


Perceptions of Female and Male Top Managers in Selected Industrial Companies and Banking Institutions in Iligan City on Women Managers

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Abstract

The study describes the perceptions of female and male top managers in selected industrial companies and banking institutions in Iligan City on women managers in terms of their demographic characteristics, work or life values, traits, and leadership styles. The study further establishes the extent of relationship and difference between these variables also associated with top managers. The study found out that male top managers in industrial companies and banking institutions largely outnumbered female top managers. Using the chi-square analysis it was found out that only the age and civil status of the top managers are significantly related to the perceived demographic characteristics of women managers. When tested at .05 level of significance using chi-square analysis and t-test, it was found out that the work or life values of top managers and those perceived on women managers are significantly related and different. Top managers value most economic, theoretical, and religious values, while women managers were perceived to place high regard for aesthetic, religious, and economic values. Though there is no

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significant relationship between the traits of top managers and their perception on women managers on this attribute, these variables are found to be significantly different. Top managers demonstrated a high confidence in their abilities as managers. They believed that they strongly possess all important traits of an outstanding leader, while women managers were not viewed in the same manner. The leadership styles practiced by top managers are similar to those perceived in women managers and are significantly correlated. Female and male top managers are significantly different in their perceptions on women managers. Female top managers tend to perceive the subject as similar to them in terms of attributes. Male top managers, however, do not exhibit the same perception on women managers.

Introduction

Women being confined to child rearing and other household duties and responsibilities were a typical scenario several decades ago. However, as people in the society become enamored by the value of materialism and pushed hard by tough economic blows, more and more families have felt the need to increase their earnings. This has resulted in an influx of more women into the workforce.

Freed from the confines of her old world – her home, the modern woman today competes with her male counterpart for employment, pay, promotion, and professional growth in a competitive labor market. She, however, must also strive to mingle, coordinate, and collaborate with her male co-worker in an effort to develop and maintain harmonious work relationships both within and outside the organization.

Since women have entered the ranks of management in both developed and developing societies, the number of researches, conventions, conferences, and publications focusing on women has steadily increased. A number of studies attempted to surface gender differences among managers. These studies brought women managers into the limelight. Yet, despite their being a choice subject in many researches, discussions, and publications, in the workforce they still are seemingly left out in terms of upward mobility and career advancement vis-à-vis their male counterpart.

Moreover, they also seem to be stereotyped to lower-status jobs. Corollary to this stereotyping of women, certain work aspects such as better job

positions, pay, promotion, development and evaluation are seemingly biased in favor of male employees. As a result, only few women hold top positions in many organizations nowadays. Breaking the "glass ceiling" has become a shared predicament of many women managers today.

To date, many aspiring women managers have continued to struggle to enter the ranks of corporate management. Such struggle may have been partly caused by the way women managers are perceived in the organization by those who have the power to determine and influence their upward mobility and career advancement.

Statement of Research Objectives

This paper attempted to describe the perceptions of female and male top managers in selected industrial and banking institutions in Iligan City on women managers in terms of four major variables namely demographic characteristics – age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, religion, work responsibility, the number of affiliation/membership to socio-civic, professional, and religious organizations; work or life values; traits; and leadership style; it also attempted to find out how the demographic characteristics of top managers related to their perceptions on women managers in terms of work or life values, traits and leadership style; it also attempted to establish the extent of relationship between the top managers' attributes and those perceived of women in terms of the four major variables.; it further sought to find out if there is a significant difference between the top managers assessment of their attributes and their perceptions on women managers; and lastly, the study attempted to establish whether there is significant difference between the male and female top managers' perceptions on women managers with respect to work or life values, traits, and leadership style.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conduct of the study was guided mainly with the assumption that one reason why only few women managers hold top positions nowadays stems from the way they are perceived by top managers in the organizations. A great deal of these perceptions relates to the relationships between the perceiver's characteristics and the attributes of women managers being per-

ceived. The underlying assumption is that the overall perceptions on women managers are determined by the extent to which the variables associated with top managers relate or differ with the perceived characteristics of women managers.

Four baseline data were ascertained in this study, namely, 1) the demographic characteristics in terms of age, gender, civil status, academic degree, work responsibility, religion, and civic/non-civic memberships or affiliations, 2) work or life values categorized into economic, political, theoretical, aesthetic and religious values (Franco, et.al, 1988), 3) traits namely vision, communication, persistence, empowerment, and organizational ability and capacity (Steers, 1991), and 4) leadership style classified into directive, supportive, achievement-oriented, and participative leadership styles. The leadership styles used in the study are based on the "House and Mitchell" Path-goal theory of leadership, which focuses on how the leader influences the follower's perceptions of work goals, self-development goals, and paths to goal attainment (Northcraft and Neale, 1990).

Based on the research objectives, the following null hypotheses were then formulated, and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the perceptions of top managers in selected industrial companies and banking institutions in Iligan City on women managers and such variables associated with top managers as:
 - 1.1 age
 - 1.2 civil status
 - 1.3 academic degree
 - 1.4 religion
 - 1.5 work responsibility
 - 1.6 number of affiliations to socio-civic organizations
 - 1.7 number of affiliations to professional organizations
 - 1.8 number of affiliations to religious organizations

2. There is no significant relationship between the attributes of top managers and their perception on women managers in terms of:
 - 2.1 demographic characteristics
 - 2.2 work or life values
 - 2.3 traits

2.4 leadership style

3. There is no significant difference between the top managers' assessment of their attributes and their perceptions on women managers in terms of:
 - 3.1 work or life values
 - 3.2 traits
 - 3.3 leadership style

4. There is no significant difference on the perceptions on women managers between male and female top managers

Scope and Research Methods

The subjects of the study were the 89 top managers in Iligan City, 69 of whom came from 15 industrial companies and 25 from banks. Top managers here refer to those holding top positions such as Chief Executive Officer, General Manager, President, Executive Vice-President, Vice-President, Assistant Vice-President, Division Manager/Superintendent, Bank Branch Manager, including those who have at least two levels of managerial subordinates as well as those holding key divisions or functions in companies where the structure consists only of two levels: the managers and the rank and file.

Though the intention of the study was to cover all the 19 industrial companies and 29 banks in Iligan City, but due to some on-going reorganization in two companies, closure/non-operation of one, and refusal by another company, the study confined itself to a total of 15 companies. Of the 29 banks, only 27 qualified for the study as two were managed temporarily by an Assistant Manager while the branch manager is on detail to another branch outside the City. It was further reduced to 25 due to the non-cooperation of the two other branch managers.

The names of these managers were obtained through telephone calls, friends' help or from their respective Human Resource Management or Personnel Department.

The study utilized the descriptive method of research with correlation analysis. Basically, the variables were measured on the basis of the top managers' perceptions on the following factors: demographic characteristics, work or life values, traits, and leadership styles.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the study. Specifically, frequency counts, percentages were used to quantitatively describe the responses given by the respondents on questions pertaining to demographic characteristics. The arithmetic mean was used to compute the average age of the respondents, while the weighted mean for the average value of a given response to statements asked, particularly on perceptions. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation or Pearson r determined the extent of correlation between the variables (particularly on data that are interval) associated with top managers and their perceptions on women managers. To test the hypotheses, parametric and non-parametric tools were utilized. These are chi-square test, two sample t-test for significant difference and unweighted least squares multiple regression. The SPSS or Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to process all the data gathered and to perform all the statistical treatment.

The study was conducted from the 2nd week of December 1998 until the 2nd week of February 1999.

Instrument

The study made use of a researcher-made structured-undisguised questionnaire as the primary tool for gathering data. It was divided into two major parts: *Part I covered the Perceptions on Women Managers*; and *Part II the Top Managers' Background*. Each was further divided into four parts: *demographic attributes, work and life values, traits, and leadership style*. The questionnaire is composed mostly of fixed alternative questions and one open-ended type of question. Specifically, fixed alternative choices include multiple choice, and a four-point scale. The questionnaire was so designed in order to facilitate quick and convenient answering by the respondents who all have very tight schedule.

Before it was administered to the actual respondents, it was first pre-tested. To determine its internal consistency and reliability, the split-half method was used. The correlation coefficient values were computed using the formula Pearson Moment Correlation for odd and even items and squaring the values obtained. The result gave a high level of reliability ranging from .620 to .955 coefficient. Revisions were then made to make the questionnaire more functional. The revised questionnaires were then personally

distributed to the top managers or through the Human Resource Manager/ Human Resource Department or with the help of a designated person in the company. Follow-ups were made by phone-calls and personal visits to the companies. Of the 105 questionnaires distributed, the response rate was 84.7%.

To measure the responses to the statements pertaining to the *Work or Life values* considered important by top managers and those perceived as adhered to by women managers, a four-point Likert-scale was employed. The response categories are as follows:

- 4 means Very Important/Strongly Adhere to
- 3 means Important/Adhere to
- 2 means Somewhat Important/Somewhat Adhere to
- 1 means Not Important/Do not Adhere to

The responses were interpreted based on the following values:

- 3.25 – 4.00 means Very Important/Strongly Adhere to
- 2.50 – 3.24 means Important/Adhere to
- 1.75 – 2.49 means Somewhat Important/Somewhat Adhere to
- 1.00 – 1.74 means Not Important/Do not Adhere to

The responses to the statements pertaining to the *Traits* were categorized and interpreted as follows:

<i>Scale Value</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	<i>Cut-off Values</i>
4	Strongly Possess	3.25 – 4.00
3	Possess	2.50 – 3.24
2	Somewhat Possess	1.75 – 2.49
1	Do Not Possess	1.00 – 1.74

To measure the extent to which certain leadership styles are practiced top managers and those perceived on women managers, both positive and negative statements were designed.

Responses to the positive statements were categorized and interpreted as follows:

<i>Scale Value</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	<i>Cut-off Values</i>
4	Always/Strongly Agree	3.25 – 4.00
3	Often/Agree	2.50 – 3.24
2	Sometimes/Disagree	1.75 – 2.49
1	Never/Strongly Disagree	1.00 – 1.74

The scale values as well as the cut-off values were simply reversed for negative statements.

Some personal interviews were also used.

Findings

Based on the data that were gathered from the 89 top managers of industrial companies and banking institutions in Iligan City, the following findings were drawn:

Majority (67.4%) of the top managers surveyed were middle-age, with mean age of 44. Likewise most women managers were perceived to be of middle age too. Male top managers who comprised more than 84% of the top managers surveyed largely outnumbered female top managers. This implies that female top managers are still rare.

Almost all are married and Christians. Majority, 60.7% have attained a college education, while only some are Master's Degree holders. Women managers were viewed similarly in terms of these three demographic attributes. They, however, are believed to be more highly educated attaining at least a Master's degree.

With respect to educational attainment, findings may imply that obtaining a post-graduate education may not be an essential requirement before one can be elevated to a top managerial position. Though, those with higher education may have a greater edge over those who have simply finished a College degree. They are affiliated to at least one socio-civic, religious, and professional organization.

The top managers were found to have dual to multiple work responsibilities. A sharp distinction was noted on the work responsibilities managed by top managers compared with those perceived handled by women managers. Top managers have work responsibilities involving Administration (51.7%), Production (49.4%), Finance (40.5%), Marketing (38.2%),

Human Resource (36%), Projects (36%), Maintenance (32.5%), and Public Relations (32.5%). Women managers, on the other hand, were perceived to manage organizational functions that include Human Resource (rank 1), Finance (rank 2), Administration (rank 3), Public Relations (rank 4), Marketing (rank 5), and Research and Development (rank 6). Three important functions namely, projects, production/operations, and maintenance, where many of the top managers, mostly men, were delegated to, were perceived to have been less dominated by women managers as these three ranked 9th, 10th, and 11th.

This distinction can be seen clearly in the pie chart below:

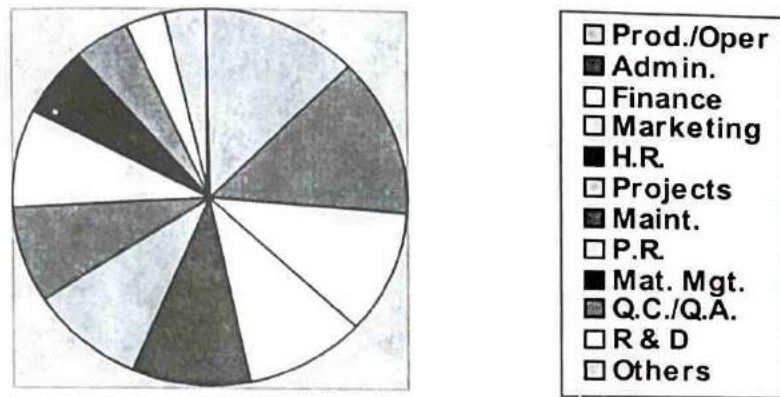


Figure 1. Distribution of Work Responsibilities of Top Managers

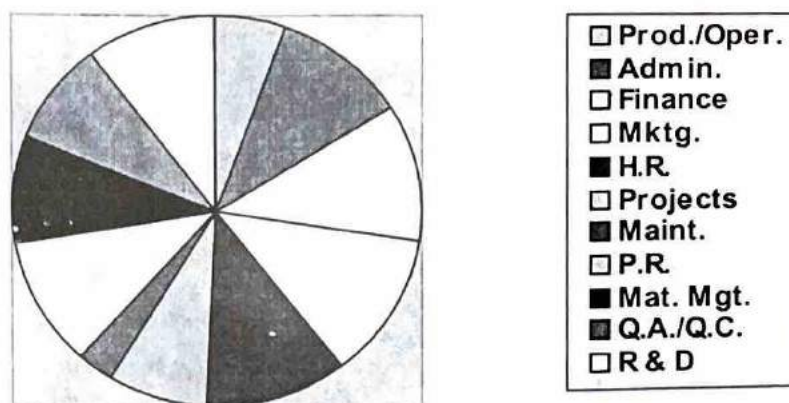


Figure 2. Perceived Work Responsibilities of Women Managers

In terms of their work or life values, it was found out that top managers valued most economic, theoretical and religious values as shown by their respective means of 3.74, 3.56, and 3.54 with economic values were esteemed more highly by top managers than other work values. Economic values may involve interest is usefulness of something, an activity or object, practicality, accumulation of wealth and profit, emphasis on efficiency, market expansion, and the like. Since most of the top managers were males, such as high regard for economic values presumably reflects not only their concern for economic welfare of the company but as well as their concern for their family being the traditional breadwinners.

Women managers were perceived to place high regard for aesthetic, religious, and economic values as evidenced by the means of 3.60, 3.39, and 3.27 respectively. Political values were least considered important or adhered to. Figures 3 and 4 summarize these findings.

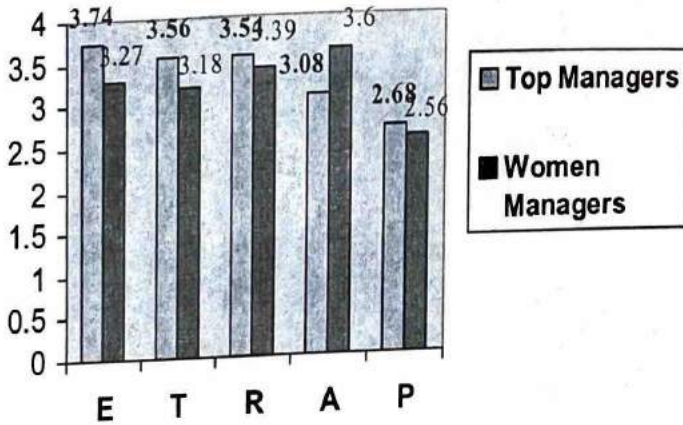


Figure 3. Work or Life Values of Top Managers and Perceived Work or Life Values of Women Managers

- Legend:
- E – Economic Values
 - T – Theoretical Values
 - R – Religious Values
 - A – Aesthetic Values
 - P – Political Values

It was also found out that the top managers demonstrated a high confidence in their abilities as managers. They believed that they strongly possess all important traits of an outstanding leader. These are vision, organizational ability, persistence, communication, and empowerment. While women managers were not viewed in the same manner. Women managers were seen strongly possessing communication and organizational abilities. Examining the bar graphs presented below, it shows that the women managers were not viewed as favorably as the way top managers, comprising mostly of males assessed themselves in terms of these traits.

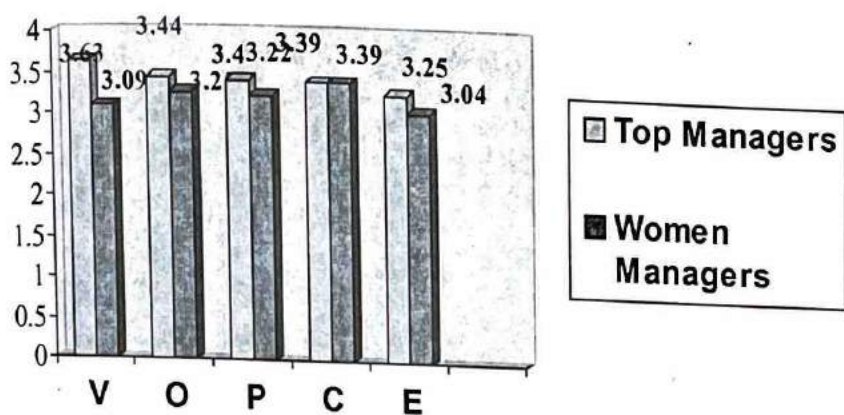


Figure 4. Traits of Top Managers and Perceived Traits of Women Managers

- V – Vision
- O – Organizational Ability
- P - Persistence
- C - Communication
- E - Empowerment

As for the leadership style, top managers were inclined to adopt directiveness leadership style. Directive leaders tend to maintain definite standards of performance. As such they let subordinates know what is expected and they provide specific guidance as to what should be done now. They know their function in the organizations and find ways to let others understand their part in the group. They also believed that they are more

participative than being supportive. In fact, they have the inclination to practice this leadership style most of the time. They were also achievement-oriented, but this leadership style had the lowest mean value (2.99) compared to the other three leadership styles namely directiveness, participative, and supportiveness with mean values of 3.49, 3.14, and 3.07, respectively.

On the other hand, women managers, likewise, were perceived as directive leaders. They were seen as more supportive than participative. In her personalized approach, she is inclined to show concern for the status and well being of her subordinates while finding time to exchange pleasantries with other employees in the organization. Top managers agreed that women managers are achievement-oriented. They find women managers being more tolerant to low-performers despite their perception that women managers also emphasize excellence just like they do. However, the ratings given to women managers in all leadership styles are lower compared to the other ratings top managers gave themselves. Figure 5 shows these findings.

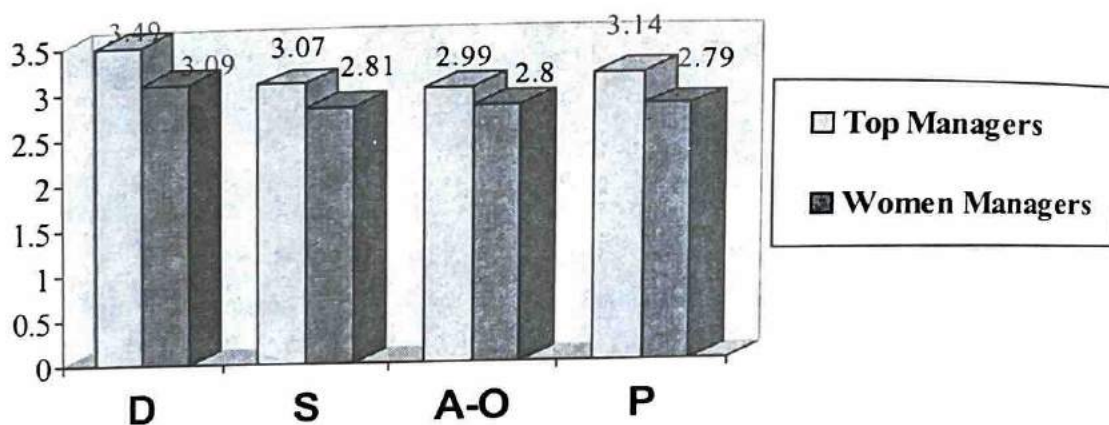


Figure 5. Leadership Styles of Top Managers and Perceived Leadership Styles of Women Managers

- D – Directive
- S - Supportive
- A-O – Achievement Oriented
- P - Participative

It was also found out that the top managers' demographic attributes such as age, and the number of memberships or affiliations to religious, professional, and socio-civic organizations are not predictor variables of their perceptions on women managers in terms of their work or life values, traits, and leadership style. This implies that their relationship is non-linear.

Other demographic variables associated with top managers such as civil status, religion, and educational attainment are found to have no significant relationship with their perceptions on the work or life values, traits, and leadership styles of women managers when subjected to chi-square analysis. Results imply that these variables do not influence the top managers' perceptions on women managers.

It was also found out that the work responsibilities performed by top managers have a highly significant relationship with their over-all perceptions on women managers as shown by the *p-value of* $.0058 < .01$. This means that certain traits, work or life values, and leadership styles are requisites to the performance of particular tasks.

The age of top managers and the perceived age of women managers showed a significant relationship as shown by the *p-value* $0.0314 < .05$. Likewise, the civil status of top managers and the perceived civil status of women managers also indicated a highly significant relationship as supported by the *p-value* $0.0010 < .01$. Results mean that age and civil status are essential requirements for managerial ranks.

Correlation between the top managers' work or life values and the perceived work or life values adhered to by women managers indicated a positive and a highly significant relationship as evidenced by the test result where $r = +.2997$ and *p-value of* $.0043 < .01$. This means that top managers tend to require women managers more of work or life values they consider very important. Similarly, women managers are required less of work or life values that top managers do not consider very important.

Correlation between the top managers' traits and traits perceived possessed by women managers showed positive low and no significant relationship as shown by $r = +0.0884$ and *p-value of* $0.4101 < .05$.

The leadership styles of top managers and those perceived on women managers showed moderate and positive correlation as supported by $r = +0.46144$. There is also highly significant relationship between the two variables. Results imply that top managers tend to notice women managers who demonstrate or practice similar leadership styles.

It was found out that there is a significant difference between the work or life values top managers considered important and the work or life values perceived to have been adhered to by women managers as evidenced by the p -value $0.0193 < .05$. This is attributed to the tendency of top managers to value most economic and theoretical values and women managers' perceived tendency to value most aesthetic and religious values. Traits of top managers and the traits perceived on women managers are significantly different as shown by the p -value $.0190 < .05$. This difference is attributed by the extent to which they strongly possess the five traits of a superleader.

Leadership styles practiced by top managers and those perceived on women managers showed no significant difference as supported by the p -value $.3415 < .05$. The no difference stems from their tendency to adopt a directive leadership style.

When the perceptions of male top managers and the perceptions of female top managers were compared and subjected to a two-sample t-test at .05 level of significance, it was found out that their perceptions significantly differ as supported by the p -value $.0032 < .01$. It must be noted, however, that since there are more male top managers, samples from this group were randomly drawn so as to be validly compared with that of the female group. Results show that the female top managers tend to have a favorable perception on women managers, i.e., they have the tendency to rate highly and form positive perception on fellow-women managers. While male top managers tend to view women managers not as favorably as female top managers perceive them. Figure 6 clearly shows this difference.

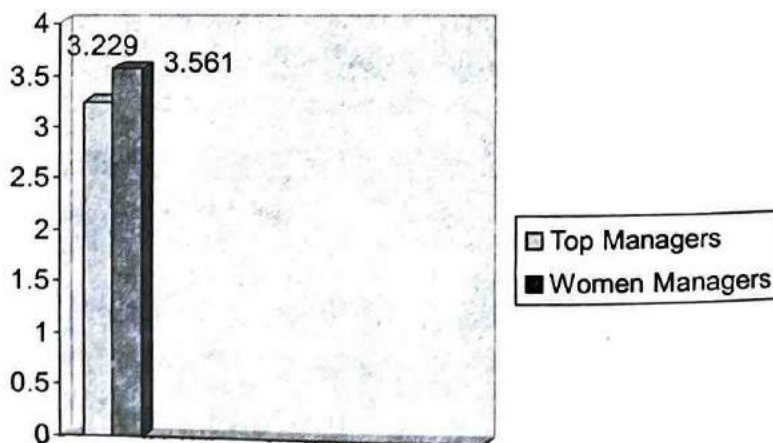


Figure 6. *Difference Between the Perception of Female and Male Top Managers on Women Managers*

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is clearly evident that female top managers are still considered a minority vis-a-vis their male counterparts. Being the minority, their voice, opinions, and the roles they perform may have the tendency to be subdued by the male majority.

Women managers are stereotype to certain attributes and positions.

From the statistical tests conducted, the following conclusions are made.

The age of the top managers is significantly related to the perceived age of women managers implying that age is a determinant factor to occupying managerial positions. There is a highly significant relationship between the top managers' civil status and the perceived civil status of women managers. Educational attainment is not significantly related to the perceived educational attainment of women managers. Of the six demographic characteristics considered in the study, namely, age, civil status, educational attainment, religion, work responsibility, and the number of affiliations to socio-civic, professional and religious organizations, only the work responsibilities of the top managers have a highly significant relationship with their perceptions on women managers in terms of work or life values, traits, and leadership styles, implying that certain work or life values, traits, and leadership styles are requisites to the performance of particular tasks.

The work or life values and leadership styles of top managers are significantly related to their perception of women managers' work or life values and leadership styles. There is no significant relationship between the top managers' traits and the traits perceived possessed by women managers.

There is a significant difference between the top managers work or life values and the perceived work or life values of women managers, with top managers giving primary importance to economic and theoretical values while women managers are believed to value most aesthetic and religious values.

There is a significant difference between the traits of top managers believed they strongly possess and the traits perceived possessed by women managers. The difference stems from their dissimilarities in the extent to which they perceive they possess certain traits.

There is no significant difference between the leadership styles practice by top managers and those perceived on women managers.

There is a highly significant difference between the perceptions of male and female top managers on women managers' work or life values, traits,

and leadership styles. Female top managers tend to have favorable perceptions on fellow women managers, while male top managers do not perceive women managers as favorably as female top managers do. This implies that they tend to favorably perceive those whom they believe are similar to them and not to favorably perceive those who are believed to be dissimilar.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, certain important points are recommended to the following:

To the woman manager, she should endeavor to break into areas of influence that have thus far been dominated by men. This means that she should be ambitious by seeking challenging works and visible assignments. This implies however, that she must be prepared to take calculated risks, but be consistently outstanding. To do this, requires that her training, work or life values, traits and education must be geared toward these areas.

She must consistently demonstrate assertiveness without necessarily resorting to being over-controlling. She should not entangle herself to idle talks and matters especially when in the presence of her male colleagues and superiors. She should rather focus more on the company's economic concerns rather than on her aesthetic and religious concerns especially when at her workstation or office.

To the top managers, organization policies, practices, and programs must be designed in such a manner that they will minimize the creation of gender difference in major job assignments.

Similar researches should be conducted with a wider scope in order to shed more insight into the experiences of women managers in the corporate world. Research undertakings such as this are hoped to magnify the stature of women managers, and help in the formulation of policies and programs designed to develop women managers and other aspiring women.

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