Investigating the Psychological Effects of Glass Ceiling on Creating Inability Feeling in Organizational Performance of Female Employees in Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Using human resources in developed societies is one of the key factors in achieving sustainable development. Meanwhile, the general status of organizations indicates that women still remain in the lower ranks of management and the effect of the Glass Ceiling. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of psychological (mental) effects of Glass Ceiling on reducing and creating inability in organizational performance of women working in Tehran Azad University of Science and Technology.

Methodology: In this study, using a descriptive-correlational study, 83 female staff of Tehran Azad University of Science and Research were randomly selected as the sample. Measurement tools included Glass Ceiling questionnaires and organizational performance. After data collection, the research data were analyzed based on research hypotheses using Pearson correlation coefficient, linear regression analysis and one-way variance.

Findings and Conclusion: The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and reduction of inability on perceived organizational performance. 29% of the variance in the sense of inability in organizational performance of female employees is can be explained by the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling. The results also showed that among the dimensions of organizational performance, 58% of variance of organizational innovation can be explained and predicted by the Glass Ceiling.

KEYWORDS: *Glass Ceiling, Psychological Effects, Organizational Performance, Female Staff.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, where countries are competing for growth and development, utilizing the full potential of human resources is of particular importance. Women are one of the valuable assets of every country, especially in developing countries. In fact, women's gender participation is the key to their growth and iprovement. Women from about half of all people in society and are the creators and trainers of future generations. They are therefore potential and important human resources in the scientific, social and cultural development of the country; hence, special attention is needed to their career path (Nejati and Jamali, 2013). The participation of women in the

profession market has been one of the most important social changes of the last century. Today, women have made significant progress in management that has been available to men for years (Powell et al., 2011).

Although in recent decades the number of women seeking managerial and senior management positions has increased, there is still a high proportion of women in high-level organizational positions in the minority (Haji Norouz, Mehrizadeh,2014, p118). And with all the professionalism and merit of working women, they have not yet reached the highest levels of authority in organizations. Studies in different countries indicate that the lack of women in executive positions and in the senior management decision-making of large companies is a global phenomenon (Burke &Matiz, 2011). It is still a major obstacle to women's career development in many international areas. It seems that the advancement of women to the executive level is blocked by invisible barriers that describe the term "Glass Ceiling" well. The Glass Ceiling comes from the stereotypical and prejudiced perceptions that exist about women and makes it impossible for women to rise above a certain organizational hierarchy. The Glass Ceiling, which is based on organizational attitudes and prejudices, is an obstacle to women's advancement in managerial careers (Asfidani, 2012).

On the other hand, the study of organizational performance in the workplace as a variable has been used to explain many of the events and occurrences in different studies. Research has shown that organizational performance plays an important role. Also, the lack of female employees in the organization creates conditions in which few people know what to do to bring about change in the organization, resulting in undesirable feedback that can lead to inability feelings, therefore, organizational performance is weakened (Morrison, 2011).

One of the barriers for organizations to achieve their goals is the presence of Glass Ceilings or invisible obstacles in organizations. The University also needs to use anti-discrimination policy as a tool to help qualified people, including women to have equal opportunities to compete on the base of ability and competence. In order for people not to show lack of knowledge,abilities and skills in the organization less than expected and to perform their role effectively or to have a working conscience, it is necessary to have of justice in organization not to make the staff feeling discriminated. Considering that the University is a nurturing and growing institution and its clients are young, doing things related to this class is of high sensitivity, because proper communication and accurate and committed work for them will lead to learning and forming the right culture and, they reinforce virtues such as trust,and reversely, in the absence of ethics and human principles at workthey will be fed with, insecurity, dissatisfaction and inappropriate ethics. It seems that the mental and psychological effects of Glass Ceiling appear to be one of the most important components of organizational performance. Given the impact that either of these components can have on the performance of the organization, however, given the internal and external records reviewed, it may be possible to say that there has never been a study of the role of the Glass Ceiling in reducing organizational performance within the country. Therefore, the main issue of this study was to investigate the role and psychological effects of Glass Ceiling on the creating of inability in perceived organizational performance of women in Tehran Azad Science and Research Institute.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In today's society, although the claim of equality of the two genders is widely accepted in social and human rights, there is a long gap between its rational acceptance and its execution in practice. The attitudes and values of our society are still patriarchal, affecting almost all areas of social and individual life of members of society. Although half of human society does not appear bold in the face of this presence, neither in Iran nor in the rest of the world, it is because discrimination of empty beliefs and prejudices has led to a poor assessment of women's abilities. The existing cultural constraints also cause not only women not toturn to certain jobs, but managers in particular situations also refuse to hire them. Creating employment opportunities and accepting women into key jobs has deep roots in the way society thinks and perceives women and their abilities and talents.

Female employees in the high income groups have less income than their male counterparts. Women and minorities fail to reach the highest levels of the hierarchy. They get close to the top positions in the organization, but rarely get hold of it. This frustration makes them think that there is a Glass Ceiling, that is, the discriminatory barriers

they see in their efforts to achieve high levels of management in organizations.

Keeping women back and preventing them from running the community and not participating in government activities, etc., creates an astonishing vacuum in social and sustainable economic growth. It is impossible to get rid of poverty, illness, illiteracy and frustration and inabilitywithout the participation of women and mothers and it must be removed from the minds of all managers in the world.

A. Glass Ceiling

One of the main issues that has been in a center of attention about the presence of women in the workplace and related issues, is the promotion of women to higher levels of management, describing the phenomenon of "*Glass Ceiling*".

After joining organizations, women begin to grow alongside men and go through different levels of organization, but as women reach higher levels of organization, their growth and promotion slows down as invisible factors prevents them from accessing top-level jobs, these invisible agents are called the *"Glass Ceiling"*.

The term Glass Ceiling was first used in Wall Street Journal for the first time in year 1986. The term refers to a place in the organization where there is no clear reason why women cannot reach it, but in reality, it is not possible for women to access it. (Ghafouri&Golparvar, 2011). Competent and empowered women, looking at the high levels of organization through this Glass Ceiling, find the place they deserve, but are unable to break the Glass Ceiling because of invisible barriers. (World Labor Organization 2008: 23-36).

The Glass Ceiling states that women are unsuccessful andfail to reach the highest levels of hierarchy. This factor and failure makes them think that there is a Glass Ceiling, that is, discriminatory barriers, in their efforts to achieve high levels of management in organizations, invisible and insurmountable obstacles that prevent minorities from reaching the top of the organization, regardless of their capabilities and successes (Catalyst, 2004).

The US Census Bureau defines the Glass Ceiling as: "They are artificial (made up) barriers based on attitudinal biases with an organizational, global, or national perspective that prevent qualified individuals in their organizations from progressing upwards in management positions. (United Nations Development Program, Abdullahi, 2009:189) According to the Federal Commission's definition of a Glass Ceiling, this phenomenon is not only specific to women, but also to (ethnic and religious minorities). Glass Ceiling is a type of inequality that is different from gender, racial or religious discrimination when it comes to gender discrimination for women, meaning that women are present at all levels of organization, but Glass Ceilings is used for situations where the percentage of presence of women is different at levels. In other words, at lower organizational levels, the presence of women is high, gradually decreasing as women approach higher levels of organization. In that case, this kind of inequality is limited and different and therefore needs to be differentiated. (SayedJavadin et al., 2009).

A review of the research literature on Glass Ceiling metaphor indicates that this concept implies an impenetrable barrier that prevents most organizations, without legal validity and merely based on technical and unwritten agreements from promoting women in the organization. (Weirts, 2012). In general, Glass Ceilings may operate at any level of the corporate pyramid, preventing women from operating, middle or senior management positions. The higher the level of management, the more important it is in policy making and strategic policy making, and therefore the Glass Ceiling becomes thicker and more impenetrable. The presence of Glass Ceilings has made the participation of women in managerial levels in our country abnormal and sick. This has resulted in poor utilization of the intellectual and professional capacities and management capabilities of women, and thus our developing society suffers losses (Zahedi, 2011).

B. Organizational Performance

An individual's performance is a measure of successfulness in his or her job, and is usually derived from the individual's output (for example, the amount of sales or production) or the measure of the success of the individual's behavior in relation to organizational expectations (Miller, 2012). Human performance is the result of a set of actions performed to achieve a goal based on a specific standard. Actions may include observable behavior or invisible mental processing (eg, problem solving, decision making, and reasoning planning). Organizational performance refers to how the tasks and activities of the organization are accomplished and the results of their performance. In other words, organizational performance is the achievement or exceeding of organizational and

social goals and the taking responsibilities that the organization has (Bosi, 2007).

In other words, organizational performance is an indicator that measures how the goals of an organization or institution are fulfilled (same source, 2012). In the current age, tremendous developments in management knowledge have made the evaluation system inevitable; Assessment in various dimensions of the organization, including the assessment of the utilization of resources and facilities, staff, goals and strategies, is one of the signs of the organization's illness. Every organization needs an evaluation system in order to understand the desirability and quality of its activities, especially in complex dynamic environments. On the other hand, the lack of a system of evaluation and control in any system means not communicating with the internal and external environment that results in aging and ultimately the death of the organization (Yoach, 2010).

Performance is one of the fundamental concepts in management, because many management tasks are based on it. In other words, the success of organizations can be seen in the mirror of their performance (Izari et al., 2009:29).

In general, different models have provided different indicators for measuring performance and according to the type of tasks of organizations. In this study, three indicators (innovation, quality and efficiency) have been used to measure organization performance.

C. Background research

There have been numerous studies on the status of women and the phenomenon of Glass Ceilings. These studies have investigated the presence or absence of factors, Glass Ceiling, Glass Wall, wage differences between men and women at different organizational levels. Here are just a few examples of case studies:

Smith (2015), in a study examines the dimensions of Glass Ceiling and the dimensions of mental success that the statistical population is comprised of women and concluded that there is a negative relationship between Glass Ceiling and mental success. Simpson and Eltman (2012) report on Glass Ceiling research and success report that Glass Ceilings in the organization create barriers that reduce the job requirements and career opportunities for women compared to men. Beheshti Rad and Nasiri (2015) investigated the role of Glass Ceiling in reducing perceived organizational justice. Research findings indicate

that there is a positive and significant relationship between Glass Ceiling and reduction of perceived organizational justice and its dimensions (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactive justice). 29% of the variance in perceived organizational justice reduction can be explained by the Glass Ceiling.

The results also showed that among the dimensions of organizational justice, a high percentage of variance change in procedural justice (0.58) can be predicted by the Glass Ceiling. Foley and colleagues (2013) found that there was a positive relationship between gender and perceptions of racial and ethnic discrimination with Glass Ceiling perceptions, and they also found that perceived Glass Ceilings had a negative impact onperception of justice and organizational performance in promotion. Kornelus and Skinner (2014) showed that the development of women's capabilities, social responsibilities, and understanding of inequalities in the workplace by officials and managers are effective in reducing Glass Ceiling. TabeBordbarandet al. (2016) in a study investigated the relationship between belief in Glass Ceiling and mental success of female employees in Shiraz municipality. The key findings of this study are: There is a significant negative relationship between belief in the Glass Ceiling and mental success and its dimensions. There is also a positive and significant relationship between resilience dimension of Glass Ceiling and mental success and its dimensions and there is a positive significant relationship between denial dimension of Glass Ceiling and mental success and its dimensions. There is a negative significant relationship between the dimension of renouncement ofGlass Ceiling and mental success and its dimensions. There is a negative significant relationship between dimension ofacceptance with mental success and its dimensions like job satisfaction dimensions.AlsoGlass Ceiling resilience dimension plays a major role in explaining mental success.

III. RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Research hypotheses are:

H1: There is a relationship between the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and the feeling of inability to perform organizational performance (main hypothesis).

H2: There is a relationship between the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and the decrease in organizational productivity.

H3: There is a relationship between the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and the decrease in organizational quality.

H4: There is a relationship between the psychological effects of the Glass Ceiling and the decrease in organizational innovation.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research method is descriptive and correlational. The target population included 152 female staff of Tehran Azad University of Science and Research. Using simple random sampling method, 83 individuals were selected. The Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size according to the size of the statistical population. The statistical methods used at the descriptive level (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics used Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression analysis and one-way analysis of variance. Questionnaire was used for data collection. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data on Glass Ceiling. After designing the questionnaire items based on the theoretical and empirical literature, the items measuring the Glass Ceiling were sent to education and management professionals and asked to indicate their importance, after collecting the data in the first step. the obtained ratings were specified and then a questionnaire containing the ratings obtained from the first stage questionnaire was sent to the experts and they were asked to confirm their agreement with the ratings obtained. The initial questionnaire had 36 items, which, after careful consideration, was reduced to 30 items by experts. As a result, the content and visual validity were confirmed by the experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Choudhundry J questionnaire consisting of 26 questions in 3 domains of productivity (6 questions), quality (6 questions) and innovation (4 questions) was used to collect data related to organizational performance. Data were analyzed by SPSS software.

V. RESULTS

Table 1: Statistical Sample Characteristics by Age, Education, and Service History

variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Age	20 to 23	23	26/7
	31 to 40	46	53/5
	41 to 50	10	11/6
	Above 50	7	8/1
Education	Diploma	7	8/1
	Upper Diploma	13	15/1
	Bachelor's Degree	44	51/2
	Master's Degree	12	14/0
	PHD	10	11/6
Years of Experience	1 to 5	13	15/1
	6 to 10	37	43/0
	11 to 15	20	23/3
	16 to 20	10	11/6
	Above 20	6	7/0

Table 2. Descriptive study of the status of the research variables in the statistical sample

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	K-S$_z$ Statistic	Significance Level
Psychological Dimensions of Glass Ceiling	3/00	0/48	0/48	0/97
Inability in Organizational Performance	3/04	0/65	0/41	0/99
Inability in Organizational Quality	3/07	0/78	0/98	0/28
Inability in Organizational Efficiency	3/01	0/71	0/79	0/56
Inability in Organizational Innovation	3/03	0/60	0/76	0/60

The results of single sample Kalmogorov-Smirnov test showed that in all data ، it is assumed that the abnormalities of the variables are distributed with significance level greater than 0.5. Therefore, the data have a normal distribution. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient between Glass Ceiling and organizational performance inability are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Mutual correlation between the psychological dimension of the Glass Ceiling and organizational performance inability

Variables	Psychological Dimensions of Glass Ceiling	
Inability in Organizational Performance	Pearson correlation	0/64
	Significance Level	0/000
Inability in	Pearson correlation	0/56

Organizational Quality	Significance Level	0/000
Inability in Organizational Efficiency	Pearson correlation	0/58
	Significance Level	0/000
Inability in Organizational Innovation	Pearson correlation	0/50
	Significance Level	0/000

The results of Table 3 show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the psychological dimension of the Glass Ceiling and creating inability feeling in organizational performance. The results also show that there is a positive and significant relationship between psychological effects and creating inability feeling in organizational quality (r = 0.56), inability in organizational efficiency (r = 0.58) and inability in organizational innovation (r = 0.50). The results of linear regression analysis to predict the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling on the creation of perceived inability in organizational performance and its components are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Linear Regression Analysis between the Psychological effects of Glass Ceiling inability in Organizational Performance

Predictor Variable	Criterion variable	F	P	R_2	B	P
Glass Ceiling	Inability in Organizational Performance	97/34	0/000	0/29	0/54	0/03
	Inability in Organizational Quality	39/23	0/000	0/21	0/46	0/000
	Inability in Organizational Efficiency	44/10	0/000	0/34	0/58	0/000
	Inability in Organizational Innovation	28/05	0/000	0/25	0/50	0/000

The results of Table 4 show that 29% of the variance in the perceived organizational performance inability is explained by the psychological effects of the Glass Ceiling. Also, the rate for inability in organizational quality is 0.21%, inability in organizational efficiency is 0.34 and inability in organizational innovation is 0.25%. B coefficients (regression coefficients) indicate that organizational performance inability (B = 0.54), organizational quality inability (B = 0.46), efficiency inability (B = 0.58), and innovation inability (B = 0.50) are positively and meaningfully explained by the Glass Ceiling.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Beliefs about gender roles are one of the most fundamental factors that impede women's presence in society. The purpose of this study was to explain the role of Glass Ceiling in reducing perceived organizational justice among female staff of Tehran Azad University of Science and Research. The findings of this study support the assumption that there is a positive and significant relationship between the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and disability on perceived organizational performance and its dimensions (quality, efficiency and organizational innovation). The results of the present study showed that 0.29 of the variance of reduction and feeling of inability to perceive organizational performance is explained by the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling. The results also showed that among the dimensions of organizational performance, a high percentage of variance in disability in organizational efficiency can be explained and predicted by the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling. Also, the results of the survey of employees' opinions on the psychological effects of Glass Ceiling and the feeling of inability to perceive organizational performance based on demographic variables indicated no differences between opinions. Findings from the present study are based on the findings of SeyedJavadin et al. (2007), Nejati and Jamali (2007), Taleghani et al. (2009), Ebrahimpour et al. (2011) and Foley et al. (2002) the disadvantage of perceived Glass Ceiling is on organizational performance in alignment promotion. Taleghani et al. (2009) in a study examining the impact of the Glass Ceiling on the reduction of women's empowerment in the Iranian Electricity Development Organization found that culture had the greatest impact on women not having access to managerial positions. In a study titled Explaining the Role of Television in Promoting Women to Community Management Levels, Ibrahim Pour and colleagues (2011) found that a high percentage of changes in the rate of growth and promotion of women to high levels of decision making were explained by the adaptability of television programs. SeyedJavadin et al. (2007) in a study presented and elaborated a model to examine the causal relationships between women's self-concept and Glass Ceiling perception of barriers found a negative relationship between women's self-concept and perception of Glass

Ceiling barriers. As a result, it can be stated that when women perceive the presence of a Glass Ceiling, they will have a lower perception of functioning within their organization.

As a general conclusion of this research, management in the present century requires more and better use of the power of women in management, and developing countries have come to the conclusion that in order to achieve their developmental goals, they have to engage women in management jobs. One of the important indicators that are considered as a gender criterion as well as women's empowerment is the extent of women's participation in large-scale decision making in the country as well as their presence in managerial positions. In spite of the plans made in this area, the presence of women in managerial positions is still not significant and it seems that women face many problems in their career advancement at managerial levels, which is not the case only in developing countries, but it is also in developed countries still as a problem and the experts have not been able to find an answer to it. According to statistics released by the United Nations and the evidence available in our country, despite the many advances made in the field of women in the past years, women still have little place in general economic activity and management decisions. In particular, it undermines the position of women in other social, cultural and political spheres. Therefore, taking appropriate scientific and planning measures and facilitating entry requirements for women to attend and survive in society should be taken into account, and peacemaking groups should take a more appropriate stance than women in society as half of their population. Consideration is not possible unless everyone first believes that the path to development will not be taken without regard to the role of women. In our country, visionaries and community policymakers have realized the importance of this issue and are seeking to increase the participation of women in managerial positions, thereby increasing the capacity needed to hold managerial positions by women.

Suggestions from this research are:

1- Holding seminars and setting up workshops to familiarize managers, policymakers, and decision makers with the gender and benefits of more effective women in senior decision-making.

2. Increasing engagement and assistance of women's rights universities, organizations, institutions and associations can be effective in shaping women's positions and their issues and problems through the media.

3. In planning and acting in the administrative system, consider activities for women to develop a sense of effectiveness, efficiency and success.

4. Trying to set the textbooks to women's issues, especially in employment, women's management, and so on.

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