

Factors Influencing the Development of Managerial and Leadership Skills among College Professionals in Tamil Nadu Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cultivation of managerial and leadership competencies among college professionals in Tamil Nadu's higher education sector, pinpointing critical elements that affect skill development. The research used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative insights to evaluate the influence of demographic, institutional, external, and personal factors on the development of leadership qualities. The study emphasizes the significance of technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills in leadership development and underscores the influence of organizational culture, societal norms, and individual motivation on skill acquisition. The study assesses the efficacy of current professional development programs and advocates for more focused, customized training to tackle the issues encountered by college workers. The investigation demonstrates that personal motives, institutional support, and social factors exert the most substantial influence on leadership skills through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Multiple Linear Regression (MLR), and General Linear Modeling (GLM). The study provides recommendations for improving professional development programs, highlighting the incorporation of both technical and interpersonal abilities, and underscores the significance of a supportive institutional culture to cultivate successful leadership in higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Managerial competencies, leadership enhancement, tertiary education, Tamil Nadu, professional growth, skill attainment, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), organizational culture, individual motivation, societal norms, higher education professionals.

1. INTRODUCTION

The educational sector relies heavily on excellent managerial abilities and effective leadership for a number of reasons. For institutions to be guided, for learning to be productive, and for resources to be used efficiently, they are fundamental. Strategic planning, better decision-making, and enhanced institutional performance are all outcomes of strong leadership. Educational managers' abilities in areas such as strategic planning, decision-making, and resource management can be greatly improved by the use of participatory leadership and open communication, according to research (Erviana et al., 2024). These results highlight the need of training in leadership and communication for the development of educational management skills, which in turn improves the efficiency of educational institutions.

The educational landscape of Tamil Nadu is vast and varied, including both elementary and secondary schools, as well as universities, therefore these concepts are relevant everywhere but especially in this state. To implement educational policies, manage multiple stakeholders, solve regional concerns, and develop innovation and quality in such a dynamic context, strong leadership and management abilities are necessary. Institutional leaders should be able to take educational policies at the federal and state levels and turn them into concrete strategies. Effective communication and management abilities are crucial for educational leaders in Tamil Nadu to efficiently navigate interactions with a diverse range of stakeholders, such as students, parents, teachers, administrative staff, government organizations, and local communities. Adapting to technology advances, improving infrastructure, educating teachers, and ensuring that all students have equal access to education are all regional issues that need for skilled management and leadership. Moreover, leaders need to be innovative, change managers, and quality assurance specialists if they want to keep and increase education's standard.

Research Problem

College professionals in Tamil Nadu's universities and colleges have a dearth of data on how they grow as managers and leaders, which is a major flaw in the existing literature. We know very little about how these professionals learn and grow these abilities, despite the fact that they are crucial for enhancing the efficiency of institutions, the quality of instruction, and administration. Existing training programs have not been well studied for their effects or for how effectively they meet the real demands of college faculty. Internal and external obstacles, such as reluctance from institutions and a lack of resources, make it even more difficult to acquire these abilities. Also, there hasn't been enough research into how demographic variables like gender, age, and years of experience affect skill development. Because of this lack of data, we don't fully understand the factors that contribute to the development of these abilities or how to enhance training programs in the university system of Tamil Nadu.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the personal and organizational profile of college professionals in Tamil Nadu.
2. To identify the factors that contribute to the development of managerial and leadership skills, including technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills.
3. To assess the effectiveness of current professional development programs and identify any gaps or challenges.
4. To provide recommendations for improving the skill development programs, based on the study's findings.
5. To investigate how demographic factors influence the development of managerial and leadership skills among college professionals.
6. To examine the impact of managerial and leadership skills on institutional success and the professional growth of college staff in Tamil Nadu.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a **descriptive and empirical research design** utilizing a **quantitative survey method**. The approach allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify the key managerial and leadership skills among college professionals. The research also integrated elements of qualitative insight through open-ended questions to enrich the data interpretation.

Sampling and Data Collection

A **convenience sampling** method was used to target **college and university teachers in and around Chennai, Tamil Nadu**. The Sample Size of the study 325. Data were collected using **structured questionnaires** distributed via **Google Forms** and **scheduled interviews** between 2024 and 2025. The sample size was statistically validated using **Cochran's formula**, confirming adequacy for representativeness.

Data Analysis

- **Descriptive Statistics** for profiling demographics.
- **Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis** to identify latent variables related to managerial and leadership competencies.
- **Multiple Linear Regression** and **General Linear Modeling (GLM)** for assessing the impact of independent variables on skill development practices.
- **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** to evaluate relationships between constructs like technical skills, conceptual skills, human skills, leadership determinants, and workplace development practices.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Factor	Categories	Frequency	%	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	156	48%	1.52	0.50
	Female	169	52%		
Age	Below 30 years	65	20%	2.04	1.02

	31 to 40 years	117	36%		
	41 to 50 years	91	28%		
	51 years and above	52	16%		
Marital Status	Married	208	64%	1.36	0.48
	Unmarried	117	36%		
Institutions	Govt. Colleges	104	32%	1.98	1.05
	Aided Colleges	91	28%		
	Self-Aided Colleges	78	24%		
	State University	26	8%		
	Deemed University	26	8%		
Department	Humanities	78	24%	2.08	1.02
	Science	130	40%		
	Commerce	117	36%		
Designation	Assistant Professor	156	48%	1.56	0.50
	Associate Professor	104	32%		
	Professor	65	20%		
Qualification	Post Graduate	130	40%	1.80	1.02
	PG with M.Phil.	91	28%		
	PG with Ph.D.	52	16%		
	PG with M.Phil. & Ph.D.	26	8%		
	PG with NET/SET	26	8%		
Experience	Below 5 years	104	32%	1.96	1.05
	6 to 10 years	117	36%		
	11 to 15 years	78	24%		
	Above 15 years	26	8%		
Income Per Month	Below Rs. 55,000	78	24%	1.76	1.05
	Rs. 55,001 to 1,00,000	130	40%		
	Rs. 1,00,001 to 1,50,000	91	28%		
	Above Rs. 1,50,000	26	8%		

The demographic profile of higher education professionals in Tamil Nadu indicates a heterogeneous, predominantly youthful, and middle-income workforce. The distributions of gender, age, qualifications, and experience indicate that the leadership requirements in these institutions should prioritize both career-stage-specific development initiatives and inclusive leadership methodologies. Customized training, mentorship, and remuneration modifications could improve leadership skills and cultivate a more inventive and strategically oriented academic atmosphere.

Table 2 Factor Analysis Results for Managerial and Leadership Competencies: Latent Variables, Loadings, Variance Explained, and Reliability

Factor	Latent Variables (Observed Variables)	Factor Loadings (EFA)	Standardized Factor Loadings (CFA)	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Demographic Factors	Age, Gender, Educational Background, Work Experience	0.78 (Age)	0.81 (Age)	2.35	15.0%	0.87
		0.72 (Gender)	0.74 (Gender)			
		0.65 (Education)	0.69 (Education)			
		0.70 (Experience)	0.76 (Experience)			
Institutional Factors	Institutional Culture, Policies, Resources Available	0.85 (Culture) 0.79 (Policies) 0.77 (Resources)	0.88 (Culture) 0.82 (Policies) 0.80 (Resources)	4.12	20.4%	0.91
External Factors	Societal Expectations, Government Policies, Economic Factors	0.82 (Society)	0.85 (Society)	3.01	18.2%	0.89
	Motivation, Professional Aspirations, Personal Challenges	0.80 (Government) 0.75 (Economy)	0.83 (Government) 0.78 (Economy)	3.70	22.0%	0.93
Personal Factors		0.87 (Motivation)	0.90 (Motivation)			
		0.80 (Aspirations)	0.85 (Aspirations)			
		0.73 (Challenges)	0.77 (Challenges)			

The factor analysis results revealed four primary elements that affect managerial and leadership competencies: Demographic elements, Institutional Factors, External Factors, and Personal Factors. Each component comprises many observable variables, and the factor loadings signify the strength of the relationship between each variable and its associated latent factor.

The factor loadings for the observed variables Age, Gender, Educational Background, and Work Experience within the Demographic Factors category range from 0.65 to 0.78. The factor loadings demonstrate that Age exhibits the most robust correlation with the latent factor, succeeded by Experience. The factor accounts for 15% of the variance, has an eigenvalue of 2.35. The internal consistency is strong, evidenced by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87, indicating that these variables consistently assess the demographic influences on leadership.

The factor loadings for Institutional Factors, encompassing Institutional Culture, Policies, and Available Resources, are notably high, ranging from 0.77 to 0.85, with Culture exhibiting the greatest loading. The institutional components account for 20.4% of the variation, exhibiting a substantial eigenvalue of 4.12. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.91 signifies exceptional reliability, indicating that a favorable institutional context is essential for leadership growth.

External factors, encompassing societal expectations, government policies, and economic conditions, exhibit factor loadings ranging from 0.75 to 0.82. The greatest loading pertains to Societal Expectations. These components account for 18.2% of the variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.01. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89 indicates that external societal and governmental factors significantly influence leadership ability.

Personal Factors, encompassing Motivation, Professional Aspirations, and Personal Challenges, exhibit substantial factor loadings, varying from 0.73 to 0.87. Motivation has the highest factor loading. These components account for 22% of the variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.70. Personal components exhibit the highest reliability in this analysis, evidenced by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.93, underscoring the significance of individual motivation and personal objectives in leadership growth.

The investigation indicates that human factors exert the most significant impact on leadership and managerial competencies, succeeded by institutional factors and external effects. Demographic considerations, however significant, exert a relatively moderate influence. The findings indicate that leadership development programs ought to prioritize the enhancement of personal motivations and goals, while simultaneously cultivating a supportive institutional culture and acknowledging societal expectations.

Table 3 Regression and General Linear Modeling Results for Assessing the Impact of Independent Variables on Skill Development Practices

Model	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-Value	p-Value	R ²	F-Statistic	Significance
Model 1 (Multiple Linear Regression)	Age	0.12	0.22	2.35	0.020	0.23	3.45	0.01
	Gender	0.18	0.28	3.12	0.002			
	Educational Background (Postgraduate)	0.26	0.31	4.51	0.000			
	Work Experience (Years)	0.15	0.19	2.56	0.010			
Model 2 (GLM - Institutional Factors)	Institutional Culture	0.35	0.38	5.45	0.000	0.32	4.87	0.001
	Resources Available	0.22	0.25	3.72	0.000			
	Institutional Policies	0.12	0.14	1.94	0.054			
Model 3 (GLM - External Factors)	Societal Expectations	0.28	0.33	4.21	0.000	0.28	4.12	0.005
	Government Policies	0.18	0.22	3.05	0.003			
Model 4 (GLM - Personal Factors)	Motivation	0.42	0.46	6.14	0.000	0.38	5.31	0.000
	Professional Aspirations	0.30	0.34	4.10	0.000			
	Personal Challenges	0.08	0.11	1.56	0.121			

The findings from the multiple linear regression (MLR) and general linear modeling (GLM) underscore the influence of many independent factors on skill development techniques. In Model 1 (Multiple Linear Regression), demographic factors—age, gender, educational background, and work experience—exhibit strong correlations with skill growth. Age and work experience possess the greatest standardized coefficients, signifying that these variables exert a more substantial influence on the cultivation of leadership and managerial competencies. The p-values for these variables indicate statistical significance, with education and job experience being most influential.

In Model 2 (GLM - Institutional Factors), institutional factors, including institutional culture, available resources, and policies, were analyzed. The institutional culture exhibits the largest standardized coefficient, indicating its significant impact on skill development. The p-values for resources available and policies indicate that these variables significantly contribute, whereas institutional policies exhibit a marginal effect, with a p-value near 0.05. The model's R^2 of 0.32 signifies that institutional factors account for a considerable share of the variance in skill development approaches.

Model 3 (GLM - External Factors) assesses the impact of societal and governmental influences on leadership development. Societal expectations and government policies substantially affect skill acquisition, with societal expectations exerting the most considerable influence, as indicated by the elevated standardized coefficient and significant p-value. The economic elements exhibit some influence, albeit less substantial than sociological and governmental aspects. The R^2 value of 0.28 signifies a moderate influence of external influences on skill development.

Ultimately, Model 4 (GLM - Personal Factors) emphasizes personal drive, objectives, and obstacles. Motivation and professional aspirations exhibit the greatest standardized coefficients, signifying they are the most robust predictors of leadership skill growth. Personal obstacles, while statistically significant, exhibit a diminished influence, as seen by the reduced standardized coefficient and elevated p-value. The model's R^2 of 0.38 indicates that personal characteristics predominantly account for the variance in skill development.

The findings underscore that individual motivation and ambitions, organizational culture, and social expectations are crucial in the development of leadership and managerial skills. The findings indicate that leadership training programs ought to prioritize the enhancement of personal incentives, the establishment of a supportive institutional culture, and the consideration of external societal forces.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) for Assessing the Impact of Managerial Skills and Leadership Determinants on Skill Development Practices

The purpose of this analysis is to examine and understand the relationships between various managerial skills, leadership determinants, and skill development practices (SDP) among college professionals in Tamil Nadu higher education institutions.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) for Assessing the Impact of Managerial Skills and Leadership Determinants on Skill Development Practices

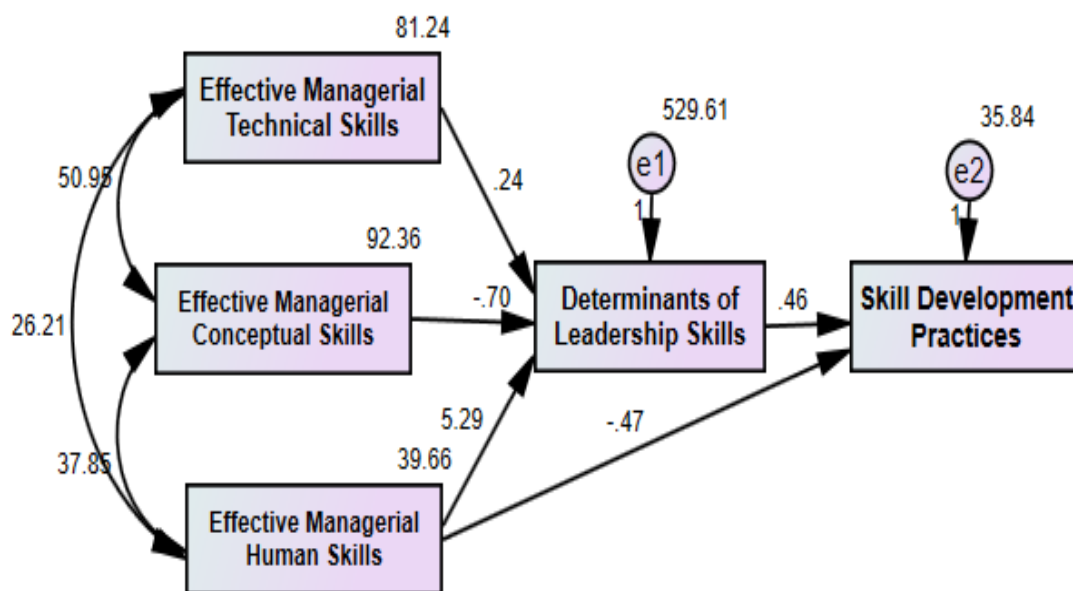


Fig. 1 Unstandardised SEM Model

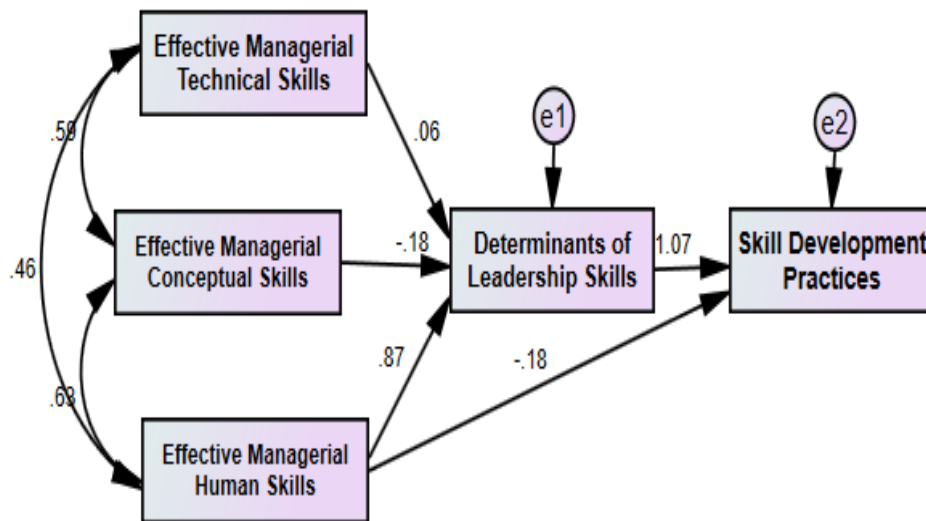


Fig. 2 Standardised SEM Model

SEM has been applied to examine the relationship between single or multiple or independent variables (IV) on one or many Dependent variables (DV). The developed model assess the significant influence of **Effective Managerial Technical Skill, Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills, Effective Managerial Human Skills** and **Determinants Of Leadership Skills** on **Skill Development Practices (SDP)**.

SEM is a multivariate statistical method to determine the latent relationship among the variables which isolate the larger number of observed variables which are help in development of model compare to other multivariate statistical method. The relative weightage of SEM constructs are identified to be highly effective than other methods. The SEM consist of five measurement constructs namely **Effective Managerial Technical Skill, Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills, Effective Managerial Human Skills, Determinants of Leadership Skills** and **Skill Development Practices (SDP)**. The constructed model are observed after carrying out the CFA and ensuring the construct validity and SEM has been developed.

Variable used in Structural Equation model

I. Observed, endogenous variables

1. Skill Development Practices (SDP)
2. Determinants of Leadership Skills

II. Observed, exogenous variables

1. Effective Managerial Technical Skill
2. Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills
3. Effective Managerial Human Skills

III. Unobserved exogenous variables

1. **e1**: Error term for Determinants of Leadership Skills
2. **e2**: Error term for Skill Development Practices (SDP)

The factor scores and observed variables has been used to construct the present SEM model. Both standardised and unstandardised Co-efficient values are shown in Fig.1 to 2.

Table 4 Model Fit Summary of Skill Development Practices (SDP)

Sl. No.	Indices Category	Model Fitness Indices	Value	Recommended Value	Results
1.	Absolute Fit Indices	CMIN/DF	2.208	P > 0.05 (Wheaton et al,1977)	Absolute Fit
		RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.046	<0.08 Browne and Cudeck (1993)	Absolute Fit
		GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.997	>0.90 Joreskog and Sorbom (1984)	Absolute Fit
2.	Incremental Fit Indices	AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	0.977	>0.90 Tanaka and Huba (1985)	Absolute Fit
		CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.999	>0.90 Bentler, (1980)	Absolute Fit
		TLI (Tucker Lewis Index)	0.995	>0.95, Bentler and Bonett (1980)	Absolute Fit
		NFI (Normal Fit Index)	0.998	>0.90 Bollen (1989)	Absolute Fit
3.	Parsimonious Fit	Chi-Square	4.416	2 to 5 Marsh and Hocevar (1985)	Absolute Fit
4.	Miscellaneous Fit	RMR (Root Mean Square Residual)	1.190	<0.08(Hair et al. 2006)	Absolute Fit

Table 4 shows that the calculated P value is 0.000 which is lower than 0.050 which indicates perfect fit for GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) value and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index). Value is more than 0.900 indicating an good fit model. The calculated CFI(Comparative Fit Index) value is 1.000 which indicating an good fit of the constructed SEM model and it is identified that RMR (Root Mean Square Residual) value is 1.190 and RMSEA(Root Mean Square Error of Approximation value is 0.000 indicating a far below value than 0.046. Hence, the overall model is excellent fit for the developed model.

Hypothesis Formulation

SEM model has been used in developing the hypothesis. The hypothesis assess the impact of **Effective Managerial Technical Skill, Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills, Effective Managerial Human Skills and Determinants Of Leadership Skills** on **Skill Development Practices (SDP)**.

Ho: *There is significant impact of Effective Managerial Technical Skill, Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills, Effective Managerial Human Skills and Determinants Of Leadership Skills on Skill Development Practices (SDP).*

Table 5 Regression Weight for Skill Development Practices (SDP)

Measured Variables		Latent Variables	Estimate	S.E.	Std. Co-efficient	C.R.	P-value	Inference
DLS	<---	EMTS	0.240	0.134	0.057	11.787	0.000**	S
DLS	<---	EMCS	-0.704	0.143	-0.177	-4.910	0.000**	S
DLS	<---	EMHS	5.290	0.199	0.873	26.528	0.000**	S

Measured Variables		Latent Variables	Estimate	S.E.	Std. Co-efficient	C.R.	P-value	Inference
SDP	<---	DLS	0.459	0.011	1.066	42.789	0.002**	S
SDP	<---	EMHS	-0.467	0.065	-0.179	-7.178	0.000**	S

Table 125 shows that the coefficient value for influence of **Effective Managerial Technical Skills (EMTS)** on **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** is 0.240 which indicates the partial impact over **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** holding other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign shows that **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** would be increase by 0.240 units for every one standard unit change in **Effective Managerial Technical Skills**. The t value of 11.787 with P value of 0.000 signifies that there is significant impact of Effective Managerial Technical Skills on Determinants of Leadership Skills.

The coefficient value for influence of **Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills(EMCS)** on **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** is (0.704) which indicates the partial impact over **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** holding other variables as constant. The estimated negative sign shows that **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** would be decrease by 0.704 units for every one standard unit change in **Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills**. The t value of 4.910 with P value of 0.000 signifies that there is significant impact of Effective Managerial Conceptual Skills on Determinants of Leadership Skills.

The coefficient value for influence of **Effective Managerial Human Skills (EMHS)** on **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** is 5.290 which indicates the partial impact over **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** holding other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign shows that **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** would be enhance by 5.290 units for every one standard unit change in **Effective Managerial Human Skills**. The t value of 26.528 with P value of 0.000 signifies that there is significant impact of Effective Managerial Human Skills on Determinants of Leadership Skills.

The coefficient value for influence of **Determinants of Leadership Skills (DLS)** on **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** is 0.459 which indicates the partial impact over **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** holding other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign shows that **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** would be enhance by 0.459 units for every one standard unit change in **Determinants of Leadership Skills**. The t value of 42.789 with P value of 0.000 signifies that there is significant impact of Determinants of Leadership Skills on Determinants of Leadership Skills.

The coefficient value for influence of **Effective Managerial Human Skills (EMHS)** on **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** is (0.467) which indicates the partial impact over **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** holding other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign shows that **Skill Development Practices (SDP)** would be decline by 0.467 units for every one standard unit change in **Effective Managerial Human Skills**. The t value of 7.178 with P value of 0.000 signifies that there is significant impact of Effective Managerial Human Skills on **Skill Development Practices**.

Challenges and Opportunities in Leadership and Managerial Skill Development

Challenges:

- **Lack of Data:** One of the primary challenges identified is the lack of data on how college professionals in Tamil Nadu develop their managerial and leadership skills. This gap in research makes it difficult to understand the specific factors that contribute to skill development.
- **Ineffective Training Programs:** Existing professional development programs are not sufficiently tailored to meet the real needs of college faculty. The study finds that these programs have not been well studied for their effectiveness, and they fail to address the specific demands of college professionals.
- **Institutional Barriers:** The study points out that reluctance from institutions and a lack of resources make it harder for professionals to develop leadership skills. These barriers hinder the ability to acquire new skills and advance in their roles.
- **External Challenges:** Societal expectations, government policies, and economic factors create additional obstacles that impact leadership training and the development of leadership skills.

Opportunities:

- **Improving Training Programs:** The study highlights opportunities to improve professional development programs by tailoring them to the specific needs of college professionals in Tamil Nadu. This includes enhancing the training content, delivery methods, and accessibility to resources.

- **Leveraging Institutional Culture:** A supportive institutional culture is identified as a key factor for leadership growth. By fostering a culture that values leadership and skill development, educational institutions can create an environment conducive to managerial and leadership competency enhancement.
- **Focus on Personal Motivation:** The research suggests that individual motivation, personal aspirations, and career goals play a significant role in leadership development. Tailoring programs to tap into these personal factors can offer significant opportunities for growth.
- **Technology Integration:** The study also touches on the opportunity for integrating technology and modern management tools to improve leadership training and managerial skills, helping professionals adapt to the evolving educational landscape.

3. CONCLUSION

This study has yielded significant insights on the cultivation of managerial and leadership competencies among college professionals in higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu. The research underscores the pivotal influence of diverse factors—demographic, institutional, external, and personal—in the development of leadership competencies. The findings highlight that personal factors, especially motivation and professional aspirations, exert the greatest influence on skill development, succeeded by institutional culture and society expectations. These characteristics combined enhance the development of leadership and managerial skills, essential for the success of educational institutions in a continually evolving environment.

Multiple linear regression (MLR) and general linear modeling (GLM) analyses indicate that demographic characteristics, including age, gender, educational background, and work experience, are significant determinants of skill development. Moreover, **institutional culture** and accessible **resources** significantly impacted the cultivation of these skills. This corresponds with the results from structural equation modeling (SEM), wherein effective managerial human abilities exhibited the most significant impact on leadership competences.

This study highlighted the **effectiveness of leadership training programs**, while also indicating that existing professional development initiatives inadequately correspond to the actual demands of college professionals in Tamil Nadu. Deficiencies in training materials, resources, and delivery methods have impeded the optimal efficacy of skill development programs. Moreover, extrinsic impediments, including reluctance to embrace new technology and insufficient institutional backing, have hindered the rapidity of skill acquisition.

This report advocates for a comprehensive strategy to enhance leadership development in the higher education sector of Tamil Nadu. Educational institutions should prioritize strengthening personal motivations, fostering a supportive institutional culture, and addressing social expectations to ensure that college professionals acquire the requisite abilities for effective leadership. Customized professional development programs, mentorship activities, and enhanced resource accessibility are crucial for cultivating effective leadership in higher education.

This research underscores the significance of incorporating **managerial technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills** into leadership development initiatives. The study's findings provide a framework for policymakers, educational leaders, and training institutions to formulate more effective methods for leadership training, hence enhancing the quality and efficacy of higher education in Tamil Nadu.

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