Development and Testing of Conceptual Model on Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

This paper dwells on the development of a conceptual model on women empowerment by considering the factors namely career and educational choices, financial independence, social and personal factors. The conceptual model assumes that when women are given freedom in choosing their educational streams and career, then this will lead to financial independence. When they are financially independent, then they also have freedom in their personal and social life. The conceptual model was tested with PLS SEM using Smart PLS 3. The result confirms that the freedom in career and educational choices lead to financial independence which in turn leads to freedom in their personal and social life.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Career Choices, Financial Independence, PLS SEM

1. INTRODUCTION

Mehra(1997) defines women empowerment as the spiritual, Political, Social or economic strength of women, which translates into the development of confidence and capability among women. The essential attributes of women empowerment are education, health facilities, nutrition, political representation and self-reliance. 43% of the women in India have household autonomy and 23% of the women have the freedom to move outside their home (Gupta & Yesudian, 2006). Women’s educational is identified as the important predictor for the different dimensions of women’s empowerment. This paper looks at the development of a conceptual model on Women Empowerment and the testing it in order to understand the relationship among the study variables. The study variables are Freedom in Educational and Career Choices, Financial Independence, Social Factors and Personal Factors.

LITERATURE AND THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Women’s educational is identified as the important predictor for the different dimensions of women’s empowerment.

Though making credit available to women, providing educational opportunities will not forthrightly make women empowered but will definitely give them an edge in decision making (Kabeer, 1999).

Women Empowerment has not been extensive across all sections of the society even though liberalisation and globalisation has led to improvement in the status of women empowerment. Poverty and Illiteracy are found to be the main reason for women not being empowered (Shettar & Rajeshwari, 2015). Education and employment are the enabling factors for women empowerment (Nayak and Mahanta2012). So it is hypothesised that H1: Freedom in Educational and Career Choices will have a positive and significant impact on the Financial Independence of women. Self help groups has made the women to take care of their health and self. The more social interactions have led women to be more aware of the health of self and children, (M. B.Rao, 2011). Every individual should accept the unequal gender role, and this only can lead to women empowerment (Nayak and Mahanta2012). So it is hypothesised that H2: Financial Independence will have significant and positive impact on Freedom in Social
Factors and H3: Financial Independence will have a significant and positive impact on Freedom in Personal Factors.

**CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

![Diagram](image)

**FIG 1**

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To know the extent of impact of Freedom in Educational and Career Choices on the Financial Independence
- To understand the level of impact of Financial Independence on the Freedom in Social Factor and Freedom in Personal Factors.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study has used the non-probability convenience sampling method as the population size is infinite and a structured questionnaire was prepared with two sections. The first section deals with demographic information of the respondents and the second section measures the respondents’ level of agreement on the five constructs namely Independence in Career and Education, Financial Independence, Independence with respect to social and personal factors and the attitude towards women empowerment using 5-point Likert Scale. The sample size of the study is 180. Smart PLS 3 Software (Ringle et.al 2015) was used to test the conceptual model.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

PLS-SEM is a regression based approach that explores the linear relationships between multiple independent variables and a single or multiple dependent variables. According to Hair et al., (2010) reliability is achieved when a variable is consistent in what it is intended to measure. Construct’s reliability can be checked by analysing the Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability. The internal reliability of a construct is said to be achieved when the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.7 or higher (Nunnally & Beinstein, 1994). From Table 1 it is clear that all the four constructs of the study have cronbach’s Alpha of more than 0.7. The cut off for composite reliability should be between 0.6 and 0.7 for construct reliability (Hensele & Sarstedt, 2013). For the study variables, the composite reliability is above the cut off limit of 0.7 (Table 1). The average variance extracted (AVE) and item loadings are assessed to study the convergent validity in PLS SEM and the AVE of 0.5 and more is considered to be good. (Hair et al., 2013). For the study variables, the AVE values are well above the cut off rate.
CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career and Educational Choices</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>0.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Factors</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Factors</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE NO 1**

TESTING OF CONCEPTUAL MODEL

R² VALUES

The table 2 on R² Values clearly states that all the values are positive and significant. It can be understood that 72% of variation in Financial Independence is dependent on Freedom in Career and Educational Choices and the result is significant at 1%. Similarly Financial Independence accounts for 78% variation in Freedom in Personal Factors and 81% in Freedom in Social Factors and both the values are significant at 99% confidence level.

ANALYSIS OF R² FOR THE STUDY VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Original Sample Mean (O)</th>
<th>Sample Mean (M)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</th>
<th>T Statistics</th>
<th>P Values</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Career and Educational Choices</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>6.974</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>H1 is Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>12.714</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>H2 is accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>8.955</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>H3 is accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE NO 2**

BETA VALUES

The beta values indicate a strong relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Based on the Beta value, it can be interpreted that every one unit change in the freedom in Career and Educational choices, there will be 0.848 units change in Financial Independence for Women and this relationship is significant at 99% confidence interval. Every one unit change in Financial Independence for women leads to 0.884 units change in freedom in personal factors for women and 0.9 units change in the freedom in social factors and both these relationships are positive and significant at 99% confidence interval.
PATH CO-EFFICIENT ANALYSIS

| HYPOTHESES | RELATIONSHIP                          | ORIGINAL SAMPLE (O) | SAMPLE MEAN (M) | STANDARD DEVIATION (STDEV) | T STATISTICS (|O/STDEV|) | P VALUES | REMARKS         |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------|
| H1         | Career and Educational Choices --> Financial Independence | 0.848               | 0.853           | 0.062                      | 13.709              | 0.00     | H1 is accepted |
| H2         | Financial Independence --> Personal Factors                  | 0.884               | 0.882           | 0.034                      | 26.267              | 0.00     | H2 is accepted |
| H3         | Financial Independence --> Social Factors                      | 0.9                 | 0.899           | 0.048                      | 18.806              | 0.00     | H3 is accepted |

TABLE NO 3

EMPIRICAL MODEL

FIG 2

5. CONCLUSION

This study clearly reveals that when women are given freedom in choosing their education and career choices, they are also empowered financially. Financial Independence helps the women to have freedom in their personal and social life like having the freedom to have social media accounts, going for adventurous trips, dressing the way they like, having the freedom decide whether to get married or not or whether to start their family life and so on. This study strongly advocates that giving access to women their preferred education stream and career is the foundation for empowering women in all spheres of life.
6. REFERENCES


