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An Investigation of the Leadership Challenges amongst Women Entrepreneurs

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Abstract: ***Women must live up to collective expectations of what it takes to be a leader while also adhering to particular gender stereotypes. Throughout history, femininity has been portrayed as reliant, meek, and conforming, and as a result, women have been perceived as deficient in leadership traits. The male bias is mirrored in the incorrect view of leadership as merely command or control. Women will be more readily acknowledged as leaders as leadership becomes correctly understood as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs of followers, and men will adapt their leadership styles (Burns, 1978). Because women represent more than half of the global talent pool, it is clear that they should be at the forefront of the economic and social scene, not just to be fair, but to ensure that the most prominent minds, men's and women's, are brought together to address the challenges that our societies face. Achieving gender equality in organizations at all levels is a lengthy and difficult path that requires the involvement of the entire company as well as the strong commitment of senior management. This report, The Leadership Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs, provides insight into the ongoing absence of women in leadership posts. Indeed, this study indicates how women talent might be exploited as a competitive advantage to meet the global difficulties that organizations will face soon.***
Keywords: Leadership, organization, challenges, women entrepreneurs

I. INTRODUCTION

India, formerly regarded as impoverished and hesitant, is today one of the world's most prominent and rapid-growing economies. Nonetheless, India's accelerating and awe-inspiring economic prosperity are tainted by widespread discrimination and intimidation. This paradoxical framework emphasises the need for skilled, adept, and qualified labour and leadership to sustain India's growth and effectiveness. Women's aptitude, talent, aspiration, and passion are critical in India for its development and growth in all spheres of human activity. Although women have already contributed much to India's gradient, they still have much more to contribute to the diverse and sustainable Indian human capital pool. Women s in India stand for or epitomise formal leadership in top executives and shift from middle to top management roles, producing a leaking leadership pipeline. Leadership in India is typically associated with men, despite data demonstrating an incalculable gap by ignoring or underutilizing the women workforce. Capturing women's leadership potential has thus become imperative for survival and affordability.

A. Objectives

To ascertain impediments hindering women's entrepreneurs' advancement to leadership positions

1) To investigate the extent to which difficulties affect Women entrepreneurs' performance and advancement to leadership positions.
2) To provide potential measures for increasing women's participation in positions of leadership.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Even while it is widely acknowledged that significant progress has been made in women's access to entry-level leadership positions, certain barriers prevent women from advancing and expanding their careers. These elements are highlighted by many authors and explained as follows: Burton (1991) and BieremaandOpengart (2002) believe that women's equitable access to career growth remains a challenge.

Work-family conflicts Lack of support causes conflict with career expectations, causing women to postpone their advancement into management or executive positions (Jano, 2000). A recent women study

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South African entrepreneurs discovered that while 93 percent of their husbands/partners supported their careers, only 27 percent of the women had structured arrangements regarding the division of daily household tasks, and 10% of the respondents received no assistance from their husbands/partners. According to these figures, women continue to bear the majority of the obligation for child and household care (Naidoo&Jano, 2003). As a result, Naidoo and May (2005) argue that many women will reevaluate their personal lives when considering a lifelong career. Women's key worries were the duration of working time that was necessary that was longer than intended (Mooney and Ryan, 2008). Furthermore, as job expectations increasingly intrude on home life, women face conflict, which undermines their career achievements (Voydanoff, 2005). According to Lopez- Claros and Zahidi (2005), work-life balance is difficult for women with young children, especially when they try to balance their job as primary caregivers with extra responsibilities in the company. For fear of confirming the communal stereotype, ambitious women rarely rely on organisational help regarding family responsibilities (Broadbridge, 2008). As a result, many women in executive and elite positions deal with this by making discrete decisions between their job growth and family, such as "opting out" or deferring marriage and motherhood (Blair-Loy, 2001; Nelson and Burke, 2000). In other cases, women increase their domain resources by relying on spouse support, such as dividing housework and caring for their children (Brett and Stroh, 2003). However, even when framed as a couple's mutual decision, such couple-level adaptive techniques do not always support women's work-life balance (Wierda-Boer et al.,2008).

According to Keene and Reynolds (2002), women entrepreneurs are disadvantaged due to family and job responsibilities. Women entrepreneurs must avoid working overtime since their families require greater care. As a result, the notion that women are less involved in their jobs than males is maintained. Freidman and Greenhouse (2000) argue in their highly acclaimed book, work and family: allies or enemies, that struggle between work and family has real consequences for women, including serious constraints on career choices, limited opportunities for career advancement, and most studies found that women themselves admit that domestic factors make it difficult for them to advance to higher jobs (punia2005) Because women are expected to prioritise their families, women entrepreneurs are likely to endure a higher amount of parental role-overload than males. 2005 (aryee, Srinivas)

According to a recent study by warenfiox(2009), integrating paid work and motherhood renames a key source of difficulty for women. Women are in charge of domestic labour and childcare (tang and cousins). 2005) Ronald Burke and Mustalakoyuncu, Lisa, and Fiksenbaun (2002) claimed that skilled women enter professional and managerial positions inside organisations, they continue to face barriers to advancement. DI Georgio-lutz(2002) discussed balancing work and family and quoted Hansel as saying that a lack of a supportive environment for balancing home and work may be the most significant hindrance to women's success.

1) *Hypothesis 1 There is a significant relationship between work-family barriers and women entrepreneurs' progression to a leadership position.*

Culture in the workplace Employers and women professionals believe that family commitments and a lack of workplace flexibility are barriers to women's advancement. However, they disagree on several other issues. According to a recent study, women were more likely than their employers to consider an inhospitable workplace culture that fosters stereotyping and assumptions about women's roles and skills a serious impediment. A culture like this might present numerous challenges for women seeking senior management roles. Meyerson (2001) and Bierema and Opengart (2002) concur that organisational structure and culture are frequently not designed to meet women's ideals. According to Linehan and Scullion (2005), women are generally put in non-strategic sectors rather than professional and management roles, resulting in delayed career growth. According to Eagly and Wood (1991), this explains why most women are less interested in managing roles because organisational cultural preferences restrict them more than men. For example, a lack of supporting workplace practises such as mentoring and adequate time to plan for child care and other personal duties can stymie their advancement. Discrimination and harassment, however, are frequently employed to inhibit it actively. Laff (2006) discovers that women are hindered in their job due to a lack of suitable mentors.

Women entrepreneur stereotypes Bierema and Opengart (2002) agree with Burton (1991) that preconceptions against women as entrepreneurs are one of the causes contributing to women's slower professional advancement and fewer possibilities. This is due to previous professional techniques and models in organisations based on male experience, resulting in negative views toward women seeking career progression in the workplace. Another example is that in 2003 while working as a volunteer for a particular organisation in Lesotho, the researcher's women supervisor was denied promotion despite her outstanding work performance because her boss claimed that she had recently lost a husband, had six children, and other family responsibilities, and thus would be unable to balance the two (her job and family commitments).

2) *Hypothesis 2 There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and women entrepreneurs' progression to leadership positions.*

Social capital underinvestment According to Ryan and Jetten (2009), women's networks can be a vehicle for individual strategy in developing their careers, as well as a strategy to give women a voice in an organisation and improve their lot. To grasp women's social networking, it is essential to understand the socio-structural framework of the society in which they live and, more precisely, how it affects their organisation. Attending social gatherings raises one's profile (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2007). According to (Aswathappa, 2005), attendance at social functions and events provides an opportunity for social contact and information about job opportunities. To improve job growth opportunities, one could join a support group to learn to listen to others and establish empathy and other important interpersonal relationships (Zajas, 1995). According to Vinnicombe and Colwill (1997), associations can make women more visible in society and motivate them to contribute and develop.

Furthermore, Dessler (2008) notes that in a study of minority working women in the United States, 40% of the women blamed their lack of professional development on a lack of networking with prominent colleagues. Nonetheless, some scholars have suggested that networks are vital for improving awareness and advancing one's profession (Robbins and Coulter, 1999; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Aycan, 2004; Maxfield, 2005; Ogden et al., 2006). According to Ogden et al. (2006), networking was a key enabler of job advancement. According to Robbins and Coulter (1999), networks lead to job success. According to Ackah and Heaton (2003), men exploited networks to get promotions. According to Aycan (2004), successful women Management in Turks, Journal of Language, Technology, and Entrepreneurship in Africa, Vol. 2. No.1.2010, ISSN 1998-1279. Maxfield (2005) states that women found networking difficult and lacked a key tool. According to Ackah and Heaton (2003), women were excluded from networks where they could make themselves known and learn about promotion processes. According to Tanzanian research, women who do not network are prone to be rendered invisible and forgotten when discussing promotions (Adler and Izraeli, 1994).

3) *Hypothesis 3 There is a significant relationship between the under-investment of social capital and women entrepreneurs' progression to leadership positions.*

Career visibility The importance of career and family roles According to role theory, an individual's identity is made up of several roles, each with varied salience for that individual. As a role grows more significant to a person, it becomes more important to meet the obligations of that role (Hogg et al., 1995). Work will be more important to some people, while family will be more important to others. Others may have a high priority in both the professional and family arenas. A salient feature of our lives serves as a barometer of self-esteem or self-evaluation, in the sense that high self-esteem is contingent on the successful fulfilment of this salient domain. Thus, if a woman who works full-time values her career, she will be encouraged to pursue it with her emotional, mental, and physical energy and resources. Career salience is the level of importance of one's career in one's life. Career salience has also been linked to career and professional commitment (Cooper-Hakim &Viswesvaran, 2005).

London (1983) emphasised career or work centrality in one's life in the subdomains of the actual level of job involvement, both psychologically and physically, and the desire for upward mobility. Within this approach, London hypothesised that persons with a high career salience would value career satisfaction more than other types of satisfaction. In addition, he claimed that a high level of work prominence would involve making sacrifices and deferring fulfilment in other areas of life, such as family (Hatchman, 2009). The Previous study has found some evidence that career role salience may boost leadership aspiration (Hatchman,2009, Marks & Houston, 2002, Nauta et al., 1998). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

4) *Hypothesis4 There is a significant relationship between career role salience and women entrepreneurs' progression to a leadership position.*

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1) *Research Design:* For this investigation, a quantitative technique in the form of a correlational analysis was used. And to see if all of the independent variables are related to women entrepreneurs' advancement to leadership positions. The independent variables include family-related variables, workplace barriers, a lack of networking, and a lack of confidence. The dependent variable is the advancement of women entrepreneurs to positions of leadership.
2) *Research Instrument:* The research tool used in this study is a structured questionnaire.
3) *Population and Sampling:* The target population was women entrepreneurs Dindigul district. A convenience sampling technique was used. A total of 120 questionnaires stayed distributed to the respondents, and 96 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 80 %.
4) *Data Analysis:* Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship among the research variables.

Table1: Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
W.M.P. to a leadership position	0.798				
Family-related barriers	-0.420**	0.804			
organizational culture	-0.467**	-0.402**	0.834		
under- investment in social capital	-0.446**	-0.418**	0.323**	0.861	
career salience	0.472**	0.70	0.157**	0.397	0.702

** - Significant at $p < 0.01$

IV. RESULT

The correlation analysis presented in Table 1 reveals that the three independent variables, work-family barrier ($r = -0.420$, $p < 0.05$), organization culture ($r = -0.467$, $p < 0.05$), and under-investment in social capital ($r = -0.446$, $p < 0.05$) were all negatively related to progression to a leadership position but career salience ($r = 0.472$, $p < 0.05$) not only significantly but positively related to progression to a leadership position.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relationship between work-family hurdles, organisational culture, underinvestment in social capital, career salience and women entrepreneurs' career progression to leadership roles. The findings of the study and investigation support the direct negative association between work-family obstacles, organisational culture barriers, and underinvestment in social capital with the progression of women entrepreneurs. It is worth noting that career salience was more expressively related to the professional growth of women entrepreneurs. The direct negative association between work-family obstacles and the advancement of women entrepreneurs suggests that women miss out on jobs because of the decisions they make to accommodate their family responsibilities. Advocating further, the barriers women entrepreneurs confront can be reduced, such as an unwelcoming organisational culture and a lack of investment in social capital, which keeps women from rising to leadership positions. All these could lead to gender biassed talent management operations in the organisation. Men are chosen over women for specific positions, given more difficult assignments that allow them to demonstrate their ability and give them high visibility, and given high-value training and development opportunities that allow men to acquire skills and competencies that qualify them for top management/leadership positions. Gender bias in personnel management harms the advancement of women entrepreneurs. The research findings on leadership positions are consistent with certain previous studies. Similarly, research confirms that family-related characteristics (Voydanoff, 2005; Blair-Loy, 2001) and unfavourable stereotypes (Cabrera et al., 2009; Embry et al., 2008) influence the career development of women entrepreneurs to leadership positions.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to raise awareness among organisations about women's challenges. It would also emphasise the notion that diversity and the growth of women are opportunities that organisations cannot afford to pass up. Hiring more women into management positions will enable organisations to leverage the softer skills that women possess, which in turn helps them with employee and customer retention; according to a recent H.B.R. study depicting the women economy, the growth market of women consumers is twice as large as that of China and India, and all of this money goes to the company, but few companies have done well enough to capitalise fully on women cons. One important approach for companies to respond to this untapped market is to hire, promote, and retain women. According to an Mc Kinsey study, certain leadership characteristics, which are more frequently used by women than by males in management teams, improve corporate performance and will be a major factor in tackling tomorrow's business issues.

1) As a result, encouraging gender diversity and leadership diversity is strategically important for businesses.
2) Corporations must guarantee that their recruitment, appraisal, and career management processes are gender-agnostic, performance-driven, and do not stifle women's professional progress.
3) For Indian women entrepreneurs, a strong education, tutoring, family support, great communication skills, and lifelong learning are crucial.

4) Employers today require programmes to assist them in recognising the benefits women may offer to their businesses and raising awareness within institutions of the valuable role women leaders play in combating gender stereotypes.

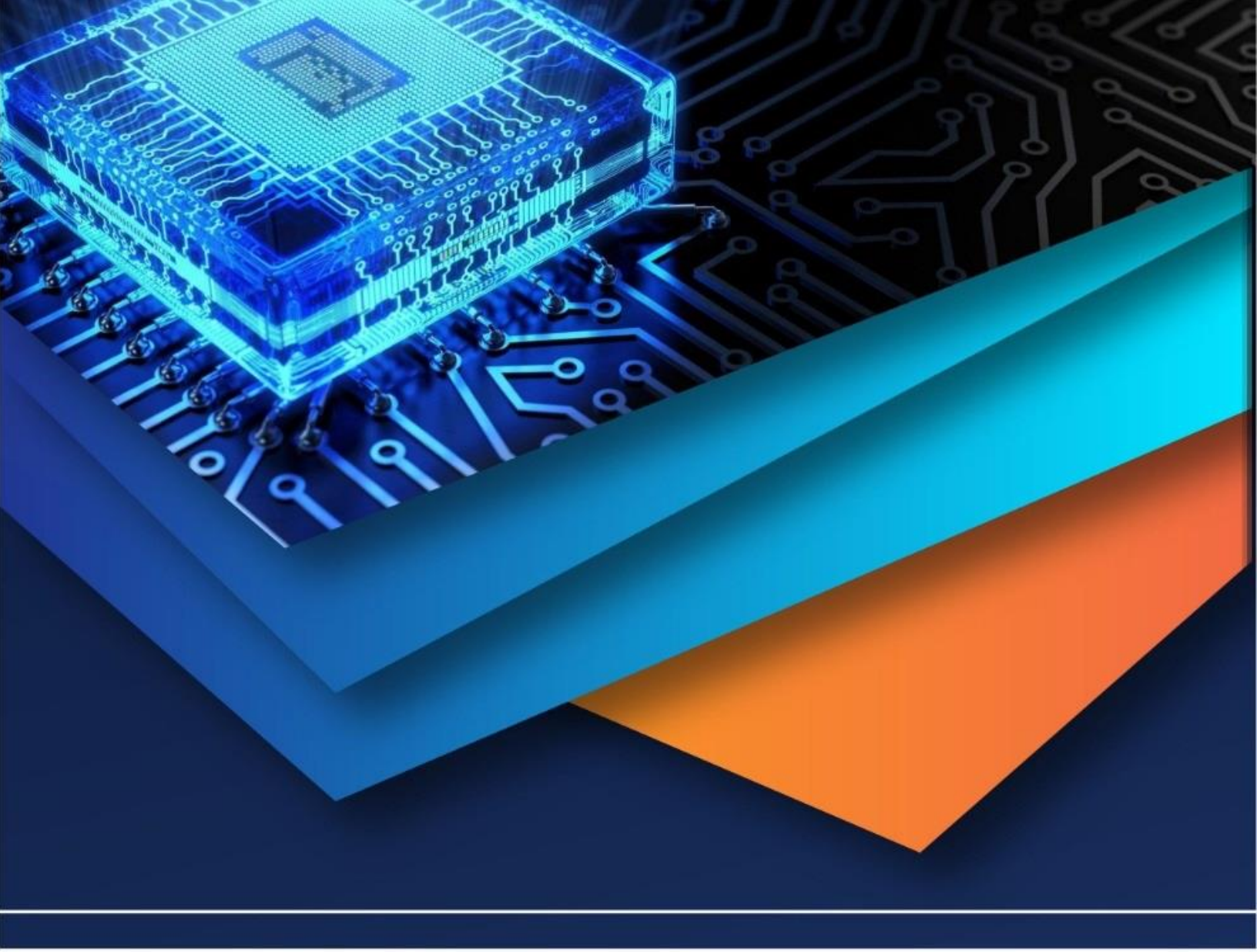
5) Human resource policies and initiatives should be designed in such a way that they not only make entry into management easier for women but also speed their advancement (career advancement)

6) Giving women leaders training and organised mentoring to help them carry out and improve in their leadership roles

7) Developing corporate methods that enable women and men to balance leadership demands while simultaneously caring for their families.

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