STICKY FLOOR: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS OF ILAM PROVINCE WITH A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

A small number of women have been assigned in managerial positions of Iranian public sector and their number in high-level managerial positions is very low. Eliminating barriers to women promotion and increasing the number of women in managerial positions at public sector depends on identifying factors influencing the glass ceiling. The aim of this study was to identify the leadership promotion barriers of women in governmental organizations to of Ilam Province using a qualitative approach. Methodology used in this study was a qualitative method based on the text bases and subjective data. In this research, the purposive sampling method, including favorable cases sampling was used. Thus, the most important factors and parameters influencing the promotion of women's leadership barriers in Ilam Province were identified through interviews with people who were expert in respective fields as well as individual interviews, and the results of interviews were analyzed. The findings of the study as the qualitative data obtained after performing the process were analyzed; the social, political factors, organizational and individual factors formed the factors affecting the "Sticky Floor" in Ilam Province. Concluding based on the results, assuming women as weak individuals and lack of socialization among the social factors, lack of certain non-governmental institutions and organizations and men colleagues refusal to follow the female managers among the political factors, lack of women's organizations and associations s well as lack of support and encouragement from others among the organizational factors, and the women's fear of failure, lack self-esteem and self-confidence in them among the individual factors had the greatest impact on "Sticky Floor" in Ilam Province.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Sticky Floor, Promotion Barriers, Women, Ilam Province.

1. Introduction

Third World countries are now trying to step towards the development of their country by enhancing the development indicators. Given the importance of human resources in the process of sustainable development and that women and men make up the human resources together, it can be said that the women have a crucial role in the development of the country. Women as a half of the population and a half of the human capital available in the country are discussed as the topic and objective of the development. Yet, they do not posses even half of the men's authority. Among the managers of successful companies, few appear to be female managers (Mirghafori, 2007).

Current research has established that, women and minorities are less likely than men and whites to hold managerial positions, especially positions at the top (e.g., Bullard and Wright 1993; Fernandez 1998; Baxter and Wright 2000; Elliott and Smith 2004).

In organizations histories, women have been appointed to posts where they have been forced to do repetitive tasks, so that it seems their abilities have been ignored. According to Schwartz (1992), organisations can be arranged into a hierarchy of levels according to their support for women and their career aspirations. Zero level organisations are those who take no action in developing women. It is often assumed that the process of authority attainment consists of a series of upward job transitions, with the higher transitions conditional on the lower ones—hence, the analogy to pipelines. Accordingly, many see the shortage of women at the top as a problem of ''leaky pipelines'': women and minorities face a disadvantage at each step of promotion and ''leak out'' on the way to the top. The pipeline perspective is attractive because it prompts researchers to look into where the ''leakage'' occurs(zeng, 2011). Based on this,we most identify the inhibiting factors of appointing women to managerial positions in government agencies in Ilam .

2- Glass ceiling and women management:

Originally coined by journalists in the 1980s, the ''glass ceiling'' refers to a specific type of labor market disadvantage encountered by women and minorities in advancing to the top positions in organizational hierarchies(zeng, 2011). The 'glass ceiling' is a metaphor which describes the existence of *vertical sex segregation* in organisations (Guy, 1994). The term has been variously described as a transparent career barrier that keeps women from rising above a certain level in organisations (Morrison, White and Van Velsor,1987), or an artificial career barrier based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevents qualified individuals from advancing upward in the organisation and from reaching their full potential (UnitedStates Department of Labor, 1991). Although a difference of opinion exists as to what criteria should be used to identify the glass-ceiling effect in empirical research, most scholars agree that the essence is the concentration of inequality in the upper echelons, to be distinguished from both the general inequality that exists at all levels and the inequality that is concentrated at the bottom (Morgan, 1998; Baxter and Wright, 2000; Cotter et al., 2001; Albrecht et al., 2003; Elliott and Smith, 2004; Prokos and Padavic,2005). The gender earnings gap is very likely to be different in the upper and lower tails of the earnings distribution. A "glass ceiling" refers to a greater earnings gap at the top end of the distribution, suggesting that female workers in upper-income brackets have lower pay than their male counterparts. Women were economically dependent upon men in the family unit. They had limited

opportunities to influence policies and decisions in the public realm. Their domestic responsibilities and systematic discrimination outside the home sharply limited women's participation in the public sphere(Gerber 1988). In spite of what some researchers term extraordinary progress, female managers frequently find themselves pressing up against a glass ceiling. They also find themselves on display under the glass. Often the lone woman at the top level, the management woman worries not just about job performance but about political viewsand even the jokes she tells or laughs at on the job (Gerber, 1988) (Wickhan, 1993).

The glass ceiling exists in most countries of the world, either developed or Third World. The ceiling in the developed countries is close to the core of senior management, but in the Third World countries, it is close to the organizational low levels. since women do reach a point below the glass ceiling but are not promoted above the barrier, the glass ceiling implies a greater female disadvantage at the top of the hierarchy than at lower levels.

3. Sticky floor :

This metaphor describes how some jobs prevent women (and some men) from moving out of certain positions (Laabs, 1993). It refers to the largely invisible, unglamorous and low-level jobs in organisations which are essential to their smooth functioning, and which are predominantly occupied by women. Examples include clerical staff, stenographers and data entry operators. Referring to the American situation, Laabs (1993) defines 'sticky-floor' employees as administrative-support workers, para-professionals (female dominated) and service-maintenance workers (male dominated). Usually low-paying, these jobs offer little occupational prestige, and have only limited opportunity for promotion. Once a woman is labelled as having a 'sticky floor' job, her ability to handle higher level jobs is questioned (Guy, 1994). "sticky floor" refers to the scenario where females at the bottom of the distribution are at a greater disadvantage and the gap is wider at the bottom (Booth et al., 2003; Arulampalam et al., 2007). Thus, the glass ceiling effect exists in developed countries, but not in developing countries. As far as the gender earnings gap in China is concerned .Although Affirmative Action and equal opportunity were, inpart, introduced to help remove this type of career barrier, many women find themselves in this situation either through inclination or stereotyping. the 'sticky floor' phenomenon, many women never experience either 'glass ceilings'.

There is some evidence that women face a 'glass ceiling'—abarrier to career prospects, which precludes them from achieving high-paying positions and having equal wages with men especially in the upper part of the wage distribution (e.g., Albrecht et al., 2003). A particularly visible Arulampalam et al. (2007) examined data from eleven European countries during the period 1995–2001, and found at the glass ceiling effect dominated in most of those countries. Only in a few countries did the sticky floor effect prevail. Using 1998 data for Sweden, Albrecht et al. (2003) found evidence of a glass ceiling in Sweden. Furthermore, De la Rica et al. (2005) and Del Río et al. (2006) used different empirical methods and found that the glass ceiling existed in Spain for more educated workers but not for the less educated. Pham and Reilly (2006) found little evidence of either the glass ceiling or sticky floor effect in Vietnam. Del Boca and Vuri (2007), using data for Italy, find that policies that reduce the cost of child care and expand the child care system can

have a positive impact on female employment. Viitanen (2005), examining UK data, finds that the price of childcare has a significant, negative, effect on the probability of working as well as on using formal childcare. Mirghafori (2007) conducted a research on the identification and ranking of factors affecting on women not being appointed to managerial positions in government agencies in Yazd Province utilizing views of experts and the Delphi method. The results indicated that cultural and social factors had the most influence on lack of women appointment to managerial positions.

Mattis, 1995 A number of other barriers to impede the career progress of women are the following

- stereotypes and preconceptions about women's abilities and suitability for careers in business.

- lack of careful career planning and planned job assignments on the part of both organizations and women.

- women's lack of access to line positions in organisations.

- the issue of access to power and control of economic resources

- the career aspirations of women themselves.

- the exclusion of women from informal channels of communication.(Mattis, 1995).

This study seeks to answer the following central questions:

1. What are the factors affecting non-assigning of women in managerial positions in governmental organizations of Ilam Province?
2. What are the most important factors influencing the sticky floor in Ilam Province?

Research methodology:

The method used in this study is a qualitative method based on text bases and subjective data. In this study, we used the purposive sampling method, including favorable cases sampling through interviews with participants (12 subjects) who were expert in the relevant areas as well as individual interviews. We also identified the most important factors and parameters influencing the barriers to women's leadership promotion in Ilam Province by library surveys and research background. After the doing the interviews, all the responds were noted and written on the paper. All of the interviewees' points were recorded. The results of this part of data analysis process are presented in Tables that show the text of responses as short statements and sentences; the raw data include direct sentences and phrases directly from the respondents. Then, the statements received the most answers from the experts were prioritized and identified as the factors influencing the sticky floor in Ilam Province.

the inhibiting factors of appointing women to managerial positions in government agencies in Ilam Province

Factors	Statements	Answer
Individual factors	Weak incentives for posts and positions	9
	Lack of self-esteem and self-confidence	12
	Women's fear of failure	12
	Women's lack of planning to reach managerial positions	9
	Women's tendency to accept posts with low liability	7
	Lack of interpersonal skills	8
	Lack of decisiveness in women	9
	Weaknesses in crisis management	10
	Being moderate, consistent and abiding	7
Organizational factors	Lack of the atmosphere to use female directors	8
	Lack of women's organizations and associations	12
	Absence of policies to prevent gender discrimination	9
	Men's tendency to work with their bands	10
	Lack of support and encouragement from others	12
	Shortage of successful women managers model in organizations	9
	Unwillingness of men to women's participation in decision-making	8
Social factors	Lack of socialization	12
	Ethnic and tribal attitudes	9
	Everyone belief on ensuring the effective management by men	10
	Assuming women as weak individuals	12
	Administrative work interference with housekeeping issues	7
	Lack of belief in the ability of women	9
	Negative attitudes towards women and their employment outside the home	8
Political factors	Non-membership of women in political groups	11
	Lack of supportive networks for women	10
	Failure to comply with the working men and women in politics	12
	Lack of institutions and NGOs	12

Based on the above table, the inhibiting factors of appointing women to managerial positions in government agencies in Ilam Province are as follows:

1.   Individual factors are effective in non- appointment of women in managerial positions in Ilam Province.

2.   Social factors are effective in non- appointment of women in managerial positions in Ilam Province.

3.   Organizational factors are effective in non- appointment of women in managerial positions in Ilam Province.

4.   Political factors are effective in non- appointment of women in managerial positions in Ilam Province.

To answer the second question, i.e., the factors affecting the sticky floor in the government agencies in Ilam Province, the statements received the most responses from the elite people were prioritized and identified as factors affecting the sticky floor in Ilam Province that such factors had not been mentioned in previous research so far. The sticky floor model was constructed as follows:
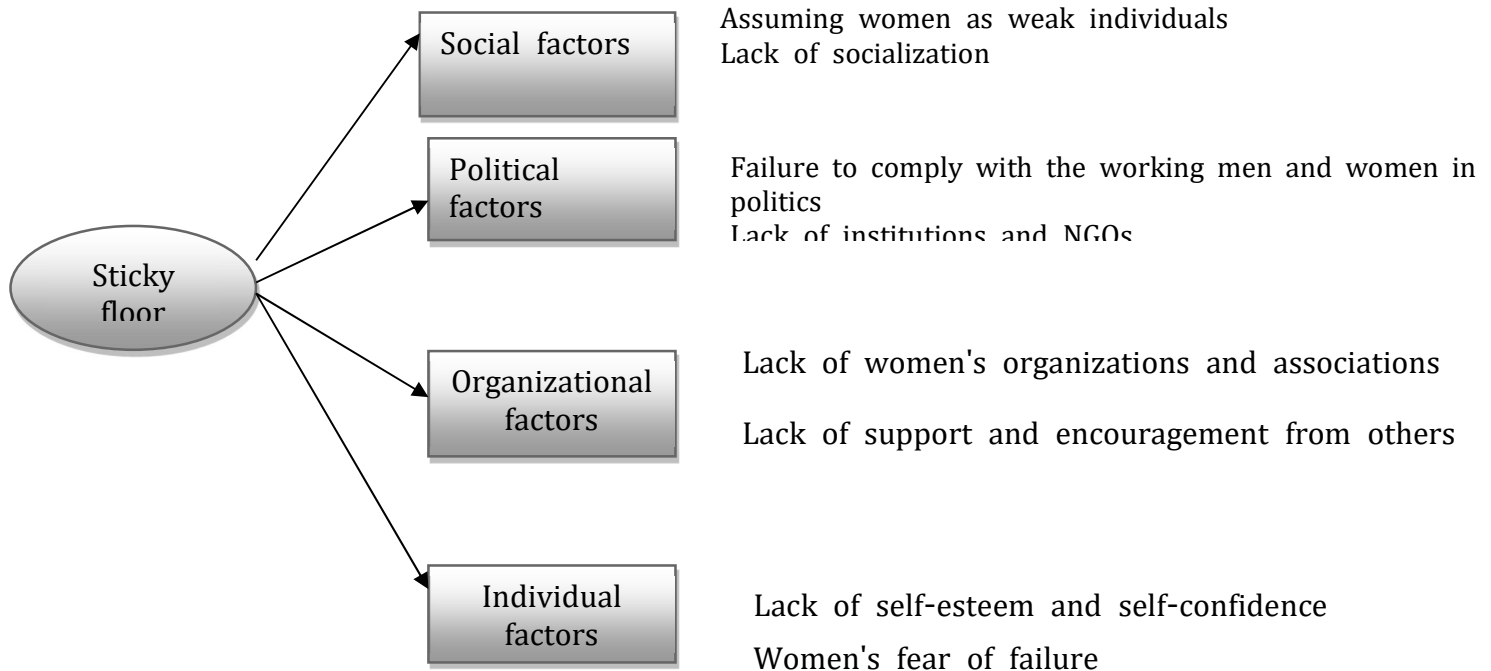
Conclusions

The research findings showed that in governmental agencies in Ilam Province, all four groups of individual, organizational, social and political factors are considered as the creators of glass ceiling; all these factors have led to non-appointment of women to managerial positions. The findings indicate that women in Ilam province are not only below the glass ceiling, but also are placed at sticky floor, so that the high levels in women's positions have no place in Ilam Province. Also, in middle and basic levels, only lower than one percent of organizational positions has assigned to them. Management vacuum of women compared to men is now felt everywhere including Ilam Province. Although we can see the presence of a woman as a manager or consultant is some executive organizations positions in Ilam Province, but in comparison with male managers, the statistics appears to be negligible. In fact, at Ilam Province, the educated, empowered   and   influencing   women   are   not   employed at managerial levels. Hence, we need to provide the areas of more participation of elite women in the country's decision makings by optimal deployment of managerial capabilities of women, including elite women in the decision makings of the country. Globalization now causes the

formation of some trends toward transnational political activities that meanwhile, globalization of concepts and discourses of human rights and women's rights as well as the international NGO activities have created a favorable environment for the growth of women's organizations at the national and international levels. On the other hand, increased political participation of women at the management level has become one of the main demands of women in the world, especially the Islamic world.

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