Effect of Glass Ceiling on the Performance of Women Employees in Service Sector

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

The term "glass ceiling" was coined by Hymowitz Carol and Schellhardt Timothy in the leading Wall Street Journal (1986) . Glass ceiling is a block for the progression of competent women employees in the organization mainly because of gender or racism. Many studies from the west confirm the existence of glass ceiling based on various constructs like the social barriers, cultural barriers, individual barriers, etc. There is no concrete evidence on this aspect in India. One of the surveys conducted by Team Lease (2017) on the staffing services, reports that more than half of the respondents have felt some kind of discrimination in their workplaces. Even with the increase in literacy level and skills among the women the percentage of women progressing upwards in their career is very small. There are not many studies that reveal the dominant factors that act as impediment for the upward movement of women at work. The researcher has used stratified random sampling by choosing respondents from entry, junior, middle and senior level of IT/ITES, Financial Institutions, Healthcare, Hospitality and Education industries from the service sector. A sample size of 400 was chosen for the study. To avoid any form of bias, data was collected from both male and female respondents. For all the constructs the Cronbach Alpha was 0.7, which stated that there was internal consistency in the statements and the questionnaire was reliable. The data was analyzed using SPSS. The exploratory factor analysis was done to explore the factors affecting glass ceiling, SIX factors were named as follows: Individual Factors, Social & Societal Factor's, Organizational factors, Cultural Factors, Family Factors, and Gender Related Issues. Regression was used to find out the effect of the factors on the job performance of the respondents. The analysis draws conclusion that women employees can break through the glass ceiling only when positive factors having an impact on their career advancement are increased. This can be done through boosting their economic power by upgrading themselves with sufficient skills, educational qualification, improving their communication skills and having good mentors who can guide and counsel them in the organisation.

1. Introduction

Discriminating attitude towards men and women is prevalent for generations in India; and this form of discrimination has an effect on the lives of both genders. The constitution of India has approved equal rights for men and women, but the difference among the genders still remains. The result of which, women are perceived to be disadvantaged at work. Many forms of discrimination are prevalent in the workplace like unequal pay, unequal treatment among the different classes of employees, lower chances of promotion for women, low or poor visibility jobs, discrimination based on the gender of the employees, etc. Even though the women employees possess the same skills and perform the same task in an equally efficient and effective manner, male employees are preferred over the women employees and in turn the male employees are paid more.

One of the surveys conducted by Team lease (2017) on the staffing service reports more than half of the respondents have felt some kind of discrimination in their workplaces. The prominent differences that are experienced is on the basis of gender of the employees, age and their religion. It is worth noting that on an average 72% of the women employees have experienced gender discrimination in their workplaces. The women respondents also feel that they are under-represented at work or in their organisations due to the stereo-type that people have about women. Many companies do not have a clear policy statement as to what are the expected and accepted norms for employees in the workplace. Among the service sectors, the representation of women employees is seen mostly in Banking and Financial Services Industry and software, but the percentage varies between 5-7%. In the education industry, we see most of the women in the primary and secondary education and their number decreases with the employment in professional colleges.

1.2. Background of the Study:

Hymowitz Carol and Schellhardt Timothy have coined the phrase "glass ceiling" in 1986. The term was constructed following a report on women in the corporate level in the leading Wall Street Journal. Glass ceiling is a block for the progression of competent female employees in the

organization mainly because of gender or racism. Usually this type of discrimination is not very apparent, since it is unwritten and off the record policy followed in the organization. Yousry (2006) states that glass ceiling is used to discuss any situation where women faces "challenges for advancement". ILO (2004) has reported that whenever there are situations that hinder the advancement of a professionally skilled and qualified person from the lower-level and stagnates there, it clearly indicates some form of discrimination most frequently related to the gender or the race to which the person belongs to. Sturges, et al (2003) felt that when people perceive that they are discriminated at work then there is definitely supported by solid conclusive evidence, which makes the presence of glass ceiling evident. Myerson and Fletcher (2000) researched that despite the increase in education level and increase in the number of females joining organisations, the presence of glass ceiling is still evident. Pomeroy (2007) have found in their study that in the senior level positions there is less or no representation of female employees. This trend is continuing from over a decade now. Helfat et al. (2007) have made an extensive study on the Executive officers in the Fortune 100 companies and have found that, the number of male employees is two times more as compared to the women employees in Human Resources management. United Nations Report (2015), found that more than 50% women of the workable age have joined the workforce, even with the increase in numbers women account for less than 2 percent of CEO positions in major corporations in United States. ILO (2010) states that, the increase of service sector jobs for women has been a universal phenomenon. In 2008, 40 percent of all employed people universally were females, and almost 46.9% were working for service sectors. Experts argue that women have benefited from the additional growth of employment opportunities in the services sector, including financial services such as banking, that require feminine attributes such as teamwork, caring and serving (Bradley et al.,2000; McDowell, 1997; Reich, 2001). In the so called "male dominant" society, women have attained success in a noteworthy manner. But, the narrow-mindedness in the place of work is affecting their growth in career. Even though there is a substantial increase in the education and professional literacy among the women there is nominal progression in senior positions. There is very little or no presence of women seen in the top management positions. Even though they get trained and qualified to occupy the managerial positions, they somewhere get held-up at the middle management levels. Men attain senior positions smoothly than females in India.

2. Literature Review

Cotter and colleagues (2001), have examined that education level of women, experience at work, length of service in an organisation are predominantly considered to measure discrimination at work. They also opine that the manager has to be supportive to help women employees excel in their jobs. The United Nation's Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (2007), reports that increase in the number of women employees has stimulated the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 0.34%. But this increase in the number is concentrated only at the clerical level and reduces at the top. Neeraj Jain et al (2009) found out that women are having good mentors that help them grow and progress in their

career and the male employees deny about any glass ceiling in their respective organisations. Terborg (1977) opines that competitiveness among the women is considered negatively in the organisations. Simpson & Holley (2000) found that women's remuneration and career prospects were different as compared to men in the USA. Women were aggravated by the sexual biasness due to which they were less likely to be promoted.

Renner et al. (2002) found that in the compensation paid to executive officers in Fortune 500 companies, pay is based on performance of the organisation, ability to pay, sector, company size, etc., but never related to gender. Ostroff & Atwater (2003) conducted a study on 4,000 managers from various companies and revealed that men were paid more compared to women employees and this difference in pay became wider and broader as the women employees moved to the higher levels. Sarmistha Nandy et al (2014), found that women employees face barriers on career advancement due to gender stereotyping within and outside the organization. Jabbar Awais, Imran Asma (2013) found that demographic profile of the women played an important role for the individual progression of women in the organisation. Metz (2003) indicated that few organizations make efforts to support women employees by providing necessary information on training and development opportunities available for them through the organisation. Ryan et al (2006) interviewed few women employees and the analyses of the interview states that most of the women feel they lack the opportunity to progress. This makes it difficult to progress up the ladder when compared to the male employees in their organisation.

Ronald J. Burke et al., (2008), despite having good education, women in managerial positions find it very difficult to progress in their careers. The main hindrance is the attitudes, biases and prejudices of their male colleagues and their organizational cultures; which leads to lower job satisfaction, disengagement at work and higher levels of job stress. Interestingly, more educated women reported higher levels of perceived organizational bias. Price Waterhouse Coopers (2008), opines that even though the number of men and women entering the workforce is equal, women get lost in the pipeline, as a result of voluntary termination, once they reached senior management positions.

Catalyst (2009) suggests that a very small percentage of the seats in the board are held by women. Over the last eight years it is increased by only 0.01 percentage points (Women in State Policy Leadership, 1998-2005). Hobbler, et al (2009) state that the objective of the study was to find out if the promotion of women depended on their bosses' perceptions that they experience greater family-work conflict as compared to male employees. The study found that the managers always attributed women to having greater family responsibilities, hence not given more importance to women while considering them for promotion. Yap and Konrad (2009) conducted a study on over 22,000 full-time, non-unionized employees from a large Canadian firm between 1996 and 2000 and found that women experience racial discrimination and a lower chance for promotion as compared to whites.

Paul Smith, Nadia Crittenden et al (2012) states that some of the factors that contribute to glass ceiling are socialization of roles, rejection, the preconceived notions, jealousy among the co-workers, Corporate culture, etc. Brittany J. Galloway (2012), have found that male domination is predominant in the organisations and the Men who communicate very toughly with their subordinates are considered straight forward, whereas if women use the same method they are viewed as rude or punishing. Rai and Srivastava (2008) found that since the organisations are operating globally there are ample number of opportunities available for women at work. They opine that glass ceiling is only a man-made issue and if the women are competent they can always hold higher positions. Rashid R (2010), quotes that in many up-and-coming markets, women opt for less challenging roles or projects or get lower performance ratings.

Burton & Parker (2010); Frey James & Eitzen (1991), state that leadership rewards are mostly associated with masculine personality. Women by nature have nurturing characteristics, which make them cheerful. The authors conclude that women to be successful should display masculine characteristics, which requires lot of compromises in their family front. Renee B. Adams, Patricia Funk (2012) that female directors are less power conscious then their male counterparts. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (2006) has reported even though women presently have occupied 44 % of the managerial and professional positions, as compared to 56 % of men. Only 12 % are holding executive roles, 8.7 % are board of directors, 3% CEOs and 2 % of chair positions are held by women. Alkadry and Tower (2006) found that gender plays a major role in salaries of public officials in similar positions. They also have stated that different employers and occupations have different sets of wages between men and women.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Statement of the Problem:

There is a lot of discrimination for women in the workplace. The discrimination or inequity may not be overt in nature, but can be in the form of discrimination in pay, promotion, assigning less visible jobs, negative feedback at work, low career advancement, lack of training and development facilities available for women, etc. The researcher felt a need to find out whether the presence of glass ceiling really affected the career growth of women employees in the organisations. For this purpose, the researcher chose to study the perception of both male and female employees on the concept of glass ceiling and also to find out if it has any effect on the career growth of employees in the organisation. The study is focused on employees working across different levels from sectors like Financial Institutions, IT, BPO, Health Care, Hospitality Industry, Education, etc.

3.2. Conceptual Framework:

Glass Ceiling (GC) effects the performance of women employees. GC is an independent variable. Performance is the dependent variable. Individual Factors (IF), Social & Societal Factors(SF), Organisational Factors (OF), Cultural Factors (CF) and Family Factors (FF) considered as independent variable in this framework. The model used in the study is as follows:
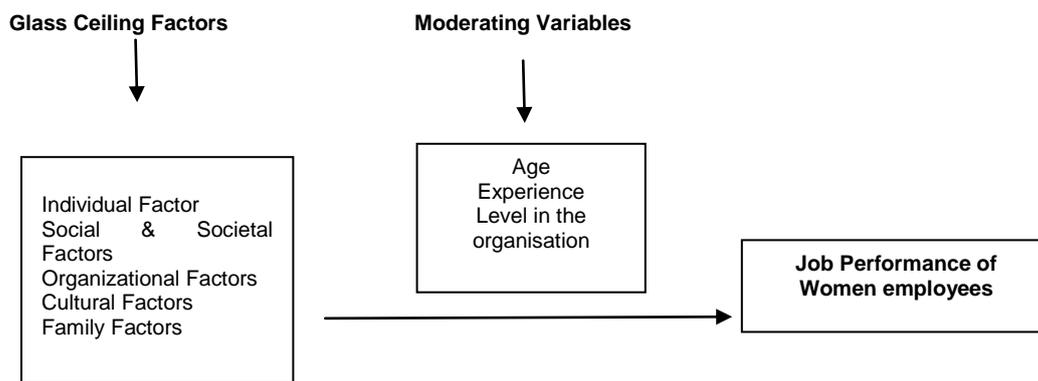

Fig 1: Conceptual Model

3.3. Objectives for the Study
1. To identify the factors influencing glass ceiling in the organisations.
2. To analyse the effect of factors influencing glass ceiling on the performance of the women employees in the organisations.

3.4. Hypothesis:
1. Individual factor has an effect on the job performance of women employees in the organisations.
2. Social and societal factor has an effect on the job performance of women employees in the organisations.
3. Organisational factor has an effect on the job performance of women employees in the organisations.
4. Cultural factor has an effect on the job performance of women employees in the organisations.
5. Family factor has an effect on the job performance of women employees in the organisations.

3.5. Sampling Type:

To have proper representation of the population the researcher has used Stratified sampling for the study. The industries in the service sector are divided using strata based on the industry employed, level of employment, experience, gender of the respondent, etc.

3.5.1. Sampling Frame:

Complete list of all the members of the population that the researcher wishes to study constitutes a sampling frame. It is a list of the items or people forming a population from which a sample is taken. All the employees working in those industries are a part of the study. The sampling frame included industries like IT/ITES, Financial institutions, Healthcare, Hospitality and Education. The sample size has been chosen so that it is representative of the chosen industries.

Table 1: Table Showing Composition of Sample Elements

Sl. No	Industry	No. of Industries	No. of companies selected for the study
1	Financial Institutions	22	10
2	IT	2000	20
3	BPO		
4	Health Care	8	7
5	Hospitality	14	10
6	Education	100	20

3.5.2. Sample Size

The approximate population working for private service sector in Bangalore is assumed to be 10, 00,000. The margin of error accepted is 5% with 95% confidence level and the response distribution is assumed to be 50%. The estimated sample size for the study is 384. The researcher has taken 400 as the sample size across Bangalore.

4. Data Analysis & Interpretation

4.1. Descriptive Statistics:

- Gender : Female respondents constitute 53% and male respondents constituted 47%.
- Marital Status:56.8% of the respondents are unmarried and married respondents constituted 43.3%.
- Level of employment:15.5% of the responses were from entry level, 39% of the responses came from junior level, 35% of the respondents were working in the middle level and 10.5% of the respondents were from the senior level. The respondents constituted employees working in different level to find out their perception on the concept of glass ceiling.
- Experience: 25% of the respondents have 1-5 years of work experience, 44% of the respondents have 6-10 years of work experience, 17% of the respondents have 11-15years of work experience and only 5% of the respondents have above 20years work experience .
- Age: 40% of the respondents constitute the age group of 30-39 , 30.8% of respondents are from the age group of 20-29, and 50& above constitute of only

9.2% of the respondents. The researcher has considered all the age groups of respondents for the study.

4.2. To identify the factors influencing glass ceiling in the organisations.

The KMO test indicates the sample adequacy. 22 variables considered for the study, have a KMO value of 0.835 which is greater than 0.5.

Table 2: KMO Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.830
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3723.828
	Df	253
	Sig.	0.000

KMO and Bartlett test is used to evaluate the strength of the linear association among the set of items in the correlation matrix. KMO is a measurement of sampling adequacy that compares the magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficients to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients. The result of KMO is **.830** which is higher than .5 which is good.

Bartlett test is to test the null hypothesis that correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Chi square value is 3723.82 and Sig. value is less than 0.05. Therefore, based on the test outcome null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Given these two results above, the correlation matrix appears to be factorable.

Rotation maximizes high item loadings and minimizes low item loadings, thereby producing a more interpretable and simplified solution.

From the Rotated Component Matrix Table **SIX** factors are identified. The factors are named as follows:

Factor 1: Individual Factors (Hard work of women, effective communication & problem solving skills, support and guidance from mentor, women raising the hierarchy, problem solving skills)

Factor 2: Social Factors (salary gaps between men and women, Competitiveness/assertiveness viewed negatively, Women are generally preferred for entry level, negative feedback, uncomfortable when they have to criticize, women are not assigned challenging/high visibility projects)

Factor 3: Organizational factors (Encourage women to maximize their potential, career advancement, Conflicts with family responsibilities, Sufficient opportunities exist, there is a counselor or manager to talk to in my organization)

Factor 4: Cultural Factors (employer perceives women may leave for family reasons, jealousy among co-workers, male domination of senior positions)

Factor 5: Performance Enhancing Factors (opportunities for training, opportunities to grow)

Factor 6: Family Factors (prefer a balanced life, they have to make too many compromises to gain highly paid positions)

The general purpose of factor analysis is to find a method of summarizing the information contained in a number of original variables to a smaller set of new composite dimensions (factors) with minimum loss of information. That is, the Factor Analysis tries to identify and define the underlying dimensions in the original variables.

For the above exercise, Principal Component Method for factor extraction is used, wherein the number of factors necessary to represent the data and the method of calculating them to be determined. At this step, how well the chosen model fits the data is also ascertained. Eigen value is kept closer or greater than 1 to extract factors from the given variables. This step is to determine the method of factor extraction, number of initial factors and the estimates of factors. Here Principal Components Analysis (PCA) is used to extract factors to represent the data. For our study, there are 23 variables. As per the above table, the 23 parameters in the data were reduced to 6 factor models.

4.3. Factors effecting glass ceiling have an effect on the performance of the women employees in the organisations

Multiple linear regressions

Multiple linear regressions are employed to test the explanatory power of independent variables on Performance Enhancing factors in the organization.

The model is shown below:

$Y = a + b1 * X1 + b2 * X2 + b3 * X3 + b4 * X4 + b5 * X5 + e$

Y: Job of Performance of women in the organization
X1: Individual Factors
X 2: Social & Societal Factors
X 3: Organizational Factors
X4: Cultural Factors
X5: Family Factors
X6: Gender related issues
B1 through b6 coefficients of X1 through X6
e is error term

Testing the model through regression which established the relation between set of independent variables on dependent variable, however the output is valid, depends upon on the testing the assumptions of the regression analysis, such as normality, form function, Heteroscedasticity and outliers.

Table 3: Model Summary

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
	0.672	0.451	0.442	0.71305

Model summary depicted, correlation coefficient as .672, and R square is .451, which showed the explanatory power of independent variables on dependent variable. In other words, factors from X1 through X6 can impact Performance of women by 45.1%.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coefficient	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.046	0.286		3.65	0.00		
X1: Individual Factors	0.475	0.051	0.412	9.27	0.00***	0.731	1.369
X 2: Social & Societal Factors	-0.13	0.054	-0.127	-2.49	0.013**	0.557	1.795
X 3: Organizational Factors	0.28	0.058	0.211	4.92	0.00***	0.784	1.275
X4: Cultural Factors	-0.03	0.049	-0.03	-0.63	0.529	0.651	1.537
X5: Family Factors	0.16	0.044	0.16	3.778	0.00***	0.799	1.252
X6:Gender related issues	-0.11	0.069	-0.094	-1.73	0.084*	0.489	2.043

*** P <.0001 ** P<.05*

To estimate the outcome variables based on predictors, OLS is used, all the assumptions are met, which discussed above. Outcome of the model showed unstandardized and standardized beta values, unstandardized values can be fitted as model which is given below.

Y = a + .475 * X1 -.13 * X2 + .28 * X3 -.03 * X4 + .16 * X5 - .03 * X6 -0.11+ e

Beta coefficient for X1: Individual Factors is, .475, which means 1unit increase in X1- Individual Factors leads to increase Y i.e. enhancement of the performance of the individuals .Variables such as X1(IF), X3-(OF) and X5- (FF)all are positively related with performance, the variables represent Glass ceilings such as X2- (SF), X4-(CF)and X6- Gender related issues all are negatively related with Performance, which means increase in score of these items will hamper the performance and in turn hinders the promotional opportunities for the women in the organization.

Standardized beta showed the magnitude of relation of one independent variables on dependent variable, keeping all

other variables constants, which is depicted in the graphical form.   Except X4 & X6, all other variables are statistically significant at least 5% level.

Table 5: Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Accepted (H0)	Rejected(H0)
1		√
2		√
3		√
4	√	
5		√
6	√	

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The concept of glass ceiling is invisible in organizations, yet ingrained in many of the service sectors in Karnataka. The number of qualified women entering the workforce is steadily increasing, but the growth gets retarded at some point in their career due to lack of opportunities made available to women in their career. Since the companies are competing globally, they are very demanding and women find it very difficult to balance both work and family due to the social and cultural issues that prevent their growth. The old boys network is so strong that, it has become impossible for the women to reach there. A lot of women are victims of the social stigma that they fear of. A lot of them expect flexibility at work, which may not be possible always. From the study it is evident that irrespective of the sector, the male domination in senior and visible positions is significant in most of the organisations. Women who have the

technical competence end up being in staff functions, which curtails their growth. The social, individual and organizational barriers restrict women from reaching the top. The number of men coming forward to mentor women is very meagre, and this can be attributed to the societal and cultural barriers. Lack of right mentors at various stages of their career and lack of family support are the obstacles for women's growth. Men and women have different leadership styles, but the brand of being emotional is stereo-typed with women. A few organizations have undertaken studies to examine the prevalence of glass ceiling. One interesting finding was that while women believed that a glass ceiling does exist, men observed that it has been shattered in most industries.

Women employees can break through the glass ceiling only when the positive factors that are having an impact on their career advancement are increased. This can be done through boosting their economic power by upgrading themselves with sufficient skills, educational qualification, improving their communication skills and having a good mentor; who guides and counsels them in the organisation. The hurdles that women face can be both external and internal to the organisation. Research reveals that women are neurologically competent to look at problems more holistically and by nature have a lot of anxiety. Holding anxiety and looking at problems holistically are desirable in the 21st century. Despite having advantages, the social, cultural and family wiring around women restrains them from being present in positions where they can exercise leadership.

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