Role of Gender Diversity in Organizational Effectiveness and its Implications

Naima Bibi*

MS Scholar of Business School, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. *Email: honeyofbusiness@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Even though considerable recognition of women at organizations, quantity of females at managerial positions (middle level and top management level) is increasing, but still too female percentage has a minor increase now a days as they were in the past years. As females are working in a male dominated society and their set procedures and practices, most of the time females face too many hurdles that minimize their pace towards upper level positions in their career growth. Negative perceptions, discrimination and a glass ceiling for females as mangers is the main reason that there is a small number of female executives in organizations. Accordingly, we wonder to know that gender has direct effect on organizational effectiveness and what are the barriers which women face during their professional career growth. This paper is an exploratory research to highlight different type of factors that affect organizational effectiveness and on the true reasons that push back women from proceeding to middle and top positions in organizations. Structured in depth interviews of top-level managers and focus group of middle-level managers were conducted to a convenient sample with the aim of knowing their attitudes and behavior towards role of gender in organizational effectiveness and to recognize its implications that are the reason of biasness, mental block and stereotyping against female at workplace.

Keywords: Male Dominated Society, Discrimination, Glass Ceiling, Interviews
JEL Classifications: J10, M10

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are always different from each other on the basis of different attributes and skills. Managing the humans is also an art. Diversity is a sprouting notion. Diversity is that people are different due to race, gender, physical and mental skills, religion, work and family standards, appearances, origins, sexual orientation and cultural orientation. Every person is made uniquely and he/she is recognized by different attributes. Managing diversity is a big challenge for organizations, especially managing gender diversity in top management team of organization. Heterogeneous groups provide diversity advantages such as innovation and formulating new ideas.

Primary dimensions	Secondary dimensions
Age	Religious beliefs
Gender	Education
Ethnicity and origin	Geographic location
Sexual orientation	Income
Race	Work background

Workplace diversity does not mean only to bring the different workforce to an organization. It is to bring diversified talent to the organization. Due to social and gender diversity group members will have expectation and belief that different people have different perspectives among the group and through this people will learn how to change their behaviors with other members of group/team.

Supporters of a group which is homogenous will have the collateral to some extent that they will reach to agreement with each other, they will easily understand the beliefs and perspectives of one another and it will lead them to one single decision.

But when members of a group notice that they are socially different from one another, they change their expectations. They anticipate differences of opinion and perspective. They assume they will need to work harder to come to a consensus. This logic helps to explain both the upside and the downside of social diversity: People work harder in diverse environments both cognitively and socially. They might not like it, but the hard work can lead to better outcomes.

Through all this process diversity brings productivity and benefits to the organization.

Now a day's world of business is much more different than it was 50 years ago. Improvement in work and family roles of women has made its contribution in the business improvement of the 21st century. Females are now getting employment in male dominated professions such as Legal Advocacy firms, sports, army and top level corporate management. It is observed that due to gender diversity at workplace organizations have increased their productivity and output. Women who are working at multiple roles generally feel better than the women who engage themselves in only household or in some other positions (Simons, 1992; Thoits, 1992; Wethington and Kessler, 1989; Qureshi et al., 2014). Zaman et al (2011) reports that women feel that Problem such as difficulties in their career growth toward upward promotions still exist in organizations. Though there are many female employees entered in organizations at middle level positions but still they are not advancing to top-management positions.

Success of business requires that organizations should utilize their talent best, irrespective of male and female. Accordingly, if organizations want to use their employees' talent best, difficulties to vertical growth of females should be improved. Many difficulties are seen as biasness against females in their offices when there is concern of upward growth, pay/wages, and career progression opportunity to next level of positions. This is the reason that firms not fully utilize a major portion of their talent pool, which shows loss of millions of dollars annually as a result.

"Moreover, females face discrimination when it comes to their job pay. In Britain, a female working full-time earns just 82% of her male colleague's salary, a fee that for a part-time female worker sinks to 60%. The pay gap costs a woman with average qualifications about $250,000, during her lifetime."

With all such difficulties, women are also facing other stones in their paths to reach to organizations and then on career growth. Some of the issues are mentioned below:
- Women have less opportunities to career growth activities and training and development
- Maternity leave undermine their promotions
- Paid less wages in part time
- Lack of access to baby day care centers
- Sexual harassment
- Stereotyping
- Lack of equal employment opportunities laws.

There is a famous quote by Margaret Thatcher "If you want something said, asks a man. If you want something done, ask a woman."

McKinsey (2012) has describe that 70% of the females consider their performance equal to their male colleagues, while in males 70% believe that their performance is higher than of their female colleagues.

Specific designations give specific set of authorities and power. Women and men both practice their authority in a different manner. Women use authority to develop a culture of mentoring and relationship building. Men use authority to develop a culture of hierarchy in which they give orders and they expect certain obedience from their subordinates.

The main focus of this study is to explore the role of gender diversity in efficiency and effectiveness of organization and to understand the problems in its implications faced by the organization in managing gender diversity.

The main objective of this study is to explore the link between gender diversity and organizational effectiveness and what are the implications in managing gender diversity. Most of the organizations claim that they are equal opportunity employers then why females are hired at lower level designations and what are the biases and stereotypes which stop organization to be fair with both genders at work.
- To explore the behaviors and attitudes gender diversity in organizational context.
- Identify the image that how respondents rate female managers in terms of productivity and decision making.
- Identify the problems which hinder women's to promote upward.
- Explore those biased behavior and attitudes which hit the self-respect of females in the organizations.
- Find some suggestions that how females can be more effective for organizations if the barriers are moved away.
- Develop policies to manage gender specific sensitive issues at workplace
- Create a change in working environment for the individual and organization to get maximum level of efficiency.
- To find the processes and ways to make aware to society and organizations about acceptance of gender diversity.

As (Moore, 1999) cited in Kreitz (2007), diversity is focused on both specifically, individual employee and upon whole organization and its context as it is explained by societal concepts. Many researchers have defined this term of diversity as an important difference which creates distinction among the staff members. Specific attributes upon which human being differ from each other. Some people are white and some are black. Some differ from each other upon the basis on religion. Some belong to specific origins. Globally in organizational perspective and especially in Pakistan it is a big challenge for organizations to manage gender diversity. Previously gender diversity was measured as a social issue and it was considered as the image of the organization. But now Gender diversity is moved towards the major value driver in corporate governance and organizational strategic management (Joana Marinova and Chantal, 2010).

2. THEORITICAL DESCRIPTION

In this part of study literature is reviewed on gender diversity, organizational effectiveness and implications to maintain gender diversity in context of social identity theory. There have been many

researches done on the gender diversity in context of organizational effectiveness. Past researches show that women are treated with discrimination and most of the time they are appointed as nurses, secretaries and teachers. On the other side men are hired as elite professions and top management positions (Grusky and Grusky, 2004).

In Pakistan women are 48.6% of total population. Labor force statistics (LFS) of 2012-13 shows that from 180 million estimated population only 12.51 million females are doing some kind of jobs. "According to the LFS, the unemployment rate was 8.3% in 2001-2002, but the rate for females it was 16.5%. That declined to 9% in 2012-2013 which was higher than the 6.2% for male employees which is another positive point." In 2013-14 LFS female unemployment rate is lowered from 6.2 to 6.0 which is a good improvement that now females are moving toward job industry more enthusiastically (LFS, 2015).

Deaux and Farris (1977) found that the success of men's is attributed towards their cognitive ability even at the same time women's successes were attributed towards hard work, matter of luck, or an easy task. If any women fails it was attributed towards her lack of skills and ability, but if any man was failed to achieve the success then it was attributed that they had difficult task, or their bad luck and less effort.

In 1980 Nieva and Gutek indicated that there is biasness between the evaluation of men and women "men are generally evaluated more favorably than women. For example, men job applicants are selected more frequently than equally qualified women applicants for managerial, scientific, and semi-skilled positions. Men applicants are given more positive assessment than women applicants on factors such as ability to adapt & accept and productivity (service potential)."

Even now situation is improved in many of business sectors as Technology, Finance and Retial and a good change has been seen now is that male and female are being equally treated at their work places but still high proportion of diversity in not achieved.

2.1. Some Impacts of Gender Diversity
- Surveys have shown that "Fortune 500 companies with more women on their boards tend to be more profitable."
- Report by McKinsey showed that "companies with a higher proportion of women at board level typically exhibited a higher degree of organization, above average operating margins and higher valuations."
- In another report "it was concluded that women's leadership styles have been characterized by task orientation, mentoring others, and concern with the needs of others. According to NASA, crew members have reported general sense of 'calmer missions' with women on board. Plus, 75% of male crew members also noted a reduction in rude behavior and improved cleanliness."
- Women managers create a better environment and bring in a strong team oriented culture.
- If gender diversity will be in increasing proportion then corporate performance will be stronger.

Some year earlier or may be decades ago organizations had two different perspectives while hiring a female employee. It was their thought that if we will hire an unmarried girl then she would get married in some years and either she will leave her job to be a housewife or she will move to any other place with her life partner. Even if she does not leave her job and stays in organization, then she will be asking for maternity leave and its medical benefits. It's also a common perception that they will become less efficient after having child and they would pay less attention to their job tasks. It was considered that women will be more careful for their kids than their offices. "In addition, it was a widespread belief that women were not as capable as men, either physically or mentally or emotionally."

Women's mobility concerns and maternity leaves are considered weaknesses to further growth and working on a senior manager role; most of the women feel that responsibilities of family are an obstacle in their promotion path. The good solution is to emerge a working atmosphere that has harmony with family time, which will be plus point for all employees (men and women), flexible working hours, agile working and day care services for children of staff at workplace.

According to Ferdman and Davidson in 2004 Gender stereotyping is a big issues that working females should deal with. At workplace behavior and attitude of male and female is same. Might be some differences were observed in past but now such differences are decreased very rapidly. There is work and family life balance conflict, but it is only attached with female staff and it affects their working environment and their efficiency. Researches have shown that women who are working in more rigid office timings have more cognitive and social issues of their families than those women who are working in flexible work schedules.

There would be many difficulties which may decrease women representation at top management level positions. It's a big challenge that women are always perceived inferior than of men, but then too it's a main factor in achieving the success for any of the organization through diversity. But with the passage of time scenario has been changed, now male and females are given equal opportunities in organizations. But still there is very less number of females in organizations. According to a study "(China has seen the greatest improvement over the past 6 years: Only 6.5% of companies had any gender diversity at board level in 2005, but this increased to 50% by end of 2011)." Organizations should realize and foster in their employees that by accepting the strengths of both gender, working relationships will be more productive, their mutual understanding will increase respect and trust among them.

2.2. Social Cognitive Theory
It is the society which socializes the female and male children into both genders' adults (masculine and feminine). There are some important aspects in human's lives such the intelligence and talent they have, how they conceptualize to themselves and other people, sociostructurally benefits and constraints they face, their career path and societal and social life are prescribed by societal "gender-typing." Upon these primary basis individuals are differentiated in their daily lives. Even some of

the gender differences are founded biologically, some stereotypic characteristics and roles which are specified for women not designed biologically but it is designed culturally (Epstein, 1997). This research paper provides a link between social cognitive theory and gender role in organizational context. Children in our society develop in themselves concepts like gender stereotypic. When they are grown up they behave accordingly in their groups. This stereotyping for gender works when they are men and women at adult age. It also affects their thinking and actions when they are at work.

3. RESEARCH METHODLOGY

This research is an exploratory study in its nature and interpretive approach is used for this case study. Qualitative research explores that how people make sense of many realities in the context of interpretation of the experiences of these realities (Denizin and Yvonna, 2013). Yin in 2003 has described the case study approach as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Case study method is considered a suitable method to study complex constructs like organizational effectiveness and gender role in it, in order to explore and interpret how the phenomenon is evolved (Yin, 2003). Due to this case study method is selected to explore and interpret the relationship between gender diversity and organizational effectiveness.

In depth structured interviews and focus groups were used to collect data from the respondents. Through interview method we can understand detailed perspective of interviewee to explore the complex phenomena like organizational effectiveness and role of gender diversity (Alvesson, 2003).

For this case study, through in-depth structured interviews were conducted of 6 top level managers form Pakistani leading government and non-government organization from services and manufacturing Sector in order to cover different areas rather than to stress a specific sector. Each interview was already scheduled and significance and objective of study was discussed with mangers. Each interview was of 60-90 min. One focus group was conducted of 8 middle and lower level employees of different organizations. Notes were taken during the focus group. Focus group time duration was 120 min.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Work sheets are used for data analysis. Thematic data analysis approach is used. Data was coded firstly and then analyzed to determine emerging themes. Data is cross validated by using triangulation. Interviews and focus groups both are used to get rigorous responses.

4.1. Discussion and Thematic Data Analysis
In data analysis both converging and diverging aspects came in front. Major Themes are discussed below:

4.1.1. Gender specific facilities
Data shows that organizations should realize that all men and women are human beings having family concerns as well as their work place life. Through these points keeping in view organizations can have flexible timing and schedules for their employees. Specially for women, organizations should provide flexible working hours as different work timings, their job patterns can be changed such as job duties can be shared, work locations can be changed (telecommuting), baby day care centers in supervision of organization.

4.1.2. Gender specific issues
Study has shown that even there are genders specific facilities are there in organizations but their practice implication is missing. Male dominancy is seen in most of the sales force and top management of organizations. Proper transport is not provided to females to which creates mobility issues for them. Female staff has the problem of lacking in confidence to speak up with their male supervisors and top managers.

4.1.3. Gender specific policies
Study has shown that most of the organizations implanted gender specific policies to make their workplace culture trustworthy and productive. But in some organizations policy implication is week due to lack of monitoring and checking of compliance. If the monitoring is strong then females will be more comfortable. To finish gender biasness and sexual harassment at workplace, many of the organizations have introduced zero tolerance policy for all such acts of biasness and harassment.

4.1.4. Portion of females in horizontal and vertical growth
Recruitment teams should better understand the job skills and job specifications required for organization success.

"The job analysis for male gender-typed jobs will help identify the characteristics, behaviors, skills, and past experiences presumed to be necessary for success in a particular job, rather than depending on vague personality characteristics that can be distorted to fit gender stereotypes (Welle and Heilman, 2007)."

Organizations should make structured design of promotions and career growth and then ensure that male and female both staff is being evaluated at same criteria. It should involve right assessment of employees' participation, using some unique psychological assessments to check performance, how much tasks assigned and target achieved, how much income generated (Welle and Heilman, 2007).

4.1.5. Managers should be responsible for their own decisions
Managers should be responsible for their decisions and they should be given full authority to decide well for the organization well-being and efficiency. They should describe specific criteria for hiring, evaluation and distribution of job vacancies among individuals without any gender discrimination. There should be equal opportunities for all.

4.1.6. Major difference in culture

In major parts of countries, this is culture and among all continents even, daughters are brought up in a special way, to be obedient, to be friendly, to do small household work, to take care of their toys and dolls, and to help their elder family members at home.

Little boys are brought up in totally a different way to build castles, to play with their friends. Such conditions have made them to think themselves as superior to girls, girls don't try to compete. Through this way, men are developed such characteristics since very minor age to take top positions; whereas, women are brought up from their child hood to be only obedient followers.

4.1.7. Support of top management

Senior managers should realize and admit that diversity at workplace is a highly competitive edge. If they are not agree to change their mindsets then all steps taken will add nothing to raise the numbers of females in the organizational work force (Mckinsey, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

From the study it is concluded that organizations are ready to accept gender diversity inclusion at the workplace. Even though many policies are made to run this process smoothly but there is the gap in execution phase. Policies are there only in HR manuals in organizations but lack of proper implementation and execution and continuous monitoring of these policies and procedures affect the organizational effectiveness. Because due to non-implementation of managing gender diversity polices, most of the time employees decide to quit the organization or they fail to work with full potential and productivity. This curtails organizational effectiveness and efficiency because when any employee leaves the organization, he/she takes his/her specific knowledge with himself/herself. So there is the need for the management to make some modification in existing policies specific to managing gender diversity and introduce some new policies according to the employee's need and then implement them properly and make it possible to have continuous monitoring of these policies to be operationalized.

6. SUGGESTIONS BASED UPON THE FORMAL DISCUSSION WITH INTERVIEWEES

Organizations are now realizing that many of the issues are there which affect gender diversity at work place. Organizations know that if they will provide remedies to such issues then their staff will be more productive in terms of efficiency. Family management is necessary for both mother and father. So workplace policies are beginning to change. Many organizations have introduced flexible work hours for men and women. Likelihood of career growth for females will also improve with the passage of time. Mentoring is also necessary part for women career advancement. Organizations provide such trainings and activities especially to women to enhance their skills. Organizations have now developed social networking so that females can meet to other organizations females and share their knowledge.

Success of organization lies in addressing such issues. Women have reached now to top positions of many organizations but still there is a less number of them to be seen at top positions. Still there is an inequality when there is the matter of salaries, promotions, entering special fields. Women should show extraordinary performance that if they are competed with their men workers, then they should have same skills and abilities to perform all tasks.

Organizations should revise their gender specific policies according to concerns of both genders. Proper implementation of policies should be done and continuous monitoring is needed to overcome such issues. Women should stop themselves from stereotyping about themselves that this task would never be done by us. If they will not believe in themselves then no one will believe in their skills. Cultural constraints should be minimized with continuous efforts. Organizations should conduct effective exit interviews.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. (2003), Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. Academy of Management Review, 28(1), 13-33.

Barnett, R.C., Marshall, N.L., Pleck, J.H. (1992), Men's multiple roles and their relationship to men's psychological distress. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54, 358-367.

Deaux, K., Farris, E. (1977), Attributing causes for one's own performance: The effects of sex, norms, and outcome. Journal of Research in Personality, 11(1), 59-72.

Denizin, N.K., Yvonna, L.S. (2013), Collecting and interpreting Qualitative Materials. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Epstein, C.F. (1997), The multiple realities of sameness and difference: Ideology and practice. Journal of Social Issue, 53, 259-278.

Ferdman, B.M., Davidson, M.N. (2004), A matter of difference: Some learning about inclusion: Continuing the dialogue. Industrial-Organizational Psychologist, 41(4), 31-37.

Grusky, M.C.A., Grusky, D.B. (2004), Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Women and Men. Available from: http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=1416.

Joana Marinova, J.P., Chantal, R. (2010), Gender Diversity and Firm Performance: Evidence from Dutch and Danish Boardrooms. Retrieved from Utrecht School of Economics.

Kreitz, P.A. (2007), Best practices for managing organizational diversity. Journal of Academic Librarianship, 34(2), 101-120.

LFS. (2015), Labour Force Survey 2013-14 (Annual Report). Available from: http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/labour-force-survey-2013-14-annual-report.

McKinsey, J.C.C. (2012), Introduction to the Theory of Games. Courier Corporation.

McKinsey, R. (2007), Women Matter. 12. Available from: http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/swiss/news_publications/pdf/women_matter_english.pdf.

Moore, S. (1999), Understanding and managing diversity among groups at work: Key issues for organizational training and development. Journal of European Industrial Training, 23, 208-217.

Nieva, V.F., Gutek, B.A. (1980), Sex effects on evaluation. Academy of Management Review, 5, 267-276.

Qureshi, M.I., Rasli, A.M., Zaman, K. (2014), A new trilogy to understand the relationship among organizational climate, workplace bullying and employee health. Arab Economic and Business Journal, 9(2), 133-146.

Thoits, P.A. (1992), Identity structures and psychological well-being: Gender and marital status comparisons. Social Psychology Quarterly, 55(3), 236-256.

Wethington, E., Kessler, R.C. (1989), Employment, parental responsibility, and psychological distress: A longitudinal study of married women. Journal of Family Issues, 10(4), 527-546.

Simons, R. (1992), Parental role strains, salience of parental identity and gender differences in psychological distress. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 33, 25-35.

Welle, B., Heilman, M.E. (2007), Formal and informal discrimination against women at work. In: Steiner, D.D., Gilliland, S.W., editors. Managing Social and Ethical Issues in Organizations. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Yin, R.K. (2003), Case Study Research: Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zaman, K., Qureshi, M., Bhatti, M. (2011), The impact of culture and gender on leadership behavior: Higher education and management. Management Science Letters, 1(4), 531-540.