Internalized Sexism as a Predictor of the Queen Bee Phenomenon and the Moderating Role of Competitiveness

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Abstract
While the body of work on women in leadership continues to expand, an area that remains relatively unexplored is the Queen Bee phenomenon. The present study shed light on this phenomenon with a focus on two major objectives. Firstly, Internalized Sexism as a predictor of the QB Phenomenon was studied. Secondly, the moderating role of competitiveness on the relationship between QB Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism was also examined. Using the purposive sampling technique, 76 women within the age range of 33 to 50 years, working in private sectors organizations and leading a team of 10 to 20 employees, were included in the sample. Data were collected using several indicators of the QB phenomenon (Derks, Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2011), the Internalized Misogyny Scale (Piggott, 2004), and the Revised Competitiveness Index Scale (Houston, Harris, McIntire & Francis, 2002), and were subjected to quantitative analysis. Linear regression indicated that Internalized Sexism positively predicted the QB phenomenon. Moderation analysis revealed that Competitiveness moderated the relationship between QB phenomenon and Internalized Sexism. Important implications were discussed in the context of observed findings.

Keywords: Queen Bee Phenomenon, Internalized Sexism, Competitiveness

The Queen Bee Phenomenon
Novelist Margaret Atwood once said, “We still think of a powerful man as a born leader and a powerful woman as an anomaly.” There is no denying of the fact that the corporate world is seen as a man’s world, and even more than 40 years after its conception, the ‘think managers, think male’ bias (Schein, 1973) continues to remain a deeply ingrained part of our psyche. However, the stagnation of women’s status in management has also been accompanied by some progress. The traditional world of work, is changing and new trends are continually emerging. Over the years, women have made great strides in leadership roles. More and more women are emerging as leaders in different sectors, climbing up the corporate ladder, breaking through the glass ceiling and successfully navigating their way through the labyrinth of leadership.

When women are successfully able to deal with such challenges, it is usually expected that they will use the power, experience and the status to support their female subordinates, providing equal opportunities to them and helping them progress up the corporate ladder. The heightened awareness that female leaders have about the gendered barriers that every working woman faces should logically lead them to develop alliances and actively support each other. However, recently, a growing body of research has emerged with evidence contrary to such expectations. Female leaders, rather than being supportive of their female subordinates, might be pulling up the ladder behind them, thereby barring the advancement of other women (Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2016; Ellemers, Rink, Derks, & Ryan, 2012). Women in positions of power, opposing rather than supporting attempts to improve the position of their female subordinates, is generally referred to as the Queen Bee (QB)-phenomenon. The phenomenon was first proposed by Staines, Travis, & Jayerante (1973) to refer to successful women who did not support the women's liberation movement and was described as “a woman in a position of authority who views or treats subordinates more critically if they are female.” Research suggests that Queen Bee behaviours can be seen as being manifested in three broad ways: a) masculine self-presentation; b) physically and psychologically distancing from other women; and c) approving and...
legitimising gender inequality.” When women in leadership positions display a combination of these behaviours with the goal of achieving success at the expense of other women, the Queen Bee effect is seen in its totality (Derks, van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016).

Although the Queen Bee Syndrome is not new, the label has recently made a return in management research and the fact that the phenomenon continues to thrive in the corporate world even 40 years after its conception suggests that further investigation into its various facets is required. Evidence for the phenomenon comes from studies demonstrating that female, as opposed to male employees, are particularly more judgemental of the career commitment, leadership abilities, and assertive behaviours of their female colleagues (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006). Gallup polls since the 1950s have depicted an inclination of both men and women to work for male supervisors over female ones. Studies have also shown that working women experience significantly more female-instigated incivility as compared to their male counterparts (Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, 2017). These statistics raise several questions. At a time, where women all over the world are fighting for positions of power, why do they themselves want to be led by a man?

Presence of Queen Bees in top management can have negative consequences for not only female subordinates, but also for women leader themselves as well. While it is true that Queen Bee behaviour can improve women's career prospects and opportunities for bagging a position in the top management, but at the same time, these can come at the expense of the extent of support they get from others in the organization (Ely, 1994). The Queen Bee phenomenon can also affect outcomes for organizations by limiting their opportunities to benefit from the diversity that women have to offer (Ellemers et al., 2012) and also by preserving gender inequality. Thus, research on the Phenomenon is not only imperative from the standpoint of individual employees, but also necessary to direct people's attention to how this phenomenon leads to the maintenance of gendered systems and structures, by dividing women instead of uniting them. It is equally important to understand the social, personal and psychological factors that contribute to the individual differences seen in the demonstration of this phenomenon.

Queen Bee Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism

A recurring theme within literature suggests that self-group distancing, a major QB behaviour demonstrated by women may be a response to their internalized sexism (Mavin, 2006). While sexism is easy to recognize, we often fail to recognize one of its concealed, covert by-products: internalized sexism. In a patriarchal society like ours, we encounter sexism everywhere and when women are repeatedly exposed to sexist events and messages in their daily life which results in the involuntary internalization of these messages and beliefs by them. Consequently, women reinforce sexism by endorsing and applying those learned sexist behaviours upon themselves and other women (Bearman, Korbokov, and Thorne, 2009). In other words, the oppressed themselves take the role of the oppressors. Women start believing that they are inferior to men and competing with each other for “patriarchal approval” is something that comes naturally to them. Female leaders who have internalized sexist stereotypes may see their own group as being inferior and undervalued. They may have a deeply ingrained belief that displaying more feminine traits or behaving in a ‘stereotypically’ womanlike manner would indicate low competence. So, they try to distance themselves from their own kind, seeing this at the best tactic to avoid affiliating with the non-dominant group and gain acceptance within the high-status group. They do this mainly by emphasizing their differences from other women. It has been seen that on being reminded of gender discrimination that they have faced, women tried to distance themselves from other women by using phrases such as “I'm not like the other women, I'm much more ambitious.” (Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2011).

In the same vein, research on stereotype threat has found that women strongly accentuate on their unique, personal characteristics when primed with negative gender stereotypes in an attempt to emphasize their individuality (Keller & Sekaquaptewa, 2008). The second prevalent form of self-group distancing tactic occurs when members of stigmatized groups start presenting themselves as per the commonly held
stereotypes of the dominant groups they wish to gain membership into. This is seen when women describe themselves in more masculine, agentic terms (Derks, Van Laar, et al., 2011, Lückerath-Rovers, De Bos, & De Vries, 2013) and identify more with the ‘masculine’ model of leadership, thereby reject any ‘feminine’ managerial traits that they validated before.

Internalized sexism has not yet been examined in the context of the QB phenomenon. An investigation into the link between Queen Bee behaviours and internalized sexism is imperative because the first step in combating this sexism is to recognize and accept that it exists. Only when women understand how they contribute to sexism and only when they realize that they are themselves part of the problem, they can work towards dismantling it.

**Competitiveness in the context of QB Phenomenon:**

Different people have different goals which drive them and trigger their motivation to compete. Individual differences among women with respect to such goals may explain why some women display Queen Bee behaviours while others do not. Alba, McIlwain, Wheeler, & Jones (2014) proposed that competitiveness has been found to be conceptually linked to seeking high status and rank within social hierarchies. Competitive women may be more motivated to beat other women to the top and attain a higher status in the organization. Keeping in mind the scarcity of top leadership positions for women, there is no question that women have to work hard and prove themselves every step of the way to reach the top. Naturally, when there are so many contenders aiming for the same prize, an unhealthy sense of competition is bound to be created. Women may start seeing each other as threats and such conditions are more likely to reinforce the competitive nature of those women who have a competitive personality. Their desire for self-advancement in the organization may override the desire for in-group solidarity. In this sense, women who display QB behaviours operate on the scarcity principle. They believe that since there are not enough resources for all of them, each woman must do what it takes to get what she deserves. This behaviour is primarily guided by the belief that the corporate world is a dog-eat-dog world where survival demands that they outshine their colleagues, most specifically female ones.

Review of relevant research shows that there is not only a dearth but rather an absence of studies examining the relationship between personality variables and the Queen Bee phenomenon. There is no questioning the fact that many of person’s behaviour can be attributed to unique personality traits that he/she possesses. Seeing the critical role personality traits like competitiveness plays in shaping who we are, it becomes extremely crucial to address this research gap by exploring how being competitive can serve as a catalyst in the demonstration of Queen Bee behaviours in female leaders. Thus, the present study can help shed light on the possible impact of competitiveness as an individual difference variable on female leaders’ likelihood of being a Queen Bee.

**The present study:** The existence of QB phenomenon in the workplace is undoubtedly laced with irony. The very women who have spent decades fighting against discrimination and unequal treatment, now perpetuate many of the same problems by working against their own. The present study aims to address this question ‘Why?’ by examining the influence of internalized sexism as a predictor of the QB phenomenon. Secondly, to understand what factor plays a role in making QB responses unique to only some female leaders, the current study also examined the moderating role of Competitiveness in the relationship between the QB Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism.

**Hypotheses**

H1: Internalized Sexism will significantly predict the Queen Bee Phenomenon

H2: Competitiveness will moderate the relationship between Internalized Sexism & the QB Phenomenon.
Method

Sample: Purposive sampling technique was used to select 76 female participants working in managerial positions in different private sector organizations within Delhi NCR, Mumbai and Bengaluru. Each participant had a team of 10-20 employees directly reporting to her.

Measures:

Queen Bee Phenomenon. The measurement of Queen Bee behaviours was based on three indicators that characterize the phenomenon: self-group distancing, and denial of gender discrimination and masculine self-descriptions ($\alpha = .74$, $r = .55$). Since there is no known single measure to assess the Queen Bee phenomenon, the items for this study, were adapted from a scale constructed by Derks, Laar, Ellemers, &de Groot (2011) to study Queen Bee phenomenon among policewomen. All the items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale and higher scores on the scale are an indicator that participants demonstrate Queen Bee behaviours. Before subjecting the data to analysis, the Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficient was used to verify the internal consistency of this questionnaire Queen Bee Phenomenon. The $\alpha$ value was found to be .77 which was above the generally recommended minimum of .70 (Peterson, 1994). Hence, the scale was considered reliable for use in the present sample.

Internalized Sexism. Internalized sexism was assessed using the only well-known and accepted measure to assess internalized misogyny, which is the Internalized Misogyny Scale (IMS, Piggott, 2004). The scale consists of a total of 17 items measuring three factors: devaluing of women, favouring men over women, and distrust of women. All the items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale and higher scores indicate higher internalization of misogyny. The IMS has good psychometric properties and has displayed good reliability with $\alpha = 0.88$ for the full scale, and ranging from .74 to .83, .82 and .74 for the three subscales. The scale has also been found to be satisfactorily correlated with measures of internalized heterosexism, modern sexism, body image, self-esteem, depression etc. (Piggott, 2004).

Competitiveness. Competitiveness was measured using the Revised Competitiveness Index Scale (Houston, Harris, McIntire & Francis, 2002) which is based on the trait theory of behaviour which views competitiveness as a stable trait and not as a dynamic state. The scale consists of a total of 14 items which are answered on a 5 point Likert. The index is divided into two separate subscales: Enjoyment of Competition and Contentiousness. The inter-item reliabilities were found to be in the acceptable range for the overall index ($\alpha = .90$) as well as for the Enjoyment of Competition ($\alpha = .93$) and Contentiousness subscales ($\alpha = .82$). The entire scale also has good Test-retest reliability ($r = .85$).

Procedure: Based on the review of relevant literature, the research questions and hypotheses were formulated and the present study was designed. Purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. For data collection, meetings were arranged with the participants in advance. After a brief introduction of the self, rapport was formed with each participant in order to make them feel comfortable. The participants were briefed and a small introduction to the purpose of the research was given. A formal consent was taken from each participant individually and participants were assured of confidentiality. After completion of questionnaire, the participants were debriefed and thanked for their time and cooperation. Once the data collection was complete, participants’ responses were analysed by using linear regression and moderation analysis through SPSS v25.0 and Hayes PROCESS macro.

Results

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and Pearson Product Moment correlations among the variables under study are reported in Table 1.

| Table 1 |
| Mean, Standard Deviations (SDs), and Correlations among QB Phenomenon, Internalized Sexism, |
Correlational analyses were carried out to examine the relationships among the variables: QB Phenomenon, Internalized Sexism, Gender Professional Identity Integration and Competitiveness. There was a significant positive correlation between the Queen Bee Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism ($r = .341$, $p < .01$). While no significant relationship emerged between competitiveness with Internalized Sexism or QB Phenomenon.

Table 2
Regression Analysis for Internalized Sexism as Predictor of Queen Bee Phenomenon (N = 76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Model Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>27.965</td>
<td>6.232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Sexism</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As it can be seen from the table, the result of the regression indicated that the predictor explained 16% ($R^2 = .16$) of the variance in the outcome variable and that the model was a significant predictor of the Queen Bee Phenomenon ($F (2,73) = 6.943$, $p < .01$). Analysis also revealed that Internalized Sexism contributed significantly to the model ($B = .130, p < .05$). This suggests that for a unit increase in internalized sexism scores, QB would increase by .130 units and for a unit decrease in GPII scores, QB scores would decrease by .273 units.

Table 3
Summary Statistics for the Moderating Effect of Competitiveness on the relationship between Queen Bee Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>26.1595</td>
<td>1.2384</td>
<td>21.1239</td>
<td>5.0746**</td>
<td>.1745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Sexism</td>
<td>.1354</td>
<td>.0515</td>
<td>2.6282*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>.0585</td>
<td>.0892</td>
<td>.6558</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Sexism X Competitiveness</td>
<td>.0070</td>
<td>.0034</td>
<td>2.0344*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
model’s significance was $F(3, 72) = 5.0746$, $p = .05$, $R^2 = .1745$. The Internalized Sexism x Competitiveness interaction was found to be significant, $b = .0070$, $t = 2.03$, $p < .05$, indicating that the relationship between QB phenomenon and Internalized sexism is moderated by Competitiveness. Following this, post hoc probing of the significant interaction was carried out through Simple Slope Analysis to determine the interaction effect of various levels of competitiveness on the three levels of internalized sexism: high, moderate and low.

### Table 4
**Simple Slope Analysis of the Internalized Sexism x Queen Bee Phenomenon Interaction Effect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Moderator</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QB Phenomenon</td>
<td>Internalized Sexism</td>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>.234</td>
<td>.0007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, it can be seen that, when competitiveness is low, there is a non-significant relationship between QB phenomenon and internalized sexism ($b = 0.037, p = .628$). At the moderate level of competitiveness, there is a significant relationship between QB phenomenon and internalized sexism, ($b = 0.135, p < .05$). Finally, when competitiveness is high, there is a significant positive relationship between QB phenomenon and internalized sexism ($b = 0.234, p < .001$). Thus, significant moderation effect is seen at both high and moderate levels of competitiveness.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of the moderating effect of competitiveness on the relationship between QB Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism using Simple Slope Analysis

### Discussion:

The aim of the present study was to examine Internalized Sexism as predictor of the Queen Bee phenomenon and study the moderating role of competitiveness in the relationship between the QB Phenomenon and Internalized Sexism. Result of regression analysis indicated that Internalized Sexism significantly and positively predicted the QB phenomenon and Hypothesis 1 has thus been accepted. This finding is consistent with prior studies which have revealed a link between women’s internalization of sexist beliefs and their intra-gender hostility. Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White (2004) demonstrated that endorsement of both hostile and benevolent sexism by women is positively associated with negative attitudes that they have towards other women which ultimately results in them displaying negative behaviours towards their own group. According to Inman & Baron (1996), bias that women show towards other women, such as blocking their advancement in the workplace,
can be seen as a particularly insidious, concealed form of sexism. Women who have internalized cultural messages and negative stereotypes associated with their gender accept traditional gender roles without question, believe in the superiority of men over women and deny the existence of sexism within society (Szymanski, 2005). Zakharova & Savinskaya (2017) in their study on millennial women found that misogyne can generate a fear of femininity in women. This leads them to realize that feminine characteristics are often devalued, especially within the workplace, and hence they themselves demonstrate negative in-group attitudes (Cowan & Ullman, 2006), engaging in in-group rejection to do so. Queen Bee behaviours such as using masculine self-descriptors, distancing self from other women and denying the pervasive existence of discrimination against women are several ways in which women express this rejection. Consistent with this, Hamel (2009) described the Queen Bee Phenomenon as a common coping or survival strategy that women use to improve their individual positions vis-à-vis other women in a male dominated environment. By distancing themselves from their group members they emphasize their dissimilarities and uniqueness from other women. For example, senior women rate their career commitment and ambition as higher than that of other women (Derks, Ellemers, et al., 2011) in order to ensure that others don’t perceive them as being similar to other stereotypical women. This response of distancing oneself from the stereotyped behaviours of an in-group member stems from a desire of protecting one’s own status as a competent individual. In the similar vein, women leaders who display Queen Bee behaviours attempt to avoid being associated with other women by identifying more with masculine qualities that are appreciated within the workplace (Lücke- Rovers, De Bos, & De Vries, 2013).

Further evidence of internalized sexism as a predictor of QB phenomenon comes from work done by Jost & Banaji (1994) on system justification who argued that women’s in-group rejection often occurs as a result of false consciousness. The concept of false consciousness, which serves as an adjunct to the concept of internalized sexism, states that members of disadvantaged groups hold beliefs about their group which are contrary to personal and group interests and these beliefs in turn help maintain the group’s disadvantaged position. One typical behaviour, demonstrated by Queen Bees, is the denial that gender discrimination against women is widely prevalent in the workplace (Stroebe, Ellemers, Barreto, & Mummendey, 2009). This demonstrates that women who have internalized sexism are so caught up in the lie of patriarchy, that they rarely question or criticize the authority of men. Instead, by turning a blind eye to the discrimination that women face, they work against their own interest to uphold the very system that denigrates them.

Moderation analysis revealed that Competitiveness, as an individual difference variable, moderates the relationship between Queen Bee phenomenon and Internalized Sexism. Since significant interaction effects emerged (p < .05), hypothesis 2 has been accepted. The strongest association between internalized sexism and Queen bee phenomenon occurred for women who reported high competitiveness. Thus, competitiveness can be seen as a factor that strengthens the association between internalized sexism and QB behaviours. Alba, McIlwain, Wheeler & Jones (2014) proposed that competitiveness has been found to be conceptually linked to seeking high status and rank within social hierarchies. Women may be more motivated to compete and beat others, get to the top and attain a higher status in the organization. It has been seen that in a competitive situation which ends with the declaration of a clear winner, while non-competitive people tend back down, competitive people tend to become even more competitive. Similarly, for women in such situations, their desire for self-advancement and success in the organization may override the desire for in-group solidarity. According to Marcus (2016), female competition is a consequence of the limited growth opportunities that women face in a male dominated workforce which leaves them with no choice but to compete with and outdo each other if they want to achieve a desirable status in the organization. Consistent with this, research has also shown that competitive behaviours and consequently, interpersonal hostility escalates when people perceive a scarcity of opportunities and resources (Hill, Rodeheffer, Griskevicius, Durante, & White, 2012). Within the workplace, women operate on the scarcity principle since they have access to fewer opportunities and resources as
compared to men. They perceive one another to be a threat to their advancement up the corporate ladder and a woman versus woman culture is thus created, and such a culture reinforces the competitive nature of those women who have already have a competitive personality.

Competitiveness among women can also be seen as response resulting from women’s own sexism (Mavin, 2006). Competition between members of an oppressed group is a fundamental manifestation of internalized oppression or in the context of women, internalized sexism. Penny (2017) referred to women being competitive/hostile towards each other as an “unspoken script of internalized sexism”. Patriarchal, male-dominated societies pit women against each other, first for the attention of men and when translated into professional settings, for positions and resources that they have limited access to. It is possible that women who display high levels internalized sexism have internalized messages of other women being threats to their own success and see them as competitors who they must outshine in order to get to the top. Competition between women may take the form of malicious gossip and women putting each other down to make themselves look better (Underwood, 2004). Many highly competitive women have also been seen withholding important information from other women, obstructing their access to important meetings and limiting their interactions with key people, all of this to hold back their competition. The present finding thus suggests that women who are highly competitive may display an exaggerated demonstration of Queen Bee behaviours as compared to non-competitive women or those women who are relatively less competitive.

The findings of this hypothesis have significantly contributed in helping us identify individual variability in the relationship between the Internalized Sexism and Queen Bee Phenomenon. Most women have internalized sexist beliefs as a reflexive response of being born and brought up in a patriarchal, gendered society. However, not all of them who later achieve success at the workplace display QB tendencies. There are bound to be some factors that moderate the link between these two and contribute to individual differences. In our study, competitiveness proved to be one such factor. Thus, it can be concluded that individual differences do exist in the effect of internalized sexism on QB phenomenon and these differences are determined by the personality trait of competitiveness.

Implications of the Present Study

The present study has several important implications. One significant practical implication of the present study can be drawn from the finding that internalized sexism shares a causal relationship with Queen Bee Phenomenon. This underscores the need to design organization-based programs that will help women explore and dispute their traditional gender role beliefs, confront their sexist biases, and develop meaningful female friendships through the use of consciousness raising exercises. Such programs will help decrease women’s internalized sexism and make them more mindful of how their implicit biases are negatively impacting their own gender group. Findings of the present research also highlight the importance of improving and strengthening women’s same-sex relationships at the workplace especially those between female supervisors and subordinates. Through corporate women networks and forums, companies can take steps to provide a space for women at different levels of the management to engage in dialogue with each other, allowing them to develop meaningful relationships, hence promoting an environment characterised by harmony as well as collaboration. Since the study has highlighted that competition amplifies the effect of internalized sexism on the demonstration of Queen Bee behaviours, it is crucial to design counselling programs and interventions at the workplace, college, and even school level, which can be targeted towards promoting healthy and “cooperative competition” among individuals, by helping them understand the importance of teamwork, and working towards common goals as opposed to always having a “me first” mentality.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present study is not devoid of limitations. The quantitative portion of the study involved the utilization of self-report measures. Such measures tend to be susceptible to inaccurate responding as they rely on the subjective experiences and personal beliefs and perceptions of respondents. The
common method bias associated with such measures might be a potential cause of concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Furthermore, the Internalized Misogyny Scale that was used in the present study exhibited high face validity making it somewhat easy to determine what the scale is attempting to measure. Future research investigating internalized sexism in the context of the QB phenomenon should make use of implicit measures to avoid this limitation as they may be lower on socially desirable responding (Steffens, 2004). Also, sample of the present study included women leaders working in private sector organizations. It would be interesting for future research to explore how the QB Phenomenon plays out among women leaders working in public sector organizations. A comparison between the two sectors can also be drawn to assess the variations in QB responses that emerge as a result of the different work environments, cultures and organizational practices.

Findings of the current study open several avenues for further exploration and deepened investigation. Further research can concentrate on uncovering additional broad and narrow personality traits and individual difference variables such as leadership self-efficacy, attributional styles and locus of control in the context of the QB phenomenon.

Conclusion
The present study shed light on a commonly experienced, but highly under researched phenomenon in the existing literature on female leadership. Based on the results it can be said that Internalized Sexism positively predicted the QB phenomenon and Competitiveness moderated the relationship between QB phenomenon and Internalized Sexism. In conclusion, the results of this study have helped add to the QB literature by pointing out the importance of internalized sexism as a significant predictor of the QB Phenomenon. Moreover, the present study is the first known one to examine the moderating role of competitiveness as it relates to the other constructs under consideration. Thus, the present study contributes to the current body of extant literature, and also provides several potential directions for future research. Further exploration of these variables would provide insight into the gendered social order that underlines women’s work experiences and also help women understand how gendered practices and discourses shape their relationships with each other.

References


