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**CONCEPTUAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF THE MBA AND MSW STUDENTS STUDYING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN KOZHIKODE DISTRICT****Abdunnasar T.****PhD Scholar Arunodaya University Arunachal Pradesh.****ABSTRACT:-**

*The leadership skills of the MBA and MSW students play a vital and strategic role in Socio economic activities of many governmental, non-governmental and corporate organisations. The progress of any organisation whether it is corporate or non-corporate depends upon the qualities of the leadership that is shown by the persons leading them. There are three broad categories of leadership skills viz. administrative, interpersonal and conceptual leadership skills. This is paper is intended to assess and compare the conceptual leadership skills of the MBA and MSW students studying in Kozhikode District. The study was conducted on a sample of 197 students selected from four major HEIs imparting knowledge in business administration and social work namely, Ferok Institute of Management Studies, Sree Narayana Educational Society Institute of Management Studies and Research, St. Joseph College Dевgiri, and Holy Cross Institute of Management and Technology. A Questionnaire with 6 items touching the major 3 dimensions of Conceptual leadership skills were used to conduct the research. The 3 dimensions are (1) problem solving, (2) strategic planning, and (3) creating vision.*

**KEYWORDS:** *E-commerce, Economic, Rural and India.***INTRODUCTION :**

An MBA is an advanced degree that teaches students about business and management. MBA stands for Master of Business Administration. An MBA program teaches students about a variety of academic areas that might prepare them for a career supervising others or managing a business.

An MSW is a postgraduate degree for those interested in pursuing a career in social work. MSW is the abbreviation for Master of Social Work. An MSW can prepare students for more advanced employment in social work, such as clinical social worker or community services manager.

Leadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization (ADP 6-22). Leadership is the quality possessed by a person to influence and inspire a set of individuals to work as a team. A person possessing strong leadership skills is a leader, who motivates individuals to perform and contribute towards the team's needs.

Business leadership is the capacity of a company's management to set and achieve challenging goals. They must take fast and decisive action, when necessary, outperform the competition, and inspire others to perform at the highest level possible (Twin, 2024).

Leadership is recognised as an enabler of well-functioning organisations. Within social work, well-led services and professions will contribute to people, families and communities experiencing

positive and enabling support that improves their life opportunities and wellbeing (Haworth et al., 2018).

Kozhikode district is one of the fastest-urbanizing cities as per the ranking based on the data collected by the United Nations Population Division (Unnikrishnan S & Unnikrishnan S, 2020). It is the fourth fastest-growing city in the world as per the list of world's fastest-growing cities, according to the list released by the reputed weekly *The Week*. Multiple factors including intra-State migration and variation in land use following the boom in real estate have made Kozhikode the fastest growing urban district in the State. (Govind, 2018) Kozhikode City is the District Headquarters of the Kozhikode District of Kerala State. Kozhikode metropolitan area or Calicut urban agglomeration is the 19th largest agglomeration in India and 2nd in Kerala. Hence for successfully being in tune the development of Kozhikode district, it is imperative that the students must possess a higher level of Conceptual leadership skills.

### NEED OF THE STUDY

Post-graduate courses are often seen as a type of professional education, particularly when they are directly tied to expanding knowledge and skills in a certain profession or field. Education, particularly professional education, equips students with the required skills and competencies to deal with life's challenges as they arise in their professional and personal lives. As a result, higher education institutions play a critical role in shaping students and making significant differences in the lives of many people. Hence, for the better employability of both MBA and MSW students, and for the development of the organizations, it is very important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the students to provide them with apt opportunities to develop their Leadership skills. In addition to that this study will help the HEIs to set up a curriculum focusing on the need for the development of Leadership skills in their students.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual leadership skills refer to the skills that allow the leader to think through and work with ideas, hypotheses, and concepts. Leaders with good conceptual skills are good at working with abstract ideas and hypothetical situations. Some important conceptual skills include deep strategic thinking, creativity, decision-making, and problem-solving.

**Prastiawan et al.'s, (2020)** research underscores the critical role conceptual skills play in effective school leadership, particularly for principals navigating the complexities of educational institutions. Their article, "School Leadership Skills in Educational Institutions," emphasizes that strong conceptual skills are not merely beneficial but essential for principals to successfully plan for the future, develop strategic goals, and make sound decisions that align with the school's overall vision. The authors argue that these skills are particularly crucial in today's dynamic educational landscape, enabling school leaders to anticipate and adapt to change effectively. By possessing a strong grasp of abstract concepts, systems thinking, and problem-solving abilities, principals can create a positive and effective learning environment that benefits both students and staff.

**Reichwald et al., (2005)**, work provides a compelling look at the role of conceptual leadership within the framework of corporate leadership systems. Their article, "Leadership excellence," argues that effective leadership in the corporate world goes beyond simply managing day-to-day operations. Instead, it necessitates a strong grasp of conceptual skills to steer the organization towards a successful future. The authors emphasize that leaders equipped with these skills are better positioned to develop a clear and inspiring vision for the company, anticipate and adapt to evolving industry trends, and make strategic decisions that are not only effective but also align with the overarching goals and values of the organization. In essence, Reichwald et al. posit that conceptual leadership is a cornerstone of building and maintaining excellence within a corporate setting.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem selected for the present study is "Conceptual Leadership Skills of The MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District".

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following objective was set forth for the study. -

1. To compare the Conceptual leadership skills of MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District.

## Hypotheses of the study

The following hypothesis and Sub hypothesis were set forth for the study.

**H1:** There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills of MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District.

## Sub Hypothesis

**H1a:** There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MBA And MSW courses.

**H1b:** There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MBA course.

**H1c:** There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MBA course.

## Definition of important terms used

1. Conceptual Leadership skills: - refers to the strategic skills used when bringing in new ideas and concepts.
2. HEIs: - Higher-educational institutions include universities, colleges, various professional schools that provide postgraduate degree or diploma in the fields of Engineering, Science, Social Work, Management Studies, Arts and Commerce in Kozhikode District of Kerala state.

## Variables of the Study

The main dependent variable of the study was "Conceptual leadership Skills of MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District". The independent variables of the study were Course and Gender.

## Method of the Study

Questionnaire survey method was used to conduct the study.

## Population of the study

All the MBA and MSW students of Kozhikode District.

## Sample of the study

A total of 197 samples were taken from 4 HEIs for the study. All the samples were divided into male and female categories.

## Tools

A total of 6 questions are included in the questionnaire-based 5-point Likert scale.

## Procedure

The tool was administered to 197 MBA And MSW students studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District requesting them to fill in the questionnaire with utmost care and sincerity. The filled in questionnaires were collected afterwards.

**Plan of action. -**

The study was carried out through the following steps-

1. Selection of HEIs.
2. Selection of Postgraduate Students.
3. Construction of tools and standardization.
4. Administration of tools on the selected groups.
5. Collection of data.
6. Analysis and interpretation of data.

**Statistical approaches of the study**

The following statistical approaches were used for the Analysis of data-

1. Mean
2. Standard Deviation
3. Critical ratio test (t)

**Analysis of Data and Interpretation**

**Analysis Pertaining to H1**

**There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills of MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District.**

Conceptual Leadership skills	Stream	N	Mean	SD	SED	t TEST	Level of Significance
	MBA	143	23.45	3.16	0.495	2.02967	0.044
	MSW	54	22.43	3.08			

- The mean Conceptual skills score for students of MBA course is 23.45, while the mean score for students of MSW course is 22.43.  
This suggests that, on average, students of MBA course have higher self-perceived Conceptual skills when compared to students of MSW course.
- The t-test results show a t-value of 2.02967 with a p-value of 0.044. This p-value is lower than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the difference in mean scores between the two groups is statistically significant.

**H1a: There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MBA And MSW courses.**

Conceptual Leadership skills	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	t TEST	Level of Significance
	M	82	23.61	3.11	0.450	1.683	0.094
	F	117	22.85	3.15			

- The mean Conceptual skills score for male students is 23.61, while the mean score for female students is 22.85.  
This suggests that, on average, male students perceive themselves as having slightly higher Conceptual skills compared to female students.
- The t-test results show a t-value of 1.683 with a p-value of 0.094. This p-value is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the difference in mean scores between the two groups is not statistically significant.

**H1b: There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MBA course.**

Conceptual Leadership skills	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	t TEST	Level of Significance
	M	69	23.90	2.88	0.520	1.654	0.100
	F	74	23.03	3.34			

- The mean Conceptual skills score for male students is 23.90, while the mean score for female students is 23.03.

This suggests that, on average, male students perceive themselves as having slightly higher Conceptual skills compared to female students.

- The t-test results show a t-value of 1.654 with a p-value of 0.100. This p-value is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the difference in mean scores between the two groups is not statistically significant.

**H1c: There is significant difference in Conceptual leadership skills between Male and Female students of MSW course.**

Conceptual Leadership skills	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	t TEST	Level of Significance
	M	13	22.08	3.73	1.118	-0.469	0.641
	F	43	22.53	2.78			

- The mean Conceptual skills score for male students is 22.08, while the mean score for female students is 22.53.

This suggests that, on average, female students perceive themselves as having slightly higher Conceptual skills compared to male students.

- The t-test results show a t-value of 1.118 with a p-value of 0.641. This p-value is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the difference in mean scores between the two groups is not statistically significant.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

1. It was found from the study that there is significant difference in Conceptual Leadership skills of MBA And MSW Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Kozhikode District'. So, the result says that the MBA students have higher level of Conceptual leadership skills.
2. There was no significant difference in Conceptual Leadership skills between Male and Female of both courses. So, the result says that the Male and Female students of MBA And MSW courses have same Conceptual leadership skills.
3. There was no significant difference in Conceptual Leadership skills between Male and Female. So, the result says that the Male and Female students of MBA course have same Conceptual leadership skills.
4. There was no significant difference in Conceptual Leadership skills between Male and Female. So, the result says that the Male and Female students of MSW course have same Conceptual leadership skills.

**CONCLUSION**

It has been observed that the study's primary hypothesis, H1, was confirmed, demonstrating that MBA students exhibit significantly higher leadership skills compared to MSW students. This finding strongly suggests that the specialized curriculum, practical management training, and experiential

learning opportunities within MBA programs play a crucial role in fostering advanced leadership abilities. The study also finds that gender does not have a significant impact on the conceptual leadership skills across all three categories which are MBA and MSW combined, MBA and MSW separately. Further study is suggested to understand whether this is an independent case or if this phenomenon is prevailing throughout the state of Kerala.

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