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Barriers to Women Career Advancement (Glass Ceiling) And The Role of personality traits (Self- Esteem, Self- Efficacy)as Means of Breaking Through

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Abstract

Women are important potential human resources contributing to scientific, social and cultural development of countries.In this descriptive –correlative study Participants (statistical sample) were 52(out of 60) executive level female employees who employed in governmental sector in sport & physical education organizations in Iran. For this purpose three questionnaires were used. Moghemies's standard "Barriers to women's advancement to management position in organization questionnaire, coopersmith (1967) self-esteem inventory andSherer's (1982) general self –efficacy scale. To analyze the data descriptive and inferential (Pearson's correlation)statistics were used.According to mean scores of barriers to women's advancement to management position, executive women perceived them very high as barriers to their advancement.Mean scores of self-esteem and self-efficacy in women were respectively 2.7 and 3.2 from possible max of 5, which were considered above average score for self-esteem and high score for self-efficacy.Correlation results showed significant negative correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy with barriers to their advancement.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, self- esteem, self- efficacy, Barriers to women career advancement

Introduction:

Women constitute almost a half of the populations in societies and are considered as creators and breeders of next generations. They are important potential human resources contributing to scientific, social and cultural development of countries. Hence, it is essential to pay a special attention to their job advancement.Despite of all worldly efforts to achieve conditions of equality for women and men and to remove social inequality between them, the problems and difficulties of women regarding inconformity, violence, etc. have still remained.

Some studies illustrate that during thelast two decades there has been an increase in the proportion of women at entry and middle-level management positions, resulting largely from the activities of the women's movement, policiesof the political system, and corporate equal opportunity initiatives. However according to Meyerson& Fletcher (2009) women at the highest levels of business are still rare. They compriseonly 10% of senior managers in Fortune 500 companies; less than 4% of the uppermost ranksof CEO, president, executive vice president, and COO; and less than 3% of top corporate earners. of CEO, president, executive vice president, and COO; and less than 3% of top corporate earners.Not only that there is strong evidence of the under-representation of women in leadershippositions in many countries all over the world such as Australia (Davidson, 2009; Maginn, 2010;Still, 2006), China (Tan, 2008), France (Barnet-Verzat and Wolff, 2008), South Africa (Booysenand Nkomo, 2010; Mathur-Helm, 2006), United Kingdom (Davidson, 2009; Thomson et al.,2008) and United States (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Fassinger, 2008).*Bombuwela and Chamaru (2013) in a study "*Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Private Sector Organizations – Case of Sri Lanka"*Showed* that the Glass Ceiling and Women Career development have a moderate negative relationship, and also show that individual factors, organizationalfactors and cultural factors have a significant effect on women career development whereas family factor has effects on the glass ceiling. Following the study results, a conclusion was eventually made that there are significant effects of the glass ceiling on women career development of executive level female employees working in private sector organizations
in Sri Lanka.

Bester (2011)*in a study*"Theperception of careerbarriersamong south African university students" indicated that the nature or type ofcareer-related barriers perceived and experienced by the sample of South Africanuniversity students (N = 1897) differed significantly among gender, racial-ethnic groupsand course level or academic year of study. Significant gender differences were found onall 13 CBI-R scales, racial-ethnic differences on 9 of the 13 CBI-R scales (both assessedby means of a one-way independent ANOVA) and course level or academic year of studydifferences on 3 of the 13 CBI-R scales (measured by Spearman's correlationcoefficient). The present research study therefore revealed descriptive and exploratorybaseline data regarding the perceived career barriers among South African universitystudents and clearly demonstrated the CBI-R's validity and applicability in the SouthAfrican student context. Awareness of these students' barrier perceptions can be a usefultool in planning and developing future intervention strategies for coping with andovercoming obstacles to their career progress.

1-1:Statement of the Problem

Historically in organizations, women have achieved positions in which they have been obliged to accomplish repetitive tasks and to have low-level status. Most of them have gained staff positions and have worked as assistances of line managers; they have rarely served as line managers (Zahedi, 2003), so that seemingly their abilities have been ignored.

The evidences, signs and statistics existing in our country show a failure in taking advantage of women forces in managerial arena. This circumstance is unacceptable for a developing country such as ours, because contribution of women in managerial levels of a society is considered as the aim of comprehensive development as well as a tool for its exploration. Investigating the aforementioned

problem lets us know that the main causes of this issue have cultural roots. In other word, what is known as progress barriers (Glass Ceiling) and prevent women from advancing towards high-level jobs is mainly formed as a result of false beliefs, biased attitudes and stereotypical notions about women. Now, a fundamental question arises: how one can remove these cultural barriers? To answer this question, we must refer to the level of culture manifestation or its appearance, which is the level of social behaviors. Social behaviors are rooted in social facts. Therefore, if we can form the social facts of women's jobs and developments properly and desirably, with no doubt we will be able to lead social behaviors towards an ideal direction.

1-2:Significance of the study

Within recent 50 years, developing countries including Iran have experienced great social and cultural developments, a significant part of which is related to women. Social development, cultural evolution, literacy expansion and education advancement generally and receiving these by women particularly not only have changed women, but also have brought them new expectations. Any shortcoming and failure in this area lead into advent of inconsistency between women. Researcher seemed that there is a gap in the empiricalknowledge available, in Iranperspective about the glass ceiling. Therefore identifying the impactof glass ceiling on women workers is very important to decision makers in identifying key workplaceissues in order to develop strategies to address and improve the policies for preventing such things. Furthermore findings of this study would be a better guideline for those who are managers;to identify managerial woman's problems, the ways to shatter those barriers.

Self esteem& Self-efficacy

Self-esteem is the basic appraisal of one self, as it concerns the overall value that one places on oneself, as a person (Rosenberg, 1965). According to korman (1976), the way individuals react to life experiences is-among others-based on the extent to which they perceive themselves as being able to satisfy their needs. The basic underlying theoretical tenet is that individuals will develop attitudes and behave in a way that will maintain their level of self-esteem(Fahim Devin,2013).

Self-efficacy implies to beliefs about one's ability to accomplish specific tasks. Self-esteem and self – efficacy influence the tasks employees choose to learn and the goals they set for themselves. Self-efficacy also affects employees' level of effort and persistence when learning difficult tasks.

Objectives of the study

In present study, the researcher is seeking to find out the barriers to women career advancement from their perspective, and also to see if personality traits such as self-esteem and self-efficacy can act as barriers related to of women's advancement? In other word,if there is any significant relationship between personality traits with women's career advancement?

The rationale and unique quality of this study lies in the fact that no such study has been done before in sport organizations in Iran. It is expected to serve as starting point for further studies.

1- Methods

2-1: participants

Participants (statistical sample)of the study were 52(out of 60)executive level female employeesemployed in governmental sector in sport & physical education organizations in Iran.

2-2:Measures

This research study relied upon the survey method for collection of data; the questionnaire based survey has become one of the most widely used techniques. Moghemies's (1990) standard "Barriers to women's advancement to management position in organization questionnaire "which was consisted of 48 items on

7 subscales(gender stereotyping, gender discrimination, family – work conflict, family support, relationship at work, leadership(supervisor) support, employees perception on the presence of glass ceiling) was used to gather data on participants' perceptions on barriers to their advancement, coopersmith (1967) self-esteem inventory consisted of 35 items was used to gain information on participants' rate of self-esteem , Sherer's (1982) 10 items general self –efficacy scale was used to gather data on participants'self –efficacy. coefficient alpha was performed to measure the reliability of the instruments.Since the instruments were translated into Farsi, and were used in a different culture at a different span of time an internal consistency estimate was computed for three instruments and the alpha value for Barriers to women's advancement to management position in organization questionnaire , self-esteem inventory and self –efficacy scale were respectively, 0.80 ,0.85and 0.88. All of these values were above the cut off 0.70 suggested by Nunnaly (1987).

FINDINGS

Table 1 displays statistical index of quantitive variables of the research. According to mean scores of these variables, executive women perceived these variables very high as barriers to their advancement.
Mean scores of self-esteem and self-efficacy in women were respectively 2.7 and 3.2 from possible max of 5, which were considered above average score for self-esteem and high score for self-efficacy.

Table 1: Statistical indexes of variable as barriers in executive women's perspective & self-esteem and self-efficacy rate in them.

Variables	**M**	**SD**	**Maximum Possible**
Gender stereotyping	3.38	0.87	5
Gender discrimination	3.47	0.62	5
Family work conflict	3.82	0.66	5
Family support	4.30	0.85	5
Relationship at work	4.06	0.88	5
Leadership (supervisor) support	4.01	0.73	5
Employees' perception on the presence of glass ceiling	3.96	0.53	5
Self-esteem	2.7	0.18	5
Self -efficacy	3.2	0.49	5

Table 2 shows correlation results between self-esteem and barriers to women advancement from their perspective. According to these results self-esteem negatively correlated with these barriers (table 2)

Table 2: Correlation between self-esteem and perceived barriers to advancement.

Variables	**N**	**Correlation (r)**	**P-value**
Self-esteem & gender stereotyping	52	-0.78	0.001
Self-esteem& Gender discrimination	52	-0.57	0.009
Self-esteem& Family work conflict	52	-0.40	0.017
Self-esteem& Family support	52	-0.51	0.009
Self-esteem& Relationship at work	52	-0.64	0.007
Self-esteem& Leadership (supervisor) support	52	-0.48	0.018
Self-esteem& Employees' perception on the presence of glass ceiling	52	-0.49	0.019

Correlation results in table 3 show that self-efficacy negatively correlated with these barriers.

Table 3: Correlation between self-efficacy and perceived barriers to advancement

Variables	**N**	**Correlation (r)**	**P-value**
Self-efficacy & gender stereo typing	52	-0.423	0.001
Self-efficacy & Gender discrimination	52	-0.510	0.001
Self-efficacy & Family work conflict	52	-0.77	0.001
Self-efficacy & Family support	52	-0.209	0.005
Self-efficacy & Relationship at work	52	-0.221	0.004
Self-efficacy & Leadership (supervisor) support	52	-0.337	0.002
Self-efficacy & Employees' perception on the presence of glass ceiling	52	-0.294	0.003

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that executive women, studied in this research perceived a great deal of barriers to their advancement to senior positions in their organizations . Gender discrimination, gender stereo typing, Family- work conflict and lack of Leadership (supervisor) support were among barriers reported by people studied The result in this regard is in line with study by Bombuwela and Dealwis (2013) in Srilanka .

Studies have identified several self-related issues that surround women's managerial mobility. Family factors (Bombuwela&Alwis, 2013) and motherhood in particular (Kargwell, 2008) have been found to contribute to the organizational glass ceiling. While women do display more of the behavioral traits such as empathy, supportiveness, and relationship-building (Appelbaum et al., 2013) and more transformational leadership qualities (Chao &Dexin, 2011) than do their male counterparts, they often lack the vision that is also a necessary component of effective leadership (Appelbaum et al., 2013). .The glass ceiling has also been attributed to structural conditions (Ballenger, 2010), with inadequate mentoring and networking opportunities (Boone et al., 2013; Dimoivski et al., 2010; Sabat& Mishra, 2010) emerging as particularly salient problems.

correlative result of self-efficacy andSelf-esteem with perceived barriers to advancement revealed a negative correlation between these variables.

Managers performance is influenced by cognitive and emotional skills. Some managers have stronger perceptions of efficacy than others in the mental aspects ofperformance. As Bandura (1997) has noted, people efficacy involves control of disruptivethinking and affective states as well as cognitive and physical performance.

Research is needed to examine the influence on performance of efficacy beliefs regarding one's attention/concentration skills, one's ability to set and work toward goals, one's ability to manage stress and disruptive thought processes, and one's ability to make the right decisions,unhesitatingly.

Self-efficacy influences learning as well as the effort that people exert on the job. Employees with high self-efficacy generally work hard to learn how to perform new tasks, because they are confident that their efforts will be successful. Employees with low self-efficacy may exert less effort when learning and performing complex tasks, because they are not sure the effort will lead to success. It seems that the results (significant negative relationship between self-efficacy with perceived barriers to advancement)is in accordance with previous findings such as those of Smith 's (2012) result.

Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships, our work, nearly every part of our lives. It arises automatically from within based upon a person's beliefs and consciousness.Self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviors, feelings and actions.Positive (high) self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection. Crook and O'Shea in a study entitled "The linkage of work achievement to self-esteem, career maturity, and college achievement "Journal of Vocational Behavior" found a significant positive relationshipbetween Self-esteem and job success.

Discussion & conclusion

According to abovementioned discussions, the living conditions of Iranian women have changed and revolved since Islamic Revolution. The recent changes in Iran have increased women's shares in reaching academic education, achieving professional careers, earning money and contributing to political affairs. This situation has provided women with a possibility for social activity and climbing economic-social bases.

Nowadays in Iran increase of awareness alongside economic and job independency have changed women from a consumer in family into an economic and social partner. This new circumstance puts a sever challenge in front of male-oriented families and provides an opportunity for growth of civil families (Jalayi poor, 2006). Despite of these significant improvements and notwithstanding the fact that we expect governmental and non – governmental organizations and universities to hold the social relationships and interactions based on the principles of universality and meritocracy, we still observe that female office employees and faculty members face with some problems rooted in society and culture. The findings of this study show that female employees studied in this research are confronting with problems resulting from inference of family-work roles and gender discrimination in two types of imagined and experienced. Of course, it is undeniable that a part of these problems is caused by special conditions of transition period. Living in Iran during transition time is the origin of facing with different kinds of conflicts and impairments (Chalbi, 1996).

Under this circumstance, different groups of society (including women) will be subjected to twofold and conflicting situations. In light of social-cultural developments and prevalence of thoughts encouraging equality is taking advantage of rights and civil freedom, women can show their abilities and call for active contribution to different arenas of social life according to their sufficiency, but yet, they find themselves surrounded by a circle of limiting attitudes which are manifested in gender inequality and discrimination.

It is obvious that building balance between these situations causes a lot of emotional and psychological costs for women. For example, dissatisfaction with inequality and failure to remove the obstacles may sometimes change into origins of psychological tension and if women try to reject the existing norms to deal with this situation, they will gradually turn into an inconsistent and marginalized group (Shaditalab, 2002). Actually we can say that seeking social justice which is a component of equalitarianism movement constitutes an important part of women's demands, especially of female executives of sport organizations.

Conclusion

In today's modern world, it is known that a glass ceiling exists for women in management and it is being studied and remedied from varying perspectives. A few women have moved beyond the glass ceiling into the executive suite, yet their number is not proportionate to their representation at middle management levels and is far below that of their similarly qualified male counterparts. Both domestically and globally, women represent a relatively untapped source of talent for leadership in the workplace. While progress has been made across the globe, barriers to women"s advancement continue to exist, including cultural norms, stereotypes, and employer policies and practices

"In hope of having equal opportunity for everyone."

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