

## **Beyond Gender: Embracing Diversity in Corporate Leadership**

**Prof. Charbel Salloum**

**Editor in Chief, *International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets***

[www.inderscience.com/jibem](http://www.inderscience.com/jibem)

Boardroom diversity is a global issue that affects all organisations worldwide. Governments and regulators have taken strong actions to expand board opportunities for women in many regions since 2005. Board diversity is an important governance issue that impacts decision-making by managers. A diverse board, comprising directors with different perspectives, experiences, backgrounds and views, can contribute to better problem-solving and decision-making, leading to greater innovation and board effectiveness. However, the precise meaning of boardroom diversity remains ambiguous, as it is sometimes related to demographic differences among directors, disparities among boards, or other board characteristics. Boardroom diversity varies around the world, influenced by cultural, traditional and environmental factors. Government and organisations driven by the widespread financial situation have focused on diversity in boards, which regroup gender, age, ethnicity, tenure and experience. Moreover, this diversity encompasses the diversity of boards that includes the board size, outside directors, ownership, and leadership duality.

With the wave of globalisation, the debate about the role of women in the business life of the 21st century has quite rapidly transformed itself. Today, worldwide organisations are focusing on the presence of women in the board. In fact, the majority of women applying for the board are quite divided between their job responsibilities and household activities, namely after marriage. They are bound by their family obligations, preventing them from effectively advancing in their career. Furthermore, women possess a high level of education and good health indicators, and the number of women who are pursuing their advanced educational degrees is continuously increasing. Sometimes there is the presence of cultural and social barriers and societal expectations, such as raising their families. This is mainly explained by social conservative aspects and cultural beliefs. Innate social and cultural norms and societal expectations have a major effect on the study areas of women and their job achievements.

In addition to the increasing number of women pursuing advanced degrees, it is essential to recognise that women possess the necessary qualifications and skills to succeed in leadership roles. However, societal expectations and cultural norms can discourage women from pursuing these roles or reaching their full potential. Organisations must prioritise gender diversity on their boards and implement measures to promote and support women's advancement in the workplace. Creating a diverse and inclusive work environment not only benefits women but also has a positive impact on overall business performance. Research shows that gender-diverse boards are more likely to make better decisions, enhance innovation and problem-solving abilities, and ultimately increase profitability. Therefore, it is essential to prioritise diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace to create a thriving, successful organisation. To achieve this, companies must establish equitable policies and practices to ensure that women have equal opportunities to advance and succeed in leadership positions. This includes offering mentoring

programs, professional development opportunities, flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies. Companies should also regularly review their diversity and inclusion strategies and set measurable goals to track their progress.

Gender diversity in leadership positions is crucial for organisations to achieve success and sustainable growth. By promoting and supporting women's advancement in the workplace, companies can create a diverse and inclusive work environment that benefits all employees and the organisation as a whole.

The *International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets* (IJBEM) is committed to advancing knowledge and practices related to business and emerging markets by promoting research on a wide range of topics. In addition to the topic discussed above, the journal recognises the importance of diversity and inclusion in corporate leadership and encourages authors to submit research that examines these critical issues. By addressing the barriers to diverse representation in leadership and promoting inclusive leadership practices, IJBEM aims to foster a more equitable and sustainable business environment. The journal provides a platform for researchers, practitioners and policymakers to share their knowledge, insights and recommendations for advancing diversity and inclusion in corporate leadership. Through its commitment to promoting research on emerging topics, IJBEM is at the forefront of advancing knowledge on business and emerging markets.