

Gender Leadership Styles in Enhancing Organizational Performance in Indian Manufacturing and Service Industries

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the different leadership styles adopted by women in the Indian manufacturing and service industries and to study how leadership styles affect organizational performance. The study determined the relationship between different leadership styles and organizational performance using an independent sample t-test and structural equation modeling using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 21.0. A model linking leadership style and organizational performance was proposed and empirically tested. Participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles were the leadership dimensions examined while the organizational performance dimensions were quality, employee, and financial performance. The empirical data were collected from South Indian manufacturing and service industries through a questionnaire survey method. The independent sample t-test results highlight that there is no significant difference between men and women in leadership styles, but that there is a significant difference in organizational performance. As there was a significant difference in the outcome variable, structural equation modeling was used to study the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance for both male and female leaders, which highlighted the women's vital role and their excelling in Indian industries to make actions more efficient and effective. The results show that the model is fit, and hence there is a positive and significant relationship between leadership style and organizational performance for both genders, but that female leaders adapt leadership styles more effectively than male leaders. These comparative results and findings offer a managerial perspective, showing that these types of leadership styles can potentially enhance women's empowerment, thus improving organizational performance.

Key words

leadership styles, organizational performance, women leaders, Indian industries, structural equation modeling

Introduction

Nowadays, the leadership styles adopted by global leaders have been shown to have a distinct effect on business results. Many studies have discussed the different leadership styles adopted by industry leaders and the results have shown that any one of the leadership styles could be the best style to ensure effective results. Effective leadership is practiced differently at different management levels: top-, middle-, and low-level management. The effectiveness of leadership depends on the leader's judgment and understanding of situational factors and their adopting the appropriate style to deal with different situations (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Leadership plays a crucial role in aligning subordinates' commitment and personal goals with organizational objectives. House and Mitchell (1975) proposed that leadership behavior that includes directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership can be adopted in various situations and times by the same individual. By adopting any one of the leadership behaviors, managers may help their subordinates achieve their goals.

The most vital development in the manufacturing and service-oriented industries has been the increasing pattern of women's participation in the labor market, which has led to women working in organizations achieving leadership positions (Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013). Organizational skills and the ability to share, communicate, and listen to the requirements of others have made female leaders a new source of leadership that has resulted in employee job satisfaction (Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013).

Hence, this study aims to focus on finding the difference between the styles of male and female leaders and their importance in improving organizational performance. This study is limited to only three types of leadership: participative, supportive, and instrumental. The literature shows that a relative void still exists in the gender-based study of these three types of leadership styles in India's manufacturing and service industries. Employees in industries strongly believe that a good leader can guide and support them in difficult situations, thus empowering them to develop solutions for the problems they face and deliver good results. Hence, this investigation intends to identify which leadership styles are progressively helpful in enhancing business performance in Indian industries.

Objectives

This study primarily aims to investigate gender differences in leadership styles and the impacts of different leadership styles—participative, supportive, and instrumental—on organizational performance in Indian manufacturing and service industries, and to explore whether the leadership styles of male and female leaders differ in the Indian manufacturing and service industries.

Literature Review

Leadership Styles

Leadership plays a vital role in every individual's behavior in today's competitive global business environment. Organizations can only be successful in achieving their objectives and delivering their output when employees experience a high quality of leadership (Robbins, 1993, 2003; Schein, 1992, 2004). Leadership is defined as the ability to develop confidence and support among the persons required to achieve organizational goals (Kim & Maubourgne, 1992), while Yukl and Mahsud (2010) describe leadership as a process that purposely exerts pressure on people to guide the formation of and facilitate the activities and relationships within a group or an organization. Fiedler (1996) stated that the relationship between leadership and organizational performance arising from a leader's effectiveness is the major determinant of an organization's success or failure. Leadership is therefore one of the important factors in an organization, playing a significant role in determining the interest levels and commitment of the people in that organization (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011). Leadership styles are a key factor for leaders to achieve organizational strategies successfully. Achieving the formulated goals and objectives efficiently and effectively in an organization depends on the managers and the leadership style they adopt (Mokgolo, Mokgolo, & Modiba, 2012). Chemers (2002) describes leadership as the process of societal effect, in which one individual can guide and support others in accomplishing tasks. This study focuses on three types of leadership styles: participative, supportive, and instrumental.

A participative leadership style is characterized by decision making, conducted jointly by the manager and their subordinates (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998) which leads to numerous benefits. Horsfall (2001) argues that this type of leadership style focuses more on meeting organizational objectives by consensus. The

leader's desire to create a feeling of ownership in the decision-making process underlines this model. A participative leadership style results in both positive and negative outcomes. Positively, participative leadership prompts quality decisions, agreement and acknowledgment, comprehension of the decisions by those in charge of executing them, improvement of basic decision-making abilities throughout the organization, increased inspiration, work fulfillment, resolution of conflict, and group advancement. Conversely, participative leadership can lead to a need for consensus at a time authoritative leadership is needed. It can also lead to drawn-out discussions and the need to agree to convenient decisions. Finally, it requires that the values and frameworks of the organization accommodate external pressures and responsibilities. It is critical to investigate the generational attributes and practices that may impact the development of this leadership style.

A supportive leadership style is a behavior that focuses on workers' welfare and is deeply concerned with their needs, tendencies, and their fulfillment (House, 1971). Supportive leaders are very clear in respect to their commitments and responsibilities and empower their subordinates. Schriesheim and Schriesheim (1980) showed that supportive leaders seem to impact employee satisfaction levels, regardless of the situational characteristics. These leaders promote good relationships with subordinates, all subordinates are treated equally, and these leaders show empathy (Ior & Hassan, 2017). This style promotes employee performance in supporting subordinates emotionally by creating an environment of trust and respect (Bourini, Jahmani, Mumtaz, & Al-Bourini, 2019). It provides psychological support, helps employees cope with difficult tasks, and makes them feel appreciated by giving positive feedback, leading to improved performance levels among subordinates (Bourini, 2021).

Instrumental and directive leadership style aims to guide and support the subordinate's participation in achieving the specified targets and objectives for the development of the organization (Bass, Valenzi, Farrow, & Solomon, 1975). Ogbonna and Harris (2000) state that instrumental and directive leadership are similar, and that this style involves the leader's desire to fix assignments and set up procedures. Antonakis and House (2002, 2004) highlight how this type of leadership fills an important gap in the theory of leadership. It is the most appropriate style for organizational system maintenance and for confirming whether workers are being rewarded for the tasks they perform (Schmid, 2007). An instrumental leadership style is the most critical leadership style, as it increases work performance and job involvement in terms of persistence, activation, and goal-oriented situations (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Rowold (2014) proposes four dimensions of

instrumental leadership style related to the monitoring of the environment, formulation of strategies, facilitating path-goals, and monitoring outcomes.

Organizational Performance

Gavrea, Ilies, and Stegorean (2011) strongly assert that most organizations strive to achieve and sustain performance, and that organizations can only expand through sustained performance. Their study highlights the fact that organizational performance is one of the most important dimensions or outcomes in management research and leadership-related studies. Organizational performance is a very common concept in academic research, but it has been defined in several different ways by researchers, making it difficult to arrive at a simple definition. Organizational performance has therefore become a multidimensional and complex phenomenon in management research.

The two methods of measuring organizational performance are subjective and objective. Sales growth, employee satisfaction, market share, customer retention, and competitive advantage are among the non-financial subjective measures, as opposed to objective financial data such as profit, revenue, return on investment, and operational efficiency. The existing literature defends the use of a range of performance measures, not just a single one, and not just financial indicators (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). It suggests that the concept of organizational performance includes different dimensions, which correspond to four basic models of organizational effectiveness: the human relations model, the internal process model, the open system model, and the rational goal model. This study focuses on both financial and non-financial indicators and measurements of performance such as financial and quality indicators and employee performance were used in this study.

Leadership Style and Organizational Performance

Transformational and transactional leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance have been discussed by many researchers, and enhancement of company performance is attributed to changes in leadership. (Nicholls, 1988; Quick, 1992; Simms, 1997). The ability to inspire vision and encouragement, which are the characteristics of transformational leaders, helps in delivering organizational outcomes (Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Nicholls, 1988; Quick, 1992). Rizvi (2000) posits that leadership has a positive influence on performance outcomes such as sales performance, customer sat-

isfaction and orientation, job satisfaction and performance, organizational commitment, and financial performance. Transactional leadership is famous for prioritizing and ensuring fulfillment among subordinates through rewards and punishments (Tan, 2013). The transactional leadership style is based on performance, supervision, management, reward, and punishment, which facilitates the organization in meeting its objectives and succeeding in its mission.

Transformational, transactional, and paternalistic leadership styles and their effect on firm performance have been studied, and the results show that transformational leadership styles have a significant effect in this regard (Özer & Tinaztepe, 2014). Popli and Rizvi (2015) showed that a transformational leadership style has a strong and positive correlation with employee engagement and service orientation. Parshuram (2015) highlighted how a transformational leadership style is the best way to build up the responsibilities required to develop quality-based activities from all levels of the organization. Popli and Rizvi (2016) stated that, along with human resource practices, an appropriate style of leadership is required to improve organizational performance through employee engagement and that the transformational leadership style has a positive correlation with employee engagement, leading to growth in the organization's performance as worker involvement is recognized. Popli and Rizvi (2017) also showed that leadership style has a positive impact on service orientation through employee engagement and that the transformational leadership style is superior to the transactional leadership style in this regard.

One study of six major leadership styles—transformational, transactional, autocratic, charismatic, bureaucratic, and democratic—focused on the impact of these styles on organizational performance (Al Khajeh, 2018). The study results show that bureaucratic, charismatic, and transactional leadership styles have a negative relationship with organizational performance, whereas transformational, autocratic, and democratic leadership styles have a positive relationship. Chaturvedi, Rizvi, and Pasipanodya (2019) proposed that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with the commitment to improving an organization's performance. Their study recommends that certain types of leadership be adopted by organizations to improve their performance by improving the capabilities and abilities of employees or subordinates. Ogbonna and Harris (2000) studied participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance, with organizational culture as a mediating variable. The study found that instrumental leadership is negatively related to performance, while supportive and participative leadership styles are positively

related.

From the above, it is evident that most studies have focused mainly on transactional and transformational leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance, and only a few have studied the relationship between path goal leadership behaviors, namely participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles, and organizational performance.

Gender and Leadership Style

The socialization process that women go through defines their leadership style, psychological nature, and other important attributes (Ben-Amar, Chang, & McIlkenny, 2017; Galbreath, 2018; Harjoto, Laksmana, & Lee, 2015; Landry, Bernardi, & Bosco, 2016). As leaders, women differ from men in terms of leadership styles and organizational priorities, a tendency to be more innovative and focused on strategic vision, more involvement in stakeholder benefits in relation to long-term projects, and greater adaptability in the management of projects, even at the expense of short-term profits (Adams, 2016; Shaya & Khait, 2017). Druskat (1994) conducted a study on the relationship between gender and leadership styles among the subordinates of leadership figures in the Roman Catholic Church. He observed that the leaders' styles were transformational rather than transactional; however, female subordinates rated their female leaders as more transformational in style than male subordinates rated their male leaders. Oshagbemi and Gill's (2003) study found no statistical differences between directive, consultative, and participative leadership styles among male and female managers. While women's leadership style is different from that of men, they suggest that female leaders are not less effective (Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller, 2003). However, gender has been shown to have a small but direct influence on leadership styles in a variety of organizations (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007).

Rowold (2011) found that the relationship between leadership styles and performance is moderated by team member heterogeneity. Two leadership styles, transformational and consideration, work best with regard to gender when the team is heterogeneous. Eagly and Johannessen-Schmidt (2001) discovered that women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles, while men adopt autocratic and directive leadership styles.

Overall, however, though researchers have posited a wide range of leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic, transformational, and transactional leaders, and have studied their effects, studies related to path goal theory-based leadership

behaviors such as participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles in terms of gender-based differences are very limited. Hence, this study mainly focuses on participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles.

From the literature discussed in this section, it can be concluded not only that empirical studies to identify the relationship between different leadership styles and performance are still scarce, but that this is especially the case in the context of gender and for developing countries like India. Hence, this study mainly focuses on gender-based differences in adopting and practicing participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance.

Gender and Organizational Performance

Women are still not familiarized with the success of the business (Martin, 2001; Martinez Jimenez, 2009; Wang, 2010) as gender discrimination is still a further reason for the gender gap in business success, which could be the predicted differences in organizational performance between men and women (Soost & Moog, 2019). The longitudinal gender effects for a time after business success remain unrevealed (Martinez Jimenez, 2009). The question of whether men or women are the best choice as business leaders and whether any differences can be observed in their respective performances remains (Soost & Moog, 2019). Hence, this study also tries to determine whether there is any difference in organizational performance between male and female leaders.

Gender, Leadership Style, and Organizational Performance

Leadership focuses on developing subordinates and serving stakeholders (Neubert, Hunter, & Tolentino, 2016) and is effective in terms of growing organizational performance (De Luque, Washburn, Waldman, & House, 2008; Kiffin-Petersen, Murphy, & Soutar, 2012; Owens & Hekman, 2012). Ho, Li, Tam, and Zhang (2015) stated that companies with female leaders in top management are more ethical and risk-averse and report conservative earnings. The effects of gender on organizational performance are more distinct for small firms and large corporate firms. Karakuş (2018) found that women are more sensitive to managerial actions and can develop organizational commitment more easily. Many studies suggest that improvising and focusing on the socialization of women is essential in nature, which characterizes them in their leadership style, psychological na-

ture, and other qualities of value (Ben-Amar et al., 2017; Galbreath, 2018; Harjoto, Laksmana, & Lee, 2015; Landry, Bernardi, & Bosco, 2016). Women differ from men in leadership styles and organizational priorities, tend to be more transparent, innovative, and more democratic in their strategic vision and policies, more interested in stakeholder improvement, more oriented towards long-term projects, and also show more interest even in short-term profits. The literature features studies conducted on the effect of leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, servant, and ethical leadership, on organizational performance with reference to gender differences. However, studies are still lacking in relation to path goal theory-based leadership styles, such as participative, supportive, and instrumental styles. Hence, this study proposes a methodology to further determine the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance based on gender differences.

Materials and Methods

Research Methodology

This study analyzes the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance based on gender differences in manufacturing and service industries in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The manufacturing industries used in this study are mainly automobile and auto components, garments, engineering, chemicals, textile products, and plastics industries, while information technology, business process outsourcing, e-publishing, and financial services are among the service sectors surveyed.

A quantitative research design was used for data collection, hypothesis testing, and answering the research questions. Industry databases used for the study were extracted from the Centre for Quality Management, which is under the governance of the public State University, established in 1978 and located in Chennai. The Centre for Quality Management has promoted advanced training, consultancy, and research in the area of Total Quality Management for employees working in industries and educational institutions since 1995.

The survey respondents were mainly drawn from the database maintained by the University's Centre for Quality Management, which includes both the manufacturing and service sectors, using convenience sampling. The respondents were mainly from the top and middle management working in project and team-oriented activities. A Google Form was designed, and the link was forwarded to near-

ly 600 respondents, with an equal distribution of questionnaires among the manufacturing and service sectors. The response was 84 percent (505 responses), a good response rate, and analysis was carried out using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 21.0. The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of three sections. The first section contained questions related to each respondent's demographic details, the second section questions related to leadership styles, and the third section questions related to organizational performance.

In this study, the independent variable is leadership style, and the dependent variable is organizational performance. The leadership style dimensions were adopted from Ogbonna and Harris's (2000) research, which analyzes the impact of leadership style on performance related to the dimensions of innovative and competitive culture. A competitive and innovative culture helps to improve employee performance and the quality of the tasks they perform, which in turn indirectly improves the financial aspects of the organization. Hence, performance-based measurements of quality, employee, and financial performance were considered in this study. The organizational performance dimensions were adopted from the work of Zu (2009) and Sila and Ebrahimpour (2005). Quality performance and financial performance-related measurement items were extracted from Zu (2009), and the measurement items related to employee performance were extracted from Sila and Ebrahimpour (2005). A dimension reduction technique and exploratory factor analysis were carried out to prioritize the required factors and measurement items and remove low-loading measurement items from further analysis.

The leadership style dimensions were the participative leadership style (PL), supportive leadership style (SL), and instrumental leadership style (IL), and the dimensions of organizational performance were quality (QP), financial (FP), and employee (EP) performance. All these leadership-related items were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The organizational performance-related items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *greatly increased* to 5 = *greatly decreased*. The questionnaire consisted of 11 items related to the respondents' demographic details, 13 items related to leadership styles, and 17 items related to organizational performance. The questionnaire was analyzed, validated, and enhanced based on the context of the Indian manufacturing and service industries.

Relationship Statements

The literature review above showed the paucity of studies related to the study of

Table 1
Relationship Statements

Statement No.	Relationship statements
S ₁	The relationship between genders and leadership styles.
S ₂	The impact of leader gender on organizational performance.
S ₃	The impact of leadership styles on organizational performance related to gender differences.

Source: analysis by Srimathi Kannan

leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance, and it is always possible that there are studies we are not yet aware to identify differences between men and women in adopting and practicing leadership styles and their relationship with organizational performance in developing countries like India. This research gap is the foundation for this study: to explore the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance from a sample of Indian industries and to compare the results obtained for men and women leaders. Based on the discussions above, the relationship statements are proposed as listed in Table 1.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Details of the Respondents

The questionnaire survey was conducted among Tamil Nadu-based manufacturing and service industries. Of the 505 valid questionnaires received, 248 (49.1%) respondents were male, and 257 (50.9%) were female. The demographic details based on the type of sector, type of company, enterprise category, and management level have been analyzed and summarized as shown in Table 2.

The analysis results show that the majority of male respondents were from the manufacturing sector, and the majority of female respondents from the service sector. The survey respondents mostly belonged to private limited companies and large enterprises. In terms of gender, respondents were more-or-less equally distributed between top-level and middle-level management, which facilitates the data analysis. From the data, it can therefore be concluded that the respondents mostly belonged to large private limited companies and were drawn from both top- and middle-level management. Hence, this data was adjudged appropriate for proceeding with further analysis to assess the posited hypothesis.

Table 2
Respondents' Demographic Details

S. No.	Demographic variables		Male (Total (%))	Female (Total (%))
1	Type of sector	Manufacturing	150 (69.8)	65 (30.2)
		Service	98 (33.8)	192 (68.2)
2	Type of company	Public	27 (58.7)	19 (41.3)
		Private	175 (48.6)	185 (51.4)
		Joint Venture	10 (34.5)	19 (65.5)
		Multinational	36 (51.4)	34 (48.6)
3	Enterprise category	Medium	78 (51)	75 (49)
		Large	170 (48.3)	182 (51.7)
4	Management level	Top level	73 (45.6)	87 (54.4)
		Middle level	175 (50.7)	170 (49.3)

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are the most important aspects of research, as they help remove unwanted dimensions and measurement items. The data were collected and assessed in terms of their appropriateness for analysis. The data was reviewed for elements such as skewness and kurtosis and to identify any missing data to facilitate a complete data analysis, as laid out by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006).

The researchers found no anomalies or missing data after implementing the aforementioned measures. A reliability test was carried out using SPSS software (version 26.0), resulting in values for Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.885 to 0.905, well above the recommended minimum value of $\alpha > 0.70$. The results of

Table 3
Reliability Test

S. No.	Dimensions	Number of measurement items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Participative Leadership style	5	0.885
2	Supportive Leadership style	4	0.887
3	Instrumental Leadership style	4	0.905
4	Employee performance	6	0.889
5	Quality performance	4	0.893
6	Financial performance	4	0.890

the reliability tests are listed in Table 3.

Dimension reduction techniques were used to measure the construct validity. Exploratory factor analysis was performed with the maximum likelihood method by using the varimax rotation method to determine the communalities, eigenfactors, and factor loadings. The number of samples used for exploratory factor analysis was 313, selected at random irrespective of the type of industry sector and gender. The independent variable used for the study was leadership style, and the dependent variable was organizational performance. As previously described, the three types of leadership styles proposed by Ogbonna and Harris (2000)—participative, supportive, and instrumental—were used for the study, and the measurement items for leadership styles were adopted from the same work. The results of the exploratory factor analysis for leadership styles are shown in Table 4.

The factor analysis results show that the three dimensions of leadership styles with 13 measurement items can be used for further study as the conditions that the communalities should be greater than 0.4 for all items, factor loadings greater than 0.5, and eigenvalues greater than one are all satisfied. It can therefore be concluded that all the items for measuring leadership style dimensions can be used for further analysis, as the conditions for construct validity and reliability are satisfied and maintained for this study.

Table 4
Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for the Independent Variable

S. No.	Dimensions	Measurement items	Factor loadings	Communalities	Eigenvalues
1	Participative Leadership style	Listening to advice	0.569	0.406	3.935
		Consideration	0.623	0.413	
		Consultation	0.810	0.657	
		Considering subordinates	0.874	0.784	
		Asking for suggestions	0.596	0.430	
2	Instrumental Leadership style	Decision	0.647	0.452	1.823
		Explaining tasks	0.656	0.451	
		Defining standards	0.729	0.570	
		Scheduling work	0.788	0.641	
3	Supportive Leadership style	Personal welfare	0.723	0.606	1.248
		Pleasantness	0.643	0.511	
		Little things	0.761	0.601	
		Treating equal	0.671	0.484	

Further exploratory factor analysis was carried out for the dependent variable, organizational performance. Organizational performance consists of the following three dimensions: quality performance, employee performance, and financial performance. The quality performance and financial performance-related measurement items were adapted from Zu (2009) and the measurement items for employee performance from Sila and Ebrahimpour (2005). The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

As evident in the above results, three measurement items were eliminated due to poor factor loadings and communality values, one from the Quality Performance dimensions (equipment downtime) and two from Financial Performance (unit cost of manufacturing and plant's operating income). The other measurement items were considered for further analysis as they all satisfied the required conditions. Finally, the selected measurement items were used for further analysis to test the hypotheses.

Table 5
Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of the Dependent Variable

S. No.	Dimensions	Measurement items	Factor loadings	Communalities	Eigenvalues
1	Quality Performance	Products and services	0.803	0.657	3.852
		Process variability	0.801	0.665	
		Delivery	0.812	0.671	
		Scrap and Rework cost	0.701	0.504	
		Cycle time	0.786	0.646	
		Customer satisfaction	0.662	0.463	
		<i>Equipment downtime*</i>	0.336	0.128	
2	Employee Performance	Turnover rate	0.739	0.555	2.534
		Absenteeism	0.804	0.659	
		Number of suggestions received	0.840	0.714	
		Job performance	0.829	0.698	
3	Financial Performance	Sales	0.769	0.600	2.234
		Market share	0.752	0.596	
		<i>Unit cost of manufacturing manufacturing</i>	0.310	0.150	
		<i>Plant's operating income income</i>	0.111	0.237	
		Profit	0.693	0.485	
		Return on asset	0.723	0.539	

Testing of Relationship Statements

The Relationship between Genders and Leadership Styles

The first statement was framed to test whether there is any difference between men and women's leadership styles. An independent sample t-test was used to study the differences between the three types of leadership styles among the genders, and the sample size was unequal, as summarized in Table 6.

The results in Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference with a p value greater than 0.05 for all three types of leadership styles for either gender. Male leaders were found to have the highest mean score for supportive leadership style, indicating more concern about their subordinates. The mean difference values show higher scores for male than for female leaders in all three types of leadership styles, with participative and supportive leadership styles practiced and adopted by male leaders significantly more than female leaders.

Studies by Bartol (1978), Dobbins and Platz (1986), and Powell (1990) showed no difference in the gender styles of leadership. In male-dominated industries, women tend to adopt male leadership styles to demonstrate the stereotypical masculine type of leadership, more so than male leaders do (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Ferrario & Davidson, 1991; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999). Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) established that women and men make equally effective leaders, while Machado et al. (2002) observed that male and female leaders run businesses in a similar way. Oshagbemi and Gill (2003) also found that there were no statistical differences between male and female managers in terms of directive, consultative, and participative leadership styles. This finding was mirrored by Altuntaş (2010) who detected no differences between men and women in relation to team-oriented and participative leadership styles. Boštjančič (2010) and Davis, Capobianco, and Kraus (2010) also concluded that there is no difference between

Table 6
T-test Results for Leadership Styles

Leadership style Dimensions	Male		Female		Mean Difference	p' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Participative Leadership	16.88	1.74	16.63	2.13	0.25	0.134
Instrumental Leadership	16.90	1.80	16.85	1.88	0.05	0.795
Supportive Leadership	16.94	1.78	16.69	1.99	0.25	0.138

*Significant at $p=0.05$, SD: Standard Deviation

male and female leaders in hiding and controlling their emotions. The findings of the current research, that there is no significant difference in practicing leadership styles between the genders, align with the findings of these other research studies. Hence, the first relationship statement shows that there is no significant difference between the genders in terms of the three types of leadership styles.

The Impact of Leader Gender on Organizational Performance

The second statement tests whether there is any difference between men and women in terms of organizational performance. The dimensions of organizational performance are quality performance, employee performance, and financial performance. An independent sample t-test was used to study the differences between the three organizational performance-based dimensions. The results are summarized in Table 7.

The results show that there is a significant difference between men and women for organizational performance with a p value less than 0.05 in all three dimensions, and with male leaders outscoring female leaders in all three dimensions. The largest gap was in employee performance, showing that male leaders especially outstrip female leaders in this category, but the results for the other two categories are quite similar. Thus, the second statement, that there is a significant difference between men and women in terms of organizational performance, is supported.

The McKinsey management consultant company produced a significant study (Boaz & Fox, 2014) showing that European companies in which gender equality had been achieved in the administrative and control bodies demonstrated a 41% higher return on equity (ROE) than their counterparts with lower gender equality. A study conducted by the Credit Suisse Research Institute (2019) covering about six years from 2006 to 2012 produced a list of companies in which companies with

Table 7
T-test Results for Organizational Performance

Business performance Dimensions	Male (N=248)		Female (N=257)		Mean Difference	p' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Employee performance	17.54	1.71	17.08	1.98	0.46	0.006*
Quality performance	17.43	1.64	16.98	1.98	0.45	0.005*
Financial performance	17.50	1.70	17.06	2.00	0.44	0.008*

*Significant at $p=0.05$, SD: Standard Deviation

at least one woman board member recorded an average share performance of 26% higher than companies with an all-male leadership. The results of this current study also show that there is a significant difference between genders in organizational performance. Finally, it can be concluded that, as there was a significant difference in the outcoming variable, organizational performance, this study was able to proceed with the third statement to find the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance based on gender differences.

The Impact of Leadership Styles on Organizational Performance Related to Gender Differences

To discuss the third relationship statement, structural equation modeling was used with the help of IBM® SPSS® Amos™ 21.0. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The structural equation models include two main variables, independent and dependent variables. In this model, leadership styles are the exogenous or independent variable, which has three sub-dimensions: participative, supportive, and instrumental leadership styles. The endogenous or dependent variable is organizational performance, which has three sub-dimensions: employee performance, quality performance, and financial performance. The main purpose of this research is to build a model to determine the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance and to conduct a comparative study based on gender. The results were derived separately for both men and women, and compared.

The model was constructed with leadership style as the independent variable and organizational performance as the dependent variable. The purpose of the model is to determine whether the model is fit and to compare the model output

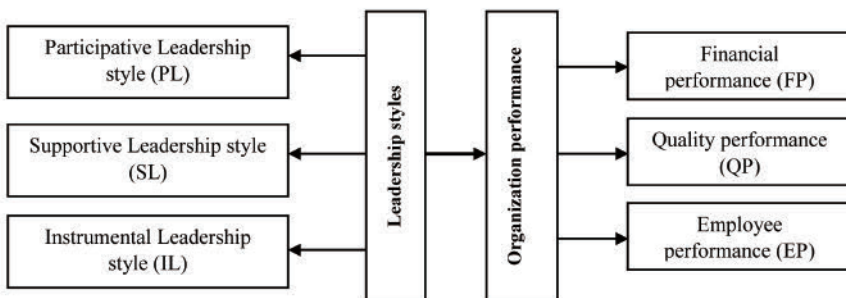


Figure 1. Relationship between independent and dependent variables

Table 8
Model fit test of Structural equation model

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold Value	Structural Model Output	
		Female (N=257)	Male (N=248)
Chi-square value	-	19.792	10.812
<i>df</i>	-	9.00	9.00
χ^2/df	<5.00	2.199	1.201
GFI	>0.90	0.976	0.987
AGFI	>0.90	0.945	0.969
NFI	>0.90	0.992	0.995
CFI	>0.90	0.996	0.999
RMR	<0.08	0.053	0.048
RMSEA	<0.08	0.068	0.029

derived separately for men and women. Table 8 lists the various fit indices required to show that the model is fit: chi-squared value, degrees of freedom (*df*), chi-squared value/*df*, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), GFI adjusted for degrees of freedom (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The acceptable threshold values for all fit indices were adopted from Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998), Hair et al., (2006), Hu and Bentler (1999), and Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008). The SEM analysis was carried out for both genders separately, and the values fit indices output obtained as shown in Table 8. The results for both genders satisfy the conditions of the fit indices as all results are in accord with the acceptable threshold result requirement. Looking at the overall values for the fit indices as a whole, we note major differences in the chi-squared and RMSEA values.

The structural equation model to determine the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance was constructed and analyzed as shown in Figures 2 and 3. The results reveal that leadership style has a positive impact on organizational performance. For men, the path estimate was found to be significant ($\gamma_{11}=0.263^{***}$, $p < 0.01$) as was also the case for women ($\gamma_{11}=0.648^{***}$, $p < .01$). From the path estimates, it is clear that female leaders mostly use leadership styles promptly to improve organizational performance than male leaders.

The supportive leadership style (0.992^{***} , $p < .01$) of female leaders has the highest path estimate value, showing that female leaders are more supportive in

performing tasks and encouraging subordinates to complete the given activities on time. House and Mitchell (1975) found that the results were stronger for the supportive style than for the instrumental style for satisfaction and performance while Schriesheim and Schriesheim (1980) revealed that supportive leader behavior is pertinent to the satisfaction levels of employees, regardless of the characteristics of the situation. Fisher and Edwards (1988) and Wofford and Liska (1993) found a positive relationship between the behavior of supportive leaders and subordinates' performance, and Alanazi, Khalaf, and Rasli (2013) concluded that supportive leadership increases the correlation with prime satisfaction if the task structure is increased. Awan, Zaidi, Naz, and Noureen (2011) discovered that highly supportive leaders made subordinates more satisfied with structured task circumstances. This result highlighted that when the subordinate's task is structured, supportive leaders encourage subordinates by decreasing negative aspects in the working environment. Finally, Bourini (2021) stated that supportive leadership behaviors moderate the relationship between work-related interests and employees' absorptive capacities.

Moore, Grunberg, and Greenberg (2005) concluded that female leaders were supportive of both male and female subordinates, where the subordinates reported

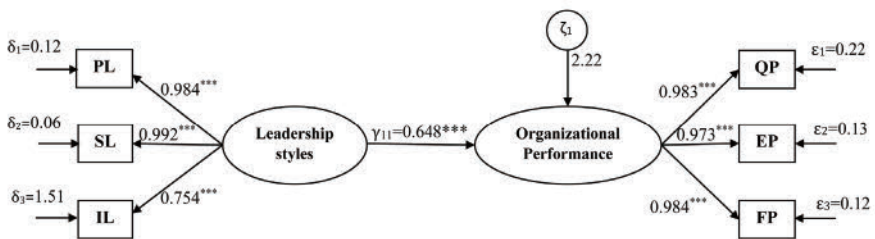


Figure 2. SEM of leadership styles and organizational performance for women.

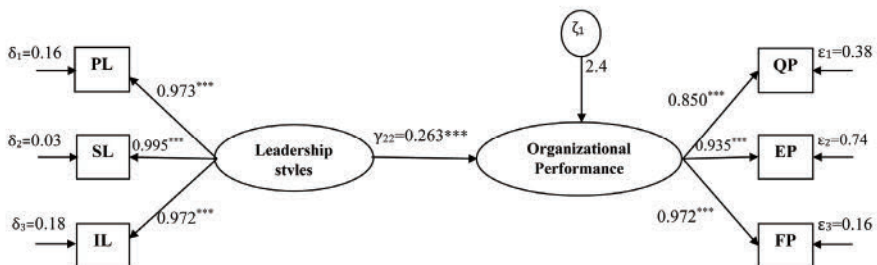


Figure 3. SEM of leadership styles and organizational performance for men.

higher levels of social support for work-life balance, work-related problems, high-level mastery, and lower levels of depression. The literature strongly stresses the fact that the supportive behavior of female leaders is more important than that of all other leadership styles, and the results of this study highlight the same. Hence, it can be concluded that the supportive leadership style plays a vital role when supervisors or leaders are women.

The next highest path estimate is the participative leadership style (0.984***, $p < 0.01$), which shows that women leaders consider their subordinates' suggestions and recommendations and engage in brainstorming activities among their subordinates to find a solution to a problem. Eagly and Johannessen-Schmidt (2001) also established that women leaders adopt a participative leadership style.

A participative leadership style among women is related to an increased spirit of empowerment, job satisfaction (This is either (Kim & Maubourgne, 1992) or (Kim, 2005) but there is no work by Kim and Maubourgne dated 2005. Please check and revise as appropriate. Yoder, 2001), and performance (Hamidifar, 2010). Women adopt a participative style of leadership as it is more effective than other styles in creating job satisfaction and concerns itself more with subordinates' problems at work (Bennett, 2009; Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Hence, from the results obtained through analysis, it can be said that the participative leadership style is also an important leadership style for women.

The path estimate with the lowest value is the instrumental leadership style (0.754***, $p < 0.01$), which is also adopted by women leaders who characteristically explain tasks and schedule work for their subordinates. From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that women leaders like to be more interactive and supportive in developing their subordinates than to adhere to a defined and scheduled task execution. They prefer to let their subordinates have a free environment in working, to make their own decisions on minor issues, and bring out ideas and execute them when they are found to be the solution to problems. Eagly and Johannessen-Schmidt (2001) found that women adopt a participative leadership style, while men adopt directive leadership styles. Stinson and Johnson (1975) stated that the relationship between instrumental leaders and satisfaction was better in low task structuring and the repetition of low tasks. Greene (1979) stated that instrumental leaders were positively related to performance and satisfaction when the structured task was very small, while Awan (2003) showed that subordinates can be motivated when they work with a directive leader and have a high ability perception. Snæbjornsson and Edvardsson (2013) stated that female leaders believe that successful managers mostly employ a masculine or instrumental leadership style. From the results ob-

tained, it is evident that the instrumental leadership style is adopted by male rather than female leaders.

In the case of male leaders, the highest path estimate is the supportive leadership style (0.995***, $p < 0.01$), followed by participative (0.973***, $p < 0.01$), with instrumental leadership style having the lowest path estimate (0.972***, $p < 0.01$). Both men and women leaders adopt the same kind of leadership styles, but male leaders are found to be more supportive and instrumental than female leaders. From the structural equation model results, it is evident that female leaders are more participative and supportive than male leaders, and all three types of leadership styles are found to have a positive impact on organizational performance. The model is found to be a better fit for female leaders than male leaders, as the female leaders strive to improve their subordinates' performance, which indirectly increases their quality and financial performance. Bartol, Martin, and Kromkowski (2003) discussed how female middle managers and executives were rated higher than men in executing goals, tasks, and interpersonal skills, while Groves (2005) showed that female leaders scored higher on social and emotional skills, which is the main characteristic of a supportive style. Altıntaş (2010) concluded that male and female managers did not differ in terms of participative and team-oriented leadership styles, and also that the pre-managerial and managerial leadership styles of female managers differ more than is the case for male managers. Davis et al. (2010) rated female leaders higher as they behave in a more constructive way than male leaders, and they are more self-critical than men. The extant literature justifies the claim that female leaders perform better than male leaders by adopting all three leadership styles to improve organizational performance. Finally, it can be concluded that the third relationship statement is valid, as leadership styles positively impact organizational performance for both male and female leaders but women leaders can be more supportive, participative, and instrumental than men leaders.

Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance. To accomplish this, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted among 600 respondents from the manufacturing and service industries in Chennai. The response rate was 84 percent. Following a thorough literature review on leadership styles, it can be concluded that there are various types of leadership styles with many positive and negative impacts on organizational performance. Employing or adopting the proper leadership style to create the nec-

essary levels of satisfaction and performance among employees working in an organization is required to ensure successful management. This research study concentrates mainly on path-goal theory-based leadership styles, namely, participative, supportive, and instrumental. In addition, the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance based on gender differences was explored. From the literature review, it is evident that studies of these leadership styles and associated gender differences are limited. Hence, this study focused on the impact of leadership style on organizational performance based on gender differences.

An independent t-test showed no significant difference between male and female leaders in the case of supportive, participative, and instrumental types of leadership styles. Although the mean values for male leaders were found to be slightly higher than those of female leaders, the p value showed no significant difference. Some studies also show that there is no difference between men and women in the style of leadership they adopt. Hence, this result showed that gender equality exists in many of the organizations that have been surveyed, and both genders are given equal importance in leading the organizations. This kind of leadership style was adopted by both genders, as most organizations require leaders to be more interactive, helpful, and emotionally bound to their subordinates.

The independent t-test also proved that there is a significant difference between male and female leaders in the case of organizational performance, and the 2014 McKinsey report (Boaz & Fox, 2014) based on European companies also gave the same pattern. The result shows that the mean value of male leaders was found to be slightly higher than for women leaders and the 'p' value shows that there is a significant difference between them. This statement is also supported by the literature, as there is a difference between men and women leaders in the growth of an organization's success.

As there was a significant difference in the outcome variable, organizational performance, the researchers were interested in establishing the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance based on gender differences. Structural equation modeling was conducted to find the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results showed that leadership styles have a positive and strong impact on organizational performance, with a higher significant impact for female leaders than for male leaders. Female leaders were found to be more supportive and participative, while male leaders were found to be more instrumental. From this, it can be stated that women leaders should be encouraged to develop their subordinates by being more supportive and participative in their behavioral aspects. The current scenario in manufacturing and service industries is that managers and leaders

have been placed in their positions to solve problems quickly and attain the desired objectives of the organization.. This type of situation has caused managers to change their characteristic approach in order to work with their subordinates and help them solve problems quickly instead of commanding them to work on the problem to achieve good quality performance. This is characteristic of what is termed a supportive leadership style, and as they are taking part in the subordinates' work improvement, they also have become more participative in nature. These behaviors have been found more in female than in male leaders, which is also supported by the literature. Thus, it can be concluded that female leaders are more supportive and participative in nature than male leaders and that we can also conclude from the results that the leadership styles of both male and female leaders have a strong positive impact on organizational performance, though the impact was found to be higher for female than for male leaders. All three types of leadership styles were found to be significant for both male and female leaders. However, female leaders were found to have higher values for participative and supportive leadership styles than male leaders. Female leaders were also found to be instrumental but to a lesser extent than male leaders. To conclude, the three types of leadership styles selected for the study were found to have a positive and strong impact on organizational performance for both female and male leaders, but more so in the case of female leaders

Recommendations

The researcher strongly recommends that all three types of leadership styles be adopted by female leaders as they show highly significant results in the improvement of organizational performance compared to male leaders. The researcher strongly focused on leadership styles in this study, believing that if management-based aspects are smoothed in an organization, this will automatically yield good results in organizational performance. The respondents were mostly from large private companies and from both top and middle management levels. Most female leaders who participated in the survey were from service industries rather than manufacturing industries. Thus, the results can be applied to large organizations, which are mostly private limited companies. Leaders in the service industries, such as software and IT companies, must be knowledgeable enough to solve problems immediately along with their team members or subordinates. They should be flexible with their subordinates as these subordinates can solve problems easily when they are encouraged and motivated by leaders. As women are, by nature, emotionally skilled and have the capability to encourage employees and

complete tasks, these types of leadership styles are significantly more adaptable to female than to male leaders as the former would be participative, supportive, and directive. Finally, it is recommended that this study can be used as a preliminary guide for leaders and women, encouraging women to boost their leadership skills to improve organizational performance.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The main limitation of this study is that the leadership styles chosen for analysis were limited to only three: participative, supportive, and instrumental. Other styles, such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, autocratic, bureaucratic, and democratic, also exist and could also be included in analyses of the type of leadership styles managers adopt in developing countries like India. Similarly, the performance dimensions selected for the study related only to financial, employee, and quality performance. Other performance-measuring dimensions such as market performance, productivity, and human-related measures, could also be included in further studies. The demographic sample selected for the study was limited to the Chennai zone of Tamil Nadu, India; future research is required for other areas of India to see if the results here are mirrored elsewhere. Finally, another possible future research direction is to examine other leadership styles to know which styles support the Indian working environment and to explore whether a mixture of leadership styles is required.

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