

## Section 2. Sociology

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### **LEADERSHIP INFLUENCED BY GENDER (CASE STUDY – ALBANIA)**

#### **Introduction**

It's very important to give your best to make things work, and it's even more important when what you give is fully appreciated! In this life, everything is won thanks to the efforts that each of us makes for ourselves. Nowadays, things are going towards perfection, technology, equality, innovation. Not only people, but also institutions are increasing their self-esteem. But what we emphasize in recent years, a special focus has been dedicated to the growth of female leaders in organizations at various levels. Women are making progress in the workplace and along with the slow steps, the barrier separating men and women is breaking down. Despite this progress, the number of women represented in the organization remains low.

The understanding of leadership is based on the fact that it is a process of influencing people to achieve one or several goals, objec-

tives, or to fulfill a certain mission. As we live in a period of change, things develop very quickly and it is necessary to adapt to change. To achieve this, businesses must focus on human resources, their management to achieve objectives. How can this be done with the greatest efficiency and effectiveness? Leadership! What is leadership and why is it important today? Male or female leadership?

The role of the leader is a decisive factor in accomplishing the mission. However, for the subordinate, initially, it does not matter how much his manager knows, how skilled he is professionally. For the subordinate, the relationships that the leader creates with him are important in the first place. Then the influences come and become mutual and it is precisely the leader's personality, his character, that plays a decisive role in subordinates, that orients them in the aspects of communication, cooperation and mutual trust.

This is because women today in the world rightly demand that they be part of the leadership. They know how to direct, motivate and inspire others and lead them towards common goals<sup>1</sup>. But another phenomenon is happening nowadays. We have the female leader and the male leader in front of us! In high management positions of companies (organizations), leadership and male gender often mean the same thing (Gurman, 1999). There are cases when women in senior leadership positions feel the need to adapt masculine traits to fit as closely as possible with the concept of an effective leader. These characteristics may include dressing in a masculine manner, harsh dialogue, aggressive behavior, etc. Another reason why leadership and the male gender go hand in hand has been because often women themselves have thought themselves not very capable of being leaders. As a result many men still think that women are not capable of leading, but only for their mundane and ordinary jobs. But over the past decades, the number of

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<sup>1</sup> URL: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Seven-Reasons-Why-Women-Should-Lead-the-New-World-of-Business%A9&id=295223>

women employed has increased significantly, although at managerial levels it is lower than the number of men (Virginia Zeringue, 1997)<sup>1</sup>. In Albania, women and girls have reached high levels of education, progress in the labor market and in public life. However, gender inequality remains a concern for society, putting many women in a dilemma between raising children or developing a career, due to the lack of adjustments in schedules, social services, and other obstacles that bring about traditional gender stereotypes and the male mindset of the society<sup>2</sup>.

But what is heard are a lot of questions and why. Why can't the image that people have about the figure of the leader be changed? Why is it still continued and a man is thought of when the word leader is mentioned? And through such issues as: – Who is the best leader? What are their qualities and do we need women in leadership? – today's leadership trends and the place women are occupying and will occupy in the near future will be explained.

**The methodology** used is focused on secondary sources, that is, data from official sources and statistics which are used in the main purpose of this study, however, in the case of Albania, a primary source was used. A sample of interviewees – female leaders, was used for the role of the most effective leadership as they thought.

**The purpose of this study** is to present an overview of the role and position of women in different organizations and to provide a synthesis of study materials for increasing the role of women in managerial positions, theories, policies and practices. Various authors have analyzed that men have dominant positions in management, and that women and men are not only studied from the point of view and biological differences, but also from the social influence they have had for years.

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<sup>1</sup> Zeringue Virginia. "The Power of Femininity: An Examination of the Qualities Women in Leadership Possess". 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Strategjia Kombëtare për barazinë gjinore dhe dhunën në familje, 2007–2010.

The hypothesis raised in this study is: Women are as capable as men in their role as leaders in an organization. But their encouragement in these positions depends on the democratic culture in organizations, the culture of society, as well as the degree of position that men have in the management of an organization.

### **Women's empowerment in Albania**

Since the transition period has negatively affected the integration of women in the labor market, women's participation in decision-making has dropped significantly and remains the lowest compared to other Central and Eastern European countries. There are many factors, among which we can mention the slow economic development and the restructuring of resources, the existing inherited mentality, society's expectations for women and the very important political will to include women in decision-making.

The perspective of gender equality in Albania has been considered in recent years as an issue that requires as much commitment as seriousness and cooperation between all actors and factors in this field, in order to realize European and international standards in this field at a faster rate. It is necessary to collect gender-disaggregated data in order to understand working conditions in different institutions. So how supportive/unsupportive are all these institutions in relation to the men and women – their staff? This is one of the conditions that must be met by an institution that can implement policies with gender objectives.

### **Why are there no women in managerial positions today, seen from a feminine perspective?**

Asking why this phenomenon happens, they will answer like this ...

There are three different categories that explain the reasons why women are in low positions in companies today, in addition to constant efforts for change. Ndër të cilat përmenden:

*„I don't want this role” – this is about the lifestyle that this group leads – list of women. Usually, the importance of family obligations*

*intervenes here, which unbalance the work-family balance. This is especially true for women who are mothers and leadership and career advancement are not top priorities. Their flexibility remains a priority, and professional life is not among the most important aspirations.*

*„I won't make it" – women are known for their double-minded nature, a quality that they don't often point out in a second partner, even more so if the person in question has a professional life. This is also caused by factors such as limited roles leading to a more limited space of vacancies in a company.*

Another factor that often carries the main weight is the building of relationships with the right people who can help in success. It often happens that women (and this is a phenomenon that happens in almost every country), wonder about the value of the dilemma „I still have to fight"?

„I can't have that role" – this includes the type of organization and the policies that human resources follow in recruiting employees. Also, traditional beliefs raise the barrier that women are less effective than men and here we are in a part where the gender of the leader affects (Sherwin, 2012).

### **Conclusion**

Men and women do not have the same feedback in terms of contribution to an organization. They have different communication styles and that is nothing new. But it is precisely communication that differentiates and is the key to persuasion.

It was observed that men tended to differentiate themselves from others and rely only on facts while women were more about finding common ground and favoring instinct. The differences between the two genders consisted of what each gender sought, how they went about getting the information they needed, why they sought that information, and how they used the final source.

Women, on the other hand, are more inclined to compare themselves with others in order to improve and to be in favor of policies that help and protect consumers, the environment, etc. Regarding the leadership style that women use, they are inclined towards the democratic one, while men are in favor of the autocratic style, where the system is centralized. Studies show that compared to men, women are less influenced by materialism and corruption.

Organizations must hire women for leadership positions, not only because of ethical and legal reasons, to be competitive but also for economic reasons.

The discrimination that organizations exercise against women can bring very serious consequences such as reduced return on investment, increased absenteeism and staff turnover, lower morale, less creativity, reduced performance and organizational productivity.

The advantages of women leaders are: more effective communication, higher flexibility and creativity, easier relationship building, social skills, negotiation and cooperation.

The reasons for a low presence of women in leadership are: women's family obligations, many prejudices, lack of examples of tradition, etc. While in Albania, patriarchal culture is considered the most important factor, followed by family obligations and economic level.

Companies/Organizations that have women in leadership positions are also expected to have higher profits. This is also reflected in the economy of a country. Consequently, countries with higher incomes tend to have more women in the labor force.

Political, economic and social changes affect the social situation and the role of women in the labor market.

Albanian managers have conservative views regarding the role of women and men at work and in leadership. They think that Albania's patriarchal culture is the main hindering factor for women aiming for leadership. Most of them have a preference for a male or female

boss, meaning they don't mind having a female superior. The vast majority think that leadership style depends on character and is not related to sex. Therefore, it cannot be said that women or men have a particular style.

Different leadership groups mean different opinions, resulting in more refined conclusions. Finally, we say that the higher the diversity in a company, the higher the possibility of increased economic performance.

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