Challenges faced by women in leadership

Business, Management

There are Three three approaches that may explain the glass ceiling phenomenonchallenges women face whilst climbing the corporate leader namely: biological models, socialisation models, and structural/cultural models (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000: 210; Bartol, 2003; Weyer, 2007: 482).

According to The biological models states that the differences , there are biological differences between men and women are biological , such as genetic, hormonal, and physical characteristics, and the reasonsexplanations for these differences are the result of genetic patterns have evolvedchanged from adaptations to differing reproductive circumstances of early males and females. Cleveland et al(2000) state that tThese adaptations have emerged slowly over thousands of generations, and these differences are stable and necessary for both male and female survival. (Cleveland et al., 2000; Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo & Lueptow, 2001: 29).

Socialisation models focusemphasises on the observed differences between men and women. These models assume that because of various social and cognitive development process of the individuals related to different stages in their live ; men and women will behave differently. From this approach it is assumed that the observed differences are not stable and may be subject change. men and women behave differently due to various social and cognitive development processes of the individuals related with life stages, such as schooling and work life. In this approach, observed differences are not stable, but on the contrary, are subject to change (Cleveland et al., 2000; Bartol, 2003: 17).

According Cleveland et al (2000: 211)to structural-cultural models, social structures, systems, and arrangements lead and definedescribe gender differences due to discrepanciesinconsistencies in status and power (Bartol, 2003: 18). In these models the, differences exists to keep those that are e powerful in control and the powerless without power, and these similar to the socialisation model are are changeable (Cleveland et al., 2000: 212).

Socialisation and structural/cultural models seem to receive more recognition have received more attention in the literature than the biological models (Bartol , Martin & Kromkowski , 2003) and have been called the mostseem to have a more accepted explanation for gender differences (Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo , Lueptow , 2001: 30). Whilst On the other hand, it is necessary to explainexplicate expectation states theory, which is one of the most prominent theories within structural-cultural models (Weyer, 2007: 483). According to expectationthis theory states theorythat , there are shared gender stereotypes within society and these stereotypes contain status beliefs (Ridgeway, 2001: 642). Ridgeway(2001) and Weyer (2007)defined Sstatus beliefs refer to widely shared cultural beliefs or schemas about the status positions within society, such as race , occupation, education or ethnicity gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation (Ridgeway, 2001; Weyer, 2007: 484). When status beliefs develop about a status position, inequalitydisparity arises between members people within this of this status position (Ridgeway, 2001: 643).

In this context, these beliefs associate greater status, worthiness, and competence, competence , status and worthiness and more valued skills

with the advantaged group than the disadvantaged group within status position (Ridgeway, 2001: 643). Therefor us, whereas agentic attributescharacteristics are generally ascribedcredited to men, communal attributes are generally ascribed to women (Eagly, 2003: 808). Agentic characteristics and behaviours can be described loosely defined as assertiveness, ambition, competing for attention, and making problem-focused suggestionspropositions. Communal characteristics might be describedcan then be defined as speaking tentatively, supporting and soothing others, and being helpful and sympathetic (Eagly, 2003; Weyer, 2007: 490). Research Literature also explains that the emergence of gender-related behaviours in organisations generally fall into these three categories: models: biological, socialisation, and structural/cultural models (Bartol, 2003: 15; Cleveland et al, 2000: 213). Researchers Many researchers have concluded that the study of gender and management has resulted in a ssimilarity ameness/difference debate with research on women in management becoming either polarised or marginalised. Thus, theyThey arguealso seem to argue for attention to the biological, social and therebyin that way often domestic fact of being female, and how this intersectstraverses with the conditions in the workplacewithin the business environment (Rees, 2003).

A range of issues arise in restraining women's potential to aspire to climbing the corporate ladder and growing nto positions of leadership . positions of leadership. Sadie (2005) maintained that at the bottom of the restrictions challenges that women face is the patriarchal system where decision-making powers are in the hands of males. In this context, traditional beliefs and

cultural attitudes concerningregarding the role and status of women in society are still common and many women who are part of this system are finding it difficult to divergedeviate from this culture and tradition they become ostracised. Regardless of women's education and access to the job market, a woman's role is considered to be the stereotypical typical one of homemaker. The man on the other hand as the bread-winner, head of household, and has the right to public and work life. Confining women's identity to the domestic spherescope is one of the barriersbarricades to women's entry into politics, and politics by its nature catapults one into public and lifework life.

The glass ceiling is an indication of gender discriminatory practices discernable in the management profession. Additionally, women who are able to crack through the " glass ceiling" this so called ceiling often contend with various gender stereotypes. Further to this more, as shown by Freeman (2000), women managers, like many working women, generally deal with dual roles career dilemmas of working in the public office as well as being responsible in the home, and with child-care concerns.

CommonlyGenerally, cultural attitudes are antagonistic to women's involvement in politicsthe working environment or political participation. Some women were capable of transcending cultural barriers and climbing to positions of leadership whether in politics or other spheres of public life, the business butenvironment but more often than not it meant having to cope with cultural expectations of a role of a withinwomen, within their leadership roles.

The South African government adopted a policy framework which outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how it intends to realise this ideal (Kornegay, 2000). The current situation in South Africa, is that the legally binding commitment to promote gender equality is very high on the government's agenda.

In the corporate environment the picture seems less impressive. In comparison with 79% of men, only 46% women were found to be employed in South Africa and it also appears that these women earned on average less than half of their male counterparts salaries (Van der Walt, 2007). Whilst in the

In the public sector, the figures are encouraging, however a huge disparity still exists in terms of salary scale levels, with their male counterparts still earning far more than women them at senior management/leadership positions.

The general understanding is that lLeadership positions entail hard work and long hours. These considerations are also accurate of women with higher levels of education. In addition to issues of family responsibilities y that do not make it easy for women to progressadvance , cultural beliefs concerning the roles of men and women inhibit women's progression to top leadership as much as it does in politics (Pandor 2006).

Leadership for women is not a simple task and so, as observed by Morna and Nyakujarah (2010)) observed that leadership for women is not a simple , task, moving up and staying at the top is not necessarily filled with joy. Other

literature onwritten on women's leadership discloses that women are less likely than men to take part in upper levels of leadership than (men (Patrick; 2008a). Acker (2000: 140) advances tThe theory advances vthat there is some sort of achievement preventiondeterrence by women that influences their leadership growth aptitude or curiosity in leadership positionstheir interest in being in leadership positions (Acker; 2000: 140).

Much of the questions aboutQuestions women'son women's leadership positions have often arisen been inraised in a number of literature studies. However, there is scantlimited information on the challenges faced by women leaders in leadership or management position compared in both the public and private sectors. In 2005, a year-long study conducted by Caliper (2005)) conducted a year long study in 2005that, identified a number of characteristics that distinguishdifferentiate women leaders from men when it comes to qualities of leadershipleadership qualities : According to this paper Caliper (2005), women leaders are more assertive and persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. Women leaders were also found to be more empathetic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts. Since the focus of this study is grounded on the challenges facing women leaders in a comparative within the public and private sectors, the dependence of the literature will rely on that line(Capliper ; 2005).

TraditionallyFrom a conventional point of , view, leadership has been associated with masculinity and the belief assumption that men make betterare better leaders than women. Even though the number of women in

leadership positions has improved especially of Africa over the last two decades after ratification of the Beijing conference in 1995, yet women representation and participation in the public sphere is still small. Hojgaard (2002) argues that the cultural structure of leadership in itself initiates difference. It is only now being clear that women could gain admissionadmittance to leadership positions.

In literature written by According to Grant (2005), it is believed that inthere is an assumption in the African culture menthat men lead and women follow. It is not unusual in rural villages in Africa to find the man literally walking ahead of woman. Different motives may be postulatedhypothesised for this, but eventually it demonstrates the intensely held preconceived notion conception of leadershipthat leadership as masculineis masculine. De La Rey (2005) lists the qualities commonly linked with leadership as effective communication skills, task completion, responsibilityaccountability, problem solving, originalityuniqueness, decision making, vision, self-awareness, confidence, experience and power. Although it is likelyThese are likely to build up these qualities in any human being in spite of despite gender, in male dominated societies, as is more often the case in African societies, communities, male leadership and styles prevail, and are regarded as the more acceptable forms of leadership. Growe and Montgomery (2000) defined leaderLeaders are defined s as people who offer vision and meaning for an institution and embody the ideas towards which the organisation strivesendeavors. From that point of view, leaders are identical and genderlesshave no gender. However, there is still doubt when women lead, and in many situations gender, more than age, experience or competence

determines the role one is assignedassigned (Growe and Montgomery ;

2000: 46).