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## **Is This Door Glass or Iron for Immigrant Female Workers?**

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### **Is This Door Glass or Iron for Immigrant Women Workers?**

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**Abstract**

**Is This Door Glass or Iron for Immigrant Women Workers?**

**Summary**

This paper addresses barriers faced by immigrant women workers during their international recruitment process by exploring their experiences. Women's studies have accelerated in the last three decades, with almost all the management literature agreeing on the challenges for women of adapting to the business life. The most popular issue in this literature regarding the women workforce is the Glass Ceiling syndrome, which hinders women's high-level positions. This study aims to develop the understanding of a new issue, which is called "Glass Door," as representing gender discrimination in the recruitment process. This concept has been defined and the theory built by Hassink and Russo (2010). This study further reveals additional barriers encountered by immigrant women workers during the recruitment process in their international applications. The study is an ongoing process, with continuous outreach to women immigrants from developing countries. Specifically, the development paper, if accepted, will be expanded by outreach to new international partnerships from other countries, including developed and developing ones. In this way, the paper has the potential to make a theoretical contribution by evaluating cross-cultural differences in the recruitment process of immigrant women from different nations.

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### Introduction

This paper addresses barriers faced by immigrant women workers during their international recruitment process, by exploring their experiences. Today in the global business world, recruitment of a diverse workforce is gaining more importance. This paper focuses on combining important issues from diversity management literature, including women in management and the immigrant workforce.

Hence, the paper is mainly focused on the problems of the immigrant women workforce, which is the paper's fit with the conference theme of 'Gender in Management' (BAM 2019).

The paper begins with an overview of the literature on the gender gap in business life and regarding immigrant women workers. The paper then discusses this issue in the context of our current study of the barriers faced by immigrant women workers with developing country origins. Preliminary findings will be presented in a table, with consideration given to the paper's further development. The development paper, if accepted, will be developed by attempting to reach new international partnerships with other countries, including developed and developing ones. In this way, the paper has the potential to make a theoretical contribution by evaluating cross-cultural differences in the recruitment process of immigrant women from different nations.

### Theoretical Background of the Gender Gap in Business

In the last century, women have begun to diversify from their traditional roles and gain social rights. Powel (2011), divided the 20<sup>th</sup> century in respect to women's representation in working life. In the first half, women representation in the workforce was very low, but the second half changed in the economic roles played by the sexes via several forms, including educational attainment, the women's liberation movement and equal employment opportunity laws. As a result, with the influence of globalization and liberal policies over time, women have been increasingly empowered in both the social and economic spheres.

Despite all of the efforts to involve women in the workforce for more than half a century, the women participation rate, according to a World Bank report, has decreased to less than 49% internationally, whereas the rate was 51.5% in the early 1990's (World Bank, 2019). Moreover, the gap of gender inequality continues, with women currently facing 100 years to achieve equal rights with men and 217 years to receive equal pay (World Economic Forum, 2017).

In order to explain this gender gap in business life, according to a review of the management literature, researchers have framed many studies using the metaphor of *glass* to represent invisible obstacles that women face in business life. These terms include the *glass ceiling*, *glass cliff* and *glass elevator*. The concept of *glass ceiling* was first used in 1986 by Hymowitz and Schellhardt in *The Wall Street Journal* in a special report on women in the corporate world. The authors found that although many lower-level women administrators were recruited by American companies, very few of them were able to rise up to the same levels as their male counterparts, and most of the women managers were given less authority and lower wages than men. Furthermore, Lynn Martin (1991) explains glass ceiling as "the existence of invisible, artificial barriers blocking women and minorities from advancing up the corporate ladder to management and executive level positions." *Glass cliff* is defined as "a situation in which a

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woman or member of a minority group ascends to a leadership position in challenging circumstances where the risk of failure is high. In addition, research by Ryan, Haslam, and Postmes (2007) observed that “*women were chosen as leaders in times of crisis because of their ‘special’ abilities, including the fact that ‘women always want to help the underdog, ‘women ‘have more skills to balance risk,’ and that they ‘tend to cope with failure more pragmatically than men.’*” It is deduced from this research that women are considered to have specific abilities that stand out in times of crisis. Finally, the definition of a *Glass elevator is the invisible leverage that propels even relatively mediocre men upward in women-dominated occupations* (McConnell-Ginet, 2000,260).

Whereas the terms glass ceiling, glass cliff, and glass elevator are related to women career development within their existing organizations, Hassink and Russo (2010) describe another issue in women’s employment as the *glass door*, which focuses on workers’ recruitment process. They define glass door as a model “...based on two key assumptions. First, women have a higher probability of leaving due to their higher valuation of non-market activities. Second, a voluntary quit leads to a larger decrease in the production of lower level co-workers when the worker who leaves has a position in the upper tier of the hierarchy. The glass door implies that the value of women’s outside option in the labour market is lower” (Hassink and Russo, 2010,14). In other words, employers may hesitate to hire a woman due to assumptions regarding women obligations to fulfill social roles and responsibilities. Some of these perceptions about a woman, if she is also a married woman, will be that she is less flexible, less mobile or less competent (Du and Dong, 2008). Therefore, employers may perceive that women cannot take on a heavy workload due to these responsibilities and cannot tolerate long working hours, thus preventing them from rising in their working lives.

### **Theoretical Background of Immigrant Women in Business**

With globalization and cultural integration in business life, many companies have started to hire people from all around the world. There are situations arising from this international recruitment process, such as the hiring of a person who already works for a particular company in his/her home country or an immigrant from another country. In the first situation, companies are not suspicious of the potential candidate, since they are familiar with or can gain some idea of his/her past work performance. On the other hand, recruiters might underestimate an immigrant candidate due to stereotypes of his/ her life and work style. Table 1 summarizes studies related to immigrant women in business. Table 2 summarizes studies related gender discrimination and recruitment.

### **Research Design and Methods**

The management literature has been clear so far about the gender gap between men and women in business life. Additionally, there are many studies about the recruitment and employment of immigrant people. However, in the case of two diversity issues coming together, when the employee is both women and an immigrant, is the door still made of glass or is it iron? The authors of this paper assume that it will be iron, since it is more visible and not easily accessible to immigrant candidates. One research question to consider is whether women immigrant workers with developing country origins face additional barriers than women domestic workers.

Our hypotheses for the first step of our research are:

$H_0$ = *Women immigrant workers who have developing country origins do not face additional barriers than women domestic workers.*

$H_1$ = *Women immigrant workers who have developing country origin do face additional barriers to women domestic workers.*

In this developmental paper, if it is accepted, we will ask whether women immigrant workers who have developing country origin and developed country origin face different levels of resistance during the recruitment process.

In order to find the answer to the initial research question, we accessed a women immigrant platform through the internet called “göçmenanneler” with 18,371 members. We asked them to answer the questions adapted from scale of “Gender Discrimination in Georgian Labor Market” which is developed by Nani Bendelani, Pirjo Turk, Mariam Amashukeli, Lili Khechuashvili (Center for Social Sciences) Please find the questions in Table 3. Since the study is ongoing, our sample size is not yet clear. If the study is accepted, we are planning to reveal all findings in our sessions.

### **Discussion**

The rise of globalization forces managerial teams, including practitioners and academicians, to think about how to deal with diverse workforce. That is why gender discrimination and immigrant women are very popular topics in academic literature. There are several researches about gender discrimination which uses “glass” metaphor such as glass ceiling, glass cliff, glass elevator and glass door. Additionally, there are some studies about immigrant women workers dealing mainly on their experiences in some specific country of origin, but gender discrimination in recruitment process of immigrant women from a developing country and the comparison of gender discrimination in recruitment process of immigrant women regarding their countries’ economic development are areas to be developed.

Immigration is an important result and problem of globalization. To move another country is a difficult situation, moreover immigrants have also many difficulties to find a proper job as well. Since recruitment teams have bounded rationality because of their prejudgment about the potential immigrant candidate’s ability, knowledge and education, they ignore many international possibilities during their hiring decision. What if this immigrant people is a woman, the process will be much more rigorous? As a result, many highly educated and skilled women couldn’t find jobs if they are immigrant. The main contribution of this developmental paper will be to clarify the barriers that immigrant women, from developing and developed countries, faced, and to understand the differences in their situation.

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**Table 1 Studies related to immigrant women in business**

<b>Article Topic</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Content</b>
Gender, immigration policies and accreditation: valuing the skills of professional women migrants	Robyn Iredale	2005	In this research they looked the relations between skilled immigrant women and their economic participation. They searched which factors effect the migration for skilled migrants. They found that the relationship between gender and international skilled migration affected by many factors and gender –based migrant selection process one of important factor.
Gender, work and migration: Deskillling Chinese immigrant women in Canada	Guida Man	2004	This research focuses on work experience of Chinese immigrant women who were highly educated, skilled professionals in their home country. Axis of gender, race, ethnicity, class and citizenship affect their economic participation in Canada. As a result, they are becoming part-time, insecure positions or unemployed in the new country. The result of research shows us they are becoming deskilled labor force.

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**Table 2 Studies related gender discrimination and recruitment**

Article Topic	Writer	Year	Content
The Effect of Gender On The Recruitment Of Entry-Level Accountants	J. Russell Hardin Kurt F. Reding Morris H. Stocks	2002	The purpose of this study was to examine whether there is gender bias in the recruitment of entry-level accountants by public accounting.
Circumventing Discrimination Gender and Ethnic Strategies in Silicon Valley	Johanna Shi	2006	This study is based on 54 semistructured interviews of high-skilled, white and Asian men and women working in Silicon Valley. The comparison of white women with Asian immigrant women reflects the interaction of gender and ethnicity in shaping divergent trajectories.
Transparency in Academic Recruitment: A Problematic Tool for Gender Equality?	Marieke van den Brink, Yvonne Benschop and Willy Jansen	2010	This paper focuses on the concepts of transparency and accountability as tools for gender equality, and examines the application of these policies in recruitment and selection
Gender in Academic Networking: The Role of Gatekeepers in Professorial Recruitment	Marieke van den Brink and Yvonne Benschop	2013	This survey's argument that gender is implicated in gatekeeping.
Economic Integration of Recent Chinese Immigrants in Canada's Second-Tier Cities: The Triple Glass Effect and Immigrants' Downward Social Mobility	Shibao Guo	2013	The triple glass effect includes glass gate, glass door and glass ceiling. This article focus on the relationship between the triple glass effect and Chinese Immigrants in Canada.
The Employment and Recruitment of Immigrant Care Workers in Canada	Jelena Atanackovic and Ivy Lynn Bourgeault	2013	This paper examined the employment and recruitment of immigrant care workers who worked in the older adult care sector in Canada.
Migrant workers in small London hotels: Employment, recruitment and distribution	Eugenia Markova, Anna Paraskevopoulou, Allan M Williams and Gareth Shaw	2013	In this study writers tried to find answer of "Why do hotels employ migrant workers?" question. The research used mixed methods and made a survey with 155 hotel managers and 51 in-depth interviews.
Field Experimental Evidence on Gender Discrimination in Hiring: Biased as Heckman and Siegelman Predicted?	Stijn Baert	2015	In this study, the authors empirically investigated gender discrimination in hiring.

Table 3 Questionnaire

**Immigrant Women Workers and Glass Door Syndrome Questionnaire**

1. How many times have you been in a job interview?
  - Never
  - Once
  - 2-4 times
  - 5-7 times
  - 8-10 times
  - More than 10 times
2. In a job interview have you been asked questions concerning:
  - Your marital status
  - Your plans to get married
  - The number of children
  - Your plans to have children
  - Doctoral proof that you are not pregnant
  - Something else not related to your skills, education, experience: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did you get hired for the job you are working currently?
  - I don't work
  - Through my friend/acquaintance/relative
  - I was hired just based on my CV
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever been turned down for a job you applied for?
  - Yes
  - No
6. Did you get any feedback why you did not get the job you applied for?
  - Yes
  - No
7. Please specify what was the reason
  - Too high expectations for salary
  - For being pregnant
  - Due to my gender
  - Due to my age
  - Due to my care responsibilities
  - Due to my plans to have children
  - Due to the lack of experience
  - Due to the lack of my skills
  - Due to my education (for example the level of education was too low/too high or the vocation/subject where education received wasn't right)
  - Due to my difference of opinions
  - Due to my appearance
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What do you think was the reason for not getting the job you applied for?

- I don't know
- Too high expectations for salary
- Due to the lack of experience
- Due to the lack of my skills
- Due to my education (for example the level of education was too low/too high or the vocation/subject where education received wasn't right)
- Due to my difference of opinions
- For being pregnant
- Due to my gender
- Due to my age
- Due to my care responsibilities
- Due to my plans to have children
- Due to my appearance
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. When looking for a job, have you experienced, that the job advertisement you were interested in, had some criteria not related to potential workers' skills, education, experience, etc. (for example only women or men /people in certain age are welcome to apply)

- Yes
- No

10. Please specify, what were the criterias?

- Only woman can apply
- Only men can apply
- Only people in certain age can apply
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. What channels have you used the most for finding a job?

- Internet recruitment sites
- Friends/family/acquaintances
- Newspaper message board
- Recruitment companies
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Gender:

- Female
- Male

13. Age:

- .....

14. Place of residence:

- .....

15. What is the highest level of education that you have attained?

- Primary education
- Secondary school level
- High School
- Bachelor degree
- Master's degree
- PhD

16. Total job experience

- ....