

## **Partial mediating effect of job stress between glass ceiling-gender discrimination and organizational commitment: A study of banking sector of Pakistan**

**Abeer IMAM<sup>1,\*</sup>, Aiman RAZA<sup>1</sup> and Hasnain RAZA<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Management Sciences, CUI, Lahore, Pakistan*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Media & Communication, UMT, Lahore, Pakistan*

(\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [abeer\\_imam11@ymail.com](mailto:abeer_imam11@ymail.com))

### **Abstract**

Glass ceiling concept is gaining importance in working organizations. It restricts organizations to get the advantage from experience and knowledge of female employees. Gender discrimination also cause hurdle in a path of success for the organization. Both of these workplace discrimination cause stress in employees that can make organization suffer. Organizational commitment on the other hand is an important attitudinal outcome that every organization needs to have from its employees. This helps organizations to get on the road of success. There should be practices that help curb glass ceiling-gender discrimination. Practices that can help control the practices of workplace discrimination. This study was destined to find the mediating effect of job stress among gender discrimination-glass ceiling and organizational commitment. Results showed that there exists a partial mediating relationship among the job stress (mediator), gender discrimination-glass ceiling (independent variable) and organizational commitment (dependent variable). Respondents of the research work were banking sector employees of Pakistan. The sample size is obtained through systematic random sampling technique. A questionnaire consisting of 17 items were distributed among banking personnel regarding study variables. Future Recommendations were also offered.

**Keywords:** Glass ceiling, discrimination, organizational commitment, banking sector, Pakistan

### **Introduction**

Managing people at work place is an imperative part of the management process (Tella et al. 2007). Managing people also contribute towards the commitment of the employees to help gain the competitive advantage and outperform the rivals. Organizational commitment is an important concept that helps organizations to help retain employees who are an asset for the organization. It has also gained a renowned importance that it helps organization to achieve its goals, to opt for innovation and the competitiveness of the organization (Suki & Suki, 2011). Similarly, job stress has also gained a considerable concern to the management, and employees of the organization. It leads to a serious organizational problem (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Ornelas & Kleiner, 2003; Varca, 1999). Glass ceiling and gender discrimination are the types of workplace discrimination that cause an employee to suffer from stress and anxiety. This relationship causes an increase or decrease in organizational commitment of employees. Today, glass ceiling is gaining recognition all over the world. Now organizations are considering practices to curb the glass ceiling and gender discrimination practices.

#### **Problem need analysis**

Glass ceiling restrict the career progression of female employees in the hierarchy. The glass ceiling and gender discrimination cause employees to experience job stress in any working environment. As reported by Ragins et al. (1998) employees in many organizations have accepted the importance and significance of shattering and destroying the glass ceiling and removing barriers and hurdles that prevent women from excelling in the hierarchy and to utilize its full potential and strength. Banking sector is considered to be the more stressed sector as compared to any other sector.

#### **Research question**

Does mediating effect of stress between glass-ceiling and gender discrimination exists in the banking sector employees of Pakistan?

### **Literature review**

Following paragraph will list the literature regarding study variables.

#### **Glass ceiling**

It is the era of managing the human capital better. Organizations employ workers to achieve their objectives and goals. So, there must be equal employment opportunities for both the genders. As mentioned by the Shoaib et al. (2010) it is essential because it not only helps in achieving the economic stability but also it helps in development. We can also analyze that the women participation is increasing in the workforce. He found that some organizations have small number of female employees as compared to male in top management or high ranking positions as they prefer to have males in top level positions. It is

important to provide equal employment opportunities for women to remove glass ceiling. It will help attain development and economic stability.

### **Gender discrimination**

Gender discrimination lowers the job satisfaction and commitment. Women are less committed and enthusiastic toward job if they are discriminated on the ground of gender. Gender discrimination and stress level is highly positively related. If there is gender discrimination then women are more likely to do work under stress.

Organizations work to perform well and to outweigh the competition. Employees of any organization is its asset. Employees must be provided with the proper promotion, hiring and facilities. The study of Abbas et al. (2011) showed that organizations succeed because of employee performance that they show at workplace. Workforce is the team of male and female employees. Workforce must be made regardless of the gender issue. Hiring, promotion and facilities are the three considerations that are examined to see whether if there is discrimination in these factors than could they affect the employee performance. Employees must be given equal opportunity to perform and get reward on the basis of performance. Females must not be discriminated in the intrinsic or non-financial rewards.

### **Stress**

According to Topper (2007) stress is a “person’s psychological and physiological response to the perception of demand and challenge. Stress is that situation that restrains an individual to experience force divergence from normal functioning that is mainly caused by the interruption in his/her physiological, emotional and mental conditions (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Stress can cause employees to show a high or lower performance for an organization (Mufti et al. 2012).

### **Organizational commitment**

Scott-Ladd et al. (2006) investigated from their research that organizational commitment is consistent in enhancing a powerful attitudinal response in employees. Powerful attitudinal responses enhanced because of increased organizational commitment, which help employees to perform well and improve productivity of the organization. Organization can benefit from this powerful attitudinal response, because when employees have a sense of belonging with the organization, they will work hard to make their organization more successful and productive.

Organizational Commitment plays an important role in the organizations to gain the loyalty of employees. Employees who have increased sense of belonging with the organization show higher commitment than the employees depicting low belongingness towards the organization. Many researchers have done lots many researches on finding ways to increase the organizational commitment of employees (Mowday et al. 1982). These researches laid the foundation that the increased organizational commitment increases the employee performance (Dost et al. 2002) and in return increase the performance of the organization. It is beneficial for the organization to develop the commitment of the employees to gain the competitive edge on other companies in terms of performance and productivity.

Employee’s emotional attachment with the organization also increases the organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984). This study is helpful to find the employee belongingness with the organization and its effect on the productivity of the organization.

### **Glass ceiling/Gender discrimination and organizational commitment**

Employees who perceive discrimination and face sexist policies and practices show a decreased organizational commitment (Ensher et al. 2001). Similarly, perceived gender discrimination negatively impact organizational commitment. Increasing gender discrimination, decrease the organizational commitment (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). While Imam & Shah (2013) finding shows that glass ceiling and gender discrimination has a positive relation with organizational commitment, i.e., increasing glass-ceiling and gender discrimination increase the organizational commitment.

### **Glass ceiling/Gender discrimination and stress**

Lack of career progression results in a stress for working women and it adversely affect the health of women and decrease satisfaction on the other extreme (Nelson et al. 1990; Nelson & Quick, 1985).

### **Organizational commitment and stress**

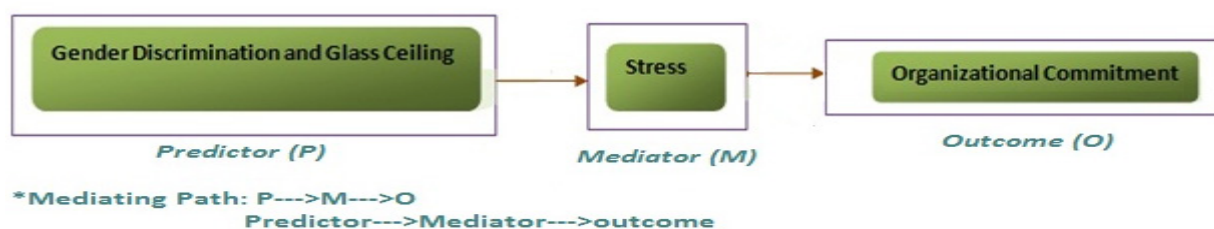
Organizational commitment is defined as the employee’s belief and faith in the organization and its goals and his/her desire to remain the part of organization and their loyalty with the organization (Mowday & Steers, 1979). Employees perform well when they are committed with the organization and its goals. If employees are satisfied with the organization and its policies they show positive attitude towards organization. But on the other side employees are facing job stress they will likely show a decline trend of their commitment with the organization. When they are facing job stress their belief and faith in the organization will shatter. If organizations implement strategies to minimize the level of stress from the organization and employees, loyalty of the employees towards organization will enhance. Employees will show their desire to be the part of the organization, when they face low job stress.

Employees can face stress because of gender discrimination and glass ceiling. When the level of stress increased they will show decreased organizational commitment. Same finding is depicted in the study conducted by Butt (2009). He found that high level of stress induces low level of organizational commitment, which shows that stress and organizational commitment are inversely related with each other. Stress, cause an employee to show negative commitment with the

organization. Increased stress can mentally disturb an employee, who can then face decreased motivation toward work and the organization. Their belonging to the organization will be affected adversely by the job stress. They will not perform for the organizations success and prosperity. They will tend to leave the organization.

### Theoretical framework

As found by the research conducted by Khatibi et al. (2009) job stress has negative impact on the organizational commitment. Increased stress decreases the organizational commitment. Employees cannot perform better when they are in the state of stress. Stress depicts a negative relation with the organizational commitment. Employees cannot show commitment with the organization and its goals (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1** Theoretical framework.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Job Stress has a partial mediating relationship between Gender Discrimination-Glass Ceiling and Organizational Commitment in the Banking Managers of Pakistan.

### Research methodology

This study is done to explore how stress mediates the relationship between glass ceiling, gender discrimination and organizational commitment in the banking sector employees of Pakistan. This research was made effective through questionnaire survey. There were 17 questions measured on a 5 point Likert-scale.

### Empirical findings

#### Reliability check

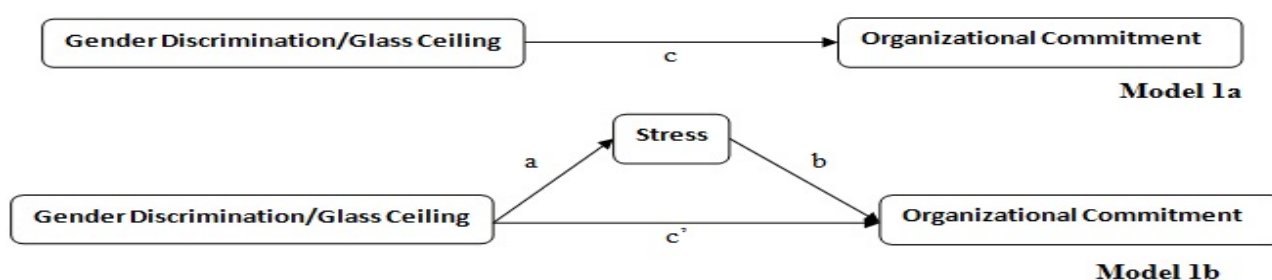
Reliability of study variables were checked through using Cronbach's alpha. **Table 1** shows the reliability analysis for study variables.

**Table 1** Constructs reliability.

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Glass Ceiling	4	.771
Gender Discrimination	4	.709
Stress	5	.742
Commitment	4	.850

#### Multiple regression analysis

The steps of Baron & Kenny (1986) were used to test the mediation effect of job stress between gender discrimination, glass ceiling and organizational commitment.



**Figure 2** Model for multiple regressions.

**Figure 2** shows path to be tested by Multiple Regression Analysis as a Baron and Kenny (1986). The four steps of Baron and Kenny (1986) states that if all the four steps should be significant then there is a partial mediating relationship while if the fourth step is insignificant then there exists a full mediation.

**Table 2** Path analysis.

Path	Coefficients	s.e.	t	Sig(two)
Path c	.6757	.1193	5.6631	.0000
Path a	.4217	.1090	3.8668	.0002
Path b	.5813	.0792	7.3395	.0000
Path c'	.4306	.1068	4.0314	.0001

Since all the four steps of Baron and Kenny (1986) were satisfied and every four steps are significant (**Table 2**). Therefore, Hypothesis will be accepted that there exists a partial mediating relationship of Job Stress between Glass Ceiling/Gender Discrimination and Organizational Commitment in the Banking Employees of Pakistan.

**Table 3** Model summary for DV model.

R-sq	Adj R-sq	F	df1	df2	p
.4176	.4091	49.1128	2.0000	137.0000	.0000

#### Interpretation

**Table 3** shows that almost 40.91% variability in gender discrimination and glass ceiling is shared by stress being the mediating variable and organizational commitment as a dependent variable. It is also evident that the model is highly significant.

**Table 4** Sobel test.

	Test Statistic (Z)	Std. Error	p-value
Sobel Test	3.3964	.0722	.0007

#### Interpretation

**Table 4** shows that there exists a significant mediation.

#### Conclusions

It can be concluded that partial mediating effect of job stress helps intensify the glass-ceiling/gender discrimination on the commitment of employees towards the organization. This finding directs this study to answer the research question that there exists a partial mediating effect of job stress between glass-ceiling/gender discrimination and organizational commitment in banking sector employees of Pakistan. It is also concluded that there exists a predictive validity (significant) for dependent variable, i.e., for organizational commitment.

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