

## Original Research Article

# Career Blockades to Women's Advancement to Positions of Authority: The role of Power Distance, Emotional Labour and Social Dominance Orientation

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## Article History

Received: 19.02.2023

Accepted: 13.03.2023

Published: 21.03.2023

## Journal homepage:

<https://www.easpublisher.com>

## Quick Response Code



**Abstract:** Despite several efforts to address gender inequality in the workplace, women's participation in managerial positions is still low, globally and gender-related power imbalances in the workplace continues to persist. This study explores the influence of emotional labour, power distance and social dominance orientation (SDO) on attitudes towards women in high ranking jobs. The study adopted a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. A total of 315 employees across a wide range of the industrial sector in Southern part of Nigeria participated in the study. Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire and analysed using a three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples t-test and hierarchical regression analysis. Findings revealed that emotional labour, power distance and social dominance orientation independently and jointly influenced attitudes towards women in high ranking jobs. ( $f [1, 315] = 17.611$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Employees with perceived low power distance ( $\bar{x} = 89.66$ ,  $SD = 18.68$ ) and low social dominance orientation ( $\bar{x} = 94.73$ ,  $SD = 20.45$ ) significantly reported more favourable attitudes towards women in high status jobs than employees with perceived high power distance ( $\bar{x} = 72.16$ ,  $SD = 17.04$ ) and high social dominance orientation ( $\bar{x} = 70.85$ ,  $SD = 12.91$ ). Power distance, social dominance orientation and emotional labour are important in the examination of attitude towards women in positions of authority. It is therefore suggested that trainings and media campaigns to change perceptions be intensified.

**Keywords:** Women in authority, organization, power distance, social dominance orientation, emotional labour.

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## INTRODUCTION

Challenges concerning gender-related biases have been around for many years and even though some of those challenges had been addressed over the years, the issue of gender inequality is still a great concern in terms of women's career advancement. Women are still being underrepresented in top management positions all over the world (United Nations, 2009). In the United States for example, women are still confronted with issues of inequality, the glass ceiling and wage gaps (Hekman *et al.*, 2017; Fernandez & Campero, 2017; Addison *et al.*, 2018). In Switzerland, women still experience gaps in wages (Janssen *et al.*, 2016). In Canada, women are facing the challenge of the glass

ceiling (Ng & Sears, 2017) and in Kuwait, women are confronting the issues of discrimination and lack of training programmes (Alzuabi, 2016). According to WIMBIZ (2011) only 10.5% of management seats were held by women in the civil service and less than 14% in the workforce (Ali, 2014). The IBR (2020) noted that there are only 29% of women in top management positions worldwide which according to the World Economic Forum (2017) suggests that an average gender gap of 32% exists at that point which was an increase when compared to the gender gap recorded in the previous years.

The obstacles facing women in Nigeria have repeatedly been linked to the patriarchal nature of the

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Nigerian society. The patriarchal culture is evident through the attitudes that view women as belonging to the home, acknowledge women through their links to their male family members and through the lack of autonomy of women on decision making, since women are required to obtain permission from their husbands or fathers on certain decisions (Makama, 2013; Tijani-Adenle, 2016; Adisa, *et al.*, 2019). The Nigerian society is therefore a gender-based society (Mifune *et al.*, 2019) which tends to place management positions as the exclusive rights of men, with women seen as less suited to management roles (Osondu-Oti & Olominu, 2018). The Nigerian society tends to support masculine working environment, where majority tend to view men as managers and managers as men (Collinson & Hearn, 1996).

Singh and Sebastian (2018) argued that women are not given a chance in business and the main opportunity that they have to become entrepreneurs is through inheriting their parents' businesses. This is an indication that women's inclusion in the family business is as a result of their birth rather than by choice. Men are typically identified with physical strength, power and ruler-ship of various private and public institutions (Adisa *et al.*, 2019) while women are confined to the boundary of the workplace (Anyangwe, 2015). Brescoll (2016) confirmed that the decisions made by female managers are considered to be motivated by emotions and therefore makes them less qualified for hiring in management positions. Fischbach *et al.*, (2015) found that successful leaders' emotions are similar to the emotions regarded as the characteristics of men rather than women. Also, BLS (2016) reported that in many countries, women who possess similar qualifications as their male counterparts earn less and Barroso and Brown (2021) revealed that women earn 84 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts. These blockades are not limited to male-dominated jobs alone but are also evident in jobs that are traditionally under the control of women, such as the teaching profession, where despite the number of women exceeding that of men in that field, still, men dominate in all senior positions (Obamiro & Obasan, 2013).

The challenges that women face due to gender biases can be devastating. Grobler *et al.* (2006) argued that stereotypes do not originate from individual experiences but rather from outside sources. They maintained that stereotypes require that exaggerated views about a particular group are sustained by confirmations from the social environment. It follows that when overstated beliefs about how women are perceived to perform in the workplace are repeatedly circulated, they produce or sustain stereotypical attitudes and this results in limiting women's potential and negates their individuality. Dickerson & Taylor (2000) asserted that having a negative attitude towards women regarding their performance in the workplace

may negatively affect their willingness to aspire for career advancement. However, providing equal opportunities for women in the workplace has its benefits. Morgan (2018) noted that organizations, where more than 15% of the senior managers are women, have greater profitability than those which have less than 10% of their top managers as women.

Power distance (PD) refers to the beliefs about social groups, with regards to the perception of power dynamics and inequality (Ramaswami *et al.*, 2014). It is the extent to which the less powerful members of the society accept and expect that power distribution is unequal. It describes how much an individual is inclined to accept the unequal distribution of power and status within the society (Kirkman *et al.*, 2009) and it has been known as one of the causes of bias. The acceptance of inequalities in power determines how individuals at different levels of power interact with each other (Mansour & Robert, 2001). It also influences the extent at which individuals participate in decision making and formal hierarchy within organizations (Geert, 2001). A country's cultural perception of PD plays an important role in terms of understanding how much a nation is positioned to stop or reduce gender inequality (Ramaswami *et al.*, 2014). Citizens residing in high PD cultures are more inclined toward the acceptance of inequality that may lead to biased perceptions (Curtis *et al.*, 2012). Those living in countries where PD is prevalent have the belief that everybody has a place in the society and nobody demands for any justification for such a claim. This is contrary to societies with low PD where people try to ensure equality in the distribution of power and also demand justification for inequalities of power (Hofstede, 2021). This indicates that individuals who perceive a high PD culture may have a negative perception of women managers, because having members of a low status group in traditionally high status positions goes against their beliefs in the unequal distribution of power and status.

Social dominance orientation (SDO) refers to a group-based hierarchy, a situation in which people prefer a system of group-based dominance where high status groups forcefully oppress lower status groups (Felicia *et al.*, 1994). It is the belief that people have in social settings that are hierarchically structured (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDO partly determines the level of acceptance of the idea of group inequality. It indicates people's willingness to tolerate a system of hierarchy (Umphress *et al.*, 2007). In other words, individuals who have high SDO are more likely to tolerate discrimination and more likely to adhere to socially defined characteristics than those who have low SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For example, an individual with a high SDO tends to welcome practices that favour group ranking or social order and oppose the ideas that are contrary (Ho *et al.*, 2012). Adisa *et al.*, (2019) indicated that SDO and other factors may be more prevalent in non-western nations such as Nigeria,

where strong patriarchal beliefs prevail. The assumption based on this is that if an individual's level of SDO is high, such an individual will likely accept a system that supports inequality among groups and if the level of SDO is low, such an individual will likely support a system that is more equal.

Emotional labour (EL) refers to the ways individuals adapt or manage their emotions to make them fit in with a role or achieve an expected organizational goal (Sturdy, 1998). The concept of emotional labour is important because job wise, men are moving into women areas and women are also moving into men's areas. Therefore, emotional labour is associated with the sexual division of labour whereby men have traditionally been thought to be rational while women have been ascribed the role of caring in the home (Sturdy, 2002). This sexual division of labour has therefore contributed to the division between the rational and the emotional, personal feelings and economic production which has subsequently led to the division between the public and private sphere. The implications of these divisions is that women are naturally emotional beings and therefore an aspect of emotional labour concerns the issue of women's capacities to deliver service (Guerrier and Adib, 2004). Emotional labour that involves caring for others is seen as suitable for women by virtue of their being different from men. Therefore management assumes that women employees in particular can achieve the caring aspect of the job which involves interpersonal skills which women are supposed to possess by virtue of their sexual difference from men.

Research evidence has shown that EL is an essential part of organizational requirements (Diden & Aydan, 2013). Studies have also shown that it influences employee performance and organizational outcomes (Da-Yee *et al.*, 2018). EL is expressed through two strategies of surface and deep-level (Celeste & Alicia, 2002). Surface-level involves 'putting on a mask' to show or falsify emotions rather than feeling them (Celeste & Raymond, 2003) and deep-level is done wherein service providers endeavour to alter their felt emotions genuinely to match the ones desired by the organization (Arlie, 1983).

Most of the existing studies on women in top management positions were conducted using students as the participants of study (Cody *et al.* 2017; Andac & Turban, 2018). However, this study was focused on employees, to explore dynamics in the workplace that could perpetuate unfavourable attitudes. The majority of research on gender, women carriers and organizations were done in Europe and North America (Grady, 2015), therefore the importance of certain socio-cultural conditions in the African contexts are ignored. Some of those studies that were conducted in the workplace were limited to the healthcare and financial sectors only (Boylol *et al.* 2019). Also, most studies were focused on

attitudes toward women managers (Cody *et al.* 2017). However, this study is interested in exploring the issues among workers in a cross section of industries.

Four hypotheses were tested;

1. There will be a significant relationship among power distance, social dominance orientation, emotional labour and attitude towards women in positions of authority.
2. There will be a significant independent and joint effect of power distance, emotional labour and social dominance on attitudes towards women in positions of authority.
3. Participants with perceived low power distance will significantly report more positive attitudes towards women in positions of authority than participants with perceived high power distance.
4. Participants with perception of low social dominance orientation will significantly have favourable attitudes towards women in positions of authority than participants who report high social dominance orientation.

## METHOD

### Research Design and Sampling

The study was a survey utilising a 2x2x2 factorial design. The independent variables are emotional labour, power distance and social dominance orientation and they occur at two levels each such as emotional labour (surface acting / deep acting), power distance (high / low) and social dominance orientation (high/ low). Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in recruiting participants to the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify cities with high performance organisations and to select organisations that fall within technology and engineering. Convenient sampling was used to select participants within the organisations chosen for the study.

### Research Participants

Questionnaires were administered to a total of 315 employees in three states. A total of 193 participants were recruited from Lagos State, 70 participants from Ogun State and 52 participants from Rivers State. Male employees were 169 (53.7%) and Female employees were 146 (46.3%) in number. The age of the participants of study ranged between 15 - 69 years with a mean of 32.3 and standard deviation of 9.0. The religious affiliations of participants include; 287 (91.1%) practice Christianity and 28 (8.9%) practice Islam. Regarding the educational qualifications of participants, ordinary level holders were 15 (4.8%), professional certificates holders were 5 (1.6%), OND holders were 10 (3.2%), HND holders were 29 (9.2%), first degree holders were 186 (59.1%), second degree holders were 65 (20.6%) and PhD holders were 5 (1.6%) in number.

Data on the organisational type reveals that 4 participants (1.3%) were in agricultural sector, 15 (4.8%) participants were in construction/real estate, 9 (2.9%) of the participants were into consumer goods, 26 (8.3%) of the participants were into financial services, 50 (15.9%) were into health care, 6 (1.9%) were into industrial goods, 22 (7.0%) were into information & communication technology, 6 (1.9%) were into oil & gas, 175 (55.6%) were into services and 2 (0.6%) into utilities. The occupations of participants therefore comprise of Accountants 12 (3.8%), Bankers 20 (6.3%), Civil Servants 21 (6.7%), Engineers 13 (4.1%), Nurses 19 (6%), Teachers 16 (5.1%) and others from various occupations. The average working experience of the participants was 8.9 years with a standard deviation of 8.14. The average duration in occupation of the participants was 6.1 years with a standard deviation of 5.4.

**Measures**

Emotional labour was measured using Castro *et al.*, (2006). This is a 9-item refined scale from the EWS (Emotions at Work) scale developed by Spratt and Curbow (1996). The original scale contains 13 items. The scores of the subscales are combined to create an emotional labour score. Each item is measured on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1(rarely) to 5(sometimes). The scale is divided into subscales; surface acting factor and deep acting factor. Surface acting factor items includes; “I act like nothing bothers me, even when a client makes me mad or upset”. Deep acting factor items include; “To give advice, I have to make sure I say it in a nice way”. The surface acting factor contains 5 items and the deep acting factor contains 4 items. The scale has a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .96 and the Cronbach alpha of surface acting and deep acting is .71 and .67 respectively.

Power distance was measured using the Power Distance Index (PDI) developed by Hofstede and Minkov (2013). It is a 4-item scale developed for measuring power distance. It is measured on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1(of utmost importance) to 5 (of very little or no importance). An example of an item for power distance is; “How often, in your experience, are subordinates afraid to contradict their boss”? Low scores indicate low power distance and high scores indicate high power distance. The Cronbach alpha for the power distance index is .84.

Social dominance orientation was measured using the SDO scale developed by Pratto *et al.*, (1994). The SDO is a 16-item scale that measures on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly favour). Eight items on the scale are reversed coded. Sample items include; “Some groups of people

are just more worthy than others” and “No one group should dominate in society”. High scores mean high social dominance orientation and low scores mean low social dominance orientation. The Cronbach alpha for the SDO scale is .90.

Attitudes towards women in high status positions was measured using the Woman as Managers Scale (WAMS) which was developed by Peters *et al.* (1974). The scale consists of 21 items representing three factors: the general acceptance of women as managers (10 items); feminine barriers to full-time employment of females (5 items); personality traits attributed to managers (6 items). It is a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale is divided into 11 favourably worded items and 10 unfavourably worded items (reverse coded). High scores indicating favourable attitudes towards women as managers and low scores indicating less positive attitudes towards women. Sample items include; “Men and women should be given equal opportunity for participating in management training programmes” and “It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions”. The authors reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .73.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

Participants for this study were drawn from different organisations and industrial sectors in three Southern States noted for having a high concentration of industrial estates and major manufacturing hub in Nigeria. Data was collected in 3 weeks. Participants were administered the paper-and-pencil questionnaire and were required to read the information at the beginning of the questionnaire and sign on the line provided to indicate their acceptance before proceeding with the survey. Employees were met in their place of employment and some of them filled questionnaires on the spot while some were collected later. For the online survey, employees were sent the link, while interested employees saw the link on social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) and clicked on the link. 345 questionnaires were distributed but 30 questionnaires were discarded because they were not completely or properly filled.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

The inclusion criteria for this study was participants who were employed and working in Lagos, Ogun or Rivers states. The exclusion criteria for this study was participants who were unemployed.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Summary of Correlation Showing the Relationship among Power Distance, Social Dominance Orientation, Emotional Labour and Attitudes Towards Women**

Variables	1	2	3	4	$\bar{x}$	SD
1. Power Distance	1				17.91	3.44
2. Social Dominance Orientation	.735**	1			72.72	14.82



3. Emotional Labour	-.189**	-.408**	1		32.12	5.27
4. Attitude Toward Women	-.577**	-.754**	-.221**	1	79.50	19.72

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=315*

From the table above the results show that power distance ( $r [315] = -.577$ ;  $p < .01$ ), social dominance orientation ( $r [315] = -.754$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and emotional labour ( $r [315] = -.221$ ;  $p < .01$ ) are significantly negatively related to attitude towards women. This implies that employees with perceptions of more power distance, more social dominance and perceptions of emotional labour significantly reported unfavourable

attitudes towards women in positions of authority especially in their organization.

Hypothesis two stated that there will be a significant main and interaction effects of power distance, emotional labour and social dominance on attitudes towards women in positions of authority. This was analysed using a 2x2x2 analysis of variance below.

**Table 2: Summary of ANOVA showing the main and interaction effects of Power Distance, Social Dominance Orientation and Emotional Labour on Attitudes towards Women**

Sources	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Power Distance	1204.256	1	1204.256	5.893	.016
Social Dominance	9953.491	1	9953.491	48.705	.000
Emotional Labour	1823.116	1	1823.116	8.921	.003
Power Distance * Social Dominance	1447.465	1	1447.465	7.083	.008
Power Distance * Emotional Labour	3395.543	1	3395.543	16.615	.000
Social Dominance * Emotional Labour	18.671	1	18.671	.091	.763
Power Distance * Social Dominance * Emotional Labour	3598.970	1	3598.970	17.611	.000
Error	62739.320	307	204.363		
Total	2589394.000	315			
Corrected Total	122146.749	314			

*R Squared = .486 (Adjusted R Squared = .475); Dependent variable: Attitude toward women in Positions of Authority*

The results in Table 2 above revealed that there was a joint significant influence of power distance, social dominance and emotional labour on attitudes towards women in positions of authority ( $f[1, 315] = 17.611$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The results indicate that perceived power distance ( $f[1, 315] = 5.893$ ;  $p < .05$ ), social dominance orientation ( $f[1, 315] = 48.705$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and emotional labour ( $f[1, 315] = 8.921$ ;  $p < .05$ ) significantly independently and jointly influenced attitudes toward

women in positions of authority. With these results, hypothesis two is supported.

Hypothesis three stated that participants with perceived low power distance will significantly report more positive attitudes towards women in positions of authority than participants with perceived high power distance.

**Table 3: Summary of T-test of Independent Samples Showing Differences between Low and High Power Distance on Attitudes towards Women in Positions of Authority**

Power Distance	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	T	P
Low Power Distance	132	89.66	18.68			
				313	8.63	<.05
High Power Distance	183	72.16	17.04			

*Dependent Variable: Attitudes towards women in Positions of Authority*

The results in the table above indicate that there is a significant difference in perceptions of power distance and attitude towards women ( $t (313) = 8.63$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Specifically, employees with perceived low power distance ( $\bar{x} = 89.66$ ,  $SD = 18.68$ ) significantly reported more favourable attitudes toward women in high status jobs than employees with perceived high

power distance ( $\bar{x} = 72.16$ ,  $SD = 17.04$ ). Therefore, hypothesis three is supported.

Hypothesis three stated that participants with perception of low social dominance orientation will significantly have favourable attitudes towards women in positions of authority than participants who report high social dominance orientation.

**Table 4: Summary of T-Test of Independent Samples Showing Differences Between Low and High Social Dominance Orientation on Attitudes Towards Women**

Social Dominance	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t	P
Low Social Dominance	114	94.73	20.45			
				313	12.68	<.05

High Social Dominance	201	70.85	12.91			
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**Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward Women in High Ranking Jobs**

From the results in Table 4 above, perception of social dominance orientation significantly influenced attitude towards women ( $t(313) = 12.68, p < .05$ ). Precisely, employees with perceptions of low social dominance orientation ( $\bar{x} = 94.73, SD = 20.45$ ) significantly reported more favourable attitudes toward women in high status jobs than employees who scored high on social dominance orientation ( $\bar{x} = 70.85, SD = 12.91$ ) scale. This implies that social dominance orientation influences attitudes toward women. Therefore, hypothesis four is supported.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate there was a significant negative correlation among all the independent variables and the dependent variable. The study has also confirmed the existence of a main and interaction effects among power distance, emotional labour and social dominance on attitudes towards women in positions of authority. The analysis further revealed that participants who scored high on social dominant orientation and power distance and lack emotional labour reported less favourable attitudes towards women in positions of authority. These results are in line with Ette (2017) who found that women were relegated to the subordinate roles due to a high SDO and a rigid hierarchy in gender order. It is confirmed by Hoyt and Simon (2016) who suggested that individuals who exhibit high levels of social dominance orientation have a tendency to display more biased attitudes towards women. Aquino *et al.*, (2005) established a correlation between high social dominant orientation and discrimination against various social groups. Umphress *et al.*, (2007) argued that individuals with SDO are more likely to believe that Black-Americans are less competent and therefore less likely to succeed. Similarly, Gutierrez (2017) observed that investors with high SDO are more likely to invest in businesses that are owned by white individuals and less likely to invest in businesses owned by the minorities due to erroneous beliefs about white superiority (Jaiswal, 2018).

Social dominance theory suggests that social groups are hierarchically positioned and that members of the dominant social groups enjoy an unequal share of positive social value (Mifune *et al.*, 2019). The theory provides explanations as to why gender imbalance exists in the society. Gender imbalance is a result of individuals's stable beliefs about traditional gender and race roles, which is called social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In order words, stereotypes exist as a result of the early history or widely held beliefs, which are false but the society believes. For instance, men are expected to be aggressive while women are expected to be less aggressive. The society generally frowns at women who possess the competitive qualities necessary to succeed in

organizational settings and encourages them to be more compassionate (Murray, 2001; Eagly and Karau, 2002). Social dominance may exist in organizational settings where strong group-based employees enjoy special privileges (Pratto & Stewart, 2012) and the weak group members, regardless their skills and abilities, have limited access to top management positions. Social dominance theory indicates that in all settings, men will manifest a higher SDO than women (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006) which is an indication of men's support of sexist beliefs that justifies masculinity. The theory suggests that the subordinate groups tend to support the system to avoid conflicts between themselves and the dominant groups. It follows therefore that since social SDO is related to the issue of perception of equality among groups, the individual's attitudes toward equality will be determined by the SDO levels of such individuals.

Aneika *et al.*, (2019) revealed that participants with perceived low power distance had more favourable attitudes towards women in positions of authority. Individuals in high PD societies tend to endorse systems that promote inequality among people and as such believe that men are more suitable for leadership and decision making positions while women are regarded as homemakers and less competent than men (Yemisi *et al.*, 2012). The findings are also supported by Cuadrado *et al.*, (2015) who reported that individuals ascribe leadership positions to men over their female counterparts. In contrast however, Gyapong and Adjapong (2019) reported that high PD societies were positively associated with more favourable attitude towards women as well as the appointment of women managers. However, Bendell *et al.*, (2019) observed a less favourable attitude towards women in technology based industries. They suggested that in such industries, aggressive risk-taking was a key reason why males were more successful than female in conventional entrepreneurship. Likewise, Gupta *et al.*, (2019) noted that low-scale business owners are perceived as more similar to women than men.

Previous studies have also established a relationship between emotional labour and behaviour in organizational settings. Carlane (2016) found that female managers engage in more frequent and longer surface acting interactions with senior members of staff than the male managers. Leire (2016) have also noted the masculine nature of emotional dimension with an agentic content such as regulation of negative emotions. Accordingly, men are often better than women at handling negative emotions and having optimistic outlook. Ti (1999) investigated how male and female perceive the issue of women's emotion in management and concluded that even though there were some differences in a number of emotional factors, the

difference is not so clear. But, since leadership roles are traditionally ascribed to men, women who serve in such roles are perceived as defying their gender roles (Alice, 2002). (Kristin, 2008) showed that participants indicated that they were more satisfied with female, but not male, managers, who accurately perceived their emotions. Similarly, failing to attend to emotion resulted in lower satisfaction ratings for female, but not male, managers. Therefore, women generally have been perceived as too emotional to be fit for managerial positions, too dependent, passive, subjective and lacking skills in leadership, ambition and competitiveness, being less assertive or less aggressive.

Social role theory is significant in illustrating the barriers facing women career advancement. The theory suggests that managers have their expectations concerning candidates' behavioural tendencies which are consistent with their social roles which can be based on gender and other demographic factors (Skelly & Johnson, 2011). Social role theory explains that men and women acting in line with their social roles are often differentiated along gender lines and that leads to gender bias (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Because women are seen as being more involved in caregiving work and men are seen as exhibiting leadership characteristics, candidates seeking managerial positions are expected to have technical and rational expertise as well as other attributes which are perceived as masculine. Women may be perceived by some executives as not possessing enough of leadership qualities required for promotion to senior-level positions and this may negatively affect their progress (Skelly & Johnson, 2011). The role congruity theory suggests that as leadership skills are ascribed more to men than to women, a prejudice exists against prospective female leaders. Because women who are effective leaders tend to violate standards for their gender when they manifest male' agentic attributes as against the expected female communal attributes, they may be unfavourably evaluated for their gender role violation, at least by those who endorse traditional gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

However, women, particularly those in predominantly patriarchal societies like Nigeria may have accepted the culture of inequality as legitimate just to avoid conflict and support the existing tradition. According to the system justification theory, individuals tend to provide support for the existing or the social system they believe in (John *et al.*, 2003). People have long standing needs that are met by supporting the prevailing structure of social, economic and political norms (Helena *et al.*, 2017). The theory suggests that individuals desire to hold favourable attitudes about themselves, the groups they belong to and hold positive attitudes about the social structure they find themselves (John & Mahzarin 1994). The theory posits that system-justifying beliefs serves a psychological function of reducing uncertainty, anxiety, guilt and also provides a sense of control to those who hold such beliefs (Helena

*et al.*, 2017). The system-justifying motive sometimes produces the phenomenon known as out-group favouritism, an acceptance of inferiority among low-status groups and a positive image of relatively higher status groups. Therefore, the notion that individuals are simultaneously supporters and victims of the system-instilled norms is a central idea in the theory (John, Mahzarin & Brain, 2004).

The theory however, clarifies the reason women who are in the subordinate group accept a system that is not favourable to them. Women may do this because of the need for a positive social identity for their group. Social system is often regarded as a means through which social identity concerns can be addressed and enhance in-group goals. Women may feel like they are trapped in the system and so in anticipation of any change in the future, may support the system rather than go against it and put themselves at a disadvantage (Chuma & Luca, 2020) It is also believed that women who strongly justify the system are likely doing so because they lack too many personal experiences of high personal control in their daily lives (Megan, 2015). Therefore, such women turn to the system to make sense of the world. Since having women in high status positions does not support the current patriarchy system, other women are not likely to support or have favourable attitudes towards women in high status positions.

However, research evidence has demonstrated that men are not the only ones responsible for the bias against women. Women too have been said to be biased against fellow women. For example, Dentith *et al.*, (2015) indicated that women can intimidate other women in order to establish or maintain their power just the way some men maintain power in the business environment. In a study by Workplace Bullying Institute (2014), it was reported that 31% of the perpetrators were women who bullied other women 68% of the time. Akanbi and Salami (2011) argued that women's career advancement in management faces obstacles because the majority of the respondents prefer to work for men rather than women on the account that women were considered hard to work with. Women managers were also seen to lag behind their male counterparts in terms of possessing some significant attributes needed in managerial job performance and success. Such attitudes by women as colleagues or managers could be an obstacle to the advancement of women to management positions. Other factors according to Okafor *et al.*, (2011) include lack of mentoring on the part of women, lack of opportunities for training and development and family responsibilities. Similarly, Adisa *et al.*, (2019) have contended that personal and organizational factors such as organizational exclusion, lack of support, patriarchal culture and the negative perceptions that women lack ability and competence have all contributed to the challenges of advancement in careers to women.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the current study has confirmed a correlation among all the variables of interest. It has also revealed the main and interaction effects of power distance, social dominance orientation and emotional labour on attitudes towards women in positions of authority. The study is therefore assumed to have contributed to the existing literature in the study area. In order to overcome the impact of the negative attitudes against women in management, extra effort is needed from individuals (Ellemers *et al.*, 2018). Change will happen when women are provided with enough support to develop resilience skills in organizations and a larger number of women are visible in leadership roles (Tabassum *et al.*, 2019). Bosak *et al.*, (2017) argued that management needs to create conditions of gender equality in workplaces and to reject gender stereotypes as accepted managerial practice. It is therefore recommended that policy makers and managements of organizations provide opportunities for more women to be part of top management and provided all necessary training and support to perform their roles successfully

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**Cite This Article:** Akingbade, R., Mayungbo, O.A., Kolawole, N.O., Ayowe, R.N., Okerenta, N. (2023). Career Blockades to Women's Advancement to Positions of Authority: The role of Power Distance, Emotional Labour and Social Dominance Orientation. *EAS J PsycholBehavSci*, 5(2), 36-46.

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