

Innovating for Women? The Relationship Between Female Influence on the Top Management Team and Innovation's Focus

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Abstract

Utilizing a longitudinal dataset from 387 pharmaceutical companies, this study investigates the relationship between the increase in female influence in the top management team (FITMT) and the innovation focus of firms. It examines how FITMT affects the development of innovations tailored to female-specific needs and those directed at other vulnerable categories, such as children. The analysis reveals that a heightened FITMT is significantly associated with an increased focus on female-focused innovations but does not show a similar effect for innovations targeting other vulnerable groups. The research employs patent data to assess the nature of innovation focus, with FITMT quantified by both the representation and power of female members in TMTs. These findings offer critical insights into how gender dynamics at the TMT level influence strategic innovation decisions, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of how female leadership can shape a firm's innovation trajectory.

Subject Areas: *Diffusion of Innovations, Marketing Strategy, New Product Development and Launch*

Track: Innovation Management & New Product Development