PREDICTING THE INTENTION OF TOP MANAGERS IN BANGLADESH TO APPOINT WOMEN TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS: AN EXAMINATION AND EXTENSION OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

By

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Statement of Originality

“This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.”

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Date: 12-03-2013
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Abstract

There is a consensus that women are underrepresented in senior management positions across the world. Since the early 1970s, researchers have been exploring the factors and forces contributing to the low presence of women in senior management roles. Theoretical and empirical scholarship suggests that women’s advancement to senior management positions is not only affected by personal factors such as qualifications, experiences and aspiration to ascend to senior leadership positions but also by the positive effect of structural factors such as human resource policies and practices, organisational climate and attitudinal factors such as stereotypical attitudes toward women as managers.

At the organisational level, most prior studies have identified both structural and attitudinal factors that create barriers to women advancing to senior management positions; however, there is a knowledge gap concerning how these organisational factors influence the intention of top managers to promote women to senior management positions. Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) suggests that people’s (behavioural) intention is an immediate determinant of enacting the behaviour in question.

To predict and understand the future pattern of women’s presence in senior management positions, it is imperative to examine the intention of top managers to promote women to senior management positions that leads to actual behaviour associated with promoting women. Therefore, this study adopts a positivist-quantitative research paradigm and develops a TPB-based research model. To examine this model, primary data were
collected from 182 human resource managers in Bangladesh through the use of a cross-sectional, self-administered survey (online and paper).

Partial least squares based structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis reveals that positive attitudes toward women as managers, anticipated affective reactions, organisational climate, human resources policies and practices, and subjective norms have a significant influence on the intention of top managers to promote women to senior management positions. Additionally, the results of bootstrapped confidence analyses indicate that anticipated affective reactions and attitudes toward the promotion of women to senior management positions mediate the relationship between attitudes toward women as managers and the intention of top managers to promote women to senior management positions. Similarly, subjective norms mediate the relationship between organisational climate and the intention of top managers to promote women as well as the relationship between human resource policies and practices and the intention to promote women. The findings of this study also justify the inclusion of structural and attitudinal variables within the TPB framework. Thus, this study extends and validates the predictive capability of the TPB in the field of human resource management and has implications for initiatives addressing gender equity in relation to senior management roles.