

Carmit Moshe ROZENTAL & Ortal FALKOVICH
PhD student's
«Alexandru Ioan Cuza» University, Iasi, Romania

A WOMAN OF WORTH? Issues Involved in empowering Women to Senior Managerial Positions in managing educational systems

Abstract: The present study is a literature review within a Doctoral research thesis. As part of the efforts being made in Israel to reduce gender disparities and increase the number of women in managerial positions, it is important to examine the correlation between the existence of marketing efforts to promote women in managerial position and the number of women employed in management positions in Israel's Ministry of Education.

Education is considered a female profession, and therefore the number of women directors in the Ministry of Education is greater than their share in the labour market. Understanding the factors that allow a woman to get employed as a director in the Ministry of Education can lead to the study of a marketing strategy that can benefit women who wish to advance to management positions in various sectors.

The literature review will present a fusion of possible connections from different content worlds: Interdisciplinary education, marketing strategy, gender, behavioural economics, creative economy, creative class, labour market, management.

Keywords: Marketing concept, 7 p's, public sector – Ministry of Education in Israel, Gender, creative labour, branding, creative economy, creative class, Interdisciplinary education, behavioural economics.

Introduction

The OECD recommendations in the sphere of gender equality are based upon the understanding that despite state programs, discrepancies and stereotypes in work opportunities, salary levels, representation and decision-making, processes in the realm of education still exist. In 2008 the Ministry of Economy in Israel developed programs for equal employment. These programs emphasized legislation for preserving a balance between family and work.

When focusing upon education, why is it important for more women to strive to advance and become school principals? Israel needs a future reserve of high-quality management on the national level, and women constitute an untapped reservoir of potential. On the personal level, developing a career on a managerial level enables women to work in a chosen profession at a level that ensures a high income. This will lead to personal and economic independence in the future.

This article reviews literature presents a combination of topics concerning the subject from the aspects of management, economics, behavior, marketing, interdisciplinary education, as well as trends in the field of creative economics.

Integrating the diverse micro (teaching) and macro (organization) disciplines in the educational system in Israel can lead to a new intervention and to gradual change. The objective is to continue to promote gender equality and to increase the number of women working in high-level-management positions in the Ministry of Education in Israel and worldwide. The use of conceptional strategical thinking throughout the world may be examined and assessed in the future.

Business Management

Managing business processes (MBP) is a comprehensive approach to the execution of an organization's aims and objectives. To increase the effectiveness of operations in an organization, MBP concentrates on optimizing the ways business processes are run in organizations. According to Lemanska and Okregelica, one of the fundamental conditions of success is a business model that is not only a theoretical concept, but also an essential tool in an organization's strategies and actions (Lemanska & Okreglicka, *Identification of business processes in an enterprise management*). Weber's model of bureaucratic organizations outlines the proper ways

of maintaining an effective organization and emphasizes that an ideal bureaucratic organization is a social system in which everyone shares a belief in the tenet of “law and order”. In other words, there is consensus in the organization, as in society, that compliance with directives, procedures, and regulations is not a matter of arbitrary coercion, but rather a requirement that assures the maintenance of order (Udy, *'Bureaucracy' and 'rationality' in Weber's organization theory*).

According to Weber's model: All organizations must have a distribution of their workload, as well as a clear division of duties among the employees, organized according to a hierarchical, pyramid, authority structure; each official's authority is clearly defined and determined by a set of precise written rules; there is a complete and explicit separation between official activity and private life; the workplace allows an employee to develop a professional career; employment in the organization is based on the employee's technical skills and not on political, familial, or other ties; promotion in the organization is based on the individual's skills; the employee is given a fixed salary to ensure loyalty to the organization and its goals; promotion to a higher rank is determined by seniority; and a collective memory system is established (*Ibid.*).

On the basis of this model, it is clear that the manager in the organization, whether a man or a woman, will have the best possible skills and abilities, since it is their responsibility to lead the organization to success.

Peter Drucker developed a model of Management by Objectives (MBO), an approach that talks about effectiveness rather than efficiency. It combines management's requirements and the employee's work plan with the aim of realizing achievements in a given period. MBO speaks about planning targets, and examining the quantity and quality of the resources needed by the organization. To ensure the organization's effectiveness, all activities must be related to achieving a particular goal. MBO has four basic principles: goals, time strategy, management features, and individual motivation. These principles shape the actions that the organization needs to take: Identifying the target by examining the current state of the organization, its characteristics, trends, and expectations; setting goals according to the areas of potential targets identified in the previous stage, which in turn serve as the foundation for determining personal, group, departmental, or organizational goals; validating every formal target (Ntanos, Boulouta, *The management by objectives in modern organizations and enterprises*).

The differences between the management styles of women and men, which have been supported by numerous studies, do not harm the success of the organization. There are different ways to achieve the same goal.

Marketing Strategies

Organizations that work according to a marketing concept will usually use “the marketing mix” to manage their interactions with consumers. This mix includes a combination of factors that can be adjusted to fit the requirements of individuals or groups of clients, and consists of the following controlled variables, the seven Ps: 1) Product – A set of characteristics that satisfy the requirements of consumers; 2) Price – Fixed according to market levels, while reflecting the quality and characteristics of the product; 3) Place – The product is available in numerous locations and by order from suppliers; 4) Promotion – Information given about the product; 5) People – Technical advice provided by manufacturers and staff, which is beneficial and informative; 6) Processes – Purchasing and support processes which are easy to carry out; 7) Physical evidence – Whatever improves the perception of the buyer.

For example, if we look at women as if they are “products” in the employment market that need to be selected for a managerial position, then a whole marketing strategy can be advanced to enhance the promotion of women: *Product level – woman as a brand in management (internal characteristics make women more confident, more assertive, better prepared, etc.); *Price level (the salaries they will earn, compared to the profits they will bring into the organization); *Place level –distribution (increasing the availability of women – they will relocate more willingly for a managerial position if they are part of a supportive network, if they have government funded childcare, etc.); * Promotion (make women more visible by presenting successful cases of women in managerial positions, role models, etc., which will have multifaceted effect – employers will be more willing to accept a woman in a managerial position, women will become more confident in applying for managerial positions; *People – the enabling environment in the first circle and beyond: the family and society; *Processes – The marketing strategy needs to be precise and easy to implement for every woman who wants to move into a management role; *Physical evidence – First and foremost, education, and in today’s world, the media, which has an extremely influential role.

In the literature, a strong brand is defined as one that is managed and planned, both intra-organizationally and externally. It can be designed on the basis of research and development, in order to add services to the product. How can a woman with management potential present herself as a strong brand? Based on what has been said, she needs to develop qualities in internal organizational areas, understand the system she will be managing, develop marketing skills, and be up-to-date with innovations in the market. She must know who she is competing with for the management position. She must identify how she differs from others and the advantages she has in comparison to them. The rapid development of technology has shortened the life cycle of brands. But technological progress is advantageous with respect to the branding of female managers, because the new management positions are presented transparently on the network in a way that is accessible to every employee in the system (Herschstein, *Managing brands – Developing brand image strategies*).

Strategic marketing planning outlines the longer-term policies, positioning, stance, and activities, which the marketing units or divisions must adopt in order to achieve corporate objectives. One of the most fundamental issues that a company must determine is the type of marketing strategy it wishes to adopt. Of the many established marketing strategies, there are three basic ones which any company can follow: differentiated marketing, undifferentiated marketing, or a combination of both.

Of these strategies, an undifferentiated approach is best suited to the marketing of women in the field of education. Undifferentiated marketing claims that there is a standard, fixed product and a standard, fixed marketing procedure. The product will be aimed at a large segment of the market. Such a strategy can reduce marketing or production costs, for example, but require large outlays for promotional activity and possibly distribution. Very few companies produce a product that is suitable for everyone around the world (*The Association of Business Executives*).

Undifferentiated marketing may also be suitable for marketing women for management positions, and using this marketing strategy can save costs and resources. It can be based on the management skills of the school principal, since a principal with managerial skills may be able to direct schools with a special orientation, such as institutions that have been defined as leaders in fostering excellence in specific fields, for example, the history and geography of the country, sports, or ecology and environmental sustainability.

Creative Economy

In a creative labour market, the creative economy can be closely related to the creative and cultural industries. Recently, the importance of the cultural economy and the cultural and creative industries has greatly increased. Today, cultural and creative industries are driving forces for economic growth, and in accordance with global demand, are also stimulated by the new economy. The concept not only refers to the sphere of culture in the strict sense, but also to cultural goods and services as the core of a new, powerful and vast sector that can be broadly referred to as cultural areas (Boccella, Salerno, *Creative economy, cultural industries and local development*).

Israeli society has different cultural identities, which the creative economy could be using as an economic leverage. Within the Ministry of Education, these cultures are represented by various types of schools. Yet, there are many cultures where the promotion of women for management positions is not always perceived as positive. In order to empower women and advance them to senior management positions within a society of diverse cultures, we must be sensitive to this, and respond to cultural diversity with the aim of promoting those who work in the creative economy.

Interdisciplinary teamwork is an intricate process in which staff from different fields work together, and share knowledge and specialties to promote a certain area. According to Molyneux (*Interprofessional teamworking: What makes teams work well?*), there are three indicators for positive teamwork: personal qualities and commitment of staff, communication within the team, and the opportunity to develop creative working methods within the team. Henneman et al. (*Collaboration: A concept analysis*) argue that collaboration requires competence, confidence, and commitment. McCray (*Leading interprofessional practice: A conceptual framework to support practitioners in the field of learning disability*) claims that while considering the characteristics that are vital for inter-professional teamwork in an organization, attention needs to be paid to the actual process of inter-professional practice within the organizational strategy (Nancarrow et al., *Ten principles of good interdisciplinary team work*). It is essential for economies that want to move forward or remain in the forefront of the international arena to provide a high level of education for both managers and workers so as to develop their ability to perform complex tasks with flexibility, understand intricate work-flows, and make

more effective decisions (Bondareva et al., *Interdisciplinary education in management at the Technical University*).

Interdisciplinary education in social science can be described as providing the opportunity for learning within the boundaries of various disciplines, and cultural and social groups, which creates a “third space.” The meeting of different perspectives within this third space triggers the co-constructing of education. According to Akkerman (*Boundary crossing and boundary objects*), learning in the third space helps develop new knowledge, stimulate critical thinking, teaches students to be open to different perspectives, etc. The third space is often actualized in overarching thematic areas where different disciplines come together to create joint solutions. Such actualization is also the result of looking at the breadth and complexity of the problem being addressed (Klaassen, *Interdisciplinary education: A case study*). Multidisciplinary education is designed according to the problem selected, which is fundamental to the learning outcomes, while taking into account a program's level of integration and constructive orientation (*Ibid.*).

In the context of marketing women for management positions, working within an interdisciplinary learning group can lead to the emergence of a new program or recommendations that can bring about an increase in the number of female managers in the future.

Behavioural Economics

A historic analysis of behavioural economics suggests close ties with psychology, thus it is likely that the future of this discipline will be influenced by developments in the field of psychology (Osman, *Behavioral economics: Where is it heading?*). From the point of view of economics, it can also be said that the areas of education and psychology interrelate in many ways; therefore, it is important to continue to integrate psychology into educational thinking.

It is reasonable to assume that if it is economically advantageous for women to be engaged in management positions, it is only a matter of time before the trend of seeing more women in management will increase. Israel's Ministry of Education is doing its best to keep the relevant curricula up-to-date, and it may be assumed that it will continue to develop educational programs to educate girls toward empowerment and independence.

Behavioural theorists argue that human decision-making is not necessarily based on concrete or rational grounds. Often individuals are just following certain traditions, or attempting to avoid risk and difficulties. Supporters of the prospect theory, which is associated with behavioural theory, argue that human behaviour is frequently determined by a persistent desire to avoid loss rather than the desire to generate profits (Guzavicius et al., *Education as public good: Behavioral economics approach*). From an educational and psychological point of view, this theory adds force to the claim that even today, women still refrain from breaking the tradition of giving preference to remaining at home, over going to work, without the career goals.

From this perspective, it is very difficult to bring about change, but in order to diversify Israel's managerial reserve, the Ministry of Education in particular, and the state in general, must continue to develop empowerment programs aimed at encouraging girls toward careers in management.

From an educational point of view, this is an important commentary that may allow many more women to change what is considered traditional behaviour. Working in a senior management position demands courage and self-confidence, as well as the ability to identify the needs of the work environment, while showing sensitivity to the family. At the same time, managers must be able to think outside the box.

It is just this type of thinking that is driving the research and development process in the disciplines of science and technology within the Ministry of Education. Thus, it is projected that girls who choose to study these subjects are much more likely to become managers in the future.

On the basis of this idea, it is worthwhile to continue to expand the empowerment of girls in other disciplines as well. The assumption is that interdisciplinary learning that which promotes thinking outside the box will encourage other girls to see themselves as future managers.

Decades of study in experimental economics have shown that individuals' preferences and economic behaviour are quite diverse. The literature has tried to explain this diversity as being due to various factors such as education, cultural differences, age, income level, and social status, among others. Gender differences have been analysed experimentally in many different areas of economics and under a wide variety of situations. Croson and Gneezy (*Gender differences in preferences*) review experiments dealing with gender differences in risk, social, and competitive preferences. Analysing a large number of experiments, they observe that, in general,

women are more averse to taking risks than men, are more sensitive to social cues, and have a lower inclination for competitive environments. On the other hand, Eckel and Grossman (*Men, women and risk aversion: Experimental evidence*), who reviewed economic experiments that explore gender differences with regard to public goods, observed no significant differences in the behaviour of subjects exposed to risk (Croson & Gneezy, *op. cit.*).

Since women behave similarly to men in a public context, while on the other hand, they tend to behave differently in a competitive or dangerous environment, gender differences can be advantageous, balancing each another out in situations where alternative solutions to various problems need to be considered. These assumptions emphasize the importance of striving toward increasing the number of women managers so as to equalize the male/female ratio in the field.

Recently, gender differences have been studied by neurobiology investigators. Their findings could clarify the differences found in experimental economics. Zack and Fakhar (*Neuroactive hormones and interpersonal trust: International evidence*) found that interpersonal trust may be related to the level of neuroactive hormones and that consumption of estrogens and their presence in the environment are related to trust. This may partially explain gender differences in social behaviors; moreover, the study supports the existence of variances in leadership styles between women and men. Nowack (*The neurobiology of leadership: Why women lead differently than men*) proposes that this disparity may be due to at least one female hormone, oxytocin, which may affect the way women react under pressure and, therefore, clarify why women do indeed lead differently than men. Barraza and Zak (*Empathy Toward Strangers Triggers Oxytocin Release and Subsequent Generosity*) show that empathy, trust, and collaboration are boosted by oxytocin. Based on these findings, Nowack (*op. cit.*) concludes that the gender differences caused by oxytocin may help explain the observed tendency among females to lead in a more participatory manner and to promote socially oriented behavior such as cooperation, team work, and assisting co-workers (Ergun et. al, *Gender differences in economic experiments*).

The effect that the presence of oxytocin has on different management strategies of men and women is an important biological factor that parents and educators must be aware of. It should also be taken into consideration when analysing marketing strategies for women. When investigating

the relationships between education, economics, gender, and women in management positions, the theoretical space should be examined from every angle.

In this way, it may be worthwhile to implement suggestions from interdisciplinary teaching strategies and to look at the economic reality in a creative manner.

The Importance of Investing in Education

In order to better understand why too little is invested in education, we need to understand the motivations, goals, and preferences that are valued in the labour market, in schools, and in many other spheres (Heckman & Kautz, *Hard evidence on soft skills*). Coleman (*Equality of Educational Opportunity*) was one of the first to study the relationship between inputs of the educational process and student performance. Since then much research has been devoted to the statistical analysis of this relationship, which led to a formalization of the education production function by Hanushek (*Conceptual and empirical issues in the estimation of the educational production functions*), and Todd and Wolpin (*On the Specification and Estimation of the Production Function for Cognitive Achievement*). Coleman (*op. cit.*) famously pointed out that families play an important role in shaping adult outcomes.

Nonetheless, the extent to which this effect is caused by income level, or other factors related to parental education such as parenting style, patience, or role model effects remains an open question. Thus far, the literature has suggested that the quality of the family environment should be judged not only by the amount of available resources, but also by the quality of parenting, and possibly the transmission of certain attributes such as self-control, self-regulation, risk attitudes, self-confidence, patience, altruism, trust, or motivation.

In the last decade, however, investigators have increasingly recognized the importance of soft skills for educational achievement and investments.

To the extent that educational activities and programs are viewed as competitive, it has been shown that males and females perform differently under competitive pressure in school. Hence, competitiveness may be an important factor when considering in gender differences in educational choices. Niederle and Vesterlund (*Explaining the gender gap in math test scores: the role of competition*), for instance, argue that an individual's

response to competitive pressure is a soft skill that affects test scores over and above the effect of ability. They assert that gender differences in this soft skill explain, in part, why more boys than girls excel in math. Math may be seen as a competitive discipline because the answers are either right or wrong and because math is highly predictive of future earnings. Further, math teaching and test-taking most often take place in a mixed-gender environment within the context of the stereotype that boys excel in math, while girls excel in language and reading. In line with the stereotype, girls at the top of the ability curve tend to underestimate their own math skills. In light of these factors, a substantial portion of girls may avoid competition against males.

The information presented in this section raises the following question: is there a biological reason that explains why women have fewer skills to deal with emotions and are less competitive, and therefore less likely to go into competitive fields, such as management?

The findings reinforce the path chosen by Israel's Ministry of Education, which found it advantageous to separate girls and boys for some of the work groups – those in which they studied the inquiry method and participated in empowerment sessions – so that the girls could express themselves better and more freely.

Conclusion

In Israel, there has been significant progress in the sphere of gender equality and in offering equal opportunities in the labor market in general, as well as in the trend to increase the number of female managers in particular. The issue has been placed on the agenda of public discussion, and numerous ways have been found to address and solve the problem. Various solutions have been proposed from the legislative, social, educational, and economic viewpoints. Since solutions have not yet been exhausted, it is important to continue to propose creative solutions from additional directions and perspectives. A female manager should be marketed as a brand name for herself and for society. Marketing women managers can constitute a strategy for empowering women.

Much can be said regarding the potential for economic profit in Israeli society and throughout the world that could be attained by advancing women to high-level management positions. Extensive studies have been conducted about the advantages and disadvantages of women working

in management jobs from the socio-psychological aspects. It is assumed that women are striving to become high-level managers as part of their professional future and that they are interested in marketing themselves and acquiring a high-level management job.

What strategies are recommended from the aspect of the educational system in Israel? The educational system is engaged in constructing programs for empowering girls and women and is working to attain gender equality.

The main efforts are currently being made to locate girls for frameworks of excellence and to encourage them to choose technological professions that will enable them to pursue academic degrees in the future. They will then be able to work in professions in which the salaries offered are among the highest in the market. There is still a long way to go before the existing „glass ceiling” barriers to management positions for women are broken. Combining the spheres of education, management, marketing, creative economics, and economy with the fields that are discussed in this literary review can provide a creative and novel way to observe the situation and generate an additional challenging topic for public discussion.

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