

A survey study on the glass ceiling, challenges and solutions

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Abstract

Utilizing human resources in developed societies is one of the key factors to attain sustainable development. Women form half of the dynamic population of any country, and their attendance in social command is a salient criteria for development.

Of important issues in non-discrimination theories is impartial promotion of women to higher management positions, which is referred as the glass ceiling. In examining women' employment, we found aspects and issues that concern us in the current situation and makes dilemmas to provide solutions for women on the rout of a joyful life. One solution for this predicament and barrier is to change the views of all members of the society towards issues. The present study examined the glass ceiling, women' empowerment, The factors which cause the glass ceiling and solutions to break it will be discussed.

Keywords: glass ceiling, empowerment, gender discrimination

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Introduction

At the present time, when countries are competing for progress and development with their maximum potency, employing the full function of human resources becomes mainly crucial. Women of the valuable possession of any country, particularly in developing countries. In fact, the significant participation of women is the key to the success and development of these countries. (Wingfield, ۲۰۰۹)

One of the principal issues in non-discrimination theories is the fair promotion of women to higher levels of management, which is referred as the glass ceiling. This term is an allusion to the unequal and unfair trends in a broader community such as society and in a smaller community such as organizations and companies, which describes an evident obstacle that prevents women from advancing to a certain level in organizations). (Cailin, S. Stamarski, ۲۰۱۰
Glass ceiling is barrier women face in rout of reaching to the top level of the organization. It is undeniable that investing in women's education leads to economic development by boosting their skills and willingness to enter the market place.

Sustainable economy based on knowledge and application of technology plays , a significant role in worldview and culture.

They are the mothers and educators of next generation. But lack of women presence in top management positions necessitates the examination of its hidden and obvious factors which is required by researchers (Sadeghi and Emadzadeh, ۲۰۰۴)

The glass ceiling is a type of inequality that is implemented regardless of a person's potentials and achievements.

Inequalities that result from past discrimination in education or training, or that result from the type of choice that individuals have made for purposes unrelated to the labor market such as family, volunteer work, or recreation, are not subject of glass ceiling.

That is, the glass ceiling occurs when artificial barriers prohibit the progression of women and minorities, simply put , women and minorities have poor possibility to achieve managerial careers despite having the same capabilities as men (Tabe Bordbar,et.al ۲۰۱۴.)

Factors establishing a glass ceiling in organizations

There are numerous factors that have caused women to procrastinate in various fields of employment and management positions, which will be described as follows:

Legal factors: although the laws of many countries accept the equality of men and women as a principle, but practically it is different. However, the legal barriers for women are very restricted, because most social laws do not discriminate between genders. However, some cultural and social restrictions are overlooked in some areas of the law, among which we can mention that a woman can't be accepted and accommodated alone in some places such as hotels.

Political factors: on account of procedural justice, justice should be defined using fair procedures. In other words, fair decisions are decisions that are the result of fair procedures. Transactional justice also refers to the quality of interpersonal practices that a person is exposed to before and after making a decision. Unfortunately, evidence suggests that women undergo organizational injustice more than men. Subsequently, when women realize that in spite of making more efforts compared to men, they are treated unfairly in gaining higher positions, they stop trying and brings about the organizations do not make use of their capacity in particular so does the society in general.

Organizational factors: the glass ceiling is sometimes resulted of the right and wrong decisions of the organization's senior managers in involving women in the management careers . For the moment the leaders of organizations utilize one or two managers at the organization's prominent in less important management positions in order to make appear that they use women's power as well as women have equal opportunities for career advancement.

Cultural factors:, In fact, culture is a set of fundamental parts of society's attitude, insight, action and belief, and in cultural beliefs, everything that exists in society as norms or abnormalities is part of the culture. On the other hand, another issue that women face at organizations is stereotypes and accepted attitudes of organization members. These stereotypes prevent the heads and the board of directors of the organization from making the right decisions and make them not have equal opportunities in the organization.

Family factors: One of the most important reasons cited by many researchers for impartial involvement of women in social affairs, including in the process of sustainable development, is that girls are raised different from boys in families and schools. In a way that they imagine themselves far from social and political roles.

insufficient models and role models of successful female managers: Successful models of female managers in society offer women more self-confidence and right practices at work place through simulating themselves

and boosting their level of efficiency. Yet, women often don't meet with the reference group from which they can get ideas for their job models, because the number of female managers is small.

Lack of support networks: When women are settled in management positions, the responsibility of executing dense management duties, bearing the pressure brought about ambiguity and family obligations as well, consumes their energy too much, as much they cannot handle alone, and they need assistance and support (Mehrra et al. ۲۰۱۶)

Glass ceiling theories

Kotter et al. (۲۰۰۱), provided four rules to identify the unevenness of the glass ceiling based on the official definition of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, which follow:

a) The glass ceiling is a type of inequality that is not explained by other job-related characteristics;

b) The glass ceiling is a type of inequality that occurs at higher levels of income more than at lower levels of income: that is, it is a special type of inequality at high levels of income (high levels of the organizational hierarchy). Thus, the glass ceiling is not a simple claim about the existence of discrimination along the entire length of the hierarchy, but refers to discrimination that increases as one moves to higher levels of the hierarchy.

c) The glass ceiling is a type of inequality in occasions of advancement to higher level positions, that is, it does not simply represent a proportion of gender or minorities who are currently at high levels:

Promotion to higher positions and income increase is a suitable criterion for the glass ceiling test. Thus, the glass ceiling should be examined with dynamic models that measure changes over time and not simply by comparing static levels, that is, longitudinal data should be examined to examine job transitions over time.

d) The glass ceiling is a type of inequality that occurs along a corridor: The term "ceiling" means that upward movements have already taken place, but then a person faces a series of tougher discriminations in his career until his progress stops, that is, there is a glass ceiling when strictness is accompanied by upward movement. to increase in the professional hierarchy (Syed Javadin et al., ۲۰۱۶). Oakley (۲۰۰۰) states that the obstacles to creating a glass ceiling have three classifications:

1- corporate methods such as hiring, maintenance and promotion;

- ۲- Behavioral and cultural factors such as stereotypes and desirable leadership style;
- 3- Structural and cultural explanations are rooted in feminist theory.

The theories and models that cause the emergence of gender-related behaviors in organizations and as a result create a glass ceiling are divided into three categories: biological model, socialization model, and structural/cultural model (Weir, Smith, ۲۰۰۷). (۲۰۱۲) ۳ stated that the structure of the belief in the glass ceiling can be made up of four dimensions: denying, withdrawal, acceptance, and resilience, which each of these dimensions alone and as a whole can contribute to the formation of women's belief in the glass ceiling. The resignation regarding the glass ceiling is based on statements that show why women surrender are or cannot follow the path of advancement due to social and organizational reasons. The acceptance factor in the formation of the glass ceiling belief shows that women do not seek to obtain very high positions, in fact, women do not seek power, while men seek high levels of power (Alavi Salkoye and Fadai Kiwani,)

Solutions for breaking the glass ceiling in Iran

Scrutinizing women' employment, we come across points and issues that make us in a dilemma to provide solutions for women in the route of a more prosperous life. A remedy to release from this predicament and barrier is changing the attitudes of all members of the society towards some issues. Since ,as long as we wouldn't be able to change our belief about the issues, we will be unable to understand the situation and find effective and innovative solutions, and we will remain in the gap. We will remain in vain wandering in the labor market and staying at home for women, and not only women will be deprived of their progression and development they deserve, the whole human society will be deprived of the benefits of the full presence of women and the issues will still not be resolved. Then,we will not reach more success in the development of Iran's society. Undoubtedly, it is obligatory to make changes and carry out the following solutions to remove the glass ceiling Women in Iran could be considered in terms of following factors:

A) Power: Among the changes, there is a switch in the attitude towards power as a central value of the society. Power in our society has been reduced to a tool to push others to implement the intention of those in power, and its other dimensions have been neglected.

Consequently, the governmental men and stakeholders' power is not for the government, and superiority and order and enforcement of their desires, but it is applied in order to gain the support and trust of the people through free and frank consultations and as wide and comprehensive as possible. Such a society will undoubtedly avoid violence and injustice against its all members (including women). More importantly, such interpretations of power cannot be institutionalized in the society without the presence of feminine attitudes that are based on devotion, participation and growth.

B) Changing the attitude towards career: This day employment system pursues a very worthless intention, which is "to obtain as many facilities as possible to consume the goods that are presented". Fake careers, embezzlement, inequality and reluctance to perform career responsibilities sincerely are among the consequences of such an attitude towards work. Thus, we realize that we require new moral values in employment and career, which transforms work from the level of struggle for survival, to service to fellow humans and the development of the earth, which is the habitat of mankind. Such a meaning of employment requires a power orientation that has always kept women subordinate

rather, it relies on the built-in aptitudes of human beings in service, intimacy and sincere commitment in implementation of economic responsibilities, which are abundantly detected in women, and of course men also benefit from it.

c) Human relations and family roles: If present society is a global, progressive and developed society, and if it demands social justice and human rights to ensure the maximum benefit of society members from social amenities and real happiness, then it is a must to enhance social justice and remove the appreciation of human rights from the domain of men and expand it to the domain of women.

d) Feminine identity: The human value is the human soul, and the human body and soul have no gender. On the one hand, gender is a biological and physical thing, and on the other hand, it is a social construct that separates and defines male and female roles based on cultural expectations. Therefore, our human and spiritual identity can grow and improve regardless of gender. Thus, male and female identity cannot be the source of superiority (Safari and Foughi Abari, ۲۰۱۹).

Conclusion

Faced with constant poverty and gender discrimination against women, the necessity of their empowerment is considered in the literature of development and gender, the authorization of employees also brings various benefits to production and service companies, especially the empowerment of women, which plays a fundamental role in sustainable development. There are various factors that resulted that women drop back in various fields of employment and management positions including legal, political, organizational, cultural, and family factors, the lack of models and role models of successful women managers, and the lack of support networks. In order to remove the glass ceiling for women in Iran, one can change their attitude towards these issues: power, change of attitude towards work, human relations and family roles and female identity.

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