PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GARMENT SECTOR LEADERSHIP ROLES: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS USING FOUR FRAMES OF GENDER IN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

This research examines women's underrepresentation in leadership roles within Indonesia's garment sector despite comprising the majority of the workforce. It employs a qualitative approach, including interviews interpreting employees' gender bias experiences, to deeply analyze the sociocultural norms and systemic practices favoring males that contribute to the disparity. The four frames of gender in organization framework structure an in-depth investigation into masculine stereotypes of leadership that limit opportunities and hinder women's advancement. PESTLE and SWOT analyses further evaluate external and internal factors perpetuating inequality. The research tests the hypothesis that addressing biases and barriers can achieve equitable gender representation to leverage women's potential, enhancing sector sustainability. Proposed initiatives like mentoring programs and fair evaluations intend to recognize women's capabilities as leaders to improve performance, tapping their currently underutilized potential. The study provides practical insights to guide companies in the sector toward greater gender equality. By comprehensively examining research problems surrounding inequality in the garment industry, this research strives to substantially contribute to the discourse and offer actionable recommendations for positive change. It aspires to highlight complexities, serve as an impetus for transformation, and shape an inclusive landscape where all individuals' potential is fully realized irrespective of gender.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Leadership, Garment Sector, Qualitative Analysis

Introduction

Gender equality is the social condition where men and women have equal access to human rights, resources, opportunities, participation, power, rewards, and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of valuing both similarities and differences without discrimination (Vokić, Obadić, & Ćorić, 2019) Specifically, gender equality in the economy refers to the equal integration of men and women into the labor market. Despite significant progress, women's participation rates remain lower than men's, hindering their advancement to managerial positions and receiving equitable pay for equivalent work (Michalos, 2014). In the context of Indonesia, gender equality remains an ongoing concern, with the female labor force participation rate persistently low at 52% compared to 85% for men (World Bank Assessment, 2020). Gender-based stereotypes and traditional roles for women hinder their growth potential, presenting challenges for career advancement, learning, earning, and leadership opportunities.

Within IDX200 companies, only 15% of roles were held by women in 2021, with merely 21% achieving gender balance in their executive leadership teams (International Business Coalition for Women Empowerment, 2021). A gender-balanced organization, marked by equal representation at all levels, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive work environment for career progression irrespective of gender. As of the beginning of 2023, Indonesia's population is 278,69 million people of which 49,52% are women (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). The garment industry, constituting 6.12% of Indonesia's manufacturing sector GDP and employing over 3.65 million workers, plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy (PricewaterhouseCoopers Indonesia, 2023). Despite a predominantly female workforce, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, necessitating urgent industry-wide transformation (Better Work Indonesia, 2019). Nevertheless, beneath this thriving industry lies a complex gender disparity. Women have fewer opportunities for advancement, making it difficult to be on the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) while facing discrimination, harassment, and struggle to make their voices heard (Woetzel et al., 2018).

In a previous research endeavor led by Widyananda in 2020, an analysis was conducted to uncover the underlying reasons behind the low representation of female pilots. However, it is noteworthy that the interpretation of interview results lacked the application of open coding, resulting in a solution that was, to a certain extent, broad and generalized. This identified research gap prompts the need for a more in-depth analysis, aiming to enhance the understanding of the findings through the incorporation of open coding. By introducing open coding into the analytical framework, the research endeavors to bring a higher level of granularity and precision to the solution derived from the study. This methodological refinement will allow for a more nuanced interpretation of the data, enabling a sharper and more insightful resolution to the existing challenge (King & Mackey, 2016). Thus, the current research seeks to build upon the prior work, addressing the limitation identified in the earlier study and contributing to a more comprehensive (Gregor & Hevner, 2013).

There are clear economic benefits to engaging more women in the labor force, such as an improvement in welfare and the opportunity to advance their careers. Additionally, higher female participation boosts household earnings, preserves aggregate demand during recessions, and aids in maintaining or consolidating the middle class (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016). Female leadership is not simply an issue of equity and diversity, but it is also a strategic advantage that benefits businesses and society as a whole. This research seeks to unravel gender equality comprehensively by examining workforce dynamics. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to provide an inclusive work environment and promote equal opportunities, that will eventually contribute to better decisions, innovation, and overall success of the organization.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative methodology to effectively address the contextual problem, aligning with the precise data obtained during interviews. The decision to employ qualitative methods was informed by the need for a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. The interviews focused on two respondents, both managers from distinct departments in a specific garment industry within Bandung City. The chosen research variable delves into the working experience of the respondents and investigates the work culture and policies that may either facilitate or impede women's advancement within the industry. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing gender dynamics within the organizational context.

The analysis method will employ four frames of gender in organizations, derived from feminist theory which offers various approaches to address gender issues in organizations, each serving as a "frame" for understanding gender and addressing disparities. Ultimately striving for gender equity through various strategies. Subsequently, the interview results will undergo a comprehensive analysis using open coding and axial coding methods. This analytical process is crucial for categorizing the obtained data into predetermined frames, facilitating an exploration of gender-related aspects within the specific garment industry in Bandung City. In addition to this, the study incorporates SWOT and PESTLE analyses to offer a broader perspective on the environment, enhancing our understanding of how external factors may impact business operations within the industry.

Results and Discussion

To begin, the data collection process involves conducting an in-depth interview, employing a semi-structured interview format. This approach combines the benefits of predetermined themes and questions typically associated with a structured interview, providing a degree of flexibility by allowing the interview session to unfold in an open-ended manner. The theme of the interview revolves around the sharing of perspectives and experiences currently observed within the organization. The primary objectives are to ascertain insights into the prevailing work culture and to understand the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. The question asked related to the four frames of gender are outlined as follow:

- Fix the women: Can you explain the level of skills women in your company have as compared to men?

- Value the feminine: What are the characteristics that women bring to the company that men cannot bring? To what extent does your company encourage these characteristics to take place?

- Create equal opportunity: What does the company do to allow women to have the same opportunities as men in the workplace?

- Assess and revise work culture: Can you explain the company culture that is dominant? To what extent is the company achievement-oriented or assertive? And to what extent is the company nurturing or collaborating?

Qualitative analysis will be conducted through thematic analysis, a method that uses open, axial, and selective coding techniques to understand the context. Open coding categorizes concepts, axial coding focuses on emergent themes, and selective coding integrates organized data categories for a more cohesive context. This systematic approach ensures a nuanced examination of the subject matter (Williams & Moser, 2019). The underlined code reflects a series of indicators that may perpetuate barriers to women's career advancement within an organization. Gender distribution and limited female representation suggest a lack of diversity, potentially hindering an inclusive workplace. Factors influencing promotion, such as individual capabilities being the primary criterion, can inadvertently reinforce existing gender biases and stereotypes. The absence of formal training programs may further impede women's professional growth, limiting their access to skill development opportunities. In a goal-oriented company culture that heavily focuses on achieving results, there may be a risk of more masculine environment that may hinder women advancement. The lack of gender-based performance evaluation, informal structure promotion, and the promotion based on individual qualities may contribute to the perpetuation of gender disparities in leadership roles. Additionally, the absence of formalized career paths and specific policies for gender equality may increase challenges women face in breaking through barriers to advancement.

Table 1. Open and Axial Code

Open Code	Axial Code
(A1) Female majority	Gender dynamics
(A2) Female skill vs male skill	
(A3) Gender distribution	
(B1) Limited female representation	Career advancement factors
(B2) Factor influencing promotion	
(B3) Individual capabilities as the primary promotion criteria	
(C1) Limited formal training program	Training and development
(C2) Training for system usage	
(C3) Personal development and learning on the job	
(D1) Weekly evaluation meeting	Performance evaluation
(D2) Evaluation criteria based on targets, diligence and problem solving	
(D3) No gender-based performance evaluation	
(E1) Family like atmosphere	Company Culture
(E2) Flexible communication channels	
(E3) Goal oriented company culture	
(E4) Focus on achieving results	
(F1) Individual initiatives encouraged	Career pathways

(F2) Opportunities based on performance	and opportunities
(F3) <u>Lack of formalized career paths</u>	
(G1) Ego as challenge	Challenges in
(G2) Importance of open communication	teamwork
(H1) Goal oriented projects	Project
(H2) Guidance from supervisors in project planning	management
(H3) Challenge in project time lines	
(I1) <u>Lack of specific policies for gender equality</u>	Company
(12) <u>Promotion based on individual qualities and skills</u>	Policies
(I3) <u>Informal structure promotion</u>	

Table 2. Selective and Axial Code

Selective Code	Axial Code
Fix the women	Gender dynamics
Value the feminine	Career advancement factors
Create equal opportunity	Create pathways and opportunities
	Training and development
	Performance evaluation
	Company policies
Assess and revise work culture	Company culture
	Challenges in teamwork
	Project management

The acknowledgment that success is attributed to individual traits rather than gender-specific skills challenges the "Fix the Women" frame, which implies a need to address perceived skill gaps in women. Thus, difficulties in appreciating feminine qualities in leadership are reflected in the low presence of women at leadership positions despite a sizable female workforce. The absence of gender-specific policies for advancement raises questions about the organization's commitment to supporting and encouraging feminine leadership qualities.

The organization's emphasis on assertiveness and competitiveness, along with its goal-oriented and results-driven methodologies, are stereotypically associated with masculine values. In addition, the emphasis on cooperation, open communication, and a family-like environment appeals to stereotypically feminine traits. However, it seems that there are no particular frameworks or policies that actively promote women's advancement in the workforce. Promotions are not determined by institutionalized promotion protocols, but rather by competence and experience. This lack of an institutional framework to ensure gender equity perpetuates an informal, masculine-oriented culture.

The SWOT analysis reveals the organization's strengths and weaknesses in its approach to gender. The organization has a family-like atmosphere that reflects feminine qualities, and regular performance evaluations that are impartial across genders. Emphasis is placed on individual initiative and personal growth, allowing employees to showcase their skills. However, weaknesses persist, such as limited female representation in leadership roles, lack of specific policies for gender analysis, and lack of formal training programs. The absence of formalized career paths also hinders career development. Opportunities for improvement include implementing policies that support gender equality and women's advancement, implementing

mentoring programs for high-potential women, and creating a competency framework for promotions. Creating awareness and support for feminine traits can contribute to a more balanced and inclusive workplace. The organization faces threats such as low numbers of women in leadership roles, lack of support for women's career growth, perpetuation of gender stereotypes, and reliance on individual skills for promotions. Addressing these threats is crucial for the organization's long-term success and commitment to fostering an equitable and inclusive work environment.

KOMPAK, an Indonesian-Australian partnership program, aligns with Australia's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy, focusing on women's involvement in decision-making, leadership, peace-building, economic empowerment, and combating violence against women and girls. The National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, enacted in 2000, guides the National Long-term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025, aiming to empower women, reduce the gender gap, provide them with a better standard of living, and encourage women's leadership to overcome barriers. However, the policy's influence is limited by its classification as an "instruction" rather than a law, making its influence insufficient (World bank, 2011).

The economic impact of increasing women in leadership roles in Indonesia is significant, with studies estimating that over $12 trillion could be added to global growth by 2025 (Ellingrud, Madgavkar, & Manyika, 2016). Women own 60% of enterprises in Indonesia, with the majority operating in micro or small businesses. Expanding access to capital and financing for women entrepreneurs and SMEs leaders could drive innovation and job growth. However, less than 7% of Indonesian SMEs have access to capital markets, highlighting the need to address the gap in financial access for women-led businesses (Dea, 2019). A World Bank study revealed that only 12% of 1,633 Indonesian women entrepreneurs had received business skills-development training, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of their motivations and a concerted effort to bridge the information gap in available resources (World bank, 2016).

Sociocultural values in Indonesia pose a significant hurdle for women in leadership roles. Gender-role stereotypes, particularly in urban areas, often lead to women being expected to be primary caregivers and home managers (Tambunan, 2017). This disadvantages women in terms of time, skill-development, and networking. High costs also limit access to childcare programs. Despite historical gender disparities in higher education, more women are pursuing higher education, countering patriarchal stereotypes and providing leadership role models. Increasing educational opportunities for women is crucial for broader acceptance of female leaders in business, government, and society (Seierstad, Warner-Søderholm, Torchia, & Huse, 2017).

Indonesia has been promoting women's empowerment in information and communication technology through social organizations like the Indonesian Women Information Technology Awareness organization. Female Development aims to create an environment where women understand technology, invent creative ideas, and create useful programs. Digital equality would impact gender work equality, economic success, and job market value (Suwana, 2017). However, women face challenges such as limited autonomy, limited access to online platforms, and perceptions of digital places as harmful or unsafe. The high costs of internet use also limit women's access to economic resources and freedom (Gattorno et al., 2022).

Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, ratified by Law No. 21 of 1999, is an international labor organization convention that mandates

every ratified ILO member state to eliminate all forms of discrimination in employment and occupation based on race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, nationality, or ancestry. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified by Law No. 7 of 1984, regulates women's right to work and the state's obligation to guarantee it. Article 11 mandates appropriate regulations to eliminate discrimination in employment, ensuring equal rights between men and women. These rights include the right to work as a human right, equal employment opportunities, free choice of profession and occupation, promotion, job security, vocational training, equal pay, social security, and occupational health and safety. However, despite these guaranteed rights, their implementation is inconsistent, with discriminatory treatment occurring during recruitment processes, such as seeking attractive, unmarried female workers or imposing job requirements resulting in sex discrimination.

Women on corporate boards are linked to improved environmental performance and responsible business practices. They participate in environmental decision-making, contribute to larger environmental spending, and are more focused on environmental, social, and governance issues. A study shows that when women hold at least 30% of board seats, they significantly impact climate governance and innovation. Women entrepreneurs also contribute positively to environmental outcomes, with more pro-environmental attitudes and commitment to sustainability goals (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2022).

Table 3. PESTLE - SWOT Analysis Summary

FRAME	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity (External)	Threat (External)
Frame 1: Fix the women	Recognizing that success stems from individual skills rather than gender			
Frame 2: Value the feminine		Limited female representation in leadership role despite sizeable female workforce	Leveraging Feminine Values for Sustainability Gains	
Frame 3: Create Equal opportunity	Regular performance evaluations based on target and problem solving are impartial across gender	Lack of training program and formalized career path	Women could have equal opportunities as men if they are equally treated by providing training	Glass ceiling theory, there is an invisible barrier that keeps hindering women from reaching leadership roles. Also a bias towards women

		leaders, because leaders are imagined as men.
Frame 4: Assess and revise work culture	Family like atmosphere appeal to feminine qualities	The industry's long work hours and inflexible schedules, rooted in traditional masculine values, may hinder women's participation and advancement in various projects.

Based on the analysis here are some recommendations solution for promoting gender equality:

1. Frame 1, "Fix the women": Enhance skills training and professional development opportunities, particularly programs aimed at building confidence, executive presence, strategic thinking, and other leadership competencies in women. This can help address any perceived skill discrepancies.

2. Frame 2, "Value the feminine": Challenge stereotypical assumptions about gender differences in skills, careers, or leadership potential through awareness campaigns, bias mitigation training, and highlighting examples of successful women leaders. Actively recognize the unique value women provide

3. Frame 3, "Create equal opportunity": Implement policies and programs specifically supporting women's advancement and leadership development. Mentorship programs for women and quotas for women in executive positions. Establish clear, transparent, and standardized criteria for promotions and career advancement pathways with opportunities for developing and demonstrating leadership capabilities.

4. Frame 4, "Assess and revise work culture": Foster an organizational culture centered on open communication, teamwork, empowerment, empathy, and growth mindsets. Draw from stereotypically feminine traits to balance existing masculine-oriented values. Collaborate with external programs empowering women entrepreneurs through training, access to capital or financing, and networking

Table IV.5 Summary of Alignment

Frame	Solution	Connection
Fix the Women	Enhance skills training and professional	Addresses potential skill discrepancies and supports

	development opportunities	women's career advancement in a male-dominated industry.
Value the Feminine	Awareness campaigns, bias mitigation training	Counters traditional gender norms, encouraging a more diverse and inclusive work culture.
Create Equal Opportunities	Implement policies and programs specifically supporting women's advancement and leadership development	Directly addresses the threat of limited representation and unequal opportunities for women in leadership.
Assess and Revise Work Culture	Balancing existing masculine-oriented values with feminine traits	Mitigates the threat of a rigid, masculine-oriented work culture, promoting inclusivity and diversity

Conclusion

This research project on advancing gender equality awareness within the Indonesian garment industry revealed that while success is determined by skills and capabilities regardless of gender, female representation in leadership roles is currently limited due to inadequate support for valuing feminine traits. Proposed solutions involve a multidimensional approach combining top-down policies like mentoring initiatives and competency-based career development pathways for women, with bottom-up cultural realignment through bias mitigation awareness and incorporating feminine values into flexible work arrangements. However, policies promoting gender equality or women's advancement alone risk perpetuating a masculine-oriented work culture. Sustainable progress requires continuous effort focused on the most impactful areas of intervention, including training programs, performance evaluations, and revising aspects of work culture. Further research across the sector can build on these findings to foster workplace gender equality through a combination of supportive policies and cultural realignment. Exploring the impact of female leadership mentorship on promotion rates, sentiments influenced by inclusiveness messaging, and the experiences of women leaving organizations can provide additional insight. A collaborative approach addressing policies, practices and culture is key to the garment industry becoming more equitable and inclusive.

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