



Unveiling women leadership dynamics in public relations: Insights and influential factors

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of information technology and the globalisation of markets underscore the paramount importance of competition for highly skilled professionals in the corporate landscape. Within this context, women leaders play a pivotal role in the development of public relations (PR) by virtue of their distinctive leadership styles and artistic approaches. This research paper aims to investigate the various elements as well as factors that contribute to the phenomenon of women leadership. Employing a dual methodology of theoretical exploration and quantitative analysis, the paper attempts to establish a nuanced understanding of the correlation between women leadership and its substantial influencing factors. Drawing from the amalgamation of findings from a comprehensive questionnaire survey and prior research content, the paper categorises these factors into three overarching aspects, namely individual factors, organisational factors, and societal factors. The research's conclusions offer valuable insights into the intricate relationship among these complex interconnected factors. Among the salient conclusions drawn from the study, cognitive integration, influence and inspire, innovation, resilience, and emotional control emerge as crucial components of women leadership. The research underscores the significant influence of personal, organisational, and societal factors on women leadership, with moral quality standing out as a particularly impactful personal factor.

Keywords: *Female, leadership, public relations, organisation*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the evolution of human society, leadership activities have consistently shaped the trajectory and progress of societal development, serving as a catalyst for advancements in various social endeavours. Leadership, as a critical functional category within these activities, inherently motivates the efficiency of leadership endeavours. The exploration of women leadership has gained increasing prominence across diverse sectors of society. Globally, the societal status of women has experienced a notable ascent, with many now occupying prominent roles in management (Wen, 2017), a trend attributed to the growing feminist consciousness and the collective efforts of women worldwide. Consequently, women are making substantial contributions to both social development and economic growth. Numerous studies assert that despite possessing the requisite skills and abilities for effective organisational leadership, women may encounter challenges in persuading others of their leadership potential. In other words, women face greater obstacles in ascending to leadership positions and achieving success in such roles (Cheah, 2021). In China, traditional beliefs have historically imposed numerous restrictions on women, relegating them to a disadvantaged social position. However, societal progress has led to a significant improvement in the social standing of Chinese women. As a result, women in China are now actively engaged in various fields, including science, technology, culture, and education, giving rise to a cohort of female leaders. The relevance of women leadership in diverse leadership activities is gaining heightened significance.

The status of women has undergone a remarkable transformation in tandem with the progress and development of the times. The contemporary era's openness and progress have created opportunities for an expanding number of women to shift from the background to the forefront, providing them with a platform to demonstrate their capabilities. Whether in domestic or international arenas, within political or business realms, women are increasingly taking on active roles, diligently contributing to their respective fields, and reaping the rewards in terms of both efficacy and reputation. The longstanding dominance of men in politics or business has been dismantled, leading to a gradual rise in the proportion of women leaders. Similarly, women's engagement in various workforce sectors is expanding both in scope and proportion, yielding impressive achievements. On a global scale, the female workforce is progressively reclaiming its rightful positions in professional and managerial realms, penetrating traditionally male-dominated fields. Notably, nearly 25% of women are now assuming management and leadership roles within organisations, aligning with the vision articulated by Adler in the 1990s, asserting that "The path to management or leadership positions must be opened and widened for women" (Izraeli & Adler, 1994, p. 61).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and women leadership

The term "leader" is commonly construed in both broad and narrow contexts. In its broader sense, it encompasses the examination of leadership positions, roles, activities, and individuals assuming leadership roles. In a more specific sense, it denotes the ability to influence and guide others toward achieving performance outcomes. This involves persuading subordinates to align their efforts with the company's objectives, reflecting a shared set of values, motivations, ideas, and needs between company managers and their followers. Leadership is characterised as the art of motivating subordinates with confidence

and enthusiasm to fulfil their tasks (Gong, 2021). Ding (2017) dictated that leaders are individuals who wield their rights as exercisers, employing skills and means to attain their goals. The leader of a team significantly impacts the abilities and actions of team members in relation to the achievement of team goals (Wang & Yang, 2019).

Fleishman et al. (1991) and others have highlighted the complexity of the concept of “leader,” asserting that in the 50 years leading up to 1991, approximately 65 different systems attempted to explain it. In reality, there are well over 65 interpretations of “leader,” with American leader scholars positing more than 350 definitions globally. Scholars have approached the interpretation of “leader” from various research perspectives. According to Karsono et al. (2022), leadership is the art of unifying organisational members, fostering collaboration to realise organisational goals and plans. Igbaekemen (2014) posited that leadership involves influencing individual or group behaviour to achieve corporate objectives. A leader comprehends the emotions of subordinates and the challenges they encounter in planning their actions. The Chinese Academy of Sciences’ “Science and Technology Leader Research” group defined leadership as the process through which a leader engages and influences those led and stakeholders in a specific situation, consistently achieving group or organisational goals (Igbaekemen, 2014; Karsono et al., 2022; Wang, 2018).

The contemporary landscape of leadership within academia reflects a rich diversity of perspectives, with experts and scholars presenting varied views. As highlighted by Stogdill, the plethora of attempts to define “leadership” has resulted in nearly as many definitions (Vasilescu, 2019). Bennis emphasised the pivotal role of leadership in influencing others, particularly in motivating them to attain challenging objectives (Issah, 2018). This underscores leadership as the capacity of leaders to inspire voluntary excellence within their organisations, encapsulating the essence of influence. The Chinese Academy of Sciences’ “Science and Technology Leadership Research” group posited leadership as a derivative concept shaped by the connotations of leadership itself (Wang, 2018). Within this framework, leadership is portrayed as the leader’s ability to attract and influence individuals in a given situation, consistently achieving group or organisational goals. Additionally, leadership is characterised by the capacity and influence of organisational leaders to set direction, establish performance expectations, and guide all members and stakeholders toward goal attainment (Bryson, 2018).

Research on leadership has reached a considerable breadth, yet the exploration of women leadership remains notably sparse, particularly lacking systematic and in-depth research content. The exploration of women leadership in domestic academic circles is relatively recent compared to international counterparts. However, with the rapid economic progress and social development in China, research on women leadership has gained momentum (Sun & Shi, 2015). According to their perspective, fundamental elements of women leadership encompass professional skills, acumen, assertiveness, organisational prowess, and the ability to foster conducive environments. Modern organisations increasingly value feminine and flexible management concepts, particularly in the nuanced aspects of work.

However, inherent weaknesses in women, such as heightened emotionality, dependency, and comparatively less macro-strategic control and open-mindedness than men, suggest a need for targeted selection and tailored leadership development for women (Sun & Shi, 2015). Additionally, the existence of the “glass ceiling” poses an unseen obstacle in the career trajectories of women, necessitating women leaders to enhance their leadership skills, address their shortcomings through continuous learning, and improve problem-solving abilities. Establishing a comprehensive perspective, enhancing vision, cultivating

a positive image, and elevating management prestige are crucial steps for women leaders (Wei, 2020). Adapting roles over time is also vital for expanding career development paths. In the realm of leadership studies, where traits are predominantly associated with male characteristics, women must focus on cultivating and enhancing self-leadership in their career progression. Developing strong communication skills, empathy, coordination, and the achievement of organisational goals can translate into advantages in the workplace. In this respect, Chen (2020) emphasised the importance of determination, understanding the power of certainty, and honing discernment skills to evolve into an outstanding leader.

Public relations and leadership

Public relations is delineated as a distinct form of management aimed at establishing and nurturing reciprocal channels of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organisation and its various audiences (Lee et al., 2023). Public relations, as defined by Fan (2018), is the strategic use of communication by social organisations to gain public understanding and support. This management activity involves disseminating information and communicating to optimise the organisation's social-ecological environment. The primary objective of public relations is to cultivate a positive image for the organisation within the public domain. Guided by the fundamental principle of sincere cooperation and mutual benefit (Kent & Li, 2020), public relations emphasises long-term planning and consistent efforts (Verčič & Ćorić, 2018). The central method employed in public relations is a combination of internal and external two-way communication (Smith, 2020).

In the context of leadership, maintaining robust public relations between leaders and their constituents is crucial for effective leadership, playing a pivotal role in the overall leadership composition. Public relations originated during the American Revolution when figures like Adams strategically used propaganda to garner public support against England. Leaders, such as Samuel Adams, recognised the significance of public support and adeptly employed public relations strategies. For leaders, public relations is an essential component of effective leadership and management, distinct from public relations conducted by ordinary individuals. It encompasses unique characteristics related to management activities, purpose, and nature. Despite its importance, many leaders harbour misconceptions about public relations, viewing it solely as a form of social interaction in practice.

Leaders can establish and maintain connections, comprehension, and cooperation with the public through the aid of public relations. In a market-driven economy, there is an expanding and increasingly intricate demand for public services from the public, leading to more diverse functions for public organisations and more challenging tasks. The success of leaders' managerial decisions within the organisation relies on the public's understanding and support. As modern management techniques evolve, contemporary leadership systems exhibit both specific detailed elements and macro-systems. This necessitates leaders to effectively manage not only the "internal" public relations involving the organisation's internal staff and the public relations of individual units within the organisation, but also to meticulously handle external public relations with entities outside the organisation. This comprehensive approach aims to harmonise various public relations aspects, ensuring the smooth implementation of necessary decisions in the organisation's operations.

Role congruity theory

The role congruity theory provides insights into how gender influences the evaluation of leadership competencies, specifically regarding the assessment of overall company

performance (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Social roles assigned to each gender in society play a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions and judgments of individuals, influencing the assessment of their performance. When individuals, especially perceivers stereotyping women team members, perceive an incongruence in the competencies required for successful leaders, it results in a distorted assessment of women leader competencies (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The discrepancy between socially defined female gender roles and the expectations of leadership roles places women at a disadvantage, leading to biases and negative perceptions that hinder their progress in leadership positions. Stereotypically “public” women behaviours, such as mentoring, modesty, or nurturing, are viewed as “incongruous” with leadership roles, while men are often perceived as more controlling and dominant — traits considered more fitting for leadership positions. This bias and negative perception contribute to an incomplete assessment of women leadership abilities, limiting opportunities for women to advance in their careers.

The role congruity theory test, stemming from the social role theory, underscores the importance of congruence between gender role requirements and leadership role expectations (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory addresses the scarcity of women in top management by acknowledging the perceived inconsistency between attributes of strong leaders and those assigned to female gender roles. When expectations of leadership roles clash with gender stereotypes, women are less likely to assume leadership positions than men (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). Thus, social roles acting as the foundation for regulating behaviours, shape perceptions of valuable attributes for both genders (Eagly & Diekmann, 2005).

Drawing upon the role congruity theory, this study explicates the bias against women leaders, elucidating the incongruence between women and leadership roles. Women encounter diminished prospects for leadership roles compared to men, and when they do assume leadership positions, they face more stringent evaluations. In this respect, evolving beliefs about gender and leadership, reducing biases, and increasing the representation of women in leadership can enhance the value of women as business managers (Pan & Liu, 2021). Therefore, Figure 1 illustrates the research framework proposed according to the role congruity theory.

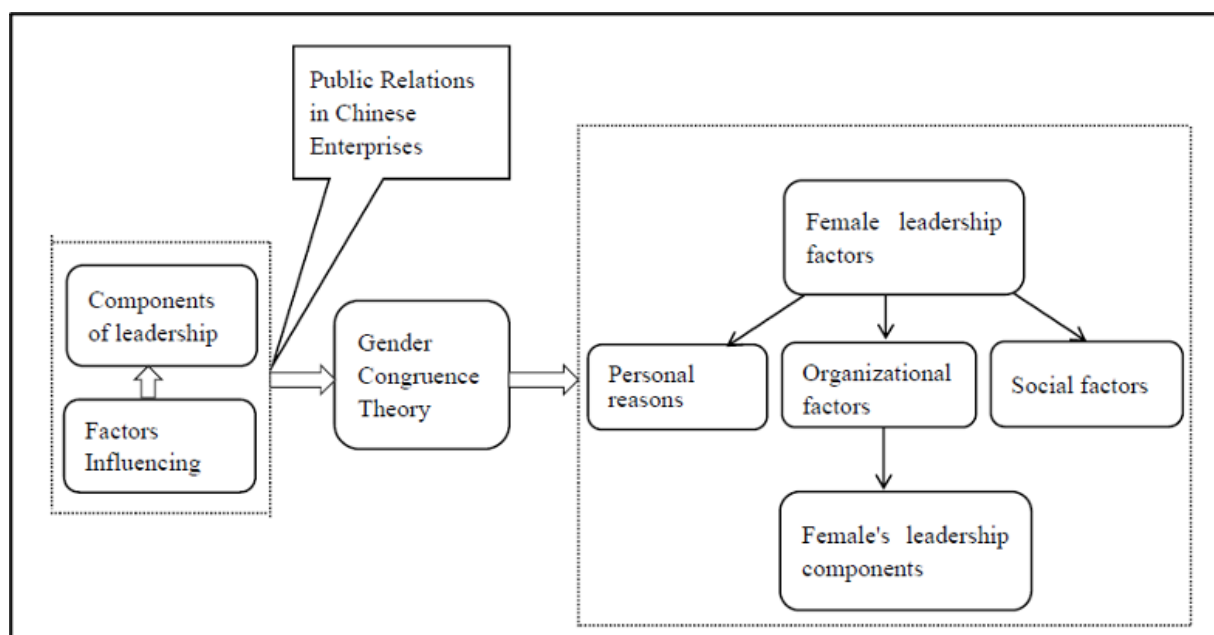


Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a dual approach of literature review and quantitative analysis by using questionnaire survey to delve into the realm of women leadership within China's organisational public relations department. The research's trajectory and the justification for its viewpoint are grounded in an exhaustive review of leadership literature and concepts related to women employees. The questionnaire's validity was scrutinised through factor analysis, analysis of variance, correlation analysis, and regression analysis by using SPSS. These analytical methods serve not only to validate the questionnaire, but also to expound upon the theoretical framework and research model underpinning this study.

The China Integrated City Index 2022 categorised cities in China into tiers using 878 data sets. It evaluated 297 cities at the prefectural level and above based on GDP, population, environmental, social, and economic factors. Based on these criteria, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen emerged as first-tier cities in China, where these metropolises play an important role in national politics, economy, and other social activities as well as have the leading role and ability to drive the country's development (Pingtao et al., 2021). Therefore, this study concentrated on women employees in leadership roles within public relations organisations located in these four first-tier cities of China. The questionnaire used in the research was modified and tailored from previous studies to align with the specific theme of this research. The questionnaire consisted of three main parts, namely demographic (5 items), concepts of leadership (5 items), and influencing factors (30 items) which employed the 5-point Likert scale. Data was collected through Star Online, an online survey platform in China. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study of 30 samples was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire which resulted in scores of 0.975 for Cronbach α and 0.665 for KMO and Bartlette's tests, respectively.

FINDINGS

There were a few limitations during the data collection process. Firstly, the data collection period was limited to only two weeks due to the duration of the researcher's learning semester. Secondly, despite the online distribution of the questionnaire via the Star Online platform, the specific target audience of women employees in leadership positions within public relations organisations was scarce. Consequently, only a total of 120 questionnaires were received during this period, and after removing incomplete responses, only 100 sets of usable data remained. The results of the reliability and validity analysis are shown in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively. Through SPSS data analysis, the Cronbach α value derived was 0.956, which is higher than 0.9 indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire is of high quality and can be used for further analysis.

Table 1. Reliability test

Number of items	Sample size	Cronbach α
35	100	0.956

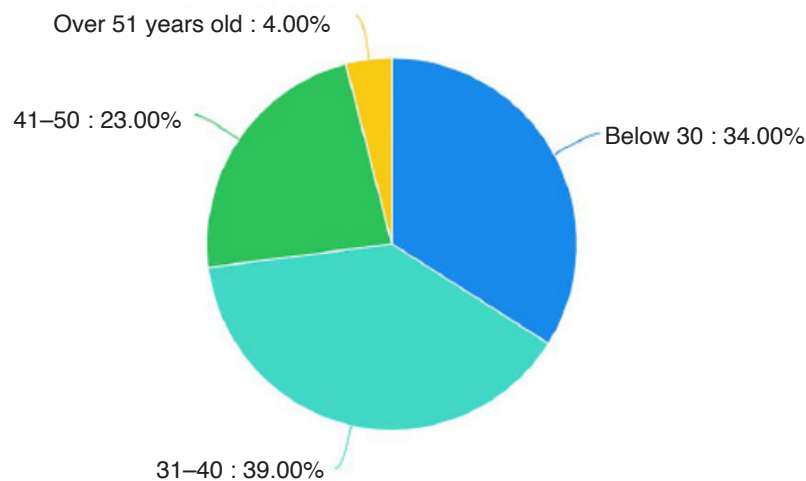
Validation was verified using KMO and Bartlett tests. The KMO value attained was 0.877 which is higher than 0.8, indicating that the questionnaire demonstrates good validity and is suitable for extracting information for further analysis.

Table 2. Validity test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.877
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2407.762
	df	595
	Sig.	0.000

Demography

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the survey participants with regard to age, indicating a predominant concentration among individuals aged 30 or younger, followed by those in the age brackets of 31–40 and 41–50. Specifically, the percentages for these age groups are 34%, 39%, and 23%, respectively. Respondents aged 51 and above constituted 4% of the total. This suggests that women leaders in the Chinese workplace typically fall within the younger age range.

**Figure 2.** Frequency and percentage for age group

As depicted in Figure 3, the largest proportion, constituting 58%, comprised married women. This could imply that married women possess experience and stability in their career development, suggesting a more balanced approach to marital and professional responsibilities. Unmarried women represented 28% of the respondents, suggesting that these individuals might have greater freedom and flexibility in their career development, potentially focusing more on their professional and leadership growth without assuming marital and family obligations. The percentage of divorced women stands at 14%, indicating a relatively low representation. This might imply that divorced women have a limited presence and influence in the workplace or that divorce has potentially had some adverse effects on their career trajectory.

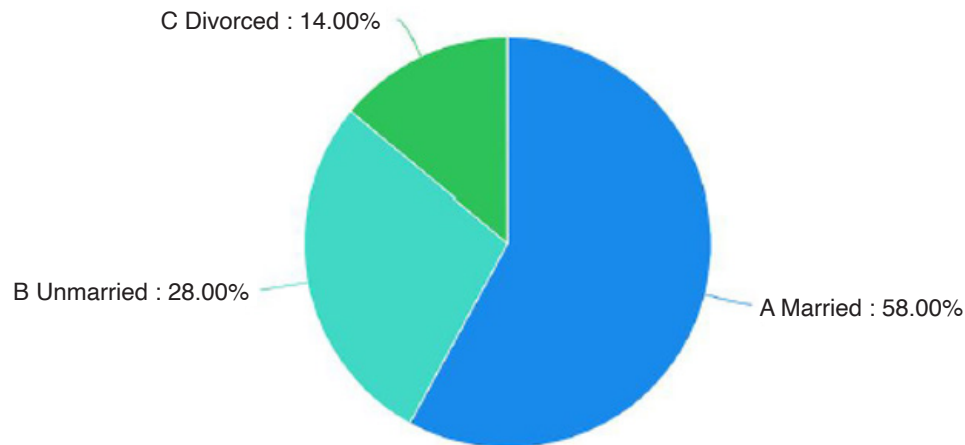


Figure 3. Frequency and percentage for marital status

Figure 4 depicts that of the survey participants, 55% held an undergraduate degree, 36% possessed a postgraduate degree, 7% had a diploma or lower educational attainment, and 2% had attained a doctorate or higher. This suggests that the educational backgrounds of Chinese women leaders in the workplace are notably strong, providing a solid foundation for career development and the enhancement of leadership skills.

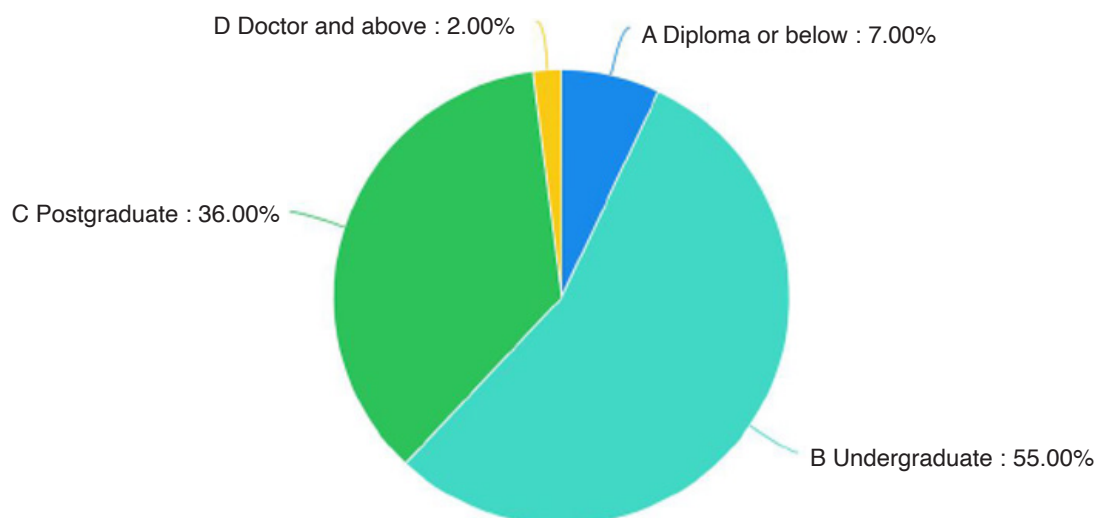


Figure 4. Frequency and percentage for education level

In Figure 5, it is evident that 27% of respondents have accumulated 6–10 years of work experience, while 24% possessed 11–15 years of work experience. Additionally, 15% had more than 16 years of work experience, indicating that these women have garnered a wealth of expertise and knowledge throughout their career development, rendering them well-equipped to assume leadership roles. The percentage of individuals with 3–5 years of work experience is 26%, and those with less than 3 years of work experience made up 8%. This suggests that these women exhibit excellence and showcase leadership potential early in their careers.

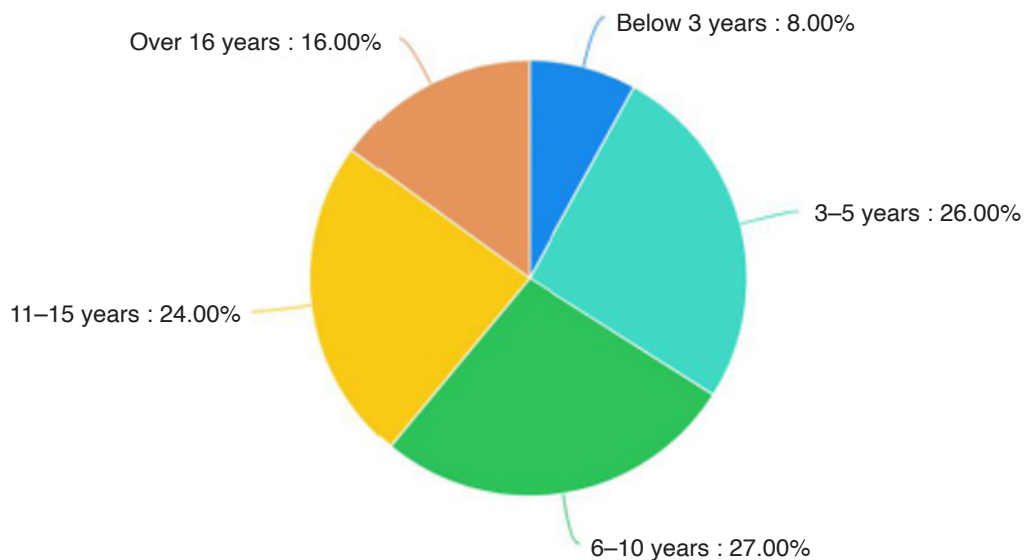


Figure 5. Frequency and percentage for work experience

As depicted in Figure 6, 42% of respondents held supervisory roles, 40% were in managerial positions, and 18% occupied directorial roles. This highlights that women predominantly occupy middle and lower management positions, with a relatively small percentage in top management roles.

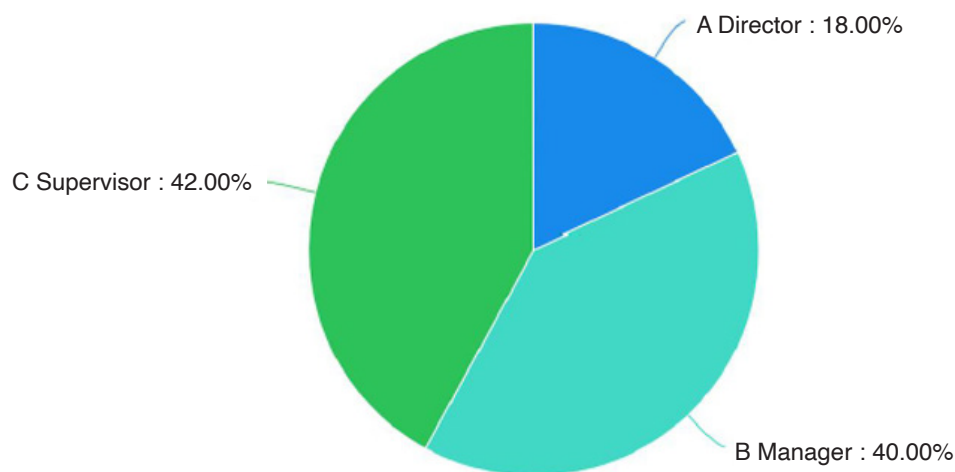


Figure 6. Frequency and percentage for work position

Leadership

From Table 3, it is evident that the factor analysis resulted in a distinct factor appropriately labelled as “women leadership.” The cumulative explained variance reached 62.44%.

Table 3. Factor analysis of leadership

Item	Component
6. Cognitive integration ability	0.862
7. Ability to influence and inspire	0.861
8. Innovation ability	0.786

Table 3. (con't)

Item	Component
9. Resilience	0.731
10. Emotional control ability	0.697

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

a. 1 component extracted.

b. 62.44% of Variance

The questionnaire in this part consisted of five dependant variables, that is influencing factors, namely Moral and Attribute (MA), Physical and Mental Health (PM), Social Support (SS), Growth and Opportunity (GO), and Company Support (CS). Each variable contained 6 items to support it.

Moral and attribute (MA)

As shown in Table 4, the highest score was observed for item 12, “I have a strong sense of team honour” (M = 4.28, SD = 0.621), signifying the respondents’ highest level of agreement. Following closely are item 11, “I practice what I preach” (M = 4.22, SD = 0.66), item 13, “I have a strong sense of responsibility and can take everything at work seriously” (M = 4.19, SD = 0.677), and item 14, “I will not snoop or discuss the privacy of others” (M = 4.15, SD = 0.657). Item 16, “I can deal with things that are not in my own interest” (M = 4.05, SD = 0.672), received a slightly lower mean score. The item with the lowest mean score is item 15, “I can listen patiently and accept different opinions” (M = 3.98, SD = 0.765). Notably, all items scored above the mean score, indicating a consistent tendency among all participants regarding moral qualities.

Table 4. Descriptive analysis of moral and attribute (MA)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
11. I talk the talk and walk the walk	4.22	0.66
12. I have a strong sense of team honour	4.28	0.621
13. I have a strong sense of responsibility and can take everything at work seriously	4.19	0.677
14. I will not snoop or discuss the privacy of others	4.15	0.657
15. I can listen patiently and accept different opinions	3.98	0.765
16. I can deal with things that are not in my own interest	4.05	0.672

Physical and mental health (PM)

As shown in Table 5, the highest score was observed for item 22, “I am very tenacious and decisive” (M = 4.08, SD = 0.748), indicating the highest level of agreement among respondents. Following closely are item 17, “I am in good health and have no serious illnesses” (M = 4.07, SD = 0.728), item 21, “I am always energetic, motivated, and enthusiastic” (M = 4.00, SD = 0.711), item 20, “I am positive and do not feel depressed by temporary failures in life” (M = 3.98, SD = 0.681), and item 19, “My life is enjoyable and full of happiness” (M = 3.91, SD = 0.898) with the lowest standard deviation. All responses were above the mean score, indicating a consensus among participants regarding the influence of physical and mental health on women’s leadership.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of physical and mental health (PM)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
17. I am in good health and have no serious illness	4.07	0.728
18. I have a regular and balance life	3.86	0.804
19. My life is enjoyable and full of happiness	3.91	0.818
20. I am positive and not depressed by temporary failures in my life	3.98	0.681
21. I am always energetic, motivated and enthusiastic	4.00	0.711
22. I am very tenacious and decisive	4.08	0.748

Social support (SS)

As shown in Table 6, within the realm of social factors, item 24, “I can get help when I encounter difficulties in work and life” ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.643$), and item 25, “I can receive support from family members” ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.689$), received the highest scores, signifying the highest level of agreement among respondents for these two items. Following closely is item 28, “Socialise with colleagues” ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.718$), and item 27, “Find the right person to talk to when you encounter troubles” ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.803$). The lowest score was recorded for item 23, “I have helpers with housework” ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.206$). Notably, all items related to social factors scored above the mean score, indicating unanimous agreement among respondents regarding the impact of social factors on women leadership.

Table 6. Descriptive analysis of social support (SS)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
23. I have helpers with housework	3.40	1.206
24. I can get help when I encounter difficulties in work and life	4.01	0.643
25. I can receive support from family members	4.01	0.689
26. Help each other with neighbors and friends	3.92	0.734
27. Find the right person to talk to when you encounter troubles	3.89	0.803
28. Socialise with colleagues	3.90	0.718

Growth and opportunity (GO)

As shown in Table 7, item 30, “I can use my strengths to do the best in my job” ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.571$), received the highest score, indicating the highest rating from respondents. Following closely are item 34, “I can take responsibility for my job independently” ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.51$), item 31, “The company provides a broader scope for my career development” ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.674$), item 32, “I am satisfied with my current job” ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.71$), and item 29, “The company provides many trainings and opportunities to me” ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.682$). Item 33, “The company provides me with good salary and benefits” ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.611$), received slightly lower scores. Notably, all scores for these items were above the mean score, indicating unanimous agreement among respondents regarding the impact of personal growth opportunities on women leadership.

Table 7. Descriptive analysis of growth and opportunity (GO)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
29. The company provides many trainings and opportunities to me	4.00	0.682
30. I can use my strengths to do best in my job	4.24	0.571
31. The company provides a wider space for my career development	4.03	0.674

Table 7. (con't)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
32. I am satisfied with my current job	4.02	0.71
33. The company provides good salaries and welfare	3.97	0.611
34. I am able to take responsibility for the job on my own	4.23	0.51

Company support (CS)

As shown in Table 8, item 40, “Have a very good relationship with your colleagues” ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.681$), received the highest score, indicating the highest rating from respondents. Following closely are item 35, “Your direct boss understands the problems and needs in your work” ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.731$), item 39, “Have a very good relationship with your boss” ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.689$), item 38, “You have enough confidence in your direct boss and will defend his decisions in his absence” ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.808$), and item 36, “Your direct boss uses his authority to help you solve problems at work” ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.811$). Item 37, “Your direct supervisor always defends you at a high cost” ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.958$), had the lowest standard variance, indicating respondents’ agreement with the influence of organisational support on women leadership.

Table 8. Descriptive analysis of company support (CS)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
35. Your direct boss understands the problems and needs in your work	3.97	0.731
36. Your direct boss uses his power to help you solve problems at work	3.78	0.811
37. Your direct boss always defend for you at high cost	3.47	0.958
38. You have enough confidence in your direct boss and will defend his decisions in his absence	3.79	0.808
39. Have a very good relationships with your boss	3.90	0.689
40. Have a very good relationships with your colleagues	3.98	0.681

Regression analysis

Regression analysis serves as a valuable tool to elucidate the direction and uncover the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables, shedding light on the extent of their influence. In this study, a comprehensive examination of the causal relationships and the degree of influence of women leadership and its influencing factors was conducted through regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is specifically employed to establish causal relationships among the variables, providing a nuanced understanding of their interplay.

As shown in Table 9, the linear regression analysis was performed with independent variables including age, marital status, education level, working experience, position, physical and mental health, moral and attribute, social support, company support, and growth and opportunity, while women leadership was considered the dependent variable. The model’s R-squared value derived was 0.640, indicating that the combination of age, marital status, education level, working experience, position, physical and mental health, moral and attribute, social support, company support, and growth and opportunity can collectively explain 64.0% of the variation in women leadership.

Upon conducting an F-test for the model, it was found to pass ($F = 15.805$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), suggesting that at least one of the variables among age, marital status,

education level, working experience, position, physical and mental health, moral and attribute, social support, company support, and growth and opportunity has a significant impact on women leadership.

Further analysis of individual variables revealed that age, education level, and working experience do not have a statistically significant effect on women leadership, as indicated by their respective regression coefficient values and p-values exceeding the 0.05 threshold. Additionally, work position was found to have no effect on women leadership.

The analysis on the individual variables revealed that the regression coefficient value for physical and mental health is -0.115 ($t = -0.945$, $p = 0.347 > 0.05$), indicating that physical and mental health does not exert a statistically significant effect on women leadership. In contrast, moral and attribute has a significant positive impact with a regression coefficient value of 0.532 ($t = 4.390$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$), and social support also demonstrates a significant positive effect with a regression coefficient value of 0.297 ($t = 2.645$, $p = 0.010 < 0.01$). On the other hand, the regression coefficient value for company support is 0.033 ($t = 0.352$, $p = 0.726 > 0.05$), signifying that company support does not have a statistically significant positive influence on women leadership.

Furthermore, growth and opportunity exhibits a noteworthy positive relationship with women leadership, supported by a regression coefficient value of 0.300 ($t = 2.553$, $p = 0.012 < 0.05$), indicating a significant positive impact. In summary, the analysis reveals that moral and attribute, social support, as well as growth and opportunity significantly contribute to a positive influence on women leadership. However, age, marital status, education level, working years, position, physical and mental health, and company support do not demonstrate a positive influence on women leadership.

Table 9. Regression analysis of variables

	$\beta 1$	$\beta 2$	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Age	-0.049	-0.072	-0.545	0.587	4.269	0.234
Marital status	0.045	0.056	0.812	0.419	1.175	0.851
Education level	-0.014	-0.016	-0.223	0.824	1.191	0.839
Working experience	0.063	0.129	1.015	0.313	3.974	0.252
Position	-0.029	-0.037	-0.489	0.626	1.395	0.717
Physical and mental health	-0.115	-0.114	-0.945	0.347	3.575	0.28
Moral and attribute	0.5432	0.448	4.39	0.000**	2.574	0.388
Social support	0.297	0.297	2.645	0.010**	3.122	0.32
Company support	0.033	0.036	0.352	0.726	2.593	0.386
Growth and opportunity	0.3	0.263	2.553	0.012*	2.63	0.38
$R^2 = 0.64$, adjust $R^2 = 0.599$, $F = 15.805$						

DV: Female leadership

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

DISCUSSION

This paper employed the role congruity theory's competency model to analyse the key components of women leadership. Utilising factor analysis, these components were categorised into a single factor. Subsequently, the current evolution of the women leadership role was examined across three dimensions: personal factors, organisational factors, and social factors.

By employing factor analysis, we can consolidate women leaders' cognitive integration ability, influence and inspiration ability, innovation ability, adaptability, and emotional control ability into a single factor, denoted as women leadership. The cumulative explained variance was 62.44%, underscoring that these five abilities are more indicative of women's leadership than the broader concept of general leadership. Notably, men tend to exhibit greater cognitive ability with a stronger cognitive discrimination capacity, while women showcase a stronger cognitive integration ability, aligning with the findings of this study.

The correlation and regression analysis results indicate that personal factors do not exert a direct impact on women leadership. This implies that variations in these personal factors among women do not directly influence their effectiveness in leadership roles. Women are likely to demonstrate effective leadership regardless of their age, marital status, educational attainment, length of employment, position, or physical and mental health. On the other hand, moral qualities and attributes have a positive effect on women leadership. This suggests that when women assume leadership roles, possessing moral qualities and positive personal attributes can enhance their performance. These moral and personal traits may encompass integrity, responsibility, decision-making ability, communication skills, and teamwork. Thus, the cultivation and emphasis of these traits can contribute positively to the enhancement of women leadership.

Through the correlation and regression analysis, a significant positive association between social variables and women leadership was also identified. Women in leadership positions contend with diverse pressures stemming from societal expectations, familial responsibilities, and personal aspirations. Prior research has underscored the substantial impact of "work-family" conflicts on women's roles and status in the workplace. Women leaders must proactively address the tensions arising from the interplay between professional and household duties. Cultivating a sense of self-development, fostering a commitment to lifelong learning, and promoting family harmony are essential strategies for navigating these challenges.

The comprehensive theoretical analysis and empirical investigation in this paper offer a well-rounded exploration of women leadership and the factors that shape it. The findings provide theoretical support and insights, offering inspiration for the development of women leadership. The results can be utilised as a reference to empower women leaders, enabling them to unlock their full potential and contribute more effectively in their roles.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

While this paper has undertaken an extensive empirical research and analysis, providing valuable insights, it is crucial to acknowledge the inherent limitations and shortcomings due to restricted knowledge and expertise. The majority of prior research on women leadership has been confined to basic descriptions; thus, the theoretical foundation of this study might lack depth, and the subject of women leadership may only be marginally covered. Given the constrained research capacity, the study relied on a sample size of only 100 participants, introducing inherent limitations to the results. Additionally, the questionnaire employed in the study was self-administered, with all responses being self-assessed. This methodology may introduce common method variation, potentially influencing the statistical analysis results to some extent. Recognising these limitations is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and potential implications.

Considering the limitations of this paper, we propose potential areas for further research: expand the sample size and geographic coverage for a more comprehensive

study, as well as explore women leadership from diverse perspectives, including leaders' self-evaluations, to derive more precise conclusions. Investigating the distinctions between male and female leadership is crucial, as previous research has primarily focused on general leadership issues. A comparative analysis of male and female leadership can profoundly impact professional growth for both genders. Additionally, examining challenges in women leadership across cultures is essential. Different cultures ascribe varying meanings and functions to leadership, influencing attitudes towards short-term and long-term goals. To understand similarities and variations in women leadership across cultures, it is imperative to explore this topic within diverse cultural contexts, enabling a more nuanced analysis and leveraging strengths while addressing shortcomings.

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