

Inclusive or Exclusive: An Examination of Sex Role Stereotypes and Requisite Managerial Characteristics among Irish Business Studies Students



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ABSTRACT

The relationship between sex role stereotypes and perceived management characteristics among male and female students was examined and compared to results recorded over the past four decades. As the number of women in employment and managerial positions increases, a change in perceptions of women as managers is expected. To test this belief, a thorough review of the literature since 1973 was conducted and the characteristics perceived as necessary for managerial success were examined among 383 male business students and 414 female business students in the Republic of Ireland. The results confirmed that managers are still perceived by male students to possess the characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men than women. Among the female sample there was no significant difference between the ratings of men and managers compared to the ratings of women and managers. The pattern of results has remained the same despite the developments in the discourse on gender equality in education and other settings over the last decade.

Key Words: Sex role stereotypes; leadership; managerial characteristics; women in management; management education

INTRODUCTION

'Sex-role stereotypes are beliefs about the appropriateness of various roles and activities for men and women' (Cleveland et al., 2000: 43). These stereotypes result in socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes that society considers appropriate for each

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gender. They also allow us to categorise individuals into groups based on their gender, and our perceptions will be influenced by what we know about the gender as a whole. Gender inequalities in the home, workplace and society shape individuals' gender stereotypes and ideologies (House and Javidan, 2004). The historical family model in Ireland was one where upon marriage the women's role was in the home and was one of caring, while the role of the man was in the workplace as the bread winner. This societal structure left only young or unmarried women in the workforce. From the 1970s onwards, there have been many attempts to promote gender equality in the workplace and in society in general. Different wage scales for both women and men have been abolished, the marriage bar¹ has been lifted, inequalities based on gender have been substantially eliminated from the social welfare system, legal entitlements to maternity leave without the possibility of dismissal have been introduced, divorce has been introduced and extramarital births have increased (O'Connor, 1998). The promotion of equality is now a feature of all public policy (Department of Education and Science, 2006). Internationally, gender equality has been acknowledged as a human right and was articulated as the third millennium goal of the Millennium Summit in September 2000 (Raftery and Valiulis, 2008). In Ireland there have been developments in the 'discourse on gender equality in education and other settings over the last decade' (Raftery et al., 2007: 115). These initiatives have tried to create an inclusive society by attempting to change attitudes and accommodate differences in society. This paper focuses specifically on the attitudes held regarding women as managers. Given the increased numbers of women in the Irish workforce along with the increased numbers of women graduating from third level education, we feel it is timely to look at the perceived similarity between women and the managerial role. As the landscape of Irish society changes, so too should the attitudes held.

This paper is structured as follows: (1) an overview of the key developments regarding the promotion of equality in Irish society and within the education sector is presented and briefly discussed, (2) the concept of sex role stereotypes and requisite managerial characteristics is introduced, (3) an overview of the research carried out to date examining sex role stereotypes and requisite managerial characteristics among student samples is presented, (4) the results of this study are then examined and (5) the implications of these results are then discussed.

Table 1 highlights some of the key developments with regard to the promotion of equality within education and wider society over the past two decades in Ireland.

Education, from first to fourth levels, engages with issues of gender equality and inequality in society (Raftery and Valiulis, 2008). The school occupies a unique position and the role of the school is fundamental to creating an inclusive society (Department of Education and Science, 2006). *Education for a Changing World* (Government of Ireland, 1992), the *Education Act* (Government of Ireland, 1998a) and *Equal Measures* (Government of Ireland, 2000a) deal specifically with inclusion and gender equality throughout school curricula in Ireland. *Charting Our Education Future* (Government of Ireland, 1995) looks at equality at all levels of education, while the *Universities Act* (Government of Ireland, 1997) focuses specifically on the third level sector in Ireland. Mavin and Bryans (1999: 99)

state that 'Universities are uniquely placed to play a crucial role to encourage individuals, organisations and professional bodies to critically challenge their ways of working and thinking'. Raftery and Valiulis (2008: 303–304) highlight the extraordinary power education can play in helping to bring about gender equality, suggesting 'education reflects, implements, often challenges and sometimes destabilises value in society'.

Table 1: Key Developments in the Area of Equality within Education and Wider Society over the Past Two Decades in Ireland

Policy	Key Development
Education for a Changing World, 1992	Underlined the importance for all institutions developing and publishing 'an active policy to promote gender equality' as well as the need to review all teaching materials on an ongoing basis (Government of Ireland, 1992: 70–1)
Charting Our Education Future, 1995	Stressed the importance of ensuring the way in which subjects are taught 'does not unwittingly reinforce gender bias' (Government of Ireland, 1995: 30)
Education Act 1998	Called for the promotion of equal opportunities for both male and female students (Raftery et al., 2007; Government of Ireland, 1998a)
Universities Act 1997	Section 36 of the Act calls for equality, including gender equality, in all activities of the university (Government of Ireland, 1997)
Employment Equality Act 1998	This Act provides that all employment contracts shall be deemed to include equality and equal remuneration clauses. Discrimination on any of the nine grounds ² is outlawed in relation to a broad range of employment-related activities and situations including training or experience for, or in relation to employment, access to employment, conditions of employment, promotion, classification of posts, activities of employment agencies and advertising (Government of Ireland, 1998b)
Equal Status Act 2000	Outlaws discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services, and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on the nine distinct grounds for discrimination (Government of Ireland, 2000b)
National Development Plan, 2000–2006	The promotion of equal opportunities between women and men, in particular through a gender mainstreaming approach, is one of four horizontal objectives in the National Development Plan, 2000–2006 and the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (Government of Ireland, 1999)

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Table 1: (Continued)

Policy	Key Development
Equal Measures, 2000	A resource pack on gender equality for primary schools. The pack is designed to assist boards of management, teachers, parents, pupils and the entire school community in formulating a gender equality policy and in promoting gender equality within the whole school context (Government of Ireland, 2000a)
The Equality Authority	Following the Employment Equality Act 1998, the Equality Authority was established. The Equality Authority replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and has a greatly expanded role and functions
Equality Unit	Under the Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring measure of the National Development Plan, a dedicated Equality Unit was established in June 2001 in the Department of Education and Science. The unit is co-funded by the EU. The unit will advise on, review and promote the development of policy so that the department can move from a perceived gender neutral to a gender visible position in all areas of education. This means taking into account the different positions of men and women in society when developing policy, programmes or curriculum change

WOMEN IN THE IRISH WORKFORCE

Up until the 1980s, women's participation in the labour force in Ireland was low compared with that of other industrialised countries. In addition, the demographic structure of the female workforce was primarily young single women (McCarthy, 2004). However this scene has dramatically changed and Ireland surpassed the 60 per cent overall female employment targets by 2010 set for European Union (EU) member states (Eurostat, 2009). Ireland's buoyant economy during the late 1990s and early 2000s facilitated a rapid expansion in labour market demand, which has been reflected in a rise in employment figures of 58 per cent in the ten-year period from 1996 to 2006 (Turner and McMahon, 2008). Female employment more than tripled in the 40-year period from 1966 to 2006 (from 280,791 to 879,000) (Central Statistics Office, 1926–2006). In Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe, the labour force is becoming increasingly feminised. Between 1996 and 2006, increases in female employment accounted for 49 per cent of total employment increases.

Women are now entering professions that were once reserved for men, one area being management. The ratio of females to males in the Central Statistics Office's (CSO) 'managers and administrators' category of employment has increased from 1:3.3 in 1997 to 1:1.95 in 2008 (Central Statistics Office, 2009). This period saw huge increases in the numbers of females in the category, rising by 66 per cent (from 63,500 to 107,500), whereas the number of males in this category only rose by 4 per cent (from 208,300 to 217,200) (Central Statistics Office, 2009). However, despite the increase in the number of females in the category, the CSO failed to differentiate between higher-level and junior-level management positions.

Although the number of female senior managers has increased and women are more visible in senior level roles, the proportion of women in senior management is still quite low. As the distribution of men and women in managerial posts changes, the stereotypes of requisite managerial characteristics should also change.

SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

Sex role stereotyping refers to the perceived suitability between gender and a particular role. 'Sex-role stereotypes are beliefs about the appropriateness of various roles and activities for men and women' (Cleveland et al., 2000: 43). While much of the research previously cited investigates the general nature of gender stereotypes and leadership, research by Schein (1973, 1975) was the first to look at the relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite managerial characteristics. Research utilising Schein's Descriptive Index (SDI) focuses on the relationship between gender and management stereotypes, reflecting the extent to which men and women are viewed as leader-like (Duehr and Bono, 2006). SDI was developed using items that differentially describe men and women generated from the work of Brim (1958), Bennett and Cohen (1959), and Rosenkrantz et al. (1968). SDI consists of a series of 92 descriptive terms commonly used to characterise people in general. Some of these are positive in connotation (e.g. sympathetic, sentimental, creative, courteous, sociable, kind, helpful, prompt, generous), others are negative (e.g. bitter, selfish, submissive, vulgar, passive, deceitful, hasty, quarrelsome), and some are more neutral (e.g. curious, competitive, knows the way of the world, hides emotion, demure, has desire for friendship). In a typical SDI study, participants rate how characteristic the 92 descriptive words and phrases are of men, women and managers in general. It can be used to assess the relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics. The response format for each descriptive term is usually a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (characteristic) to 1 (uncharacteristic) with a neutral rating of 3 (neither characteristic or uncharacteristic). The degree of resemblance between the ratings of men, women and managers is determined by calculating interclass correlation coefficients from randomised group analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

RESEARCH ON SEX ROLE STEREOTYPES

There has been a growing abundance of literature examining sex role stereotyping and requisite management characteristics since 1973. Since Schein's initial study in 1973 a series of studies have been conducted using SDI (Schein, 1975; Massengill and Di Marco, 1979; Brenner et al., 1989; Heilman et al., 1989; Schein et al., 1989; Schein and Mueller, 1992; Schein and Davidson, 1993; Orser, 1994; Schein, 1994; Dodge et al., 1995; Schein et al., 1996; Martell et al., 1998; Fullagar et al., 2003; Boyce and Herd, 2003; and Boysen and Nkomo, 2010). To date, numerous studies have been carried out using SDI to determine the relationship between sex role stereotypes and perceived management characteristics, reflecting the extent to which men and women are viewed as leader-like. SDI studies have been replicated on numerous occasions by Schein and other researchers, using samples of both male and female managers and male and female students. Of interest to this paper is

the research to date pertaining to a student population. Table 2 summarises the findings of this research using SDI among a student population.

Table 2: Summary of Research to Date

Author, Year	Country and Sample Details	Findings
Schein et al., 1989	United States – 145 male and 83 female management students from a small private liberal arts college in the eastern US	Male students, similar to their managerial counterparts in the 1980s and 1970s, still adhere to the male managerial stereotype and perceive middle managers to possess characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men than women. Female management students no longer sex type the managerial job
Schein and Mueller, 1992	Germany – 167 female and 279 male management students in a major university	Successful middle managers possess characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men than to women. German females sex type the managerial position to almost the same degree as the males
Schein and Davidson, 1993	United Kingdom – 105 female and 123 male undergraduate management students in a large university in the north and 78 female and 73 male students from a southern-based university	Managers are seen as possessing characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than women. Females recorded lower ratings than the male students for the similarity of females and managers in the UK
Orser, 1994	Canada – 297 undergraduate students from Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto. The sample comprised business, consumer and nutrition students	Confirms previous international research that there is a significant relationship between the traits associated with success as a manager and the characteristics associated with men among female and male business and non-business students. Female students, regardless of year or course of study, also believed that the traits associated with women are significantly related to the characteristics of a successful manager

(Continued)

Table 2: (Continued)

Author, Year	Country and Sample Details	Findings
Schein et al., 1996	China – 123 female and 150 male undergraduate students enrolled in a school of business in a large city in China	For both males and females within the Chinese sample, the hypothesis that managers are perceived to possess characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than women was confirmed
Schein et al., 1996	Japan – 105 female and 211 males enrolled in a business course at a university in a large Japanese city	The hypothesis that managers are perceived to possess characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than women was confirmed while a near zero non-significant relationship was recorded for the ratings of women and managers
Sauers et al., 2002	New Zealand – 153 male and 165 female commerce students attending university in New Zealand	Both male and female students in the study perceive middle managers as possessing the characteristics, attitudes and temperaments commonly ascribed to men and, to a lesser extent, women
Fullagar et al., 2003	Sweden – 73 male students and 201 female students in an English-speaking university. Participants were students from different departments taking psychology courses	There was a significant relationship between ratings of men and managers and an insignificant relationship between women and managers
Fullagar et al., 2003	Turkey – 469 male students and 337 female students in an English-speaking university. Participants were students from different departments taking psychology courses	Consistent with previous research, the results indicated that there is a prominent male stereotype associated with successful middle management

(Continued)

Table 2: (Continued)

Author, Year	Country and Sample Details	Findings
BooySEN and Nkomo, 2010	South Africa – MBA students White: 143 males, 59 females Black: 283 males, 120 female	The results recorded by the male sample from South Africa were mixed. The 'think manager, think male' hypothesis for black males continues to exist. However, the white male sample did not sex type the managerial role in favour of men. For black women the resemblance between the characteristics of women in general and successful managers in general is significantly higher than the resemblance of men and managers. White women perceived men and women to equally possess the requisite managerial characteristics

Although these studies were conducted between 1989 and 2010, a consistent pattern of results emerges from the male samples used in these studies. Male participants consistently sex typed the managerial role, with the exception of white males from South Africa. The results from the female sample are somewhat more varied. In China, Japan, Sweden and Germany, female participants sex typed the managerial role in favour of men. In New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, South Africa (black) and the United States (US), female students did not sex type the managerial role. They see women and men as equally likely to possess characteristics necessary for managerial success. However, with the changes in Irish society in recent years and the increased numbers of females in the workforce, coupled with gender equality initiatives in legislation and education, we believe the level of sex role stereotyping will be reduced and therefore propose the following research question: *Given the increased number of females in employment and managerial positions in the last 40 years, do students still sex type the managerial position?*

METHOD

Schein's Descriptive Index (SDI) was used in this research. The original 92 descriptive terms were used to measure gender stereotypes and characteristics of managers. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a subject information sheet, detailing the nature and purpose of the research. The following instructions were given to the candidates:

On the following pages you will find a series of descriptive terms commonly used to characterise people in general. Some of these are positive in connotation, others are negative, and some are neither very positive nor very negative.

We would like you to use this list to tell us what you think of men/women/managers in general. In making your judgements, it may be helpful to imagine you are about to meet the person for the first time and the only thing you know in advance is the person is male, female or a manager. Please rate each word or phrase in terms of how characteristic it is of men/women/managers in general.

The ratings are to be made according to the following scale:

1 – Not characteristic, 2 – Somewhat uncharacteristic, 3 – Neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic, 4 – Somewhat characteristic, 5 – Characteristic

Each survey was accompanied by a subject information sheet. This sheet explained the nature of the study, gave guidelines on how to complete the survey, obtained consent to participate in the research, assured anonymity of the participants and explained the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time. Full ethical approval was granted for this research by the host university.

As with previous research using SDI, three different target conditions were utilised in this research. The conditions were as follows: (1) men in general, (2) women in general and (3) managers in general. Therefore, each participant responded to only one target condition; these were randomly assigned. Some respondents were asked to report the extent to which the descriptive terms were reflective of 'men in general', others were asked to reflect on 'women in general' and the remaining participants were asked to report on 'managers in general'.

The results of this study were then compared to the results of previous studies carried out using SDI among a student population. The following studies were included in the analysis: Schein et al. (1989) (US sample), Schein and Mueller (1992) (German sample), Schein and Davidson (1993) (UK sample), Orser (1994) (Canadian sample), Schein et al. (1996) (Chinese and Japanese samples), Sauers et al. (2002) (New Zealand sample), Fullagar et al. (2003) (Swedish and Turkish samples), and Booysen and Nkomo (2010) (South African sample). All of these studies used the same methodology and analyses as the original 1973 and 1975 empirical studies carried out by Schein.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants chosen for this study were a student population. Prime et al. (2008) argue that societies which are classified as more gender egalitarian will harbour fewer stereotypes about men and women. Student groups are one group in society which are perceived to harbour relatively egalitarian views of men and women (Lueptow et al., 2001). Williams and Best (1990) argue that university students may be particularly suitable for research on sex role stereotyping. Students have a relatively egalitarian view of men and women which, when juxtaposed with the evidence of stereotyping in their culture, makes them more perceptive of the differences in characteristics ascribed to men and women (Williams and Best, 1990). Other reasons which make student samples attractive from a research point of view: (1) using only a student sample allows for a direct comparison between the results of this study and previous studies using a student sample, (2) using a student

sample eliminates differences in corporate culture, and (3) this study was carried out in an era where women had significant presence in the workforce.

The sample used in this research was a combination of undergraduate (N = 588), post-graduate (N = 162) and executive education (N = 47) students from a business college at a large public university in the Republic of Ireland. The classes in which this survey was distributed were selected randomly. Surveys were administered (handed out and collected) at the end of class over a three-week period. Class sizes ranged from 15 students to over 200 students. All survey responses were optional and confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

A total of 809 questionnaires were returned and of these 12 were eliminated because of failure to complete them properly. Surveys were eliminated if the sex of the respondent was not reported, the survey was incomplete or non-variability was demonstrated in item ratings. The sample represented sixteen different programmes, twelve from within a business college and four interdisciplinary programmes (all of which were offered through the business college and one other college in the university). Overall, there were 383 (48 per cent) male respondents and 414 (52 per cent) female respondents. The overall average age of respondents was 23 years old (minimum age = 18, maximum age = 56, mode = 22).

ANALYSES

As in past research, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC, r^i) were computed. The degree of resemblance between the descriptions of men and managers and between women and managers was determined by computing ICCs from two randomised groups' (the 92 descriptive items) analyses of variance. ICCs were computed between managers and each of the gendered conditions. The ICC gives an estimate of the percentage of the total variance that is due to the differences between the treatments (Dodge et al., 1995). ICCs were calculated to determine the degree of similarity between managers and men in general and between managers and women in general.

A high correlation between two groups reflects similar ratings for the two conditions. According to Hays (1963), the larger the value of r^i the more similar observations in the same class tend to be relative to observations in different classes. In line with research conducted by Duehr and Bono (2006: 828), 'if the difference in the correlation between two sets of conditions (e.g. managers and men in general as compared to managers and women in general) exceeds .29, the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)', assuming equal variance across all samples.

RESULTS

Based on the findings in Table 3, which presents the results of the analyses of variance and the intraclass correlation coefficient, there was a large and significant resemblance between the overall ratings of men and managers ($r^i = 0.633, p < 0.001$), with the resemblance of women and managers lower ($r^i = 0.357, p < 0.001$). The difference in correlation between the two sets of conditions is 0.276. Using Duehr and Bono's (2006) approach to

test the differences, no statistically significant difference was recorded as the difference is less than 0.29.

Table 3: Analyses of Variance of Mean Item Ratings and Intraclass Coefficients

Source	df	MS	F	r'
<i>Men and Managers</i>				
Between items ^a	91	0.719	4.49***	0.633***
Within items ^b	92	0.160		
<i>Women and Managers</i>				
Between items	91	0.623	2.12***	0.357***
Within items ^c	92	0.293		

*** $p < 0.001$

^a The MS for between items looks at the amount of variation that can be explained by accounting for differences between the descriptive items.

^b The MS for within items looks at the variation within each descriptive item across the two groups (men and managers). If men and managers are rated similarly the within item will be small compared to the between item and the F statistic will be significant, as is in this case.

^c For women and managers the within items is larger because the groups are not rated similarly and so the F statistic is not significant.

df = Degrees of Freedom; *MS* = Mean Squared

To determine whether or not gender had an impact on these results, ICC tests were carried out to moderate for gender. These tests revealed that the gender of the respondent did have an impact on the relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management positions. Table 4 details these results.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance of Mean Item Ratings and Intraclass Coefficients

Source	df	MS	F	r'
Males				
<i>Managers and men</i>				
Between items	91	0.707	5.27***	0.681***
Within items	92	0.134		
<i>Managers and women</i>				
Between items	91	0.501	1.49	0.193***
Within items	92	0.335		

(Continued)

Table 4: (Continued)

Source	df	MS	F	r^l
Females				
<i>Managers and men</i>				
Between items	91	0.749	3.78***	0.582***
Within items	92	0.198		
<i>Managers and women</i>				
Between items	91	0.760	2.79***	0.472***
Within items	92	0.272		

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

There is a large and significant difference between the way men rate men and managers ($r^l = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$) compared to women and managers ($r^l = 0.193$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the male sample believe managers possess characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than women. (The difference in the correlation between two sets of conditions for male responses is 0.488, confirming a statistically significant difference.) The difference in rating between the two conditions for the female sample is much lower. The ratings between the two conditions for females is 0.110, confirming that women do not sex type the managerial role. These findings corroborate the findings of Schein et al. (1989), Schein and Davidson (1993), Orser (1994), Schein et al. (1996), Sauers et al. (2002), and Booysen and Nkomo (2010).

The next section looks at sex role stereotyping of the managerial role in other countries and compares these results to the results of previous studies to help determine patterns of results across different cultures.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

To put these results into an international context, these results were compared to the results of previous studies using SDI among a student population: Schein et al. (1989) (US sample), Schein and Mueller (1992) (German sample), Schein and Davidson (1993) (UK sample), Orser (1994) (Canadian sample), Schein et al. (1996) (Chinese and Japanese samples), Sauers et al. (2002) (New Zealand sample), Fullagar et al. (2003) (Swedish and Turkish samples), and Booysen and Nkomo (2010) (South African sample).

The differences highlighted in bold in Table 5 denote a statistically significant difference in ratings. Looking at the results of this study, the following observations can be made:

- Among the male sample, all males with the exception of white males from South Africa sex type the managerial role in favour of men.
- In China, Japan, Sweden and Germany, both males and females sex type the managerial role in favour of men.

Table 5: International Comparison of Results

Country	r' Men and Managers	r' Women and Managers	Difference in r' Scores for Males Rating Men and Managers and Males Rating Women and Managers	r' Men and Managers	r' Women and Managers	Difference in r' Scores for Females Rating Men and Managers and Females Rating Women and Managers	
				Male Ratings		Female Ratings	
Canada	0.66**	0.0**	0.66	0.38***	0.47**	0.09	
China	0.91**	-0.04	0.95	0.91**	0.28*	0.63	
Germany	0.74**	-0.04	0.78	0.66**	0.19*	0.47	
Ireland	0.68**	0.193***	0.488	0.582***	0.472***	0.110	
Japan	0.54**	-0.07	0.61	0.68***	-0.04	0.72	
New Zealand	0.72**	0.36***	0.36	0.66***	0.46***	0.2	
South Africa (Black)	0.784**	0.272*	0.512	0.505***	0.641***	0.136	
South Africa (White)	0.683**	0.410***	0.273	0.563***	0.538***	0.025	
Sweden	0.71**	-0.03	0.74	0.67***	0.22***	0.45	
Turkey	0.57**	0.11	0.46	0.59***	0.34***	0.25	
UK	0.67**	0.02	0.65	0.60***	0.31***	0.29	
US	0.70***	0.11	0.59	0.51***	0.43***	0.08	

** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

- In Ireland, New Zealand, the UK and the US, male students adhere to the male managerial stereotype and perceive managers to possess characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men than women. However, the level of sex typing in Ireland is less than that recorded in the UK and US. Female students from these countries did not sex type the managerial role.
- In Turkey and Japan, females rated men and managers higher than males rated men and managers.
- Canadians and black South Africans were the only participants to record a reversal of usual patterns: the female sample in both countries recorded a higher correlation between women and managers than between men and managers.

Taking the entire sample, a paired *t*-test was conducted to determine whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the difference in r^1 values for males rating men and managers and males rating women and managers compared to the difference in r^1 values for females rating men and managers and females rating women and managers. The result of the paired *t*-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between males rating men and managers and males rating women and managers ($M = 0.59$, $SD = 0.187$) compared to females rating men and managers and females rating women and managers ($M = 0.28$, $SD = 0.234$), $t(11) = 5.984$, $p < 0.0000$ (2-tailed). The mean difference in scores was 0.307 with a 95 per cent confidence interval ranging from 0.194 to 0.420. The eta squared statistic (0.7649) indicated a large effect size. Shapiro-Wilk's (Pallant, 2010) test was carried out to test for normality; in both cases the *p* value was > 0.05 , implying normality. We can conclude, therefore, that males internationally view the managerial position differently to their female counterparts.

DISCUSSION

Research to date has recorded consistent patterns of results for male students rating sex role stereotypes and requisite managerial characteristics, with male students predominantly sex typing the managerial role in favour of men. With the changing role of women in society and the increased numbers of women in the workforce and managerial positions, coupled with equality legislation and equality initiatives within the area of education, we put forward the following research question: *Given the increased number of females in employment and managerial positions in the last 40 years, do students still sex type the managerial position?*

This study yielded a similar pattern of results to previous studies: males sex type the managerial role in favour of men, while females hold a gender-free view of management.

Although males sex typed the managerial role in favour of men, it is encouraging to note that the difference in r^1 scores for males rating men and managers compared to males rating women and managers in this study is lower than differences recorded by male samples from Canada, China, Germany, Japan, South Africa (blacks), Sweden, the UK and the US. However, caution needs to be paid when interpreting these results. Although

the difference in r^1 scores is lower, males recorded $r^1 = 0.193^{***}$ for women and managers, meaning males see very few similarities between women and managers in general.

Turning to the results of the female sample, female students do not sex type the managerial role; they see both males and females as possessing the necessary characteristics to fulfil the managerial role. Females see the managerial role as a gender-free role. This is in line with international studies carried out in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey, the UK and the US.

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS

The overall results of this study are quite disconcerting. Males continue to sex type the managerial role in favour of men. Given the fact that these males are the future working generation, and most likely future managers, it may provide a bleak future for young females aspiring to managerial positions. The global nature of managerial sex typing among males should be of concern to those interested in promoting gender equality worldwide. The pattern of outcomes among the male samples leads us to agree with Schein (2007), who suggested that attitudinal barriers to women's advancement may be in place for some time. While women are making inroads into the managerial position in Ireland and worldwide, this change in the managerial landscape is not reflected in Irish students' perceptions of the managerial position. Regardless of the number of women in managerial positions, males seem to persist in their perception of the necessity of a masculine model of managerial success. Such sex role stereotyping of managerial work can result in a view that women are less qualified than men for managerial positions and negatively affect their opportunities for entry or advancement into the field of management.

The traditional organisational structure that exists within Irish business is a hierarchical structure with male dominance at its apex. Russell et al. (2009) reported that men are twice as likely to hold senior and middle management positions in Ireland than women. They further suggest that Ireland has one of the highest levels of gender segregation in the European labour market, with females over-represented among lower-paid workers. The lack of female mentors and development opportunities for females at lower or middle levels of an organisation, coupled with the fact that male students in Ireland continue to sex type the managerial role in favour of men, is likely to inhibit females in the Irish workplace from reaching senior management positions in the near future. The association between sex role stereotypes and perceptions of requisite management characteristics may, in part, account for the limited number of women in senior management positions in Ireland. Because males are prominent in decision-making roles, and owing to the fact that they hold a masculine view of management requirement, women will continue to be less likely to be selected for or promoted into management positions.

Schein and Mueller (1992) recommend continued international efforts for equal opportunities in employment, legislation and the encouragement of corporate structural mechanisms to circumvent the negative impact of stereotypical attitudes on women's opportunities. The strength of the relationship between characteristics perceived to be held by men and those perceived as required for managerial success may explain why efforts to

enhance and promote the status of women in management are proving so difficult (Schein, 2001). Despite all the societal, legal and organisational changes that have occurred since the initial studies (Schein, 1973, 1975), males continue to perceive that managerial characteristics are more likely to be held by men than by women. Failure to adopt policies that ensure fairness and equal access for both genders may result in despondence from female workers.

'The global nature of managerial stereotyping among males should be of concern to those internationally promoting gender equality worldwide' (Schein, 2001: 648). Schein (2001) warns that participation rates of females in managerial roles will be kept low if the attitudes of male decision makers, prejudiced strongly by managerial sex types, are allowed to go unchallenged. Such stereotyping of the managerial role is inhibiting women from entering the higher echelons of the managerial sphere, and in turn negatively affecting their status in society. Schein (1973: 99) suggests that 'all else being equal, the perceived similarities between the characteristics of successful middle managers and men in general increases the likelihood of a male rather than a female being selected for or promoted to a managerial position'.

The big question now is where next for middle-level female managers? Cleveland et al. (2000: 313) highlight findings from a study by the Feminist Majority Foundation and state, 'it will take until about the year 2465 for women's presence in executive suites to be equal to men's' if change continues at the same slow rate. The attitudes held by males of women as managers have stood still while all other aspects of the global workforce have changed. Taking the findings of this study into account against the backdrop of unprecedented economic growth and increases in employment participation rates in Ireland, it is very possible the 'think manager, think male' phenomenon (Schein et al., 1996) will keep Irish women confined to lower- and middle-level positions for the foreseeable future.

While the results of this study represent an important group of future employees, the sample may also have potentially influenced the research findings. The sample, mainly undergraduate students, had limited or no work experience. The perceptions recorded are not based on lived experiences or observations in the workplace. Further research is merited in this area to capture the perceptions of the current workforce in Ireland to determine whether or not sex role stereotypes of requisite managerial characteristics exist in the Irish workforce.

CONCLUSION

For educators, a greater emphasis on gender equality is required on the curriculum to ensure a more gender-egalitarian view of management is created in the classroom, which in turn will hopefully filter into the workplace thereafter. *Charting Our Education Future* (Government of Ireland, 1995: 30) stressed the importance of ensuring the way in which subjects are taught 'does not unwittingly reinforce gender bias'. Particularly within the area of management education, a greater emphasis should be placed on a gender-free view of management or a more feminine view of management. This could be done through introducing cases with females as the main actors and using examples of successful female

managers in anecdotes. Ignoring the issue of women in management reinforces the exclusion of women from this select group, simply repeating historical management practice. Mavin and Bryans (1999: 99) state that:

Universities are uniquely placed to play a crucial role to encourage individuals, organisations and professional bodies to critically challenge their ways of working and thinking. By placing gender on the curriculum students will be made aware of more appropriate management styles that can be implemented in organisations, such as feminine and androgynous leadership/management approaches.

A masculine bias in management education may discourage future managers from promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Schein and Davidson (1993) recommend that training, development and teaching within business schools should aim to eliminate stereotypes. Outside of the classroom, business schools should also help promote and foster gender equality. Students should have access to female role models and mentors. Similarly, within the workplace, greater emphasis needs to be placed on gender equality and workplace diversity. Organisations should ensure policies and procedures are in place to foster gender equality. Equality should be incorporated into all policies and procedures from recruitment and selection right through to promotion to senior management levels. Organisations should also ensure equal representation on selection and promotion boards to ensure boards are free from bias. A strong emphasis should be placed on diversity and equality training. This should be introduced in induction programmes to show organisational commitment to equality in the workplace. Employers should provide mentoring to females aspiring to managerial positions. A level of flexibility should be allowed to workers to help workers balance commitments at work and at home. Gender equality needs to be reflected in all levels of organisational structures. If this does not happen, the 'global devaluation of women' (Schein, 2001: 686) will continue long into the future.

NOTES

- 1 The marriage bar, which required women to leave paid employment on getting married, was introduced in the Irish civil service in 1933. This clause operated until 1958 for primary school teachers and until 1973 for all other categories of workers (O'Connor, 1998).
- 2 Gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief and membership of the Traveller community.

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