

Impact of Women Leadership on Team Performance: An Empirical Study of Employees' Perceptions in Organizational Settings

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ABSTRACT

The increasing participation of women in leadership roles has emerged as a significant factor influencing organizational effectiveness and team performance. This study aims to examine employees' perceptions of women leadership and its impact on team performance in organizational settings. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 100 employees working in companies in Coimbatore using a convenience sampling technique. A self-structured questionnaire was administered through an online survey method to gather both socio-demographic information and perception-related responses.

The findings reveal that a majority of employees hold favourable perceptions toward women leadership, with 64% demonstrating moderate and 34% high levels of positive perception. A significant proportion of respondents (78%) expressed a preference for female supervisors. The Chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant difference in supervisor gender preference ($\chi^2 = 92.61, p < .001$), suggesting a strong inclination toward women leaders. Furthermore, correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between perception scores and both years of experience with supervisors ($r = .42, p < .01$) and the number of women leaders in the organization ($r = .58, p < .01$).

The study highlights that women leadership contributes positively to team performance through collaborative leadership styles, effective communication, and strong interpersonal skills. Despite these positive perceptions, certain structural and cultural barriers continue to exist. The study concludes that promoting women leadership is not only essential for achieving gender equality but also serves as a strategic approach to enhancing team performance and organizational success.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the presence of women in leadership roles has steadily increased, marking a meaningful shift in both organizational structures and societal attitudes toward gender equality. What was once a domain largely dominated by men is gradually evolving, as more women step into positions of influence across industries. This transformation is not merely a statistical change; it reflects deeper progress in education, economic participation, and organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion. Today, women leaders are not only contributing to decision-making processes but are also reshaping

workplace cultures by bringing perspectives that value collaboration, empathy, and inclusiveness.

Leadership plays a central role in determining how teams function and perform. It influences how individuals communicate, resolve conflicts, stay motivated, and work toward shared goals. In this context, leadership is not just about authority, but about connection and influence. Research suggests that women often adopt transformational and participative leadership styles, which prioritize open communication, mutual respect, and team engagement (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

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These approaches tend to create supportive environments where employees feel valued and motivated, ultimately strengthening team cohesion and productivity. In modern organizations that increasingly rely on teamwork and innovation, such leadership qualities are especially relevant.

The relationship between women leadership and team performance has gained considerable attention in organizational research. Evidence suggests that gender-diverse leadership enhances creativity, problem-solving capacity, and the quality of decision-making within teams (Dezsö & Ross, 2012). Women leaders are also frequently associated with strong emotional intelligence, including the ability to understand, manage, and respond to the emotions of others (Goleman, 1998). These interpersonal strengths can foster trust, improve workplace relationships, and enhance employee satisfaction and engagement—factors that are closely linked to improved team performance.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the journey toward equal representation in leadership is not without challenges. Women often continue to encounter structural and cultural barriers such as gender stereotypes, implicit bias, and limited access to leadership opportunities. These obstacles can shape not only the number of women in leadership positions but also how their leadership is perceived by others within the organization. As a result, examining employees' perceptions becomes essential, as these perceptions can influence team dynamics, acceptance of leadership, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to explore employees' perceptions of women leadership and its impact on team performance within organizational settings. By focusing on the lived experiences, attitudes, and viewpoints of employees, the study aims to provide a more grounded understanding of how women leaders influence team functioning in real-world contexts. In doing so, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender and leadership, while also offering insights that can support the development of more inclusive, effective, and high-performing workplaces.

Materials and Methods

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine employees' perceptions of women leadership and its impact on team performance. This design was considered appropriate as it enables a systematic description of attitudes, opinions, and characteristics of a specific population without manipulating any variables.

The study was conducted among employees working in various companies located in Coimbatore. The city is a prominent industrial and corporate hub in Tamil Nadu, comprising a diverse range of organizations, making it suitable for studying workplace dynamics and leadership patterns.

A total of 100 employees participated in the study. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. This non-probability sampling method was chosen due to time and logistical constraints, while still ensuring representation from different organizational backgrounds.

Data for the study were collected through an online survey method. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents via email, allowing for wider reach and ease of response. The online mode facilitated efficient data collection, especially from employees working in different organizations and locations within the study area.

A self-structured questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

- Section A: Included items related to socio-demographic and organizational characteristics such as age, gender, educational qualification, work experience, and type of organization.
- Section B: Comprised statements measuring employees' perceptions of women leadership and its influence on team performance. These items were designed using a Likert scale to capture varying degrees of agreement.

The instrument was developed based on relevant literature and the objectives of the study to ensure content relevance and clarity.

The collected data were coded and analyzed using statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean, were used to summarize the data. Additionally, inferential statistical methods such as the Chi-square test were applied to examine significant differences and associations among variables.

The study ensured that participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study, and the data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study included a total of 100 respondents. Among them, 58% were female and 42% were male, indicating a relatively higher representation of women in the sample. In terms of age, a significant majority (74%) belonged to the 20–30 years category, followed by 20% in the 31–40 age group and only 6% in the 41–50 category, suggesting that the sample is predominantly young employees.

Regarding marital status, 62% of respondents were single, 36% were married, and 2% belonged to other categories. Educational qualifications revealed that 66% had postgraduate degrees, 22% were undergraduates, 10% held Ph.D. degrees, and 2% had diplomas, indicating a well-educated sample.

In terms of residence, 60% of respondents were from urban areas, 24% from semi-urban areas, and 16% from rural areas. Family structure showed that 64% belonged to joint families, while 36% were from nuclear families.

Work experience with supervisors varied, with 42% working for 3–5 years, followed by 22% for more than 5 years, 18% for 1–2 years, 10% for less than a year, and 8% not working under any supervisor. Only 16% of respondents held supervisory roles themselves, while 84% did not.

A large majority (88%) reported having female supervisors, while only 12% had male supervisors. Similarly, 66% of respondents indicated that their organizations had more than five women leaders, suggesting a relatively strong presence of women in leadership roles within the sampled organizations.

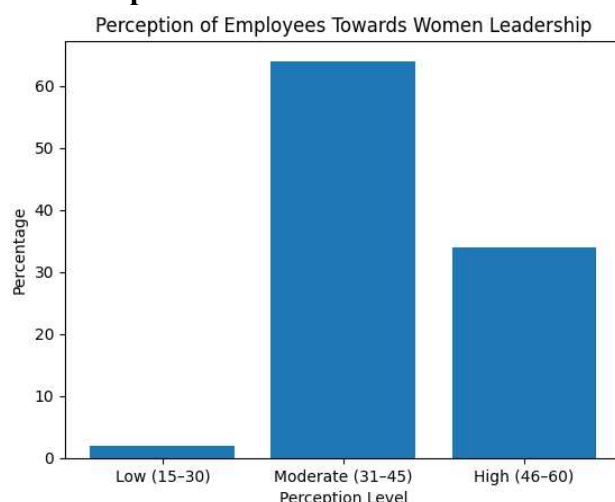
Organizational Characteristics

Most respondents (56%) worked in medium-sized organizations, followed by 24% in large organizations and 20% in small organizations. This distribution indicates that the findings are more reflective of medium-scale organizational environments.

Preference for Supervisor Gender

A substantial majority (78%) of respondents expressed a preference for female supervisors, compared to 18% who preferred male supervisors and 4% who indicated other preferences.

Perception of Employees Towards Women Leadership



The perception scale scores were categorized into three levels: The mean score falls within the moderate to high range, indicating that employees generally hold favourable perceptions towards women leadership. While a majority (64%) exhibit moderate perception, a considerable proportion (34%) demonstrate high levels of positive perception. Only a negligible percentage (2%) reported low perception.

Statistical Analysis: Chi-Square Goodness of Fit Test

To examine whether the observed preference for supervisor gender significantly differs from an equal distribution, a Chi-square goodness of fit test was conducted.

Category	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O-E) ² / E
Male	18	33.33	7.05
Female	78	33.33	59.78
Others	4	33.33	25.78
Total	100	100	92.61

Chi-square value (χ^2) = 92.61

Degrees of freedom (df) = 2

p-value < 0.001

The results indicate that the calculated Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 92.61$) is statistically significant at the 0.001 level with 2 degrees of freedom. This clearly shows that the observed preferences are not evenly distributed. A large majority of respondents (78%) preferred female supervisors, compared to 18% who preferred male supervisors and 4% who indicated other preferences.

The findings suggest a strong and statistically significant inclination toward female leadership, indicating that employees perceive women leaders positively and consider them effective in supervisory roles. This reinforces the growing acceptance of women in leadership positions and highlights their perceived impact on team performance within organizational settings.

Correlation Test

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among perception of women leadership, years of experience with the supervisor, and the number of women leaders in the organization.

Variables	Perception Scale Score	Years with Supervisor	Number of Women Leaders
Perception Scale Score	—		
Years with Supervisor	.42**	—	
Number of Women Leaders	.58**	.36*	—

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01$.

The results indicate a moderate positive correlation between perception scores and years with supervisor ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), suggesting that employees with longer exposure to supervisors tend to have more favourable perceptions of women leadership.

A strong positive correlation was observed between perception scores and the number of women leaders in the organization ($r = .58$, $p < .01$), indicating that increased representation of women in leadership roles is associated with more positive employee perceptions.

Additionally, a significant positive relationship was found between years with supervisor and the number of women leaders ($r = .36$, $p < .05$), suggesting that employees in organizations with more women leaders tend to have longer and more stable supervisory relationships.

Discussion

The present study examined employees' perceptions of women leadership and its impact on team performance in organizational settings. The findings indicate a generally positive perception of women leaders, with a majority of respondents expressing preference for female supervisors and reporting moderate to high levels of favourable perception. These findings align with existing literature that

highlights the effectiveness of women in leadership roles and their contribution to team performance.

One of the key findings of the study is that a significant proportion of employees preferred female supervisors. This result is consistent with the work of Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), who found that women are more likely to adopt transformational leadership styles characterized by supportiveness, collaboration, and participative decision-making. Such leadership behaviours are known to enhance team cohesion and employee satisfaction, which may explain the strong preference observed in the present study.

The study also revealed that employees generally hold moderate to high perceptions of women leadership. This finding supports previous research by Dezsö and Ross (2012), which demonstrated that increased female representation in leadership positions is positively associated with improved organizational performance. The presence of a substantial number of women leaders in the organizations studied may have contributed to greater familiarity and acceptance, thereby influencing employees' perceptions positively.

Furthermore, the findings are in line with Goleman's (1998) work on emotional intelligence, which emphasizes that effective leadership is closely linked to interpersonal skills, empathy, and self-awareness. Women leaders are often perceived to possess higher emotional intelligence, which enhances communication, conflict resolution, and team management. These qualities are critical for improving team performance and fostering a positive work environment.

The demographic profile of the respondents, particularly the dominance of younger and highly educated employees, may also have influenced the findings. Younger generations are generally more open to gender equality and diversity in leadership roles, as supported by contemporary studies on workplace diversity and inclusion (Post, 2015). This generational shift may explain the strong acceptance and preference for women leaders observed in the study.

However, while the findings indicate positive perceptions, the majority of respondents fell within the moderate perception category rather than high. This suggests that although women leadership is accepted, there may still be underlying biases or structural barriers that prevent full endorsement. This observation is consistent with research by Eagly and Carli (2007), who highlighted the concept of the "labyrinth" of leadership, where women face subtle

and persistent challenges in advancing to and being fully accepted in leadership roles.

Additionally, the use of convenience sampling and the limited geographical focus of the study may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Similar studies conducted across diverse cultural and organizational contexts have shown variations in perceptions due to socio-cultural factors (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Therefore, while the present study provides valuable insights, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the study setting.

Overall, the results reinforce the growing body of evidence that women leadership has a positive impact on team performance and organizational effectiveness. The preference for female supervisors and favourable perception scores suggest a shift towards more inclusive and gender-equitable workplaces. Promoting women in leadership positions can therefore be seen not only as a matter of equality but also as a strategic approach to enhancing team performance and organizational success.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate a growing acceptance and positive perception of women leadership in organizational settings, particularly in relation to team performance. Employees demonstrated favourable attitudes toward women leaders, with a clear preference for female supervisors and moderate to high perception levels. This reflects a gradual shift toward gender inclusivity and recognition of women's leadership capabilities in contemporary workplaces. Women leaders are perceived to contribute effectively through collaborative approaches, strong interpersonal skills, and inclusive decision-making, which enhance team cohesion and performance.

Despite these encouraging findings, certain challenges such as underlying biases and structural barriers continue to persist. Therefore, organizations must adopt proactive strategies to strengthen women's participation and effectiveness in leadership roles. This includes implementing gender-inclusive policies that ensure equal opportunities, transparent promotion practices, and increased representation of women in managerial and executive positions. Leadership development programs, along with mentorship and coaching initiatives, can further support women in enhancing their leadership competencies and navigating organizational challenges.

In addition, organizations should conduct regular gender-sensitization programs to address stereotypes and foster a more inclusive work culture. Supportive

measures such as flexible work arrangements and work-life balance policies are also essential to enable women to sustain and progress in leadership roles.

Overall, promoting women leadership is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic approach to improving team performance and organizational effectiveness. Future research may expand this study by including larger and more diverse samples to gain deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of women leadership across different sectors.

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