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## RELATED FACTORS FOR GLASS CEILING MANAGEMENT TO DEVELOP A CAREER PATH. CASE STUDY: FEMALE EMPLOYEES OF KERMAN EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION

FACTORES RELACIONADOS PARA LA GESTIÓN DEL TECHO DE VIDRIO PARA DESARROLLAR UN CAMINO PROFESIONAL. ESTUDIO DE CASO: EMPLEADOS FEMENINOS DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN EJECUTIVA DE KERMAN

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explain the factors related to glass ceiling management to develop the career path of female employees of Kerman executive organizations. The statistical population of the study included two groups of experts and female executives of Kerman organizations. In this analytical study, the factors associated with glass ceiling phenomena in four dimensions: organizational factors, individual factors, socio-cultural factors, legal factors, glass ceiling management in four dimensions of denial, obtaining, retirement, willingness to change, and career path development in two dimensions of internal career and the external workflow of the structural equation approach were analyzed. The findings indicated that in addition to its direct, factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon has an indirect impact through the development of glass ceiling on career path development. The mediating effect of glass ceiling management on the relationship between factors associated with glass ceiling phenomenon and career path development was also confirmed. In addition, the status of factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon and glass ceiling management status in the study population were above average and career development status was below average. Moreover, as glass ceiling phenomena increased, glass ceiling management increased and career path development decreased, but as glass ceiling management increased, career path development developed decreased.

### Keywords:

Glass ceiling, development of the career path, Kerman executive organizations.

### RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo explicar los factores relacionados con la gestión del techo de cristal para desarrollar la trayectoria profesional de las empleadas de las organizaciones ejecutivas de Kerman. La población estadística del estudio incluyó dos grupos de expertos y mujeres ejecutivas de organizaciones Kerman. En este estudio analítico, los factores asociados con los fenómenos del techo de cristal en cuatro dimensiones: factores organizativos, factores individuales, factores socioculturales, factores legales, gestión del techo de cristal en cuatro dimensiones de negación, obtención, jubilación, voluntad de cambio y trayectoria profesional. Se analizó el desarrollo en dos dimensiones de la carrera interna y el flujo de trabajo externo del enfoque de ecuaciones estructurales. Los hallazgos indicaron que, además de su directa, los factores relacionados con el fenómeno del techo de vidrio tienen un impacto indirecto a través del desarrollo del techo de vidrio en el desarrollo de la carrera profesional. También se confirmó el efecto mediador de la gestión del techo de vidrio sobre la relación entre los factores asociados con el fenómeno del techo de vidrio y el desarrollo de la carrera profesional. Además, el estado de los factores relacionados con el fenómeno del techo de vidrio y el estado de gestión del techo de vidrio en la población de estudio fueron superiores al promedio y el estado de desarrollo profesional fue inferior al promedio. Además, a medida que aumentaron los fenómenos del techo de vidrio, aumentó la gestión del techo de vidrio y disminuyó el desarrollo de la carrera profesional, pero a medida que aumentó la gestión del techo de vidrio, el desarrollo de la carrera profesional disminuyó.

### Palabras clave:

Techo de vidrio, desarrollo de la carrera profesional, organizaciones ejecutivas de Kerman.

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the belief in equality between men and women, women are witnessing gender inequality. Not only do women not have equal opportunities with men at the start of their employment, but they are also less fortunate in the ascendancy of progress, so that the presence of women in management positions, both macro and micro, is negligible. The proportion of women who reached senior management positions is relatively small, indicating discriminatory barriers to entry into senior management positions (Enid Kiaye & Maniraj Singh, 2013). In South Asia, female labor force participation is particularly low. All developing regions in the World Bank's available figures are as follows: Female labor force participation in Pakistan was 23% in 2011 and 16% in Afghanistan, 29% in India and 57% in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2012). Sweden is the fourth out of 142 countries for gender equality. However, there is a glance at the number of female executives in top positions on the Swedish companies list, with a clear minority of women (5%) and a majority of men (95%) (Statistics Sweden, 2014). After joining the organizations, women begin to grow and develop alongside men and go through different levels of the organization; however, as women reach higher levels of the organization, their growth rate is diminished to the extent that it prevents them from accessing top-level jobs. These invisible agents are called glass ceilings. The term clearly refers to the place in the organization that there is no clear reason why women cannot get there, but in reality, women cannot be reached. Looking at the high levels of the organization through this glass ceiling, competent and empowered women find a place they deserve but are unable to break through this glass ceiling (Mirghafori, 2006). Women are a potentially important source of scientific, social, and cultural development in the country, so special attention is needed for their career path. American women occupy less than five percent of the top organizational positions (Smith, Crittenden & Caputi, 2012). An American organization focused on women's issues has predicted that it will take 73 years for women to reach the top of the five hundred top management companies (Catalyst, 2004). In addition, the UK Equal Opportunities Commission calculated that it would take sixty-five years for women to achieve equal opportunities with men as managers of the UK's top one hundred companies (O'Neil, et al., 2008; Sepehri & Sheikhalizadeh, 2019).

Most women have served as assistant directors of staff and rarely take the responsibilities of line managers; therefore, the main subject of the study is why their presence in different domains and their tenure in higher-level responsibilities is less evident, even though women make up

half of the population, and despite their education and experience, women are reluctant to accept sensitive positions and responsibilities. Finally, it can be stated that despite the belief in equality between men and women in the enjoyment of rights and opportunities, women are witnessing all kinds of gender inequality. Women, in the pursuit of professional and scientific success and opportunities, face social-cultural barriers such as gender discrimination in employment, vertical mobility, participation in decision-making, family pressures, and the difficulty of accessing informal social networks (Mirkamali & Nastizaei, 2009). Numerous studies in Iran over the past twenty years indicate that cultural attitudes and negative stereotypes, superficial perceptions, and prejudices about emotional and behavioral traits, psychological and personality traits of women, and women's unwillingness to take up managerial positions are major barriers to women's promotion. studies show that women at the highest levels of business are still rare. Less than 15% of CEOs in 500 Fortune companies are women (Bertrand, Black, Jensen & Lleras-Muney, 2014). Glass roofs can be seen in many countries, including Australia, China, France, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. One of the organizational challenges to people's jobs is a lack of proper insight into the capabilities and incentives that enable the potential success of careers. In fact, people do not have a good understanding of their career anchors. If managers are employed without considering their motivations and skills, it causes them to diverge between their individual and organizational goals and they are likely to be disinterested in their job. If the human resource factor, which is one of the most important factors and resources of the organization's production, is excluded, what remains is that the other factors and capabilities of the organization are not automatically usable. Accordingly and considering the importance of the existence and impact of human resources on the organization's position, one of the essential tasks of human resources management is to try to maintain and promote the employees in the organization so that every person working in the organization can gain career promotion and development during the organization after acquiring experience and job skills. People seek growth and development by entering the world of work and organization, thus they choose the path that is designed at the discretion of the manager. Developing a career path is based on the assumption that the most successful individuals in the organization are headed for the path that brings them the highest salaries and benefits. Each person has a career path for what he or she is doing automatically, but it is up to each person to interpret it in a way that is meaningful and valuable to them (Schein & Van Maanen, 2006). Regarding the importance of this topic as

one of the research focuses, the present study aimed to explain the factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon with glass ceiling management to develop the career path of female employees of Kerman executive organizations and present a desirable model. Therefore, the main question of this research is what is the model of factors associated with glass ceiling management to develop the career path of female employees of Kerman executive organizations?

## DEVELOPMENT

The glass ceiling indicates that women have failed to achieve high levels of hierarchy. This factor and failure make them think that there is a glass ceiling, that is, discriminatory barriers, in their efforts to achieve high levels of management in organizations. The results of the research indicate that in Iran, increasing women's access to higher education and get a higher grade, as well as increasing the number of female specialists in the society does not lead to their promotion in the labor market and the participation rate of men and women in the field is significantly different. (Shieh-zadeh, 2011). According to official statistics in 2011, the female population of the country is estimated as 49%. In the field of education, the literacy rate of women increased from 36.5% in 1976 to 81% in 2011. A 40% growth of NGOs active in the field of women can be observed in the area of social participation of women (Motaghi Shahri, Ghafouri & Mahmoudi, 2014). In management and decision-making, only about 2.5% of female executives are female, and as we move to higher levels of management, the rate decreases to 1.4% at the level of general manager and vice president. Women are consciously or unconsciously marginalized in the natural division of human resources in organizations, and their growth and development are considered insignificant to other people. And even sometimes their achievement is seen as extravagant and far-fetched, because the prevailing notion is that they should be on the sidelines and not at the top, this would indicate the glass ceiling that prevents most organizations in the world, without legal validity, solely on the basis of unwritten agreements to promote women in the organization (Wirth, 2002).

The results of the surveys also indicate that gender is still a common obstacle to women's career advancement in many international arenas. It seems that women's advancement to the senior level has been hampered by invisible barriers that best describe the term "glass ceiling". The glass ceiling is the result of stereotypical perceptions and prejudices that exist about women and prevent women from ascending to particular levels in the organizational hierarchy. Glass ceilings, which is based on organizational

attitudes and prejudices, hinder the advancement of women in managerial careers.

Mathur-Helm stated in 2006 that the glass ceiling is a reality as a myth and is nurtured by organizational culture, policies, and strategies. Women and men complement each other in the workplace, but it seems that men decide to take the lead. In the past decade, sociologists in the field of business sociology have paid more attention to gender and the process of job selection and have acknowledged that the process of job selection and career promotion, especially for educated women, is different from that of men. There were several studies on the status of university women in the country, all of which acknowledged that gender is a determinant factor in choices and that women are not present in university management levels, although their participation in lower and middle management levels is increasing. However, there was no noticeable change in senior management. The most important reasons for such a situation are culture, patriarchal tendency, and mistrust of women's abilities at university (Zahedi, 2007).

The overall objective of this study is to identify and explain the factors associated with glass ceiling management in order to develop the career path of female employees of Kerman executive organizations. Other goals include:

- 1- Investigating the status of the factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon in the study population
2. Assessing the status of glass ceiling management in the study population
- 3- Investigating the development of a career path in the study population
- 4- Investigating the relationship between the factors associated with the organizational glass ceiling phenomenon and glass ceiling management in the study population
5. Investigating the relationship between factors associated with the phenomenon of the organizational glass ceiling and career path development in the study population
- 6- Examining the relationship between glass ceiling management and career path development in the study population

## Research Method

The research method used in this study was descriptive and structural equation approach and confirmatory factor

analysis was used. Designing variables affecting the glass ceiling and career path development through library studies were investigated. In order to finalize the list of dimensions and indices, the Delphi method was used by a survey of experts (including university professors and HR professionals). A special type of open-ended questionnaire was used for the expert opinion survey. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed randomly in the target area. Finally, 394 questionnaires were used for statistical analysis. Content validity (face validity) was used to determine the validity of the questionnaires in the study population. The internal consistency method was used to estimate the reliability coefficient so that the internal reliability of the factors related to the Glass Roof Questionnaire, Glass Roof Management, Glass Roof Phenomena, and Job Path Development Questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. And as the Cronbach's alpha values were higher than (0.7), the internal reliability of all dimensions was confirmed. The value of these statistics indicates that the questionnaires are highly reliable.

### Research Findings

#### *Are the factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon in the population under study in a good condition? ( $3 < \mu$ )*

According to the results of Table (1), it can be said that the factors underlying the glass ceiling phenomenon in the study population were at a desirable level ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). In other words, based on the average obtained for this variable, it can be said that the status of factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon (organizational, individual, social and legal) in the study population was above average.

**Table 1. Factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon in the study population.**

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Theoretical average = 3.00	
			T statistics	p-value
Organizational	3.10	0.74	2.75	0.003
Individual	3.11	0.72	3.02	0.001
Social	3.10	0.77	2.68	0.004
Legal	3.20	0.81	4.94	0.001

#### *Is the glass ceiling management in a good condition in the community understudy? ( $3 < \mu$ )*

According to the results of Table 2, it can be said that the glass ceiling management in the study population was at a desirable level ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). In other words, based on the average obtained for this variable, it can be said

that the status of glass ceiling management in the study population was above average.

**Table 2. Glass ceiling management status in the study population.**

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Theoretical average = 3.00	
			T statistics	p-value
Denial	2.76	0.66	-7.22	1.00
Resignation	2.99	0.74	-0.10	0.539
Willingness to change	3.09	0.75	2.49	0.007
Acceptance	3.21	0.68	6.22	0.001

#### *Is the development of the career path in the study community in a good condition? ( $3 < \mu$ )*

According to the results of Table (3), it can be said that in the study population, the career development variable was not at the desired level ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). In other words, based on the mean obtained for this variable, it can be said that the status of career path development in the study population was lower than the average level.

**Table 3. Career development status in the study population.**

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Theoretical average = 3.00	
			T statistics	p-value
Internal work-force	2.96	0.76	-0.94	0.827
Technical competence	2.84	0.87	-3.68	1.000
Managerial competence	3.14	0.81	3.55	0.001
Independence	2.89	0.86	-2.55	0.994
External work-force	2.36	0.60	-21.27	1.000
Promotion	2.17	0.69	-23.61	1.00
Earnings	2.73	0.76	-7.06	1.00

#### *Is there a relationship between factors related to organizational glass ceiling phenomenon and glass ceiling management among female employees at Kerman executive organization?*

The structural equation modeling results presented in Table (4) indicate an incremental and significant effect of factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon on glass ceiling management (0.752) among female employees at

Kerman executive organizations. In other words, by increasing the factors associated with the phenomenon of glass ceiling among female employees in Kerman executive organizations, glass ceiling management will be improved and enhanced.

Table 4. Path coefficient and its significance and research question in the path analysis model.

Question	Path coefficient	T value	Type of relationship
Glass ceiling management → factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon	0.752	14.035**	Incremental (direct)

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level, \* Significant at 0.1

The results of the correlation test indicate that there is a significant relationship between organizational factors, individual factors, socio-cultural factors and legal factors with glass ceiling management (p-value <0.05). Given the calculated positive correlation coefficients, these relationships are incremental (direct). In other words, the glass ceiling management variable increases by increasing each factor associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon. According to the calculated correlation coefficients, it can be said that the relationship between organizational factors and glass ceiling management is more intense (Table 5).

Table 5. Examining the relationship between the factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon and glass ceiling management.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Glass ceiling management	1				
2. Organizational factors	0.657**	1			
3. Individual factors	0.614**	0.654	1		
4. Socio-cultural factors	0.642**	0.627	0.672	1	
5. Legal factors	0.634**	0.684	0.698	0.635	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

***Is there a relationship between factors related to Organizational glass roof phenomenon and career development among female employees in Kerman executive organizations?***

The structural equation modeling results presented in Table (6) indicated the significant and decremental effect of factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon on career path development (-0.628) among female employees in Kerman executive organizations.

Table 6. Path coefficient and its significance and surveying the research question in the main path analysis model.

Question	Path coefficient	t value	type of relationship
Career path development → factors associated with glass ceiling phenomenon	-0.628	-10.977**	Decremental (reverse)

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level, \* Significant at 0.1

In other words, by increasing the factors associated with the phenomenon of glass ceiling among female employees in Kerman executive organizations, career path development will also decrease (Table 6).

The results of the correlation test indicate that there is a significant relationship between organizational factors, individual factors, socio-cultural factors and legal factors with career development (p <0.05). Given the calculated positive correlation coefficients, these relationships are incremental (direct). In other words, by increasing each of the factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon, the career path variable will increase. According to the calculated correlation coefficients, it can be said that the relationship between legal factors and career path development is more intense (Table 7).

Table 7. Investigating the relationship between factors related to glass roof phenomena and career development.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Career path development	1				
2. Organizational factors	-0.685**	1			
3. Individual factors	-0.671**	0.654	1		
4. Socio-cultural factors	-0.605**	0.627	0.672	1	
5. Legal factors	-0.686**	0.684	0.698	0.635	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

***Is there a relationship between glass ceiling management and career path development among female employees in Kerman executive organizations?***

The structural equation modeling results presented in Table (8) indicated the significant and decremental effect of glass ceiling management on career path development (-0.236) among female employees in Kerman executive organizations. In other words, with the increase of glass ceiling management among female employees in Kerman executive organizations, the development of a career path will decrease.

**Table 8. Path coefficient and its significance and surveying the research question in the main path analysis model.**

Question	Path coefficient	t value	type of relationship
Career development → Glass roof management	-0.236	-3.999**	Decremental (inverse)

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level, \* Significant at 0.1

The results of the correlation test indicate that there is a significant relationship between denial, resignation, willingness to change and acceptance with career path development (p-value <0.05). Due to the negative correlation coefficients between resignation and acceptance with career development, they are the type of decremental (reverse). In other words, the career development variable decreases by increasing the components of the tendency to resign and accept. In addition, the relationship between denial and willingness to change with career path development is incremental (direct) and with increasing denial components and willingness to change, the career path variable will increase. According to the calculated correlation coefficients, it can be said that the relationship between acceptance and career path development is more intense (Table 9).

**Table 9. Examining the relationship between the components of glass ceiling management and career path development.**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Developing a career path	1				
2. Denial	0.852**	1			
3. Resignation	-0.597**	0.666	1		
4. Willingness to change	0.644**	0.676	0.635	1	
5. Acceptance	-0.664**	0.640	0.627	0.711	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

*What is the model of factors related to the glass roof phenomenon with glass roof beliefs in developing the career path development among female employees in Kerman executive organizations?*

The results indicated that the factors related to the glass ceiling phenomenon in addition to its direct effect, it also influences on career path development indirectly and through glass roof management. The direct impact rate is -0.628 and the indirect impact through glass ceiling management is -0.77. In addition, based on the calculations, a significant confidence interval was obtained from the Bootstrap method to investigate the mediating role of

variable glass ceiling management (-0.622 and -0.840). If the confidence interval does not include zero, it is assumed that there is a significant indirect effect. Accordingly, the mediating effect of glass ceiling management on the relationship between factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon and career path development is confirmed. Figure (1) shows the final model derived from the relationships among variables.

**Table 10. Direct, indirect and total effects on the main path analysis model.**

Question	Path coefficient	Type of relationship	Type of Fit
Glass ceiling management → factors associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon	0.752	Incremental (direct)	too strong
Glass ceiling phenomenon → factors associated with glass ceiling phenomenon	0.844	Incremental (direct)	
Career path development → factors associated with glass ceiling phenomenon	-0.628	Decremental (reverse)	
Career path development → Glass roof management	-0.236	Decremental (reverse)	

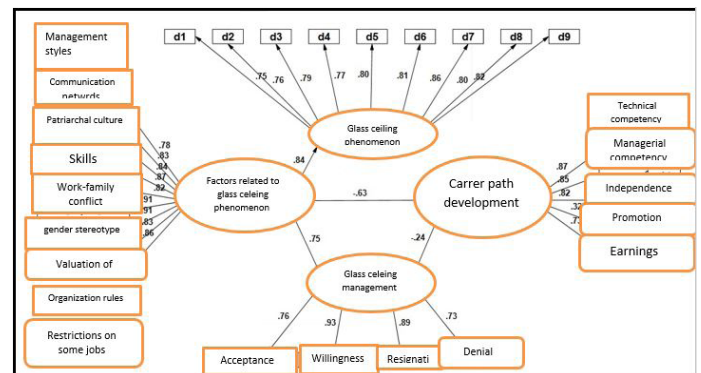


Figure 1. Structural equation results for the final research model.

The concept of the glass ceiling in the US where the Glass Roof Commission was created as part of US citizenship in 1991, while glass ceilings existed in US companies and it was observed that women in the workplace could only reach certain levels of the organization and no more. In the present study, the presence of glass ceiling among female employees in Kerman executive organizations was confirmed by the research of Jay et al. (Ge et al., 2011) that there is glass ceiling in Hong Kong. In addition, the study by Pai & Vaidya (2009) who found that glass ceilings existed and that there were barriers in the organization and places of study that did not allow them to rise to the top. Among the relationships investigated in this study was the influence of glass ceiling factors on the career

development among female employees in Kerman executive organizations, which was studied by De Alwis & Bambullah (2013), and Shah Talebi, Yarmohammadianm & Ajami (2009). This study also consistent with Shah Talebi, et al. (2009).

In the present study, the evaluation of glass ceiling management, which included four beliefs of acceptance, rejection, willingness to change, and resignation, was consistent with Smith's research (Smith, 2012) on how each of these factors affects women's career development. Thus, acceptance and resignation beliefs decrease career development and denial and tendency to change have a favorable effect on the career development of women.

## CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, women should seek senior positions and be given effective leadership when given the opportunity. Higher education capabilities will help women overcome discrimination. Women need to be committed to their jobs to enhance their career path, not to reject high-paying jobs because of family roles, and to refrain from long hours at work. The results of confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the individual factors were the most important factor in explaining the variable on the variables associated with the glass ceiling phenomenon, which was consistent with the research of Ahmadi Kohanali, Behboudi & Jamoor (2013), who stated that individual factors are the most important ones. Therefore, women need to work harder to acquire managerial, technical, perceptual skills, and to work harder to coordinate work and family and spend long hours working.

Career path development is also one of the most important issues for employees and organizations; because there is an interaction between the organization and the organization's development through the organization's career path. An employee develops his or her career path through management skills and experiences that bring reward and promotion. In the present study, the development of a career path from the perspective of the external and internal career paths was investigated. The results of the present study indicated that the glass ceiling phenomenon and glass ceiling management has an adverse effect on women's career development. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare the view of women on the glass ceiling in order to pave the way for women's career development and to achieve success and advancement in their career in order to determine the position and place of employment of women.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that managers do not neglect the career development of women who make up half of the active population. The results

of this study indicated the factors related to the phenomenon of glass ceiling that reduce the development of women career path and prevent them from growing on this path. The government also needs to reduce restrictive laws to increase the development of women's career paths. The results of the research and evaluation of the experts confirm that planning and action to remove the limitations of women in developing their career path can be effective in achieving development.

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