**Glass Ceiling Factors, Job Satisfaction and Job Switching Decisions of Female Employees
in Private Sector Enterprises of Bangladesh**

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Abstract

Glass ceiling is an important issue in the developed world, but there are few studies on the developing world, especially on the private sector of Bangladesh. Therefore, this study aims to determine the influences of the factors of glass ceiling on the job satisfaction and job switching decisions among the female employees in the private sector of Bangladesh. This study conducted structured questionnaire surveys on 192 female employees from two private sector industries – banking and telecommunication in Bangladesh. The data were collected in December 2013 by using random sampling technique. The study used Ordered Logit and Binary Logit regressions. The study found that women employees working in banking sector hold more job satisfaction than those of telecommunication sector. Further, the study found that glass ceiling related variables has no significant relationship with the job satisfaction of women employees but there are several glass ceiling factors that statistically significantly influence on the decisions of changing or switching the existing jobs of women employees. Those who feel they are discriminated by any male colleague or being discriminated to move to higher level management positions or discriminated for promotions or holding less job security are likely to change their existing jobs. To improve the situation, several initiatives need to be taken in the organization like awareness building, standard and ethical human resource practices, strict policies for discriminatory attitudes and behavior etc.

Key words: *Job satisfaction; glass ceiling; gender discrimination; Bangladesh*

1. Introduction

Glass Ceiling refers to invisible barriers that impede the career advancement of women. It also refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is halted at a particular level because of some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism. This situation is referred to as a “ceiling” as there is a limitation blocking upward advancement, and “glass” (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy (Afza and Newaz, 2008:85).

Several studies show that the disparity between male and female representation in public and private sector is wide in most of the third world countries. Women have little or unequal access to employment. An insignificant number of women occupy key decision making positions (United Nations, 1989). Women have been unable to exert power over economic structure in their societies as they are virtually absent from or are poorly represented in economic decision making (FWCW 1995). ‘Social or economic policies wholly or partially directed towards women remain inadequate in resolving problems as they often reflect male perceptions and orientations, thereby contributing to inequalities between the two genders’ (Afza and Newaz, 2008:86).

It is generally argued that in the developing world, like Bangladesh, where almost half the population is women, the need for involving more women in the development process can

make them more empowered and hence increase the chances for development (Afza and Newaz, 2008:86). However, in the workplaces of Bangladesh, women are discriminated based on stereotypical perceptions. According to Afza and Newaz (2008:86), 'in Bangladesh, the stereotype perception results in differing attitude in both genders regarding women's participation in different industries and service sectors of the economy, women are portrayed as weak, unassuming, passive, feminine, submissive, and dependent'. In the workplaces we observe several discriminatory practices against female employees that include attitudes of employers suggesting women are not capable enough physically, that they are also weak mentally and their emotional status is also not strong. Studies also show that women become temperamental very easily and do not possess enough motivation to do their jobs well and hence the common belief is that women perform well in traditional roles that include teaching in primary schools, working in the NGO or working as a social worker, health and welfare officers instead of working in administrative and management positions.

The stereotype about female employees is that they are committed and efficient only for a short period of time and are generally not reliable, also women are believed to have health concerns and are easily vulnerable to sickness and therefore frequently remain absent from work. In addition, it is believed that pregnancies interrupt their regular work and their careers are disrupted by family interests (Zafarullah, 2000). According to Hossain (2007), there is a component of knowledge in the literature about women's career within organizations that suggests that it is the organization itself, which plays a key role in the advancement or absence of women in organizational hierarchy (e.g. Liff and Ward, 2001; Benschop and Dooreward, 1998).

Research on "Glass ceiling" in Bangladesh is very limited and unexplored. Previous research work in Bangladesh (Zafarullah; 2000 and UNDP; 1993) on 'Glass ceiling' was focused mostly on the public sector. Another study by Afza and Newaz (2008) was done to examine the existence of glass ceiling in different industries and service sectors in Bangladesh. The study indicates five factors are responsible for glass ceiling effects which eventually restricts women career opportunity and progression at a certain stage. The identified factors are: management perception, work environment, work-life conflict, sexual harassment and organizational policy. The study also found that management perception and work environment are most significant factors for creating glass ceiling, whereas, organizational policy and work-life conflict are the second most significant factors. On the other hand, respondents disagreed about sexual harassment as a contributing factor for creating glass ceiling effect in the organization. Whereas pleasant appearance, attitude towards organization, career focused and family support were found to influence career advancement of women in an organization.

This could be a consequence of a strong male homosociality, where women as a group are strongly held back from continued upward mobility at a certain level of the occupational hierarchy (Erik and Marita; 2006). UNDP (1993, p. 91) survey also identified six perceptions of disparate treatment to women in the administrative cadre of the BCS (Bangladesh Civil service) such as (a) negative attitudes towards women by male colleagues: (b) doubts of superior officers about the capabilities (for work) of women officers: (c) superiority complexes of male colleagues: (d) tendency of men to treat women in a gender-biased fashion: (e) comments that men were more efficient than women: and (f) non-cooperation of male colleagues. Thus, the existence of Glass ceiling in an organization has received considerable attention in recent years.

The literature indicates that organizational cultural factors alone cannot explain the relative absence of female employees in the management of different organizations. The gender gap in different organizations is influenced mostly organizational culture as well as social norms in the environment that the organizations are operating in. There is little empirical evidence that exists concerning specific factors that actually influence female employees' absence in the top management levels in the private sector industries in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study is an attempt to determine the influences of the factors of glass ceiling on the job satisfaction and decision to change the job among the female employees of private sector in Bangladesh

2. Literature Review

The term Glass ceiling has been first identified by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt in an article, published on the March 24th edition of the "Wall Street Journal" in 1986. This article reveals the invisible barriers that impede the career advancement of women in the American workforce. The term glass ceiling was coined prior to the 1984 article by two women at Hewlett-Packard in 1979, Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber, to describe how while on the surface, there seemed to be a clear path of promotion, but in actuality women seemed to hit a point where they seemed unable to progress beyond. However, Gay Bryant used the term prior to that, in one of his article published in *Adweek*, March 1984. According to Davidson and Burke (1994), the concept of Glass ceiling refers to an invisible but impermeable barrier that limits the career advancement of females.

A Glass ceiling is a specific type of gender or racial inequality that can be distinguished from other types of inequality (Cotter et. al. 2001). In their study, they have identified four criteria that create glass ceiling. The first criterion was that a Glass Ceiling inequality represents a gender or a racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employees. Second criterion was that a Glass Ceiling inequality represents a gender or a racial difference that is greater at higher levels of an outcome than at lower levels of an outcome. Third criterion was that a Glass Ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels. And the last criterion was that a Glass Ceiling inequality represents inequality that increases over the course of a career.

In the same research they found evidence of a glass ceiling for women, but racial inequalities among men do not follow a similar pattern. 'Glass Ceiling' appeared to be a distinctively gender phenomenon. The concept of a glass ceiling is an oft-used metaphor for the relative disadvantages regarding women's career opportunities, alluding to the growing difficulties for women when moving up the career ladder (eg Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia and Vanneman, 2001; Charles and Grusky, 1995: 68). It creates a situation where there is a definite stop for women at a certain level in the hierarchy (Baxter and Wright, 2000; Britton and Williams, 2000).

A substantial body of research in different countries in Europe has further examined the role of marital and child-bearing responsibilities as aids or hindrances to progress women's professional career (Bellas, 1992; Cole and Zuckerman, 1987; Astin and Davis, 1985, cited in

Hossain, 2007). While men are usually occupied for their continuing professional career development and achievement of higher positions and promotions, women are assumed a degree of detachment from a profession and a postponement of promotion in favor of childcare and other family responsibilities (Hossain, 2007). These continuing differences pose career difficulties and dilemmas for female employees in different industries (Evetts, 1996).

Research in developed countries further reveals that female employees who achieve progression in their career ladders ascribe it to the efforts of their organizations (Hossain, 2007). These employees state that their organizations identify and develop high-potential employees, provide high visibility assignments, social support, mentoring programs etc. for female employees (Burke and Nelson, 2002). Similarly, in some developing countries (like Bangladesh, India), government has been taking initiatives to promote female participation in employment, by providing special provision such as quota system for women (Hossain, 2007). This worked as a positive incentive for female graduates to embrace a career in the government job. However some researchers argue that the quota system is linked to the concept of reverse discrimination. Under this system, an employer would be required by law to employ a certain proportion from the marginalized group, such as females. It may cause psychological strain on quota appointees as they will be generally looked down upon by those selected on the basis of merit (Zafarullah and Khan, 1989).

Several reasons for difficulties in career opportunities for women have been identified. First, men in managerial positions prefer people with cultural preferences similar to their own, or that managers have a preference for appointing people similar in this respect to others already employed in the organization (Kanter, 1977). This kind of homo-sociality implies that men have a tendency to prefer men for self-reflection, relaxation and social support, the intention being to confirm their own identity and cultural norms (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Maume, 1999). Another type of explanation is based on the prevalence of sexist attitudes, e.g. that men are better suited to leadership positions than are women (Kanter, 1977; Reskin and Hartmann, eds. 1986). Such attitudes could be used by men in strategies to secure power, authority and other privileges (Acker, 1990). Employers avoid promoting women because women as a group are absent from work more often than men, due to child bearing and childcare responsibilities (where women are assumed to have larger responsibilities than men) (Rosenfeld *et al.*, 1998: 27). Despite a well-developed child care system there seems to be a conflict between work and family which cause practical problems especially for women with small children (Ginn *et al.*, 1996). As a consequence women's aspirations could be lowered and their career prospects obstructed. All the above mentioned reasons are clearly connected to the idea of Glass ceiling existence in an organization.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1 Data

This study conducts structured questionnaire survey on 177 female employees from two private sector industries – banking and telecommunication in Bangladesh. The data were collected in December 2013 by using random sampling technique.

3.2 Regression Model

The study uses Ordered Logit and Binary Logit regressions. The functional forms of the equations are as follows:

$$Y1 = f(X1, \dots, X33) \quad (1)$$

$$Y2 = f(X1, \dots, X33) \quad (2)$$

The measurements of the variables are as follows:

- X1 Age (0= up to 25 years age, 1= up to 30 years, 2= up to 35 years, 3= up to 40 years, 4= more than 40 years of age)
- X2 Marital Status (0= single, 1=married)
- X3 Education (0= bachelor, 1= masters)
- X4 Remained unemployed for 6 month & more time after graduation, yes=1, no=0)
- X5 Having break in career, yes=1, no=0)
- X6 Received career guidance from any mentor; yes=1, no=0)
- X7 Using network to get the job, yes=1, no=0)
- X8 Tenure - Total job experience year (0= up to 1 years of experience, 1= up to 3 years, 2= up to 5 years, 3= up to 10 years, 4= more than 10 years)
- X9 Tenure- Current job experience year (0= up to 1 years of experience, 1= up to 3 years, 2= up to 5 years, 3= up to 10 years, 4= more than 10 years)
- X10 Industry Type (1= Bank, 0= Telco)
- X11 Have training yes=1, no=0)
- X12 Current position, Entry level=1, Mid-level=2, higher mid-level=3, high level=4)
- X13 Having administrative responsibility, 1=yes, 0=no)
- X14 Salary level, \$500=1, \$1000=2, \$2000=3, \$2000+=4)
- X15 Satisfaction about salary, yes=1, no=0)
- X16 Previously refused to take job anytime, yes=1, no=0)
- X17 Having conflict between job and family life, yes=1, no=0)
- X18 Small children requiring care at workplace, yes=1, no=0)
- X19 Family Status (1= joint family, 0= nuclear family)
- X20 Discriminated in the job interview as women, yes=1. no=0)
- X21 Discriminated by any male colleague, yes=1, no=0)
- X22 Discriminated as women by management, yes=1, no=0)
- X23 Sexual harassment in job, yes=1, no=0)
- X24 Socially Isolated in workplace as women, yes=1, no=0)
- X25 Excluded from important meeting in workplace as women, yes=1, no=0)
- X26 Discrimination for authority handover for decision in the job as women, yes=3. not-sure=2, no=1)
- X27 Discrimination to move higher management position in the job as women, yes=3. not-sure=2, no=1)
- X28 Discrimination for promotion as woman, yes=1, no=0)
- X29 Discriminated in financial benefits of the job as women, yes=3. not-sure=2, no=1)

- X30 Discrimination in efficiency/ skills recognition as women, yes=3. not-sure=2, no=1)
X31 Less job security as women, yes=1, no=0)
X32 Having network likes man, yes=1. not-sure=2, no=3)
X33 Chances of man getting job is more than women, yes=1, no=0)
Y1 Overall job sanctification, very satisfied =4, satisfied=3, not satisfied=2, very dissatisfied=1)
Y2 Plan to change job within 5 years, yes=1, no=0)

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Analysis:

Among the respondents, majority of them (47%) are between 30-35 years old, and 60% of total women are married (Table 1). All of them have tertiary education, where 60% passed masters degree.

Table 1: Demographic and job information of the female employee

Variables	0	1	2	3	4	Total
X1	59 (33%)	84 (47%)	21 (12%)	11 (6%)	1 (1%)	177
X2	71 (40%)	106 (60%)				177
X3	58 (33%)	119 (67%)				177
X4	150 (85%)	27 (15%)				177
X5	165 (93%)	12 (7%)				177
X6	128 (72%)	49 (28%)				177
X7	121 (68%)	56 (32%)				177
X8	59 (33%)	70 (40%)	30 (17%)	13 (7%)	5 (3%)	177
X9	71 (40%)	64 (36%)	27 (15%)	10 (6%)	5 (3%)	177
X10	89 (50%)	88 (50%)				177
X11	96 (54%)	81 (46%)				177
X12		149 (84%)	21 (12%)	4 (2%)	3 (2%)	177
X13	79 (45%)	98 (55%)				177
X14		133 (75%)	41 (23%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	177
X15	77 (44%)	100 (56%)				177
X16	132 (75%)	45 (25%)				177
X17	149 (84%)	28 (16%)				177
X18	145 (82%)	32 (18%)				177
X19	118 (67%)	59 (33%)				177

Table 2: Glass Ceiling related status of the female employees

Variables	0	1	2	3	4	Total
X20	159 (90%)	18 (10%)				177
X21	153 (86%)	24 (14%)				177
X22	150 (85%)	27 (15%)				177
X23	169 (95%)	8 (5%)				177
X24	159 (90%)	18 (10%)				177
X25	162 (92%)	15 (8%)				177

X26		115 (65%)	46 (26%)	16 (9%)		177
X27		95 (54%)	53 (30%)	29 (16%)		177
X28	156 (88%)	21 (12%)				177
X29		128 (72%)	38 (21%)	11 (6%)		177
X30		110 (62%)	53 (30%)	14 (8%)		177
X31	162 (92%)	15 (8%)				177
X32		92 (52%)	59 (33%)	26 (15%)		177
X33	121 (68%)	56 (32%)				177
Y1		3 (2%)	65 (37%)	48 (27%)	61 (34%)	177
Y2	83 (47%)	94 (53%)				177

4.2 Regression Analysis

There are several demographic, job related, and glass ceiling related factors that statistically significantly effects on the overall job sanctification (Y1) of the female employee in Bangladesh (Table 3). Some of the variables show Odd ratio more than 1, indicating job satisfaction, and below 1, indicating job dissatisfaction. It is found that those who have break in career (X5), also receive career guidelines from any mentors (X6), and have network as like as man (X32) are not satisfied in their current job. On the other hand, those who have involved in the current job for a long time (X9) and satisfied on their salary (X15) are also satisfied in their current job. Further, the employee working in banking sector holds more job satisfaction than those of telecommunication sector (X10).

Interestingly there is no glass ceiling related variables is statistically significant with the job satisfaction. The reason is that women in Bangladesh faces obstacle in their career for different reason rather than the glass ceiling. It is also remarkable that those who are somehow fallen behind due to break in career are also very cautious about their career and not satisfied about their current position. Similarly, those who are careerist and expecting to earn more, maintain networking, consult peoples about career and switch job frequently as usual holds less job satisfaction and less loyalty about their employer. This tendency found more case of telecommunication sector where jab satisfaction is less than banking sector. However, none of these issues are related to the issues of glass ceiling.

Table 3: Regression output on the factor influencing the job satisfaction of female employees

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odd Ratio	Prob.	Odd Ratio	Prob.
X1	1.040613	0.4526	1.022	0.7062
X2	1.094487	0.8019	0.282	0.0158
X3	1.041287	0.9177	0.388	0.1105
X4	1.127745	0.8118	0.432	0.3031
X5	0.14779	0.0064	16.161	0.096
X6	0.515702	0.0874	2.095	0.1906
X7	0.838299	0.6468	1.522	0.4523
X8	0.714881	0.1324	1.355	0.4089
X9	1.619891	0.0279	0.546	0.1207
X10	2.112387	0.0276	0.546	0.2228
X11	0.641346	0.2725	3.888	0.014

X12	0.741333	0.4804	1.853	0.3392
X13	1.14322	0.6989	1.578	0.3538
X14	0.774064	0.5027	0.669	0.5554
X15	2.424568	0.0194	0.720	0.5505
X16	0.714052	0.4287	4.892	0.0088
X17	1.338735	0.6431	0.496	0.4756
X18	1.750161	0.2871	3.592	0.1486
X19	0.558224	0.1023	2.405	0.1066
X20	2.586595	0.1687	1.130	0.9066
X21	0.615885	0.4025	16.708	0.0339
X22	0.682359	0.4817	2.013	0.5023
X23	1.840618	0.4814	0.134	0.2305
X24	1.700917	0.5299	0.003	0.0052
X25	0.356701	0.1155	0.230	0.2436
X26	0.736025	0.3142	0.647	0.3542
X27	0.93159	0.8097	2.827	0.0355
X28	0.618886	0.4857	44.099	0.0194
X29	0.860608	0.6555	1.285	0.6426
X30	1.038801	0.901	0.920	0.8611
X31	1.828916	0.4385	52.387	0.0362
X32	0.636552	0.0984	0.223	0.0009
X33	1.199314	0.6537	0.628	0.4693
Y2	1.088812	0.8302		
Y1			1.347	0.2701
Dependent Variable	Y1	Y2		
Model Type	Ordered Logit	Binary Logit		
Pseudo R-squared	0.124748			
Schwarz criterion	3.10911	1.776957		
Hannan-Quinn criter.	2.714437	1.414285		
LR statistic	51.13822			
Prob(LR statistic)	0.029805			
Akaike info criterion	2.445169	1.166849		
Log likelihood	-179.397			
Restr. log likelihood	-204.967	-69.26613		
Avg. log likelihood	-1.01355	-0.391334		
Mean dependent var	0.531073	0.531073		
S.E. of regression	0.395235	0.395235		
Sum squared resid	22.33814	22.33814		

The Odd ratios are calculated as e^{β}

There are several demographic, job related, and glass ceiling related factors that statistically significantly related with the planning of change the current job (Y2) of the female employee. Some of the variables show Odd ratio more than 1, indicating having influences on willingness to shifting job within 5 years. Those who have training (X11) or consider themselves more skilled would like to shift in better job. Those who have conflict between job and family life (X17) also like to shift the job.

More importantly, unlike the job satisfaction, there are several glass ceiling factors that influences the planning of change the current job (Y2) of the female employee. Those who feel

are discriminated by any male colleague (X21), discriminated to move higher management position (X27), discriminated for promotion (X28), and holding less job security (X31) would like to shift in better job. Though these glass ceiling factors shows statistically significant relationship with their planning to change job, only 8-30% of the employee agreed that these glass ceiling factor are available in their current job. Some other factors also shows statistically significant relationship with not willing to change job, like the married women (X2) or the women who like to be isolated in the workplace (X24) or those who have good network and understanding within the organization (X32).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Women professional careers in organizations are mainly influenced by family, socio-cultural norms, political pressures may also influence a person's working as well as social life. Among the women, those who have involved in the current job for a long time and satisfied on their salary are also satisfied in their current job. Beyond the job satisfaction, women employees are also like to change the job if they have training or consider them more skilled as well as for the case if they have conflict between job and family life. Interestingly there is no glass ceiling related variables is statistically significant with the job satisfaction but there are several glass ceiling factors that influences the planning of change the current job. Those who feel they are discriminated by any male colleague, discriminated to move higher management position, discriminated for promotion, and holding less job security would like to change their job. Overall, the women employee working in banking sector holds more job satisfaction than those of telecommunication sector.

To improve the situation, several initiatives need to take in the organization. Awareness creation about gender discrimination among the male and female employee can improve the situation. Moreover, organizational policy needs to be focused on standard and ethical practices. There should be strict policy for discrimination or harassments, etc.

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