Chapter 23
Self–Perception of Leadership in Mexican Businesswomen

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the self-perception of their own leadership in Mexican businesswomen. With this information, it can build a female leadership model, which allows knowing the self-perception of skills and characteristics they have as leaders, the situations that led them to use this leadership, the challenges they face daily in the performance of their activities, and the context in which they operate. Among the main results, it was found that Mexican businesswomen have a balanced leadership between the search for economic results and the development of quality relationships. This means that they manage to have efficient communication, they take their employees into account in the development of their companies, but they are also interested in the achievement of organizational objectives. They develop this leadership in a context where family support is key to achieving success and the main challenge they face is economic. Also, they have managed to break with the traditional scheme of work and female business leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Different studies of female executives and businesswomen in the world context have highlighted the importance of studying female leadership and its applications in organizations (Galbreath, 2011; Jia & Zang, 2013; Torchia, Calabró & House, 2011; Hoobler, Masterson, Nkonomo & Michel, 2018; Hoober, Lemmon & Wayne, 2014; Minelgaite, Edvardsson, Zydziunaite & Vaiman, 2015; Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci & Burke, 2017).

Throughout history, women have played different roles, which have caused changes both in the family structure and in the business. This economic opening brought with it an evolution of thought, not only as individuals, but also as a society, where it is sought that there is a representation of both genders in each of the social environments. These changes must be analyzed according to the new occupational structures and the dynamics of the labor market to evaluate the barriers, challenges, and opportunities that have been presented to women and thus determine their current needs (Heller, 2004).

Some authors agree that as women begin to have a greater productive and labor participation, the way they educate their children, their relationships and their perception of themselves and society, the economy, politics will change.

The characteristics that women contribute to leadership, according to the existing literature in this regard are:

- Effective communication in a natural way.
- Humanistic point of view, both in the family and in business.
- Empathy.
- Collaborative work.
- Intuitive skills. They use intuition in analyzing and solving problems.
- Openness to participation and democracy.
- Look for long-term win-win relationships (Puyal & Sanagustin, 2006).

As is known, these characteristics influence the leadership and management style carried out within organizations. Female leadership tends to be viewed as more collaborative, emotional, and cooperative than male leadership. The fact that women work in leadership positions shows their interest in breaking the so-called "glass ceiling", which is a phenomenon that makes it difficult for them to access senior management positions (Hernández & Camarena, 2005).

Eagly & Carli (2007) claim that this situation has begun to change, and women have greater access, even in areas that were previously exclusive to men. These authors propose the concept of "labyrinth of glass" as a new metaphor. In this way, they highlight that, at present, women are not being blocked from accessing the highest positions, but they do have to overcome different obstacles and travel complex paths to reach them.

Recognition of the executive work of women today continues to be more symbolic than real. Men mostly hold the highest positions, even when there are women more prepared within the company for those positions.

Having more women in organizations makes them a better place to work for everyone, regardless of gender. According to the Center for Creative Leadership (2020c) having a higher percentage of women in an organization helps to:

- Improve the job satisfaction.
- Increase the organizational dedication.
- Have more meaningful work.
- Decreased burnout among the employees.

It is undeniable the important job position that women have reached today and the perspective that is had about their imminent rise in the corporate pyramid in the near future. This advance has been the

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