

A Study on Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Academia with Special Reference to HEI's in Ibra

Reshma D'sa¹, Sana Al Rahbi¹, Rahma Al Harthy¹, Hagar Al Hagar¹, S. Thilaga²

¹Department of Business Studies, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Ibra, Oman

²Department of Management Studies, Coimbatore Institute of Technology, Coimbatore, India

Email: reshdsa@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: D'sa, R., Al Rahbi, S., Al Harthy, R., Al Hagar, H., & Thilaga, S. (2023). A Study on Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Academia with Special Reference to HEI's in Ibra. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11, 232-242.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.111018>

Received: December 12, 2022

Accepted: January 17, 2023

Published: January 20, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The study aims to know the extent of effect of glass ceiling on Omani women career development with special reference to Higher Education Institutions in Ibra, North Sharquiah region. The factors affecting glass ceiling were identified through Review of literature and the factors were family factors, organizational factors and cultural. Also, some of the symptoms of glass ceiling were identified, like physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms. The research is done using a sample study, selecting Omani women employees from University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibra, Al Sharquiah University and Oman Sciences of Health Sciences-Ibra. The survey is based on questionnaire and includes 70 respondents from various positions in this educational institution. The data collected were subjected to detailed analysis, based on which suggestions and recommendations are made. From the study, we found most respondents with experience of 0 years to 10 years faced glass ceiling effect which hinders their growth on career development and also, they faced psychological and behavioral symptoms.

Keywords

Omani Women, Glass Ceiling, Career Development

1. Introduction

Human resource is one of the most important resources in the organization without which none of the other resources in the organization can function. Every organization tried to acquire and retain most competent and motivated workforce. Women also are an important part of this workforce. Women who usually balance work and life find it hard to compete with men in the organiza-

tion because of the bias that is caused in the workplace. Since the beginnings of the Renaissance in the Sultanate of Oman, the Sultan Qaboos bin Taimur bin Saied Al Said urged education as the basis for the development and progress of the country. Women played a major role in the development of the Sultanate. There still exists difference in gender and their gender role stereotypes where women's engagement in work roles is challenging and displays sign of glass ceiling (Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013) in academia and seeks the importance of its scientific evidence (Öztürk & Simsek, 2019) to understand the concept more in-depth as it is affected by the degree of power of the barriers such as religious, cultural, legal, personal and organisational factors in general (Raburu, 2015).

According to a study (Ali & Akter, 2021) about discrimination perception, barriers within families, masculinity, work environment, employee satisfaction, and discrimination against women were considered as the factors that affect the career advancement of women using quantitative methodology among 154 faculty members in University of Punjab. Recommendations were made that HEIs should use blind review-based promotions and selection criteria for top management positions to control the glass ceiling effect on women (Ali & Akter, 2021). It was also studied (Al Zadjali et al., 2020) that women's duties in family and business life, organizational policies, power distance, and organizational factors like organizational culture, organizational networking, and organizational practices were found to have a substantial impact on women's career progression that affect the rise of glass ceiling in academia (Machado-Taylor & Özkanli, 2013). Apart from these cultural factors, cultural factors have a considerable impact on women's career development, especially in the financial industry.

This was supported by another study (Ashiq et al., 2021) that considered individual, societal and organizational as the major factors. As for the societal aspect, the beliefs and stereotypical perception of society have a significant impact on the career progression of women. Finally, the personal factor does not affect the type of company, whether governmental or private. Furthermore (Marinakou, 2014), solid blend in HRM policies and practices may reduce the gender gap, resulting in equal employment opportunities, and that a change in working culture may aid financial organizations in building more trust among customers, investors and other stakeholders, allowing them to leverage women's natural capacity for transformational leadership in this changing world.

Besides (Gago & Macías, 2014), glass ceilings also negatively impact teachers' commitment to their organization and can be minimized by providing recommendations. The adoption of glass ceiling strategies (8) has a significant influence on the loyalty of employees to their employers. It is critical for teachers to remain committed where education serves as the basis of the economy. The glass ceiling and gender discrimination are key issues that businesses should address via educational initiatives saying where men and women in the workplace (Jabbar & Imran, 2013) should have the same rights and obligations in terms of equal pay based on skills and knowledge, and the same job responsibilities. They should also be entitled to the same flexible office and home working hours and

leave them on weekends.

In some companies, although women have the experience and skills that enable them to work in senior positions, they are not given an opportunity to do so. Only men take high positions. This type of situation where women are not allowed to advance in the organization through some invisible barriers is known as glass ceiling where the difference exists in their wages as well (Yadav & Khanna, 2014). There are many women employees in education sector and though they have the required skill, knowledge and experience they do not reach the higher position. In this paper, the factors that cause the formation of the glass ceiling are discussed.

2. Glass Ceiling

The education sector is one of the most important sectors that play a role in the growth and prosperity of the country that has both men and women that plays major role in raising a generation for future life. The percentage of women in this sector is greater than that of men. Women enjoy the ability to work outside their home and carry out their family responsibilities at the same time. As today we see the achievements of women in the education sector and other sectors, but there are some challenges that women face in their career path preventing them from their achievements and assuming senior positions which also include the wrong beliefs of the community that she is unable to take high positions, her inability to balance work and family life, and her health condition also prevents her from reaching management positions. These consequences and challenges can be referred to by the term “glass ceiling”. In this paper, the researcher tries to identify the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling and the impact of these factors on the career development of Omani women in the education sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

Glass Ceiling in Academia

Due to the educational development and competition for obtaining jobs in higher ranks during their work. Every person looking for a job or still studying must understand what is meant by the glass ceiling, and in particular women must understand the glass ceiling and its causes and how she can work in administrative positions if the institution in which she works applies the glass ceiling. The researcher focuses in their research on the causes of women's impediment from advancing to higher positions in higher education institutions (public and private universities/colleges). Also, this research will help women to increase their strengths and motivate them and reduce their weaknesses to become a woman capable of working in administrative positions by encouraging her to increase her knowledge and experience to enable her to work in senior positions. This study also tries to present some solutions that help break down or reduce the glass ceiling in the work environment.

3. Objectives

As a result, it is crucial to research and understand the position of women career

development in academia using some form of empirical justification because there is a severe lack of relevant literature regarding the glass ceiling for women in the HEIs context, particularly looking into the impact of various factors that affect the women career development. Thus, the study was carried out with the following objectives:

- 1) To identify glass ceiling factors affecting career advancement for women employees in academia.
- 2) To study the relationship between glass ceiling and women career development.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁₃: Organizational factor positively influence the outcome factor women career development.

H₀₁₄: Cultural factor positively influence the outcome factor women career development.

H₀₁₅: Behavioral Symptoms positively influence the outcome factor women career development.

H₀₁₆: Psychological factor negatively influence the outcome factor women career development.

The results of the hypothesis tested are given in the table no.4 based on the analysis carried out.

4. Materials and Methods

Simple random method is used for the collection of data from the 70 respondents (population 165) using a structured closed ended questionnaire with three parts in it, Part I-demographic information, II-identify the existence of glass ceiling, III will be to identify the effects of glass ceiling on women employees and collected using Google forms on a five-point Likert scale from the women employees working in educational institutions in University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibra, Al Sharqiyah University and Oman College of Health Sciences-Ibra. The important consideration for the study is presence of both male and female employees in the organization. Data will be analyzed by using statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a powerful analytical tool used for data management and graphical representation of the data (6). Socio demographic variables were analysed using SPSS and are presented in **Table 1**. Path Analysis (**Figure 1**) was carried out for comparing of the results from the questionnaire and is presented in **Table 2** & **Table 3**.

5. Results

The number of respondents from University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibra were 48.6% of the survey, Sharqiyah University 44.3% and Oman College of Health Sciences 7.1%. The age group among the employees is less than 35 years is 48.6%, 36 - 45 years constitutes 37.1%, and 46 - 55 constitutes 12.9% and above 55 years constitutes 1.4% of the respondents. The level of education

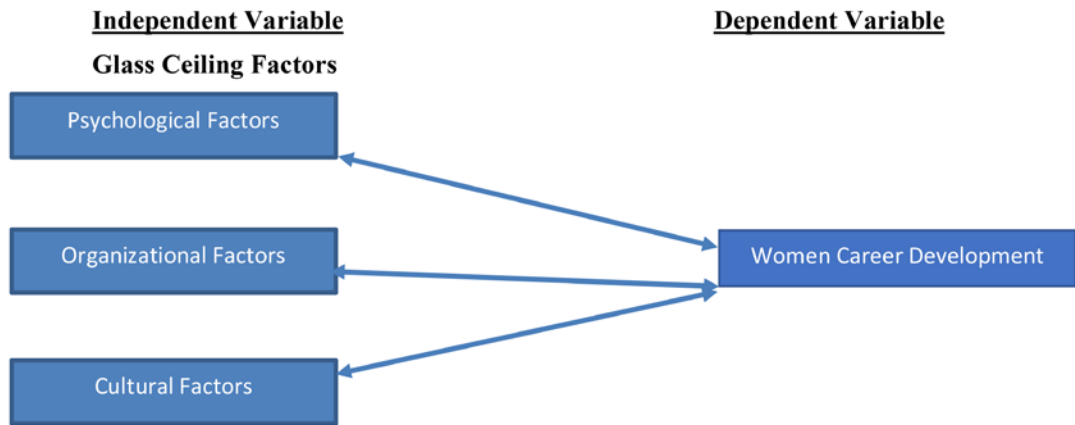


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Table 1. Socio demographic characteristics of the sample.

	Group	Frequency
Educational Institution	UTAS-Ibra	34
	A'Sharqiya University	31
	Oman College of Health Sciences	5
Age	Less than 35 Years	34
	36 - 45 Years	26
	46 - 55 Years	9
	Above 55 Years	1
Educational Status	Secondary School	2
	Diploma	12
	Bachelor	27
	Master	19
	Doctorate	10
Salary	Below 500 OMR	7
	501 - 1000 OMR	32
	1001 - 2000 OMR	23
	Above 2000 OMR	8
Experience	Less than 5 Years	23
	6 - 10 Years	22
	11 - 20 Years	18
	Above 20 Years	7
Marital Status	Unmarried	19
	Married	47
	Divorced	3
	Widow	1

Source: Primary Data.

Table 2. Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model).

	Path		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
WCD	<---	OF	0.290	0.085	2.432	0.015	Significant
WCD	<---	CF	0.362	0.131	2.753	0.006	Significant
WCD	<---	PSY	-0.363	0.127	-3.150	0.002	Significant
WCD	<---	BS	0.283	0.121	2.309	0.021	Significant

Source: Primary Data.

Table 3. Squared multiple correlations: R².

Dependent Variable	Estimate
Women Career Development	0.441

Source: Primary Data.

among the employees is Bachelor and Master since it constitutes 38.6 and 27.1 percent to the total respectively. These are followed by Diploma and Doctorate of 17.1 and 14.3 respectively. The least of the respondents stands at Secondary school with stands at 2.9% of the respondents. In the present study, the 32 respondents' salary of the employees is confined to OMR 501 to OMR 1000 which constitutes 45% of the respondents followed by OMR 1001 to OMR 2000 which is 32.9%. Only 11.4% of the respondents earned more than OMR 2000 and the least was below OMR 500 which constituted 10% of the respondents.

The year of experience among the employees is less than 5 years and 6 to 10 years which constitutes 32.9 and 31.4 percent to the total respectively. The number of 18 respondents with an experience of 11 - 20 years constitutes 25.7 percentage to the total. Only 7% of the respondents had more than 20 years of experience. The marital status among the employees is 'married' and 'unmarried' which constitutes 67.1 and 27.1. Only 3 respondents were divorced which constituted 4.3 percentage of the respondents and widow was just 1 respondent which constituted 1.4 percentage of the respondent for the study.

The major intention of the study is the effects of glass ceiling factors on career advancement of women. Hence, the research emphasizes on the independent variables 1) Psychological factors (PSY) 2) Organizational factors (OF) 3) Cultural factors (CF). The dependent factor is women career development (WCD). The Psychological factors are behavioural challenges, childcare, family responsibilities, balancing, Organizational factors are organization policy, management attitude, and cultural factors are beliefs and stereotypes and government factors are government policies towards women in the country, with these behavioural symptoms of the respondents were also considered. The model used for this study is

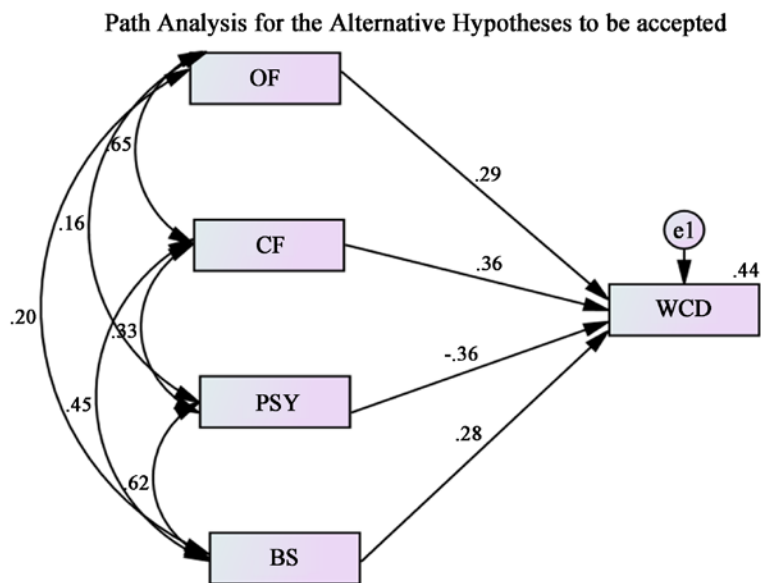
$$WCD = f(F, O, C)$$

where,

WCD: Women Career Development
 PSY = Psychological Factors
 OF = Organizational Factors
 CF = Cultural Factors.

In hierarchical regression, the predictor variables are entered in sets of variables according to a pre-determined order that may infer some causal or potential relationships between the predictors and the dependent variable (Francis, 2003). Such situations are frequently of interest in the social sciences. Hence the researcher empirically tested the hierarchical regression for the model conceptualized in **Figure 2** regression path analysis within the AMOS graphics environment.

The analyses conducted, the parameter estimates are then viewed within AMOS graphics, and it displays the standardized parameter estimates. The regression analysis revealed that the impact of glass ceiling factors influencing career development of women employees in the academia. The above regression weight shows that the psychological factor (PSY) is most influencing factor on the Women Career Development (WCD) as the regression weight -0.363 and it is negatively influencing, the next to psychological factors, cultural factors (CF) is positively influencing the outcome factor Women Career Development (WCD) 0.362 followed by Organizational factors (OF) 0.290 and the factor behavioral symptoms (BS) 0.283 influenced the dependent factors Women Career Development (WCD). The visual representations of results suggest that the relationships between the constructs of Women Career Development (WCD) are stronger. The overall regression model shows that psychological factor, cultural factor, organizational factor and behavioral symptoms are significantly influenced the dependent factor Women Career Development (WCD) and model



Source: Primary Data.

Figure 2. Multiple regression - path analysis.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing.

Sl No	Hypotheses	Result (H1)
H ₀₁	There is significant association between the experience and standards set for women are higher than men.	Supported
H ₀₂	There is significant association between the experience and Management support for women to balance their personal and work life.	Supported
H ₀₃	There is significant between the experience and women and men are equally respected in the workplace.	Supported
H ₀₄	There is significant between the experience and favoritism and biasness exist in the organization regarding gender.	Supported
H ₀₅	There is significant between the experience and men are promoted faster than women.	Supported
H ₀₆	There is significant difference between experiences and women who progress demonstrate competency on the job producing high quality work.	Supported
H ₀₇	There is significant difference between experiences groups on Women's management and leadership skills which help them to be successful leaders.	Supported
H ₀₈	There is significant difference between experiences groups on the support of a mentor greatly increases the success of a woman in organizations.	Supported
H ₀₉	There is significant difference between Age, glass ceiling and women career development.	Not Supported
H ₀₁₀	There is significant difference between education, glass ceiling and women career development.	Not Supported
H ₀₁₁	There is significant difference between salary, glass ceiling and women career development.	Not Supported
H ₀₁₂	There is significant difference between marital status, glass ceiling and women career development.	Not Supported
H ₀₁₃	Organizational factor positively influences the outcome factor women career development.	Supported
H ₀₁₄	Cultural factor positively influences the outcome factor women career development.	Supported
H ₀₁₅	Behavioral Symptoms positively influence the outcome factor women career development.	Supported
H ₀₁₆	Psychological factor Negatively influence the outcome factor women career development.	Supported

Source: Primary Data.

represented R^2 0.441 i.e. 44%, the independent factors are explaining the dependent factor (WCD).

Respondents with various years of experience gave contrasting responses with respect to five important subjects which were as follows: Standards set for women are higher than men, management support for work life balance, men and women are equally respected in the workplace, Favoritism and biasness exist in the organization regarding gender, Men are promoted faster than women were the major causes of glass ceiling for women career development. The above difference in opinion indicates that age of respondents is also an important factor in determining perception towards glass ceiling. The maximum number of responded belong to less than 10 years of experience and hence maximum number of responded do agree that standards set for women are higher than men. Significant association between the experience and Management supports women to balance their personal and work life.

Since the Pearson Chi-Square P value is less than 0.05, there is a significant association between the experience and Management supports women to bal-

ance their personal and work life. Significant association between the experience and women and men are equally respected in the workplace. Since the Pearson chi-square p value is less than 0.05, there is that significant association between the experience and women and men are equally respected in the workplace. Significant association between the experience and favoritism and biasness exist in the organization regarding gender. Since the Pearson chi-square p value is less than 0.05, there is significant association between the experience and favoritism and biasness exist in the organization regarding gender.

Significant association between the experience and men are promoted faster than women. Since the Pearson chi-square p value is less than 0.05, there is that significant association between the experience and men are promoted faster than women. It is observed that women above 20 years experiences group a deviated from the 6 - 10 years of experiences group on Women who progress demonstrate competency on the job producing high quality work. Women having more than 20 years of experience have high competency level than the other. It is observed that the above 20 years experiences group a deviated from the 6 - 10 years of experiences group on Women's management and leadership skills help them to be successful leaders. Women having more than 20 years' experience have more leadership skill than the others. So, alternative hypotheses accepted. It is observed that the above 20 years experiences group a deviated from less than 20 years of experiences group on the support of a mentor greatly increases the success of a woman in organizations. More than 20 years experienced women employees supported their mentors on success of organization.

6. Discussion

Women's career aspirations have grown during the last centuries which leads to Women's participation in the labor force has increased, and they can now work in a variety of fields. However, as the term "Glass Ceiling" suggests, there are other variables that influence women's job advancement that are not readily evident. This study was conducted to examine how glass ceiling influences affect women's career development, particularly in academia in Oman. Organizational, psychological and cultural variables were identified as the key causes of the glass ceiling and found that it significantly impacts and was also found that psychological and behavioural symptoms are most significant causing variance in glass ceiling. The level of data collecting on the glass ceiling was measured in academia in both private and public educational institutions as part of this thorough study. However, the study finds that social support and perception have a significant impact on women's career growth in both private and public educational institutions, owing to cultural views and stereotypes. Furthermore, society believes that men are better at handling leadership roles and that women are less efficient at performing their jobs thus becoming a career barrier (Marinakou, 2014). Furthermore, the study discovered that psychological (including the family factor), cultural, organizational factors all had a substantial impact on the

dependent component Women Career Development.

7. Conclusion

According to the results, women have self-confidence and are ready to take on greater work tasks, but psychological fatigue, burnout and unfair organizational policies prevent them from advancing in their careers. In view to all the above, it is essential for higher education institutions to recognize and acknowledge that all people, regardless of gender, deserve equal opportunities by chalking out a proper career advancement plan (Öztürk & Simsek, 2019). Talented women must be identified, developed, and given proper training in order to increase job satisfaction and lessen wage disparities (Goodall & Osterloh, 2015). Women's career advancement is supported by social support from colleagues and community members. A working woman should also strive to advance in her career and be more ambitious by understanding her potential (Öztürk & Simsek, 2019). Finally, career advancement not only benefits employees but is also a great formula for an organization's success in many ways (Marinakou, 2014).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Ali, T., & Akter, N. (2021). The Effect of Glass Ceiling on Women Advancement: A Case Study of Financial Institutions in Bangladesh. *Economics and Business Quarterly Reviews*, 4, 56-63. <https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1992.04.04.394>
- Al Zadjali, A., Al Yahmadi, B., Al Zakwani, E., Al Ajmi, S., & Porkodi, S. (2020). Glass Ceiling Effect on Women's Career Development in Public and Private Companies: A Comparative Study in Oman Oil and Gas Sector. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development*, 2, 27-33.
- Ashiq, U., Abbas, N., & Abbas, F. (2021). Glass Ceiling Effect and Women Career: Determining Factors in Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of Education & Social Research*, 4, 1-8. [https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss1-2021\(1-8\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss1-2021(1-8))
- Bombuwela, P. M., & De Alwis, A. C. (2013). Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Private sector Organizations—Case of Sri Lanka. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 5, 3-19. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2013.02.01>
- Gago, S., & Macías, M. (2014). A Possible Explanation of the Gender Gap among Accounting Academics: Evidence from the Choice of Research Field. *Accounting & Finance*, 54, 1183-1206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acfi.12035>
- Goodall, A., & Osterloh, M. (2015). How to Redress the Gender Imbalance. *Times Higher Education*. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/how-to-redress-the-gender-imbalance/2020135.article>
- Jabbar, A., & Imran, A. (2013). Perception of Glass Ceiling in the Educational Institution: An Evidence from Pakistan. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 23, 628-634.
- Machado-Taylor, M., & Özkanli, Ö. (2013). Gender and Academic Careers in Portuguese

and Turkish Higher Education Institutions. *Eğitim ve Bilim-Education and Science*, 38, 346-356.

Marinakou, E. (2014). The Glass Ceiling and Women in Management in the Middle East: Myth or Reality? *The Journal of American Business Review, Cambridge*, 3, 294-301.

https://www.academia.edu/26924983/The_Glass_Ceiling_and_women_in_management_in_the_Middle_East_Myth_or_reality

Öztürk, İ., & Simsek, A. H. (2019). Systematic Review of Glass Ceiling Effect in Academia: The Case of Turkey. *OPUS Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 13.

Raburu, P. A. (2015). Motivation of Women Academics and Balancing Family & Career. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5, 359-370.

<https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2015.v5n1p359>

Yadav, R., & Khanna, A. (2014). Existence of Glass Ceiling in India. *Research Journal of Indian Cultural, Social & Philosophical Stream*, 141-148.

https://www.academia.edu/31806281/EXISTENCE_OF_GLASS_CEILING_IN_INDIA