

Reflection of Gender Equality in Enterprises

—Taking Lenovo as an Example

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Abstract: Environmental, Social, and Governance model has gradually become an important element that cannot be ignored in the process of enterprise development. Lenovo has been selected into the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index for many years in a row, and through the release of the industry's annual "Global Diversity and Inclusion Report", it discloses various equal rights including gender equality. In terms of gender equality, Lenovo has created an open and diverse work culture for employees, and has become the strongest driving force behind Lenovo's 35-year history as a leader and enabler of intelligent transformation. This article takes Lenovo as a case study object, discusses the combination of corporate law and feminism in Environmental, Social, and Governance model, the role of Environmental, Social, and Governance model rating in promoting gender equality of Lenovo employees and its impact on corporate value, and finally summarizes how Environmental, Social, and Governance model rating can be reformed to make it better grounded in feminist conclusions. This article uses literature reviews and questionnaire surveys as research methods. As a conclusion for this article, the application of Environmental, Social, and Governance model ratings and feminism in corporate law can promote gender equality among Lenovo employees, pave the way for an inclusive corporate economy and specific equality, and promote corporate value.

Keywords: corporate law, gender equality, Lenovo Group, feminism, ESG governance

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's economy and society have reached an important inflection point in their development. Therefore, only enterprises that do not focus only on economic benefits but attach importance to corporate responsibility and social benefits can achieve long-term and stable development.

Against this background, the concept of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) development has gradually entered people's fields of vision. ESG is to evaluate the value of a company's responsibility to society from the three dimensions of environment, society, and corporate governance. In September 2018, in the new version of the "Code of Corporate Governance for Listed Companies", a new framework for ESG was formulated, and the ESG rating system came into being. At present, there is still a certain gap in the progress of ESG in domestic companies compared with foreign countries. Domestic scholars have not yet reached a unified conclusion on the impact of ESG

performance and corporate value. At the same time, in the corporate discourse system, there are still many problems in the protection of women's rights and interests. Therefore, it is very important to combine feminism and ESG to promote the reform of corporate law. At present, domestic scholars have put forward some suggestions for the gendered reform of company law.

This article will take Lenovo as a case study to explore the reflection of feminism and ESG ratings in Lenovo, study the impact of ESG ratings on company value, and put forward some suggestions for the company's reforms to promote gender equality.

2. Concept Definition and Theoretical Analysis

2.1. The Concept of ESG and the Introduction of ESG Rating

Most Chinese companies use Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) to divide ESG ratings into seven grades from high to low, namely AAA, AA, A, BBB, BB, B, and CCC [1]. MSCI has a well-established rating process. It collects the macro data of the company's industry through various channels, such as academic reports and government public information. At the same time, it actively contacts the rated companies. After updating the ESG rating, it will continue to monitor and analyze the factors that may affect ESG controversies and governance. Therefore, this article uses the ESG rating data provided by MSCI, which is highly recognized internationally, as a reference to conduct a follow-up analysis of Lenovo Group's ESG rating performance.

2.2. The Manifestation of Feminism in Corporate Law

It is difficult to see the combination of feminism in the field of corporate law, which does not mean that feminism has no effect in corporate law [2]. Bring a feminist perspective into a field that does not seem to pay attention to women, and responds to long-term discussion gender topics in new and interesting ways. These response can be divided into three categories. First of all, challenging shareholders' centralism in corporate governance believes that the company's decision-making should consider the widespread interests other than shareholders; and the system should include the values of feminism, such as care and communication; Finally, the non-democratic concentration model that criticized this company's power has brought difficulties in the society [3].

3. Summarize the Current Situation and Problems

3.1. The Problems and Status Quo Faced by Women in the Corporate Environment

There are still many problems in the protection of women's rights and interests. Gender inequality runs through a woman's career, from entry to the workplace, including promotions, maternity leave, and senior management. Although many companies have introduced ESG ratings, under the social background of fully liberalizing the two-child policy, some reports have shown that the increase in the possibility of having a second child has reduced the benefits that companies can obtain from female executives of childbearing age, so companies have reduced the number of women of childbearing age [4]. Moreover, the proportion of female executives in listed companies in China only accounts for 9.63% [5]. These data all show that women cannot "walk into" the company's discourse system so "comfortably".

3.2. The Development History and Performance of Domestic Companies Using ESG Governance in Terms of Social

In recent years, domestic listed companies have generally exposed negative events related to the environment, society, and corporate governance, which has promoted the development of ESG in my

country. In 2016, various regulatory authorities in my country jointly promulgated the “Guiding Opinions on Building a Green Financial System”. With the formulation of relevant national laws, more and more companies have introduced ESG ratings. The disclosure of some ESG indicators in the Shanghai and Shenzhen 300 shows that the disclosure rate of S has achieved a substantial increase from 2018 to 2020 [6]. More companies and institutions are paying attention to corporate social governance responsibilities.

In 2020, Lenovo Group began to publish ESG reports and won the AA grade, taking a leading position in the entire information technology industry. In terms of S, Lenovo abides by the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has a comprehensive and holistic recruitment system, and creates a diversified business model for employees. The ESG report released by Lenovo every year discloses the gender composition of the group’s board of directors and the proportion of female employees and executives around the world. Its diversity and inclusiveness have established a good reputation in the market in the current era.

4. Lenovo Group’s Performance and Effectiveness in Terms of Gender Equality

4.1. Analyze Lenovo Group’s Measures and Status Quo in Terms of Employee Gender Equality from the Perspective of Social

Lenovo has a comprehensive and holistic recruitment system in place. First of all, all business departments adopt end-to-end recruitment to ensure fairness. They set up a campus plan to cultivate future corporate talents and promote Lenovo Group as an employer value brand. Also, Lenovo ensures uninterrupted recruitment and training of personnel.

A diversified business model is the long-term development value of Lenovo Group. Lenovo Group provides sufficient job opportunities for different employees and makes full use of the unique advantages of diverse talents by raising the inclusive awareness of leaders and employees. Lenovo’s policies and Code of Conduct are committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination and harassment, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, nationality, social or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marriage conditions, pregnancy, disability or veteran status, etc. And since 2018, Lenovo’s diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives have been supervised by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. After achieving the 2020 executive ratio target, Lenovo has set a new goal to further increase the company’s global female executive ratio by 2025, and the longest-running program is the female leadership development project that cultivates female executive talents (WLDP). What’s more, Lenovo uses the DEI strategy to carry out internal talent retention and cultivate diversified top talent plans, and promises to release indicators related to the ratio of women’s invention rights every year, making further progress in advocating women’s rights [7].

4.2. The Combination of Feminism and Company Law Reflected in Lenovo Group

In terms of ontological rules of company law, the task of company law is to expose or reverse the functional alienation caused by the freedom of private contract, such as shareholder repression and capital violence [8]. In Lenovo’s ESG report, Lenovo’s establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee plays a corresponding role by building inclusive leadership behaviors, establishing a diversity and inclusion system, ensuring accountability, and telling Lenovo’s unique diversity and inclusion story. Lenovo is also conducting global anti-harassment training with the goal of a 100% global completion rate.

In terms of governance rules, feminist corporate governance believes that the specific environment, the current situation of facts, and the emotions of relative people should be considered to deal with specific corporate relationships. And underlying corporate relationships give corresponding duties of

care due to varying degrees of asymmetry in the distribution of power. Lenovo is committed to introducing feminism into the corporate governance system and cultivating an inclusive culture. Lenovo supports 13 employee resource groups (ERGs) around the world in fostering inclusion and a sense of belonging among employees. The author released questionnaires on multiple topics to 1,000 Lenovo branch employees working in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, and got the following feedback.

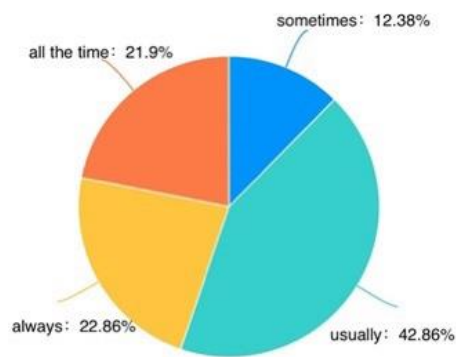


Figure 1: Satisfaction of Lenovo's inclusive working environment.

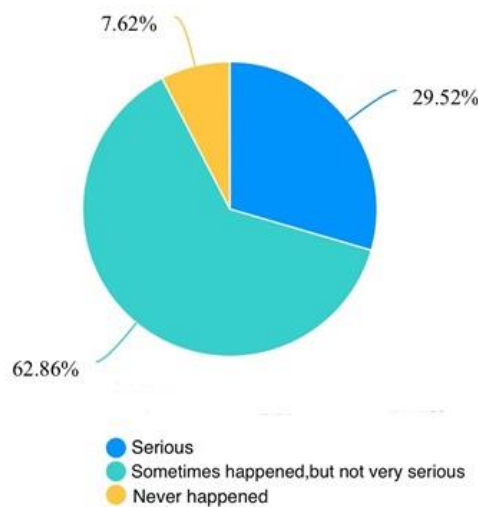


Figure 2: Lenovo employees think whether the “Glass Ceiling Effect” around them is serious.

The two figures come from the author's survey, which is done by 1,000 random Lenovo employees, and all the figures are true. According to figure 1, we can see that the vast majority of employees (more than 85%) are satisfied with the Lenovo working environment. According to figure 2, more than 90% of employees have experienced the “Glass ceiling effect”, and nearly 30% of them consider it serious. To conclude, the combination of feminism and corporate law at Lenovo seems successful so far, but it still needs to be improved, especially in the section on women's promotion environments.

In practice, the application of feminist analytical methods will lead to a dramatic shift in the approach to judging—from an isolated, objective approach defined by patriarchy to an empathetic, caring view of judging. Lenovo is committed to cultivating inclusiveness and empathy among employees. Lenovo is committed to cultivating tolerance and empathy among employees. Lenovo provides guidelines for enterprises to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in workplaces, markets, and communities by signing the UN Women's Empowerment Principles

(WEPs). While pursuing gender equality, Lenovo knows that reducing prejudice and promoting gender equality is a work that requires full commitment. Lenovo will work with other parties and members of the United Nations Global Compact to implement this initiative.

4.3. Analysis of Lenovo Group's ESG Rating's Impact of Promoting Gender Equality on Corporate Value

Based on the above analysis, this paper finds that Lenovo has an industry-leading performance in the E aspect of the ESG rating, and has a relatively perfect combination of corporate law and feminism. Studies by relevant scholars have shown that when other conditions remain unchanged, an increase in ESG rating performance can increase corporate value [3]. The introduction of feminism into ESG rating practice can improve the guarantee of gender equality in corporate law, thereby promoting the improvement of corporate value.

5. Recommendation

5.1. For National Legal Departments and Administrative Agencies

The ESG rating data of Chinese companies come from two sources: corporate active disclosure and passive disclosure. The number of companies in my country that choose to disclose their reports independently is small, so it is difficult to promote the ESG rating system [9]. The effective use of the ESG rating system in companies will promote the combination of feminism and corporate law, and the fact that fewer domestic companies use ESG ratings will result in a situation where women's rights cannot be fully protected. Therefore, national top-level design to promote corporate ESG information disclosure is crucial.

The government should set up relevant institutions to verify the ESG reports issued by listed companies every year and give audit opinions. At the same time, it should be noted that feminist company law opposes the singleness of corporate governance model and legal coercion, and advocates personalized multiple strategies. Therefore, in ESG ratings, the government should examine whether the rules formulated by the company conform to the concept of feminist corporate governance, that is, strengthen the examination of corporate governance diversity. China needs to strengthen the improvement and supervision of ESG ratings from the legal level, so that the rule of soft law in the regulatory concept can truly take root.

5.2. For Companies

The undertaking of corporate social responsibility, that is, ESG governance embodies feminist values and practices feminist behavioral views. The company's goal is the focus of reform closely related to this. For this reason, corporate goals should not only be interpreted in a utilitarian way, but should also discuss how to achieve the goals of diversity. The diversification goals of Chinese companies should address China's own gender equality issues and formulate company goals that are in line with Chinese characteristics.

The director diversity system is the most direct institutional manifestation of the female-owned company law. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the management of the diversification of company directors in the E and G aspects of ESG governance, and strengthen the diversification of corporate governance by reshaping the company's management [10].

The combination of feminism, ESG and corporate law still has a long way to go, but when they have begun to integrate, corporate governance has already begun to progress. Just like Lenovo's case of combining feminism and ESG, more and more Chinese companies will learn from Lenovo's successful governance experience and pave the way for concrete equality in the company.

6. Conclusion

The application of ESG ratings and feminism in corporate law can promote gender equality among employees of Lenovo Group and will certainly pave the way for an inclusive corporate economy and concrete equality, promoting corporate value enhancement.

Due to the short reference time of domestic ESG ratings, the specific data that can be obtained in this paper is limited, and the specific indicators and scores of ESG ratings are difficult to obtain, so we have to start from the overall level.

Since ESG includes the comprehensive consideration of three aspects, and this article focuses on the promotion of gender equality as an aspect, it is impossible to completely avoid the impact of E and G on the results when analyzing its impact on corporate value. When using the questionnaire method to explore the attitude feedback of technology company employees towards the company's gender equality, due to subjective factors, employees have doubts and prejudices about the use of the questionnaire, which may have a certain impact on the accuracy of the survey results.

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