

Human Resource Management: Concepts and Practices (Wiley Series in Management)



THE GLASS CEILING IN HUMAN RESOURCES: EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT AND THE PRACTICES OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

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Research on sex stereotypes suggests that gender bias is an invisible barrier—the so-called glass ceiling—preventing women from breaking into the highest levels of management in business organizations. Using data from a state-based professional HR organization, we investigated this phenomenon in the field of HR management. Building on the lack of fit model of gender discrimination and previous research, we tested two hypotheses: that women in HR are more likely to be concentrated in lower-level managerial positions in organizations that emphasize employee involvement (because of a related emphasis on stereotypically feminine managerial abilities) and that women in HR also are more likely to be concentrated in lower-level managerial positions in organizations that emphasize strategic human resource management (because of a related emphasis on stereotypically masculine characteristics). Our results support the first but not the second hypothesis. Theoretical and practical implications related to the glass ceiling are discussed. © 2008 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

The glass-ceiling effect in organizations (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990) has received a great deal of popular and scholarly attention in recent years, perhaps due to its persistence over time. Recent studies on the lack of women in senior management (Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2007) and the gender pay gap (Blau & Kahn, 2007) indicate that women are disproportionately underrepresented

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