

Leadership Competencies Analysis - A Study with Reference to Women Managers in Software Industry

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Abstract: Women with enormous potential were being underutilized to their capacity in Business. And most boards say they want more diversity but the percentage seems to be very less attractive and still confront challenges in reaching business leadership positions. According to the latest reports women hold only 16.6 percent of Fortune 500 board's seats in 2012. The purpose of the present paper is to identify and examine the key leadership competencies of women managers working in the IT (Information Technology) sector and understand why still women have not made greater inroads. This research is an exploratory one; it is designed to explore the leadership competencies of women managers. The competency questionnaire with 29 competencies was designed and administered to 100 women managers of 5 software companies in Hyderabad. The respondents are the women managers who are having experience of minimum one year and maximum of fifteen years in managerial position leading a team of members. The data collected was analysed by a multivariate analysis technique (Factor Analysis) reducing the factors to the minimum of five commonalities and to the maximum of ten commonalities. And also an attempt was made to find out whether Age and Experience of women in the similar field will have any significant variance with leadership competencies. This study is contributed to and enhances the knowledge on the key leadership competencies for women to be successful in getting sponsored to the leadership positions.

Keywords: Competencies, Diversity, Emotional, Sponsor

I. Introduction

The popular saying - *Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devatah* - meaning wherever women are respected and worshipped, there lie the divinity and prosperity. India has long been a civilization giving immense respect to women and providing women equal opportunities to exercise power in day to day life and in important decisions. In modern India women are no longer treated as show pieces to be kept at home. They are also enjoying the impact of globalization and making an influence not only in domestic front but also on international sphere. The influx of Information Technology (IT) has helped to evolve the socio-economic status of the people in the country and specially women. This also made to transform woman into the career woman of today. Information technology is a sector where a quarter of the total workforce comprises women, but when it comes to representation at the top the figure is abysmally low. Only one in every 10 senior management positions is occupied by a woman in the Indian IT sector, were it is perceived to be a preferred destination for female employees. In the last five years, IT firms have largely placed women at the entry level positions while the count of mid- to senior level women executives has remained the same. So in effect, while their absolute numbers may be growing, their numbers at the top are not. The alarming signal is that a large number of women are dropping out of the IT industry due to various reasons at a crucial time of their careers. The research show that while 22% of women left their jobs because of family reasons, 27% of them quit while taking care of their children and 32% of women have not come back to the IT sector. It is a matter of another 5-10 years when we will see more women in the top deck. That is largely because the diversity programmes which have started in India seriously to mentor women leadership and to sponsor them to the top level by recognizing their special traits.

II Literature Review

Leadership could be seen as the art of influencing and directing people in a manner that wins their obedience, confidence, respect and enthusiastic cooperation in achieving a common objective.(Bass, B M, Bass & Stogdill 1990).Leadership is about behaviour, managing a group doesn't make one a leader until one's behaviour creates an environment of trust, commitment and service (John Nirenberg 2004). Leadership demands talent, spirit and hard work to develop power of imagination, an inner urge, courage and commitment to implement big ideas; an insight to choose situationally appropriate action. A competence in general can be understood as the ability of an individual to activate, use and connect the acquired knowledge in the complex, diverse and unpredictable situations (Perrenoud, 1997, in Svetlik, 2005). Competencies as the ability to use

knowledge and other capabilities, necessary for successful and efficient accomplishment of an appointed task, transaction of work, goal realization, or performance of a certain role in the business process. (Gruban 2003). Competencies encompass knowledge, expertise, skills, personal and behavioral characteristics, beliefs, motives, values, etc. They are behavioral records of the roles, which people perform in the work processes. Jeter, Lynne (2005), focuses on understanding the attitudes and behaviours that comprise "emotional intelligence" and the ability to manage one's self and emotions, and the ability to relate effectively with other people. His study suggests action steps for matching people for strengthening essential leadership competencies. Uma Shekaran (2006), in her book explains how the emergence of women in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors prevailing in the society. Indian women executives may not be any different from their counterparts from other countries. In the context of the emerging concept of team work, women would be particularly ideally suited to lead teams as executives and leaders. Groves (2005) found female leaders naturally scored higher on social and emotional skills and therefore obtained higher rating for charismatic leadership. But then again, women who are modest will appear less competent (Rudman, 1998). In a nutshell, the choice of leadership style is expected to match the gender role stereotypes, and this expectation is even more evident in the case of women managers. Grant(1988) studied what women can offer to organization and identified the psychological qualities that are relevant to organization and are commonly found in women. His findings support those of other studies that stress women's more cooperative behaviour and their need for a sense of belonging rather than self enhancement, their ability to express their vulnerability and their emotions and their perception of powerless as domination or ability to control than as a liberating force in the community.

III Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present research are explained as follows

1. To study and understand the leadership competencies of women managers working in the software Industry.
2. To study and understand the clusters of leadership competencies which are important to promote leadership among the women managers
3. To analyze which competencies are more dominant among women managers
4. To analyze the significant variance of Age and Experience with leadership competencies

IV Research Methodology

The universe for the present study consists of all women managers working in the software Industry. The Methodology adopted in the present study for analyzing the leadership competencies of women managers in all its perspectives is qualitative. A survey method has been adapted to gather information about leadership competencies of women managers. The competency questionnaire was administered to 100 women managers of 5 software companies in Hyderabad. The respondents are the women managers who are having experience of minimum one year and maximum of thirteen years in managerial position leading a team of members. The exploratory form of research is adopted to identify and understand the experiences, opinions, perceptions of women managers. For the purpose of the study Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence scale was adopted with 29 competencies. These dimensions are independent and contribute uniquely to job performance. They are generic in a way that can be applied to all jobs (Goleman, 1999, Macaleer & Shannon, 2002). A content analysis has been made to gather the data for the model leadership competencies for women managers. The data collected were analysed by a multivariate analysis technique (Factor Analysis) reducing the factors to the minimum of five components and to the maximum of ten components to identify the key leadership competencies. And also an attempt was made to find out whether Age and Experience of women in the similar field will have any significant variance with leadership competencies.

V Analysis & Interpretation

1. Leadership Competencies of Women Managers

The quality of leadership directly impacts the health and success of every organization. Leaders often have the intelligence, experience and interpersonal skills required to successfully lead an organization, but it is the understanding of how to apply that knowledge that defines competence. To understand the specific leadership competencies of women managers they were asked to rate their competencies. The purpose here is to understand the leadership competencies. From the available data the factor analysis was conducted and the respondents are tested for responses and the data was analysed. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value is arrived at 0.531, since it is greater than 0.05 and is suitable for conducting factor analysis. Therefore the factor analysis was conducted. The extracted commonalities among 100 respondents and found to be minimum of 0.543 for accurate self management and maximum of 0.909 for Interprets & communicates business. For

understanding the dimensionality of leadership competencies that are key for the Managerial development. The 29 factors are reduced to 10 components.

According to Table:1 the factors loaded on rotated component matrix are Co-operation, Creativity, Flexibility and Ability to work on (F1) component which is named as Efficiency Competence. The factors loaded on the (F2) component are service orientation, sense of ethics, Initiative, self-confidence which is named as professional competence. The factors loaded on (F3) are Team skills (good follower), Team skills (effective leader) which are named as Team spirit. The factors loaded on the (F4) component are business practice, corporate philosophy, accurate self assessment which is named as Entrepreneurial competence. The factors loaded on the (F5) component are Interprets & communication, corporate philosophy which is termed as business awareness. The factors loaded on the (F6) component are Communication, Conscientiousness and Collaboration which is named as Social competence.

Table: 1 Distribution of Leadership Competencies on Rotated Component Matrix

[F1] Efficiency competence	[F2] Professional competence	[F3] Team spirit	[F4] Business Competence	[F5] Business Awareness	[F6] Inter personal Competence	[F7] Negotiating Skills	[F8] Self confidence	[F9] Business Evaluation	[F10] Personal competencies
Co-operation	Service Orientation	Team skills (good follower)	Business Practice-Understands business	Interprets and communicates information	Communication	Consensus building	Influence	Business Practice-Monitors performance	Empathy
Creativity	Sense of Ethics	Team skills (effective leader)	Business Practice-Monitors performance	Corporate Philosophy-Acquires information	Conscientiousness	Ongoing Assessment	Self confidence	Evaluation	Mediation
Flexibility	Initiative		Corporate Philosophy-Interprets information	Acquires ,organizes and maintains Business	Collaboration	Accurate Self Assessment			
Ability to work	Self confidence		Accurate Self Assessment						

Source : Survey data

The factors loaded on the (F7) component are Consensus building, Ongoing Assessment, Accurate self assessment. The factors loaded on the (F8) component are Influence, Self confidence which is termed as Self confidence. The factors loaded on the (F9) component are Business practice-monitors performance which is termed as Business evaluation. The factors loaded on the (F10) component are Empathy and mediation which is named as personal competence. Women Managers who are having these combinations are emotionally aware and are strong in leadership behaviour.

Table: 2 Distributions of Leadership Competencies on Rotated Component Matrix

[F1] Efficiency Competence	[F2] Professional Competence	[F3] Business Competence	[F4] Team spirit	[F5] Business Awareness
Co-operation	Positive point of view	Business Practice-Understands business cycle	Team skills being a effective leader	Interprets and communicates information
Ongoing Assessment	Conscientiousness	Business Practice-Monitors performance	Team skills being a good follower	Acquires ,organizes and maintains Business
Flexibility	Initiative	Corporate Philosophy-Interprets information		Corporate Philosophy-Acquires information
Creativity	Service Orientation			
Ability to work	Empathy			
	Communication			

Source: Survey data

According to the data given in the Table:2, the factors loaded on rotated component matrix are Co-operation, Ongoing Assessment, Flexibility, Creativity and Ability to work and are loaded on (F1) component which is named as Efficiency competence. The factors loaded on the (F2) component are Positive point of view, Conscientiousness, Service orientation, Initiative, Empathy and Communication which is named as professional competence. The factors loaded on (F3) are Business practice understanding and monitoring and corporate philosophy which is named as Business competence. The factors loaded on the (F4) component are Team skills being an effective leader and Team leader being a good follower which is termed as Team spirit. The factors loaded on the (F5) component are Interprets and communicates information, Acquires, organizes and maintains Business and Corporate Philosophy-Acquires information which are named as Business Awareness. Women Managers who are having these combinations are emotionally aware and are strong.

2. Comparison of Factors Loaded on Rotated Component Matrix

The factors loaded on rotated component matrix are reduced to 10 factors and 5 factors in each iteration. These factors are given a name based on the competencies which are categorized. The competencies are common in both the cases; they are Efficiency competence, Professional competence, Business competence, Team spirit, Business awareness. This enables us to conclude that women managers are having leadership competencies which are important for the business decision-making. And the important leadership competency clusters are explained in the following figure-1.

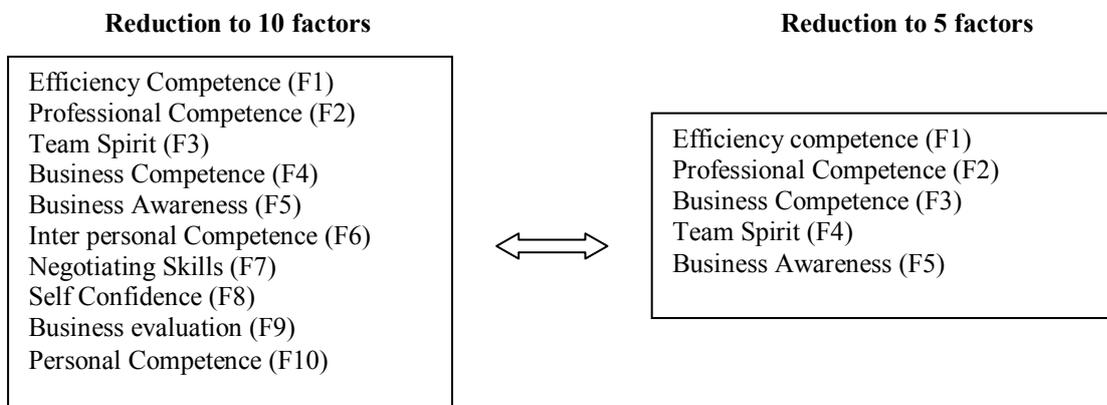


Figure: 1 Comparison of Factors Loaded on Rotated Component Matrix

3. Analysis of variance between the means of leadership competencies and Age and Experience of the respondents

In order to examine whether there is significant variance arising between the means of leadership competencies and Age and Experience ANOVA is conducted. The results show that there is significant variance between the means of Efficiency competence (0.05) and age but there is no significant variation between means of Professional Competence (0.951), Business Competence (0.408), Team Spirit (0.358), Business Awareness (0.262). There is significant variance between the means of Business awareness (.053) and experience but there is no significant variation between means of Efficiency competence (0.767), Professional Competence (0.98), Business Competence (0.321), Team Spirit (0.439). Efficiency competence and Business awareness are the two important leadership competencies which are important for the leadership development and women managers possess these qualities which help them to be successful managers in organisations. When women managers with good people skills have the strong self confidence and are adapting with the changing business scenario and take decisions accordingly and prove their dynamism they will be successful.

VI Recommendations

Leadership is an important topic today. There have been significant changes in work force representing good percentage of women contributing to the nation’s growth. There is a myth that women are not good leadership material but this study provides objective evidence that woman managers have all the competencies and skills to aspire for leadership positions.

- The psyche makeup of women should be strong and determined to aspire for leadership positions. Women need to have mentors who can transform through their actions and behaviours.
- Lot of leadership learning can happen in the boss-subordinate, colleague-colleague relationships. It is an advantage, if there is a good role model.
- Women should stop underestimating their own leadership competencies. This may contribute to advancement to leadership positions.

VII Conclusion

From the given demographic profile of women managers working in IT industry of Hyderabad, it is very clear that women potential is high and there is a realization that full involvement of women in development of the organisations. Today organizations are willing to hire women and education has helped to provide equal opportunities for women in the corporate world. Retention policies in organization have also changed to attract and retain women throughout their career especially after marriage like parenting and other domestic responsibilities. In this journey of leadership women with intelligence, experience, interpersonal skills and business awareness have succeeded in empowering others and capturing hearts. Women with calibre and competencies and who has a good support system from the organization where she works, her family and her spouse can definitely be a good leader. There is a need to also expand the role of successful women to be mentors to other aspiring women in the organization. A process of well established mentorship will enable women to build their competencies, enhance their visibility and develop the leadership competencies to become effective leaders in their organizations. Mentorship along with the sponsoring team in the organisation can be a very effective tool for leadership development.

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