



Attitudes towards female managers in Austrian and Macau tourism industry

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ABSTRACT

This study measures attitudes towards female managers in Austria and compares them to the attitudes in Macau within one industry to discover possible mitigating factors. The study takes quantitative approach and distributes Women As Managers Survey (WAMS) to 135 Austrian and 209 Macau hospitality employees. The findings indicate that attitudes towards women as managers are more negative in Austrian than in Macau tourism industry in physical constraints, acceptance, ability and leadership aspects of WAMS. In contrast, Macau attitudes are more positive, especially among male respondents in all four aspects. The results have implications for gender related policies and suggest that talent management rather than gender equality measures may be needed in a high profile industry.

1. Introduction

Governments across the nations have exerted legal efforts in ensuring gender equality in education and employment, which resulted in numerical increases of women in higher education and employment in general. However, this alone may not be the only measure of success because the quality of future employment is also important. If men and women are equal, they should be treated equally at work and receive equal remuneration for the same work, but research shows that it is not the case. The reputation of female managers also remains weaker than men (Heilman, 2012). This is clearly manifested in the existence of glass ceiling and wage gap that widens after marriage and parenthood (Geiler & Renneboog, 2015), glass cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005), lower percentage of female managers on company boards (Catalyst: Pyramid, 2018; Terjesen, Aguilera, & Lorenz, 2015) and female manager concentration in female oriented industries (Haslam, Ryan, Kulich, Trojanowski, & Atkins, 2009). This is of concern because the male majority in management is likely to shape the company culture and adopt performance appraisal systems that may be preferred by men, but are unfavorable to women (Festing, Knappert, & Kornau, 2015) because, for example, they involve a self-assessment component on which men rate themselves higher than women (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014) as men generally over report their performance while women tend to underreport it (Reuben, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2014).

Moreover, if higher ranked managers have stereotypical views of female gender role, it can impede women's career progression. Hoobler, Lemmon, and Wayne (2014) suggest that biased daily managerial

decisions, including allocation of challenging tasks, training and development opportunities and career guidance result in lesser organizational development of women and subsequent low managerial aspirations, and this trend can be reversed by the presence of a woman on the board of directors (Cook & Glass, 2014). Apart from negative implications for further female career advancement, this may also hurt the company because female managers are not likely to exert much effort in the absence of company support or when they have been treated unfairly (Fu & Lihua, 2012). Therefore, it is important to identify where bias exists in order to introduce effective countermeasures to promote female leadership. However, the effectiveness of a measure may depend on the context of a country or even an industry where it is introduced, so even with similar legal provisions, the outcomes may differ.

“Think manager, think male” stereotype (Schein, 1973; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996) and resulting from this gender role incongruity between women's social gender roles as caregivers and the image of a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002) are commonly cited as root cause of this bias (Heilman, 2012; Lyness & Heilman, 2006). It is also the reason why women in societies which expect them to fulfill their caregiving role tend to place importance on their families rather than career which results in fewer women in employment.

However, since gender roles in the modern world are changing, gender stereotypes tend to reflect these changes (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). While association of leaders with masculine characteristics remains strong (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011), it moderates the professional progress and female work participation to a different degree across countries and industries. Since stereotypes are motivated

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by the reality they reflect, it can be assumed that nations with greater female work participation, narrower wage gap and higher rate of women in management will hold less traditional views of women and accept them more readily in gender incongruent roles like management which in turn will likely be reflected in positive attitudes towards female managers. Therefore, studying attitudes towards female managers in countries with contrasting employment outcomes may yield explanation as to the cause of those attitudes, reflect on the effectiveness of equality measures employed and direct policymakers in their future legislative efforts.

Attitudes towards female managers have been tested using Women as Managers Survey (WAMS) developed by *Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, and Smith (1977)* and it has been established that in countries where women are expected to adhere to their gender roles like China, Egypt (*Elsaid & Elsaid, 2012*), Turkey (*Pinar, McCuddy, Birkan, & Kozak, 2011*) or India (*Gulhati, 1990*), attitudes towards female managers have been negative and women's professional progress slower. However, cross country comparisons of attitudes using WAMS are limited and where they exist, WAMS was administered mostly to student samples (*Chullen, Adeyemi-Bello, & Vermeulen, 2017; Javalgi et al., 2011*) or mixed employee samples (*Dlamini & Migiro, 2014*) which makes accounting for possible industry-related impacts difficult to assess. Given that female managers in workplaces congenial with their female gender role tend to be more accepted (*Garcia-Retamero & López-Zafra, 2006*), it is important to compare attitudes within a single industry.

To satisfy the need for further cross-country comparison within one industry, this study aims to: a) administer WAMS to measure attitudes towards Austrian female managers for the first time and compare them to the attitudes in a Chinese city, Macau to identify differences and similarities between the attitudes in both samples; b) identify differences between Austria and Macau in order to explain the results.

2. Literature review

2.1. Wage gap in Austria

For a long time, Austria had one of the highest percentage of female university graduates, but one of the lowest rates of female managers in Europe which suggests that cultural barriers to female integration into workforce were at play (*Straub, 2007*). This was further supported by male-dominated vertical gender segregation and male dominance in the primary and secondary sectors with service being the only sector with larger female representation (*Szabo & Reber, 2007*). Recent data from (*Statistics Austria, 2018*) show that women have continued to outnumber men at tertiary level of education by 4% in 2016, yet remained underrepresented in industry (12%) and overrepresented in Services (84%). Despite being equally if not better educated, only 32% of women held managerial positions in 2016 (*Eurostat, 2018b*).

Male domination of higher and better paid positions might explain the wider wage gap in Austria where, in 2000, women earned 67% of male salary and constituted 85% of part time-workforce (*Yang, 2006*), which improved by 2016 when 49.8% of part time workers were female (*Maruani, Meulders, & O'Dorchai, 2017*) and women earned 20% less than men (*Eurostat, 2018a*). By 2017, 68% of women were reported to be in full time employment; however, this number declined as the number of children increased and stood at 64% for women with three or more children (*Eurostat, 2018b*). This is of concern for Austrian women and should be of interest to Austrian policy makers since the ratio of men and women in senior official and management positions is positively correlated with similarity of income levels for men and women (*Terjesen & Singh, 2008*) and a narrower wage gap (*Cardoso & Winter-Ebmer, 2010*).

If women can earn similar salaries to men, the transactional cost of them staying at home (that is the potential income lost by choosing to stay at home) is too high, so they will be more motivated to allocate their time to paid employment (*Ruppanner, 2010*). This seems to

happen more in Macau with 67.2% of female population employed (*Government Information Bureau of the MSAR, 2017*) than in Austria, where 54.7% of the workforce is female (*Calderon, 2016a*, pp. 1–8).

Lower female work participation and wage gap in Austria is reflected in economic indicators. Although both countries have similar Gender Development Indexes (GDI) with Chinese and Austrian GDI at 0.954 and 0.957 respectively and are classified as group 2 countries with medium-high Human Equality Development (HID) achievements between genders, both countries report most significant discrepancies in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita where China's GNI is 10,705 and 15,830 for females and males respectively and Austrian GNI is 29,829 and 57,888 for females and males respectively (*Calderon, 2016a*, pp. 1–8; *2016b*, pp. 1–8). Thus, despite similarities in GDI, and HDI, Austrian women generate significantly lower percentage of GNI (51%) than Chinese women (67%) which corresponds with a 50% lower representation of Austrian women in management compared to China (*Terjesen & Singh, 2008*). This is despite similarities in education and employment trends in China where, as in Austria, tertiary education shows a high degree of gender balance (*OECD, 2018*), there is a decline in women's work participation in manufacturing (at 40% in 2011) coupled with a simultaneous increase in service sector of which hotel, catering, education, health and financial intermediation employed 50–60% of women in 2012 (*Dasgupta, Matsumoto, & Xia, 2015*) and a corresponding wage gap of above 30% (*World Economic Forum, 2018*).

2.1.1. Different cultures, similar realities

Austrian women are underrepresented in management. While over 50% of women participate in workforce, only 10% hold senior managerial positions, and this translates into low ration of female managers per company with only 20% of them having at least one female manager on board (*Christiansen, Lin, Pereira, Topalova, & Turk, 2016*). When women make it to the top, they encounter glass ceiling and wider wage gaps compared to men (*Arulampalam, Booth, & Bryan, 2007*). Even tourism industry, which employs 63% of Austrian women sees most of them work in lower level positions with little opportunity for promotion and lower pay compared to male employees in this sector (*Obadic, 2016*). A similar trend is also visible among the entrepreneurs with only 6.2% of self-employed women working mostly in female dominated service catering, restaurant and retail sectors (*Leoni & Falk, 2010*). Such underrepresentation of women in higher managerial positions then leads to the shortage of suitable candidates for international job assignments, which is the most frequently cited reason for the absence of females among Austrian expats across all industries (*Kollinger, 2005*). This situation may be explained by gender stereotypical upbringing process of girls and a resulting women's gender congruent behavior at work (*Fischlmayr, 2002*). As a result of this and women's own silent acceptance of their situation, young female managers in Austria tend to be seen as “female objects” (p. 780) and feel that they are only taken seriously at work as they get older. Many feel that they are only sent abroad “for representative reasons” (p. 780) and are second to men when it comes to be chosen for international posts (*Fischlmayr, 2002*). In the light of this, it may not be surprising that female managers in Austria report higher rates of insomnia in high strain jobs with little social support and work control (*Gadinger et al., 2009*), and only masculine female leaders report high levels of success in masculine work environment (*Jasielska, 2016*).

Female managers in China face an equally tough reality because to get to the top, they need to overcome two obstacles: gender-related prejudice and constraints of the collectivist culture (*Woodhams, Xian, & Lupton, 2015*). According to Confucian values, women's role is to support her husband while he provides for the family and to perform the caretaking tasks. While ensuring social harmony and promoting the collective good, such division of responsibilities also leads to distinct polarization of gender roles. Moreover, as Chinese society is strongly patriarchal, women feel obliged to not only fulfill responsibilities towards their own families, but to the husbands' families as well which

puts considerable pressure on women's time and energy resources.

Moreover, although men and women are legally guaranteed equal rights, there are no systems in place to help women in their careers once they are employed. Companies, are not obliged to ensure a balanced gender ratio in their workforce, which according to (Tatli, Vassilopoulou, & Özbilgin, 2013) constitutes a major obstacle for women's professional progress, nor they are guaranteed employment after pregnancy and the paid maternity leave itself is 90 days (UNdata, 2013). In this context, women have developed self-sufficiency which is visible in Hong Kong female managers' tendency to rely on their own resourcefulness to reconcile work and family obligations (Ng & Chakrabarty, 2005).

As a result of gender bias, female managers in China report gender-related difficulties in climbing the corporate ladder to higher positions (Gao, Lin, & Ma, 2016); (Jonge, 2014) and if Chinese managers observe traditional Confucian values in workplace as suggested by Ho, Lau, and Young (2010) and Li and Madsen (2010), female managers might be at a further disadvantage.

Chinese managers form most executive business ties based on everyday work interactions (Bu & Roy, 2008; Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998) and if negative attitudes exist, they may result in professional isolation of women due to lack of interaction, especially in male dominated industries. As reported by Bu and Roy (2008), a vast majority of male managers' professional networks comprise of male contacts. It could explain why Chinese female manager candidates consciously seek to involve male managers in their networks (Huang & Aaltio, 2014) and why female managers' networks consist mostly of male contacts (Bu & Roy, 2008). Further, while the use of networking in securing a better paid job is easier for women at lower levels, it becomes increasingly difficult with hierarchy (Shen & Kogan, 2017), and it is not seen as appropriate for female managers (Zhu, Konrad, & Jiao, 2016) which suggests a stronger bias towards women at higher levels of the corporate hierarchy. This discrimination is also reflected in the compensation of female managers in publicly listed companies who tend to be better educated yet paid less than their male counterparts (Xiao, He, Lin, & Elkins, 2013).

Finally, given that the presence of a mentor is crucial to professional advancement of a female manager in China (Peus, Braun, & Knipfer, 2015), the presence of negative attitudes, especially among higher-ranked male managers can negatively impact women's corporate future and prevent companies from capitalizing on the workforce diversity.

Chinese women are well aware of being seen as "Ornamental Directors" and many of them choose to utilize their talent by opening their own enterprises (Rowley, Lee, & Lan, 2014). This is reflected in 2012 statistics reported by World Bank which show that in China, 64% of firms have female participation in ownership (as compared to the 34.9% worldwide average) (World Bank Group, n. d.).

Overall, female managers in both countries do not seem to be held in high regard which predicts negative results of WAMS. In China, it is due to collectivist and Confucian values, which spill over to the workplace and lack of top-down gender policies while in Austria, it may be due to traditional upbringing of girls and gender objectification of women in the workplaces. However, higher overall female work participation of Chinese women, their greater participation in generation of GNI and company ownership point to their less gender congruent role and might result in slightly higher attitudes in the Macau sample.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

In order to achieve the stated objectives, data was collected using a convenience sampling approach in two different countries: Macao SAR and Austria. Student surveyors were recruited and trained to assist with the process of data collection.

Different times of the day (from 8:00 a.m. to 22:00 p.m., in four

different time slots 8:00–12:00; 12:00–16:00; 18:00–20:00 and 20:00–22:00) during different days of the week (Monday to Sunday) were assigned to the student surveyors in order to reach as many hospitality industry workers as possible. The locations of the data collection included highly frequented places by employees and workers, following the conventions practiced in the census survey of the respective countries. As an inclusion criteria, participants were required to be aged 18 or above and working in the tourism and hospitality industry. Those who met this criterion and agreed to participate were given instructions by the student surveyor as to how to fill out the survey. A total of 344 valid responses were collected from both countries (Austria $n = 135$ and Macao $n = 209$). To ensure that the unequal sample sizes of the two different regions do not affect the statistical power and the type I error rates, a box M test was performed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Non-significant value ($p > .001$) of box M test would indicate that the covariance between the groups under test is equal. For the current study, the results of box M test showed that there was homogeneity of variance-covariance across the two different regions ($p = .16$) indicating that there is equality of covariance between the two groups under study.

Overall, both samples had equal representation in gender and middle job levels, but differed in top job level representation as Austrian sample held higher level jobs while Macau sample held double the low level positions (Table 1). This was reflected in salary differences with most Austrian respondents earning MOP 10,000–14,999 and above and most Macau respondents earning below this amount. These salary differences were likely the result of higher education level as Austrian sample held double the master degrees than Macau sample which mostly held bachelor degrees (see Table 1).

3.2. Instrumentation

As a screening question, participants who agreed to participate in the current study had to first indicate their age and work related questions (number of years served in their current company and job position). Then, they were subjected to a self-administered questionnaire that consisted of 2 parts. The first part measured participants attitudes towards female managers using the Women as Managers Scale (Terborg et al., 1977), which included 9 negatively (e.g. "Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women") and 12 positively worded items (e.g. "Women have the capability to acquire the necessary skills to be successful managers"). The response format to each statement was based on a 7-pt Likert scale, ranging from 1- strongly disagree to 7- strongly agree. The second section measured participants' job and demographic characteristics.

4. Results

4.1. Validity and reliability of the measurement items

Based on the original framework proposed by Terborg et al. (1977), it was decided that a second-order construct to measure WAMS (Women as Manager) would be the most appropriate for the current study which appears to be the most commonly employed approach in this field of study (Bowen, Wu, Hwang, & Scherer, 2007; Javalgi et al., 2011). To that extend, a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on WAMS.

Results of the CFA test are represented in Table 2, and indicate a good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.45$, CFI = 0.97, NNFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.04, SRMR = 0.04). The measurement model was reliable, as composite reliability (CR) coefficients ranged from 0.76 to 0.84, exceeding the threshold of 0.70. In addition, alpha values were all greater than 0.70, ensuring internal consistency reliability (Nunnally, 1978). The model also achieved convergent validity, with all of the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding the 0.50 cutoff value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The standardized loadings were greater than

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of participants.

	Macau		Austria	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender				
Female	106	50.7	53	39.3
Male	103	49.3	82	60.7
Age				
18-27	59	28.2	34	25.2
28-37	66	31.6	62	45.9
38-47	60	28.7	33	24.4
48-57	23	11	4	3
Education				
High school or below	20	9.6	2	1.5
Vocational education	28	13.4	50	37
Bachelor's	127	60.8	51	37.8
Master's or above	27	12.9	32	23.7
Job Status				
Full time	157	75.1	134	99.3
Part-time	35	16.7		
Self-employed	17	8.1	1	0.7
Job level				
Top level	23	11	32	23.7
Middle or supervisory level	96	45.9	72	53.3
Entry or low level	90	43.1	31	23
Years in Company				
< 1 year	50	23.9	1	0.7
2–3 years	31	14.8	36	26.7
4–5 years	8	3.8	26	19.3
6–7 years	22	10.5	38	28.1
> 7 years	84	40.2	32	23.7
Years in Job Position				
< 1 year	55	26.3	3	2.2
2–3 years	50	23.9	45	33.3
4–5 years	15	7.2	31	23
6–7 years	32	15.3	38	28.1
> 7 years	50	23.9	16	11.9
Monthly income				
≤ MOP 3499	11	5.3	–	–
MOP 3500–3999	5	2.4	–	–
MOP 4000–4499	10	4.8	–	–
MOP 4500–4999	10	4.8	–	–
MOP 5000–5999	24	11.5	–	–
MOP 6000–7999	32	15.3	–	–
MOP 8000–9999	22	10.5	–	–
MOP 10,000–14,999	46	22	41	30.4
MOP 15,000–19,999	19	9.1	54	40
MOP 20,000–29,999	11	5.3	33	24.4
MOP 30,000–39,999	9	4.3	5	3.7
MOP 40,000–59,999	4	1.9	–	–
≥ MOP 80,000	6	2.9	1	0.7

Table 2
WAM scale items and validation.

Scale items	Standardized loadings	α	CR	AVE
WAMS				
Ability		0.84	0.79	0.56
18. Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	0.72			
21. Women cannot be aggressive in business situations that demand it.	0.84			
20. Women are not competitive enough to be successful in the business world.	0.83			
Acceptance		0.84	0.84	0.63
8. The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.	0.789			
4. Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participation in management training programs.	0.656			
9. Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.	0.81			
10. It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	0.765			
Physical Constraint		0.78	0.84	0.57
13. Problems associated with menstruation should not make women less desirable than men as employees.	0.832			
11. The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.	0.722			
14. To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity.	0.68			
Leadership		0.7	0.76	0.66
6. On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organization overall goals than are men.	0.77			
7. It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	0.65			

CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the scale constructs.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Physical Constraint	5.03	1.17	0.75			
2. Ability	5.11	1.19	0.18	0.80		
3. Acceptance	5.77	0.94	0.65	0.42	0.76	
4. Leadership	3.83	1.45	0.28	0.30	0.13	0.81

or equal to 0.65, all significant at the 0.01 level (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Finally, discriminant validity was assured by comparing the square root of the AVE with the correlation between constructs (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). The square root of the AVE of each construct was greater than the correlations between it and other constructs, ensuring discriminant validity (Table 3).

4.2. Main analysis

A two-way MANOVA was run with two independent variables – gender and culture – and four dependent variables - physical constraint, acceptance, ability and leadership. The combined scores on physical constraint, acceptance, ability and leadership were used to assess attitudes towards female managers. The results would indicate whether males and females from Austria and Macao would differ in perceptions towards female managers. Because perceptions towards female managers in this case are measured in four different dimensions, they need to be considered together in the same analysis. Therefore, a two-way MANOVA is deemed to be the most appropriate analysis. The average scores of the two-way MANOVA are presented in Table 4.

There was a statistically significant interaction effect between gender and culture on the combined dependent variables, $F(4, 337) = 4.69, p = .001, Wilks' \Lambda = 0.947, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.053$. That is, the combined WAMS score was different for males and females from different countries.

To assert where the difference lies, follow up univariate two-way ANOVAs were run. These showed a statistically significant interaction effect between gender and culture for physical constraint $F(1, 340) = 6.62, p = .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.02$, acceptance $F(1, 340) = 10.40, p = .001, \eta^2 = 0.03$, ability $F(1, 340) = 12.46, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.04$, but not for leadership $F(1, 340) = 3.29, p = .07, \eta^2 = 0.01$. That is, the perceptions of acceptance, physical constraint and ability is not the same for females and males across the different regions. Whereas for perceptions of leadership, there were no differences shown between males and females across the two regions. As such, a simple main effects

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of WAMs across different genders by country.

	Austria			Macau			Total
	Female	Male	Subtotal	Female	Male	Subtotal	
Ability	4.55	4.16	4.36	5.30	5.70	5.50	4.93
Acceptance	5.66	5.41	5.53	5.75	6.15	5.95	5.74
Leadership	3.51	3.35	3.43	3.90	4.32	4.11	3.77
Physical Constraint	5.33	5.30	5.32	4.66	5.30	4.98	5.15
WAMs	4.76	4.54	4.63	4.65	5.06	4.85	4.75

analysis was conducted for physical constraint, acceptance and ability, because we know that there are significant differences between the groups, but it is unclear where the difference lies. There was a statistically significant difference between males and females from Macau on their perceived physical constraint $F(1, 340) = 16.23, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.046$; acceptance $F(1, 340) = 10.62, p < .001$ partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$; ability $F(1, 340) = 8.36, p < .001$ $\eta^2 = 0.024$ and leadership $F(1, 340) = 4.55, p = .034$ $\eta^2 = 0.013$. In regards to the Austrian sample, males and females only perceived women's ability to be significantly lower $F(1, 340) = 4.92, p = .027$ $\eta^2 = 0.014$ while scores of both genders were positive for acceptance, physical constraint and leadership.

Therefore, simple comparisons were run for the differences in means of physical constraint, acceptance, ability and leadership reported by males and females across different cultures. Males in particular rated physical constraint significantly higher than females, 0.64, 95% CI [0.33, 0.96], $p < .001$, acceptance, 0.41, 95% CI [0.16, 0.65], $p < .001$, ability, 0.40, 95% CI [0.13, 0.67], $p < .001$, and leadership 0.42, 95% CI [0.03, 0.80], $p = .034$. On the other hand, Austrian males rated women's ability significantly lower than females did, -0.39 , 95% CI [-0.74, -0.04], $p = .03$.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Summary

To meet the first objective, the study found overall worse attitudes in Austria (4.63) than in Macau (4.85). A four-dimensional model of physical constraints, acceptance, ability and leadership was proposed to establish where precisely attitudes differed. Significant interactions were found in all four dimensions. While Austrian sample scored lower than Macau in each dimension with men reporting lower scores throughout, Macau scores were higher and showed significant differences between male and female scores with men reporting higher scores throughout.

Where comparable with previous studies of female managers in China, the attitudes seem to be contradicting. On the one hand, [Bowen et al. \(2007\)](#) reported more favorable attitudes among females than males (although female workers rated female managers lower than female students subjects) which followed the global trend at the time ([Schein, 2007](#)). This is readily explained by social role theory ([Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000](#)) and predictable in light of Confucian values ([Woodhams et al., 2015](#)) which state that women should perform domestic and care taking duties. Thus, anything that contradicts or is incongruent with the socially expected role may result in negative attitudes towards women performing those incongruent roles. On the other hand, the present study and [Javalgi et al. \(2011\)](#) report higher scores for males than females, which contradicts social role theory and supports the notion of dynamic gender stereotypes which change alongside social changes ([Diekmann & Eagly, 2000](#)).

Since the attitudes towards female managers are different in Macau and Austria, it is possible to tackle the second objective of this study. Differences in cultural dimensions may be one factor behind differences in attitudes. Data available from ([Clearly Cultural, n. d.](#)) provide the

Table 5
Hofstede's cultural dimensions index of China and Austria.

	Masculinity	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism	Long-term orientation
China	66	80	30	20	87
Austria	79	11	70	55	60

easiest and most accessible reference point ([Table 5](#)).

Although both countries are masculine, and as such will expect women to perform gender prescribed duties, like caregiving, which in line with the social role theory will dictate gender congruent women's roles and lower attitudes towards female managers, the results indicate otherwise and confirm that masculinity of a culture does not always predict female manager representation ([Caligiuri & Tung, 1999](#)).

While high in Austria, low Chinese uncertainty avoidance suggests that this dimension most likely explains the cultural factors that mitigate attitudes towards female managers. A score of 30 in this dimension suggests that the Chinese are more likely to embrace changes caused by pragmatics of life, such as the economic need for both parents to support the family or ambiguity associated with working for a female manager. This coupled with low individualism, which drives women to meet both their Confucian family obligations and excel at work, give the Chinese women a cultural advantage over their Austrian counterparts.

Higher professional integration of the Chinese women is supported by economic indicators. Women in China generate a higher percentage of GNI, constitute a larger percentage of workforce and sit on more directorial boards than Austrian women. Therefore, this may have given them more opportunities to prove themselves at work which subsequently resulted in better attitudes towards female managers.

National policies aimed at protecting female workers may be another factor explaining attitudes as countries with well-established maternity policies and a guaranteed position upon return for new mothers may in fact do women a disfavor by making them unattractive to the employers who might prefer men over women as the former will not overload their welfare contributions ([Mandel & Semyonov, 2006](#)). According to [Kapeller, Egger de Campo, Hönig, Kreimer, and Millerlei \(2002\)](#) Austria has:

- Act on Equal Treatment (Gleichbehandlungsgesetz) in private sector and the Federal Act on Equal Treatment (Bundesgleichbehandlungsgesetz) in public sector and altogether these acts protect hiring, pay, benefit eligibility, promotion and positive action towards women (40% representation requirement for public sector).
- Law of parental leave (Kinderbetreuungsgeld) which allows any employee regardless of employment length to receive 435€ per month in state welfare for 30 months if their annual income does not exceed 14.600 €. It motivates women to prolong their maternity leave and postpone return to work or only return to work on part-time basis which postpones their reintroduction into workforce after maternity leave, especially if they have multiple pregnancies.

Unlike Austria, China makes few provisions for women in terms of prolonged maternity leave options and female employees are expected to report back for duty after 90 days following birth ([UNdata, 2013](#)). Although this makes for a harsh reality, it also ensures continuity of employment, keeping abreast of professional developments, uninterrupted career track and eventually a higher work position.

Finally, difference in status of hospitality industry in both countries may be a possible explanation. In Macau, the prestigious image of hospitality industry, the city's main employer and source of many fortunes, is no match for Austrian hospitality industry which is dominated by smaller private operators and small chains ([Scaglione, Schegg, &](#)

Murphy, 2009).

Macau hospitality industry employs a sizable proportion of women, the salaries are decent and all employees are promoted within a clear promotion timeframe. Macau's hospitality is also gaining exposure and reputation abroad, and the city itself is famous for its international integrated resort chains, like Sands, Wynn and MGM. Those are well established brands that project positive company reputation, which may extend to their employees.

Thus, employees working in highly prestigious organizations may enjoy better respect than those who work for non-branded companies even though they may work in similar positions. This may be associated with the better work conditions and remuneration packages. As the well-established hotel chains offer better packages to their employees, they are preferred over the small hotel operators in Macau and other small and medium companies which notoriously report staff shortages due to the competition from big international chains.

5.2. Theoretical contributions and future research

This study attempts to offer three theoretical contributions. First, it measures attitudes towards female managers in Austria using WAMS for the first time and by comparing them with Macau attitudes, finds them to be low. Second, it proposes a 4-part model for a more systematic future comparison of attitudes across studies. Finally, it attempts to fill the need for cross country comparison of attitudes within the same industry and finds that in two countries where women seem to be expected to act in a gender congruent role, attitudes can differ within tourism industry. Several factors were proposed to explain this finding, but they remain a speculation that could be addressed by future research. However, the discrepancy in attitudes of the two samples indicates that results should be analyzed in the context of respondents' professional backgrounds, maternity policies and respondents' industry status in order to account for a wider range of possible factors mitigating attitudes towards female managers in the four proposed aspects: physical constraint, acceptance, ability and leadership. Such systematic approach may pinpoint specific changes in the attitudes and accurately identify problematic factors that then can be addressed with more effective countermeasures.

5.3. Practical implications

Austrian companies should take a note of rather low attitudes towards female managers and remedy the status quo because the percentage of female managers employed in higher company ranks positively correlates with the percentage of females promoted at lower ranks (Kunze & Miller, 2017) probably because they create a 'female-friendly culture' (Tate & Yang, 2015), provide more managerial role models (Walsh, Fleming, & Enz, 2016) and thus narrow the gender pay gap (Hedija, 2017). It has been previously established that attitudes improve with education (Sultan & Khan, 2017); hence companies may consider promoting enhancement of the employees' overall education, especially by giving them exchange opportunities to work or train abroad and possibly introduce gender sensitivity trainings, which were successfully used in STEM to improve implicit attitudes towards female staff (Jackson, Hillard, & Schneider, 2014).

Better attitudes towards female managers and higher female workforce participation in Macau's prestigious hospitality industry seem to support calls for company image management as a strategy to attract talent (Wallace, Lings, Cameron, & Sheldon, 2014). However, promotion of women friendly environment may be more important in Austria than in Macau where efforts would be more effective in capitalizing on the positive attitudes in the main local industry. Since tight Macau labor market makes job switching easy, financial rewards are not sufficient to retain talent. Instead, companies should retain female talent by offering tailored career development tracks for their female staff and ensuring that the existing female managers are nurtured and

appreciated (Walsh et al., 2016) because female managers are twice as likely as male to leave the company (Krishnan, 2009).

Companies should also ensure balanced female manager representation in higher levels. Since female managers tend to put more efforts into training their staff (Ye, Wang, Wendt, Wu, & Euwema, 2015), it will have implications for employee retention as firm-specific skills acquired through on-the-job training may not be easily transferred to other companies and tie the employee to the company (Estevez-Abe, 2005).

6. Limitations

As with any research, limitations are inevitable. Although attitudes towards women managers were examined in the present study and compared across two different countries, it is important that future research simultaneously examines their impact on work and individual related outcomes. Second, the results were drawn from two countries, and although cultural differences were proposed as one of the explanations for the results, they should be interpreted as initial insights in a cross-cultural setting. Further studies could aim at comparison of attitudes towards female managers in the context of cultural values and should include multiple countries with similar cultural value systems to confirm which values impact specific aspects of WAMS. This approach could identify whether there are identifiable patterns of behaviors related to a specific cultural value. Finally, attitudes towards women managers were examined based on self-reported measures that are susceptible to social desirability effects. Future studies may include implicit measurement approach of attitudes towards female managers.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2019.01.007>.

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