

A Comparative Analysis of Attitudes Towards Women as Managers in the U.S. and Netherlands

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This paper examines attitudes towards women as managers in a sample (n=166) of U.S. and Dutch male and female undergraduate business students using the women as managers scale (WAMS). Across both cultures, three factors emerged from the WAMS and were labeled “ability,” “acceptance,” and “female specific barriers.” Results showed that females held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did males. Similarly, but contrary to expectations, U.S. participants held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did Dutch participants. These results can inform both women managers and multinational corporations interested in improving the success of their international assignments.

INTRODUCTION

According to data from the World Bank (2016), women presently represent only 39.6% of the global workforce. Labor force participation rates for women vary greatly within countries, where they are as high as 54% in Rwanda but as low as 13.1% in the United Arab Emirates (World Bank, 2016). Nevertheless, several studies in developed countries have reported that while the number of women in the workplace has grown, the number of women in managerial roles has all but stalled (Javalgi, Scherer, Sanchez, et al., 2011; Vianen and Fischer, 2002). For example, although women make up 45% of the overall S&P 500 labor force, they account for only 37% of the first or mid-level managers in those companies. Moreover, women represent only 25% of S&P 500 executive and senior level managers, hold only 19% of its board seats, and comprise only 4.6% of its CEOs (Center for American Progress, 2015).

Attitudes towards women in managerial roles have been widely investigated in the literature (e.g., Guney, Gohar, Akinci, and Akinci, 2006). Although research has shown that women are just as capable as men, women continue to be perceived as lacking the necessary knowledge, skills, and/or abilities to be successful in upper management roles (Dodge, Gilroy, and Mickey-Fenzel, 1995; Guney et al, 2006). This is troubling because conscious and unconscious stereotyping of women in managerial roles may result in discriminatory behavior (Javalgi et al., 2011; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). As employers consider females for managerial assignments (both domestic and international), it is important

they fully understand the attitudes of their workforce. For example, if results were to reveal that male supervisors held unfavorable views of women as managers, then employers would benefit from directly confronting and discussing these prejudices with them. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes towards women as managers. In particular, this study examines attitudes towards women as managers between males and females in the U.S. and Netherlands.

This study seeks to contribute to the literature in several ways. First, to date, no study has directly explored attitudes towards women as managers in the Netherlands. Thus, this study seeks to make an important contribution to the literature's collective knowledge of global cultures by being the first to directly examine the Dutch. Second, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by comparing attitudes towards women as managers across cultures. Although research regarding the factors linked to the acceptance and success of women as managers in independent countries is growing, comparative cross-national research remains scarce (Broadbridge, 2010; Huse and Solberg, 2006). Similarly, according to Brookfield's Global Mobility Trends Survey (2016), the U.S. ranked #1 in the world with the most international assignees (22%) while the Netherlands ranked #17 in the world (3%). Thus, this study helps fill this gap by comparing attitudes towards women as managers across cultures where international assignments are abundant. Third, it appears cross-national studies concerning attitudes towards women as managers have not explored the separate and distinct effects of sex and culture. For example, a study may compare attitudes towards women as managers between males and females in Countries A and B. These studies have traditionally directly compared Country A males to Country A females to Country B males to Country B females using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). However, if differences in attitudes towards women as managers are found between say Country A males and Country B females, their analyses cannot discern if the effects were entirely related to sex, culture, or a combination of the two. Moreover, the relative contributions to variance explained in attitudes towards women as managers cannot be determined. This study seeks to improve on past research by clearly articulating the distinct effects of sex and culture as well as their contributions to variance explained in attitudes towards women as managers.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: First, this paper reviews the literature concerning attitudes towards women as managers. Second, it provides an overview of key background information on the U.S. and Netherlands and draws comparisons between the two. Third, this paper then discusses the roles of sex and culture in influencing attitudes towards women as managers. Following these, this paper describes its methodology, discusses its results, and concludes with implications for research and practice in addition to reviewing its limitations and directions for future research.

Literature Review of Attitudes Towards Women as Managers

Interest in attitudes towards women as managers burgeoned in the 1970's, particularly with the development of several different measures aimed at assessing negative stereotypical impressions of women in leadership positions. At first, research concerning attitudes towards women as managers was carried out exclusively in Western samples. For instance, in a study of 280 employees working in an international distributing company, females held significantly more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than men (Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, and Smith, 1977). Similarly, research among MBA students between 1975 and 1983, found that male students maintained consistently negative attitudes towards women as managers while female students maintained consistently positive attitudes during the same eight-year period (Dubno, 1985). Everett, Thorne, and Danehower (1996) replicated and extended Dubno (1985), exploring MBA student attitudes towards women as managers from 1975 to 1991. They found that attitudes of male MBA students towards women as managers were still largely negative, while the attitudes of female MBA students were still largely positive.

Later, research concerning attitudes towards women as managers began to receive attention internationally (Cordano et al., 2002). For example, Gulhati (1990) examined differences between 173 male and female managers working in the health, social service, and education sectors in India using the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS). Their study found that Indian female managers held more favorable attitudes than did their male counterparts. Similarly, Ng (1995) studied differences between male and

female part-time MBA students in Hong Kong using WAMS, finding significant differences related to sex were found. In a mixed sample of undergraduate business majors, government employees, and bank employees in Nigeria, Adeyemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz (1996) found that Nigerian females held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did Nigerian males.

Finally, scholarship concerning attitudes towards women as managers transitioned over into cross national research. Cordano et al. (2002) first examined attitudes towards women as managers in a sample of Chilean and U.S. male and female undergraduate business students. Their analysis found that there were no differences in “acceptance” of women as managers across cultures, but there were differences related to sex. Further, they found that both sex and culture were related to the perceived “ability” of women as managers. Lastly, they found that sex explained nearly three times the variance in attitudes towards women as managers than did culture. Tomkiewicz, Frankel, Adeyemi-Bello, and Sagan (2004) compared attitudes towards women as managers between male and female U.S. and Polish “professionals.” Results indicated that Polish respondents as a whole held more conservative attitudes towards women as managers when compared to U.S. respondents as a whole. Further, results indicated that U.S. females held the most favorable attitudes towards women as managers followed by Polish females, then U.S. males, and finally Polish males.

In 2006, Guney et al. studied attitudes towards women as managers in a sample of 219 academicians in Turkey and Pakistan. Their study found that both Turkish males and females shared negative views of women as managers and that women’s attitudes were even more negative than men’s. Further, in relation to attitudes towards women as managers, they found that Pakistani women held more favorable attitudes than Pakistani men, Pakistani women held more favorable attitudes than Turkish women, and that Pakistani men held more favorable attitudes than Turkish men. In 2009, Sincoff, Owen, and Coleman studied attitudes towards women as managers in sample of undergraduate and graduate business students in China and the U.S. Their study indicated that overall, women were perceived less favorably as managers by Chinese and U.S. males as compared with Chinese and U.S. females. Last of all, Javalgi et al. (2011) studied attitudes towards women as managers in undergraduate business students across China, Chile, and the U.S. Their study found that U.S. men and Chilean men held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did Chinese men. Additionally, Chinese men and women held the least favorable attitudes overall.

Background for Country Comparisons: U.S. and Netherlands

The U.S. and Netherlands provide a rich and fitting backdrop for comparing attitudes towards women as managers across international borders due to several unique differences in macro environmental factors, gender gap data, and contextual labor force figures and legislation.

First, the U.S. and Netherlands differ markedly on an array of macro environmental factors, underscoring their diversity and distinctiveness. Among these factors in which the U.S. and Netherlands differ include market potential measured in population (U.S. = 321.37 million vs. Netherlands = 16.95 million), economic growth measured in GDP real growth (U.S. = 2.5% vs. Netherlands = 1.9%), unemployment rates (U.S. = 5.2% vs. Netherlands = 6.9%), and labor force (U.S. = 156.40 million vs. Netherlands = 7.88 million), just to name a few. Moreover, these countries differ in government type (U.S. = federal presidential republic vs. Netherlands = parliamentary constitutional monarchy) and legal system (U.S. = common law vs. Netherlands = civil law), as well as in terms of advancements in communications technology, transportation systems, and international exports (CIA World Fact Book, 2016).

Second, the U.S. and Netherlands differ meaningfully in terms of their gender gap. The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report (2015) ranked a total of 145 countries on how well resources and opportunities are divided among their male and female populations. The index examines each country’s ability to close the gender gap between men and women in four categories: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Higher rankings reflect greater equality whereas lower rankings reflect greater inequality. Overall, across all four categories taken together, the U.S. ranked 28th out of 145 countries while the Netherlands ranked

13th out of 145 countries. These results indicate that there is greater equality between genders in the Netherlands than in the U.S. overall.

Economic participation and opportunity is concerned with the gap between men and women's labor force participation, remuneration, and advancement. In this category, the U.S. ranked 6th out of 145 countries whereas the Netherlands ranked 39th out of 145 countries. These results indicate that there is greater equality between genders in the U.S. than in the Netherlands when it comes to economic participation and opportunity.

Education attainment is concerned with the gap between men and women's access to education. In this category, the U.S. ranked 40th out of 145 countries whereas the Netherlands ranked 1st out of 145 countries. These results indicate that there is greater equality between genders in the Netherlands than in the U.S. when it comes to educational attainment.

Health and survival is concerned with the gap between men and women's overall health. In this category, the U.S. ranked 64th out of 145 countries whereas the Netherlands ranked 104th out of 145 countries. These results indicate that there is greater equality between genders in the U.S. than in the Netherlands when it comes to health and survival.

Political empowerment is concerned with the gap between men and women at the highest levels of political decision making. In this category, the U.S. ranked 72nd out of 145 countries whereas the Netherlands ranked 13th out of 145 countries. These results indicate that there is greater equality between genders in the Netherlands than in the U.S. when it comes to political empowerment.

Third, some specific contextual figures concerning the labor force and women in the U.S. and Netherlands also prove useful for understanding differences between these countries. For example, according to a report from The Economist (2015), on average, only one-fifth of the working-age population in European Union member states hold part-time employment (8.7% of men and 32.2% of women). Yet, more than half of all Dutch workers - a remarkable 26.8% of men and 76.6% of women in the Netherlands - are employed in a part-time capacity. In contrast, only 18.9% of workers are part-time in the U.S.: 12.6% are men and 25.8% are women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Consequently, this means that only 23.4% of the approximate 4.6M full time workers in the Netherlands are women (Trading Economics, 2016), while 43.9% of the approximate 121.5M full time workers in the U.S. are women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Moreover, women hold just one-fourth of management positions in the Netherlands. However, these are positions held largely at the middle management level. Only 11% of top leadership positions are held by women in the Netherlands as compared to an average of 23% across Europe as a whole ("Female managers on the rise," 2016) and just 21% of Dutch women serve on corporate boards (Covert, 2015). In the U.S., women account for only 14.6% of executive officers, 8.1% of top earners, 4.6% of Fortune 500 CEO's., and hold just 16.9% of Fortune 500 board seats (Warner, 2014). Taken together, these different social, political, and economic features underscore the suitability of the U.S. and Netherlands for cross-national comparison.

The Role of Sex and Attitudes towards Women as Managers

First receiving widespread attention following a 1986 special report published in the *Wall Street Journal*, the term "glass ceiling" has been used to describe the barriers faced by women in the workforce as they struggle to advance their careers into top management positions. More specifically, "glass ceiling" refers to the imperceptible barriers encountered by female employees, as opposed to overt discrimination, that have persistently limited their accessibility to leadership positions in organizations (Black and Rothman, 1998; Oakley, 2000; Weyer, 2007). The "glass ceiling" has inspired many variations including the "bamboo ceiling" in reference to Asian-Americans and the "marble ceiling" in reference to women in government.

Gender role stereotypes have received a great deal of attention in the management literature and have been cited as one of the major factors contributing to the glass ceiling effect (Mihail, 2006a, b). Gender role stereotypes refer to the commonly held beliefs about characteristics that describe men and women. In general, men are most often regarded as aggressive, competitive, assertive, and competent, whereas

women are most often regarded as kind, expressive, empathetic, compassionate, and nurturing (Curseu and Boros, 2011; Kirchmeyer, 2002). These same sets of beliefs have reinforced a “think manager, think male” climate in the workplace, with research indicating that the characteristics attributed to successful managers are also the ones most closely associated with the stereotypical male image (Schein, 1973, 1975, 1978; Sczesny, 2003). Accordingly, women are thought to be less effective and efficient in managerial roles when compared with their male counterparts. In effect, women are unable to ascend to top leadership positions in their organizations due to conflicting role expectations (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Schein, 2001; Sczesny, 2003).

Prior research holds that women tend to embrace more favorable attitudes toward women roles (e.g. Eagly, Diekmann, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Koenig, 2004). Furthermore, numerous studies indicate that individuals tend to maintain and promote attitudes which reflect an advancement in status, position, or power of the group to which they belong (e.g. Darke and Chaiken, 2005; Newport, 2007; Walker, Field, Giles, Bernerth, and Jones-Farmer, 2007). Applied within the context of management, these tenets suggest that the extent to which men and women are differently positioned in their organizational roles, such that men are thought to be effective and efficient managers and women are thought to be ineffective and inefficient managers, that one would expect women to express attitudes towards women as managers that would improve their disadvantage whereas men would express attitudes towards women as managers that would maintain their advantage (Eagly et al, 2004). Thus, on average, women should hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers when compared to their male counterparts. This prediction is well-supported and documented in the literature (see Adeyemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz, 1996; Blueborn, 1983; Cortis and Cassar, 2005; Liu et al., 2001; Ongen, 2006).

Hypothesis 1: Sex will have a main effect on attitudes towards women as managers, such that females will hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than will males.

The Role of Culture and Attitudes towards Women as Managers

Hofstede’s (1980) model of cultural dimensions is the most widely used typology for characterizing national cultures. In his seminal piece, Hofstede analyzed responses from more than 100,000 people across more than 50 different countries regarding their attitudes about their employment and work environment. His findings revealed systematic cultural differences along four dimensions: *power distance (PD)*, *individualism/collectivism*, *uncertainty avoidance*, and *masculinity/femininity*. Two of these, PD and masculinity/femininity, are especially useful to understanding attitudes towards women as managers.

PD

PD is defined as “the extent to which one accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally” (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, and Lowe, 2009, p. 745). In other words, PD reveals the extent to which a culture accepts inequality among social groups (e.g. men and women) and therefore has particular significance for understanding attitudes towards women as managers (Hofstede, 1980). Cultures low in PD encourage diverse opinions and perspectives and welcome and value the contributions of everyone regardless of social status. In contrast, cultures high in PD often support and reinforce inequalities between groups (e.g. men and women) and develop policies and provisions that maintain a clear hierarchy of who commands and who obeys.

Indeed, prior research has found PD to influence the perceptions of men and women, especially in business settings (Garcia, Posthuma, and Roehling, 2009; Xiumei and Jinyinhg, 2011). For instance, Caligiuri and Tung (1999) found that PD had a negative effect on the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriate women as compared to men. Thus, cultural attitudes about power appear to influence perceptions of women and expectedly should influence perceptions about women in managerial roles. For example, attitudes towards women in managerial roles should be markedly different if one were to compare the U.S. (a country reporting a low PD score of 40) to a country such as Saudi Arabia (a country reporting a high PD score of 95). Unsurprisingly, a review of the available data reveals that women in the

U.S. make up 46.8% of the total U.S. labor force (Department of Labor, 2015) whereas women in Saudi Arabia make up only 16% of the total Saudi Arabian labor force (Chew, 2015). Similarly, it is unsurprising to find that nearly four times as many women are employed as managers in the U.S. as compared to women in Arab countries (where PD as a whole is high; International Labour Office, 2008).

Overall, PD is a compelling cultural variable which researchers can explore to explain differences in the attitudes of men and women in the workplace. However, a comparison of PD between the U.S. and Netherlands reveals but a marginal difference in their orientations along this dimension. The U.S. reports a low PD score (40) and the Netherlands also report a low PD score (38). Accordingly, there should be a small, albeit negligible difference in attitudes towards women as managers across this dimension for U.S. and Dutch individuals, with the Dutch expressing more favorable attitudes towards women as managers. Notwithstanding, significant cultural differences in attitudes towards women as managers may exist between the U.S. and Netherlands if their scores across the masculinity/femininity dimension are also considered. Indeed, the U.S. reports a score of 62 in masculinity/femininity (a high score indicating a masculine culture) in contrast to the Netherlands which reports a score of 14 (a low score indicating a feminine culture).

Masculinity/Femininity

Masculinity/femininity is a cultural dimension which “refers to the distribution of values between the genders ...” (Hofstede, 2011). In a society regarded as feminine there should not be a strong differentiation between genders and their social roles. Thus, in feminine societies Hofstede (2001, p. 297) noted that “Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.” Feminine societies should reflect smaller wage gaps between genders as well as an increased number of women in managerial roles. Conversely, in masculine societies social gender roles are clear and distinct. Thus in masculine societies Hofstede (2001, p. 257) noted that “Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.” Masculine societies should reflect larger wage gaps between genders as well as fewer women in managerial roles. Given the masculine orientation of the U.S. and the feminine orientation of the Netherlands, on average, the Dutch should express more favorable attitudes towards women as managers as compared to their U.S. counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: Culture will have a main effect on attitudes towards women as managers, such that Dutch individuals will hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than will U.S. individuals.

The Joint Effects of Sex and Culture and Attitudes towards Women as Managers

Taking the arguments above together, i.e. that on average, women should hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers when compared to their male counterparts and that on average, the Dutch should express more favorable attitudes towards women as managers as compared to their U.S. counterparts, it follows that sex and culture should interact to influence attitudes towards women as managers. For example, Dutch females should hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than U.S. females.

Hypothesis 3: Sex and Culture will interact to influence attitudes towards women as managers (e.g. Dutch females will hold more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than U.S. females).

METHODS

Sample

The primary source of data for this study was collected through student opinion survey. Participants in this study were 166 undergraduate business administration students: 105 from a large Southeastern university in the U.S. and 61 from a large university in the Netherlands. Overall, respondents were comprised of 92 males and 74 females. The U.S. student participants consisted of 52 males and 53 females whereas the Dutch student participants were comprised of 40 males and 21 females. On average, U.S. student participants were 21.78 years old whereas Dutch student participants were 21.15 years old.

The use of students in empirical studies concerning perceptions of women as managers is a well-regarded and established practice in the literature (Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein, 1989; Ng, 1995, Owen & Scherer, 2000; Owen et al. 2003; Sincoff et al., 2009; and Tomkiewicz and Adeyemi-Bello, 1995). Moreover, business students have been regarded as serving as a useful sample characteristic of both the culture and managers within organizations in their particular countries (Cordano et al., 2002).

Measures

Women as Managers Scale (WAMS)

Participants' responded to a set of twenty-one attitudinal statements concerning different views of women holding managerial positions known in the literature as the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) (Peters et al., 1974; Terborg et al., 1977). The measure included 11 favorably worded items and 10 unfavorably worded items (reverse coded for scale construction) and were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree). Higher scores on the WAMS were associated with more favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles whereas lower scores were associated with less favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles. Sample items included "Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participating in management training programs," "It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions," and "Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world," (reverse coded). The reliability and construct validity of WAMS has been detailed in numerous studies (e.g. Ilgen and Moore, 1983).

Questionnaires were provided to students during class and collected immediately following completion. Although participants were drawn from two separate countries (U.S. and Netherlands) where two separate primary languages are spoken (English and Dutch), the original English-language version of WAMS was provided to Dutch study participants. Dutch study participants were enrolled in a bilingual undergraduate business program in the Netherlands and demonstrated fluency in reading, writing, and speaking English. Accordingly, a traditional translation/back translation method was not needed.

Instrument Analysis

This study did not presume equivalent measurement and theoretical structure of the WAMS across U.S. and Dutch participants (Byrne and Campbell, 1999). Rather, the procedures for establishing cross country (cross-sample) stability common to studies of this nature were followed (e.g. Ommundsen, Morch, Hak, Larsen, and Van der Veer, 2002). First, separate exploratory factor analyses were performed on WAMS items for participants from each country in our sample. Each sample produced three factors containing similar items. For U.S. participants, the percentage of variance explained was 56.23 percent whereas for Dutch participants, the percentage explained was 45.88 percent. Accordingly, the factorial similarity among U.S. and Dutch participants revealed cross-country stability for the WAMS.

Next, U.S. and Dutch participants were combined into a single sample where principal components analysis with varimax rotation was performed. Three factors were extracted with eigenvalues greater than one, collectively accounting for 52.58 percent of the variance. The decision was made to only interpret loadings at the .50 level and above, resulting in 19 items being interpreted.

Items contained in each factor were carefully reviewed. Factor I comprised of 8 items related to the "ability" of women in managerial roles (e.g. On the average, women managers are less capable of

contributing to an organization's overall goals than are men. (reverse coded)). Factor II comprised of 6 items related to the "acceptance" of women in managerial roles (e.g. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.). Lastly, Factor III comprised of 5 items related to "female specific barriers" and women in managerial roles (e.g. The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.). The three-dimensional factor structure for the WAMS found in this study matches the three-dimensional factor structure found in Peters et al.'s (1974) original study, as well as those found in other studies (Cordano, Scherer, and Owen, 2003; Crino, White, and DeSanctis, 1980). For each of the three factors, means were calculated by totaling item scores and then dividing by the number of items. Each of these factors produced Cronbach's alpha scores greater than the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (Factor I = .87; Factor II = .77; and Factor III = .75).

RESULTS

Descriptives

Table 1 lists the mean scores and standard deviations for male and female participants overall, U.S. and Dutch participants overall, as well as U.S. males and females and Dutch males and females individually, across each of the three factors: ability, acceptance, and female specific barriers.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVES BY SEX, CULTURE, AND OVERALL FOR FACTORS EXTRACTED FROM THE WAMS SCALE

	Mean	SD
Males Overall		
Ability	5.15	1.06
Acceptance	5.62	.93
Female specific barriers	4.45	1.10
U.S. Males		
Ability	5.31	1.09
Acceptance	5.79	1.06
Female specific barriers	4.46	1.22
Dutch Males		
Ability	4.93	.99
Acceptance	5.40	.68
Female specific barriers	4.53	.95
Females Overall		
Ability	6.24	.87
Acceptance	6.34	.75
Female specific barriers	5.66	.92
U.S. Females		
Ability	6.47	.48
Acceptance	6.51	.78
Female specific barriers	5.91	.77
Dutch Females		
Ability	5.65	1.12
Acceptance	5.92	1.29
Female specific barriers	5.02	.95

U.S. Overall		
Ability	5.90	1.02
Acceptance	6.16	.99
Female specific barriers	5.20	1.25
Dutch Overall		
Ability	5.18	1.14
Acceptance	5.58	.65
Female specific barriers	4.70	.97

Figure 1 illustrates the comparison of mean scores between males overall (U.S. and Dutch males combined) and females overall (U.S. and Dutch females combined). As predicted (Hypothesis 1), females responded with the most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across all three factors (ability = 6.24, acceptance = 6.34, and female specific barriers = 5.66) as compared with males (ability = 5.15, acceptance = 5.62, and female specific barriers = 4.45). Figure 2 illustrates the comparison of mean scores between U.S. participants overall (U.S. males and females combined) and Dutch participants overall (Dutch males and females combined). Contrary to expectations (Hypothesis 2), U.S. participants responded with the most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across all three factors (ability = 5.90, acceptance = 6.16, and female specific barriers = 5.20) as compared with Dutch participants (ability = 5.18, acceptance = 5.58, and female specific barriers = 4.70).

FIGURE 1
GRAPH ILLUSTRATING COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES OVERALL ACROSS ABILITY, ACCEPTANCE, AND FEMALE SPECIFIC BARRIERS

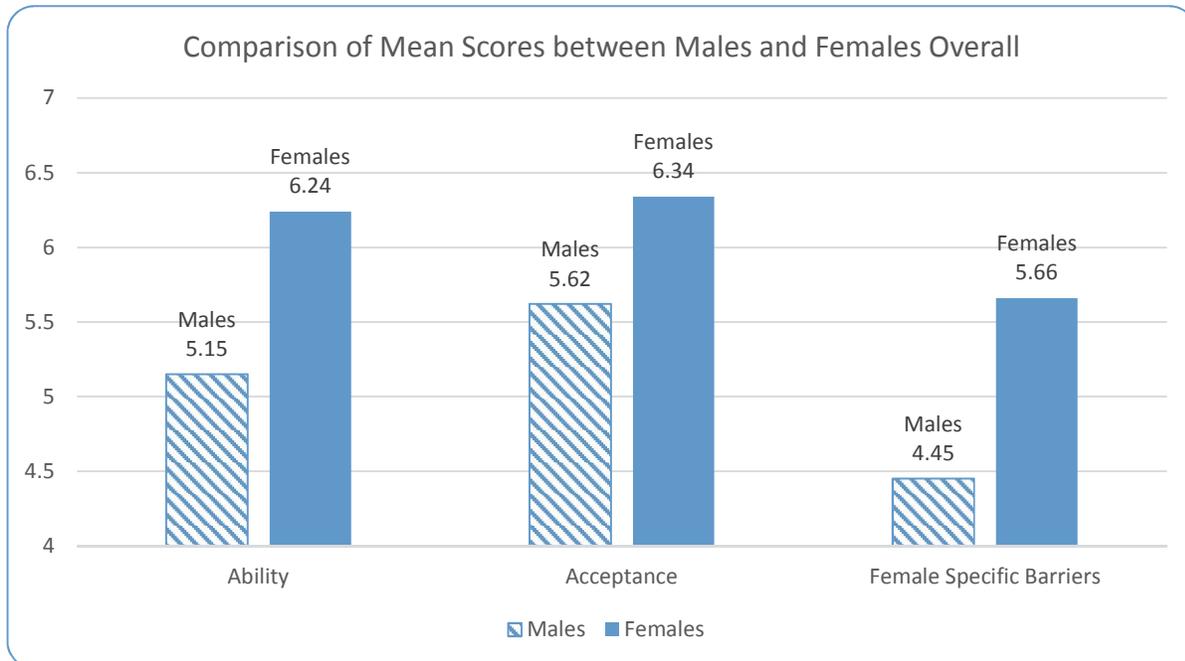


FIGURE 2
GRAPH ILLUSTRATING COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES BETWEEN U.S. AND DUTCH
OVERALL ACROSS ABILITY, ACCEPTANCE, AND FEMALE SPECIFIC BARRIERS
FACTORS

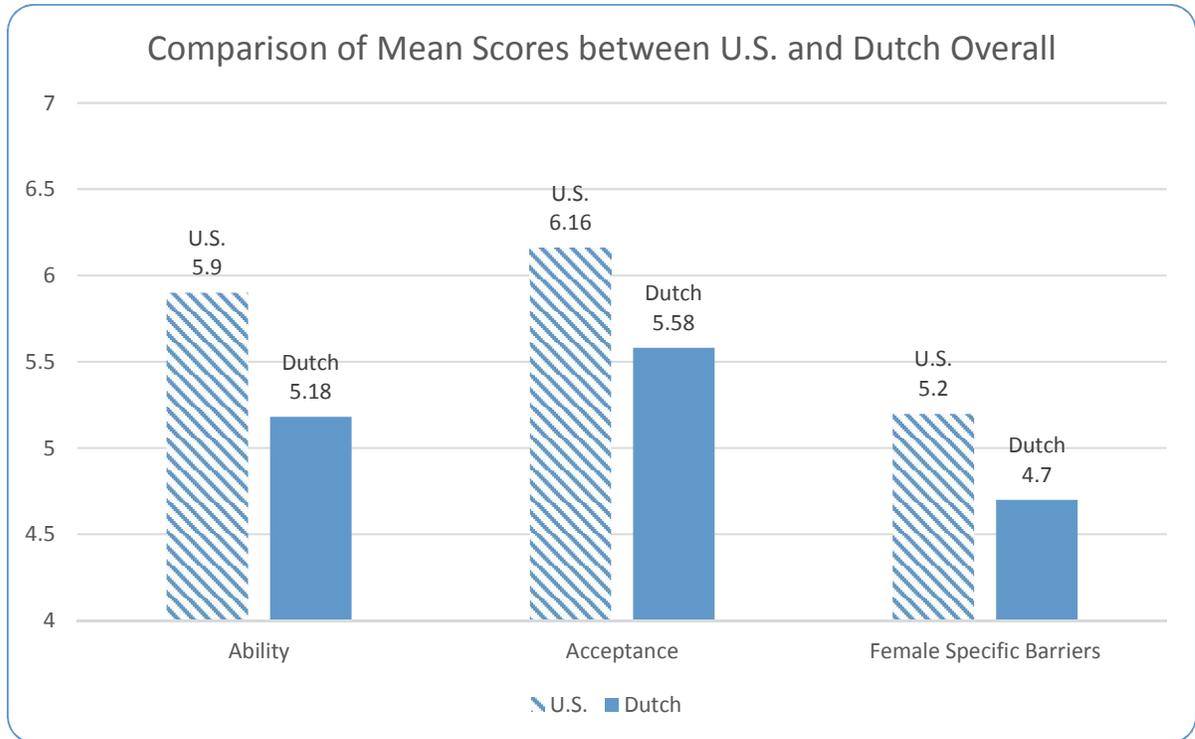
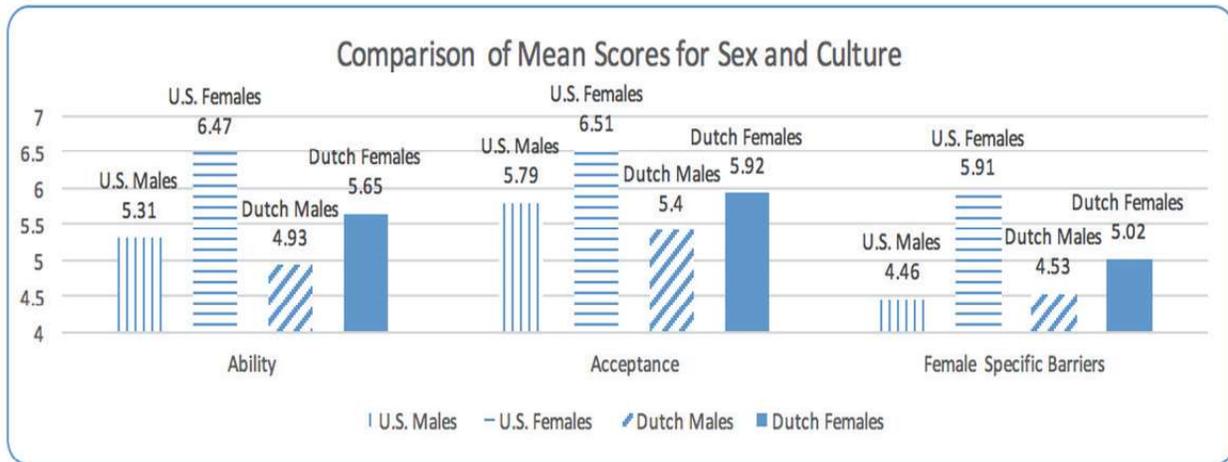


Figure 3 illustrates the comparison of mean scores between U.S. males and females and Dutch males and females individually. Contrary to expectations (Hypothesis 3), U.S. females responded with the most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across all three factors (ability = 6.47, acceptance = 6.51, and female specific barriers = 5.91). Dutch females responded with the second most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across all three factors (ability = 5.65; acceptance = 5.92; and female specific barriers = 5.02). U.S. males responded with the third most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across two of the three factors (ability = 5.31 and acceptance = 5.79), but responded with the least favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles on the third factor (female specific barriers = 4.46). Lastly, Dutch males responded with the least favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles across two of the three factors (ability = 4.93 and acceptance = 5.40), but responded with the third most favorable attitudes towards women in managerial roles on the third factor (female specific barriers = 4.53).

FIGURE 3
GRAPH ILLUSTRATING COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES BETWEEN U.S. MALES, U.S. FEMALES, DUTCH MALES, AND DUTCH FEMALES ACROSS ABILITY, ACCEPTANCE, AND FEMALE SPECIFIC BARRIERS FACTORS



Tests for Group Differences

First, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between sex and culture groups on ability, acceptance, and female specific barriers as a set (see Table 2). Results showed that there were significant effects for the sex grouping variable (Hypothesis 1: $F(3, 160) = 18.41, p = < .001$), the culture grouping variable (Hypothesis 2: $F(3, 160) = 7.03, p = < .001$), as well as a significant interaction between the sex and culture grouping variables (Hypothesis 3: $F(3, 160) = 2.89, p = < .05$).

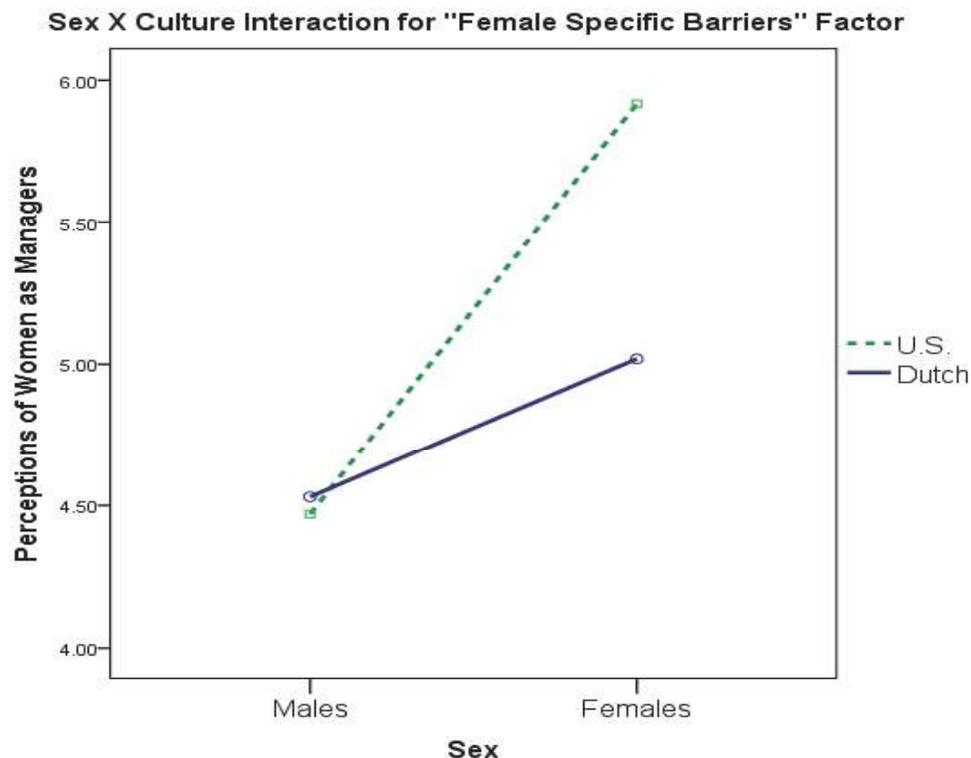
TABLE 2
MANOVA AND ANOVA RESULTS

	F	df	p	Eta squared
Sex	18.41	3, 160	.000	.257
Ability	35.91	1, 162	.000	.167
Acceptance	20.26	1, 162	.000	.104
Female specific barriers	34.24	1, 162	.000	.162
Culture	7.03	3, 160	.000	.116
Ability	14.76	1, 162	.000	.069
Acceptance	12.87	1, 162	.000	.066
Female specific barriers	6.40	1, 162	.012	.032
Sex X Culture	2.89	3, 160	.004	.051
Ability	1.86	1, 162	.175	.008
Acceptance	.48	1, 162	.492	.002
Female specific barriers	8.39	1, 162	.004	.039

Next, univariate analyses (ANOVAs) were performed for each attitudinal variable, which are also shown in Table 2. For the sex contrast (Hypothesis 1), all three factors were significant: ability ($F(1, 162) = 35.91, p < .001$), acceptance ($F(1, 162) = 20.26, p < .001$), and female specific barriers ($F(1, 162) = 34.24, p < .001$). Similarly, for the culture contrast (Hypothesis 2), all three factors were significant: ability ($F(1, 162) = 14.76, p < .001$), acceptance ($F(1, 162) = 12.87, p < .001$), and female specific barriers ($F(1, 162) = 6.40, p < .05$). Lastly, for the sex by culture contrast (i.e. interaction; Hypothesis 3), only the female specific barriers factor was significant ($F(1, 162) = 8.39, p < .01$), but not the ability ($F(1, 162) = 1.86, p = n.s.$) or acceptance ($F(1, 162) = .48, p = n.s.$) factors.

Figure 4 illustrates the interaction between sex and culture for the female specific barriers factor. Given the significant interaction between sex and culture for the female specific barriers factor, a simple main effects analysis was performed to further explore and understand the nature of this relationship. Results showed that the difference in mean scores between U.S. males and U.S. females on the female specific barriers factor was statistically significant ($p < .001$), but that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between Dutch males and Dutch females on the female specific barriers factor ($p = n.s.$). Similarly, results showed that the difference in mean scores between U.S. females and Dutch females on the female specific barriers factor was statistically significant ($p < .001$), but that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between U.S. males and Dutch males on the female specific barriers factor ($p = n.s.$).

FIGURE 4
INTERACTION PLOT ILLUSTRATING INTERACTION BETWEEN SEX AND CULTURE
FOR “FEMALE SPECIFIC BARRIERS” FACTOR



Eta squared was used to compare the magnitude of effects for the sex, culture, and sex by culture (i.e. interaction) grouping variables. The eta squared statistic is a measure of effect size and indicates the proportion of total variability in a dependent variable that is accounted for by the variation in an

independent variable. Rules of thumb suggest eta squared $\geq .14$ indicates a large effect, eta squared = .13 to .06 indicates a medium effect, and eta squared = .05 to .01 indicates a small effect (Cohen, 1988). The eta squared for the sex grouping variable (.257) was nearly two and one-half times the eta squared for the culture grouping variable (.116) and five times the eta squared of the sex by culture (i.e. interaction) grouping variable (.051). Similarly, the individual eta squared values for sex on each of the three factors (ability, acceptance, and female specific barriers) were greater than the individual eta squared values for culture on each of the three factors, and the individual eta squared values for culture on two of the three factors (ability and acceptance) were greater than the individual eta squared values for sex by culture (i.e. interaction). Thus, sex has a much greater influence on attitudes towards women as managers than do the cultural differences between the U.S. and Dutch, and the cultural differences between the U.S. and Dutch has a much greater influence on attitudes towards women as managers than sex and culture taken together (e.g. U.S. males vs. Dutch Males).

DISCUSSION

This study provides evidence that differences exist in attitudes towards women as managers between sexes and national cultures. In particular, this study found differences in attitudes towards women as managers across three factors (ability, acceptance, and female specific barriers) between males and females and between U.S. and Dutch participants. These findings have important implications and make important contributions.

First, this study examined differences in attitudes towards women as managers between sexes. As expected, results revealed that females overall held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did males overall across all three factors. As a gender, on average, men believe women to be less effective and efficient in managerial roles than they believe themselves to be. Thus, while there appears to be increasing support for women in management, these results indicate that gender role stereotypes still exist and that women continue to be perceived as lacking the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities to be successful in upper management roles (Dodge et al., 1995; Guney et al, 2006). As noted previously, this is troubling because conscious and unconscious stereotyping of women in managerial roles may result in discriminatory behavior (Javalgi et al., 2011; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Indeed, attitudes are believed to strongly shape behavioral intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). A complete discussion of the managerial implications of this finding are covered in a subsequent section (see *“Implications for Practice”*).

Second, this study examined differences in attitudes towards women as managers between national cultures. Although attitudes towards women as managers have been examined in international samples including India (Gulhati, 1990), China (Liu et al., 2001; Ng, 1995), and Nigeria (Adeyemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz, 1996), to name a few, no study to date has directly explored these attitudes in the Netherlands. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to our knowledge of global cultures by being the first to directly examine the Dutch. Similarly, this study also contributes to the literature by comparing attitudes towards women as managers across cultures. Again, although research regarding the factors linked to the acceptance and success of women as managers in independent countries is growing, comparative cross-national research remains scarce (Broadbridge, 2010; Huse and Solberg, 2006). Thus, this study helps fill this gap by comparing attitudes towards women as managers between the U.S. and Netherlands. Contrary to expectations, U.S. participants held more favorable attitudes towards women as managers than did Dutch participants across all three factors. Moreover, U.S. females responded with the most favorable attitudes of any particular group. These findings diverge from what should be expected based on the PD and masculinity/femininity dimensions of Hofstede’s (1980) typology. These disparities may be explained in part, by unique sociopolitical circumstances (see *“Potential Explanations for Unexpected Results related to Culture”*) as are its managerial implications (see *“Implications for Practice”*).

Third, with the exception of Cordano et al. (2002), it appears cross-national studies concerning attitudes towards women as managers have not explored the separate and distinct effects of sex and

culture. For example, Tomkiewicz et al. (2004) compared attitudes towards women as managers in the U.S. and Poland. Their analyses directly compared U.S. males to U.S. females to Polish males to Polish females using MANOVA. Accordingly, in reviewing their results one cannot discern the individual effects of sex and culture on attitudes towards women as managers. Moreover, the relative effects of each variable on the variance explained in attitudes towards as managers cannot be determined. The findings of the present study are consistent with Cordano et al. (2002), revealing that sex explains significantly more variance in attitudes towards women as managers than does culture (although it is important to note that they studied Latin American cultures). However, even Cordano et al. (2002) did not report on the interactive effects of sex and culture. Thus, this study appears to be the first cross-national study which distinctly examines sex, culture, and their interactive effects on attitudes towards women as managers. Although sex and culture interacted to affect attitudes towards women as managers on the female specific barriers factor, no significant interactions were found between sex and culture for the ability or acceptance factors. Results of the simple main effects analysis were mixed. For example, there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores between U.S. females and Dutch females on the female specific barriers factor, but that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between U.S. males and Dutch males on the female specific barriers factor. Overall, differences related to sex and culture individually explained significantly more variability in attitudes towards women as managers than did sex and culture together (i.e. interaction).

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have important managerial implications for businesses. First, Stroh, Varma, and Valy-Durbin (2000) found that although women were interested in and likely to accept international assignments, male supervisors in the home country often posed difficulties to women receiving expatriate manager assignments due to concerns regarding their ability. Results of his study indicate that U.S. and Dutch males held the least favorable attitudes towards women as managers. Accordingly, U.S. and Dutch females (as well as females in general) interested in international assignments as managers would benefit from directly confronting and discussing potential prejudices with their direct supervisor, particularly when their supervisor is male. Proactive steps such as this help reverse patterns of discrimination. Similarly, employers should carefully review supervisors' recruitment and selection criteria for international assignments to ensure that decisions were not based on preconceived stereotypes rather than actual ability.

Second, this study can directly inform women interested in working in expatriate managerial roles. Female expatriate managers should be acutely aware of the cultural norms and beliefs of the host country where they perform their work (Burke, 1977). These women will not likely be welcomed into their roles as managers. Similarly, they will likely encounter and endure negative stereotyping related to their ability to perform in a managerial capacity. This study's findings suggest that these challenges would be more pronounced for U.S. women accepting expatriate manager positions in the Netherlands, rather than the reverse (although that is not to suggest Dutch women accepting expatriate managerial positions in the U.S. would be challenge-free). This implication is interesting because Adler's (1987) research on the "gaijin effect" asserted that Western women on expatriate assignments would be perceived as legitimate by host country nationals. In any regard, female expatriate managers immersed into a new cultural environment may encounter difficulty adjusting and consequently may experience stress from the inability to cope with culture shock. Expatriates not fully prepared to confront the challenges of international assignments will likely perform poorly in their work. Thus, in order to make expatriate assignments more effective for female managers and their companies, employers must implement well-developed training programs aimed at improving cultural awareness and adjustment while simultaneously minimizing the negative effects of gender role stereotyping (Goldberg, 2007).

Limitations and directions for future research

First, the current study drew from a sample comprised of U.S. and Dutch business students. While this sample reveals the current attitudes towards women as managers of the emerging workforce/future

business leaders in the U.S. and Netherlands, it may not be representative of the population at large. For example, the attitudes of employees with established careers may differ from those of college students with limited work experience. Indeed, individuals with experience working alongside others, under the direction of others, or in a supervisory role themselves may benefit from a more informed perspective when forming attitudes towards women as managers. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalizable across all contexts. Additional research is required using many different samples, across many different types of organizations, and in many different types of industries.

Second, this study focused exclusively on differences in attitudes towards women as managers in the U.S. and Netherlands. Given its inattention in the literature, this study made an important step as the first to examine attitudes of Dutch males and females towards women managers. However, to date, barely a handful of countries have been compared through a cross national lens in a similar manner. As international opportunities for women increase, a thorough understanding of attitudes towards women as managers is essential to the success of all firms, especially multinational corporations. Future research should continue to explore additional countries and cultures to better understand the challenges and opportunities of women in managerial roles.

Potential Explanations for Unexpected Results related to Culture

As noted above, the unexpected findings of this study related to culture may be explained in part, by unique sociopolitical circumstances. For example, Dutch women were not introduced to the labor market until a comparatively much later period relative to the U.S. World War II in the early part of the 20th century imposed burdens upon businesses in the U.S., drawing away male workers for military service (The Economist, 2015). These prompted women to enter the workforce to shore up labor shortages in factories and shipyards and inspired images of women war workers (e.g. *Rosie the Riveter*). Comparatively however, few men in the Netherlands had to leave to fight in war and accordingly their labor market did not experience a similar inflow of women workers. Moreover, the country's wealth together with its Christian ideals made dual incomes unnecessary. Indeed, until the early 1980's the country provided subsidies so that mothers could stay home with their children. This paradigm shifted in the late 1980's when the Netherlands began to encourage the mobilization of women into the workforce. Despite this, cultural ideologies persisted that women should remain largely family-oriented. In 2000, the right for men and women to request to work part-time was written into Dutch law. Consequently, women in the Netherlands have been able to achieve a high labor force participation rate in the past two decades. Yet, as noted earlier, the rate in which Dutch women occupy managerial roles lags behind that of U.S. women, and lags considerably behind that of Dutch and U.S. men. The Global Gender Gap Report (2015) confirms this disparity. While the Netherlands outranks the U.S. in labor force participation and wage equality for similar work, it lags considerably behind the U.S. in its ratio of female-to-male legislators, senior officials, and managers and its female-to-male ratio of professional and technical workers. Thus, one reason U.S. males and females may have reported more favorable attitudes towards women as managers is because comparatively more progress concerning women in managerial roles has been made before they were born and during their lifetimes than their Dutch counterparts (Sincoff et al, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the critical roles that sex and culture play in the formation of attitudes towards women as managers. Understanding the attitudes of host and parent country nationals can assist employers in better facilitating international assignments for its female workforce. Employers that fail to fully understand attitudes towards women as managers will limit the global success of their businesses. At the same time, understanding attitudes alone is insufficient for eliminating the stereotypes and biases women managers face. Employers must continue to emphasize training and support in order to remove obstacles while simultaneously increasing opportunities, for women in leadership roles.

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