Gender differences in perceptions about glass ceiling and affective commitment in the banking sector

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Abstract
An “invisible barrier”, the glass ceiling is an unacknowledged and unspoken impediment inhibiting professional advancement, prominently impacting women and minorities. Irrespective of one’s achievements and qualifications, the glass ceiling remains an unbreakable barrier. This facet of discrimination against women is evident and prevalent at each step of the way, from entering the corporate world to accomplishing goals to seeking newer and advanced opportunities. There is no denying the active role of the glass ceiling in the organizational domain in India. However, recent research has shown that there is one sector in India which has shown a steady increase in employing women - the banking sector and so it was considered worthwhile to examine the attitude of employees in this sector. The present study examines the differences in perception of women and men about the glass ceiling phenomenon, its relationship with affective commitment and explored the gender differences in affective commitment. The Career Pathways Survey by Smith et al. (2012) and Affective Commitment Scale by Meyer and Allen in 1997 were used. It consistence with previous researchers, in the present study no significant gender differences were found in the perception of glass ceiling amongst women and men. Moderate positive relations were found between affective commitment and denial; resignation; resilience; acceptance. A low positive relation was found between distributive justice and affective commitment. Even for affective commitment, no gender differences were found. Therefore, indicating that perhaps India is progressing towards a breakthrough in the banking sector with an increasing number of female employment the banking sector.

Keywords: glass ceiling, women, banking sector, commitment

Introduction
Visualize yourself living in a glass house with a breathtaking view. You look above to admire the fleeting clouds on a sunny day and the shining stars in the twilight, and think to yourself – the sky is the limit. So you climb up the steps in an attempt expand your world, sadly only to be pushed back down. Why? For what? Because of the glass ceiling effect. An “invisible barrier” (Dimovski et al., 2010) [14], the glass ceiling is an unacknowledged and unspoken impediment inhibiting professional advancement, prominently impacting women and minorities. Used as a metaphor, the phrase signifies the challenges and set-backs faced by women and minorities in their attempt to progresses upward on the corporate ladder (Powell & Butterfield, 2003) [55]. It was Marilyn Loden who coined the term “glass ceiling” over 40 years ago, in 1978, based on her personal bigoted experiences – “despite my better performance record, a promotion I was hoping for was going to a male peer. The reason given - that he was the main breadwinner and so needed the money more”. Rightly so, as compared to men, women are subjected to significant hurdles in career advancement more often and at greater magnitude. In addition, they are deprived of opportunities and consequently are unlikely to gain recognition at higher levels in their field of work (Jackson et al., 2014) [30]. Irrespective of one’s achievements and qualifications, the glass ceiling remains an unbreakable barrier. This facet of discrimination against women is evident and prevalent at each step of the way, from entering the corporate world to accomplishing goals to seeking newer and advanced opportunities (Hejase et al., 2014) [27]. Based on the Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (2021), the gap in “Economic Participation and Opportunity “remains the second-largest with only 58% of this gap closed so far. However marginal improvements have been noted since the 2020. The glass ceiling is therefore also described as the prevailing inequalities among women and men in their career.
“I’m not the women president of Harvard, I’m the president of Harvard” said Drew Gilpin Faust. It is worth noting that the glass ceiling effect is observed “diachronically”, signifying that it is the “advancements in women’s careers, promotions to managerial positions, that need to be taken into account” and not the number of women holding those positions (Cotter et al., 2001) [7, 8]. Cotter and colleagues (2001) [7, 8] defined four main characteristics demonstrating the glass ceiling inequality. They talked about gender and/or racial difference which firstly, cannot be explained by other characteristics relevant to the job; are higher for higher outcomes; entail inequality in chances of further advancement to higher levels; and lastly, increases over time.

When understanding the glass ceiling effect, it is also imperative to shed light on the probable causes at play. Ayranci et al. (2012) [2] attributed “male chauvinism” and the stereotypical beliefs of the society against women as the primary cause. While Hurn (2013) [28] addressed the “double burden syndrome”, explaining how the glass ceiling effect is a result of the exaggeration of women having to balance between their family and career, addressing it to be unrealistically arduous. Moreover, harassment, unfair organization practices and the absence of family friendly policies are also indicated as casual factors (De Alwis et al., 2013) [11, 12]. Another perspective indicates the ramifications of a women’s action as casual factors of the glass ceiling effect. A women’s resignation from work post marriage or child birth glorifies the perception of women wanting more flexibility, and so is implicated negatively (Dastidar et al., 2020) [9]. Furthermore, Dastidar and Kalita (2020) [9] also suggest that women are unlikely to negotiate or demand for their deserved benefits and perks. And so it is on these grounds that the vicious cycle of inequality strives. The varying needs of men and women have been attributed to the existence of a glass ceiling, which can be understood with the metaphor of how women prefer “career trees” whereas men prefer to climb “career ladders” (O’Connor, 2001) [49]. The glass ceiling will go away when women help other women break through that ceiling” says Indira Nooyi. One’s personal, situational and social barriers are most strongly held responsible for the glass ceiling effect in organizations (Kiaye et al., 2013) [17]. Keeping in mind the casual factors, it is vital we understand the impact it has on those falling victim to it.

The glass ceiling exerts its overbearing influences, the consequences of which are detrimental, affecting ones occupational and personal life. The prevalence of this effect may result in women being underrepresented and understated in the corporate hierarchy, the existence of a pay gap owing to gender bias, segregation of workforce, discriminatory policies and practices, favorable treatment towards male employees, sexual harassment and marginalization of women in the organizations. It may also result in poor self-esteem (Tran, 2014) [63], intention to quit (Stewart et al., 2011) [60] and a decline in one’s ability of building support structures for their career (Freeman, 1990) [23]. A universal phenomenon, the glass ceiling effect is experienced by women all over the world. For the purpose of the present study, its prevalence in the Indian context will be examined.

Glass Ceiling in the Indian Context: Focus on the Indian Banking Sector

There is no denying the active role of the glass ceiling in the organizational domain in India. The corporate sector in India too is governed by the predisposed prejudices and biased notions attached with working or as they say, wanting to be “more like a man”. In the corporate sector, the employment rate of men and women may be 70% and 30% or 60% and 40% but when it comes to being at the top of the corporate ladder, the percentage falls down to an astonishing of 15% women as compared to 85% men (Yadav et al., 2014) [65].

“There are two sides of a coin”. When it comes to women, the presence of stereotypes in the mind of male managers and the overwhelming male dominance of men in top positions (N. Jain & Mukherji, 2010) [31], clearly highlights the absence of gender equality in India. Yet, contradictorily, this said ‘equality’ has been found in the Indian financial sector (de Jonge, 2014) [13]. Regardless of the majority of women deprived of their chance of career advancement, there is one sector in India which has shown a steady increase in employing women - the banking sector (Bezbarauh et al., 2015) [5]. This is backed by a recent study of 240 top Indian companies by EMA Partners, which says “more than a half of India’s women chief executives are accounted for by the banking and financial services industry” (EMA Partners, 2011) [52]. Overseas and private sector banks employ a larger percentage of women (3.91%) whereas nationalized banks encompass a total of 25% of the employment to women. Examining gender discrimination in the banking sphere, Sachdeva (2014) [156] determined that it is due to the nationalization of banks that an increase of women employees has been observed. Concurrently, analyzing the “bottlenecks” prevailing for women in the banking field, Thapar et al. (2017) [61] obtained a significant and valuable outcome stating that although the glass ceiling effect exists in the corporate sector, the government has taken initiative in curbing the disparity among the employment of women and men. A steady rise in the percentage of women employees has been observed (Lathabhavan et al., 2019) [38].

The banking sector is believed to be a beacon of hope for breaking through the glass ceiling. But we are nowhere near it, yet. Between the highest and lowest step of the ladder lies the concerns around the time it takes women to achieve this status. And so the question arises again, are women being treated equally? Middle management positions are said to be most impacted by the glass ceiling (Centre of Social Research, 2009) [6] wherein the growth of a female employee becomes stagnant, limiting them to achieve greater heights. In another study, bankers reportedly agreed to the fact that women do face “sexist barriers” in their occupational life, further attributing it to a women’s preference for maintaining a work life balance rather than focusing on advancing in their career (Lathabhavan et al. 2018) [39]. Further assessing the career path of women, Dastidar et al., (2020) [9] found significant agreement towards women being disregarded or unacknowledged for theirs hard work and efforts. The study also implied the presence of inequality in the sphere of financial and other remunerations among women and men. Nonetheless, there exist a small proportion of individuals negating the whole
Theoretical background of the glass ceiling phenomenon

The role congruity theory focusing on the prejudice faced by women in leadership positions is what one understands by the phenomenon of glass ceiling (Eagly and Karau, 2002) [18]. This is based on the theoretical proposition that sexist beliefs are embedded in communal attributions. Such attributions give rise to stereotypical characteristics of nurturance, kindness etc. that then, are associated with women whereas men get away by being associated with assertiveness, ambitious, independent, and so on (Phelan et al., 2008) [53]. These argentic attributes associated with men are seen as quintessential characteristics of a good leader (Duehr and Bobo, 2006; Weyer, 2007) [17, 64]. The theory is based on two types of stereotypes: “descriptive stereotypes” (what group members are actually like) and “prescriptive stereotypes” (what they should) (Eagly et al., 2002) [18]. The interaction between these stereotypes are attributed as the reason for women being “less suitable” for higher roles. Furthermore, the agentic behavior of women contradicts the prescriptive stereotypes of women and so leads to an unfavorable attitude towards women employees. It is these two forms of prejudice that lay the foundation of the glass ceiling phenomenon (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Weyer, 2007) [20, 64]. Moreover, its influence is inescapable since women and men readily “accept these stereotypes” (Eagly and Karau, 2002) [18].

Perception of the glass ceiling phenomenon

With relevance to the present study, the concept of glass ceiling is understood and evaluated based on its four components as defined by Smith et al (2012) [58]. Denial, resilience, resignation and acceptance are the four beliefs demonstrating one perception of the glass ceiling phenomenon. Denying the presence of the gender biased barriers faced by women while holding a firm belief that both men and women are equally and similarly subjected to obstacles in their career path is denial. For individuals denying its presence, the glass ceiling phenomenon is non-existence, that it’s nothing but a “myth”. Resilience epitomizes one’s certainty implicating women’s ability to break through the glass ceiling. It takes into account the capabilities and strengths to face obstacles coming their way, holding a positive and encouraging notion of women in the workplace. A submissive and despairing attitude, resignation is the belief that career advances for women are unachievable. Well aware of the negative consequences faced by women, these individuals therefore make no attempts to challenge the glass ceiling. Lastly, acceptance refers to following the said “norms” and stereotypical beliefs about women – “women belong in the kitchen, not at an office” “a working mother has no time for her children”. Individuals with this ideology believe that women give a “stronger preference to other life goals over career development”. The four beliefs defining glass ceiling are paramount in determining the perspectival differences and its implications. On elaborating on the concept of glass ceiling, the lack of recognition of women in the corporate world and the seeming disparity among women and men in terms of career development was outlined. Both the factors contribute significantly to one’s commitment to their organization. Therefore to gain a deeper understanding of the glass ceiling phenomenon and its impact, it is beneficial to understand the concept of affective commitment.

Affective Commitment

Organizational commitment represents the extent to which employees are involved with and devoted to their work and their organization (Meyer et al., 1991) [43]. A component of organizational commitment, affective commitment denotes an individual’s dedication towards the values of the organization, almost as if becoming one, adopting the goals of the organization as their own. It involves high emotional connectivity with the organization and a sense of personal responsibility for the organizations success (Mowday, 1999) i.e. “the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and goals” (O’Reily et al., 1986; Meyer et al., 1993) [51, 44]. In addition, Porter et al (1974) [54] described its three key components (1) “belief in and acceptance of the organization goals and values, (2) a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization to achieve its goals, and (3) a desire to maintain organizational membership”.

Individuals with high affective commitment perform better, hold a positive work attitude and have strong aspirations to be a part of the organization (Hassall et al., 2005) [25]. With regards to productivity and turnover, years of empirical evidence has suggested that affective commitment is highly beneficial (Hassan 2012; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999) [26, 29]. Likewise, due to the nature of affective commitment, combining attitudes and emotional attachment towards one occupation and workplace, it has been one of most imperative topics of interest (Esfahani et al., 2014; Milliman et al., 2003; Peterson, 2011) [22, 45, 52]. There is evidence that important organizational outcomes (e.g. commitment) differ by gender. Commitment among females has been linked to empowerment, supervision, development opportunities, and work life balance, whereas commitment among males has been linked to leadership practices, rewards, and company image (Stamarski et al., 2015) [59]. Achievement orientation, more typical among males than females, creates a perception that their ongoing commitment to the organization will lead to career advancement, and thus they are committed to their employers for different reasons than are females. Females perceive their own advancement as coming on the heels of organizational success. Further, they tend to stress the communal aspects of their jobs, such as working relationships and good communication, whereas males are more concerned with authority and personal advancement (Kulesa et al., 2005).


Various researchers have underlined the factors that impact affective commitment, such as compensation and incentives,
employee relations, task orientation, performance management and promotion. Employees may express greater commitment and attachment to the organization, thus tend to remain with the organization when they feel that their capabilities, efforts and performance contributions are recognized and appreciated (Davies, 2001) [10]. However, where the world talks about equal opportunities for employment, the existing gender discrimination leaves no stone unturned in promoting the glass ceiling phenomenon, due to which, affective commitment is adversely impacted (Tiwari et al., 2019) [62].

Glass Ceiling and Affective Commitment
Jones (2002) [33] argued that glass ceiling variables such as position stagnation, just-world beliefs, number of previous promotion inhibitions, hierarchical position, promotion opportunity satisfaction, and identity, all affect attributions of failures. These, in turn, affect self-esteem, self-efficacy, organizational citizenship behavior, level of aspirations, and organizational commitment. Ensher et al. (2001) [21] stated that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are important constituents of employee attitudes and behaviors that can be largely affected by the perceived discrimination and behaviors associated with glass ceiling existing in an organization. People feeling high degrees of affective commitment desire to remain in their organizations because they endorse what the organization stands for and are willing to help in its mission. A work environment characterized by hurdles and obstacles, hindering ones progress, may have an adverse impact on one’s affective commitment. Dost et al. (2002) [16] found a moderate level of relationship between glass ceiling and affective organizational commitment. Therefore, employee commitment towards organization is fairly affected by the glass ceiling. Khuong et al. (2017) found an inverse relationship between organizational commitment and glass ceiling. Similar results were also obtained by de Alwis and Bombruwela (2013) [11, 12]. Women despite being proficient employees are disregarded and unstated, resulting in an unfavorable work environment. The notion leads to a male dominated workplace severely impacting and reducing one’s commitment to their organization (Tiwari et al., 2019) [62]. And so it can be concluded that the presence of the glass ceiling phenomenon significantly and negatively impacts organizational commitment (Onuoha, 2018) [50].

Rationale of the study
The present study was designed with an aim to fathom the beliefs governing the glass ceiling phenomenon. Keeping in mind the ubiquitous orthodoxy that has been thriving in the Indian mindset; women have often been deprived of the opportunities of succeeding to greater heights and unfolding their true potential in their career path. Being placed under the said or often unsaid pressure to manage work and family, women in India have to face a great ordeal before even stepping into the workplace. Even once they do enter the workplace, their abilities and efforts are judged by their biological attributes rather than their abilities. Such biasness has long been observed in almost all sectors of the economy. The only unbiased attitude observed for the longest time then, has been that women at all levels of employment are subjected to the same attitude, without any woman being spared of such judgment. Growing body of research and awareness has finally begun to shed light on the inequalities in the workplace and as more and more individuals and organizations realize how they themselves were under these unconscious influences, a change can now be seen. Many sectors in the economy are trying to make the workplace exclusive in the true sense of the world, and rise of women are top leadership positions is further catalyzing this change. The banking sector in India has experienced a breakthrough with an increasing number of female employees, despite the underrepresentation of women in senior positions. It was therefore, considered worthwhile to examine the attitude of employees in this sector.

Objectives of the study
To assess the perception of women and men’s beliefs about the glass ceiling phenomenon.
To explore the relationship between the explanatory style of the glass ceiling beliefs and affective commitment.
To examine the gender differences in affective commitment.

Hypothesis
1. There will be no significant gender differences in the perception of the glass ceiling effect.
2. There will be no significant relationship between Denial and Affective Commitment.
3. There will be no significant relationship between Resignation and Affective Commitment.
4. There will be no significant relationship between Resilience and Affective Commitment.
5. There will be no significant relationship between Acceptance and Affective Commitment.
6. There will be no significant gender differences in Affective Commitment.

Method
Participants
A sample of 70 participants was collected through purposeful sampling, consisting of 35 women and 35 men between the age of 35 – 45 years. The inclusion criteria required the participant to be working in the Indian banking sector (public/nationalized), specifically at a managerial level position with an experience of 6 years to 10 years. All participants were residents of New Delhi, India.

Measures
Career Pathway Survey
Developed by Smith, Crittenden and Caputi (2012), the Career Pathway Survey attempts to measure ones belief about the glass ceiling phenomenon. Each item on the survey represents a perception of the difficulties faced by women in their career advancement. With a total of 40 items, the scale measures 4 main beliefs associated with glass ceiling – namely denial (8 items), resignation (9 items), acceptance (10 items) and resilience (8 items) on a seven point likert scale. Eight items of the total 40 were negatively worded. Items for Denial- 30, 9, 39, 10, 13, 1, 11, 15, 7, 4 Items for Resignation -36,26,37,20,31,8,34,35,18,5 Items for Resilience 38, 33, 27, 40, 24, 6, 21, 32, 16, 25, 3 Items for Acceptance – 19, 12, 23, 22, 2, 28, 14 Items reverse scored – 7, 10, 11, 12, 19, 30, 39. Total score for each dimension is the sum of all items. The scale allows for a comparison to be made between the negative attitude of resignation and acceptance as compared to the positive attitude of resilience and denial. Reliability of the four factors is as followed: Resignation 0.79; Resilience 0.71;
Denial 0.75 and Acceptance 0.71. The overall reliability of the instrument was calculated to be 0.78.

**Affective Commitment Scale**
The affective commitment scale is a sub scale of the organizational commitment scale developed by Meyer and Allen in 1997. The affective component encompasses whatever emotions are elicited. All eight items of the ACS targets ones view associated with their organization, tapping the mindset and emotional attachment (and therefore have affective content). All the items are measured using five point likert scale ranging from strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5). The scale has a reliability of above .60.

**Procedure**
Data collection from the participants began after taking informed consent and the demographic details and ensuring confidentiality. The career pathways survey was administered first followed by the affective commitment component of the organizational commitment scale.

**Results**
Data from the questionnaires was analyzed using T test and Pearson’s Correlation.

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of scores on the Career Pathways Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Men (n=35)</th>
<th>Women (n=35)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>38.29 (5.93)</td>
<td>40.54 (5.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignation</td>
<td>35.89 (8.45)</td>
<td>36 (6.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>31.49 (9.98)</td>
<td>28.09 (8.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>25.94 (7.19)</td>
<td>28.2 (5.74)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Table 1 shows that women obtained a slightly higher mean on the dimensions of denial, resignation and acceptance (40.54, 36, and 28.2 respectively) as compared to men (38.29, 35.89, and 25.94 respectively). However, men obtained a slightly higher mean (31.49) on the dimension of resilience as compared to women (28.09).

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of scores on Affective Commitment Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Men (n=35)</th>
<th>Women (n=35)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>39.51 (8.00)</td>
<td>39.09 (7.54)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Table 2 shows that the means obtained by both men and women for affective commitment was almost identical (39.51 and 39.09 respectively).

**Table 3: Test of means of Career Pathway Survey and Affective Commitment with respect to gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>t value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>-1.66</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignation</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>-1.43</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis from Table 3 shows no significant difference between men and women On any of the dimensions: Denial [t (68) = -1.66, p > 0.05]; Resignation [t (68) = -0.06, p > 0.05]; Resilience [t (68) = 1.50, p > 0.05]; Acceptance [t (68) = -1.43, p > 0.05]; Affective Commitment [t (68) = 0.23, p > 0.05]; Distributive Justice [t (68) = -1.47, p > 0.05].

**Discussion**
The aim of the present study was to obtain an understanding of the differences in the perception of women and men about the glass ceiling phenomenon and its relationships with affective commitment in the banking sector. Irrespective of women’s achievements and qualifications, the glass ceiling remains an unbreakable barrier. This discrimination against women is evident and prevalent at each step of the way, from entering the corporate world to accomplishing goals to seeking newer and advanced opportunities (Hejase et al., 2014) [27].

The first hypothesis which states that no significant gender differences exist in the beliefs about the glass ceiling effect was accepted. Women and men perceptions of glass ceiling were found to be similar to one another. The difference was not significant for any of the dimensions (table 2). The present results can be corroborated by other researches as well (e.g.: de Jonge, 2014; Sever, 2016) [13]. The steady increase in the employment of women in the Indian sector may have played significant role in the obtained results (Bezbaruah et al., 2015; Lathabhavan et al., 2019) [5, 38]. Furthermore, the sample of the present study was women and men employed in public sector banks, concurrently, Sachdeva (2014) [56] states that nationalization of banks has also lead higher female employment. Similarly, Thapar et al. (2017) [61] concluded that government initiatives have considerably contributed in curbing the disparity among the employment of women and men. Moreover, it is the varying needs of men and women that has been attributed to the existence of a glass ceiling, which can be understood with the metaphor of how women prefer “career trees” whereas men prefer to climb “career ladders” (O’Connor, 2001) [49]. Perhaps it is this difference in life goals which may be responsible for reducing the impact of the glass ceiling phenomenon, as the goals may be different but of equal essence to women and men in their occupational life. The increasing number of women as role models in top leadership positions can possibly explain the present results too. A survey conducted by the International Business Owners in 2004 reported that 42% of Indian businesses had women in top management positions. A similar result was obtained by the MSCI survey conducted in 2017, reporting that 60% of financial service companies had a higher

Data analysis showed a moderate, positive correlation of affective commitment and denial (r=.45). A low yet positive correlation was obtained between affective commitment and resignation and resilience (r=.28, r=.13 resp.). The correlation between affective commitment and acceptance however, was almost negligible (r=.043).
percentage of women employees as compared to men. Despite only a small percentage of 6.7% positions being occupied by women managers or officers India, the banking sector has seen a change in this trend with women like Chanda Kochhar, Naina Kidwai and Usha Thorat who have held positions such as the CEOs/MDs of renowned banks like ICICI, HSBC etc., much more effort is needed to make the workplace more inclusive. The benefits of this go beyond equal representation and contribute to higher productivity, innovation and financial success of the organizations (Northouse, 2015) [48].

Affective commitment is “the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and goals” (O’Reilly et al., 1989; Meyer et al., 1993) [51, 44]. On assessing the gender differences in affective commitment, no significant differences were found. The results are similar to those of the studies by , Balay (2012); Becker et al., (2009); Khalili et al (2012) [35] and Neelam et al (2015) [47]; Sharma (2015) [57]. Commitment among females has been linked to empowerment, supervision, development opportunities, and work life balance, whereas commitment among males has been linked to leadership practices, rewards, and company image (Stamarski et al., 2015) [19]. Thus indicating that despite the presence of the career challenges (perhaps like the glass ceiling phenomena), women and men are both equally committed to their organizations. Achievement orientation, more typical among males than females, creates a perception that their ongoing commitment to the organization will lead to career advancement, and thus they are committed to their employers for different reasons than are females. Females perceive their own advancement as coming on the heels of organizational success. Further, they tend to stress the communal aspects of their jobs, such as working relationships and good communication, whereas males are more concerned with authority and personal advancement (Kulesa et al., 2005).

In exploring the relationship between the glass ceiling beliefs and affective commitment, no significant correlations were found, indicating a weak relationship between the two. A moderate yet positive correlation was obtained for denial, indicating that the lower the person’s perception of barriers in their work place, the more affective commitment they will display, giving their best to meet the goals and responsibilities of the organization. This result is supported by Dost et al. (2002) [16] who found a moderate level of relationship between glass ceiling and affective organizational commitment. For resignation, a low positive correlation was found. Jones (2002) [31] suggested that glass ceiling variables such as resignation can inhibit organizational commitment. Likewise, Ensher et al. (2001) [21] also indicates that organizational commitment can be largely affected by the perceived discrimination and behaviors associated with glass ceiling existing in an organization. However, the reason for a positive relation may be that even though individuals are aware of the difficulties in their path to growth, they may choose to work harder to overcome these difficulties, thus showing mildly positive commitment to the organization.

A low but positive relation was also obtained between resilience and affective commitment. In study conducted by Sachdeva (2014) [56], 6 factors where noted making women executive successful in the Indian Banking sector a) Liberalization of Indian Economy b) Education c) Diversity Consciousness by Banks d) Nature of Banking Job e) Family Support f) Banking comes naturally to Woman. These factors may be responsible for making women more resilient. Lastly, a moderate positive correlation was revealed between acceptance and affective commitment. The correlation value is negligible and hence not significant. The reason for a positive score may be that even though the participant has accepted that the opportunities for professional growth are not many, his/her goals and values match those of the organization, motivating him/her to do better. However this reason cannot be generalized as the correlation is not very high. A positive relation may also be a consequence of the benefit of job security or a lackadaisical attitude of an individual towards their job, which may lead to more continuous commitment than affective commitment. Overall, similar to the results of the present study, Bombuwela and Alwis (2013) [11, 12] and Khuong et al (2017) found an inverse relationship between affective commitment and glass ceiling. The reason for low correlation may be a consequence of three factors, which may also serve as suggestions for future research - 1) A small sample size ; 2) taking a sample largely comprising public sector banks employees – the organizational differences in the working of public and private sector banks may have led to a low representation of the perception of the participants, and ; 3) the sample for the present study viewed the perceptions of supervisors and middle managers whereas glass ceiling can be said to be more prevalent in higher management.

**Conclusion**

It was found that no significant gender differences exist in the perception of glass ceiling amongst women and men. Moderate positive relations were found between affective commitment and denial; resignation; resilience; acceptance. A low positive relation was found between distributive justice and affective commitment. Even for affective commitment, no gender differences were found. Therefore all hypothesis of the study were accepted.

**Implications of the study**

The present study has important implications for implementation of gender equality norms not just on paper, but in the actual workplace. A need to streamline process making the workplace unbiased is the need of the hour. The impact of role models with respect to gender equality can perhaps bring about a positive change by motivating women to speak against injustice and explore their full potential at work. Awareness programs structured around recognizing and shattering the glass ceiling attitudes must be conducted on a regular basis to deal with this phenomenon. Gender sensitivity workshops along with role plays can also be encouraged to educate the 21st century workforce and make the scenario more inclusive.

**Limitations and suggestions for future research**

Conducted during this unprecedented situation of the pandemic, the sample size taken was not large enough. Data was only collected from employees of public sector banks. The study took into account only middle level managers and supervisors working in the Delhi-NCR region. A pan India study therefore, is needed to understand if at all there are changes in trends depending on different regions. A larger sample is needed to explore and delve deeper into the
cognitions and behaviors around the glass ceiling effect to make it more representative of the Indian scenario. Comparing the data from public and private sector banks can be studied further serve to be useful in understanding whether the nature of the organization impacts this phenomenon. Since the present study was focused around the perception of glass ceiling and in depth study into the prevalence of the concept in the actual workplace must also be looked into, especially in the banking sector. Structured interviews can be conducted with the employees for better understanding into the discourse and themes of the concept.

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