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A Comparative Analysis of the Attitudes Toward Women Managers in China, Chile, and the United States

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to determine if stereotypical perceptions of women as managers existed among men and women in three cultural settings: the U.S., China and Chile. Based on the extant literature, hypotheses were developed and tested.

Design/Methodology Approach: Participants in our study were students enrolled in degree programs. The data was collected from the U.S., China and Chile. Using the women as managers scale (WAMS), the study explores attitudinal dimensions. Further, gender and country effects were identified at both multivariate and univariate levels.

Findings: The findings show that stereotypical perceptions of women as managers exist among men and women in three cultural settings (the U.S., China and Chile). For instance, U.S. and Chilean men had more positive perceptions of women as managers than Chinese men. Further, Chinese men and women displayed the lowest perceptions of women as managers.

Originality/Value: The results of this study build upon the extant literature and the WAMS scale offer interesting insights for international managers on perceptions of women as managers in three distinct cultural settings and socioeconomic developments. Implications for research and practice in cross-cultural and international management shed additional light on this important topic.

Key Words: Women as managers, Stereotypical perceptions, U.S. and emerging markets (China and Chile), Cross-cultural comparison

A Comparative Analysis of the Attitudes Toward Women Managers in China, Chile, and the United States

Introduction

With the increasingly globalized economy, characterized by such activities as flow of investment and technology, capital mobility, and the rise of multinational corporations, dramatic changes have taken place in the global workforce that are affecting the employment conditions and career development of workers, especially female workers (Peng, Ngo, Shi, and Wong, 2009). Gender is indeed rooted in the organization's processes and structures, and gender images are formed and observed in the corporate world (Mills, 1997). Many contend that the glass ceiling still exists for women (Catalyst, 2006). While there appears to be increasing support and impetus for women in management, women are still perceived as not having the requisite skills and abilities to hold upper level management positions (Dodge, Gilroy, and Mickey-Fenzel, 1995). The U.S. Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) noted that the conscious and unconscious stereotyping of women translates into perceptions of women in managerial positions, and may result in discriminatory behavior. This supports the idea that many people hold negative stereotypes of women as managers (e.g., Guney et al., 2006).

Evidence suggests that efforts to dismantle the glass ceiling that prevented women from attaining executive positions had been ineffectual for at least three reasons: a lack of understanding barriers women face as they advance upward in the hierarchy of an organization, insufficient understanding of career strategies effective for career mobility, and incomplete or insufficient understanding of organizational culture (Owen, Scherer, Sincoff, and Cordano, 2003).

Clearly, women in management remain an important issue of concern, given that women comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent across the globe. The absence of women at the top corporate hierarchy cannot be ignored. (Wentling, 2003; Owen et al., 2003). As observed by Tomkiewicz et al (2004), there are no societies where women's position and power exceeds men's, but the degree to which this power inequality prevails varies across countries. This may be due to cultural values, social and economic systems, and attitudes toward women's roles and positions in the society in different countries.

Little empirical research has been conducted to examine the attitudes toward women as managers across different cultures (Peng et al., 2009; Owen, et al., 2003), which has important implications for human resource management. An understanding of how attitudes toward women managers in different cultures vary is important in order to effectively utilize human resources and human variety to compete in the global marketplace. A failure to understand how women succeed in the corporate world embodied with different cultures puts corporations at a disadvantage in this global economy, where women are contributing to its growth. The growing emphasis of U.S companies to seek foreign markets in order to sustain growth and the increasing push toward strategic partnerships among companies in emerging markets suggests that firms that quickly adapt and learn the characteristics that influence the success of women in these markets could turn their learning into a major competitive advantage (Chatterjee and Pearson, 2002).

The objective of this article is to identify the differences in stereotypical perceptions of women as managers in three different cultural settings- the U.S., China and Chile. Since women's participation for top level management positions continues to become an important issue in the

corporate world, insights gained from this study offer suggestions for practical implications and serve as foundation for future empirical research in cross-cultural and international management settings.

The remainder of the discussion is organized as follows. Section one provides the background on women as managers from a global perspective. Section two discusses related literature review and hypothesis development. Section three provides the discussion on research design, and section four focuses on the methodology and study findings. Finally, the paper concludes with practical implications and directions for future research.

Women as Managers: Global View

Worldwide, women represent 40% of the total labor force, up from 39% in 1980 (World Bank, 2006). But studies in several developed countries show that the number of women in managerial positions has grown more slowly than the number of women in the workplace (Ott, 1998; Vianen and Fischer, 2002; Vinnicombe, 2000). In 2006, no British woman had headed a big British company, although 46% of the workforce is female (World Bank, 2006). The number of female executive directors of the UK's FTSE 100 companies was very small, although it grew from 11 in 2000 to 17 in 2004, that is, 17 women compared to nearly 400 men (*Economist*, 2005). A larger sample of British companies found that 65% had no women on their boards in 2003. Although women lead three large UK organizations, they are not British women. Marjorie Scardino, CEO of Pearson Publishing and Laura Tyson, head of the London Business School are from the US, and Clara Furse, head of the London stock exchange, is Canadian (*Economist*, 2005). In 2005, only 5% of executives of French companies were women, and gender equality in the French workplace "is a far-off dream" (*Economist*, 2005).

There is little evidence of gender equality in the Japanese workplace, with Japan measuring 69th of 75 countries on gender equality, and 44th of 64 countries on gender empowerment in 2003 (United Nations Human Development Report, 2003). Female employees receive significantly lower performance evaluations than their male counterparts, and women are not expected to reach high-level positions or stay at a company for the long term (Duignan and Iaquinto, 2005). But there has been some progress. In 2005, two women were appointed to head large Japanese companies: Fumiko Hayashi, chairman and CEO of Daiei, a supermarket chain; and Tomoyo Nonaka, CEO of Sanyo Electric. Yet a top manager at Nissan notes that what has changed least in Japanese business in the past 20 years is “the mindset of Japanese gentlemen” (*Economist*, 2005).

In the U.S. nearly 60% of all women were in the labor force in 2005, and 75% of those worked full time. Women comprised 46% of the total US labor force, with the largest percentage of employed women (38%) working in management and professional jobs, followed by 35% in sales and office jobs, 20% in service, and 6% in production. Women accounted for 50% of all workers in high paying management and professional positions, outnumbering men in managerial jobs in finance, human resources, education, medical, and others. Between 1994 and 2004, women’s employment in management grew faster than employment in service jobs – 43% compared to 34% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005).

But this growth is not reflected in the number of female CEOs of the Fortune 500. Between 1987 and 1996, the number did not change. Although ten years later the situation had improved, only ten women ran Fortune 500 companies in 2006 compared to nine in 2005, and a total of 20 Fortune 1000 companies have women in the top job compared to 19 the year prior (Fortune,

2006). From 1987 and 1996, women's representation on boards of Fortune 500 companies increased, from 0.5 women to 1.2 women on the average board. In a study of the top 200 companies in the SandP 500, 16% of directors are women, while 97% of boards have at least one female director, and 64% have more than one (Daum, Neff, and Norris, 2006).

In emerging markets, the representation of women in CEO positions is also very low. The International Labor Organization estimates that women hold between 25% and 35% of private sector managerial positions in Latin America (ILO, 2003). But in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and Colombia the percentage of women in director or manager positions was 14%, 16%, 20%, 23% and 35% respectively (Maxfield, 2005). The percentage of women in president or vice-president positions is far smaller: none in Argentina and between 2.5% and 14% in the other countries. Less than 3% of CEO jobs in Mexico are held by women (Rueda, Pfeifer and Velázquez, 2006). Corporate board membership by women is also low: in Argentina, only 7% of corporate board seats are held by women, and in Mexico, only 3% (Maxfield, 2005).

Despite the fact that Chile has a female president, that half of government ministries are led by women, and that the government has mandated gender parity in the leadership of public offices, the participation of women in executive positions is very low. Women make up 35% of Chile's total labor force (World Bank, 2006). But a recent study of 100 Chilean companies showed that only 20 have at least one female manager – usually in human resources, legal affairs, marketing and other functions considered to require skills rather than creativity. Of the ten largest Chilean companies, only two have female managers, and only one has a female CEO. Among the 100 companies with the highest level of market value, only 5% of the highest executive positions are held by women (Selman and Veloso, 2006).

In China, women account for 45% of the labor force, and of this, 40% is the share of Chinese women in paid work in the non-agricultural sector (World Bank, 2006). According to the China Association of Women Entrepreneurs, 20% of Chinese companies have women as bosses (Hu, 2006). Forty-four percent of management positions in trading and finance companies in Shanghai are occupied by women, 28% of Shanghai entrepreneurs are women, and of 500 entrepreneurs on the China Rich List, 35 or 7% are women (Hu, 2006). Surveys from the All China Women's Federation show that 90% of women entrepreneurs achieve success one year after starting their businesses, compared to 50% of men. Among 1.5 million companies managed by women, 98% turn a profit (Hu, 2006). Since knowledge is very limited about women's management careers in China, this may be an overly optimistic view of the role of Chinese women as managers (Cooke, 2003).

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development:

The pervasive stereotyping of women's capacity for leadership based on gender keeps women from occupying upper management and leadership positions. A majority of studies on leadership suggest that gender is not a good predictor of leadership performance, a recent study found that managers frequently stereotype women's and men's leadership capabilities, and, in some cultures, these stereotypes discount the effectiveness of women leaders on many highly valued leadership attributes (Catalyst, 2006). In other words, many people do not perceive that women have the skills and capabilities required to be competent managers, and this has a negative influence on women's ability to advance into managerial positions (Catalyst, 2006).

When considering the role of women in management positions in developing and transition economies, much of the literature paints a somewhat gloomy picture. Tomkiewicz et al. (2004),

for instance, investigated attitudes toward women managers in Poland and the U.S. Their findings suggest that while Poland may be extremely challenging environment for women managers, Polish women who aspire to managerial careers are likely to find intense attitudinal impediments. Polish males appear more conservative in their attitude toward women managers than do American male counterparts. Reszke (1990) pointed out the discrimination of women in the labor market in Poland on three dimensions: access to employment, level of payment, and access to managerial positions. Despite possibilities created in Poland due to a market-based economy and the level of higher education that Polish women were achieving, the gap between men and women's status in the labor market exist (Desperak, 2002).

Focusing on students' attitudes toward women as managers in Greece, Mihail (2006) found that gender was the most influential factor in accounting for the differences in attitudes. The findings show that male business students hold relatively negative stereotypic attitudes compared to their female counterparts. Furtherer, no significant differences on such characteristics as age, work experience, and cooperation with female supervisor was noticed.

Recent research about women as managers in various countries suggests that where there are cultural differences, there are differences in the perceptions of women as managers. For example, in countries where Hofstede's (2001) masculinity (assertiveness) and power distance dimensions rank high, we predict a less positive perception of women as managers. In Venezuela and Chile, both countries with high masculinity scores, gender and nationality have significant effects on gender stereotypes in the workplace (Nicholson and Wong, 2002). In another study, Chileans resist the idea of women as managers more than do their US counterparts, perhaps because the roles of men and women are more traditional in that country

(Owen et al., 2003). Maltese male employees and students express more traditional and stereotypical attitudes toward women in management than their female counterparts, explaining why Maltese women face barriers as they seek careers in management (Cortis and Cassar, 2005).

Either in the media or in the local or national newspapers we read the success stories of women as business owner and/or entrepreneurs. Although the image of the successful business woman is portrayed frequently in the media, the reality may be different. While Chinese women legally enjoy equal rights with men in employment, and although the media show that Chinese women have won almost equal status evidenced by a strong presence in business, Chinese women are vastly underrepresented in managerial positions. In the public sector, where statistics are regularly gathered, women occupy less than 8% of managerial positions in government organizations. Further, most women are clustered at the flat or bottom end of the organizational pyramid such that “men are generals and women are soldiers” (Cooke, 2003). In one of the few studies of private sector organizations, Chinese salesmen opine that women do not possess managerial characteristics, and that female sales managers are not accepted by Chinese salespeople (Dubinsky, Comer and Liu, 2002).

Chinese tradition still demands that women focus their lives on their families and husbands. Women are subservient to the family patriarch and stay low in the society. The image of a successful businesswoman may make husbands lose face (Hu, 2006). Indeed, in a survey of 30 Shanghai female entrepreneurs, 25% were divorced with 80% of divorces occurring after the women had achieved success in business. Chinese women, as women in other parts of Asia and the world, face considerable barriers in their desire to become managers and assume high level

positions in their organizations (Benson and Yukongdi, 2005). This suggests that where traditionalist values dominate, there is a less positive perception of women as managers.

Everett et al., (1996), using a sample of MBA students enrolled at an urban Southern University, found that attitudes of men toward women executives is generally negative, and attitudes of women generally positive. Ng (1995) conducted a similar study in Hong Kong and reached a similar conclusion as Everett et al. (1996). Aycan (2004) examined the factors that influence women's career development in such emerging market as Turkey. He found that self-confidence and determination are key success factors for achieving career goals for women managers in Turkey. In another study, Sakalli and Beydogan (2002) investigated Turkish college students' attitudes toward managers. Their study showed that male respondents indicated less positive attitude toward women managers than their female counterparts.

The perception of women managers is more positive in the US, followed by Mexico, Japan and then India, perhaps due to cultural differences including the educational level (Srinivas, Allen and Sakamoto, 1999) and attitudes about equality in the workplace among respondents. Curiously, stereotypes that discredit women (and favor men) as managers exist in some countries that have high levels of gender equality (Catalyst, 2006; Hofstede, 2001).

Based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There are significant attitudinal differences between gender groups toward women as managers across China, Chile, and the U.S. cultures.

Hypothesis 2: Chilean and U.S. men and women have more positive perceptions women as managers than their Chinese counterparts.

Hypotheses 3: Chinese men and women tend to show the lowest perceptions of women as managers compared to the Chilean and the U.S. cultures.

Methodology

Sample

When conducting the cross-cultural research, where there are challenges of collecting data with the sample population, the student community can be considered as representing a reality of the characteristics typically found in a society as whole and in the workforce in particular (Mihail, 2006; Ng, 1995). The university students, no matter where they study and what culture they belong, have their own convictions, values, and reality like those working individuals and /or managers. Therefore, students as participants in social science research in general and organizational behavior research in particular to study the perceptions of women as managers can provide insight of how future managers may assess roles and tasks of women and men in organizational settings (Deal and Stevenson, 1998; Tomkiewicz and Adeyemi-Bello, 1995; Owen et al., 2003). Students often work in public, private, and non-profit settings where they exhibit the behaviors common among individuals who have longer tenure in the workforce and thus represent a niche for the study of organizational phenomena (Greenberg, 1987).

Participants in our study were 636 undergraduate students enrolled in degree programs at a large state university in Beijing, China, a large public-private university in the eighth region of Chile, and a large Midwestern university in the United States. Chinese participants included 90 women and 122 men (mean age = 20.41 years). Chilean participants included 74 women and 155 men (mean age = 26.00 years). US participants included 99 women and 96 men (mean age = 23.74 years). All three groups were in at least their junior year (third year) of study towards a US bachelor's degree or the Chinese and Chilean equivalents. Chinese, Spanish, and English were the primary languages spoken by the Chinese, Chilean, and US participants respectively.

Participants employment status varied by country group with the Chinese sample having the least amount of employed individuals (0.10 % employed at least part-time) followed by the Chilean sample (35.80% employed at least part-time), and the US sample (85.50% employed at least part-time). This variability in employment reflects the nature of undergraduate education in the three countries where in the US it is typical for students to hold some form of employment and less typical in Chile. In China almost all undergraduate students attend the university full-time and are not employed. Participants were grouped according to country (China, Chile, and US) and gender (female and male). This assignment of participants to groups resulted in a 3 x 2 design with six groups.

Variables, Instrument, and Languages Translation

All participants responded to a set of twenty-one attitude statements relating to women in management known in the literature as the *Women as Managers Scale* (WAMS: Peters, Terborg, and Taynor, 1974; Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, and Smith, 1977). The instrument includes 11 positively worded and 10 negatively worded (reverse coded for scale construction) items which reflect stereotypical statements (e.g., ambition, responsibility, skill, and aggressiveness) about women performing managerial roles in organizations. A seven-point Likert response format was used with scale anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Used with full-time worker samples (Crino, White, and DeSanctis, 1981; Owen and Todor, 1993) and student samples (Owen et al., 2003; Ware and Cooper-Studebaker, 1989), the validity and reliability of the *Women as Managers Scale* (WAMS) has been demonstrated during the instrument's initial development (Peters et al., 1974; Terborg et al., 1977) and has shown continued moderate to high reliability over a thirty year period.

Since our sample consisted of three different language and country groups we translated the WAMS from English to the two other target languages of the participants, Chinese and Spanish. We utilized the traditional translation/back translation method (Brislin, Lonner, and Thorndike, 1973; Guthery and Lowe, 1992; Hwang, Yan, and Scherer, 1996). The following procedure was used for translation. Two bilingual researchers translated the WAMS from English to Chinese individually. Together they reviewed their separate translations to identify any differences in words and phrases used. Once translation differences were resolved, a third bilingual researcher translated the WAMS back to English. The team of three Chinese-English speakers assessed discrepancies in translation back to English. Finally, the Chinese language version of the WAMS was pre-tested on a small group of native Chinese speakers in Beijing, China. After this administration of the instrument, several modifications to the original translation were made. For the Spanish version of the WAMS a similar translation/back translation procedure was followed with a pre-test administered in Concepción, Chile.

Analysis

We performed a factor analysis on our sample to identify the dimensionality of the WAMS as administered in Chinese, Spanish, and English. Table 1 displays the results of the factor analysis. Using eigenvalues greater than one criterion, two factors were extracted and these two accounted for 40.51% of the variance. A decision was made to interpret loadings that were no less than .50 on a primary factor. For the two factors this resulted in a total of 13 items being interpreted. None of these items loaded less than .60 on its primary factor, or greater than .24 on its secondary factor, thus providing some assurance of differentiation between the two factors. Review of the items included in each factor led us to label Factor I as ability of women in

managerial roles (“Ability”; 8 items) and Factor II as acceptance of women in managerial roles (“Acceptance”; 5 items). Scales for each of the two factors were formed by summation of items.

The scale’s reliability was tested by using the Cronbach’s alpha. This is a measure of internal consistency, based on the average inter-item correlations. Given the relatively strong loadings on primary factors, scale reliabilities were moderately high for both Ability (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.87) and Acceptance (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.86). Higher scores on Ability and Acceptance indicate more favorable perceptions of women as managers. The correlation between Ability and Acceptance of .37 ($p < .01$) indicated that there was moderately low overlap between the two dimensions.

Insert Table 1 about here

Findings

Our hypothesis focused on differences among countries on perceptions of women as managers. With two dimensions, Ability and Acceptance, identified we began our analysis, using a holistic multivariate approach (Barker and Barker, 1984; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). First, we performed a MANOVA to determine if there were differences between gender and country groups on Ability and Acceptance as a set. We also performed *post hoc* tests of differences between group means (centroids) using a multivariate extension of the Scheffé technique. We also reviewed the canonical correlation between Ability and Acceptance as well as the discriminant loadings for contributions of the two WAMS dimensions to the set. Second, given a significant multivariate effect, we performed an ANOVA to identify mean group

differences at the univariate level using the Scheffé test. This analysis provided us information on the magnitude and direction of group differences on the individual variables.

MANOVA results revealed that there were significant differences for both the gender and country effects, ($F = 71.78$; $df = 2$ and 628 ; $p < .01$); thus, providing support for hypothesis one. US and Chilean men had more positive perceptions of women as managers than Chinese men on the combined WAMS variable and were significantly different ($p < .01$) from the Chinese men, this supported hypothesis two. While US and Chilean women were significantly different ($p < .01$) from all of the other groups their WAMS perceptions were not significantly different from each other. Chinese women and men had the lowest perceptions of women as managers on the combined WAMS variable and were significantly different from each other ($p < .01$). This supports hypothesis three.

US and Chilean men had more positive perceptions of women as managers than Chinese men on the combined WAMS variable and were significantly different ($p < .01$) from the Chinese men, but not from each other. US women had more positive perceptions of women as managers, as evidenced by the higher group centroids (see Table 2 for group centroid values and Table 3 for between group differences).

A review of the canonical correlation between Ability and Acceptance ($r_c = .56$) indicated a moderate degree of association between the two WAMS dimensions. Ability (discriminant loading = .89) contributed the strongest to the two-variable set while Acceptance (discriminant loading = .64) contributed moderately. Given these multivariate results, our analysis shifted to the univariate level to identify group mean differences on the individual Ability and Acceptance variables.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

A significant ANOVA result was obtained for Ability ($F = 46.22$; $df = 5$ and 630 ; $p < .01$). Similar to the results at the multivariate level, US and Chilean women had the most positive perceptions (see Table 2 for group mean values and Table 3 for between group differences on both Ability and Acceptance), but were not significantly different from each other (although US women had the highest mean on Ability). US women were significantly ($p < .05$) different from and had a higher group mean on Ability than all the groups of men and Chinese women. Chilean women had a significantly ($p < .05$) higher group mean on Ability than Chinese men and women and Chilean and US men. Chinese men had the lowest group mean, but were not significantly different from Chinese women. Chilean men were significantly ($p < .05$) different and had more positive Ability perceptions of women as managers than did Chinese men and women.

The ANOVA result for Acceptance was significant ($F = 26.68$; $df = 5$ and 630 ; $p < .01$). All of the between group differences were the same as for the *post hoc* tests of mean differences on the Ability dimension with the exception of two tests for mean differences between pairs of groups. First, US, Chilean, and Chinese women were not significantly different with respect to the Acceptance WAMS dimension. US and Chilean women had almost identical Acceptance means followed by Chinese women who had the lowest mean among the women groups. Second, Chinese women were significantly ($p < .05$) different from Chinese men. Chinese women had more positive perceptions with respect to Acceptance than Chinese men.

Discussion

The results of our study provide preliminary evidence that US and Chilean women have high positive perceptions of women as managers on the Ability and Acceptance WAMS dimensions, and the combined dimension. Chinese men and women have the lowest perception of women as managers on all three factors. In all three nations, men have the lowest perception of women as managers than their same-country women counterparts. In fact, US females had the highest positive perception of women as managers, followed rather closely by Chilean females, while Chinese males had the lowest perception of women as managers. Therefore, we find most interesting the difference between the Chinese sample, and the US and Chilean samples. Three arguments may explain the results.

First, the United States and Chile report higher per capita incomes and higher levels of social and economic development than China. In the United States and in Chile, women have played a more important role in business and politics in recent history evidenced by their presence in a greater number of managerial positions (Daily et al., 1999; Rueda et al., 2006). In China, which has the lowest GDP as compared to the U.S. and Chile, women are not found frequently in managerial roles (Frank, 2001), and that women are seen as having little or no place being in the male-dominated working world (Liu et al., 2001). The results support the notion that the more developed socio-economically the country, the more positive the perception of women as managers.

Second, the Chinese results may reflect the persistence of traditionalist values that do not place many women in high level managerial positions. Despite over a decade of economic growth, women are still concentrated in low-status jobs where they perform repetitive work (Liu et al., 2001). China's culture emphasizes women's role and responsibilities to the family.

Chinese traditional society suggests that the virtuous woman is obedient, quiet, self-effacing, devoting herself solely to the family (Leung, 2003), and women managers are believed by many Chinese to be “unfair, hard to work with, and narrow-minded” compared to male managers (Rajerison, 1996). The Confucian adage that “it is a virtue if a woman doesn’t have ability” leads women to be socialized to be shy and relatively unassertive. Although these values have changed somewhat as China has developed politically and economically, they still have a significant influence on society’s behavior (Frank, 2001). Leading Chinese businesswomen believe that women are natural managers, but they find the road to leadership is very hard.

Third, the results suggest there may be more acceptance of inequality among groups of people in Chinese society, as explained by the power distance dimension of Hofstede’s national cultural differences (Franke, Hofstede and Bond, 2002). Chile’s power distance score of 60 suggests greater acceptance of inequality than the US. This supports the idea that Hispanic cultures place a greater value on power distance than do Anglo cultures (Stone, Stone-Romero, and Johnson, 2007). Nevertheless, the US and Chile’s scores of 35 and 60 respectively are significantly lower than China’s score of 80. China’s high score suggests that inequalities of wealth and particularly power are dominant in that society. In China, people may still accept the stratified system that limits upward mobility of some citizens, in this case, women. The lower power distance scores suggest that Americans and Chileans accept fewer differences of power and wealth among people, such that equal opportunity for everyone – including women – is more accepted. So, where people are more likely to accept that women are not equal to men, there is a less positive perception of women as managers.

Managerial Implications

Our study provides preliminary evidence that there are differences among genders on the perceptions of women as managers in three countries that vastly differ culturally and in socioeconomic developments. The study offers important managerial insights for international managers. A brief discussion of the implications is presented below.

Legitimacy of Women as Managers

National culture seems certain to influence people's perceptions of women as managers in an organizations. Women, particularly non-US women from emerging and transition economies should understand that as they rise into managerial ranks of local organizations, their legitimacy as managers may be questioned by other men and women in the organization. The challenges facing these women are particularly great and obvious, since the pervasive, culturally-based the notion that women are not as equal as men may translate to the workplace. Colleagues and subordinates of female managers of in organizations in emerging markets may assume that their female managers have little place in managerial ranks, and undermine these women's efforts to lead.

There are also implications of our study for expatriate women managers. Expatriate females, even those from the US and other industrialized countries, should be aware that their leadership may not always be taken seriously by people from cultures that hold traditional gender roles as highly important. Despite Adler's (1987) research on the *gaijin* effect – that is, that Western women sent on expatriate assignments are perceived as legitimate by local host country nationals – our research suggests that a Western female manager might find that they are not perceived as positively by emerging market subordinates and colleagues as one might expect or desire. Moreover, Hispanic and Asian women who rise to positions of leadership in global firms

may find that they are considered even less legitimate than their Western female counterparts, particularly if they are assigned a management position in a Latin American or Asian country.

We believe that in an emerging market like China or Chile an organizational cultural and structure explains whether or not people will perceive women as viable managers. As developing and emerging market countries move from agrarian to more industrial and service economies, the size and composition of their work forces changes. In Latin American and Asian countries there is greater demand for highly skilled labor, the labor force has become more urbanized, and women's participation in the workforce has grown. As more women enter the permanent work force either to satisfy career goals or to increase family incomes, male workers become more accustomed to women as colleagues and supervisors. Therefore, as countries become more industrialized and improve their economic and social conditions overall, attitudes about working women and women in management are likely to improve and organizational culture likely to change. For example, attitudes toward women as managers are more positive in the US, followed by Mexico, Japan, and then India (Srinivas et al., 1999), suggesting the influence of some social and economic factors. Women worker's chances of becoming managers are better in Taiwan, which has experienced significant socio-economic change. While traditional Taiwanese cultural values continue to be barriers, female managers feel that their opportunities and experiences as managers improved significantly in their generation (Chou, Fosh and Foster, 2005).

Cross-Cultural Training

Today, firms are not only speedily entering foreign markets, but are compelled to compete on the effectiveness and competence of their core human abilities and talent. Increasingly, these core individuals are being required to operate efficiently and effectively across national borders and in a greater number of cross-national job assignments. While immersed in new cultural environments, international assignees are out of their own company culture and personal comfort zones and are faced with a variety of challenges such as the ability to cope with the stress of culture shock. Past research suggests that individuals who are not predisposed or prepared to confront these challenges may perform poorly in their assignments.

Top management should require employees, particularly in high power distance (e.g., the U.S.), highly traditional countries of lower socio-economic development (e.g., China and Chile) to receive training in gender and cross-cultural differences (Goldberg, 2007) as applied to management. This training may help local employees understand that gender has little to do with managerial and leadership capability (Catalyst, 2006). Whether the firm is a local, Latin American company, a US global firm, or an Asian multinational, top management must ensure that women rise to managerial roles surrounded by conditions that help them succeed. It is not that women managers need excuses or more managerial breaks. Simply put, evidence suggests that national and cultural differences affect if, and how, subordinates and other colleagues accept women managers. Therefore, training in awareness, understanding, and competence managing gender and cultural differences will help employees overcome perceptions that women managers are less legitimate than males, and it will level the playing field allowing competent, female managers to lead their organizations to high performance.

Facing the Changing Global Reality of Women Competing for Management Positions

China and Chile have experienced significant business and economic growth in more than a decade. In these and other emerging markets, we expect the role of women in management to have increased because of the increasing need for skilled people to assume positions of responsibility in the workplace, and the demand for more knowledge workers to perform high skilled jobs rises. More Chilean women have assumed supervisory positions in recent years, and in 2006 Chile elected a female president, Dr. Michele Bachelet. With the female president, economic and educational conditions will continue to improve, and the peoples' perception of women as managers will change in a positive direction. As the Chinese economy expands and as more young men and women receive higher education, more Chinese women are expected to compete for more management and supervisory positions (Frank, 2001). More women are represented in entry level and middle management positions.

Further, as a country becomes more affluent, people have more disposable income to purchase or "outsource" services and tasks that both women and men traditionally had to do themselves. Thus, a woman who is a wife and mother in a more affluent economic situation can hire household assistants and purchase household appliances that help her accomplish her duties in the home. The perception, then, of a woman as manager becomes more acceptable as people are confident that her traditional duties, as determined by society, are also being properly met. Where socio-economic conditions favor increased educational opportunities for women and greater access to services such as family planning and child care, women's access to employment opportunities also tend to increase (Psacharopoulos and Tzannatos, 1992). As more women enter the labor force and have greater opportunities to engage in managerial roles, the perception

of women as competent leaders should also become more positive (Insch, McIntyre and Napier, 2008).

Building Trust for Long Term Success

While trust is an element defining the structure and performance of local economic organizations, the problems and challenges are global in scope and complexity (Chatterjee and Pearson, 2002). Since trust is an area embedded in collectivistic cultures as Asia and Latin America, its implications in the organizations' domain may enhance our understanding of the local context of doing business. For leaders and managers in the advanced economic, it is important to recognize that building trust is central to long-term relationship and business success, especially when it comes to conducting business in Asian and Latin American cultures as these represent collectivistic as opposed to individualistic cultures as the U.S.

Trust has increasingly been seen as the key component of managerial framework in Asian and Latin American organizations. Trust means that one believes in and is willing to depend on another party with positive expectations for competent and honest action in situation (Das and Teng 1998). This means that not only seeing managers as able and confident person, but also as accepting that person with no gender bias. When the elements of trust such as competence, integrity, and benevolence are seen in managers, they need to be recognized and valued regardless of gender. Otherwise, managers, especially women managers in any society, feel that they are not accepted and valued even if they are capable performing their jobs equal to or better their male counterparts. In the U.S., business relationships may be more frequently formed based on performance. However, in China and Chile, for example, personal relationships take precedence over business (Amoako-Agyei, 2009). In order to be successful, it is imperative to establish

good, personal relationships based on mutual trust. To build trust, male managers in both advanced and emerging economies must gain deeper understanding of cross-cultural differences and accept the role of women as managers and recognize their abilities and skills. Sustained interactions and meaningful communications pave the way for building sustained relationships between male and female managers in such countries as China and Chile.

Directions for Future Research

As with other research, this study has limitations that need to be addressed to advance the growing field of International Human Resource Management. First, our study was cross-sectional and thus does not represent the breadth of organizations or workplace contexts in the US, Chile, or China. Therefore, we need additional research to confirm the current study's results. Future investigations might replicate our study and compare our results to those obtained from research in other cultures and countries to identify similarities and differences. Second, even though we identified differences among country and gender groups, we cannot draw causal conclusions from the results. The results should be interpreted as providing initial insight into the relationships we studied. Third, though we identified two dimensions of perceptions of women as managers (Ability and Acceptance), they do not represent the full range of perceptions that individuals may have with respect to women as managers. In our study we identified a common set of perceptual dimensions to allow us to make comparisons. There are additional dimensions of how people perceive women as managers, and some may be unique to a specific country or culture. For example, to more fully understand how perceptions of women as managers function between genders and among countries future research should consider culture and gender-specific variables that may impact the formation of these perceptions with respect to

societal role expectations. Additionally, it would be useful if future research controlled for contextual variables such as income, managerial level, and education to identify factors which may differentiate perceptions by segmenting these factors. Fourth and finally, although we are confident in the validity of the proxy variables (GDP + PPP and HDI) for measuring level of socio-economic development and equality, a future study might measure these variables more directly to provide stronger confirmatory evidence. Since social and economic conditions appear to significantly affect how positively people perceive women as managers, future research might better unpack this construct and identify other ways to measure these variables within and across countries and cultures.

Conclusions

An important result of this study was the comparison of male and female attitudes about women as managers in three countries, and the finding that there are gender and country differences depending on their views on gender equality, and the country's level of development. The study offers a model to other investigators who might wish to further this research and apply the WAMS in countries that use languages other than English. We also identified two reliable constructs, Ability and Acceptance, which provided a common metric for investigation across three languages and three countries. This approach, which was both multi-lingual and multi-cultural, provides insight to the study of women, managers, and business practices in Western and non-Western countries.

As women rise to managerial positions in global firms, their legitimacy may be challenged, particularly if they are asked to manage people in a Latin or Asian location. Yet as emerging market countries grow, women of many nationalities will expand their role and rise to higher

levels of managerial responsibility. Training in gender and cultural differences may be useful to help local employees understand that gender has little to do with managerial and leadership capability, and level the playing field for women managers. Men and women who question the capabilities of women managers may learn to appreciate their competencies, and more importantly, to see women as critical resources that will assist modern global organizations achieve high performance.

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Table 1

Factor Analysis of the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS)

Item ^{a,b}	Factor I ^c	Factor II ^c	Mean	S.D.
I. Ability				
1. Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.	<u>.79</u>	.17	6.05	.94
2. Women are not ambitious enough to be successful in the business world.	<u>.76</u>	.14	6.04	.97
3. Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.	<u>.73</u>	.18	6.06	.97
4. On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization's overall goals than are men.	<u>.72</u>	.15	6.09	.98
5. Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	<u>.72</u>	.24	6.08	.97
6. Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	<u>.65</u>	.00	6.12	1.00
7. Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	<u>.61</u>	.00	6.00	.97
8. It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	<u>.60</u>	.21	6.22	.93
II. Acceptance				
9. Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers.	.15	<u>.79</u>	6.22	1.26
10. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.	.16	<u>.78</u>	6.22	1.24
11. Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.	.17	<u>.78</u>	6.39	1.08
12. Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programs.	.00	<u>.75</u>	6.49	1.12
13. It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	.11	<u>.74</u>	6.30	1.14
Eigenvalues	4.68	3.82		
% of Variance	22.30	18.21		
Cronbach's α	.87	.86		

^a Results shown are for the two factors used in the analyses.

^b Items 1 through 8 were reverse coded.

^c Primary loadings are underlined.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics by Group and Variable

Variable	US				Chile					
	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Ability ^a	48.36	6.03	53.67	2.90	47.38	4.48	52.46	3.78	45.43	5.12
Acceptance ^a	31.73	3.68	34.07	1.65	31.13	4.54	34.00	1.79	28.26	6.01
Combined WAMS ^b	-.04		1.08		-.26		.88		-.89	

^a Univariate results.

^b Multivariate results (group centroids).

Table 3

Post-hoc Comparisons between Pairs of Groups

Variable	Differing Groups ^{a,b,c}
Ability	1 from 2,4,5 2 from 3,5,6 3 from 4,5 4 from 5,6
Acceptance	1 from 2,4,5 2 from 3,5 3 from 4,5 4 from 5 5 from 6
Combined WAMS	1 from 2,4,5,6 2 from 3,5,6 3 from 4,5 4 from 5,6 5 from 6

^a Groups are: 1 = US males; 2 = US females; 3 = Chilean males;
4 = Chilean females; 5 = Chinese males; 6 = Chinese females.

^b Scheffé test used for all univariate *post-hoc* differences shown.

^c Mahalanobis D² used for all multivariate *post-hoc* difference tests.

