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Women Entrepreneurs a must needed Workforce in Industry 6.0

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ABSTRACT

Today the digital transformation provides new avenues for the economic empowerment of women and can contribute to greater gender equality. The Internet, digital platforms, mobile phones and digital financial services offer "leapfrog" opportunities for all and can help bridge the divide by giving women the possibility to earn and access knowledge and general information. We need to seize this opportunity to foster greater gender equality in the labour market, boost economic growth and build a more inclusive, digital world. Entrepreneurship skills have become even more important in a world where digital technologies offer to a greater number of people the possibility to start or develop their own business. But risk aversion, scarce access to seed funding, and rigid social and economic structures which limit the accumulation of funds, can jeopardise both entrepreneurship and the innovation propensity of individuals. Further sharing international experiences and good practices is essential. Participation of women in innovation activities can represent another important step towards greater gender equality. The research investigates on how female entrepreneurs are successfully bridging the gender gap through the way of digitalization.

Research Methodology: A qualitative literature review in relation to women entrepreneurship activities and the emergence of digital technologies is performed. *Findings* Specifically the contribution and the impact provided by the Digital Technologies will be analyzed for women entrepreneurship. A conceptual discussion on how the Digital Technologies opportunities could be valuable in overcoming some of the constrains women tackle in their entrepreneurship process and which are the main research streams that emerge for future investigation on the theme.

Originality/Value: Even if the literature on Women Entrepreneurship is well covered, to our best knowledge the intersection between the two fields remains unexplored. The paper provides a contribution in this direction, identifying new trends and future directions for research.

Practical Implications: The major implication is to advance knowledge and practice in the area of gender in management and use of Digital Technologies by focusing upon empirical research, theoretical developments, practice and current issues. Benefits are related to a better understanding of the debate on "Gender and Management" themes by reconsidering networking activities with social media.

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Introduction

In recent years, the startup scene has witnessed a surge, largely propelled by the integration of AI in business operations. Notably, women have emerged as prominent figures within this entrepreneurial landscape, spearheading innovation and establishing impactful startups. These women-led ventures are harnessing the power of AI to revolutionize conventional industries, challenge societal norms, and effectuate significant transformations. In various sectors spanning healthcare, education, finance, and agriculture, women entrepreneurs are leveraging AI technologies like natural language processing, machine learning algorithms, and data analytics to optimize processes, boost efficiency, and facilitate informed decision-making. For instance, in healthcare, women-founded startups employ AI-driven machinery for seamless diagnosis, treatment, and patient care tracking, enhancing accessibility and affordability while democratizing healthcare services. Moreover, these startups are uniquely positioned to address societal challenges, benefiting not only women but society at large. By focusing on issues such as education access, healthcare availability, financial inclusion, and environmental sustainability, women-led ventures develop innovative solutions to bridge existing gaps and meet unmet needs. By prioritizing social impact alongside profitability, they pave the way for widespread positive change. In addition to innovation, women entrepreneurs champion diversity and inclusion within the startup ecosystem. Breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes in a male-dominated space, they actively promote equity by offering mentorship, networking opportunities, and support to underrepresented groups. Through their successes and leadership, they inspire and empower the next generation of women entrepreneurs, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. Despite facing unique challenges like gender bias and access to funding, women entrepreneurs exhibit resilience, resourcefulness, and determination. As their numbers steadily increase, they adapt, collaborate, and persevere, creating ecosystems conducive to their success. In essence, women-led startups are driving meaningful change, reshaping entrepreneurship, and shaping the future of AI and technology

globally. Their contributions underscore the imperative of fostering inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment within the entrepreneurial landscape. The research investigates on how female entrepreneurs are successfully bridging the gender gap through the way of digitalization.

The Glass Ceiling Effect
Ever since the publication of the seminal book that birthed the term "glass ceiling", that memorable metaphor for the invisible barrier that impedes the senior management advancement of talented women professionals inside corporations has seemingly become ubiquitous in management literature, business school curricula, and the global psyche [1]. As evidence, by December 2010 the Amazon.com database had 242 books with "glass ceiling" in the title and 337 books that include the keyword phrase "glass ceiling." Scholarly journals also help to disseminate information about the glass ceiling phenomenon by reporting numerous studies that confirm its existence inside large firms [2]. Today, multiple business courses including organizational behaviour, ethics, and business law might be considered incomplete without highlighted mention and discussion of the glass ceiling phenomenon. While teaching about the glass ceiling has greatly broadened awareness of this gender based inequity in the corporate workplace, the disappointing truth is that the phenomenon continues to influence behaviour among corporate leaders. Several scholars suggest frustrated women executives often choose to leave the corporate world in order to escape the effects of the glass ceiling by forming their own small firms [3]. The underlying hypothesis is that the glass ceiling – a phenomenon that by definition is specific to large firms – cannot prevent women business owners from serving as chief executive of their own firm and realizing the rewards they deserve. However, evidence is growing that the strategy of leaving the corporate world in order to escape gender bias often fails. This is because women business owners typically encounter other forms of systemic gender bias that constrain their performance. Specifically, based on gender, women business owners face a disadvantage in raising capital. Researchers suggest a common motivation for professional women to leave corporate jobs and start their own firms is that self employment gives them greater control over their careers and, therefore, is a way to escape the glass ceiling phenomenon [3]. One study conducted by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners found 16 percent of women entrepreneurs cite a glass ceiling as a major motivation for becoming an entrepreneur [4]. Nascent entrepreneurs of all types (not just women) commonly cite a need for independence, a desire to escape the constraints of a formalized organization, and frustrations with the progress of their career as reasons for wanting to start their own firm [5].

Literature Review Industry 6.0
Industry is defined as the production of goods and services through the transformation of raw materials and resources into valuable products. It involves the creation of finished products or services through various stages of production that may include manufacturing, processing, assembly, packaging, and distribution. Industries have played a significant role in the economic growth and development of nations throughout history. They have contributed to the creation of employment opportunities, the development of new technologies, and the improvement of living standards. Over the years, the industrial sector has gone through numerous changes, and each of these changes has been termed as an Industry Revolution.

Industry 1.0: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution
Industry 1.0, also known as the first industrial revolution, began during the late 18th century and lasted until the mid-19th century. It was characterized by the widespread use of mechanized production, the utilization of energy sources such as coal and steam-power, and the emergence of the first factories. This revolution allowed for mass production to become possible and saw the emergence of the first industrial giants such as the cotton mills and ironworks.

Industry 2.0: The Era of Mass Production
Industry 2.0 was marked by the introduction of electricity and the invention of new technologies such as the assembly line. This revolution led to increased productivity, efficiency, and quality in the production of goods, as well as the emergence of new industries such as the automobile industry.

Industry 3.0: The Rise of Automation
Industry 3.0, also known as the digital revolution, saw the use of electronic technologies to create computer-based systems, robotic production lines, and automated factories. This revolution allowed for the emergence of the internet, as well as the development of new technologies such as 3D printing, big data, and cloud computing.

Industry 4.0: Automation and Digitization
Industry 4.0, also known as the fourth industrial revolution, began in the early 21st century and is characterized using automation and data exchange. This revolution has allowed for the development of the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence, and machine learning. It has also enabled the use of 3D printing, big data, and cloud computing.

The growth of Industry 4.0 is driven by several factors, including the need to increase productivity and efficiency, the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, and the increasing use of the internet of things (IoT). The use of automation and data exchange allows for faster and more accurate data processing, as well as increased efficiency in the production of goods. Additionally, the development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning allows for more efficient decision-making and problem-solving capabilities. Finally, the use of the internet of things (IoT) allows for improved communication and data-sharing between connected devices.

The Evolution of Industry 5.0: Humans and Machines Working Together
Industry 5.0, also known as the Human-Tech partnership, aims to bring together the benefits of Industry 4.0 with the human touch. It emphasizes the importance of human creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills, while also utilizing advanced technologies such as AI, robotics, and IoT. Industry 5.0 aims to create a work environment where machines and humans work in collaboration, with machines performing repetitive and dangerous tasks while humans focus on more complex and creative work. This approach is expected to lead to increased efficiency, productivity, and job satisfaction, while also promoting social responsibility and sustainability.

The need for Industry 5.0 is driven by the need to remain competitive in the global market, as well as the increasing demand for increased efficiency, productivity and quality. Additionally, the use of advanced technologies such as cognitive computing, artificial intelligence and machine learning allows for improved

decision making and problem solving capabilities, as well as the potential for new business models.

Unique Characteristics of Industry 5.0:
Collaboration: Industry 5.0 emphasizes the importance of collaboration between humans and machines. This means that humans and machines will work together to achieve common goals, with each one complementing the other's strengths and weaknesses.

Customization: Industry 5.0 is characterized by the customization of products and services. This means that products will be designed and produced based on the specific needs and requirements of individual customers.

Sustainability: Industry 5.0 places a strong emphasis on sustainability. This means that manufacturing processes will be designed to reduce waste and minimize the impact on the environment.

Decentralization: Industry 5.0 emphasizes decentralization, with a focus on distributed production and manufacturing. This means that production will be closer to the point of consumption, reducing the need for transportation and logistics.

Flexibility: Industry 5.0 emphasizes flexibility, with the ability to quickly adapt to changing market conditions and customer needs. This means that manufacturing processes will be designed to be easily reconfigured and adapted to meet changing demands.

Industry 5.0 is a revolutionary advancement in the industrial sector, with the potential to drastically improve productivity, efficiency, and quality across various industries. This revolution is characterized by using advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and the internet of things (IoT). The prospects of Industry 5.0 are promising, as the use of advanced technologies and automation will continue to improve productivity and efficiency across various industries. Additionally, the development of new technologies such as blockchain, quantum computing, and advanced robotics will allow for the potential for new business models and the development of new products. Overall, Industry 5.0 is focused on creating a more sustainable, collaborative, and customer-centric manufacturing environment that leverages the strengths of both humans and machines.

Industry 6.0: Advancements and Challenges
Industry 6.0(Future Concept), also known as the sixth industrial revolution, is characterized by using advanced technologies such as quantum computing, and nanotechnology over the pre-built Industry 5.0 architecture. These technologies will enable more efficient and effective solutions to solve complex problems, as well as the potential for new business models.

The use of Industry 6.0 technologies will also provide the potential for advanced robotics, and increased safety and security in production and manufacturing processes. Additionally, the use of blockchain technology will enable secure and reliable data-sharing and communication between connected devices, as well as the potential for new economic models. Ultimately, the use of Industry 6.0 will continue to revolutionize the way we produce, manage, and consume goods, services, and information but as with any technological advancement, Industry 6.0 may also have some potential drawbacks or negative impacts.

Addressing the Drawbacks of Industry 6.0: Strategies and Solutions
The advent of Industry 6.0 presents a multitude of challenges that require substantial investment in the development of technological, social, and economic infrastructures to ensure their smooth integration into society. The development of new technologies and automation is likely to have a profound impact on employment, with many jobs being rendered obsolete or transformed. This may exacerbate existing inequalities in society and result in job displacement for many people, particularly those with lower levels of education or training. Additionally, the widespread adoption of Industry 6.0 technologies may also result in increased environmental degradation, resource depletion, and pollution, which could have serious consequences for future generations. To address these challenges, policymakers must take a proactive approach to ensure that Industry 6.0 is implemented in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. This may involve the implementation of new regulations and policies aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of automation and ensuring that the benefits of technological progress are shared equitably across society.

Potential Directions for Industry 6.0 Could involve Advancements in Areas such as:
Biotechnology Integration: Further integration of biotechnology into industrial processes, including bioengineering, biomanufacturing, and bioinformatics.

Sustainable and Circular Economy Practices: Greater emphasis on sustainable manufacturing practices, resource efficiency, and circular economy models to minimize waste and environmental impact.

Quantum Computing and Quantum Technologies: Utilization of quantum computing and other quantum technologies to solve complex optimization problems, enhance data security, and revolutionize computation capabilities.

Advanced Robotics and Autonomous Systems: Development of more sophisticated robotics and autonomous systems capable of handling complex tasks in diverse industrial settings.

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR): Expanded use of AR and VR technologies for training, maintenance, design, and collaboration in industrial settings.

Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology: Continued development of advanced materials and nanotechnology for applications in manufacturing, energy, healthcare, and other industries.

Decentralized Manufacturing and 3D Printing: Increased adoption of decentralized manufacturing models enabled by advancements in additive manufacturing (3D printing) and distributed production networks.

Cyber-Physical Systems and Digital Twins: Integration of cyber-physical systems and the widespread adoption of digital twin technologies for real-time monitoring, optimization, and predictive maintenance.

In summary, Industry 6.0 is a futuristic industry that transcends previous revolutions, emphasizing sustainability, intelligence, and holistic integration. Its impact will be profound, shaping the way we work, interact, and live in the coming decades.

Understanding Digital Leadership

In today's fast-paced world driven by technology, the concept of digital leadership has become essential for navigating the intricate modern business landscape [6]. To grasp the essence of digital leadership, it is crucial to explore its definition and evolution in the context of rapid technological advancements [7].

Digital leadership can be defined as the ability of individuals to effectively leverage technological tools and steer organizations toward success in the digital age [8]. This leadership paradigm has emerged in response to the increasing digitization of business processes, communication channels, and market landscapes [9]. As technology continues to redefine business practices, digital leadership has become indispensable for organizational success [10].

Understanding the evolution of digital leadership entails tracing the trajectory of technological advancements. The advent of the internet, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other transformative technologies has necessitated a shift in leadership approaches [11]. Traditional leadership models are no longer adequate in a landscape characterized by constant change and disruption. Digital leadership is synonymous with agility, innovation, and the strategic use of emerging technologies [12].

At the core of digital leadership are several key characteristics that distinguish it from conventional leadership styles. Adaptability is a fundamental trait, as digital leaders must navigate a landscape where change is constant. Tech-savviness is another hallmark, requiring leaders not only to understand relevant technologies but also to integrate them seamlessly into organizational strategies. Digital leaders comprehend the strategic implications of technology and leverage it to drive innovation and competitive advantage [13].

Forward-thinking is the third key characteristic of digital leaders. In a world shaped by digital advancements, the ability to envision future changes is critical [14]. Digital leaders anticipate future shifts and position their organizations to capitalize on emerging opportunities (Borowska, 2019:13). This mindset fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, enabling leaders to lead their teams through digital transformations.

To illustrate these principles, consider the case of a traditional manufacturing company transitioning to Industry 4.0. A digital leader in this context would not only implement automation and data analytics but also envision how technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain could revolutionize the entire value chain. Such a leader anticipates future integration of technologies, positioning the organization as a frontrunner in the evolving industry landscape [15].

Digital leadership is not merely a buzzword; it is a strategic imperative in a world shaped by rapid technological advancements. Defined by adaptability, tech-savviness, and forward-thinking, digital leaders are at the forefront of steering organizations through the complexities of the digital age. Embracing and understanding digital leadership is paramount for sustainable success in the ever-evolving landscape of the 21st century.

Strategic Conviction

Strategic conviction is the unwavering belief in a chosen course of action or direction, coupled with a well-defined plan to achieve specific objectives. It transcends mere confidence and entails a deep commitment to a set of principles or strategies, even in the face of uncertainties and challenges. This concept holds particular relevance in the realm of business, where leaders must navigate complex landscapes and make decisions that significantly impact the future of their organizations.

At the core of strategic conviction lies the understanding that successful strategies demand steadfast commitment [15]. This conviction isn't born out of impulsiveness but is rooted in thorough analysis, careful consideration of available data, and a comprehensive understanding of the external environment. Short-term setbacks or external pressures don't easily sway leaders with strategic conviction; instead, they remain focused on the long-term goals and objectives guiding their strategic decisions.

An integral aspect of strategic conviction is the effective communication of this unwavering belief throughout the organization. Leaders must inspire confidence and commitment among their team members, fostering a collective sense of purpose. This shared conviction acts as a unifying force, aligning individuals' efforts toward common goals and creating a cohesive organizational culture.

Strategic conviction also entails a willingness to take calculated risks. While maintaining a strong belief in the chosen strategy, leaders must be adaptable and open to adjusting their approach based on ongoing feedback and changing circumstances. This adaptability isn't a sign of wavering conviction but a demonstration of the strategic agility necessary to navigate dynamic environments successfully.

An organization led by individuals with strategic convictionsis better equipped to weather challenges and capitalize on opportunities. This steadfast commitment provides a sense of direction, stability, and purpose, which can be particularly crucial during turbulent times. It fosters a resilient and determined organizational mindset that can persevere through adversity.

However, strategic conviction doesn't imply being stubborn or resistant to change. Effective leaders with strategic convictions are discerningandrecognizewhen adjustments are necessary without compromising the core principles guiding their strategies. This blend of unwavering belief and flexibility creates a powerful foundation for sustained success.

In the digital era characterized by disruption, innovation, and constant change, the need for strategic conviction is more pronounced than ever [16]. Successful leaders in this era exhibit strategic conviction in the face of uncertainty. They proactively shape their organizations' destinies rather than merely reacting to changes [17]. Strategic conviction empowers them to make tough decisions, allocate resources effectively, and inspire their teams with a shared vision. It's a mindset that enables leaders to take calculated risks, experiment with new ideas, and remain resilient in the face of setbacks.

Key Changes in the Field of Women Entrepreneurship & Industry:

Gender-Based Digital Exclusion has many Causes

Hurdles to access, affordability, (lack of) education and skills and technological literacy, and inherent gender biases and socio-cultural norms, are at the root of gender-based digital exclusion. Enhanced, safer and more affordable access to digital tools is critical, as are policy interventions addressing long-term structural biases.

Women in Developing parts of the World need to be Connected Worldwide roughly 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone and can access mobile Internet. Women are on average 26% less likely than men to have a smartphone. In South Asia and Africa these proportions stand at 70% and 34%, respectively.

The gender Divide in Internet use is Widening
While the global digital gender divides in Internet usage remained almost unchanged between 2013 and 2017, at about 11%, the gap between developed and developing countries increased, driven by an increase in the gender Internet usage gap of by 3 percentage points in least developed countries (LDCs) and 4 percentage points in Africa.

Digital Technologies offer Leapfrog Opportunities and Help Empower women
The Internet, digital platforms, mobile phones, and digital financial services, offer "leapfrog" opportunities for all and can help bridge the divide by giving women the possibility to earn (additional) income, increase employment opportunities, and access knowledge and general information. This benefits women and their families, thus enhancing the lives and well-being of people and of society as a whole.

Women have much to Gain from Boosting their use of Digital Tools
While going digital can be enabling for all, the digital gender divide means there is important scope for women to extract more value from their use of digital tools. Female users currently tend to use fewer services than men and are less confident in using the Internet. For instance, while mobile money accounts offer an effective way to boost financial inclusion, it remains the case that fewer women are likely to own and use such an account. Online or video-based upskilling and tutorials may especially help women make better use of digital tools and extract more value from them.

Compulsory Education Helps to Eliminate the Digital Gender Divide
Compulsory schooling is crucial to ensure that individuals gain the basic skills and competences needed for full participation in labour markets and society. At the age of 15, the gender gap in terms of skills for the digital area is not clear-cut: girls underperform boys in specific digital-related skills, but they outperform boys in collaborative problem solving skills, which are increasingly valued by employers. Although women display greater literacy and collaborative problem solving skills than men at the age of 15, this gap in literacy is bridged by the age 27 for the average man, while men's advantage in numeracy skills increases with age [18].

Gender Specific Expectations about the Future need to Change
At 15 years of age, on average across OECD countries, only 0.5% of girls wish to become ICT professionals, compared to 5% of boys. Twice as many boys as girls expect to become engineers, scientists or architects. Changing gender-specific expectations about professions is key, including by fostering female role models in STEM.

Lower Proportions of Women Graduate in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, or ICTs.
While more women than men completed tertiary education in 2015, only 24% of graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction were women; the share in ICTs was just 25%. Also, when women graduate in these fields and go on to the labour market, they display on average lower numeracy skills than male graduates.

Raising Awareness about Education Opportunities is key for Women and Girls
Women are less likely than men to participate in massive open online courses (MOOCs), which can often be accessed for free and cover a range of topics. Informing workers, and working women especially, about training opportunities can encourage participation.

Removing Obstacles to Adult Education is Important
For all workers, and for women in particular. This calls for more flexible opportunities for adults to upgrade their skills and for co-ordination across institutions and actors, including education and training institutions, employers, but also social policy institutions.

Increased Participation in Labour Markets, including via Digital Platforms, needs to go Hand in Hand with Job Quality
For women, and men, to benefit from the work opportunities offered by digital technologies, including platforms, efforts need to be made to ensure that flexibility does not occur at the cost of reduced job quality, in terms of e.g. pay, job security and social protection.

A better Redistribution of Unpaid Childcare and Housework Would Help Foster Women's Participation in (digital) Labour Markets
Women spend 2.6 times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic work and this restricts the time they can spend in paid work or to upskill themselves. Actions aimed to raise awareness, challenge gender stereotypes and norms, coupled with measures fostering gender-neutral parental leave-taking and childcare services provision would help address norms, attitudes and behaviours around childcare and housework ingrained in society, and enable greater female participation in (digital) labour markets and training.

Skills in High Demand in Digital Intensive Sectors Are More Frequently Displayed by Men. Narrowing the gender wage gap requires policies aimed to equip female workers with more self-organisation, management and communication, and advanced numerical skills; encouraging greater female enrolment in STEM-related studies and apprenticeships; and targeting existing gender biases in curricula and parental preferences.

ICT Skills can help Narrow the Gender Wage Gap
Men and women differ in their endowment of the skills needed in the digital era. Women in fact display a relative advantage in ICT task-based skills which can garner relatively higher rewards on labour markets, contributing to the reduction of the gender wage gap [19].

Women's Participation in Inventive Activities has been Increasing, but the Pace is Slow
Lack of diversity in the composition of innovation teams across the world reflects widespread socio-cultural biases. To counter this, a greater diversity of inventors is needed. Female participation in patenting activities increased at a faster pace than the average rate at which all patent applications grew over the period 2004-15 – and in ICTs increased relatively more than in all other technological domains. But the low starting point coupled with the relatively slow progress means that, at the current pace, it will be 2080 before women are involved in half of all patented inventions within the five largest IP offices (IP5).

Diversity Brings Value, Both Social and Economic

Greater inclusion of women in inventive activities is good not only for women themselves, but also for stronger economic growth and enhanced societal wellbeing [20]. Inventions arising out of mixed teams, or women-only groups, appear to have wider technological breadth (and may therefore be more economically valuable) and higher impact from a technological viewpoint than those in which only men are involved.

Software is a male-Dominated World, Especially in Companies.

Analysis focusing on one well-known open-source software (R), shows that women are few and far between in the software world and play a relatively less important role, with many of them less connected to the network of software developers than their male colleagues. Especially in companies, very few (15%) female (R) software authors can be found.

The Gap in Entrepreneurship and in Start-ups and Venture Capital (VC) Investment Point to Socio Cultural Gender Bias.

The gender gap in entrepreneurship is striking and persistent. Men are nearly twice as likely as women to be self-employed; they are three times more likely than women to own a business with employees across OECD countries; and 90% of innovative start-ups seeking VC investments have been founded by men. Women-owned start-ups receive 23% less funding and are 30% less likely to have a positive exit – i.e. be acquired or to issue an initial public offering – compared to men-owned businesses. Nevertheless, progress is possible: VC firms with at least one female partner are more than twice as likely to invest in a company with a woman in the management team, and three times as likely to invest in female chief executive officers (CEOs).

Many Gender Equality Initiatives are Under way in G20 Economies, but more needs to be done

Coordination among different initiatives, scaling up, learning from successful and unsuccessful programmes and building on lessons learned may go a long way in improving the equitable sharing of the benefits of digitalisation. Narrowing the gender gap, also the digital one, calls for actions addressing the structural root causes of the divide. Success at increasing the number of girls and women studying STEM will do little to bridge gaps if these people confront unchanged biases in the workplace.

Action Requires Measurement

Evidence-based policy making requires the systematic collection of data, aimed at identifying priorities, and defining and monitoring key lines of actions. Fostering the addition of gender-related dimensions in official statistics is important in this respect [21-32].

Result & Findings

Progress on the percentage of senior management roles held by women in the mid-market has been too slow. Without determination to change, and quickly, then the progress we have made risks not just plateauing but slipping back. Businesses have a clear opportunity to take actionable, tangible steps, and follow our three pathways to accelerate towards parity:

1. Have a senior leader, of any gender, and a female senior leader taking responsibility for, and leading on, DE&I. It is incredibly important to have buy in from the senior team, alongside the lived experience of a female senior leader.
2. Set a standalone DE&I strategy and review it to ensure that it contains the right elements to increase the percentage of women in senior management roles. There must be clearly defined steps as to how businesses increase this number and success must be measured. It is not enough to measure only elements which are required by law.
3. Reconsider any decisions made around requests for their workforce to return to the office. Businesses must ensure that they make decisions about this element based on creating a way of working that empowers all employees to be inspired, trusted, and accountable – not just on their business performance metrics.

Conclusion

Leadership is changing as a result of technology, the changing nature of work, organizations, and humans, as well as due to the increased usage of digital communication. E-leadership is a field emerged from leadership and psychology. As a result, there has been an increase in studies on digital leadership. This increase can be attributed to the growing relevance of digital leadership in company life. According to the available literature, the general characteristics of digital leadership are as follows: a leader who has a vision for digital transformation, is capable of developing flexible and adaptable policies, possesses digital knowledge and intelligence, motivates his employees, allows them to make mistakes, and demonstrates empathic and conciliatory behaviours.

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