

ФЕНОМЕНЫ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО РАЗВИТИЯ

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INFLUENCE OF MASS MEDIA ON REALIZATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND LEADERSHIP IN SERBIA

Гендерное равенство входит в число прав, которые должны быть гарантированы каждому человеку. Социальные, политические, экономические и культурные различия между мужчинами и женщинами все еще сохраняются, особенно заметны различия в зарплате, роли в процессах принятия политических решений, в неравном распределении работы. В действительности это основано на многочисленных стереотипах, существующих в семье, образовании, культуре и средствах массовой информации. В Сербии лидерство в основном связано с мужчинами, и им предоставлены политические роли, и принято считать, что на политических позициях должны находиться только мужчины. С другой стороны, средства массовой информации (Интернет, ежедневные газеты, радио и телевидение) могут влиять на снижение предрассудков между полами. Цель статьи – показать результаты влияния средств массовой информации на реализацию гендерного равенства и лидерства. Были проведены исследования об участии женщины в Городской Ассамблее, руководящих и надзорных органах и руководящих должностях в городе Сомбор (Сербия).

Ключевые слова:

коммуникация, лидерство, пол, половое равенство, СМИ.

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1. Introduction

It has been known that throughout history gender roles have varied, from a society to a society, and within a certain culture there are situational and individual variations in keeping the gender roles [3–5]. In accordance with that, gender differences can be noticed in different times and places. As it is known, gender roles can often cause inequality in life between men and women, which can be seen in their unequal position in life, differently distributed political power in making decisions and representation, inequality in private sphere, differences in legal status, in gender based distribution within economy and violence against women, as the most widespread form of violation of human rights and discriminating attitudes in practice. In developed countries there is a trend of fewer jobs labelled as typically male or female. On the other hand, in less developed societies in which the patriarchal system is dominant, men have more valued roles than women, mainly because men

are generally better paid for their productive work compared with women. In such a society, men's role will mainly include jobs which are qualified as socially more important and economically more productive. If men are more engaged in public work, then it is most often the work within political organizations and management. Looking at the role of women in a society, it can be concluded that their role has a threefold function: productive, which is related with production of consumers goods and earnings from work out of the household, reproductive, which is related with work in the household and care for children and family, and public work, which is related with tasks and responsibilities which are performed for the benefit of the whole community (the jobs in organization and support, without evaluation and decision making). These roles do not bring income, they are deemed as natural, but not economically productive. Communication is a key precondition of development of the human society. On the one hand commu-

nication is inevitable precondition of effective management and on the other hand the instant availability of various kinds of information drastically increase quality of everyday life of every individual. Every advancement in communication technologies has made a significant influence on further development of the human society as a whole. It is a need of every human being to communicate every day, at a workplace, at school, at home, in the street, in the society, etc. Through communication with other persons, a person transfers his/ her knowledge, experience and feelings in a form of information, but at the same time receives and absorbs new knowledge and information from the other side they communicate with. [16]. It is characteristic for women to communicate in a peaceful way, because they are considered a gentler sex, with a special accent on nonverbal communication. It is known that women understand body language better than men and signals emitted by people they communicate with that reach them out of conversation. On the other hand, men are considered better speakers. It is known that they are very skillful in verbal communication.

Led by the fact about different positions of men's and women's gender based roles in society, Wood and Eagly [17], deem that universal gender differences point to the essential characteristics of people which can be inborn or they stem from cultural conventions which occur in a similar way in different societies. Those gender differences which are not consistent are reflected in variable aspects of human functioning which are dependent on the outer circumstances.

One of the key characteristics according to which the gender roles differ is the distribution of work. So, for women it will be most characteristic to take on the role of a housewife and person who takes primary care of children, while for men it will be most characteristic to take on the role in economy and as the primary supplier of the family. Although majority of women in industrialized societies are employed, genders show a tendency to concentrate in certain professions – in majority of occupations that bring a higher level of income and power there are more men than women.

The second universal pattern is related with status and power. Although these gender differences do not exist in all societies, all gender hierarchies which exist, favor men. Those patterns take different specific forms: in some, the woman has less resources than the man; in others her life has less importance; in some there are more restrictions for female marriage and sexual behavior. Wood and Eagly [17] believe that those patterns are based on physical

sex differences. Female reproductive activities are especially critical. In case women decide to be mothers, their duty is to take care of the children. Those activities prevent the woman from performing activities which require speed, uninterrupted periods of activities, study or travel. In the postindustrial societies reproductive activities have less influence on a woman because natality is decreased, breast feeding is not compulsory, there is organized child care. The next determining element is greater strength and speed of a man, which has made him predisposed to be more effective in the work that requires those qualities (hunting, war), which has lesser importance in modern societies, because there are few jobs/professions which require those qualities.

Mass media have an increasing influence on spreading information, creation of opinions, value system and general social behavior. Their influence is determined by subjective and objective reactions, however their social importance is indisputable. The greatest barrier is a relatively low average level of education, distrust in the media contents, as well as selective reception of media contents. Compromise and gradual adaptation between the objective and subjective approach to the media contents is balanced on basis of social context and concrete circumstances. Recipients have right to be fully informed about social events, in order to be able to orient themselves on their own and to take part in any decision making process in a most adequate way [1]. Means of mass communication in such situations take the role of those who make influence on harmony in decision making on various levels. Consequently, mass media have their role in realization of gender equality as well.

The goal of this paper was to examine influence of mass media on realization of gender equality and leadership, and also to examine the position of women on leading places in the city of Sombor, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

2. Methodology of the Research

Goal of the Research. The basic goal of this research is to examine the influence of mass media in realization of gender equality and leadership by means of a survey (questionnaire).

Hypotheses of the Research. On basis of the research carried out so far, data have been collected that give evidence that the gender equality and leadership are well organized when mass media promote gender equality. Starting from the goal of the research it is possible to make the following general hypothesis of the research: Mass media bring about a

36 higher level of gender equality and leadership among women and men.

Special Hypotheses. In order to support this research, the following hypotheses have been set:

1. Equality of women and men exists.
2. Women and men are equally present at the leading positions.
3. Communication is more easily made with women at leadership positions compared with men.
4. Leadership befits equally both women and men.
5. Communication, verbal and nonverbal is equally important to both women and men on leading positions.

Variables of the Research. The dependent variables of this research included:

- emotional attitude towards the way of work, and independent variables implied:
 - method of work
 - classical text processioning
 - text processing by statistical methods
 - sex of the interviewee

Population and Sample of the Research. The research was carried out on the sample of 80 interviewees, employed at public state institutions of the city of Sombor, Autonomous province of Vojvodina. The structure of the interviewees is shown in the table 1. The interviewees have been given the questionnaire, where the answers YES or NO had been provided, and also Women (W) or Men (M). The poll was anonymous.

Table 1

Sample Structure (n = 80)

Parameter	Number of Interviewees
Women	39
Men	41
Total	80

Subject of Research. It is necessary to determine what is the influence of mass media on realization of gender equality among women and men, in other words, on basis of the poll come to the results that reflect the opinions of the interviewees about position of women or men, as well as the importance of communication of women and men who are on leading positions. With the aim of gender equality, data of number of women occupying leadership positions in the city of Sombor will be collected. Thanks to that, both women and men would have equal rights and opportunities in finding employment, and on the other hand, mass media (internet, daily newspapers, radio, TV) would earn a better status among the employed population. This way of work contributes to raising the level of work achievements, gender equality and leadership.

Methods, techniques and instruments of research. Methods used in this research were chosen in accordance with nature of the problem, subject, goal and tasks of the research, as well as with the set hypotheses. Two methods were applied:

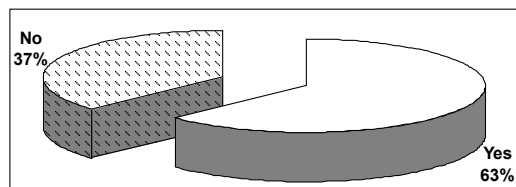
1. descriptive method (used in process of data collecting, processing and interpretation)
2. The poll with questionnaire was used as the instrument of the research in order to determine opinion of the interviewees about gender equality, leadership and communication.

According to the way of performing the poll, the tests were written, and the method of applying them individual, anonymous. The poll questionnaire for the interviewees (n=80) opinions and attitudes of the interviewees are asked about gender equality of women and men on leadership positions as well as about verbal and nonverbal communication with men and women.

Statistical Processing of Data. Statistical processing of acquired results has been made in the statistical package software GrapfPad Prism 5.00 (Version 5.00 for Windows, Graph Pad Software, San Diego California USA, www.graphpad.com). Chi-square test was used for comparison of frequency of nonparametric features. Significance of the differences has been found on the significance level of $p < 0,01$. The acquired results have been presented in a graphic way using Microsoft Office (2007).

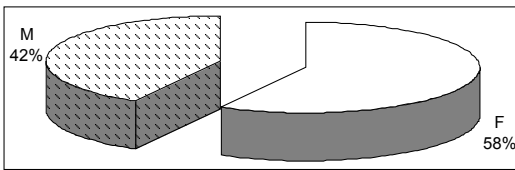
3. Test results

For confirming the hypothesis that the women are equal to men in performing their work, Chi-square test was used. Out of 80 participants, 63% have stated that women are equal to men in performing their work. Results show that statistically much higher ($p < 0.01$) number of participants stated that this is so, compared to the ones who stated that women are not equal to men in their work (Graph 1).



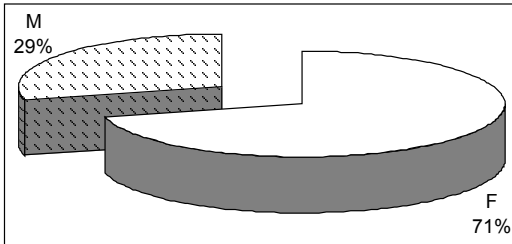
Graph 1: Work equality between women and men ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

Results of presence of men and women in leadership positions are shown in Graph 2. It is evident that the gender distribution is nearly the same, so no statistically significant differences were determined between the answers.



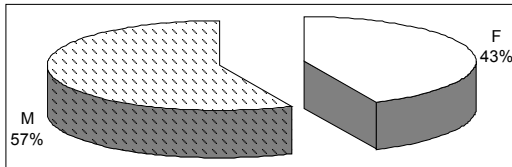
Graph 2: Gender distribution in leadership positions ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

The participants stated that in 71% of the cases, it is easier to communicate with women as compared to men. In this instance, statistically significant difference was determined between the answers ($p < 0.01$). This is often in correlation with courtesy and pleasantness that is more present in women than in men.



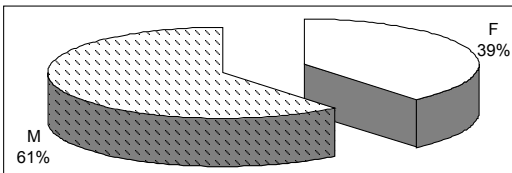
Graph 3: Ease of communication ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

Results on leadership are shown in Graph 4. Statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was determined between the answers given, with 57% of participants stating that leadership is better suited to men, as compared to women (43%).



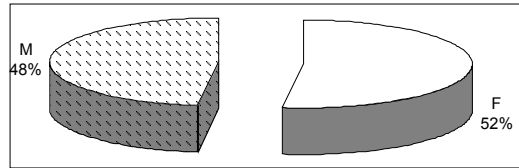
Graph 4: Distribution of leadership ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

The participants gave approximately the same answers about affinity towards working in institutions where women and men are in leadership roles, respectively. No statistically significant difference was determined between the recorded answers.



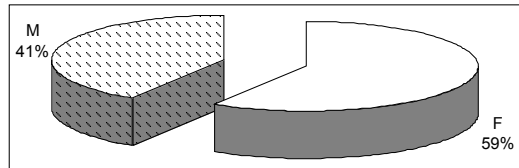
Graph 5: Affinity towards working in institutions where women and men are in leadership roles, respectively ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

Results obtained in this survey show statistically significant difference in courtesy. The participants stated that women are more courteous in 52% of cases, while just 48% of men are more courteous (Graph 6).



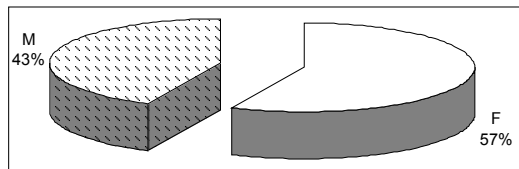
Graph 6: Distribution of courtesy ($n = 80, p < 0.01$)

Results show statistically significant differences while comparing the answers between women and men concerning the significance of nonverbal communication. As many as 59% of participants stated that women pay more attention to nonverbal communication (body language, physical appearance, way of dressing) compared with only 41% who state this for men (Graph 7).



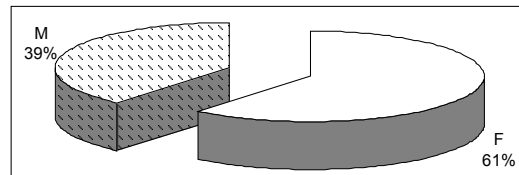
Graph 7: Significance of nonverbal communication

Unlike the results concerning nonverbal communication, verbal communication is suited to both women and men, without determined statistically significant difference ($p > 0.01$), but there is a larger numerical representation with men (Graph 8).



Graph 8: Significance of verbal communication

Results show that skilled oratory, including both verbal and nonverbal communication is characteristic to both women and men, according to participants, regardless of gender and statistically significant differences (Graph 9).



Graph 9: More skilled speakers ($n = 80$)

Besides surveying the participants by an anonymous survey, the data on participation of women in Town Assembly of Sombor, steering and supervisory committees and in leadership roles, in time period between 2005 and 2015, in the Sombor Municipality. The results are shown in Table 2.

Shown results clearly indicate that women are present in leadership roles, as well as in different committees and public companies.

THE SURVEY	Annex
Circle the answer:	
1. Are women equal to men in the workplace?	
2. In your surroundings, are there more women or men in management positions in state institutions? F M	
3. In state institutions, is it easier to communicate with women or men? F M	
4. Leadership is more characteristic for women or men? F M	
5. Would you rather work in institutions where women are in charge or institutions where men are in managerial positions? F M	
6. According to you, who is more courteous? F M	
7. Who pays more attention to verbal communication? F M	
8. Who pays more attention to nonverbal communication? F M	
9. According to you, who are the better speakers? F M	

Table 2

Participation of women in Town Assembly of Sombor, steering and supervisory committees and in leadership roles (2005–2015) (Data from Assembly and Executive Affairs Services of the Town of Sombor)

Positions	Number of women
Assembly Members	19
Leadership Roles	8
Directors of Public Companies and Institutions	14
Steering and Supervisory Committees of Public Companies	68
Steering and Supervisory Committees of Institutions	176

4. Discussion

Contents presented by mass media is a product of social reality. Mass media influence the political life through polarization: “for” or “against”. By their activity the mass media help individuals or groups to generalize their experiences and present possible ways of addressing the issue. In that way they influence the public to react politically or apolitically to the contents being presented. Independent media can exist if they can be freed from the effects of politics. Otherwise they are under the heel of political interest groups and cannot keep a neutral position. “The freedom is gradually being moved towards the information space, communication management becomes the essence of all doctrines, a mixture of simulation and reality sets new framework for persuasion, that, empowered and unscrupulous does not even want to hide its own presence” [10, p. 147]. The media must be freed from the pressure of ideology and public institutions, with great public support.

Mass media intensely influence the formation of an individual’s personality, strengthening personal values, obtaining behavioral models, identification with values of others, but also encourages violence and aggressiveness, idolatry, identification with positive and negative characters. The mass media have a special possibility to influence an individual and the society alike, focusing the behavior and action, while the function of assigning status is separate from the function of imposition of social norms. The mass media assign status to public problems, persons, organizations, social movements, while focusing attention to politicians, parties, and interest groups, increasing their reputation, authority and social influence. It is seldom the case that the principle is opposite, but such a possibility is not excluded. Also, their influence is of high intensity when they degrade activities or events that are not in line with commonplace public morale, with the goal of separating private or personal from social or public ethics.

The struggle for equality of women that has been going on for centuries is not over yet. Compared to some earlier times, we can say that a certain progress was made, but not enough to eradicate the word discrimination. The media are also responsible for unfavorable position of women in society. Also, using gender sensitive language is an important factor in improving the visibility of women in society. It is very important to seriously and adequately portray women and their needs and activities. With that being said, foremostly the communication is given a great importance, because it is characteristic for women

to exercise many rights through it. Today when we think and talk about some influential events, we no longer name only men as the protagonists. Important leadership functions in many fields are filled with women as well. Modern organizations have started realizing the importance of including women in management [2]. Entrepreneurship, industry, politics and other fields attain necessary diversity in approach through styles of work and team leadership by involving women, thereby gaining solutions that are more complete and of higher quality. Higher involvement of women and its results, such as new views and ideas, confirm that managing differences is useful, be it in profit or non-profit organizations. The men are credited with higher skill in mastering practical knowledge. They are, more often than not, seen as being more: independent, confident, competitive, ambitious, active, aggressive, persistent, even as bigger risk takers. The women are credited with higher communicative skills, especially non-verbal [11]. They are viewed as better in advising, helping, understanding and “reading” emotional states of others. It is being said that the women are more: considerate, gentle, tactful and tidy. This can certainly be true in some cases, but if we stop to think about everything that influences someone’s behavior and character, we will realize that by making such a generalization, we can make a mistake and surrender to prejudice. By trying to meet the demands of modern society, to be accomplished as a mother and wife, as well as a career woman, they experience tough inner conflicts, which is often detrimental to their health. This is so because women have more difficulty to strike a balance between their own personality, ties to the surroundings, nature, family, career which makes them triple hypostatized in accordance with her functions [9]. It is good to have the knowledge about the potential gender differences, about the advantages and drawbacks of certain traits for a leadership role, but we must remain open for individual differences and how someone handles himself or herself and how ready the person is to learn and develop in personal and business sense. Whether someone will be a good leader, be it a woman or a man, depends on the style of leadership the organization in question needs. We cannot say that there is a universally best leadership style. In some cases the best solution is leadership focused on two-way communication, delegation of responsibilities and tasks, sometimes the more centralized approach is preferred, where there is a higher responsibility resting on one individual, while sometimes the most liberal style is the best. Having the possibility

and skill to adapt and try various approaches is the skill to focus one’s attention to. Research shows that it is easier for women to master a leadership style that includes the most communication, exchange of ideas and team leadership. Therefore, the interactive style is the one where they would improve themselves the most. In general, one strongpoint attributed to women is the ability to solve issues through the cooperation by compromise. On the other hand, led by the same results, we could argue that the men are more prone to the so-called “autocratic”, task oriented style. It is also believed that the men are more geared towards competitive approach and that they can be more skilled when it comes to competition.

Leadership is a process that needs to be continually worked on. One needs to improve her or his skills, set challenges, inspire, encourage and develop the team spirit. Most suitable for this function is one who works on all of these traits, along with personal and team development. If a leader sets the values and goals correctly, believes in them, offers inspiration, both expects and gives trust, can in return expect fulfillment of goals, good team spirit, acceptance and affection. One becomes such a leader through a lot of work and commitment. However, what mark does this struggle leave on a woman’s personality? Since a woman, as any social being, is capable of adopting the patterns set by immediate and wider environment and behaving accordingly, yet there is a dilemma concerning the adequacy of adopting these patterns. Namely, a woman can have a possibility to adopt a pattern in the form of personality of a leader, in accord with the leadership role, without losing her identity [6–8].

In our social milieu, generally, women are not allowed to be the leaders of political parties, and they themselves were not supported enough to get the masses to follow them and an idea they represent. Women are rational and responsible, inclined to withstand many challenges, and are to the same degree as men biologically immune to the basic challenges that the power and authority set before an individual obtaining them: moral, intellectual, social and biological. Due to their feminine subtleness, commitment and true willingness to be supportive of the men’s world, politically engaged women are misused as workforce of a political organization.

Being a good leader is a great challenge for anyone. Leadership implies not only delegation, issuing tasks and attaining goals, but also motivation, influencing and direction. A good leader has a set of necessary traits such as: responsibility, dominance, confidence, integrity, intelligence, determination and persis-

tence. But that is not all. A common sense ability to have an initiative is also needed. Such an initiative always serves development, not only of an individual but also the entire team the person leads, and more. A common sense initiative is an actuator of our psyche, actuator of others and always serves development. Main characteristic of our time is a fast flow of information. Communication is an important part of every individual's life. However, there are those that are either unable to communicate, or the communication is difficult. Such people, children, youth and elderly are set on the sidelines of the society and have a lowered interaction with their environment. This group foremostly includes persons with some kind of handicap (physical or intellectual). Human needs are the same for all, and establishing communication as a form of addressing a human need is especially important. In an attempt of defining the term "need", no definition is accepted. Psychology defines "need" as a necessity to obtain something that is missing or remove an existing obstacle. Since the essence of human personality is in multidimensionality of its needs, it is impossible to define such needs through the prism of just one scientific discipline. During the middle of the twentieth century, biologists and psychologists introduced the term homeostasis in explaining the origin of human needs. The homeostasis implies physiological mechanisms that, in a living organism, have the task of maintaining constant conditions, i. e. maintaining the balance needed for optimal functioning of the being. Humans need not only biological, but also social balance that ensures the individual has certainty in social situations. In accordance with this is the definition of a need as a certain state of organism or social situation that exists independently of the consciousness of a human that is in a state of biological or social balance. The most complete classification of human needs was given by Maslow. He considered that all human needs can be divided into needs of absence and needs of existence, or growth. Fulfilling the needs of absence disables the occurrence of illness, but, in order to maintain the continuity of health, needs of existence should be met as well. Maslow made a scale of needs divided into five groups. The first level are the physiological (existential) needs such as the need for air (oxygen), food, water, sleep, clothing, etc. The physiological needs are an anchor point of motivation and are more powerful than all other needs. Motives are in fact needs that, when experienced, initiate action towards attaining a certain goal. If a person's one or more basic needs are not met, the motive for their fulfillment will be

stronger than the motive for fulfillment of needs from a higher hierarchical level. The second level are needs for safety. They include the needs of every human for certain level of safety, freedom from fear and suffering and become dominant in situations of real unforeseen danger (in war, sickness, during natural disasters). When more basic needs are met, the need for love emerges. This level represents the needs to belong somewhere and to be accepted (by family or other group), to be loved but also to love others, to have faith in others and for others to have faith in us, to help and count on help from others. The next level contains needs for self-esteem and respect from other members of a group to which we belong, by achievement, success, etc. It is also important that self-esteem and respect be affirmed by status and status symbols [14]. Exchange of information between humans using words is the verbal communication, performed orally and in written form. However, oral communication, besides its basic task - transferring certain messages, has a great motivational value [12]. Proper choice of words is paramount in verbal communication [13]. The occurrence of loanwords - words of foreign origin in a language is desirable only if the language does not contain words that can replace them. Usage of loanwords even when there is no need for them, i. e. even when the word has its own adequate counterpart in a language is loathworthy, even when the loanwords are being used correctly. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, usage of loanwords is wrong, both in everyday speech, and in printed and electronic media. Such improperly used words lead to confusion because they are not clarified enough [15].

Conclusion

Today when we think and talk about some influential events, we no longer name only men as the protagonists. Important leadership functions in many fields are filled with women as well. Modern organizations have started realizing the importance of including women in management [2]. Entrepreneurship, industry, politics and other fields attain necessary diversity in approach through styles of work and team leadership by involving women, thereby gaining solutions that are more complete and of higher quality. Higher involvement of women and its results, such as new views and ideas, confirm that managing differences is useful, be it in profit or non-profit organizations.

One needs to improve her or his skills, set challenges, inspire, encourage and develop the team spirit. Most suitable for this function is one who works on all of these traits,

along with personal and team development. If a leader sets the values and goals correctly, believes in them, offers inspiration, both expects and gives trust, can in return expect fulfillment of goals, good team spirit, acceptance and affection. One becomes such a leader through a lot of work and commitment. However, what mark does this struggle leave on a woman's personality? Since a woman, as any social being, is capable of adopting the patterns set by immediate and wider environment and behaving accordingly, yet there is a dilemma concerning the adequacy of adopting these patterns. Namely, a woman can have a possibility to adopt a pattern in the form of personality of a leader, in accord with the leadership role, without losing her identity. It is characteristic for women to, using nonverbal and verbal communication, win job positions, persuade their superiors, etc. On the other hand, and not less important, women

are more detailed and skillful in concluding contracts, making deals, in business meetings, etc. Our results show that men do not have a great advantage as compared with women in leadership positions, bearing in mind that the number of male and female interviewees was roughly the same.

Human rights are, in several ways, linked with communication, i.e. mass media. People find out about the rights that they are given and that belong to them and the ones they have yet to attain. Often they do not find out about some rights at all. In these situations the media have a great and very important role to play, stimulating the public to insist on learning about the rights that they are undeniably entitled to. The media stimulate the striving to make human rights a living reality and determine the responsibility of everyone to know her or his rights. Such is also the situation with workplace gender equality in management.

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