

Original Paper

Challenges and Conflicts of the Women in the Search of the Ascension in the Professional Career

Thompson Augusto Reis^{1*}, Aline De Souza Soares², Elenice De Oliveira Oliveira², Jeanne Mayara
Alves Da Costa² & Graziela Oste Graziano Cremonezi³

¹ UNIMEP, Piracicaba, Brazil

² UNASP, HT, Hortolândia, Brazil

³ UNIMEP, Piracicaba, Brazil

* Thompson Augusto Reis, UNIMEP, Piracicaba, Brazil

Received: December 17, 2017 Accepted: December 26, 2017 Online Published: January 3, 2018

doi:10.22158/jbtp.v6n1p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jbtp.v6n1p1>

Abstract

The main objective of this research was to study women in the labor market, pointing to their achievements and challenges faced daily. A bibliographical review of primary and secondary sources is presented on how to construct the various social representations that contribute to the configuration of inequalities between men and women in the labor market. The research is characterized as exploratory. The study was carried out among female professionals of the IES (Higher Education Institution) Administration course in the countryside of the state of São Paulo. Data were collected through questionnaires. It is concluded that the female population is in search of equal rights, and has conquered its space in the labor market, besides being distinguished in its professional career within the organizations.

Keywords

woman, gender inequality, challenges, conflicts, prejudice

1. Introduction

Over the centuries, women seen only in family settings have started to seek equal rights both in society and in the labor market. The growth of industrialization in the nineteenth century in Brazil resulted in the need for a greater demand for salaried workers in factories. Among them were young women, single, of humble origin and whose purpose was to help with family income and maintain their own livelihoods (ROCHA-COUTINHO, n.d.; COUTINHO, 2011).

In the last ten years, women's work in Brazil has undergone several transformations. The entry of women into the university, the expansion of schooling and the reduction of the fertility rate, influenced women in the search for new opportunities in their professional careers (BRUSCHINI, 2007).

In this context, the development and professional advancement of women are also linked to career planning aimed at self-knowledge, constant learning and always be aware of possible changes. With this, the continuity of the studies became fundamental for its entrance, permanence and growth in an organization (LOUREIRO; COSTA; FREITAS, 2012).

According to surveys carried out by IBGE and the Catho group with managers and executives, Brazilian women have the same level of qualification in relation to men, both for educational purposes

(24% graduated from universities, 40% have MBA, 28% and 8% Doctorate), as well as in foreign languages. It is further that executive women reach younger high positions compared to men (ROCHA-COUTINHO; COUTINHO, 2011).

In 2012, the share of women in formal employment at higher education levels is higher than that of men. In incomplete higher education, they represent 52% of employment, while men account for 48%. With higher education completed, the difference in the percentage of participation between the sex's increases, considerably. They make up a total of 59%, while they have an activity rate of 41% (RAIS, 2012).

According to research conducted by PwC in conjunction with the Institute Optimum Research, shows that currently the women of the Millennium Generation are more confident about their career. In Brazil and India, the confidence index corresponds to 76%, Portugal (68%); the least confident are Japan (11%) and Germany (19%) (MALVESTIO, 2016).

The demand for space in the job market is fierce, as men and women seek the same opportunities in management positions. However, the woman has been breaking down barriers and stereotypes in order to dribble the difference that exists between the genders in the organizations (CRAMER; CAPELLE; SILVA, 2008).

However, Bruschini (2007) points out that female labor is still in a situation of precariousness and gender inequality, in relation to the remuneration and lack of registration in the portfolio. In 2005, more than 33% of the female labor force has been subjected to precarious labor market environments. More than six million women work in domestic work, more than three million are engaged in unpaid activities and more than two million work in rural areas, proving "... in short, the devaluation of women's work" (LOUREIRO; COSTA; FREITAS, 2012, p. 132).

The difficulty of ascending a woman in a leadership position may occur due to several factors. However, it is worth stressing the need to reconcile work, family and childcare, which according to Loureiro, Costa and Freitas (2012) can cause conflict and guilt due to absence from home and outsourcing of domestic services and maternal tasks.

Even with the transformations that have occurred over the years, men continue to dominate the corporate market, but new opportunities arise in the advantage of women who need to reconcile domestic and professional life. With this, some organizations maintain benefits that help women who are mothers and need more flexibility (ROCHA-COUTINHO; COUTINHO, 2011).

The woman who conciliates work and family feels charged for dedicating herself to business and minimizing her time in family life. Thus, the support of the spouse in the home care, with the children and emotional support is fundamental. The first contributes to the reduction of tasks in the home and the second helps to increase his capacity as a wife and to encourage his professional career (CRAMER; CAPELLE; SILVA, 2008).

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Women's Leadership

According to Frankel (2007), women are spontaneously leaders and their attributes are what make the difference in the current concept of leadership, characteristics already observed by organizations that seek new styles of leaders.

Women's leadership style has been prominent in society, although companies don't always value it. Women are the best leaders because they have objectivity in their tasks at work, besides having an overview of reality always seeking knowledge and ideas. Women have their own qualities and can

influence people without coercion, making the work environment more pleasant and conducive to the development of common goals (FRANKEL, 2007).

2.2 Female Leadership and Gender Inequality

According to Chiavenato (2004), leadership is the way to conduct people's behavior towards a unique outcome. The act of leading is nothing more than motivating, directing, coordinating people to achieve a specific goal.

There are three types of leadership: autocratic, democratic and liberal. The autocratic leadership model is well centered on the leader, who keeps all decisions and guidelines under his care, doesn't share ideas, and doesn't seek help from his team.

Democratic leadership is when the leader shares his ideas and goals openly with the group and establishes working methods in which everyone has the freedom of exchange and opinions.

The Liberal leadership style is fully open to subordinates, where group decisions are little influenced by the leader. In this case, the leader's participation is only for team support in cases where feedback is required (CHIAVENATO, 2004).

Still in an outdated concept, the woman to excel in the job market seeks to have characteristics similar to those of her male partners, where the leadership model is more authoritarian. According to Gasparini (2015), women shouldn't worry about a standard of leadership because their own characteristics are being valued in the current job market. The woman is more sensitive, has a keen perception, follows the norms of the company, values and encourages its leaders, and has a capacity to influence people.

According to the article, "Companies with more women in management have better results" published in the newspaper O Globo in 2007, "a survey conducted by the Catalysty (The Bottom Line: Corporation Performance and Women's Representation on Boards), the 132 companies with the highest number of women in their boards were the ones that had the best results, and the 129 companies (Lima, 2004) with the lowest number of women on the board were the ones with the worst results".

2.3 Inequality of Genres

According to the Federal Constitution article 113, item 1 "All are equal before the law. Not having privileges, distinctions, by reason of birth, sex race, professions of their own or parents, social class, wealth, religious beliefs or political ideas". Thus, it is understood in the law that every human being independent of his or her gender is capable of exercising any paid activity in an organization without suffering any kind of discrimination.

In Brazil the discrimination is perceptible mainly in the labor market, where the individuals with the same attributes perceive different wages, however, this wage difference also occurs in other countries (CAVALIERI; FERNANDES, 1998).

Since the 1970's the inclusion of women in the labor market has been gradually increasing, with this they are breaking down barriers and beginning to compete with men for jobs and fighting for equal rights. Nevertheless, there are two important indicators of gender inequality (KANAN, 2010; FONTENELE-MOURÃO, 2006).

The first deals with the wages perceived by the woman compared to that of the man, who, although possessing the same educational profile and professional experience, the woman's salary is less than the man's. According to the Household Sample Data (PNAD) (IBGE, 2012), the average work income of men was R\$ 1698.00 and of women R\$ 1238.00. The second refers to the occupation of women in leadership roles in organizations. In the survey carried out by the IBGE (2013), it was found that the access of 25-year-old women to managerial and managerial positions is lower in comparison to men in

this same age group: 5% for women and 6.4% for men.

According to Cambota and Pontes (2006), there is another type of discrimination known as “occupational segregation” that refers to equally productive workers with different opportunities to occupy higher paid jobs.

According to Benze and Filho (2003), women in the labor market face differences in pay in all areas within the organization, even though they have a relatively better academic record relative to men. Often women are rejected in relation to promotions in the companies and consequently they end up not occupying superior positions.

There is also a link between women’s work and low wages, where the most predominantly female professions are relatively poorly paid, such as letters and social work (GUEDES; ALVES, 2004).

Reis (2017), points out that in recent years there has been a significant growth of female professionals in administrative areas in Brazil. This study is based on research conducted by the CFA (Federal Board of Administration) and CRA’s (Regional Board of Administration) where data were collected that were verified in surveys conducted in the last 21 years. These data show the continued growth of women in administrative settings, to get an idea in 1995 they were 21% and in 2015 they reached 34%. It is true that the male gender is still predominant, but to prove the tendency, in a short period, this masculine predominance tends to diminish being possible until it doesn’t exist (MELLO; KREUZ; MATTAR; FAUZE, 2016).

2.4 Women’s Career and the Labor Market

The term career comes from the Latin “via carraria” which means road, road and route. In the present day this definition can be used the professional career that is also the path, road that each person builds throughout his professional life (REIS, 2017).

According to Dutra (1996), the career should be understood as a sequence of positions and works performed by the people and not as a severe path to be followed. Reconciling the development of people with that of the company is what we call a career. Already Reis, Maciel, Momberger and Cremonesi (2017) the career is linked to the feeling of being professionally developed, and most people organize and analyze what they really aim for in the path that leads them to personal and professional fulfillment.

The woman when instructed to be housewife, mother and wife. This situation made her dependent on the male figure. The purpose of the woman was to marry and constitute a family, with which the man was responsible for the family income. Even though this reality exists, women have been seeking over the decades the complementation of family income, dominance in the labor market and professional development (SALVAGNI; CANBERRA, 2015).

A major factor in increasing female labor market participation is the economic downturn, rising inflation and changes in employment structures, highlighted in Brazil in the 1980’s (LEONE, 1997). When looking for opportunities in the labor market the woman has the objective of avoiding the impoverishment of the families, increasing the income.

Probst (2003) points out that the perspective in the 20th century is that women surpass the number of men in organizations, that is, women have been gaining space in the labor market.

According to data from the Annual Report, Table 1: Employee by Gender of Social Information (RAIS), a database of the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), which annually provides information on the Brazilian formal labor market, as already mentioned in 2012, the share of women in formal employment at higher education levels is higher than that of men.

Women have sought to invest more in education, seeking advantages over men in the labor market

(KANAN, 2010). This quest for qualification is essential for achieving concrete career goals.

Table 1. Employment by Gender

Graus de Instrução	Masculino	Feminino	Total
Médio Incompleto	2.405.322	1.286.720	3.692.042
Médio Completo	11.664.808	9.331.484	20.996.292
Superior Incompleto	912.608	988.777	1.901.385
Superior Completo	3.501.153	4.945.708	8.446.861
Total	18.483.891	16.552.689	35.036.580

Source: RAIS, 2012.

For Botelho (1999), women are more concerned about their career. The woman has a better development in a network of contacts, where she excels in-group activities, because they are more organized and their main characteristics are accessibility, humility, domination, objectivity and sensitivity.

2.5 Existing Conflicts in the Professional Development of Women

According to Reis (2017), there are several conflicts on the way to the professional development of women. At a given moment the woman has to choose between motherhood and her professional career and despite having a visible improvement in the structures of the organizations, where the flexibility of schedules and even the home office contribute to minimize them, these conflicts continue to exist.

According to Figure 1 the reduction of fertility in Brazil is notorious, women are having fewer children. Families are dwindling and with it, the household chores also get smaller, making it easier for women as mothers and workers.

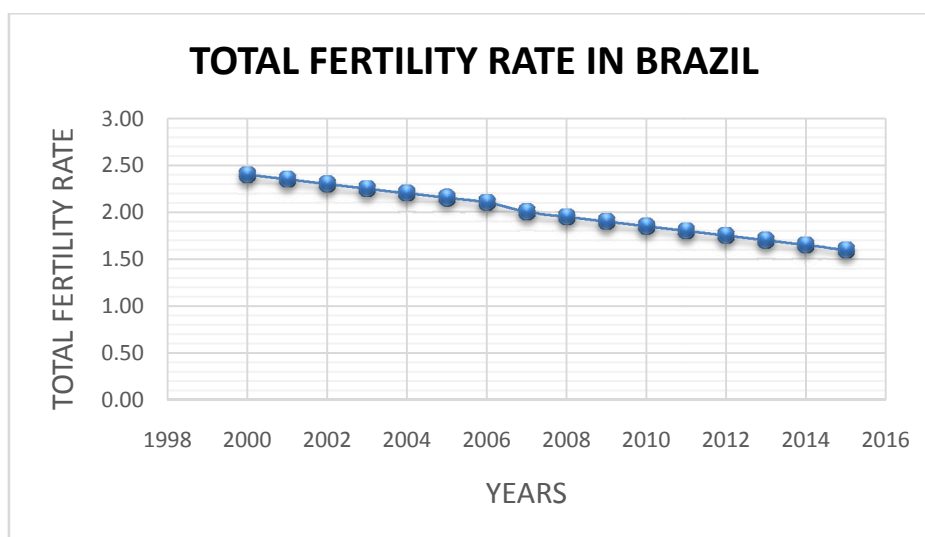


Figure 1. Fertility Rate in Brazil

Source: IBGE, Population Projection of Brazil-2013.

In the last ten years, working women remain responsible for the activities of the home, caring for their children, spouse and other family members (BRUSCHINI 2007). This raises the woman's responsibilities to care for her career and home, and many are unable to reconcile all tasks.

Women who hold executive positions in large organizations rely on the help of professionals to take

care of their chores and their children (nannies, house cleaners). Therefore, daily chores doesn't impact the routine of the mother, but it is still the responsibility of the mother parenting education. There is still another conflict that arises at a time when the family income isn't enough, that is, the woman has to choose to work to complement the spouse's salary. As a result, the family will have more economic stability (REIS, 2017).

3. Research Method

According to Silva and Menezes (2005) there are so-called classic forms of research, among which applied research stands out, and is related to the objectives determined in the situation under study. From the point of view of its nature, the research is classified as applied, seeking to generate knowledge of women in positions of leadership in the organizations, for practical application directed to the solution of problems or opportunities.

Therefore, from the point of view of the approach to the problem according to Silva and Menezes (2005), it will be a qualitative and quantitative research, where the focus of the research is in the approach of the challenges and conflicts of the woman in the search of the ascension of the professional career.

From the point of view of her objectives, cited by Gil (2002), it will be an exploratory research, considering that the topic of insertion of women in leadership positions needs to be better revealed. It will be analyzed as a case study, always according to other sources that will base the topic addressed.

Therefore, from the point of view of the technical procedures to be used, Gil (2002) presents three denominations that will be reproduced in this research: bibliographical of primary and secondary sources, and of survey.

The population will be the female professionals who work in organizations. The sample will be to the 73 students of the 8th semester of the course of Administration in the IES (Higher Education Institution) of the countryside of the state of São Paulo. For the intentional samples women were chosen who exercise or not positions of leadership.

A multiple-choice questionnaire will be conducted, closed with a series of possible answers. For the tabulation and analysis of data collected, using the instruments mentioned above, computational instruments were used, where the tabulation and analysis of the collected data were done by means of computational instruments.

4. Data Analysis

The research sample was carried out with 73 students from the 8th semester of the Administration course at IES (Higher Education Institution) in the countryside of the state of São Paulo, using as a research instrument a questionnaire in which we analyzed in percentages the challenges and conflicts of the woman on the rise of professional career.

4.1 Equal Rights

Figure 2 shows whether women believe they have the same rights as men in the labor market, since in some situations this difference is perceptible.

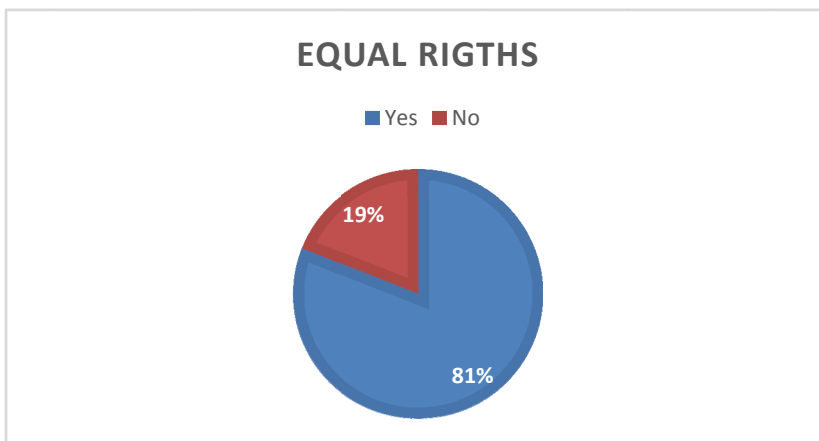


Figure 2. Equal Righths

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is noted that 81% of women believe that they have the same equal rights as men in the labor market. According to Kanan (2010); Fontenele-Mourão (2006), the inclusion of women in the labor market since the 1970’s has been increasing, and as a result of this increase, the barriers are decreasing and women have been winning equality rights.

4.2 Compatible Salary

In Figure 3, the question of the difference in the remuneration of women and men in relation to organizations was raised, and whether women believe that, their salary is compatible with their job function.

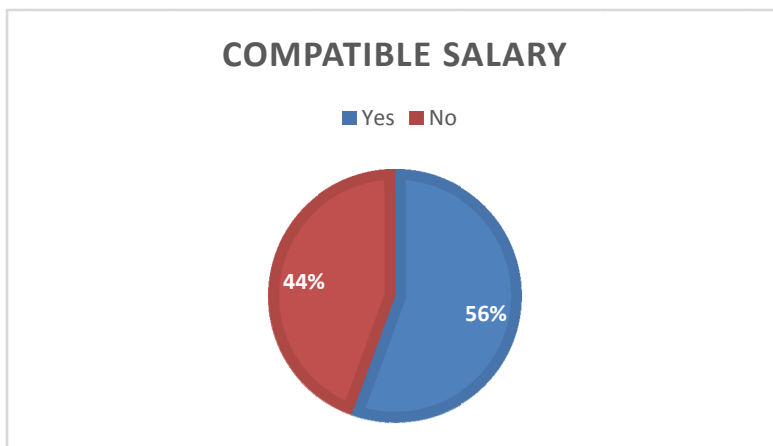


Figure 3. Compatible Salary

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is pointed out that 56% of women believe that their salary is compatible with the job they perform. Even though it is a very relevant factor, it is noticed that the search for women by space in organizations has been growing. But, there is still a difference, as 44% believe that their salaries aren’t compatible. Benze and Filho (2003) point out that women are facing differences in pay compared to men in the labor market, even with very similar skills and academic background.

4.3 Gender Bias

In this analysis, the data collected sought to determine if the women interviewed suffer gender bias in the organizations.

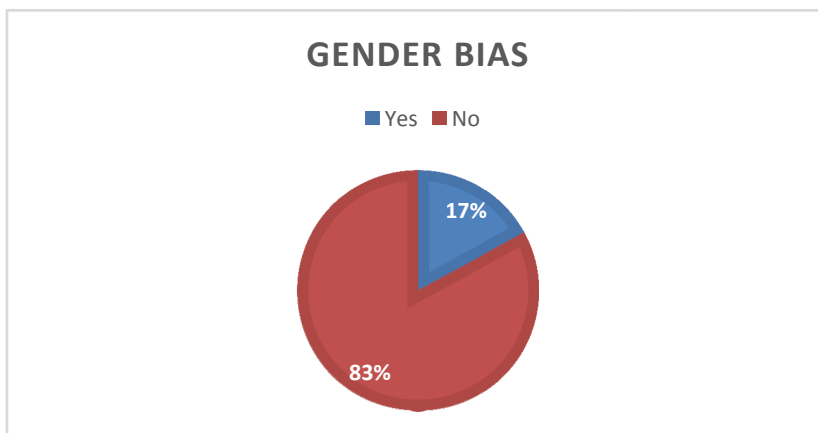


Figure 4. Gender Bias

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is verified that, 83% of the interviewees report not suffering gender bias, but it is identified that 17% still suffer. Probst (2003) points out that the perspective in the 20th century is that women surpass the number of men in organizations, that is, women have been gaining space in the labor market. Given this, the prejudice has diminished due to this increase in representativeness that was cited by Probst (2003).

4.4 Workspace

The Figure 5 sought to know the area that has the most performance of women in the Labor market in the Metropolitan Region of Campinas, demonstrating the interest of the students in the Administration course.

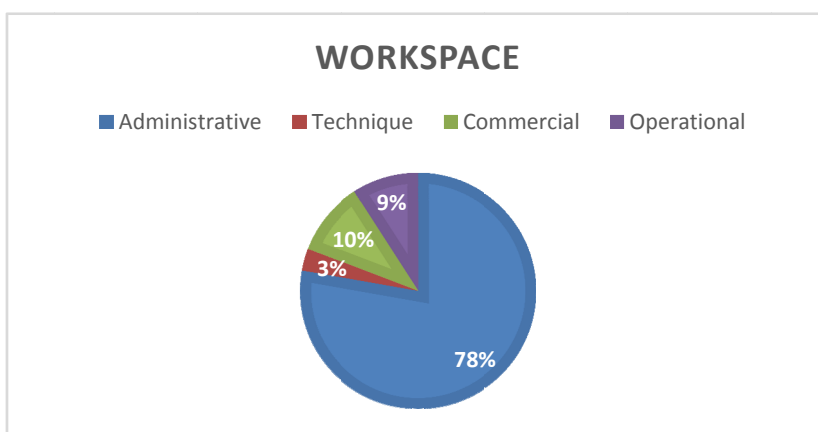


Figure 5. Workspace

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among the options, it is highlighted that the Administrative area where 78% of respondents say to perform their professional activities. These data are in accordance with the research carried out by Reis

(2017), which states that among individuals with employment relationships, 81% of these occupy positions linked to administrative positions.

5. Final Considerations

This study was analyzed the context of the rise of women in the labor market, seeking equal rights before society and in organizations.

The search for women for opportunities began after the Industrial Revolution, where they had to leave the homes for the industries by necessity and increase in the family income, in this trajetória the woman faced many challenges and conflicts.

One of the conflicts faced by the woman was to reconcile work and family, since there are great charges regarding child rearing and caring for the home. In the research carried out with the students of the administration course, it was based on the fact that in the current scenario the paradigms are breaking down.

Over the years the woman has been perfecting herself and building an academic training equal to or greater than that of men. Although it is perceived that in the labor market there is still gender inequality, in the research it was noticed that every day the woman has been conquering her space and standing out in the professional career within the organizations.

The study was significant in view of the old scenario of gender inequality within organizations. Far from concluding, it is suggested that other surveys be conducted with a larger number of respondents and in other locations in order to obtain more expressive results.

References

- Annual Report of Social Information (RAIS). (2012). Ministry of Labor and Employment. In *Program of Dissemination of Labor Statistics*. Brasília, DF, Brazil.
- Benze, R. P., & Filho, E. E. (2003). The Woman in Management Positions: Aspirations and professional fulfillment, remuneration and positions occupied. In *XXIII National Meeting of Production Eng.* Ouro Preto, MG, Brazil.
- Botelho, J. M. (1999). Mulheres Cuidam Melhor da Carreira. *Jornal Carreira e Sucesso*.
- Brasileiro Institute of Geograohy and Statistics-IBGE. (2012). National Household Sample Survey-PNAD. In *Synthesis of social indicators: An analysis of the living conditions of the Brazilian population*. Rio de Janeiro.
- Bruschini, M. C. A. (2007). Work and gender in Brazil in the last ten years. *Cad. Pesqui., São Paulo*, 37(132), 537-572. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0100-15742007000300003>
- Cambota, J. N., & Pontes, P. A. (2006). *Discrimination by gender Intra-occupations in Brazil, in 2004*. XV National Meeting of Population Studies, ABEP, Held in Caxambu-MG, Brasil, from September 18 to 22, 2006. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://www.abep.org.br/publicacoes/index.php/anais/article/view/1647/1609>
- Cavaliere, C. H., & Fernandes, R. (1998). Differentials of salaries by gender and color: A comparison between Brazilian metropolitan regions. *Journal of Political Economy*, 18(1).
- Chiavenato, I. (2004). *Gestão de Pessoas*. São Paulo: Elsevier-Campus.
- Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil. [S.l.]*. (1988). Brazil.
- Cramer, L., Capelle, M. C., & Silva, L. A. (2008). *The insertion of women in the business world: Building an identity*. Don Bosco Educational Association, 2008. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://www.ufop.br/ichs/conifes/anais/OGT1301/htm>

- Dutra, J. S. (1996). *Administração de Carreira: Uma proposta para repensar a gestão de pessoas*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Fontenele-Mourao, T. M. (2006). Women at the top of the career: Flexibility and persistence. In *Special Secretariat for Policies for Women*. Brasília, DF, Brazil.
- Gasparini, C. (2015). What differentiates women in managerial positions? In *Exame Magazine*. Retrieved December 3, 2017, from <https://exame.abril.com.br/carreira/o-que-diferencia-as-mulheres-em-cargos-de-chefia/>
- Gil, A. C. (2002). *Como Elaborar Projetos de Pesquisa* (4th ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.
- Guedes, M. D. C., & Alvez, J. E. D. (2004). *The female population in the labor market between 1970-2000: Particularities of the group with university level*. Paper presented at the XIV National Meeting of Population Studies, ABEP, held in Caxambú-MG-Brazil, from September 20 to 24, 2004. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://www.abep.org.br/publicacoes/index.php/anais/article/viewFile/1307/1271>
- Instituto Brasileiro De Geografia E Estatística-IBGE. (2013). *The wage gap between men and women increases according to the level of education*. Brazil Agency. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/brasil/2013/11/diferenca-salarial-entre-generos-aumenta-conform-e-grau-de-escolaridade>
- Kanan, L. A. (2010). Power and leadership of women in work organizations. *Organization and Society, Salvador*, 17(53), 243-257.
- Leone, G. G. (1997). *Curso de Contabilidade de Custos*. São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Atlas.
- Lima, M. E. B. D. (2004). *Mullher e Mercado de Trabalho*.
- Loureiro, C. M. P., Costa, I. D. S. A. D., & Freitas, J. A. D. S. B. E. (2012). Professional Trafficking in Executive Women: What is the price of success? *Journal of Management Science, State of Santa Catarina*, 14(33).
- Malvestio, A. (2016). *What you need to know about the women of the millennium*. HBR Brasil, 2016. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://hbrbr.uol.com.br/o-que-e-preciso-saber-sobre-as-mulheres-da-geraca-milenio/>
- Mello, S. L., Kreuz, M., & Fauze, M. N. (2016). National Research System CFA/CRA: Perl, training, performance and work opportunities. In *Administrator and the Technologist*. CFA/CRA, Brasília.
- O GLOBO. (2007). *Companies with more Women in Management have Best Results*. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <https://oglobo.globo.com/economia/empresas-com-mulheres-na-direcao-tem-melhores-resultados-diz-estudo-4151412>
- Probst, E. R. et al. (2010). *Diversity in Organizations: Constructing a look at the evolution of women in the organizational context*. XXXIV Meeting of ANPAD, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 25 to 29 September 2010.
- Reis, T. A. (2017). *Study of the Career Profile and Expectation of Students in Management*. UNIMEP, Piracicaba.
- Rocha-Coutinho, M. L., & Coutinho, R. R. (2011). Brazilian women in leadership positions: New perspectives for old challenges. In *SciELO.com, Lisbon* (pp. 61-79). Retrieved November 29, 2017, from <http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/brasil/2013/11/diferenca-salarial-entre-generos-aumenta-conform-e-grau-de-escolaridade>
- Salvagni, J., & Canabarro, J. (2015). Women Leaders: Gender, career and family inequalities in work

organizations. *Journal of Management and Secretariat, São Paulo, SP, Brazil*, 6(2), 88-110.
Silva, E. L., & Menezes, E. M. (2005). Research Methodology and Elaboration of Dissertation. In
Florianópolis: Laboratory of Distance Education of UFSC (4th ed.).