EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON WOMEN LEADERSHIP AT WORKPLACE: IN DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS OF INDORE

KHUSHBOO JAIN

Assistant Professor
Shri Vaishnav Institute of Management Indore
rrjkhushi@gmal.com

DR DEEPA KATIYAL

Associate Professor
Shri Vaishnav Institute of Management Indore
deepakatiyal@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The escalation in research regarding women leadership has brought various facts forward, but the unbalanced ratio of male and female leaders draws scope for research on women leadership. In the professional environment too, women are taking over various challenging job positions and large masses of women are onto their journey of synergizing their family responsibilities with professional job roles. Such synergy calls for their leadership traits and decision making in both spheres. This study attempts to study the factors of women leadership, especially in their professional sphere. Studies have concluded that occupational differences have an interactive effect on leadership. Hence, taking the base of the surveys of past researches this empirical study is planned to know the impact of occupation on the factors of women leadership. Using a survey of female respondents from Indore city the study concluded that occupation has a significant effect on women leadership factors of Women Empowerment, Stereotype Mindset, and Professional Competency. However, the occupation was not found to affect the factor of Gender Discrimination.

Keywords: Women leadership, gender diversity, workplace, occupation.

INTRODUCTION

Modern families are in demand around the world, which needs both the parents working. Increased competition and world scenarios have forced greater involvement of parents in their professional life domains. Though in general the attitude towards the role of women as a professional has undergone transformation still men are preferred for managerial positions in comparison to female employees (Hejase, et al., 2013). A female is presumed to choose personal life commitments over professional commitments when it's a matter of leadership

role on a senior designation. Little or no flexibility is offered at senior positions which become more cumbersome when the employee, in a senior position, is a female. Pillay (2005) mentions one of the barriers to the career progress of women to be the psychology and attitude that is being built over decades where males are considered to be the bread-earners of the family. This attitude of society and the family members towards them has escalated their male egos and they have built dominance in their behavior. Especially in India, the roles of parents have also been prominent, in the past, in strengthening this dominance as sons were treated with greater regard than daughters. This created a sense of inferiority in females which has grown up to be a 'mental block', but the vigor in females for growth has transformed their personal and professional spheres drastically over the past few decades. They have proved themselves in all the spheres. Still, when deciding upon managerial positions in organizations, women are less preferred. The entry of women in professions and the corporate ladder has added diversity of value in traditional male-dominated leadership roles. During executing roles of home-managers, women develop strong leadership, financial and managerial skills. Thus women employees can prove to be a source for sound financial advice and solutions for various economic woes.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index has been tracking the gender gap on the basis of Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment since 2006. The recent reports of The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, 2020 have revealed the following conclusions. There is still a 31.4% average gender gap that remains to be closed globally. The largest gender disparity is reported to be for the sub-index of the Political Empowerment gap with only 24.7% of the global Political Empowerment gap being closed in 2020. Very few Political seats are being occupied by women globally. For the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index, 36% of women have been reported to acquire the leadership roles for senior private sector managers and public sector officials. However, this parity is being approached by only a handful of countries. In labor markets, 55% of adult women are reported against 78% of men with 40% of the wage gap and 50% of the income gap which still needs to be bridged. Also at various places, women are being restricted to access credit, land, and financial products. The sub-index of Educational Attainment revealed smaller gaps with a focus on a few developing countries for increasing the sufficiency of women's

talent to reduce the gap of 20%. The gap for the sub-index of Health and Survival has been closed to good extents of 95.7%.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The leadership role and managerial role of an employee go hand-in-hand. Demonstrating good managerial skills need the support of leadership skills for leading and decision making. On other hand showcasing leadership roles needs a further strong managerial role for fulfilling the vision of the organization. **Hejase, et al. (2013)** attempted to evaluate the leadership role of women over their managerial roles, at the workplace. In his study, he tried to find answers to the research questions related to distinguishing factors for leadership among male and female employees; women leadership style that proves beneficial for the organization and the style that is well accepted by the subordinates. For this study the author explored women leadership on grounds of genetic and biological differences; cultural differences; self-promotion; office politics and power; communication style and adopted leadership style. The author recommends women to have strong faith in their feminine characteristics while showcasing their leadership roles. Women leadership has been studied in South Asian culture by **Subramanian, et al. (2016),** exploring the gender-based view of an organization; leadership styles adopted by men and women, and the reason for the difference in leadership styles. The author argues that transformational and transactional leadership styles are adopted differently by men and women leaders. Women employees have reported themselves to be task-oriented under male leaders but interpersonally oriented under female leaders.

Julizaerma and Zulkarnain (2012) put forth the benefits of gender diversity during decision making in boardrooms and examined the association of gender diversity in leadership roles and firm performance. The survey on Bursa Malaysia listed companies (Main and ACE) depicted a positive association and the author concluded a prominent role of women directorship on firm performance. **Kadyrkulova (2008)** explored the leadership styles adopted by male and female leaders. Based on different social roles to be played by men and women leaders, the study showed that men generally take up autocratic leadership whereas women combine this style with democratic leadership. To enhance this style, the author suggests keeping abreast of the natural leadership skills possessed by both men and women leaders. **Singh and DurgaPrasad (2007)** attempted to study the association of leadership positions of women managers with career progression with work-family barriers, organization culture, underinvestment in social capital,

and career salience. Direct negative relation has been concluded of women managers' career progression for all the constructs except career salience. Women prioritize family responsibilities and their professional responsibilities being distracted by the inhospitable culture of organizations towards women. **Chatterjee (2016)** explored women leadership in Panchayati Raj in India. In the direction of rural development female leaders have been successful in changing the composition of the rural leadership and have raised aspirations and educational attainment for girls.

Hasan and Othman (2012) argued that men and women should behave in similar ways when leadership is concerned, as the main objectivity in this role is of fulfilling the leading of the subordinates to shape their behavior. Women leaders, adopting participative/collaborative leadership styles, are believed to be more effective in today's less hierarchical organizational structure. **Hryniewicz and Vianna (2018)** studied the perception of Brazilian women for their leadership roles in personal and professional spheres of their life. On exploring the challenges faced by them the study concluded the following barriers in women leadership roles. Vestiges of prejudice, Motherhood, Personal appearance, Resistance to women's leadership, Issues of leadership style, Demands of family life, Childhood experiences of household chores, Underinvestment in social capital, A matter of choice, Women without children suffer less prejudice, Women must be better than men to be a boss, Lack of explicit ambition, Attributing success to external factors and Lack of confidence in affirmative actions. This portrays the fallacy of equality of social opportunities towards both genders. **Dutta and Agarwal (2017)** contextualized the perceptions of career identity and career advancements of women managers. The author synthesized that to seal the leaking women leadership pipeline, a context-specific and gender unbiased conceptual approach needs to be adopted for the economic growth of the organizations. An inferiority setback of women towards their career aspirations, professional projections, and leadership roles have been reported in the study by **Kreuzer (1992).** The author explains societal values and childhood experiences to be the reason for this setback. **Kossek And Buzzanell (2018)** state that for bringing positive change in women leadership roles the factors that are needed to be taken care of include equality in quotas, job conditions, considerations for male and female issues with justifications, and leadership expectations for extra-role behaviors. **Martin and Barnard (2013)** add the absence of covert and entrenched culture for positive change. The presence of

inequality in leadership roles harms families and society as a whole. Organizations should focus on changing the contexts that debar women from acquiring leadership roles (**Kossek, et al., 2017).**

The transition of women's attitude during motherhood as tracked by **Zhou (2017)** found women to be more traditional in cases where after attaining motherhood they withdraw from their employment. These findings reveal the reshaping of attitudes for declining the incompatibility of women for her responsibilities towards employment and childrearing. The performance of women based on various professional parameters like strategy formulation, building organizational culture, job orientation, etc. proves their competencies as efficient leaders. In the context of the financial performance of a firm, women leaders connect positively to not only financial but with sales performance too (**Hoobler, et al., 2018**). Taking the base of social cognitive theory and the theory of circumscription and compromise **Darouei and Pluut (2018)** explored the factors picked by women employees to accept leadership roles. Opportunity for promotions and career-based individual self-efficacy was found to be the key variables for the decision-making. **Bruckmuller and Branscombe (2010)** talked about the 'Glass Cliff' concept present in professional workspaces. This refers to the acceptance of women as leaders more at the time of crisis rather than during times of success. Stereotype attitudes towards gender have been found to mediate the Glass Cliff effect (**Peterson, 2014; Kulich, et al. 2007**). **Ryan, et al. (2007)** added that women perceive a lack of equal opportunities, favoritism, and male dominance at the workplace.

Ller and Branscombe (2009) have reported a pay-gap among male and female leaders. In the case of male leaders, the pay is found to be based on an organization's performance, which directs increased bonuses in the future, but in the case of women leaders, the pay is found to be based on her charisma and leadership quality. This biased perception results in lower bonuses for female leaders.

The research gap identified in the previous literature studied is the absence of such research in Indore city. Also, the effect of occupation on women leadership was not found. Hence this study was carried on with the objective of finding the factors of women leadership in the context of Indore city. Also, the authors framed hypotheses to test the effect of occupation on women leadership in Indore city.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Professions have seen an increasing number of women employees. However, the number of women leaders is still behind in the race with their male counterparts. This study would help professionals and future researchers to know about the factors responsible for women leadership. Also, the research on the effect of occupations on the factors of women leadership would set standards for consideration of women for leadership roles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the factors of women leadership
- To study the effect of occupation on women leadership

HYPOTHESES

H_{01}: Occupation has no significant effect on Women Empowerment

H_{02}: Occupation has no significant effect on Gender Discrimination

H_{03}: Occupation has no significant effect on Stereotype mindset

H_{04}: Occupation has no significant effect on Professional Competency

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is primary research done for knowing the factors of women leadership and to know the effect of occupation on the factors of women leadership. Various journals, books, and articles are referred for developing the understanding of women leadership. The data for the primary research was collected through a self-structured questionnaire. This is a working paper the factors of women leadership were found in the previous paper using factor analysis. In the current study the effect of occupation on the factors of women leadership, found in the previous paper, was hypothesized by using One-Way ANOVA for hypothesis testing. The population considered for the study consisted of women respondents from Indore city. Appropriateness of the scale was checked using KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which is depicted in the previous paper. In the current research paper, the results of hypothesis testing are presented with their interpretation.

DATA INTERPRETATION

The results of hypothesis testing are depicted in the following section. One-Way ANOVA results obtained for hypothesis testing are presented in tables following which the interpretation of the same is mentioned.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographic variables considered for the study include age, gender, occupation, and education. The descriptive statistics for the demographic variables including mean and standard deviation are mentioned below in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	126	1.00	3.00	1.4206	.58451
Gender	126	1.00	2.00	1.6984	.46078
Occupation	126	1.00	3.00	1.8889	.77172
Education	126	1.00	3.00	2.0952	.49685
Valid N (listwise)	126				

As the objective of the study is to study the effect of occupation on women leadership, hence the descriptive statistics for the demographic variable of occupation is specifically mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	45	35.7	35.7	35.7
	2.00	50	39.7	39.7	75.4
	3.00	31	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

FACTOR ANALYSIS

To know about the appropriateness of applying factor analysis Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is applied in the previous research paper. The KMO score is found to be .786; this shows that the application of factor analysis will be appropriate for the study. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found highly significant as the p-value is <0.05. The factor loading for the items is calculated using principal components with varimax rotation. The attributes considered had a factor loading of .5 or more. On applying factor analysis four factors were extracted which are mentioned as follows

Factor 1: Women Empowerment

Factor 2: Gender Discrimination

Factor 3: Stereotype mindset

Factor 4: Professional Competency

ANOVA TEST RESULTS

In the current study, the authors made an attempt to study the effect of occupation on the factors extracted during factor analysis. For finding the effect of occupation on women leadership four hypotheses were formulated. Hypotheses' testing was done using One Way ANOVA.

Table 3: ANOVA for Effect on Women Empowerment

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Women Empowerment	Between Groups	24.727	2	12.363	15.165	.000
	Within Groups	100.273	123	.815		
	Total	125.000	125			

Table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing for hypothesis H_{01}. The values in the table show that the hypothesis H_{01} is rejected as the p-value is found to be less than 0.05. This concludes that occupation has a significant effect on Women Empowerment.

Table 4: ANOVA for Effect on Gender Discrimination

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender Discrimination	Between Groups	3.700	2	1.850	1.876	.158
	Within Groups	121.300	123	.986		
	Total	125.000	125			

Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis testing for hypothesis H_{02}. The values in the table show that the hypothesis H_{02} is not rejected as the p-value is found to be more than 0.05. This concludes that occupation has no significant effect on Gender Discrimination.

Table 5: ANOVA for Effect on Professional Competency

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stereotype mindset	Between Groups	9.244	2	4.622	4.911	.009
	Within Groups	115.756	123	.941		
	Total	125.000	125			

Table 5 shows the results of hypothesis testing for hypothesis H_{03}. The values in the table show that the hypothesis H_{01} is rejected as the p-value is found to be less than 0.05. This concludes that occupation has a significant effect on Professional Competency.

Table 6: ANOVA for Effect on Stereotype mindset

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Professional Competency	Between Groups	10.370	2	5.185	5.563	.005
	Within Groups	114.630	123	.932		
	Total	125.000	125			

Table 6 shows the results of hypothesis testing for hypothesis H_{04}. The values in the table show that the hypothesis H_{01} is rejected as the p-value is found to be less than 0.05. This concludes that occupation has a significant effect on Stereotype Mindset.

FINDINGS

Factors for women leadership for the *first objective* found in the previous study are summarized as follows:

Women Empowerment explained the progressive role of women in earlier male-dominated professions. It covered equal opportunities for women as men to participate in the management of the organization along with management training programs for their professional development. Women should be given a chance to execute their capabilities as a manager. Their work should be considered valuable by the organization. Due respect should be given to women's ambitions for their vigor as professionals in the business world. Their contribution to the organizational goals should be considered as capable as that of men. Hence exercising women empowerment in organizations can prove out to be vital for any organization's success.

Gender Discrimination brought into notice still existing bias behaviors of management and male colleagues in terms of leadership roles, based on gender. The desirability for a job that requires responsibility is found to be gender-biased. Pregnancy and maternity issues are considered while concluding a women's desirability for a job. They are thought to be more inclined towards their family responsibilities than job responsibilities. In pressure situations, management faces a dilemma to take women leaders to face contingencies at work without breaking down with the same vigor as that of men.

The stereotype Mindset portrays the prejudices people carry for women leaders. Organization's male professionals at times stay back to give their full assurance for considering women leaders at key managerial positions for disseminating challenging work. Some other prejudices related to women leaders covered in this factor include sacrificing some of her femininity to be a successful leader, spending more of her time at home to prove herself as good mothers, and always imagining her to be soft-spoken even in times of critical business situations that demand aggressive behaviors.

Professional Competency envelopes the competencies required for the leadership roles by women at the workplace. It includes the objectivity possessed by women for evaluating business situations and take up their leadership roles as often as their male colleagues. It also includes mathematical, mechanical, technical, and managerial skills of women employees to make them acceptable for top executive positions. The psychological factors of women that make them competitive enough to accept leadership roles are self-confidence, strong communication, and emotional intelligence that make women be competitive enough to accept leadership roles.

Hypothesis testing done for the ***second objective***, to study the effect of occupation on the factors of women leadership shows a significant effect of occupation on the factors of women empowerment, stereotype mindset, and professional competency. The gendered aspect of professionals was not found affected by the occupation. Women empowerment practices in India are found different in different occupations. Male-dominated industries are found to exercise fewer women empowerment than industries where gender does not play a significant role. In the global scenario, India still falls back in addressing women empowerment in many occupations. Various senior positions in Indian companies are still ruled over by male leaders, India is placed third-lowest in the global representation of women managers (Kersley et al., 2019). This shows a wide scope of women empowerment in India. The stereotype mindset existing in organizations where prejudiced attitudes are carried for women debars them from exercising leadership roles. Various occupations are still found to be primarily male-dominated with less scope for women leaders. Their family responsibilities are considered to be big hindrances in their profession. Their psychology is underestimated and at times unexplored. Professional competencies for women leaders are prejudiced with the fact that women, being engaged in personal lives, may not outperform in leadership roles. Also at times, salary negotiations are not

done equally for a female like that of males considering her to be the second earning source of the family.

CONCLUSION

Women leaders are taking over various job positions in professional workspaces. This calls for their leadership roles in various instances and job roles. An attempt was made to know the factors of women leadership in the previous working paper and in the current research authors tried to study the effect of occupation on women's role as a leader. For finding the factors of women leadership, the data gathered using the survey method of data collection for the primary study was subjected to factor analysis in the previous paper. Findings of factor analysis extracted four factors for women leadership viz. Women Empowerment, Gender Discrimination, Stereotype Mindset, and Professional Competency. In the current study, the effect of occupation was tested using One-Way ANOVA, on factors of women leadership found in the previous paper. A significant effect of occupation was found on Women Empowerment, Stereotype mindset and Professional Competency. However, the Gender Discrimination factor was found to have no significant effect of occupation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Differences exist in psychology and perception of life events among men and women. For decades women have sacrificed their share but gradually self-realization has pushed them to be more confident and has forced them to take challenging roles both in personal as well as professional life spheres. To facilitate women as leaders, organizations can adopt the following recommendations.

- Organizations need to understand the intrinsic relation between personal and professional responsibilities of women employees and not to consider them mutually exclusive

- Women employees can be provided opportunities to obtain skills and experience for managing and driving an organization's technical and operational proceedings as a leader

- Women should not be under-represented for her efforts in organizational working and decision-making

- Automation should never rule over the leadership roles and decision-making performed by women leaders

- Organizations can toil to build desire, insight, and capacity in women employees for taking up leadership roles

● Women employees should be given an equal chance to lead, think and act with conscious intent to exercise leadership.

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