



## Analysis and investigation of the relationship between the Glass ceiling syndrome and Organizational Silence

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### Abstract

Organizational silence is perceived as a social phenomenon that occurs at the organizational level and affects many organizational characteristics. These organizational characteristics include efficiency, performance, decision making, management processes, culture, and employees' perceptions of the factors affecting silent. The glass ceiling states that women and minorities fail to reach the upper levels of the hierarchy. They approximate the leading positions at the organization, but rarely obtain it. This frustration makes them presume that there is a glass ceiling. The glass ceiling makes employees withhold from expressing their ideas and always remain silent. Organizations are required to encounter crossing the glass ceiling. Acquiring different skills, being intimidated to perform activities, self-confidence, stability in achieving goals, enlightened and conscious thinking can trigger women in achieving managerial professions.

### Keywords

Women studies, Gender Discrimination, Organizational Justice, Glass Ceiling, Organizational Positioning, Organizational Silence

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## **Introduction:**

In current competitive world, to a large extent, the efficiency and development of any organization relies on the accurate exploitation of human resources. In recent years, organizations expect their employees to be creative, express opinions, and be responsible due to intense competition, customer expectations, and focus on quality, which are characteristics of the dynamic and developing world. In order to survive, organizations require staff that are responsible for the challenges of their surroundings and are not afraid of sharing their information and knowledge (Qalavandi and Moradi, 2014). In present day civilization, while it is asserted that two genders are equal and it is being widely accepted in social and human right power, there is a great distance between rational acceptance and its implementation in practice. Nevertheless, the attitudes and values of the societies, especially the developing societies, in terms of seeking power, are within patriarchal structures, which have blocked one-dimensional and exclusive values for men. The glass ceiling is defined as a metaphor caused by the inequality of women against men, which indicates the existence of exclusivity of power structures based on patriarchy in the organizations of developing countries (Shafi et al., 2019). In this article, the relationship between the glass ceiling syndrome and organizational silence is investigated.

## **Glass Ceiling Syndrome**

In present era, Environmental challenges have forced organizations to seek continuously for mechanisms to preserve and survive. In the meantime, employing the potential abilities of human resources and the genuine utilization of these tremendous forces and talents is considered as a great advantage for any organization. Besides, Organizations are obliged to have more capable employees than before in order to respond to environmental changes. Consequently, it can be noted that empowering employees has become one of the important strategies in order to adapt to external changes as an important issue in the management and organizations' leadership as well. Nowadays, the issue of women's management is one of the important labels that have received a lot of attention from the experts of various sciences in different countries of the world; moreover, international organizations pay special attention to the position of women in different countries. So, the matter of women, for the most part their participation in decision-making and high levels of management has always been of interest (Allahiyari et al., 2017). Glass ceiling is the same obstacles on women route to reach the top level of the organization. It is evident that supporting women's education, on the one hand, by increasing their skills and readiness to enter the labor market, contributes to sustainable economic development based on knowledge and the application of technology, and on the other hand, it is a significant development. In their presuppositions and culture, it creates the future generation in the position of mother and educator. However, the decline in the presence of women in high management positions requires researchers to investigate its hidden and obvious factors (Tabe Bardbar, 2014). The phenomenon of women's failure to achieve high levels of management is called a glass ceiling. This term was first used in 1986 by the Wall Street Journal. Besides, Morrison and his colleagues are pioneering features of using this term in 1987. This term was utilized in 1990 to refer to the small number of women and minorities in the management of public and private sector organizations. Sometimes it is also applied to deep wage gap at upper levels of the income distribution. High income earners have lower wages compared to their peers. The glass ceiling states that women and minorities fail to reach higher levels of the hierarchy. They come close to the top positions in the organization, but rarely get it. This frustration makes them think there is a glass ceiling. That is, they see discriminatory obstacles in their efforts to achieve high levels of management in organizations (Sidjavadin et al., 2016).

## **Organizational Silence**

As a matter of fact, in today's highly competitive world, benefiting from the opinions, suggestions and innovative ideas of employees is one of the prerequisites for organizational development and among the effective factors in surpassing organizations from competitors. A number of factors resulted in withholding of information about potential problems or issues by employees and in other words they prefer to remain silent. Organizational silence is the refusal of employees to express their ideas, information, concerns and opinions about issues related to the job and the organization, which is one of the important passive responses that employees manifest in the face of misbehavior in the workplace. In fact, employees prefer to withdraw their voices when they feel that their statements will be perceived negatively and may result in bad feedback. In general, organizational silence is a social phenomenon that occurs at one level of the organization and is affected by many organizational characteristics. These organizational characteristics include decision-making operations, management processes, employees' cultures and perceptions (Sephund et al., 2019). Organizational silence is related to limiting the effectiveness of organizational decisions and development processes. The problem that is currently plaguing organizations are that most of them are upset with very few employees' expression of ideas. In such a situation, the quality of decision-making and making changes decreases. Also, organizational silence prevents effective organizational changes and development by preventing negative feedback, therefore, the organization does not have the ability to investigate and correct errors (Miller, 1972).

Morrison and Milliken (2000) consider organizational silence as a socially structured phenomenon that is created at an organizational level and is influenced by different organizational components. In fact, organizational silence is an ineffective process that destroys all human efforts.

Van Dyne et al. (2003) introduced three types of silence as - acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and pro-social silence.

### **Different types of Silence**

**Acquiescent Silence:** When most people call a person as a quiet person, involves keeping back important ideas, information, or opinions, because of resignation. It implies disengaged behavior that is more passive than active and is motivated by resignation, obedience and accent to anything.

**Defensive Silence** is holding back important ideas, information, or opinions as a method of self- protection, arising from fear. It is deliberate and practical behavior aimed at self-protection from external threats. Defensive silence is a deliberate and non-passive behavior that is used to protect oneself from external threats. However, this type of silence, unlike obedient silence, is more passive and includes more awareness of the options and options available in decision making.

**Pro-social Silence** entails withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the aim of profiting other people or the organization arising from altruism or cooperative motives. It is motivated by concern for others, being interested in others and creating opportunities for collaboration.

**Opportunistic silence** as deliberately withholding information. The authors consider different manifestations of opportunism including delivering incomplete or distorted information. Opportunistic silence could also be a tactic to avoid additional workload by misleading or confusing. It has not yet attracted much attention in the literature on silence in the organization (Ismaili, 2018).

### **The Causes of barriers for women**

The unequal position of women in organizations is not caused by a single factor, but rather from the convergence and complex interaction among numerous political, economic, legal factors, social beliefs, operations and actions of individuals and organizations (Shafi et al.,

2017). Different causes and reasons for the creation of a glass ceiling have been identified during the research conducted in this field, and some of these reasons are listed below:

Political causes

Attitudinal Causes

Cultural Causes

Glass Ceiling

Social Causes

Presuppositions

Family Causes

At present day, the success of organizations depends on the optimal use of existing expertise and the expression of innovative ideas. Whether these expertise are in available for men or women. Hence, the barriers on the promotion of women must be removed. Organizations must baffle and break the glass ceiling in order to experience acquiring different skills, being intimidated to do things, self-confidence, and stability in achieving goals. Enlightened and conscious thinking can assist women succeed in achieving managerial occupations.

On the other hand, the number of women in the workplace has been increasing in recent years, but women have not grown much in managerial professions and promotion to the highest level of the organization, women are not considered qualified for management, while men and their work are appraised. They give all the conditions in favor of men. Often there is no cooperation between working men and women in household affairs and this causes the responsibility of managing the family and children to fall on women s' shoulders and working women cannot fulfill and do their best and their duties at work.

As a result, women face role conflict and this issue has other negative consequences. Achieving the goals of any organization and ultimately achieving the economic and social development of any country depends on the optimal use of its human resources. Organizations should utilize expert men and women and remove the glass ceiling (Malekpour Naqneh and Raisi, 2018). Therefore, the glass ceiling has a direct relationship with organizational silence.

### **Conclusion**

Organizational silence is related to restraining the effectiveness of organizational decisions and developmental processes. The problem that is currently plaguing organizations are that most of them are upset with very few employees. In such a situation, the quality of decision-making and making changes decreases. Also, organizational silence prevents effective organizational changes and development by preventing negative feedback, therefore, the organization does not have the ability to investigate and correct errors. Female employees in high income groups receive fewer wage compared to their peers. The glass ceiling states that women and minorities fail to reach higher levels of the hierarchy. When they approach the top positions in the organization, but they rarely get it. This frustration makes them think of the existence of a glass ceiling. That is, they see discriminatory barriers in the track of their efforts to achieve high levels of management in organizations, and this causes them not keeping their voices about the issues of the organization and remains silent.

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