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Addis Ababa University

College of Business and Economics

School of Commerce

**Assessment of Factors Affecting the Participation of Women in Leadership: The Case of
Zemen Bank S.C.**

By

Bayush Berhanu

A Project Work submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of Master's Degree in Business Leadership

Advisor:

Solomon Markos (PhD)

June, 2020

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this study entitled “Assessment of Factors Affecting Women’s Participation in Leadership Positions: The Case of Zemen Bank S.C.” is my own work. I have undertaken the research work independently with the guidance and support of the research advisor. This study has not been submitted either at master’s level or undergraduate in this or any other institutions and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

By: Bayush Berhanu

Date: -----

Signature: -----

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Bayush Berhanu Feleke has carried out this research project work on the topic entitled “Assessment of Factors Affecting Women Participation in Leadership Positions in the Case of Zemen Bank S.C.” under my supervision. This work is original in nature and it is sufficient for submission for the partial fulfillment for the award of Degree of Masters of Art in Business Leadership.

Solomon Markos (Ph.D.) Signature _____ Date _____

Assessment of Factors Affecting Women Participation in Leadership Positions in the Case of Zemen Bank S.C.

By: Bayush Berhanu Feleke

Approval Sheet

Approved by Board of Examiners:

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Abstract

As one of the youngest Banks in Ethiopia, Zemen Bank has been part of the financial industry for one decade with unique strategic objectives: superior service, superior efficiency and superior knowledge. Though the number of its employees is quite enough to run its operations efficiently, the gender mix in the organizational ladder has been unbalanced with no female executive member, only one female Senior management and very limited number of women in the middle level management. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate factors affecting the participation of women in leadership position in Zemen Bank S.C. The target population of the study was female employees with three years and above work experience within Zemen. The work experience requirement was set according to the Bank's minimum requirement to assume leadership position, at least at as a member of middle level management. Census survey was applied and a total number of 131 respondents who at least meet the minimum work experience requirement to assume leadership positions were identified as per the data found from Human Resource Department of the Bank. Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The study identified societal, organizational and personal factors that contribute to the limited number of women in the leadership positions in Zemen Bank S.C. In general, the study endorsed that organizational factors such as top management commitment and support, human resource policies and practices take the lion share hindering women's upward growth, followed by personal/individual factors such as women's attitude towards assuming a leadership position and lack of supervisors' recommendation to compete for higher positions. Societal factors also play the role to limit the career advancement of women. Based on the findings, the study further acknowledged the need for revision of the Bank's Human resource polices and practices, the national programs with regard to bringing gender equality nationwide and creating opportunities for women to develop themselves.

Key words: Women leadership, Women participation, Gender in Leadership, Zemen Bank

ACRONYMS

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CSO - Customer Service Officer

HR - Human Resource

ILM - Institute of Leadership and Management

ILO - International Labor Organization

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UK - United Kingdom

UN - United Nations

VP - Vice President

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 . Background of the Study

As a forward towards brining women to the from by empowering them, Ethiopia has been introducing various strategies in the recent years (Ogato, 2013). Among such measures is gender equality plus empowerment of women to enable minorities took fair share exercise in different ways. According to Ogato, to improve the livelihoods of the society, women empowerment and gender equality is considered as one of the building blocks which in turn will lead to poverty reduction and sustainable improvement of the living condition.

Bringing the flavor of women leadership in the process of the organization life cycle is believed to have its influence in the efficiency of the organization. Unlike women in economically developed countries with high level of financial empowerment and a demanding voice of audience and public reaction, women in less developed countries are dominated by cultural and economic factors letting them to restrict themselves from speaking out for their right and demand for better position the society (Essays, 2018).

According to UN Women Annual Bulletin 2018, the undergraduate enrollment rate of women falls at 34% though the Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is working to implement remarkable transformation in the spheres of girls' and women's empowerment through the bridging of gender gaps; and significantly increasing women's political participation in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ethiopia is one of the signing members of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that aim to achieve gender equality for all women and girls stands and falls with empowering and guaranteeing the rights of those who have been pushed to the margins by decades of structural discrimination on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity, among others (Women's Rights In Review 25 Years After Beijing, 2020). In the country, an increasing trend has been noted to the number of leadership positions that Ethiopian Women assume recently (Bahiru, Bruktawit and Mengistu, Abeba Beyene (2018). According to Worku (2017), women employees are higher than men employees in terms of number. The same study also stated that though, their number is higher,

the number of women leaders are very few and limited when we come to the business sector due to various challenges, tangible or intangible or actual or perceived. Tigist (2015) argues that the majority of Ethiopian women engaged in low profile positions like many African Countries. The same study states that the low status of women in developing countries in general and in Ethiopia is a result of the cultural influence they face in terms of denial of access to education, training, and discriminating employment practices, and less involvement of women in policy formulation. On the other hand, educational gap, lack of recommendation, lack of confidence from the women side and absence of clear and transparent promotion criteria were identified as the factors that contribute to the limited number of women in Leadership in one of the private banks in Ethiopia (Miheret, 2019).

Hana (2015) also raised factors such as lack of support from supervisors, few numbers of female candidates in the pipeline, inflexible working hours, family commitments & difficulty in balancing work and household responsibility underlying the fact that women's career advancement in the banking industry is not affected only by one factor but with a combination of social, organizational and personal factors.

The case company, Zemen Bank, is among the late entrant in the sector with eleven years of operation in the industry. Looking at the gender mix of the Banks' management, we see that there are no women executives and one senior management number from 313 women employees of the Bank. To this end, this study was conducted to assess factors that contribute to the limited number of women in leadership position of the Bank and to suggest remedial actions.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Contrary to being considered as risk averse, women are considered as risk aware which is leading to opening of a new window to consider them in leadership positions including in the selection of Board of Directors (Felista, 2013). Globally, nations reach to several international declarations to address the gender disparity. However, the result achieved is not satisfactory enough especially in developing country where women are considered mainly as house wives and supposed to take care of children. We see few women in the top positions of organizations worldwide due to the gender disparity though the magnitude of the disparity is much bigger in developing countries than the developed ones.

Despite the fact that female labor force constitutes 46.6% of the total labor force of Ethiopia according to World Bank data (2019), we rarely see them reach top leadership positions in the banking sector of Ethiopia like many organizations. Organizations argue that there is an equal employment opportunity in the organization though it is practiced in a customized way to provide equal growth opportunity in the ladder of the organization. This is reflected in the number of leadership positions assumed by women throughout the lifetime of many of the industry players of the financial sector, specifically the private banking sector.

Though the number of women and men in the early years of these banks were small, currently the banks have a huge number of women employees. Supported by the increasing access to education in the country, the number of women employees is increasing in the business sector recently (Worku, 2017). It is also true in case of Zemen Bank where there exists is no female executive management member and only one female in senior management position. The Bank has 313 female employees out of a total of 988 employees as of April 30, 2020.

Despite the number of female employees constitutes about one third of the work force of the Bank, the number of female employees assuming managerial positions are few in number as indicated in the below table.

Table 1.1 - Number of employees in terms of job position

No.	Job category		Male	Female	Total
1.	Executive Management	President/CEO & Vice Presidents	5	0	5
2	Senior Management	Assistant Vice Presidents & Directors	16	1	17
3.	Middle level Management	Division Managers	15	4	19
4.		Section Heads	9	2	11
5.		Branch Managers	39	6	45
6.		Assistant Branch Managers	3	4	7
7.	Non Managerial Employees	Professional Teams	588	296	884

Source: Zemen Bank, Human Resource Department, 2020

As evidenced by the above data, women are underrepresented in the managerial positions, Executive Management, Senior Management and Middle level management. The Bank introduced a new scheme as a human capital development and succession planning called Managerial Development Program where candidates go through an intensive training program to become all rounded Manager. Through this program, 24 employees of the Bank participated out of which only 5 were female. Here also we see that women are underrepresented from the very beginning of the succession planning of the Bank that was expected to solve the shortage of qualified managers by getting them ready for assignment whenever the need arises.

Miheret (2019), through her study of the same topic in the case of Bank of Abyssinia mentioned that various factors contributed to the fact that women are not highly involved in the leadership positions. Among these factors are: organizational, socio cultural, and personal factors are the major ones that hinder women from stepping out for their right and compete for top positions and they often lack opportunities, resources and support for realizing their potential (Miheret, 2019).

According to Endale (2014), one of the Millennium Development Goals of Ethiopia, gender equality initiatives failed to achieve its plan though there is encouraging change in empowering women's participation in leadership and many women are participating in many governments' offices including ministerial position and executive ranks. The same is reflected in the very limited number of women leaders are seen in the ladder. Women who fight for their right, believed in themselves and went far beyond one can go to claim his/her right are given the opportunity to get positions. Such limitations have an impact on the society as a whole as women contributes to the economic development of their family, their organization as well as the country.

On the other hand, empowering women in having their own income instead of being dependent on the spouse income will create a huge impact on the cultural influence on women. To increase their contribution economically and socially, it is mandatory to enable them develop themselves and keep the growth ladder.

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the factors that affect women's participation in leadership positions in Zemen Bank S.C.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:-

- To identify the socio-cultural factors that hinder women's participation in leadership position.
- To identify what organizational factors affect women's participation in leadership position;
- To determine the personal factors that affect women carrier development.
- To assess what type of positions women perform best and the underlying reasons;
- To assess women's attitude towards assuming leadership position in the bank;

1.5 Research Questions

In this study the below research questions were designed to assess the factors that are affecting women's participation in leadership:

- What socio-cultural factors affect women participation in leadership position?
- What organizational factors play the major role hindering women from reaching to top leading positions in Zemen Bank?
- what personal factors affect women carrier development?
- What type of do women fit to perform best and why women are suitable to these positions?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is aimed to assess factors that limit the number of women in leadership position in Zemen Bank S.C. By tracing the major factors that hinder women from going forward in to leadership position, the findings can be considered as an input in policy making regarding the gender mix, employee development and succession planning of the Bank. On the other hand, the study would assist women to recognize the factors that affect their career path and will help them to work towards managing these factors throughout their carrier life.

Though there are previous studies in the same topic, this research tried to identify if there are recent developments in empowering women due to changes in polices, access to education and employment opportunities that will lead to a different findings than the previously identified factors. Finally, this study is believed to contribute to further study as a base for researchers for further study on the subject matter, which is a global concern these days.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is female employees of the bank with three or more years of experience. Due to convenience and accessibility issue, the study only included female employees within Addis Ababa. Assuming that several factors contribute to the low number of women in the leadership positions, the study focused only on organizational, socio-cultural and personal that are believed to have a relationship in one's career development.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The Bank currently have 45 Branches and 988 employees. The study was conducted on managerial and non-managerial female employees of the bank with three and more years experience in Zemen Bank, Head office and Addis Ababa branches only. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other banks in Ethiopia.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Leadership - Rost (1993) defined leadership as the influencing relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their shared purpose. Iowa state university (1976) also defined leadership as “the interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals”. In this study the term “Leadership” refers to any women with an influencing relationship among leaders and followers to bring about changes in the Bank.

Participation: this term is used in this study to refer to the involvement of women in the leadership and management position of the Bank.

Gender: Gender refers to the personal sexual identity of an individual.

Leader/Manager: Administrative and managerial employee who holds positions of authority and decision making

Barriers: Factors, structures, attitudes, or any obstacle intentional or unintentional, that hinders women from achieving a leadership position in the Bank

1.10 Organization of the Study

The paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the introductory part which comprises Background of the Study, Background of the organization, Statement of the Problem, General and specific Objectives of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Scope of the Study and Limitation of the study. Chapter two presents a review of available literature related to the study. Chapter three describes the methods of the study. Chapter four is the analysis and interpretation of the research results/ findings and discussion of those results and finally chapter five discusses the conclusion of the research findings and recommendations in addressing the research questions posed based on the statement of the problem.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A review of related literature in the subject matter is presented in this chapter. Literatures that support the research objectives the research problem is reviewed. The literature review focused on original sources such as journals, books, thesis and dissertations. The chapter is divided up as follows: theoretical literature review will discuss about the meaning and concept of leadership, general situation of women: population & literacy level, the relationship between gender and leadership style, women in the leading positions in global and the African case. Various literatures on the Ethiopian case, women in the Banking sector of Ethiopia, on the identified barriers to women participation in leadership: societal, organizational and individual/personal factors are reviewed as an empirical review.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1 Meaning and Concept of Leadership

Leadership is defined by (Jossey Bass Reader, 2008, business leadership, google scholar) as a complex social process, rooted in the values, skills, knowledge and ways of thinking of both leaders and followers. It is a continuous process of establishing and retaining a strong relationship between followers; who are willing to follow the footsteps of the leader, who has the aspiration to lead. Leadership has multi dimensions of skill and orientation, enabling successful leaders understands their followers in managing the tasks and processes in an organization. In many organizations, members believed that their potential is underutilized due to absence of a leader (Lindah & Gareth, 1982)

According to Yalem (2011), direction setting, visualizing the desired future to achieve and inspiring followers to strive towards the fulfillment of their vision is distinct features of leaders. Here we see that the inspiration plays the role for followers to achieve what seems impossible without it. Leadership is defined by Yukul (2006) as a way to influence individuals to get their willingness to understand what needs to be done and the way it is expected to be done and ultimately achieving what is set as common objectives.

It was also universally agreed that leadership is a common solution to social problems. As a leader-follower relationship is the base for the process of leading, a leader should be able to create the perception and commitment of followers to achieve the envisioned future. Leaders must be able to guide and paint the vision with confidence, and everyone must be ready to believe that this leader is able to achieve the aim (Kouzes & Posner cited by Tigist 2015)

2.2.2 General Situation of Women: Population & Literacy Level

Even though there are various initiatives to reduce poverty and illiteracy globally, the difference between the developed part of the world and the remaining part of our world is visible. In the developed countries, children start school at a very young age where they learned to read and write. But on the other side of the reality shows that not all the countries in the globe have such a change to get education easily where the literacy rate – that is, the number of people that are at least 15 years old that can read and write – is very low.

Considering the global situation, the literacy rate in general is high due to the balancing number from the developed world such as European community which has almost 100% literacy rate. According to World Population (2020), among the world population the literacy rate of youth at least 15 years old and above falls at 86.3% while Males have a 90% literacy rate and females with 82.7%. However, Africa as a continent falls in the category of low literacy rate followed by South and West Asia. Female took two third of the illiterate adults globally. Ethiopia's female population is about 50.6 % and their literacy rate is 51.8% as of 2015 according to world population cited at Literacy Rate by Country Population. Due to the cultural influence, many families orient their female children to be shy, quite and dependent while they encourage boys to be independent, bossy, and defensive. This in turn shapes their attitude about themselves and reflects throughout their life according to Tigist (2015).

2.2.3 Gender and Leadership Style

Though there is no evidence on the effect of gender on leadership style, women leadership is more of facilitating compared to that of men of leading (Schaefer cited in Grove & Montgomery (2011). Schaefer also state that the men usually follow the traditional way procedural or top-down approach

to get things done while women focus on building relationship and emphasizing on process. However, this doesn't mean that the leadership style of men dominance over the leaders.

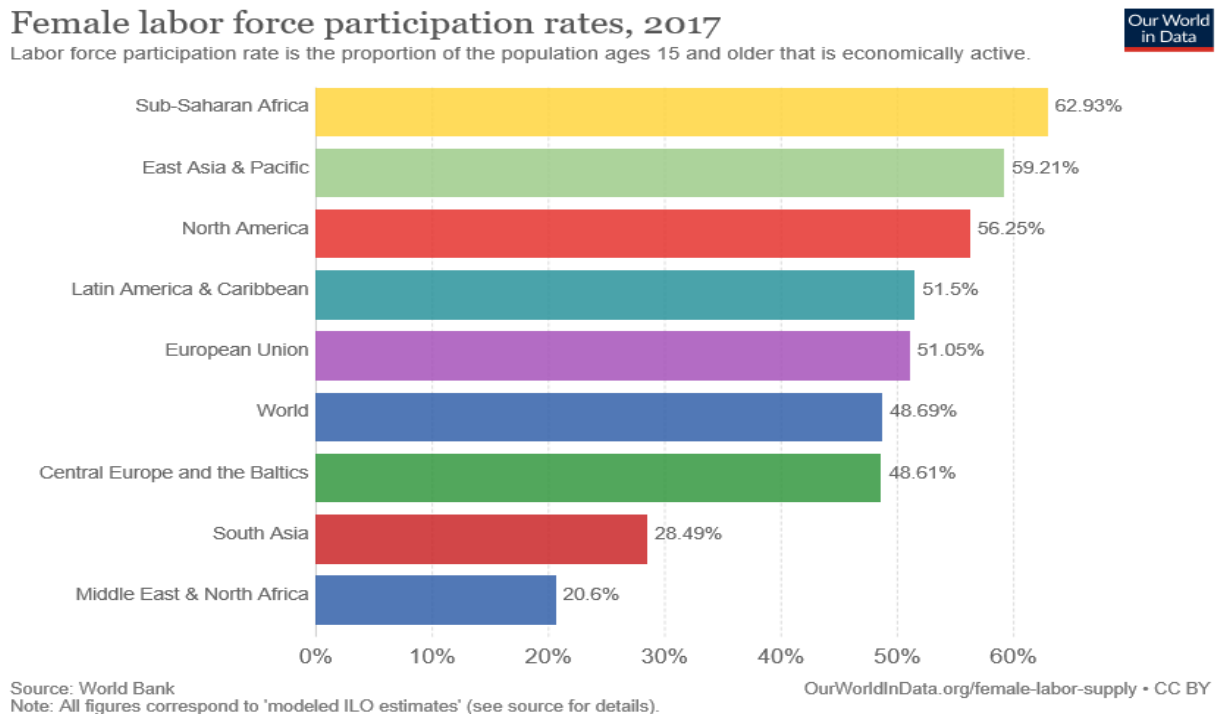
According to Dina (2019), the gender gap in labor force participation is a universally accepted fact in any part of the world. In developing countries, women spend their time on informal and unprotected activities most of the time to respond to the family need. Emphasizing that gender is a major determinant of individual's preferences, abilities, skills and behaviors, Nancy (2012) argued that men are stereotypically assumed to be more competent relative to women, and are mostly considered for senior level positions.

As stated by our-world-in-data report of March 2018, a radical increase is evidenced in the number of women participating in labor markets during the 20th century across early-industrialized countries. Even if the growth in the participation of women in the labor market began at different times with different rates, the substantial increase was recorded during the century in economically developed countries of the world contributing to the economic and social change. However, a slowdown of the growth was registered at the turn of the 21st century (Ortiz-Ospina, Tzvetkova & Roser, 2018).

On the other hand, participative type of leadership style is considered to be the effective one due to the rapid globalization, and increased labor market availability which is giving a room for female employees to get a chance to participate in the formal sector. In the developed world, gender is less likely to affect women career advancement though the number of women becoming to positions is still far behind than the population size of women.

According to Catalyst (2020), Structural barriers and cultural restrictions are two factors that contribute to this gender gap. Despite an increase of women pursuing higher education globally, a gender gap in career advancement remains among highly educated women and men in some countries. Unpaid caregiving responsibilities can prevent paid employment opportunities, and this work disproportionately falls to women. Looking at the global picture, the same study indicates that only 41 million (1.5%) men provide unpaid care on a full-time basis while 21.7% or 606 million women are engaged in fulltime family engagement including child care.

Figure 2.1 Global Female labor force participation rates, 2017



2.2.4 Women in Leadership

2.2.4.1 Global case

A limited number of women assume leadership positions among the largest corporations of the world which clearly shows the visible difference in gender mix of leadership positions. As of the May 2019 Fortune list, only 33 women (6.6%) were CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Women account for less than a third (29%) of senior roles globally per the census of Women Executive Officers and Top Earners of the Fortune 500 by CATALYST (2012) which revealed that women held 14.3% of executive officer positions at these companies, while more than one quarter of the companies had no women executive officer at all. Contrary to this fact, there are areas where the public sees female leaders as having an advantage according to Horowitz et al, (2018).

Regardless of their limited number, many believed that women are more compassionate, pathetic and better at working out for what they believed as presented by (Horowitz et al., 2018). Hanna (2015) also argued that the increase in the number of positions assumed by women has a number of organizational benefits both in social and economic terms.

Globally, a number of research has been done to trace the factors that have contributed to the low representation and the potential solutions. Morriso as cited by Hanna (2015) stated that gender differences, gender discrimination and structural systemic discrimination contributed to the disparities.

2.2.4.2 The African Perspective

Despite its resources and suitable weather, Africa is well known for its underdevelopment and poor leadership as a continent. Poverty, low literacy rate, unavailability of health care, poor infrastructure, famine and political instability have been the identity of the continent for long. On the other hand, it is blessed with many natural resources even if this by itself become one of the pushing factors for many of its stability. The continent is also seen as an emerging economy recently and attracting many investments.

Women in Africa has been considered as a second citizen due to many reasons. They are assumed to be home assistant while men are bread makers. In addition to the cultural influence, a number of obstacles limit women's participation in leadership in the continent (Miheret, 2019). The same study also states that income inequality is the hinge of all the factors that affect women from coming to the front because of the wide disparities in employment based on gender. Daily Nations, as cited by Miheret (2019) that women are poorly represented in senior positions in government Offices across many nations.

Though there are various initiatives globally, lack of resources, both human and financial, contribute to repetitive failure of various initiatives targeted to increase the participation of women in the decision making process and advocacy of women leadership according to Kamau (2012). Such an effort was expected to bring gender equality and women participation in public life though it is not fully supported by the society and its culture.

2.3 Empirical Review

There are a number of research papers conducted on women's participation in decision making and leadership position both in public sector and private sector. The gender disparity issue has been an agenda for many including government of Ethiopia and non-governmental international organizations like UN, ILO and others. The summary of the literatures in this specific topic is presented here under.

2.3.1 The Ethiopian Case

Ethiopia, as a sub Saharan country, is also part of the gender disparity in its formal business, be it governmental office or the private sector. Same cultural effect like that of the continental case is valid in the country also. The country is the second largest in terms of its size covering an area of 1.1 million square kilometers with a population size of around 110 Million and 50.6% female according to world population data (2020). Though the share of female from the total population is high, the female workforce stood at a lesser rate of 46.6% as per World Bank Data (2019).

Various literatures documented that women had played critical roles in times of wars and peace as community organizers and activists in the history of Ethiopia. Their contribution is significant enough to be part of the country's success story in war. The wisdom based leadership by Taitu, second formal wife of Emperor Minilik's (1877-1913), is unforgettable history and comes first when one talk about the contributions of Ethiopian women. As the chief advisor of Emperor Minilik, she had played an influential role in the foreign relations of the country during that period. Taitu holds a firm and uncompromised stand about the independence of Ethiopia in the history for patriotism (Meaza, 2009). Meaza also indicated that it was never easy for Ethiopian women to advance in the formal political power regardless of their demonstrated strengths, contributions and leadership abilities.

Though the participation of women in leadership and decision making position is minimal, there are visible moves to address the gender disparity in the country (Endale, 2014). Culture is taken as a basic reason for stereotyping women as are quiet, submissive, patient, and tolerant of monotonous work and violence (Hirut cited by Tigist 2015). Like many African Countries, the majority of Ethiopian women hold low status in the society. The same study states that the low

status of women in developing countries in general and in Ethiopia is a result of the cultural influence they face in terms of denial of access to education, training, and discriminating employment practices, and less involvement of women in policy formulation.

The constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, per Article 35(6), states that women have the right to full consultation in formulation of national development policies, the designing and execution of projects, particularly in case of projects affecting the interests of women. Recently the government has introduced actions to increase the number of women participating in the decision making positions of governmental offices which had never been the concern in the history of the country.

Many changes has been witnessed after the new Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed took office and undertake an initiative to make Women occupy half of the positions in Ethiopia's cabinet, as part of the reforms he made with a belief to stabilize and take the country forward towards the process of legislation, enforcement and establishment of democratic institutions (Ineke, 2018).

On the other hand, there is no data that indicate the women leaders in the private business sector.

2.3.2 Women in Leadership –in the Ethiopian Banking Sector

Currently there are 16 private banks in Ethiopia. As a service giving organizations, we see many women in the front desks of these banks in Ethiopia. The Banking Sector in Ethiopia, as a service giving organizations, it is believed women to serve customers better than men in general. Though the number of women employees in these private banks is relatively better, we see few of them in the leadership ladder of the banks in the financial industry as declared by the Banks annual report and website.

In all of the industry players, the number of women leaders is very limited as indicated by the below table:

Table 2.1 Gender Mix in Leadership Positions in Ethiopian Private Banking Sector

	<u>Bank Name</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1.	Debub Global Bank	14	3
2.	NIB International Bank	26	1
3.	Awash Bank	30	1
4.	Dashen Bank	34	3
5.	Oromia International Bank	18	-
6.	Cooperative Bank of Oromia Bank	9	-
7.	Bunna International Bank	21	-
8.	Zemen Bank S.C.	20	1
9.	Bank of Abyssinia	36	8
10.	Wegagen Bank S.C.	27	1
11.	Abay Bank S.C.	15	1
12.	Addis International Bank S.C.	10	1
13.	Enat Bank	8	5
14.	United Bank	28	9
15.	Lion Bank	13	3
16.	Birhan Bank S.C.	19	5

Source: Annual report for the fiscal year 2019 of the Banks

2.3.3 Factors contributing to the limited number of women in leadership positions

The three categories of barriers (individual, organizational and societal) are used as an explanation of women's minimal presence in leadership/management positions (Oakley, Jabeen and Jadoon, Mordi et.al.; Diversity Institute, Elsi, cited by Hanna 2015). These three categories of barriers that are discussed as follows:

2.3.3.1 Societal factors

It is customarily that society set the standards and expectations in all aspects of one's life that affect people from following their aspirations (Mirza and Jabeen, 2011). In many part of the world, women are perceived as caregivers to their family and their professional work becomes secondary

which is a limitation. In the contrary, the “breadwinner” title is generally awarded to men as the head of the family role. Bringing change in the way the society think, perceive and accept the gender issue is a difficult and time taking process due to the fact that societal factors is hidden in the culture and tradition of a country (Elsi, 2013). There is still a belief that gender issues exist that can be strong barriers towards career advancement of women. Especially in the developing world, socially accepted norms prescribe that women’s appropriate behaviors should be nurturing, caring, and cooperative and it is less appropriate for women to be aggressive or assertive in getting deserved developmental or promotional opportunities (Eagly and Carli cited by Hanna 2015). In her research to investigate the challenges and factors hindering women from occupying leadership and management position in Ethiopian financial sectors, Tigist (2015) identified that the time women spend to socialize in the society, household responsibilities, lack of support for child care, low access to education and enrolment of women and absence of gender policy at country level as some of the societal factors that affect the number of women that succeed in the leadership position. The study further recommended working on the policy framework in providing equal opportunity in education and training from the early age of women. Family commitment is also one of the factors that Hanna (2015) identified in her study to identify the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership position. Change of societal culture and belief through continuous effort and awareness creation, advocating gender equality, formulating and implementing supportive polices and national objectives and improving government involvement in society awareness and sensitizing gender awareness sessions in the educational curriculum of the country are among the recommended actions by the same study.

Worku (2017) through his study to identify the challenges and gaps as related to executive women in public institutions in Ethiopia, mentioned that the longstanding traditions among the society affected women from competing with men for an equal opportunity, both in terms of professional and academic development regardless of the practices of the organizations. This led to unbalanced opportunities to men and women in assuming executive managerial positions. The study further concluded that the impact of family responsibility and the socio cultural impacts affect women from advancing in the organizational ladder.

The attitudinal bias in terms of classifying gender issue as a concern for women only and specific positions are originally meant for men, are among the factors that Dina (2019) identified through her study to assess the practice of gender equality and women's participation in leadership. As a remedy for such gap, performing the gender analysis and working on gender awareness are recommended. In addition, legislation and policies related to employment equity, human rights, access to affordable day care and reproductive rights have a profound impact on the ability of women to advance in the workplace (Diversity Institute, 2012). In Ethiopia, the number of women in decision making positions remains low in spite of government action. Many traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes regarding the role and status of women entrenched in the Ethiopian society limit women from advancing in their working career especially in the rural area of the country. Still for a working female, the household tasks and child caring are considered as their responsibility despite their carrier and education. Haregewoin (2003) argues that such kind of societal discrimination is one of the barriers that limit women from progressing. On the other hand, for a female leader, it requires determination and commitment to balance effectively execute their responsibilities (Worku, 2015).

Contrary to their social commitment, the new employment opportunity and the increasing financial burden to meet the required demand in covering the cost of living, women spend their time outside of their home while the number of men willing to share unpaid work - the household responsibility- rarely increased (Bahiru, Bruktawit and Mengistu, Abeba Beyene, 2018).The societal discrimination in stereotyping based on gender contribute the achievements of women and thereby create a psychological barrier that limit the number of women in the leadership position with an effect in their performance (Oswald cited by Bahiru, Bruktawit and Mengistu, Abeba Beyene, 2018).

2.3.3.2 Organizational factors

In formal organizations, expectations of individual employees, their belief together with shared values among a group of employees develop organizational culture, which one way or the other affect the career development of employees. According to Elsi (2013), organizational culture, having a strong effect on the performance of the organization and on the people in the organization, can be defined in different ways and have different characteristics. In addition, culture may change

if the organization faces new trends, changes in the business world or a change of leader. Organizational structures inhibit women's entry to and advancement in the workplace (Fagenson, Jabeen and Jadoon cited by Hanna 2015).

Organizational and institutional practices are reflection of the societal or systemic factors. Some of the organizational factors that hinder women's anticipation to leadership position include women friendly policies, lack of flexible work arrangements, absence of women from decision making bodies and lack of networking and mentoring opportunities (Jabeen and Jadoon cited by Hanna, 2015). These barriers might vary significantly from organization to organization. Researches further indicate that gender bias in recruitment, succession planning, promotion, and evaluation prevent women from advancing to leadership positions. Oakley (2000) in her article mentioned corporate practices as a major obstacle for women career advancement. She explained that gender imbalance is partially caused by the favoritism of males during recruitment, retention and promotion.

Similarly, ILO (2004) described corporate culture as a fundamental reason for women's absence from management and leadership positions in that it restricts women career development, particularly the lack of family-friendly policies at the workplace, obliges them to prioritize their family life over paid work. To be considered as equally competent with men candidates, women are expected to perform far better as per Hanna (2015).

Work-life balance is another individual barrier to women career progression due to their multiple roles in handling a career and a home and family (Judith, 2010). Basically, women leave their personal life due to demanding jobs and focus on their professional life aspiration to go up to the organizational structure. Many researchers believed that better performance can be resulted from a balanced work-life relationship of women as damage of succeeding in work and failing to balance the personal life or vice versa outweigh its benefits. As explained by Lyness & Judiesch (2008), there is a positive relationship between the professional work and personal life of women in accomplishing their responsibilities. Here, in order to help women balance their life with their work responsibility, an organization can contribute via different arrangements such as flexible working hour and the like (Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014).

Due to their dual role at their home and office, women face many difficulties to balance their responsibility, perform better and progress in their leadership position (Judith, 2010). Furthermore, the long hours, late meetings, and last-minute requests often required by leadership positions can cause conflict with the responsibilities faced by women at home (Diversity Institute, 2012).

Lack of family-friendly policies in organization is one of the factors that limit women's career advancement as they are more responsible for childcare and family obligations. According to Thompson, Beauvais, and Lynes as cited by Bahiru, Bruktawit and Mengistu, Abeba Beyene (2018), in order to have a favorable organizational culture in terms of work-life balancing, it is expected to develop shared beliefs, assumptions and values between an organization and its employees. This can be expressed by relieving the employee's family burden via various supportive actions.

Miheret (2019) also identified absence of clear and transparent promotion criteria as organizational practice that limit the number of women in their career advancement. The author recommended top management to be open-minded and willing to appoint women who are competent, developing systemized promotion criteria to reduce bias, revising the Bank's strategy, policies, laws and regulations to be inclusive of women. Another study by Hanna (2015) that aimed in identifying the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership, identified limited number of competent candidates in the pipe line as an organizational factor contributing to the few number of female leaders in an organization. Crating the Bank's polices to be encouraging and supportive to women employees, exercising affirmative action in the recruitment and selection process and working on networking and mentoring programs are suggested as recommendations in the same study.

2.3.3.3 Individual/Personal Barriers

Individual or personal factors accounted to the characteristics, attitudes and skill of women employees themselves. Personal factors include readiness in terms of education and work experience, self-image, motivation and ambition to accept challenges, confidence, willingness to

take risks, assertiveness, emotional stability and ability to handle a crisis (Onsongo, Gender Advisory Council cited by Hanna 2015)

Lack of confidence and career ambition have been cited as factors in preventing women from moving into senior and executive positions also. A study by Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) revealed that low level of ambitions and expectations limit women managers from moving forward (ILM, 2011). In addition, when women demonstrate characteristics that are associated with leadership (confidence, self-reliance, dominance and self-promotion); they face a criticism because of incompatibility between perceptions of the leader role and the female gender role (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Developing the confidence and positive attitudes of women must be a road that a family should follow to bring female leaders in to the picture with an ability to lead without scarifying their personal life according to Elsi (2013). This can be addressed by allowing individuals to familiarize with the business environment that have an exemplary gender mix in leadership positions.

In Ethiopia, women's lack of assertiveness and lack of commitment by the few women in decision-making positions to fight for issues of gender equality combined with insufficient number of educated women were identified as reasons for the limited number of women in decision making positions (MOWA cited by Hanna 2015).

Lack of supervisor's recommendation regardless of the educational qualification and work experience is among the personal factors that limit the career development of women as evidenced by many literatures. Though its effect is minimal, Miheret (2019) identified lack of supervisor's recommendation as one of the factors that keep women off the leadership track. This is because to be considered to most of managerial and supervisory positions in many organizations, a recommendation from the immediate supervisor is required as part of the promotion requirement. Women on the other hand to care for their home and family members in addition to their professional work, which is a constraint for female employees to stay longer in the office, participate in late meetings, limit themselves from field and weekend assignment (Diversity Institute cited by Hanna 2015.)

For an organization that have no family friendly policy, women with family commitment and responsibility is unlikely to get the recommendation of the supervisor regardless of the educational qualification and expertise.

Furthermore, Hanna (2015) has concluded that, the limited number of women in leadership position is not a result of one factor but a combination and chain effect of all the three, organizational, societal and individual factors.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the study covers the research design, the source of data collection, the population size, how the sample design is done, data collection technique that will be followed, how the data will be analyzed, validity, reliability and ethical consideration techniques used throughout the research process.

3.1. Research Design

The research follows a quantitative approach to identify the factors affecting women participation in leadership position in Zemen Bank S.C. The study used descriptive research design with adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings in identifying the factors preventing women employees of the Zemen Bank from advancing to leadership.

3.2. Sources of Data

To accomplish the objective of this study, data is collected from both primary and secondary sources in two phases. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires, which was distributed for 131 female employees of Zemen Bank S.C.

As a secondary source of data different published as well as unpublished organization documents, such as Human Resource data and other documented sources from web site of the bank were considered in addition to books, articles, published reports, journals related to the research topic.

3.3. Population Size

The population of the study is 131 female employees of the bank with three or more years of selected from the total 983 employees of the bank.

3.4. Sampling Design

The study involved Head Office and branches employees of the Bank within the city of Addis Ababa. For purposes of the current study, the sampling frame list was obtained from Human Resources Department of the Bank. The participants were selected from different department.

As the study's main target is to identify the factors affecting women from reaching the top of the ladder in organizational structure, the population was narrowed down to the number of women who have stayed within the Bank for about three years, who have enough exposure and the minimum requirement to assume supervisory or managerial positions. According to the data obtained from the Human Resource Department, there are 131 female professional employees with three or more years experience with in the Bank.

As the population size in the study is limited and feasible to reach all, the researcher applied census method to increase the reliability of the data collected.

3.5. Data Collection Method

Questionnaire which was partially adopted from Hanna (2015) was used as the primary data collection instrument in order to gather data timely and with minimum cost. Moreover, all the respondents are with a minimum educational qualification of Diploma and BA degree as per the Bank's requirement. The data collection instrument included closed-ended questions that best reflect the factors affecting the participation of women in leadership position. Thus, data was gathered from respondents allowing them the freedom to express their idea per the questions designed to address the topic under study.

3.6. Data Analysis

This study specifically employed the quantitative method in order to provide an extensive explanation on the subject matter. Data captured from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 24.00 and descriptive statistics; such as tables, figures, percentages, graphs and charts was used to analyze and present results.

3.7 Validity and Reliability Analysis

3.7.1 Validity

Validity is another property or characteristics of the dependent variable that describes the measuring tool or questionnaire is described as being valid when it measures what it is supposed to measure. This study considered, reliability, as an indicative measure where a measure has good reliability, it is said to be that the data represent what it supposed to. In addition to that, by face validity the data respondents give on their perception regarding the factors limiting the number of women in leadership position on its face measures for the construct of interest. Also checking the content validity, the questionnaire covers most visible factors affecting the participation of women in leadership position to prove the construct interest, as evidenced by the literature reviewed.

3.7.2 Reliability

In pure and applied researches one of the most used reliability (internal consistency) estimators is Cronbach's Alpha, introduced in 1951. An instrument's internal consistency is based on the correlation between different items of the same test. This correlation indicates if a number of items supposed to measure the same construct produce similar scores. For Cronbach's Alpha, computed with correlations between all pairs of items, internal consistency can vary between zero and one. A generally accepted rule is that the alpha of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level. However, values higher than 0.95 are not necessarily good, since they might be an indication of redundancy (Hulin, 2001)

Accordingly, using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability analysis were conducted to examine the reliability of each variable. The results demonstrated in the following table show that the overall values were above the acceptable threshold which is 0.6. Thus, $\alpha = 0.728$ presents acceptable construct reliability which ultimately indicates internal consistency.

The result by factors is presented as follows;

Table 3.1: Alpha Reliability statistics for total data

S.N	Measures/Factors	Cronbach alpha value	No. of items
1	Socio-cultural attitudes	0.623	15
2	Organizational factors	0.735	20
3	Individual factors	0.624	20
	Overall value	0.728	55

Source: Constructed in SPSS, 2020

Therefore, the above Cronbach alpha value directs that the survey instruments and questionnaires are reliable and hence it's pivotal to undertake further data analysis using appropriate statistical and inferential techniques.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

The researcher hereby affirms to follow ethically and morally acceptable processes throughout the research process. The data was collected based on free will and consent of the respondents with clear declaration of the purpose and objective of the study. The same was clearly communicated on the introductory part of the data gathering instrument to enable the respondents understand the purpose of the study, respond with their full consent and with a confidence to respond without mentioning their name or unique identification in order to assure the respondents that their response is purely for academic purpose, have no connection with their professional work and it will be not be shared with the management of the bank in any way to avoid fear and discomfort.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate of Respondents

In order to undertake this survey, a population of 131 Bank employees has participated. Particularly, the women that are currently working at the managerial and non-managerial positions in different organs of the Bank were participated in filling the questionnaires. As a result of the distributed questionnaires, 121 (92.3%) were returned as valid and hence utilized or further analysis.

4.2 Demographic Background of the Respondents

Descriptive statistics using frequencies was used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents and hence the result of the analysis is described in detail hereunder:

4.2.1 Age of the Respondents

Looking at the respondent age classes, participants in the age group of 26 -35 years are in majority with 73.6% of representation and followed by those in 36-45 years which accounted for 14%, and those between 18-25 years are just 12.4%. This indicates that the majority of the participants are emerging adults. The detail description of the age classes are presented in the following table;

Table 4.1: Age of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	15	12.4	12.4	12.4
	26-35	89	73.6	73.6	86.0
	36-45	17	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

4.2.2 Marital Status

Checking the marital status, of the total respondents, the majority, 68.6% (n = 83) were identified as married, and 25.8% (n = 31) were identified as single, while 3.3% and 1.7% were identified as widowed and divorced, respectively.

Table 4.2: Marital Status of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	31	25.6	25.8	25.8
	Married	83	68.6	69.2	95.0
	Widowed	4	3.3	3.3	98.3
	Divorced	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	120	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.8		
Total		121	100.0		

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

4.2.3 Number of children

As indicated by the respondents, the majority of the women respondents (35.5%) have 2 children, followed by 30.6% with one, 4.1% of them have 3 and 1 participant has 4 children. Whereas, 28.9% of the respondents do not have children.

Table 4.3: Number of children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.0	35	28.9	28.9	28.9
	1.0	37	30.6	30.6	59.5
	2.0	43	35.5	35.5	95.0
	3.0	5	4.1	4.1	99.2
	4.0	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

4.2.4 Educational level

As presented in the following table, of the total participants, the largest group 60.3% (n= 73), reported having a Bachelor's degree, 36.4% were Masters degree holders, while the smallest group 3.3% (n = 4) reported as a Diploma/TVET completed. The detail is computed in the following table;

Table 4.4: Educational Level of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	4	3.3	3.3	3.3
	BA/BSC	73	60.3	60.3	63.6
	Masters	44	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

4.2.5 Work Experience Level of the Respondents

As presented in the below table, it was found that 38% of the respondents have been working in the Bank between 3-5 years. Followed by those of service of 8 and above (33.9%) and those in between 5-8 years were constituted 28.1%. on average, this implies that most of the employees of the Bank have an experience of equal and less than 8 years. the result is calculated in the following table;

Table 4.5: Years of Experience in Zemen Bank

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3-5	46	38.0	38.0	38.0
	5-8	34	28.1	28.1	66.1
	8 & above	41	33.9	33.9	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

4.2.6 Job position

Regarding the respondent's job position, non-managerial takes a large share of respondents with 81%, followed by managerial (15.7%). This indicates that the majority of them are advancing towards the leadership position, while 15.7% are already assumed the career ladder. However, 4 participants were not indicated their job position in the questionnaires.

Table 4.6: Job Position of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Managerial	19	15.7	15.7	15.7
	Non-managerial	98	81.0	81.0	96.7
	Missing	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	121	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

As discussed in the methodology chapter, valued respondents were asked to rate each questionnaire item by using a Likert five-point rating scale ranges from Strongly Disagree (=1), Disagree (=2), Do not Know (=3), Agree (=4), and Strongly Agree (=5). Thus, relevant statistical tools (i.e. SPSS), and techniques were utilized to analyze the data quantitatively (i.e. descriptive statistics like mean, percentages, standard deviation were employed).

Particularly, the mean value indicates to what extent the sample group averagely agrees or disagrees with the statements. The lower the mean, the more the respondents disagree with the statements. The higher the mean, the more the respondents agree with the statement. On the other hand, the standard deviation shows the variability of an observed response from a single sample. Accordingly, to evaluate the scores rated by the survey participants, the Oxford writing criterion standard mean valuation system is used in the analysis. As a result, the valuation system is presented as follows;

Table 4.7: Standard Mean score valuation system

Mean Value	Mean Percentages	Decision
1-1.49	20-29.9%	Very low
1.5-2.49	30-49.9%	Low
2.5-3.49	50-69.9%	Moderate
3.5-4.49	70-89.9%	High
4.5-5	90-100%	Very high

Source: Oxford writing criterion

4.3 Factors Affecting the Participation of Women in Leadership

As indicated in the methodology part, the survey results and discussion are developed based on the score that was given by the participants on the intended attributed items. Accordingly, the overall and specific factors that affect the engagement of women in the leadership and decision making positions in Zemen Bank are presented in the following manner;

4.3.1 Overall factors

There are many factors that obstruct women from participating in managerial positions. There are several factors at the personal, organizational, and societal levels preventing qualified women from ascending to senior positions in the Bank. At the personal level, such factors as lack of confidence and their attitude in terms of self-image and personal belief to discharge their responsibilities were found to be deterring women from taking management positions.

At the organizational level discriminatory recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures, unclear promotion criteria, management commitment, and support, and few opportunities for further training affected women's participation in leadership position. Additionally, societal factors such as discrimination against female child education and general beliefs about women's domestic roles were identified as eroding women's self-development and success in their work. Accordingly, the overall result of the factors that affect the women's participation in the decision-making process is computed as follows;

Table 4.8: Mean Statistics of the factors

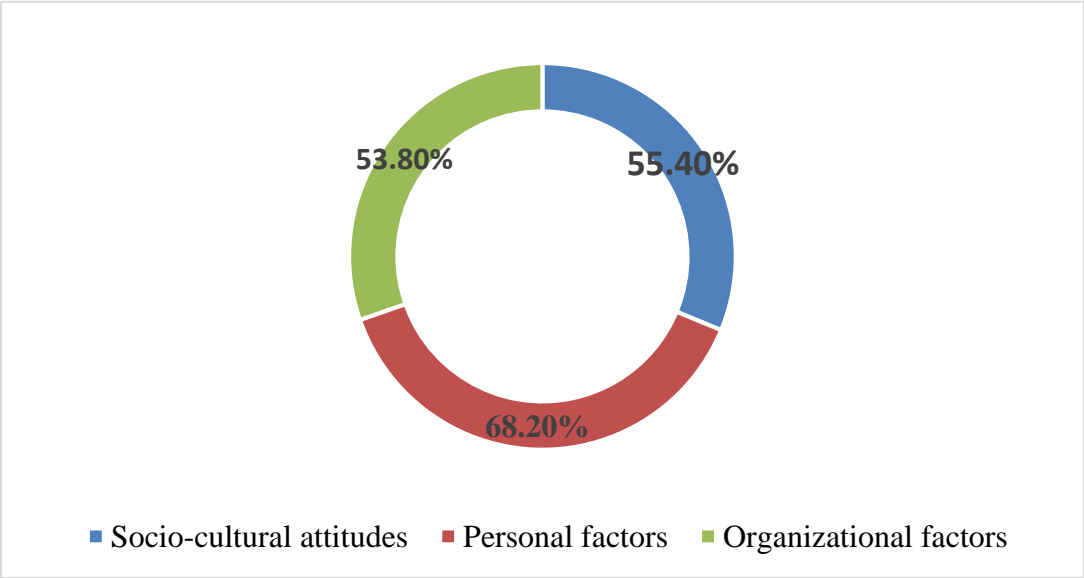
Factors	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Society attitude towards women	2.80	0.46
Gender Stereotype	2.70	0.32
Socio-cultural attitudes (overall averages)	2.75	0.39
Women readiness in terms of competencies	4.1	0.57
Attitude towards assuming a leadership position	3.0	0.38
Self-image and Personal belief	3.43	0.56
Lack of Recommendation	3.12	0.93
Personal Factors (overall averages)	3.41	0.61

Factors	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Management commitment and Support	2.55	0.70
HRM Policies	2.61	0.59
Work-life balance	2.90	0.57
Organizational Factors (overall averages)	2.69	0.62

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

As indicated in the above table and below figure, on average, organizational factors are highly affecting the women’s participation in the leadership position in Zemen Bank, marking a 53.8 percent, relatively. Particularly, from the organizational factors, the management commitment and support (51.06 percent) provided from Zemen Bank are perceived as the biggest driver that hinders the women’s participation, comparatively.

Figure 4.1: Result of factors that affect women participation in a leadership position



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Further, policies of the Bank related to the recruitment, selection, promotion, and training issues are also viewed by the women as a second driving factor, recording 52.29 percent, relatively. However, the raters observed that the work-life balance provided by the Bank is less moderately (58%) affecting their participation in the leadership position with a variation of 0.587 standard deviation.

Moreover, the socio-cultural attitudes towards the women and individual factors are moderately affecting the women's effective participation in the leadership path with a survey score of 56 percent, comparatively and as the majority of the respondents have agreed with the statements. Particularly, the 56 and 54.83 percent of score on socio-cultural attitude (MV=2.80, SD=0.457) and gender stereotype (MV=2.74, SD=0.324) reveals that socio-cultural barriers related with an attitude towards women education and other involvement in the professional work and gender stereotyping were one of the reasonable hindrances of women for holding leadership positions in their respective work engagement.

Besides the second moderate mean score (MV=2.69, SD=0.62) on organizational factors demonstrates that average management commitment and support, the Bank's HRM policies and procedures are the modest barriers for their advancement towards the career development and leadership paths.

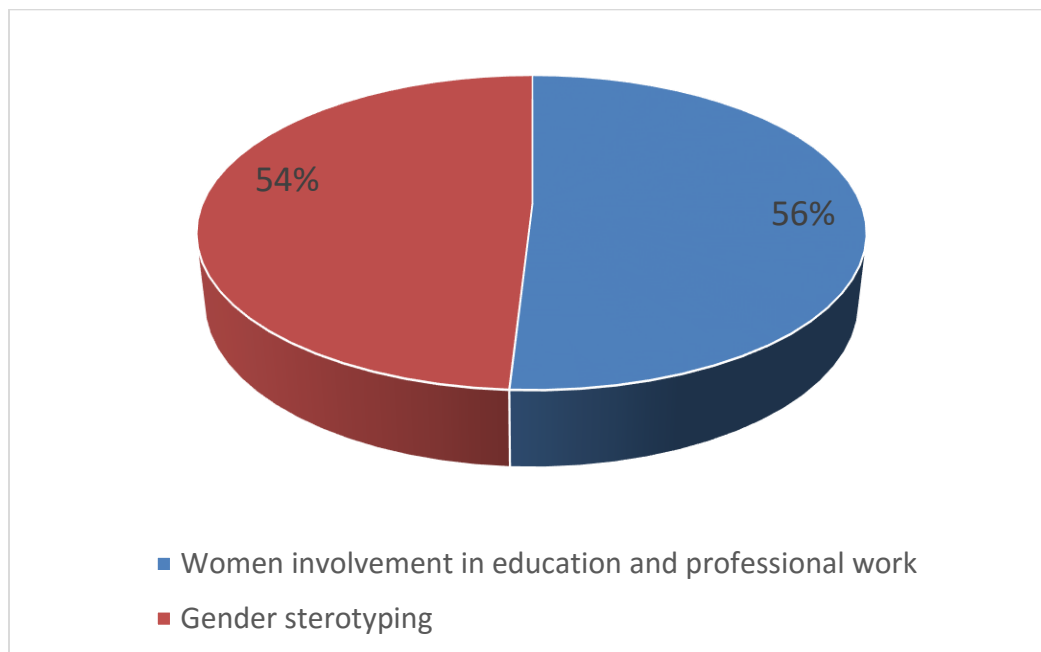
4.3.2 Specific Factors

The detailed analysis of factors that affects the women's participation in the senior management position by specific items are discussed hereunder;

4.3.2.1 Socio-Cultural factors affecting women participation in a leadership position

In Ethiopia societies, perception towards women is improving though they still follow the traditional belief that assigns women's place to home and family works which puts limitations on their professional careers. The major socio-cultural factors which deter the women's professional path are family workload, attitude towards women's development, availability of educational opportunities, long-standing traditions, and beliefs that pose a challenge on the women's productivity in their workplace and community at large. The result of socio-cultural factor by items are figured as follows;

Figure 4.2: Result of Socio-cultural Items



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Accordingly, as rated by the survey participants, from the socio-cultural attitude items, the effect of gender stereotyping is moderate (54 percent), with a more concentrated response across the survey respondents. Similarly, the effect of social attitude towards women's involvement in education and professional work is moderate, recording a score of 56 percent, relatively.

The latter result shows that on average, the traditional and long-standing cultural beliefs that assign women's role as a homemaker is still not reduced and reflection of existing realities in the society. The traditional status of a woman as a homemaker anchors is moderately practiced and affect women's careers. Whereas, the former score of gender stereotypes directs that men are averagely considered as an agent and more competent than women in assuming and practicing the leadership role in the Bank. In turn, this will affect the women's confidence in their work and achievement as men by affecting their commitment, engagement, and effectiveness which leads to their under-representation in the management position. The score that the respondents scored a very low mean value (agreement) is illustrated in the following graph;

Figure 4.3: Statements of Socio-Cultural factors with low mean scores

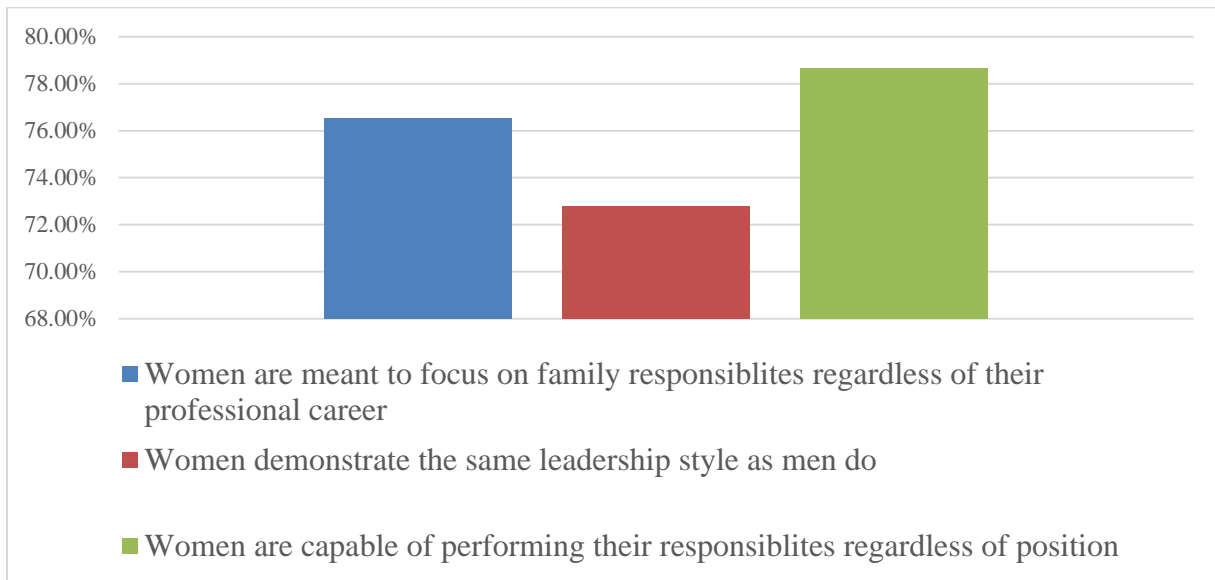


Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Conversely, as presented in the above figure, looking at the frequency of the responses, the majority of the survey participants 74.6 percent disagreed that the educational system supporting female students in preparing themselves for higher positions. In the same way, 69.7 percent of the respondents disagreed that women are facing the same challenges for men in attaining top professional positions while the remaining 30.3% hold neutral position. While asked to validate whether it is difficult for women employees to occupy leadership positions, 91.8 percent disagreed expressing their confidence in assuming leadership positions.

The respondents also indicated that women employees are underrepresented with a 78.7 percentage disagreement while asked if women are equally represented in leadership position in the Bank. Furthermore, 89.3 percent of respondents disagreed that there is an attitude that consider women as equally responsible as men.

Figure 4.4: Statements of Socio-cultural factors with relatively high scores



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

As illustrated in the above bar chart, among the socio-cultural attitudinal items, the respondents scored a relatively high score on the capability items, 78.66 percent, comparatively. Of the total respondents 86.6 percent of participants are agreed with the women skills and talents at their respective departments or work units, while only 3.3 percent disagreed with this statement. This shows that the majority of the respondents felt that women employees of the Bank are capable and talented of performing their responsibilities regardless of their position which is expected to favor their upward movement to the leadership roles in the Bank.

Moreover, on average, the women perceived that they are expected to focus on the household responsibilities regardless of their professional career. The high score is attributed because 75.4% of respondents indicated that they assume additional responsibility at home.

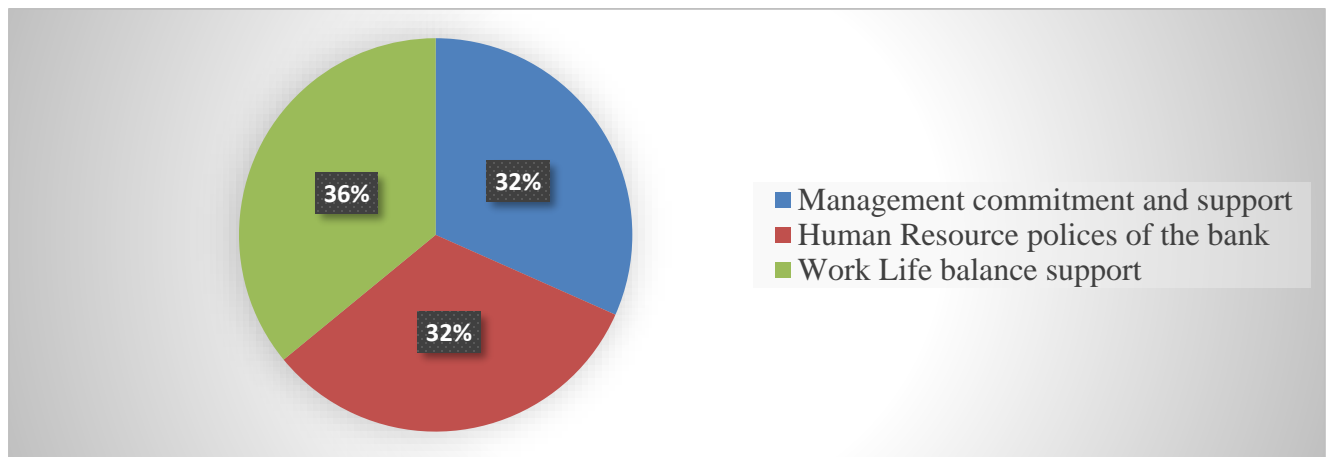
Finally, 80.3% percent of respondents perceived that women demonstrate the same leadership style as men do.

4.3.2.2 Organizational factors affecting women participation in a leadership

In order to check the influence organizational factors on women's participation in the leadership position of Zemen Bank, the questions related to management commitment and support, HRM policies and work-life balance support provided by the Bank were asked. Accordingly, as

presented in the following figure, among the organizational dimensions, the Bank management commitment and support to develop women’s in the leadership position is moderate, recording 51.06% percent with (MV=2.55, SD=0.70). Moreover, the 52.29 percent score on HRM policies indicates on average, there is a moderate availability of fair and unbiased recruitment and selection, learning and development opportunities, and succession planning practices which helps the women to advance into leadership positions now and in the future. Also, a relatively higher among the organizational factors, 57.98 percentage score of work-life balance shows that, on average, women are facing moderate difficulties in maintaining their professional and life balance though the score is moderate, (MV=2.90, SD=0.59).

Figure 4.5: Result of Organizational Factors



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Among the management commitment and support items, the respondents scored a very low score (47.38%) on the statement of management concern about family responsibility of women and its effect on their work with an (MV=2.37, SD=1.07) with a high response variation, relatively, followed by moderate top management encouragement, (50.06%) and then top management commitment to hire and select more women in the leadership position (50.82%), comparatively.

The previous result indicates that, the Bank’s understanding and considering the dual roles of women’s which include home obligations and work responsibilities as well as other roles is very weak which would have a significant impact on women representation in the senior and top decision-making positions, relatively. Additionally, the survey result of top management

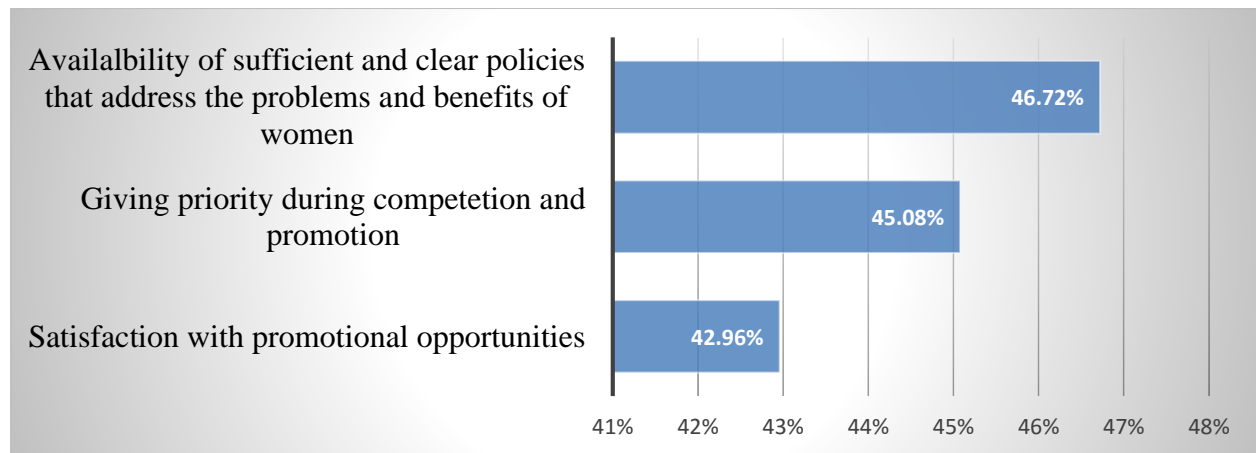
encouragement suggests that the management has an average commitment to empowering women from grass root level to attain a leadership position in the near future.

Regarding HRM policies of the Bank, as indicated in the succeeding figure, on average, the Bank has scored a second-lowest result in developing and implementing strategic HRM policies, procedures, and practices that boost the women's engagement in the leadership positions. Particularly, on average, the Bank scored a weakest score on women's satisfaction with available promotional opportunities in the Bank, recording 42.96 % (MV=2.148, SD=1.03), relatively.

Then, the second least score on giving priorities during the competition and selection periods, marking 45.08 percent, relatively. Accordingly, 68.9% of the respondents are rated strongly disagree or disagree with statements, while 10.7 percent have agreed with the statements. This reveals that Zemen Bank is very weak at practicing affirmative actions to empower and develop women for future responsibilities.

Additionally, the 89.3 percent of respondents (MV=2.34, SD=1.03) indicate that the bank have insufficient and ambiguous policy in addressing problems and benefits of women with high variation among respondents.

Figure 4.6: Result of HRM Policies with low mean score



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

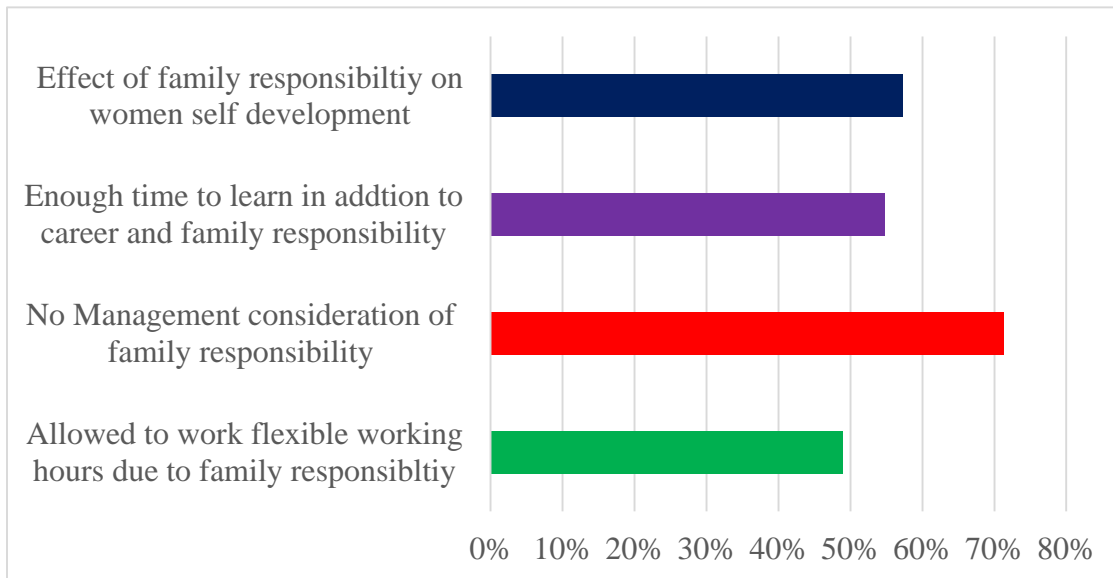
Moreover, as illustrated in the above figure, the Bank scored a low result on in attaining the women employees' satisfaction with the availability of promotional opportunities, giving priority during competition and promotion, insufficient and ambiguous polices to address the benefits of women

relatively with a score of 42.96% (MV=2.15, SD= 1.03), 45.08% (MV=2.25, SD= 0.99), and 46.72% (MV=2.34, SD=1.03) respectively. The earlier result demonstrates that there is a practice of unfavorably treating employees because of their gender status which affects the women’s involvement and advancement towards the leadership positions.

Further, the result also confirms that, in the Bank, some of the women are experiencing a reasonable gender bias during promotion such as through subjective managerial recommendations and other factors that affect their competitiveness. Therefore, to enhance women’s empowerment, the Bank has to promote and devise strategic HRM policies and practices to effectively exercise non-discriminatory practices.

On the other hand, the mean score on sufficient HRM policy indicates that the Bank practice in addressing the women’s mainstreaming issues through developing and implementing various HRM policies, procedures, and guidelines that facilitate the women’s participation in the decision-making process is low. The result further directs that the Bank practices in giving special attention to women by developing different HRM policies and procedures such as succession planning, retention, learning, and career development and other practices that encourage them to participate equally in all hierarchical positions and other levels are weak which reduces the satisfaction with the HRM practices of the Bank, comparatively.

Figure 4.7: Result of Work-life Balance



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Regarding the Work-life balance items, as articulated in the above table, on average, the Bank has scored a moderate score in helping the women to balance their career, family, friends, community, and other leisure pursuits. Particularly, in providing flexible working hours by considering the family responsibility, 36.1 percent were agreed while 63.1 percent of the respondents disagreed with an average mean score of 2.90.

Similarly, on-time allocations to educate themselves in addition to their career and family responsibility, the survey participant has scored a moderate score (54.76%) with a MV=2.74 and SD=1.19) which shows that the women’s are moderately balancing the family burdens with their professional learning opportunities to span their technical and methodological knowledge, values and understanding required in all aspects of life. Conversely, the management consideration of family responsibility as part of the female employee burden is very weak, recording 28.6 percent with a low mean value of 1.43. The mean and standard deviation values of the work-life items are presented in the following table;

Table 4.9: Mean Statistics of Work-life Balance Items

Work-life Balance Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Flexible work hours	2.45	1.2991
Management Consideration of family responsibility as a burden	1.43	1.2984
Enough time to learn in addition to career and family responsibility	2.74	1.1909
Influence of family responsibility on self-development opportunities	2.86	1.245

Source: Survey Result and Own Computations, 2020

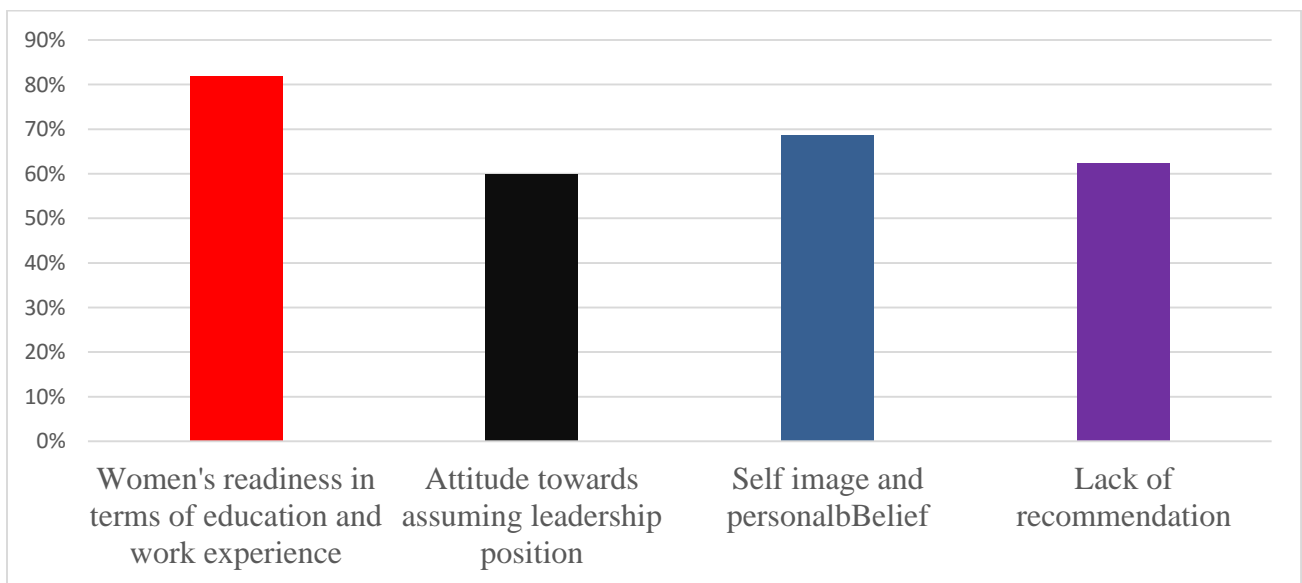
In general, from the organizational factors, the poor practice of top-management in empowering and encouraging women, poor management commitment and consideration of family responsibility as work effect, weak practice and lack of sufficient HRM policies, guidelines and procedures that benefits and empower a women’s are the biggest factors which affect the women’s participation in the leadership position in case of Zemen Bank.

4.3.2.3 Personal factors affecting women participation in a leadership position

Theoretically, various scholar (Singh and Shahabudin, 2000) claims that the psychological dimension related to personality characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors are the major self-initiated factors which hinder the women's career advancements. Mainly, the reason related to self-esteem, self-confidence, lack of motivation, emotional instability, loss of assertiveness, and ambiguity management competencies is the personal factors that contribute to the limited number of women in decision-making and senior management positions.

As presented in the following table, among the individual factors, on average, the women's readiness in terms of education and experience is high which is 81.9 percent (MV=4.1, SD=0.57), relatively. Among all items, this attribute represents the highest and factor for women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions. Above all, according to the respondents women are strong in preparing themselves through education, learning, self-initiative training, and other expertise to boost their talents and skills that fuels their ability in the workplace and equip them for the management positions. This further confirms that the women have a high commitment and initiation to increase their capabilities that qualifies them for the leadership roles in Zemen Bank. Accordingly, the survey result of this items are figured in the following manner;

Figure 4.8: Result of personal factors



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

On the other hand, on average, the majority of the women (62.32 percent) felt that lack of supervisor's recommendation, the tendency of recommending men than women, more household responsibility that hinders workplace performance, and hence recommendation as their major constraint to advance towards leadership positions.

Moreover, self-image and personal belief are also other facts that have a profound impact on their career prospects with an average score of 68.65 percent (MV= 3.43, SD=0.56). This shows that on average, the women are moderate in personal belief and self-image such as women's inferiority, sensitivity for criticism, feeling discomfort to speak to a group of people, emotional instability, less conflict, and crisis management competencies which affects their confidence and assertiveness towards career advancements. Besides, the participants have scored an average score of 59.95% on attitude towards leadership position which suggests that the women are moderately visualized their fit for leadership position, aspirations, and interest in assuming the leadership positions, comparatively.

4.3.2.4 Summary of aggregate mean per factor

The aggregate mean value of all the three factors is presented below:

Table 4.11: Aggregate Mean values

Factors	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Socio-cultural factors	2.7709	0.3257
Organizational factors	2.6889	2.6889
Personal factors	3.4104	0.3692

Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

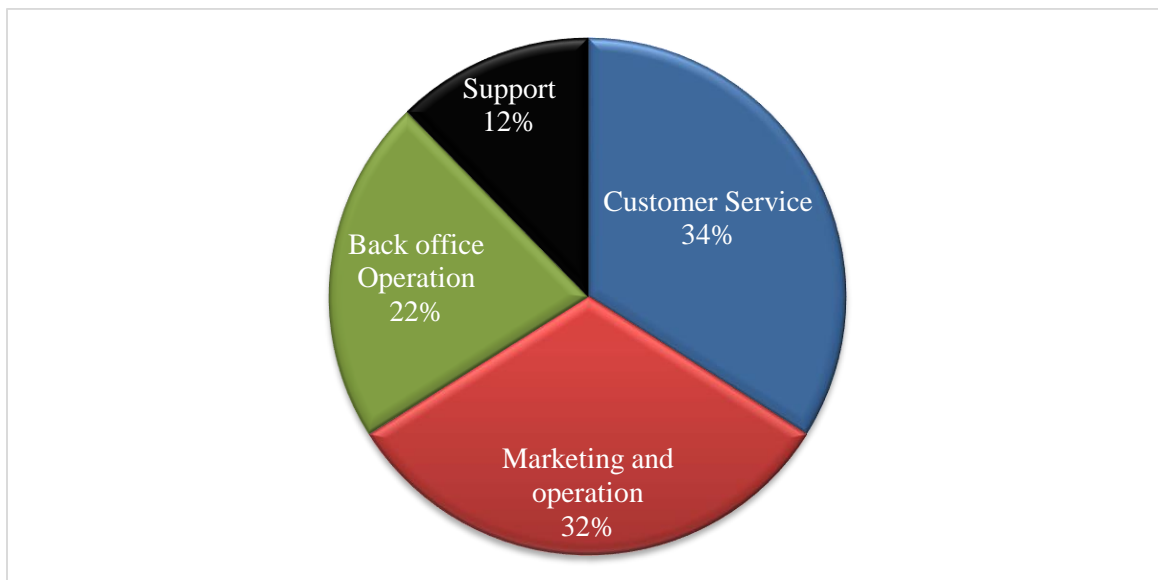
As it is shown in the above table, the aggregate mean value of the three factors affect the participation of women in leadership moderately. This shows that the limited number of women in leadership position is the sum result of all the three though there are individual variables that contribute a higher value to the less participation of women. Among these factors, Management commitment and support (MV=2.55, SD=0.70) as well as HRM policies of the Bank (MV=2.61, SD=0.59) both are the variables under organizational factors relatively with high effect on the participation of women in leadership position followed by gender stereotyping (MV=2.74, SD=

0.46) under socio cultural factors. Society attitude towards women involvement in the education and profession work also moderately affect the participation of women with (MV 2.80, SD=0.46)

4.4 Analysis of General Questions

In order to capture the full view of the women’s talents, skills and identify the area that they will be productive if they engaged in, additional questions were asked. The question was “*in which area women mostly perform best? Why do you think women perform best in the above-stated position?*” Accordingly, the participant’s responses are illustrated as follows;

Figures 4.9: Results of Areas that women Perform best



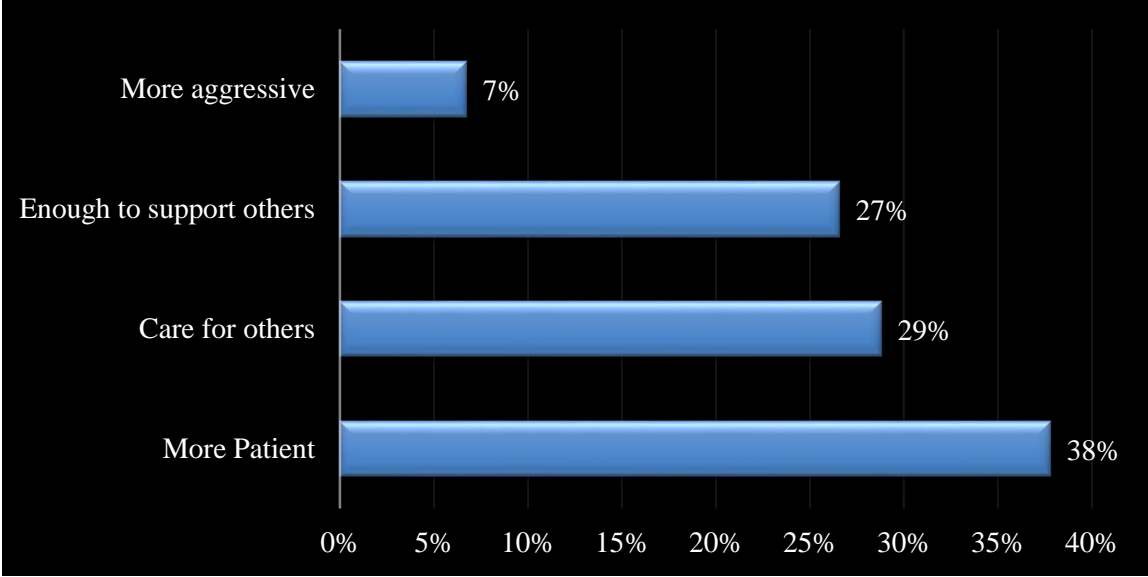
Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

Accordingly, the majority of the respondents agreed that women will be productive and can deliver more efficiently for the Bank if they engage in the customer service areas (34%) and marketing and operation (32%) areas. It is evident that customers are the heart of the Banking business as a service giving sector and therefore the Bank needs to more concentrate and build great customer experience through various strategies and tactics at both operational and strategic levels to realize the end goal of profit maximization through customer satisfaction.

To do that, engaging talented and capable employees in the area of the first point of contact such as customer service and marketing is necessary to create superior values that satisfy customer

needs and interests. So, as per the survey findings, the majority of the respondents reflected that in these core business areas women will be more beneficial in delivering drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty and other values than other areas such as back-office operations and support. The reasons for selected professional roles and responsibilities are figured as follows;

Figure 4.10: Reasons for selection areas



Source: Survey Result and Own Construct, 2020

As illustrated above, the top reason for women’s productivity in customer service and marketing areas is indicated as more patient than men (38%), care for others (29%), they are able to provide enough support to others (27%), and women are more aggressive than men (7%). Particularly, the result of patience to listen and respond customer requests and care for others shows that women are better at managing ambiguities, understanding customer interactions, needs, pains and interests via giving special attention in the customer service, marketing and promotion areas than other professional workers which maximizes the overall customer journeys and other tangible outcomes of the Bank.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and also gives conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the objectives of the study. It also presents discussions of the key findings, conclusions drawn based on such findings and recommendations on what can be done on women participation in a leadership position in case of Zemen Bank.

5.1 Conclusions

The theoretical and various empirical studies found out that different factors affect the women participation in the top and decision making positions in various organizations worldwide. Particularly, the social, organization, and individual factors are the biggest hindering factors for the women in advancing to leadership positions. By considering the above factors, this descriptive study was aimed to assess the factors affecting women's participation in the leadership position in the case of Zemen Bank.

Accordingly, to undertake the study, various methods and procedures were utilized. Mainly, in collecting the data, the structured questionnaires were designed and distributed to women employees who have spent a minimum of three years with the Bank to rate measuring statements on 5 points from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Out of the total distributed, 121 questionnaires were returned as valid and used for data analysis. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20) descriptively using appropriate statistical techniques.

Regarding the finding, overall the finding shows that all three factors are posing the barriers to women's participation though the magnitude differs. Among the factors, the organizational factors (53.8%), are highly contributing to the limited number of women in leadership position, while socio-cultural factors (55.4%) and individual factors (68.2%) are moderately affecting their participation with a moderate variation of agreements across the respondents.

Particularly, from socio-cultural factors, 68% of result on society attitude towards women involvement in education and work confirms that there is a moderate existence of widely accepted traditional beliefs that assign the women position as a homemaker than engagement in learning,

development and other professional areas that maximize the capability of women. Similarly, a 66% score on gender stereotype reveals that averagely males are considered as a capable leader than the women in the eyes of society.

A further looking at the personal factors, the result demonstrates that women's readiness in terms of necessary qualifications and expertise is very high (80%) which highly fuels their move towards the senior management positions. Conversely, the psychological and behavioral readiness to assume the leadership positions are moderate, recording 61% on attitude towards leadership and 64% on self-image and belief which again affects their commitment, effectiveness, and confidence in progressing towards the straight leadership ladder. Also, lack of recommendation (60%) from their respective supervisors is one of the factor in disturbing their upward movement.

Moreover, among organizational factors, the finding indicates that the management commitment and support, HRM policies and procedures, and work-life balance support that are providing by the Bank are highly hindered the women's engagement in top and decision making positions with a 51.07%, 52.29% and 57.98% survey score, respectively. Specifically, the management commitment in empowering and encouraging women's towards the leadership position, concern about family responsibility of women and it is the effect on work, concern on gender-mix, availability of clear and strategic HRM policies, procedures and guidelines that develop, engage, retain and address the problem of women, affirmative actions, performance based recognitions, and gender discrimination during the promotion is identified as the main top constraint of organization factors in empowering, developing and engaging women into leadership positions in the Bank.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the below recommendations are given as a way forward to increase the number of women coming to the top positions in the organizational structure:

5.2.1 At the societal level:

- Though there are various initiatives within the country to increase the gender equality, it is recommended to the sponsors of these initiatives, governmental or non-governmental institutions, strengthen the depth of the initiatives to increase the number of women that

are joining school at early age which will have an impact on the university/college enrollment rate as well as the number of women joining the work environment. Working on awareness creation at every household level and reflecting the benefit of women education will contribute a lot to increase the enrollment rate of women to formal education. By doing so, the country will be able to reduce the societal attitude that kept women behind the curtain to serve the family needs and restrict their educational as well as professional advancement.

- Here, the major role player, the government should put controlling mechanisms to check the effects of the different gender equality initiatives and policies are implemented. Exercising result based evaluation of the effects of each initiatives such as checking the percentage increase of female students in the country will help to keep the check and balance of each project.
- As part of the society and irrespective of their gender, all employees of the Bank have to actively contribute, support, and participate to address gender-related inequalities that affect the motivation, inclusiveness, and career aspirations of women in the Bank.

5.2.2 At the organizational level:

As the organizational factors play the lion share in limiting the number of women who participate in leadership position in the Bank,

- It is recommended to the top management to carefully plan the gender balancing issue bank wide starting from the selection and recruitment process and develop a mechanism to bring more women to the ladder as part of its succession planning.
- In the same token, the top management needs to revisit its Human Resource Policies including recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer policies and guidelines to be considerate of the fact that women have dual burden, both at family level and organizational level. This can be achieved through exercising a relatively relaxed criteria for empowering women without compromising the minimum standard and requirements that are required to assume a certain position.
- As indicated in the response, women best perform in customer service areas and marketing and promotion, which are pillars for service giving organizations. Taking this advantage,

the Bank should allow women to come to leadership positions in these wings of its operations to create an efficient and smooth service delivery. This can be done by crafting development programs for women in customer service, marketing and promotion areas, creating more training opportunities and coaching them to follow the way to the leadership position, which will in return help the Bank to keep a competitive advantage among the industry players.

- It is also recommended to encourage women to compete for managerial positions and loosen some of the requirements which are not significantly affecting the quality and required expertise to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the position they are going to assume which can be a way to express management's commitment towards gender equality.
- To enable women balance their professional activity and personal life, the organization needs to work on reducing their home responsibility like child care by providing benefit packages such as arranging a day care around its premises, granting women breastfeeding break, and allowing them to work flexibility without compromising their responsibility in the Bank.
- Providing educational support to enable women advance in their academic qualification and providing practical training to develop their readiness to assume leadership position when the need arises.
- The Bank has to design strategic talent management practices to effectively utilize the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of women that enhance the overall participation of women in the top leadership positions and their contributions to the bottom-line of the Bank.

5.2.3 At Individual/Personal level

- Though most of the respondents agreed that they are ready to assume leadership position, they are still required to work on educating themselves, prove their capability that is required to discharge their responsibilities effectively to get the attention of the top management and recommendation. Participating in different project teams, bringing innovative ideas and suggestions is helpful to proof their ability as well as get the favorable view of the management to them.

- Women should keep themselves aware of the policy changes, the bank's requirement and recent developments in human resource policy and procedure of the Bank in order to keep themselves on the track.
- Women employees of the Bank also hereby recommended to develop themselves to face challenges, managing workloads and meeting the expectations of their immediate supervisors in order to build the level of confidence to recommend them to higher position. Attending various seminars and experience sharing sessions, keep socializing in various organizational events and spending more time and effort in office activities might help a lot in keeping themselves on track.

5.3 Implication for Further Research

As the gender disparity is deep rooted in our society just like many developing countries, it need extensive effort and time to completely erode it from the society. Organizations, as sub systems of society, are one way of reflections that endorse the societal attitudes towards the career development of women in its system. The research identified that many societal, individual as well as organizational factors that contribute the limited number of women who participate in leadership position in Zemen Bank S.C. However, as the topic by itself is vast and a study on one organization might fall back to fully express the effect of societal, individual and organizational factors in women career advancement, it is recommended for further research with in depth analysis to arrive at general conclusions and applicable recommendations.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

Thank you in advance for your time and dedication in completing this questionnaire.

I am a postgraduate student at Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce in the field of Business Leadership. I am currently conducting a research entitled “Assessment of Factors affecting the participation of women in the leadership positions in the case of Zemen Bank S.C.”

The purpose of this research is to identify the underlying factors and suggest the measures that will help to fill the gap in the career advancement of women towards leadership position in the Bank.

Believing that your participation in the study to identify the contributing factors, you are hereby required to provide the best option that fits your choice by marking in the spare provided. Writing your name is not required at all.

Finally, I hereby kindly confirm that the information that you share will be kept confidential and only used for the academic purpose. No individual responses will be identified and will not be disclosed in anyway.

Sincerely,

Bayush Berhanu

4.	There is limited educational opportunity for women in the society					
5.	Our culture doesn't allow women to stay in the office for long hours					
6.	The position of men and women in the society is naturally determined					
7.	I got enough support from my family in developing my self					
ii. Gender Stereotyping		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Women demonstrate the same leadership style as men do					
2.	Women employees face difficulties when they occupy leadership positions					
3.	Women are capable of performing their responsibilities regardless of position					
4.	Women are equally represented in leadership position in Zemen Bank					
5.	There are about the same challenges for men as for women in attaining top professional positions					
6.	There is an attitude that men are more responsible for leadership					
7.	Individuals are responsible to ensure gender equality in the office					

- b. **Organizational factors** – the below questions are designed to assess the organizational factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in Zemen Bank S.C. Here, management commitment & support, recruitment, selection and promotional issues, women friendly policies and practices and training opportunities are assessed.

i. Top Management Commitment and support		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The management is committed in hiring and selecting more women in the leadership positions.					
2.	The management is concerned about the gender mix					
3.	There is top management encouragement of women to come forward and express themselves					
4.	The management is concerned about the family responsibility of women and its effect on their work					
ii. Policies of the Bank in Recruitment, selection, promotion & training issues		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The bank's recruitment process encourage women to apply and participate in all positions					
2.	There must be special consideration during hiring and promotion to benefit women					
3.	The bank gives priority for women during competition and promotion					
4.	Required efforts are made to keep the gender equality in the Bank					

5.	Female employees get the required mentoring, guidance and support in their career development					
6.	There is gender discrimination during promotion					
7.	There is adequate enabling environment in the Bank for women empowerment					
8.	I am satisfied with promotional opportunities in the organization					
9.	I have got adequate training from my organization to enhance my skills					
10.	I usually got satisfied with recognition of my performance					
11.	The Bank supports its' employees in educational assistance in order to be able to get into leadership					
12.	All employees are well aware of the educational & other qualifications of the bank to assume a higher position than what I assume now					
iii. Work Life Balance		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I am allowed to work flexible working hours due to my family responsibility					
2.	My family responsibility is holding me back from developing my self					
3.	The management of the Bank doesn't consider family responsibility as a part of the burden female employees have					

4.	I have enough time to educate myself in addition to my career and family responsibility					
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C. **Individual/Personal Factors** – the below questions are designed to assess the individual/personal factors that contribute to the limited number of women in leadership position in the Bank.

i) Women’s readiness in terms of education and work experience		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I have the required educational preparation which would enable me to get into leadership position					
2.	I regularly update myself on recent developments and changes					
3.	I believe I have the capacity to assume leadership position if I got the chance					
4.	I believe I can demonstrate the same professional expertise and job know how as men do					
5.	I have the same aggressiveness and drive to get ahead in my carrier as successful men do					
6	I am not interested in leadership positions					

ii. Attitude towards assuming Leadership Position		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I am fit for leadership position					
2.	I am aspired to assume leadership position right now					
3.	I am not ready to assume leadership now					
4.	I am not interested in leadership positions at all					
iii.) Self Image and Personal Belief		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	My personal belief have an impact on my progress towards leadership position					
2.	I believe that Women are inferior than men					
3.	Women are sensitive for criticism					
4.	Women feel discomfort to speak to a group of people					
5.	Women are thinking positively about themselves					
6.	Women are better in crisis handling and challenge management than men					
7.	I have the required emotional stability to handle crisis and challenging situations					

iv.) Lack of Recommendation		Strongly Agree	Agree	Do Not Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Women lack supervisor's recommendation to apply for promotion					
2.	There is a tendency of recommending men than women regardless of performance					
3.	My household responsibility is holding me from staying longer in the office and getting my supervisor's recommendation for promotion					

Part III. General - the below two questions are designed to assess what type of positions women best to perform best and the underlying reasons.

1. In which areas women mostly perform best?

- a) Front Desk Customer Service []
- b) Back office operations []
- c) Marketing & Promotion []
- d) Support []

2. Why do you think women perform best in the above stated position?

- a) Because women are more patient []
- b) Because women are more aggressive []
- c) Because women by nature care for others []
- d) Because women wise enough to support others []

Thank you!