

Gender Discrimination and Glass Ceiling in the International University in UAE

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Abstract

The aim of this research article is to find the challenges faced by women in climbing their organizational ladder through the epistemic concept of glass ceiling phenomenon. The general objective of this paper is to determine the impact created by glass ceiling effect upon women's failure in representing high-ranking executive positions alike their male counterparts.

At present, women form approximately half of the workforce across the nation though their representation in senior and executive level positions are relatively minuscule to be considered. In this research, the authors identified the challenges that a woman employee undergo in her journey to executive level positions.

The present study is concerned with critical evaluation of gender discrimination and glass ceiling in the International University in UAE. The purpose of the present study is to identify the variables which play a vital role in glass ceiling effect based on gender. The study primarily focuses on gender difference / glass ceiling effect in case of University with special reference to International University in Dubai.

Key Words: gender discrimination; glass ceiling; gender discrimination in education; gender gap in University; glass ceiling effect; women in education

Introduction

"Glass ceiling" (Frenkiel, 1984; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Mann, 1987), is simply defined as a barrier that exists without its actual presence and prevents a person from moving ahead in their career, thanks to one or more prejudices. Glass ceiling effect mainly affects the women employees in higher education institutions, especially due to the conventional gender perceptions about leading the organization.

Social psychologists have been interested in discrimination since the field's early years (e.g., Allport, 1954; LaPiere, 1934). Traditionally ethnic rather than gender discrimination has received the most attention. Interest in gender discrimination began rising in the 1970's, perhaps as an outgrowth of the women's movement.

The societal changes that impact both men and women are critical in empowering the women reposition themselves both in institutions as well as in the society. The 21st century exerted a high pressure on the culture followed in different countries through its concepts such as

globalization and ever-increasing importance for knowledge-based economy. Globally, the digital communication fastened the way how news is communicated in lightning speed.

According to Kiaye and Singh (2013), the participation of women in the workforce has increased tremendously across the globe in the past few years. There are lot of evidences available which infer that it is women who are lagging behind their male counterparts in reaching top leadership positions in organizations. Further, the studies also prove that the growth of women in moving ahead in their career hierarchy is also generally slow (Catalyst, 2014; Ding and Chareonwong, 2013).

Though various factors attributed to the under representation of women in top leadership positions, it is gender discrimination which remains the primary factor that prevents women to climb up the organizational ladder (Acker, 2009; Kiaye and Singh, 2013).

Literature Review

The glass ceiling is defined by Morrison and Van Glinow (1990: 200) as “barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy.” The researchers who worked on glass ceiling effect mostly focused on the top levels in the organization and tried to find out the presence of such glass ceiling effect through the determination of actual promotion decisions to top management (Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Powell & Butterfield, 1997), contribution of women in leading management positions in terms of percentage (Blum, Fields & Goodman, 1994), remuneration earned by men and women managers (Blum et al., 1994; Stroh, Brett & Reilly, 1992) followed by ratings achieved by potential candidates who were aiming for promotion to top management (Powell & Butterfield, 1994; Powell & Butterfield, 1997). There are no such investigations conducted to prove the existence of perceived glass ceiling effect and to deduce its impact on critical work-related perceptions and attitudes. This research paper determines both actual as well as perceived glass ceiling to understand how well each one predicts specific outcome variables.

'Glass ceiling' (Frenkiel, 1984; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Mann, 1987) is simply defined as a barrier that exists without its actual presence and prevents a person from moving ahead in their career, thanks to one or more prejudices. Glass ceiling effect mainly affects the women employees in higher education institutions, especially due to the conventional gender perceptions about leading the organization.

Though women forms approximately half of the workforce across the nation, their representation in senior and executive level positions are relatively minuscule to be considered. Further, when it comes to college campuses and other educational institutions, the representation of women in senior level administration positions is very low (Jawahar & Hemmasi, 2006). In spite of the advancements in mentoring programs, professional development and leadership training, the rate at which the women reach higher positions in higher education is greatly lagging behind men (Ehrich, 1994, 1995; Quinlan, 1999; Stanford-Blair & Dickmann, 2005).

According to the report published by American Council on Education [ACE] (2012), though the women are engaged in management roles in higher education institutions, the top leadership positions in this setup too have a glass ceiling effect in place.

There are various reasons exist in gender discrimination when it comes to leadership roles, according to researchers, such as glass ceiling (Johns, 2013; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010), sexual harassment (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone 2012), mentoring and work relationships (Wallace 2014) and managing work and family (Cha 2013). Further, Jimenez (2012) mentioned that women undergo a lot of discrimination, harassment and intimidation when compared to their male colleagues.

In higher education institutions, the glass ceiling effect is one among the prominent obstacles faced by women in moving ahead to reach top positions. Compared to women, men learn the tactics of moving ahead in corporate roadmap easily which becomes an added advantage in building relationships with influential mentors who support their appraisal (Lepkowski, 2009).

Gender role perceptions hindered women's advancement in higher education leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women face a number of gender role perceptions they must overcome to attain upper-level leadership positions. In their study of gender role congruity, Eagly and Karau (2002) defined these perceptions in terms of prejudice and maintained that this prejudice was asserted because of a general bias in favor of men as leaders and that when women did become leaders, they were judged more harshly than men and were, therefore, seen as less effective. Sczesny (2003) agreed by asserting that, in general, people envision males as leaders.

Methodology

The aim of this research study is to answer the research questions leveraging the scientific procedures. The prominent objective of conducting research is to uncover

the hidden facts in glass ceiling effect.

Research methodology is a systematic procedure to handle a research problem so that the solution is found. Being a stream of science that deals with the process of conducting research, there are various steps involved in research methodology that needs to be adopted by a researcher when exploring the research problem and the logic in it. In addition to the research methods and techniques, the researcher must be aware of the entire methodology itself using which the research is conducted. The researchers must equip themselves in the development of certain indices, conducting tests, executing statistical tests such as mean, mode, median, standard deviation or chi-square and application of suitable research techniques for the considered research question. The researcher must also interrogate themselves on what these techniques are, why and how these must be utilized. The researchers should grasp the assumptions of different techniques and should be able to decode the type of techniques and procedures to be applied when trying to find the best solution to a problem.

Research Methodology

The research methods are huge in number thanks to custom-made requirements that seek information, availability of time and need patterns. These various research methods are only a result of different modifications and improvements that evolved in the due course of time.

All the research methods irrespective of their uniqueness, the main purpose is to collect information. The primary reason behind using different research methods is to justify the yield of optimum results.

There are two broad methods of reasoning present in research such as deductive and inductive approaches.

Research Design

Research design is nothing but a systematic approach followed by a researcher to conduct a scientific study. The research design set of synchronizes all the identified components and the data in order to achieve a plausible outcome. The research design should have a strategic methodology that aligns with the chosen research in order to conclude the study with authentic and accurate results. The research paper starts with the identification of various research types in order to provide a bird's eye view understanding.

Here is the list of four research designs

- Exploratory Research

- Descriptive Research

- Explanatory Research

- Evaluation Research

Sampling Design

Sampling denotes the act of choosing a specific group of sample so that it can represent the entire population. The sampling methods are predominantly classified as two groups such as probability sampling and non-probability sampling, while in the former, every member has a fixed known opportunity to belong to the sample. There is no specific probability for an individual to be a part of the sample in latter case.

Statistically, probability sampling denotes the sampling method in which the entire population is given a pre-specified and equal chance to be a part of the sample. Having randomization principle as the base, this procedure is developed in such a way that it assures all the individuals in a population are given equal selection opportunities. This way of approaching the research reduces the possibilities of bias.

Data Collection

There are numerous ways available to fetch data for the questions prepared. The data collection technique may produce quantitative data i.e., numerical information, or illustrative information such as qualitative data, while it may also be a combination of both data types i.e., mixed methods. It remains critical to find out the type of data to be collected for answering the chosen research question.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative research is basically exploratory research which is utilized to understand the motivations, opinions and reasons that underlie the research. Qualitative research provides insights about the problem under study and it helps in the development of ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research.

Quantitative Data

In quantitative research, the problem is quantified through the collection of numerical data and processed statistically to gain knowledgeable insights. This type of research is utilized to quantify the opinions, attitudes, behaviors and other such defined set of variables. The results achieved from the larger sample population can be generalized.

Data Analysis and Findings

The task of data analysts is to 'try' to give meaning to the facts. 'Try' to give meaning because if the data are bad, then they will yield no interpretation. On an assumption that the

data is good, the analysis can infer valuable description or otherwise explanation about the social phenomenon currently under investigation. Higher the quality of

execution of the analysis, stronger the conclusion will be! (Michael, 2002, pvii)

Hypotheses Test

1. **Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no impact of GD / GCE on employment opportunities for women in Universities in UAE to a moderate extent. $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$

Alternate Hypothesis 1: GD / GCE has significant impact on employment opportunities of women in Universities in UAE

$$Z = -0.856$$

At 95% confidence level

The Z calculated value (-0.856) is less than the critical value (1.96) which indicates that the sample values do not support the alternate hypothesis and thus it is rejected. The null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is thus supported.

P Value

The P value for the Z score -0.856 is 0.19 and this is greater than 0.05 due to which it cannot be inferred as significant value. So the null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is accepted.

Further detailed analysis of the hypothesis was made based on the age group, experience and gender. All the analysis supported the null hypothesis. The Z score and the p value for the detailed analysis are provided in the below table.

S. No.	Hypotheses	Z score	P value	Accepted
1	Experience			
	2 or less	-0.66	0.25	Null Hypotheses
	3 to 6	0.08	0.46	Null Hypotheses
	7 to 10	-1.21	0.11	Null Hypotheses
	Over 10	-0.52	0.30	Null Hypotheses
2	Age			
	18 to 29	-0.32	0.37	Null Hypotheses
	30 to 50	-0.93	0.17	Null Hypotheses
	50 or older	-0.76	0.22	Null Hypotheses
3	Gender			
	Female	-0.78	0.21	Null Hypotheses
	Male	-0.70	0.24	Null Hypotheses

2. **Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no impact of GD / GCE on promotion opportunities for women working in Universities in UAE to a moderate extent. $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$

Alternate Hypothesis 2: GD / GCE affect the promotion opportunities for women working in Universities in UAE. $H_1(\mu > 3)$

$$Z = -2.44$$

At 95% confidence level

The Z calculated value (-2.44) is less than the critical value (1.96) which indicates that the sample values do not support the alternate hypothesis and thus it is rejected. The null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is thus supported.

P Value

The P value for the Z score -2.44 is 0.007 and it is clear that it is less than 0.05 so it is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is rejected.

Further detailed analysis of the hypothesis was made based on the age group, experience and gender. Most of the analysis supported the null hypothesis except for employees with 7 to 10 years' experience, in the age group 30-50 and male employees who claims that GD / GCE affects the promotion opportunities for women working in Universities in UAE. The Z score and the p value for the detailed analysis are provided in the below table.

S. No.	Hypotheses	Z score	P value	Accepted
1	Experience			
	2 or less	-0.95	0.17	Null Hypotheses
	3 to 6	-1.04	0.14	Null Hypotheses
	7 to 10	-1.93	0.02	Alternate Hypotheses
	Over 10	-1.08	0.14	Null Hypotheses
2	Age			
	18 to 29	-1.34	0.09	Null Hypotheses
	30 to 50	-1.96	0.02	Alternate Hypotheses
	50 or older	-0.87	0.19	Null Hypotheses
3	Gender			
	Female	-1.27	0.10	Null Hypotheses
	Male	-2.20	0.01	Alternate Hypotheses

3. **Null Hypothesis 3:** There is no impact of GD / GCE in terms of the remuneration for women working in Universities in UAE.

Alternate Hypothesis 3: GD / GCE affect the remuneration of women working in Universities in UAE.

$$Z = -0.856$$

At 95% confidence level

The Z calculated value (-0.856) is less than the critical value (1.96) which indicates that the sample values do not support the alternate hypothesis and thus it is rejected. The null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is thus supported.

P Value

The P value for the Z score -0.856 is 0.19 which is obviously greater than 0.05 denoting the value to be insignificant. Thus, the null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is accepted.

Further detailed analysis of the hypothesis was made based on the age group, experience and gender. All the analysis supported the null hypothesis. The Z score and the p value for the detailed analysis are provided in the below table.

S. No.	Hypotheses	Z score	P value	Accepted
1	Experience			
	2 or less	-0.10	0.46	Null Hypotheses
	3 to 6	0.40	0.34	Null Hypotheses
	7 to 10	-1.37	0.08	Null Hypotheses
	Over 10	-0.41	0.34	Null Hypotheses
2	Age			
	18 to 29	-0.32	0.37	Null Hypotheses
	30 to 50	0.61	0.27	Null Hypotheses
	50 or older	-1.43	0.07	Null Hypotheses
3	Gender			
	Female	-0.18	0.42	Null Hypotheses
	Male	-0.40	0.34	Null Hypotheses

4. **Null Hypothesis 4:** There is no impact of GD / GCE in terms of the facilities provided for women in Universities in UAE.

Alternate Hypothesis 4: GD / GCE affect the facilities provided for women in Universities in UAE.

$$Z = -0.734$$

At 95% confidence level

The Z calculated value (-0.734) is less than the critical value (1.96) which indicates that the sample values do not support the alternate hypothesis and thus it is rejected. The null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is thus supported.

P Value

The P value for the Z score -0.734 is 0.23 which is eventually higher than 0.05 so, it remains insignificant. Thus, the null hypothesis $H_0(\mu \leq 3)$ is accepted.

Further detailed analysis of the hypothesis was made based on the age group, experience and gender. All the analysis supported the null hypothesis except the employees who have 2 or less years of experience felt that GD / GCE affect the facilities provided for women in Universities in UAE. The Z score and the p value for the detailed analysis are provided in the below table.

S. No.	Hypotheses	Z score	P value	Accepted
1	Experience			
	2 or less	-2.46	0.006	Alternate Hypotheses
	3 to 6	0.08	0.46	Null Hypotheses
	7 to 10	-0.24	0.40	Null Hypotheses
	Over 10	-0.45	0.32	Null Hypotheses
2	Age			
	18 to 29	-1.54	0.06	Null Hypotheses
	30 to 50	0	0.5	Null Hypotheses
	50 or older	0.14	0.44	Null Hypotheses
3	Gender			
	Female	-0.71	0.23	Null Hypotheses
	Male	-0.40	0.34	Null Hypotheses

Research Aims

The research study has the following aims:

To analyze whether GD/GCE exists in Higher Education sector

To analyze whether the growth opportunities for women are available in Education field.

The study analyzes how the remuneration levels are affected based on gender.

We can also see whether the women has career opportunities in Education field.

Hypothesis

The hypotheses for the study were the following:

There is no impact of GD / GCE on employment opportunities for women in International University in UAE to a moderate extent. i.e. $H(\mu = 3)$

There is no impact of GD / GCE on promotion opportunities for women working in International University in UAE to a moderate extent. i.e. $H(\mu = 3)$

There is no impact of GD / GCE in terms of the remuneration for women working in International University in UAE to a moderate extent. i.e. $H(\mu = 3)$

There is no impact of GD / GCE in terms of the facilities provided for women in International University in UAE to a moderate extent. i.e. $H(\mu = 3)$

Result

The Z score and the simultaneous P value of all the 4 hypotheses tests proved the acceptance of null hypotheses which clearly indicates that the perceived gender discrimination / glass ceiling effect has only a moderate impact in the remuneration, career growth, promotion and facilities provided for women in International Universities in UAE.

At the same time, further detailed analysis of the hypotheses based on gender, age and work experience reflected some different view point.

Employees with a work experience of 7-10 years, age group of 30-50 and male employee's survey results ended up with rejection of null hypotheses for hypotheses no 2. Though the Z score values supports the null hypotheses the P value strongly rejects the null hypotheses. There is a glass ceiling and gender discrimination when it comes to the promotion opportunities for women.

Similarly for hypotheses no 4, employees with 2 or less years of experience have concluded that there is gender discrimination when it comes to the facilities provided for women in Universities.

Conclusions and future research

The Z score and the simultaneous P value of all the 4 hypotheses tests proved the acceptance of null hypotheses which clearly indicates that the perceived gender discrimination / glass ceiling effect has only a moderate impact in the remuneration, career growth, promotion and facilities provided for women in International Universities in UAE.

It has been found that the gender mix is fairly even for jobs

at entry-level though there is a lack of female talent in the hierarchy of the organization. Being a long-term trend, the female talent cannot be considered as a sudden stall, neither mass exodus.

In UAE, the attitude towards the women in the workplace is changing for the past of couple of years. A big change is happening in the society and the presence of women is strong in numbers. The UAE is miles and miles ahead of other countries in terms of gender equality. The results support this strongly.

The Glass Ceiling / Gender Discrimination is there to a moderate extent but women are breaking the glass ceiling and are achieving in their careers. "As women, we need to break our own glass ceiling. We are all guilty in [limiting ourselves]. We need more role models, we need to be role models, and we need to be conscious of how we set up the glass ceiling," said HodaAbouJamra, founding partner of TVM Capital Healthcare Partners at the Arabian Business Forum 2016. The government sector in UAE employed a total of 66 per cent women workforce while the overall women workforce of the country remains 59 per cent. It has the largest number of businesswomen in the GCC.

Women are loaded with opportunities to progress in their career and climb up the organizational ladder. Against the viewpoint considered by different studies, the current study focused on the existence of glass ceiling in various sectors.

Glass ceiling is a scenario in which the women are underrepresented at senior or leadership positions in the organizations due to numerous factors. Few reasons that lead to the under-representation of women in higher positions are unavailability of female role models in leadership positions, nurturing children or prolonged maternity leave and male dominant social networks. Much contrary to different studies and theories which inferred the presence of glass ceiling effect, the current study has a different outcome. Though the glass ceiling effect is not supported in any form, majority of the respondents cited that the main reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is the resistance of men against women being promoted at top leadership posts and the dominance of males in social networks.

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