

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN EMPLOYABILITY SCENARIO IN INDIA: EXPLORING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

The concerns on women employability in India are quite prominent due to the impact caused by a varied number of factors. In this study, a detailed look into such factors are taken which has been able to provide many interesting insights into the situation. A total of 505 working women in India are used for primary data collection in a quantitative approach through a structured questionnaire. While the socio-cultural challenges faced by women in India has been focused on by many researchers, the mediating roles of organisational and social support is not that thoroughly investigated. The importance of factors such as work-life balance, employability/entrepreneurial skills, socio-emotional competencies, stereotyping mediated by social support and perceived organisational support on women employability is significant. From the analysis conducted here it can be established that the need to include skills is as essential as paying heed to the social and emotional surroundings covering women in India. The need for positive support especially from the social group around these women along with the organisational support is very crucial.

KEYWORDS: Women, Employability, Working, Support.

Introduction

The Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT) in (Moreland, 2006) defined employability as:

"A group of skills, knowledge and private attributes that make a private more likely to secure and achieve success in their chosen occupation to the advantage of themselves, the workforce, the community and therefore the economy."

Women in India just like the entire Indian society are under a process of transformation (Kapoor, 2019). One prominent feature which is consistently changing is the professional aspect of girls. Profession never comes easy to them. The society and therefore the culture of India have made their own graph of progress where women are concerned. During this graph, albeit education is allowed to be taken together, within the end of the day personal variables take a toll on a mean Indian woman's life. Personal variables as in marriage, child-birth, social and family expectations then on. Then slowly a woman's professional interests are side-lined for the so called important aspects of her life (Agarwal &

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Lenka, 2018). If she wants to pursue her professional interests, she can't do so without a network, either from her family or from the organization she works for (Makarova et al., 2019). Due to this the society has happily begun tasks and jobs which women are good at and thus acceptability is high when women are seen doing all that. Hence, when a lady tries to snap out of that specific image, she is met with resistance. This resistance could be implicit or explicit, prominent or subdued. Stereotyping and socio-cultural norms are a serious roadblock for ladies (Adom & Anambane, 2019).

(Uddin, 2021) conducted their analysis with a particular emphasis on the work-life balance of working women during the COVID-19 time period. According to the findings of the study, the socio-cultural aspect, the flexibility of working, and work commitments are all significant aspects that should be taken into consideration. Because of societal, cultural, family, and gender standards, working women confront a variety of obstacles with regard to striking a balance between their job and home responsibilities. Since COVID-19 first appeared in the globe, the obstacles that need to be overcome have become increasingly difficult. (Ricci et al., 2021) investigated the perceptions held by professionals working in labour market intermediaries regarding the employability of highly skilled migrant women in STEM fields, as well as the training needs that those professionals believe are necessary to effectively work with this target group. The research centred on how women might improve their employability and perform better in their particular fields by acquiring new skill sets. This particular study focuses on the experiences of migrant women who are employed in STEM-related fields. (Fisher et al., 2020) have chosen to centre their attention on the gender factor, the purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between perceived organisational support and citizenship activity. It was revealed that the feeling of obligation was a mediator of the connection, however this was only the case for male responders. Tupe, (2020), discussed the potential of blended learning programmes to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in women living in India. Specifically, they focused on the country's growing middle class. The first and most crucial phase in the instructional design process is to conduct the entrepreneurial skill assessment. This is an extremely important step. It would appear that the experimental group has grown the level of entrepreneurial abilities reasonably significantly more in post-test compared to pre test as a result of blended learning interventions because there was a significant difference found between the post-test and pretest scores of female students.

Based on the review it is established that the need to know more on women employability especially from organisational and social perspectives is essential. This would help to understand the role played by different factors considered essential in the process. The study has set the following objectives for the study:

- To identify the different factors essential for women employability in India.
- To determine the mediating role played by perceived organisational and social support in encouraging women employability.

The next section provides a detailed understanding on the method followed to arrive at the results of the study.

Research Methodology

The study here takes a quantitative approach to give a holistic idea about mediating factors on women employability. The approach include both primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary sources are gathered from journal articles, books and reports to curate the research instrument used for the study. The statistical approach planned for the purpose of the study is mostly based on primary datasets. As the research is based on women employability, the instrument used for data analysis includes items from the existing review of literature in the form of a structured questionnaire mostly in 5 Point Likert Type Scale. There are a total of 505 datasets collected from women residing in India and are having working experiences of minimum a year.

As the factors for the conceptual model are hereby extracted from the literature review, the below table provides the list of factors to be used and its role in the model.

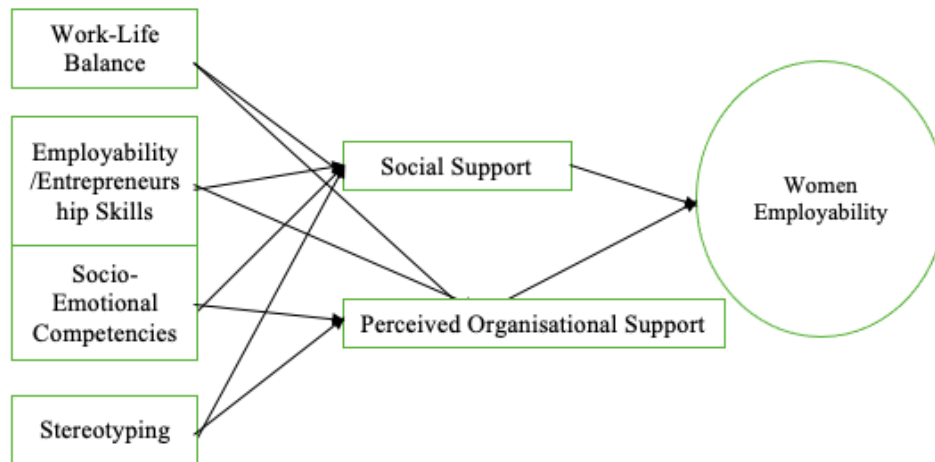


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

There are different statistical tools used to analyse these results and they are used in the next section of the study.

Results & Discussion

The chapter here has been designed to put forward the statistical analyses done with respect to the primary datasets collected.

The study uses SPSS to record and analyse the datasets to arrive at the desired results.

As the study deals with the working situation of these women, understanding the number of years they have spent working can highlight important results. Majority of the women in the sample have an experience of 3 years followed by 2 and more than 5 years. It is the women in the experience category of 1 and 4 years that is the least at 11.1%.

The objective of the study is to hold a mediation analysis in understanding women employability. It would include the variables of perceived organisational support and social support along with the factors directly impacting women employability.

A total of 38 items are provided in the questionnaire used for the study. Before conducting the mediation analysis, the study attempted a principal component analysis coupled with KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity for sampling adequacy. The questionnaire designed with the items mentioned in the above section would be analysed using PCA through varimax rotation to confirm the underlying factors while considering a factor loading of 0.4 for acceptance (Hair et al., 2006).

A total of six factors have been extracted where all have factor loadings of more than 0.4 – Work-life Balance (WLB), employability/entrepreneurial (Skills), socio-emotional competencies (COM), stereotyping (ST), social support (SS), perceived organisational support (POS).

This shows that all the items considered in the analysis above statistically represent their respective factors. Bartlett's test generates a p-value of less than 0.05 and the overall KMO value generated stands at 0.763 which is above the acceptable level of 0.720 and is above the acceptable level of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006). The above analysis shows that the questionnaire designed with each of the six factors has generated a good sampling adequacy level and can be used for further analysis in this regard.

For the mediation analysis, a total of two mediating variables have been considered. The factor of women employability is taken as the dependent variable and the four extracted factors of work-life balance, employability/entrepreneurial skills, socio-emotional competencies and stereotyping and the dependent variables. The mediating variables here include the perceived organisational support and social support. The model consists of a single depiction with both sets of mediators being present in the same environment.

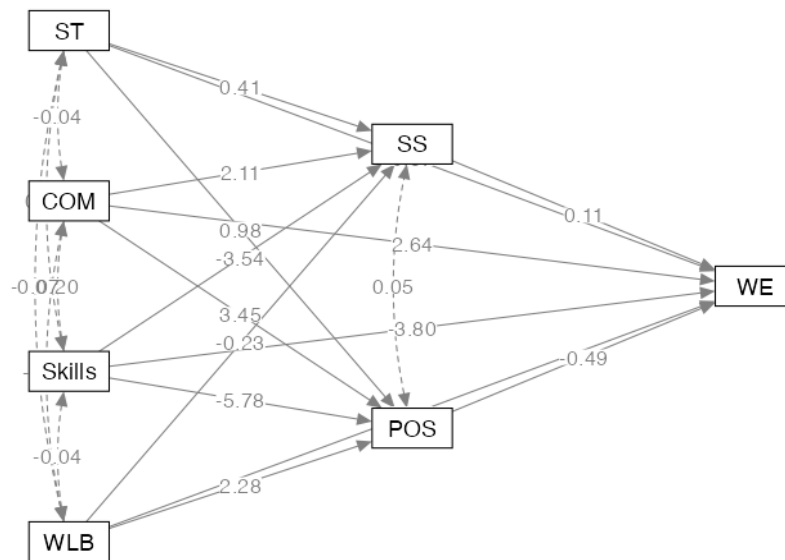


Figure 2: Mediation Model

The analysis shows that considering the direct relationship between the dependent and independent variables, it is seen that it is statistically significant with the p-value of less than 0.05. It shows that the four factors of work-life balance, employability/entrepreneurial skills, socio-emotional competencies and stereotyping all have a statistically significant impact on women employability. Now considering the indirect relationships where the mediators of perceived organisational support and social support are being introduced. It is interesting to note that the relationships in all the four dependent variables remain significant with p-values less than 0.05 with respect to perceived organisational support. This indicates that it only acts as a partial mediator in the process. On the other hand, when the mediator of social support is introduced the relationship between all the independent factors on women employability takes the p-value of more than 0.05 which is statistically not significant. This shows that the introduction of social support as the mediator exerts full mediation among the relationships.

It can be stated from the above statistical inferences that when it comes to the organisation, the mediation is partial and other components in the environment might also influence along with it. However, when it comes to social support, it can fully mediate the relationships. This shows that with respect to women's employability, the social support from family, partner and friends can highly alter the nature of relationship between the factors causing hindrances on their employability.

Implications

The concerns on women employability in India are quite prominent due to the impact caused by a varied number of factors. In this study, a detailed look into such factors are taken which has been able to provide many interesting insights into the situation. These nine items enquire various perspectives of the first and the most important aspect faced by working women - work-life balance. However, understanding each of them and the respondents' level of agreement on a scale from 1 to 5, it is seen that the highest mean score is at 3.22. It is with respect to the agreement of the women that they are not able to maintain their work and other activities at the same time. This shows that there are high difficulty levels associated with the maintenance of work-life balance among the working women. The lowest score is at 1.78 with respect to the agreement about the deteriorating relationship with a partner because of work. This states that out of the problems in maintaining work-life balance, the relationship maintenance with their partners is the least of the concern. The next factor identified is that of stereotyping which is also often related to women in the workplace. It is seen that with the highest score of 3.56, the maximum women agreed to have faced gender based assessment of their strengths before assigning a job role. The 4 item scale measuring perceived organisational support shows that with 3.56, the highest mean score depicts the high agreement on the provision of support by the supervisor at work. The lowest score is at 2.44 for provision of an amicable work environment and policies working in favour of them. It shows that there is not much of an amicable environment for work provided by the colleges

and the management policies do not help them in balancing their lives to a great extent. There are 3 items used to understand the social support provided by the family, partner and friends. Based on the mean scores it is seen that in case of all, the support provided is at a higher level. The agreement about friends support is the highest followed by family and then by partner. The mediation analysis included the role of the organisation and social support as mediators and identified its effectiveness in establishing the relationship between the extracted factors and the women employability levels. The results show the high impact caused by social support in establishing women employability and the partial role played by organisational support in this regard. The study establishes the results by (Neumeyer et al., 2019; Roomi, 2013; Suseno & Abbott, 2021) who mentions the significant impact of social support in the context of women employability.

The results have clearly established the role played by each of the essential components related to the situation. This can be utilised further for studies in the area and generate interesting implications.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of the study here have been quite insightful in understanding the situation of women employability in India. While the socio-cultural challenges faced by women in India has been focused on by many researchers, the mediating role of organisation and social support is not that thoroughly investigated. The importance of factors such as work-life balance, employability/entrepreneurial skills, socio-emotional competencies, stereotyping mediated by social support and perceived organisational support on women employability is significant. From the analysis conducted here it can be established that the need to include skills is as essential as paying heed to the social and emotional surroundings covering women in India. The need for positive support especially from the social group around these women along with the organisational support is very crucial. The women being employed at various jobs must be facilitated with systems that enable them to have proper work-life balance while understanding their socio-emotional competencies. The development of various policies to support women who are employed is necessary to encourage more women towards employment and eventual empowerment.

The future research can investigate more about the type of social support sought after in women employment. Undertaking qualitative analysis can also be fruitful in regard. Moreover, the need to determine more factors essential acting as mediators in women employability must be analysed in the future research.

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