

Advancing Women in HR Leadership: A Qualitative Exploration of Promoting and Inhibiting Factors

Iris RON¹

Abstract

The human resources management profession in its current form began to take shape in the 1990s in Israel. (Bar Haim, 2007) Academic women began to integrate into human resources roles in business organizations (Meshulam and Harpaz, 2015). In the past, those who headed departments dealing with human resources were men, and they were part of senior management. After the human resources profession became predominantly female, a decline in salaries and management levels began (Sagi Weisberg, 2001). The research question was: What are the external and internal factors that hinder or promote the career development of female human resources managers in business organizations in Israel?

The goal was to reach an understanding of the relevant aspects for promoting female human resources managers to senior positions in business organizations in Israel. The qualitative research was conducted using a model of personal interviews conducted with 12 female human resources managers at various management levels.

The study resulted in a conceptual model that lists the relevant elements for promoting women to senior positions, classifying them into areas: professional and personal abilities and skills, leadership abilities, organizational culture, and work-life balance. The interviews concluded that for promotion, several conditions must exist: self-esteem and recognition of their abilities, mental toughness, emotional intelligence, a desire to instill personal and professional moral values in the organization, determination and perseverance, interpersonal communication skills, proactivity, project initiation, self-representation and marketing, a feminine management style, and the ability to balance work and home.

Keywords: *female, human resources managers, senior positions, moral values*

JEL classification: M0, M1

DOI: 10.24818/RMCI.2025.4.770

1. Introduction

Approximately 40 years have passed since the accelerated establishment of human resources departments in Israel, which began due to the need to absorb and retain additional employees in developing high-tech organizations throughout the country and the entry of global organizations based abroad, such as those in the US and Europe (Sagie & Weisberg, 2001). Initially, most people involved in human

¹ Iris Ron, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași, România, E-mail: irisron@gmail.com

resources were men, with women with excellent communication skills and great talent being recruited to the position of human resources department manager (Tzafrir et al., 2016). The human resources profession has become primarily aimed at women (Meshulam and Harpaz, 2015).

Professional human resources departments were staffed by managers who were educated in sociology and psychology. This move was driven by the demand for soft skills and an understanding of human behavior (Bar Haim, 2007).

The problem addressed by the study is that despite the excellent opportunities provided to talented women to integrate into the high-tech field, as human resources managers at corporate headquarters, there has been a significant decline in salaries and management ranks (Sagi Weisberg, 2001). Today, there are two main gaps:

a). It is not clear to the organization's managers what the importance and need for professionalism in human resources management is; therefore, there is a discriminatory attitude towards the human resources department in Israel by not having representation in management (Tzafrir et al., 2016).

b). Most heads of human resources departments do not take part in the strategic decision-making process in the organization, even though their knowledge and position regarding the implementation of management decisions in practice are of great importance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Financial Value of Female Leadership

The idea that gender equality is not just a moral goal or a bylaws requirement, but it is one of the essential conditions for getting organizational business credit. Gender equality can increase a company's profitability by about one percent for every female manager who joins the management team. A 15-year survey of large corporations in the U.S. found that companies performed better with more women in senior management roles, especially in leadership, finance, and innovation, including at the strategic level of the organization (Dezsó & Ross, 2012). Comparing similar companies for shareholders and investors' evaluation, organizations with at least one woman on the senior management team are worth at least 1% more than those without women in these roles. For example, if a company is valued at \$400 million, having a woman on the management team adds roughly \$4 million to its value (Dezsó & Ross, 2012). In companies where women hold top management positions, innovation plays a crucial role in the company's overall strategy. Even in organizations that do not prioritize innovation, there is no decline in other performance metrics and profits. Thus, the understanding that profitability improves when women are fully involved in the organization is a significant factor that can promote gender balance in organizations. (Dezsó & Ross, 2012).

The following are the reasons for this increase in profitability and the company's value: female managers have access to new markets and an

understanding of how to communicate with diverse sectors (International Finance Corporation, 2018); female managers tend to take fewer risks in management and strategic decision-making (International Finance Corporation, 2018); highly educated female managers usually hold master's degrees and have completed courses in a variety of knowledge areas (International Finance Corporation, 2018); female managers are resourceful, creative, and capable of multitasking (Dezsó & Ross, 2012); investors are increasingly investing in companies with gender-diverse management teams (Dezsó & Ross, 2012); diversity is linked to effective accounting management, corporate responsibility, job security, and involvement in social projects (Dezsó & Ross, 2012); in companies led by female CEOs, there is often a significant increase in the company's value and its stock price (Hong & Page, 2004).

2.2 Internal Factors in Promoting Female HR Managers

The internal promotion factors for career advancement are divided into acquired skills and aspects of the manager's personality that contribute to their acceptance into a senior position. Internal promotion factors for a senior position are internal forces that give impetus to action. These factors are referred to as "internal" because they are not explicitly or formally stated, but rather hidden within the employees' perceptions and consciousness. These internal factors include motivation to move forward, self-confidence, and a desire to realize one's abilities.

However, it is not enough to desire to realize one's potential. To be hired, candidates must possess the appropriate qualities and skills. Personality traits include proactivity, resourcefulness, leadership, interpersonal relations, excellence, efficiency, and moral values. Other qualities required for management are interpersonal communication, flexibility, creativity, and the ability to create order in one's environment (Jacobs & McClelland, 1994). Perseverance and determination are additional qualities to all those mentioned above. If crises and failures occur throughout the process, Female managers still do not give up and progress despite the difficulty (Davies et al., 2005). The feminine management approach, expressed as an internal promoter, involves the ability to listen, harness employees to perform tasks, and promote essential projects, employees, and management (Kim, 2022). It also involves the ability to present a broad view of the organization and lead organizational change (Minja, 2020). Women are usually characterized by a more attentive, inclusive, and flexible approach, according to the studies of Cohen et al. (2020). These qualities and skills are essential today in managing employees effectively. These main qualities and abilities are essential for achieving success and good business results. In particular, the female approach to management is preferred by younger generations who have recently entered the workforce, including Generation Y and Z (Wall Street Journal, 2020). They report that they also need a pleasant work environment. (Gerpott et al., 2021).

The internal promotion factors that influence the promotion of managers to senior positions stem from the manager's personality, such as the drive for self-realization, motivation for promotion that is, in turn, motivated by a genuine desire to help people in the work environment, belief in abilities, proactivity, charismatic leadership (Bartone, 2023), and excellent interpersonal relationships. The ability to see the big picture (Minja, 2020) will enable female managers to make strategic decisions in the future when they become part of the company's management. All of these will be added to internal factors related to the manager's acquired skills that affect the career advancement of female managers. The skills acquired, such as recruiting people to carry out tasks and distributing responsibilities from a senior level to a junior one to promote the company's goals, will help her advance to senior management. In addition, she would be assisted by her ability to harness workers, her experience in managing organizational changes, and her knowledge of management that is coordinated with her company's needs. In addition, presenting projects and self-marketing will help the human resources management implement the operational decisions involving the HR teams working in the organization (Brown et al., 2015).

Internal promotion factors are divided into personality and acquired skills. Awareness of positive personality traits and skills will empower and advance managers to succeed in their current roles and later in senior positions.

2.3 Personality Characteristics of a Female Manager as Internal Promoting Factors

- Emotional intelligence (EQ), which is expressed in the ability to understand and manage emotions positively and communicate effectively with others, overcome challenges, and relieve the pressure of subordinates and colleagues. (Śmieja et al., 2014) Female managers have higher emotional intelligence (EQ) (Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2010). Today's managerial challenges require emotional intelligence. EQ combines cognitive abilities and awareness of personal emotions in social relationships. EQ enables individuals to manage emotional situations and respond relatively, despite the intensity of emotions being high. People with a high EQ strive to understand the feelings of others before getting angry and acting unbalanced or confrontational, and instead act from a balanced and moderate place, being empathetic, inclusive, and compassionate. (Lopez-Zafra, & Garcia-Retamero, 2010).
- When gender-specific EQ levels were examined, gender differences favoring women were observed in personal scores, according to findings based on tests such as the MSCEIT, which measure parameters of behaviors and ways of thinking (Śmieja et al., 2014), in areas including motivational self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to express emotions clearly and understandably. Women were more sensitive to identifying their own and others' emotions and were more empathetic (Meshkat & Nejati, 2017).

- Multitasking - resourcefulness, responsibility, and the ability to absorb information while engaging in multiple activities. Female managers can perform tasks in real-time and multitask effectively. They absorb information from the field, analyze it in detail, and create a mini-project that addresses a need or solves a problem. At the same time, the office is engaged in its daily activities (Aharoni and Barmeli, 2015).
- Intellectual curiosity is the desire to know about in-depth topics in the professional field in which the company is engaged. Curiosity drives the search for information that facilitates decision-making, thereby enhancing managerial effectiveness, risk assessment, and innovation (Kidd et al., 2015). When there are challenges that are discussed in the management, and the manager wants to understand in depth what it means, out of curiosity, she could ask and take an interest, for example, in the structure of the material from a chemical point of view, even if she has no prior knowledge in this field, she will be interested and wish to study the subject in order to support the process of solving a given problem (Austin, 2014).
- Communication: Women in management positions communicate more effectively with Generation Y and Generation Z. (Generation Y, also known as the “digital natives,” are characterized by a need for work-life balance, meaning, collaboration, and openness to technology.) Generation Z, the “true digital natives,” are characterized as socially aware, pragmatic, entrepreneurial, and skilled at multitasking.) (Plakhotnik et al., 2024). They can use "small talk" to create solidarity, collegiality, and social bonding between themselves and those in their employment community (Mullany, 2006). According to Cates (2013), Gen Y and Gen Z employees prefer how women provide feedback and evaluation (Cates, 2013). Women tend to be more sensitive to the destructive consequences of letting their emotions erupt and not curbing their behavior. Therefore, they tend to be less impulsive than men (Meshkat & Nejati, 2017). As a result, female managers were observed to be less impulsive than their male counterparts, thereby maintaining good professional interpersonal relations within the company, with fewer instances of unbecoming behavior (Weinstein & Danon, 2015; Cross et al., 2011). Women are less affected by their egos. The ego can create barriers to workplace interactions by placing undue importance on one person instead of the professional issue at hand (Hougaard & Carter, 2018). Women are less likely to let their egos get in the way of achieving their goals. They tend to be more flexible and negotiate fairly, collaboratively, and less competitively. Managers who do not emphasize ego can empower employees and promote professionalism (Hougaard & Carter, 2018). Women are like coaches; they train people through positive feedback and less criticism, allowing their employees to grow and maximize their talent. This way, they achieve greater efficiency in their teams (Meshkat & Nejati, 2017).
- Female leadership is characterized by effective communication and employee motivation. Female managers tend to foster strong relationships with team members by being sensitive to others, practicing kindness, listening actively,

and maintaining open communication channels (Radu et al., 2017). They know how to give employees recognition for their work and efforts. Their social sensitivity also enables them to communicate more effectively with their male counterparts. These are the qualities that leaders should utilize to enhance employee motivation and, consequently, improve managers' satisfaction with employee performance (Lillbacka, 2010).

- **Values:** Female managers bring their values and ways of thinking, shaped by the female character and work methods that they naturally follow. These have now been found to be much more suitable for managing Generations Y and Z than the prevailing approach (Levin, 2018). Generation Y and Generation Z align well with the female approach, whose values prioritize home activities, relationships, family, and leisure as equally crucial in the workplace (Cates et al., 2013). People today are increasingly aware that flexibility in work hours is crucial to an organization's success. Employees expect that there will be no more commitments after work hours, so work meetings should not be held in the evening, which is family time (Madsen, 2003).
- **Creativity:** According to Cates, female leadership encourages creativity and attention, which is reflected in a management style that nurtures employees and gives them the confidence to express creative ideas (Cates, 2013).
- **Gender diversity leads to greater creativity within the organization:** When different genders bring their unique worldviews, the discussion expands in new directions, thereby creating innovation (Turban et al., 2019). With business creativity, problems can be solved more quickly and efficiently. Creativity enables employees to generate unique ideas that interest and engage them, making them an essential part of their organizational contribution. Producing fresher innovations has a positive impact on success compared to competitors in the field. Businesses can stay one step ahead and compete by anticipating what people will need before they even realize they need it. Creativity enables a company to push the boundaries and achieve innovation in all areas, from management and strategy to an enhanced end product (Turban et al., 2019).
- **Innovation, Cheng & Groysberg's paper (2020)** describes a survey conducted in 60 countries regarding investment in women's recruitment to board positions. The findings revealed that companies that paved the way for greater diversity on the board were more likely to provide long-term support for innovation and creativity (Cheng & Groysberg, 2020). Gender diversity in management, particularly when there is a critical mass of female managers, leads to greater support for innovative activities and organizational change processes. The greater the balance of gender diversity, the more it relates to the application of research and development power. Companies with more women in senior management report more patents and higher levels of innovation overall (Gallup, 2015).
- The reasons that prevent women from advancing to senior roles, such as external factors, are included under the heading "glass ceiling" as an external source of discrimination against women (Yom-Tov, 2020). Today, the lack of promotion

is often linked to their tendency to settle for their current position, a phenomenon known as a "sticky floor" (De Schacht et al., 2017).

- A "sticky floor" is a term that describes women's tendency to stay in mid-level positions when working conditions are favorable, especially when they seek flexibility in their working hours. Studies indicate that the 'sticky floor' phenomenon is common among women who feel satisfied in junior roles but do not advance to more senior positions. One reason is a stronger sense of social belonging to those at a lower level and a reluctance to disconnect from the social circle they identify with (Grant et al., 2006).

3. Methodology

The purpose of the study is to identify the external and internal factors that hinder or promote the career development of human resources managers in business organizations in Israel. For this purpose, a qualitative research method was chosen that would answer the research question. This qualitative research method was conducted through personal interviews. The interview analysis identifies, maps, and quantifies the factors that promote and delay the promotion of HR managers to senior positions. The research question is: What external and internal factors inhibit or promote the career development of female HR managers in business organizations in Israel?

The study was conducted among the participants of the Human Resources Forum in Israel between August 31, 2021, and February 2, 2022. The qualitative research population consisted of 12 interviewees, all of whom are managers at various levels in human resources departments.

This study examines the internal and external factors that hold many HR managers back from advancing to senior positions. The study will also examine the internal and external factors that contribute to the promotion of managers who have already advanced to senior positions.

This study focuses only on female managers without reference to additional and diverse gender definitions. It focuses on the world of High-Tech in the business sector, not the public sector. The research will primarily focus on female HR managers. In practice, it will be possible to apply the issue of promoting women to senior positions in general and examine what can be done regarding the promotion of female managers in business organizations.

The research employs a qualitative, constructivist approach, which posits that reality is composed of subjective experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. Data collection: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 female HR managers from high-tech organizations in Israel. The research tool consisted of an interview guide that included an initial open-ended question, in which each HR manager shared the story of her career development, followed by 22 specific questions.

The analysis is based on content analysis of the collected data and identifies key categories, including enabling and inhibiting factors. Research Hypotheses are :

H1. HR managers' narratives reveal both the challenges and strengths they face in advancing to senior positions.

H2: HR managers describe a variety of reasons for advancing their careers.

H3: Participants identify unique factors that promote and hinder their career development in their nearest environment.

H4: Participants identify character traits, skills, knowledge, and worldviews that influence actual promotion, as well as the motivation to promote HR managers to senior positions.

Selected questions from the qualitative interview guide:

After the demographic questions, the first question was about her career progression. Therefore, the question was phrased as follows: "Can you please describe your career progression process?" The interviewees shared their stories, emphasizing what was important to them and downplaying what was less significant. For example, most managers did not mention being mothers or how this affected their career progression. Only one manager stated that she was pregnant and had no current plans to change jobs. The interview guide focused on the perceived value of various factors that promote and hinder the career development of HR managers. They focused on acquired management skills and innate personal qualities that enabled them to advance, as well as on the skills and motivational factors that drive their mission to instill moral values in the organization. The questions also allowed them to describe the actions they took that advanced their careers along the way.

4. Results and Discussion

Research findings according to the research question: "What external and internal factors inhibit or promote the career development of female HR managers in business organizations in Israel?"

- a) Professionalism and knowledge in the field of human resources as a promoting factors for a senior position.

This finding suggests that a manager's effectiveness is primarily determined by their professionalism in the field of human resources. Professionalism is acquired through a combination of knowledge and experience in the professional field of human resources, as well as a business connection. Professionalism enables a female manager to feel confident in herself as an authority in her field, which is essential for her advancement. In the research literature, Mathur and Marley's study on employees' perceptions of professional development in management suggests that developing professional skills through training can enhance managers' abilities and confidence in handling challenges, which is essential for effective management (Mathur & Marley, 2015). In other words, professionalism in the field of work of a human resources manager, which

is expressed in skills, up-to-date professional knowledge and a constant connection to the business, is an acquired ability that is essential for the manager's sense of security in her position and her success, when she sees herself as a professional authority in her department, and therefore investing in the acquisition of professional, managerial and business knowledge can contribute to the promotion of managers to a senior position.

Promoting women to senior management positions is related to up-to-date professional knowledge that benefits the company and enhances the confidence of female managers in their ability to fill senior management positions.

b) Emotional intelligence as a promoting factor for a senior position

The findings indicate that, in the eyes of managers, internal emotional management is crucial for understanding how to respond effectively to external behavior. For example, this includes accepting criticism without being offended, recognizing emotions, and reacting in moderation without becoming emotionally carried away, thereby avoiding responses such as anger or aggression. Additionally, it involves being attentive to the other person and being sensitive to their needs. In professional literature, emotional intelligence is described as the ability to manage and communicate effectively with others, overcoming obstacles in communication that can arise when interacting with subordinates and colleagues. (Śmieja et al., 2014) Female managers have a higher EQ (Lopez-Zafra, 2010): The communication challenges between people in organizations today require emotional intelligence. EQ is an ability that combines cognitive abilities with an individual's awareness of their personal feelings, even within social relationships. Emotional intelligence appears to be a crucial trait for a female executive seeking to advance to a senior position. The ability to combine self-awareness and emotions with cognitive abilities creates a successful combination that enables moderate and effective communication, leading to synergy between employees and managers and ultimately achieving beneficial results for the organization.

c) The impact of implementing moral values on the motivation for promotion to a senior position

One of the main reasons female HR managers are interested in entering a senior position that requires effort and sacrifice is the opportunity to make a tremendous impact on the organization by embedding moral values within it. The ability to influence the organization's moral policy gives them more meaning for their job. Turkman et al. (2020) argue in their study that it is essential for female HR managers to do more than bring money to the company and its shareholders. They want to do something meaningful that gives intrinsic and noble value to the world (Turkman et al., 2020). Their study also emphasizes that creating an ethical work environment can improve the performance and ability of the team. Managers strive to foster the embedding of moral values as part of their leadership strategy, while demonstrating the values behind their role. This is why their organization does something intrinsic and ethical beyond being a workplace and beyond a

business. This encourages female managers to advance to senior positions and develop the values within the organization at a strategic level, demonstrating that the organization contributes to humanity in indirect ways.

The promotion of women to senior management positions is related to the ability of female managers to impart meaning to moral values within the organization, thereby benefiting humanity.

d) Acquired skills as a promoting factor:

In the interviews, female HR managers described parenthood as a factor that can promote career advancement. Evidence of this is seen in the words of one female manager: "When the children are older, it is more important that they see the example of a mother with a career, whose salary justifies maintaining a high standard of living, thereby justifying her investment in work." She recognizes her potential, and as a result, the children learn to behave similarly, excel in school, and ultimately succeed later in life, advancing in their careers. The children learn by observing the hardworking mother, who invests, persists, and is determined to develop her career. In the qualitative research (100% of the interviewees were mothers) 83% of them claimed that being a mother does not hinder their promotion. Only 13% viewed their motherhood as an internal barrier.

5. Conclusions

a) Conceptual conclusions according to the question: "What external and internal factors hinder or promote the career development of female human resources managers in business organizations in Israel?". The dominant promoting factors that predict career motivation are: self-esteem and recognition of the required acquired skills and abilities; mental resilience and especially emotional intelligence are essential for the promotion process; desire to assimilate personal and professional moral values for the benefit of the environment; there is a motivation to influence strategic decisions; determination and perseverance, not giving up despite challenges; interpersonal communication skills; proactivity in initiating projects; representation and self-marketing towards management; authority and assertiveness, along with feminine managerial qualities such as listening and sensitivity to others; being mothers does not harm their motivation for promotion, but rather the opposite.

The conceptual model: The model suggests that to advance into managerial roles, female HR managers need to possess practical management skills. These skills include being proactive, instead of waiting for something to happen, addressing a problem that can be foreseen, and taking responsibility in advance. Some of these skills are related to understanding the dynamics between people, managing effective communication, and creating the right relationships with colleagues by strengthening interpersonal relationships and supporting effective management. On the professional level, some management skills involve curiosity in the field of human resources, seeking additional sources of learning, and

introducing innovation to the organization. Leadership is an integral part of management skills. It includes qualities like charisma, which is an important trait when you want to recruit people to help you achieve the organization's goals. A leader also needs to act boldly and push beyond their fear to discover new areas and horizons that can move society forward. At the same time, it is necessary to balance courage with risk management and a broad vision of the organization, so that the decisions, no matter how courageous, will not harm the organization and cause it losses. A leader must identify long-term trends that will guide the organization in the right direction. A manager who is a leader must also combine the authority that stems from her rank with high professionalism, flexibility, and creativity.

Another component of the model is personality traits that reflect the essential qualities a manager needs to possess to advance to a senior position. First and foremost, a human resources manager should evaluate herself as having the ability to hold a senior position and aspire to reach it. She must have emotional intelligence, be aware of the feelings of others, and be considerate of their needs, thus fostering effective communication and relationships. A human resources manager should have the mental strength to manage their emotions effectively and create a positive impact on the organizational environment. To lead change processes and ultimately present the results and actions taken in a representative and impressive manner, thus positioning itself at the forefront of the organization. Added to all this is perseverance and diligence: the ability to persevere even when conditions are complex helps HR managers overcome periods of uncertainty.

c) The significant value of professional development for advancing to a senior position. Professional development refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills through experience, as well as the opportunity to deepen professional expertise by taking management courses. The motivation for learning and development strengthens the ability to cope with a dynamic and changing environment. Academic education is one of the essential prerequisites for female managers who want to advance, as it provides the knowledge, professional confidence, and authority that come from having studied the field in depth.

The study's conclusions suggest that parenting and motherhood do not constitute either an inhibitor or a promoter, but rather a factor that operates in the background, can be managed, and influences the process of prioritizing tasks as part of a broader trend toward achieving a work-life balance.

Another component of the model for promoting women to senior management positions involves an organizational culture that reflects a company that supports social and environmental values and fosters a positive work environment. Managers should feel that their organization fosters a positive atmosphere characterized by trust, open sharing, and mutual respect among team members. At all stages of career development, managers need a mentor who guides and accompanies them through the promotion process. Additionally, in an organizational environment characterized by fairness and justice, salaries would also be commensurate with the position.

The conceptual conclusions suggest that the combination of various categories, including management and leadership skills, personal traits, the manager's background data, organizational culture, and the balance between home and work, presents a pattern of balanced and influential leadership. Combining intellectual abilities, moral courage, a commitment to values, strong human connections, balanced judgment, and inclusive humanity, along with leadership, creates synergy that enables personal growth and advancement of the entire organization. This framework offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the promotion of female HR managers to senior management positions, laying the groundwork for systematic leadership development processes. Finally, this model is multidisciplinary because it combines knowledge from the fields of organizational culture, personal traits, interpersonal relationships, and management to create a strategy that promotes women to senior positions in business companies.

b) Operational conclusions for the promotion of female HR managers to senior positions in business organizations: this study makes a significant contribution to expanding knowledge on the promotion of female HR managers to senior positions in business organizations. The "Promoting Women to Senior Management Positions" operational model helps reduce the gender gap in senior management.

This study provides a comprehensive and detailed examination of the internal factors that most significantly influence the promotion of women to senior positions and based on which relevant development programs can be built for any organization. The classification of factors according to their degree of influence on the promotion of human resources managers makes it possible to work on each part separately. The issue of "work-life balance" is not a significant reason for the lack of promotion to a senior position, as it neither facilitates nor hinders promotion, but only diverts the discussion in irrelevant directions. The issue of instilling moral values as a primary motivating factor that promotes the advancement of women to senior positions requires interviewers to see that there is an agenda of moral values for women who are candidates for advancement to a senior position.

In addition to these conclusions, the mapping of factors for promotion may be expanded further and also examined: the influence of additional personality characteristics; the influence of new technologies and more women's involvement in social media; the influence of implementing new organizational policies, leadership development programs, and flexibility in working hours.

References

1. Bar-Haim, A. (2007). *Human resource management* (Vol. 3). The Open University of Israel. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359012794_CSR-Related_Employment_Relations_and_HRM_Practices_at_Small_and_Medium-Sized_Enterprises_vs_Multinational_Corporations [Accessed March 2025].

2. Cohen, J. R., Dalton, D. W., Holder-Webb, L. L., and McMillan, J. J. (2020). *An analysis of glass ceiling perceptions in the accounting profession*. *J. Bus. Ethics* 164, 17-38. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-018-4054-4> [Accessed May 2025].
3. Davies, P., Spencer, S. J., & Steele, C. M. (2005). *Clearing the air: identity safety moderates the effects of stereotype threat on women's leadership aspirations*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(2), 276-287. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.2.276> [Accessed May 2025].
4. De Schacht, N., Pauw, A. D., & Baert, S. (2017). *Do gender differences in career aspirations contribute to sticky floors?*. *International Journal of Manpower*, 38(4), 580-593. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-10-2015-0171>[Accessed May 2025].
5. Dezső, C.L., & Ross, D.G. (2012). *Does Female Representation in Top Management Improve Firm Performance? A Panel Data Investigation*. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(9), 1072-1089. DOI: 10.1002/smj.1955. <https://sms.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/smj.1955>> [Accessed May 2025].
6. Gallup. (2015). *State of the American Manager: Analytics and Advice for Leaders*. Retrieved from <https://www.gallup.com/services/182138/state-american-manager.aspx> [Accessed May 2025].
7. Grant, L., Yeandle, S., Buckner, L. (2006). *Working below Potential: Women and Part-Time Work*. Working Paper Series No. 40. Center for Social Inclusion, Sheffield Hallam University<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242449068_Working_below_PotentialWomen_and_Part-Time_Work> [Accessed 29 August 2020].
8. Hong, L., & Page, G.E. (2004). *Groups of diverse problem solvers can outperform groups of high-ability problem solvers*. *PNAS*, 101(46), 16385–16389. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.0403723101> [Accessed May 2025].
9. IFC Corporate Governance Knowledge Publication (2018) *Women in Business Leadership Boost ESG Performance: Existing Body of Evidence Makes Compelling Case*. <https://www.ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/pso42.pdf> [Accessed May 2025].
10. Jacobs, R. and McClelland, D. (1994). *Moving up the corporate ladder: a longitudinal study of the leadership motive pattern and managerial success in women and men*. *Consulting Psychology Journal Practice and Research*, 46(1), 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1061-4087.46.1.32>[Accessed May 2025].
11. Kim, S. (2022). *Are your employees hopeful at work? The influence of female leadership, gender diversity, and inclusion climate on Japanese employees' hope*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.936811> [Accessed May 2025].
12. Meshulam, I., & Harpaz, I. (2015). *Human Resource Management: The Strategic Approach*. Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth and Hemed Books. [Hebrew book].
13. Ministry of Economy and Industry, Strategy and Policy Planning Division. (2019). *Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship, Industry, and Business*. Jerusalem. Available at: <https://bit.ly/33M4m4W> [Accessed 29 August 2020].
14. Minja, D. (2020). *Strategic philosophy and competitive advantage: conceptual understanding and application in public sector organizations*. *East African Journal of Business and Economics*, 2(1), 10-19. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajbe.2.1.140> [Accessed May 2025].
15. Ron, I. (2022). *A qualitative study on the promotion of female human resources managers to senior positions*. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 24, 198-208. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1123996> [Accessed May 2025].

16. Ron, I. (2022). *Factors Promoting Female Managers' Advancement to Senior Positions*, STRATEGICA International Conference, <https://strategica-conference.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/12-2.pdf> [Accessed May 2025].
17. Ron, I. (2020). *Factors Hindering the Promotion of Female Managers to Senior Positions*, Review of Economic and Business Studies (REBS), <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1241078> [Accessed May 2025].
18. Sagie, A. and Weisberg, J. (2001). *The Transformation in Human Resource Management in Israel*. International Journal of Manpower, 22(3), 226-234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720110398275> [Accessed May 2025].
19. Wall Street Journal. (2020). The invisible wall: this is how women are paved out of the safe path for CEOs. Globes. [online] Available at: <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001317915> [Accessed 20 September 2021].
20. Yom-tov, H. (2020). Equal, but less. Davar. Retrieved from <https://www.davar1.co.il/211994/> [Accessed May 2025].
21. Zafir, S., Reshef, A. (2016). Interview with Prof. (Emeritus) Ilan Meshulam in "The Study of Organizations and HR Management" Quarterly 1(1) 2016 (Hebrew) <https://cohrm.haifa.ac.il/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Meshoulam.pdf> [Accessed May 2025].