

Analysis of the Dimensions of Gender Justice in the Process of Appointing Managers: A Case Study in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province

Ali. Jamshidi¹, Abdolkhalegh. Gholami Chenarestan Olya^{2*}, Ali. Pirzad³

1. PhD Student, Department of Management, Yas.C., Islamic Azad University, Yasuj, Iran
2. Associate Professor, Department of Management, Yas.C., Islamic Azad University, Yasuj, Iran
3. Associate Professor, Department of Management, Yas.C., Islamic Azad University, Yasuj, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Aa1405@iau.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Jamshidi, A., Gholami Chenarestan Olya, A., & Pirzad, A. (2026). Analysis of the Dimensions of Gender Justice in the Process of Appointing Managers: A Case Study in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province. *International Journal of Innovation Management and Organizational Behavior*, 6(5), 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijimob.5709>



© 2026 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to analyze the dimensions of gender justice in the process of appointing managers in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province and to develop a qualitative model of fair and merit-based managerial appointment.

Methods and Materials: This study was conducted using a qualitative research design based on the grounded theory approach. The research participants included 15 managers, experts, and informed organizational actors in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province who had direct knowledge or practical experience regarding managerial appointment, promotion procedures, organizational justice, and gender-related challenges in administrative advancement. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews focused on managerial appointment criteria, gender justice in promotion, organizational barriers, supportive policies, and contextual conditions affecting women's access to leadership positions. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding.

Findings: The inferential analysis of the qualitative data showed that managerial competency indicators formed the central phenomenon of the extracted model. These indicators included leadership skills, decision-making ability, specialized background, and professional experience. Organizational justice and gender justice were identified as causal conditions influencing fair appointment. Organizational justice consisted of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, while gender justice included equal opportunities for promotion, removal of mental and structural barriers for women, gender-oriented policies and supports in appointments, and employees' perception of gender discrimination. Contextual and environmental factors, including organizational culture, attitudes of senior managers, higher-level laws and regulations, and lived experiences of female managers, were identified as background conditions shaping the realization of gender justice in managerial appointment.

Conclusion: The results indicated that gender justice in managerial appointment is achieved when competence-based evaluation is combined with transparent procedures, equal promotion opportunities, supportive organizational policies, and a culture that recognizes women's leadership capacity.

Keywords: Gender justice; managerial appointment; managerial competency; organizational justice; women's leadership; Welfare Organization

1 Introduction

Gender justice in managerial appointment has become a central concern in public administration, organizational governance, and human resource management because appointment decisions determine not only who occupies formal positions of authority, but also whose experiences, competencies, and priorities are represented in organizational decision-making. In public organizations, the appointment of managers is especially consequential because these institutions are expected to embody fairness, legality, accountability, and public value. When women and men do not have equal access to managerial opportunities, the result is not merely an individual career disadvantage, but a structural weakness in administrative legitimacy, organizational trust, and the quality of public service delivery. Recent research on gender representation in public institutions has emphasized that participation and representation should be examined not only as statistical indicators, but also as institutional processes shaped by recruitment systems, promotion criteria, organizational culture, and the distribution of authority (Erwin et al., 2025). Therefore, analyzing gender justice in managerial appointment requires attention to both formal rules and informal mechanisms through which managerial competence is recognized, evaluated, and rewarded.

The importance of this issue has been reinforced by global evidence showing that women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions across sectors, despite increasing educational attainment, professional participation, and organizational experience. Studies in public administration, health, education, academia, and corporate governance have shown that the movement of women into leadership is often slow, uneven, and vulnerable to reversal, especially when organizational structures are not supported by transparent appointment systems and inclusive career pathways (Mendiratta et al., 2025). Research on women leaders who break the so-called glass ceiling also indicates that advancement is rarely the result of competence alone; it is influenced by access to networks, mentoring, institutional support, leadership opportunities, and the ability to navigate gendered expectations within the workplace (Mathetha & Dhanpat, 2025). Accordingly, the persistence of gender gaps in managerial appointment suggests that organizational justice cannot be reduced to the presence of formal merit-based criteria; rather, it depends on whether those criteria are

applied consistently, transparently, and without gendered interpretation.

A major theme in the literature is the tension between merit-based selection and gender discrimination. Meritocracy is often presented as a neutral and objective principle in managerial appointment, yet empirical studies show that merit can be interpreted through gendered assumptions about leadership, availability, authority, and suitability. In a case study of Mexico, gender discrimination was shown to persist even in systems that formally emphasize merit-based selection, because decision-makers may reproduce biased expectations while claiming procedural neutrality (Chudnovsky & Farill, 2024). More recent work on parity in public administration has further demonstrated that gender equality is a moving target; even when parity policies are introduced, their effects depend on institutional enforcement, women's policy agencies, political commitment, and the practical capacity of organizations to transform appointment routines (Chudnovsky et al., 2025). This evidence highlights the need to examine how gender justice is actually experienced within appointment processes, particularly in public organizations where formal rules may coexist with informal preferences and unspoken barriers.

Women's leadership is not only a matter of distributive fairness but also a factor associated with institutional performance, responsiveness, and diversity of perspective. A scoping review of women's global leadership in health showed that women's leadership can influence institutional priorities, equity-oriented decision-making, and organizational responsiveness, particularly in systems where public service delivery depends on understanding diverse social needs (Kalbarczyk et al., 2025). Similarly, research on women's leadership for health in Kyrgyzstan emphasized the relationship between rights, responsibilities, and women's participation in leadership, showing that equitable leadership structures are connected to both professional recognition and social accountability (Bjegović-Mikanović et al., 2024). In fields such as global health, gender equality in leadership has been discussed as an urgent twenty-first-century concern because women's underrepresentation in senior roles weakens the inclusiveness and legitimacy of institutions that serve broad populations (Smith & Sinkford, 2022). These findings are highly relevant for welfare organizations, whose mission is directly connected to social protection, vulnerability, family support, disability services, and community well-being.

The Welfare Organization of Fars Province represents an important institutional context for examining gender justice in managerial appointment because welfare services require both administrative competence and sensitivity to social diversity. In such organizations, managerial appointments influence policy implementation, service quality, staff motivation, and the organization's ability to respond to the needs of women, children, families, older adults, persons with disabilities, and socially vulnerable groups. If managerial appointment processes are not perceived as fair, transparent, and merit-based, employees may lose trust in administrative decisions, and qualified women may become less motivated to pursue leadership roles. Conversely, when appointment systems combine managerial competence with organizational justice and gender justice, they can strengthen both internal legitimacy and public service effectiveness. This is consistent with research suggesting that inclusive professional institutions require more than symbolic representation; they require active mechanisms for equality, participation, and advancement (Reed et al., 2022).

One of the key barriers identified in previous studies is the persistence of structural and cultural obstacles that limit women's access to leadership. In healthcare organizations, women's narratives have revealed barriers such as limited mentoring, exclusion from informal networks, gendered expectations around family responsibilities, lack of sponsorship, and doubts about women's leadership legitimacy (Haines & McKeown, 2023). Similar patterns have been found in higher education, where women's participation and contribution to leadership are constrained by institutional cultures, unequal opportunities, and assumptions that restrict women's authority despite their qualifications (Adamu, 2023). Research in South African academia has also identified both challenges and enablers of women's advancement, demonstrating that institutional culture, leadership commitment, workload distribution, and promotion support can either hinder or facilitate women's career progression (Mbukanma & Strydom, 2022). These studies indicate that women's managerial advancement must be understood as a process shaped by organizational conditions rather than as a simple outcome of individual ambition.

The literature also shows that gender inequality in leadership is observable across different national and organizational contexts. In Jordanian higher academia, gendered inequalities have been described as macrostructural, with women being outnumbered and outranked in senior academic and administrative positions

(Hawatmeh et al., 2024). Studies in Nigerian universities similarly show gender disparity in principal officer positions, with implications for educational planning, administration, and institutional justice (Okonta & Nkedishu, 2024). In the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya, drivers of gender imbalance in senior management have been linked to organizational, sociocultural, and policy-related factors (Musili, 2024). In educational institutions in Kenya, women's perceptions of barriers to top leadership positions further illustrate how the question "when will it be our turn to lead?" reflects both individual frustration and institutional delay in recognizing women's leadership capacities (Vundi, 2024). These findings underscore that women's underrepresentation is not accidental but is reproduced through repeated organizational practices.

Studies from local government and education systems in African contexts provide additional evidence that women's leadership participation is affected by both structural opportunity and social legitimacy. Research in Mtubatuba Local Municipality in South Africa showed that women's participation in leadership positions is shaped by institutional culture, political dynamics, and gendered perceptions of authority (Ntuli et al., 2023). Similarly, research on schools and local government in Tanzania revealed that women's participation in leadership is influenced by community expectations, institutional support, and access to decision-making spaces (Mwahombela, 2023). Evidence from Zambia showed that women use navigation strategies to enter decision-making positions in the Ministry of Education, suggesting that women's leadership trajectories often require strategic adaptation to environments that were not originally designed to support equal advancement (Kalumba et al., 2023). Together, these studies indicate that gender justice in appointment processes requires attention to both individual competencies and the institutional environment in which those competencies are evaluated.

Another important dimension concerns the role of organizational networks, support systems, and leadership pipelines. Research on women's pathways to CEO appointments in Icelandic listed companies showed that board members' perceptions play a major role in women's leadership opportunities, especially because appointment decisions are influenced by assumptions about readiness, fit, networks, and leadership style (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2025). Earlier work on women's access to CEO positions also emphasized the importance of skills, networks, and support,

indicating that women's leadership advancement depends not only on competence but also on whether organizations create pathways through which competence becomes visible to decision-makers (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2023). This is particularly important in public organizations where managerial appointment may be shaped by formal qualifications, seniority, interpersonal trust, administrative reputation, and informal recommendations. If these mechanisms are not transparent, women may be disadvantaged even when they possess equal or superior qualifications.

Corporate governance studies also provide useful insights into how gender diversity affects appointment decisions and organizational outcomes. Research on the relationship between women on boards and woman CEO selection has shown that the presence of women in governance structures can influence the likelihood of women's appointment to executive positions, particularly when sustainability governance and inclusive institutional norms are present (Zaccone, 2023). Studies of Pakistani boards have similarly shown that women's presence in leadership structures is shaped by ownership patterns, family networks, and social relations, demonstrating that gender representation is embedded in broader power structures (Wagner et al., 2023). Research on female directors during the COVID-19 crisis also suggests that moments of uncertainty can either open or restrict opportunities for women in leadership, depending on institutional resilience and governance priorities (Sánchez et al., 2023). These studies show that gender justice in managerial appointment must consider how power, networks, governance norms, and crisis conditions affect women's leadership trajectories.

Beyond representation, gender diversity in leadership can shape organizational innovation and strategic capacity. Research on top management team gender diversity and open innovation has shown that gender-diverse leadership teams can influence openness, knowledge exchange, and innovation-related decision-making (Saeed et al., 2023). In international organizations, women's leadership has been examined as a process of "beating the odds," highlighting how women can reach high-level positions despite institutional constraints, but also showing that such advancement often requires exceptional individual effort in addition to favorable organizational conditions (Sokolova et al., 2023). In sports governance, gendered strategic action fields demonstrate that leadership access is structured by institutional rules, symbolic power, and field-specific expectations (Pape & Schoch, 2022). These findings are

relevant to public-sector appointment because they show that managerial selection is not a neutral technical procedure; it is embedded in organizational fields where norms, power relations, and legitimacy shape who is considered leadership material.

Gender mainstreaming and intersectional analysis provide broader theoretical foundations for examining gender justice in public organizations. The history of gender mainstreaming in United Nations agencies shows that gender equality requires systematic integration into policies, programs, administrative structures, and accountability mechanisms rather than isolated or temporary interventions (Ravindran et al., 2023). Intersectional analysis further demonstrates that women's leadership progress cannot be assessed only through gender as a single category; it should also consider how organizational rank, professional background, social class, ethnicity, age, family status, and institutional location may interact to shape opportunities and constraints (Zeinali et al., 2021). This perspective is important for studying appointment processes because women are not a homogeneous group, and gender justice requires attention to the different ways in which barriers may be experienced by women across organizational levels and career stages.

Professional and public-sector case studies further show that sustainable gender equity requires institutional redesign. The case of the Senior Executive Service in the Commonwealth context highlights the importance of executive systems, public-sector capability frameworks, and institutional arrangements in shaping senior appointments (Head & Colley, 2021). In Malaysia, studies of female leadership have identified persistent issues and challenges related to cultural expectations, work-family balance, institutional support, and women's access to decision-making positions (Othman et al., 2023). More recent reflections on gender equity in psychiatric professional governance have argued that organizations need to reset their approaches to equity by moving beyond formal acknowledgement toward practical, accountable, and structural change (Galbally et al., 2025). These findings support the view that fair appointment systems must integrate managerial competency criteria with organizational justice mechanisms and explicit attention to gendered barriers.

Legislative and policy frameworks are also important, although they are not sufficient on their own. Research on legislative enactments for women's inclusion in governance in Lagos State, Nigeria, has shown that legal and policy

measures can create a foundation for women's participation, but implementation gaps, political will, and institutional practice determine whether such measures produce meaningful inclusion (Chukwudi et al., 2024). This distinction is important for public organizations because the existence of formal equality in employment regulations does not automatically guarantee gender justice in managerial appointment. Policies must be translated into transparent criteria, accountable procedures, supportive organizational cultures, and mechanisms for monitoring fairness. In welfare organizations, where the mission is deeply connected to social justice, the internal practice of justice in appointments becomes part of the organization's ethical and administrative credibility.

Based on the reviewed literature, gender justice in managerial appointment can be conceptualized as the interaction of several dimensions: equal promotion opportunities, removal of mental and structural barriers for women, gender-sensitive policies and supports, and employees' perceptions of gender discrimination. These dimensions interact with organizational justice, including distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. They also intersect with contextual and environmental factors such as organizational culture, senior managers' attitudes, higher-level laws and regulations, and the lived experiences of female managers. In this framework, managerial competency remains central, but competence must be evaluated in a context where women and men have equal opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills, decision-making ability, specialized background, and professional experience. Therefore, the problem is not whether competence should be central to appointment, but whether organizations possess the justice-oriented mechanisms required to identify competence fairly.

Despite the growing body of international research on women's leadership and gender equality in governance, there remains a need for context-specific qualitative studies that examine how gender justice is understood and operationalized within public organizations. Many existing studies focus on higher education, health, corporate boards, or national policy systems, while fewer studies examine welfare organizations as administrative settings in which gender justice has both internal managerial and external social significance. In the Iranian public-sector context, and particularly in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province, understanding the dimensions of gender justice in managerial appointment can help clarify how organizational culture, appointment procedures, managerial attitudes, and

women's lived experiences shape access to leadership. A qualitative approach is especially valuable because it can reveal the meanings, perceptions, and hidden mechanisms that are not always visible in formal documents or quantitative indicators.

The aim of this study is to analyze the dimensions of gender justice in the process of appointing managers in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province and to develop a qualitative understanding of the organizational, gender-related, competency-based, and contextual factors that shape fair and merit-based managerial appointment.

2 Methods and Materials

The present study was conducted using a qualitative research design with an exploratory and analytical orientation. Since the aim of the study was to analyze the dimensions of gender justice in the process of appointing managers in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province, a qualitative approach was considered appropriate for obtaining an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, interpretations, and organizational observations. The study was designed based on the grounded theory method, which allows concepts, categories, and theoretical relationships to emerge directly from the data. This approach was suitable because the issue of gender justice in managerial appointment is closely related to organizational culture, formal and informal promotion mechanisms, perceptions of merit, gender-based barriers, and institutional decision-making practices, all of which require deep qualitative exploration rather than surface-level measurement.

The research field consisted of the Welfare Organization of Fars Province, with emphasis on individuals who had direct or indirect knowledge of managerial appointment, promotion procedures, administrative decision-making, and gender-related challenges in organizational advancement. Participants included managers, senior experts, administrative specialists, and informed individuals who were familiar with managerial selection and promotion processes within the organization. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because the study required information-rich cases capable of providing detailed and relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Selection criteria included professional experience in the organization, familiarity with appointment and promotion procedures, knowledge of organizational policies and practices, and the ability to reflect on gender

justice in managerial advancement. The sampling process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that the interviews no longer generated substantially new concepts or categories. In total, fifteen participants were selected for the this qualitative study.

The main tool for data collection was a semi-structured interview. This tool was selected because it provided sufficient structure to keep the interviews focused on the research aim while also allowing flexibility for participants to explain their experiences, provide examples, and discuss issues that emerged during the conversation. The interview guide was developed in accordance with the purpose of the study and focused on the criteria, conditions, barriers, and organizational mechanisms affecting managerial appointment from the perspective of gender justice. The core interview questions addressed participants' views on the main criteria for appointing and promoting managers, the relevance of gender justice in the promotion of women, and the contextual or organizational factors that facilitate or hinder gender-equitable managerial appointment.

To deepen the interviews, follow-up questions were used whenever necessary. Participants were asked to explain the indicators and sub-indicators of managerial appointment criteria, clarify whether differences existed between women and men in the evaluation of managerial competence, and describe the nature of such differences if they had observed them. They were also asked to discuss whether supportive policies or practices existed for women's advancement in the organization, how effective such policies had been, and whether leadership ability, decision-making competence, professional experience, and organizational commitment were evaluated equally for women and men. Additional questions explored the role of organizational culture, managerial attitudes, training, formal regulations, informal networks, and institutional expectations in shaping gender justice in the appointment process.

The interviews were conducted individually and in a setting that allowed participants to speak freely and reflectively. Before each interview, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and they were assured that their responses would be used only for research purposes. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. With participants' permission, the interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy in data transcription and analysis. When recording was not possible or when participants preferred not to be recorded, detailed notes were taken during and immediately after the interview. Each interview was then

transcribed carefully, and the transcriptions formed the primary textual data for analysis.

The qualitative data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach. Data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously so that concepts emerging from early interviews could guide subsequent interviews and help refine the focus of inquiry. The analysis began with repeated reading of the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' narratives. During this stage, meaningful statements, repeated ideas, important experiences, and key organizational issues related to gender justice and managerial appointment were identified. The data were then examined line by line to extract initial codes that represented participants' perceptions and experiences.

In the open coding stage, the interview data were broken down into smaller conceptual units, and preliminary codes were assigned to relevant segments of the text. These codes reflected issues such as managerial competence, professional merit, gender stereotypes, access to promotion opportunities, organizational support, transparency in appointment procedures, informal decision-making, organizational culture, and barriers to women's managerial advancement. After open coding, similar codes were compared and grouped into broader conceptual categories. This constant comparison helped the researcher identify recurring patterns across participants' responses and distinguish central concepts from marginal or isolated statements.

In the axial coding stage, relationships among categories and subcategories were examined. The purpose of this stage was to organize the extracted concepts around meaningful axes and clarify how different conditions, actions, interactions, and consequences were connected. Categories related to organizational conditions, appointment criteria, gender-related barriers, supportive mechanisms, cultural expectations, and perceived fairness were compared and integrated. This stage made it possible to identify the structural and contextual dimensions influencing gender justice in the appointment of managers within the Welfare Organization of Fars Province.

In the selective coding stage, the central category of the study was identified and related systematically to the other categories. The final analysis focused on integrating the main categories into a coherent explanatory framework for understanding the dimensions of gender justice in managerial appointment. The emerging model reflected how formal criteria, organizational culture, institutional support, transparency, merit-based evaluation, and gender-sensitive

managerial policies interact in shaping equitable or inequitable appointment processes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, the researcher used careful transcription, continuous comparison of data, repeated review of codes and categories, and revision of interpretations based on the internal consistency of participants' narratives. The final categories were developed directly from the interview data and were used to explain the qualitative dimensions of gender justice in the managerial appointment process.

3 Findings and Results

The qualitative analysis of the interviews with fifteen experts and managers showed that the process of appointing

and promoting managers with a gender justice approach is shaped by a set of interrelated organizational, gender-related, managerial, and contextual dimensions. The analysis was conducted through open, axial, and selective coding based on the grounded theory approach. As a result, managerial competencies were identified as the central phenomenon, while organizational justice and gender justice emerged as causal conditions, and contextual and environmental factors were identified as the broader conditions that influence the realization of fair and merit-based managerial appointment.

Table 1

Qualitative Results Extracted from Grounded Theory Analysis

Main Category	Role in the Model	Subcategory	Extracted Indicators
Managerial Competencies	Central Phenomenon	Leadership Skills	Ability to guide teams; ability to inspire and motivate employees; effective interpersonal interaction
Managerial Competencies	Central Phenomenon	Decision-Making Ability	Logical analysis of situations; ability to predict consequences; courage in critical decision-making
Managerial Competencies	Central Phenomenon	Specialized Background and Experience	Management experience in similar units; familiarity with the structure and missions of the organization; experience in strategic positions
Managerial Competencies	Central Phenomenon	Individual and Psychological Characteristics	Self-confidence; organizational commitment; motivation for personal growth and development
Organizational Justice	Causal Condition	Distributive Justice	Fair distribution of promotion opportunities; fairness in allocation of rewards; proportionality between effort and achievement
Organizational Justice	Causal Condition	Procedural Justice	Transparency in decision-making processes; possibility of employee participation in processes; consistency of procedures in managerial appointments
Organizational Justice	Causal Condition	Interactional Justice	Respect in interpersonal communication; mutual understanding and empathy; respectful feedback from supervisors
Gender Justice	Causal Condition	Equal Promotion Opportunities	Equal access to managerial positions; elimination of discrimination in recruitment and appointment announcements; meritocracy regardless of gender
Gender Justice	Causal Condition	Removal of Mental and Structural Barriers for Women	Elimination of stereotypical attitudes; design of flexible job structures; support for employed mothers
Gender Justice	Causal Condition	Gender-Oriented Policies and Supports in Appointments	Gender quotas in certain managerial levels; incentive policies for female managers; targeted training and empowerment
Gender Justice	Causal Condition	Employees' Perception of Gender Discrimination	Feeling of inequality in performance evaluation; perception of discrimination in appointment processes; lack of transparency in the reasons for selecting managers
Contextual and Environmental Factors	Contextual Condition	Organizational Culture	Acceptance of women in leadership roles; valuing competence; resistance or openness to gender-related changes
Contextual and Environmental Factors	Contextual Condition	Attitudes of Senior Managers	Belief in gender justice; readiness to delegate power; willingness to strengthen gender diversity
Contextual and Environmental Factors	Contextual Condition	Upstream Laws and Regulations	Government policies regarding the appointment of women; employment regulations; legal requirements related to organizational justice
Contextual and Environmental Factors	Contextual Condition	Lived Experiences of Female Managers	Narratives of discrimination or support; paths of growth and individual challenges; motivational and supportive resources in the managerial path
Fair and Merit-Based Managerial Appointment	Consequence	Equitable Appointment and Promotion	Alignment between managerial competence and appointment decisions; reduction of gender-based barriers; strengthening of transparent and justice-oriented promotion mechanisms

The first main finding of the study was the identification of managerial competencies as the central phenomenon in the model. Participants emphasized that any gender-just appointment system must be based on competence, professional ability, and managerial readiness. From their perspective, gender justice does not mean ignoring merit; rather, it means ensuring that women and men are evaluated through equal, transparent, and fair criteria. Leadership skills were one of the most frequently emphasized dimensions of managerial competence. The ability to guide teams, motivate employees, create effective interpersonal relationships, and inspire organizational members was considered essential for managerial appointment. Participants also highlighted decision-making ability as a key component, especially in positions where managers must analyze complex situations, predict the consequences of decisions, and act with confidence during organizational crises.

Specialized background and professional experience formed another important dimension of managerial competence. The interviewees believed that individuals appointed to managerial roles should have sufficient experience in similar units, familiarity with the structure and mission of the organization, and previous exposure to strategic responsibilities. This finding indicates that appointment decisions should not be based only on formal status or personal connections, but should reflect the candidate's real professional background and organizational knowledge. In addition, individual and psychological characteristics, including self-confidence, organizational commitment, and motivation for growth, were identified as important indicators. These characteristics were viewed as particularly relevant because managerial roles require resilience, initiative, responsibility, and the capacity to develop both oneself and others.

The second major finding was related to organizational justice, which emerged as a causal condition influencing the way managerial competencies are recognized and applied in appointment decisions. Participants described organizational justice as a prerequisite for fair promotion because, without justice in organizational procedures and interactions, competence may not be evaluated accurately. Distributive justice referred to the fair distribution of promotion opportunities, rewards, and organizational achievements. According to the interviewees, employees are more likely to perceive appointment decisions as legitimate when opportunities for advancement are distributed fairly and when there is a clear relationship between effort, performance, and career progression.

Procedural justice was another important dimension of organizational justice. The participants emphasized that the appointment of managers should be based on transparent, stable, and participatory procedures. Transparency in decision-making was particularly important because unclear appointment mechanisms can create perceptions of favoritism, discrimination, or informal influence. Consistency of procedures was also considered necessary, meaning that the same standards should be applied to all candidates regardless of gender. Interactional justice was also identified as a meaningful component of the appointment process. Respectful communication, mutual understanding, empathy, and constructive feedback from supervisors were viewed as factors that shape employees' sense of fairness and affect their trust in organizational decisions.

The third major finding concerned gender justice as a causal condition in the appointment and promotion of managers. The participants indicated that gender justice requires equal access to managerial opportunities and the removal of explicit and implicit forms of discrimination. Equal promotion opportunities were reflected in indicators such as equal access to managerial positions, elimination of discriminatory assumptions in appointment announcements, and commitment to meritocracy regardless of gender. The findings showed that gender justice is not limited to formal equality; it also requires practical conditions that allow women to compete for managerial positions under fair circumstances.

Another dimension of gender justice was the removal of mental and structural barriers for women. Participants referred to stereotypical views about women's leadership abilities, assumptions about women's family responsibilities, and rigid organizational structures as barriers that may restrict women's managerial advancement. Therefore, the findings suggest that fair appointment systems must address both attitudinal and structural obstacles. Support for employed mothers, flexible job structures, and the reduction of gender stereotypes were identified as important mechanisms for improving women's access to managerial positions. Moreover, gender-oriented policies and supports, such as targeted empowerment programs, incentive policies for female managers, and in some cases gender quotas at specific managerial levels, were identified as possible instruments for correcting existing imbalances.

Employees' perception of gender discrimination was another important subcategory within gender justice.

Participants stated that even when formal regulations appear neutral, employees may still perceive discrimination if appointment decisions are not transparent or if women and men are evaluated differently in practice. Feelings of inequality in performance evaluation, perceptions of discrimination in appointment procedures, and lack of clarity about the reasons for selecting managers were identified as indicators that can weaken organizational trust. This finding shows that gender justice depends not only on the existence of policies but also on employees' lived perception of fairness in the implementation of those policies.

The fourth major finding was the identification of contextual and environmental factors as background conditions affecting the realization of gender justice in managerial appointment. Organizational culture was one of the most influential contextual factors. A culture that accepts women in leadership roles, values competence, and welcomes gender-related change can facilitate fair appointment processes. Conversely, a culture resistant to women's leadership or attached to traditional assumptions about managerial roles can reproduce inequality, even when formal policies support fairness. Therefore, organizational culture acts as a powerful condition that either enables or limits the effectiveness of justice-oriented appointment mechanisms.

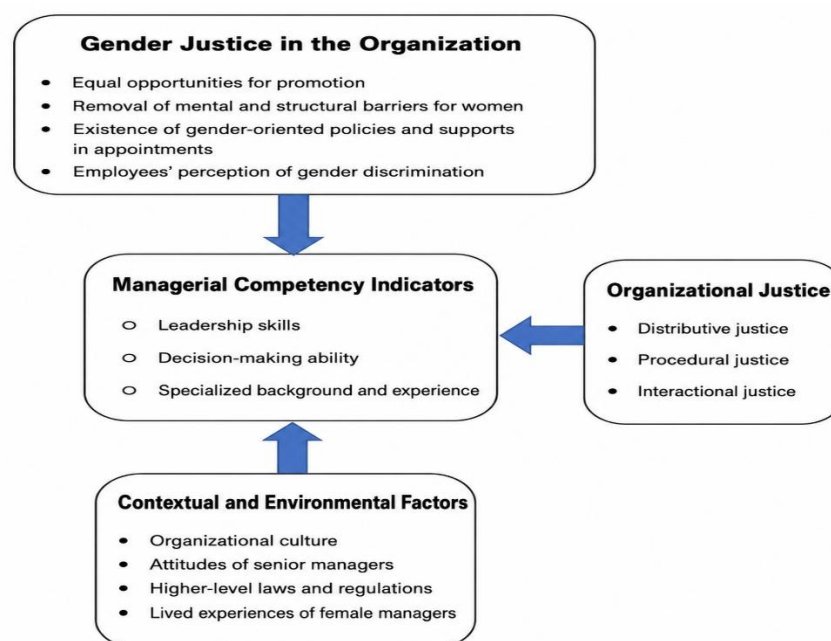
The attitudes of senior managers also emerged as a significant contextual factor. Participants believed that

senior managers play a decisive role in supporting or obstructing gender justice. Belief in gender justice, readiness to delegate power, and willingness to strengthen gender diversity were identified as important indicators of supportive leadership. When senior managers view women's managerial advancement as valuable for organizational development, gender justice is more likely to become part of actual appointment practice. However, when senior managers lack commitment to gender diversity, formal policies may remain symbolic and fail to produce meaningful change.

Upstream laws and regulations were also identified as contextual factors that shape appointment and promotion processes. Government policies regarding the appointment of women, employment regulations, and legal requirements related to organizational justice can provide a formal framework for fairer managerial selection. However, participants' responses suggested that regulations alone are insufficient unless they are implemented through transparent procedures and supported by organizational commitment. Finally, the lived experiences of female managers were identified as a valuable source for understanding the real barriers and supports in the managerial path. Narratives of discrimination, support, individual challenges, and motivational resources showed how gender justice is experienced in practice and how organizational systems can either restrict or facilitate women's advancement.

Figure 1

Final Model of the Study



In the selective coding stage, the final conceptual model was developed by integrating the extracted categories. The model shows that managerial competencies are located at the center of the appointment and promotion process. Organizational justice and gender justice function as causal conditions that influence whether these competencies are recognized, evaluated, and used fairly. Contextual and environmental factors provide the organizational, cultural, legal, and experiential background within which appointment decisions are made. The interaction of these dimensions ultimately leads to fair and merit-based managerial appointment, characterized by alignment between competence and appointment decisions, reduction of gender-based barriers, greater transparency, and strengthened justice-oriented promotion mechanisms.

4 Discussion

The findings of the present study showed that gender justice in the process of appointing managers in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province is not a single-dimensional issue, but rather a multidimensional organizational phenomenon formed through the interaction of managerial competencies, organizational justice, gender justice, and contextual and environmental factors. The qualitative analysis indicated that managerial competency indicators constitute the central phenomenon of the model. Participants emphasized leadership skills, decision-making ability, specialized background, and professional experience as the main criteria that should guide the appointment and promotion of managers. This finding suggests that, from the participants' perspective, gender justice does not mean replacing competence-based appointment with gender preference; rather, it means ensuring that women and men have equal opportunity to demonstrate their competencies and that these competencies are assessed through transparent, fair, and gender-neutral procedures. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that women's advancement into leadership is strongly affected by how organizations define, recognize, and reward competence, and that women often need to demonstrate managerial capacity within systems where leadership potential is interpreted through gendered expectations (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2025; Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2023; Mathetha & Dhanpat, 2025).

The centrality of managerial competencies in the extracted model also aligns with research emphasizing that women's access to senior positions is shaped not only by

their skills but also by whether organizations make those skills visible and legitimate within appointment systems. Studies on women leaders in South Africa and Iceland have shown that women who reach leadership positions often possess strong professional capability, resilience, networks, and strategic adaptability, but their advancement remains dependent on organizational recognition and support (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2025; Mathetha & Dhanpat, 2025). Similarly, research on female executives across countries suggests that women's upward mobility may be fragile when advancement is not supported by sustainable institutional pathways, leading to rapid exit or instability after promotion (Mendiratta et al., 2025). In the present study, participants' emphasis on leadership, decision-making, and specialized experience confirms that appointment systems must be competency-based; however, the model also shows that competence must be interpreted within a justice-oriented framework to prevent the reproduction of hidden gender bias.

Another major finding was the role of organizational justice as a causal condition affecting fair managerial appointment. Distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice were identified as essential components of a fair appointment system. This means that participants viewed justice not only in terms of final outcomes, such as who is appointed, but also in terms of how opportunities are distributed, how appointment procedures are implemented, and how employees are treated during organizational decision-making. This finding is consistent with studies in public administration showing that representation and participation in public institutions must be examined through a gender lens because administrative fairness depends on both formal access and the quality of institutional procedures (Erwin et al., 2025). It also aligns with research on merit-based selection and gender discrimination, which indicates that even formally neutral systems may reproduce inequality if decision-making procedures are not transparent, accountable, and consistently applied (Chudnovsky & Farill, 2024).

The finding concerning procedural justice is particularly important because participants repeatedly emphasized transparency, consistency, and participation in appointment processes. This result supports previous research showing that gender equality in public administration is a moving target and cannot be achieved only by announcing equality-oriented policies; rather, it requires continuous institutional monitoring, implementation capacity, and mechanisms that prevent symbolic compliance (Chudnovsky et al., 2025). In

this regard, the present study contributes to the literature by showing that employees' trust in appointment decisions depends heavily on whether procedures are understandable and whether the reasons for appointing managers are communicated clearly. Similar conclusions have been reported in studies of women's inclusion in governance and public institutions, where the gap between legislation and actual practice has been identified as a major barrier to meaningful gender inclusion (Chukwudi et al., 2024; Head & Colley, 2021). Therefore, organizational justice can be understood as the administrative foundation through which gender justice becomes operational.

The results also identified gender justice as another causal condition in the appointment and promotion of managers. The extracted dimensions of gender justice included equal promotion opportunities, removal of mental and structural barriers for women, existence of gender-oriented policies and supports, and employees' perception of gender discrimination. These findings are aligned with a large body of research showing that women's leadership advancement is constrained by both visible and invisible barriers. Studies in healthcare, higher education, local government, and public administration have documented obstacles such as gender stereotypes, exclusion from informal networks, limited mentoring, lack of sponsorship, work-family expectations, and unequal access to leadership opportunities (Adamu, 2023; Haines & McKeown, 2023; Mbukanma & Strydom, 2022; Ntuli et al., 2023). The present findings similarly show that gender justice requires attention not only to formal equality but also to the lived conditions that determine whether women can realistically compete for managerial positions.

The removal of mental and structural barriers for women was one of the most meaningful findings of the study. Participants referred to stereotypical attitudes, rigid organizational structures, and insufficient support for employed mothers as barriers that may restrict women's access to leadership. This finding is consistent with studies from Malaysia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and South Africa, which have shown that women's participation in leadership is shaped by sociocultural expectations, institutional support, leadership pathways, and the legitimacy granted to women in authority roles (Kalumba et al., 2023; Mwahombela, 2023; Ntuli et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2023; Vundi, 2024). Similar evidence from academic settings in Jordan and Nigeria shows that women may be structurally outnumbered and outranked, particularly when leadership pipelines and promotion systems reproduce male-dominated

norms (Hawatmeh et al., 2024; Okonta & Nkedishu, 2024). These studies support the present finding that gender justice must address both subjective attitudes and objective organizational arrangements.

The results further showed that gender-oriented policies and supports can contribute to more equitable appointment processes. Participants referred to targeted empowerment, incentive policies, and supportive mechanisms for women managers as important elements of gender justice. This is in line with research on gender mainstreaming, which emphasizes that gender equality should be embedded into organizational structures, policies, programs, and accountability systems rather than treated as a marginal or temporary concern (Ravindran et al., 2023). It also corresponds with studies in global health and professional organizations, which argue that equality and inclusiveness require institutional strategies that actively remove barriers and create leadership opportunities for women (Kalbarczyk et al., 2025; Reed et al., 2022; Smith & Sinkford, 2022). The present study confirms that, in public welfare organizations, gender-sensitive support is not opposed to meritocracy; rather, it creates the conditions under which merit can be assessed more fairly.

Another important finding was the role of employees' perception of gender discrimination. Participants indicated that even when formal regulations appear fair, perceptions of discrimination may persist if appointment decisions are not transparent or if women believe they are evaluated differently from men. This finding is consistent with research showing that gender discrimination often operates through subtle mechanisms, including assumptions about leadership suitability, informal networks, and opaque selection practices (Chudnovsky & Farill, 2024; Musili, 2024). Studies on women's leadership in international organizations and corporate boards also show that women may advance despite barriers, but their progress is often shaped by power relations, governance structures, and informal expectations that influence selection outcomes (Sokolova et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2023; Zaccone, 2023). Therefore, the perception of discrimination should be considered an important diagnostic indicator of organizational justice, because it reflects how employees experience the appointment system in practice.

The identification of contextual and environmental factors as background conditions was another central result. Organizational culture, attitudes of senior managers, higher-level laws and regulations, and lived experiences of female managers were found to shape the conditions under which

managerial competencies, organizational justice, and gender justice operate. This finding supports previous research showing that women's leadership is deeply embedded in institutional culture and governance structures. For example, studies of women's leadership in health and academia demonstrate that organizational values, leadership commitment, and professional norms can either enable or restrict women's advancement (Adamu, 2023; Bjegović-Mikanović et al., 2024; Haines & McKeown, 2023). Likewise, research on gender equity in professional governance suggests that organizations must move beyond formal acknowledgment and redesign their structures in ways that make equity practical, measurable, and accountable (Galbally et al., 2025).

The role of senior managers' attitudes is especially significant. The findings showed that belief in gender justice, readiness to delegate power, and willingness to strengthen gender diversity can affect whether women are considered seriously for managerial positions. This result is aligned with studies indicating that leadership gatekeepers, boards, and senior decision-makers play a major role in women's appointment to executive positions (Gunnarsdóttir et al., 2025; Zaccone, 2023). Studies on open innovation and top management team gender diversity also suggest that the composition and attitudes of leadership teams can influence organizational openness, knowledge exchange, and strategic decision-making (Saeed et al., 2023). Therefore, senior managers should not be viewed merely as implementers of appointment policies; they are active agents who can either reproduce gender inequality or institutionalize justice-oriented appointment practices.

The finding regarding higher-level laws and regulations indicates that public-sector appointment systems are shaped by broader legal and policy environments. This aligns with studies showing that legislative enactments and public-sector frameworks can support women's inclusion, but their effectiveness depends on implementation, political will, and organizational accountability (Chukwudi et al., 2024; Head & Colley, 2021). At the same time, research on women's leadership during periods of crisis and institutional change suggests that external pressures may either expand or constrain women's opportunities depending on how organizations respond to uncertainty (Sánchez et al., 2023). This point is important for the Welfare Organization of Fars Province because higher-level policies can provide legitimacy for gender justice, but internal organizational culture and managerial commitment determine whether such policies are translated into real appointment practices.

The lived experiences of female managers also emerged as an important contextual component. This finding is consistent with intersectional perspectives, which emphasize that women's leadership trajectories should be understood through the interaction of gender with professional rank, organizational location, career stage, and social expectations (Zeinali et al., 2021). It also aligns with studies in sports governance and international organizations showing that leadership fields are shaped by strategic action, symbolic legitimacy, and power relations that affect women's access to decision-making positions (Pape & Schoch, 2022; Sokolova et al., 2023). In the present study, women's lived experiences provided insight into how discrimination, support, motivation, and organizational opportunity are encountered in practice. This finding suggests that any model of gender justice in appointment should incorporate the voices of women who have directly experienced the managerial pathway.

5 Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that fair and merit-based managerial appointment requires the integration of competency-based evaluation with organizational justice and gender justice. Managerial competencies must remain central, but they should be assessed through transparent procedures, equitable opportunity structures, gender-sensitive supports, and an organizational culture that accepts women's leadership. This integrated interpretation is consistent with global evidence showing that women's leadership strengthens institutional diversity, equity, responsiveness, and governance capacity when supported by structural mechanisms rather than symbolic commitments (Erwin et al., 2025; Kalbarczyk et al., 2025; Smith & Sinkford, 2022). Therefore, the present study contributes to the literature by proposing that gender justice in managerial appointment is best understood as a dynamic organizational process in which merit, justice, policy, culture, and lived experience interact.

This study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted qualitatively in the Welfare Organization of Fars Province; therefore, the findings are context-dependent and should not be generalized mechanically to all public organizations. Second, the data were collected through interviews, and participants' responses may have been influenced by personal experiences, organizational position, social desirability, or caution in discussing gender-related

issues. Third, although purposive sampling enabled access to knowledgeable participants, the sample size was limited to individuals who were available and willing to participate. Fourth, because gender justice is a sensitive organizational topic, some participants may have avoided explicit criticism of existing appointment procedures. Finally, the study focused on perceptions and experiences rather than direct observation of appointment meetings or official decision-making processes.

Future studies can expand the present findings by examining gender justice in managerial appointment across different public organizations, provinces, and administrative sectors. Comparative qualitative studies between welfare organizations, educational institutions, municipalities, and health-related public agencies could provide a broader understanding of how organizational mission and structure influence gender justice. Future research may also use longitudinal designs to explore how women's managerial pathways develop over time and how appointment experiences affect career motivation, organizational commitment, and retention. In addition, future studies can examine the perspectives of different groups, including female managers, male managers, human resource officers, senior decision-makers, and employees who have applied for promotion. Researchers may also combine interview data with document analysis and observation of appointment procedures to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of formal and informal decision-making mechanisms.

Based on the findings, public organizations should develop transparent, competency-based, and gender-sensitive appointment procedures. Managerial appointment criteria should be clearly defined, formally documented, and communicated to employees so that candidates understand how leadership skills, decision-making ability, experience, and professional qualifications are evaluated. Organizations should also provide equal access to leadership development programs, mentoring, training, and promotion opportunities for women and men. Senior managers should be trained to recognize implicit gender bias and to apply appointment criteria consistently. In addition, welfare organizations should create supportive structures for women's advancement, including flexible work arrangements, empowerment programs, and mechanisms for reporting perceived discrimination. Finally, regular review of appointment outcomes can help organizations identify gender gaps, improve accountability, and strengthen trust in managerial selection processes.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

References

- Adamu, A. Y. (2023). Barriers to Women's Participation in and Contribution to Leadership in Ethiopian Higher Education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 31. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.31.7884>
- Bjegović-Mikanović, V., Matović-Miljanović, S., Seitalieva, C., Makarova, T., Murzalieva, G., Kozhokeev, K., Wenzel, H., & Laaser, U. (2024). Rights and Responsibilities: Women Leadership for Health in Kyrgyzstan. *PLoS One*, 19(2), e0295239. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0295239>
- Chudnovsky, M., & Farill, C. E. C. (2024). Gender Discrimination and Merit-based Selection: A Case Study of Mexico. *Public Administration and Development*, 44(2), 118-133. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.2041>
- Chudnovsky, M., Medina, D. M., & Filippo, A. (2025). Parity in Public Administration as a Moving Target: The Role of Women Policy Agencies in Mexico. *Public Administration and Development*, 46(1), 60-76. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.70034>
- Chukwudi, C. E., Oladipo, V. O., & Gberevbie, P. D. E. (2024). The Legislative Enactments on Women's Inclusion in

- Governance: A Study of Lagos State House of Assembly, Nigeria (2015-2022). *Kuey*. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i5.1394>
- Erwin, A., Mutzenberg, M. D., Neves, M. A. S., Smid, S., Usheva, F., & Wilde, A. (2025). Representation and Participation in Public Institutions – A Gender Lens. *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, 41(3), 723-736. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18747655251366925>
- Galbally, M., Kotzé, B., Mackersey, S., Barber, R. M., Kannakkahewa, N., & Every-Palmer, S. (2025). Through the Looking Glass: Resetting the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry's Approach to Gender Equity. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(11), 943-945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674251366796>
- Gunnarsdóttir, S., Christiansen, P. H., Óladóttir, Á. D., & Kristjánssdóttir, E. S. (2025). Exploring Women's Leadership in CEO Appointments: A Qualitative Study of Board Member Perspectives in Iceland's Listed Companies. *Sage Open*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251339804>
- Gunnarsdóttir, S., Óladóttir, Á. D., Christiansen, P. H., & Kristjánssdóttir, E. S. (2023). Do Women Have the Right Skills, Network and Support to Become CEOs? *International Conference on Gender Research*, 6(1), 138-145. <https://doi.org/10.34190/icgr.6.1.1092>
- Haines, A. C., & McKeown, E. (2023). Exploring Perceived Barriers for Advancement to Leadership Positions in Healthcare: A Thematic Synthesis of Women's Experiences. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 37(3), 360-378. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhom-02-2022-0053>
- Hawatmeh, C. Z., Hashish, I. A., & Alazzeh, R. R. (2024). Outnumbered and Outranked: A Macrostructural Snapshot of Gendered Inequalities in Higher Academia in Jordan. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 33(2), 332-348. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoa-09-2023-3953>
- Head, B., & Colley, L. (2021). Senior Executive Service Case Study: Commonwealth. <https://doi.org/10.54810/jzso5617>
- Kalbarczyk, A., Banchoff, K., Perry, K. E., Malhotra, A., & Morgan, R. (2025). A Scoping Review on the Impact of Women's Global Leadership: Evidence to Inform Health Leadership. *BMJ Global Health*, 10(2), e015982. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2024-015982>
- Kalumba, M., Daka, H., Kalimaposo, K., Phiri, C., Mulenga-Hagane, L. M., & Mugala, A. (2023). Navigation Strategies by Women Into Decision-Making Positions in the Ministry of Education, Zambia. *European Journal of Development Studies*, 3(3), 147-155. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejdevelop.2023.3.3.276>
- Mathetha, K. N., & Dhanpat, N. (2025). A View From the Top: How South African Women Leaders Shatter the Glass Ceiling. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1601448>
- Mbukanna, I., & Strydom, K. (2022). Challenges to and Enablers of Women's Advancement in Academic Careers at a Selected South African University. *International Journal of Learning Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(12), 44-64. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.12.3>
- Mendiratta, E., Mukherjee, S., & Oehmichen, J. (2025). Breaking Through Only to Break Up: A Cross-Country Analysis of the Speed of Advancement and Exit of Female Executives. *Human Resource Management*, 64(3), 769-791. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22277>
- Musili, F. (2024). Drivers of Gender Imbalance in the Senior Management of the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya. *American Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 9(1), 27-39. <https://doi.org/10.47672/ajppa.1771>
- Mwahombela, L. (2023). Women's Participation in Leadership in Schools and Local Government in Ibumu and Image Wards in Kilolo District, Iringa Region, Tanzania. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2023/v38i3824>
- Ntuli, N., Jili, N. N., & Xaba, M. R. (2023). Women Participation in Leadership Positions in Mtubatuba Local Municipality, South Africa. *Journal of Leadership in Organizations*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.22146/jlo.74881>
- Okonta, V., & Nkedishu, V. C. (2024). Gender Disparity in Principal Officers' Positions in Nigerian Universities: Implications for Educational Planners and Administrators. *International Journal of Education Learning and Development*, 12(4), 16-37. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijeld.2013/vol12n41637>
- Othman, N., Radin Siti Aishah Radin, A. R., Abdullah, N., & Ramly, R. (2023). Female Leadership in Malaysia: Issues and Challenges. *Asian Women*, 39(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.14431/aw.2023.12.39.1.1>
- Pape, M., & Schoch, L. (2022). Gendering Strategic Action Fields in Sports Governance. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(6), 996-1013. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221136084>
- Ravindran, T. S., Atiim, G., Remme, M., & Riha, J. (2023). A Compendium of the History of Gender Mainstreaming in Five United Nations Agencies. <https://doi.org/10.37941/rr/2023/1>
- Reed, E. F., Chong, A. S., Levings, M. K., Mutrie, C., Laufer, T. M., Roncarolo, M. G., & Sykes, M. (2022). The Women of FOCIS: Promoting Equality and Inclusiveness in a Professional Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies. *Frontiers in Immunology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2022.816535>
- Saeed, A., Ali, A., & Riaz, H. (2023). Open-Up or Stay Closed: The Effect Of TMT Gender Diversity On open Innovation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 27(6), 1813-1836. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ejim-08-2022-0425>
- Sánchez, I., Bohorquez, M. V. U., Guzmán, C. A., & Guzmán, B. A. (2023). The COVID-19, a Crossroads for Female Directors. *Management Decision*, 62(7), 2136-2163. <https://doi.org/10.1108/md-06-2023-0953>
- Smith, S. G., & Sinkford, J. C. (2022). Gender Equality in the 21st Century: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Leadership in Global Health. *Journal of Dental Education*, 86(9), 1144-1173. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jdd.13059>
- Sokolova, M. V., DiCaprio, A., Collinson, N. B., & Quirante, Z. (2023). Beating the Odds: Women's Leadership in International Organizations. *Politics & Gender*, 19(4), 1087-1109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1743923x23000107>
- Vundi, N. (2024). When Will It Be Our Turn to Lead? An Evaluation of Women's Perceptions on Barriers to Access the Top Positions in Educational Institutions' Leadership in Kenya. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 292-303. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajass.7.1.1917>
- Wagner, E., Pernsteiner, H., & Riaz, A. (2023). Blood Is Thicker Than Water: An Analysis of Women's Presence on Pakistani Boards. *Gender in Management an International Journal*, 39(4), 516-533. <https://doi.org/10.1108/gm-04-2022-0139>
- Zaccone, M. C. (2023). Unveiling the Relationship Between Women on Board and Woman CEO Selection: What Is the Role of Sustainability Governance? *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, 41(3), 215-234. <https://doi.org/10.7433/s122.2023.10>
- Zeinali, Z., Muraya, K., Molyneux, S., & Morgan, R. (2021). The Use of Intersectional Analysis in Assessing Women's Leadership Progress in the Health Workforce in LMICs: A

Review. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.34172/ijhpm.2021.06>