

# Chapter 13

## Gender–Based Microaggressions, Impostor Phenomenon, and Turnover Intention Among Women IT Employees

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Microaggressions are everyday verbal, behavioural, or environmental slights that signal hostility towards marginalised groups. Such microaggressions when extended towards women in a workplace can lead to a lasting impact on the health and well-being of the women employees. The professional growth and development also would be hampered, deterring women from climbing ladders of professional success. The present study aims to understand the impact of gender-based microaggressions on women and questions whether such microaggressions can be linked to impostor phenomenon and turnover intention in them. Primary data was collected from 129 women IT employees employed in Bangalore’s informational technology sector in four different job positions. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and Kruskal-Wallis Test were used for data analysis. The results show that there are significant and positive relationships between gender-based microaggressions and impostor phenomenon and turnover intention among women IT employees.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Women's presence in the corporate world has been steadily on the rise and overt discrimination against them is becoming uncommon. But covert discrimination in the form of gender-based microaggressions are still prevalent in workplaces, harming both the organisation and women employees alike. Continued instances of this subtle form of sexism leads to female employees' productivity and self-esteem being lowered and causes increased self-doubt and intention to turnover. A rise in impostor phenomenon in the employees, a belief in an individual that their success can be attributed to only luck or accidents and not their skills or capabilities, may also be observed due to chronically being subjected to such microaggressions. Thus, as an indirect result of the presence of gender-based microaggressions in the workplace, the professional advancement of women employees is questioned.

Companies that prioritise diversity and inclusion outperform their less diverse counterparts in terms of performance, talent acquisition, employee engagement, and employee retention (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2019). According to Deloitte Global, big global technology organisations will, on average, have about 33% of women working there in 2022, slightly up by 2 percentage points from 2019. According to the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology 2017–2018, more women have gotten employed in the IT (information technology) field during the past ten years, making up 34% of the sector's overall employment (Gupta, 2021). Even intensive programmes to find, hire, keep, and promote women were proven to work slowly. Although this development is positive, IT businesses may need to put in even more effort in the future to raise these figures (Hupfer et al., 2021). The highly male dominated work environment could be one among the many plausible reasons behind the gender disparity. Studying the presence of gender-based microaggressions from the perspective of women employees in the information technology sector may give further insight into why women lag behind in assuming higher positions and leadership roles in the corporate field.

This paper aims to study gender based microaggressions in the workplace affecting women and further connect the presence of the aforesaid microaggressions to impostor phenomenon and turnover intention.

## **Gender Discrimination**

Women have historically struggled to obtain academic reputation and success because they have been denied access, opportunities, and inclusion. They also have poor professional visibility and standing (Hinton, 2001). According to the Gender Gap Report from the World Economic Forum, "no country in the world has yet managed to eliminate the gender gap" (Hausmann et al., 2006). In the areas evaluated by Women, Business and the Law, women still only have about three-quarters of the economic rights that men do, and about 2.4 billion women of working age reside in nations where they do not have the same economic freedoms as men. Access to childcare and law enforcement also continue to be challenges (Women, Business and the Law, 2022). Although there are many factors contributing to these ongoing gender disparities, it is obvious that conventional gender preconceptions and ideas (gender prejudice) have a significant impact. Boys and girls are taught how to act, what activities they should engage in, and which toys or clothes they should favour very early in life (Eccles et al., 2000).

Over the years, the genesis, persistence, and change of gender discrimination have all been thoroughly examined in research on gender and organisations. Organisations become gendered through supposedly gender-neutral (but typically masculine) practices and policies. Organisations become environments where one gender is routinely viewed as inferior (Kelan, 2008). Open acts of discrimination, sexist

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