

Female Leadership and Its Repercussions on Employees' Motivation in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

The type of leadership is a factor that has proven to be fundamental to employee motivation and satisfaction in the workplace. This study aimed to analyse whether female leadership has repercussions on the motivation of employees in the labour market. Based on a case study (labour market) including a questionnaire and an interview, a representative sample was obtained, and the following topics were addressed: quality of the relationship between leader-employee; satisfaction and motivation of employees at work; female leadership. The evidence obtained allows us to conclude that the variables under study, such as leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship, are not positively related to either employee job satisfaction or employee motivation at work.

Keywords: Leadership, Female Gender, Satisfaction, Motivation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many studies have analysed and studied the role of women in top positions or even in positions and/or hierarchical positions in which they must exercise leadership. Over the centuries, women have become more important in the labour market. Although gender inequality still exists in societies, more and more women are gaining prominence in various organizational positions. Portugal remains one of the countries with gender inequalities in both positions and wages.

According to the study carried out by the World Economic Forum, in December 2019, Portugal was below countries such as France (43%), Italy (34%) or even England (27%) and Spain (22%), with a percentage of 16.2% of women in management positions in companies.

In a report published by the International Labour Organization in the year 2019, women are under-represented in management and leadership positions, with only 27.1% of leaders and managers being women on a global level.

The main objective of this study was to determine whether female leadership has repercussions at the level of employee motivation, as well as at the level of organization management in Portugal, by analysing the sub-theme of obstacles and opportunities that women have experienced during their professional career. For this purpose, the following main questions were outlined: "What are the repercussions that female leadership can have on both employee motivation and the management of the organization?" and "What obstacles and opportunities have women, holding leadership positions, experienced during their professional career?"

In this study, qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. Qualitative methodologies focused on semi-structured interviews with women in leadership positions. As for the quantitative methodologies, these focused on questionnaires in order to study whether the leadership styles adopted by the female gender have a positive or negative impact on the organization and whether female leadership has an impact on employee motivation.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this study is to determine whether female leadership has repercussions on the motivation of employees in the labour market. Considering the aforementioned, following specific objectives for the study were established: to characterise the motivation of employees in the labour market by taking into account the type of leadership of their direct leader (whether female or male); to identify whether or not there are repercussions of female leadership on employee motivation. And if so, what the repercussions are; identify the obstacles and opportunities that the women interviewed in leadership positions have experienced during their professional career.

The hypotheses of this research were obtained through the study and analysis of the documented information. After defining and identifying the dependent and independent variables, as well as their relationships, the hypotheses were tested.

Therefore, we have developed the following hypotheses:

H1: Leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship relate positively to motivation.

H2: Leadership and quality of the leader-employee relationship relate positively to satisfaction.

H3: Satisfaction is positively related to motivation.

H4: Female leadership has an impact on employee motivation.

III. METHODOLOGY

According to (Reis, 2022) Methodology is considered to be a pillar for research as it indicates the path to follow in the work being developed by the researcher himself.

The methodological approach adopted was based initially on prior bibliographical research and then proceeded to the execution of a case study through a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire, which was later made available to individuals who are part of the labour market.

This questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions, thus allowing for a more objective and real comparison.

IV. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

A. Gender

The data collected shows that the sample is relatively balanced, with 44 female respondents representing 58% of the sample and the remaining 42% corresponding to the 32 male respondents.

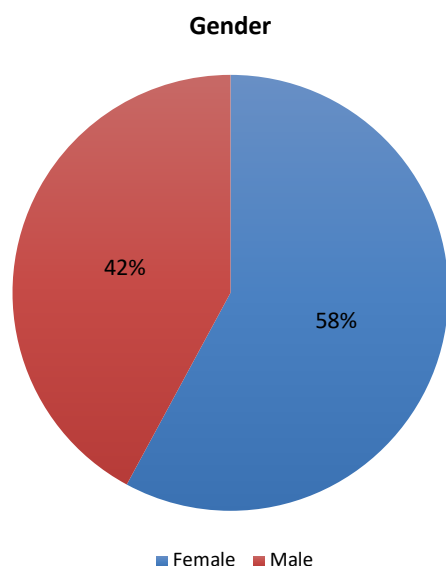


Fig. 1. Distribution by gender of survey respondents.
Source: Own Survey.

B. Age

With regard to the age range or age, the vast majority of respondents are in the 36-45 age group, corresponding to 28% of the total sample under analysis. When analyzing Fig. 2, we also observe that the other age range with the highest response rate was the 18-25 one.

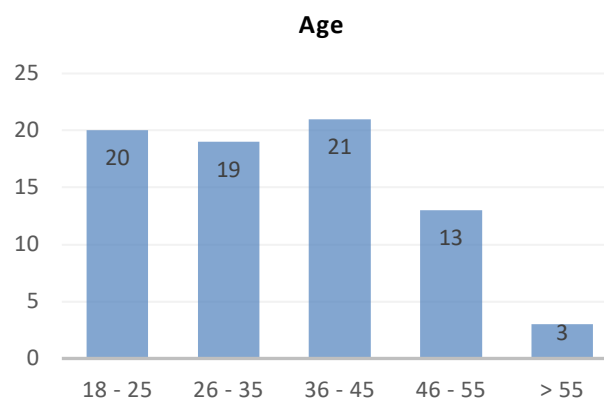


Fig. 2. Distribution by age/age range of survey respondents. Source: Own Survey.

We also found that only 4% (3 individuals) of respondents are in the age range over 55 years.

As mentioned in the Methodology, some hypotheses were established to better understand and analyze the topic under study. In this regard, in this study the following hypotheses were analyzed:

H1: Leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship are positively related to motivation.

Therefore, firstly, it was hypothesized that both predictor variables, i.e. leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship, would be positively related to motivation. Taking motivation as the criterion variable and leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship as predictor variables, a multiple linear regression was carried out (Table I), which confirmed that the predictor variables have a significant positive contribution to motivation. That is, when we tested this hypothesis, we were able to verify that the relationship between leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship is moderate ($r = 0.861$), while 74% of the total variability in motivation is explained by leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship. By verifying that $R = 0.86$, we conclude that there is a linear relationship between the variables under study.

By analyzing Table II, we found that after performing the ANOVA test, the p-value = 0 was obtained; therefore, for any level of significance the fixed hypothesis that "Leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship relate positively to motivation" is rejected.

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF THE MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

Summary of Model B					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate a	Durbin-Watson
1	0.861 ^a	0.742	0.734	0.32761	1.878

Source: SPSS Program

TABLE II: ANOVA TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Average Square	Z	Sig.
Regression	22.483	2	11.241	104.737	<001 ^b
1 Residual	7.835	73	0.107	-	-
Total	30.318	75	-	-	-

Source: SPSS Program

TABLE III: SUMMARY OF THE MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

Summary of Model B					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.876 ^a	0.768	0.762	0.40205	1.738

Source: SPSS Program

TABLE IV: ANOVA TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Average Square	Z	Sig.
Regression	39.101	2	19.551	120.947	<.001 ^b
1 Residual	11.800	73	0.162	-	-
Total	50.901	75	-	-	-

Source: SPSS Program

H2: Leadership and quality of the leader-employee relationship relate positively to satisfaction.

Regarding the second hypothesis, which proposed that the variables leadership and quality of the leader-employee relationship would be positively related to satisfaction. Considering leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship as predictor variables and satisfaction as mediator variable, a multiple linear regression was performed (Table III) which confirmed this hypothesis. That is, when we tested this hypothesis, we found that the relationship between leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship is moderate ($r = 0.876$) and that around 77% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by the variation in leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship. By verifying that $R = 0.88$, we conclude that there is a linear relationship between the variables under study.

By analyzing Table IV, we found that after performing the ANOVA test, the p -value = 0 was obtained; therefore, for any level of significance the fixed hypothesis that "Leadership and the quality of the leader-employee relationship relate positively to satisfaction" is rejected.

H3: Satisfaction is positively related to motivation.

Regarding the third hypothesis, in which a positive relationship between satisfaction and motivation was proposed, a multiple linear regression was also performed (Table V), considering the Satisfaction variable as the mediator variable and the Motivation variable as the criterion variable.

TABLE V: SUMMARY OF THE MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

Summary of Model B					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.806 ^a	0.650	0.645	0.49053	1.571
Residual		11.800	73	0.162	-
Total		50.901	75	-	-

Source: SPSS Program

TABLE VI: ANOVA TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Average Square	Z	Sig.
Regression	33.095	1	33.095	137.542	<.001 ^b
1 Residual	17.806	74	0.241	-	-
Total	50.901	75	-	-	-

Source: SPSS Program

That is, when this hypothesis was tested, we found that the relationship between job satisfaction and work motivation is moderate ($r = 0.806$), and it turns out that about 65% of the variation in satisfaction is explained by the variation in motivation. By verifying that $R = 0.81$, we conclude that there is a linear relationship between the variables under study.

By analyzing Table VI, we verified that after the ANOVA test, the p -value = 0 was obtained, so for any level of significance, the hypothesis established that "Satisfaction is positively related to motivation" is rejected.

H4: Female leadership has an impact on the motivation of employees.

Regarding the fourth and last hypothesis set in this work, in which it was proposed that female leadership has an impact on the motivation of employees/workers, no linear regression model was performed, since the aim of this hypothesis was not to relate any other variable of the study to female leadership.

In this regard, this hypothesis was "tested" by taking into account a direct question in the questionnaire about motivation and leadership at work and taking into account the analysis of the interview with women in leadership positions.

Observing the responses obtained through the questionnaire, it was found that in the total of 76 respondents (Fig. 3), 61 responded that in their opinion female leadership does not affect the motivation of employees, which is equivalent to 80% of the responses obtained.

However, 20% of all respondents say that in their opinion female leadership affects the motivation of workers.

Taking into account the interview with women in leadership positions, it was also possible to conclude that female leadership does not affect the motivation of workers, since and according to the interviewee "I think that here the difference is not between men and women. For me, there is no female leader or male leader. Either you're a leader or you're not! Or you have those characteristics that I already mentioned".

However, and according to the interviewee, gender cannot be a barrier for women to achieve leadership positions within an organization, as in her opinion "there are men who do not like to be led by women".

In your opinion, does female leadership affects motivation?

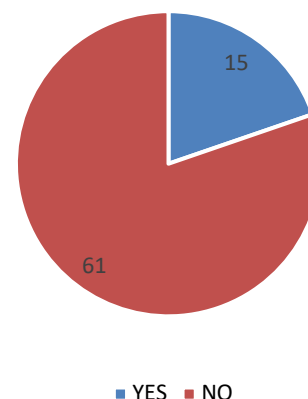


Fig. 3. Representation of information related to hypothesis 4.
Source: Own Survey.

V. CONCLUSION

This study was carried out with the main objective of understanding whether female leadership has an impact on the motivation of employees in the labour market. The study allowed us to recognize and understand the motivation of the various employees in the labour market in times of pandemic (since this work was carried out during the pandemic) and whether or not they are motivated and satisfied with the leadership in their organization and with the leadership exercised directly.

Furthermore, the study allowed us to recognize whether factors such as the quality of the leader-employee relationship and leadership have an impact on both motivation and job satisfaction among employees. As we can see, and after testing the hypotheses under study, the relationship between the variable "quality of the leader-employee relationship" and the variable "motivation at work" shows a significant positive relationship, in which 74% of the total variability of motivation is explained by leadership and the quality of the relationship between leader and employee. This result is in line with what has been shown in the literature as a leader is seen by their subordinates as someone who helps voluntarily and who puts the interests of their subordinates before their own and those of the organization. Taking into account the methodology used (questionnaire), we can state that the employees consider that a good leader should possess, among others, the following characteristics: assertiveness, ability to delegate tasks, motivation towards their subordinates, confidence, a sense of justice, impartiality, appreciation, closeness to their employees, good boss (i.e., set an example), and defend their workers, which should be the first to step forward if necessary. When analyzing the other type of methodology used (the interview), it was found that the interviewee (holding a leadership position) has more or less the same opinion as the majority of respondents, since for her, "A leader does not need to tell me what I have to do. When I follow my leader I supposedly know what I have to do because they show me what I have to do", "The leader is there to support, not to order", as well as in giving their opinion, a leader is innate by nature and can improve their behaviours, however, some characteristics should not change in a leader, such as "the firmness, the determination because you can't forget that you have people who depend on you too, you can't like them when everything is fine and when everything is bad it's their fault, certainly not! It's both good and bad. Therefore, you have to think before you act, so to speak because it is subjective, as congratulate them when everything goes well. And being clear about the objectives, being clear about what is intended, being clear about the perspectives (...) the determination, and having to make decisions cannot be for our own benefit, it has to be for the sake of a common goal, which I see is our CR in terms of the company. Because for me, my team comes first, then the team in general, the CR".

However, despite 74% of motivation being explained by leadership and the quality of the relationship between leader and employee; when the first hypothesis was tested, it was found that leadership and the quality of the relationship between leader and employee do not relate positively with work motivation, thus concluding that hypothesis 1 was rejected.

It was also found that, 77% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by variation in leadership and the quality of the relationship between leader and employee. This result is also in line with that demonstrated in the literature as well as with the responses obtained through the questionnaire since, in the opinion of the respondents (64 responses), a satisfied employee is a motivated employee. These two variables are related, since if a worker is satisfied with both the hygienic factors and the motivational factors existing in the organization (Bifactor Theory or Two Factor Theory), this worker may be motivated both by their work and by the organization to which they belong. However, after testing the second hypothesis which argued that variables such as leadership and the quality of the relationship between leader and employee relate positively to job satisfaction, the hypothesis was rejected.

As for the third stipulated hypothesis, it was found that there is a moderate relationship between the variables "job satisfaction" and "job motivation", in which 65% of the variation in satisfaction is explained by the variation in motivation. However, when tested, this hypothesis was rejected, concluding that satisfaction is not positively related to work motivation in this study.

In short, and in relation to the last defined hypothesis, which can be said to be perhaps the most central to this study, since the main objective of this dissertation was to understand if female leadership brought repercussions at the motivational level of workers in the labour market. This way, and after testing the fourth and last hypothesis defined, it is concluded that female leadership does not have an impact on the motivation of employees, thus rejecting hypothesis 4. Throughout the study, it was found that more and more employees are influenced by the type of leadership (regardless of whether the leader is female or male) that they experience and that this is fundamental to their experiences at work. The same is true in relation to satisfaction and motivation at work since people state that taking into account the type of leadership and the type of leader they experience within the organization where they work, they feel more or less motivated and, in turn, feel more or less satisfied at work.

The main objective of this study was to understand if and how female leadership has an impact on employee motivation. The role of leadership as well as the quality of the relationship between the leader and the employee proved to be an influential factor in the work motivation of employees; however, the research carried out did not allow us to state that the leadership and quality factors of the relationship between leader and employee (LMX theory) relate positively to both work motivation and job satisfaction on the part of employees.

The same happened between the two essential factors and addressed throughout this research, which was employee motivation at work and employee job satisfaction. These are two variables that, taking into account some studies and theories, are related to each other, and may or may not have a positive relationship; what's more, with the sample under study the relationship between these two variables is not positive.

Justification for this fact may be focused essentially on the time factor in which this study was carried out since the country was in a pandemic and some companies were

undergoing restructuring or processes of termination and change. These processes affect and influence the opinion of respondents.

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