



Women in senior management Tomsk Polytechnic University

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Abstract

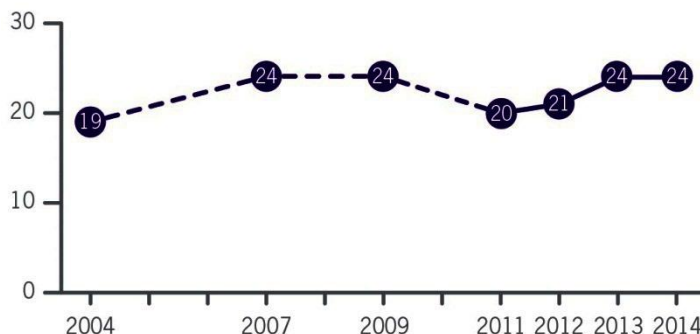
The number of women in senior management does not show an improvement in the last decade, despite growing positive sentiment among businesses toward quotas and signs that legislation is moving in that direction. Though the past 40 years have seen a massive generational shift, with more women entering the workforce across the globe, more needs to be done to advance women to senior leadership positions. So the purpose of this article is to explore the global shift in the number of women at the top of the business world, positions and roles which women have succeeded in. Also this article considers the feminine qualities that are valued today and the barriers that might prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder.

Keywords: manager, woman, senior management

1. Introduction

Women have made progress in the wider workforce over recent forty years. Since 1970 the proportion of women in the mature market workforce has risen from 48% to 64%. However, whilst male and female graduates are recruited in almost equal numbers by businesses, the proportion of women in the top jobs around the world is very low.

Proportion of senior business roles held by women – global



Source: Grant Thornton IBR 2014

Figure 1. Proportion of senior business roles held by women – global

Over the past years the number of women in leadership roles increased. Some people believe that gender diversity at board and senior management positions promotes corporate growth. The IBR (International Business Report) survey indicates a 3% increase in the number of women in senior management positions from 2012 to 2013, with 24% of businesses with women in senior management roles globally in 2013. However, the data shows that less than a quarter of senior management roles are held by women (24%). This hasn't changed since 2013, and even since 2007, and suggests that the proportion of women in senior management has returned to its 'natural level' following the financial crisis during which women were disproportionately hit (Figure 1) [3, 4, 5].

2. Results

More positive news comes from the proportion of women running businesses across the world, which has risen to close to 12% up from 10% last year and just 5% in 2012. Over the past year women have grabbed headlines in every industry and every corner of the globe. They take the lead in different positions in politics and economics. The survey shows that women are best represented in finance and human resources positions. While still relatively low, such positions appear to be important stretch roles which provide opportunity for greater exposure for women progressing towards the role of CEO, perhaps explaining the progress observed in recent years.

Table 1. Top woman most likely to be employed in finance and HR (% of businesses employing women in each role)

	2012	2013	2014
Human Resources Director	21%	30%	25%
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	13%	31%	23%
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	9%	-	12%
Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)	8%	13%	11%
Other finance director (eg Controller)	13%	14%	8%
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	12%	-	7%
Head of Sales	8%	13%	7%
Partner	3%	-	4%
Chief Information Officer (CIO)	5%	-	3%

After analysing Table 2, we drew a conclusion that businesses in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia have the most women in senior management. Also it follows that countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, India, United Arab Emirates and Japan have the lowest proportion of women in senior management.

Table 2. Women in business around the world (% of women in senior management)

TOP	2013	2014	BOTTOM	2013	2014
Russia	31 %	43%	Spain	21%	22%
Indonesia	-	41%	Ireland	21%	-
Latvia	43%	41%	US	20 %	22%
Philippines	37%	40%	UK	19%	20%
Latin America	23%	40%	India	19 %	14%
Lithuania	40%	39%	Argentina	18%	-
China	51 %	38%	Switzerland	14%	13%
Thailand	36%	38%	Denmark	23%	14%
Estonia	40%	37%	Germany	31%	14%

Georgia	37%	35%	UAE	11 %	14%
Armenia	23%	35%	Netherlands	11%	10%
Poland	48%	34%	Japan	7 %	9%

Globally, Russia (43%) has the highest proportion of women in senior management, a figure that has been fairly stable since 2004, helped by a gender ratio that favors women by 6:5.

Over the past 20 years women in Russia have got many jobs in quickly expanding services sectors, such as health, education and accountancy. Several countries in Eastern Europe, for instance, the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, Georgia, Armenia and Poland also have high number of women in senior management positions. This can be traced back to the promotion of women in the former Soviet Union. The communist leaders promised “equal opportunity for all”.

In Botswana, the Philippines and Thailand, the tendency for families to live with or near parents and grandparents provides in-built childcare infrastructure, allowing mothers to go out and work. Women are also well-represented in the leadership of Chinese businesses (38%); similarly to Russia, the focus of socialism on equality may have a role to play here, as well as the one-child policy which lowered the childcare burden. Women’s power in China is growing. Still, they have to go further, and it would be possible if companies offered more opportunities for women to develop.

In Latin America, 40% of businesses have no women in senior management at all. But women in two of the continent’s fastest growing economies - Peru (35%) and Chile (30%) – hold relatively high proportions of top jobs. Brazil (22%) and Argentina (25%), despite both having female presidents, continue to lag behind. In Latin America there is a problem of culture: the husband is the boss. For men it is difficult to see that the woman is a boss. United Arab Emirates have amongst the lowest number of women in senior management positions. However, both countries have shown significant progress over the past 12 months. The results suggest that the wave of economic liberalizations in the Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring could have boosted the chances of women in the region to reach the top.

Developed countries have relatively fewer women in senior management. One reason may be the development of the nuclear family and the resulting lack of childcare, as well as lower aspirations among women in the West compared with developing economies where strong growth and cultural shifts are fueling female ambition. Japan comes in at the bottom of the 45-economy survey. Just 9% of senior roles are held by women, almost no change from a decade ago.

Women have more and more advantages now. Why? They are more efficient and reliable. Women have a better understanding of their workforce and also they are more liberal with their praise. They are more impartial and attentive. They listen more, are less status-conscious, conduct concise meetings, are much more effective negotiators and display greater flexibility. They will be aware of the pressure of your job, but delegate responsibility where it’s appropriate. They are interested in their personnel promotion. Women managers use more effective time management [6].

On the other hand, despite the positive tendency, the majority of women continue to face significant social and economic barriers. Challenges for women include inequalities in education, health and employment, discrimination and feminization of poverty. That affects the work level. Those women who stay ahead of the game with the rapid pace of the technology change have an advantage [8].

Also women continue to bear many responsibilities for the home: caring for children and other household members, preparing meals and doing other housework. This is the biggest obstacle

why women don't rise to the top of companies. Balancing between work and family responsibilities is particularly difficult for women who are employed full-time. In many countries, employed women spend an inordinate time on this «double burden». Many women respond by moving into less demanding fields where hours are more flexible. Some of them go part-time or drop out of the workforce entirely [1, 2].

Yet the news is not all grim. In July Yahoo! hired a 37-year-old from Google Marissa Mayer as its new boss who had given birth to a baby in October. She is an inspiration for many people. She believes that “burnout” is for wimps. Marissa Mayer had taken maternity leave for two weeks. If she can change the internet’s biggest basket case while engaged in child it will be the greatest triumph for working women [7].

3. Conclusion

To sum up, women hold 24% of senior management roles globally; less than one in ten businesses has a female CEO, with women largely employed in finance and human resources (HR) roles; Russia has the highest proportion of women in senior management, Japan comes in at the bottom of the survey; education and talent management may work in tandem with flexible work arrangements to increase the number of women in top leadership.

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