PROMOTING GREATER ROLE OF WOMEN AS LEADERS IN THE MACEDONIAN MARKETING SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Marketing as an activity that marked the 21st century is a very important part of the business activities of any organization. Traditional and modern marketing are interconnected despite digitalization as a new process. A good marketing leader is the key to success in many large companies. Leadership is a very broad concept and there are different theories and styles of leadership. This paper focuses more specifically on female leadership styles in marketing, as a concept that is becoming more interesting to study and observe. The study provides an evidence that women leaders in the Republic of North Macedonia dominatly use a participative leadership style, which also means that besides the involvment of the employee in the decision-making process, they show respect, care and empathy for others. The study also shows that there is no differences in leadership styles among the genders, which supports the feminist idea of women being equal to men; thus breaking the business and leadership stereotypes in regards to the women being less valuable in the business environment.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Marketing, North Macedonia, Gender, Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership can be regarded as the term of the 21st century because if in the past having a leader in the company would have been considered as a competitive advantage, today – it is an essential for any organization, big or small. As Moldoveanu and Narayandas (2019) write "companies of all sorts realize that to survive in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, they need leadership skills and organizational capabilities different from those that helped them succeed in the past". The literature is full of studies of leadership styles and theories that are being grouped by industry, behavioral characteristics and etc., however many authors suggest that there are differences in leadership based on gender. Intuitive reasoning contends that early socialization patterns give rise to diverse traits in men and women that most likely produce different leadership styles (Powell, 1993). According to Eagly and Johnson (1990) "women seem to lead in a rather democratic way, while men show a more autocratic leadership style". This is confirmed by newer studies as well. A study conducted by Horowitz et al (2018) states that "a majority of Americans (57%) think men and women on top positions in business and politics are different when it comes to their leadership styles". It is important to note that the leadership style and its effectiveness is a combination of different factors and characteristics that are unique for each individual. However, it should be noted that female leadership can be an important asset for any company. A study conducted by Desvaux and Devillard (2008) conclude that "female leaders and a diversity of leadership styles can give companies a real competitive edge".

One sector that is increasingly important in recent years is the marketing sector, as the global market becomes more competitive and the marketing experts are perceived as a possible competitive advantage. A study conducted by Kerns (2020) cited

by Harte (n.d.) states that when it comes to leadership, only "17% of marketing and ad agencies are run by women".

The marketing industry is growing which according to Bilbo, (2021) results in more managerial and operative open positions, and this is where women's marketers can establish themselves. The ultimate goal would be that women as leaders in the marketing sector are treated and have equal opportunities as their male coworkers. If one takes into cosideration that the research of this topic is limited worldwide, it is to be assumed that in regional terms this topic is even less studies and researched.

This research was conducted in order to understand the context of the current situation of women leadership in the marketing sector.

A quantitiavie research method was used in order to verify the results in order to reflect objective overview of the researched topic. This approach uses numerical data analysis and data collection to characterize, clarify, forecast, or control variables and phenomena of interest. (Gay et al, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a very broad concept and there are different theories and styles of leadership. This term is defined in many ways, by many authors. As a definition that is very important in terms of leadership is that of Tannenbaum & Shmit, (2000), who believe that "leadership is an interpersonal influence that is implemented in a certain situation through the process of communication, with a single goal and intention to achieve certain goals".

Female leadership is just one branch of this concept and can be defined and understood in different ways. Many authoritative leaders understand women's leadership as the fact that women can be and are leaders, others may define it from a feminist perspective, as a matter of equality and the right to have the same opportunities. It refers to certain female characteristics that are valued in

today's organizations (Burns, 2021).

As such a process, leadership can also be thought of as an influential action used to achieve goals. (Yukl,2006). This process can be considered as a tool to motivate people. Motivation aims to achieve certain goals through the action of those people. Different leadership styles arise from different ways of motivating people, different types of goals and the nature of organizations (Daft et al, 2010).

2.2. LEADERSHIP STYLES

The traditional literature, in line with the view of the German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin, who in 1939, identified three styles of leadership (Lewin et al., 1939), mainly disscusses: the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Autocratic leadership style is based on centralizing power and authority in the hands of one person. The autocratic leader has unlimited power and decision-making power, controls his subordinates and is responsible for all decisions made, orders groups and individuals (Eagly & Carli, 2008).

Democratic leadership style is characterized by the involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process. Communication is two-way, motivating, both for groups and individuals; Employees are given the opportunity to express their ideas, which encourages creativity and innovation. At the heart of democratic governance is a good organizational climate and employee relations (Lewin et al., 1939).

The laissez-faire leadership style, often referred to as a delegative leadership style focuses on delegating initiative to team members. is characterized by responsibility avoidance and disclaimer. Group members are instructed to choose tasks and do what is best in the best possible and familiar way. The flow of communication is primarily horizontal; self-promotion is allowed among equal members according to one's view of independence and the influence of the leader (Požega et al, 2013).

Likert (1932), identifies four types of leadership characteristic of certain management systems. The first type is defined as authoritarian-exploratory and is leadership where decisions are made by the leader. The second type is benevolent-authoritarian style, a type characterized by the fact that some aspects of decisions are delegated. The consultative type is the third type of leadership, where the leader leaves room for acceptance of ideas and suggestions from subordinates, while the fourth type, marked as participatory is a group type of leadership with comprehensive forms of leadership and full involvement of subordinates in decision-making processes and a comprehensive anatomy.

Other types of leadership styles have been identified troughout the years, such as: transactional and transformational leadership, which together with the charismatic type of leadership form the modern leadership model (Lowe and Gardner, 2000).

2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A LEADER BASED ON GENDER

Female leadership is often defined by the differences between femininity and masculinity. The characteristics that are presumed to influence decision-making, problem-solving, and achievement are often compared. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight the values and benefits of women in leadership today and the benefits of diversity of organizations and businesses.

Women and men are biologically different from each other and usually culture and society shape and reinforce gender roles. The traditional role of men is to support their family and the role of women is to take care of the children and the home. Traditionally, men are considered more aggressive and women are the fairer sex. Different stereotypes about female and male characteristics and roles in society still exist and are felt (Kolb, 1997).

However, everyone has their own individual characteristics and strengths and therefore stereotypes should be avoided. By favoring men as more efficient in working life, the important and valu-

able characteristics that women possess remain underestimated. Stereotyping slows down change and can act as a major obstacle when it comes to women's career opportunities (Sherman, 2005).

There are certain characteristics of leadership that are described as feminine and masculine. Some of the characteristics that are often found in male leaders are competitiveness, focus, goal orientation, inventiveness, performance orientation and desire to be the best. Female leadership characteristics include social skills and social interaction, conversational communication style, acceptance of differences, be highly qualified and work well in groups (O'Neil et al., 2015).

These characteristics do not imply the gender of the leader, they just represent a different kind of leadership behavior that can be applied by both women and men.

Female leadership style is best described by words such as positive participation, interactions,, involvement, networking, teamwork, enthusiasm, employee orientation, listening, understanding, camaraderie, spontaneity, warmth, kindness (Heim and Golant, 1993). Sharing power and information is characteristic of the "female style" of leadership. "Women leaders share information and make decisions, give positive feedback, which helps employees grow" (Adler, 1990).

2.4. LEADERSHIP AND MARKETING

When reviewing the literature, it can be noted that there is very little academic research that has been conducted on the topic of the role of leadership in marketing, although marketing today represents a leading industry. But over time, leaders begin to create an opinion in the field of leadership in marketing.

Thus, sustainable marketing leadership model requires that effective leader has strategic visioning, integrated planning, managing performance and marketing controllership (Shapiro, 2005).

The connection between leadership and marketing is included in the most recently updated definition by the American Marketing Association (AMA): "marketing is the activity, set of institu-

tions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (AMA, 2017).

2.5.   DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEMALE AND MALE LEADERSHIP IN THE MARKETING SECTOR

When it comes to leadership in marketing, it is very ungrateful to make distinctions according to gender, but only in this way can the stereotype of women in leadership positions broken. According to the analysis made by the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications of Sweden (2001), both genders have their own way of managing a business and helping it grow. However, the flexibility of the marketing industry is an opportunity for women who face the challenge of balancing business and family responsibilities (Fielden et al. 2003). This is mostly due to the possibility of working from home, flexibility of the working hours and even the possibility of part-time work (Wilby, 2008). This aspect can on the other hand cause prejudices related to advancement of women, excluding them from promotion opportunities.

Using a database of 30 million profiles, research firm Zippia compiles statistics on the top marketing leaders in the United States. After extensive research and analysis, the Zippia team found that (Zippia, 2020):

- Over 68,763 chief marketing officers are working in the country right now.

- Chief marketing officers make up 32.0% of the total, while men make up 68.0%.

- An employed chief marketing officer is 38 years old on average.

- In 2021, women's earnings were 94% of men's earnings.

Studies also show that there are many differences in communication between men and women: women share more information about their personal lives, stick to one topic longer, use non-verbal cues less, give employees/subordinates more space to finish a sentence and try to speak includ-

ing everyone present (Cole, 2012), which are desirable traits in the marketing sector.

2.6.   FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN MARKETING SECTOR

Analyzing the benefits of female leadership, modern science has found that women lead less autocratically than men and have a greater sensitivity to the importance and use of human potential. It is these characteristics that are cited as the reason for the increased involvement of women in the marketing sector, diversity management, the importance of women's management style for the business operations of modern organizations, the increased number, expertise and organization of women and the relationship between the share of women in management and organizational performance (Górska, 2016).

In the last ten years, especially in the business of marketing, new trends in business behavior have emerged that are critical to the growth, development and survival of today's organizations. Modern organizations rely more on teamwork and a "feminine" style of communication or leadership that becomes key to success. In addition to teamwork in the modern organization, the involvement of employees in decision-making, information exchange, trust, consensus and cooperation is characteristic. These characteristics relate to female leadership and are typical of women. For these reasons, the percentage of women in management positions is increasing today. Women are better than men at multitasking, team building and communication, which in today's business is far more important than strict formalities. The need to include women in business is increasing because teams of both genders are significantly better and more efficient at solving problems (Helgesen, 2020).

According to Marcetić, (2009), the female leader imposed the following attitudes in her work in the organization:

- respect for others (no classic stereotypes, respect for other colleagues, employees/subordinates),

- trust (because of the general belief that the

behavior and actions of others are trusted by employees),

- care (care is manifested by the fact that other people's needs exceed their own needs; by building mutual and mutual trust with colleagues and employees / subordinates, the leader contributes to the success of the organization's work and encourages motivation),

- empathy (compassion or empathy is the ability to recognize other people's feelings and in business management and marketing management it is extremely important to develop that compassion which is the basis for building quality relationships),

- Self-responsibility (any success basically involves taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions, a successful manager strives for self-responsibility always and in all situations).

However, in addition to gender, a person's own characteristics, which actually apply values, are also very important. The presence of women in management teams in the organization's marketing departments is generally associated with strong social commitment (De Castro et al., 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

The paper intends to analyse the leadership styles of the female population in marketing sector and therefore shape and change the culture of the organizations and the marketing strategies.

For this purpose, authors use quantitative research method, utilizing Clark's questionnaire as the main method of data collection. Clark's questionnaire follows the three basic styles of leadership, originally defined by Kurt Lewin as autocratic, democratic (participative) and laissez-faire. The questions and attitudes in the questionnaire were divided into three sets of 10 questions each (using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 -almost never to 5- almost always).

The research was conducted in Macedonian companies that have a marketing department or marketing tasks are given to a certain level of management, on a total sample of 115 participants

(65% females and 35% males). The age dissemination suggested that the majority of the employees (57%) are between 25-40 years old, followed by the 40-60 years old (40%) and +60 years old (3%). Regarding the marital status, education and working experience, the dominant majority were married (63%) and hold bachelor degree (64%), with 44% of the respondents having working experience of 6-10 years, followed by people who have work experience between 11-15 years. Furthermore, 19% have more than 15 years of work experience and 13% of the respondents have work experience from 1 up to 5 years.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this research is to study the women's dominant leadership style and the differences in terms of leadership styles coming from women's age, education and work experience. It also compares the dominant style of the female leaders with the dominant leadership style practiced by men. The research results show that the participative style (38%) is dominant style among most of leaders, both men and women, in the Macedonian companies. However, because the focus of this paper is on women leadeship styles, the authors firstly analyse whether there is difference among the different genders.

Since twenty years ago, the marketing industry as a whole has been expanding quite quickly in the country. The development of information technology and the implementation of new business strategies are primarily to blame for this. But it must be underlined that just 5% of significant companies in the nation's management ranks are held by women. (Symphony Solutions, 2019).This number is within the world average, despite the great struggle for gender equality.

This study provides an evidence that the participative leadership style is represented in both genders. (as shown in Table 1). The Fisher exact test statistic value shows that there are no significant differences in leadership styles between both genders. According to Bass and Avolio (1997), participative management is about developing the ability to influence people, rather than imposing

authority on them, engaging subordinates effectively in the decision making and problem solving process. It is clear that female marketing leaders in the country choose a style that provides them a chance to demonstrate their independence and potential for genuine cooperation with subordinates.The study's findings are also consistent with those of Eagly et al. (2003), who found no conclusive evidence of differences that would distinguish between male and female leaders. Therefore, one of North Macedonia's major challenges to development is the promotion of gender equality. It is particularly important in the economic sphere and the management of enterprises and organizations.

Table 1. Leadership style based on different gender groups

Results			
	Male	Female	Row Totals
Authoritative leadership style	9 (6.61) [0.87]	10 (12.39) [0.46]	19
Participative leadership style	20 (19.13) [0.04]	35 (35.87) [0.02]	56
Delegative leadership style	11 (14.26) [0.75]	30 (26.74) [0.40]	41
Column Totals	40	75	115 (Grand Total)

Results in red are Expected Count

Results in light red are Residual

To strengthen the research study, the authors further explore the leadership styles among women in the marketing sector, based on demographic characteristics such as: age, education and working experience.

Table 2. Leadership style based on women's age group

Results			
	25-40	41-60	60+	Row Totals
Authoritative leadership style	2 (1.60) [0.10]	6 (5.47) [0.05]	2 (2.93) [0.30]	10
Participative leadership style	5 (5.60) [0.06]	20 (19.13) [0.04]	10 (10.27) [0.01]	35
Delagative leadership style	5 (4.80) [0.01]	15 (16.40) [0.12]	10 (8.80) [0.16]	30
Column Totals	12	41	22	75 (Grand Total)

Results in red are Expected Count

Results in light red are Residual

The research results, obtained through Fisher's exact test show that there is no statistical significant difference in practicing leadership style based on women's different age groups (as shown in Table 2). These findings are consistent with those made by Sessa et al. (2007), who contend that age has no bearing on the decision of leadership style, despite the fact that younger female leaders tend to be more concerned with achieving results quickly, as opposed to older female leaders who have longer-term ambitions.

The next analysis that was carried out was the relationship between the educational level and the leadership style practiced by the women. From the obtained results of the Fisher's exact test, it was found that p= .936, which is greater than .05, thus confirming that there are no significant differences in terms of leadership style based on women's educational level (as shown in Teble 3). It actually means that education does not have any great importance when it comes to the way of leadership among the women leaders included in this research.

Table 3. Leadership style based on women's education

Results				
	High School	Bachelor	Master	Row Totals
Authoritative leadership style	2 (2.13) [0.01]	4 (4.40) [0.04]	4 (3.47) [0.08]	10
Participative leadership style	8 (7.47) [0.04]	14 (15.40) [0.13]	13 (12.13) [0.05]	35
Delagative leadership style	6 (6.40) [0.03]	15 (13.20) [0.25]	9 (10.40) [0.19]	30
Column Totals	16	33	26	75 (Grand Total)

Results in red are Expected

Count Results in light red are Residual

Table 4. Leadership style based on women's working experience

Results					
	1-5	6-10	11-15	15+	Row Totals
Authoritative leadership style	1 (0.80) [0.05]	2 (2.80) [0.23]	5 (3.60) [0.54]	2 (2.80) [0.23]	10
Participative leadership style	2 (2.80) [0.23]	9 (9.80) [0.07]	12 (12.60) [0.03]	12 (9.80) [0.49]	35
Delagative leadership style	3 (2.40) [0.15]	10 (8.40) [0.30]	10 (10.80) [0.06]	7 (8.40) [0.23]	30
Column Totals	8	21	27	21	75 (Grand Total)

Results in red are Expected Count

Results in light red are Residual

The final point raised in this thorough investigation was the leadership style of women in respect to their professional backgrounds. There are no significant differences in terms of leadership style and work experience, according to the Fisher's exact test, which yielded a result of p=.855, which is greater than.05 (as shown in Table 4). It actually means that education does not have any great importance when it comes to the way of leadership among the women leaders included in this research.. According to the women leaders who participated in this study, education is not a significant factor when it comes to leadership style, which is consistent with Corona (2010)'s finding that there is no correlation between years of professional experience and leadership style.

According to the participative style, female leaders know how to use their creativity to solve organizational problems. This is mostly due to the focus on teamwork and communication. In addition to teamwork for a modern organization, this style is characterized by the involvement of employees in decision-making, information exchange, trust, consensus and cooperation. It also encourages self-confidence and enthusiasm among employees, which are of great importance in marketing leadership.

CONCLUSION

Women in marketing leadership have not been extensively researched. There are many scientific studies on women in leadership in general, but there are fewer on women in marketing leadership. Despite the progress women are facing in the marketing sector, as of November, 2018, worldwide, only 27.1% of women ware managers and leaders (ILO, 2019). However, it cannot be denied that that industry is undergoing a wave of transformation. This is a result of the rapid rise in the number of women working in the marketing business, their independence from traditional family roles and the shadow of men, and the fact that the nature of the marketing industry allows women to both succeed at work and contribute to their families.

The study provides an evidence that women leaders dominatly use a participative leadership style, which also means that besides the involvment of the employee in the decision-making process, they show respect, care and empathy for others; act with trust and strive to fulfill the goals of the organization. Since there is no differences in leadership styles among the genders, the paper supports the feminist idea of women being equal to men; thus breaking the business and leadership stereotypes in regards to the women being less valuable in the business environment. Hence, they deserve equal opportunity for organizational leadership position within the marketing world. Moreover, the female leadership should be no longer considered as a new form of leadership, but a way to successfully manage organizations.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Study's limitations are expected. The possibility of social desirability bias is one of the key drawbacks. The amount of honesty should not be assumed even though the respondents are anonymous. Uncertainty over the respondents' representation of the industry's overall population is another danger. The respondents' demographic location is the final drawback. Since only the Republic of North Macedonia was examined in this study, more comprehensive analyses of these variables should be provided by subsequent research.

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