

An Evaluation of the Challenges Faced by Women in Attaining Strategic Management Positions

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges women face in reaching strategic management roles within the tech industry, focusing on perceptions from Eswatini Government Enterprises, higher learning institutions, and corporate leaders. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of organizational, individual, cultural, and empowerment challenges. It utilizes qualitative methods for deeper insights and quantitative methods for broader data representation. Online surveys assessed female leaders' perspectives. Data was gathered from both secondary sources and primary sources through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A total of 40 female participants were randomly selected to ensure diverse perspectives. The research revealed that while women possess the potential for executive roles, societal stereotypes and the balancing act of reproductive and professional responsibilities hinder their progress. Female managers tend to adopt transformational leadership styles, emphasizing the need for supportive organizational structures to facilitate their growth. It is recommended that women must overcome fears of failure and seek support through female networks to bolster confidence in leadership roles; Company Leadership, shift management practices to foster inclusivity and self-esteem among diverse employee groups; Policy Makers, revise female empowerment frameworks and establish forums for women to share experiences and successes; and Future Research, explore the evolving challenges faced by women in tech management to promote greater inclusion. Promoting gender diversity in the tech industry is crucial for innovation and progress. An inclusive environment allows diverse perspectives to thrive, ultimately benefiting the entire sector.

Keywords: Challenges, Diversity, Gender, Leadership, Technology, Women.

Introduction

Globally, regardless of the wonderful age of women which was ushered in by the 1995, Beijing, China 4th World conference on women [1], it has been observed that worldwide representation of women is challenging, it signifies that women are underrepresented at almost all levels of decision making globally, countries do not effectively involve females in their government systems [2], women continue to be disadvantaged. Yet feminine gender comprises half of the ecosphere's populace with

rise in birthing ratio of female gender recorded on each day. Hence, this occurs even when they are extremely qualified and despite the reaffirmation that women rights were human rights and that gender equality was an issue of universal concern, benefiting all [1]. Therefore, women remain discriminated, in terms of accessing top strategic management positions.

Several women remain suffering from professional segregation in the workplace and hardly break through the glass-ceiling in public life which separates them from strategic management and proficient positions. The

challenges faced by the few who advocate for transformation or push for progress to occupy top leadership/ management positions can be various and complex, as it strengthens prevailing stereotypes of women's capacity to perform at the strategic level of public life and hence, prolongs a vicious cycle of sidelining and disempowerment of women.

Throughout history the key role that a female play in the world has contributed to advancement, ensured stability, and long-lasting growth of communities and countries. Females' involvement in politics, management, governance public or political spheres of life, and technical leadership positions is crucial to attaining reasonable society and sustainable development [2]. Nonetheless, despite those facts and the escalating number of qualified and trained females, it is vivid that they are still underrepresented in almost all levels of decision making in all sectors. According to research conducted by [3], in 2018, females filled 16% of positions on the executive teams of significant Belgian firms, better than thirteen years ago, when the record was around 9 and 10%. The figures are still far below average compared to the entire employment rate of females and their share of populace. Furthermore, despite the current interest for diversity in organizations and legislation for equal chances for males and females the figures have not changed much, women continue mostly in the minority in decision making positions [3].

The drive towards equal chances and encouragement for female has been filled with several confronts, especially in achieving strategic management position within several sectors that impede their progress. These encounters are complex, comprising general norms, business arrangements, and organized biases that endured overtime. For example, ethnic stereotypes usually determine insights of leadership, assigning personalities considered more fitting for males, while females who demonstrates similar behaviors may face

hostile response. Furthermore, the absence of mentors and role models further worsens the problem [4, 5].

Moreover, work-life balance continues being a serious challenge for any female, specifically those with caregiving obligations. The anticipation to execute conventional gender functions can lead to contradictory gender pressures, making it hard for females to pursue and sustain professions in management. As institutions gradually understand the value of diverse perceptions, it is fundamental to address these issues aggressively and establish an atmosphere that not only acknowledge but dynamically promote female's rise into strategic management positions. This introduction sets the stage for a hidden evaluation of the difficulties around females' leadership and the essential steps required to adopt an inclusive culture that champions women representation in strategic leadership positions [6].

Many of the questions about women's leadership positions have repeatedly risen in numerous studies. However, there is a little information on the challenges women face in attaining leadership or strategic positions in the technology industry.

Leadership is the capacity of an individual or team of individuals to influence and steer followers or adherents of an entity, institute or a group. Leadership is a characteristic impacted to an individual's position, rank or standing in an organogram. However, it is an aspect anyone can have or achieve, even those lacking leadership positions. It is a developable ability that can be enhanced over time [7].

Leaders are perceived as individuals who effect sound and occasionally tough decisions. They articulate clear vision, determine realistic goals and provide adherents with knowledge and instruments crucial to realize those goals. According to [8], an effective leader has the following characteristics: self-awareness, strong communication skills, integrity, creative and innovative thinking, empathy, willingness

to take risks, leadership agility i.e. open to change, ability to influence others, resilience, visionary and reactiveness in times of crisis i.e. good decision maker.

Leadership plays a pivotal function in the success and guidance of an enterprise. According to [9], companies depend on positive leaders to converse its mission, vision, and goals, unite team members over those objectives and then realize them. These skills are particularly crucial in times of crisis. An establishment with robust leadership can often traverse challenges and grab opportunities in ways that may be more demanding for an enterprise missing effective guidance [10].

Tough decision-making is often required for the realization and development of an enterprise. It is essential for leaders to have emotional intelligence. [11], describes emotional intelligence as "the ability to comprehend and control your emotions, as well as understand and influence the emotions of those surrounding you."

At the core of every thriving enterprise is a visionary leader who sets the trend, manages resources effectively, and creates the institutional culture. They make key decisions about the prospect of the establishment, push it ahead to realize its objectives, and retain an atmosphere that encourages the workforce to bring their best to work.

The subsequent are some of the numerous leadership theories.

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership theory indicates that the utmost leaders continually adapt by implementing diverse techniques for different conditions or effects. This theory reveals a relatively advanced view of leadership in practice and can be an effective framework of

reference for knowledgeable, expert leaders who are earnestly alert of institution requirements and individual motivation. Most significantly, it permits expert leaders the independence to decide from a selection of leadership iterations. Difficulties develop, however, when the incorrect technique is applied awkwardly. Situational leadership, nonetheless, is most effective when leaders decide two or more effective approaches like charismatic, transactional and transformational [12]. Figure 1 is a prototype of the Situational Leadership.

According to [13], there are four leadership styles of the situational leadership model:

1. **Telling (Directing):** Used when the players require close guidance. Most ideal for processes in a business and for beginner level. It's a temporary method envisioned to create movement.
2. **Selling (Couching):** This model is utilized when the followers are not motivated to perform tasks. The frontrunner supplies the background and perspective and engages with the team to strengthen buy-in and continued advancement.
3. **Participating (Collaborating):** This model is used when the participants/followers are knowledgeable in particular roles but do not have commitment or conviction required to complete them. Therefore, the participants make decisions based on their principals backing to inculcate and improve task understanding.
4. **Delegating (Empowering):** Used when the participants are efficient and effective at their roles and responsibilities and needs minimal supervision. The participants are entrusted to make task-related decisions and propose approaches for advancement and identify best practices.



Figure 1. Situational Leadership Style [14]

Situational leadership reveals four major, universal and essential leadership competencies: [15]

1. Communicate an impact methodology in a manner that cohorts can both comprehend and accept.
2. Analyze a person's Performance Readiness to fulfill a given job.
3. Adapt frontrunner conduct based on the analysis.
4. Improve by managing the progress towards better performance.

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatics are significantly the most effective leadership style. Charismatic leaders have a vision, as well as traits that influence adherents to execute their vision, as they are

presented on Figure 2. Hence, this leadership style has conventionally been one of the most respected. Charismatic leadership offers a fertile ground for creativeness and invention and is often substantially motivational. If there are charismatic leaders at the wheel of the institution, employees simply desire to conform. There is nonetheless, one noteworthy challenge that potentially undermines the value of charismatic leaders is that they can disappear. Once they have left, an establishment can appear purposeless and directionless. Therefore, charismatic leadership usually rejects other competing, strong qualities. The outcome of weeding out the contest is a legion of cheerful adherents, but minimal leaders [16].



Figure 2. Charismatic Leadership [17]

According to [17], the key characteristics of Charismatic Leadership Model are:

1. Charismatic front runners are very poised in their approach. They hardly have any uncertainty about their choices and hold a very significant personality.
2. They have influence over many adherents.
3. They place great expectations and competence and perform as mentors for the workers.
4. They fuel the purposes of the workers and trust in the capacity of the workforce.
5. Based on study conducted by [18], the subsequent are the benefits of charismatic leadership style.
6. Employee views and sentiments are considered.
7. It promotes teamwork and collaboration.
8. It encourages and motivates the players.
9. It generates a sense of definite transformation.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leaders pursue to change those they lead. Consequently, they can characterize sustainable, self-replicating leadership. Transformational leaderships are not satisfied to just use force of personality (charismatic) or bargaining (transactional) to encourage cohorts, transformational leaders

utilize knowledge, skill and vision to transform those nearby them in a way that makes them followers with intensely rooted buy-in that stays even when the front-runner that established it is no longer part of the team. Transformational leaders signify the most significant style of leadership since followers are allocated the opportunity to transform, convert, and, in the process, upgrade themselves as participants. Structurally this realizes the valuable leadership effect since transformational leaders grow individuals. Transformational leadership is strongly sought after, since it has no false constrictions in terms of buy-in and instead is determined on getting cohorts on board based upon their individual growing thought process and altering responses to leadership difficulties. It is remarkably suited for self-paced, change loaded conditions that demand creative challenge resolution and consumer responsibility [19].

[20], states that transformational leadership depicts the method whereby a leader engages with his team and establishes a relationship that improves the confidence and motive of both leaders and teams. Hence, as an outcome of this procedure, the leader focuses on the requirements of the team, which aid them to reach their maximum potential. Figure 3 is a model of the transformational leadership.



Figure 3. Transformational Leadership [17]

According to [21], there are four foundations in the transformational styles, transformational factors (intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence).

- 1. Intellectual Stimulation:** Promote invention and artistic effort. They urge their followers to examine assumptions and test the way that things are performed. They foster novel ideas and innovative solutions to challenges, and they assist their follower's study from their mistakes and failures rather than condemning them.
- 2. Individual Consideration:** Pay attention to the requirements of each specific player. They appreciate everyone's needs for accomplishment, and they act as an instructor and advisor to assist them learn and develop. They create formidable interpersonal connections and show empathy and consideration for their cohorts.
- 3. Inspirational Motivation:** Present value and challenge to their follower's purpose. They assist the cohorts to comprehend the reason their jobs are imperative and provide them with encouraging and challenging vision of the future that they choose to labor towards.
- 4. Idealized Influence:** Behave like a mentor to the team members. They build rapport

and cultivate respect by exercising what they preach, acting altruistically and basically setting the standard.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leaders are elegant "do as I say" style. Figure 4 models exactly the autocratic leadership. In general, these leaders are unacquainted with leadership thrust upon them in the form of a new appointment or assignment that concerns human resource management. Autocratic leaders can harm an institution irreparably as they compel their followers to effect strategies and operations in a very narrow way centered upon a biased idea of what success looks like. Devotion, innovation and invention are naturally disregarded by autocratic leadership [22].

According to [17] autocratic leaders:

1. Works effective when quick ruling must to be made.
2. Can assist to control a conflict in the short-term. Nonetheless, it does not resolve the problem.
3. There arises a massive lack of confidence in this leadership model on the subordinates. This is because the authority to make all the conclusions remains in the hands of the trailblazer.



Figure 4. Autocratic Leadership [17]

The benefits and disadvantages of this model according to [17] are:

Benefits

1. Front runners have a structured goal setting.
2. They go mainly by the rule book.
3. Extremely organized environment.
4. Great for the fast cognitive process of drawing conclusions.
5. It assists in challenging circumstances.

Disadvantages

1. It limits innovation and novelty.
2. It can lead to dejection within the squad.
3. Not appropriate for institutions having collaborative values.
4. It can have deficiency of professional relationships and influences.
5. Leaders can lack flexibility characters.

Problem to be Solved

According to study conducted by [23], World Economic Forum Report 2024 states that women's labor force representation remains below men's across nearly every trade and economy, with women accounting for 42% of the international labor force and fill only 31.7% of top decision-making positions. Top-level positions continue narrowly available for women, worldwide. This is demonstrated by the international "drop to the top": in 2024, the

slope from entry level to the C-suite and senior leadership is steeped in a 21.5 percentage-point difference in representation. Although women are confirmed to filling virtually half of entry-level spots, they fall short of representing just a quarter of chief executive positions. In the past World Economic Forum Reports, it presented as a promising trend, unfortunately women's appointments into strategic management positions started to decline, from 37.5% to 36.9% in 2023, and continued lessening in early 2024 to 36.4%, below 2021 levels. According to LinkedIn research study conducted by [24] states that the deteriorating macro-economic situations are connected to a reduction in appointing females into strategic management positions.

The technology industry is identical with invention /innovation, continually pushing the limits of any possibilities. It is widely known as a men dominated industry, thus significantly falling behind in gender diversity. Females in leadership positions in the technology industry are rare. Recent report published by Deloitte Insights states that only a quarter of females' workforce are occupying the tech industry [25]. This inequality is more evident in strategic management positions, where according to [26], women held only 41% C-Suite and 37% Board of Directors positions in the United States Technology Start-Ups.

The aim of the study is to explore the challenges women face in attaining strategic management positions in the technology industry. Several approaches should be employed to fight the challenge. An action, legislative or otherwise must be taken; technology organizations must implement strategies to investigate and evaluate the challenges that are affecting females' prospects in the tech industry.

Limitations

The major limitation of this research is the sample size. This was because of the period of study, only a few individuals agreed to participate in the study. Since the study is based on few individuals from the state-owned enterprises, private institutions and high education institution, users of the services provided plus the civic organizations, is does not fully represent the women sector in IT industry. Furthermore, the study was only conducted with only the people of Eswatini.

Objective

This study investigates the challenges that women face in attaining strategic management positions in the technology industry. This will be made possible by conducting qualitative study to deliver a complete summary of the hurdles to women's contribution in technology and promising practices for tackling these challenges, it will address policy intervention; strategies to enhance female leaders' leadership and competencies. It will also serve as a reference and resource for researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders who wish to promote awareness, and advocate for transformation.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the challenges women, face in attaining Strategic Management Positions in the Technology Industry (organizational, cultural, personal and empowerment challenges).

2. To propose the hurdles that must be conquered by women to access strategic management positions, as well as the significance of a likely female management technique.
3. To propose possible changes and policies aimed at increasing the women's presence in strategic management positions in the technology industry.

Materials and Methods

Data was generated from both secondary and primary sources. Primary data was gathered openly by employing semi structured interviews to enable probing in the qualitative method. Significant secondary data was obtained from academic journals, internet articles, books, state documents and legislation, research reports and statistics. The research implemented the qualitative research approach to gain individual's insights and depict a situation of the study problem. It was complemented with quantitative methods to research to deliver a complete examination of the study problems, and to afford a snapshot of valuable data from the sample to defend casual explanations for the results. As such this research employed a technique branded as "sequential qualitative first" [27]. Online surveys were applied to assess the stated population.

The research succeeded to sample only 18 leaders' participants who have remained in same respective units for at least a year from the State-owned enterprises, higher institutions and private sector. 7 participants came from Civic Organizations, and 15 female participants who get services from the different SOE's, higher education institutions and private companies in Eswatini. Making the sample research size to be 40 participants. The researcher applied a random sample to choose the participants, in which every participant in the research populace has an equal chance of being elected and gain full appreciation on this study subject [28, 29]. The search criterion was based on

secondary data /papers that were addressing leadership, gender differences, role played by women in leadership position and in technology, approaches women can take to become effective leaders, possible strategies of turning toxic leadership into excellence and the challenges faced by women in attaining strategic management positions in the tech industry, which are relevant to the subject matter, and papers which are less than 10 years and papers with statistics reports. All papers that were older than 10 years and papers based on individual perspective analysis were excluded.

Here I present the analysis of some of the research.

1. The diverse definitions of leadership reflect varying perspectives across different fields, with leadership being described as the ability to influence and guide followers [7]. According to [8], effective leaders possess qualities such as self-awareness, strong communication skills, empathy, and resilience. Leadership is crucial for organizational success, particularly in challenging circumstances, as it helps convey vision, unite teams, and foster positive work environments [9].
2. Leadership significantly influences a company's performance by enabling effective communication of goals and navigating crises [8]. Based on study conducted by [30] and [31], emotional intelligence is essential for leaders to make informed decisions, enhance team dynamics, and drive productivity. Leaders who prioritize self-awareness and empathy can cultivate a culture of accountability and responsibility, promoting ethical decision-making and trust within teams [32].
3. Based on the report compiled by [33], the role of female Leadership yields, economic and organizational benefits, such as improved innovation and employee

satisfaction. It also addresses gender inequality.

4. According to [34], the value of women in the tech leadership position increases female representation in leadership roles, hence, help to, drive diversity in the industry; tackle gender bias; and enhance creativity and problem solving.
5. Women face significant challenges, including gender bias and stereotypes, networking & mentorship gaps, and work-life balance issues, organizational culture, representation issues which hinder their advancement into executive positions.
 - i. *Gender Bias and Stereotypes:* Women often encounter discrimination and are perceived as less capable in leadership roles [35].
 - ii. *Networking and Mentorship Gaps:* Limited access to influential networks restricts opportunities for women to advance [4].
 - iii. *Organizational Culture:* Many workplaces lack supportive policies for women, perpetuating hostile environments [36].
 - iv. *Representation:* The underrepresentation of women at all levels limits role models and perceptions of leadership accessibility [4].

Results and Discussions

According to the analysis made from the first research question addressing organizational challenges (Table 1 & Figure 5), it was concluded that the three major organizational challenges regarded as being strongly agree were the “lack of legislation and policies to ensure women participate in decision making” (62.50%, n = 25), “the concentrated authority of making decisions” (50%, n = 20), and “constrained/ limited power granted to female leaders” (42.50%, n = 17).

Table 1. Organizational Challenges

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lack of Legislation & Policies to ensure women participate in decision making	62.50%	20.00%	2.50%	10.00%	5.00%
Poor Communication between male and female units in an enterprise	30.00%	45.00%	5.00%	12.50%	7.50%
Scarcity of Females Leaders in Board meetings and councils at the Strategic Level	32.50%	55.00%	2.50%	7.50%	2.50%
Concentrated Authority of Making Decisions	50.00%	37.50%	5.00%	2.50%	5.00%
Constrained /Limited Power granted to female leaders	42.50%	37.50%	5.00%	12.50%	2.50%
Lack of Equal Opportunity in employing and having female advance to leadership positions	40.00%	47.50%	5.00%	5.00%	2.50%
Minimal participation of female leaders in the formulation of strategic plans for institutions	17.50%	55.00%	7.50%	12.50%	7.50%

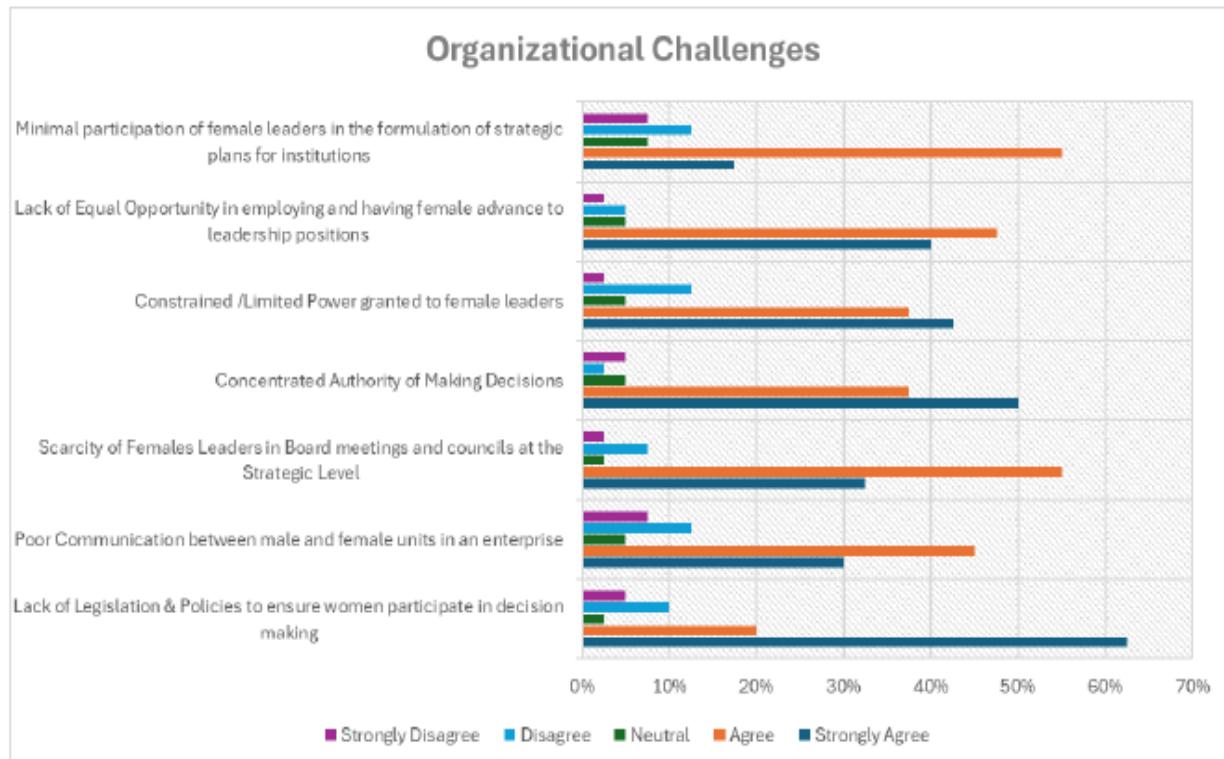


Figure 5. Organizational Challenges

To respond to the question of cultural challenges, six elements associated with cultural challenges of the partakers were applied. Table 2 and Figure 6 display the models. The three prime stated cultural challenge rated as strongly agree and agree were “Prevailing beliefs about males having

higher capacity and management skills of females as leaders” (47.50%, n = 19), “Bias from strategic management to men in recruitment for strategic roles than females” (42.50%, n = 18) and “Lack of confidence of leadership in female' abilities as leaders” (45%, n = 13).

Table 2. Cultural Challenges

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Prevalence of traditional relationship between women leaders and subordinates rather than informal professional relationship	32.50%	15.00%	27.50%	20.00%	5.00%
Bias from strategic management to men in recruitment for strategic roles than females	42.50%	32.50%	7.50%	15.00%	2.50%
Lack of confidence of leadership in female' abilities as leaders	27.50%	45.00%	5.00%	17.50%	5.00%
Challenges of dealing with some men colleagues and head of units for female frontrunners	20.00%	32.50%	12.50%	27.50%	7.50%
Prevailing beliefs about males having higher capacity and management skills of females as leaders	27.50%	47.50%	7.50%	15.00%	2.50%
Gender stereotype	22.50%	32.50%	27.50%	12.50%	5.00%

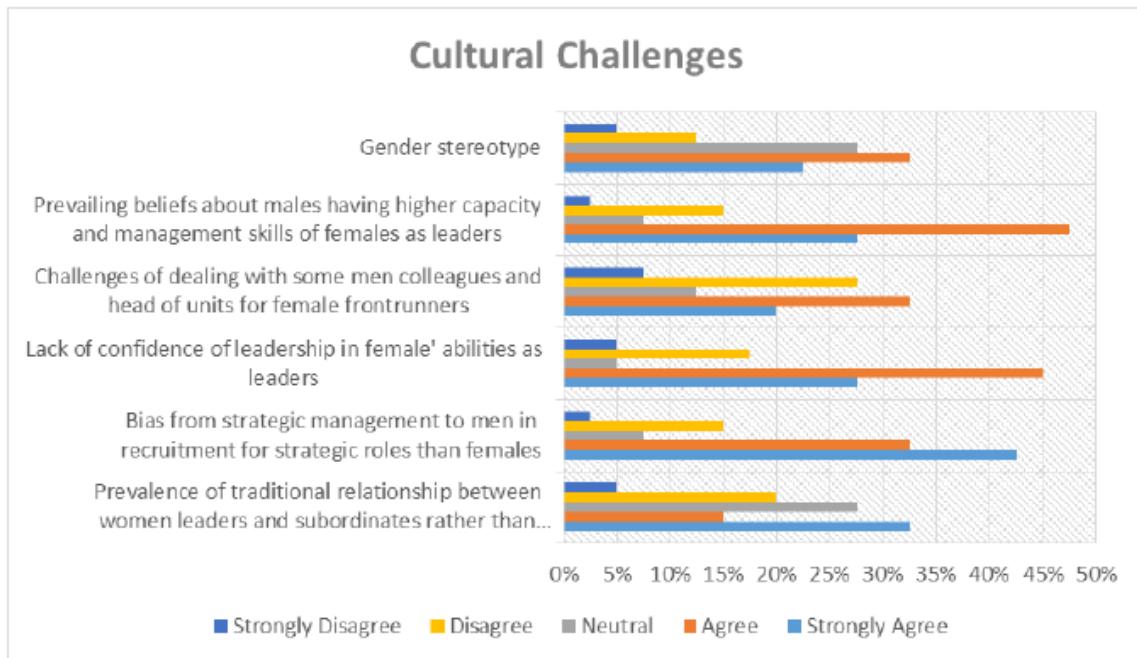


Figure 6. Cultural Challenges

To respond to the question of personal challenges, nine elements associated with personal challenges of the partakers were applied. Table 3 and Figure 7 display the models. The three major stated personal challenges rated as disagree “Health and physical aspect of pregnancy and childbirth that

affects the effectiveness of the leadership role” (47.50%, n = 19), “Women's lack of confidence in their ability to make informed decisions” (42.50%, n = 17) and “Lack of motivation and desire for women to occupy a leadership role” (40%, n = 16).

Table 3. Personal Challenges

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Difficult of travelling if required by work conditions because of domestic obligations	15 %	27.5%	20%	27.5%	10%
Females employ emotions than rationality in dealing with administrative issues	22.5%	45%	5%	17.5%	10%
The difficulty in finding a balance between professional responsibilities and family obligations.	17.5%	27.5%	5%	37.5%	12.5%
Health and physical aspect of pregnancy and childbirth that affects the effectiveness of the leadership role.	12.5%	20%	10%	47.5%	10%
Fear of taking responsibility	10%	25%	17.5%	25%	22.5%
Sense of Isolation in Leadership position	10%	15%	22.5%	37.5%	15%
Women lack Leadership Skills	10%	10%	10%	37.5%	32.5%
Lack of motivation and desire for women to occupy a leadership role	5%	15%	10%	40%	30%
Women's lack of confidence in their ability to make informed decisions	5%	15%	7.5%	42.5%	30%

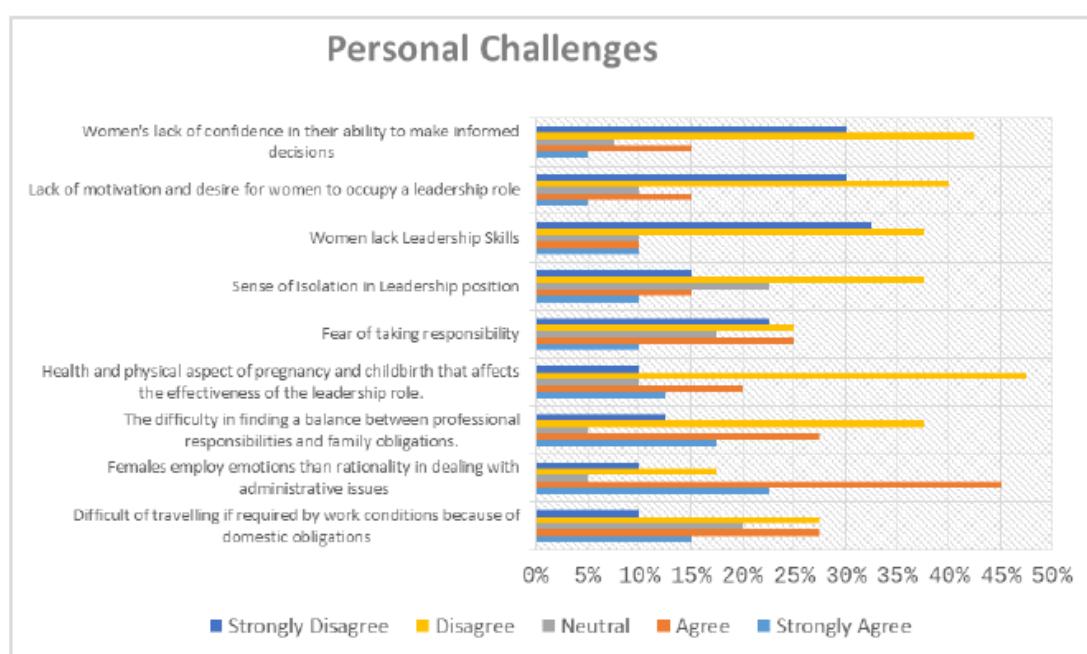


Figure 7. Personal Challenges

Table 4. Empowerment Challenges

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lack of family support to maintain a balance between professional responsibilities and domestic obligations	25.00%	40.00%	7.50%	12.50%	15.00%
Lack of delegation of authority for females from strategic management	32.50%	42.50%	2.50%	15.00%	7.50%
Lack of information required for decision making	17.50%	32.50%	25.00%	22.50%	2.50%
Poor management skills required to exercise the strategic function	22.50%	32.50%	12.50%	27.50%	5.00%
Lack of knowledge of regulations governing the work	27.50%	37.50%	12.50%	20.00%	2.50%
Limited opportunities for training and skills development	25.00%	47.50%	10.00%	15.00%	2.50%
Lack of training programs for female leaders and poor preparation for them before they are assigned	30.00%	52.50%	7.50%	7.50%	2.50%

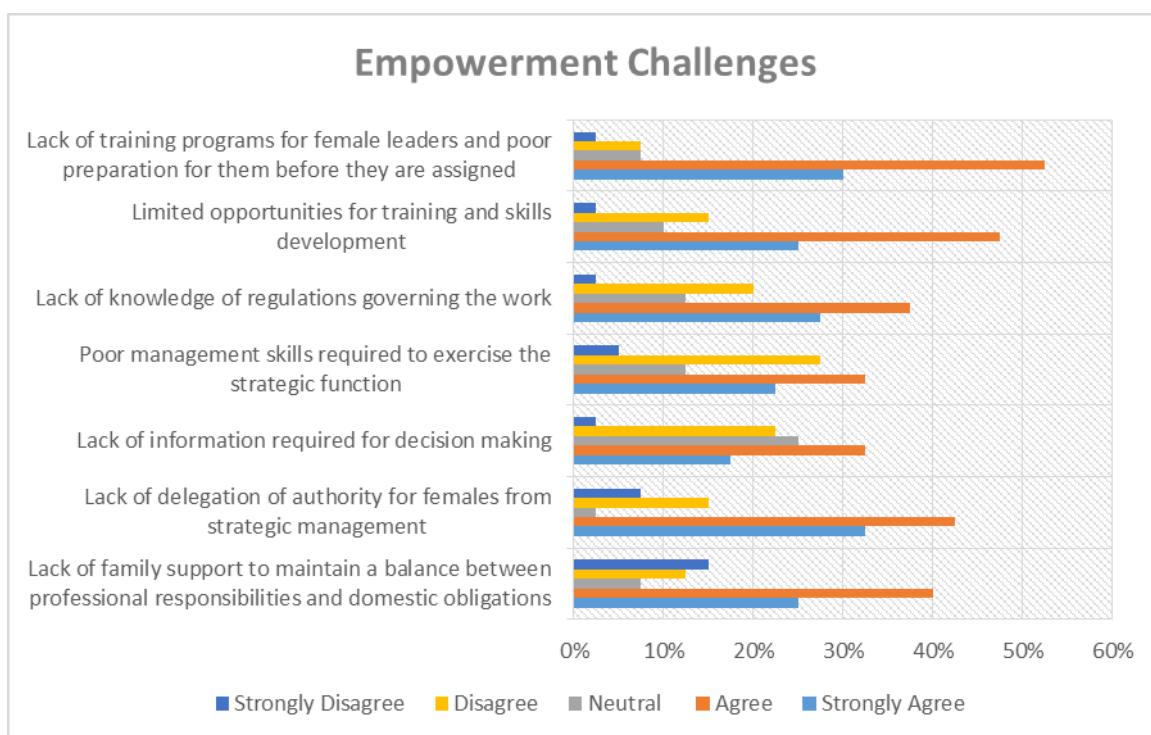


Figure 8. Empowerment Challenges

To respond to the question of empowerment challenges, seven elements associated with empowerment challenges of the partakers were applied. Table 4 and Figure 8 display the models. The three major stated empowerment challenge rated as Agree are “Lack of training

programs for female leaders and poor preparation for them before they are assigned” (52.50%, n = 21), “Limited opportunities for training and skills development” (47.50%, n = 19) and “Lack of delegation of authority for

females from strategic management" (42.50%, n = 17).

The second question wanted to know the difficulties that must be controlled by women in attaining strategic positions and do women have preferred leadership approach based on the research variables (age, marital status, qualification, designation and period of work experience). To respond to the question, the elements that correspond to each challenge, the researcher analyzed the Null Hypothesis (H0)

which means the different sample probabilities distribution are the same, the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) which means the sample probabilities distribution are not the same. Alpha was set at $\alpha = 0.05$, for all Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, we can conclude that we cannot reject the Null Hypothesis because there is no difference between the groups since the null Hypothesis is less than the critical factor in all the tables.

Table 5. The Kruskal Wallis H- Test by Age (N= 40)

Variable	Age Category	N	H0	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Alpha (α)	Critical Value for two tailed t-test is $t =$	Significance Level
Organizational Challenges	22 to 35 years	11					
	36 and above	29					
Personal Challenges	22 to 35 years	11					
	36 and above	29					
Cultural Challenges	22 to 35 years	11					
	36 and above	29					
Empowerment Challenges	22 to 35 years	11					
	36 and above	29					
			0.0054	3	0.05	7.815	0.0054

Table 6. The Kruskal Wallis H-Test by Marital Status (N=40)

Variable	Age Category	N	H0	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Alpha	Critical Value for two tailed t-test is $t =$	Significance Level
Organizational Challenges	Married	21					
	Not Married	19					
Personal Challenges	Married	21					
	Not Married	19					
Cultural Challenges	Married	21					
	Not Married	19					
Empowerment Challenges	Married	21					
	Not Married	18					
			0.0054	3	0.05	3.182	7.815

Table 7. The Kruskal Wallis H- Test by Qualification (N=40)

Variable	Age Category	N	H0	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Alpha	Critical Value for two tailed t-test is t=	Significance Level
Organizational Challenges	Bachelors/ Honours	14					
	Masters /Doctorate	26					
Personal Challenges	Bachelors/ Honours	14					
	Masters /Doctorate	26					
Cultural Challenges	Bachelors/ Honours	14					
	Masters /Doctorate	26					
Empowerment Challenges	Bachelors/ Honours	14					
	Masters /Doctorate	26					
			0.054	3	0.05	3.182	7.815

Table 8. The Kruskal Wallis H-Test by Designation (N=40)

Variable	Age Category	N	H0	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Alpha	Critical Value for two tailed t-test is t=	Significance Level
Organizational Challenges	Student/Supervisor/Manager/ Teaching Ass. /Lecturer	22					
	Snr. Manager/ Director / Executive / Professor	18					
Personal Challenges	Student/Supervisor/Manager/ Teaching Ass. /Lecturer	22					
	Snr. Manager/ Director / Executive / Professor	18					
Cultural Challenges	Student/Supervisor/Manager/ Teaching Ass. /Lecturer	22					
	Snr. Manager/ Director / Executive / Professor	18					
Empowerment Challenges	Student/Supervisor/Manager/ Teaching Ass. /Lecturer	22					
	Snr. Manager/ Director / Executive / Professor	18					
			0.054	3	0.05	3.182	7.815

Table 9. The Kruskal Wallis H-Test by Work Experience (N=40)

Variable	Age Category	N	H0	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Alpha	Critical Value for two tailed t-test is t=	Significance Level
Organizational Challenges	Less than 10 years	6					
	10 – 20 years	16					
	More than 20 years	18					
Personal Challenges	Less than 10 years	6					
	10 – 20 years	16					
	More than 20 years	18					
Cultural Challenges	Less than 10 years	6					
	10 – 20 years	16					
	More than 20 years	18					
Empowerment Challenges	Less than 10 years	6					
	10 – 20 years	16					
	More than 20 years	18					
			(0.00156)	3	0.05	3.182	7.815

Finally, to respond to the third question, which asked, "How can women best enter and succeed in the strategic leadership positions in tech. To respond to the question, the researcher used Table 1 and Figure 5 results on organizational challenges, the policy makers must ensure the legislation and policies are in place. Women must also be granted power to make decisions, and the decision making must be centralized in an organization.

To address the cultural factors, the researcher used Table 2 and Figure 6, the perception around the globe that men are more skilled than women must be scientifically proven and guided by interpretation. Women must be encouraged to be self-confident from an early age, so they grow with a great self-esteem, parents motivate young girls. They should know they have the capacity like a boy child. They must be encouraged to pursue any field of study, especially the STEM field. Management in organizations must believe in females that they have the capacity to occupy strategic positions just like their male counterparts, the bias will inevitably end.

The researcher used Table 3 and Figure 7 to address personal challenges. There is a huge

perception that women fail to occupy strategic positions because of personal factors such as pregnancy, child rearing, lack of desire to occupy strategic positions, and the lack of confidence. This is not all true. Companies must give the females an opportunity as well to prove oneself.

Finally, to address the empowerment challenges, the researcher used Table 4, Figure 8. Organizations fail to train women leaders, if they do offer them an opportunity, they fail to prepare them before they are assigned. There is also limited skill development opportunity for females in institutions. Management furthermore fails to delegate authority to females, there is just a lack of trust.

Regardless of the advances made in promoting gender equality in different areas, the tech field remains mainly male-dominated. According to [37], females only hold 5% of executive positions in tech, in 2022, females made up only 28% of the technology labor force, this is a reflection that gap still exists in the tech industry. Despite the subsequent benefits highlighted, gender inequality in the technology sector remains significant and greatly debated matter. While women make up

almost half, i.e. 47%, of the U.S. labor force, women in the tech industry occupy less than 28% of the executive roles [38].

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following are recommendations to the different groups:

Recommendation to Women

Since some of the females aspiring to be front-runners fear failure particularly those who start their management path. It is key to motivating them to deal with the moments of uncertainty and lack of confidence, by entrusting them to disregard that subconscious that may dampen some hope in them taking tough decisions, voicing out their opinions and stepping out of their sanctuary.

Additionally, neither trying to function like a male ensured triumph for females executive nor letting her womanly values to stand in the way of making things performed is suggested either. The research suggests female frontrunners to remain focused on unit or company purpose.

Further, given that generally there is an absence of support of female frontrunners from other women-based employees or trailblazers, it is essential to launch female based network and networking proceedings as well as other online forums to back and encourage one another.

Recommendation to Company Leadership

Eliminating socio-cultural stereotypes on females' frontrunners implies not only a conversion in workers' attitude but also management methods, procedures and company principles. The executive board should develop corporation approaches to create love, self-esteem and confidence with the diverse sections of the company organization.

Recommendation to Policy Makers

Despite the state programs that are targeted at inspiring females on several aspects involving management, such as compromising

with access and success of females in executive opportunities. The research, hence, suggest for revising the prevailing female empowerment framework to replicate the accurate state, and finally the state should build a female management forum or network for the purpose of allowing females share accomplishment and encounters they face in their executive positions.

Recommendation for Future Research

It would be appropriate to further investigate the changing aspects of the challenges females face in attaining strategic management positions in the technology space on a broader level than this study has done. The worth females in tech executive carry in contrast to male to explain calls for further inclusion of females in strategic management position in technology also warrants additional research.

Conclusion

Considering the research findings, it can be determined that while females have the capacity and potential to occupy executive positions to perform at the strategic management level, the vicious cycle of difficulties against their management path every so often coerce their triumph. With the exception from inner influences amongst themselves, outside influences such as social and cultural stereotypes, the challenge of harmonizing reproductive and office roles, and absence of networking has contributed meaningfully to confining their management accomplishment. Meanwhile female managers apply the transformational method of leadership since it is founded by the certainty that it supports their female principles of encouragement and thoughtfulness, it is consequently critical to improve their authority through modifying official and corporate edifices, processes and measures as well as transmuting the insolences of males and females towards females in executive and leadership roles. Consequently, more supporting pleasant working conditions

will be established and their capacity recognized.

The absence of diverse labor force perceptions endures because of general prejudices, inadequate chances, and embedded ethnic patterns within employment and promotion methods. To bridge the gap, institutions must apply positive measures, for instance targeted employment approaches, comprehensive leadership advancement plans, and fair reward structures.

Embracing diversity and promoting inclusion is vital for accomplishing success and innovation since varied players bring together diverse views, knowledge, and analytic methods, hence enhancing effectiveness, efficiency, and performance transversely a vast worldwide network.

Prioritizing on development of comprehensive workforce values, advancing in proficient growth opportunities, and leveraging shared intuition, vision, and knowledge, establishments can pursue to discourse the scarcity of females in the technology industry and commemorate their distinctive commitment, skill sets, and perceptions.

Though insensible partialities still occur; by taking positive strides to advance inclusion and opportunities for females in the work environment and identifying their various position in attaining prosperity, institutions will be well armed to find and shape women frontrunners who will persist paving the way for imminent groups. In a progressively technology realm, the digital sector plays a fundamental function in influencing our future. By encouraging gender diversity and adopting an inclusive condition, the world guarantees that the greatest and intelligent minds are working in harmony to promote modernization and develop solutions that profit all.

Ethical Consideration

This study observes the utmost ethical values to warrant the well-being, dignity and rights of all partakers. Preceding participation, the

partakers were supplied with complete information about the research's goal, procedures, likely perils, and advantages. Informed approvals were received from all the contributors, confirming voluntary and knowledgeable accord to participate in the research.

All participants were told about the privacy of the data collected from them. The questionnaire and interview did not need the partakers to describe /identify themselves. Contributors were guaranteed that the data they supplied will only be employed for the purpose of this research. Therefore, confidentiality was absolutely preserved, and all data has been securely kept stopping illegal access. The value of generosity was faithfully pursued, with measures taken to lessen damage and increase benefits for the contributors.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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