

Exploring the empowerment equation: analyzing the intersection of women in managerial positions and women-owned firms

Sarvinoz Sharifjonovna Mamadjonova

samamadjonova@wiut.uz

Westminster International University in Tashkent

Dilobar Toshpulatovna Sharofutdinova

dilobar.tfi@gmail.com

Tashkent Pharmaceutical Institute

Abstract: In recent years, the topic of gender equality and women's empowerment has gained significant attention across various sectors and industries. One area that plays a crucial role in understanding women's progress in the professional landscape is the representation of women in managerial positions and the ownership of women-led firms. This article delves into the statistical analysis of the share of women in managerial positions and the percentage of women-owned firms in Uzbekistan, shedding light on their correlation, trends, and implications. Simultaneously, examining the percentage of women-owned firms provides a lens into entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, showcasing women's contributions as business leaders and drivers of innovation.

Keywords: gender equality, women's empowerment, drivers of innovation

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is the issue emerging in all spheres of our lives. Thus, it might be wrong assuming that the issue derives only for Uzbekistan or Central Asian countries. Gender equality in top echelon positions is another alarming problem which is faced globally. However, some research shows the positive outcomes from female ruling (Andersson, & Lidestav, 2016; Beaman, & Dillon, 2018; Khan., 2016; Leach., 1992; Salahodjaev and Jarilkapova, 2020; Wolfram and Kienesberger., 2023).

Women in power in Uzbekistan have made progress in recent years, but still face significant challenges in achieving gender equality and representation in leadership positions. This paper focuses on the statistical data of women in managerial positions and female owned firms' proportion in the rather patriarchal business sphere of Uzbekistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Today, experts agree on the fact that firms or business performance is highly correlated with the diversity of the entity. Specifically, Blount et al. (2023) argue that

women CEOs' financial knowledge plays a significant role in determining the success of their ventures. In addition, gender of the manager also plays a crucial role in the critical decision making. Thus, Sahi et al. (2023) examine how women entrepreneurs survived the COVID-19 crisis by focusing on their new product innovations. Their study highlights the resilience and adaptability of women entrepreneurs during times of crisis. Importantly, having more women on the board positively influences firm employment, suggesting that gender diversity can lead to increased job opportunities (Tunyi et al., 2023).

Navarro and Gallo (2014) explore the role of female CEOs in developing countries' firms. The study examines the representation and impact of women in top leadership positions in the context of developing economies. The authors assess the relationship between female CEO presence and firm performance. The study contributes to the understanding of gender dynamics in the corporate world of developing countries and highlights the potential benefits of increased female representation in top management positions.

The topic of the contribution of the business and enterprises to the greenhouse effect is being highlighted recent years. Studies show a positive association between gender diversity on corporate boards and social and environmental performance indicators. The research highlights the importance of gender diversity as a driver for responsible and sustainable business practices (Alazzani, Hassanein, and Aljanadi, 2017). The studies provide valuable insights into the dynamics and effects of gender diversity and women's empowerment in different contexts, contributing to a deeper understanding of these important topics in business and society.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was obtained from the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The agency provides a comprehensive dataset on gender statistics, including information on the percentage of firms owned and managed by women. This official data source ensures the reliability and accuracy of the statistics used in the analysis. By employing this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the trends and percentages of women-owned firms and women in managerial positions in Uzbekistan (2017 to 2022 years). The findings will contribute to the understanding of gender dynamics in the business sector and support evidence-based policies and initiatives for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

DATA ANALYSIS

It is important to acknowledge that even though Uzbekistan is an open and democratic country it is stubborn to resist its patriarchal frameworks in especially decision-making positions. Thus, the figure 1 shows how the women's share changed in management personnel in the country. It is obvious, that Andijan not only held its

leadership in this trend but also managed to increase its women leaders. However, the change is somehow moderate for the rest of the regions, and we can see the sharp decline in Syrdarya from 2020 to 2021. Overall, less than 30% of Uzbek business is managed by female professionals.

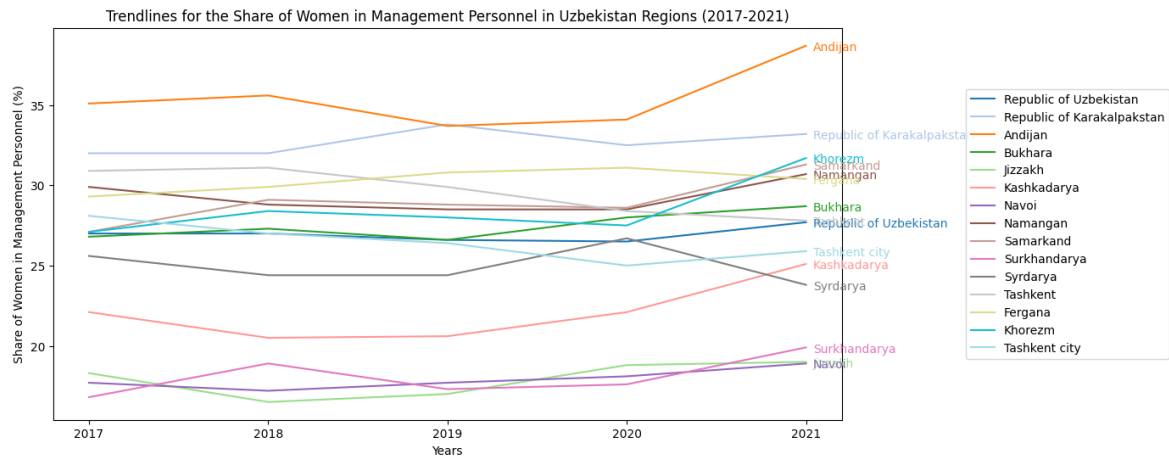


Figure1. Trendlines for the Share of Women in Management Personnel in Uzbekistan Regions¹

Another important aspect of the content we are exploring is what percentage of the Uzbek companies are owned by women. The visualisation of the data shows odd results (figure 2). Here, we can see strong fluctuations in female owned enterprises share for all the regions of Uzbekistan. But there is one common feature for all the regions data, the peak of the number of women’s companies was 2021 out of 5 consecutive years represented in the in the line graph. Namangan and Surkhondarya reached its benchmark in 2021 considering for more than half of the female owned firms. But, after the numbers fall down. In the most recent year, 2022, Khorezm stands as a leader in this race, possessing about 45 % female owned companies. It must be highlighted that only about 30% of firms belong to women throughout Uzbekistan.

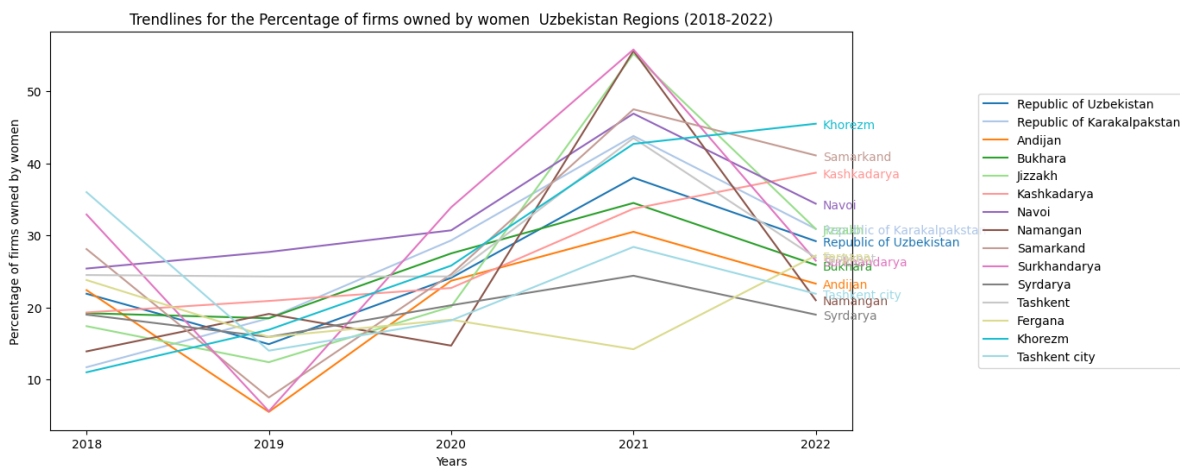


Figure 2. Trendlines for the Percentage of firms owned by women Uzbekistan Regions (2018-2022)²

¹ Source: author, based on data of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on statistics

² Source: author, based on data of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on statistics

It was also important to look at the difference between what percentage of firms belong to women and what share is managed by them. The figure 3 shows such a picture. It was decided to take 2021st year as it was the latest available year with data available for the moment the article is written. It shows considerably balanced result for the whole Uzbekistan, 27.7% firms managed by women and 29.9% owned by them. However, there are eye-catching moments of the graph if to look at the regional level. Hence, in Jizzakh, Kashkadarya, Samarkand, and Khorezm there are more firms which are owned by women and less women led. On the other hand, in Andijan and Namangan more firms are managed by women, whereas less owned by same sex.

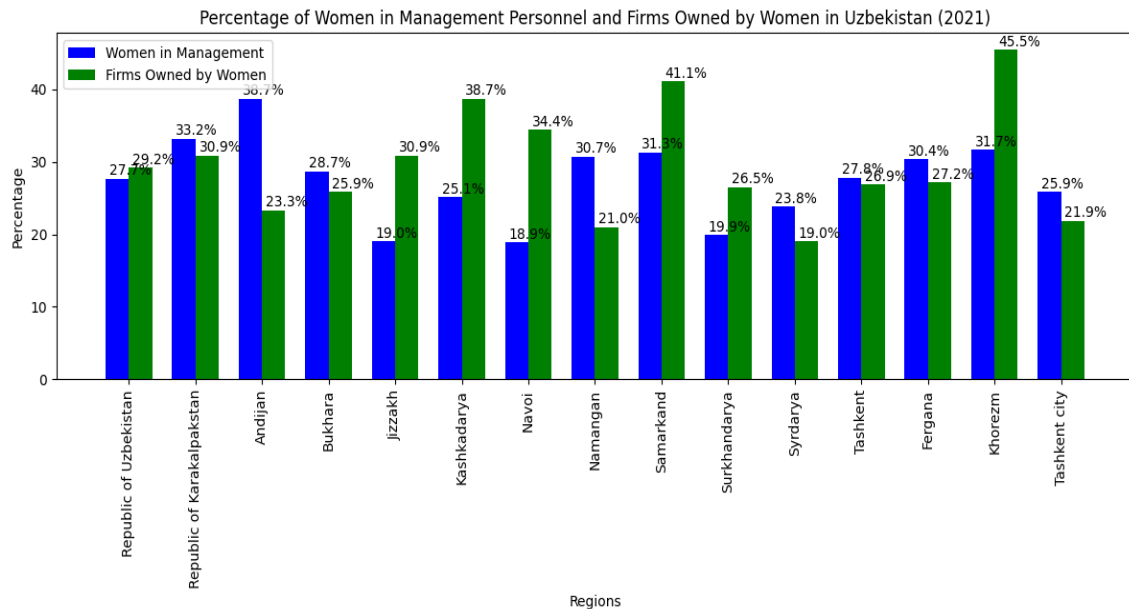


Figure 3. Percentage of Women in Management Personnel and Firms Owned by women in Uzbekistan³

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the above-mentioned data, it was estimated that even though it is being done a lot of agitational events enhancing gender equality in the workplace its contribution is slow, we can see it from the figure 1. There is small change in the share of women led firms in the country. But the research shows obvious positive outcomes in female management.

Figure 2 showed dubious results which might be due to the error in the data collection. Because the share change for each year is very aggressive for the female owned firms. On the other hand, it might be due to the impact of some political or economic factor, which should be further investigated. So, this figure created limitation with its uncertainty.

It was initially assumed that it is common experience for Uzbek families to give the business ownership to the mother of the family, because of the credit privilege for women entrepreneurs. And presumably female owned firms must have outnumbered

³ Source: author, based on data of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on statistics

female managed ones considerably. However, I was surprised to find out that the difference is minor.

Jizzakh, Kashkadarya, Samarkand, and Khorezm are regions with noticeably more firms which are owned by women and less women led, this might be due to the above mentioned assumption. And Andijan and Namangan where more firms are managed by women might be showing positive approach towards female leadership, which is also surprising as those regions are amongst stereotypically patriarchal places of our country.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this research shed light on the current state of gender equality and women's leadership in Uzbekistan's business landscape. Despite efforts to promote gender equality and enhance women's participation in the workplace, the progress has been slow. However, the research does indicate positive outcomes in terms of female management.

Initially, it was expected that the tradition of granting business ownership to the mother of the family, combined with credit privileges for women entrepreneurs, would result in a significant difference between the number of female-owned firms and female-managed ones. However, the research revealed a minor disparity, suggesting a more complex dynamic at play.

Overall, these findings highlight the need for continued efforts to promote gender equality and support women's leadership development in Uzbekistan. Further research and targeted interventions can help uncover the underlying factors influencing these trends and guide policies and initiatives aimed at achieving greater gender parity in the business sector.

References

1. Andersson, E., & Lidestav, G. (2016). Creating alternative spaces and articulating needs: Challenging gendered notions of forestry and forest ownership through women's networks. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 67, 38–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2016.03.014>
2. Khan, T. (2016). Feminism, Environmental Economics, and Accountability. In *Handbook of Environmental and Sustainable Finance* (pp. 207–237). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-803615-0.00011-X>
3. Leach, M. (1992). Gender and the environment: Traps and opportunities. *Development in Practice*, 2(1), 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/096145249100076511>
4. Wolfram, M., & Kienesberger, M. (2023). Gender in sustainability transition studies: Concepts, blind spots and future orientations. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2022.100686>

5. Salahodjaev, R., & Jarilkapova, D. (2020). Women in parliament and deforestation: cross-country evidence. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2020.125830>
6. Blount, I., Triana, M. del C., Richard, O., & Li, M. (2023). How women CEOs' financial knowledge and firm homophily affect venture performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113459>
7. Sahi, G. K., Modi, P., & Mantok, S. (2023). New product innovations in times of crisis: How did women entrepreneurs survive the COVID-19 crisis? *Industrial Marketing Management*, 111, 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2023.03.004>
8. Tunyi, A. A., Areneke, G., Tob-Ogu, A., & Khalid, S. (2023). Doing more with more: Women on the board and firm employment. *Journal of Business Research*, 154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113385>
9. Ribeiro, M. A., Adam, I., Kimbu, A. N., Afenyo-Agbe, E., Adeola, O., Figueroa-Domecq, C., & Jong, A. de. (2021). Women entrepreneurship orientation, networks and firm performance in the tourism industry in resource-scarce contexts. *Tourism Management*, 86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104343>
10. Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2013). On the origins of gender roles: Women and the plough. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(2), 469–530. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjt005>
11. Navarro, A. I., & Gallo, A. (2014). The Female CEO in Developing Countries' Firms. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2405558>
12. Alazzani, A. , Hassanein, A. , & Aljanadi, Y. (2017). Impact of Gender Diversity on Social and Environmental Performance: Evidence from Malaysia. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 17(2), 61–74.
13. Nuber, C., & Velte, P. (2021). Board gender diversity and carbon emissions: European evidence on curvilinear relationships and critical mass. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(4), 1958–1992. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2727>
14. Atif, M., Hossain, M., Alam, M. S., & Goergen, M. (2021). Does board gender diversity affect renewable energy consumption? *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2020.101665>
15. Pan, C., Guo, H., Jiang, Y., Wang, H., & Qi, W. (2020). The double effects of female executives' participation on corporate sustainable competitive advantage through unethical environmental behavior and proactive environmental strategy. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(6), 2324–2337. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2505>
16. Хидиров Н., & Мамаджонова С. (2022). ПОЛУЧЕНИЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ДЛЯ ЖЕНЩИН: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ВЫЗОВЫ:

https://doi.org/10.55439/ECED/vol23_iss3/a30. Economics and Education, 23(3), 198–205. https://doi.org/10.55439/ECED/vol23_iss3/a527