

Women in top management positions: the case of the Mexican Federal Telecommunications Institute

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Abstract

We rarely question whether the current composition in which there is a predominance of men in top management positions generates benefits for organizations and for society. However, when it comes to women we seek to justify the benefits of their presence. Considering this, we can say that only for social justice is the inclusion of more women relevant. However, to this fact we can add benefits of including them in those positions. The low representation of women in these positions is largely due to the absence of equal labor conditions between women and men, the functioning of traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and human capital management policies without a gender perspective. The research studies from collaborators' perception of Mexican public institution, which are the factors that influence more to get more women in top management positions. The results indicate that women consider as a fundamental factor for their promotion having adequate working conditions that allow them to develop their capacities through co-responsibility of tasks in front of men. In other words, guarantee conditions of true equality between women and men.

Key words: Analytic Hierarchy Process, Gender Equality, Public Sector, Top Management Positions, Women.

Mujeres en posiciones directivas: el caso del Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones en México

Resumen

Rara vez nos cuestionamos si la composición actual en la que hay un predominio de hombres en puestos de alta dirección genera beneficios para las organizaciones y para la sociedad. Sin embargo, cuando se trata de mujeres si buscamos justificar los beneficios de su presencia. Considerando esto, podemos decir que solo por justicia social es relevante la inclusión de más mujeres. Sin embargo, de manera adicional, la inclusión de mujeres en estas posiciones trae múltiples beneficios. La baja representación de mujeres en estos cargos se debe en gran medida a la falta de condiciones laborales de igualdad entre mujeres y hombres, el funcionamiento de los roles y estereotipos tradicionales de género y las políticas de gestión del capital humano sin perspectiva de género. La investigación estudia la percepción de los colaboradores de una institución pública mexicana, sobre cuáles son los factores que más influyen para incluir a más mujeres en puestos de alta dirección. Los

resultados indican que las mujeres consideran como factor fundamental para su promoción, el contar con condiciones laborales adecuadas que les permitan desarrollar sus capacidades a través de la corresponsabilidad de tareas frente a los hombres. En otras palabras, garantizar condiciones de verdadera igualdad entre mujeres y hombres.

Palabras claves: Igualdad de Género, Mujeres, Posiciones Directivas, Proceso de Jerarquía Analítica, Sector Público.

1 Introduction

The Mexican Constitution states that women and men are equal in the face of the law¹. However, the reality shows that this is far from being accomplished in the labor, social, economic, cultural, and political spheres of the country. The Global Gender Gap Report 2015 (Breene, 2016) indicates that achieving gender equality is an issue that goes beyond the economic, and transcends aspects such as access to health, education or political spaces. In this regard, Breene (2016) mentions the importance of creating equal conditions for half of the world population in favor of the well-being of companies and countries. What is more, Breene (2016) also states that in the last 10 years, since the World Economic Forum (WEF) reported on the gap between men and women, the gap has only narrowed by 4%. This means that at the current rates, and if policies were not carried out to improve the conditions of women in all sectors, it would take another 118 years to close the economic gap entirely.

Noland et al. (2016:2) state that "Women do not participate in the global economy to the same extent as men do. Implicit is a normative question of why this is the case and a positive question of what would be the economic impact if women were to participate more fully in economic life". In this context, it is important to say that labor inequality between men and women becomes usually higher in the top management positions. A study by Grant Thornton (2020) indicates that only 3 of 10 positions in top management are occupied by women. Similarly, a research of McKinsey & Company (2019) found that for every 100 men promoted and hired to manager, only 72 women are promoted and hired. This 'broken rung' results in more women being stuck at the entry level. Unsurprisingly, men end up holding 62% of manager-level positions, while women hold just 38%. It reflects that the biggest obstacle women face on the path to senior leadership is at the first step up to manager (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

It is important to know some of the reasons why there is less female participation in top management positions. For Macarie and Creta (2008) the reasons are due to factors such as: society's beliefs related to the woman's and man's role; marriage and children; a lack of facilities (kindergarten) for working women; men's prejudices, and the omnipresence of men's values in organizational cultures. Similarly, Vega et al. (2016) said that the labor barriers that women face such as stereotypes, social roles, preferences, decisions related to the reconciliation of work and personal life, which affect their opportunities in the labor market. In this regard, Zabludovsky (2015) mentions that in Mexico the presence of women decreases as there are better wages, this means that the presence of women is less at the top of the positions, which exacerbates the inequality between women and men in these positions. Zabludovsky (2015) further points out that this difference could

1 Article 4 of the "Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos", [Online], Available: http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/1_080520.pdf.

be explained due to the unpaid responsibilities assumed by women dedicated to the care of their families. In this line, women in Mexico dedicate up to 42 hours a week to housework while among men this number drops to just 15 hours.

The metaphor of glass ceiling is used to describe the invisible barriers, through which women can see the elite positions, but cannot reach them (Chi & Li, 2008; Mora & Ferrer-i-Carbonel, 2009; Stier & Herzberg-Druker, 2017). These barriers prevent large numbers of women and ethnic minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious, and highest-positions jobs in the workforce (Broughton & Miller, 2009). In addition, the European Institute for Gender Equality (Gender Equality, 2020) defined the term “sticky floors”, which describes another structural problem of the equity in the labour market. This term means a point to a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps workers, mainly women, in the lower ranks of the job scale, with low mobility and invisible barriers to career advancement.

In this line, it is necessary to point out that the inequality is bigger on the work sectors where traditionally there is higher male participation. In addition, Sassler et al. (2016) found that hostile work spaces, beliefs associated with women’s skills, stereotypes and gender roles, and a small number of women graduated from STEM careers² are some of the reasons why women’s in these fields are underrepresented on workforce. In this field, Saxena, Geiselman and Zhang (2019) considered that sexual and non-sexual harassment, making jokes, interrupting someone while speaking, and/or addressing, severe criticism, belittling ideas, or intentionally directed derogatory comments frequently take the shape of undermining women in the STEM workplace.

Gender equality in Mexico

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 (WEF, 2020), Latin America is the third-highest ranked region regarding the inequality of gender in this year’s Index, behind Western Europe and North America. Mexico ranked 25th out of 153 countries, and obtained a score of 0.754, compared to Iceland that was classified as the country with the lowest inequality between men and women obtaining a score of 0.877 in a scale from 0 to 1. The results means that Mexico has implemented policies that have improved the closing of the gender gap, in 2018 (WEF, 2018) Mexico ranked 50th out of 149 countries, and obtained a score 0.721 in a scale from 0 to 1. However, the improvement is not enough to be at the top countries. The problem is bigger, especially in the field of “Economic participation and Opportunity”, because Mexico obtained the second worst place (124th place of the 125 evaluated countries). This field considers labour force, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, legislators, senior officials and managers and professional and technical workers (WEF, 2020). Likewise, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017) found that less than half (47%) of Mexican women in working-age participate in the labor force, a rate well below the OECD average for women (67%).

In this way, Camarena Adame and Saavedra García (2017) wrote that women occupy 31% of top management positions in Mexico (32% in the OECD), only 7% of the members of the board of directors of Mexican companies are women (10% in the OECD), and only 2% of Mexican women are businesswomen (compared to 6% of men). As a result, women occupy less than a third of the managerial positions and have a participation

of one woman for every 10 men in the top management positions. In Mexico, of a sample of 50 companies listed on the Mexican Stock Exchange, only 7% of the full members are women (Camarena Adame & Saavedra García, 2017). According to the McKinsey Global Institute (2017), if the gap between women and men in the workforce were closed in Mexico, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would increase 43% by 2025. Finally, according to INEGI (2020), in Mexico, only 60.6% of women between the ages of 3 and 29 attend school and only 44 out of every 100 women are affiliated with some health institution.

What about the public sector in Mexico?

According to INEGI (2018a) in 2018, 51% of the public servants of the federal government were women. Although the proportion of public servants between women and men in the federal government favors slightly for women, this is not the same in the highest positions of the public institutions. It has been usual for women to occupy positions of lower hierarchy and even that, in equal positions, they occupy the lower levels of the position with lower wages. Mostly men dominate the top management positions in the federal government. The data from INMUJERES (2017) reflects that in the first level of top management positions (Dirección de Área) only 36.5% were women. What is more, in the highest position (Secretaría de Estado) the number of women is lower, 10.5% (Figure 1). We can visualize how hard it is for women to occupy positions with greater responsibility.

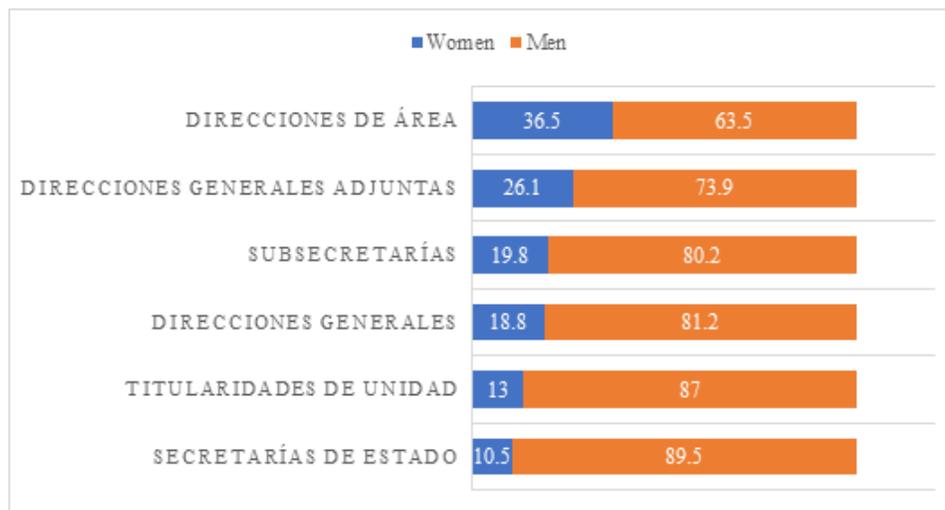


Figure 1: Proportion of women and men in the federal government (INMUJERES, 2017)

In summary, the evidence shows that there is still a pending task to achieve greater female participation in top management positions, also in the public sector in Mexico. The importance of having a greater number of women in top management positions is justified only by social justice. According to INEGI (2018b), almost 125 million people are living in Mexico, 51.1% are women, and the 48.9% men, far from what happens in top management positions. Apart from the social justice, the importance that public institutions assemble their workforce with a diverse population where social interests are represented, women included. If this were not enough, in addition, various studies found the benefits of female leadership. For example, Evans

(2014) explains that the collaborativeness, nurturance and emotional intelligence that the women are more developed than men are now far more important considerations than power and control related to male leadership. Similarly, Hejase et al. (2013) highlights that the women are less hierarchical than men; are better at conflict management, because they have better communication and listening skills and show more tolerance and empathy; tend to be more “people persons” because they are comfortable in relating on one-to one basis with people at all levels of an organization.

The Federal Telecommunications Institute (FTI) case

Federal Telecommunications Institute (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones) that is a public autonomous organization, created in 2013, with the objective of regulating the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors in Mexico, also having responsibilities in economic competence. Therefore, it is part of the public sector in Mexico, as a Constitutional Autonomous Organization. The FTI, have a HR management policy with the ideal to attract, develop and retain the human talent, promoting high performance, productivity and results orientation through the adoption of practices that allow the creation of a harmonious, equitable and inclusive work environment. In 2017, FTI created an area in the Unit of Administration, to promote the gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Since the Institute was created, the talent management policy has focused on its employees and the search for the best conditions for their balance between work and personal life. In this case, many actions were implemented, such as flexible hours, adoption of a home office pilot test, paternity leave exceeding those established by law, special hours for people with care needs, a breastfeeding program, specialized training in new masculinities, violence prevention against women, and support networks among women to promote their leadership. However, and despite the efforts made, the proportion of women and men within the Institute replicates the reality experienced by public organizations in the country. According to the FTI (2020), at the end of the first quarter of 2020, 41% of the personnel working at the Institute was women and 59% was men. However, as Figure 2 indicates, female participation in leadership positions decreases in positions of greater responsibility.

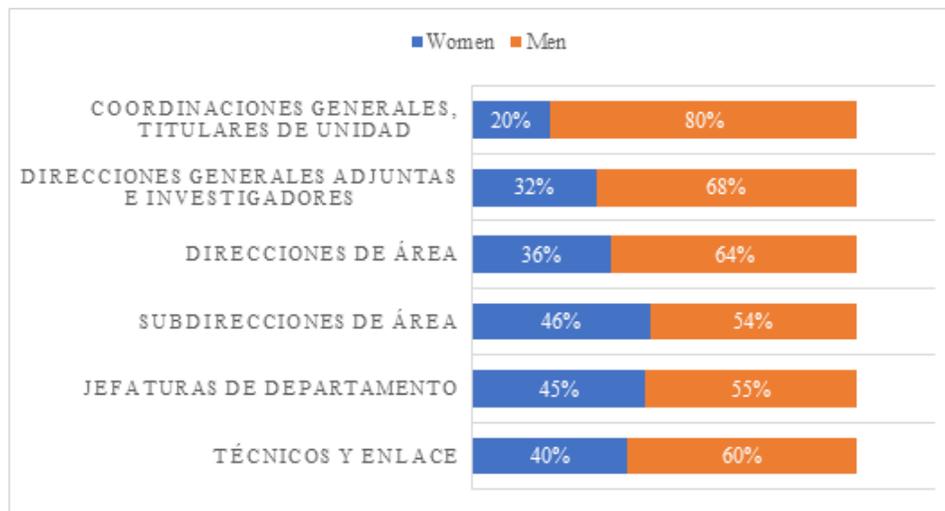


Figure 2: Proportion of occupation of women and men by position band in the IFT (FTI), 2020

Due to this fact, the goals of this article are to analyze which strategies influence more to get higher share of women in the top management positions in the Federal Telecommunications Institute. In addition, the research can offer elements to improve or change the policies who are operating at the FTI. To make the analysis, the research considers three strategies related to de FTI’s collaborators perception. First, to find in general which are the most important conditions to promote more women in top management positions. Also, if the if the people who works at the Institute conceive as an important issue the inclusion of women in top management positions, and; if the FTI has a HR and gender equality management policies that sets the right conditions to allow the participation of women in top management positions.

2 Materials and Methods

Data

To obtain the perception about the gender equity within the Institute, an online anonymous questionnaire was prepared. A Liker scale was used to assess the importance of including more women in top management positions and how much the respondents agree or disagree with the stated strategies. The contributors of this analysis are 350 of 1,210 FTI’s collaborators (representing 28.9%) from Enlace (lowest positions) to Director General (highest position). The sample of collaborators consists of 161 (46%) females and 189 (54%) males. The average age of the people who answered the survey is 37.9 years (standard deviation of 9.83 years). About the job position, the distribution of collaborators who answered the survey is 36.4% of Administrative Liaison (Enlace), 30.4% Head of Department (Jefatura de Departamento), 23.5% Subdirector of Area (Subdirección de Área), 8.3% Area Director (Dirección de Área) and 1.4% General Director (Dirección General).

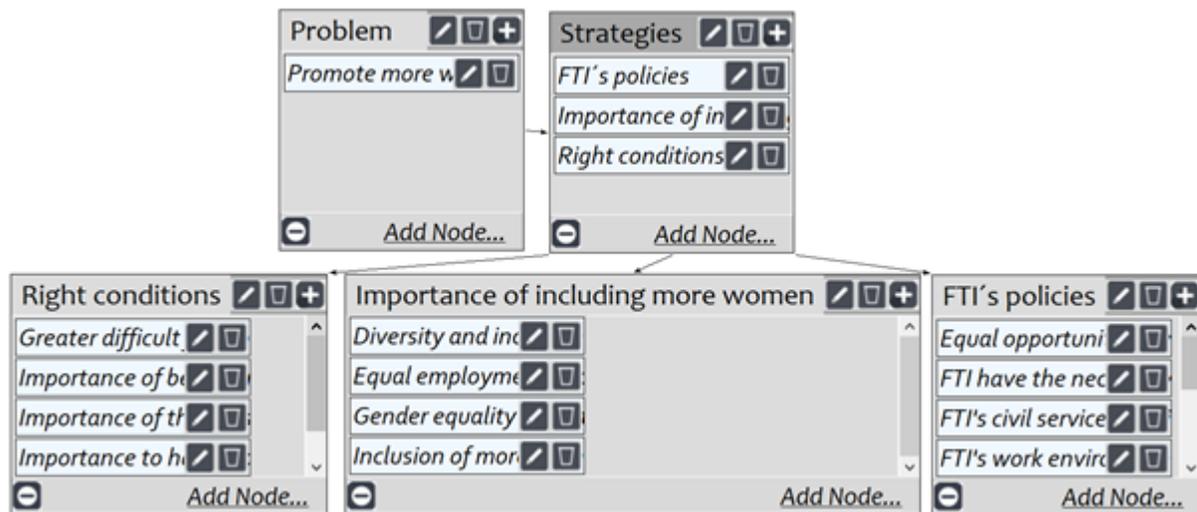


Figure 3: Structure of the AHP model

In addition, the analysis was divided considering the general and gender perspectives in order to know which topics of the strategies are considered more important to encourage women in top management positions and if the perception changes in order to gender. The design of the survey was carried out with the advice and approval of the Institute’s Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion area. The experts found three

aspects to consider for the promotion of more women in the top management positions, in the following order of importance. First, the perception of the right conditions to promote more women in top management positions; second, the perception of the importance of including more woman in top management positions; and third, if the FTI policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions. The gender equality experts of the Institute carried out the order of importance of the strategies.

The arguments are that in a general way, the existence of necessary conditions is the general condition that favors and allows having spaces in which the inclusion of more women in top management positions is favored. On the other hand, the degree of knowledge and awareness of the collaborators as a second point since it allows having less hostile work environments for them. Finally, and in a particular way about the actions carried out in the FTI as a parameter of what is carried out within the Institute. To analyze all the factors, an AHP model was constructed (Figure 3).

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

Analytic Hierarchy Process was developed by Saaty (1977, 1980) and works with both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of preferences. To obtain criteria priorities, pairwise comparisons based on the fundamental verbal/numerical 1-9 scale is required (Table 2). The number of necessary comparisons for each comparison matrix is $n(n-1)/2$, where n is the number of criteria. Each criterion gains a geometric mean of its comparisons, which are then normalized.

An important requirement is to test consistency of our stated preferences, as human-made decisions can be mutually inconsistent because of the human nature. The most commonly used method for consistency check was developed by Saaty (1977), who proposed a consistency index (CI) related to eigenvalue method. CI is obtained as

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1} \tag{1}$$

λ_{\max} is the maximal eigenvalue of the pairwise comparison matrix. The consistency ratio (CR) is given by:

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI} \tag{2}$$

RI is the random index shown in Table 1.

n	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RI	.58	.9	1.12	1.24	1.32	1.41	1.45	1.49

Table 1: AHP - Random indices (Saaty, 1977)

The priorities are considered consistent if the consistency ration is less than 10%. SuperDecisions software is used to count the criteria preferences and to test consistency of the preferences.

3 Results

The results are presented in the order of importance of strategies that the FTI’s experts in gender equality, diversity and inclusion area considered. First, the results from the perception about the right conditions to promote more women in top management positions. Second, results from the perception of the importance about including more woman in top management positions. And third, the results about if the FTI’s policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions. The first part exposes the results in general perspective, then the results from women, and men, and, finally, the summary of the gender differences is presented. The results indicate which of the topics related to the three strategies are considered for the FTI’s collaborators as the most important in order to promote more women in top management positions at the FTI. This give us elements to formulate the discussion of the research.

General results

Table 2 indicates that, related to the strategy “conditions to promote more women in top management positions”, the most important topic for FTI’s collaborators are Importance to have working conditions that favor the promotion of women and Work-life balance like a factor that determines the develop of women, both with 36.80% of importance. Then, Importance of being a man or a woman to be promoted and Greater difficult for women to get higher responsibility positions with 10.12% respectively. The least important topic was Importance of the boss to be promoted with the importance of 6.16%. The inconsistency of the evaluation is only 0.79%, which is below the required limit of 10%. Thus, the evaluation can be considered as consistent.

Topic	Importance percentage	Inconsistency
Importance of the boss to be promoted	6.16%	
Importance of being a man or a woman to be promoted	10.12%	
Importance to have working conditions that favor the promotion of women	36.80%	0.79%
Greater difficult for women to get higher responsibility positions	10.12%	
Work-life balance like a factor that determines the develop of women	36.80%	

Table 2: Importance of topics about conditions to promote more women in top management positions, general results

Table 3 presents the results from the perception of the importance of including more woman in top management positions strategy. In this field, the most important theme for FTI’s collaborators are Equal employment opportunities for women and men importance with 55.96% of importance. Then, with 24.95% Gender equality importance. Finally, the least important themes are Diversity and inclusion in work teams importance and Inclusion of more women in top management positions importance that receive the importance of 9.55% in both of them. The inconsistency of the evaluation is 1.63%.

Topic	Importance percentage	Inconsistency
Diversity and inclusion in work teams importance	9.55%	
Equal employment opportunities for women and men	55.96%	
Gender equality importance	24.95%	1.63%
Inclusion of more women in top management positions importance	9.55%	

Table 3: Importance of topics about perception of the importance of including more women in top management positions, general results

Finally, the Table 4 shows the FTI’s collaborators perception results about if the FTI’s policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions. FTI’s work environment is based on respect and the inclusion of ideas and Training actions focused on gender equality issues have allow sensitize about the case, resulted the most important with 18.71%. In third place, with 18.08% Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Next, with the same percentage of importance (11.05%) are three, FTI’s policies are correct to promote female leadership; FTI’s civil service³ contributes to improve opportunities for the advancement of women; and FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions. The Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better positions at the FTI obtained 5.95%, followed by FTI’s leaderships subserve the inclusion of women in top management positions and Men have advantages over women to occupy better positions in the Institute, with 3.98% and 1.44% respectively.

Topic	Importance percentage	Inconsistency
Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better	5.95%	
FTI’s leaderships subserve the inclusion of women in top	3.98%	
FTI’s policies are correct to promote female leadership	11.05%	
FTI’s civil service contributes to improve opportunities for the advancement of women	11.05%	
FTI’s work environment is based on respect and the inclusion of ideas	18.71%	
FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions	11.05%	3.73%
Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and	18.08%	
Men have advantages over women to occupy better positions in the Institute	1.44%	
Training actions focused on gender equality issues have allow sensitize about the case	18.71%	

Table 4: Importance of topics about if the FTI’s policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions, general results

3 For FTI’s civil service, the research refers to the human resources mechanism use on the Institute to attract, develop, train, and retain the talent, based on evaluate the merit, knowledge, skills, experience, and attitudes of people who works or wants to work at the FTI.

Gender perspective

Table 5 presents the results of the importance considering the gender of the collaborators related to the strategy: Conditions to promote more women in top management positions. The most important topic for women was Importance to have working conditions that favor the promotion of women with 44.29%, followed by Work-life balance like a factor that determines the develop of women with 28.88%; in third place, with 12.28% Importance of being a man or a woman to be promoted, and finally with the same percentage of importance (7.27%) Importance of the boss to be promoted and Greater difficult for women to get higher responsibility positions. The inconsistency was 1.24% (far below the 10% limit).

In the men's case, Importance to have working conditions that favor the promotion of women and Work-life balance like a factor that determines the develop of women are tied for first place importance with 34.35%. In the second place, Importance of being a man or a woman to be promoted and Greater difficult for women to get higher responsibility positions (12.90%). Finally, with 5.51% the Importance of the boss to be promoted. The inconsistency was the same from women (1.24%).

Topic	Women Importance	Men Importance
Importance of the boss to be promoted	7.27%	5.51%
Importance of being a man or a woman to be promoted	12.28%	12.90%
Importance to have working conditions that favor the promotion of women	44.29%	34.35%
Greater difficult for women to get higher responsibility positions	7.27%	12.90%
Work-life balance like a factor that determines the develop of women	28.89%	34.35%

Table 5: Importance of topics about conditions to promote more women in top management positions, women and men results

On the other hand, Table 6 presents the results from women and men related to topics about perception of the importance of including more women in top management positions. In this case, the results are the same in both genders considering order of importance and percentages. First, Equal employment opportunities for women and men importance with 55.96%. Followed by Gender equality importance (24.95%). Finally, tied as the third place Diversity and inclusion in work team's importance and Inclusion of more women in top management positions importance with 9.55%. In women and men results, the inconsistency was 1.63%.

Topic	Women Importance	Men Importance
Diversity and inclusion in work teams importance	9.55%	9.55%
Equal employment opportunities for women and men	55.96%	55.96%
Gender equality importance	24.95%	24.95%
Inclusion of more women in top management positions importance	9.55%	9.55%

Table 6: Importance of topics about perception of the importance of including more women in top management positions, women and men results

To close, Table 7 express the importance of topics about if the FTI’s policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions. Women considered that the most important topic was Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and inclusion; FTI’s work environment is based on respect and the inclusion of ideas and Training actions focused on gender equality issues have allow sensitize about the case (19.40%). Second, with 12.95%, FTI’s policies are correct to promote female leadership. Third, FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions with 9.88%. Followed by, FTI’s civil service contributes to improve opportunities for the advancement of women (8.19%). At the end of importance was, FTI’s leaderships subserve the inclusion of women in top management positions (4.82%) and Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better positions at the IFT with 4.51%. In this case, the inconsistency was 3.99%.

For men, three topics are at the top with the same percentage of importance, FTI’s civil service contributes to improve opportunities for the advancement of women; FTI’s work environment is based on respect and the inclusion of ideas and FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions, with 19% of importance. In second place, with 11.28% three topics too, FTI’s policies are correct to promote female leadership; Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and Training actions focused on gender equality issues have allow sensitize about the case. Third, Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better positions at the FTI (5.32%). In the last order of importance, FTI’s leaderships subserve the inclusion of women in top management positions with 2.37%, and finally Men have advantages over women to occupy better positions in the Institute (1.48%). For men’s case, the inconsistency was 2.20%.

Topic	Women Importance	Men Importance
Equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better	4.51%	5.32%
FTI’s leaderships subserve the inclusion of women in top	4.82%	2.37%
FTI’s policies are correct to promote female leadership	12.95%	11.28%
FTI’s civil service contributes to improve opportunities for the advancement of women	8.19%	19.00%
FTI’s work environment is based on respect and the inclusion of ideas	19.40%	19.00%
FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions	9.88%	19.00%
Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and	19.40%	11.28%
Men have advantages over women to occupy better positions in the Institute	1.44%	1.48%
Training actions focused on gender equality issues have allow sensitize about the case	19.40%	11.28%

Table 7: Importance of topics about if the FTI’s policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions, women and men results

Gender differences

The results show us differences in the considerations made by women and men. In the first strategy (conditions to promote more women in top management positions), the principal difference is that women considered by almost 10% (9.94%) more important than men the Importance to have working conditions that favour the promotion of women. In addition, women considered the influence of the boss slightly more important to be promoted compared to men (4th place in women's case versus 5th place in men's case). In second strategy, (importance of including more women in top management positions) there is no differences by gender. However, in the third strategy (FTI's policies are in the right way to contribute that more women occupy top management positions) the most significant differences were found. In women's case the most important theme was the FTI's environment (based on respect and the inclusion of ideas), Knowledge about the actions and benefits offered by the Institute to guarantee gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and training actions focused on gender equality. In contrast, men considered that FTI's civil service, in addition to FTI's environment and if the FTI have the necessary policies for more women in top management positions are the most important grading the FTI's policies. It highlights that the role that leaders play in promoting women, as well as equal opportunities for women and men to occupy better positions, was not considered important. Because in the 4 cases they did not add more than 6% of importance.

4 Discussion

The results of the analysis allowed us to identify differences in the perception of the factors that influence the most the possibility to promote more women in the top management positions associated with the gender to which they belong. These differences lie in the following considerations. First, women consider having adequate working conditions as a fundamental factor for their promotion (44.29% of importance). In this way, Clerkin (2020) describes that women want from work synthesized in flexibility in schedule works and real leadership opportunities. Koura et al. (2017) observed that improving work-life balance conditions increases employees' self-efficacy and reduce gender differences in the workplace. To secure adequate (equal) working conditions, this involves four fundamental aspects. First, it is crucial to know employees' characteristics and their specific needs (number of employees with children, ages, employees with special needs under their care, professional experience, academic training, address, among others), which would improve the acceptance of HR strategies and programs and minimize tension in the workplace (Gursoy, Chi & Karadag, 2013; King, Murillo & Lee, 2017; Koura et al., 2017). Second, a policy of attracting talent without biases, this mainly implies that the organizations have a Civil Service in which merit is the reason for accessing a public job. In this line, in order to attract talent without unconscious biases, the implementation of policies such as curriculums vitae without personal data such as gender, age, marital status, among others, is required; interviews with multidisciplinary teams, IT systems that allow anyone to apply for vacancies or the application of general knowledge tests. About that, Beattie & Johnson (2011) said that to achieve such working conditions, organizations need to have a talent attraction system that guarantees that merit is the fundamental value for promoting a job, without the influence of any unconscious biases and any form of discrimination.

Third, promote adequate working conditions for women, like develop job flexibility policies, mentoring programs and female leadership programs, training aimed at men for the development of new masculinities and the exercise of co-responsibility in domestic tasks and a responsible exercise of fatherhood (Randles, 2018). In addition to, education, training and development plans focus on breaking with traditional gender

roles and seeking support networks by and for women (Badura et al., 2018; Rudman et al., 2012; Smirles et al., 2020).

It is important to say that even though organizations develop such programs and policies for higher inclusion of women in leadership positions, it is necessary to actively promote them among the employees as the current organizational culture may minimize their effect. Badura et al. (2018) suggest that organizations should actively discuss issues related to gender equity. Moreover, women should not change their behaviour to fit within the gender stereotypes, but organizations should rather educate their employees to eliminate such stereotypes. In this way, according to Smirles et al. (2020), education related to a professional development program for women could have a greater and long-term impact on their professional success.

Second finding reveals that male employees ranked with higher importance that the FTI has the necessary policies for more women in top management positions (19.00% compared to 9.88% in case of females) and the contribution of the FTI's civil service to improve opportunities for the advancement of women (19.00% compared to 8.19%). This could be explained by Flood and Pease (2005) who considered the position of privilege of men and the invisibility of the difficulties faced by women in the workplace (studying public sector institutions). This explains that sticky floors and glass ceilings are obstacles faced by women, of which men are unaware (Morgan, 2015). Furthermore, these results explain why women underestimate their capacities and the mechanisms that exist to be able to compete for a better position (FTI's civil service). This could be compared with the Steele, Spencer and Aronson (2002) who observed that cultural differences do not seem to affect the perception of women as less likely to have the traits required for corporate leadership. This represents an important obstacle for their career development in management positions. Among other aspects, from a psycho-sociological perspective, stereotypes can exert a profound influence on the behaviour of the people they affect.

Third, the FTI talent management policy and the actions realized by the area of Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have allowed FTI collaborators to perceive equal opportunities between women and men as a very relevant topic (55.96%). This could be explained, because the environment and the actions have made employees aware of the importance of labour equality in general. However, even women themselves do not yet see the importance of including more women in managerial positions as a relevant topic (9.55%). Organizations must stimulate the women's interests for managerial positions. When individuals are interested in the work that they are doing, they are likely to set higher priorities on those tasks and, consequently, they are likely to seek out experiences through which they can develop the knowledge and skills necessary for performing well (Nye et al., 2017). Therefore, to increase females' interest in the leadership, it is necessary to improve the role of leadership mentoring in the organizations.

This fact is undoubtedly a pending task for all organizations, only for social justice and representativeness of the population are benefits of including more women in these positions. In this case, women may consider the equal working conditions as the fundamental obstacle, which would facilitate higher share of women in the top managerial positions. As Evans (2014) pointed out, women are often perceived as not suitable for the leadership positions. This is mainly due to gender assumptions regarding labor division (Place and Vardeman-Winter, 2018). However, the inclusion of women in the managerial positions should be promoted along with the other strategies. Usually, organizations often fill vacant leadership positions promoting individuals who match stereotypic beliefs about what leaders should be like, missing the necessary interpersonal skills required to be successful in a leadership role (Badura et al., 2018). However, adding more women to leadership positions has benefits for organizations, as women have greater communication skills, promote more

collaborative and less hierarchical workspaces, and even public organizations that can be more empathetic in offering solutions (Eagly & Carli, 2003), i.e. soft skills that are more required nowadays.

Finally, and as an area of opportunity for the Institute, it is to work with greater efforts to sensitize the leaders of the Institute to include more women in top management positions. The results show that the employees did not consider the impulse of the leaders as important (less than 6% of importance). Rincón, González and Barrero (2017) found that in the case of female leadership, the traditional gender stereotypes that suggest that women do not have the required characteristics for leadership, besides influencing the attitude of their followers as indicated earlier, can also negatively affect the behaviour and career development of female leaders. However, current managerial trends demand more emphatic and emotional intelligence that fit more to female leadership styles. In conclusion, without the conviction of the leaders, the inclusion of more women in top management positions is more difficult.

The importance of the presented analysis lies in two main aspects. First, the analysis gives a view on the current situation of gender equity in Mexico. Even though public institutions have implemented policies for the gender equity, these policies have mainly solved the problem on the lower positions, but there is still a huge inequality in the higher managerial positions. Second, to improve the situation in the higher managerial position, the analysis can be used as a reference for HR areas in public institutions to define criteria for the promotion of more women in leadership positions to achieve substantive equality across all hierarchical levels. Nowadays, when organizations must optimize their resources, it is invaluable to know, which strategies have the highest importance from the employees themselves. Hand in hand with this, organizations must also understand that implementation of any strategy must be well presented and explained. It is important that employees consider inclusion and diversity as a relevant issue so that the later can be promoted with less resistance. Further, it is important to promote talent management policies that modify the traditional functioning of gender roles reducing the gaps that exist between men and women in higher levels.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are in the absence of data comparison with other public institutions in order to find a frame of reference of the Institute. This limits the obtained results to use them widely as a general overview on the public sector in Mexico. So, the results of the analysis can be seen more as an introductory analysis and further research is needed. In addition, no responses to the survey were obtained at the highest levels of the FTI, so the perception on the subject in those positions of the Institute remains unknown. Receiving perception from the highest level about the greater inclusion of women in such positions may be valuable as these positions remains with higher inequality. Again, extended research is needed to include responses from the highest level of public organizations, which would confirm or adjust the HR strategies for diversity and inclusion. Finally, the analysis can include more employees' characteristics (such as age, seniority, generation) to understand more the perception about the equality strategies. This would enable us to have the complete view over the analysed problem. However, this requires bigger sample to obtain representative results.

5 Conclusions

Usually, studies related to women leadership are focused on explaining the advantages of promoting them in the organizations. However, one of the reflections of this research is that beyond the benefits, the lack of women in top management positions should be normalized as a matter of social justice towards this sector of the population. The theme is especially relevant in the public sector because it pursues objectives for the benefit of society in general, that is why all interests must be represented. One of the reflections generated by this research is the way in which actions to be implemented to promote more women in these positions could be prioritized. It is essential to have specialized areas in gender equality that, in collaboration with the human resources areas, support the awareness and importance of the issue. Then, the key is to generate policies with a gender perspective. Always thinking about social justice, more than in the search for benefits derived from the inclusion of more women in top management positions that also have.

Finally, knowing the results of the research, it is important to define and carry out subsequent studies to create policies that favour more women leadership. The research gives rise to the efforts to be coordinated throughout the Mexican government, with the intention that it would become a national policy, and not only result in isolated efforts. It is time to discuss more the ongoing problem of gender inequality in top leadership positions in the public sector, considering the inclusion of more women in management positions.

6 References

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