



## **Gender Discrimination and Unfair Treatment: Investigation of The Perceived Glass Ceiling and Women Reactions in The Workplace – Evidence from Indonesia**

SINTO SUNARYO<sup>a\*</sup>, REZA RAHARDIAN<sup>a</sup>, RISGIYANTI<sup>a</sup>,  
JOKO SUYONO<sup>a</sup> AND INDRIANAWATI USMAN<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Faculty Economics and Business, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia*

<sup>b</sup>*Faculty Economics and Business, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Women have rapidly increased their participation in the workforce recently. However, they remain underrepresented in upper-level management positions. Gender stereotypes hinder women's career advancement, resulting in a glass ceiling – i.e., invisible barriers to their career development and achievement of leadership positions. This study analyzes the glass ceiling effect on organizational fairness and commitment, career prospects, and work engagement. A total of 201 working women in various government institutions in Indonesia completed an online questionnaire over a two-month study period. Data were analyzed using partial least squares. The results showed significant glass ceiling effects on organizational fairness and work-related attitudes toward career prospects, organizational commitment, and work engagement. When women perceive a glass ceiling in the workplace, they feel unfairly treated by the organization. Therefore, the perceived glass ceiling decreases women's career prospects, organizational commitment, and work engagement. This study also found that organizational fairness mediates the glass ceiling effect on career prospects and organizational commitment. Future research recommendations are highlighted in addition to empirical work on gender discrimination as it relates to attitudes and behaviors in the workplace.

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\* Corresponding author: Email: [sintosunaryo\\_fe@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:sintosunaryo_fe@staff.uns.ac.id)

## INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotypes firmly separate men from women in the workplace and have hindered women's career advancement (Bligh and Kohles, 2008; Schein, 1973, 1975; Vianen and Fischer, 2002). This hindrance is due to gender rather than a lack of skill or competency. The International Labour Organization (ILO) data show that women tend to have less labor market participation. Their global labor force participation rate is 48.5%, whereas that of males reaches 75%, resulting in a 26.5% gap (ILO, 2018). Thus, women's employment access is relatively constrained. The ILO acknowledges the necessity of further mitigating gender inequality, particularly regarding employment discrimination.

Discrimination refers to prejudicial actions that lead to specific treatment of individuals based on their group identities (Dessler, 2015). Discrimination in the workplace leads to crucially negative consequences, such as decreased productivity, undesirable organizational citizenship behavior, conflict, and high job turnover (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Therefore, discrimination harms the organization and its employees. In the workplace, one type of discrimination experienced by employees is gender discrimination. Offenders of gender discrimination emphasize how females are different from males and attempt to find scientific justification for social norms emerging from male superiority and gender inequality (Kira et al., 2017). According to Kira et al. (2017), gender discrimination faced by female employees is attributable not only to gender but also to socioeconomic inequality, sexual orientation, disability, and racial and ethnic discrimination.

Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) argues that cultural beliefs underlie gender discrimination in the workplace. Consciously or unconsciously, individuals categorize others based on sex and gender stereotypes. This process results in gender-based categorization, and thus, all matters pertaining to individuals are based on sex, further fostering gender stereotypes. Researchers consider cultural elements, organizational structure, and interactions within the discussion of gender discrimination and examine how these elements are systematically interrelated in the workplace.

As one form of discrimination, the glass ceiling is present in the workplace. The glass ceiling metaphor has been used for more than three decades to describe obstacles that women encounter in the workplace. The glass ceiling is an invisible organizational obstacle that may impede women's career advancement (Mondy, 2008). The glass ceiling creates invisible disparities, such as opportunity inequality, thus preventing women from gaining work experience for professional and advancement and exposing them to less commitment from top management (Bell et al., 2002).

Research has been conducted to analyze the glass ceiling phenomenon in the workplace. Yukongdi and Benson (2005) explain that women encounter career advancement barriers originating from organizations, families, and societies. People strongly believe that the glass ceiling occurs because of the "old boy network," which hinders women from reaching top management positions (Dessler, 2015). Sunaryo et al. (2019) identify barriers faced by women seeking to become leaders, including gender stereotypes that consider them inappropriate as leaders, underestimations of their leadership skills, and self-imposed barriers, such as work-family conflict and a belief that leadership is not in women's nature.

The glass ceiling influences organizational justice, career prospects, work engagement, and burnout (Foley et al., 2002; Hwang, 2007; Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan, 2017). Research has shown that the glass ceiling moderates the relationship between masculine/feminine traits and career satisfaction (Blessie and Supriya, 2018). Moreover, Khalid and Sekiguchi (2019) propose that the mediating effect of the glass ceiling is related to personality traits and career success. These studies confirm the adverse effects of the glass ceiling on individuals and organizations.

In the Indonesian context, Rosenfield (2012) finds that Indonesian women are disadvantaged for several reasons. (1) The New Order regime dominated by the military did not allow women to gain high political positions in military. (2) The majority of traditional Muslims in Indonesian societies tend to position women in the house rather than publicizing their existence. (3) Women are not likely involved in organizational decision-making. These actions reflect the patriarchal culture in Indonesian society, which is a problem for Indonesian women seeking careers. Patriarchal culture develops is a form of traditional gender stereotyping. In Indonesia, smart women who want to pursue better careers than their husbands fear they will be stigmatized for seeking non-traditional roles thought to create disruption in the family (Dzuhayatin, 2020). Most people hold the norm that a wife has to be a good homemaker, whereas it is the husband's role to be

breadwinner. In this context, once females are married, particularly in a patriarchal culture, the decision to give birth and raise children is expected to dominate their lives (Bal, 2005). At this point, females require time to fulfill this role in the family, which causes them to forsake careers. In a patriarchal culture, females who attempt to break through gender barriers to achieving a better life for their family while pursuing personal interests encounter obstacles in career progression (Bal, 2005). The constraints faced by females to progress in their careers have become a glass ceiling for them. Therefore, the glass ceiling is still a major issue among Indonesian women, especially in terms of vertical mobilities in leadership where there are numerous barriers for women trying to climb the leadership ladder.

This research aimed to examine the glass ceiling and its organizational impact, such as organizational justice and commitment, career prospects, and work engagement. The glass ceiling perception can be considered a comparison between individuals in their in-group and the majority of the out-group (Foley et al., 2002). This perception subsequently influences the perception of justice in organizations, particularly related to promotion decisions. Thus, individuals who believe that promotions are decided objectively will be optimistic about their career prospects. Employees who encounter different treatment and barriers to pursuing career advancement will experience a declining sense of justice. This matter indicates the intersection of organizational justice and the glass ceiling within a social context.

On the topic of justice, Clavero and Galligan (2021) contend that arguments for gender equality center on the principle of fairness. This principle suggests that males and females are entitled to equal treatment in regard to participation, occupation, and socioeconomic status associated with employment, and in all circumstances gender-based discrimination should be prohibited. Rawls (2001) asserts that equally talented and motivated individuals should be given equal opportunities to attain desirable positions and that an individual's destiny should not be determined based only on sex, family socioeconomic status birth or education.

In addition to the impact of discrimination on the individual, organizational injustice can decrease organizational commitment. Individuals who perceive injustice in the organization will be less inclined to organizational commitment. In reference to social exchanges, individuals will be committed to their organization in return for the proper treatment they receive in the organization (Jiang et al., 2015). If these individuals perceive a greater sense of fairness, they tend to display positive work outcomes, such as commitment to the organization. By contrast, individuals who perceive unfairness display a lower degree of commitment due to employees' unwillingness to receive negative treatments despite their positive contributions to the organization.

Organizational commitment can also be affected by the glass ceiling. If females perceive a glass ceiling in their workplace, this will be detrimental to their organizational commitment, resulting in a reluctance to fully develop their professional capacities. A study conducted by Downes et al. (2014) revealed that the glass ceiling directly exerts a significant effect on organizational commitment. The glass ceiling is also associated with work engagement decrease (Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan, 2017). When women have limited employment and career opportunities, job dissatisfaction and sadness increase, thus affecting work engagement. This research aims to examine the extent to which the glass ceiling affects work-related outcomes, including organizational fairness, organizational commitment, work engagement, and career prospects, through a comprehensive research design.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Gender Discrimination

Discrimination is legally prohibited by law and is not a part of organizations' official policies, but it remains a problem. In Indonesia, efforts to prevent and lessen practices of gender discrimination specifically in the workplace are made in accordance with Presidential Instruction Number 9 Year 2000 on the concept of gender in national development following attendance of Indonesian delegates to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women* (CEDAW). Nonetheless, these efforts have not yielded optimal results.

Discrimination highlights the difference between individuals, often referred to as unequal treatment, where a person is judged based on his or her demographic group (Robbins and Judge, 2015), for example, gender. Gender discrimination, either direct or subtle, has been present in almost every culture in a range of forms, intensity, and rationalizations (Kira et al., 2020). Gender discrimination includes differential treatment of employees based on gender identity or sexual orientation, which may occur in the context of hiring, firing, promotion, pay, benefits, and job classifications (Dharmawardhane and Navaratne, 2019).

Gender discrimination has proven to adversely affect individuals and the workplace (Qu et al., 2020), and female employees are especially vulnerable to discrimination. A meta-analysis has shown that, either subtle or overt, these types of discrimination have a significant impact on individuals and need to be seriously addressed (Jones et al., 2016). In the workplace, gender discrimination impedes women's career success, not because of their "choice" but because of disparate treatment within organizations (Herrbach and Mignonac, 2012). According to Castano et al., (2019), gender discrimination arises from macro-societal such as systematic sexism and micro-individual aggressions, which are reproduced in organizational structures. Further, discrimination experienced by women in the workplace is a multidimensional phenomenon that affects women's careers (Cavaletto et al., 2019). Gender discrimination makes women pessimistic about career opportunities, so they tend to underestimate their abilities (Kaiser, 2014). Cavaletto et al. (2019) argues that gender discrimination is a vicious cycle, where women are placed in lower positions in the organizational hierarchy, get less training, and have fewer opportunities. Thus, gender discrimination becomes the primary barrier to women's advancement.

### **Glass Ceiling**

The glass ceiling is one of the widely known concepts that has drawn attention in the 20th century. Thus far, researchers define and give value to the term "glass ceiling." The glass ceiling describes the phenomenon where women are underrepresented in their efforts to reach the upper levels in the organizational hierarchy, it also describes the barriers women face in gaining high-level decision-making positions (Xiang et al., 2017). According to the US Department of Labor, "glass ceiling" is a political term used to describe invisible and unremoved barriers faced by women and minorities in attaining higher positions (Folke and Rickne, 2016). The barriers do not consider qualifications and achievements of women and minorities. According to Ellwood et al. (2019), the glass ceiling refers to women's difficulties in accessing jobs with high salaries and the lack of women in top management positions. Furthermore, the glass ceiling indicates a stagnant condition in women's careers that widens the social status gap between lower-level and top management. Comprehensively, the glass ceiling hinders women from attaining the highest levels in their professions.

Ng and Sears (2017) classify barriers for women's careers into individual and organizational barriers. First, individual barriers include gender-role socialization, low self-efficacy and self-esteem, work/life conflict, a lack of family and social support, a lack of role models, and a lack of social capital. Second, organizational barriers consist of organizational culture, gender stereotyping of managerial positions, a lack of organizational support, and inadequate HR policies supporting women. According to Cross and Linehan (2006), the barriers that prevent women from attaining higher organization positions, such as senior managers, emanate from the organizational practice and policy, networking, mentoring, and the glass ceiling. Oakley (2000) identifies three types of constraints that create a glass ceiling: (1) corporate practices, (2) behavior and culture, such as *stereotype* and leadership style preferences, and (3) structural and cultural explanations rooted in feminist theory. Thus, the glass ceiling includes external and internal barriers. External barriers are caused mainly by external factors, such as organizations, governments, and societies, whereas internal barriers tend to originate from women's roles in their personal lives.

Concerning barriers that females encounter in their careers, a study involving 8600 companies in 49 countries revealed that only 16.9% of top management positions in 2018 were occupied by women, a small increase from 15.0% in 2016. In Indonesia, specifically in public organizations, gender stereotypes are still prevalent, and females are presented with a glass ceiling in their career progression. This phenomenon is demonstrated by the small number of female employees holding advanced management positions. Cakrawira Indonesia conducted a survey that revealed a gap between genders in the distribution of high-level management positions among civil servants in 34 ministries. In addition, there were only about 13% of high-level and mid-level management positions occupied by women in 2018 (KSI Indonesia, 2019).

## Organizational Fairness

Organizational justice pertains to the views of members of an organization regarding whether they are treated fairly by their organizations (Greenberg, 1987). Individuals' emotional reactions to fairness in allocations and exchanges in the workplace affect perceptions and behaviors (Barsky et al., 2011). According to Adams' equity theory, employees compare the outputs they obtain from their work (for example, pay, promotion, and recognition) with the inputs they contribute (for example, efforts, experiences, and education). Furthermore, the theory explains that employees notice their output-to-input ratios and compare them with those of their colleagues (Robbins and Judge, 2015). The theory also holds that the connection between affective reaction and perceived justice is predictive of injustice, resulting in feelings of guilt in redundancy payment whereas triggering emotions, such as anger and distress, in less payment (Barsky et al., 2011).

The concept of organizational justice generally encompasses three distinct dimensions of fairness: distributive, procedural and interactional (Colquitt et al., 2013). Distributive fairness concerns perceived fairness as a result of a work outcome, procedural fairness pertains to processes to determine the outcome, and interactional fairness refers to the manner by which employees are treated by authoritative figures (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Mohammad et al. (2019) explain that overall fairness, not just a certain type of fairness, reflects the real picture regarding employees' personal experiences of justice in the workplace, and they explain that overall fairness is a better predictor of employee attitudes and behaviors. A number of researchers believe that a holistic approach is necessary to examine perceptions of fairness within a specific group or organization (Lind, 2001; Lind and Tyler, 1988). Previous studies have also substantiated the distinction between a holistic measure of fairness and distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness, which serve as antecedents to predict a holistic measure of workplace fairness (Reynolds and Helfers, 2018). Employees observe how they are treated in the workplace; thus, their perceptions of organizational fairness tend to strongly influence their feelings toward and desire to work hard for the organization (Tyler and Blader, 2003).

Organizational fairness refers to employees' perception of fairness in the workplace. According to Johnson et al. (2009), organizational fairness is the extent to which employees perceive the organization's fairness, decisions, culture, and interaction. Organizational fairness focuses on how employees perceive the treatment they receive from authorities and decision-makers in the workplace (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Johnson et al. (2009) explain that employees interpret several organizational events, such as performance assessment, selection, and promotion, by judging fairness in the decision-making procedure, appreciation, and other outcomes and interpersonal treatment they experience during the process. Thus, fairness judgment relates to a broad range of attitudes and behaviors.

## Hypotheses

The glass ceiling perception can be formed from the comparison among individuals in their reference groups and between such individuals and the majority of people outside the groups (Foley et al., 2002). The glass ceiling perception occurs in social contexts that reward people differently based on their social group. Therefore, fairness becomes a social and relational consideration, in which a fair procedure will lead to positive feelings toward other people (Schroth and Shah, 2000). The basic principles of social comparability and identity are based on equity and social justice (Foley et al., 2002). Wenzel (2000) holds that the process of identity becomes the core of the fairness phenomenon; this process underlies the motive of fairness; the occurrence of unfairness threatens identity, and social justice becomes the opposite of social discrimination (Foley et al., 2002). Thus, the social identification process, organizational fairness, and glass ceiling perception are intertwined in the social context. Previous research confirmed this notion with findings that perceived gender discrimination negatively influences the perception of fairness i.e., procedural fairness (Triana et al., 2019). When individuals' perceptions of the glass ceiling emphasize status differences between genders, females tended to identify themselves as affected more significantly, and their perceptions of unfairness intensified. Accordingly, the following research hypothesis is formulated:

*H1: The perception of the glass ceiling negatively affects the perception of organizational fairness.*

The glass ceiling also affects individuals' perception of success. Perception of a glass ceiling is seen by employees as reducing the possibility of achieving high-level positions, and diminished possibilities significantly influence minorities to believe that discrimination toward them in the workplace will hinder them from achieving such positions (Hwang, 2007). Minorities in organizations (including women) often internalize the negative evaluations and stereotypes exacted by majorities, thus restricting themselves and career success due to fear of failure (Foley et al., 2002). In addition, Foley et al.'s (2002) findings prove that gender discrimination causes a glass ceiling, decreasing career prospects. Social exchange theory (Tajfel, 1984) asserts that employees tend to compare their contributions in the workplace with the rewards they receive and compare these results with those of others. When employees feel that their rewards differ from those of others, they perceive unfairness and tend to resent the gap. This effort can demotivate them from seeking career advancement. Thus, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

*H2: The perception of the glass ceiling negatively affects career prospects.*

*H3: The perception of organizational fairness positively affects career prospects.*

*H4: The perception of organizational fairness mediates the perception of the glass ceiling effects on career prospects.*

In addition to unfairness in organizations, the glass ceiling can also affect other attitudes and behaviors, such as an employee's organizational commitment and work engagement. Regarding organizational commitment, the glass ceiling has a significant effect: the lower the organization's glass ceiling is, the greater the employees' lack of commitment (Dost et al., 2012). Several previous studies also report that the perceived glass ceiling can decrease organizational commitment (Downes et al., 2014; Eghlidi and Karimi, 2020; Khuong and Chi, 2017; Onuoha and Idemudia, 2018). Foley et al. (2002) also find that organizational fairness mediates the relationship between the glass ceiling and organizational commitment. Based on the viewpoint of social exchange theory, perceived fairness is beneficial in creating commitment among employees in an organization (Donglong et al., 2020), that is, fair decision-making procedures are evidence of an organization's concern for employees (Lind and Tyler, 1988). Kaola and Rambe (2020) find that employees were more likely to commit themselves to their organizations when they perceived that the organization treated them fairly. Reinforcing these findings, Zhao et al. (2020) and Donglong et al. (2020) suggest that perceptions of justice and organizational commitment are positively related. Thus, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

*H5: The perception of the glass ceiling negatively affects organizational commitment.*

*H6: The perceptions of organizational fairness positively affect organizational commitment.*

*H7: The perception of organizational fairness mediates the perception of glass ceiling effects on organizational commitment.*

The glass ceiling is also associated with employee work engagement issues. Men are considered more easily engaged in work than women (Banihani et al., 2013). This concept cannot be separated from women's dual roles in work and family. Individual differences are significantly related to work engagement (Ghorbannejad and Esakhani, 2016; Langelaan et al., 2006). This idea is reinforced by the glass ceiling expectation that women will prioritize their families over their careers. Yavas et al.'s (2008) research also reported that women have more difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities and experience more family-work conflict than men. This burden negatively affects women's work engagement. Previous research noted that four dimensions of the glass ceiling belief (denial, resilience, resignation, and acceptance) significantly influence work engagement (Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan, 2017, 2018). Moreover, Sharma and Kaur (2019) found that the glass ceiling in terms of societal and organizational barriers significantly affects women's work engagement.

In addition, organizational fairness can also influence work engagement. Park et al. (2016) explain that when employees notice that they are treated fairly and valued at work, their self-confidence and motivation increase. This opinion is consistent with Frank et al. (2004), who stated that the treatment employees receive in the workplace is based on a mutual contract between employers and employees and generates work engagement. Tyler and Blader (2003) indicate that employees establish their social identities through interactions with others and that these identities motivate them internally to engage in groups that reinforce feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Fair treatment in the workplace determines employees' perceptions of

their social identities and consequently increases their engagement. Thus, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

*H8: The perception of the glass ceiling negatively affects work engagement.*

*H9: The perception of organizational fairness affects work engagement.*

## METHODS

### Participants and Procedure

This research was conducted using a cross-sectional study design, which involved one specific time with many samples (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). An online survey was conducted on female civil servants who work in various government institutions and are known to the researchers. These female civil servants work in different sectors such as education, health, finance, law, municipalities, and district-level governments, serving as entry-level staff to managers in their departments. The survey employed the snowball sampling technique: the researchers recruited the initial respondents first, and then, subsequent respondents were recruited based on the recommendation of the first respondents (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The researchers sent the online survey link to the female civil servants and asked for their willingness to participate in the research. The researchers also asked the participants to share the link with other female employees they knew in their workplaces and neighborhoods. The online survey was conducted with 501 respondents using the snowball sampling technique. Many participants did not complete the survey; therefore, only 201 responses could be used for data analyses.

The ages of respondents ranged from 18 to 58 years old, with an average of 36. Most were married (70.15%), and the rest were unmarried (26.37%), divorced (1.99%), or widowed (1.49%). Regarding the number of dependent children, 55.73%, 3.49%, and 3.98% had 1–3 children, 4–5 children, and did not respond, respectively. Regarding education levels, 42.29%, 30.85%, 18.41%, 7.46%, and 1% of respondents held an undergraduate degree (S1), master's degree (S2), diploma certificate (D3), high school certificate, and doctoral degree, respectively. The average length of employment was 11 years, with the longest employment period at 44 years.

### Measures

Responses to the survey were measured on a five-point scale that reflected the extent to which participants agreed with each item, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey was translated into the Indonesian language. Questions were adapted from previous studies, and each was appropriate within the context of the research population in Indonesia. Questions measured respondents' perceptions of the glass ceiling in the workplace in general, as well as perceived organizational fairness, perceptions of career prospects and respondents' commitment to their organizations. There were no questions that were not in accordance with the culture in Indonesia.

**Glass ceiling.** The perceived glass ceiling was measured using four questions from Foley et al. (2005). The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The respondents were asked to answer questions related to the perception of differentiating behaviors due to gender status. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.83.

**Organizational fairness.** The organizational fairness was measured using Hwang's (2007) questionnaire, comprising 11 items and measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). Organizational fairness describes respondents' perceptions of fairness in their organizations, as perceived by employees who compare the treatment they receive with that of other people. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.91.

**Career prospects.** Career prospects were measured using Foley et al.'s (2002) questionnaire comprising six items and measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). Career prospects refer to the respondents' career expectations and aspirations in their organizations. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.89.

Organizational commitment. Mowday et al.'s (1979) questionnaire comprising 15 items was used to measure organizational commitment. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). Organizational commitment shows the degree to which the respondents identify their involvement with their organizations. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.89.

Work engagement. Work engagement was examined using Balducci et al.'s (2010) questionnaire comprising nine items and measured on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.91.

### Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses, this research employed partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), which is a regression-based method for creating and developing social science models with a prediction-oriented approach (Hair et al., 2013). The research model suitability in PLS was measured by calculating the goodness-of-fit (GoF) value. Bootstrapping method was performed on hypothesis testing as the default resampling method. The application of the resampling method allowed the data to be freely distributed and did not require the assumption of normal distribution and a large sample.

Using a guideline for evaluation standards (Hair et al., 2017), there are two stages of analysis and data interpretation in PLS-SEM, namely (1) measurement model evaluation for measuring validity and reliability and (2) structural model evaluation for examining direct and indirect effects of the developed model. SmartPLS 3.3.2 was used to perform the PLS-SEM analysis.

## FINDINGS

### Preliminary Analysis

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, including the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values, and variable correlations. The analysis results support the hypotheses in this study. The correlation analysis results show that the glass ceiling variables have a significant negative correlation with organizational fairness and commitment, career prospects, and work engagement. Table 1 also illustrates that organizational fairness has a significantly positive correlation with career prospects, work engagement, and organizational commitment.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation of Variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Glass Ceiling	Organizational Fairness	Career Prospects	Work Engagement
<b>Glass Ceiling</b>	201	1.000	4.000	1.831	0.708				
<b>Organizational Fairness</b>	201	1.000	5.000	3.871	0.659	-.496**			
<b>Career Prospects</b>	201	1.000	5.000	3.304	0.838	-.143*	.268**		
<b>Work Engagement</b>	201	3.000	5.000	4.090	0.531	-.427**	.549**	.464**	
<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	201	2.000	5.000	4.040	0.590	-.501**	.690**	.358**	.677**

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

### Measurement Model Evaluation

Validity and reliability tests of each construct were conducted to evaluate the measurement model. Furthermore, convergent and discriminant validity were analyzed to test the construct validity. If the factor loading value is above the recommended value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010) and the average variance extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.5, then the construct passes the convergent validity test (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 2 shows that the factor loading and AVE values of all constructs meet the recommended criteria, thus presenting evidence of convergent validity. In contrast, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. A construct also passes the discriminant validity if the square root of each construct's AVE has a greater value than the correlations with other latent constructs. Table 3 shows that all constructs passed the discriminant validity because the square root of each construct's AVE has a greater value than the correlations with other latent constructs.



The Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values identify the reliability of the instrument, which is reliable if both are above 0.70. Table 2 shows that the Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability of each construct meet the required criteria, indicating that all measurement scales are reliable.

Table 2 Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Glass Ceiling	GC_1	0.840	0.833	0.889	0.666
	GC_2	0.817			
	GC_3	0.815			
	GC_4	0.793			
Organizational Fairness	OF_1	0.744	0.908	0.923	0.548
	OF_2	0.679			
	OF_3	0.681			
	OF_5	0.690			
	OF_6	0.659			
	OF_7	0.774			
	OF_8	0.874			
	OF_9	0.770			
	OF_10	0.783			
	OF_11	0.728			
Career Prospects	CP_1	0.802	0.890	0.919	0.695
	CP_2	0.863			
	CP_3	0.722			
	CP_4	0.880			
	CP_5	0.889			
Work Engagement	WE_1	0.742	0.907	0.925	0.608
	WE_2	0.827			
	WE_3	0.833			
	WE_4	0.820			
	WE_5	0.750			
	WE_6	0.799			
	WE_7	0.816			
Organizational Commitment	OC_1	0.691	0.893	0.913	0.514
	OC_2	0.793			
	OC_5	0.691			
	OC_6	0.654			
	OC_8	0.800			
	OC_10	0.776			
	OC_11	0.648			
	OC_12	0.629			
	OC_13	0.643			
	OC_14	0.813			

Table 3 Fornell–Larcker Criterion

	Glass Ceiling	Organizational Fairness	Career Prospects	Work Engagement	Career Prospects
Glass Ceiling	<i>0.816</i>				
Organizational Fairness	-0.496	<i>0.741</i>			
Career Prospects	-0.143	0.268	<i>0.833</i>		
Work Engagement	-0.427	0.549	0.464	<i>0.780</i>	
Organizational Commitment	-0.501	0.690	0.358	0.677	<i>0.717</i>

Note: The square root of AVE values is shown on the diagonal and printed in italics; non-diagonal elements are latent variable correlations (LVC).

### Structural Model Evaluation

The proposed hypotheses are examined using the structural model analysis after evaluating the measurement model. This analysis was conducted by examining the direct and indirect effects between the hypothesized variables. Figure 1 shows the PLS analysis results:

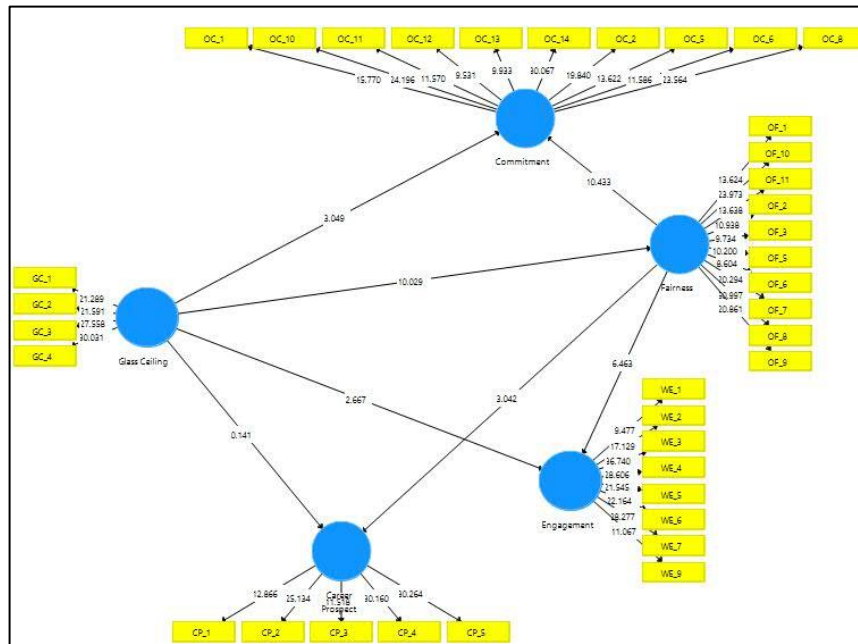


Figure 1 Structural model analysis results

Table 4 Hypothesis testing results

	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	
<b>Direct Effect</b>					
Glass Ceiling → Organizational Fairness	-0.496	0.049	10.029	<b>0.000</b>	H1 is supported
Glass Ceiling → Career Prospects	-0.014	0.096	0.141	<b>0.888</b>	H2 is rejected
Organizational Fairness → Career Prospects	0.261	0.086	3.042	<b>0.002</b>	H3 is supported
Glass Ceiling → Organizational Commitment	-0.211	0.069	3.049	<b>0.002</b>	H5 is supported
Organizational Fairness → Organizational Commitment	0.586	0.056	10.433	<b>0.000</b>	H6 is supported
Glass Ceiling → Work Engagement	-0.205	0.077	2.667	<b>0.008</b>	H8 is supported
Organizational Fairness → Work Engagement	0.447	0.069	6.463	<b>0.000</b>	H9 is supported
<b>Indirect Effect</b>					
Glass Ceiling → Career Prospects (via Org. fairness)	-0.130	0.048	2.711	<b>0.007</b>	H4 is supported
Glass Ceiling → Organizational Commitment (via Org. fairness)	-0.290	0.042	6.911	<b>0.000</b>	H7 is supported

H1 predicts that the glass ceiling negatively influences organizational fairness. On direct testing, the structural model analysis results (Table 4) show that the perceived glass ceiling has a significant negative effect on organizational fairness ( $\beta = -0.496$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.000$ ). Hence, H1 is supported. Results also demonstrate that organizational fairness has a significant positive impact on career prospects ( $\beta = 0.261$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.002$ ) and work engagement ( $\beta = 0.447$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.000$ ). Thus, H3 and H9 are supported. The perceived glass ceiling has a significant negative impact on organizational commitment ( $\beta = -0.211$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.002$ ) and work engagement ( $\beta = -0.205$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.008$ ). However, the glass ceiling does not significantly affect career prospects ( $-0.014$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.888). Thus, H5, and H8 are supported, whereas H2 is rejected. The results also indicate that organizational fairness has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment to a significant degree ( $\beta = 0.586$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.000$ ), thus supporting H6.

The indirect test results show that the glass ceiling has a significant negatively effect on career prospects, work engagement, and organizational commitment via organizational fairness (see Table 4). Therefore, H4 is supported, that is, organizational fairness mediates the impact of the glass ceiling on career prospects. The test results also show that the glass ceiling does not directly affect career prospects. Thus, organizational fairness fully mediates the glass ceiling effect on career prospects. By contrast, the results also illustrate that organizational fairness partially mediates the glass ceiling effects on work engagement and organizational commitment. Therefore, H7 is supported, that is, organizational fairness mediates the effect of the glass ceiling on organization commitment.

## DISCUSSION

Discrimination is a dangerous act that harms organizations and employees, particularly the glass ceiling that impedes women from achieving career advancement (Mondy, 2008). Discrimination in various forms, including the glass ceiling, has negative consequences on organizational fairness, career prospects, and work engagement; it also results in burnout, productivity decline, and poor organizational citizenship behavior (Foley et al., 2002; Hwang, 2007; Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan, 2017; Robbins and Judge, 2015). In the Indonesian context, the glass ceiling is a common phenomenon in multiple local governments, which is demonstrated by the lack of females holding positions in the upper echelons of government, resulting in gender injustice in the bureaucracy's workforce (Krissetyanti, 2018). The World Bank (2018) reports a range of variations in gender balance within the central and local governments in Indonesia. According to the World Bank (2018), there are few females holding structural public service positions, particularly at levels that require managerial responsibility and leadership. This research analyzed the glass ceiling effects on organizational fairness and commitment, career prospects, and work engagement.

The results show significant negative effects of the glass ceiling on organizational fairness. Thus, female employees who perceive a glass ceiling in the workplace consider that organizations do not treat them fairly. This finding supports Foley et al.'s (2002) finding that the presence of a glass ceiling reduces employees' perception of fairness in organizations. As reported by Krissetyanti (2018) in a study on gender bias among Indonesian civil servants, while the merit system is applied in promotions of structural positions in Indonesian bureaucracies, in practice, the promotions remain under the domination of male candidates in the upper echelons. This induces perceptions of organizational fairness among female civil servants in the workplace.

Results also suggest that organizational fairness positively influences career prospects, work engagement, and organizational commitment. Therefore, when employees feel they are fairly treated by the organization, they tend to believe in their career prospects within the organization. Moreover, fair treatment encourages employees' work engagement and increases organizational commitment. This result is consistent with Hwang (2007), who shows that individuals who believe in fair organizational processes have increasingly positive perceptions of career prospects. Similarly, the results of this research support Kim and Park's (2017) finding of a direct relationship between organizational fairness and work engagement. In addition, the present study's findings also strengthen equity theory (Masterson, 2001). This theory posits that employees show organizational commitment and an obligation to contribute to organizations when they perceive fair treatment from the organization.

This research also shows that the glass ceiling has significant negative effects on organizational commitment and work engagement. The results indicate that female employees who encounter a glass ceiling in the workplace tend to reduce their organizational commitment and attachment to work. This finding supports previous research suggesting the negative effects of the glass ceiling on work-related attitudes, including organizational commitment and work engagement (Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan, 2017, 2018; Downes et al., 2014; Eghlidi and Karimi, 2020; Khuong and Chi, 2017; Onuoha and Idemudia, 2018; Sharma and Kaur, 2019). In Indonesian culture, which is inclined toward patriarchy, females encounter greater barriers to workplace success than their male colleagues (Sumarto and Permanasari, 2013), which then negatively affects their work-related outcomes. It is also apparent that Indonesian females are disadvantaged when choosing not to marry or have children when compared to females who choose these traditional roles and are considered 'complete women' (Retnaningsih, 2013).

In terms of indirect effects of the variables, this research proves that organizational fairness mediates the glass ceiling effects on career prospects and organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with previous studies that prove the mediation effects of organizational fairness (Foley et al., 2002; Hwang, 2007).

## THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

The study focused on the consequences of the glass ceiling perceived by women in the workplace. This research offers a theoretical contribution in regard to the effects of the perceived glass ceiling on a range of work-related outcomes, which encompass organizational fairness, career prospects, organizational

commitment, and work engagement. This study also reveals the role of organizational fairness in those relationships. By presenting a comprehensive model to understand the broader impact of the glass ceiling perceived by females in the workplace, this research is built on previous studies (Foley et al., 2002; Herrbach and Mignonac, 2012; Sharma and Kaur, 2019). Furthermore, using this research model, analyses on the glass ceiling can be conducted in different workplace contexts. For instance, researchers can identify the types of glass ceilings as barriers that predominantly affect work-related outcomes (Kiaye and Sing, 2013; Cross and Linehan, 2006).

### **Practical Implications**

This current study has revealed the significant influence of the glass ceiling on work-related outcomes, which comprise organizational fairness, organizational commitment, work engagement, and career prospects. When females perceive a glass ceiling at work, they will draw a connection to issues on organizational fairness, which ultimately lower their commitment and work engagement. These female employees will also view their career prospects as constrained by the glass ceiling in their workplaces. Leaders should take the initiative to prevent the glass ceiling phenomenon in their workplaces. In this regard, leaders should ensure equal opportunities for male and female employees through a number of policies and practices in managing human resources. As an example, one measure might be prioritizing competencies and achievement over gender for employees seeking job promotions. The open bidding policy could also provide qualified employees with equal opportunities to occupy certain positions, instead of putting female employees at a disadvantage due to the glass ceiling phenomenon. Leaders should devise work performance evaluation systems using measurable indicators to enable subordinates to gain insight into their work performances via objective parameters that reflect the organization's fairness. Objective work performance would be one consideration for career progression for employees. Leaders can also evaluate employees' perceptions of organizational fairness in the workplace, which would further improve policies and human resource practices in general.

## **CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The results of this research prove the significant effects of the glass ceiling on how female employees feel about fairness in their organizations and their attitudes toward career prospects, organizational commitment, and work engagement. The findings show that female employees who perceive a glass ceiling in the workplace consider that organizations do not treat them fairly. Thus, they feel that they have limited career prospects in the organization, reduce their organizational commitment and work attachment. In interpreting the research findings, limitations of the research methodology should be considered.

First, the cross-sectional design of this study does not allow researchers to draw conclusions about causal relationships. There is a possibility that the relationships among variables are reciprocal or even the opposite of what has been theorized. Therefore, a careful interpretation of the correlations among variables is essential.

Second, self-report surveys could increase common method bias, as proposed by Howard (1994), in that self-reported data often cause concerns as these are prone to common method or desirability bias. Nonetheless, a number of studies suggest that in cases where variables concern self-perceptions, as is the case with variables in this study, it is appropriate to use self-reported data (Maurer and Tarulli, 1994; Spector, 1994).

Third, this research was conducted in government institutions in Indonesia and does not necessarily reflect the relationships between the glass ceiling phenomenon and organizational fairness and commitment, career prospects, and work engagement in other types of organizations.

In light of the limitations of this research, there are several suggestions for subsequent studies. To draw conclusions about causal relationships among variables in cross-sectional studies, future studies could consider a longitudinal design to further explain the relationships among variables. To prevent common method bias due to self-reported survey data, future studies can employ other methods such as the multi-source data analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For a broader generalization of research findings, further research can be conducted in a range of organizations, such as those in the private sector, to validate research findings in the current study. This research focused on the structural relationship between the glass ceiling and

its consequences, including organizational fairness, career prospects, organizational commitment, and work engagement. Further research needs to consider the antecedents that cause the glass ceiling, such as interpersonal and situational factors (Elacqua et al., 2009).

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## APPENDIX

## Appendix 1 Research Questionnaire

Variables	Statement	Source(s)
Glass ceiling	1. At work, I sometimes feel that my gender is a limitation.	Foley et al. (2005)
	2. My gender has a negative influence on my career advancement.	
	3. At work, many people have sex stereotypes and treat me as if they were true.	
	4. At work, I feel that others exclude me from their activities because of my gender.	
Organizational Fairness	1. Promotion procedures are designed to generate standards so that decisions can be made with consistency.	Hwang (2007)
	2. Promotion procedures are designed to allow for requests for clarification or additional information about the decision.	
	3. Promotion procedures are designed to collect accurate information necessary for making decisions.	
	4. Promotion procedures are designed to provide opportunities to appeal or challenge the decision.	
	5. Promotion procedures are designed to have all parties affected by the decision represented.	
	6. Promotion procedures are designed to hear the concerns of all those affected by the decision.	
	7. The promotion procedure in this organization is fair.	
	8. I am satisfied with the promotion procedure in this organization.	
	9. Promotion decisions in this organization are fair.	
	10. I am satisfied with the decisions of who is promoted in this organization.	
	11. I am familiar with the way this organization determines promotions to administrative or higher positions.	
Career Prospects	1. I eventually want to become a top executive officer in this organization.	Foley et al. (2002)
	2. Although it requires a sacrifice, I aspire to be promoted in this organization.	
	3. I will do whatever it takes to be promoted in this organization.	
	4. I think I will eventually be promoted in this organization.	
	5. I am confident that I will be promoted in this organization.	
	6. I would be surprised if I were promoted in this organization.	
Organizational Commitment	1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	Mowday et al. (1979)
	2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	
	3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization (R).	
	4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	
	5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	
	6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	
	7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar (R).	
	8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	
	9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization (R).	
	10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	
	11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely (R).	
	12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees (R).	
	13. I really care about the fate of this organization.	
	14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	
	15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part (R).	
Work Engagement	1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	Balducci et al. (2010)
	2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	
	3. I am enthusiastic about my job.	
	4. My job inspires me.	
	5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	
	6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.	
	7. I am proud of the work that I do.	
	8. I am immersed in my job.	
	9. I get carried away when I am working.	