

International companies hire more women

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Globalisation provides opportunities for gender equality in employment, according to new research by Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU).

The study, conducted by WU's researchers Alyssa Schneebaum and Carolina Lennon, found that there is a correlation between global economic interaction and the gender distribution among a firm's employees.

Firms that export or are owned by parent companies abroad have a higher female share of full-time, permanent employees than firms that are only active in their national markets.

This was especially apparent for exporters with customers in countries with equal gender norms – these companies employed six to seven percentage points more female employees.

“What we see here is a ‘race to the top,’ meaning that global firms adopt more equal hiring practices compared to non-global firms if they interact commercially with more gender-equal economies. There seems to be no evidence of a race to the bottom, that is, gender inequality isn't imported through commercial links with gender-unequal countries,” says Professor Schneebaum.

However, the percentage of women only increases at the lower and middle levels of the organisation – exposure to gender equal norms has no effect on top management positions.

Being internationally oriented has a negative effect on the probability of a firm having a female in top management positions with exporters 3.9 per cent less likely to have a female in charge.

“These results are important because they show how commercial trade serves as a medium through which gender norms can be transmitted across countries. However, we do find that for more prestigious jobs, it will take more than just commercially-base exposure to norms of equality to get more women into management positions,” says Professor Schneebaum.

The study analysed data administered by the Enterprise Analysis Unit of the World Bank from 2006 to 2014, on 30,000 firms in more than 100 developing and emerging economies.

Read the study:

https://github.com/DrSnowtree/Working-Papers/blob/master/0_globalization_gender_equality.pdf

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Professor Schneebaum, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky Education on khurley@bluesky-pr.com or call +44 (0) 7538412793.