

Abstract

Workforce diversity is an important source for the competitive advantage of a company. Numerous studies confirm that diversity in the organizational context produces more innovative, creative, profitable and flexible teams, who are able to satisfy rapidly changing global customer demands. This thesis focuses on the equal employment opportunities of women in Azerbaijan. More precisely this paper aims to find out the present status of women in modern Azerbaijani companies, measure their opportunities to professionally grow to higher management posts and evaluate the extent of diversity management implications in the workplace. Azerbaijan offers a unique research setting for studying workforce diversity due to the interaction of religious, cultural, sociopolitical and historical elements, which are partly contradictive from each other. The aim of this thesis is thus to study how different elements affect the status of women in the modern Azerbaijani organizations. Namely this thesis has the goal to find out whether local and international companies based in Azerbaijan are ensuring gender inclusion on all hierarchical levels, including executive managerial positions. In order to get insights into the current gender diversity situation in Azerbaijani companies and within to close the existing research gap, the thesis undertakes a qualitative method of analysis. In total 12 expert interviews with HRM professionals, managers and employees of local and international companies were conducted. Analysis of the qualitative data will provide many insights into the contemporary situation of Azerbaijani female managers, pursuing their careers in the patriarchic cultural setting, which is yet strongly influenced by the past Soviet and modern Western policies. Results and findings are presented after a throughout examination of the qualitative data.