

Breaking the Glass Ceiling Gender Differences in Performance Appraisal Outcomes in Private Banks of Chennai City

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Abstract—The glass ceiling, a metaphorical barrier preventing certain minority groups from advancing to higher levels of management or leadership positions, continues to limit opportunities for women in the workplace. It is crucial for organizations to identify and address the glass ceiling by making synergistic efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable work environment. This paper investigates the intricate relationship between gender and performance appraisal outcomes within organizational settings. It further examines the influence of gender stereotypes and societal norms on the perception and evaluation of individual performance. The study also explores the effects of the glass ceiling based on gender analysis and work experience, and how these factors shape performance appraisal practices.

Data were collected from both male and female employees working in selected private banks in Chennai city. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 74 respondents, and the data were analyzed using SPSS. The findings suggest the need for organizations to provide training programmes, particularly for managers and appraisers, to increase awareness of gender biases in performance evaluations. Recommendations include establishing equitable and transparent evaluation criteria, incorporating inclusive feedback mechanisms, and actively reducing unconscious biases. By prioritizing these measures, organizations can foster a more inclusive workplace culture where employees can excel and contribute effectively, irrespective of gender or experience level.

Index Terms—Leadership position, Glass ceiling, synergistic effort, equitable workplace, performance appraisal outcome

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible barriers that prevents the women from advancing to higher levels of management and leadership within organizations. The literature review suggests that breaking the glass ceiling results in improved organizational performance, as gender inequality in management provides a variety of resources, ideas, and skills that contribute to a competitive edge (Sahoo & Lenka, 2016). However, the persistence of the glass ceiling is also influenced by societal and organizational cultures, management demographics, and discrimination, which can impact women's career growth and performance appraisal outcomes (Carneiro et al., 2022). Women in the banking sector continue to face a "double glass ceiling," even though their overall representation in the workforce has reached parity. The term glass ceiling refers to "artificial barriers rooted in attitudinal or organizational biases that prevent competent employees from advancing to managerial positions." Boyd (2012) notes that as early as 1991, U.S. Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin identified the presence of such invisible barriers that stemming from organizational prejudice and systemic discrimination that restricted women and people of colour from progressing to managerial and executive roles. Interestingly, while some studies have indicated that traditional stereotypes and institutional design factors significantly affect gender equality, the "Glass Ceiling Syndrome" itself was not found to

have a significant effect in certain contexts, with age playing a moderating role in shaping gender equality outcomes (Halim et al., 2023). The study reveals that the impact of the glass ceiling on performance appraisal outcomes may change depending on the specific context and demographic factors involved (Karakiliç, 2019). In summary, the glass ceiling poses a multifaceted challenge for women in their workplace, with significant implications for performance appraisal outcomes. Organizations that recognize and take action the problems associated with the glass ceiling may develop equality and productive work place. Approaches such as mentoring programs, diversity management, and affirmative action can enable the organizations alleviate the effects of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination, ultimately contributing to the elimination of the glass ceiling barriers and improving performance appraisal outcomes or women employees (Harlander, 1996; Itty et al., 2019).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rao, K., & Meenakshi, S. (2022) examined gender diversity and the persistence of the glass ceiling among employees in selected private banks. The study found that women employees, despite strong performance, continue to face slower promotion rates compared to male counterparts. The authors highlighted that gender stereotypes influence role allocation, with women concentrated in customer service and clerical positions while men dominate credit, sales, and managerial tracks. Performance appraisal systems were found to be partly subjective, contributing to unequal career advancement opportunities. The study also revealed that women employees reported limited access to mentorship and leadership development initiatives. Organizational culture and work–life balance challenges further reinforced the glass ceiling effect. Despite these barriers, the study noted that private banks adopting transparent appraisal frameworks showed reduced gender disparities. The researchers concluded that strengthening unbiased evaluation criteria and leadership training could enhance gender diversity at higher levels.

Baxter, J., & Wright, E. O. (2000), the study examines the presence of a gender gap in authority across the United States, Sweden, and Australia This study explored the prevalence and impact of the glass ceiling in different countries, finding significant barriers for women in higher-level positions across diverse contexts. The researcher investigated the patterns of income distribution, progression through different wage levels, and the role of gender-specific mechanisms on women's career advancement in the labor market. The analysis brings to highlight the presence and effects of the glass ceiling. The research also explored the differences in career advancement for women in academia between Sweden and the US, highlighting factors like networking, gender equity initiatives, and the effect of personal attributes on reaching leadership positions, thus broadening the scope of glass ceiling studies.

Lyness, K. S., & Heilman, M. E. (2006) the research highlighted on how gender biases in performance appraisals impact the career advancement of women compared to men. The author examined the gender impact on performance evaluations and promotions of managers. The results also proved that gender is not significant correlated with the performance and promotion. This research paper enhances the academic discourse on hiring practices and the implications of using "fit" as a decision-making tool in the labor market.

Prem Knowles S,Sremmant Basu,Ashpin Pabi D J (2023) investigated gender-based job satisfaction levels employees in IBM, finding minimal variation between genders. The main aim is to study the employee's performance and gender-based job satisfaction. Older performance rating system causes dissatisfaction new system evaluates employee contribution and organizational goal. There is no much variation in gender-based satisfaction level. This paper suggests that the company's recruitment and promotion policies may contribute to a more equitable work environment.

Powell, G. N., & Butterfield, D. A. (1994) examined the glass ceiling by analyzing promotion rates and highlights gender disparities in top management positions. This paper aimed to fill the gap by investigating how promotions are made and whether

gender plays a major role in taking decision. It also highlighted the importance and understanding of the mechanisms behind promotion decisions. This knowledge could assist organizations in developing fairer practices and potentially breaking the glass ceiling. The notion of a glass ceiling is undermined by evidence showing that, in this particular scenario, women outperformed men in evaluations and referrals.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the respondent’s perception of performance appraisal towards gender disparity.
 To study the existing performance appraisal system based on selected demographic variables.

Hypothesis of the Study

Ho1: There is no significant difference among the mean ranks towards different criteria to assess the performance appraisal based on gender disparity.

Ho2: There is no significant difference among the working experience of the respondents with respected to selected criteria to assess the performance appraisal.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with selected criteria to assess the performance appraisal.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Type: The researcher employed simple random sampling to ensure that the population was properly represented in the study. The research is carried out using the primary method. Questionnaires are used to collect data for study.

Types of research: The research that is used is Descriptive research

Sampling Size: Sample sizes of 74 respondents are collected from the selected private bank employees.

Research approach: Quantitative approach is used for Data calculations. Questionnaire design and pre-testing to fulfil the study's goals, a structured, closed-ended questionnaire on the components of glass ceiling was designed utilizing a 5-point Likert scale with end points ranging from "strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1)". The respondents were also requested to provide information about their age, job

title, work nature, educational background, and average monthly income. Before the questionnaire was finalized, it was pre-tested on a small sample of 15 randomly selected respondents, and any necessary corrections were made. The data was tabulated on the computer, and the final analysis was carried out using SPSS version

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic profile	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	23	31.08
	Female	51	68.92
Age Group (in years)	Less than 30	9	12.2
	30 - 40	32	43.2
	40 - 50	14	18.9
	Above 55	19	25.7
Education Qualification	Under Graduate	7	9.5
	Post Graduate	35	47.3
	Professional Degree	32	43.2
Work Experience (in years)	Less than 5	22	29.7
	5 – 10	18	24.3
	10 – 15	13	17.6
	Above 15	21	28.4
Total Respondents		74	

Table 1 depicts the characteristics of the sample population with the sample size of 74. With regard to gender, 68.92 percent are female, which is the largest distribution. In terms of age distribution, 43.2 percent of the respondents comprised the largest group in the age group of 30–40 years. Regarding education qualifications, the majority (47.3 percent) of respondents hold postgraduate degrees. In terms of work experience, 29.7 percent of respondents had less than 5 years of experience. This demographic profile breakdown is crucial for analyzing the survey results.

Table 2 Criteria to assess the performance appraisal based on gender disparity – Friedman test

Criteria	Mean Rank	Chi-Square Value	P Value
Performance appraisal process in our organization is fair and unbiased in assessing employees' performance, regardless of gender.	5.01	20.827	0.008
Equal opportunities for career advancement and recognition based on merit, irrespective of gender, following performance appraisals.	5.89		
Criteria used to evaluate performance during appraisals are clear and transparent, without favoritism towards a particular gender.	5.15		
Gender diversity among the evaluators and decision-makers involved in the performance appraisal process, which contributes to fairness.	5.00		
Correlation between gender and the likelihood of receiving favorable performance appraisal ratings in our organization	4.96		
Gender stereotypes influence the evaluation of employees' performance during appraisals	4.57		
Employees of a particular gender were disproportionately praised or criticized during performance appraisals	5.01		
Sufficient opportunities for employees to provide feedback or raise concerns regarding potential gender biases in the performance appraisal process	4.45		
Organization is committed to addressing and mitigating gender disparities in performance appraisals	4.95		

Ho: There is no significant difference among the mean ranks towards different criteria to assess the performance appraisal based on gender disparity.

Table 2 shows the Friedman test result, P value is less than 0.05, so null hypothesis is rejected at 5 percent and the chi-square value is 20.827. Based on mean rank, "Equal opportunities for career advancement and recognition based on merit, irrespective of gender, following performance appraisals" received the highest average score of 5.89. It also indicates that respondents generally believe there are plenty of chances for advancement and recognition in the company, irrespective of gender. "Sufficient opportunities for employees to provide feedback or raise concerns regarding potential gender biases in the performance appraisal process" ranks lowest in mean value of 4.45. This suggests that respondents generally believe there may not be enough opportunities for staff members to offer feedback or voice concerns regarding potential gender biases in the process of performance reviews.

Table 3 Criteria to assess the Performance Appraisal with Experience – ANOVA TEST

Criteria	Experience (in years)				F Value	P-value
	Less than 5	5 - 10	10 - 15	Above 15		
Gender stereotypes influence the evaluation of employees' performance during appraisals	3.77 (0.81)	4.11 (0.96)	4.23 (0.44)	4.67 (0.48)	5.567	0.002
Sufficient opportunities for employees to provide feedback or raise concerns regarding potential gender	3.82 (0.79)	4.22 (0.94)	4.15 (0.68)	4.48 (0.51)	2.813	0.046

biases in the performance appraisal process						
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H0: There is no significant difference among the working experience of the respondents with respected to selected criteria to assess the performance appraisal.

With regard to criterion "Gender stereotypes influence the evaluation of employees' performance during appraisals," the corresponding p-value is 0.002 and the F-value is 5.567. This suggests that among employees with different levels of experience, there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions. Particularly, compared to employees with less experience, individuals with over 15 years of experience tend to score this criterion much higher. This implies that employees with greater experience are more likely to recognize how gender preconceptions affect how well they perform during appraisals.

The F-value is 2.813 and the corresponding p-value is 0.046 for the criterion "Enough opportunities for employees to provide feedback or raise concerns regarding potential gender biases in the performance appraisal process." This suggests that views based on experience levels differ statistically significantly. When compared to employees with greater experience, those with fewer than five years of experience typically evaluate this criterion much lower. This suggests that staff members with less experience think they have less opportunity to address gender biases in the performance review process or to offer feedback.

Table 4 Criteria to assess the Performance Appraisal with Gender – t test

Criteria	Gender				t Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Performance appraisal process in our organization	4.17	1.07	4.45	0.50	1.520	0.004

is fair and unbiased in assessing employees' performance, regardless of gender.						
Equal opportunities for career advancement and recognition based on merit, irrespective of gender, following performance appraisals.	4.30	1.10	4.67	0.47	1.980	<0.001
Employees of a particular gender were disproportionately praised or criticized during performance appraisals	4.17	1.15	4.41	0.49	1.245	0.001

H0: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with selected criteria to assess the performance appraisal.

Table 4 indicates that all the criteria to assess the performance appraisal t test results indicate that there is significance difference between male and female respondents.

The criterion "Performance appraisal process in our organization is fair and unbiased in assessing employees' performance, regardless of gender" compared to male employees, female employees gave the performance appraisal process a much better rating for impartiality and fairness, indicating that they believe it to be less prejudiced and more equitable.

With regard to criterion “Equal opportunities for career advancement, comparing female and male employees after performance reviews, the former believe they have more equal opportunities for professional progression and merit-based recognition. Based on final criterion “Employees of a particular gender were disproportionately praised or criticized during performance appraisals” in that female employees perceive less disproportionate praise or criticism based on gender during performance appraisals compared to male employees.

V. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Observing the sample's demographics, in particular the large proportion of women, professionals in their mid-to-late 30s and 40s, that with master's degrees, and those in their early careers. Based on Friedman test finding, while prospects for professional progression and fairness are well-regarded, there are also major concerns about the performance rating process's inadequacy in addressing gender biases and the transparency of the evaluation methodology. The results of this study offer guidance to organizations seeking to improve equity and reduce gender differences in performance assessments.

The outcomes of ANOVA test demonstrate that perceptions of gender bias in performance reviews and the availability of feedback opportunities are significantly influenced by the experience levels of employees. Compared to their less experienced colleagues, employees with greater expertise are more likely to notice the impact of gender stereotypes on performance evaluations and to perceive better chances for correcting gender prejudices. These observations can help develop plans for enhancing the equity and openness of performance review procedures, particularly with regard to gender-related issues and a range of experience levels inside the company.

The results of the t test indicate that there are gender variations in views of fairness, equal opportunities, and possible gender biases in the performance rating process that are statistically significant. Compared to male employees, female employees typically view the process as fairer, with more equal opportunities for professional progression and less unfair praise or criticism based on gender. Such findings can guide

initiatives to close the gender gap and strengthen equity within the performance review procedures of private banks. The study suggests that deliver training courses to all staff members, with a focus on managers and appraisers, to increase knowledge of gender prejudices in performance reviews. Fair and transparent evaluation standards, inclusive feedback mechanisms, and the identification and mitigation of unconscious biases should be the main objectives of these initiatives. It also suggests that create mentorship programs that place younger workers with senior colleagues to offer advice, assistance, and chances for career advancement. Mentoring relationships can assist less experienced workers in navigating performance review procedures, effectively reassuring for themselves, and gaining awareness of gender prejudices. In conclusion, by prioritizing these measures, private banks can cultivate a more inclusive organizational culture that enables employees to thrive and contribute meaningfully, irrespective of gender or experience level.

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