Chapter 37

Factors Affecting Women Leadership to Reach Top Management and Its Impact on the Economy:
The Case of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Adel Ismail Al-Alawi
University of Bahrain, Bahrain

Nehal Fareed El Naggar
Royal University for Women, Bahrain

ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic organizations, as women climb up the corporate ladder, they don't seem to sustain and even might become extinct on the way upwards. In developing countries, especially in the Arab world, females have been regarded as the inferior of the species in a strictly male-dominated culture where they have been denied access to roles and positions open only to men, as male supremacy is the norm. This is a descriptive study based on mixed methods aiming to understand the role of women in the banking sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 female decision makers in the Bahraini banking sector to take their perspective on the topic with a total of 450 online question-naires that were distributed to 26 banking institutions representing both conventional and Islamic retail banks with a response rate of 200 respondents with a valid response of 147 representing 33% response rate. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential analyses; techniques such as tabulation, percentages, and charts have been employed.

INTRODUCTION

In an ideal world, there should be a balance in the gender availability on top management positions as the world is moving its efforts towards the anti-discrimination practices. Sidani (2016) stated that there is an ample of challenges facing working women in the Arab world; represented by gender discrimination, lack of line experience, inadequacy of career opportunities, gender differences in linguistic styles and socialization, gender-based stereotypes, gender inequalities lower levels of participation and pay especially in the upper echelon. Although Arab women have come a long way over the past few decades; it is still argued that working women face these challenges in the Arab world more evidently than their counterparts in other parts of the world. Hence, this gives room to investigate the various barriers that may hinder a woman from reaching top management positions and boardroom, along with its potential effect on the economic growth.

Increasing representation of females in top management of firms can be seen as increasing diversity in the management which can bring individuals of different characteristics and skills leading to improve the decision making process within firms adding different perspective and value. However, there is also an argument that this could lead to increased conflict and differences of opinion leading to delayed and/ or comprised (not optimal) decisions being taken.

Different studies addressed women leadership and its potential implication on the organizational performance consequently leading to the economic growth. Results reveal there is a positive relationship between women representation on top management and boardroom, and organizational performance, where the performance was measured by different researchers using different variables concluding that companies with women representation on top management enjoyed more innovative ideas, higher gross value added/turnover, profit on ordinary operations, net income, Return on Assets (ROA) and stock prices than their peers that did not have women on top layer positions (Smith, et al. 2006).

Dezsö et al. (2012) stated that female representation in top management may have important implications for a firm's competitiveness; in contrast organizations with no women representation on top management are missing out the opportunity of enhancing their performance and participating more positively to the economic growth. Hence, this adds to the research significance and the knowledge gap with regard to the topic under study.

Oakley (2000) and Auster (1993) referred to the glass ceiling as being very visible to those whose careers have been affected by it. In all parts of the world, female senior executives, and especially female Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are extremely rare in large corporations.

Many theories were proposed to identify the reasoning behind holding women back from advancing to higher managerial positions. One of which is the "double-bind theory" which states that many leaders claim that women lack the strength needed to pursue work properly and are too sensitive to handle issues and problems, while –on the other hand- when a female leader was recognized to enjoy the needed capabilities, her femininity will get hurt. Moreover according to Ibarra et.al (2013) "On subjecting women to double binds and double standards, high-potential women who are evaluated as competent managers often fail the likability test, whereas competence and likability tend to go hand in hand for similarly accomplished men."

On the other hand the role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders proposes that perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to perceiving women less favorably in potential occupations and evaluating a female behavior less favorably than it is enacted by

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/factors-affecting-women-leadership-to-reach-top-management-and-its-impact-on-the-economy/209005

Related Content

Staying Safe in the Digital Age: Mobile App Advancements
Seema Babusing Rathod, Rupali A. Mahajan, Bhisham Sharmaand Purushottam R. Patil (2024). *AI Tools and Applications for Women's Safety (pp. 291-303).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/staying-safe-in-the-digital-age/337769

Identity, Hard Sums and Butterflies
Catherine Byrne, Brian Boweand Michael Carr (2019). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education (pp. 35-47).*
www.irma-international.org/article/identity-hard-sums-and-butterflies/216372

The Power of Narratives
(2021). *Using Narratives and Storytelling to Promote Cultural Diversity on College Campuses (pp. 1-25).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-power-of-narratives/256734

Students of the Imaginary: Interpreting the Life Experiences of Ethnic Minority Students From Xinjiang Classes
Xin Su, Neil Harrisonand Robyn Moloney (2020). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education (pp. 36-53).*
www.irma-international.org/article/students-of-the-imaginary/270945

Support Is Not Just for Pantyhose
(2017). *Challenges Facing Female Department Chairs in Contemporary Higher Education: Emerging Research and Opportunities (pp. 35-50).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/support-is-not-just-for-pantyhose/173664