

BREAKING BARRIERS: UNVEILING THE GLASS CEILING'S IMPACT ON WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

The concept of the "glass ceiling" has become a widely recognized metaphor representing the barriers hindering women's advancement in various professions. Originating from a phrase coined by the Wall Street Journal in 1986, the term encapsulates the challenges faced by women and minorities in breaking through invisible barriers to higher positions in the workforce, irrespective of their qualifications or accomplishments. This study aims to investigate the existence of the Glass Ceiling phenomenon in workplaces. Primary and secondary data were utilized for this research, with a focus on gathering primary data through a structured questionnaire administered to 50 working women. The data collected were analysed using SPSS software, incorporating Factor Analysis to present and interpret the findings. The study also includes data collected from IBM Noida, India, adding a specific regional context to the broader examination of the Glass Ceiling effect.

Keywords:

Glass Ceiling, Women's Advancement, Workplace Barriers, Gender Inequality

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of women has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, with women making substantial contributions to society [1]. Despite progress, there remains a noticeable shift in economic power from men to women, albeit not always in vertical terms but also in a parallel manner. Conversely, amidst this alteration towards females' empowerment and development, an elusive barrier persists, hindering women from reaching top positions [2]. This barrier represents various biases that impede the advancement of qualified minorities and women, especially into mid- and senior-level management roles [3]. While some women have shattered these barriers, many still dominate lower-paying, lower-status roles traditionally associated with females, such as clerical work, human resources organization, and nurturing [4].

Amidst a plethora of statistics and theories, the debate continues on whether the Glass Ceiling truly exists or if perceptions skew the facts either for or against it. Women have rapidly evolved in their roles across diverse sectors like policy, proficient training, remedy, occupational, and rule. The concept of the Glass Ceiling, a potent metaphor from the 20th century, persists in the 21st century despite modern innovations [5]. Some mind sets still resist the ideals of fairness and equality, leading to ongoing debates about gender inequality, particularly in the Indian context [6].

Greater female participation in the personnel is recognized as beneficial for the low-cost. The Glass Ceiling metaphor vividly illustrates the invisible barriers that women and ethnic minorities face, hindering their access to elite positions despite being able to see them [7]. These barriers limit the opportunities for many

women and minorities to secure influential, important, and high earning works within the personnel.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE GLASS CEILING EFFECT

The term "Glass ceiling" was first coined in 1986 by Hymowitz and Schellhardt in The Wall Street Journal, shedding light on the challenges challenged by females striving to accomplish elder locations and advanced income levels across various sectors such as businesses, management, tutoring, and non-profit administrations.

Lips [11] highlighted the ongoing lack of awareness regarding the pay gap and its severity among both employees and employers. This lack of awareness often stems from perceptions that justify the gap based on perceived differences in attitudes, behaviors, and choices between men and women.

In the United Kingdom, Cole [9] found that females held less than 5% of senior organisation uprights and approximately 26% of all decision-making situations, despite comprising over 40% of the total workforce. These findings underscore the existence of implicit boundaries that limit women's advancement beyond certain levels within organizations [10] [12].

Bombuwela and De Alwis [8] emphasized the detrimental impact of the Glass Ceiling consequence on the development and career expansion of females. Their study highlighted how these barriers hinder women's progress within organizational hierarchies.

Table.1. Factor Analysis

Factor	Eigen value	Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative Variance Explained (%)
Existence of invisible barriers	6.371	63.71	63.71
Unequal opportunities for growth	2.017	20.17	83.88
Pay inequality within the organization	0.661	6.61	90.49
Lack of recognition for hard work	0.354	3.54	94.02
Disadvantages faced by women	0.210	2.10	96.12

Quicker promotions for men	0.139	1.39	97.51
Limited opportunities for voicing	0.127	1.28	98.79
Disparities in promotions and increments	0.062	0.62	99.41
Impact of the glass ceiling	0.041	0.41	99.82

The literature review demonstrates a consistent pattern of findings indicating the existence of the Glass Ceiling effect, which impedes women’s career progression and limits their representation in top leadership roles across different sectors and countries. These barriers persist despite advancements in women’s involvement in managerial positions, reflecting ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality and breaking through organizational barriers.

3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the issues contributing to the “Glass Ceiling” effect in workplaces.
- To investigate the presence of a ‘glass ceiling’ in various organizational settings.
- To propose actionable measures aimed at breaking through the Glass Ceiling barriers and promoting gender equality in leadership roles.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an empirical approach, utilizing both main and minor data sources. Minor data were composed from several reputable causes such as websites, records, and journals, while main data were gathered done a organised survey administered to 50 employed women selected via convenience sampling (IBM NODA). The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software, with Factor Analysis as the statistical tool. The questionnaire utilized a five-point scale (SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, DA - Disagree, SDA - Strongly Disagree) to gauge responses.

4.1 INVESTIGATION

To understand the factors contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect within an organization, several statistical tests were conducted as in Table.2.

Table.2. Statistical Result

Statistical Test	Result
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	The KMO value of 0.798 indicates significant correlation among variables, suitable for FA.
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square: 649.702, df: 45, Sig: .000 (significant), justifying Factor Analysis.

The commonalities of all factors are above 0.4, indicating their significant contribution to the data. This Factor Analysis provides a detailed breakdown of the factors contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect, offering insights into areas where organizations can focus their efforts to address gender inequality in the workplace.

5. FACTOR ANALYSIS OF GLASS CEILING EFFECT

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed to discern underlying factors, notably unsatisfactory behaviour and male dominance. These factors were determined based on Eigenvalues and the total variance explained, which amounted to 83.880%, exceeding the recommended threshold of 60%. The Eigenvalues associated with these factors exceeded one, indicating their significance.

A Rotated Component Matrix was constructed to further elucidate these factors. Under the component labeled “Unequal Treatment,” items such as perceiving an invisible barrier, unequal opportunities for professional growth compared to male counterparts, pay disparity, and lack of recognition were prominent. Conversely, under “Male Superiority,” aspects like the perceived disadvantages faced by women, quicker promotions for men, limited opportunities for women to voice their opinions at higher management levels, disparities in promotions and increments, and the impact of the Glass Ceiling were identified.

Through factorial analysis, it was determined that the removed variables revolve around dissimilarity in action and masculine advantage, both contributing significantly to the understanding of the Glass Ceiling effect. This inference is substantiated by statistical tests conducted to comprehend the factors underlying the Glass Ceiling effect within organizations:

Table.3. Statistical Result

Statistical Test	Result
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	KMO value: 0.798 (significant correlation among variables, suitable for Factor Analysis)
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square: 649.702, df: 45, Sig: .000 (significant, justifying Factor Analysis)

The Factor Analysis revealed distinct components contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect, with each component’s Eigenvalue, variance explained, and cumulative variance explained delineated in the analysis. Notably, all factors exhibited commonalities above 0.4, signifying their meaningful contribution to the dataset.

This comprehensive Factor Analysis offers detailed insights into the factors perpetuating the Glass Ceiling effect, thereby guiding organizations on areas to prioritize in addressing gender inequality within their workplaces. The study of the Glass Ceiling phenomenon, originally popularized by the Wall Street Journal in 1986, remains a pertinent lens through which to examine challenges hindering women’s advancement in professional domains, irrespective of qualifications or achievements.

This research amalgamated primary and secondary data sources, focusing on a structured questionnaire administered to 50

working women. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, employing Factor Analysis to interpret the findings. Additionally, insights from IBM Noida, India, were integrated, providing a regional context to the broader investigation into the Glass Ceiling effect.

6. CONSEQUENCES AND CONVERSATION

The findings of this education corroborate the existence of a Glass Ceiling in offices, signifying an unseen obstacle that obstructs women's progress beyond a certain level. This conclusion is supported by the unequal treatment observed towards women compared to their male counterparts across various aspects such as promotions, pay packages, opportunities for voicing opinions, and recognition earned.

In evaluating 10 variables associated to upgrades, salary packages, equal prospect for existence perceived, and acknowledgement received, factor analysis was conducted. This analysis identified two major factors: "Unequal Treatment" and "Male Superiority," highlighting key aspects contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect.

The statistical tests conducted in this study, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, affirmed the suitability of factor analysis for understanding the Glass Ceiling effect within organizations. The factor analysis revealed distinct components contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect, with each component's Eigenvalue and variance explained providing valuable insights.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the insights gathered from our study on the Glass Ceiling effect, here are some key suggestions:

- **Empowerment Programme:** Develop and implement empowerment programs specifically tailored to women in the workforce. These programs should focus on building confidence, leadership skills, and resilience to overcome challenges.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Encourage and support flexible work arrangements that accommodate the diverse needs of women, especially those balancing career and family responsibilities. This could include options like telecommuting, flexible hours, and parental leave policies.
- **Equal Opportunity Policies:** Ensure that equal opportunity policies are not just on paper but actively enforced in recruitment, promotions, and compensation practices. Address any biases or barriers that may hinder women's advancement within the organization.
- **Mentorship and Networking:** Establish mentorship programs and networking opportunities that connect women with senior leaders and mentors who can provide guidance, support, and advocacy.
- **Training and Development:** Invest in training and development programs that equip women with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in leadership roles. Provide opportunities for continuous learning and career advancement.

- **Promoting Inclusive Leadership:** Foster a culture of inclusive leadership where diverse perspectives are valued, and decision-making processes are transparent and fair. Encourage collaboration and teamwork across all levels of the organization.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly monitor and evaluate progress towards gender equality goals. Collect data on key metrics such as representation, pay equity, and career progression to identify areas for improvement and track outcomes over time.

By implementing these suggestions and actively working towards dismantling the glass ceiling, organizations can create more inclusive and equitable workplaces where women have equal opportunities to succeed and thrive in their careers.

8. CONCLUSION

The study's objectives were to analyse the factors contributing to the Glass Ceiling effect, investigate its presence in various organizational settings, and propose actionable measures to break through the barriers and promote gender equality in leadership roles. The conclusions drawn from this study are significant and underscore the challenges and opportunities in addressing the Glass Ceiling phenomenon.

The findings unequivocally confirm the existence of the Glass Ceiling in offices, highlighting an unseen yet formidable obstacle that obstructs women's progression beyond a certain level in their careers. This barrier primarily stems from the unequal treatment of women compared to their male counterparts, perpetuating a culture of male superiority within organizational settings.

Despite women's longstanding participation in the workforce, many workplaces still operate within frameworks that favor masculine norms, resulting in limited opportunities for women to achieve equal status, fair pay, and career advancement. This disparity is evident in pay gaps, promotion discrepancies, and the overall stagnation of women's positions within organizational hierarchies.

Furthermore, societal biases and entrenched myths contribute to perpetuating these barriers, leading some women to hesitate in advocating for advancement due to fears of being labeled as overly ambitious or aggressive. Overcoming these mind sets and biases is crucial to breaking through the Glass Ceiling effectively.

In India and globally, addressing the Glass Ceiling requires a concerted effort to dismantle biases, challenge norms, and create inclusive environments where gender equality is not just a value but a reality. This battle against social evils and misconceptions necessitates ongoing commitment and action from organizations and society.

Moving forward, initiatives promoting gender equality, providing equal opportunities for growth and recognition, fostering inclusive leadership, and challenging gender stereotypes are essential. These steps will contribute significantly to breaking through the Glass Ceiling and creating workplaces where individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive based on merit and capability.

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