

Women in Global Workforce Leadership: Insights from India and Cross-Cultural Dynamics

Xinyu Wang

Suzhou United Graduate School, Southeast University, Nanjing, China

Abstract: *In recent decades, globalization has transformed organizational structures, necessitating a team-based decision-making approach. This shift has posed new challenges for HR and organizational behavior experts. Workforce diversity, particularly the surge of educated women in leadership roles, is notable. Taking India as an example, this paper explores the rise of successful female managers, analyzes the link between company performance, gender, and national culture, and proposes strategies to boost female representation at the corporate top.*

Keywords: *Globalization; Female Leadership; Company Performance; Indian Case Study*

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, globalization has revolutionized the landscape of organizational structures and operations, necessitating a shift towards team-oriented decision-making methodologies. This transformation has posed significant challenges for human resource and organizational behavior experts, compelling them to reconsider traditional paradigms. Among the myriad changes brought about by globalization, labor diversification stands out prominently. One of the most notable aspects of this diversification is the increasing presence of women in the workplace, particularly in senior leadership roles within enterprises (Davidson & Burke, 2004).^[1] This trend is not only evident in the number of women entering management careers but also in their educational attainment, which in many cases equals or surpasses that of their male counterparts. For instance, research projects in the field of management have reported that samples of women leaders often possess higher academic qualifications compared to their male peers (Wood & Lindorff, 2001).^[2]

This paper aims to delve into the reasons behind the surge in successful woman managers, using India as a case study. By examining the unique socio-cultural context and corporate environment in India, this study seeks to understand the factors that contribute to the rise of women in leadership positions. Furthermore, it will analyze the relationship between company performance and gender, as well as national cultural factors. By exploring these dimensions, this paper seeks to provide insights into the methods and strategies that can be employed to further increase the number of women at the top of companies. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender diversity in organizational leadership and its implications for corporate performance and cultural dynamics.

2. Women in management positions in India

In many countries, female senior managers' percentage in companies is increasing. This is mainly due to the reduction in gender discrimination. However, after observing the data, we can find that in India, where gender discrimination is very serious, female executives' proportion in business managers is relatively high. The reason behind this is worth exploring.

2.1. Psychological needs

Confidence built through diverse life experiences in both social and work environments stands as a pivotal personal factor influencing one's aspirations for career development (Buser, 2016).^[3] In the context of Indian women, this factor is particularly significant. Their early life and work experiences serve as a solid foundation for their subsequent career success. Unlike countries where gender discrimination is less prevalent, Indian women, due to the societal norms they navigate, exhibit a stronger desire for freedom and autonomy. This drive motivates them to relentlessly improve themselves, ultimately contributing immensely to their organizations.

Furthermore, the rising expectations of Indian women concerning their quality of life fuel their aspirations for financial independence. Occupational identity, which is intricately tied to one's social standing, becomes even more crucial for women seeking to assert their equality within familial structures. In India, where occupational status often mirrors family status, advancing in one's career becomes not just a personal achievement but also a reflection of one's family's standing. This aligns with the collectivist roots of Indian society, as discussed by Botsford Morgan and King (2012), further emphasizing the importance of career development for Indian women.^[4]

2.2. *Interpersonal relationships with superiors and spouses*

Interpersonal relationships with direct supervisors play a crucial role in the success of women as top managers. Women who maintain a positive and amicable relationship with their superiors often experience fewer workplace conflicts, leading to higher job satisfaction and overall happiness (Towler & Stuhlmacher, 2013).^[5] These informal interactions, characterized by open communication and frequent feedback, serve as a catalyst for enhancing their job satisfaction and motivation.

The significance of the supervisor's role cannot be overstated, particularly during life stages when women often grapple with balancing work management and personal responsibilities. A supportive supervisor can provide the necessary guidance and understanding, helping women navigate these challenging periods with ease. Moreover, emotional support from both professional and personal realms is vital for coping with work-related stress. The emotional backing of a supportive spouse or partner can significantly bolster a woman's resilience in the face of workplace pressures. This emotional support complements the professional guidance received from supervisors, creating a holistic support system that fosters career growth.

In the context of Indian women, the majority of those who have achieved success in their careers possess strong family relationships and enjoy a relaxed working environment. This combination of personal and professional harmony serves as a foundation for their professional success, enabling them to thrive in their leadership roles.

2.3. *Supporting policies of companies*

In India, the traditional role of women within the family is deeply ingrained in societal norms, leading most women to seek a harmonious balance between their home and work lives. Recognizing this, companies have implemented supportive policies to assist women in achieving this equilibrium.

Numerous businesses in India offer a comprehensive range of family support measures tailored specifically for female managers. These include flexible working schedules that accommodate personal commitments, childcare and elderly care assistance programs, and initiatives that facilitate the entry and progression of women with family responsibilities into management positions. By providing these amenities, companies are not only addressing the practical challenges faced by working women but also fostering an environment conducive to their professional growth. Such policies have empowered more and more women to excel in their careers, enabling them to reach their optimal performance levels at work. This, in turn, has laid a solid foundation for their successful career advancement, demonstrating that with the right support, women can thrive both in their personal and professional lives. The combined efforts of both individuals and organizations are crucial in breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for women to shine in the corporate world.

3. Influence of gender and national culture on leadership style and global effectiveness

More and more companies have employees of different races from all over the world, which creates a higher degree of cultural and labor diversity. With the globalization of the market economy, more and more companies have become multinational companies and have expanded their scale and maintained profits for a long time, which has accelerated the cultural diversity and gender diversity in contemporary organizations. As a result, the impact of gender and national culture on company performance has attracted widespread attention.

3.1. *The influence of gender*

The survey found that female managers' proportion and female chairmen's proportion are generally positively correlated. This shows that the number of woman chairpersons is related to the proportion of

female executives positively, indicating that female chairpersons are more inclined to appoint women as company executives. At the same time, ROA is also positively correlated with the percentage of woman managers at a significant level, which indicates that woman leaders will upgrade the company's financial performance and market performance to a certain extent. But looking at most statistical data, we find that these positive correlations are very low. It even has a negative correlation with some indicators and has a certain negative impact on the company's performance. This result proves to a certain extent that women account for a small proportion of the total number of executives, and women have limited impact on the company's performance in the management. As a minority in the senior management level, it is likely to be a symbolic seat in the senior management level, which has less intervention and influence on the company (House, 1999).^[6] When making decisions in the male-dominated company management, the opinions of female executives' impact is small, female executives are inefficient at the senior management level, causing a negative impact on company performance, but after the proportion of female executives reaches a certain scale, female executives will not exist in a symbolic sense and have a bearing on company performance. Significantly positive impact.

Moreover, the majority of women tend to be averse to risk, which is reflected in the financial strategies of companies they lead. The average asset-liability ratio of women executives is notably lower than that of other companies, as they recognize that higher corporate liabilities can adversely affect corporate performance. In addition, women often exhibit superior skills to men in tasks requiring carefulness and patience. Women senior managers have proven to have better information integration capabilities, particularly in fields such as finance and accounting, where they hold certain professional advantages. Consequently, companies with a higher proportion of female executives generally demonstrate better financial performance compared to similar organizations. Therefore, when a company encounters debt risks, those with female executives are often able to navigate and avoid these risks effectively, ultimately enhancing the overall performance of the company.

Women possess innate sensitive intuition, a natural gift for collaboration, and a pragmatic approach to problem-solving. They tend to have a deeper concern for others, which translates into a nurturing work environment where employees feel valued and cared for. This, in turn, fosters a more harmonious workplace where teamwork thrives. Women are also adept at adapting to new roles and jobs, bringing a well-calculated approach to their responsibilities, ensuring tasks are executed efficiently and effectively. In organizations where female senior managers are abundant, the corporate culture becomes more inclusive and employee morale improves significantly. The empathy and understanding displayed by these women leaders create a supportive atmosphere that encourages innovation and personal growth.

However, the presence of female executives in some companies is often viewed as more symbolic than substantive. Many corporations prioritize their public image and strive to meet external interests, which can lead to the strategic placement of women in leadership positions. Major shareholders may increase the number of female managers to enhance the company's reputation and appeal to stakeholders. Interestingly, the higher the major shareholder's shareholding ratio, the more likely it is for a woman to be appointed as the company's chairman. This trend is often observed in companies with a high degree of equity concentration, where the major shareholders exercise effective oversight. In such scenarios, a female chairman can bring a unique perspective to corporate governance, ensuring rigorous supervision and fostering a culture of accountability within the organization.

3.2. The influence of national culture

Culture is pivotal in influencing the behavior different societies' people, and it has a significant impact on each person's different views and expectations about how they should do things in a particular society (Hofstede, 2001).^[7] The style of leadership and its cultural preferences is influenced by national culture. Managers take different approaches to leadership and company performance in different cultural contexts. The main contribution of leaders is precisely the management of corporate culture. Corporate culture also influences leaders. It explains to some extent what leaders should do, what they can and cannot do. Generally speaking, corporate culture determines the behavior of leaders. A key factor in the success of any organization is the leadership of its management. National, political, and corporate cultures show a high degree of diversity internationally, and tend to favor the type of preference of cultural leaders (Jogulu, & Wood, 2008).^[8] For example, under the national culture that regards men as authorities at all kinds of positions, organizations and families, the development of female executives will be severely restricted. This culture-specific norm has the ability to make an influence in the practices of human resource and organizations' policies, especially in organizations that involve employee recruitment, opportunities of promotion, and expectations of acceptable roles for

men and women. In contrast, from the perspective of Hofstede culture, low “power distance” countries and highly “individualized” societies will cherish a more equal workplace and have the chance to make expressions for themselves through open negotiation (Mandell, & Pherwani, 2003).^[9] Such an environment is unlikely to affect or indicate the general gender and behaviors and roles deemed appropriate within the organization, thereby placing less pressure on men and women. This free cultural environment is expected to promote an equal acceptance of leadership roles, which in general can explain positive assessments of the effectiveness of leadership styles by both man and woman managers in the organization.

4. How to increase women in top management positions

It can be seen from the previous analysis that the presence of woman managers in the company has a good effect on the company's performance, and the accounting performance indicators and company market value indicators are also significantly better than other companies. However, in fact, female executives are still a "minority" in the senior management of companies in most countries, and female executives have not fully played their role in the senior management. Therefore, this article will make a few suggestions for increasing the number of female executives.

4.1. Establish legal and company systems

To bolster the participation of female executives in corporate governance, both companies and governments must prioritize the establishment and refinement of existing legal and corporate frameworks. It is imperative to examine global best practices and promptly adopt successful strategies from countries that have excelled in this domain. By doing so, we can establish legal mandates that require listed companies to enhance the percentage of women in their management teams. A pivotal aspect of this initiative involves reserving specific seats for women within the company's core departments. This measure ensures gender diversity at both the board of directors and senior management levels, fostering an inclusive environment that values and leverages the unique perspectives and skills of women. Furthermore, close attention must be paid to the gender composition of the board of directors and the board of supervisors. By ensuring a substantial percentage of female representation on these boards, we can further promote equality and inclusivity within corporate governance structures.

In summary, by adopting a proactive stance towards legal and corporate reforms, we can pave the way for greater participation of female executives in corporate decision-making processes. This, in turn, will foster a more balanced and diverse workplace that harnesses the full potential of all employees, regardless of gender.

4.2. Giving adequate training to female employees

To foster the career advancement of women employees, it is essential to provide them with comprehensive training that not only enhances their professional skills and qualities but also equips them to take on leadership roles within the company. While there are external factors, such as laws, regulations, and organizational systems, that can hinder women's career progression and are often beyond individual control, there are steps that can be taken to mitigate their impact. Similarly, women's inherent personality traits may pose certain challenges, but these can be complemented by developing their human, social, and psychological capital through targeted interventions like education and training.

Encouraging women to actively participate in the operational and managerial aspects of the company and leveraging their expertise in specific areas is crucial for their career growth. As highlighted by Eagly and Carli (2003), women's contributions in these domains can significantly benefit the organization.^[10] Moreover, it is imperative to focus on women's full-time career development, starting from their college education. By implementing targeted capacity development programs, female students can be better prepared for the workforce, promotions, and eventual retirement.

In this context, individuals should embrace the mindset of lifelong learning, continuously seeking opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. Simultaneously, society and organizations must foster a culture of lifelong development, providing women with the resources and support they need to progress in their careers (Deng, & Lin, 2015).^[11] By integrating these strategies, we can create an

environment that motivates and empowers female managers, enabling them to achieve dynamic and fulfilling career growth.

5. Conclusion

Whether in India or other countries, female managers are playing an increasingly important role in business management. This article starts from India and analyzes the reasons why Indian female executives can still increase under the cultural background of India. The study of female managers is not only to better develop the potential of female managers, but also to better achieve organizational goals. This provides lessons for countries where women are not yet able to play important roles in corporate management. This article also analyzes the influence of gender and national culture on the style and performance of leaders, which must be paid attention to by every enterprise in the process of globalization. Finally, on the basis of the above analysis, this paper puts forward suggestions for increasing female managers' percentage. Labor diversity and cultural diversity are inevitable trends in a globalized environment and one of the important factors for the success of each enterprise.

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