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IMPACT OF GLASS CEILING EFFECT ON SERVICE SECTOR EMPLOYEES A CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The unacknowledged barrier to advancement affecting females called Glass ceiling is still linger and it is a constant battle for many women in service sector industries. "The Great Man Theory" was followed in early decades where many women were rejected at work place due to different behaviors and attitudes of women by nature. The service sector is a male dominated sector which is a common characteristic in many other industries since early ages. There is a growing concern that females are being discouraged from advancing their careers even though things are rapidly changing in favor of female employees due to non-labor-intensive technology and employment opportunities for knowledge workers. This paper aims to identify the causes of the glass ceiling effect in the contemporary service sector affecting career advancement of female employees. In this paper authors have systematically reviewed the contemporary publications on glass ceiling effects published between years 2010 and 2020. The methodology engaged to develop the paper was in line with multi-journal systematic review methodology, which reviewed publication of multitude of journals. A total of 80 papers were selected in this period, and 59 were reviewed for this study. Authors were focused on obtaining insights that would be necessary for further researches to further develop the research design and develop hypothesis to be tested in a wider context. This paper concluded that gender personality traits, organizational human resource practices, societal barriers and

government barriers causes the glass ceiling where it intensively impacts on women's career progress.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, Gender discrimination, women advancement,

INTRODUCTION

The term of "Glass Ceiling" was coined in a 1986 Wall Street Journal article on Corporate Women by Hymowitz and Schellhard. Despite, countless and rapid changes happening in the labor market with women's involvement, women are still stagnating at lower positions. This is a barrier which is subtle and transparent yet strong enough to prevent women climbing in the management hierarchy (Clevenger & Singh, 2013). Men as a percentage holds the higher contribution at management positions. This unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, affecting women and members of minorities defined as the glass ceiling. Women are considered to be minorities and their contribution classified as the ethnic minorities in an organizational context which is a growing concern (Edirisinghe and Thalagaspitiya (2016). Countless reasons cause women's advancement in the form of leadership (Yokongdi and Benson 2011). In 1991, the glass ceiling commission was established to study these barriers and to provide recommendations for eliminating hindrances against women's advancement.

The glass ceiling effect can be encountered in almost every industry, including service sector, although several industries are relatively free of gender effects in this modern era. Perhaps, due to that reason service sector has not received much attention through the existing studies. The rationale of the study was to examine the glass ceiling existence, contributory factors and effects of glass ceiling for service sector employees. Therefore, accessing quantitative data would be an effective way to explain the glass ceiling existence. Thus, authors aim to bridge this knowledge gap by critically evaluating materials that has already been published during the period from 2010 to 2019. Accordingly, authors have identified four key reasons causing the glass ceiling. There are namely; Gender personality traits, Organizational human resource practices, Government barriers and societal barriers. Primarily, This review find answer to (a) what are the persuasive factors towards glass ceiling in service sector? Further, as specific objectives of this paper, it find answers to (a) Is there any relationship between gender personality traits and glass ceiling? (b) Is there any relationship between organizational human resource practices and glass ceiling? (c) Is there any relationship between government barriers and glass ceiling? (d) Is there any relationship between societal barriers and glass ceiling?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite countless combat attempts of gender discrimination across the country, the glass ceilings still remain in women leadership positions (Clark, 2018). The term of “glass ceiling” is a tool for measuring the causes why women fail to rise in the career ladder regardless their qualifications and experience (Steven et al., 2013). The term coined by Morrison in 1987 to depict the women engagement

complexity in climbing the top of the corporate ladder. International Labor Organization (2015) declared the gender diversification is a hygiene factor for any working organization and therefore, should create a healthy working environment by contributing to better business returns, economic growth and social welfare development. Fathoming the statement, Clark (2018) stated, any country who does not have the ability to absorb the full potential of women, will not reach to its full potential. Thus, concluding the literature and statistics, it is explicitly evident that the “Glass ceiling” is still linger and is a constant battle where multiple researchers argue the glass ceiling is only a self-created myth. Contrarily, Ely et al. (2011) stated, women fail to hold senior leadership positions due to lack of competencies and hard work while authors like Carnes and Kelley (2011) argued, women inherently choose to confront or accept the glass ceiling, external factors are not responsible but is an excuse to give up on career progression. Conversely, University of Chicago Booth School of Business (2018) argues that the “GC” is not a ceiling or wall, but various and pervasive gender biases.

Causes of Glass ceiling effects in service sector

Various barriers which refrain women reaching to top positions are called “glass ceiling effects” and is a form of gender discrimination where it has now gradually changed with proactive strategies and approaches (Smith, 2015). According to Bhoganadam (2014) women emancipation and economic development are interrelated as in one direction, development plays a vital role in driving down the gender discrimination and on the other way it creates a balance in social development. It is revealed that wrong corporate practices, the stereotypical nature of women and individual commitments bestow the confidence,

women to leave their jobs without reaching to the peak (Keenawinna and Sajeevanie, 2015). On the other hand, women stagnate at lower levels or depart the job due to individual factors, cultural barriers and corporate barriers (Uduwella and Jayathilake, 2019). The glass ceiling is the final result of various influencing multifaceted phenomena and are changing with the time and technology (Andries et al., 2014). Thus, Plessis et al. (2015) stated, the importance of ascertaining persuasive factors individually as each factor may have different impacts. It is, therefore, notable the necessity of bridging the gender gap with proactive actions in order to make the socioeconomic stability of the country.

Factors influencing glass ceiling in the service sector

Gender Personality Traits

According to Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) Individual inner qualities of a woman are the most influencing factor in women's advancement hence, attitudinal factors cause the low representation of female leaders (Munro, 2012). However, there are numerous controversial opinions exist in the society pertaining to this judgment where some people does not concur personality trait as a hindrance (Cross, 2010). Women's traits like patience, commitment, understanding and empathy could build strong customer relationships and resolve complications effectively. Conversely, Chahal (2013) argues, women are born with different attitudes in nature, hence reluctant to accept the risks and challenges proving the psychological difference exist between men and women. The leadership of both men and women tend to be circumstantially effective yet women's leadership has more edges. In contrast, Bhosle and Barik (2014) stated, women are weak, emotional and aggressive. Thus, incapable of handling management positions. As stated by University of

Chicago Booth School of Business (2018), women's vulnerability encourages the glass ceiling since they are not excelling their capabilities sufficiently. Due to this, countless organizations are uncomfortable with women's participation as it required greater flexibility such as maternity leaves, flexible working hours and high security. However, women used to be risk-averse ages ago where now with the changing time and novel technology women transformed into risk takers as there are considerable trailblazers in the industry proving the same. Tran (2014) stated, a woman's lower self-esteem issues inherently compel them to deny career progression, either they refrain building their network or avoid developing capabilities. Self-efficacy shows the individual's capability, mastery experience boost self-efficacy showing immense impacts on the glass ceiling (Uduwella and Jayathilake, 2019) where Preko (2012) has linked this to the wage gap as men are being paid higher due to extreme confidence level while women are struggling with lower self-esteem issues. Although women have surpassed men in terms of education, women choose minor jobs and wages expecting a comfortable work life with a higher range of mental peace (University of Chicago Booth School of Business, 2018). Historically, researchers like Cotter et al. (2001) and Bell et al. (2002) highlighted a significant argument of sexual filths at work places where significant women trying to make it to the top by offering sex to male managers. However, women are now more wide-ranging so that such phenomena are rare commodity.

Human Resource Practices

Various studies in the history pointed out the advantages of abolishing the glass ceiling within an organization. Every employee should be treated equally irrespective of their gender, position, religion or the racism. The women claimed

organizations are male oriented and not concerned about women's need at work (Ely et al., 2011). Women's empowerment is leading footstep of social change and it begins from the work place, hence organizations are successful with high female participation, under performance organizations requires more female leaders (Bruckmüller et.al., 2010 and Ryan et.al., 2011). Women's advancement is the key measuring instruments of company's capability and human resource practices, vice versa the key indicator of women empowerment (Balakumar and Shenbaham, 2016). Kiaye and Singh (2013) highlighted, Women's ideas are often discounted hence women are not fairly evaluated by male supervisors, this "invisible women syndrome" and organization culture is bombarding their career advancement. It is observed that significant organizations come up with ineffective and unachievable target systems by discouraging women and organizations are reluctant to invest in female employees as they quit the jobs midway. However, in the current context, organizations have stepped out with proactive concepts such as "Great Place to work Women" to encourage more women participation. Gender diversified organizations are successful, hence policies and work environment plays a significant part as it encourages women to formulate the healthier work life balance (Mentor Global Consultants, 2020). It is revealed that proper security from the employer's side, policies against violence and sexual harassment encourage women to work comfortably (Chahal, 2013). Nonetheless, De Pater et al (2010) dictated, females leave jobs upon marriage or pregnancy as they cannot commit both responsibilities collectively hence human practices are not at fault.

Government Barriers

Poor government involvement, lack of law enforcement bodies may create social

imbalance, consistence and conscious attention is required to monitor and tackle glass ceiling related issues (Clevenger and Singh, 2013). Researchers like Sakata (2013) and Saleem et al. (2017) claimed the dire need of government involvement to discourage the glass ceiling. International Center for Research on Women (2022) argued that glass ceiling will be reduced undoubtedly with comprehensive punishment for sex harassment or bribe. Further, Murray (2010) stressed, professional corporate environment jointly with a proper government policy framework could be the single most important strategy to overcome the glass ceiling. The age restriction at work may limit women's advancement with less job rotation, training and career supports (Plessis et al., 2014). Likewise, government failures may create gender imbalances hence women will end up doing minor jobs in the public sector where it requires minimum qualifications at the entry level. Alternatively, Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) differently opinioned, government is not an obstacle, but a support system where Sri Lanka is an active member of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), has taken several actions towards women empowerment including "War Widows". Women are getting better entry and mid-level positions with proper government guidance, policy reforms and the quota system, thus; the gender is socially constructed rather than fixed by nature (Kiaye and Singh, 2013). On top of all, some communities are comfortable with lesser government involvement since it is hassle free, people hold a negative impression towards constitution due to multiple complications hence against with government intervention (Coleman, 2014). Amidst countless studies only few researchers have identified the government barriers as a persuasive factor towards glass ceiling.

Societal Barriers

Clevenger and Singh (2013) authenticated, traditional attributes supporting men over women are still lingering intact and gender-based beliefs may negatively impact on women's advancement. Researchers like Chamaru and Bambuwela (2013); Sharma and Kaur (2019) clearly stated glass ceiling is not a ceiling or wall yet varied forms of gender based beliefs occurred in both overt and covert ways. According to, Beeson and Valerio (2012) and Cross (2010) family commitment and taking care of children is the common reason towards the glass ceiling where its impact coming from different social cultures and communities. Unlikely in European countries, Asian countries still hold the cultural beliefs that women should remain at home doing house chores, due to this fear factor majority of women approach either low risk jobs or leave their jobs midway. Moreover, companies still hold the social beliefs and choosing men for risk involved jobs while women are being given by lesser chances for such assignments, such companies are often justified their decision with the effectiveness of the team (Pravita et al., 2017). Wall Street Journal survey (2015) highlighted, "male chauvinism" slow down the women's advancement. Various women localities are still requesting the consent from their male spouse to stepping out from the comfort zone. Social support from family and colleagues plays a vital role in women's advancement amidst vague opinions (Rathi et.al. 2013). Asian countries are profoundly associated by "Confucianism" where they consider the greatest job of a woman is reproduction and marriage at young age keep women away from career progression (Munro, 2012). On the contrary, Glass (2016) argues, young women's greatest fear is societal barriers as they consider that starting up a family may unfavorably impact on their career success.

METHODOLOGY

This review is grounded by secondary data type "Documentary secondary data" (Saunders et al., 2019). Predominantly, authors have reviewed the contemporary publications on "glass ceiling effects" published between years 2010 and 2020. Authors have consumed both written and non-written documents in order to review this paper. In this paper, methodology engaged to develop the paper was in line with multi-journal systematic review methodology, which reviewed publication of multitude of journals. A total of 80 papers were selected in this period, and 59 were reviewed for this study. A systematic review can be identified as the method of gathering existing information's pertaining to a given subject (Saunders et al., 2019). The review is grounded by "deductive approach" as the existing theories were derived from published journal articles.

Data Analysis

In this paper the key focus was on articles published between years 2010 and 2020 and the methodology developed in line with multi-journal systematic review. Accordingly, a total of 80 papers were selected in this period, and 59 were reviewed for this study. This paper concluded that gender personality traits, organizational human resource practices, societal barriers and government barriers causes the glass ceiling where it intensively impacts on women's career progress and following table illustrates the overall findings out of the reviewed 59 articles. Following is the summary of existing literature and each variable has illustrated with most possible causes.

Table 1: Summary of existing studies

Individual Personal Traits (16)	Organizational Human Resource Practices (13)	Societal Barriers (13)	Government Barriers (5)
Self-efficacy issues	Recruitment and promotions procedure	Traditional attributes	Law enforcement bodies
Risk-averse in nature	Salary and remuneration structure	Family commitment	Comprehensible punishments for sexual harassment or bribes at work
Pride and rude in nature	Training and development opportunities	Taking care of children and aged parents	Age restrictions at work
Women's vulnerability	Target achievement structure	Different social cultures and beliefs in different communities	
Backward attitude	Sexual harassment policy	Marriages at young age and reproduction	
Feminist attributes	Policies and work environment	Patriarchal society	

(Source: Developed by author)

DISCUSSION

On the basis of previous researches, it is revealed that women face problems in rising to leadership positions. People are negative towards women due to stereotypical nature and masculine culture. This paper reviewed answers for; (a) Is there any relationship between gender personality traits and glass ceiling? (b) Is there any relationship between organizational human resource practices and glass ceiling? (c) Is there any relationship between government barriers and glass ceiling? (d) Is there any relationship between societal barriers and glass ceiling?

Relationship between gender personality traits and glass ceiling

According to Fosuah et al (2017) gender personality traits are one of the potential causes of glass ceiling. A study conducted by Glass (2016) dictated, a woman's personality traits, character and habits such as lack of self-confidence, lower self-esteem issues, fear, pride and negligence contribute towards glass ceiling and these societal perceptions refrain women

embracing executive positions. Uduwella and Jayathilake (2019) highlighted through their study, personality traits have a significant relationship with women's advancement where self-efficacy beliefs and personal growth initiatives often favor women's advancement. Further, Pruitt (2015) opinioned, women's pride and arrogance nature prevent women excelling their careers, and the most fascinating fact is women tend to leave their careers midway and embrace entrepreneurship since women are often discriminated at work place. Thus, women start their own business where they will be their own bosses and control their own affairs hence there will be nil glass ceiling impacts.

Relationship between organizational human resource practices and glass ceiling

The empirical results of previous studies support the positive relationship between organizational human resource practices and glass ceiling. Existing studies provide the evidences proving the majority of corporate glass ceiling factors have an adverse impact towards organizational human resource practices. There are debates over women's

leadership capabilities in male dominant professions. Employees are reciprocating with a stronger commitment to the organization when the organization provides them attractive benefits. This can be either intrinsic rewards or extrinsic rewards where, in return, it may lead to less turnover and number of positive effects such as effective performances. Therefore, corporate practices are the predominant persuasive factor towards the corporate glass ceiling (Khuong and Chi, 2017). Warren and Antoniadis (2016) also identified countless professional bodies has gender imbalances at the governance level where gender harassment, management perception and masculine culture promotes the corporate glass ceiling. On the other hand, Chin (2016), stated current competitive organizational cultures and structures are welcoming competitive female work force. Adequate training and development framework discourage the glass ceiling as it indicates females are more likely to get promoted when they are fully trained and equipped with required professional skills. Moreover, Clevenger and Singh (2013) stated, organizations should emphasize on increasing promotion opportunities for women where Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) also highlighted the necessity of practice equal employment opportunities at work place. On the contrary, Fosuah et al (2017) argued, human resource practices and policies do not significantly contribute to glass ceiling yet sexual harassment act of an organization has a direct impact towards the glass ceiling where Kolade and Kehinde (2013) found lenient monitoring of sexual practices of an organization causes glass ceiling. Keenawinna and Sanjeevani (2015) stated, through a research conducted within the Sri Lankan banking study, the human resource practices have an extremely low impact towards glass ceiling.

Relationship between government barriers and glass ceiling

As stated by Cross (2010) government plays a critical role when combating glass ceiling effects. Government supposed to impose proper policy and legislation system against gender discrimination. Saleem et al (2017) dictated the positive relationship with government barriers and women's advancement hence government required to develop public policies to boost women's talent. It is also revealed, the dire necessity of government involvement in order to discourage corporate glass ceiling where it will contribute to the economic growth as well as to reduce the unemployment rate. Accordingly, Murray (2010) identified the relationship between government involvement and glass ceiling where proper policy framework could be the single strategy to overcome the gender discrimination. Likewise, the poor government involvement may result gender discrimination which will eventually impact on sustainable development of the country. Further, as stated by the International Center for Research on Women (2016), there is an increasing trend of sexual harassment cases at work place where the government intervention is mandatory with comprehensive punishment for sex harassments and bribes.

Relationship between societal barriers and glass ceiling

A woman's dual role in the society prevents females promoting to senior management positions, hence cultural barriers can be identified as another important root cause towards the glass ceiling (Mayssa et al.,2015). According to Yokongdi and Benson (2011), utilization of female talent has become a prominent obstacle since cultural norms, values, assumptions and stereotypes are deeply rooted in patriarchal and religious traditions. Asian countries are profoundly

associated by “Confucianism” where they consider the greatest job of a woman is reproduction and will certainly halt their career due to the future responsibility of bearing and nurturing children (Sandberg, 2013; Statistics New Zealand 2015; Skelly and Johnson, 2011). Fathoming the statement Gunawardana (2017) stated, stereotypical attitudes, traditional behaviors of the male spouses and family commitments also tends to be predominant. A research conducted by Purcell et al (2010) revealed, extremely low support from family and social culture resist women excelling their careers. However, Khuong and Chi (2017) revealed, there is no any positive relationship between family support and glass ceiling. Conversely, Uduwella and Jayathilake (2019) concluded, family care, child care and house chores had no any significant relationship with women’s career development and overall, societal barriers lies at a moderate level.

Limitations of the study

This research study is a special emphasize (Case study) on service sector employees. The study is restricted itself to investigate the glass ceiling existence, impacts and causes of glass ceiling for service sector employees and the manufacturing industry was not considered in the study. Thus, the generalization ability of the entire service industry is limited and findings and suggestions might not be applicable or relatable for manufacturing industry. This, therefore, discourage the comparative analysis between service and manufacturing industries on the same phenomenon of the glass ceiling. However, the author has addressed the literature irrespective of the governance, hence the literature comprised both the manufacturing and service industries glass ceiling impacts. The paper has reviewed using 59 journal articles which is comparatively a small sample, and

findings were concluded. The highest percentage of response rate will increase the validity and credibility, hence the research findings can be generalized into a large population. Furthermore, the male response rate for the study is significantly lower compared to the target male population. This disabled the ability to compare different views between men and women. Moreover, the geographical coverage or the boundaries can be identified as one of the significant limitations of this study. The study would have been further comprehensible if it has more geographic coverage within the country as certain regions within the same country has comparatively different limitations and thus, the findings can be compared across the regions. According to Saunders et al (2012) generalization is a particular concern for case studies, this review was mainly based on different case studies and faced similar difficulties and lower response rate limited the generalization ability and comprehensiveness of the findings. Moreover, almost every selected study has been used the mono-method approach which generated only the quantitative data affirming the minimal rate of validity. In recent studies, researchers have failed to adopt the qualitative methods, provided the prevailed situation of the country due to COVID-19 pandemic. According to Creswell (2009) mixed-method approach has become increasingly popular as it increases both the reliability and validity at the same time. Moreover, there is an important gap that needs to be filled, which requires further research attention. Such research inquiries could adopt qualitative approach jointly with the quantitative approach in order to unravel the deep sides of the GC. Accordingly, one of the key limitations of this review was lack of face to face interview observations to get a rich insight of the thematic area. Moreover, variables like organization culture, organization practices have been

identified as the key influencers of glass ceiling and these perceptions required proper examination which selected case studies was unable to well address and examined. However, the response pattern can be identified as a normal distribution and as in result, the responses can be considered as unbiased. Besides, selected researches were conducted within the cross-sectional time horizon due to short span of time which is another limitation. The topic of “Glass Ceiling” being descriptive and complex in nature required sufficient time frame for an adequate and close examination. The research area of “Glass Ceiling” can be addressed in a broader sense considering the thematic area is wider and highly complex in nature. Nonetheless, the review is only backed by the literature of recent 10 years, which is not ample enough to cover a broad area like glass ceiling and women emancipation. Besides, According to Saul et al (2014) previous studies are inadequate to get a comprehensive insight pertaining to the GC and its associated consequences. Thus, it is difficult to connect GC conundrum to one particular knowledge domain due to the worrisome is the scanty nature of systematic review of literature related to GC phenomenon. As stated by Morgan (2015), it is difficult to summarize an accurate conclusion as to how much the gender disparity and career progression exist across the globe due to the differences on choices and preferences between men and women.

CONCLUSION

This paper offered background materials and analysis on the glass ceiling impact for women in the contemporary service sector. It is evident that glass ceiling is a constant battle and a global phenomenon. In the current context, the majority of the women are becoming well aware of the glass ceiling and wisely act upon it. Despite that, still the society holds

stereotypical attitudes towards women proving the patriarchal culture. The literature encourages to review current human resource practices exist in many organizations in favor with women. Subsequently, women will get equal opportunities to excel their careers similar to men and executive female leadership positions can be uniquely positioned with the intention of reducing gender discrimination. However, organizations are still reluctant to invest on women, work force provided that society has a negative impression on feminist attributes like pride, rude nature and negligence. Therefore, the results of countless existing studies emphasize the necessity of providing adequate and proper training which will eventually mold women’s professional skills and on the other hand, will discourage women’s negative attributes such as pride and true nature. Masculine culture often strengthens glass ceiling effects in the service sector as service sectors profoundly associated by “Confucianism” where they consider the greatest job of a woman is reproduction. Thus, conscious and consistent government attention along with a structured legislation framework is required.

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