An Analysis of demographic & socio economic factors influence on   psychological empowerment of Women in leadership

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Abstract - Leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other important organizational, social and personal processes. The focus on women leadership has grown recently, due to the fundamental gains women have achieved in the workplace. At the same time there is a scarcity of women leaders and women in senior management positions who could be taking up leadership roles. The present study analysed how the demographic and socio economic factors influence on psychological empowerment of women in leadership. The results show that there is significant difference between total experience and psychological empowerment. It helps to understand the psychological empowerment of women leaders towards their work.

Keywords: women in leadership, demographic and socio economic factors, psychological empowerment.

I.   INTRODUCTION

There has been a growth in the women holding senior and leading positions around the world in comparison with previous years. 51 % of senior management positions were held by women in China; this increasing rate can be seen in other countries as well e.g., Japan (7%), United Arab Emirates (11 %), and Netherlands (11 %), Jordan enhances the role of women and the importance of their presence in all sectors e.g. (political, social and economic life) ([4]Basil Alzougool 2015).

Currently women leaders are faced the various sociological and psychological barriers such as job related stress, gender related barriers, glass ceiling, socio cultural beliefs, work environment, faulty perceptions-self-image etc. affects in their leadership position ([19]Vidyakala et.al 2018). Gender roles are instead socially constructed classifications that are inspired and furthered by the overarching influence of patriarchy within society, communities, and families. Research demonstrates, however, that despite an increased presence of female employees in mid-management positions, executive positions across the globe continue to be Women's advancement in the workplace has taken significant strides in the past 50 years. The movement has challenged the notion of predetermined gender roles as dominated by men. It is thus imperative that these fundamental, patriarchal classification schemes are challenged and deconstructed. This ordering of power thus has serious consequences for women's leadership.

Numerous strategies have been attempted to overcome these barriers to women's leadership, particularly within the workplace. The goal is fair representation of women within corporations, politics, the professions, religious organizations, and unions. But there are limits to promoting equality within the structures that are maintained by macho values. Through existing male-dominated organizations, men have come to view their perspectives and customs as being representative of wider, gender-neutral human organizations. With this perspective comes an assumption that the structure is asexual. This results in an undervaluing of women's knowledge and experiences. Even when women move into leadership positions, they are conditioned by the perspectives and power structures to maintain the status quo; while gender composition may be changed, the underlying structure of power, knowledge, status, and wealth is not challenged. Simply put, male dominance is the main obstacle to women rising to top positions in corporations and politics. Furthermore, traditional gender roles, still widespread in society, are barriers to women climbing corporate ladders. Current value systems largely support the notion that it is better for the family if the father is employed and the mother takes care of the majority of parental responsibilities. Unsupportive attitudes from family, friends, and co-workers may have negative effects on women's work and their roles in society ([10]Jakobsh-2012).

Role of Women in Leadership:

Women have a more prominent presence as managers and executives in organizations, more attention has been devoted to the possible differences between the leadership styles of women and men. Intuitive reasoning suggests that early socialization patterns develop different qualities in women and men that would likely result in variations in leadership styles ([14]Powell, 1993).

The growing number of women in managerial positions has created interest in the role of women as leaders. Women are more likely than men to encounter negative expectations and reactions, making it more difficult for them to reach positions of respect, influence, and leadership. Importantly, there has been a tremendous shift toward greater acceptance of women as leaders over the last half century ([2]Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Psychological Empowerment:

The psychological perspective of empowerment is known as Psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment is the belief that one has necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job well that can make a difference in the organization ([18]Sprietzer, 1995a). Researchers from psychological perspective say that psychological empowerment can be enhanced by change in both the internal mental aspects of the employee and the external work environment. Psychological empowerment is a reflection of the ongoing ebb and flow of employee's perceptions and attitudes about their work environment.

Empowerment has been accepted as an important organisational factor in satisfying the psychological needs of the employees in work place and improving organizational and personal effectiveness and thereby achieving organisational goals. Many managers and scholars have identified that the true sustainable competitive advantage of any organization is its employees and that the employees should be actively involved in the activities of the organization for its success. This is closely associated with the concept of empowerment which means giving employees the autonomy to make decisions about how they go about their daily activities. The success of an organisation, be it a manufacturing organisation or a service organization, largely depends on its empowered workforce. Psychological empowerment has been positively correlated with managerial effectiveness, increased levels of job satisfaction and decreased level of job strain ([17]Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason, 1997). [13]Nykodym et al. (1994) stated that the role conflict and role ambiguity of those employees who consider themselves as empowered have been reduced as they can control their own environment. Seibert, Silver, and Randolph (2004) have shown that psychological empowerment had a mediating role in individual-level outcomes of performance and job satisfaction. Further literature in psychological empowerment reveals that organizations where employees are psychologically empowered shows increase in productivity ([11]Akbar et al., 2010), higher job satisfaction ([6]Carless, 2004), high organizational commitment ([7]Chen and Chen, 2008, [9]Joo and Shim, 2010, [3]Bhatnagar, 2005), lower burnout ([8]Cavus and Demir, 2010), reduced employee turnover intent ([5]Collins, 2007) and reduced strain ([12]Martin, 2007).

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

[11]**Mishra (2016)** examined the importance of psychological dimension of empowerment with special reference to working women of India. In addition to it, the paper also discussed about the various psychological bottlenecks of women psychological empowerment. The paper attempted to throw a light on psychological well-being, role clarity, self-esteem, and happiness, which is crucial to psychological empowerment of working women. The paper concluded that proper attention must be paid to the psychological aspect which plays a very critical role in empowering the working women.

[16]**Secil (2013),** examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and psychological well-being. Additionally, it is aimed to find evidences about the mediating role of individuals' self-efficacy perception and the moderating role of perceived supervisor social support on the relationship between psychological empowerment and psychological well-being at work. The effect of psychological empowerment on work-related psychological well-being and the roles of self-efficacy and social support were examined through a structured research survey which has been performed among teaching staff working in public primary schools in Istanbul-Kadıköy. The results have proved that all four dimensions of the psychological empowerment had significantly positive relationships with psychological well-being states of the individuals. Moreover, the statistical findings have revealed that self-efficacy perception had a partial mediating role and perceived social support had a significant moderating role on the relationship between psychological empowerment and well-being. Furthermore, the study have revealed to various public and private organizations from different sectors which aim to enhance psychological well-being of the individuals and try to improve their work-related positive affections at the workplace.

[15]**Porter (2009),** examined the perceptions of female leaders' qualifications, leadership style, and effectiveness to lead. Eighty-nine leaders were surveyed using the Leader Perception Questionnaire Inventory (LPQ-i) on a four-point Likert scale and four random selected phone interviews. This study focused on several conceptual frameworks: first, role congruity theory which examined the incongruence of female leaders; second, contingency and transformational theory, which focuses on behaviour style based on qualifications, leadership styles, and effectiveness of female leader's; and lastly, feminist theory which examined gender

related issues of leadership. This study details current and historical context of female leader's influence in the workplace throughout history. This study utilized a (qualitative and quantitative) mixed methods approach to gain a new perspective using a phi and chi test to test the hypotheses. The findings concluded that women are continually disproportionately outnumbered by a large margin of (62%) males and '37%) females in high level leadership positions. Also, the findings concluded that men and women hold similar views of female leadership.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the role of women in leadership.
- To identify the significance of demographic profile of the respondents towards the psychological empowerment of women in leadership.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research: The present study is descriptive in nature.

Area of the study: The study was conducted among the women leaders in various companies in Coimbatore.

Sample Size: A sample size of 75 respondents is selected using convenience sampling technique. Primary data collection was done through survey method using a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data is also collected from journals, books and websites.

Tools used for analysis: Percentage analysis, ANOVA

Analysis and Interpretation: The collected data is processed, classified, and interpreted using the following statistical analysis:

Percentage Analysis

Percentage Analysis refers to a specified kind which is used in making comparison between two or more series of data. Percentages are based on descriptive relationship. It compares the relative items. Since the percentage reduces everything to a common base and thereby allow meaning comparison.

Table 1: Demographic factors

Demographic Factors	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30 years	38	50.7
	31-40 years	18	24.0
	41-50 years	14	18.6
	Above 50 years	5	6.7
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**
Marital Status	Married	36	48.0
	Unmarried	35	46.7
	Divorcee	2	2.6
	Widow	2	2.7
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**
Education	Diploma	5	6.7
	Degree	21	28.0
	Master's degree	23	30.7
	Professional	17	22.6
	others	9	12.0
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**
Mother Tongue	Tamil	46	61.3
	Hindi	4	5.4
	Kannada	11	14.7
	Malayalam	7	9.3
	Other languages	7	9.3
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**
Occupation	Team leader	40	53.3
	Project manager	26	34.7
	Associate manager	9	12.0
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**
Total Experience	Less than 2 years	24	32.0
	3 years - 4years	31	41.3
	6 years – 9 years	16	21.3
	10 years and above	4	5.4
	TOTAL	**75**	**100.0**

The following are the findings based on percentage analysis

- 50.7% of the respondents' age group is 20- 30 years.

- 48.0% of the respondents are married.
- 30.7% of the respondents are educated Master's degree.
- 61.3% of the respondents' mother tongue is Tamil.
- 53.3% of the respondents are employed at team leader level.
- 41.3% of the respondents' experience is 3- 4 years.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):

The principle of ANOVA is to test for differences among the mean of the populations by examining the amount of variation within each of these samples, relative to the variation between the samples using SPSS software version 16.0.

❖ Age and psychological empowerment

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between age and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between age and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 2 Age and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.286	3	.095	1.107	.352
Within Groups	6.122	71	.086		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 1.107 and the significant level is 0.352. The calculated table value is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between age and psychological empowerment.

❖ Marital status and psychological empowerment

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between marital status and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between marital status and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 3 Marital status and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.212	3	.071	.811	.492
Within Groups	6.196	71	.087		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 0.811 and the significant level is 0.492. The calculated table value is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between marital status and psychological empowerment.

❖ Education qualification and psychological empowerment

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between education and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between education and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 4. Education qualification and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.219	4	.055	.620	.650
Within Groups	6.189	70	.088		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 0.620 and the significant level is 0.650. The calculated table value is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between education and psychological empowerment.

❖ **Mother tongue and psychological empowerment**

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between mother tongue and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between mother tongue and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 5 Mother tongue and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.652	4	.163	1.983	.107
Within Groups	5.756	70	.082		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 1.983 and the significant level is 0.107. The calculated table value is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between mother tongue and psychological empowerment.

❖ **Occupation and psychological empowerment**

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between occupation and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between occupation and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 6 Occupation and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.040	2	.020	.226	.798
Within Groups	6.368	72	.088		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 0.226 and the significant level is 0.798. The calculated table value is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between mother tongue and psychological empowerment.

❖ **Total experience and psychological empowerment**

Null hypothesis H_0: There is no significant difference between total experience and the psychological empowerment.

Alternative hypothesis H_1: There is significant difference between total experience and the psychological empowerment.

Table No: 7 Total experience and psychological empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.747	3	.249	3.122	.031**
Within Groups	5.661	71	.080		
Total	6.408	74			

Interpretation:

The f value is 3.122 and the significant level is 0.031. The calculated table is more than the table value of 0.05. Thus the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. **Thus it can be concluded that there is significant difference between total experience and psychological empowerment.**

IV.   CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study show that the demographic factors i.e., total experience only there is a significant difference on psychological empowerment of women in leadership. The study recommended that the women leaders need to be trained in the psychological empowerment programmes and design media programs on women development for changing the society attitudes towards the value of women in top workforce through exposure of training programs, workshops and education curricula and the role models of successful women in different phases and leadership positions to improve women leadership skills. Women leaders are unclear with their scope and responsibilities of their job and not knowing what their opportunities for advancement and promotion existing for their job. So they need training.

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