

Women in Leadership Roles

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Abstract

This paper provides an in-depth review of gender disparity in various professions, including finance, marketing, information technology, and education, in terms of women's leadership. It discusses the causes of gender disparity, for instance, culture, legal boundaries, and systemic prejudice, which in isolation and in combination constrain chances of ascent to leadership by women. Based on examples from across the globe and research works, the paper shows both the difficulties of women in dislodging conventional gender obstacles and achievements in transforming gender roles. It contrasts gender differences in leadership styles and performances, highlighting the distinct leadership qualities of women in transformational and emotionally intelligent styles. Moreover, this paper discusses controversies in predicting financial administration abilities within gender categories, and societal influences as determinants of developing leadership capacity. This article suggests equitable policies and structural adjustments promoting fairness and tapping into the abilities of women to ensure organizational and societal performances. It joins current literature in promoting gender diversity in leadership within professions.

Keywords: Leadership; Gender Inequality; Leadership Dynamics; Diversity and Inclusion; Emotional Intelligence

1. Introduction

Leadership is significant as it represents the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. The importance of leadership concerning the humanitarian side is reflected in establishing humanitarian relationships and involving the team members to discuss the work issues together (Twateet, N, 2014). However, women continue to face discrimination and barriers in many industries, despite the growing recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, the unequal opportunities between men and women do exist in various sectors (Martinez, S, 2022). Women's roles are always portrayed by the community as emotional of being responsible for household chores and all reproduction activities, thinking these are some reasons that women in leadership positions are a minority (Benedik,J, 2018).

The involvement of women in leadership positions will contribute to improving the society and the humanitarian response. According to Ruparel (2019) who reported that putting women in charge will not only preserve their lives and means of subsistence with dignity, but it will also benefit the larger community (Ruparel,S, 2019). Therefore, there should be serious actions and efforts to address gender disparities in leadership roles. As well as to apply policies that support diversity and inclusion for all in equal manner (Ibok, 2015).

This paper aims to investigate how gender inequality and leadership intersect in various industries, illuminating the elements that either support or undermine women's leadership paths. It compares the leadership styles of men and women, looks at global trends in gender inequality, and talks about the organizational and societal changes required to close the leadership gap. This paper seeks to advance equitable leadership practices for long-term social and organizational development by combining research findings with real-world examples.

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2. Gender Inequality

Gender inequality leads to men and women having different access to resources, power, or even advantages. It relates to bias that deals with gender-based discrimination that manifests in the social class system of a society. It entails marginalization, stereotyping violence against women in addition to restricted access to healthcare, education, unemployment, and even compensation. It restricts socio-economic and political development while undermining societal growth through human rights violations (Chakraborty, O, 2023).

For instance, certain instances of gender inequality are caused by overtly destructive acts against women, including harassment and violence, which instill fear in victims, or by social or legal constraints on the conduct of women (Farzana et al, 2017). Gender inequality exists in various forms across the globe and happen everywhere. In South Sudan, women often struggle to access land, leading to unpaid domestic labor. This results in less income and food for households, as social practices often result in last-minute mealtimes (Giovetti, O, 2022).

Chad in central Africa has one of the world's highest rates of early childbirth, driven by widespread child marriage, which also lowers females' educational attainment. This means that gender equality is becoming less likely as a result of the worldwide pandemic, conflict, climate change, and a strong pushback against women's sexual and reproductive rights. The rate of violence against women is still high (Lowery, T, 2023).

Another example is women in Yemen who are restricted from moving freely and are banned from traveling abroad unless accompanied by an immediate male relative. They are also at risk of becoming victims of "honor killings," as the judicial system does not provide adequate protection against sexual and domestic abuse (UNFPA, 2015). According to Lowery (2023) Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Chad are the worst countries in gender equality in 2022.

There is also global gender inequality in the work context. For instance, across the globe, women are paid the least for labor performed. Globally, women earn 24% less than males do, and at the current rate of advancement, it will take 170 years to close the difference. There are 700 million fewer women than men working for pay. Furthermore, in developing nations, 75% of women work in the informal economy, often earning insufficient wages to overcome poverty and lacking employment contracts, legal rights, and social protection (OXFAM, 2024).

3. Diversity is a key result area for companies today: Is this new trend of hiring women into leadership roles evident in other industries?

Diversity and inclusion in workplace take a lot of attention and conversation lately. These days, a lot of businesses are implementing inclusive workplace policies because they recognize the importance of cultivating a diverse staff (Khameis & Alshamsi, 2023).

Therefore, diversity and inclusion are critical in the workforce. The absence of inclusion and diversity can create a negative and toxic work environment, often leading to increased discrimination. This, in turn, can cause isolation and feelings of helplessness among employees, fostering an atmosphere where bigotry can flourish, even if it is already an underlying issue. On the other hand, companies with diverse workforces tend to be more innovative, and businesses that embrace diversity generate 19% higher innovation revenues (Martinez, S, 2022).

4. Compare and contrast different industries (Finance, Marketing, Informational Technology, Education among others)

Diversity in leadership positions—especially women employment—has drawn attention from several businesses. How this trend appears in several industries, including finance, marketing, information technology, and education, are contrasted in this paper.

4.1. Finance

- **Discussion:** Studies indicate that having a diverse leadership team improves financial performance. Diverse teams generate new ideas often, which boosts revenue and market share. These teams' varied viewpoints and skill sets enable them to quickly resolve issues, encouraging growth and adaptability (Khameis & Alshami, 2023). However, lack of female role models makes it difficult for women to excel in the financial industry (Zoe Report, 2023).

- **Challenges:** There is an underrepresentation of women in financial positions compared to men. According to a Deloitte report (2019), women only made up 5% of financial services. To resolve this challenge, women need to be trained and involved in the financial sector.
- **Outcomes:** Financial success is increased by diverse leadership. Diverse teams generate more revenues and market share by innovating often. These teams can quickly address issues thanks to their varied viewpoints and skill sets, which promotes growth and adaptability (Khameis & Alshami, 2023).

4.2. Marketing

- **Discussion:** Not only do women hold the majority of marketing roles, but LinkedIn data also indicates that women make up the majority of marketing leaders. But there is a glaring underrepresentation of women of color in senior positions (LinkedIn Internal Data, 2021). Statistics show that women in North America are well represented in marketing compared to other industries.
- **Challenge:** Women are well represented in the marketing sector as they are more sociable and have good marketing skills. However, black women are underrepresented in marketing industry. According to a study conducted in Nigeria, there are essential criteria, methods, and procedures that must be followed to maximize the potential of women in the marketing industry (Ibok, N, 2015).
- **Outcomes:** Women are well represented in the marketing industry. Furthermore, without acknowledging women's contributions to the banks' potential for profit, bank marketing would fall short. All that's required is a formal acknowledgment of their contribution and the development of workable regulatory framework measures that might improve their safety and fully realize their potential (Ibok, 2015).

4.3. Information Technology

- **Discussion:** Despite discussions on gender diversity, women continue to be underrepresented, underpaid, and subjected to discrimination in the software industry, impacting opportunities, pay, and workplace safety (White, S, 2024).
- **Challenges:** Women are underrepresented in information technology roles. Thus, companies need to prioritize inclusion and equity in advancing and keeping women in the IT sector (White, 2024).
- **Outcomes:** According to a study conducted, women are more likely than males to quit their jobs because of rigid work schedules. Of those who quit, 14% said they couldn't work around their schedules, and 12% said they didn't have a good work-life balance. According to 97% of participants, requesting greater flexibility at work would harm their prospects of promotion (Parmelee, M, 2023).

4.4. Education

- **Discussion:** Women are well represented in the education sector; they have seen tremendous progress in the education sector (Chukwudebe et al, 2014).
- **Challenges:** Gender bias still exists as women are underrepresented in higher education leadership positions. One of the studies conducted to investigate this issue revealed that women were notably underrepresented in teaching, research, and administration roles at postsecondary educational institutions. Given the critical role that high-quality education plays in development—and higher education in particular—it is imperative that more women hold administration positions in the educational sector's reform because of their bravery and zeal for change (Chukwudebe et al, 2014).

While the hiring of women for leadership positions is clearly on the rise across industries, there are notable differences in the movement's success and pace. To truly achieve gender equality in leadership, significant obstacles must be removed from some sectors while others are making progress.

5. What is the track of women in leadership roles compared to men? Gender differences in leadership

Scholars and theorists have refrained from delving into the individual differences based on gender. It was believed that many researchers felt quite uneasy about this field of study (Beall et al, 2004). This idea implies that leadership responsibilities need equal preparation and development for men and women (Budworth & Mann, 2010).

Using the same techniques to develop male and female leaders overlooks the real distinctions between the sexes based on gender socialization and life experiences. It is assumed that opportunities and experiences would be comparable for men and women. Additionally, it assumes that people would view men and women equally if they display identical behaviors, which is unsupported for a variety of activities like networking (Forret & Dougherty, 2004).

A substantial amount of scholarly literature has offered both theoretical and empirical justifications for the ongoing differences in the inclinations of males to assume leadership roles more frequently than those of women. The majority of that study has concentrated on the external elements that sustain men's advancement to executive roles. For instance, scholars have focused on organizational rules and practices that restrict women's access to the inner sanctum of corporate leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Women's roles are always portrayed by the community as emotionally being responsible for household chores and all reproduction activities, thinking these are some reasons that women in leadership positions are a minority. Although they represent 49.7% of the labor force, only 16.3% of women hold CEO positions, and 24.7% are board directors, which leads to the conclusion that women's equivalence to men will not be met by 2060 (Benedik, J, 2018). There is a widespread belief that women have been perceived as weak in leadership abilities for generations since they have been labeled as dependent, submissive, and compliant" (Burns, J. M, 1978).

6. Are men better leaders than women?

The debate over gender leadership has persisted throughout history, but today's corporate environment requires a deeper understanding of what constitutes a "good" leader (Agaragimova, E, 2022). Dr. Alice Eagly's study reveals that women excel in leadership due to their transformational nature, effective listening, and innovative thinking compared to their male counterparts (Alice, E , 2013).

Numerous studies comparing the ways in which men and women manage stress in challenging circumstances have been conducted. Due to neurological and psychological differences, neuroscience and neurobiology demonstrate that when under duress, women make wiser decisions (Verma, R, Balhara, Y, & Gupta, C, 2011). Similarly, men and women make judgments quite similarly in regular scenarios, according to a University of Southern California study. However, in high-stress situations, men tend to behave more riskily, which frequently has negative effects and expensive outcomes. Stress affects men and women differently, both mentally and physically (Agaragimova, E, 2022).

Studies on leadership styles indicate a shift toward a more "Transformational" approach that prioritizes interpersonal and emotional intelligence. Meanwhile, research reveals that women outperform males in the emotional facets of leadership and women are more adept at transformational leadership than men are (De Mascia, S, 2019).

Another study conducted in the USA found that although men were preferred for leadership positions, women's leadership abilities were still highly regarded. This demonstrated gender disparity despite the women's expertise (Eagly , 2007). Despite women's competences, there is still a persistent underrepresentation of women in universities (Morley , 2014).

Table 1 Leadership Traits of Women and Men

Traits	Men	Women
Honest	20%	50%
Intelligent	14%	38 %
Hardworking	28%	28%
Decisive	44%	33%
Ambitious	34%	34%
Compassionate	5%	80%
Outgoing	28%	47%
Creative	11%	62%

Source: (Pew Research Center , 2008)

Table 1 shows a survey that was distributed to assess the leadership traits of men and women leaders. The findings of this survey reveal that women are more honest, intelligent, compassionate, outgoing, and creative than men leaders.

7. Do women manage money more effectively?

This is an argumentative topic that scholars and studies have different findings and views about it. Therefore, this paper will show the variety of views of the scholars who investigate this topic.

According to Pappas (2021), who stated that women are better in handling money than men. She explained that, in general, women tend to be more risk-averse than men. They are less risk-takers than men, which means that when it comes to handling money, they are less likely to lose their resources in high-risk or risky situations (Pappas, A, 2021).

In contrast, Mirams (2021) argued that men are better than women in handling money. Men as a group typically make more sensible and economical purchases. They focus on the effectiveness of the good or service instead of being influenced by labels or branding. Furthermore, men tend to budget their money better and they determine what needs to be bought and make plans for it. They don't make impulsive purchases. They are adept at prudent and successful money management because of their planning skills (Mirams, L, 2021).

8. Do you understand gender differences in leadership styles and effectiveness?

Empirical evidence has shown that women in their leadership styles tend to use cooperative, helpful, or democratic styles, while men tend to use directive, competitive, or autocratic leadership styles (Chin, J, 2011). Another academic research has illustrated the differences between men and women in communication skills and traits. According to Basow and Rubenfeld (2003), women in their communication with others tend to be more open, cautious, well-mannered, and social, whereas men tend to be typical, more self-confident, and dominant.

In addition, women usually focus on the task to be done, and they involve themselves with their employees in accomplishing the tasks, paying attention to the details and what is going on under the area of their responsibility and interacting with others effectively (Basow, A, & Rubenfeld, K, 2003). Another study illustrated that men in their leadership usually focus on themselves. They usually prefer to work independently, ensuring the authority they have and the contribution they make (Statham, A, 1987).

In contrast, some scholars argue that the differences between the leadership styles between men and women are mostly due to gender roles rather than biological differences. It means that the differences are related to the way that the society view the roles of males and females in addition to the situation and the work environment as well as raising up and cultural background. According to Kanter (1977) men and women who have the same power, authority and position behave in the same way, proposing that no differences between their leadership styles (Kanter, R, 1977).

Another study illustrated that men and women have a good influence on teaching and learning from each other about leadership dimensions of their organizations (Nelton, S, 1991). As a result, it would be good for the organization to accept the variety of leadership styles. In addition, there is no single best form of leadership, all leadership styles depend on the tasks to be accomplished and the policy of the organization (Moran, B, 1992).

Psychologists have a different view that the leadership differences between men and women are because of the differences growing for both men and women in their childhood since societies and parents do not usually deal with their female and male children similarly. As a result, women and men will grow up to be different in their skills and leadership styles, even if they are in the same leadership positions (Money, J & Ehrhardt, A, 1972). The following table summarizes the differences between women's and men's leadership styles.

Table 2 Differences between women and men leadership styles

Women Leadership Styles	Men Leadership Styles
Cooperative and democratic.	Autocratic and dominant.
More open and social.	Typical and more self-confident.
Involve themselves with others to accomplish their tasks.	Focus on themselves and want to work alone.
Pay attention to details and interact with others.	Prefer to be powerful and use their authority with others.

Source: Twateet (2014)

9. Conclusion

This paper concludes by highlighting the ongoing gender gaps that prevent women from advancing into leadership positions in a variety of industries. Unfair opportunities for women are still shaped by societal, structural, and cultural barriers, even in the face of significant progress in some areas. The discussions highlight how women frequently exhibit emotional intelligence-enhanced transformational leadership styles, which improve organizational performance. In addition to promoting equity, encouraging gender diversity in leadership improves creativity, judgment, and the general resilience of the company. Therefore, attaining sustainable and balanced leadership in the contemporary workforce still depends on addressing gender bias and putting inclusive policies into place.

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