

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN SUPPLY CHAIN

Decision-Making, Digital Adoption, and Sustainable Practices



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DEDICATION

To my beloved Mother

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ABSTRACT

The global supply chain environment is changing very fast in light of aggravated digitalization, sustainability concerns, and multifaceted decision-making processes. Notwithstanding such changes, women still have an immeasurably low representation in leadership in the Pakistani supply chain. Based on the identified three pillars of the literature review and established through quantitative research, this study constructs a Reference Framework of Empowerment of Women Leadership in Supply Chain: Decision-Making, Digital Adoptions, and Sustainable Practices. Semi-structured interviews based on eleven women leaders in various supply-chain related industries, such as manufacturing, retail, fashion, logistics, events, and artisanal production, were obtained using an exploratory qualitative design. The information was analyzed through thematic analysis techniques provided by Braun and Clarke (2006), which resulted in 87 preliminary themes that were then reduced into key themes in accordance with the suggested framework.

The results also indicate that women leaders more likely are working with collaborative and transformational leadership, as well as ethically-based leadership styles, but there are always structural obstacles to them, including unreliability of suppliers, price volatility based on inflation, low bargaining power, and disruptions to the logistics. Online adoption proved to be a facilitator of leadership competence and a stumbling block because it was expensive to adopt and teams were less digital or the infrastructure was insufficient. It was discovered that sustainability was a leadership orientation that was naturally ingrained and that the participants were always willing to focus on ethical sourcing, waste management, fairness, and community welfare despite the financial and material constraints.

The paper has concluded that the three dimensions of women leadership such as decision-making authority, digital capability and sustainability alignment are interdependent pillars. The study contributes greatly to both theoretical and practical contributions by providing the first empirically-based, and Pakistan-specific framework on empirically-based empowerment of women in supply chain leadership.

Keywords: *Women Leadership, Supply chain management, Decision-Making, Digital adaption, Sustainable practices, Pakistan, Empowerment framework, Qualitative study.*