Is She Mathilda the Hun: Attitudes Toward and Outcomes Associated with Women Managing in Male and Female-Dominated Cultures: Are There Differences?

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The number of women occupying mid-management positions in organizations has steadily increased. The types of organizations where women manage are increasingly diverse yet some remain male-dominated. Studies have explored managerial women's management styles as well as the challenges they encounter. However, little is known empirically about the dynamic between managerial women and their female subordinates. This study investigates the presence of and attitudes towards women who manage within male and female-dominated cultures. The study explores whether female subordinate attitudes and perceptions vary based on organizational type. It also examines whether female subordinates differ in their intention to leave the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Women in the US have achieved consistent employment gains. They currently comprise approximately 47% of the US labor force (Catalyst, 2013). Over the last ten years, the number of women in management and professional positions has slightly increased and they currently occupy roughly 51% of these positions (Catalyst, 2014a). Upon examination of various sectors, women are: 35% of all employees in investment banking and securities dealing; 21% of all employees in car manufacturing; and 26% of all computer professionals (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2013; US EEOC, 2013a; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Despite these advancements, women in senior executive positions, however, have not fared as well. According to Catalyst (2014a) approximately 5% of *Fortune 500* CEO's are women. Moreover, these corporate women occupy approximately 16% of Board seats, and are 8% of top earners at *Fortune 500* firms (Catalyst, 2014a). More specifically, in investment banking, car manufacturing, and information technology, women occupy approximately 16.1%, 16.5%, and 17% of executive positions, respectively (US EEOC, 2013; US EEOC, 2013a; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

These data suggest that management and executive occupations in the labor market remain relatively segregated by biological sex and women are underrepresented in senior level positions. This situation is somewhat surprising given women's educational attainment, which includes earning roughly 34% of MBA degrees over the last decade (Catalyst, 2014b). Moreover, they have made inroads into traditionally male-dominated occupations. Women in the senior managerial ranks comprise the pipeline for the next group of executives. As the pipeline increases, the number of women tapped for senior leadership roles should also, theoretically, increase. Women who hold these positions are representative of their organization's culture and values as they have been selected to execute strategies and attain goals of the

organization. Moreover, they may serve as role models for young women desirous of occupying a management position. Regardless of whether managerial women secure a position in a traditionally male-dominated, or a traditionally female-dominated industry, insights about their presence as well as attitudes toward them would prove beneficial.

The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes and outcomes associated with women who manage within male and female-dominated cultures and to gain knowledge about the nature of their presence within these environments. Specifically, there is interest in exploring female subordinate perceptions about managerial women in male-dominated and female-dominated organizational cultures and the intent of female subordinates to leave the organization. Moreover, the study examines whether attitudes and intent vary based on organizational type.

MALE AND FEMALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES

In a male-dominated industry, women typically comprise 25% or less of the total employment (Department of Labor, 2009). Despite women gaining entry into the majority of employment sectors, a gender gap remains in many industries (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). The oil and gas, utilities, and technology sectors are amongst industries heavily populated by men when examining mid and senior level positions. Moreover, these sectors have experienced tremendous growth. According to Langdon, McKittick, Beede, Khan, and Doms (2011) from 2000 to 2010, oil and gas, energy, and high tech employment grew three times the rate of other industries in the US. Moreover, this sector is expected to grow by 17% through 2018. With respect to female-dominated industries, retail, office administration, primary education, and nursing remain the sectors most populated by women. Given these industries tend to be segregated by biological sex, there are unspoken behavioral expectations associated with managing within both industry types. Moreover, women may face additional challenges when navigating within these environments (Warren, 2009).

Firm industry has been widely studied in attempts to better understand men, women, and management (Bilimoria, 2006; Nelson & Levesque, 2007). Results suggest that firms with a service focus, with a great number of women stakeholders and firms that are children-oriented have a greater tendency to hire and promote women managers (Brady, Isaacs, Reeves, Burroway & Reynolds, 2011). Other studies such as Tharenou (2001) report that few gender differences exist in women's executive representation. Nelson and Levesque (2007) indicate that there is limited distinction in the number of women in high growth technology, retail, and wholesale trade sectors. Women's scant representation in various industry sectors, nonetheless, is clear. There are, however, no definitive conclusions about the relationship between gender, management, and women's presence in various industry sectors.

Studies have been conducted to shed light on why gender based sector differences occur. One proposition is the presence of the clone theory whereby new hires, or those under consideration for promotion, are similar to the hiring or promotion manager. The theory suggests that there is a sense of comfort that exists with the hiring or promotion manager and the candidate given perceived commonality in certain characteristics. As such, candidates with dissimilar characteristics from the hiring or promoting manager may be more readily excluded from consideration. Another proposition suggests that firms requiring a high level of interaction with various stakeholders may be why some industry sectors have greater numbers of women managers (Goodman, Fields, & Blum, 2003). The prevalent notion is women tend to be well skilled in establishing rapport and connection with others and as such, their presence in sectors such as retail sales, childcare, and education is more prominent.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In addition to characterizing the nature of a firm's industry, awareness of organizational culture is also salient. Schein (1985) defines culture as the prevailing values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that are shared among individuals in an organization. Javidan, Dorfman, Howell, and Hanges (2010) suggest that organizational culture influences the behavior of leaders. Additional studies suggest that there is a

symbiotic relationship between national culture, industry dynamics, and the prevailing organizational culture of a firm (Hofstede, 1980; Lyness & Kropf, 2005). Given the dynamics associated with an industry, a firm within the industry is likely to adopt and exhibit characteristics consistent with the prevailing characteristics. Consequently, the organizational culture of a firm in a male-dominated industry will likely reflect competition, individualism, task orientation, independence and respect for authority since these are the prevalent characteristics of the industry (Maier, 1999). Within this context, there is tremendous respect for hierarchy, the chain of command dominates, and an authoritarian management style permeates the organization. Moreover, in this environment individual gains are rewarded and assertiveness and aggression are commonplace (Maier, 1999). One's career has priority over other personal demands and organizational commitment is prized (Rosener, 1995).

Conversely, female-dominated organizational cultures are characterized by participation, collaboration, involvement, and egalitarianism (Loden, 1985). Group dynamics and processes are highly valued and there is considerable focus on interpersonal relationships. In terms of rewards, intrinsic factors are valued and team recognition dominates (Loden, 1985). Additionally, work-life balance is encouraged and respected (Lyness & Kropf, 2005).

Studies have examined the significance of gender and organizational culture. Van Vianen and Fischer (2002) state that women have a weaker preference for competitive organizational values as compared to their male counterparts. Wicks and Bradshaw (1999) report that women identify an ideal culture as one that emphasizes relationships, acceptance, and less authoritative relationships. The researchers also discuss the prevalence of stereotypical sex based behaviors. They indicate that men, for example, are rewarded for less than friendly behaviors and women are rewarded for being friendly and accepting authority. These studies demonstrate that the prevalence of masculine cultures may present challenges for women who are navigating the managerial role. The reported findings also suggest that women may have a preference for a female-dominated culture.

Despite perhaps having a preference for working in a feminine culture, it may not be an option for some managerial women given the prevalence of masculine cultures in organizations. Subsequently, women who work in a male-dominated environment may need to demonstrate a style that is consistent with a masculine organizational culture in order to appear competent, maintain their status, and be considered an asset to the organization. Loden (1985) reports that demonstrating ambition, aggressiveness, self-confidence, and individualism comprise the requisite characteristics of the masculine mode of management and as such, are the normative behaviors that are widely demonstrated.

MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND GENDER

Studies report there is a tendency for managerial men and women to be associated with specific characteristics and men are more inclined to be associated with traits closely aligned with effective management (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Eagly and Karau (2002) report that despite having similar qualifications and leadership skills men are more inclined to be the preferred leader. Rudman and Kilianski (2000) suggest there is a greater likelihood of having prejudice against women who lead when subordinates expect men to have greater authority. Also, there is greater negativity toward women bosses in masculine sectors and jobs (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006).

Research also indicates, there is an expectation that male and female managers conform to sex-role specific behaviors (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Failure to demonstrate sex appropriate behaviors is often penalized. This often-times places managerial women in a double-bind situation. If these women demonstrate traits associated with typical masculinity they tend to be criticized for not being more feminine, approachable, and inclusive (Herrera, Duncan, Green & Skaggs, 2012). Similarly, if these women demonstrate more feminine traits they are criticized for not being tough, decisive, and results-oriented which are masculine qualities that are associated with effectiveness.

SUBORDINATE ATTITUDES TOWARD MANAGERS

Research has examined subordinate attitudes toward male and female managers. Many of the early studies report limited subordinate preference for a male or female manager (Brewer, 1979, Brewer & Kramer, 1985). Many contemporary studies, however, report gender bias among subordinate attitudes toward managerial women. Ely (1994) reveals that women subordinates hold negative perceptions of women managers when there are few women in senior positions. Warning and Buchanan (2009) reveal that male subordinates are more receptive to women bosses as compared to their female counterparts. Weiss (2009) indicates that women are inclined to accept hierarchy from men but not from other women. Tinsley, Chedelin, Schneider and Amanatullah (2009) state effective women managers who demonstrate masculine behaviors are penalized despite similar behavior being acceptable for male counterparts.

TURNOVER IN ORGANIZATIONS

Studies have examined the nature of turnover in organizations. Research on turnover intent reveals that thoughts about and intentions to leave an organization strongly predict actual withdrawal behavior (Lee & Mowday, 1987). Studies suggest that organizational context can influence intentions to withdraw from an organization. Specifically, subordinates who perceive biased organizational practices have a more negative attitude toward the organization and are less committed to the firm (Ensher et al., 2001). Rosin and Korabik (1991) report that women working in a male-dominated firm are more inclined to report less satisfaction and a greater likelihood of leaving the firm. Perceptions of gender discrimination increases the propensity of turnover intention (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987) and Foley, Ngo, and Wong (2005) assert that perceptions of personal gender discrimination influences the intent to leave an organization. Moreover, both moderately and highly-trained professional women are inclined to voluntarily leave organizations as well.

ROLE CONGRUITY THEORY

Role congruity theory posits that stereotyping of gender roles leads to expectations of individual behavior (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Given men and women are perceived to be different, there are appropriate behaviors for each (Heilman, 2001). There is the expectation that women demonstrate communal behavior which entails being helpful and nurturing (Eagly, 1987). Men, conversely, are expected to display commanding or agentic behaviors such as control, assertiveness, and confidence (Eagly, 1987). Subsequently, there is the attitude that men are more inclined towards leadership roles given the characterization of agentic behaviors. Conversely, communal traits are more highly valued for women. When women are perceived to demonstrate greater agentic behaviors, however, role incongruity ensues. This is likely to occur when women hold a traditionally masculine position such as manager or leader and when they are managing within a masculine culture.

HYPOTHESES

Women are making progress within the managerial ranks of organizations. While many studies have examined the attitudes and behaviors of these women, fewer studies explore female subordinate attitudes toward them and their presence. A contemporary occurrence is that organizational culture is evolving and male-dominated and female-dominated cultural types have emerged. Women occupy managerial positions within both organizational cultural types. The dynamics associated with female-dominant cultures embody qualities such as participation, involvement, and work family balance. Reports suggest that women prefer greater collaboration and inclusion from managers versus competition and a command and control style that tends to characterize the typical behavior of managers within masculine cultures. Moreover, some studies suggest that women may be more receptive to women supervisors. Therefore, it

is hypothesized that women subordinates will differ in their attitudes toward women managers in male and female-dominated cultures.

> *H1: Female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their attitudes toward women managers.*

Managerial women in supportive or female-dominated cultures have a role in executing policies and procedures and demonstrating desired and acceptable behaviors and practices. Subsequently, this suggests that subordinates may have a greater perception of egalitarianism within these firms. Conversely, male-dominated firms have a traditional culture characterized by competitiveness, assertiveness, hierarchical authority, and there is the practice of win at all costs. This type of culture also has a tendency to prioritize work over other demands. Those who do not embrace and demonstrate these characteristics may feel excluded and devalued. Therefore it is hypothesized that female subordinates will differ in their perceptions of gender bias.

> *H2: Female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their perceptions of gender bias.*

Studies report that women have a greater preference for the characteristics and values espoused in female-dominated cultures. Specific qualities such as inclusiveness, consensus building, and participation tend to be exhibited and practiced more widely by women managers. As such, female subordinates will differ in their preference for a female supervisor.

> *H3: Female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their preference for a female supervisor.*

Organizational context and culture can influence attitudes toward the firm. Less than positive thoughts about the organization may contribute to thoughts of withdrawal. Moreover, if there are perceptions of inequity and gender discrimination, there may be less commitment to the organization. This is particularly true for women as they are more inclined to leave an organization when these conditions exist. Hence, female subordinates will differ in their intention to leave the organization.

> *H4: Female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their intent to leave the organization.*

SAMPLE METHOD AND MEASURES

A total of 268 participants were involved in the study and they completed a self-assessment instrument. The instrument assessed attitudes toward women as managers (ATWAM), perceived gender bias, supervisory preference, and intent to leave the organization. All participants were women and all have a female supervisor. These women work in industries and for organizations that demonstrate either male or female-dominated cultures. In total, six firms comprise the survey frame. Two firms from financial services and one firm from the information technology sector represent male-dominant cultures. Two firms from the personal care sector and one firm from retail sales represent female-dominant cultures.

The Attitudes Toward Women as Managers (ATWAM) instrument was created by Yost and Herbert (1998). It has 12 items that gauge attitudes about women's ability to serve in a managerial capacity. Sample questions include: It is acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men; Recognition for a job well done is less important to women than it is to men; Women tend to allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior more than men; Women can be aggressive in business situations that demand it. A low score on the survey indicates a favorable attitude toward women

managers. Conversely, a higher score is associated with a less favorable attitude toward women in managerial roles. The alpha coefficient for the instrument is .76.

The perceived gender bias scale was developed by Gutek, Cohen, and Tsui (1996) and it measures four items. The items include: Men are promoted faster than women in the organization; My organization prefers to hire men; Men are more likely to receive a generous pay raise; Men are more likely to receive favorable performance evaluations. The scale has an alpha coefficient of .91.

The supervisory preference scale was created by Warning and Buchanan (2009). It assesses two items: I would rather have a female supervisor as compared to a male supervisor; I prefer a male supervisor to a female supervisor. The alpha coefficient for the scale is .70.

The intentions to leave scale was developed by Rosin and Korabik (1991) and it is measured by four items: I am thinking of quitting; I wish to quit; I am intending to quit; and I am actively searching for another job.

The ANOVA technique was used to examine differences between women managing within the male and female-dominated organizational types. Means were also compared in order to further examine the nature of differences between the groups.

RESULTS

The ANOVA results indicate that hypotheses one, two, and four were statistically significant at the .02 level. All ANOVA results are depicted in table one.

TABLE 1
ANOVA RESULTS

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ATWAM	Between Groups	3937.434	1	3937.434	149.956	.000
	Within Groups	6984.428	266	26.257		
	Total	10921.862	267			
PROMOTEM	Between Groups	91.743	1	91.743	318.849	.000
	Within Groups	76.537	266	.288		
	Total	168.280	267			
HIREM	Between Groups	105.132	1	105.132	361.423	.000
	Within Groups	77.375	266	.291		
	Total	182.507	267			
RAISEM	Between Groups	18.086	1	18.086	57.111	.000
	Within Groups	82.652	261	.317		
	Total	100.738	262			
PEM	Between Groups	10.704	1	10.704	33.378	.000
	Within Groups	85.307	266	.321		
	Total	96.011	267			
SPREFF	Between Groups	.230	1	.230	.143	.705
	Within Groups	427.423	266	1.607		
	Total	427.653	267			
ANOVA	Between Groups	240.405	1	240.405	222.469	.000
	Within Groups	287.445	266	1.081		
	Total	527.851	267			

*Legend
ATWAM = Attitudes Toward Women as Managers construct
PROMOTEM, HIREM, RAISEM, PEM= Perceived Gender Bias construct
SPREFF = Supervisory Preference construct
INTTOLV = Intent to Leave construct

The first hypothesis states that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their attitudes toward female managers. Attitudinal differences between female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures was significant (F=149.95, p <.00). Mean differences reveal that female subordinates in male-dominated cultures have more favorable attitudes toward female managers. The variable means are reflected in table two.

TABLE 2
VARIABLE MEANS

ORG TYPE		ATWAM	PROMOTEM	HIREM	RAISEM	PEM	SPREFF	INTTOLV
0	Mean	27.03	4.49	4.56	4.55	4.48	2.46	5.86
	N	133	133	133	128	133	133	133
	Std. Deviation	2.614	.502	.514	.515	.516	1.171	1.223
1	Mean	34.70	3.32	3.30	4.02	4.08	2.40	3.97
	N	135	135	135	135	135	135	135
	Std. Deviation	6.737	.568	.563	.604	.611	1.356	.819
Total	Mean	30.89	3.90	3.93	4.28	4.28	2.43	4.91
	N	268	268	268	263	268	268	268
	Std. Deviation	6.396	.794	.827	.620	.600	1.266	1.406

Legend
ATWAM = Attitudes Toward Women as Managers construct
PROMTEM, HIREM, RAISEM, PEM= Perceived Gender Bias construct
SPREFF = Supervisory Preference construct
INTTOLV = Intent to Leave construct

The second hypothesis which states that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their perceptions of gender bias was also supported. Female subordinate differences in perceptions of gender bias was significant for each construct: PROMOTEM F = 318.84, p<.00; HIREM F = 361.42, p<.00; RAISEM F = 57.11, p<.00; PEM F = 33.37, p<.00. The means indicate that female subordinates in male-dominated firms perceive greater gender bias as compared to female subordinates in female-dominated firms. They believe men are preferential hires and are promoted faster. They also perceive that men are inclined to receive favorable performance evaluations and pay raises.

The third hypothesis that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their preference for a female supervisor was not statistically supported, F=.143, p>.70.

The fourth hypothesis that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their intent to leave the organization was statistically supported, F=222.46, p<.02. Female subordinates in male-dominated organizations have greater intent to leave the organization in comparison to their counterparts in female-dominated organizations.

DISCUSSION

This study explores the presence of and attitudes toward women managers in male and female-dominated firms. There was interest in examining whether subordinate female attitudes toward women managers, perceptions of gender bias, supervisory preferences, and intention to leave the organization

differed. With the exception of supervisory preference, subordinate women in male and female-dominated firms were dissimilar in their attitudes.

Results indicate that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures differ in their attitudes toward women supervisors. Female subordinates in male-dominated cultures have more favorable attitudes toward women supervisors as compared to female subordinates in female-dominated cultures. One explanation of this outcome may be that since women are in the minority, there is simply a sense of solidarity. Given women are managing within the context of a male-dominated culture, perhaps there is an appreciation for them because the subordinate women are aware of the challenges that the supervisors encounter. For female subordinates, the case may very well be that the masculine culture is less palatable and supervisory women demonstrate a semblance of desired supervisor characteristics.

Conversely, female subordinates have less favorable attitudes toward women supervisors in female-dominated cultures. One rationale is there may be increased competition for resources, recognition, and promotion opportunities. Subsequently, managers may embrace more traditionally masculine behaviors in order to distinguish themselves from other managers. Moreover, the managers may exhibit a more masculine style in order to be taken seriously, meet performance goals, and be considered effective. Consequently, female subordinates might perceive them less favorably.

Female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will vary in their perceptions of gender bias was the expectation expressed in the second hypothesis. Results indicate that female subordinates in male-dominated cultures perceive greater gender bias. They believe that men are more inclined to be hired and promoted, and that men are more likely to receive better raises and performance evaluations. These perceptions may be created, substantiated, and perhaps reinforced, by taking note of the gender composition of the workplace. Mere observations may reveal a gender imbalance. Moreover, closer scrutiny may shed light on the hierarchical positions men hold relative to women. Perceived gender bias can clearly have potentially damaging effects given the implications for the firm's reputation as well as success in recruiting and retaining the best and brightest women. The competitiveness of the firm may also be compromised if all talent is not maximized.

The third hypothesis states that female subordinates in male and female-dominated cultures will differ in their supervisor preference. This proposition was not supported. Subordinates within both cultural types did not prefer a female supervisor. While the finding was unexpected, it is consistent with the results of other studies. Why is it that women don't prefer a female supervisor? It seems that women believe in women's ability to manage, yet, they don't prefer them. Perhaps there are behaviors that women demonstrate that simply do not resonate with other women. Given the greater number of women present in female-dominated cultures, maybe there is a wide range of behaviors exhibited that move beyond those typically found within this context. Traditional masculine behaviors may be demonstrated as women compete for organizational resources. Moreover, these values might be considered an essential part of a female manager's arsenal in her attempts to climb the corporate ladder.

In male-dominated cultures women may not prefer a female supervisor given the traditional characteristics of the culture. They may perceive that women managing within this context might have to embrace the prevailing characteristics of the culture. In fact, they may feel that women ratchet up traditionally masculine behaviors in order to be accepted by their male counterparts. Clearly, this dynamic needs further study.

The fourth hypothesis asserts that female subordinates in male and female dominated cultures will vary in their intent to leave the organization. Results indicate that women in male-dominated cultures are more inclined to withdraw. These women may perceive the culture as less than welcoming and exclusive. This may influence their thoughts of being considered a valued and respected employee. Moreover, they may closely evaluate both their ability and opportunity to thrive in the organization. Consequently, they may have greater intent to withdraw from the organization.

This investigation provides insight into the presence of and attitudes toward women managers within male and female-dominated cultures. The study explores these dynamics from a female subordinate perspective. The results suggest that differences based on firm cultural type exist. Increased awareness of

these differences would prove useful in cultivating effective organizational cultures in both male and female-dominated contexts.

Based on the findings of the study, exploiting the values espoused within female-dominated cultures would prove beneficial to these firms as they could capitalize on creating a reputation for valuing all talent which might positively impact recruitment and retention efforts. In male-dominated cultures, having a greater sensitivity to the perceptions of gender bias is salient. Identifying the root of these perceptions by reviewing, and perhaps, modifying human resource policies and practices would prove useful. Since women are managing within both cultural contexts, having a greater understanding as to why they are least preferred as supervisors is sorely needed.

Clearly, senior executives and decision-makers need to examine the dominant cultural values within their firms. Having knowledge about these workplace dynamics can create greater awareness of and appreciation for all talent, which may translate into greater competitiveness.

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