

Favouritism of male counterparts increased the respondent's vulnerability to stress. Some of the stressors identified by the respondents with regard to gender stereotyping were:

- Stereotypical attitude of the management position: "Think manager, think male" (100%);
- Women are not suited to managerial positions ... they are incapable of doing a man's job (90%);
- Refusal by black subordinates to work "under" a female manager (90%);
- Management's perception that women are more committed to family than work (100%);
- Women managers are not career committed due to family obligations (90%).

Such stereotypes led respondents to believe that they were unprepared for careers in management. Because of the considerable public scrutiny experienced by female managers, the respondents indicated that female staff tried to avoid failures by minimising risk-taking and continuing to work in lower-level positions. The social division of gender and its associated forms of oppression produced a situation in which the respondents faced additional pressures and stressors. The specific stressors identified by the respondents were:

- Sexist comments (70%);
- Limited access to power, resources and promotion (80%);
- Strains of coping with prejudice and sex stereotyping (100%);
- Overt and indirect discrimination from fellow employees based on gender (100%).

Some of the concerns noted were:

Being the head of a "female-dominated" department I am not included in the organogram in line with the male managers.

I have been accused of sleeping my way to the top because I am the only female manager.

My management still has the master-servant mentality. They treat me like a maid and I have to clean up after them.

Most of the products in my company are not women-friendly. Being a marketing manager I have tried to motivate for the female consumers' needs to be taken into account, but this has been ignored. I bring in fifty million rand in profits for the company, but this is not acknowledged just because I am the only female among a white male-dominated management.

The fact that my organisation is based on male models of work is discriminatory against women.

It is evident from the present findings that stereotypical attitudes of the managerial positions, cultural norms as well as subtle discrimination were potential sources of stress for the majority of the respondents. The sexism that the respondents encountered highlights what Hanner and Statham (1988) describe as the "double jeopardy" of being a female manager: the challenge of succeeding in a male-dominated world without reinforcing, or becoming part of it. This male ethos in organisations becomes an additional stressor for women managers (Davidson & Burke, 2000).

Tokenism

Although the affirmative action programmes are based on the need to rectify past injustices of the under-representation of women in management positions, these programmes have also

unintentionally created the misperception that women managers are “deficient” in skills, knowledge and expertise. When women comprise less than 15% of a total category in an organisation, they can be labelled as “tokens”, i.e. as symbols of their group rather than as individuals (Kanter, 1977). The respondents who were regarded as being the ‘token’ black women managers identified the following stressors:

- High visibility (100%);
- Being the first of their race and gender to hold a management position in the organisation (100%);
- The pressures related to being a test case for the employment of future black women in the company at management level (100%).

The following remark reflects the difficulty organisations have in reconciling an African female face with a management function:

Being different is viewed negatively as I do not conform to the stereotypical images of corporate managers. One of the comments made by my boss was ‘You do not have the face of an accountant.’

McDerment (1992:13) found that women managers constituted the major target group for stress-related diseases. People from black and ethnic minority groups were particularly vulnerable to dysfunctional stress. Not surprisingly, the pressures associated with being a token woman manager are often a tremendous burden, as illustrated by the following comments:

We often hear comments that we got the job because we are black women and not because we have the qualifications and experience to do the job. So the affirmative action policy, whilst being positive, also impacts negatively on our status.

Being the first black women manager, I am under constant pressure to perform well. If I do not perform well as a manager then I am letting all black women down.

Being a test case for the employment of future black women as managers in my company is a responsibility that is really stressing me out.

The present findings reflect that the African and Indian respondents experienced *intensified negative effects* associated with their tokenism compared to their Caucasian female counterparts. Irrespective of their qualifications, these token women were subject to excessive scrutiny, their differences from men became highlighted and polarised, and their attributes were distorted so that they became entrapped in stereotypical roles. By virtue of being placed in a group which was significantly outnumbered by men, female managers became tokens, which forced them into roles that limited their probability of success (Davidson, 1997).

Social isolation

Given the history of South Africa during the apartheid, women are under-represented at managerial levels. The majority of the respondents (80%) were the only female managers in their department. The following stressors were identified by the respondents:

- Exclusion from networks (80%);
- Lack of mentoring relationships (90%);
- Lack of role models (90%);
- Lack of social support (70%);
- Exclusion from social outings with male colleagues and directors (90%);

- Social and recreational activities are not women-friendly, for example, golf tournaments, darts competitions, a night out in the pub ... (90%).

Gender-specific models of career progression show that women advance more slowly than men and that factors influencing success in terms of hierarchical growth differ for the gender (Kirchmeyer, 1996). A very consistent difference was that men had role models, received mentoring and had extensive networks, which facilitated their career progression.

RACE AND STRESS

There is more to understanding stress and stress management than an analysis of organisational and personal factors. Social factors such as racism and ethnicity also play a key role in identifying female managers' vulnerability to stress. Given the racial composition of the sample, the researcher examined whether racial discrimination was a potential source of stress. The majority of the Indian respondents (90%) in the public and private sectors experienced racial discrimination as a potential source of stress. All the African respondents (100%) in the public and private sectors experienced racial discrimination as a potential source of stress. Racism operates in many and diverse ways, but the most common concerns noted were:

- Not being taken seriously because of colour (60%);
- Isolation because of colour (60%);
- Visibility because of colour (40%);
- Lack of support from other race groups (50%);
- Inter-race rivalry (50%);
- The failure of the white directors to recognise the capabilities of the African and Indian respondents;
- Resistance by Caucasian staff to being managed by African or Indian women managers (60%).

The stress of being a black manager in a predominately white setting was highlighted by one of the respondents: "As a black woman I feel very stressed out working in an organisation based on white and male models of work which were inherited from the apartheid era. I do not 'fit in' with the corporate images of the people in management, which is predominantly white males."

Racism was not only identified as a life pressure at a general level by the respondents but also as a specific occupational stressor which resulted from role ambiguity and dilemmas inherent in such situations. What often made such incidents even more potentially stressful was the lack of support from the management and Caucasian colleagues as reflected by the following comments:

As a black manager supervising white staff, I have often felt isolated, rejected, humiliated and unsupported, especially when dealing with staff that is racist.

My institution is referred to as the "Cinderella institution". The management does not give me sufficient support and resources to run the institution as all the children in the institution are black. They do not have proper bedding, ablution facilities and clothing. Rotten vegetables and left-overs from the white institutions are sent to me. Although I have motivated for resources, these requests are often ignored.

I am the only black woman in a boardroom full of white staff and management does not provide me with any resources that I fight for in the boardroom. I do not get any support from my white female colleagues either in the boardroom.

The following remarks reflect the difficulty organisations have in reconciling an African or Indian female face with the management function:

Being different is viewed negatively as I do not conform to the stereotypical images of corporate managers. One of the comments made by my boss was "You do not have the face of an accountant".

That short black woman ... what can she do besides making tea? I was told that I do not look the part of an executive by my management.

That black woman that came from the outside knows nothing about my job. She is just a "window dressing" and I have to suffer the consequences of affirmative action. I am working for several years in the company and I should have got the promotion. Instead I have to be under her. This is ludicrous.

Thus the strains of coping with racism resulted in stress. The present findings clearly illustrate the failure of organisations to respond to the presence of African and Indian women in management. Similarly, Davidson (1997) found that black and Indian women managers in the United Kingdom were subject to racial discrimination and the strain of coping with racism led to stress.

Performance pressure because of colour

One of the stressors most frequently cited by the respondents concerned performance pressure because of colour. All the African and Indian respondents experienced the pressure to perform because of their colour. Some of the concerns noted were:

- Having to prove themselves more than their Caucasian colleagues (90%);
- Having to work harder and meet higher performance levels than their Caucasian colleagues (100%);
- Constantly justifying professional status ((90%);
- High expectations (100%);
- Expecting respondents to fail (90%).

One respondent commented: "I am not given credit and recognition for my professional qualifications and expertise. My board only sees me as a black woman. As a result of this I am constantly under pressure to perform well and prove that black women are capable of holding executive positions."

Another respondent commented: "I am the only Indian female manager in my department and I have to work harder than my male counterparts and be on top of things to prove that I am capable of managing. Yet my Caucasian male colleagues do not work as hard as I do, but still get more recognition than I do."

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It is evident from the present findings that there is a re-segregation of the labour market in terms of both "race" and "gender" in both the public and private organisations. The respondents experienced similar sources of stress arising from race and gender discrimination both in the private and public sectors. However, compared to their Caucasian counterparts, the African and Indian respondents experienced the double bind of racism and sexism, thus increasing their vulnerability to stress.

One of the major stressors experienced by the respondents was stereotyping based on race and gender. Stereotyping within firms leads to attribution errors, such as all successes by women managers are situational luck and all failures reflect women's inherent inability to function as managers. In other words, women are not born to be leaders. The social psychological literature on stereotyping and status expectations is quite clear that in the absence of strong information to counter stereotypes, prejudgments rule. Even employers report that they use race as a signal for potential productivity (Reskin, 1998). Appointing women of all races into management positions in the 21st century is generally accepted as a reasonable principle in South Africa. The contradiction between this principle of equality and the demonstrable inequalities evident in this study exposes the continuing dominance of male privilege and values throughout society (patriarchy). Women managers themselves have to make sure that this process towards employment equity is a success by repositioning themselves to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Given the nature of the stressors experienced by women managers, it will take more than legislation to eradicate the social ills of racism and sexism at work. The main challenge for South Africa is bridging the gap between policy and practice. Both public and private sector organisations need to address "racial and gendered" organisational cultures.

Managers in South Africa need to extract the best management tools from camps representing a variety of cultural management orientations both within and outside. Madi (1995) points out that the issue is not that there should be an Africanisation of the corporate culture in South Africa, but there should be South Africanisation of the corporate culture. In the debate on Afrocentric versus Eurocentric management styles Beaty (1996:397) states: "One cannot but observe the striking parallels between and the complementary nature of the feminine and the Afro-centric leadership approaches, which are already reflected in the South African situation. This just emphasises the dictum: Unity in Diversity". Thus, in order to empower South African organisations to compete in today's highly competitive, global marketplace, it is critical to have a diverse and flexible leadership team that includes feminine and masculine as well as Eurocentric and Afro-centric strengths.

Given the nature of stress arising from racism and sexism, social workers in working with executive stress amongst women should ensure that the following paths be paved to understand and lessen the inequality organizations generate:

- Study the workplace inequality processes that create cumulative skill inequalities;
- Discussion with employers and staff about gender and racial discrimination and stereotyping;
- Dialogue between organisations and women managers about boundaries, inclusion and exclusion at work;
- Study the spatial and historical variability of racial and gender inequality;
- Promote anti-oppressive practices in organisations;
- Ensure that the desired goals of the affirmative action policy of racial and gender equality in the workplace are achieved.

The key question is not: "What are the human capital deficits of female managers?" The question we should be asking is: "What are the workplace, community and family processes which generate racial and gender inequality?" One should search for answers in stereotyping, social closure, historically embedded racism, sexism, opportunity, career processes and stressors which they produce.

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