

AN IMPACT OF SOCIOLOGICAL BARRIERS ON WOMEN LEADERS

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Abstract: The scenario for women leaders in India's corporate world, though small in number is changing for the better as the gender divide narrows and the glass ceiling is slowly disintegrating. There is a paucity of women leaders and women in senior management positions thus it is the right time to address the barriers faced by women leaders and encourage and support women to take up leadership roles. Women leadership is a delicate balancing act but women are capable of building an inclusive, collaborative and transformational work environment with leadership styles that are highly effective and encourage individuals and organizations to flourish. Hence sociological barriers in women leadership have become a major topic for research studies. The specific problem addressed in this study is to examine the impact of sociological barriers in women leadership.

Keywords: Sociological barriers, women leadership.

Introduction

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 "natural" dominated by men. It is thus imperative that these fundamental, patriarchal classification schemes are challenged and deconstructed. The fundamental structure of Western patriarchal society depends upon an understanding that males are superior, more powerful, and that they represent the "norm," whereas women are understood as inferior, lacking in power and autonomy, and secondary. The power of socialization that underlies this system cannot be ignored. In fact, sexist, patriarchal values are so deeply engrained in society's consciousness that they are largely invisible. The very fabric of social organization has been woven by males, for males, to support males.

Today women are better positioned than ever before to growth to leadership roles in technology. Not only, companies have undertaken many kinds of support structures in place, such as women's networks and leadership development courses, but there is an increasing number of women at the top who can serve as role models or inspiration. Nevertheless, women are still a distinct minority in the technology workforce and an even smaller proportion of corporate leadership. Young women were tangled about the practical steps they need to take to make it to leadership.

This study mainly focused that effect of Sociological barriers (cultural barriers and corporate structure issues and sociological issues) in women leadership. Issues of comprehension, elucidation and reaction to correspondence emerge mostly from our socially-learned traits and incompletely from our own qualities. These are called socio-psychological barriers. Even though women's education and entry into the job market, the woman's role is typically of homemaker. Despite cultural attitude some women are able to transcend and rise to positions of leadership but more often than not, it means having to juggle cultural expectations with their leadership roles. Frequently, women employees were not taken seriously by their bosses, colleagues, or society. Guaranteeing a career posed challenges for women due to their family responsibilities. Women were normally to perform duties as wife and mother, in addition to fulfilling their professional responsibilities, some women experienced feelings of guilt or selfishness if they put their career interests first, because women's work and family demands were simultaneous, these demands had a significant impact on women's careers (Kirai MN, Margaret Kobia-2012).

Review of Literature

Margaret (2012), investigated the effect of social cultural beliefs on career progression of women in Kenya's civil service, the data was obtained through a descriptive survey involving 324 women in middle and senior management in selected government ministries a structured questionnaire with Likert scale questions was used to collect data from the respondents. An interview was also conducted with the human resource managers. The study used the feminist theory to explain the status and experience of women in organizations across organizational structure. The findings of the study revealed that cultural barriers are among the most difficult to remove, as they are often subtly enforced by both men and women. The study provides evidence on the effect of social cultural beliefs and offers recommendations on what the society as well as individuals can do to change their perception on women in society.

Lahti (2013), found that there are many direct and underlying factors regarding women's under representation in managerial positions. There are three levels of influential factors were defined in this study such as societal, organizational and individual factors. According to this study, it was found that women's role, perception in the organisational culture along with their competences plays a major role in women's managerial career development. The organisation in most cases, are found to make decision on advancement of careers in women by promoting women in leadership role. It was also found that, possibilities of women to become leaders in Finnish labour market varies according to sectors as there is a strong division of gender equality and women's career development.

Deborah Denise Smith Porter (2009), revealed the perceptions of female leaders' qualifications, leadership style, and effectiveness to lead among eighty-nine leaders was surveyed using the Leader Perception Questionnaire Inventory (LPQ-i) on a four-point Likert scale and four randomly selected phone interviews. The study discussed several conceptual frameworks: such as role congruity theory which examined the incongruence of female leaders; contingency and transformational theory, which focused on behavior style based on qualifications,

leadership styles, and effectiveness of female leader's; and finally, feminist theory which examined gender related issues of leadership. This study explained 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.

Objectives of the study

- To identify various sociological barriers affecting women leadership.
- To analyse the impact of the predictor variables on women leadership.

Research Design

- **Type of Research:** The present study is descriptive in nature.
- **Area of the study:** The study was conducted among the women leaders IT Companies in Coimbatore. **Population** includes women leaders who are working as a team leader, project manager and associate manager of IT Companies, Coimbatore.
- **Sampling technique:** Convenience sampling technique is used to select the sample. Primary data collection was done through survey method using a well-structured questionnaire. The Sample Size of 60 women respondents from the IT companies in Coimbatore was chosen through convenience sampling method.
- **Reliability:** Reliability is the extent to which the measurement of the constructs gives consistent results. The Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the constructs. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall instrument was found to be 0.944, which depicts that the reliability of the coefficient value is at acceptance level.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.944	28

Source: Primary data

- **Classification of data:** The data was collected through questionnaires and tabulated. The data has been classified based on age, marital status, educational qualification, nature of family, occupation, monthly income and experience.
- **Framework of data analysis:** Statistical package for social science (IMB SPSS statistics 20) was used to analyse the data. SPSS is one of the most widely used statistical software packages. It covers a broad range of statistical procedures that allows summarizing data, determining whether the differences between groups are statistically significant or not. It also contains several tools for analysing data, functions for recording data and computing new variables as well as merging and aggregating data files.
- **Tools used for analysis:** Percentage analysis is used to explore the distribution in the demographic factors of the respondents, Regression analysis is used to analyze the impact of the predictor on women in leadership.
- **Analysis and Interpretation:** The collected data is processed, classified, and interpreted using the following statistical analysis:
- ❖ **Demographic profile of the respondents**

Among 60 respondents 44.1% are in the age group of 36-44 years, 72.9% are married, 45.8% are postgraduates, 74.6% are from nuclear family, 39% are associate managers, 33.9% have a monthly income above Rs.50001 and 40.7% have an experience above 7 years.

❖ Regression

The Coefficient of Multiple Determination which is represented by R^2 measures how much percent of independent variable can explain dependent variable.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.978 ^a	.956	.952	.12251	2.021

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Barriers, Corporate Structure Issues, societal issues
 b. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

Based on the above table, it is found that R^2 score is 0.956 suggesting that all the predictor variables accounted for 95.6% of the variance in women leadership. It indicates that the determined independent variables such as Cultural Barriers, Corporate Structure Issues, and societal issues have an impact on leadership.

F-test

F-test statistics is used to check whether all independent variables included in this model have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Table 3: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.428	4	4.357	290.312	.000 ^b
	Residual	.810	54	.015		
	Total	18.238	58			

- a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Barriers, Corporate Structure Issues, Societal issues

T-test

T-test analysis is used to examine the significant impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 4: Coefficients of all factors

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.245	.099		12.600	.000
	Cultural Barriers	-.757	.050	1.135	-12.673	.000
	Corporate Structure issues	1.270	.101	1.823	12.423	.000
	Societal issues	1.047	.057	1.361	18.287	.000

a. Dependent Variable: women Leadership

Source: Primary data

Cultural Barriers – The B value is 1.135 and the significant value is 0.000 which is less than the acceptable value, hence it is inferred that cultural barriers have a significant impact on women leadership.

Corporate Structure Issues – The B value is 1.823 and the significant value is 0.000 which is less than the acceptable value, hence it is inferred that corporate structure issues have a significant impact on women leadership.

Societal issues - The B value is 1.361 and the significant value is 0.000 which is less than the acceptable value, hence it is inferred that societal issues have a significant impact on women leadership.

Inference

From the analysis it can be inferred that cultural barriers, corporate structure issues and societal issues explained 95.2% (adjusted R Square) of the variance in sociological barriers towards women leadership. Corporate Structure issues had the major influence on women leadership with a beta coefficient of 1.823 and were significant. And societal issues had the second major influence with a significant beta coefficient of 1.361.

Discussion and Conclusion

The consequences of this examination propose that a sociological barrier of women in authority in IT segment emerges from work related stress, societal issues and corporate structure issues. In work related pressure they are more hazy with their work and they feel that they are not met all requirements to deal with their activity because of gender discrimination. Stress is a developing issue in the work environment. The issues because of elevated amounts of pressure are shown physically, mentally and typically by a person. Women leaders need to assume various parts in which they are not ready to give 100% potential. Some of them consider this troublesome task as a weight while some others may accept as open door to demonstrate their initiative effectiveness. So self-inspiration and proceeds with support from the administration can mentally enhance their capacity to work.

Organizations (IT Companies) must embrace and understand the importance of women leaders in order to remain competitive, respond to globalization and promote innovation and productivity within its organization. Based on the results showed the overall effects of socio-psychological barriers towards women in leadership is significant in demographic variables in most of the ways. The current study revealed that there is an all variables (i.e., sociological barriers) have a significant impact on women leadership. Hence the study concludes that IT Companies should concentrate women leaders gain more social support from formal and informal networks, prefer collaborative work style and interactive leadership and gain line management experience which will help for their career strategy.

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