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The importance of sustainable leadership among company directors in the audio-visual sector in Spain: a cultural, ethical, and legal perspective

Abstract

Business sectors are generally evolving towards the adoption of models of sustainable practice, but is this also true in the specific audio-visual sector? This question leads us to examine whether sustainable practices are carried out in the image and sound sector, using sector business leadership as a starting point. Adopting a long-term perspective has helped companies survive difficult times, such as seemingly ever more frequent economic crises and recessions, as well as to overcome the current COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Together with review of appropriate literature, the study aims to analyse the perception of managers in the audio-visual sector regarding styles of leadership in their organizations, through the Bee and Locust Sustainable Leadership framework that Avery and Bergsteiner developed in 2011. A quantitative study was carried out based on the analysis of the responses given by fifty middle and senior managers from the audio-visual sector in Spain who answered a 54-point questionnaire. The findings yielded interesting results. Organizations within the audio-visual sector were found to display elements of both bee and locust leadership styles. The results showed that idea contribution and teamwork were valued by the managers interviewed. Furthermore, considerable importance was attached to the need to implement continuous training and the development of corresponding professional careers in companies. Overall, the results showed that there was a clear need for companies in the audio-visual sector to put greater effort into promoting and successfully achieving sustainable practices at the operational level.

Keywords

Sustainable leadership, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainability, locust leadership, bee leadership, audio-visual sector, audio-visual company.

1. Introduction

In literature on the subject, different meanings have been attributed to the term “leadership” so there is no single definition (Yukl, 2009). However, most of them have some basic elements

in common; among these are “group,” “influence,” and “target.” Recent studies have considered strong leadership as a determining factor in growing the capacity for innovation within a business (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). But this is not a new question, since, for years, some authors have identified two leadership types that affect the innovation process; these are transformational leadership (Oke, Munshi & Walumbwa, 2009) and transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Transformational leaders can convince others to put aside their own specific interests for the benefit of the group. The leader in turn receives trust, respect and even admiration from colleagues.

On the other hand, transactional leadership fosters the idea of there being a transaction or collaboration of active involvement, one that is mutually beneficial, between the leader and the members of the group, in which they accept the leader’s influence as long as he or she provides them with valuable resources (Hull & Hage, 1982). In this sense, we are looking at a relationship based on reciprocal benefits, and which generates the momentum for all parties to pursue agreed and common business goals.

Studies analysing the relationship between leadership and the innovation capacity of the organization, have shown that the characteristics of the leader, his leadership skills, his change-oriented management philosophy and his motivational capacity to increase knowledge transfer amongst working groups are key elements that positively influence the innovative capacity of organizations (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1996).

The term leadership has been classified in many ways. Among them, currently, there is a new concept that stands out with many now thinking that there should be another form of leadership, a type of sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006), which prioritises a long-term objective of acting fairly and ethically regarding all stakeholders (that is, stakeholder that are both internal and external to the company).

1.1. Sustainable leadership

Adopting a long-term performance perspective has helped companies survive in difficult times, such as economic crises and recessions (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011), as well as to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. According to the authors Avery and Bergsteiner, sustainable leadership can be perceived in the way the company is organized; with respect to their principles, processes, values and way of working (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). Furthermore, “sustainable companies must operate in a certain way so that they can meet the needs of the present without affecting the ability of future generations to cover their own needs” (2011, p. 9).

The concept of sustainable leadership has been researched in relation to different contexts, such as in the education sector or in organizational settings (Crews, 2010; Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011; Davies, 2007). The first sustainable leadership model dates back to 2006 and was developed by Hargreaves and Fink (2006), who analysed sustainable leadership in the education sector. According to these authors, the development of sustainable leadership in this field permits the development of an educational culture that promotes the free and mutually beneficial exchange of opinions and ideas.

The aforementioned authors, as well as Davies (2007) and Lambert (2011) have also developed sustainable leadership frameworks at the organizational level in the education sector, both in the United Kingdom and in the United States (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Davies, 2007; Lambert, 2011). According to Lambert (2011), sustainable leadership requires a commitment at all levels of the organization to develop a culture in which the skills of future leaders of the organization may also be nurtured and appropriately developed.

Avery & Bergsteiner’s (2011) framework divides organizations into two main categories, which they call (1) “locust leadership” and (2) “bee leadership.” The leadership philosophy of the locusts is based primarily on making and maximising profits, to the extent of making profits at any cost, even if it means harming the environment or others (Avery & Bergsteiner,

2011). On the other hand, the bee leadership philosophy is more holistic in nature and is based on generating value for stakeholders. As can be seen, these are values aligned with the seventeenth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, that of creating global alliances (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011).

Although the honeybee model has been found to be more sustainable and profitable in the long term, many companies still persist with the more conventional locust model, which is based on short-term and opportunistic but evidence-lacking decision making (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011) due to its more ample potential applicability.

1.2. The audio-visual sector as a cultural industry

There is not a great deal of academic literature on leadership and management styles in the audio-visual sector. Defining who exercises leadership in an audio-visual production depends on the type of hierarchical structure in place within the organization. It is not the same in a production company as in a television network. In a generic way, we will use the term producer to refer to the person who is ultimately responsible for the development of a project and its subsequent production (Guerrero, 2012). In other words, the producer is the professional, the executive involved from the beginning with the development of the concept and the outline of the program, but who is also involved in its production and marketing.

In television, the role of the producer is of vital importance, since ultimately the responsibility associated with the development and control of the production of the project falls on him, not only from an economic and logistical point of view, but also creatively. He is responsible for the artistic and technical result and is the one who promotes and devises the projects (Guerrero, 2012)

For Diego (2005), the executive producer is a creative manager who must assume leadership and have the appropriate qualities to carry out his duties with authority and, at the same time, coordinate teamwork. For his part, Guerrero (2010, p. 376) points to the executive producer as the person ultimately responsible for the projects, both from an economic and logistical perspective, as well as from a creative perspective. However, the executive production role does not fall exclusively upon a single individual, but his responsibilities are distributed, as agreed in the production contract, between the production teams and the production companies. Guerrero also refers to other roles in the audio-visual sector such as audio-visual product managers. Within the network we find the director of the general program production division and the executive producer; and within the production company, the person in charge of the particular production area (whether entertainment or other areas), the executive producer and the director of the program.

Other studies such as the one by Mumford *et al.* (2002) include television directors as being examples of leadership positions that must balance behavioural flexibility with a controlling role. They must participate in the creative process as part of their leadership role, as well as the development, structuring and promotion of ideas.

Therefore, in this study we will consider to be leadership positions in the audio-visual sectors such positions as Executive Producer, Production Director, Producer, Content Director, Program Director, Area Directors.

2. Objectives

The main aim of this study was to identify the degree to which sustainable leadership is commonly practised among managers in the audio-visual sector in Spain. The research for this study will take as a framework Avery and Bergsteiner's Honeybee and Locust sustainable leadership model and will consider the following research question:

RQ1. How do managers in the audio-visual sector perceive the type of leadership practised in the companies in which they work?

RQ2. Is their perception aligned more to a bee-type model of leadership, or a locust-type model of leadership, or neither one nor the other?

Over the years, the sustainable leadership approach has been gaining momentum among a number of scholars. This study will examine the concept in more detail through a quantitative analysis using a group of 50 managers from the audio-visual sector. Studies on leadership in the audio-visual sector are scarce, and the sustainable leadership approach is innovative.

3. Methods

Avery and Bergsteiner's framework will be used as a basis for the methodological approach undertaken (i.e., as will be later described in the Purpose section of this article). The model is based on 23 key factors that underlie the concept of sustainable leadership, which, if carried out together, will contribute over time to improving organizational performance.

A quantitative study was carried out based on the analysis of the answers given by fifty middle and high-level managers in the audio-visual sector in Spain who responded to a 54-point questionnaire.

The questionnaire used was based on the sustainable leadership model of Avery and Bergsteiner, with the pertinent modifications made to adapt it to the peculiarities of our research. Of the 54 questions posed, 46 (Part II) analysed the level of sustainable leadership of the company in which the different managers worked and 8 questions (Part I) were introductory, seeking to learn a little more about the profile of each manager interviewed. The 46 questions presented in Part II analysed the level of sustainable leadership and were broken down into three main categories: fundamental practices (questions 1 to 26), top-level practices (questions 27-38), and key performance drivers (questions 39-46). The 46 questions of Part II are listed below:

1. In terms of training and development I aim to develop everyone continuously.
2. In terms of training and development I aim to develop people selectively.
3. For me, long job tenure is very important at all levels.
4. At some level I can accept a high degree of personnel turnover.
5. I mostly make promotions from within the organization wherever possible.
6. I mostly appoint people from outside the organization wherever possible.
7. I am concerned about employees' welfare.
8. For me employees are interchangeable and employee cost is a very significant cost item in accounting.
9. In my opinion a CEO works as the top team member or as the representative of the team.
10. In my opinion a CEO is a decision maker and can be considered as the person in charge.
11. "Doing the right thing" in the business is more important than profit.
12. For me, assessable risks can be taken in any situation to increase profit.
13. I prioritize long-term business objectives over those that are short term.
14. I prioritize short-term profits and growth considerations.
15. I think that change is an evolving and considered process.
16. I think that change is something rapid, volatile, perhaps even ad hoc.
17. I think that people should work with maximum independence from others to increase the profits from their work.
18. I think people should follow their managers and obey instructions.
19. In setting business objectives, I always emphasize protecting the environment.
20. In my opinion, the environment is there to be exploited to increase profit.
21. I think that the interests of the people and of the community within the business environment should be carefully considered in making business decisions.
22. I think the people and community should be exploited since they are available to the business to increase profit.

23. I think that everyone matters, whether they are related to the business or not.
24. I think, since we are in business to generate profits, that only shareholders matter.
25. I believe in vision statements embodying a shared view of the future as an important strategic tool.
26. I believe that a vision of a shared, consensual future does not necessarily drive the business.
27. I believe the decision making in the business should be consensual and devolved.
28. I believe the decision making in the business should be primarily manager centred.
29. I believe staff are capable of self-managing.
30. I believe managers should manage and control staff.
31. I think team working should be extensive and empowered.
32. I think team working should be limited and manager centred.
33. I think widely shared culture fosters and enables the meeting of business objectives.
34. I think the pursuit and the achievement of short-term business objectives constitutes a valid business culture.
35. I believe the sharing of knowledge is especially important and should be practised throughout the organization.
36. I believe that knowledge-sharing is important only to the extent of a need-to-know basis with people having access only to what they need to fulfil their specific roles in meeting the overall business objectives.
37. In business I need to foster a high degree of trust through relationships and good will.
38. In business we must control and monitor staff to compensate for a low trust environment.
39. In my opinion strategic innovation is especially important and therefore should be encouraged at all levels of the organization.
40. In my opinion, innovation is risky and therefore should only be managed by managers.
41. I highly value emotionally committed staff.
42. In my opinion, financial rewards suffice as motivators, therefore I do not expect emotional commitment from the staff.
43. In my opinion, quality ought to be embedded within the culture of the business.
44. In my opinion, quality may only be achieved through mechanisms of control.
45. I effectively communicate the business culture and the strategic actions to be developed.
46. I understand that the functions of the workers on my team are easily achievable using new technologies, and that using them can eliminate jobs.

To describe the level of sustainable leadership, a five-point Likert scale was used (i.e., 1 to 5); and the questionnaires were created using Google Forms, so as to be able to send them digitally by email and WhatsApp, given the context of the COVID- 19 pandemic and the difficulty in being able to carry out face-to-face interviews. Interviewee anonymity was always guaranteed.

4. Results and discussion

Among the audio-visual sector managers interviewed, we have found a heterogeneous sample of roles and responsibilities, including directors, producers, communication directors, production directors, executive producers, audio-visual department directors, audio-visual directors and technical directors. All these profiles, as part of the role, need to manage teams and thus display and practise leadership characteristics.

The results of the second part of the survey that aimed to assess the level and application of each of the components of Avery and Bergsteiner's (2011) contextual model of sustainable leadership are shown and described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of a questionnaire based on interviews with 50 managers from the audio-visual sector.

Question	1	2	3	4	5
1	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	14 (28%)	24 (48%)
2	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	19 (38%)	18 (36%)
3	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	15 (30%)	9 (18%)	11 (22%)
4	11 (22%)	7 (14%)	16 (32%)	13 (26%)	3 (6%)
5	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	7 (14%)	18 (36%)	24 (48%)
6	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	19 (38%)	12 (24%)	13 (26%)
7	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	9 (18%)	38 (76%)
8	22 (44%)	15 (30%)	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)
9	6 (12%)	7 (14%)	17 (34%)	11 (22%)	9 (18%)
10	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	12 (24%)	17 (34%)	7 (14%)
11	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	12 (24%)	16 (32%)	21 (42%)
12	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	18 (36%)	16 (32%)	5 (10%)
13	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	11 (22%)	24 (48%)	14 (28%)
14	15 (30%)	17 (34%)	17 (34%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
15	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	17 (34%)	26 (52%)
16	9 (18%)	9 (18%)	17 (34%)	12 (24%)	3 (6%)
17	10 (20%)	14 (28%)	13 (26%)	11 (22%)	2 (4%)
18	9 (18%)	17 (34%)	13 (26%)	10 (20%)	1 (2%)
19	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	9 (18%)	19 (38%)	17 (34%)
20	42 (84%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
21	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	11 (22%)	35 (70%)
22	37 (74%)	8 (16%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
23	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	9 (18%)	12 (24%)	28 (56%)
24	29 (58%)	15 (30%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
25	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	9 (18%)	38 (76%)
26	23 (46%)	12 (24%)	7 (14%)	5 (10%)	3 (6%)
27	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	8 (16%)	19 (38%)	20 (40%)
28	18 (36%)	9 (18%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)
29	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	14 (28%)	19 (38%)	6 (12%)
30	6 (12%)	10 (20%)	16 (32%)	16 (32%)	2 (4%)
31	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)	35 (70%)
32	23 (46%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
33	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	12 (24%)	33 (66%)
34	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	9 (18%)	15 (30%)	22 (44%)
35	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	9 (18%)	37 (74%)
36	32 (64%)	13 (26%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)

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37	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	13(26%)	33 (66%)
38	17 (34%)	15 (30%)	11 (22%)	6 (12%)	1 (2%)
39	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	15 (30%)	31 (62%)
40	25 (50%)	18 (36%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
41	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	12 (24%)	36 (72%)
42	21 (42%)	14 (28%)	9 (18%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)
43	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	10 (20%)	13 (26%)	24 (48%)
44	19 (38%)	10 (20%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)
45	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	14 (28%)	14 (28%)	20 (40%)
46	13 (26%)	17 (34%)	12 (24%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)

Source: Own elaboration.

With respect to the questions of the first section on fundamental leadership practices (questions 1-26), we must highlight the importance that was given to the implementation of continuous training and to the shaping of professional careers of employees in companies (i.e., 38% of respondents agreed and 36% completely agreed with this last statement).

The results obtained regarding the concern for the well-being of employees are especially relevant: 76% of those surveyed affirm that they were very concerned about it, a percentage to which we can add 18% of respondents who felt concerned about this same issue.

There was a general agreement of preference for meeting long-term commercial objectives, as opposed to short-term ones, thus prioritizing sustainability over mere shorter-term economic benefit. This statement includes respect for the environment and for the environment being taken into consideration when establishing commercial objectives. 84% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement 'In my opinion, the environment exists to be exploited for the purpose of increasing profits'.

This concept of ethics and sustainability also extends to the treatment of people and the community. 92% of those surveyed agree that they should be considered and taken care of, since the business depends on their collaboration, and obtaining business profits cannot be based on their exploitation (90%). It is not only the shareholders who need to be taken into account in the management of the business, but all stakeholders. The majority of interviewees also agreed that having a shared vision for the future was a strategic tool, an indicator of bee-type leadership. 70% of respondents said that teamwork should be promoted and empowered, and not be determined solely by the guidelines established by the manager of the company.

Having a high degree of trust with the employees through the maintenance of good relationships with them and the fostering of good will, was important amongst the study interviewees. If the leader cares about adding value not only to the company but also to his colleagues, he will not only get their loyalty but also achieve a good work environment. "If the leader manages to see beyond the bottom line and profit line, overcoming the initial short-sightedness of short-term effectiveness, he will be able to connect to the people again" (Stein, 2014, p. 77). After all, employees are generally there for the long-term and relate to durability and sustainability.

Another of the top-level practices that respondents rated highly was knowledge sharing. A large majority understood that it is very important for knowledge sharing to take place throughout the organization. This result again responds to notions of involvement and worth employees feel as they are allowed to share more deeply in business objectives.

With regard to the Key Performance Drivers category, respondents said that strategic innovation is very important, and therefore should be encouraged at all levels of the

organization. Personnel committed to the company are highly valued, and they were aware that financial rewards are not enough by themselves to achieve this involvement.

4.1. Sustainable leadership in the audio-visual world

The results of the survey showed that there is a clear need for companies in the audio-visual sector to continue working towards sustainable practices at the company level. This research started from the contextual framework of Avery and Bergsteiner's (2011) bee and locust sustainable leadership model and posed a series of questions to managers in the audio-visual sector.

The audio-visual sector managers interviewed responded that the sustainable leadership model was not being implemented to its fullest, despite there being an awareness withing their organization of the availability of more sustainable practices, and these managers recognised that they needed to persevere to progress further. Some described their organizations as having characteristics of a sustainable leadership bee-type model and others of a locust type.

According to Avery and Bergsteiner (2011), organizations that are 100 percent "pure" bee or locust leadership in nature are rare. According to both authors, it is more likely that we find a mixture of both types of leadership elements. They argue that this trend is often historical or may reflect a personal preference of the founder of the organization (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011).

The results of this study are in line with those of Kalkavan. (2015), whose objective was to assess the level of sustainable leadership in the Turkish insurance industry. Kalkavan also used Avery and Bergsteiner's model of sustainable leadership as a contextual framework for his study. The results of their research showed that despite the existence of significant leadership elements among managers in the Turkish insurance industry, sustainable leadership skills did not meet the expectations required to fully achieve sustainable leadership. Kalkavan's data is very much in line with that of this study, which reveals the use of a mix of the two diametrically opposed leadership philosophies of bees and locusts (Kalkavan, 2015). This is very much aligned with the results from this study where it was found that the audio-visual industry also entailed a mixture of both types of leadership elements.

In addition, sustainable leadership according to Avery and Bergsteiner (2011) goes beyond complying with the three pillars of sustainability, which are financial, social and environmental. Theoretically, a bee approach would be ideal. In bee organizations, the involvement of stakeholders such as customers, employees and suppliers is key. In this context, managers must act as stewards for future generations, "plan for the long term and protect the company's reputation through the implementation of ethical practices (caring for the environment and local communities)" (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011, p. 31). In this study, there was a general agreement of a preference to meet the long-term objectives of the organization, thus prioritizing sustainability over mere economic benefit. 84% of those surveyed disagreed with the notion that the environment only exists to be exploited in order to increase the profits of the organization.

4.2. An ethical governance

The concept of ethics and sustainability also extends to the way people and the community are treated. 92% of respondents agreed that all within the community had to be taken into account as business depends on their collaboration. According to Tuppen and Porrit, sustainable leadership must also consider equity, environmental justice, intergenerational equality, and governance. A sustainable leader should therefore also be concerned with the welfare of humanity and all forms of life.

The qualities that leadership roles in the audio-visual sector should have, include the capacity to manage, organise and coordinate. In addition to creative qualities and leadership

skills, the executive producer must be versatile and have extensive knowledge of the different areas of the television industry (Guerrero, 2012). The executive producer, being the leader of a team, should be able to ensure trust and be able to delegate specific relevant tasks to team members such as the producer and the program director (Guerrero, 2012). Therefore, leadership skills are highlighted as one of the main characteristics required of leaders in the audio-visual sector. The creation of an audio-visual product is the result of multidisciplinary teamwork that requires a leader with authority, responsibility, and talent to plan operations and make complex decisions.

In our study, 76% of those surveyed claimed to be very concerned about the well-being of employees. Guerrero (2012) points out that a competent and beneficent producer must know how to inspire confidence in his collaborators and have the authority to be able to get them to act as a team while maintaining calm at all times in order to be able to make decisions and to instill productive peace of mind in all colleagues. The television producer will also have to be capable of making instant decisions and resolving accurately and quickly any unforeseen contingency. Thus, the primary qualities of the television producer should be a sense of calm, confident authority and speed of reaction, while maintaining artistic and professional standards (De Aguilera, 1965).

The study carried out by Murphy and Ensher defines, through interviews and qualitative analyses, different styles of leadership and management. Interesting conclusions are drawn from this research insofar as they show that managers, although they are the ones who have the final decision, recognize the value of the opinion and suggestions of the team, considering that they are professionals in their respective specialties and that their contributions can improve the product. The data also showed that a leader needed to exercise strong control. They assert in one of their interviews that “you are only as good as the people you work with” (Murphy & Ensher, 2008, p. 346). This statement clearly summarizes that the leader must know how to collect ideas from his team to incorporate them beneficially into the product.

Most of the respondents said they are committed to the exchange of knowledge. A large majority understand that it is very important that the sharing of knowledge be carried out wide throughout the organization. Regarding the participation of the team and the management of creativity in the audio-visual sector, Suñe *et al.* (2012) observed how managers fostered a culture oriented towards knowledge transfer through their knowledge management platforms. They also highlighted the importance of forming multidisciplinary work teams as this facilitated the creation of new ideas and the transfer of key knowledge for the development process of new products. This process maximizes the use of the experience and skills of the individual members of the company at a collective level.

4.3. The importance of innovation

Respondents stated that strategic innovation is very important and therefore should be promoted at all levels of the organization. In the audio-visual sector, innovation management is constant. It is necessary to observe if there are adaptations, improvements and innovation in codes of good practices, management models and, in short, the ability of an organization to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new products and services, or into more efficient processes” to improve organizational performance and outcomes (Lawson & Samson, 2001).

Again, we find that Lawson and Samson’s (2001) proposal on innovation capacity defines seven key aspects, including the management of creativity and ideas, culture and environment, and technology management, which, as we have seen before, are intrinsic qualities of cultural industries. In addition, they consider three key factors for the development of new products: an innovation strategy, a suitable culture or context for innovation, and a structured innovation process.

Suñe *et al.* go on and highlight that the communications and messaging from leaders needs to be direct and honest, and whenever possible they should prevent possible problems from being hidden. Furthermore, in Suñe *et al.*'s article, company directors interviewed were in favour of the dynamics of change, through the promotion of creative activities and the commitment to invest in R&D. The ability of these managers to mobilize employees in pursuit of goals had a positive impact on the development of innovative solutions. In addition, they affirm that the appropriate leadership style and incentives sustain an innovative culture and the involvement of the participants in new product development projects, favouring the development of the capacity for innovation.

4.4. Female leadership in the audio-visual sector

Although over the years the participation of women in the labour force has increased considerably, of the fifty people surveyed, only 20% were women. In Spain, the female presence in managerial positions reached 20% in 2016. Although we cannot deny that the role of women in leadership positions in the business world is becoming more and more prominent over time, there is still a long way to go. The growing presence of women in leadership has its benefits, many of which are aligned with the growing awareness of sustainable leadership. Among the benefits to be highlighted are better corporate governance, the formulation of more effective strategies, and corporate performance by focusing more on the importance of corporate responsibility (Díaz-Iglesias, Blanco-González & Orden-Cruz, 2021) and ethical behaviour.

In 2011, Martínez and Navarrete studied the presence of women in the audio-visual industry. Regarding cinematographic production, 9% of the films were directed by women. In script and production, female participation was 19%. A new study carried out by Izquierdo and Latorre (2021) revealed that women in the audio-visual industry occupy only a small percentage of management positions. A report published by the Association of Women Filmmakers and Audio-visual Media (CIMA) showed that women occupied 30% of the positions of the staff involved in feature films.

In leadership positions, women are also a minority, as only 14% of films had a woman as director, and only 20% of screenwriters were women with higher participation in executive production (22%) and, especially, in production (29%) (Lauzen, 2020). In Spain, the data reveals that in 2019 women represent 32% of the staff of fiction feature films but rather less, only 26% of leadership positions (Cuenca, 2019).

Furthermore, production leadership is essentially male, with 62% men versus 38% women at the executive/management level. Executive teams have more men than women in 58.3% of projects, while 29.2% have the same number of men and women, leaving only 12.5% of productions in which women are in a majority at the highest executive/management level.

5. Conclusions

The main objective of this research was to analyse how the managers of the audio-visual sector in Spain perceived the standard of leadership at the companies in which they worked and to determine whether this leadership fits within the model of sustainable leadership of bees and locusts formulated by Avery and Bergsteiner (2011). The results of the study show that leadership in the Spanish audio-visual industry contains elements of both bee and locust sustainable leadership elements.

The data seem to indicate that the audio-visual industry in Spain still has a long way to go regarding the implementation of sustainable leadership. The study itself is innovative since research about sustainable leadership in the audio-visual industry is scarce. The authors understood from this study that progress is gradually being made in the audio-visual sector in Spain towards a type of sustainable leadership in companies in the sector but that further improvements remain possible at several levels. One of the possible lines of study in the future

would be to observe and analyse the perception of employees with regard to the leadership that is presently exercised in their companies and therefore to see whether their perspective is comparable with that of their managers.

Furthermore, a critique that could be made of our study is the limited sample size of 60 interviewees. A larger sample size could have led to the highlighting of other factors tending towards different or varying results. An extension to this study to other European countries could perhaps have produced results showing socially derived and culturally derived factors in play and their incidence on findings and conclusions. This might perhaps be done in the future. The study could further be extended to include specific audio-visual sectors such as television or film production, as the audio-visual industry is very broad ranging from making videos for webs to advertising. Therefore, a more specific sector could potentially be researched.

Many companies are increasingly aware of the favourable impact that the implementation of sustainable leadership practices can have on their bottom line. Sustainability, over time, has become more than just a trend in the business world. It is currently a necessity, a must-have in any company, and it encompasses issues as diverse as decent work and economic growth, gender equality, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and responsible production and consumption, among others.

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