

Factors that Facilitate Women's Access to Management Positions: The Case of Peruvian Companies

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Abstract: Over the past few years, the presence of women as managers is important for corporate performance, several international organizations have raised their voices to seek the commitment of states around the world; women have begun to have greater recognition of their social and intellectual abilities to manage companies, but full gender equity within the corporate world is yet to be seen. Following goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 established by the UN, it's important to improve the situation in countries such as Peru, where the presence of women in managerial positions is still very low so it's necessary to have more women breaking the glass ceiling and climbing to top management positions (Salas et al., 2020). This research study aimed to describe the factors that facilitate women's access to managerial positions. About the methodology, it was a descriptive type of research, with a quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional approach; the population is all the women who held managerial positions in companies in Lima and Callao during 2021, and the sample was 30 women, with a non-probabilistic sampling for convenience; the technique used was the survey and the instrument was the questionnaire. The results obtained showed that among the factors with the greatest impact were myths and stereotypes, the most required factor to facilitate the access of women in managerial positions was the change in social paradigms, the required impact was the reduction of gender inequality and according to the perspective of women managers the participation of women in managerial positions was proportional to a greater economic return and it's expected that women managers can make way for other women in various areas of the organization. It was concluded that the factors that are most involved in the access of women to management positions are those linked to the culture and thinking of the population, so it requires a long-term plan and the commitment of women, organizations, the environment, the culture, and government entities to facilitate the access of women in management positions in Lima and Callao.

Keywords: Manager's gender, Gender diversity, Gender equity, Female leadership, Business management

1. Introduction

In the last 5 years, there has been an increase in research articles on various factors that can generate an increase of women in leadership positions such as management and directorships within organizations, since gender diversity brings benefits not only for companies but also brings social and economic benefits for the country in which it takes place. This is something important because it's part of the mechanisms used to increase business productivity in organizations in addition to supporting goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals established by the UN for 2030 (ILO [International Labour Organization], 2019). However, globally there has been evidence of the weak representation of women in management and board positions, as indicated in the Grant Thornton report (2022), where it's mentioned that although there was an increase in the percentage compared to the previous year, the global proportion of women in senior positions is 32%. While Deloitte (2022) in its most recent edition, indicated that the percentage of women in board positions globally in 2021 was 19.7%. Chen and Houser (2019) detailed that stereotypes influence how capable women are seen to be in developing these skills. Governments around the world, over the past few years, have paid attention to gender balance. Not only because of the quest to assert women's rights in societies traditionally based on male power, but also because of the effect that government measures have on society and the opportunities that society gives to women. Among the measures employed by governments are both mandatory and voluntary quotas, but organizations in countries such as India have created mechanisms to circumvent them (ILO, 2020). Demonstrating that the actions taken aren't sufficient to achieve full gender balance.

Access factors comprise aspects in terms of different environments that allow the creation of measures and actions taken by various actors interacting with women in their working life. Osi and Teng (2021), named them as facilitators that women encounter before and during their professional life to reach the CEO position. These are tools of the legal or voluntary type that serve to break the "glass ceiling" which is defined as what prevents women from continuing to climb to higher job positions within the company in which they work (Ordóñez and Pérez, 2020).

1.1 Objective

The general objective is “Describe the factors that facilitate the access of women in management positions in companies in Lima and Callao, in the year 2021”. It’s necessary to investigate the factors that facilitate access for women in managerial positions in Lima and Callao since women currently don't have a significant representation in senior positions such as managers and boards compared to the male presence. According to ILO (2017) in South America, female talent is underutilized and it’s visible that the region has a loss of female talent in leadership positions due to obstacles such as functions, gender stereotypes, and the family and domestic burdens assigned to women. An identification of the Peruvian context must be made before the planning of measures that facilitate or guide women to leadership positions within the administrative boards of Peruvian companies. And that greater gender equality can then be made visible.

2. Literature Review

Regarding the factors that facilitate women's access to managerial positions, Osi and Teng (2021) mentioned the influential and required factors on the professional success of women such as the drivers of professional success for women leaders and reflect the different levels of relationships and interactions women have in their organizations (mentors, colleagues, and subordinates) and families (husbands, sons, and fathers), which reflect cultural norms and standards such as myths and stereotypes, lack of training, discrimination (Osi and Teng, 2021; Tahir et al., 2021), machismo (Barrueto, 2021), lack of gender equality policies (Centrum, 2018) and workplace harassment (Pwc, WomenCEO Perú and IFC, 2021). The required factors could be commitment and greater momentum from the CEO and senior management (ILO, 2019), change of social paradigms (Barrueto, 2021), promotion of laws that consider their participation (Seierstad et al., 2017; Heller and Gabaldon, 2018) and female empowerment policies (Centrum, 2018; Brieger, 2019; Lewellyn, 2020). About women in managerial positions Núñez and Tannert (2018) explain that they are women with the necessary skills to lead organizations. Barrueto (2021) mentions that there are determining factors for these women to reach senior management positions, such as the expected required impact like the reduction of gender inequality (Halliday et al., 2021), ILO (2019) mentions greater sustainability over time of the company, greater innovation, greater female employment, and the improved profitability of a company. And the perspective of women's participation as mentioned by Barrueto (2021) about greater female participation in boards generates greater economic returns (ILO, 2019) and consideration of the importance of promoting active female participation in managerial positions.

Various antecedents have been written worldwide, the article by Halliday et al. (2021) analysed the national context as a key factor for the integration of organizational leadership and the presence of women on boards. Their results showed that having female directors generates a greater impact in organizations within national contexts with macho cultures, with less gender equality. Osi and Teng (2021) studied factors that challenged and enabled women in their working lives were identified, such as the presence of myths and stereotypes, and discrimination. They also identified facilitators such as a culture with equal opportunities, constant support from organizations through orientation programs, professional training, and more. ILO (2019) presented a study that looked at solutions to increase gender diversity, they found it’s that a woman is the president of the board of directors since there is evidence that this causes more women in intermediate-level positions in organizational leadership positions; having more women in executive positions also generates benefits to the organization such as greater sustainability, greater profitability, and innovation. The study by Ricks (2018) investigated the skills useful to women in board positions in the education sector to reach the top level in the organizational hierarchy to set a pattern or path for other women to rise as well. The role of culture in equal opportunities and the importance of a commitment on the part of organizations and society so that women can have access to training in these skills is also pointed out. Seierstad et al. (2017) examined the promotion of laws that consider the participation of women has a great influence on the increase of women in high positions. He found it necessary to have constant support and accompaniment from political forces to generate significant progress. Also pointed out that national policies referring to women on the board of directors should not be recreated by other countries without prior evaluation of the national context, because there are factors that may differ from one country to another, even belonging to the same geographical region. Lewellyn and Muller (2020) tried to identify causal pathways and discover how empowering forces and cultural dimensions together affect gender diversity on corporate boards. Among their findings, the positive relationship between having greater economic and political power and having more women on boards stands out. The beliefs and attitudes of the culture towards women do affect the presence of women in board positions.

Studies on women in managerial positions have also been published in Peru. PwC, WomenCEO Perú, and IFC (2021) offered a guide with recommendations to get more female directors in Peruvian companies to increase the number of women in senior positions. Within the context of women in high positions, factors that must be addressed were mentioned; an example was workplace harassment. The guide detailed eight strategies that link the organizational culture that offers the same opportunities to men and women, the commitment of the general management, compliance with the legal framework, the rights to equality and non-discrimination, organizational policies that promote diversity, strategies of gender, the promotion of female leadership and alliances with specialized organizations. Barrueto (2021) investigated factors that influence the presence of women managers in companies in Metropolitan Lima and their impact. Among the results obtained, the main influential factors were myths and social stereotypes, followed by machismo. The factors that benefit the permanence of women in managerial positions were the commitment on the part of managers and changes in social paradigms. WomenCEO Perú et al. (2021) made a report about the participation of women on the boards of directors located in the context of Peru, it was mentioned that women are in 40% of companies listed on the stock market also confirmed that a diverse board of directors adds value to companies. It also raised an access factor, the employment profile of women, focusing on their capabilities, which is why organizations must commit to training them and providing equal opportunities. In the study carried out by Centrum PUCP et al. (2018) to learn about his journey and experience in the position, access factors such as years of experience in the field and internationally, and shareholder confidence were identified. The need for policies that achieve female empowerment was mentioned. Jara (2020) carried out an investigation analysing the relationship between the entry of women to the board of directors and the diversity of its composition, the results obtained showed that the participation of women directors contributes to improving diversity on boards since they increase the diversity of knowledge.

3. Methodology

This research is descriptive, non-experimental, and cross-sectional design. The population is all the women who held a managerial position in Lima and Callao, during 2021. Currently, there is no exact data on the number of women who held managerial positions in Peru, according to a study by the consulting firm Spencer Stuart (2016), the percentage of women in the general manager position was 7% in Peru. And a sample of 30 women who worked in managerial positions within companies in Lima and Callao during the year 2021 was used. As it's an unknown quantity, a non-probabilistic sampling is used with purpose since there are limitations in terms of the number of women who can be contacted.

In the analysis unit, inclusion criteria such as the position held by these women was applied. It must be a managerial or board position depending on the type of company in which they work, they must have held the position during the year 2021 and they must have worked in Lima or Callao. The technique used is the survey, and the instrument is the questionnaire. The instrument will be adapted from that belonging to the scientific article by Barrueto (2021) a questionnaire made up of seven questions from which the last two will be eliminated. since they are specific to the context studied in the article and do not correspond to the present investigation. Three sociodemographic questions will be added to obtain the approximate profile of women in managerial positions.

4. Data Collection

The call for participants was made through private LinkedIn messaging and direct contact, and the questionnaire was sent virtually through the Google form with prior confirmation of participation. The participants were previously informed of the importance of providing objective answers to identify the factors that allow women access to management positions. The data obtained were extracted and treated using Excel to find the mode and frequency statistics, the descriptive statistics and the results were presented in frequency graphs and sector graphs for their analysis and interpretation. Copyrights were respected for the adaptation of the Barrueto (2021) instrument applied in her research. In the application of the questionnaire, an informed consent message was presented, and the participants were informed of the use and management of the information collected so that they know the implications of their responses.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Results

Three introductory questions were asked to find out the general profile of the respondents. 53% of the participants are in an age range between 40 and 49 years, followed by 23% between 30 and 39, 20% between

50 and 59 years, 3% between 20 and 29 years old, and finally, no one reaches 60 years of age. About the distribution of the positions held by the respondents in 2021, there were 60% held the position of general manager, 10% of them were executive directors, 7% had positions as director financial and operations manager, 10% had another type of manager, while 3% was a commercial director, and finally, none had positions as an administrative manager or another type of director. For the size of the company in which they worked, half of the respondents 47% worked as a manager or director in medium-sized companies, 47% of them worked in small companies and only 7% in large companies.

Regarding the objective of identifying the influential factors in the access of women to managerial positions in companies in Lima and Callao, in the year 2021, the following results were found. As shown in figure 1, the most influential factors were myths and/or stereotypes with 83%, and machismo with 73% of the respondents having selected them. Followed by the lack of policies on gender equality and discrimination with 50% and 53% respectively. Finally, 23% of the respondents identified the lack of training as an influential factor, and only 20% selected harassment at work.

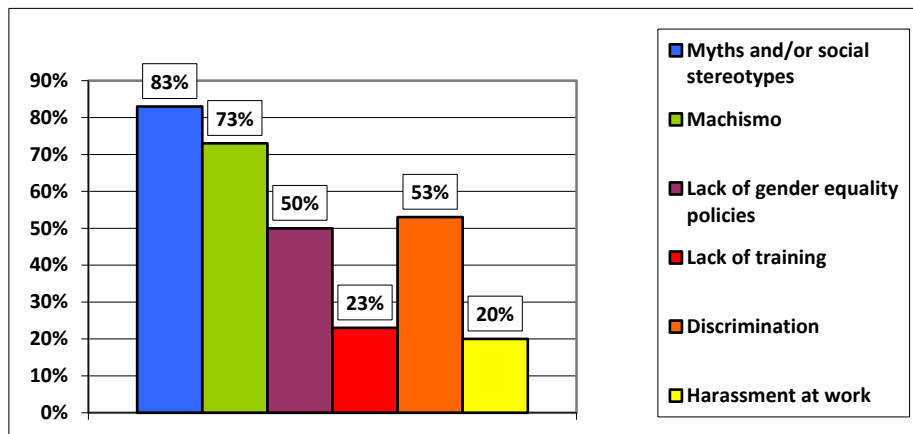


Figure 1: Factors That Influence the Participation of Women in Management

Regarding the objective of identifying the factors required in the access of women in managerial positions in companies in Lima and Callao, in the year 2021, the results displayed in figure 2 were found. Among the respondents, 93% of them identified the change of social paradigms as a required factor, while 83% believe that policies for female empowerment from schools are necessary, 70% of the respondents identified the commitment and greater impulse from CEOs and senior management as a requirement to achieve greater participation of women in management, only 30% selected the promotion of laws that consider their participation and finally 10% believe that other factors are required.

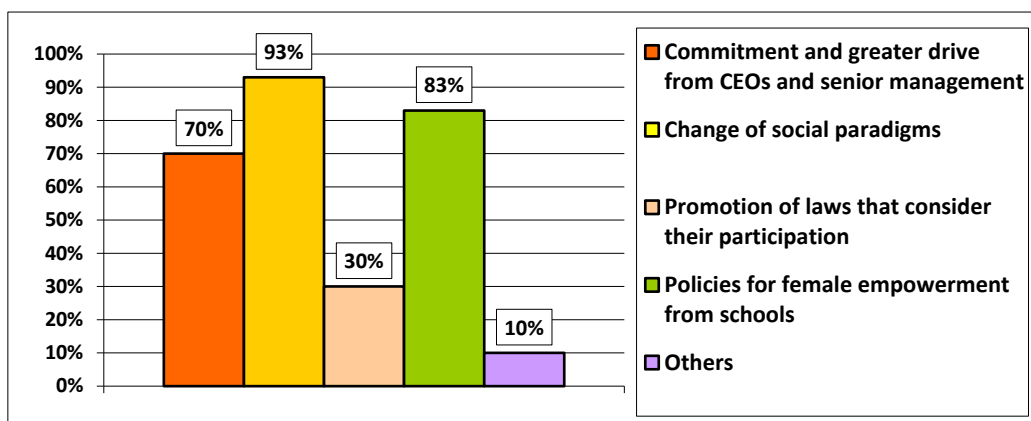


Figure 2: Factors Required to Achieve Greater Participation of Women in Management

Regarding the objective of identifying the required impact of women's participation for women's access to managerial positions in companies in Lima and Callao, in the year 2021, figure 3 shows the results obtained. 47% of the respondents believed the participation of women in management should generate a reduction in gender inequality, 40% greater sustainability over time for the company, and an improvement in profitability. While 37% chose all the alternatives, they were 27% thought that there should be more female employment and 20%

more innovation. Lastly, only 3% of participants expressed that other impacts are required from the participation of women in management.

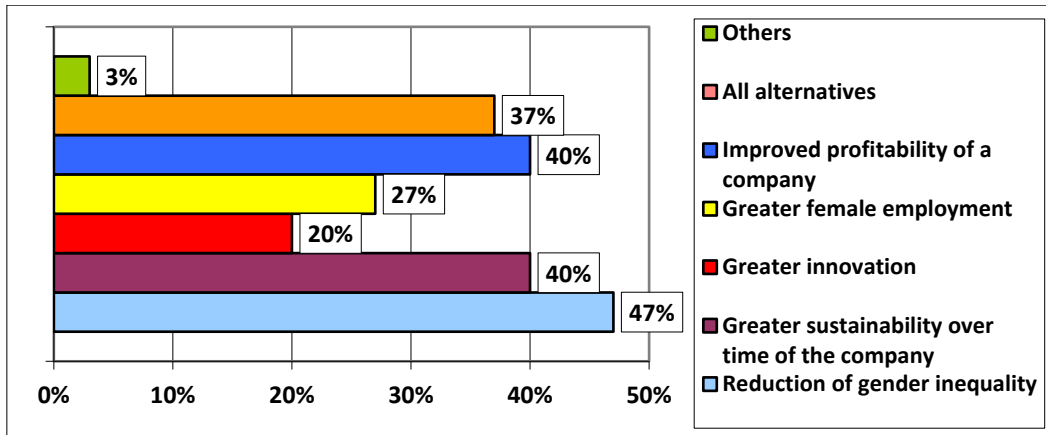


Figure 3: Required Impact of Women's Participation in Management

The objective of identifying the perspective on the access of women in managerial positions in companies of Lima and Callao, in the year 2021. Figure 4 details the results obtained from the perspective of the respondents on whether companies with greater female participation at levels of business managers and in high executive positions present higher economic returns. There were 93% of those answered yes, while 7% thought no.

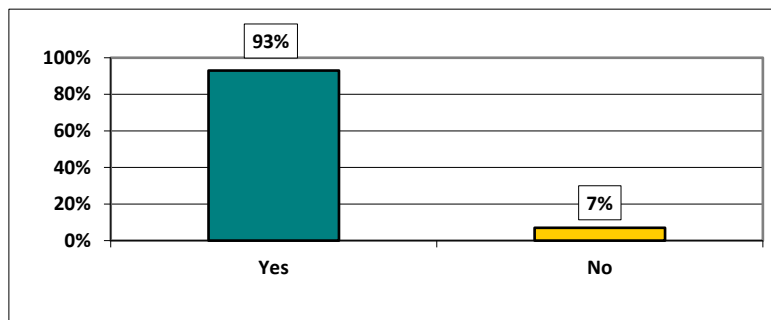


Figure 4: Perspective on Whether Companies With Greater Female Participation at Business Management Levels and in Senior Executive Positions Present Higher Economic Returns

Figure 5 presents the results regarding the consideration of the importance of promoting active female participation in boards. Among the respondents, 100% answered yes and none answered no. It can be seen that currently women in management positions are aware of the importance and need to promote active female participation, and this is a good indicator that they would be willing to do their part to better achieve expectations that more women can ascend to managerial positions in Peru.

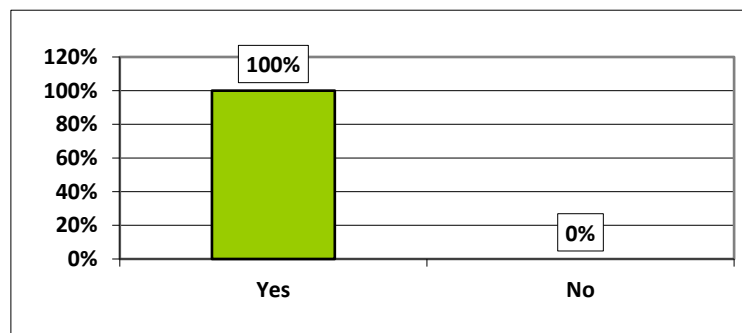


Figure 5: Consideration of the Importance of Promoting the Active Participation of Women In Peruvian Business Management

5.2 Discussion

In the present investigation, the main objective is to describe the factors that facilitate the access of women in management positions in companies in Lima and Callao, in the year 2021. In this regard, after obtaining the results of the questionnaire, it was possible to detail that the profile of women in management positions during 2021 was that of a woman between 40 and 49 years of age, with the position of general manager of medium-sized or small companies. It was also identified that the factor that most influences the presence of women in senior management is "myths and stereotypes" and "machismo" (Barrueto, 2021; Lewellyn and Muller, 2020; Osi and Teng, 2021). The most required factor to achieve a greater presence of women in management was "the change in social paradigms" which contradicts Barrueto (2021), and "female empowerment policies" (Centrum PUCP et al., 2018). The most required impact of the participation of women in management were the "reduction of gender inequality" (Halliday et al., 2021), "greater sustainability in the time of a company" and "improvement of profitability of a company" in the second place (Centrum PUCP et al., 2018). From the perspective of the respondents, it was possible to discover that almost all the respondents consider that companies with greater female participation at business management levels do present higher returns (Barrueto, 2021; ILO, 2019) and that they do consider it important to promote the active participation of women in Peruvian business management (Barrueto, 2021).

However, the results found cannot be generalized to other realities, there are some limitations; first, direct contact with surveyed managers was difficult, and second, the population is small. Therefore, it would be necessary to carry out other investigations that cover a larger sample if the topic is sought to be deepened in the future. Another limitation was the lack of scientific articles that investigate the variables in the Peruvian and Latin American context to compare results in a more detailed way.

It's recommended that more research be carried out that investigates the access of women to high command positions such as management and boards within the Peruvian and Latin American context. In future studies, it would be beneficial to expand the dimensions presented, in addition to the creation and use of instruments with a greater number of questions that allow a greater scope.

6. Conclusion

It was concluded that the factors that facilitate the access of women in managerial positions are determined by those that have a great positive and negative influence on the possibility of their promotion and these are mostly established by culture, which is why a change in social paradigms and promoting female leadership from an early stage of formation. In the Peruvian context, culture is an extremely important factor, but the organization has a decisive role in generating an improvement in the current situation. There are expectations for the participation of women in management, one of which is the reduction of gender inequality. One would then be talking about a commitment at a general level, where both women, organizations, the social and cultural environment, as well as government authorities, commit to change to facilitate women's access to management positions.

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