Gender Role Stereotypes and Requisite Management Characteristics: The Case of South Africa

Professor Lize Booysen
Dr. Lize (A.E) Booysen, (DBL) Professor in Organizational Behavior and Leadership
Antioch University, (USA) PhD in Leadership and Change Program
abooysen@antioch.edu

Professor Stella . M. Nkomo*
Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
Pretoria, South Africa 0003
stella.nkomo@up.ac.za

*All correspondence in reference to this paper should be directed to Professor Stella M. Nkomo, stella.nkomo@up.ac.za

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Abstract

**Purpose** - Although Schein’s gender role management stereotype hypothesis has been examined in many countries around the world, no studies specifically examine the combined effects of race and gender on this phenomenon. The present study used an intersectional analysis to test the hypothesis among different race and gender groups in South Africa.

**Design/methodology** - The 92-item Schein Descriptive Index was randomly administered to 592 black men, white men, black women, and white women managers. The degree of resemblance between the descriptions of men and successful managers and between women and successful managers was determined by computing intra-class correlation coefficients.

**Findings** – Results confirmed the think manager, think male hypothesis for black and white men but not for black and white women. Black and white men were less likely to attribute successful managerial characteristics to women. The hypothesis was more robust among black men than among white men. For black women, the resemblance between the characteristics of women in general and successful managers was significantly higher than the resemblance of men in general and successful managers. This represents only the second study globally to report a reversal of the usual pattern. White women perceived men and women to equally possess the requisite management characteristics.

**Practical implications** – Intersectionality is capable of revealing the ways in which race and gender simultaneously influence perceptions of managerial characteristics.

**Originality/value** - The paper provides a race and gender intersectional analysis that compares the perceptions of the think manager – think male hypothesis in contrast to the dominant gender only analysis that may mask important differences in the stereotyping of managerial characteristics. It is also the first study of its kind in South Africa.

Key words: gender stereotypes; intersectionality; race and gender; South Africa
Introduction

Although women have made some gains in entering and rising in the managerial ranks of organizations, worldwide men continue to dominate executive and senior management positions (Eagly and Carly, 2003a, Eagly and Carli, 2007; Schein, 2007; UNDP, 2008). The latest findings from the Grant Thornton International Business Survey Report revealed that in four in 10 businesses worldwide there are no women in senior management (Grant Thornton International 2007). Women average only four percent of the presidents and 10 percent of the members of the highest decision-making body in the largest publicly quoted companies in each of the 27 nations of the European Union (Early and Sczesny, 2009). In the United States recent figures indicate women account for 15.7 percent of corporate officers and 15.2 percent of members of boards in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2009).

Very little current data are available for women managers at all levels in African countries. A United Nations study published in 2000 reported women’s participation in management and administrative jobs averaged 15 percent across 26 African countries (United Nations, 2000). The average percentage of women legislators, senior officials and managers averaged 28.7 percent across the six sub-Saharan African countries included in the most recent UNDP gender empowerment statistics (UNDP, 2008). The 2009 annual census conducted by the Business Women’s Association of South Africa reported despite a slow increase of women in senior positions, they still lag far behind their male counterparts in terms of representation in executive management and CEO positions.

Gender stereotyping of the managerial position has been offered as one possible explanation for the proverbial glass ceiling women encounter in their managerial career mobility (Schein, 2001, 2007; Eagly and Carly, 2003a). Proponents of this explanation argue
that the extent to which the managerial position is viewed as “male” in gender-type, the characteristics required for success are seen as more commonly held by men than by women (Schein’s 1973, 1979, 2001, 2007). Schein labeled this hypothesis as the “think-manager, think-male maxim.” The think manager – think male gender-role stereotyping hypothesis is a well researched phenomenon with over fifty published studies. Yet, there is little research that specifically examines the combined effects of race and gender on this phenomenon. Very little published research on the stereotype can be located for African countries (Booysen and Nkomo, 2006).

The failure to examine the race and gender of participants in the extant research on the think-manager-think male stereotype occurs despite the fact that the intersectionality of race and gender has become a central tenet of feminist thinking (Shields, 2008). According to an intersectional perspective, categories of difference like race and gender converge and impact each other, and thus should not be separately analyzed (Andersen and Collins, 2001; Holvino, 2008). The aim of this research is to explore race and gender effects in gender-role stereotyping among South African managers. Specifically, it provides a more complex intersectional analysis that compares the perceptions of the think manager – think male hypotheses among white men, black men, black women, and white women managers in South Africa. Intra-class correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the degree of correspondence between the descriptions of successful middle managers and men in general, and descriptions of successful middle managers and women in general for each race and gender group. The results of this study are compared to those found for nine other countries across the world.
Gender Stereotypes and Manager Attributions

Women in management research has been dominated by efforts to explain the gap between women and men’s participation in managerial positions, especially the limitations on their upward mobility (Ely and Padavic, 2006). Scholars have written extensively about gendered organizations and gender role stereotyping (Acker, 1990; Alvesson and Billing, 1997; Heilman, 2001) as a major impediment to women’s advancement in managerial positions. A number of studies have focused on the manager-as-male stereotype as a major explanation for discrimination against women in the workplace. According to the manager-as-male stereotype, gender stereotyping of the ideal manager fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions (Schein, 2007). Proponents of the hypothesis thus argue it is important to study the perceptions individuals hold in regard to the stereotype.

The pioneering work on this hypothesis was conducted by Schein (1973) using samples in the United States, although a number of scholars have studied the manager-as-male stereotype since that time (e.g. Heilman, 2001; Duehr and Bono, 2006; Jackson, Engstrom and Emmers-Sommer (2007); Powell, Butterfield and Parent, 2002; Sczesny, 2003; Willemsen, 2002). Schein (1973) tested the relationship between gender role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics. She demonstrated a relationship between gender role stereotyping and characteristics perceived as requisite for success as a manager. In her study, both men and women perceived successful middle managers as possessing characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men in general than to women in general.
A number of studies replicated Schein’s work and confirmed her initial hypothesis (e.g. Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein, 1989; Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon, 1989; Dodge, Gilroy and Fenzel, 1995; Schein, Mueller, and Jacobson, 1989; Schein and Mueller, 1992). A notable exception to this dominant trend was reported by Orser (1994). In a study of Canadian university students, Orser found that while both male and female students perceived men and women as possessing characteristics necessary for managerial success, the association between managerial characteristics and perceptions of women was stronger than that for men and managers for female students in their sample.

In 2001, Schein extended her earlier work to include studies in the United Kingdom, Germany, China, and Japan, and updated her United States study (Schein, 2001). Her comparative findings for the United Kingdom, Germany, China and Japan supported her original findings. Men and women in all four countries saw managers as possessing characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than to women. The United States results were unchanged 20 years later from the male perspective. However, women’s perceptions in the United States study were found to have changed to the view that women are equally likely to possess management characteristics. This change was attributed to the higher proportion of women in middle management positions in the United States than in Germany and UK. More recent studies in the United States show a considerable change in male views as evidenced by greater congruence between their perceptions of women and successful managers (Dueher and Bono, 2006). However, what is rather consistent across many countries is the correlation between the characteristics attributed to managers and men is stronger than that of women and managers, although with varying degrees of difference (as perceived by males and females in different countries.
Race and gender in management stereotyping

Despite the large body of research confirming the think-manager, think-male phenomenon, no studies could be located that used a race and gender lens to examine perceptions of women as managers; all the studies simply compare “male” and “female” perceptions. In one of the few studies examining race and managerial stereotypes, Tomkiewicz, Brenner and Adeyemi-Bello (1998) using Schein’s index found a significant resemblance between ratings of whites and ratings of managers; whereas the resemblance between ratings of blacks and ratings of managers was insignificant. At a minimum, their results suggest race plays a role in perceptions of managers. Their study, however, did not examine both the race and gender of participants.

In recent years, theoretical arguments have been made for scholars to avoid studying gender in isolation from race and ethnicity. The idea of the simultaneity of race and gender has been most clearly articulated by black feminist theory. Black feminist theory emerged as a response to the exclusion of the lives and issues of women of color in both western and non-western societies in feminist analyses (e.g. Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Crenshaw, 1995; Hill-Collins, 1990; Essed, 2001; Holvino, 2008; Hull, Scott, and Smith, 1982; Hurtado, 1989; Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991; Nakano Glenn, 1999; Waters and Conaway, 2007). This occurred because much of the research and writing of feminism centered on gender omitting race. Black feminist theorists in attempting to avoid universalizing explanations of women’s experiences looked for ways of understanding both race and gender simultaneously. They stressed everyone has race and gender. It is this latter theme that is of most relevant for the theoretical framework of this paper.
In black feminist theory, race and gender are defined as "interlocking categories," as "intersecting systems," as "interdependent systems," as "indivisible categories," or as "interrelated axes of social structure." These ideas have been subsumed under the construct of intersectionality (Shields, 2008). Employing the notion of intersectionality, scholars argue race and gender are not experienced as separate or additive but as linked and simultaneous (Acker, 1999; Ferdman, 2000; Nakano Glenn, 1999; Andersen, 2005; Holvino, 2008). Reframing race and gender simultaneously requires that any study of gender also incorporate race since the specificity of our perceptions and experiences are shaped by both. At the individual level, people experience their lives and develop their identities based on their location along race and gender, whether they are in dominant groups, subordinate groups or both (McCall, 2005). Essed (2001) points out that while these multiple identities are interdependent, they can be contradictory at times, and are contextually bound.

Gender identity has been shown to be inextricably embedded in racial identity (Andersen, 2005; Bell and Nkomo, 2001; McCall, 2005). The normative meanings of these identities are continuously shaped, reshaped, and reinforced over an individual's lifetime by social structures and social institutions. At the societal and group level, gender takes on meaning and is embedded in the context of racial order that privileges some groups and subordinates others (Acker, 2006). It is not just men and women who occupy differential organizational positions but men and women of particular races and ethnicities (and even social classes).

Recognition of the interlocking nature of race and gender underscores the significance of two important theoretical concepts: social location and standpoint. Social location refers to the position an individual occupies within society, particularly in respect to race, gender
class or sexual orientation and other marked categories. These social locations are privileged and oppressed depending on the access to power that one has within particular categories and how the categories intersect. A group’s position in hierarchical power relations and the experiences attached to differential social locations influences perceptions and behaviours. A standpoint as defined by feminists is a critical perspective that marginalized or oppressed groups may have about how power relations operate within society (Hill-Collins, 1998). It is important to stress it is a group’s location within intersecting hierarchical social structures, not individual variations per se, which fosters the development of standpoints (Hill-Collins, 1998).

Black feminists further argue that although gender may result in a particular social location as well as standpoint for women because of gender subordination, race is a differentiating factor positioning women in different ways (Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Crenshaw, 1995; Hill-Collins, 1998). Thus, according to Hill-Collins (1990), black women possess a unique standpoint because of the disadvantaged position they occupy along the race and gender axis. Black women’s standpoint is marked by an intersectional understanding of oppression and a legacy of struggle against such oppression. She identified four major components of black women’s standpoint. However, it is fourth component that is most relevant to the current research. Hill-Collins (1990) argued black women empower themselves by creating self-definitions and self-evaluations that enable them to establish positive images to counteract negative representations of black womanhood. Although, a race and gender intersectional approach is missing in the study of gender-based managerial stereotypes, several scholars have examined the significance of race and gender in organizations (Acker, 2006; Bell and Nkomo, 2001; Bell, Meyerson, Nkomo and Scully, 2003; Hite, 2004). For example, Bell and Nkomo (2001) in their research on the effects of
race and gender on the careers and life journeys of black and white women managers found black women and white women had significantly different organizational experiences as well as perceptions of the barriers to their advancement. Black women perceived both racism and sexism that negatively affected their organizational experiences. While white women had achieved greater career mobility compared to the black women in the study, they still reported significant barriers to success embedded in gender. Bell and Nkomo (2001) concluded that professional white women are privileged because of their race yet subordinated because of their gender, while black women faced both racism and sexism in their daily organizational experiences. In line with black feminist standpoint theory, Bell and Nkomo (2001: 168-169) found one of the strategies black women used to withstand the discrimination they faced in their organizations was to draw upon their cultural heritage of strong black women to create positive self-valuations.

There have also been a few relevant studies of race and gender in South Africa. Booysen (1999) reported significant race and gender differences in perceptions of national culture in regard to collectivism, gender differentiation, humane orientation and future orientation. On the other hand, Littrell and Nkomo (2005) reported no significant differences among black men, black women, white men, and white women in descriptions of preferred leader behavior. In sum, these studies underscore the need to not rely upon gender only investigations of organization phenomenon including the study of managerial stereotypes. Hence, it is reasonable to expect an individual’s race and gender and not gender alone will affect perceptions of managerial stereotypes.
In the specific case of South Africa, historical racial hierarchies embedded under the system of apartheid created distinctive social locations which structured gender and racial experiences in the workplace differently (Kelly, Wale, Soudien, and Steyn, 2007; Booysen, 2007; Erwee, 1994). South Africa’s unique political and social history raises the possibility of distinct differences in perceptions of managerial stereotypes across race and gender. The previous apartheid system simultaneously established a race and gender hierarchy embedded in unequal power relations. For example, while white women acquired some privileges due to their race, they were for the most part relegated to the home sphere or typically female jobs in the workplace (e.g. secretary, nurse, etc.). African women on the other hand were largely confined to domestic work. The best and highest paid jobs in the economy including management positions were exclusively reserved for white men. Black men were primarily employed in unskilled jobs (Booysen, 2007).

Although apartheid ended with the historic 1994 election of a democratic government followed by the passage of aggressive employment equity legislation in 1998, a race and gender hierarchy is still evident in current labor force statistics. Despite a majority of the economically active population (74 percent) being black South Africans, the current occupational representation of race and gender groups in the labor force largely reflects the pattern that existed during apartheid. White males still dominate top and senior management positions followed by white females, black males and black females (South African Department of Labour, 2009). Specifically, white men represent 61.1 percent of top managers and 47.4 percent of senior managers followed by white women who comprise 12 percent and 18 percent respectively. Black men are 10 percent of top management and 12
percent of senior management. Black women, Indian women and Coloured women are the most underrepresented groups on all levels of management and the professions (Department of Labour, 2009). The current presentation of black women in top management is 4 percent and 5.4 percent in senior management (Department of Labour, 2009).

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In sum, the extant literature underscores the need to provide a more nuanced study of the combined effects of race and gender on Schein’s “think manager-think male” hypothesis. Given the growing diversity in the workplace evident in many countries throughout the world (Konrad, Prasad and Pringle, 2006), studies of the managerial stereotype are limited if ‘gender’ is treated as a homogenous category in testing the hypothesis. The primary research question addressed in the present study is: Are there significant differences among black men, white men, white women and black women in the think-manager-think male stereotype?

We hypothesized there would be significant differences in the degree of correlation between perceptions of managers and characteristics of men and women depending on the race and gender of the perceiver. Specifically, we hypothesized the results would follow a pattern reflective of each group’s social location in the South African managerial labor market (McCall, 2005). Consistent with previous research that found men are more likely to perceive a high degree of men-manager resemblance compared to women, we hypothesized that while both white and black males would perceive managers as possessing characteristics more commonly ascribed to men in general than to women in general, the association would be greater for white men (Hypothesis 1). The perceptions white males
hold of successful managers may be strongly affected by their domination of top and senior management positions in South Africa. They occupy a privileged social location because of their race and gender while black men are privileged by their gender but subordinated by their race. Consistent with Schein’s (2001) findings for women and black feminist theory (Hill-Collins, 1998; 1990), we hypothesized that while black and white women would perceive men and women to equally possess the requisite management characteristics, black women would perceive women in general to possess a stronger resemblance to a successful manager than white women (Hypothesis 2). Because as Hill-Collins (1990) argues black women employ a strategy of positive self-valuation and positive images of womanhood, they may hold stronger positive perceptions of the resemblance of the characteristics of women to those of successful managers.

Method

This research design is a replication of the original Schein (1973) and subsequent studies (i.e. Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein, 1989; Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon, 1989; de Pillis, et al., 2008; Dodge, Gilroy and Fenzel, 1995; Schein, Mueller, and Jacobson, 1989; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, and Liu, 1996). A replication approach was used in order to allow for comparison of findings to Schein’s original studies and the results of the subsequent research performed in eight other countries. The same methodology was employed in all of these studies.

Participants

The Schein Descriptive Index (SDI) was distributed to 592 part-time MBA students at a large South African University who were all full-time practising managers. In each class section, approximately equal numbers of man, woman and successful middle manager
questionnaires were distributed. The average age of the respondents was approximately 32 years (SD=1.02) and the mean years of managerial experience was six years (SD =.78). Twelve of the questionnaires distributed were incomplete which resulted in 580 fully usable questionnaires. Questionnaires completed by the small number of coloured and Indian managers were excluded resulting in a final sample of 560. The final sample consisted of 238 black men; 143 white men; 120 black women; and 59 white women. This distribution is reflective of the MBA student population in South Africa where the ratio of men to women is about 2 to 1. Since the end of apartheid, significantly larger numbers of black students have enrolled in the programs.

Measuring instrument and data collection procedure

The 92-item SDI was used to elicit gender role stereotypes and the characteristics of successful managers. Since English is the language used for business purposes in South Africa as well as the official teaching medium for the MBA program, the participants’ English proficiency was deemed sufficient enough to administer the index in its original English form. The instrument was developed by Schein (1973) and has been used in numerous studies since its development (Schein, 2001). The 92 items consists of various adjectives and descriptive terms like objective, tactful, creative, etc. Three forms of the index, including exactly the same descriptive terms and instructions, except that one form asked for a description of men in general, one for a description of women in general, and one for a description of successful middle managers were randomly administered. Participants were instructed to mark whether they thought each item was characteristic or not characteristic of a successful middle manager (Condition 1), women in general (Condition 2) , or men in general (Condition 3). Ratings on each of the 92 items are made according to a five-point scale, ranging from 1, not characteristic to 5, characteristic.
No participant received more than one of the three conditions. There was also a relatively equal distribution across conditions for each race and gender group. Participants were not made aware of the purpose of the study and were told to complete their surveys without discussing it with anyone else. The researchers were present during the data collection to ensure the latter occurred. We also collected demographic information (e.g., gender and race, age, and years of work experience).

Analyses

The primary analyses followed procedures of previous studies using the Schein Descriptive Index (Brenner, Tomkiewcz and Schein, 1989; Schein, 1973; Dodge, Gilroy and Fenzel, 1995; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy and Liu, 1996). The first step was to calculate the mean ratings on each of the 92 items for each of the groups: Men, women, and middle managers, doing the calculation separately for each race and gender group. Next, the degree of resemblance between the descriptions of men and managers and between women and managers was determined by computing intra-class correlation coefficients (cf. Hays, 1963:424). Intra-class coefficients (r’) are preferable to Pearson’s product-moment correlations because they consider both the relative correspondence and absolute agreement between ratings. The classes (or groups) were the mean 92 descriptive items. In the first analysis, the scores within each class were the mean item ratings of men and managers, while in the second analysis they were the mean item ratings of women and managers. This analysis was done for each race and gender group separately. According to Hays (1963) the larger the value of r’, the more similar observations in the same class tend to be (Schein, Muller, Lituchy and Liu, 1996:36). The smaller the within-item variability, relative to the between-item variability, the greater the similarity between the mean item ratings of either the descriptions of men and managers or those of women and managers.
In other words, a high intra-class coefficient in the context of this study means high similarity between descriptions of the two groups (e.g. men in general and managers or women in general and managers).

Results

Table 1 contains the intra-class correlation coefficients for each race and gender group. First, we examined the pattern of the coefficients. As predicted in Hypothesis 1, the pattern of correlations between men and managers and women and managers were different across the race and gender groups. The correlation between men and managers was highest for black men (.784 p< .01) followed by white men (.683 p < .01), white women (.563 p<.01); and black women (.505 p< .01). In respect to the correlations between women and managers, the pattern also differed. Black women perceived the highest resemblance between women and managers (.641 p<.01); followed by white women (.538 p <.01), white men (.410 p <.01); and black men (.272 p<.05).

Hypothesis 2 predicted while both black and white men would perceive middle managers as possessing characteristics more commonly ascribed to men in general than to women in general, white men would perceive a higher resemblance than black men. To test Hypothesis 2, the z (prime) transformation test was used to test the significance of the difference between two intra-class correlation coefficients (men and managers; women and managers) for black and white males. The general decision rule is: If -1.96 < z < 1.96, then there is no statistically significant difference between the coefficients. The intra-class coefficients were significantly different between ratings of men and managers and women and managers for both black men and white men (r’ = 0.784 > r’ = 0.272, z= 31.68 p <.001; r’ = 0.683 > r’ = 0.410, z=16.36 p< .01, respectively). This suggests as predicted that both black
and white men perceived men as more likely to possess the characteristics necessary for a successful manager compared to women. However, contrary to the prediction, the differences in the intra-class correlations were significantly higher for black men. Thus, the think manager—think male hypothesis is more strongly supported among the black men in the sample compared to white men.

Finally, we hypothesized that while black and white women would perceive men and women to *equally* possess the requisite management characteristics, black women would perceive women in general to possess a stronger resemblance to a successful middle manager than men in general (Hypothesis 3). The hypothesis was partially confirmed. There were no significant difference in the intra-class coefficients for the white women in our sample ($r' = 0.563$ and $r' = 0.538$ respectively, $z = 1.44$, ns) indicating they see both men and women as equally likely to possess successful managerial characteristics. This was not the case for black women. There was a significant difference in the intra-class coefficients for black women ($r' = 0.641 > r' = 0.505; z = -8.349, p < .01$). This suggests that for black women the resemblance between the ratings of women and managers was significantly greater than the ratings of the descriptions of men and managers. In other words, black women perceive a stronger resemblance between women in general and successful managers than between men and successful managers.
Table 1  
Intraclass Coefficients Race and Gender Groups  
South African Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups Being Compared</th>
<th>White Males (N = 143)</th>
<th>Black Males (N = 238)</th>
<th>White Females (N = 59)</th>
<th>Black Females (N = 120)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men and Managers</td>
<td>.683**</td>
<td>.784**</td>
<td>.563**</td>
<td>.505**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and Managers</td>
<td>.410**</td>
<td>.272*</td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td>.641**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z score</td>
<td>6.36***</td>
<td>31.68***</td>
<td>1.44 ns</td>
<td>-8.35***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05; **p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion

While there were some similarities in the intra-class coefficient results found for several other countries, a race and gender analysis revealed some interesting differences. Both black and white men in this study perceived men as more likely to possess the characteristics necessary for a successful manager compared to women. That is, the intraclass coefficients for managers and men are significantly higher than that of managers and women. (Schein and Muller, 1992; Schein, et al., 1996; Schein 2001; dePillis, et al. 2008). This male pattern is similar to that reported for other countries using student samples as shown in Table 2 (Fullagar, et al., 2003; Sauers et al., 2002; Schein and Muller, 1992; Schein, et al., 1996; Schein 2001). In a recent study of gender impediments to the

However, it was expected that the pattern for black and white men would be symmetrical to their current group social locations in the managerial labor force in South Africa. Surprisingly, the intra-class coefficient of the resemblance between characteristics of men and successful managers was significantly higher for black men than white men suggesting the managerial stereotype is more robust among black men in South Africa than white men. There is evidence to suggest strong patriarchal traditions remain in respect to the role of women in many black African societies (Steady, 2007). Contradictions between statutory and customary (traditional) law in some African societies can result in relations of power which keep in place inequitable social structures that privilege men as well as firmly held beliefs about women’s roles in society (Okeke, 2000; Steady, 2007). Booysen (1999) found in her study on the influence of race and gender on managerial attributes in South Africa that black males had higher scores on gender differentiation relative to other groups suggesting a strong belief in gender role differentiation between men and women. More recently, Menon and Kotze (2007:84) conducted a study of human resource integration in the South African military. Some of the interviewees in their study reported “traditional black men who are used to being respected at home by their wives, find it difficult to work under women.”

The black women in South Africa had the highest intra-class coefficient ($r'= .641$) between characteristics of women in general and successful managers of all four race and gender groups, and this was significantly higher than their rating of men and successful
managers. This is one of the second known country studies where a higher intra-class coefficient was found between characteristics of women and successful middle managers than characteristics of men and successful middle managers (see Table 2). Orser (1994) reported a similar result for women in Canada with intra-class coefficients of 0.38 for managers and men and 0.47 for women and managers. For all the other countries, the intraclass coefficient for women is lower than that for men and in one case (Japan) it is insignificant.

The results for the black women in the present sample are supported by arguments found in black feminist theory (Hill-Collins, 1990, 1998). Black women in South Africa may possess a unique standpoint because of the disadvantaged situation they experienced under apartheid because of their race and gender. According to Hill-Collins (1990), such a standpoint is grounded in historical group-based experiences and political struggles. It is possible that the black women as a group hold particular images of women rooted in the strong leadership roles black women played in the struggle against apartheid. It is possible that their images of “women in general” were affected accordingly.

Another possible explanation lies within the current attention to black women in South Africa. While stereotypes about women and men are generally based on observations of their behaviors in gender-typical social roles, the prominent attention to black South African women “who have made it” in local media may have also affected the perceptions of the women in our study (Eagly, 1987). The Deputy President of the country at the time of data collection was a woman and there was also strong representation of black women in parliament (Bauer and Britton, 2006). Further, their perceptions may have been influenced by government’s significant emphasis on the legislative empowerment of black women in
Table 2
A comparison of intraclass coefficients across ten country samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Canada\textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>China\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Germany\textsuperscript{c}</th>
<th>Japan\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>UK\textsuperscript{c}</th>
<th>USA\textsuperscript{d}</th>
<th>New Zealand\textsuperscript{e}</th>
<th>Sweden\textsuperscript{f}</th>
<th>Turkey\textsuperscript{f}</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and men</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.91**</td>
<td>0.74**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>0.71**</td>
<td>0.57**</td>
<td>0.683**</td>
<td>0.784**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and women</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.410*</td>
<td>0.272*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and men</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.91**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.68**</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.563**</td>
<td>0.505**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and women</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.538**</td>
<td>0.641**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p <.05; **p<.01, *** p<.001

Notes:  
(a) From Orser, 1994.
(b) From Schein et al., 1996.
(c) From Schein and Mueller, 1992.
(d) From Schein et al., 1989.
(e) From Sauers et al., 2002.
both the public and private sectors of the country (Mathur-Helm, 2005). Similarly, the author of the Canadian study attributed the results to progressive employment equity legislation (Orser, 1994). In sum, there may have been a number of factors influencing the perceptions of black women.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study has implications for both practice and research. The finding that the black men in our study held the strongest belief in the manager-as-male stereotype is somewhat worrisome. As transformation unfolds and more black men assume top and senior management positions, their beliefs may not translate into improvement in the representation of women in management and gender equality in South Africa. Organizations and government policy makers will have to pay attention to relational practices between men and women and leadership development that addresses gender diversity in the workplace. To the extent that perceptions and attitudes influence actual behavior, further research is needed to probe more deeply into the underlying causes of gender stereotyping among men of all races in South Africa. In this regard, we suggest qualitative methodologies may help to surface the reasons for gender stereotyping of the management role.

Our results also suggest future research should explicitly examine the influence of culture on stereotyping of the managerial role. Recent studies in the leadership field have found that leadership attributes are culturally contingent (House, Jovian, Dorfman and Gupta, 2004). The interaction between perceptions of managers and national culture might reveal differences in gender role stereotyping. African feminists have also underscored the need to understand the complex role of culture in addition to race and
gender in understanding the experiences of women in Africa (Steady, 2007; Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Steady (2007) calls for the recognition of culture as a paradigmatic framework for interrogating the positive and negative influences it has on defining the societal roles of women in Africa.

Future research should also address the limitations of the present study. Efforts should be made to increase the sample size of white women. Their numbers were relatively low compared those for the other race and gender groups. Along the lines of sample, our participants were relatively younger managers enrolled in an MBA program. Research is needed to compare the perceptions of managerial student samples and those of older non-student managers. The present study did not test for the race and gender respondents attributed to the generic prompt of successful middle manager, men in general and women in general. Given the pattern of the results, it would also be important to ascertain what race and gender respondents attribute to the target (i.e. successful middle manager) as well as men in general and women in general. Alternatively, one might create race-gender specific targets. Nevertheless, the research results underscore the value of examining both race and gender in the study of managerial stereotypes. This is particularly important in countries like South Africa with significant racial and ethnic diversity where a gender only approach may miss important intersectional differences.

Note:

1. “Coloureds” are the descendents of black and Indian slaves, the indigenous Khoisan people and white settlers.
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