

INVESTIGATING CAREER CHALLENGES WHICH PREVENT FEMALE MANAGERS IN REACHING TOP POSITIONS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A STUDY OF SOME SELECTED HOTELS IN BOLGATANGA-GHANA

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Abstract

The overall purpose of the study was to investigate the career challenges which prevent female managers in the hospitality industry from reaching the top management positions. The specific objectives were to identify challenges of female managers in selected hotels in the Upper East Region, find out the positive and negative impact of females working in selected hotels in the Upper East Region and identify significant differences in the perceptions of male and female managers in the industry. A sample of 200 randomly selected respondents took part in the study. A structured interview was used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics was used in addressing the objectives. The findings suggested that hospitality education programmes could make a contribution by revealing the existence of barriers and gender issues in the industry. This could be accomplished by developing courses based on necessary skills, and providing

more mentors and role models (especially female professionals) for managers. It was concluded that educators should design and evaluate a course or a component of a course to address these issues at departments. Females should be offered further opportunities to be prominent in other departments in the industry as well as be encouraged to upgrade themselves since that is the only way they can advance in their careers. Hospitality education should play an important role in preparing future leaders and create a more equitable environment for women.

Keywords: Career, females, Hospitality, Factors, Constrain, Advancement

INTRODUCTION

Many corporate executives and managers, almost all men, argue that women have not made significant progress because they do not have the required educational backgrounds, skills and work experiences. These executives saw the slow rise of women as an unbiased fact rather than discrimination (Fernandez 1993). Although most young men and women are promoted based on performance, a gender gap still exists in the rate of promotions and women are at a disadvantage (Cobb and Dum, 1999). Women are still concentrated in traditional occupations such as sales, technical and administrative support jobs (Bowler, 1999). With the increased number of women in the work force in the past decades, more women have enrolled in higher education, which is viewed as a quicker route to the top level management. Since females constitute a significant proportion of the labour force in several countries, awareness of the factors and the constraints that might affect their participation is increasingly required for their managers (Burrell, 1997).

Despite the significant number of females working in the hospitality field worldwide, only a few of them succeeded in reaching top managerial positions. It is necessary to admit that females' failure in competing with their male counterparts to reach top positions is not restricted to the hospitality industry. The experience of many women striving for the top levels in business survives, accompanied with the fact that they must work harder, often struggling with extraordinary demands on their personal lives to earn the same recognition or success as men (Sparrow, 1999). Females' status and career advancement in the hospitality field is an issue of particular importance in an industry characterized by assorted workforce (Snyder, 1993). Women comprise 66% of the U.S. workforce, yet only 21% hold middle management positions, and a mere 15% are at the senior management level (Bible and Hill, 2007).

According to Besen and Kimmel (2006)' some scholars argue that, "The disproportional representation of women in managerial positions is due to the glass ceiling: blocked

opportunities for women, while some argue it is due to the sticky floor: keeping women in lower paying jobs". Regardless of the cause, the fact remains that there are significantly more men than women in management positions (Bible and Hill, 2007). Realistic studies show that some extraordinary women rise to the top. For example, according to Noble and Moore (2006), many women who aspire to leadership positions find it impossible to get there, whereas others who make it eventually leave. Further, a few of the documented causes of successful women's departures from organizational life include the difficulty of combining work and family life, the unforgiving and relentless battles against the male stronghold of traditional organizational cultures, and the continued dominance of the male leader stereotype (Haywood, 2006). Five major factors affect women's ability to excel in their careers and get past the glass ceiling. These impediments include stereotypes and perceptions, mentoring and networking availability, discrimination in the workplace and family issues (Bible and Hill, 2007). Research has found that traditional organizational cultures often reflect continuing gender stereotypes. For example, studies revealed that a prevailing stereotype of the difference between men and women was that "Women take care and men take charge" and that women are not as good at problem solving as their male counterparts (Bible and Hill, 2007).

This phenomenon of women's careers being stuck at middle management levels is well documented and has been referred to as the "glass ceiling" effect (Jackson, 2001). The "glass ceiling" effect has attracted considerable attention from social scientists, feminists, and currently, also from managers who consider this skewed balance in senior positions as an undesirable state of affairs.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have assessed the under representation of women managers and gender discriminatory issues at the workplace which depicted a negative image of female management advancement in the hospitality industry top positions. This is evident as only few females succeeded in breaking the ceiling and reaching top positions. On the other hand, the industry might be acclaimed for providing females with management positions in some departments. The researcher has observed that most organizations still do not recruit, promote or support women workers on a par equal to men, in that, educators and industry leaders do not take responsibility for preparing women for success. Also, little research has focused on the preceptors of hospitality students, educators and industry recruiters regarding the advancement of women in the industry. The researcher, therefore, would like to investigate the challenges which prevent women from reaching the top management positions.

General objective

The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges preventing women from reaching the top management positions.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify challenges facing female managers in selected hotels in the Upper East Region.
2. To find out the negative and positive impact of females working in selected hotels.
3. To identify significant differences in the perceptions of male and female managers in the industry.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges preventing women from reaching top management positions?
2. What are the negative and positive impacts of females working in selected hotels?
3. Are there significant gender differences in students and industry recruiters' perceptions of factors that facilitate and constrain women career advancement and gender issues in the work place?

Significance of the Study

The results of this research would help to address the educational setting and will in the long term, enable educators to fulfill their responsibilities to create a more supportive industry environment for women. Again, hospitality students would benefit by having a better understanding of the hospitality industry and a better preparation for adjustment in the industry and for career development and advancement. It would strengthen hospitality programmes and benefit the hospitality industry in general. Final, it would help policy makers to design better ways to prepare women for career development and how education programmes could help reduce barriers to women career development.

Limitations to the Study

Conducting such a research cannot be undertaken without encountering some challenges. First, the choice of conducting the research only in the Bolgatanga metropolis, ignoring other regions, would not give a true reflection of the entire problem. This is mainly due to the fact that what the Bolgatanga metropolis would see as a problem might not be so to the other employees in the other regions since they operate within different environments, though with the same objective. This then could bring some bias which has been described by Marsha and Rossman (2006), as

“a way participants in a research process tend to incline to one region so as to be able to influence the final outcome of the research in their favour”.

Furthermore, employees who were chosen for the research were not willing to provide more information to prevent being rebuked by management. The researcher encountered problems getting information from the respondents since the hospitality industry was a very busy place.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Factors That Affect or Constrain Women's Career Advancement

Some of the factors that function as barriers to women's career advancement include glass ceiling, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, organizational culture, work and family conflicts.

Glass ceiling refers to invisible, generally artificial, barriers that prevent qualified individuals, Example, women, from advancing within their organizations and reaching their full potential (Knutson and Schmidgall, 1999). The term was popularized in the 1980s when it became a significant concept at the workplace in the United States. It describes a tendency for women and minorities to be over represented at the lower level of an industry, but under represented at senior levels. Billy and Monoochehri (1995) describe the development of women's role in history. They argue that, traditionally, a women's place has been in the home, taking care of children and husbands. While women comprise almost half of the labour force at workplaces, the number of women in middle-management positions and especially, senior management position is still low. That is where the term “Glass ceiling” comes from, as coin by Billy and Monoochehri (1995). According to Flanders, (1994) the phrase “Glass ceiling” is used to sum up the frustrations at every level, of working women who see where they wanted to advance to but find themselves blocked by invisible barriers. “Glass ceiling” is a transparent barrier that applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing to higher positions simply because they are female. Researchers' show that women have reached executive status in the hospitality industry, and those who did have high education suggested a number of variables that appear to contribute to the existence of, the concept of glass ceiling. Petrick (1998) surveyed a group of restaurant executives in the United States of America (USA) and showed that very few women have attained top management positions.

Brownell (1995), studied gender differences in personality and career development among hotel general managers. The findings suggested that a profile characterized by determination, ambition, positive attitude, interpersonal skills and hard work contributed to the career advancement of female managers. Barrett (1992), studied the salary discrepancies

between male and female foodservice directors in hospitals and the findings revealed that male directors earned a mean of \$ 10,000 more per year than female directors. Sinew and Arnold (1998), examined the gender inequality in public leisure service agencies and results suggested that female middle managers were given fewer opportunities to be promoted to upper management positions.

Another often-cited barrier involves women's limited access to organizational and professional networks and to mentors. Because men occupy most senior management positions, female managers lose out to the lack of opportunities to socialize with and to develop mentoring relationship with them (Chi-Ching, 1992). Family constraints can be perceived as a function of a female's commitment to and actual involvement in duties associated with parental, marital and homemaker roles on one hand and the amount of support she receives from her spouse and other relatives on the other hand (Chi-Ching, 1992).

Brownell (1998) indicates that the nature of the hospitality industry demands long hours and requires a great deal of crisis management and problem solving. These factors combine to create a dynamic but often stressful and exhausting work experience for managers. Furthermore, when female managers return home to their children and spouses who are also anticipating their full support and attention, the balance of work and life may then become difficult to achieve (Brownell, 1998). Whereas more research, especially in North America, has started to focus on studying barriers that prevent middle-level female managers from moving up, far fewer studies have been conducted in different national, social and cultural contexts. Although some Asian countries have been at the forefront in passing labour equality laws, female executives are under-represented in the region.

By June 1996, only three out of 72 Hong Kong hotels had female general managers (Pine, 1997). In Singapore, only two females made it to the position of general managers among 77 hotels registered under the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board. Israeli and Adler (1994) suggested that cultural and societal differences shaped the opportunities, motivations, and choices of female managers in different countries. The trends towards globalization in the hotel industry justify the need for more cross-national research in female career development. The term "Glass ceiling" refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organisation is stopped at a lower level because of some form of discrimination. This situation is referred to as a "Ceiling" as there is a limitation blocking upward advancement, and "Glass" (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy. However, this "Glass ceiling" tends to affect working women the most. It is the barrier that prevents large numbers of women, ethnic minorities, and sexual minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious, and highest-grossing jobs

in the workforce. This barrier makes many women feel as though they are not worthy enough to have these high-ranking positions. Also, they feel as if their bosses do not take them seriously or actually see them as potential candidates (Pine, 1997).

Factors That Facilitate Women's Career Advancement

The review of literature revealed that energy and hard work are presented as being the most important traits that facilitate women's career advancement. Gregg and Johnson (1990) noted that the women in their survey felt that they had to work twice as hard and do twice as good a job as their male colleagues in order to prove they deserved a promotion. Other traits also included communication, trust and perseverance. Suggestions are given to women managers to stand out through hard work, being good at what they do, networking, relocating or changing companies (Ng and Pine, 2003). Knutson and Schmidgall (1999) noted that having a charismatic personality also is an affective advancement strategy and that woman executives believe that to advance; they must develop a style with which men are comfortable. Networking and mentoring have been identified as two methods to help women. Fagenson and Jackson (1993) stated that some women in high level positions have benefited from networks. Furthermore, women need to set up their networks and participate in men's networks. Many women have acknowledged the help of mentors who helped them to enter into various networks.

Brownell (1992) described the hospitality managers who emerge as leaders in the 21st century as men and women who deal effectively with a multi-cultural workforce, present their ideas clearly and are able to mobilize others around a common goal. Brownell (1994), in another study on personality and career advancement, found the following traits of hospitality managers; hard work, fairness, the ability to motivate others, determination, calmness, assertiveness or competitiveness, enthusiasm, deliberateness and detail-orientation. Skills and intelligence are also important, such as communication skills, leadership skills and interpersonal skills.

Ng and pine (2003) found out that significant gender differences on the importance of effective communication skills indicated that female managers viewed a stronger positive relationship between communication skills and career development than males. Three obstacles were found to be significantly different between female and male managers; male managers were inadequate regarding the job knowledge, difficulty in establishing credibility, and lack of equity training. In all these items, males viewed them as bigger obstacles than females.

METHODOLOGY

Non-Experimental Research was used to describe participants, traits, scores and other characteristics without any intervention. The population for the study comprised of five hotels in Upper East Region. These hotels were chosen because they are the well patronized and of standard quality which helped the researcher to get enough information necessary for the research.

A sample size of 200 respondents was used for the study because of the various departments in the hotel industry. 40 were chosen from front offices, 60 from food and beverage section, 50 from housekeeping, 25 from accounts office and 25 from stores. Two hundred (200) respondents were used in the study because the researcher believed that this sample size is manageable and could comfortably be handled or worked with. The estimated sampling frame was based on the small numbers of available industry workers. One sampling frame was obtained for this research. Respondents were selected from the various departments of the hotels such as front office, restaurant, kitchen, housekeeping, accounts and stores.

Simple random sampling technique was used for the study. Random sampling technique gives every element in the target population an equal and independent chance of being included in the simple random sampling. This sample procedure allowed the researcher to use statistical methods to analyse sample results.

The survey strategy was chosen because it provided the researcher with the flexibility to incorporate not just questionnaires. The data was collected from respondents by means of standard questionnaire which was both open ended and close-ended.

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data served as the providers of insights, views and respondents' conception of different phenomenon relating to the subject matter.

Questionnaires included open-ended and close-ended was designed for the study. To add breadth and depth to the research, secondary data was also utilized and was presented in the literature review section of the actual document. The secondary sources of data came from published articles, social science journals, theses and related studies on the hotel industry.

The data analysis was performed using SPSS. The data from the respondents were carefully edited to ensure accuracy and consistency. The edited data was analyzed by means of quantitative and descriptive methods of data analyses. The findings have been presented using frequency tables, line graph and pie chart.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Figure 1: Percentage distribution for Managers and Supervisors

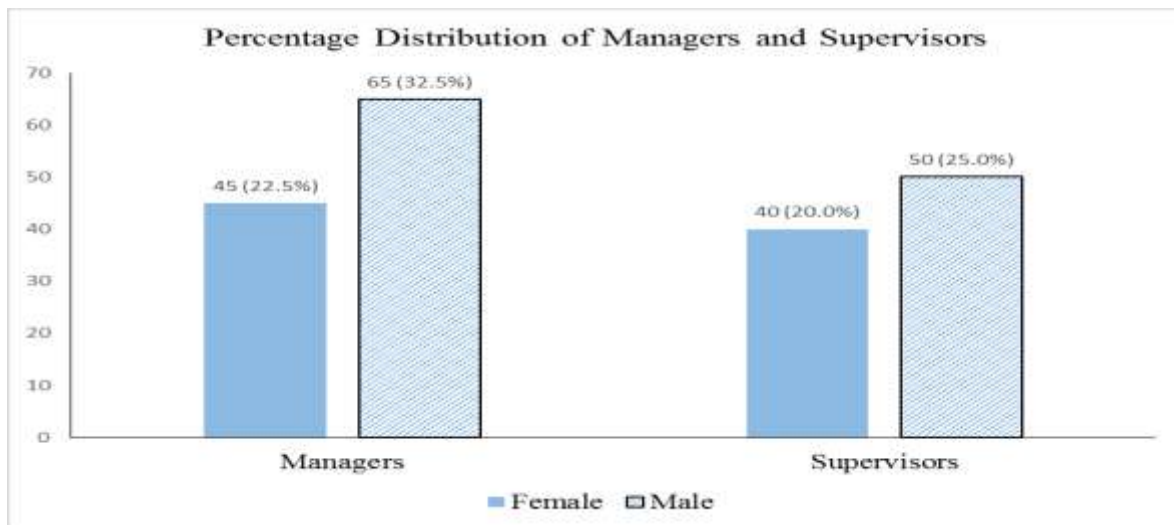


Figure 1 indicates the number of respondents used for the study. In all, ten (10) hospitality outlets that were chosen, 55% of the respondents contacted were managers whilst 45% of the other respondents were supervisors. It can be concluded that more than half (55%) of the respondents occupied top positions in the various hospitality industries surveyed.

Figure 2: Age of respondents

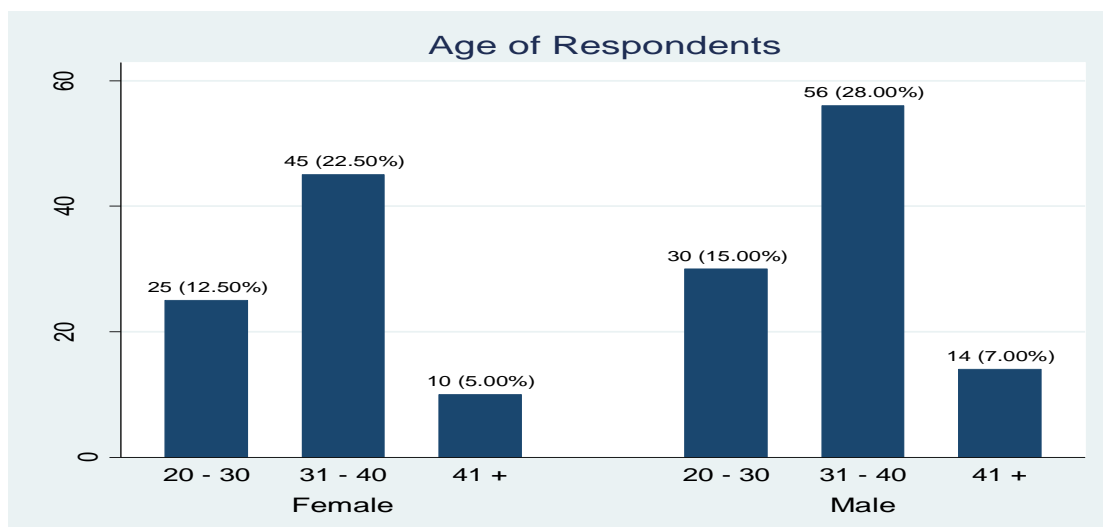


Figure 2 which represents the age distribution of respondents' shows that 27.50% of the respondents fall within the age range of 20-30 years, 31-40 years 51%, and 12% of the

respondents are 41 years and above but respondents between 31-40 years had the highest percentage (51%) and the least percentage falls within the age group 41 and above. From the presentation, only 5% of the female respondents were above 40 years.

Figure 3: Academic qualification of respondents

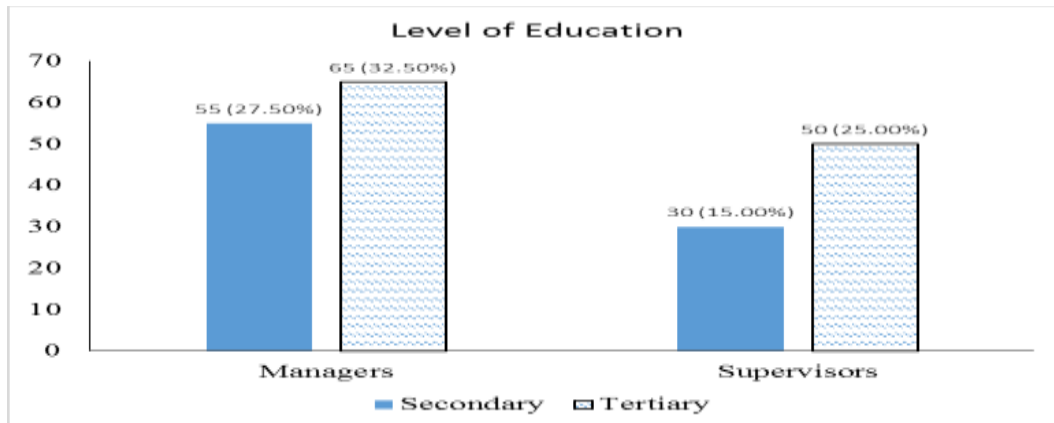
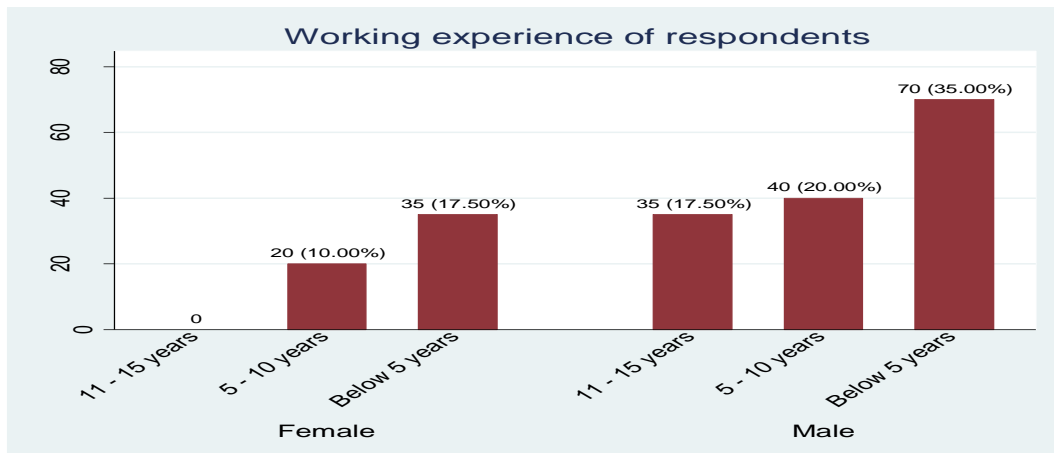


Figure 3 indicates that 42.5% of the respondents have secondary education whilst 57.5% of the respondents also have tertiary education which suggests that their level of education enabled them to get to top management positions.

Figure 4: working experience of respondents



From figure 4, 35% of the male respondents have work experience below 5 years. 37.5% of male respondents have either 5 to 10 years or above 15 years' experience in the field of work whilst 17.5% of the females' respondents have worked experience below 5 years and between 5 to 10 years is 10%. It can be seen from the findings that no female has work experience beyond 11 years in the field.

Table 1: Gender difference between male managers and female managers

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	135	67.50
No	65	32.50
Total	200	100.00

From table 3, 67.5% of the respondents agree there is gender difference between male managers and female managers. These findings agree with Brownell (1995) which says that women can only advance to top management positions through ambition, determination, interpersonal skills and hard work.

Figure 5: Does hospitality education prepare women for higher managerial positions?

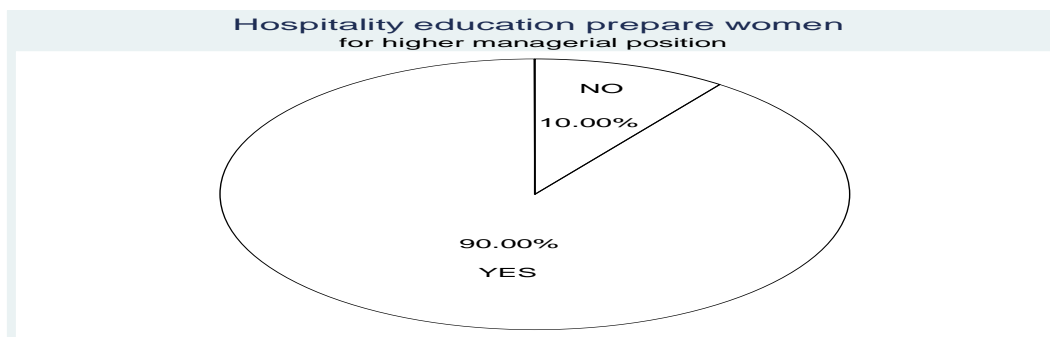


Figure 5 shows that, out of the two hundred (200) respondents who responded to the questionnaire, 90% of them believe that hospitality education programs can prepare women for better positions whilst only 10% of the respondents disagree. It is obvious that with some level of hospitality education, women can advance in their careers.

Table 2: Effects of organisational culture on female managers

Item	Yes	No
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Are women discriminated against men on a par equal pay?	160 (80%)	40 (20%)
Are females not capable of managing top positions?	20 (10%)	180 (90%)
Do women need to work harder than men to get the top position?	30 (15%)	170 (85%)
Is a gender discrimination and sexual harassment reason why women cannot advance?	190 (95%)	10 (5%)
Is organizational culture a barrier for female career advancement?	186 (93%)	14 (7%)

Are women discriminated against men on a par equal pay?

From table 4, 160 respondents (80%) believed that women are discriminated against as compared to men on a par equal pay whilst 40 respondents (20%) also were of the view that women and men are given equal pay in terms of work done and qualification. The question whether females are not capable of managing top positions, 20 respondents (10%) agreed that women are not capable of managing top positions whilst (90%) constituting 180 respondents disagreed to the statement. From the findings, one can say that women, if given top positions at the management level, can do even better than men.

Do women need to work harder than men to get the top position?

Again, regarding the question, whether women need to work extra harder than men to get to top positions, 30 respondents (15%) believed women need to work extra harder than men to get to the top positions whilst 170 respondents (85%) asserted that women do not need to work extra harder than men provided they have the same qualification and the ability to work.

Is gender discrimination and sexual harassment reason, why women cannot advance?

Regarding gender discrimination and sexual harassment as the possible reasons why women cannot advance, (95%) constituting 190 respondents agreed that sexual harassment and gender discrimination are some of the reasons why women cannot advance to management levels, whilst 5% of the respondents disagreed to the statement. These findings agree with the views of Wood and Cavanaugh (1994) which says that most women graduates leave the hospitality industry due to gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

Is organizational culture a barrier for female career advancement?

Last, on the question “whether organizational culture is a barrier for female career advancement”, the results show that 186 respondents (93%) agreed that organizational culture plays a major role in women’s career advancement whilst 14 respondents (7%) disagree to the statement. A majority (92%) of the respondents indicated that organizational culture is a barrier to women’s career advancement.

Figure 6 represents factors that enhance women’s career advancement in the hospitality industry. Out of the two hundred (200) respondents who responded to the questionnaire, 15% of them indicated network and mentoring as some of the factors that can facilitate their career advancement. (75%) of the respondents also were of the view that it is only promotion that could facilitate their career advancement, whilst (10%) of the respondents also said trust and

perseverance are factors that could facilitate their advancement. There is no doubt that a majority (70%) of the respondents indicated promotion because research conducted by Gregg and Johnson (1990) revealed that women need to work harder than their male counterparts in order to be promoted at their various work places.

Figure 6: Factors that facilitate women's career advancement

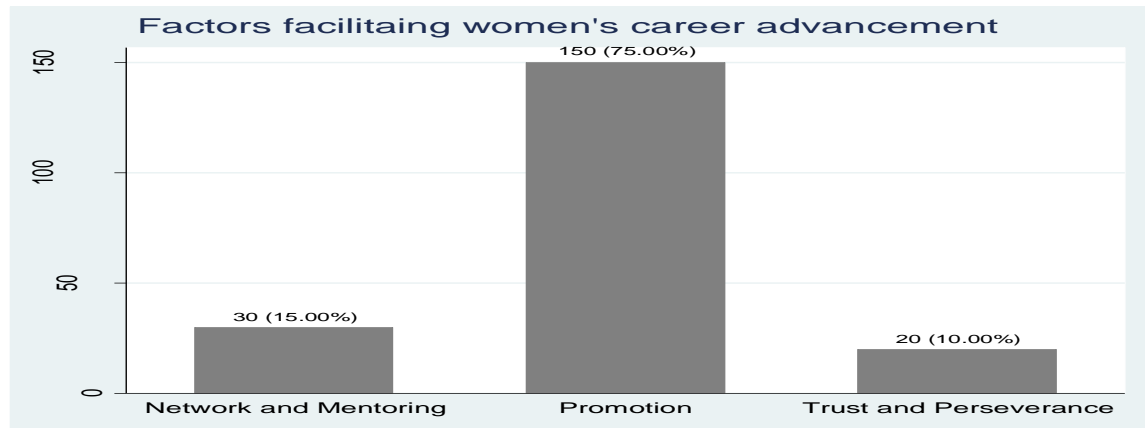


Table 3: Sociological Factors Affecting Female Managers in Breaking through the 'Glass Ceiling'

Item	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Networking and mentoring are some of the factors that facilitate career advancement	150 (75%)	50 (25%)
Work and family conflict have an impact on women career advancement	180 (90%)	20 (10%)
Women do better than men when given the opportunity to top positions	190 (95%)	10 (5%)
Awareness that only few women are able to break through the glass ceiling	184 (92%)	16 (8%)
Monitoring and networking are facilitating factors for career advancement	180 (90%)	20 (10%)
Does higher education level advance women's career?	195 (97%)	5 (2.5%)
Can women be depended on to make objective business decision?	191 (95%)	9 (4.5%)
Are women as capable as men when it comes to management positions?	160 (80%)	40 (20%)
Are women committed to their job?	190 (95%)	10 (5%)
Do you agree that women cannot work under stress?	20 (10%)	180 (90%)
Can women handle continuous hard work?	30 (15%)	170 (85%)
Do women juggle between their work and families?	186 (93%)	14 (7%)
Are women given the opportunity to upgrade themselves for managerial skills?	160 (80%)	40 (20%)
Do women family duties prevent them from responding to urgent work duties?	45 (22%)	155 (77%)
Are women given extra responsibilities to learn higher position duties?	175 (87%)	25 (12%)
Do women lack some managerial skills?	40 (20%)	160 (80%)

Networking and mentoring are some of the factors that facilitate career advancement

As regard whether networking and mentoring are the facilitating factors for women's career advancement, 150 respondents (75%) agreed that mentoring and networking are the facilitating factors for career advancement, whilst 50 respondents representing (25%) disagreed to the statement. This means that women need some form of mentoring and encouragement to be able to make it. These findings agree with Fangerson and Jackson (1993) that some women in high level have benefitted from networking and mentoring.

Work and family conflict have an impact on women career advancement

As to whether work and family conflict have any impact on women's career advancement, 180 respondents (90%) approve of work and family conflict as a barrier to women's career advancement and 20 respondents (10%) disagree to the statement. According to Mallon and Cassell (1999), it was found out that long working hours was a significant barrier to seeking promotions for many women in the industry since it is assumed that women traditionally, would be involved in child care and house work which was viewed as their responsibility.

Women do better than men when given the opportunity to top positions

With regard to whether women could do better than men when given the opportunity, 95% of the respondents believe women can be better managers than men if given the opportunity. Only 5% of the respondents think that women cannot be good managers. This finding depicts that a majority 98% of the respondents are good managers in every aspect.

Awareness that only few women are able to break through the glass ceiling

On the question of awareness that only few women are able to break through the "Glass ceiling", 184 respondents representing (92%) agreed that only few women have been able to break through the "Glass ceiling" truly whilst 16 respondents representing (8%) also disagreed to the statement. It can be concluded from the findings that a majority of the respondents 92% are already aware of 'Glass Ceiling'.

Does higher education level advance women's career?

As to whether higher educational levels advances women's career, 195 respondents representing 97.5% agreed that women can only advance to top positions when they have higher levels of education, whilst 5 respondents representing 2.5% did not agree to the view that higher educational levels should be considered before women can advance in their careers.

These findings agree with the view of Sparrow and Popielars (1995) that an individual with a bachelor's degree and a major in the field is doubted advantaged in his or her career progress.

Can women be depended on to make objective business decision?

On the statement whether women can be depended on to make objective business decisions, 191 respondents representing 95.5% agreed that women can make objective business decisions once they get to top positions whilst 9 respondents representing 4.5% believed that women are not capable of making objective business decisions. It is obvious that nearly 96% of the respondents are of the view that women are good at decision making in businesses.

Are women as capable as men when it comes to management positions?

As regards whether women are as capable as men when it comes to management positions, 160 respondents representing 80% were of the view that women are capable just like men when it comes to management positions whilst 40 respondents representing 20% believed that women can never be more capable than men. It can be concluded that a majority 96% are in favour of the statement.

Are women committed to their job?

On the question whether women are committed to their jobs, 190 respondents representing 95% agreed that women are committed to their jobs and deserve to get to top positions and once they get there, they will work harder to meet organizational standards, whilst 10 respondents representing 5% do not think women are committed to their jobs. It is confirmed that a majority 95% of the respondents indicated that women are committed to their jobs.

Do you agree that women cannot work under stress?

The question: "Do you agree that women cannot work under stress?" 180 respondents representing 90% responded that the statement is false whilst only 20 respondents representing 10% agreed to the statement. These findings mean, no matter the circumstances, women are still able to work.

Can women handle continuous hard work?

As to whether women can handle continuous hard work or not, 30 respondents representing 15% answered positively to the statement whilst the rest of the 170 respondents representing 85% disagreed that women can handle continuous hard work. This shows that women have the love for their jobs and are willing to sacrifice for their jobs.

Do women juggle between their work and families?

The Concern whether women juggle between their works and families, 186 respondents representing 93% agreed that women juggle between their jobs and families which prevents them from making it to the top level. Meanwhile, 14 respondents representing 7% disagreed that women juggle between their jobs and families. This is because it is believed that a woman's place is the kitchen, therefore, women have to stay home and take care of their families.

Are women given the opportunity to upgrade themselves for managerial skills?

Out of the two hundred (200) respondents who responded to the question whether women are given the opportunity to upgrade themselves for managerial skills, 160 respondents 80% agreed that women are given the opportunity to upgrade themselves for their careers advancement but 40 respondents 20% disagreed to the statement. This indicates that most of the hotels contacted 80% supported this.

Do women family duties prevent them from responding to urgent work duties?

With regard to whether women's duties prevent them from responding to urgent work duties, 45 respondents 22.5% agreed that women's family duties prevent them from responding to urgent work duties whilst the rest of the 155 respondents 77.5% disagreed to this, in the sense that despite women's duties as mothers and wives, they still make time to respond to urgent work duties when the need arises.

Are women given extra responsibilities to learn higher position duties?

The concern as to whether women are given extra responsibilities to learn higher position duties, 175 respondents 87.5% were of the view that women are given extra responsibilities to learn higher position duties to enable them to advance to top positions, especially if the person has the potentials and is willing to accept extra responsibilities, whiles 25 respondents, 12.5% indicated women are not given the opportunity to learn extra responsibilities.

Do women lack some managerial skills?

As to whether women lack some managerial skills, the results indicated that 20% of the respondents believed that lack of managerial skills by women prevent them from advancing in their careers whilst the other 80% of the respondents disagreed that lack of some managerial skills is the reason why women are not advancing. It is to say that if women are not given the opportunity to act, it would be difficult to establish whether they have the skills or not. It is therefore important to give women the opportunity to manage high positions.

Figure 7: Challenges facing female managers in the hospitality industry

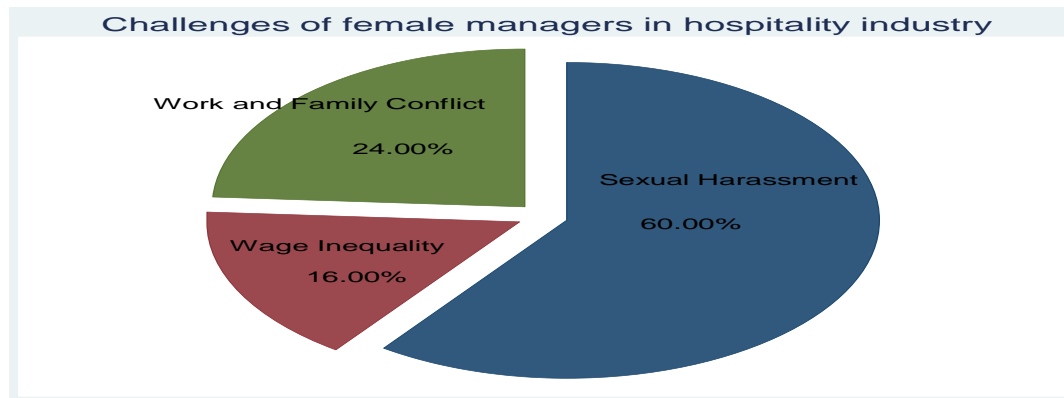


Figure 7 shows challenges facing female managers in the hospitality industry. From the pie chart, it was clear that 48 respondents (24%) indicated that work and family conflict is a challenge, 32 respondents (16%) also cited wage inequalities as their challenge, whilst 120 respondents (60%) were of the view that the kind of challenge they faced is sexual harassment. It was obvious that an appreciable number of respondents (60%) faced sexual harassment problems at their various workplace units.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Objective One: Identify Challenges Facing Female Managers in Selected Hotels in the Upper East Region

From the findings, despite the fact that the hospitality industry is characterized by many women, only few of them are able to breakthrough. The researcher noticed from the data collected that before women can advance in their careers, there is the need for them to learn extra responsibilities that will make them capable of managing top level positions. Also, it is very important for women to upgrade themselves through educational programmes for them to be able to compete with their male counterparts when it comes to promotions.

Objective Two: Find out the Negative and Positive Impact of Females Working in Selected Hotels

The researcher also noticed that most of the people emphasized that there should be a lot of hospitality programmes that will prepare women for higher positions once they are out of school. It is obvious that most females do not get to top because the industry operates 24 hours and 7 days a week, thirty (30) days a month and 365 days a year and due to this, Higher positions are given to males because it is believed that once a woman gets pregnant and gives birth, she will

go on maternity leave which will affect the company. For this reason, before women can get to top positions they obviously have to be single in order to be able to attend to organisational needs all the time.

Due to the importance of women in the hospitality industry, the mission of hospitality educational programmes is not only to prepare students for professional lives but also to meet the needs of the hospitality industry in preparing women for career advancement. It is encouraging that most respondents in this study realized the importance of hospitality education with regard to women's career advancement. The under-representation of women managers and gender discrimination issues at the workplace have been assessed through previous studies, however, little research has focused on the perceptions regarding the advancement of women in the industry. Some respondents thought there were no barriers to women's career advancement, and others felt little could be done about educational programmes to change the situation with regard to women's positions in the hospitality industry.

Significant Differences in the Perception of Male and Female Managers in the Industry

The findings suggested that hospitality education programmes could make a contribution by revealing the existence of barriers and gender issues in the industry. This could be accomplished by developing courses on necessary skills and providing more mentors and role models, especially female professionals, for female managers. The study revealed that there is a vast difference in equal pay policy and other incentive packages that the male managers enjoy when they occupy top positions. Hospitality education should play an important role in preparing future leaders and create a more equitable environment for women so as to be par with the male managers. The researcher also observed that advancement is not based on gender but rather on performance, knowledge, skills, hard work, education and determination. Before women could advance in their careers, they need to work extra harder to get to the top.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Figure 1 indicates that 115 respondents representing 57.5% contacted were managers while 85 respondents representing 42.5 % were supervisors.
- It was clear that about more than half of the respondents 57.5% occupying managerial positions are males.
- It can be seen from the findings that no female has work experience exceeding 11 years in the field.
- An appreciable number of 155 respondents represented 77.5% know that "Glass ceiling" exists.

- It was found out that an appreciable number of 135 respondents represented 67.5% agreed there is a gender difference between male managers and female managers.
- It was obvious that with some level of hospitality education, women can advance in their careers as a majority of 180 respondents representing 90% indicated.
- It was revealed from the findings that 190 respondents representing 95% were of the view that women, if given top management positions can perform even better than men.
- The findings agreed with the thought of Wood and Cavanaugh (1994) that most women graduates leave the hospitality industry due to gender discrimination and sexual harassment. This view was expressed by 95% of the respondents.
- A majority of 186 respondents representing 93% of the respondents specified that organizational culture is a barrier in women's career advancement.
- 150 respondents representing 75% were of the view that promotions facilitate their career advancement.
- It was evident that 190 respondents representing 95% approved that work and family conflict is a barrier to women's career advancement.
- Almost about 186 respondents representing 92% agreed that only few women have been able to break through the "Glass ceiling".
- It was confirmed that nearly 190 respondents representing 95% indicated that women are committed to their jobs.
- The results testify that 160 respondents representing 80% agreed that women are given the opportunity to upgrade themselves for their career advancements
- A majority of 155 respondents representing 77.5% disagreed that women's family duties prevent them from responding to urgent work duties in the sense that despite women's duties as mothers and wives, they still make time to respond to urgent work duties when the need arises.
- It was obvious that an appreciable number of 84 respondents representing 42% faced sexual harassment problems at their various workplaces.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that about more than half of the respondents occupying managerial positions are men. Addressing these issues in the educational and the industry settings will enable both educators and the industry to fulfill their responsibilities to help in creating a more supportive industry environment for women. It was found that an appreciable number of the respondents agreed there was a gender differences between male managers and female managers. Also the study review that women if given top

management positions can perform better than men. Management should examine how organisational culture influences women status in the hospitality industry. It is hoped that these conclusions will not only be of academic concern, but will also be beneficial to industry leaders in practical application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered for future research. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educators should design and evaluate a course or a component of a course to address these issues at departments.
2. Females should be offered further opportunities to be prominent in other departments in the industry as well as be encouraged to upgrade themselves since that is the only way they can advance in their careers.
3. Industry recruiters should design and evaluate mentorship programmes for female managers.
4. Management should examine how organisational culture influences women's status in the hospitality industry.

Further research should be carried out by students in order to find a lasting solution to this problem. The solution lies not only in better preparations by women to work hard to foster their abilities, but also in the creation of a more equitable organisational culture in the industry. Hospitality education can play an important role in preparing the future leaders of the industry to improve the organisational environment.

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