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A contextual study of female-leader role stereotypes in the hotel sector

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\textbf{ABSTRACT}

Guided by the role congruity theory (RCT), this paper examines the mismatch in female-leader role stereotypes and how this mismatch may lead to prejudicial evaluations against female leaders. It also tests how gender equality practices and leadership development programmes (LDPs) may mitigate prejudicial evaluations against female leaders. Following a quantitative approach, this study uses a paired sample \( t \)-test and linear approach (i.e. multiple regression) to model the relationships and test the hypotheses formulated. Drawing on a survey of 392 employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels in Jordan, the study shows that employees stereotype successful leaders to be more masculine than feminine while they attribute both feminine and masculine stereotypes to women. There is, thus, an element of congruity in female-leader role stereotypes which reduces prejudicial evaluations against female leaders. Moreover, the results indicate that gender equality practices and LDPs significantly enhance the emergence and effectiveness of women leaders. The importance of this study derives from extending the RCT through a contextual investigation in the hotel sector in Jordan. This was done by considering two additional constructs, i.e. gender equality practices and LDPs that mitigate prejudice against female leaders.

\textbf{Introduction}

A challenging phenomenon in the Middle East today is the growing number of educated and skilled women who are unemployed or underemployed as compared to their male compatriots (Metcalfe, 2008; United Nations Development Programme, 2017). For women, this is an issue of equal opportunities and justice in their economic participation. For scholars, it is an opportunity to pay contextual attention to issues of gender and leadership (Du, 2016).

A key concern expressed by management scholars is the inconsistency in female-leader role stereotypes (e.g. Billing, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Within studies about gender and leadership, it is apparent that the masculine is still regarded as the universal or normal criterion against which a leader is judged (Leitch & Stead, 2016). Women leaders live within a paradox (Mavin & Grandy, 2016) between the expected image of leaders as masculine and the feminine style that is expected from women.

This discrepancy in gender roles has invoked the role congruity theory (RCT) which explains how “members of a group enter or attempt to enter into social roles that are stereotypically...
mismatched for their group” (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig & Eagly, 2014, p. 71) and may be in turn subject to negative prejudices. In light of RCT, the key issue addressed in this paper is to examine whether typical leadership positions (e.g. board of directors, CEOs) are more suitable for men than women, which in turn may result in gender gaps. To test the hypotheses formulated and model the relationships, the paper uses a multiple linear regression analysis along with a paired t-test.

In the Middle East, organisations in general remain male-dominated. Particularly, there is a lack of women in the upper echelons of management (Masadeh, 2013). This is also the case in the hospitality industry where women remain under-represented (Tucker, 2007). The situation in the hotel sector in Jordan reflects serious prejudice against women’s employment. Thus far, empirical and theoretical studies show contradicting conclusions about the preferability of feminine or masculine style of leadership (e.g. Duffy et al., 2015; Katila & Eriksson, 2013; Koenig et al., 2011; Muller-Kahle & Schiehll, 2013; Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010). This paper investigates this issue in the context of the hotel industry in Jordan given the “feminine” nature of this industry (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015) due to its caring orientation. In particular, the paper seeks to examine: (a) the extent to which the dominant image of leaders is masculine or feminine, and how such a stereotype produces prejudice against women leaders, (b) how prejudice against women leaders restricts their abilities to emerge as effective leaders, and (c) how gender equality and leadership practices affect prejudice towards women leaders.

Given the lack of studies on gender and leadership in the hospitality industry in the Middle East or Arab region (Kogovsek & Kogovsek, 2015; Masadeh, 2013), this study fills in a significant gap and takes an important step towards understanding gender and leadership in Jordan. This will contribute to the hospitality management literature by moving beyond the general perceptions and stereotypes that hold women back, by empirically examining how prejudice may explain the gender gap in leadership roles. Further, the study may assist policymakers by pointing towards practices (i.e. gender equality practices and LDPs) that may reform prejudicial attitudes against women.

The paper is organised as follows. First, a review of the literature is presented with a particular focus on gender and leadership practices in the Arab region. Second, a discussion on the hospitality industry in Jordan is offered. Third, the paper explains the adopted methodology and analysis techniques. Finally, the results, contributions and limitations are offered.

**Literature review**

**Gender and leadership in the Arab region**

On the basis of a cross-national review of gender, the Middle East continues to rank very low globally in terms of economic and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2016). The Arab countries are ranked very low based on the Gender Empowerment Measure (United Nations Development Programme, 2017). In terms of economic participation, female representation in the workforce in the region is much below the world average, with serious gender gaps in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia (United Nations Development Programme, 2017; World Bank, 2013).

The gender gap is also evident in Jordan with a 21.2% unemployment rate for males and 55.9% for females who hold a bachelor’s degree and above (Department of Statistics, 2017). Gender gap in economic participation may be attributed to gender stereotypes and social attitudes (e.g. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Mulvaney et al., 2007; Peebles et al., 2005).

In terms of leadership in organisations, women remain under-represented in comparison to their male counterparts. According to UNICEF (2011), only 40 women out of a total of 600 are working as judges in the court system, while there are no female judges in the Islamic Sharia
courts. Moreover, in the Jordanian parliament, only 20 seats out of 130 are occupied by females (i.e. 15.38%) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016).

Policymakers in Jordan have taken some steps to address gender inequality, e.g. by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 2009). Such governmental interventions have served to improve women’s literacy and education. For example, the ratios of enrolment in higher education for females and males are 51.2 and 48.8%, respectively (Al-Akrabawi & Talafha, 2012). However, there remain significant gender gaps in terms of employment. Social Security Corporation (2014) documents employment gender gaps in different economic activities in Jordan. For example, in manufacturing, construction, tourism and transportation, the gender gap in employment is found to be 44.0, 84.4, 85.3 and 63.3%, respectively. The gender gap seems to be specifically high in the tourism sector (Majcher-Teleon & Ben Slimène, 2009).

**RCT of prejudice against female leaders**

The RCT highlights people’s cognition towards the roles of women and leaders, and how such cognition or lack thereof produces conflict between these roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory was developed by Eagly and Karau (2002) “based on an analysis of the descriptive and injunctive aspects of gender roles” to explore how the inconsistency between women and leader roles leads to prejudicial evaluations against women leaders while underlining preference for men (p. 588).

Since the purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of employees about the qualities linked with successful leaders and the characteristics associated with women, RCT has been used as a lens to explore whether there is a congruity (or incongruity) in female-leader roles stereotypes. Moreover, given that Eagly and Karau developed and tested RCT in a Western context, it will be enlightening to examine the utility of this theory within a non-Western context, i.e. Jordan.

A large body of literature supports the basic notion of RCT. Mulvaney et al. (2007) argue that the contradictions between a typical female role (i.e. staying at home and taking care of others) and typical employee role (i.e. spending time outside the home) may adversely affect women’s career advancement. Some studies point towards the advantages that male leaders have due to their natural masculine abilities (e.g. Muller-Kahle & Schiehll, 2013). In their study that examines bias in determining candidacy for leadership positions, Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) found that when the candidate is female, and the industry is not role-congruent with her gender-role, decision-makers manifest prejudice in selection.

There is a stream of research that indicates positive traits of women leaders. For example, women leaders are perceived as more cooperative and caring, which makes them more superior for leadership posts (e.g. Duffy et al., 2015; Marco, 2012). Eagly and Carli (2003) note that in modern organisations, there may be more consideration of feminine qualities, such as being caring and supportive, as important features for leadership.

Despite such appreciation of a feminine style of leadership, upper echelons are traditionally perceived as male-dominated jobs (Billing, 2011) and constituted around male norms (Mavin & Grandy, 2016). In male-oriented industries, particularly, e.g. construction and steel, masculinity may be perceived to be more suitable for leadership, while in female-oriented jobs, such as cleaning jobs and customer service, the feminine style of leadership may be perceived to have merit (Campos-Soria et al., 2011). Koenig et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies to examine the extent to which stereotypes of leaders are masculinised. Their study points towards the overall masculinity of leadership stereotypes.

Thus, given that “the traits commonly associated with traditional, heroic leadership are closely aligned with stereotypical images of masculinity” (Fletcher, 2002, p. 1), women suffer from
negative prejudice (Eagly & Carli, 2003) notwithstanding the fact that they may exhibit great leadership skills. To advance and contextualise this discussion, Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) argue that RCT may be used to investigate this phenomenon. This paper, therefore, adopts the RCT of prejudice against female leaders as a theoretical lens to study gender and leadership practices in the hotel sector in Jordan. In light of the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are posited:

**Hypothesis 1.** There is a mismatch or incongruence between the leader role stereotype and the female role stereotype.

**Hypothesis 2.** The greater the incongruence between the female gender role and the leadership role, the more prejudice there will be against female leaders.

### Prejudice against female leaders

According to RCT, there are two forms of prejudice against women leaders: (a) negative evaluation of women as potential leaders, and (b) negative evaluation of women as actual leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). These forms of prejudice may prevent women from emerging as leaders and decrease their effectiveness as either potential or actual leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

In their study of RCT, Koenig and Eagly (2014) define prejudice as less positive perceptions against a group of people who are stereotypically mismatched with certain social role requirements. Thus, regardless of the skills and abilities that a group of people have, prejudice leads to discrimination against them based on their membership. In this regard, even though women may have competitive skills in comparison to their male counterparts, they face disadvantages emanating from prejudicial assessments.

Women in Muslim-majority countries are generally expected to balance their gender role with their social role (e.g. as workers) (Grünенfelder, 2013). As a result, women more than men face prejudice, their performance is closely scrutinised, and “this degree of scrutiny may weaken women’s ability to lead effectively and may increase their turnover” (Glass & Cook, 2016, p. 3).

Eagly and Karau (2002) acknowledge that women leaders in some situations may not encounter unfair evaluation due to some potential factors that may “moderate the two forms of prejudice” (p. 576). For example, Koenig and Eagly (2014) note that women are perceived to be nurturing and warm which makes them fit with certain jobs such as nursing. Hence, given that the first form of prejudice (i.e. against potential women leaders) stems from the inconsistency between the female role and the leader role, more congruence in these roles would mean less prejudice against women leaders. In light of the foregoing discussion, this paper posits:

**Hypothesis 3.** There is a negative relationship between prejudice against female leaders and their emergence as leaders.

**Hypothesis 4.** There is a negative relationship between prejudice against female leaders and their effectiveness as leaders.

### Gender equality

Gender equality, or lack thereof, may be seen as a consequence of gender practices that lead to equal (or unequal) treatment of men and women. Guimarães and Silva (2016) examine how gender discrimination in the hospitality industry affects female workers. Their results show that even when women are better educated than men, they face both discrimination and disadvantage. Likewise, Campos-Soria et al. (2011) investigated different types of occupational gender segregation in the hospitality industry in Andalusia, Spain. Their study portrays cleaning jobs,
customer service and jobs with less responsibility as more attached with women, while jobs with a high level of responsibility and administration are attached with men.

Pinar et al.’s (2011) study of gender diversity in the Turkish hospitality industry shows that discrimination against women makes them powerless to compete with men and restricts their upward mobility. The literature suggests that women remain disempowered due to inequality regimes (Acker, 2006; Murray & Syed, 2010).

However, the literature also shows that women in corporate boards and top management teams may significantly improve organisational performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005; Smith et al., 2006). Thus, discriminatory and prejudicial practices against women warrant serious attention by policymakers and managers. In their study that focuses on organisational predictors of women on top-levels, Hillman et al. (2007) suggest that organisational size, industry type, firm diversification strategy and networks significantly affect female representation on boards of directors. Therefore, anti-discrimination plans and diversity enlargement strategy are essential (Gröschl, 2011) towards more balanced representation of males and females in upper echelons. In light of the literature review, this paper posits:

**Hypothesis 5.** The greater the gender equality within organisations, the greater the possibility of females to emerge as leaders.

**Hypothesis 6.** The greater the gender equality within organisations, the greater the perception of females as effective leaders.

**Leadership development programmes**

The importance of LDPs has been asserted in the literature (Morrison, 2000; Trehan, 2007). Sandler (2014) notes that LDPs are needed to develop and enable female leadership because the quantity and quality of female leaders in the workplace largely depends on the availability and quality of LDPs.

Chaturvedi et al. (2012) found a positive association between LDPs in organisations and the ability of females to emerge as leaders. Similarly, Yeh (2013) notes that development programmes are significantly linked with improving the workforce diversity and thus, more formalised LDPs are relevant for women (Gallant, 2014). Chaturvedi et al. (2012) suggest that women’s upward mobility into leadership positions may be limited due to the lack of LDPs.

There remain, however, cultural and structural gaps in terms of female–male participation in LDPs. For example, King Penny Wan (2014) notes that men, more than women, have opportunities to participate in LDPs due to the prejudicial stereotyping against women. Furthermore, even when women do participate, they encounter difficulties because of cultural and other biases against them (Eagly, 2005). Hence, a key concern of LDPs is to pay attention to how to enhance autonomy (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009) and support executive women (Murray & Syed, 2010). Also, from a practical viewpoint, it is imperative for human resource professionals and academics alike to take gender relations into consideration when designing and operating LDPs. Accordingly, this paper posits:

**Hypothesis 7.** There is a positive relationship between LDPs and the emergence of female leaders.

**Hypothesis 8.** There is a positive relationship between LDPs and the effectiveness of female leaders.

**Theoretical framework**

In light of the reviewed literature, a theoretical framework is developed (Figure 1). This framework helps to understand if there is an incongruity between “female stereotype” and “leader
stereotype," and the extent to which such incongruity may prevent women from emerging as effective leaders. Furthermore, the framework considers other factors such as gender equality and LDPs that may enable women to emerge as effective leaders. The novelty of this framework is its ability to offer empirical updating and contextualising of RCT. The framework may enable researchers to comprehend the context and implications of gender practices and stereotypes facing women leaders.

The context of the study

The hotel sector in Jordan

Because of its service oriented and shift-type nature, the hotel sector in Jordan is generally perceived to be a less likely place for female employment. In an Arab country, Muslim context, it can be argued that job responsibilities in the hotel sector pose some incongruity with female social roles, such as contact with unrelated (not mahram) people. On the basis of their study that focuses on obstacles and opportunities for women’s employment in Jordan’s tourism industry, Majcher-Teleon and Ben Slimène (2009) note that working late at night is prohibited by cultural and religious norms, and jobs requiring social contact with strangers, travelling and long hours of work are perceived as less preferable for women. Accordingly, in the hotel sector, there may be gender practices and prejudices that could prevent women from reaching upper echelons. Table 1 shows that the gender gap in the hotel sector is highest in comparison to other segments of the tourism industry.
The 4- and 5-star hotels operating in Amman, Aqaba, Dead Sea and Petra were selected for the survey. First, the 4- and 5-star hotels, because of their overwhelming dominance of employment numbers, can be considered as a representative population for the hotel sector. Second, lower star hotels are often family owned businesses of a small size which does not satisfy the objectives of this study. Third and most importantly, there is an enormous gap between male and female employment in 4- and 5-star hotels in Jordan. For example, in 5-star hotels operating in Amman, there are 389 female employees, in comparison to 4244 men. In Aqaba, 24 females are working in the sector, in comparison to 1235 males. The gap is also massive in Dead Sea and Petra. Table 2 shows the distribution of employees in hotels by gender and governorate (region).

### Methodology

To study how individual perceptions, stereotypes and other variables affect women leadership, data were collected through a self-completion questionnaire. This section discusses the processes of instrumentation, data collection and analysis.

### Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used comprising a section on demographic information, and another section comprising different scales to measure research variables. These scales were adopted from the literature with further modifications to fit the current paper's objectives. These scales are shown in Table 3. The following sub-sections illustrate in detail each scale used to measure variables.

### Role congruity: Gender and leader role stereotypes

The authors adopted the short version of Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) using 10 items to describe masculine traits and 10 items to describe feminine characteristics. Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) treats femininity and masculinity characteristics as two extremes. In the original inventory, there are 20 characteristics linked with masculine attributes, 20 characteristics linked with feminine features and 20 items describe androgyny, using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e. 1 never

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**Table 1. Numbers of females vs. males’ participation in tourism sub-sectors.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism sectors</th>
<th>Female participation</th>
<th>Male participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>1.529</td>
<td>17.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist restaurants</td>
<td>1.545</td>
<td>17.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agencies</td>
<td>1.431</td>
<td>3.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist shops</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving centres</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2015).*

**Table 2. Number of employees distributed in 4- and 5-star hotels by gender and governorate.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Amman</th>
<th>Aqaba</th>
<th>Dead Sea</th>
<th>Petra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel class</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>% F to M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five star</td>
<td>4,244</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>1,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four star</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three star</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two star</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One star</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2015).*
true to 7 always true). In specific, the BSRI tests the mismatch (or match) between the (feminine) female role and the (masculine) leadership role.

The short version was used to eliminate some problems linked with the inventory. Previous research shows that the 60 items in Sex Role Inventory are culture specific and time specific and some of the masculine traits are linked directly with leadership traits (e.g. has leadership ability and acts like a leader) (Misner, 1989 cited in Kark et al., 2012).

The authors thus chose and excluded certain traits to prevent any contradictions between them. Moreover, because the aim of this paper is to understand how congruity or incongruity between gender role and leader role affects women’s participation in leadership, the current version of BSRI in this paper consists of just masculine and feminine characteristics without considering the androgyny traits to have clear distinction between the two dimensions. Some examples of these traits are as follows: aggressive, analytical, assertive, forceful, masculine and self-sufficient vs. does not use harsh language, feminine, gentle, sensitive to the needs of others, soft spoken and warm.

**Prejudice**

To assess prejudicial perceptions, the Old-Fashioned and Modern Prejudices scale was used. This scale was developed by Swim et al. (1995) following McConahay’s Old-Fashioned and Modern Racism Scale. Swim et al. (1995) changed all items that measure racism and adopted them to measure prejudice against women. The Old-Fashioned and Modern Racism scale includes questions that focus on discrimination against black people (i.e. racism). For example, the scale includes questions about the extent to which participants believe that (1) black people are generally not as smart as whites, and (2) discrimination against blacks is no longer a problem. Swim et al. (1995) altered these statements to focus on prejudice against women.

Items developed to measure prejudice against women were grouped into two categories: old fashioned and modern prejudice. In this paper, this scale was modified to suit the objectives: (1) the authors combined the two categories (i.e. old fashion and modern sexism) as one group, because the paper uses RCT which talks about general prejudicial evaluations against female without taking the two dimensions into account; (2) some of the questions in the original scale focus on issues not related to the current study (e.g. sexism by the government and media) and therefore were excluded. Some examples from the original scale are as follows: women are generally not as smart as men; I would be equally comfortable having a woman as a boss as a man; women are just as capable of thinking logically as men; women often don’t miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination; and my organisation has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement (Swim et al., 1995).

**Gender equality practices**

To measure gender equality in Jordanian hotels, the World Value Survey and GLOBE study were used. The World Value Survey is the largest survey to measure people’s attitudes and beliefs (Rizzo et al., 2007). Rizzo et al. (2007) used the fourth wave of World Value Survey 2000 to investigate gender equality.
Three questions from this scale were selected because they relate to this study, with minor changes to reflect the perceptions of people towards gender equality. Two questions were excluded because they focus on family life rather than work. The three questions after revisions are as follows: (1) In my organisation, when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women, (2) in my organisation, men and women are both capable to act as leaders, and (3) in my organisation, a university education is important for men as it is important for women.

Moving to GLOBE study, House et al. (2004) developed different scales to measure attitudes, values and beliefs on both societal and organisational levels. Regarding people’s perceptions of gender equality practices at the organisational level, some examples are as follows: In this organisation, men should be encouraged to participate in professional development activities more than women; I believe that in this organisation, work would be more effectively managed if there were many more women in positions of authority.

For the societal level, different forms of questions were used. Some examples to measure gender equality are as follows: in this society, boys are encouraged more than girls to attain a higher education; in this society, who is more likely to serve in a position of high office?

From this point, the authors altered the selected questions that are most related to the current study with a view to measure the perceptions of people on issues of gender equality at an organisational level (i.e. hotels). Some examples used in the final questionnaire are as follows: in my organisation, I believe that who should serve in a high level are men and women in equal; I believe that this organisation would be more effectively managed if there were women and men at high levels and; in my organisation, men and women are both capable to act as leaders.

Leadership development programmes
To measure LDPs, this paper reviewed previous studies on LDPs that have been conducted quantitatively and drew on surveys to use valid and reliable scales. Different items were selected from the literature. Some examples are: how often does the company conduct LDPs; leadership programmes help me to enhance my leadership abilities; and opportunities are provided equally for men and women to participate in leadership programmes to broaden their job scope and competencies.

The emergence of female leaders
This study adopts General Leadership Impression (GLI) scale (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Lord et al., 1984). This scale is popular in leader emergence studies (Türetgen et al., 2008). It has five items to measure the emergence of a leader using a Likert scale. These items are (a) the amount of leadership the ratee exhibited, (b) how willing the rater would be to choose the ratee as formal leader, (c) how typical the ratee was of a leader, (d) to what extent the ratee engaged in leader behaviour, and (e) the degree to which the ratee fit their image of a leader (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987). The authors substituted the word “rate” with “female leader” using a scale ranging from always to never.

In addition, three items were adopted from Kent and Moss’s (1990) research, i.e. “self-monitoring as a predictor of leader emergence” to measure how people evaluate their abilities to emerge as leaders (i.e. self-report). The authors added these three items to GLI scale by altering the question from concentrating on self-evaluation to other-evaluation (i.e. women). These three items are as follows: women assume a leadership role; women lead the conversation; and women influence group goals and decisions.

The effectiveness of female leaders
This paper followed a study conducted by Hooijberg et al. (2010) that examined the effectiveness of leaders. Their study utilised “separate measures of perceived effectiveness for self, direct reports, peers, and bosses” (p. 13). This scale (Perceived Effectiveness) consists of five items that
reflect the perceptions about effective leaders. Given the focus of this paper on women leadership, participants were asked to rate their perceptions of “woman” as an effective leader.

In addition, this study used another instrument developed by van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005) that looks at the perceptions of people about effective leaders. For example, Van Quaquebeke et al. (2011) used this scale to measure the “participants’ perception of leadership effectiveness” (p. 376). The following are examples used in this study: women leaders are effective leaders; women leaders are good team leaders; and I put my trust in women leaders.

**Procedure and demographic characteristics**

The questionnaires were distributed to employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels operating in different geographic locations in Jordan (Amman, Aqaba, Dead Sea and Petra) from June to August 2016. In total, 684 questionnaires were distributed, while 397 questionnaires were received, i.e. a response rate of 58%. Five questionnaires were not fully completed, hence they were excluded. In total, 392 questionnaires were used for final analysis.

The targeted sample size for the participants was calculated according to the total number of employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels in Amman, Aqaba, Dead Sea and Petra (i.e. 12678). In this study, the sample size was calculated using the following formula: “Sample size = (Z-score)^2 \times SD \times (1-SD)/(margin of error)^2,” and according to the following levels: (a) confidential level = 95% (i.e. Z-score = 1.96), (b) margin error = ±5% and (c), SD = 0.5. The result of this formula shows that 385 respondents are needed.

\[
\left(1.96\right)^2 \times .5(.5)/(.05)^2 \\
\left(3.8416 \times .25\right)/.0025 \\
.9604/.0025 \\
384.16 \text{ respondents are needed.}
\]

To confirm this number, this study adopts Saunders et al.’s (2012) suggestion for the adequate sample size for different sizes of population. According to that, the appropriate sample size for this study is 370 at 5% margin of error, 95% level of confidence and 10.000–12.000 total population.

Following a convenience sampling protocol, the survey questionnaire was distributed by the first author through initial contact with human resource managers of these hotels by means of telephone and personal visits. Also, follow-up phone calls were made with those managers to communicate the method of distribution of the questionnaire. Later, these questionnaires were manually collected. All the targeted locations were surveyed. In total, 26 hotels were included in this study as follows: 11 in Amman, 8 in Aqaba, 4 in Dead Sea and 3 in Petra.

Some facts about the sample are as follows. A significant percentage of employees who participated in the survey held bachelor’s degrees (40.1%). In relation to the tenure and the managerial level, the participants spent 6–10 years in their work (44.1%) and served at middle management levels (52.4%). Also, 46.6% of the respondents were aged between 25 and 34 years. Most were male (81.1%), while 18.9% were female. Finally, regarding religion, the percentages for Muslim and Christian employees were 91.5 and 8.0%, respectively. About 0.5% classified themselves as other. Table 4 illustrates the demographic data.

**Validity and reliability**

To confirm the internal consistency of the scales used in the survey questionnaire, a reliability test was done by computing Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability for all scales was accepted since they exceed the cut-off point, i.e. 0.7 (Gal et al., 2018) (see Table 5). However, the reliability for
Construct validity: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Given that EFA is appropriate to identify the factor structure underlying a set of data (O’Rourke & Hatcher, 2013), this study uses EFA to assess and verify the factors for each variable. The study

gender equality practices scale is .651. A factor analysis test was done to determine the problem. This analysis was conducted on all scales.

In relation to the validity of the scales, content validity was established by a senior academic person who specialises in leadership and gender studies. According to the received comments, which are mainly concentrated on the language consistency, the questionnaire was refined. Internal validity was established by relying on the RCT, in which the cause and effect relationship between the research variables was supported. Moving to the external validity, the convenience sampling technique used in this study increased this type of validity in which the sample is representative of the whole population. Finally, in relation to the construct validity, the next section discusses in more detail.
adopted varimax rotation. The following paragraph illustrates the suitability of all variables in this study using the EFA method. Four indicators should be considered to achieve the goal of EFA-varimax/orthogonal rotation which are (1) Bartlett’s test, (2) KMO, (3) factor loading and (4) percentage of variance. The significant values for these indicators are as follows: Bartlett’s test \((p < 0.001)\) (Saffari et al., 2013), KMO should be \(> 0.50\%\) (Kuegah, 2006). In relation to the factor loading, Lan (2009) argues that a value of factor loading \(> 0.3\%\) is considered significant. Finally, Sinkovics and Ghauri (2009) say that the percentage of variance should be \(> 0.5\%\).

The overall picture of the scales is consistent with the literature. However, some minor variations emerged. First, regarding the factor loading for all items in this study, it is noticeable that all items within each scale exceed the cut-off point, i.e. 0.3\% (Lan, 2009), except two items which are item number 6 in the gender equality scale, i.e. in my organisation, when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (-.116) and item number 1 in leader masculinity scale, i.e. aggressive (.161). Therefore, we looked at the reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) of these two variables to further confirm the lack of correlation. The reliability for leader masculinity scale was high (.860) which means that we can keep item number 1 in this scale. However, the reliability for gender equality scale was low (.651) which means that item number 6 needs to be deleted. Thus, after deleting item number 6 in this scale, the reliability increased to .716. With regards to Bartlett’s test, all variables indicate a significant value \((p < .001)\). In addition, KMO shows high values (exceeding 0.50) indicating adequate sample. Table 6 illustrates these statistical values.

**Convergent validity: Average variance extracted (AVE)**

AVE is a measure of variance that is captured by a construct/variable in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error (Shi et al., 2007). According to Martínez (2010), convergent validity can be demonstrated by looking at the average variance explained (AVE) which should exceed 0.5. In this study, the AVE for all variables ranged between .50 and .80 except one variable, i.e. leader masculinity, in which the AVE was 0.49. In this case, as Huang et al. (2013) argue, we can accept AVE at 0.4 when the reliability is high. Therefore, given that the reliability for all variables was high (above .70), the convergent validity achieved all conditions. This is illustrated in Table 7.
As an initial step to test the proposed hypotheses, a simple bivariate correlation test was applied. Table 8 depicts these correlations. Given that the correlation test is recursive, a regression analysis was applied to further confirm or reject the proposed hypotheses. The following discussion illustrates the analysis used along with their results based on the hypotheses formulated.

Hypothesis 1: In relation to the first hypothesis, we followed the procedure recommended by Kark et al. (2012) who suggest that paired t-test is commonly used to compare the mean of two paired data or observations (Chumney and Simpson, 2006; Zhang, 2006). We applied this procedure in which scores on both masculine and feminine items “were averaged and compared” (p. 628).

In comparison to successful leaders who were stereotyped as masculine (M = 3.9162, SD = .71654), successful leaders who were stereotyped as feminine received lower rating (M = 3.6916, SD = .85122). In statistics, this variance between means reflects a significant difference (p = .000).

While comparing how employees stereotype women in general, there were no significant differences (p = .761) between stereotyping women to be masculine (M = 3.7551, SD = .79389) or feminine (M = 3.7670, SD = .87143). Employees stereotype successful leaders to be more masculine than feminine, while they stereotype women to be both feminine and masculine in the same time. Thus, hypothesis 1 was rejected. Table 9 presents these statistical indicators.

Hypothesis 2: Since the results for hypothesis 1 show that employees stereotype successful leaders to be more masculine than feminine, and they stereotype women to be both feminine and masculine, we added both variables, i.e. the leader as masculine and women as masculine together as independent variables, and prejudice as a dependent variable. The results show that there is a significant negative relationship between the congruity in leader and female roles (as masculine) and prejudice against women leaders (β = −.258, p = .000). Also we added other two variables, i.e. leader as feminine and women as feminine together as independent variables and prejudice as a dependent variable. The results show that there is a significant negative relationship between the congruity in leader and female roles (as feminine) and prejudice against women leaders (β = −.310, p = .000). This shows that when people stereotype females in a way that correlates with how they stereotype leaders, there will be no prejudice against women leaders. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Hypotheses 3 and 4: As shown in the previous section, the three independent variables were used to predict the value of a dependent variable at once. To test the association between prejudice against women leaders and the emergence of women leaders (H3), as well as the effectiveness of women leaders (H4), a multiple regression test was used by adding prejudice along with gender equality and LDPs as independent variables at once, and the emergence of women leaders and the effectiveness of women leaders as dependent variables.

The results of hypothesis 3 indicate a significant and negative relationship between prejudice against women leaders and the emergence of women leaders (β = −.411, p = .000). Regarding
hypothesis 4, the relationship between prejudice against women leaders and the effectiveness of women leaders is significant and negative ($b = -0.378$, $p = 0.000$).

These results are consistent with the RCT and the literature that shows that prejudice against women leaders will preclude women to emerge as effective leaders (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Hence, hypotheses 3 and 4 were accepted.

**Hypotheses 5 and 6:** To test the relationship between gender equality practices and the emergence of women leaders (H5), as well as the effectiveness of women leaders (H6), a multiple regression test was applied by treating gender equality practices as an independent variable and the emergence of women leaders and the effectiveness of women leaders as dependent variables.

The results of hypothesis 5 indicate a significant and positive relationship between gender equality practices and the emergence of women leaders ($b = 0.283$, $p = 0.000$). Regarding hypothesis 6, the relationship between gender equality practices and the effectiveness of women leaders is significant and positive ($b = 0.394$, $p = 0.000$). The results in this study were found to be in line with the literature that shows that gender equality practices allow women to emerge as effective leaders. Accordingly, hypotheses 5 and 6 were accepted.

**Hypotheses 7 and 8:** Moving to hypotheses 7 and 8, the same procedure was followed to examine the relationship between variables. In specific, a multiple regression test was utilised by adding LDPs as an independent variable, and the emergence of women leaders (H7) and the effectiveness of women leaders (H8) as dependent variables.

The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between the LDPs and the emergence of women leaders ($b = 0.116$, $p = 0.011$). Also the results indicate a positive and significant relationship between the LDPs and the effectiveness of women leaders ($b = 0.168$, $p = 0.000$). As predicted, LDPs were found to be supporting females in emerging as effective leaders. Table 10 summarises the results of this paper.

**Summary of testing the research model**

A statistical description of the variables that were used in the multiple regression models is presented as follows. For the first dependent variable, Tables 11 and 12 show the model summary and ANOVA. For the second dependent variable, these indicators are shown in Tables 13 and 14.
Table 10. Results of hypotheses testing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Statistical value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>There is a mismatch or incongruence between the leader role stereotype and the female role stereotype.</td>
<td>See Table 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>The greater the congruence between the female role and the leader role, the less prejudice there will be against female leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = -.258$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>There is a negative relationship between prejudice against female leaders and their emergence as leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = -.411$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>There is a negative relationship between prejudice against female leaders and their effectiveness as leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = -.378$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>The greater the gender equality within organisations, the greater the possibility of females to emerge as leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = .283$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>The greater the gender equality within organisations, the greater the perception of females as effective leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = .394$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>There is a positive relationship between leadership development programmes and the emergence of female leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = .116$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>There is a positive relationship between leadership development programmes and perceiving female leaders as effective leaders</td>
<td>$\beta = .168$ $p = .000$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Model summary for the first dependent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
<th>Std. error of the estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>.694*</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>.63918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predictors: (Constant), prejudice, LDPs, gender equality.

Table 12. ANOVA for the first dependent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>147.662</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49.221</td>
<td>120.475</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>158.519</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>306.181</td>
<td>391</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predictors: (Constant), prejudice, LDPs, gender equality.

Table 13. Model summary for the second dependent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
<th>Std. error of the estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>.795*</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>.51899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predictors: (Constant), prejudice, LDPs, gender equality.

Table 14. ANOVA for the second dependent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>179.300</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59.767</td>
<td>221.890</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>104.509</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>283.809</td>
<td>391</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predictors: (Constant), prejudice, LDPs, gender equality.
Finally, to highlight the “goodness of fit” and to illustrate if the observed values follow a specific pattern (Indrayan & Holt, 2016), we used Chi-square “as one of the numerous goodness-of-fit tests” (Warner, 2012, p. 340). Table 15 shows the result of the Chi-square goodness-of-fit test. It shows that our test is statistically significant: $\chi^2(2) = p < .0005$. Therefore, we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences within the groups included in our study. This means that the data do not follow a distribution with certain proportions.

**Discussion**

While the situation of women’s participation in leadership is gradually changing worldwide, the gender gap is more entrenched in Jordan (Masadeh, 2013). In particular, there is limited awareness about what may enable women’s participation in the tourism industry in the Middle East (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). This paper, therefore, has extended RCT through a contextual investigation in the hotel sector in Jordan to explain what may be maintaining this gender gap in practice. The paper extends RCT by including additional constructs (i.e. gender equality practices and LDPs) that may mitigate the prejudicial beliefs against women leaders.

Given that RCT is generally focused on the stereotyping agentic qualities that are to be associated with leaders (while communal qualities are to be linked with women), some empirical findings in the literature are noteworthy that show how women are disadvantaged in masculine/male dominant workplaces (Wessel et al., 2015). Katila and Eriksson (2013) highlight some differences between female and male CEOs in terms of leadership abilities while Brannan and Priola (2012) show that women are supposed to be more modest to avert shameful behaviours. This observation was also supported by Eagly and Carli (2003) who show a general incongruity between woman and leader roles in a masculine context whereby women suffer prejudices that prevent them to access leadership positions.

Our results, in contrast to the views mentioned above, indicate that employees stereotype successful leaders as masculine ($M = 3.9162, SD = .71654$), while they believe that women, beside their feminine nature ($M = 3.7670, SD = .87143$), should have masculine traits ($M = 3.7551, SD = .79389$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was rejected by showing a congruity in female-leader role stereotypes. This result deviates from the basic premise in RCT, i.e. incongruity in female-leader role stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This result suggests that because RCT demonstrates that the determinants of prejudicial assessment are group stereotypes and role traits, prejudice should be minimised to the extent that social group (e.g. leader) stereotypes and gender role (e.g. woman) stereotypes do not conflict. This offers new insights about the possible alignment in female-leader role stereotypes that may deny the negative prejudicial evaluations against women leaders.

By extending RCT, a positive and significant relationship between gender equality practices and the emergence ($\beta = .283, p = .000$) as well as the effectiveness ($\beta = .394, p = .000$) of women leaders was revealed in this study. This suggests that women in the hotel sector may have more potential to emerge as effective leaders when policymakers prevent discriminations against them. This may encourage policymakers in hotels in Jordan to consider gender equality practices to enable and promote women leaders. The extant literature supports our results. For example,

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### Table 15. Chi-Square goodness-of-fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test statistics</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Managerial level</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>265.089</td>
<td>153.052</td>
<td>84.887</td>
<td>135.278</td>
<td>150.080</td>
<td>595.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asym. Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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T. KOBURTAY AND J. SYED
Lyness and Judiesch (2014) conducted a longitudinal research to examine >40,000 managers in 36 countries. Their results show that in egalitarian societies, both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the workplace, while in less egalitarian societies, men have more chances for advancement than women (e.g. Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015) because of the embedded practices of discrimination that prohibit women to compete with men in businesses (Frederick Littrell & Bertsch, 2013).

This study also shows that LDPs are positively and significantly linked with the emergence ($\beta = .116$, $p = .011$) and effectiveness ($\beta = .168$, $p = .000$) of women leaders. This is consistent with Chaturvedi et al. (2012) who found a positive association between the availability of LDPs and the emergence of women leaders. Also, Huang and Gamble (2015) suggest that LDPs are strongly associated with improving women’s skills and abilities and raising their self-confidence and ability to cope with different tasks (e.g. leadership task).

Beside the results that emerged in this study, it is essential to mention that women in the Middle East often encounter challenges that are augmented through “misinterpretations of Islam’s teachings” (Tlaiss, 2015, p. 860) and the patriarchal nature of culture (Abu-Rabia-Quader & Oplatka, 2008). For example, when women work in male-dominated jobs, especially under patriarchal systems or organisations, they may be expected to demonstrate their professionalism by adopting more masculine traits and playing their role as "honorable wives" in order to enhance their family’s image within society. This leads us to conclude that, in Jordan, practices of management and leadership may be generally premised on tribal Bedouin traditions, which revolve around the typical superiority of the male tribal chief.

**Practical and theoretical importance**

Since few studies exist on gender and leader stereotypes in the tourism industry, this study addresses a gap and takes an important first step to understand gender and leadership in the hotel sector in Jordan. Moreover, the study enhances awareness of the incongruity in female-leader role stereotypes process, prejudicial consequences on women leaders and some remedial practices that may tackle the masculinity of leadership. It also offers new insights that add value to Eagly and Karau's (2002) incongruity model, by showing a potential match in female-leader role stereotypes. Therefore, given that the results show a congruity in how people stereotype both women and leaders to manifest masculine traits, one important contribution is opening new avenues for future research.

In addition, despite the meta-analyses and individual studies that Eagly and Karau (2002) have cited while developing their theory, the application and evaluation of RCT in the hotel sector highlights certain further variables that may work to the benefit of women leaders and hence, a new theoretical model emerged. This paper presents a logical step to apply this model not just in the hospitality industry in Jordan but also in other industries and countries.

From a practical viewpoint, given that the underrepresentation of women in the hotel sector results from gender discrimination and inequality, this study encourages policy and decision-makers to improve gender equality practices in the hope that these will prevent discrimination against women at work. Also, since the findings indicate that LDPs are significantly linked with women’s abilities to emerge in leadership and elite executive positions, organisations may benefit by designing and offering more training programmes that focus on developing leadership qualities.

**Limitations and future research**

A key limitation of this study is the restricted sample of 4- and 5-star hotels. Future scholars may extend this study by drawing on a wider sample in terms of size and sectors. Scholars may also
look at extended applications of RCT in entrepreneurship and family businesses. Indeed, the next logical step for future scholars is to extend this research in other cultural contexts and thus contextualise RCT in other countries. In addition, while the results show an optimistic view in regard to women leaders, the major question, i.e. why a serious gender gap exists, is still not fully addressed. Hence, future research may explore other contextual and societal factors that may be contributing to the gender gap.

Critics may argue that RCT concerns issues related to gender as a social construct and not as biological terms. This warrants future research studying RCT to note that this theory is cultural and social specific. Moreover, we acknowledge that prejudice is just one factor (among many others) that may lead to the lack of women in leadership. Therefore, future scholars may foster more effort to examine other reasons that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions.

In Jordan, studies on the relationship between women and leadership are lacking and sparse (Abu-Tineh, 2013). In the wider context of the Arab region, previous research also contains some evidence of the mismatch in female-leader role stereotypes. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to incorporate in-depth analysis of how employees stereotype the female and leader roles, taking into account the intersection of cultural variances.

Conclusion

To enhance organisational image in terms of gender equality, Kirsch and Blaschke (2014) suggest to include more women in leadership and decision-making positions. This paper offers a nuanced understanding of gender-related biases that may affect gender and leadership in organisations. The paper points towards practices that may address prejudicial evaluations against women leaders – i.e. gender equality practices and LDPs – and encourages policymakers and employers to consider a pro-equality approach to enable full utilisation and development of women in leadership roles.

While there has been a salient increase in women’s employment in activities associated with tourism (Tucker, 2007), given the lack of research on gender and leadership in the tourism industry, this study takes an essential first step to examine the linkages between gender and leadership in the hotel sector in Jordan. Also, given that the evidence of female advantage remains the exception and prior research has offered limited explanation in terms of when women receive a premium instead of a penalty (Leslie et al., 2017, p. 403), this paper fills in this gap by examining how to remedy prejudice against women leaders.

To conclude, despite the gradual changes in women’s roles and culture in Jordan, much remains the same for women in leadership and top-level positions. Implicit in this study is that both masculinity and femininity are social concepts that reflect gender expectations in society (Eagly & Karau, 2002), and such concepts need to be reformed to enable greater participation of women in employment and leadership.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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