

ORIGINAL

Artículo de revisión

Women's leadership and participation in decision-making in companies*

Liderazgo y participación de la mujer en la toma de decisiones en las empresas

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the leadership and participation that women have achieved today in decision making in organizations, taking into account the spaces they have achieved in the labor and professional field, highlighting the innate abilities of their gender and the contribution this makes to the process of incorporation in the management of organizations and regions. A qualitative approach is used, where a documentary bibliographic review is carried out. The result shows how in educational institutions the participation and leadership of women has been growing in their professional development and how this sacrifice and persistence have allowed them to play an important role in society and in companies. Likewise,

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the innate abilities of women have played a very important role that has allowed them to promote innovation, persistence and creativity to manage companies.

Keywords: Women, Organization, Decisions, Participation, Companies

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como fin describir el liderazgo y la participación que han alcanzado las mujeres hoy día para la toma de decisiones en las organizaciones; teniendo en cuenta los espacios que han logrado en el campo laboral y profesional, resaltando las habilidades innatas a su género y el aporte que esto realiza al proceso de incorporación en la gerencia de las organizaciones y de las regiones. Se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo, en donde se realizó una revisión bibliográfica documental. Dentro del resultado se evidencia como en las instituciones educativas la participación y el liderazgo de la mujer ha ido creciendo en su desarrollo profesional y cómo ese sacrificio y persistencia han permitido ubicar a la mujer en un rol importante dentro de la sociedad y en las empresas, de igual manera las habilidades innatas de la mujer han jugado un papel muy importante que le han permitido promover innovación, persistencia y creatividad para dirigir las empresas.

Palabras Clave: Mujer, Organización, Decisiones, Participación, Empresas

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION - RESOLUTION SCHEME. - I. Research problem. - II. Methodology. - III. Writing plan. 1. Educational level. - 2. Women's innate abilities. - 3. Independence. - IV. - Research results - 1. Educational level. - 2. Women's innate abilities. 3. Independence. CONCLUSIONS - REFERENCES.

Introduction

Colombia has one of the world's worst per capita income distributions regarding gender equality and women's empowerment (Galvis & Meisel Roca, 2009). This study examines the conditions that have allowed women to occupy high positions in companies in similar proportions to men but with lingering conditioning and limiting factors.

As indicated by (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2010), the applied cross-sectional research used a descriptive, correlational, and field approach with a non-experimental design. A documentary review and fieldwork enabled us to articulate the current occupation of women in senior management positions, the influence of the labor, social, and educational conditions, and their gradual ascent to the top.

As well as contributing to more appropriate and assertive decision-making in various organizations, women's participation and leadership in business decision-making can considerably improve the quality and effectiveness of those decisions.

Resolution scheme

1. Research problem

Can women's participation and leadership contribute to good business decisions?

2. Methodology

In order to analyze situations in the real context through news and scientific articles, a documentary bibliographic review provided a theoretical foundation for the qualitative-descriptive methodological approach. For a deeper understanding of the process of empowerment in the companies, the biographical trajectories of women who have been business leaders were examined.

Descriptive analytical research was carried out based on articles and news focusing on women's business leadership, which has left its mark and had an impact throughout history. The sampling was carried out deliberately since the search for women leaders in companies during the last five (5) years was carried out.

The data collection instrument is based on reliable documentary data from the last five (5) years. The information collected was organized, considering the women's educational level, their innate abilities, and their independence in family, social, labor, and educational aspects. This way, the information was classified to answer the proposed research question.

3. Writing plan

3.1 Educational level

According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in its eighth goal, the United Nations (2015) affirms through statistics the gender gap that exists between men and women since men earn, on average, 20.00% more than women in Latin America and Caribbean, and the performance rate reached in 2016 at 30.00% and men at 20.00%; notoriously, gender inequality is evident.

However, the gap is gradually narrowing thanks to social, economic, and cultural advances. According to Garcia & Antwan (2019), women were more feeling than reason, and it was sought through education that knowledge would enhance their refinement and qualities.

Currently, in educational institutions, the participation of women has been growing, and the role of women has gone from being a housewife to an aspiration as a professional. Moreover, many are heads of households, where the sacrifice made to raise their families is evident. Women's work is not only in the home, as it used to be seen in the past; now, through her spirit of self-improvement, she has managed to change several paradigms, which have been reflected in all sectors positively. According to the Ministry of National Education (2016) in Colombia and according to the indicators of the National Planning Department (2015), the rates of the level of studies in higher education among women aged 25 to 34 years were 29.0% higher than that of men, with a rate of 23.00%; in this way, it is evident how the educational quality has been improving in women.

3.2 Women's innate abilities

In recent years, Santander has achieved female empowerment in different aspects. Although in some situations, gender inequality is still reflected, women have managed to climb towards good labor and political, social, and economic opportunities. According to Orquera (2022), women's leadership promotes innovation, generates more accurate decision-making instances, and promotes the incorporation of talented professional profiles. Table 1 shows women's skills

when leading companies and the positive impact based on studies carried out in the last five years.

Table 1. Women's skills and their incidence in companies

| WOMEN'S SKILLS | IMPACT ON COMPANIES |
|---|--|
| Better business utilities | The World Labor Organization (ILO) confirms that companies perform better when women hold positions. |
| Improved business performance | In the study by Paradigms (2020) in a company in Chile, when they began to hire women, productivity and innovation improved, and the decision-making process was optimized (p.217). |
| Knowing how to listen | According to Vidal (2007), to have good communication, it is necessary to know how to listen, which means that when a person feels listened to and respected, he or she can flourish (p. 132). |
| Implementation of collective projects | Godoy, Loaiza & Abril (2021) state that women have effectively managed daily adversities with increasing frequency in recent years. These adversities are being overcome assertively (p. 62). |
| Creativity | At the business level, creativity must be present in any situation that arises in order to provide positive and enriching solutions. According to Rajadell (2019), creativity involves three aspects: creative, analytical, and practical intelligence (p. 69). |
| Adequate assertive communication | According to Paradinas (2020), women can manage conflicts; that is, they contribute to adequate communication among the company's employees, leading to an adequate work environment. (p. 218). |
| Control reactions and keep an open mind | Rojas (2020) states that women can better manage their emotional responses (p. 94). |
| Have the ability to delegate | Cruz (2020) suggests delegating tasks is crucial for a leader to carry out all responsibilities efficiently. It is equally important to have supervision to review the activities undertaken (p. 6). |
| Positive attitude and constant motivation | A study by Padilla & Hernández (2022) found that women entrepreneurs are acknowledged for their autonomy and authority in reconciling company operations. Despite societal discrimination and inequality, work is carried out harmoniously. (p. 10) |
| Knowing the limits | In a company, avoiding conflicts in the actions taken is important. It means that actions should not be open to misinterpretation, and there must be clear limits to ensure respect for authority. |
| Respect and value | According to Turner (2020), showing respect for others is essential to organizations. Everyone within a company should be appreciated for their role in the entity. Respect means acknowledging the value of every person and considering their ideas with seriousness. |
| Generates an adequate work environment | Rojas (2020) states that having female leadership results in a workplace environment that is more empathetic, less stressful, and promotes better teamwork and more opportunities (p. 94). |
| Maintain adequate concentration | It is important to have a strong focus during the processes involved. According to Rajadell (2019), the level of bargaining power depends on the degree of concentration, differentiation, and vertical integration. (p. 224). |
| Advances in continuous improvement | For companies to grow, their staff must be well-trained in performing their roles effectively. The leadership team plays a crucial role in setting the tone for continuous improvement within the organization. According to Rajadell (2019), when mistakes are made, or something negative happens, it is the responsibility of the leader to identify the root cause of the problem to provide effective solutions. (p. 218) |
| Be humble | According to Medina (2008), as a person gains social status within a company, they must maintain humility to remain a good leader. Regardless of changes in social status, humility should remain a part of their overall character development. |
| Teach by example | Humans learn by example, which is no exception for business leaders. Employees look up to their leader as a role model to follow. According to Medina (2008), a person with strong values can manage great fortunes and create wealth and job opportunities for others over time. By setting a good example, leaders can inspire their employees to contribute positively to the company. |

Source: own elaboration based on bibliographic searches,

3.3 Independence

Over time, women's roles have significantly evolved and can be observed in various aspects of life, such as family, social, academic, and work environments. Table 2 displays female leaders who have taken action in support of different business sectors.

Table 2. Participation and actions carried out by women leaders

| PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP | IMPACT OR ACTIONS TAKEN |
|------------------------------|--|
| Rosalba Castillo | A coffee leader from Ocamonte, who happens to be the only woman in the departmental committee of coffee growers in Santander, is determined to improve coffee growers' post-pandemic situation. She aims to develop effective strategies for coffee growers to enhance their planting and renovation activities in 2022. (Alguero, 2022). |
| Lina María Vera-Cala | A researcher specializing in chronic non-communicable diseases and serving as the Dean of the Health Faculty at the Universidad Industrial de Santander has provided recommendations for the upcoming government's public health agenda. The aim is to prevent diseases and tackle the challenges of public health in Colombia, according to the university's website in 2022. |
| Teresa Eugenia Prada | The President of the Women's Foundation is working towards minimizing the employment disparities and empowering women to become better leaders and attain self-sufficiency in the |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| | country's urban and rural areas (The Republic, 2022). |
| Isabel Cristina Rincón-Rodríguez | In 2010, the Senior Researcher at UDES was recognized as one of the top 10 women for her managerial achievements in the Santander department. Three years later, The Republic awarded her the "Order of Executive Merit Grand Cross Gaseosas Hipinto" as an executive woman in 2013. |
| Gheidy Gallo-Santos | The departmental development plans should properly incorporate the gender approach to achieve the fifth sustainable development goal. The target is to have over 5,000 women leaders across the 32 departments of the country by 2022 (Artuz). |
| Women's group Ammucale | The Municipal Association of Rural Women in Lebrija has been working for over 26 years to improve the quality of its products. They showcase their goods through the Ammucale Market Backpack, which has gained recognition. (Source: Fundaexpresion, 2021). |
| Beatriz Carreño | According to The Republic, "Ceo de Newvity" is a company that specializes in creating legally protected brands. The company has set a growth target of 110% for 2021 and plans to expand its reach to include over 300 companies in Colombia and Spain through various projects. |
| Caterine Castillo & Paola Fuertes | According to The Republic, the co-founders of Neivor were able to secure an investment worth US\$600,000 just a few months after launching their business. Neivor aims to transform payments in residential complexes, making it easier for administrators, owners, and tenants to manage their transactions. |
| Natalia Manrique | The Director of the Caona Foundation works towards enhancing the living standards of underprivileged communities in Colombia, as reported by The Republic in 2021. |
| Laura Uricoechea | The founder of THECACAOMARKET was born in Cimitarra, Santander, an area known for its cocoa market. According to an article in The Republic from 2021, the company aims to expand nationally and internationally. |
| Yasmin Lopera | I am the manager and founder of AOXLAB, a specialized laboratory for food analysis. Our lab is well-established in the market, and we aim to offer specialized services in various sectors, including coffee, cocoa, avocado, and chemical products. (Source: The Republic, 2021). |
| Angélica Flechas | The founder of Háptica, a consulting firm focused on service design, is expanding its reach in Colombia and Mexico, according to a recent article in The Republic (2021). |
| Margarita Cabal | The founder and leader of Páramo Snacks is a sustainable organic food business created in collaboration with a group of rural women from the Arce swamp. Their main focus is on producing baked chips. This information was reported by The Republic in 2021. |
| Alejandra Jiménez | Bionne is a brand that specializes in producing high-quality concentrated products from plant-based sources, as reported by The Republic in 2021. |
| Blanca Cabrera | The Executive Vice President of Transfiriendo has been at the helm of an electronic platform for businesses in various Latin American countries for over 13 years. This platform provides security in the electronic market, as reported by Colombia Fintech in 2020. |
| Blanca Guerrero | The founder of Other Level Cakes established the business during the pandemic, offering home delivery services with aspirations of expanding into a franchise, as reported by The Republic in 2021. |
| Sarah Cadavid | The inventor of the menstrual cup reported a significant rise in sales of 300% by the end of 2020, according to The Republic (2021). |
| Ana Barrera | Founder of Aflore, who has a direct sales channel enabled by trust and technology, manages a network of 17,000 community members. |
| María Camila Muñoz | Founder of Aflore, who has a direct sales channel enabled by trust and technology, manages a network of 17,000 community members. |
| Mónica Ramírez | Chief Entrepreneur at TowerTech Americas, which offers technological solutions, commercializing devices for service stations, and mobile commerce (Colombia Fintech, 2020). |
| Sandra Rubio | Colombia Fintech has established itself as a leader in technology in Colombia. They have created a group of Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs who collaborate with the Presidency of the Republic to promote female empowerment in the most vulnerable municipalities. |
| Beatriz Fernández | The founder of Crepes and Waffles has provided opportunities for women heads of households, as reported by Semana in 2019. |
| Sol Beatriz Arango-Mesa | The person holds three important positions: president of services, vice president of sustainable development, and general manager of Fundación Nutresa, as reported by Semana in 2019. |

Source: own elaboration based on bibliographic searches.

4 Research results

4.1 Educational Level

After conducting research, it was found that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) confirm the gender gap between men and women through statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean. On average, men earn 20.00% more than women, and the performance rate 2016 was 30.00% for women and 20.00% for men. It highlights the significant gender inequality present in the region.

In recent times, women have increasingly become active participants in educational institutions. Traditionally seen as homemakers, women are now aspiring professionals, and many are even the heads of their households. Despite their sacrifices in raising their families, women's higher education rates have surpassed men's, particularly among women aged 25 to 34. According to the Ministry of National Education in Colombia (2016), women in this age range have a higher education rate of 29.00%, compared to men's rate of 23.00%. These figures demonstrate the improving quality of education among women.

4.2 Women's innate abilities

Orquera (2022) has stated that women in leadership positions promote innovation, make more accurate decisions, and encourage the inclusion of skilled professionals.

4.3 Independence

Women's educational achievements and diverse social, political, academic, and work roles have enabled them to attain economic and mental independence. This progress has gradually shattered gender barriers in our society.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it has been shown that the educational attainment of women nowadays has enabled companies to employ female professionals who have greatly contributed to their success. These women have attained important positions within organizations and helped improve their performance, competitiveness, and resource utilization.

Likewise, it became evident that the skills of the female gender have allowed them to hold managerial positions, with better skills and abilities than men, achieving an important position at the business and entrepreneurial level.

Women have been observed to have unique skills that enable them to excel in leadership roles, with better abilities and expertise than men. It has resulted in women achieving significant positions in the business and entrepreneurial world. Furthermore, women have attained comparable levels of education and professional training as men, which has helped to break down long-standing stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination. As a result, women can perform their roles with greater efficiency and confidence, paving the way for easier development in all aspects of work, social and political life. The inclusion of women in business decision-making processes has facilitated this progress.

Research suggests that having women in leadership positions can bring a valuable diversity of perspectives and experiences to business discussions and decisions. Women often have unique approaches to problem-solving and can offer innovative ideas and creative solutions. It can greatly enrich the overall outcome of business operations.

It has become apparent that women play a crucial role in the market and make up a significant portion of consumers and users. Including female leaders in decision-making processes is essential in considering this market segment's needs, preferences, and perspectives.

Better problem-solving: Research has shown that diverse teams, which include gender diversity, tend to make more informed decisions and generate better solutions. Including women in business decision-making can promote more critical thinking and greater consideration of different options before making a decision.

Transformational leadership: It was inferred that women in leadership roles often adopt leadership styles characterized by collaboration, empathy, and consensus building. These qualities can foster a more inclusive and participative work environment, improving decision-making and promoting talent retention in the organization.

Research has shown that having a gender-diverse management team impacts a business's success. Companies with more women in leadership positions tend to perform better financially and show higher levels of innovation.

It is crucial to understand that having women involved in making business decisions is not only about achieving gender equality. It is also about utilizing the potential and advantages of having a more diverse team, which can lead to better business performance and success.

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