

Empowering Leadership Behavior – An Empirical Study with Special Reference to Selected Service Sector in India

Jain Sonal*, **Jain Sangeeta and Sharma Vivek**

IMS, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore, INDIA

*jainmsonal15@gmail.com

Abstract

In the ever-changing work environment, organizations must benefit from their human asset in order to sustain competitiveness. Therefore, it is important to recognize the role of employees' perception of leadership in contributing to setup an environment where employees experience empowered, are willing to do more than what is expected and want to stay in the organization. This research investigated the link between empowering leadership behavior of the women managers and demographic variables using data from selected service sector of India.

The main purpose of this research is to study the role of some demographic variable such as age, family structure, marital status etc. on empowering leadership behavior. This study was done on the women managers of the selected service sector (Education, Health, Information Technology, Banking and Insurance) with a sample size of 377 respondents by using structured questionnaire. Analysis was done by using Frequency Distribution and Percentage Analysis, ONE WAY ANOVA, etc. The analysis is done on SPSS software. Numbers of demographic variables are available but for this research, personal demographic variables were taken.

Keywords: Empowering leadership behavior (ELB), Women managers, Service sector, Demographic variables.

Introduction

In 20th century it was almost unheard of to have a female boss. In 1953 Gallop conducted a survey and the result shows that only 5% employee prefer to work under a female boss. But as the situation changed, the same survey shows that 20% employees happily work under the female boss. Undoubtedly, it is unbelievable that women are as influential as men. They are powerful, strong, confident, emotionally and mentally mature. Due to changes in technological advancement in 21st century and increasing cut and throat competition in the international market, many companies are trying to adopt new strategies of HRM practices by implementing empowering leadership behavior style in which manager gives more power in decision making and obligation for subordinates' job where compared with what they had in traditional bureaucratic organization.⁵ Generation X is converting in generation Y, as generation Y

is more open minded and willing to take responsibility, support, employee empowerment and responds positively to change.

To empower leadership is the leader's empowering style of behavior.¹ Some researchers found a connection between transformational leadership and empowerment in which Dvir et al stated that empowerment is the positive result of transformational leadership. The beginning of the empowering leadership begins with the concept of power sharing.¹³

The basic difference between the traditional leader's behavior and the current empowering counterparts the shift in control from the leader to individuals. Arnold et al² study revealed the five major characteristics of an empowering leader's behavior (1) showing concern (2) leading by example (3) coaching (4) participative management and (5) informing.

Review of Literature

Harter et al suggested in their study that leadership is one of the biggest contributing factors to employee work engagement. Empowering leadership can play an essential and an extrinsic motivational role to encourage work engagement. Basically, it is considered that empowering leadership behaviors support employees to meet the basic requirement for self-determination. To encourage the followers by using self-rewards, try to engage them in participative goal setting and encourage them for teamwork and independent action, empowering leaders pass on their power to followers. By doing so followers 'capacity should be enhanced for self-determination and followers' feelings of mastery.

Empowering leadership means sharing power to improve employees' motivation and contribution in their work.⁸ It is a process of creating the environment that makes possible to share the power with an employee by outlining the importance of employee's role, giving him decision-making autonomy, showing trust in employee's potential and give them freedom to act and perform according to the current situation.² All these activities are conceptually connected to work engagement. Empowering leadership happens when leader or managers encourage trust-based relationship with their subordinates, communicate the convincing vision to their employees, encourage participative decision making, guide their subordinate to be more self-supporting and show more concern for the employee's family front to share their personal problems.⁸

Srivastava et al¹² mentioned in their study that there are various leadership behaviors for the study, but empowering leader behavior has assumed special importance. Konczak et al⁹ identified the six dimensions of leaders empowering behavior. Delegation of authority in which empowered leaders share information and knowledge with their followers to facilitate them to contribute their valuable suggestion and make quality decisions that are beneficial for the organization.⁷ Accountability for outcomes in which leaders concentrate on reallocating the power and giving new responsibilities to followers and make them accountable for outcomes.^{7,9}

Self-directed decision-making is explained as permitting and connecting subordinates to involve themselves in problem solving processes⁹ realizing them to feel more empowered. With information sharing, managers share information with subordinates and subordinates also share information with one another.^{2,9,11} Apart from this, leaders play an important role in developing the skills and coaching for innovative performance where they create opportunities for training and enhance their skills of assistants.^{9,11}

Cameron³ mentioned, development of human capital can be the most predictive positive practice for organizational effectiveness. Thus, it is assumed that leadership empowerment behavior encourages psychological empowerment. Leadership empowerment behavior (LEB) is focused on an enable process, not on delegating process and is conceptualized as the capability of leaders to delegate authority, encourage accountability and self-directed decision-making, enhancing skills and training of the supporters.^{7,9}

Objectives of the study are:

- 1) To study the empowering leadership behavior among the female employees of selected service sectors of India.
- 2) To study the effect of demographic variables on awareness of the Empowering leadership behavior of women managers.

Hypothesis of the study

H1: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior on the basis of age.

H1a: There is a significant difference in leadership behavior on the basis of age.

H2: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on family structure.

H2a: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on family structure.

H3: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on marital status.

H3a: There is significant difference in leadership behavior based on marital status.

Research Methodology

The sample consisted of 377 female respondents from the selected service sector (Education, Health, Information Technology, Banking and Insurance) which included both private and public sector organization. The rationale behind selecting a selected service sectors including only female employee was to minimize the gender effect because some studies reported that there was no difference in the empower leadership behavior of a male and women managers.

The primary data was collected by using standard scale ELQ (Empowerment leadership Questionnaire) developed by Arnold et al.² It includes five scales: participative decision making, showing concern, leading by example, informing and coaching while secondary data was collected through published journal, e journals, thesis, magazines website and different reports. In present scenario, women are multi talented and they are exploring their talent in different kind of service sector where the role of a woman is increasing day by day. Women are turning bread makers to bread earner and leaving no stone unturned for their existence in the market.

Data Analysis and Discussion

H1: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior on the basis of age.

H1a: There is a significant difference in leadership behavior on the basis of age.

Interpretation

Using the descriptive statistics given in table 2, the ANOVA test is conducted to test the first hypothesis "H1." Table 3 gives the result of the ANOVA test conducted on the age group of the respondent. It is found that the given value of p is greater than .05 and it is statistically insignificant. Based on the result the null hypothesis is accepted which means there is no significant difference in leadership behavior on the basis of age.

H2: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on family structure.

H2a: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on family structure.

Interpretation

Table 4 and 5 tend to test the "H2". The significance value of empowering leadership behavior comes out to be .002 (less than .05), thus null hypothesis is rejected and subsequently alternate hypothesis is accepted. It means family structure is found to play an important role in determining the empowering leadership behavior of the women managers. With the highest mean score, the women manager who belongs to joint family shows the highest level of leadership behavior if they empowered in the

organization, followed by the nuclear family with the low mean score whereas the female employee who lives single, shows the lowest level of empowering leadership behavior.

H3: There is no significant difference in leadership behavior based on marital status.

H3a: There is significant difference in leadership behavior based on marital status.

Interpretation

Table 6 and 7 manage to test hypothesis no. 3. Significance value of p is greater than critical value with 95% level of significance. It states that the null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected. It means there is no significant difference in unmarried, married and separated women managers' empowering leadership behavior.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Particulars	Categories	Frequency		Percent
Age	20-29	228		60.5
	30-39	114		30.2
	40-49	26		6.9
	More than 50	9		2.4
Marital Status	Unmarried	183		48.5
	Married	187		49.6
	Separated	7		1.9
Family Structure	Single	72		19.1
	Nuclear	192		50.9
	Joint	113		30

Table 2
Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20-29	228	135.8202	27.04749	1.79126	132.2905	139.3498	33.00	175.00
30-39	114	131.3509	27.85137	2.60852	126.1829	136.5188	38.00	175.00
40-49	26	141.4231	22.98725	4.50817	132.1383	150.7078	75.00	174.00
more than 50	9	152.4444	20.27998	6.75999	136.8559	168.0330	109.00	175.00
Total	377	135.2520	27.07746	1.39456	132.5099	137.9941	33.00	175.00

Table 3
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	5458.901	3	1819.634	2.512	.058
	Within Groups	270220.160	373	724.451		
	Total	275679.061	376			

Table 4
Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
single	72	129.4583	28.79257	3.39324	122.6924	136.2243	33.00	170.00
nuclear	192	133.1302	28.18430	2.03403	129.1182	137.1422	37.00	175.00
joint	113	142.5487	22.32071	2.09976	138.3883	146.7091	76.00	175.00
Total	377	135.2520	27.07746	1.39456	132.5099	137.9941	33.00	175.00

Table 5
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	9297.459	2	4648.729	6.527	.002
	Within Groups	266381.602	374	712.250		
	Total	275679.061	376			

Table 6
Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
unmarried	183	136.1366	26.34676	1.94761	132.2938	139.9794	33.00	175.00
married	187	134.8396	27.26090	1.99351	130.9068	138.7724	37.00	175.00
separated	7	123.1429	40.65066	15.36451	85.5473	160.7384	38.00	157.00
Total	377	135.2520	27.07746	1.39456	132.5099	137.9941	33.00	175.00

Table 7
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	1201.432	2	600.716	.819	.442
	Within Groups	274477.629	374	733.897		
	Total	275679.061	376			

Conclusion

Across the world, most of organizations are adopting the empowering leadership behavior practices in order to follow today's economic market and new needs of the employee. There are many reasons to empower their followers especially for the women managers. When leaders empower their employees, they will feel more competent and control and they will experience meaning in their work. The purpose of this study was to investigate how demographic variable is affecting empowering leadership behavior practices for women managers.

The results implied that age and marital status did not play any significant role in leadership empowerment behavior of women managers whereas the family structure of a women manager plays a significant role in deciding the leadership behavior of a women manager when empowered by their managers. The women manager who lives in joint family and has full family support shows the higher level of empowering leadership behavior because of better social skills. Whether it is right or wrong women managers whatever position they hold whether it is CEOs, entrepreneurs or managers, are more skilled when it comes to connecting to people.

Limitations and Suggestions

The study focused only to professional working women and limited demographic variables have been taken. The study is confined only to selected service sector of India. It was

suggested that leader should create an encouraging working environment with equality, guidance, respect, empowerment, communication, keeping in mind the company's value and culture. The injustice can be minimized when the top management incorporates women managers in decision making. Women managers should provide opportunities to make the correct job choice, engagement increases when there is a fit between expectations and reality.

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