

The Influence of Leadership Styles on the Women's Glass Ceiling Beliefs

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Abstract—The purpose of this study is determining the effect of the leadership styles on the women's glass ceiling beliefs. The study was intended to provide guidelines to Iran organizations on how to facilitate the growth of women in senior management. This study comprises a literature review, which outlines the various theories related to the leadership styles, glass ceiling and glass ceiling beliefs. Data from a cross-sectional study of 218 women working in Iran the Ministry of Health and Medical Education were analyzed. The participants completed the questionnaires and measures of subjective career success and too leadership styles. The Career Pathways Survey (CPS) assesses four sets of beliefs about glass ceilings: denial, resilience, acceptance and resignation. The leadership styles assess three sets of style: of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Findings-this experimental study examined whether the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles had different effect on the denial, resilience, acceptance and resignation for women's access to leadership positions in organizations.

Index Terms—leadership styles, Glass ceiling beliefs, Glass ceilings, Women's career advancement

I. INTRODUCTION

There is Potent evidence of the under-representation of women in leadership Situations in many countries such as China [1], South Africa [2]-[3], France [4], Australia [5], United Kingdom [5]-[6], and United States [7]-[8]. The glass ceiling metaphor is mostly used to describe the obstacles and barriers in front of women seeking promotions to the top levels of organizations [9]-[11]. In this paper, we describe the influence of leadership styles on the women's thoughts and attitudes towards glass ceilings, the Career Pathways Survey (CPS). Certainly, wide ranges of theoretical explanations have been proposed to make sense of glass ceilings [7], [12].

A plenary review of these theories is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, the subsequent examples highlight the great variety of causes proposed for glass ceilings. Several evolutionary psychologists describe glass ceilings as a byproduct of natural election, resulting from hard-wired adaptations that increased the success of the human species over the last 20,000 years [13]-[14]. Often, the scarcity of female leaders is linked to ongoing

prejudice and discrimination against women in the workplace [15]. For instance, Fassinger cites women being denied access to the old boys' club, tokenism, shadow jobs(women being subjected to extra scrutiny) , in addition absence of mentors and role models as forming a package of obstacles acting against women [8], [16] .

Women who become mothers often encounter an array of prejudice against career advancement that creates a maternal wall [17].

Many researchers emphasize gender differences as the main cause for gender inequality in leadership. Olsson gives a qualitative analysis, which uses ancient Greek heroes Ulysses and Xena as a double-metaphor for different ways men, and women search for satisfying careers [18]. Hakim proposes her preference theory citing gender differences in life goals, values, abilities and competitive behavior [19]. O'Connor assumptions that the existence of glass ceilings is greatly due to 'different needs' among women and men. She sums up these differences with more metaphors: women prefer career treats whereas men are much more likely to ascend career ladders [20].

Conforming to Venkat R. Krishnan, Leadership is inducing followers to pursue common or at least joint purposes that represent the values and motivations of both leaders and follower's. The crux of Leadership is concern for the needs and purposes of followers [21].The role of the leader is to implement the right leadership style to the right situation. There are relationships between the Leadership styles and glass ceiling beliefs and also glass ceiling .thus, an appropriate Leadership style creates an appropriate Career Pathways Survey and decrease glass ceiling.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Leadership

Leadership is a largely desired and valued action and behavior not just a title or position. "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal [22] .Conforming to Northouse, there are four aspects of leadership; the author describes leadership as a process involves influence, attention to common goals, and occurs in groups. Leadership and management have alike components; both involve working with individuals or

groups of people and accomplishing sought-out goals. Leadership and management supplement one another. For instance, leadership creates visions and clarifies a larger picture, influencing and empowering subordinates to commit to the goals. On the contrary management is more detail and position oriented. Management plans and allocates monetary resources for the leader's aspired vision, and also establishes rules, while creating motives for subordinates [23].

B. Leadership Styles

For the past two decades transformational leadership has provided a eminent approach for looking at “new” leadership [24]. The early work on transformational leadership done by Burns [25] analyzed political leadership to define two types of leaders: transactional and transformational. A transactional leader is focused on the economic exchanges among employee and boss, a “quid-pro-quo” concentrating on the external needs of the employee and exchanging the fulfillment of these needs for service.

The transactional leader approaches “followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions .Such transactions consist the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers” (p. 4). While transactional relationships are about the give-and-take of the economic transaction, Burns claims the transformational leader “is concerned with the development of the individual and recognizes and looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4),[25].

According to Cheryl [26] Building on the work of Burns [25], Bass [27] created a model incorporating a continuum of leadership behaviors in an organizational setting that ranged from laissez faire, to transactional to transformational [26]. While Burns focused on leader behavior being either transactional or transformational, Bass made the distinction that both are necessary to a leader's success and not mutually exclusive. Laissez faire is characterized by a hands-off approach. The transactional characteristics are consistent with Burns [25] in that leaders take action only when performance or results do not conform to standards. Transaction based contingent rewards are then exchanged for performance. Transformational leadership requires different behaviors. “Transformational leaders stimulate followers and encourage them to transcend their own self-interests for a higher purpose, mission, or vision” [26].

Bass's full range leadership model (Fig. 1) [28] begins with laissez-faire characterized as a “hands-off” leadership then moves upward to the transactional quid-pro-quo style then to the transformational focus on both the vision and follower. There is an increasing positive impact on performance as the leadership behaviors become more transformational. Conforming to Cheryl, [26] another important study of transformational leadership comprises works by Kouzes and Posner [29], Sashkin [30] and Bennis and Nanus [31]. Kouzes and Posner [29] have spent over 20 years identifying and

analyzing leadership behaviors that are transformational in nature. Those behaviors include:

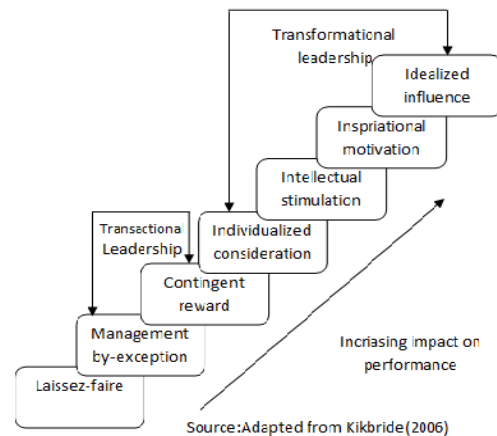


Figure 1. Full range leadership model

Challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. According to Cheryl [26]), Bennis and Nanus [31] in their book *Leader* reported the results of a study of 90 leaders. They recognize transformational leaders as those who: demonstrate behaviors of creating a powerful vision, that is communicated and shared, that is consistent with expectations they create, and maintains recognize and optimistic attitudes. Sashkin [32] expanded the theory with visionary leadership as a basis for the transformational leader creating the organization's vision and gaining the support of the followers. Table I compares the key concept of these theories. While each of these theorists has developed an approach to transformational leadership in somewhat different ways, the defined behaviors appear consistent [33].

TABLE I. COMPARES THE KEY CONCEPT OF THEORIES.

| Behaviors and Characteristics | Bass | Bemis/Nanus | Kouzes/Posner | Sashkin |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Communication | * | * | * | * |
| Trust | | * | * | * |
| Caring | * | * | * | * |
| Creating Opportunities(risk) | | * | * | * |
| Self-confidence | | * | * | * |
| Empowerment | | * | * | * |
| Vision | * | * | * | * |
| Culture | | * | | * |
| Assessment instrument | Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire | Leadership behavior questionnaire | Leadership practices inventory | The leadership profile |

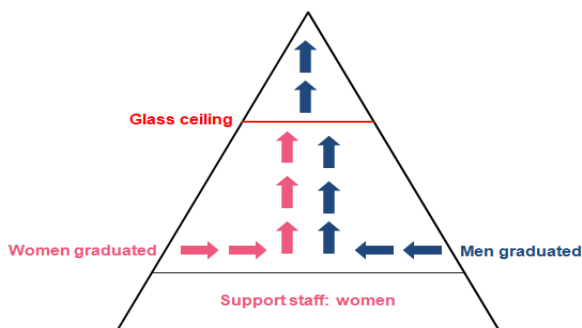
Source: Adapted from Sashkin and Sashkin (2003)

Many studies have been conducted using the multifactor leadership questionnaire. The Kouzes and Posner leadership practices inventory has been used in a diversity of organizations to better comprehend the transformational leader. According to Cheryl [26], Sashkin [32] expanded the leadership behavior questionnaire (LBQ) and, then the leadership profile (TLP) in order to quantify and assess the aspects of visionary leadership. The LBQ was initially designed to quantify the qualitative work that Bennis had done while

tracking “specific behaviors and outcomes of those actions” [26]. Later, personal characteristics and culture building were added. The TLP looks at all three aspects of leadership and measures both transactional and transformational behaviors as well as culture. Both instruments (TLP and LBQ) demonstrate high validity and reliability [26], [30] and were used in a wide diversity of research studies. Transformation leadership research continues to show voucher of its effectiveness [34]. The effectiveness has been demonstrated in area such as subordinate satisfaction, performance, and motivation [26].

C. Glass Ceiling

Conforming to Insch *et al.* [35], the concept of the glass ceiling originated in the USA, where the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (GCC) was created as part of the US Civil Rights Act of 1991 to carry out a study and provide recommendations for the US Congress on how to eliminate artificial obstacles that hindered the progress of women to superior management positions. The glass ceiling was perceived to exist in corporate America because it was observed that women participating in the workplace could only advance to certain levels in organizations and no further. Their 11 percent representation at senior management and 2 percent representation on corporate boards did not mirror their 50 per cent composition of the total US labor force[36]. According to Insch *et al.* [35], once at middle Management, women got stuck owing to artificial barriers that were attributed to the glass ceiling. The GCC found that women were being hired into “feminized” positions in the organization, more so in human resources and personnel as opposed to holding senior line management positions or in executive positions in sales, marketing and production. To describe the phenomenon, Meyerson and Fletcher [37] qualified the underrepresentation of “gender inequity” within the corporate sphere of organizations. They talk about a systematic “disadvantage which blocks women from career advancement”, even if women have the same abilities as men. Fig. 2 illustrates the phenomenon:



Source: ORSE study, 2004

Figure 2. Figure of glass ceiling

Furthermore, according to the GCC’s report, the glass ceiling disregards merit and achievements of women by reinforcing discriminatory barriers that takes the form of gender bias, harassment or organizational norms that do

not favor women thus hindering their upward career mobility. Powell and Butterfield [38], defined the glass ceiling as a “barrier so subtle and transparent, yet so strong that it prevented women and minorities from moving up the management hierarchy”. Unlike formal barriers to career advancement such as lack of education and insufficient work experience, the subtleness of the ceiling means that glass ceiling barriers are less tangible and may be embedded in culture; society and psychological factors that work collectively to impede the advancement of women to senior managerial positions [39]. Hoobler *et al.* [40] asserted that the ceiling referred to barriers women faced that hindered their upward mobility in organizations, with the “glass” metaphor referring to the invisibility and subtleness of the barriers.

D. Career Pathways Survey

The Career Pathways Survey [41] is a Multi-factorial instrument, which quantitatively assesses four sets of beliefs about glass ceilings: Denial, Resilience, Acceptance and Resignation. According to Smith *et al.* [41], they identified these four groups after a review of the literature on women’s career advancement, and “Women reject less concerned especially, the comprehensive research reported by Eagly and Carli [42]. The CPS was constructed with items related to the four groups of beliefs about glass ceilings and all items have been presented in the literature [41]. It is essential to propend that in this study we use belief, attitude and opinion interchangeably.

Conforming to Smith *et al.* [41] the CPS provides scores for four groups of beliefs about glass ceilings. Denial is defined as the belief that men and women face the same issues and problems in seeking leadership. Examples of items in the CPS assessing Denial are: “Women have reached the top in all areas of business and politics”, “Women starting careers today will face sexist barriers” (reverse scored). Resilience is defined as the attitude that women are able to break glass ceilings. Instances of this factor are: “The more women seek senior positions, the easier it will be for those who follow” and “Women are capable of making critical leadership decisions”. Resignation is the belief that women suffer many more negative consequences than men when pursuing career advancement and thus, there are overwhelming reasons for women not attempting to break glass ceilings. Acceptance is the belief that women prefer other life goals, such as family involvement, over developing a career. Therefore, Acceptance is summed up as a pro-family/anti-career advancement set of beliefs. Examples of items in the CPS assessing acceptance are: the needs to work incredibly long hours”, “Women are about promotions than men are”, [16]. Smith *et al.* [41] proposed a dichotomy for the CPS factors. First, Resilience and Denial are optimistic as they share the view that women can attain the top levels of organizations. Second, Resignation and Acceptance involve pessimism as they both imply the gender imbalance in leadership is not likely to change because most women do not have leadership goals in the

workplace. Consequently, they suggested glass ceiling beliefs can be antecedents for the above range of subjective success variables that have been shown to be affected by optimistic (and pessimistic) thoughts. [41] We assumed the mechanism that links glass ceiling beliefs with subjective success is the similar as that proposed by Smit, *et al.* [41] and Luthans *et al.* [43]. for optimism/pessimism influencing subjective success. Thus, optimistic thoughts and beliefs about chances of women's career advancement (Resilience and Denial) are likely to lead to positive emotions and actions toward seeking promotions. In contrast, pessimistic thoughts (Acceptance and Resignation) are likely to lead to negative emotions and actions toward promotion. [41]

E. Research Conceptual Model

The main hypothesis is Leadership styles have effect on the glass ceiling beliefs. It is shown in the following model. (Fig. 3)

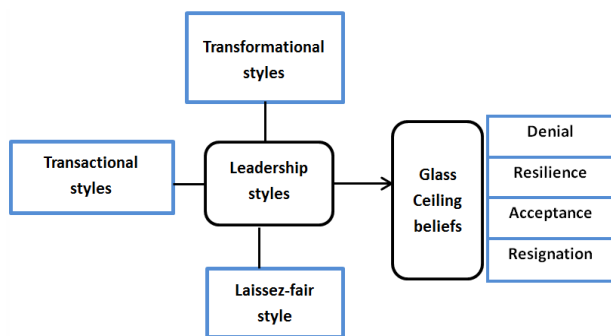


Figure 3. Conceptual framework

F. Research Hypothesis

In the present study the following hypothesis tested:

H1: leadership styles have effect on the glass ceiling beliefs.

H2: transformational style has effect on the Denial.

H3: transactional style has effect on the Denial.

H4: laissez-faire style has effect on the Denial.

H5: transformational style has effect on the Resilience.

H6: transactional style has effect on the Resilience.

H7: laissez-faire style has effect on the Resilience.

H8: transformational style has effect on the Acceptance

H9: transactional style has effect on the Acceptance.

H10: laissez-faire style has effect on the Acceptance.

H11: transformational style has effect on the Resignation.

H12: transactional style has effect on the Resignation.

H13: laissez-faire style has effect on the Resignation.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Goal

The aim of this study is to identify whether the leadership styles may cause to different levels of glass ceiling beliefs. In order to, test the assumptions, a field was conducted.

B. Sample and Data Collection

The survey of this study was conducted on 215 Women who were working in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Iran in May 2013. Of the 215 women in Study 21.8% were between 20-30 years old, 52.8% were between 31-40 years old, 3.7% were up to 50 years old. 81.5% were college graduates. 28.7% were single, 66.7% were married, 3.4% were divorced and 1.4% was widow. 22.7% had no children, 65% had 1-2 children, and 12.3% had 3-4 children. ; 29.6% occupied staff positions, 66.7% were expert, and 3.7% worked in middle or top management. So, data were collected using questionnaires. Sample size was computed 215 through Cochran's sample size formulator a population amount of 1148 employees. 230 questionnaires were distributed. 215 questionnaires of final data were left.

C. Research Instrument

In order to examine the content validity of questionnaires, it was examined by field experts and in order to determine its reliability and construct validity a pilot study of the instruments were done. In a pilot study, the questionnaire was applied to 30 employees outside the sample and correction was made based upon the feedback received. Leadership questionnaire is based on the Bass and Avolio full range of Leadership model. Also this scale evaluated leadership styles using 35 items distributed in 3 subscales. In this case individuals were asked to respond to each item using a 5 point scale ranging from 0 to 4. Coding was entered in to SPSS. Transformational leadership contained 19 items with a Cronbach alpha of 0.931 and transactional leadership had 12 items and a Cronbach alpha of 0.808 and laissez-faire contained 4 items with a Cronbach alpha of 0.754 respectively. In addition, for glass ceiling beliefs used Paul Smith, *et al* [41] questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated to Persian from English and customized for the related company. It has 38 items distributed in 4 subscales. Individuals were asked to respond to each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. Denial contained 10 items with a Cronbach alpha of 0.762, Resignation had 10 items and a Cronbach alpha of 0.715, Resilience was made of 11 items yielding a reliability of 0.757, and Acceptance contained 7 items with an internal consistency of 0.732.

The correlation coefficient between variables: (Table II)

TABLE II. THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN VARIABLES.

| Research variables | 1 | 2 |
|--------------------|---------|------|
| Leadership styles | 1.00 | |
| Glass Ceiling | **0.207 | 1.00 |
| **p<0.01 *p<0.05 | | |

The structural validity was examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the validity of model and dimensional structure. Also exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in order

to be able to directly inspect whether or not the factor loading matrix possessed the simple structure. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures the sampling adequacy. KMO s measures are shown in Table III:

TABLE III. KMO S MEASURES

| Concepts KMO measure of sampling adequacy Sig | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Individualized consideration | 0.722 | 0.000 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 0.739 | 0.000 |
| Inspirational motivation | 0.777 | 0.000 |
| Idealized influence | 0.770 | 0.000 |
| Management by exception | 0.757 | 0.000 |
| Contingent reward | 0.785 | 0.000 |
| staying out | 0.700 | 0.000 |
| Inactivity | 0.745 | 0.000 |
| Denial | 0.756 | 0.000 |
| Resignation | 0.738 | 0.000 |
| Resilience | 0.706 | 0.000 |
| Acceptance | 0.755 | 0.000 |

D. Analyses and Results

In this study, statistical analysis was conducted with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 19. Frequencies analysis, reliability analyses, exploratory and factor analysis were conducted. In addition, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied, using the Lisrel 8.51 program. Structural Equation Modeling was conducted to investigate the influence of leadership styles on the women's glass ceiling beliefs. The result from SEM supports the theoretical model with a Chi-Square =30.87, df=13, RMSEA=0.046. The χ^2/df ratio of

2.18 had a value less than 3, indicating an acceptable fit. Also an inspection of the fit indices was considered in the present study showed that they met the criteria recommended: GFI =0.97, AGFI=0.86, CFI=0.95, NFI=0.94 and RMSEA=0.046 .In combination, these fit indices suggest a satisfactory fit to the data. so, examination of the path coefficients for the model indicated the proposed paths were significant(see Fig. 4)

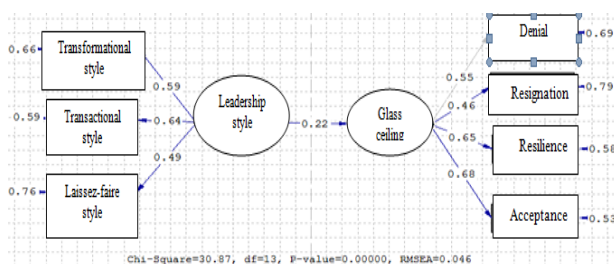


Figure 4. The proposed equation model

The results show that leadership styles have positive and significant impact on women's glass ceiling beliefs. (Table IV)

TABLE IV. RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

| Effects | Standard value (β) | t-value | result |
|---|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| leadership styles glass ceiling → beliefs | 0.22 | 2.24 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| Transformational leadership → Denial | 0.50 | 2.10 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| transactional leadership → Denial | 0.49 | 3.89 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| laissez-faire leadership → Denial | -0/37 | -0.49 | Not Confirm the hypothesis |
| Transformational leader → Resilience | 0.34 | 3.29 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| transactional leadership → Resilience | 0.50 | 4.63 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| laissez-faire leadership → Resilience | 0.28 | 2.19 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| Transformational leadership → Acceptance | -0.49 | -3.52 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| transactional leadership → Acceptance | 0.71 | 5.20 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| laissez-faire leadership → Acceptance | 0.33 | 3.29 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| Transformational leadership → Resignation | -0.60 | -4.40 | Confirm the hypothesis |
| transactional leadership → Resignation | 0.59 | 1.93 | Not Confirm the hypothesis |
| laissez-faire leadership → Resignation | -0.38 | -3.34 | Confirm the hypothesis |

IV. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of leadership styles on the women's glass ceiling beliefs. As predicted by Hypothesis 1, leadership styles have positive and significant impact on the glass ceiling beliefs. Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals and objectives [44]. Influencing the behavior of others is at the heart of leadership. (Ivancevich et al., 1994), so leader by selecting and applying appropriate style of leadership can change Women's beliefs. These beliefs can decrease the effects of glass ceiling.

Transformational leadership has positive, significant impact on the Denial and Resilience, Also has Negative impact on the Acceptance, and Resignation. A transformational leader is one who empowers followers and motivates them to perform beyond their expectations. They inspire peers and followers to work on transcendental planes and collective goals instead of focusing solely on immediate personal interest [27]. Numerous research studies are purported to confirm that transformational leadership has a greater and more

positive impact on organizational Performance [45] than transactional leadership. Claartje researchers found that, for women inspirational motivation and individualized consideration were regarded as equally important for promotion. [46]

Optimistic thoughts and beliefs about chances of women's career advancement (Resilience and Denial) are likely to lead to positive emotions and actions toward seeking promotions. In contrast, pessimistic thoughts (Acceptance and Resignation) are likely to lead to negative emotions and actions toward promotion. [41] Therefore, by using transformational leadership style the obstacles of glass ceiling can be overcome.

Transactional leadership has positive effect on the Denial, Resilience and Acceptance. The contingent reward leadership style increases Denial and Resilience in followers thus decrease the effects of glass ceiling. Style of management by exception (active) increases Acceptance, so Females continue to encounter less success than male counterparts in accessing upper level organizational positions. Management by exception (passive) does not have any effect on the Resignation. According to research results in transactional leadership, style of contingent reward leadership is more important for promotion, and style of management by exception (active) is less important, and management by exception (passive) is more detrimental.

Laissez-faire leadership increases Acceptance thus be limited mobility of women, and doesn't have effect on the Denial, increases Resilience and Decreases Resignation, thus decrease the effects of glass ceiling.

All of the transformational leaders behaviors and contingent reward were considered important for promotion, and management by exception (active), management by exception (passive), and laissez-faire styles were considered less important for promotion, with the latter two considered quite unhelpful [46]. It is recommended that it's better to teach managers transformational leadership acts and as a result communication with employees will be enhanced. In transactional leadership style leaders can become successful temporarily thus training them transformational leadership behaviors can create a long time success.

Furthermore in order to overcome the limited mobility of women, organizations need to recognize women's beliefs about glass ceiling, and strengthen positive attitudes towards seeking promotions such as resilience and denial.

V. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The questionnaire isn't a very good tool for measuring variables such as women's glass ceiling beliefs, and there were no facilities for doing interviews in this field. In connection with this research study, there is a gap, thus it needs more research should be done. Such studies should take place at the national level with supported organizations such as the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Because such researches requires a lot of cost and time.

A larger sample would have ensured more general results to organizations in Iran. Respondents had to evaluate their personal characteristics, their employer and the workplace condition that they worked in it, which Special answers that related to personal characteristics, could have been exaggerated; the views of subordinates would present a more balanced view. This study needs to be replicated in other major centers in Iran, in order to facilitate the growth of women in senior management, across the country. According to Paul Smith, at present there is little empirical evidence to show that glass ceiling beliefs are stable individual differences. If longitudinal studies provide evidence of the stability of glass ceilings beliefs, they might be considered as relevant as personality traits, an area that has been extensively examined for its role in subjective career success [41], [47]-[48]. Research into the relationships between personality traits and glass ceilings attitudes would be a valuable addition to career success literature. It is recommended that future research incorporate an important variable: career category and human resources. Major differences might be found in women's attitudes toward glass ceilings across areas such as heavy industry, finance, retail sales, education, government, health, social services and trades. Directions for future research also include longitudinal studies to determine.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

About Social implications, this study will benefit women in the workplace, giving them due recognition, empowerment and prospects for upward mobility. About value, the paper is the first to shed light on the connections between leadership styles and women's beliefs about glass ceilings. Theory maintains that leadership styles are an important aspect of ascending the corporate ladder. Glass ceiling is not necessarily the reason some women remain in middle management [49]. According to the original theory, leadership styles have positive and significant impact on the glass ceiling beliefs. Leader with selecting and applying appropriate style of leadership can change Women's beliefs. These beliefs can decrease the effects of glass ceiling. Thus, an appropriate Leadership style creates a appropriate Career Pathways Survey and decrease glass ceiling. This study will benefit women in the workplace, giving them due recognition, empowerment and prospects for upward mobility.

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