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Impact of gender bias on organizational commitment: an empirical study of glass ceiling practices in corporate sector of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The Glass ceiling practices in the corporate sector have been a subject of concern in the industry and in the policy-making quarters of the government. Present government legal framework does not have enough hold to curb on local glass ceiling practices effectively. There is a need to eliminate glass-ceiling practices in the corporate sector in order to keep female employees motivated. It will create congenial working environment and will lead to improvement in female employee's attitude, commitment and ownership towards their work engagements in the organization. Women employees need to be recognized and given equal participation in each and every level of the organization. The objective of the study is to map environment of glass ceiling practices and to highlight female employees' harassment, discrimination and carrier deterrence practices. The research work is done through survey using a questionnaire for information and data collection about the glass ceiling practices in the local industry. Information and data was collected using simple random sampling technique. The data was collected from Punjab. Questionnaire is based on 8 Glass Ceiling and Gender Discrimination constructs consisting of total 24 questionnaire statements.

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1. Introduction

Human Resource Management involves staffing, training, development and motivation of employees **DeCenzo & Robins (1998)**. These areas are important considerations that help employees to feel sense of belonging to the organization. The trend of women participation in the workforce is increasing worldwide. According to the consensus of authors presented in the research women are discriminated at every level of management in the work place. It shows there is the presence of gender discrimination and glass ceiling in the organization. Its important for the organization to understand the gender biasness because it's the era of competition and only those organizations can succeed who can proactively manage the competition.

1.1 Gender Discrimination:

Discrimination is defined as "different treatment of individuals or groups based on arbitrary ascriptive or acquires criteria such as sex, race, religion, age, marital or parental status, disability, sexual orientation, political opinions, socio-economic background, and trade union membership and activities" (**Eurofound, 2012**).

Discrimination varies on the bases of pay, promotion and hiring. Female employees face the gender discrimination on these three backgrounds. Female do not earn potential pay, which is their right to earn. They earn less pay than male employees. Equal Employment Opportunity is provided by the law to ensure that there must be surety of equal job opportunities that must be given to workforce. Workforce is comprises of both genders, i.e., males and females. But the female employees bear the gender discrimination in job.

1.2 Glass Ceiling:

It is not known who used the term glass ceiling first but the term got familiar and popularized in 1986 when extensively read Wall Street Journal published the article by Carol Hywomiz and Timothy Schellhardt. As reported in Women History the term

"Glass Ceiling" was used in 1984 by Gay Bryant in the book, "The Working Woman Report", which examined the status of female employees in the organizations. Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was established in 1991 to obtain and gather information about opportunities and barriers to advancement in career for females and minorities (**Women History, 2012**). The practice of Glass Ceiling hinder's the qualified female employees in their career advancement in an organization's hierarchy (**Appelbaum et al., 2011**). Female employees face the hurdle in their career progression and experience a barrier that hinder their way to progress. Their career advancement to the top level position suffer because of the presence of the glass ceiling. There must be a workplace diversity in organizations to encourage the employees to perform well and in return organizations achieve the competitive edge against the other organizations. Glass ceiling hinder the female employees to proceed towards the top level position. There is also another layer that refrain female employees from getting the international assignment (**Insh et al., 2008**). Employees must be given the opportunity of equal employment. Female employees must be given opportunity to avail the international assignment. Women can prove their selves but they only need a chance.

1.3 Organizational Commitment:

Gender discrimination has an adverse effect on the organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction (**Ensher et al., 2001**). Gender discrimination affects employees performance and as well as badly affects organization performance. The critical constructs of that impact organizational performance are organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational Commitment is defined by **Mowday et al. (1974)** as comparative potency of the recognition and identification of employees with their organization. Organizational commitment plays a vital role for any

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organization success. As found by **Dost et al. (2002)** glass ceiling and gender discrimination affect employee's commitment towards the organization negatively. This type of barrier decreases organizational commitment on part of an employee and also decreases job satisfaction level.

2. Problem Need Analysis:

Glass ceiling hinder the career progression of employees in the organization. Glass ceiling must be eliminated or it must be reduced to ensure the work engagement of employees and their commitment towards the organization. The study is aimed at achieving the facts and guidelines for working environment that ensures that the equal employment opportunity for the employees especially female employees should prevail. In addition to find how the practices of Glass Ceiling and Gender Discrimination can be reduced in Pakistan industrial and corporate practices especially in banking sector. The following research questions need to be answered in order to understand the impact of glass ceiling in an organization. These questions will be supported by the rich literature.

Research Question:

- 1) - Do women get equal opportunity and access to organizations resources?
- 2) - How glass ceiling & discrimination practices affect Organizational Commitment?

3. Literature Review:

Answer to Research Question (1) – “Do women get equal opportunity and access to organizations resources?” can be addressed by discussing the glass ceiling effects in different nations.

Glass ceiling is present at the workplace and it is also affecting the workforce diversity especially at the international assignments. Today is the era of competition and companies can survive only if they are proactive and are favoring the diversity at the workplace and essentially the workforce diversity. There must be equal employment opportunities for employees to help minimize the concept of glass ceiling.

European world talk about equal employment opportunities for employees in the workplace but still there is lot of gender discrimination and glass ceiling. Whether the females are working in the public sector or in the private sector they have to face the glass ceiling. Analyzing gender pay gaps across the wage distribution in eleven countries **Arulampalam et al. (2007)** found that the magnitude of the pay gap varied largely in different sectors and private and public organizations. That gap is maximum at the top level positions and low at the lower level management, which is generally referred to as 'sticky floor' effect. It is observed by the **Mohamed Zainal (2009)** there are several other factors that hurdle the women promotability besides manager's perception including the work and family life conflicts. He further added, in assessing the phenomena of glass ceiling in Malaysia there are many factors that can affect the female employee promotion, but he focused on manager's perception toward women promotion. Gender bias environment is faced by women all over the world. Even in developed countries women face the challenges to their survival in job. Sub-continent is underdeveloped as compared to the European world. Women have to do take care of their kids and home besides their job. They are highly educated but they don't get a chance to avail the status in top management. The same scenario is investigated by the **(Jain & Mukherji, 2010)**. The gender stereotypes influences judgment and evaluation for the promotion of women in an organization. It affects the women

motivation to hard work. Regardless of being highly educated, women remain in lower management level. Indian organizations are still lacking commitment to achieving workplace diversity. Women have to give up their career to take care of their kids. Women can progress if they rely on maids and home assistance from other family members **(Jain & Mukherji, 2010)**.

The impact of gender discrimination can be assessed by studying effects of wages, hiring, promotion practices or rated salary raise scales for female employees. There are stereotypes, which are of the view that the women should be paid less. Men should get priority on women during the whole career of her job. Even in developing countries female employees face the discrimination in pay. They are not given justified pay in comparison to the work they do. Gender discrimination is the phenomena that can be observed in every society. Females bear equal burden of work as men do but even then they are paid less than their colleagues. Pakistan Social and Living standard Measurement (PSLM) survey (2004-2005) supports the findings of **Farooq & Sulaiman (2009)** that the females are under paid as compared with their co-men workers. This discrimination can be eliminated through the proper investment in education sector that can help women to be acquainted with the required knowledge and skill for the particular job. As found by the **Díaz & Sánchez (2011)**, there is a significant differences in pay for women than men in France, Germany, Italy, Spanish and United Kingdom. Potential wages are determined by the talent of the human capital while the actual wage differ in the sense that it is paid to employees depending on their ability to transform their human capital, knowledge and experience into the earnings of the organization. Female employees do share their experience and knowledge equally as the men do, during their employment career. Employees are discriminated on what they can potentially earn and what actually they have been paid. Employees work hard but they couldnot get the pay that is their right. **Leutwiler & Kleiner (2003)** found that the stereotypes among women, minorities, still exist and have an effect on placement of job, hiring, promotion and rewards and raises. If the best individual does not get the fair promotion just because of the fallacious stereotypes then the organizations productivity can decrease. If the organization is not responsive to employee complaint about this type of discrimination then employee should contact US Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. Organizations should respond to the needs of the female employees if they are facing the wage discrimination. It can help improve the performance of the employees and ensure the performance of the organization.

Channar et al. (2011) analyzed the effect of gender discrimination on the employees' satisfaction and motivation, commitment and enthusiasm and stress level. They found that in private sector women are more discriminated than they are in public sector. Gender discrimination lowers the job satisfaction and commitment. Women are less committed and enthusiastic toward job if they are discriminated on the ground of gender. Gender discrimination and stress level is highly positively related. If there is gender discrimination then women are more likely to do work under stress.

Answer to Research Question (2) – “How glass ceiling & discrimination practices affect Organizational Commitment??” can be addressed by following literature

Gender Discrimination and Organization:

Discrimination also decreases the employees' organizational commitment. It also affects the job satisfaction.

As said by Ensher et al. (2001) job satisfaction and organizational commitment is important constituent of employee attitudes and behaviors that can be largely affected by the perceived discrimination. Organizations must follow the steps to decrease the perceived discrimination and increase the commitment of employees towards the organization. Perceived discrimination results in increased work tension at one extreme and at the other it decreased the job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). When there is a discrimination in terms of wages, promotion and recognition, employees' commitment level towards the organization suffers a lot. Employees who face discrimination in terms of compensation, job assignment, promotion, layoff and/or disciplinary actions are most likely to file the grievances than those who face no or zero gender discrimination (Allen & Keaveny, 1985). Employees suffering from the discrimination are more likely to file the grievances towards the organization. There must be programs that develop the sense to curb the discrimination and enhance the organizational commitment. So that the employees enjoys employment satisfaction and enhanced organizational commitment.

According to Gutek et al. (1996) perceived gender discrimination among female employees was related to lower and decreased feelings of power and authority and job esteem. When there is a perceived discrimination female employees are more likely to feel the decreased powers and lack the job esteem and show lower organizational commitment.

Glass Ceiling and Organizational Commitment:

Glass Ceiling has also an affect on Organizational Commitment which is addressed by following authors.

Dost et al. (2002) found moderate level of relationship between glass ceiling and organizational commitment. Therefore, employee commitment towards organization is fairly affected by the glass ceiling. Organizations should develop policies to minimize the glass ceiling practices. They should give proper career advancement opportunities to females in order to retain highly skilled and qualified professional. As quoted by Jawahar & Hemmasi (2006) when organizations do not give proper career advancement opportunities to women employees, they have to face unavoidably loss of competent, capable, skilled, experienced and knowledgeable professionals. Similarly, female employee shows decreasing organizational commitment when they work in the environment which is highly dominated by the gender bias and men stereotypes (Korabik & Rosin, 1991). This shows that gender biasness has an adverse effect on the commitment of female employees towards organization.

4. Theoretical Framework:

According to Al-Meer (1989) there were researchers who have recognized the need of study of relationship between the job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance with variables leadership style, gender and work experience. This relationship help find the commitment of the organization in the presence of any hurdle for the promote-ability of employees. When there is less barrier employee face they will perform better, enhance organizational productivity and increase organizational commitment. The theoretical framework is shown in Fig-1 below.

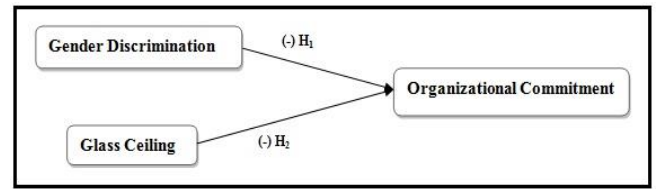


Fig-1

Employees must be provided with the proper promotion, hiring and facilities. Abbas et al. (2011) explored that the organizations success is dependent on the performance of its workforce. When employees are given equal opportunity in terms of pay, hiring, promotion, recognition and rewards, career progression, developmental assignments, training and development and at international assignment, they can perform well and show the organizational commitment.

5. Hypothesis:

H₁: Gender Discrimination has a Negative Association with Organizational Commitment

H₂: Glass Ceiling has a Negative Association with Organizational Commitment

6. Research Methodology:

Research methodology is an organized and efficient approach used for data collection. This is basically a pilot study done to see the effect of glass ceiling and gender discrimination on organizational commitment. The research work is done through survey using a questionnaire for information and data collection about the glass ceiling practices in the local industry. The Questionnaire was develop to measure the extent of gender discrimination and glass ceiling in the organization using five-points Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability of the scale is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha. Information and data was collected using simple random sampling technique. The data was collected from Punjab including three cities, namely Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Okara. The collection of data is done through personal visits and sending questionnaire through mail. Questionnaire is based on 8 Glass Ceiling constructs consisting of total 24 questionnaire statements. 100 questionnaires were sent in the field but only 72 were filled by the respondents. The response rate was 72%. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-16th Edition) is used to analyze the data which is collected from sample. Regression and Descriptive statistics are applied on the data.

Table-1 Construct

	No. of Items
Gender Discrimination	12
Glass Ceiling	12
Organizational Commitment	3

7. Empirical Findings:

7.1 Reliability Check: Reliability of the scale is checked through chronbach's alpha. There were 9 constructs of the questionnaire. The Cronbash's alpha obtained was .718, which indicates an acceptable range and shows a reasonable level of internal consistency of our scale.

Table-2 Construct's Cronbach's Alpha

	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Gender Discrimination	12	0.885
Glass Ceiling	12	0.887
Organizational Commitment	3	0.901

Table-4 Correlations

			Glass Ceiling	Gender Discrimination	Organizational Commitment
Spearman's rho	Glass Ceiling	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.247*	.447**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.036	.000
		N	72	72	72
	Gender Discrimination	Correlation Coefficient	.247*	1.000	.615**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.	.000
		N	72	72	72
	Organizational Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.447*	.615**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	72	72	72
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

7.2 Respondents Profile:

Table-3 Statistics

	Gender	Age	Organization. Size	Organization. Structure	Managerial. Position	Experience
Mean	0.49	29.56	2.07	2.00	2.29	1.76
Std. Deviation	0.503	7.166	.699	.000	.488	.722

As tabulated in table-3, the average age of the respondents in the study is 29.560 years, while the experience of employees was 1.76, (as it was quoted 1 refers to <5years of experience, while 2 refers to 5>years<10, 10>years). This shows that employees have an average experience between 5>years<10. Organization Size shows number of employees in that particular organization. results shows mean of 2.07 where 2 is coded for 20-25 employees. Organizational structure mean value is 2 which depicts that the respondent organizations have a hierarchal structure. Managerial Position shows mean of 2.29, which means that most of the respondents are from middle level management.

7.3 Correlation:

Since p value for gender discrimination is .000 in Table-4 which is less than 0.01 and there is a positive correlation but spearman's correlation coefficient as shown in table-4 is .447, which shows that there is a positive relationship between gender discrimination and organizational commitment. Similarly, p value for glass ceiling is .000, which is less than 0.01 and spearman's correlation coefficient rho is .615, which shows that there is a strong positive relationship between glass ceiling and organizational commitment.

7.4 Regression Analysis

Table-5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.720 ^a	.518	.504	2.25546

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Discrimination, Glass Ceiling

The coefficient of determination in Table-4 is 0.518, which shows that there is about 51.8% variation in the organizational commitment explained by the gender discrimination and glass ceiling. Therefore, regression equation can be somewhat helpful to make the prediction. **7.5 Regression Equation:**

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (GD) + \beta_2 (GC) + \epsilon$$

Hiring, wages, promotion, compensation including both recognition and rewards, international assignments, training and development if properly distributed and implemented then employees organizational commitment is most likely to increase

while if the developmental assignments decreases it decrease the organizational commitment.

$$Y = 0.349 + 0.325 (GC) + 0.555 (GD) + \epsilon$$

The negative sign of glass ceiling in a regression equation as per table-3 shows that the organizational commitment with the decreasing glass ceiling increases commitment while increasing gender discrimination decrease commitment.

Table-5 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.349	1.003		.348	.729
Glass Ceiling	.325	.091	.310	3.579	.001
Gender Discrimination	.555	.084	.575	6.644	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

8. Conclusion:

According to Empirical findings Correlation Matrix spearman's correlation coefficient for organizational commitment with gender discrimination, and glass ceiling is 0.615 and 0.447 respectively. It shows that there is a strong positive relationship between the dependent (Organizational Commitment) and independent variable (Gender Discrimination and Glass Ceiling). Therefore, both hypotheses 1 and 2 are rejected.

It means that organizational commitment does not decrease with the increasing gender discrimination and glass ceiling practices. Regression Analysis also proves that there is a strong relationship between dependent variable "Gender discrimination and Glass Ceiling" and independent variable "Organization Commitment".

But Literature shows that glass ceiling and gender discrimination affect employee's commitment towards the organization negatively (Dost et al., 2002). Similar finding has been quoted by Korabik & Rosin (1991) was that when there is gender biased work environment and men stereotype are also participating in the workforce, female employee shows decreasing organizational commitment.

9. Limitations:

The main limitation of this study is that respondents selected for the study mainly belong to small developing cities of Punjab Province because of the convenience sampling. Other

limitation was that there was almost unequal representation of gender for survey; almost 51% of respondents were male. These were the reason that glass ceiling effect was minimized or is not existed. In future work we will overcome these limitations and data from equal number of female respondents (male and female) will be collected; research will be conducted in major metropolitan cities of Punjab. It will enable to explore the effect of gender discrimination and glass ceiling more effectively in the banking sector.

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