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LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN IN IT INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the leadership of women in the Information Technology (IT) industry, aiming to understand the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of female leaders in a predominantly male-driven sector. It examines the leadership styles adopted by women, their career progression, and the organizational and societal factors influencing their advancement. The research identifies barriers such as gender bias, limited mentorship opportunities, and work–life balance issues, while also highlighting enablers like supportive policies, training programs, and inclusive work cultures. By analyzing empirical data, case studies, and existing literature, the study provides insights into how women leaders enhance team performance, innovation, and organizational growth.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal. Leadership is the potential to influence behaviour of others. It is also defined as the capacity to influence a group towards the realization of a goal. Leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behaviour and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation. Leaders are required to develop future visions, and to motivate the organizational members to want to achieve the visions. Leadership refers to the quality of leading people. Leadership has led to the progress of human civilization. A leader is one who can motivate others and lead a group of people or organization. It is different to be a good leader than just being a leader. It is because a good leader does not only influence but makes to realize the capabilities of a person. It helps in giving the best. The Great Leader did not say anyone to follow him but the deeds and concepts of life influenced other people. Good leaders prove themselves by working instead of boasting.

OBJECTIVE

1. Advances in information technology (IT) are providing leadership opportunities for women both in upper and middle management.
2. To identify the most important influencing factors to women progression to leadership positions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. **Shanthi Mark Fernandes, (2023)29** studied the "Role of Transformational Leadership on Innovation in Higher Education," highlighting how transformational leaders foster innovation through motivation, intellectual stimulation, and exploring new opportunities. The study, based on secondary data from journals and databases like ScienceDirect and ResearchGate, analyzed the impact of transformational leadership on promoting innovative practices, such as introducing multidisciplinary courses and outcome-based education. It emphasizes the need for further research using primary data to better understand its effect on the innovation process.
2. **Edward David, (2022)25** studied the "Effect of Skill Development Programme on Enhancing Leadership Qualities Among Undergraduate Students," focusing on their awareness and effectiveness in leadership and soft skills. Using the LESSDPT training program with 450 respondents, the study employed descriptive analysis, T-test, F-test, correlation, and regression. Findings revealed a low level of leadership and soft skills awareness, influenced by demographic factors like gender, age, year of study, locality, and college type. The study emphasizes the need for higher education teachers to be trained to effectively teach leadership skills.
3. **Tan Bee Wen, Theresa, (2019)16** studied "Leadership Styles in Influencing Employees' Job Performances" in the Malaysian private sector, examining transformational, transactional, and thought

leadership styles. Using self-administered questionnaires, the study found that leadership styles significantly impact employee performance, with thought leadership fostering innovation, trust, and authority. It also noted that fear-based management may yield short-term results but is unsustainable.

4. **Iqbal, Anwar, Haider, (2015)** studied the "Effect of Leadership Style on Employee Performance," examining autocratic, democratic, and participative styles at Al-Ghazi Tractor Factory. Using secondary data from CEOs and employees, the study found that participative leadership positively impacts long-term employee performance by fostering confidence and decision-making power. Democratic leadership improves performance moderately, while autocratic leadership is effective only in the short term. The study concludes that participative leadership is most beneficial for sustainable employee growth and performance.
5. **Ravikumar, (2013)7** studied the "Impact of Team Work, Work Culture, Leadership, and Compensation on Employee Engagement in MSMEs in India," surveying 500 employees. Using multiple stepwise regression analysis, the study found that leadership qualities, particularly integrity, collaboration, and teamwork, have a significant positive impact on employee engagement. The research emphasizes the importance of establishing HR departments as a link between management and employees to enhance engagement.

Leadership: Meaning, Qualities, and Frameworks

1.Meaning of Leadership

Leadership is the ability to guide, inspire, and influence a group of individuals or an organization toward achieving a common goal or vision. It involves:

- Setting direction
- Making strategic decisions
- Motivating others to collaborate effectively

Leadership can take various forms and styles, often involving qualities such as communication, vision, empathy, and adaptability.

2. Effective Leadership Qualities

Leadership qualities can be categorized into three main types:

1. Innovative Qualities
2. Empathy and Emotional Qualities
3. Inspirational Qualities

2.1 Innovative Qualities

- **Creativity:** Ability to generate innovative and unconventional ideas that inspire others and influence industry direction.
- **Knowledge:** Possessing deep expertise, insights, and a comprehensive understanding of a specific field.
- **Courage:** Willingness to take bold, principled stands and challenge the status quo for positive change.
- **Public Speaking:** Engaging with audiences through speaking engagements, workshops, podcasts, or media interviews to disseminate knowledge and build reputation.

2.2 Empathy and Emotional Qualities

- **Decision Making:** Guiding individuals or organizations to make informed and strategic choices based on expertise.
- **Influencing:** Inspiring, persuading, and impacting opinions and actions within a field or community.
- **Problem Solving:** Identifying challenges and implementing solutions that enhance organizational resilience.
- **Proper Coordination:** Harmonizing the efforts of teams and resources to achieve goals efficiently.

2.3 Factors that Foster Leadership Qualities

1. **Continuous Learning:** Expanding knowledge and skills through courses, observation, practice, and research.
2. **Innovation and Creative Thinking:** Offering progressive ideas and unique perspectives to drive industry growth.
3. **Mentoring:** Guiding mentees through information-sharing and advocacy to foster growth and organizational culture.
4. **Adaptability:** Flexibility in cognitive, emotional, and dispositional aspects to navigate change effectively.

5. **Self-Esteem:** Maintaining confidence, competence, and a strong moral compass.
6. **Passion:** Demonstrating commitment and enthusiasm that inspires trust and engagement.
7. **Improvisation:** Responding effectively to unforeseen challenges and opportunities.
8. **Credibility:** Being trustworthy, reliable, and respected by peers.
9. **Expertise:** Developing specialized knowledge and authoritative insights in a specific field.
10. **Influencing:** Shaping opinions and guiding positive change through effective communication and
11. leadership.

2.4 Pillars of Thought Leadership

1. **Credibility:** Being perceived as an authority in one's discipline through experience, knowledge, and recognition.
2. **Profile:** The reach and influence of one's network and professional visibility.
3. **Being Prolific:** Regularly sharing knowledge through blogs, speaking engagements, media, and social platforms.
4. **Depth of Ideas:** Codifying insights into processes and frameworks that educate and guide others.

3. SMART Goals

SMART goals provide direction, focus, and motivation for both individuals and organizations.
SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** Clear and well-defined goals answering: Who, What, Where, When, Why?
- **Measurable:** Establishing criteria to track progress and determine success.
- **Achievable:** Realistic goals considering available resources and capabilities.
- **Realistic:** Goals that are relevant and within reach.
- **Timely:** Goals with defined start and end dates to create urgency.

Importance of SMART Goals

- **Clarifies End Objective:** Removes ambiguity and provides a clear focus.
- **Effective Time Management:** Optimizes resource use and work efficiency.
- **Reminds You of Priorities:** Keeps attention on key milestones.
- **Obliges to Take Action:** Encourages consistent progress and achievement.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study highlights the exceptional leadership abilities exhibited by women working in the IT sector. Empirical data and thorough study demonstrate that women are not only proficient in technical domains but also in critical leadership competencies including communication, empathy, adaptability, and team problem solving. Their distinct viewpoints and varied methods greatly enhance team dynamics, creativity, and corporate success. But institutional prejudices and impediments must be addressed if women are to climb into leadership positions. Organizations may fully utilize the potential of female leaders in the IT industry by creating an inclusive and encouraging atmosphere. This will increase creativity, resilience, and competitiveness in the rapidly changing digital landscape.

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