

A Comparative Analysis of Perceptions held towards African Female Leaders, Successful Middle Managers, Females, and Males in the Financial Services Industry

Zandile Sanelisiwe Moleko and Wilfred I. Ukpere*

Abstract--- *The representation of African females in leadership positions is limited in the South African context. Leadership research indicates several barriers encountered by females in advancing into leadership roles, due to pervasive negative perceptions of African females as leaders. The stereotypes held of females' impact on their ability to be represented in leadership roles. The phenomenon of 'think manager, think male', identified by Schein reinforces the conviction that female leadership is less likely to be effective, thus drawing correlation between characteristics attributed to managers and those attributed to males being considered superior to those of female managers. This paper provides a comparison of the perceptions held towards African female leaders, successful middle managers, females and males within the financial services industry. A mixed-methods approach was employed with the first phase being composed on the distribution of Schein's Descriptive Index (SDI) and the second phase composed of interviews with African female leaders, their subordinates, peers and managers. The results indicate that there is significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, females, successful middle managers, and males in the financial services industry.*

Keywords--- *Services Industry, Comparative Analysis, Female Leaders.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The representation of African females in leadership positions is limited within South African organisations. Leadership research indicates several barriers encountered by females in advancing into leadership roles, due to pervasive negative perceptions of African females as leaders. The stereotypes held regarding females, impact on the opportunities they are afforded, the support they receive, the desire of individuals to be managed by them, and the relationship dynamics with other females. The phenomenon of 'think manager, think male', identified by Schein (1970, 2001: 675) is a global phenomenon (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010; Powell, 2011; Schein *et al.*, 1996). It is the conviction that female leadership is less likely to be effective. The consistent factor in previous studies around this notion being the correlation between characteristics attributed to managers and those attributed to males being considered superior to those of female managers (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010).

Zandile Sanelisiwe Moleko, Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, Johannesburg Business School, College of Business & Economic, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Wilfred I. Ukpere, Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, Johannesburg Business School, College of Business & Economic, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. E-mail: wiukpere@uj.ac.za*

Problem statement

The history of South Africa provides a unique backdrop to the experiences of African female leaders, who are impacted by both race and gender bias. Perceptions result in great demands being placed on females, specifically African females, who have to contend with the bias against both race and gender.

Research objectives

The following are the research objectives of this study:

- To understand how African female leaders from the banking industry are perceived by their subordinates, peers and managers;
- To determine if there is any significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, females, successful middle managers and males in the financial services industry in terms of negative and positive leadership characteristics.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the literature on females in South Africa emphasises the status of females in leadership and managerial roles (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005), and comparisons are done using Western views of leadership.

Perceptions of African female leaders

The relationship between leadership characteristics and gender-role stereotypes needs to be further understood within a variety of contexts (Schein, 2001), South Africa being one of them. The impact of culture and its values and traditions on leaders' style and behaviour has gained much research interest (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). The influence of cultural values and traditions on leaders' attitudes and behaviours has been indeed been examined extensively (Hofstede, 1998; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Qintanilla, and Dorfman, 1999 as cited in Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). With the paucity of research on South African females in leadership and the drive to increase their representation in organisations, it is critical to understand the dynamics within the South African context.

Research indicates that females in South Africa encounter barriers similar to those of their female counterparts globally, especially with regard to their progress and upward mobility (Erwee, 1994; Erasmus, 1998; Mathur-Helm, 2002, cited in Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). This has impacted on their development into leadership roles, their experiences as leaders, and how they then behave as leaders. African females encounter substantial gender-related barriers to their upward mobility, such as misconceptions and stereotyping (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009), despite the fact that they are talented and educated and display commitment to their careers (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). A further challenge encountered by females is that of managing the demands of both work and home, resulting in role conflict (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012).

Culture has a substantial impact on the status of females in different countries, stereotypes based on gender, family and work relationships, and socialisation. It is important to note this and not homogenise the experiences of African female leaders (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Black females in South Africa, which term includes African females, suffer a double disadvantage: gender bias and the remnants of political discrimination during Apartheid.

The experiences of Black females are further differentiated based on whether the individual is African, Coloured, or Indian, due to different cultural backgrounds and experiences. The focus in the current study is on African female leaders specifically. The discrimination they faced formed the basis for African females having limited opportunities and access to education, as well as the historic absence of equal opportunities (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012). This resulted in limited representation of African females as leaders, a scarcity of skills in certain disciplines, and questions regarding the eligibility and competence of African female.

Female leaders in South African are viewed as displaying leadership behaviours that differ from those of traditional male leaders, and they have been perceived as not having leadership potential (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). These perceptions are further amplified by perceptions related to race, whereby females of colour, specifically African and Coloured females, have to contend with additional stereotyping due to their historical roles (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005).

In research conducted by Booysen and Nkomo (2010) in South Africa, the results indicated that both White and Black males held the perception that they had a greater likelihood than females to possess the requisite abilities and competencies to make them successful as managers. Furthermore, it has been suggested that managerial stereotyping and gender differentiation are more prevalent in Black males than in White males. The results also indicated that Black females had the highest rating of characteristics aligned with successful management. This finding of characteristics associated with females being more conducive to success in management is rare. It has only been found in one other known country study, namely Canada. The historically disadvantaged position of African females may imply that their views of leadership are influenced by experiences of their larger race group and political struggles. Their views may thus be entrenched in the strong leadership roles females played during the political struggle in South Africa.

The past decade has seen a growth in female leaders across the world. The South African context is rich in history and contextual influences and understanding the perceptions of African female leaders is a critical component of the study of leadership.

The influence of gender

Various views are held by subordinates of leaders, based on gender and subordinates' perceptions of leaders' behaviour (Bartol and Wortman, 1975). Compared to males and younger individuals, females and older individuals may show greater prejudice against a female leader (Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra, 2006).

Pull Her Down (PHD) syndrome refers to females not supporting, but rather obstructing each other's advancement (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012). Queen Bee syndrome is a term coined to describe a general phenomenon of females who are successful in traditionally male-dominated environments due to their individual efforts who oppose the development of other females (Ellemers, Heuvel, Gilder, Maass, and Bonvini, 2004). The Queen Bee gains pleasure from being the first and only successful woman, and she does not assist another female. She achieved success, and is then unwilling to assist other females, as she is disgruntled about not having received assistance herself (Malveaux, 2005). Queen Bee syndrome and PHD syndrome and Bitch syndrome refer to possible dynamics

in the female-to-female leader-subordinate relationship, which further impact the role of the female leader in how she manages this dynamic.

How female leaders are perceived

The difference in leadership styles of males and females is one of extensive debate, with a consensus that males and females generally display different leadership styles (Appelbaum, Audet and Miller, 2003; Grove and Montgomery, 1999). These differences contribute to the barriers females face in aspiring for leadership roles.

The phenomenon of ‘think manager, think male’, identified by Schein (1970, 2001: 675) using samples in the USA, is prominent (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010; Powell, 2011; Schein *et al.*, 1996). Some studies replicated Schein’s work and confirmed the existence of this phenomenon (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010). An exception to this, is the work of Orser (1994), which considered the characteristics of female managers more superior to those of male managers (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010). The earlier work by Schein was extended to the UK, Germany, China and Japan, as well as in updating previous research done in the USA. The consistency amongst these studies is the alignment reflected in the characteristics of managers and that of males, which are consequently deemed to be superior to those characteristics ascribed to female managers (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010).

In organisations, female leaders are thought to be unable to meet leadership requirements, due to their being different from males (Maleki and Karamzadeh, 2012). Socialisation supports the perception that female’s leadership style is less effective than that of male. This perception is due to stereotypically masculine characteristics being valued and rewarded in organisations, which results in females being highly conscious of the masculine attributes and being taught to alter their own behaviour (Wicks and Bradshaw, 1999, in Appelbaum *et al.*, 2003).

These stereotypes indicate that, although there may not be significant differences in the performance of male and female leaders, the prevalent perception of a successful leader is more closely aligned with males than with females (Ellemers *et al.*, 2004). The notion that male leadership is better than female leadership, or vice versa, is contested. Effective leadership does not reside with either the male or the female leadership type. Both can learn from each other (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2003). With the current changes in the world, there is an emerging argument that female leadership styles may even be more effective than male leadership (Maleki and Karamzadeh, 2012). In team-based environments relying on consensus between members, the leadership styles of females may, in fact, be more effective. These types of structures and team-based environments are more common in organisations today (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2003). Popular leadership books indicate the move towards greater emphasis on female leadership in the workplace, with the perception that effective leadership is congruent with how females lead (Maleki and Karamzadeh, 2012).

Different models of leadership promote different aspects of leadership. The McKinsey group created a leadership model based on interviews with females from around the world that is directed specifically at females in leadership and how they can become more effective. This model refers to “centred leadership”, and is directed at the enhancement of female’s leadership (Barsh, Cranston and Craske, 2008). The representation of females in senior levels in organisations and diversity in the leadership styles in organisations have been identified as having the

ability to give organisations a competitive edge, which is crucial to organisations' survival (Desvaux and Devillard, 2008).

The association of a leadership style with a gender and effectively employing this in organisational contexts that are predominantly masculine will be considered in the present study. Research has indicated that in these environments, males are more effective than their female counterparts in roles that are considered more masculine, and vice versa (Eagly, Steven, and Makhijani, 1995). The dilemmas facing female leaders extend to the environment in which they work, and the interplay of the gender prescribed for the leadership role juxtaposed against their gender role.

The debate has moved beyond motivating the representation of females in leadership. Profitable organisations understand the significance of successful teams (Moskal, 1997; Nelson, 2006), and many teams have females in key roles. It has been shown that female managers contribute significantly to making organisations profitable (Moskal, 1997). The phenomenon of 'think manager, think male' has been widely documented. However, there is limited research on the combined effects of gender and race in this phenomenon (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010: 286). The leadership debate has moved to the dynamics faced by female leaders, the interplay of leadership with gender, race and class, the role of organisations and society, and the perceptions held of female leaders.

The relationship between perception and leadership style

The influence of gender stereotypes on the perceptions held of leaders and managers is recognised in research (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010). The perception dictating that good managers are males persists (Powell, Butterfield, and Parent, 2002; Willemsen, 2002). Aspiring female leaders face a dilemma regarding leadership and gender stereotypes, a marked disadvantage, and they are faced with the perceived incompatibility between the role they play as leaders and their gender role (Powell, 2011).

What individuals deem as a good leader is a result of the alignment between what is preferred in the role of a leader and the characteristics that are stereotypically accredited to the leader. This results in a tendency to prefer male leaders over female leaders (Brown, Diekman, and Schneider, 2011). In organisations, expectations theory and social role theory indicate that the perception of males being more capable than females creates inequalities (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Role congruity theory indicates that, in the leadership domain, females are less likely than males to develop into leaders when what is expected of the leadership role differs from the female gender stereotype (Ritter and Yoder, 2004).

Gender stereotypes influence how males and females perceive leadership (Sczesny, 2003). As leadership is, in itself, gendered, females entering leadership roles have to deal with stereotypes of female leaders (Yoder, 2001). Gender plays a social role, and, as such, history, culture, and societal beliefs and values contribute to the roles associated with males and female. The dominance of masculine values in society is also transferred to the work environment (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012).

Attitudes towards females in executive roles as leaders have improved. This improvement relates to the willingness and comfort of individuals to work for a woman, an increase in optimism about the idea that the

business could accept a female manager, and the erroneous belief that females must be exceptional to be successful. This improvement, however, has not translated into significant improvements in representation of female managers (Carlson, Kacmar and Whitten, 2006).

Exposure of individuals to female bosses reduces gender bias (Elsesser and Lever, 2011). This further encourages the representation of females, as having a female leader may contribute to dispelling misconceptions regarding female leaders. Substantial differences in self-perception versus subordinates' perceptions may, however, have a negative impact, resulting in diminished leadership effectiveness (Seltzer, 2004).

Research indicates that, aside from those individuals who have no partiality regarding the gender of their manager, there is a preference for a male manager (Elsesser and Lever, 2011; Powell, 2011). A Gallup survey on American workers indicated a preference for male managers by both males and females (Carroll, 2006). A review of research comparing the leadership styles of males and females indicated proof for the absence, as well as the presence of variances between males and females (Eagly and Johnson, 1990).

Part of the dilemma females in leadership face is around how they present themselves as leaders and what repercussions they face. Research indicates that powerful females who are more vocal will experience some backlash; this opinion was elicited from both male and female respondents. For females to achieve success in organisations, this may necessitate that they find resourceful strategies to steer through the challenges in power hierarchies (Brescoll, 2012).

The stereotypical expectation of females is that they will lead more democratically than males (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). Sensitivity is strongly associated with female leadership, while male leadership is associated with masculinity, strength and tyranny (Johnson *et al.*, 2008). Females are viewed as more effective than their male counterparts in leadership positions associated with caretaking, whilst males are viewed as more effective in positions that require the leader to take charge (Prime, Carter and Welbourne, 2009).

Stereotyping implies that, in order for females to be perceived as effective, they need to display characteristics associated with males (Powell, 2011). According to Johnson *et al.* (2008), for females to be perceived as effective, they need to display styles attributed to both males and females, whereas males need only display masculine characteristics. Stereotyping has an impact on the perceived potential of females and may also impact on how their achievement is evaluated, resulting in biased evaluation. This is not the case with their male counterparts, whose performance is automatically attributed to competence (Ellemers *et al.*, 2004). Gender stereotyping creates bias against females, not only in selection for managerial roles, but also in opportunities for promotion and training decisions (Schein, 2007, cited in Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010).

An indication of where contextual influences and cultural background potentially further influence perceptions is within the American context. Research has differentiated the experiences of African American females, and recognised that their life experiences may be culturally different to that of their counterparts by recognising the intersectionality that exists for them, which combines their race, the effects of their gender, and the effects of their social class (Byrd, 2009; Jean-Marie *et al.*, 2009; Lloyd-Jones, 2009; Stanley, 2009). Intersectionality, according to feminist research, refers to differences in categorisation such as race and gender converging; these cannot be

analysed separately, as they impact each other (Booysen and Nkomo, 2010). Experiences and perceptions are shaped by race and gender, hence a need to examine both simultaneously (Booysen and Nkomo, 2010).

It is argued that Black females generally hold a perspective that is influenced by their history of struggle and oppression. Black females have been shown to have different organisational experiences than their White counterparts, coupled with differing perceptions on barriers within organisations (Booysen and Nkomo, 2010). The perceptions and experiences of Black females indicate a negative effect on their organisational experiences due to sexism and racism. In contrast to this, White females indicate greater career mobility, even though they still experience barriers linked to gender (Booysen and Nkomo, 2010).

Perceptions result in great demands being placed on females, specifically African females, who must contend with the bias against both race and gender. This affects how they perform as leaders. A further dynamic in place is perceptions of the leader-subordinate relationship and the gender of the subordinates, which further complicates perceptions held of leaders.

There are also indications of differences in leadership behaviours of males and females in financial services. Females tend to display more risk aversion than males, coupled with a long-term perspective (Nelson, 2011). With the limited representation of females in leadership roles in financial services, compared to their male counterparts, and identified differences in leadership behaviour, gender role identity differences come into play. Research indicates that, when females are employed in roles within industries that are viewed as incongruent with their traditional gender role, they are subjected to prejudice (Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra, 2006). The African female leader in the financial services industry potentially faces multiple challenges related to perceptions of both race and gender (Jean-Marie, Williams, and Sherman, 2009; Holvino, 2010).

Society's perception of females influences their selection into roles, how their performance is viewed, and the support they receive in the process of developing into leadership roles once they occupy these roles. Differences between males and females as leaders have generated much interest, with research exploring differences in style, barriers to leadership, stereotypes, and various theories of leadership (Lips, 2009; Powell, 2011; Shum and Cheng, 2008).

While previous research on females within the management and leadership domain has been done, these studies have focused predominantly on the West (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Empirical research continues to indicate a persistent preference for male leadership (Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, and Liu, 1996; Sczesny, 2003; Willemsen, 2002). In reviewing the proposed characteristics of good leadership, the preference for stereotypically masculine characteristics continues to reflect the notion that males make more suitable managers and leaders (Harris, 2002; Powell, 2011; Schein *et al.*, 1996; Sczesny, 2003). This poses challenges for female leaders, as what an organisation perceives as good leadership may be different to female leadership characteristics.

Society's structure is conventionally dominated by males, and reactions to males and females in leadership roles are influenced by this social convention (Lips, 2009). Organisations are a key focus area in the effort to redress existing societal inequalities (Acker, 2006). A change in organisational culture is required in order to achieve gender equality (Lord and Preston, 2009).

Organisational culture is a consequence of how things are done in organisations, which includes organisations' policies and practices. The inequalities that exist within organisations are associated with these environmental practices and processes (Acker, 2006), and the HR practices of organisations need an intentional focus on supporting the advancement of females (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012).

Research indicates that males tend to hold more traditional views of gender roles, and that these traditional views support males positions of power (Konrad and Harris, 2002). The role traditionally played by females, namely that of mother and child-bearer have resulted in perceptions that females are less capable than males in the work environment. This perception is intensified with regard to leadership roles (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012). Organisational structures further strengthen this notion. With females still bearing the main responsibility for home and family care, they find it difficult to regularly work beyond office hours. Females failing to achieve targets is then interpreted as an inability to match the performance of males, and it is not considered that females may not have the necessary support structures to work long hours (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012).

Stereotyping has a direct impact on whether individuals want to work for African female managers in leadership roles. This stereotyping results in the focus being, not on the leader's abilities, but on the perceptions held by individuals of leadership characteristics. Furthermore, different cultures have different perceptions of leadership. Extensive literature is available on leadership characteristics, leadership types, and gender differences (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Shum and Cheng, 2008; Yoder, 2001). However, explorations of the perceptions and stereotypes that exist regarding African female leaders have so far been limited. More research focusing on the impact of stereotyping of so-called African American females has been done in the USA. This research considered aspects such as the double jeopardy experienced by African American females- being both African and female (Jean-Marie, Williams, and Sherman, 2009; Holvino, 2010). Research indicates that African American females are helped, rather than hampered, by the stereotyping to which they are exposed. It was identified that people are more open to Black females being more domineering than White female. White females were expected to be nicer than White males, whilst White males could be more domineering. In contrast, people did not expect Black females to be communal in their relations with others, but rather expected them to be more domineering than Black males (Cooper, 2011).

One of the crucial challenges in creating equity in representation is the issue of legitimacy. Females' ability to successfully perform in senior roles is questioned, and the challenge in practice is to dispel such negative perceptions. The perception that females lack leadership ability contributes to resistance to having females in senior management roles (Dickerson and Taylor, 2000). Despite the fact that females begin their careers with a level of commitment, intellect, and education that is comparable to that of males, fewer females rise to the top (Barsh *et al.*, 2008). Without changing society's mind-set to one of regarding females as competent and talented, females will continue to be overlooked (Devillard, Graven, Lawson, Paradise, and Sancier-Sultan, 2012).

The legislation, policies, practices, and social structures discussed above play a role in the barriers females face in the workplace and are associated with the glass ceiling. These barriers have been explored according to level, industry, and in terms of career advancement (Rowe and Crafford, 2003). Another contributor to the challenges females face in the workplace is the juggling of multiple roles and the impact of this on their work-life balance.

Societal expectations of females mean that some things continue to be female's work, resulting in females attempting to meet the demands of both home and work. The call for organisations is to create policies and practices that enable females to achieve a work-life balance as organisations and society strive for greater representation of female. This will require determined action and change of society, organisations, individuals and groups norms (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, and Baumgarten, 2007).

The manager-subordinate relationship and the influence of gender are additional dynamics that deserve consideration. Gender may influence beliefs regarding leadership behaviour (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, and Reichard, 2008). The manager-subordinate relationship between females produces a unique complexity, reflected in what is commonly referred to as 'Queen Bee Syndrome' or 'Pull Her Down (PHD) syndrome. There is a persistent perception that females who become successful as leaders alter their behaviour in order to simulate that of males, as male characteristics are considered synonymous with the characteristics of good leadership (Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012).

Looking holistically at African female leaders, gaining an understanding of how they are perceived in leadership roles in the banking environment within the financial services industry will shed light on the prevalence of the 'think manager, think male' phenomenon within the cultural context of South Africa. Furthermore, females also have the ability to either be role models or to negatively impact other females, based on the perceptions held about them (Hoyt and Simon, 2011). It is therefore imperative to understand how African female leaders are perceived when compared to their successful middle manager, female and male counterparts.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study followed a mixed-methods approach, employing a sequential explanatory research design. The first phase was quantitative, which entails the distribution of questionnaires based on Schein's Descriptive Index (SDI). A total of 415 individuals from the financial services sector responded. The second phase was qualitative in nature, where semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten African female leaders, five subordinates of African female leaders, five peers of African female leaders, and five managers of African female leaders within the financial services sector. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and the interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis conducted. The two methods were then triangulated, and the findings of the research were considered in the context of previous studies.

IV. FINDINGS

To assess the differences in mean scores across the four categories of groups being rated, namely *African female leaders*, *females*, *successful middle managers*, and *males*, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used (Pallant, 2011) for hypothesis testing. The analysis of variance compares the variability in scores that is present between the different groups being observed with variability within each of the groups (Pallant, 2011). This within-group versus between group analyses provides an indication of the ratio of variability, which, if significant, confirms the null hypothesis. The post-hoc tests thereafter give an indication of which of the groups differ (Pallant, 2011). Finally, the eta squared provides an indication of the effect size (Pallant, 2011).

The results of the respondents' perceptions of African female leaders based on their ratings of the 92-item SDI on a five-point Likert scale were used to determine the leadership characteristic groupings. On this scale, a score of 1 indicated *Not characteristic of African female leaders*, a score of 2 indicated *Somewhat uncharacteristic of African female leaders*, 3 indicated *Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic of African female leaders*, 4 indicated *Somewhat characteristic of African female leaders*, and a score of 5 indicated *Characteristic of African female leaders*. The data for the 92 items they were sorted into smaller groups by calculating the mean for every item and then assigning it to a group based on the mean value. Items with $M > 3$ were grouped as positive or characteristic of African female leaders, and items with $M < 3$ were grouped as negative or not characteristic of African female leaders.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed as a dimension-reduction technique which found that in considering perceptions held towards African female leaders, those behaviours that were deemed to be uncharacteristic of African female leaders were identified under two factors, namely destructive characteristics and withdrawal characteristics. Conversely, those behaviours that were deemed to be characteristic of African female leaders were identified under three factors, namely intrapersonal capabilities, interpersonal capabilities and external derailers.

Respondents' perceptions based on negative leadership characteristics

The first group considered in the analysis of variance was *Negative characteristics* that were not characteristic of African female leaders. The first hypothesis is indicated below:

Hypothesis 1

H_0 : There is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of negative leadership characteristics.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of negative leadership characteristics.

However, after the exploratory factor analysis, it was established that the hypothesis cannot work, as the exploratory factor analysis yielded two additional factors, namely *Destructive characteristics* and *Withdrawal characteristics*.

This necessitated the adaption of the initial hypothesis to accommodate these two new factors, which are represented in the revised null and alternate hypothesis indicated below.

Adapted Hypothesis 1.1

H_0 : There is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of destructive characteristics.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of destructive characteristics.

Adapted Hypothesis 1.2

H_0 : There is no significant difference in respondents’ perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of withdrawal characteristics.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in respondents’ perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of withdrawal characteristics.

Table 1: ANOVA of Negative characteristics

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destructive Characteristics	Between Groups	64.853	3	21.618	28.321	0.000
	Within Groups	313.720	411	0.763		
	Total	378.573	414			
Withdrawal Characteristics	Between Groups	24.736	3	8.245	11.868	0.000
	Within Groups	285.539	411	0.695		
	Total	310.275	414			

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if a statistically significant difference exists across the four categories of groups being rated on *Destructive* and *Withdrawal characteristics* respectively, which make up the *Negative characteristics*. Post hoc tests indicated that statistically significant differences in *Destructive characteristics* existed between the categories. Post hoc tests further indicated that statistically significant differences in *Withdrawal characteristics* existed between the categories. There was a statistically significant difference in *Destructive characteristics* and *Withdrawal characteristics* across the four groups.

Respondents’ perceptions based on positive leadership characteristics

The second group considered in the analysis of variance was *Positive characteristics* that were not characteristic of African female leaders. The second hypothesis is indicated below:

Hypothesis 2

H_0 : There is no significant difference in respondents’ perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of positive leadership characteristics.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in respondents’ perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of positive leadership characteristics.

However, after the exploratory factor analysis, it was established that the hypothesis could not work, as the exploratory factor analysis yielded three additional factors, namely *Intrapersonal capabilities*, *Interpersonal capabilities*, and *Internal derailers*. This necessitated the adaption of the initial hypothesis to accommodate these three factors, which are represented in the revised null and alternate hypothesis indicated below.

Adapted Hypothesis 2.1

H_0 : There is no significant difference in respondents’ perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of intrapersonal capabilities.

H₁: There is a significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of intrapersonal capabilities.

Adapted Hypothesis 2.2

H₀: There is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of interpersonal capabilities.

H₁: There is a significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of interpersonal capabilities.

Adapted Hypothesis 2.3

H₀: There is no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of internal derailers.

H₁: There is a significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, successful middle managers, females, and males in the financial services industry in terms of internal derailers.

Table 2: ANOVA of Positive characteristics

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrapersonal Capabilities	Between Groups	7.683	3	2.561	6.040	0.000
	Within Groups	174.267	411	0.424		
	Total	181.950	414			
Interpersonal Capabilities	Between Groups	19.346	3	6.449	11.994	0.000
	Within Groups	220.965	411	0.538		
	Total	240.311	414			
Internal Derailers	Between Groups	31.717	3	10.572	20.951	0.000
	Within Groups	207.399	411	0.505		
	Total	239.116	414			

Similarly, a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if a statistically significant difference exists across the four categories of groups being rated on *Intrapersonal capabilities*, *Interpersonal capabilities*, and *Internalderailers* respectively, which made up *Positive characteristics*. Post hoc tests indicated that statistically significant differences in *Intrapersonal capabilities* existed between the categories. Also, post hoc tests revealed that statistically significant differences in *Interpersonal capabilities* existed between the four categories. Finally, post hoc tests showed that statistically significant differences in *Interpersonal capabilities* existed between the categories. There was a statistically significant difference in *Intrapersonal capabilities*, *Interpersonal capabilities*, and *Internalderailers* across the four groups.

Comparison of perceptions

In the process of analysis of the statistical output, there was sufficient statistical evidence that there is significant difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders, females, successful middle managers, and males in the financial services industry in terms of negative and positive characteristics, thus confirming the alternate hypothesis.

Destructive characteristics were identified as behaviours that African female leaders do not exhibit and, which may be harmful. In relation to this factor, African female leaders were perceived as not being: devious, vulgar, deceitful, bitter and selfish. In terms of being aggressive, there were inconsistent views, as some perceived African female leaders as indeed aggressive. Furthermore, there was also a perception that African female leaders can be hard and hard drivers. Identified here was the paradox that as females are not expected to be aggressive, the hard character and aggressiveness of African female leaders is seemingly amplified, not necessarily being more aggressive than males, but being perceived to be owing to the lack of expectation of them to be that way. The perception of being aggressive aligns to how males are perceived, while females and successful middle managers are not perceived as aggressive. African female leaders and successful middle managers were both not perceived to display destructive characteristics. Notably, successful middle managers seem to avoid destructive characteristics more than African female leaders. There was a difference in respondents' perceptions of African female leaders and males, because even though African female leaders were not considered to display destructive characteristics, males were perceived to display destructive characteristics. Like successful middle managers and African female leaders, females also did not display destructive characteristic like males. African female leaders were perceived to avoid destructive characteristics even more so than females. This indicates that African female leaders, successful middle managers and females were all not considered to display destructive characteristics. However, males alone were considered to display destructive characteristics.

Withdrawal characteristics were identified as behaviours that African female leaders do not exhibit and, which may be potentially protective and foster avoidance or make African female leaders to drawback. In relation to this factor, African female leaders were perceived as individuals who are not shy, nervous and demure. These are characteristics, which traditionally may have been stereotypical of females, which have strangely not been associated with African female leaders. African female leaders and successful middle managers were both not perceived to display withdrawal characteristics. However, successful middle managers were notably perceived to avoid withdrawal characteristics more than African female leaders. Like African female leaders and successful middle managers, males do not display withdrawal characteristic as females do. In fact, males seem to even avoid withdrawal characteristics more so than African female leaders. Notably, females were the only group that displayed withdrawal characteristics. African female leaders, successful middle managers and males were perceived to not display withdrawal characteristics.

Intrapersonal capabilities were identified as behaviours that African female leaders exhibit that occur internally to African female leaders, inherently inside themselves, and, which relate to themselves. In relation to this factor, African female leaders were perceived to be: consistent, possessing leadership ability, intelligent, having good analytical ability, able to separate feelings from ideas, competent, objective, firm, prompt, know the way of the world, well informed, ambitious, desire responsibility, self-controlled, decisive, direct, self-confident, steady, assertive, tactful, logical, skilled in business matters and self-reliant. Additional behaviours that were identified as characteristic of African female leaders were: certainty, strength of character; courage; and ability to challenge the status quo. African female leaders and successful middle managers were both perceived to display intrapersonal capabilities. However, successful middle managers were perceived to display intrapersonal capabilities more than

African female leaders. Like African female leaders and successful middle managers, females also were found to display intrapersonal capabilities.

Interpersonal capabilities were identified as behaviours that African female leaders exhibit that occur between African female leaders and others or other variables. In relation to this factor, African female leaders were perceived to be: sympathetic, values pleasant surroundings, understanding, grateful, aware of feelings of others, intuitive, humanitarian values, helpful and kind. Further identified behavioural characteristics of African female leaders include: a pervasive sense of valuing diversity, as well as empowering others. African female leaders, females, successful middle managers and males were all perceived to display interpersonal capabilities. African female leaders and females were both perceived to display interpersonal capabilities. However, females were considered to display interpersonal capabilities more than African female leaders. Like African female leaders and females, successful middle managers and males were also perceived to display interpersonal capabilities; however, successful middle managers were perceived to display interpersonal capabilities more than males. Although all four groups were perceived to have interpersonal characteristics, African female leaders were perceived by respondents to display them the least.

Internal derailers were identified as behaviours that African female leaders exhibit that have the potential and ability to become obstacles to their progress. In relation to this factor, African female leaders were perceived to be: fearful, uncertain, submissive, frivolous, timid, wavering in decision making, passive, and quarrelsome. Further identified behavioural characteristics of African female leaders were: self-critical and lack of confidence, insecurity, defensiveness, and a tokenism complex. Successful middle managers were not perceived to display internal derailers like African female leaders. Females, like African female leaders, were also perceived to display internal derailers. Conversely, males and successful middle managers were not perceived to display internal derailers. The findings, therefore, reflect that African female leaders and females were perceived to be fearful, uncertain, submissive, timid, passive and quarrelsome, as opposed to successful middle managers and males.

V. DISCUSSION

The paradigm of ‘think manager-think male’ has resulted in several studies that have assessed the alignment of stereotypes of successful middle managers to stereotypes of females and males. These studies entail the rating of characteristics of females, males, and successful middle managers, and the correlation of resultant mean ratings to compare perceptions of each group (Koenig *et al.*, 2011). This approach was also applied to the current study. This ‘think manager-think male’ syndrome was also reflected when the results of a study indicated an alignment between the mean value of males and that of successful middle managers, and a misalignment between the mean value of females and that of successful middle managers (Koenig *et al.*, 2011). In the current study, an additional dynamic was added to test if there was an association between perceptions held of females, males, and successful middle managers and perceptions held of African female leaders. The shared high mean values for successful middle managers and that of males may insinuate Schein’s (2001) ‘think manager-think male’ perspective, since the characteristics of successful management are aligned to those of males. The instances of shared high mean values

between African female leaders and females may further support this view. What is clear, however, in this study is the lack of consistent trend of the 'think manager-think male' influence across all factors.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the differentiation in perceptions held of African female leaders, females, successful middle managers and males indicates that further work is still required to influence perceptions held of African female leaders and the impact these perceptions have on their advancement and representation within the financial services industry, namely banking. Recommendations to organisations on mechanisms to address inherent bias within organisations and foster greater advancement of African female leaders include: the review and alignment of organisational practices; a focus on the organisational culture as an enabler; the importance of the role line managers have to play; the benefits of networks as an enabler; and the power of formal learning and development; coaching; mentoring; and sponsorship to create greater representation. There is also a role to be played by African female leaders in managing and eliminating negative characteristics, developing positive characteristics, focusing on their personal development and investing in the development of other African female leaders. This is to ensure that perceptions held of African female leaders enable their advancement and success, which simultaneously requires effort from African female leaders themselves, as well as line managers and organisational practices.

REFERENCES

- [1] Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender and Society*.
- [2] Appelbaum, S. H., Audet, L., and Miller, J. C. (2003). Gender and leadership? Leadership and gender? A journey through the landscape of theories. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 24(1), 43-51.
- [3] Barsh, J., Cranston, S., and Craske, R. A. (2008). Centered leadership: How talented women thrive. *The McKinsey Quarterly*.
- [4] Bartol, K., and Wortman, M. (1975). Male versus female leaders: Effects on perceived leader behavior and satisfaction in a hospital. *Personnel Psychology*, 28, 533-547.
- [5] Booyesen, L. A. E., and Nkomo, S. M. (2010). Gender role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics: The case of South Africa. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25(4), 285-300.
- [6] Brescoll, V. L. (2012). Who takes the floor and why: Gender, power, and volubility in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56(4), 622-641.
- [7] Brown, E. R., Diekmann, A. B., and Schneider, M. C. (2011). A change will do us good: Threats diminish typical preferences for male leaders. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37, 930-941.
- [8] Byrd, M. Y. (2009). Telling our stories of leadership: If we don't tell them they won't be told. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5).
- [9] Carroll, J. (2006). *Americans prefer male boss to a female boss*. Gallop survey. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/24346/americans-prefer-male-boss-female-boss.aspx>
- [10] Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., and Whitten, D. (2006). What men think they know about executive women. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(9), 28.
- [11] Cooper, M. (2011). Stereotypes may help black women succeed. Stanford News. Retrieved from <http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2011/stereotypes-may-help-black-women-succeed>.
- [12] Desvaux, G., and Devillard, S. (2008). Women Matter 2: Female leadership, a competitive edge for the future.
- [13] Desvaux, G., Devillard-Hoellinger, S., and Baumgarten, P. (2007). Women Matter: Gender diversity, a corporate performance driver.
- [14] Devillard, S., Graven, W., Lawson, E., Paradise, R., and Sancier-Sultan, S. (2012). Women Matter 2012: Making the breakthrough.

- [15] Dickerson, A. and Taylor, M. A. (2000). Self-limiting behavior in women: Self-esteem and self-efficacy predictors. *Group and Organization Management*, 25(2), 191-210.
- [16] Eagly, A. H., and Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(2), 233-256.
- [17] Eagly, A. H., Steven, J., and Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(1), 125-145.
- [18] Ellemers, N., Heuvel, H. V. D., Gilder, D. D., Maass, A., and Bonvini, A. (2004). The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), 315-338.
- [19] Elsesser, K. M., and Lever, J. (2011). Does gender bias against female leaders persist? Quantitative and qualitative data from a large-scale survey. *Human Relations*, 64(12), 1555-1578.
- [20] Garcia-Retamero, R., and López-Zafra, E. (2006). Prejudice against women in male-congenial environments: Perceptions of gender role congruity in leadership. *Sex Roles*, 55(1):51-61.
- [21] Growe, R., and Montgomery, P. (2001). Women and the leadership paradigm: Bridging the gender gap. Resources in Education. ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service EA031031.
- [22] Harris, H. (2002). Think international manager, think male: Why are women not selected for international management assignments? *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 44(2), 175-203.
- [23] Hofmeyr, K., and Mzobe, C. (2012). Progress towards advancing women in South African organisations: Myth or reality. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(4), 1276-1289.
- [24] Holvino, E. (2010). Intersections: The simultaneity of race, gender and class in organization studies. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 17(3), 248-277.
- [25] Hoyt, C. L., and Simon, S. (2011). Female leaders: Injurious or inspiring role models for women? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 35(1), 143-157.
- [26] Jean-Marie, G., Williams, V. A., and Sherman, S. L. (2009). Black women's leadership experiences: Examining the intersectionality of race and gender. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5), 562-581.
- [27] Johnson, S. K., Murphy, S. E., Zewdie, S., and Reichard, R. J. (2008). The strong, sensitive type: Effects of gender stereotypes and leadership prototypes on the evaluation of male and female leaders. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 106(1), 39-60.
- [28] Koenig A. M., Eagly A. H., Mitchell A. A., and Ristikari T. (2011). Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 616-642.
- [29] Konrad, A. M., and Harris, C. (2002). Desirability of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory items for women and men: A comparison between African Americans and European Americans. *Sex Roles*, 47(5/6), 259-271.
- [30] Lips, H. (2009). Women and leadership: Delicate balancing act.
- [31] Littrell, R. F., and Nkomo, S. M. (2005). Gender and race differences in leader behaviour preferences in South Africa. *Women in Management Review*, 20(8), 562-580.
- [32] Lord, L. A., and Preston, A. (2009). Understanding leadership experiences: The need for story sharing and feminist literature as a survival manual for leadership. *Gender and Education*, 21(6), 769-777.
- [33] Lloyd-Jones, B. (2009). Implications of race and gender in higher education administration: An African American woman's perspective. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5), 606-618.
- [34] Maleki, N., and Karamzadeh, F.K. (2012). Appraisal of female leadership pattern in governmental organization. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6 (35), 9847-9852.
- [35] Malveaux, J. (2005). Nurturer or queen bee? *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 22(4), 55.
- [36] Moskal, B. (1997). Women make better managers. *The Workplace*.
- [37] Nelson, B. (2006). Are women better people managers? *Healthcare Registration Magazine*.
- [38] Nelson, J. A. (2011). Would women leaders have prevented the global financial crisis? Implications for teaching about gender and economics. *Global Development and Environment Institute Working Paper no.11-03*.
- [39] Nkomo, S. M., and Ngambi, H. (2009). African women in leadership: Current knowledge and a framework for future studies. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinary*, 4(1), 49-68.
- [40] Pallant, J. (2011). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using the SPSS program* (4th edition). Berkshire: Allen and Unwin.
- [41] Powell, G. N. (2011). The gender and leadership wars. *Organizational Dynamics*, 40(1), 1-9.
- [42] Powell, G. N., Butterfield, D. A., and Parent, J. D. (2002). Gender and managerial stereotypes: Have the times changed? *Journal of Management*, 28(2), 177-193.

- [43] Prime, J. L., Carter, N. M., and Welbourne, T. M. (2009). Women “take care,” men “take charge”: Managers’ stereotypic perceptions of women and men leaders. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 12, 25-49.
- [44] Ritter, B. A., and Yoder, J. D. (2004). Gender differences in leader emergence persist even for dominant women: An updated confirmation of role congruity theory. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28(3), 187-193.
- [45] Rowe, T., and Crafford, A. (2003). A study of barriers to career advancement for professional women in investment banking. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1(2), 21-27.
- [46] Schein, V. E. (2001). A global look at psychological barriers to women’s progress in management. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 675-688.
- [47] Schein, V. E., Mueller, R., Lituchy, T., and Liu, J. (1996). Think manager — think male: A global phenomenon? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17(1), 33-41.
- [48] Sczesny, S. (2003). A closer look beneath the surface: Various facets of the think-manager-think-male stereotype. *Sex Roles*, 49(7), 353-363.
- [49] Seltzer, J. (2004). Recent research of note: “Discrepancies in self/subordinate perceptions of leader behavior: Leader’s gender, organizational context and leader’s self-monitoring.” *Organization Management Journal*, 1(1), 15-17.
- [50] Shum, L. C., and Cheng, Y. C. (2008). Perceptions of women principals’ leadership and teachers’ work attitudes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(2), 165-184.
- [51] Stanley, C. A. (2009). Giving voice from the perspectives of African American women leaders. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 11(5), 551-561.
- [52] Willemssen, T. (2002). Gender typing of the successful manager — a stereotype reconsidered. *Sex Roles*, 46(11), 385-391.
- [53] Yoder, J. D. (2001). Making leadership work more effectively for women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 815-828.