Turnover intention and glass ceiling perceptions among female workers in IT industry in Malaysia

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to investigate the effects of glass ceiling perception on the turnover intention among female workers in IT industry. This paper proposes a conceptual model to examine the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention. Besides, this paper also proposes the mediating variables, which job satisfaction and commitment that are expected to mediate the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention. The findings of this study may provide new conceptualisation related to the turnover intention among female workers that may allow for more empirical research to be conducted in the future studying the effects on other human resource management aspects.

Keywords: female workers, glass ceiling perception, IT industry, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intention

1. Introduction
The trend of employee turnover is not only faced by Malaysia but also faced by other countries in Asia Pacific. The turnover rate in Malaysia is 9.3 percent in 2009 and increasing by 10.1 percent in 2010 (Ahmad Pharmy, 2010). Furthermore, in 2011, employee turnover rate in Malaysia has increased to 15.9 percent, which is placed sixth behind China (24.4%), Australia (19%), India (18.6%), Hong Kong (16.3%) and Indonesia (16.1%) [1]. A survey done by Malaysian Employers Federation on 143 companies across the various sectors in Malaysia between June 2010 and July 2011, reported that the top three industries in the non-manufacturing sector with the highest annual average turnover rate are IT/communication (at 75.72%), associations/societies (at 33%), and hotel/restaurant (at 32.4%) [1].

Previous researchers explained that the high turnover rate in IT industry is caused by two factors, which are employees quit from their job to get the higher salary and higher position offered in other organization [2]. This raises the question that whether the employees were restricted to obtain higher salary and higher positions in the same organization, so they need to quit their job to find those opportunities in other organizations. In a study done by [3] found that there is a perception of glass ceiling in IT industry. However, there is no clear reveal about the existence of a relationship between the glass ceiling perception and turnover intention in IT industry, especially in Malaysia context. Accordingly, a study to measure the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention is needed to clarify the factors of the high turnover rate in IT industry in Malaysia. This study will investigated the roles of job satisfaction and organizational commitment as a mediator in the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention among women workers in IT industry in Malaysia.

2. Turnover Intention
Employee turnover is a problem for organizations because of the high turnover rate can affect the efficiency of the organization [4], increased cost of turnover and many other negative impacts [5]. estimated that the cost of turnover in the hospitality industry, including not only costs directly associated with filling the vacant positions, but also "… include other costs, such as lost productivity, lost sales, and management's time" (p.108) [6]. Has categorized the employee turnover into two groups namely "job-to-job turnover" and "job-to-non-employment movement". He defined "job-to-job turnover" as employees who are quit their job and move to another job, while "job-to-non-employment movement" is defined as employees who are quit from their job for domestic, personal or other reasons.

According to [7]. Intention is one's motivation in the sense of conscious plan to mobilize his efforts to implement the behaviour [8]. Have defined intention to quit as a psychological variable that indicates a person's membership in an organization, whether it wants to stay in the organization or quit. Employees who have the intention to quit will tend to have behaviours such as thinking to stop, try to find another alternative and giving an estimation how much longer he/she will stay in the organization [7, 9] through the theory of reasoned action say that the actual behaviour must be preceded by behavioural intentions. He stressed that the stronger the desire to engage in behaviour, the more likely the occurrence of such behaviour. In the case of turnover behaviour in the organization, intention to quit must be an antecedent of such behaviour. Therefore, by reducing the turnover intention of individuals, the actual turnover in an organization will be reduced, thereby can reduce the financial cost incurred by the organization and effort involved in the recruitment, selection [6], induction and training of replacement staff [10].

Many scholars concerned with the research on employee turnover because it has a significant impact on the financial cost [5], affect the overall performance of an organization [11,12], and it has the potential to become difficult to control in term of difficulty in finding quality employees with the skills needed to fill vacant positions left by previous workers [4]. Some researchers estimated that the cost of turnover in the hospitality industry, including not only costs directly associated with filling the vacant positions, but also including other costs such as lost productivity, lost sales, and interfere with the efficiency of time management. All costs mentioned are the costs

incurred by the organization as a corrective action to restore the performance efficiency of an organization. Therefore, it is important to know in advance, what are the factors that can influence employee's intention to quit because by knowing the intention, the organization can take any preventive action rather than having to bear the substantial costs as a corrective action after the employee has left the organization.

Since more than three decades ago, the study of turnover intention has been extensively carried out by many researchers in various sectors. Many studies have been concerned with the turnover intention, showing that many factors can influence these behavioural intentions such as job stress [7, 13, 14], job satisfaction [7,15-19] and organizational commitment [16, 17, 20-25]. However, to the researchers knowledge, research related to turnover intention and glass ceiling perceptions seem never been done by previous researchers, especially in IT industry in Malaysia.

3. Development of Propositions
3.1 Glass Ceiling Perception
The term of "glass ceiling" is used "... to describe all the frustrations of working women at every level who can see where they want to get to but who find themselves blocked by an invisible barrier" [26].

"The glass ceiling has been described as an invisible barrier akin to a concrete ceiling that is impenetrable and prevents the accession of women to senior levels of management. The way the glass ceiling manifests itself differs between countries and organisations. How the glass ceiling is managed will determine the success of an equitable workplace" [27].

A study conducted by [28] found that barriers to the promotion of women managers in the organizational culture in Malaysia. Previous studies also found that women managers do not receive support from organizations and not getting the necessary development opportunities for career advancement such as networking, mentoring, and family-friendly initiatives [26,28]. In addition, the results also showed dissatisfaction among mid-level women managers with corporate culture, common practices and opportunities for career development organizations [28].

Some researchers have noted that perceived glass ceiling has an effect on organizational performance due to inequities in career advancement, gender discrimination and also unsupportive working environments [27, 29, 30]. Thus, in turns may affect self-esteem, the level of aspirations and also organizational commitment. According to [31]. Female employee shows decreasing organizational commitment when they work in the environment which is highly dominated by the gender bias and men stereotypes. Glass ceiling also hinder the women employees to be promoted from reaching the highest ranks of the management hierarchy due to personal barriers like family conflict and obligations [27, 32, 33] found that glass ceilings are perpetuated when bosses perceive family-work conflicts among female employees. Therefore, the following proposition is suggested regarding glass ceiling perception and turnover intention.

Proposition 1: There is a positive relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention.

3.2 Job Satisfaction
Generally, previous researchers [7, 11, 34, 35] agree that job satisfaction is the basic employee attitude on matters related to employment such as payments, supervision, promotion, colleagues and the work itself. In other words, job satisfaction can be referred as to the extent to which employees like their jobs [15]. Some scholar [12, 15, 17, 21, 36, 37] stated that satisfaction exists in the form of intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic satisfaction here refers to the internal satisfaction as an opportunity for self-development, achievements and the work itself. While the extrinsic satisfaction refers to external rewards such as salary, company policies, and support, supervision, co-workers, opportunities for promotion and customer.

Recent researchers found that job satisfaction is strongly and positively impact on commitment [7, 16–18] and negatively impact on turnover intention [16, 21, 22, 38]. It implies that job satisfaction is one of the most important antecedents of organizational commitment and turnover intention of employees [7, 21]. Some other researchers also found that job satisfaction has a significant influence on turnover intention [17]. On the basis of the abovementioned literature, the following propositions are suggested regarding the nature of these relationships.

Proposition 2: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job commitment.

Proposition 3: There is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Proposition 4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention.

Proposition 5: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between glass ceiling perception and organizational commitment.

3.3 Organisational Commitment
Organizational commitment explains the loyalty of employees to the organization that employs them. There are three types of commitments are usually referred to by most researchers, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment [7, 13, 16, 17, 21, 23, 25]. Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation [7, 16]. Continuance commitment reflects employee perceptions related to the opportunity cost if they leave the organization [38]. For example, workers feel the need to stay because of the loss potential of things like the lack of alternative employment and they are aware of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Meanwhile, normative commitment reflects the sense of responsibility to remain with the organization based on a sense of obligation or loyalty [16, 21].

Most researchers found that there is a strong inverse relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions of an employee [7, 20, 21]. Therefore, it can be concluded that the organizational commitment may negatively affect the turnover intention. However, previous studies have not been found empirically proved that there is a significant difference of the impact of organizational commitment on the turnover intention, particularly among female workers in IT industry in Malaysia. Thus, the following propositions are

suggested regarding the nature of these relationships.

Proposition 6: Organisational commitment mediates the relationship between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention.

Proposition 7: Organisational commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

4. Methodology

The study is initiated to design questionnaire form. It is the main instrument to be used to obtain the raw data about the glass ceiling perception and turnover intention. A questionnaire is developed in accordance with the objectives to be achieved at the end of the study. Each question is carefully designed to reduce as much as possible any biased answers from respondents. On the basis of the extensive review of the literature, a combination of existing validated measurements was used to develop the instrument for this study. Questionnaire forms will be distributed to the respondents via registered mail. Postal questionnaire method is chosen because it is typically cheaper compare with long-distance phone calls [39]. The respondent will be selected using random sampling techniques. A cover letter will be attached to inform the respondents about the objectives of this study. The sample consists of female workers in IT industry in Malaysia.

In collecting the data, this study will use a self-administered questionnaire that refers to a data collection technique in which respondents read and answer the questionnaire, and thus give his responses without the presence of a trained interviewer [40]. Findings from previous research proved that respondents are more likely to give honest answers when using self-administered questionnaire than answering face-to-face interview questions [41]. This method of data collection is also said to help reduce the tendency to social desirability bias that often occurs when sensitive data is requested [39, 41].

Once the primary data obtained, the process of data analysis will be carried out. The statistical methods that will be used in the pilot study are Cronbach's Alpha, descriptive statistics, and exploratory factor analysis. Meanwhile, the statistical methods that will be used in fieldwork study are the confirmatory factor analysis. After the unidimensionality, validity and reliability of the measurement items were carried out; the structural equation modeling will be performed using AMOS Graphics version 21.0.

4.1 Measures
4.1.1 Glass Ceiling Perception
Ten items will be used to measure glass ceiling perceptions. In this section, the respondents will be asked to indicate their perception about glass ceiling practice in their organization using 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The samples of items for glass ceiling perceptions are "At work, I do not get enough recognition because I am a woman.", "I perceive that women often placed in the lowest occupational structure in the organization" and "I perceive that the higher organizational structure is dominated by men".

4.1.2 Job Satisfaction
In this section, the respondents will be asked to indicate overall satisfaction towards their job and the organization. A total of five items questions, which adapted from a study done by [7] will be used to measure job satisfaction on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The samples of items are "I Most days, I am enthusiastic about my job", "I like my job better than the average worker does" and "All things considered, I am satisfied with my current job".

4.1.3 Organizational Commitment
In this section, the respondents will be asked to indicate their commitment towards their organization. Job commitment can be classified into three types; 1) affective commitment, 2) normative commitment and 3) continuance commitment. A total of twenty items questions, which adapted from a study done by [25, 38] will be used to measure coping strategies on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The sample of items for affective commitment is "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization". Besides, the sample of items for normative commitment is "I owe a great deal to this organization". Meanwhile, the sample of items for continuance commitment is "One of the reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable sacrifice-another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here".

4.1.4 Turnover Intention
10-items for turnover intention are adapted from a study done by [7]. Items will be written to symmetrically measure the turnover intention among female workers in IT industry. The respondents will be asked to indicate their intention to quit using 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The sample of items for "I plan to leave my present employer as soon as possible", "I often daydream about what it would be like to work in another organization" and "When I have the opportunity to work in another organization, I will take that opportunity".

5. Potential Contributions
This study has the potential to contribute at least in the following two aspects.

5.1 For Future Research
This study may contribute significantly to the existing knowledge related to the impact of glass ceiling perception on the turnover intention. This study may provide understanding on the extent to which glass ceiling perception by female workers may influence job satisfaction, job commitment, and turnover intention. The findings of this study are also expected to stimulate new research that may include the effects of glass ceiling perception on other human resource management aspects. The originality of this study may also contribute to a formation of a new body of knowledge and enrich the literature sources in the field of strategic management that will benefit the academicians.

5.2 For Organization
As this study will highlight the glass ceiling perception affecting turnover intention, thus this study may serve as guidelines for an organisation and the policy makers in formulating policies and planning that could improve promotion system within the organisation. This study's findings are important for organisations looking to engage in strategic management to recruit and retain the female workers

in the organisation. In addition, the study's findings are also expected to help the decision makers to make sound decisions to increase the opportunities for female workers to show her talent and thus able to achieve a higher position in their organization.

6. Conclusion
In sum, the central contribution of this paper is to propose a conceptual model (Fig. 1) to examine the relationships between glass ceiling perception and turnover intention. Besides, this study also proposes the mediating variables, which are job satisfaction and organisational commitment that are expected to mediate the relationship between perception of the glass ceiling and turnover intention. The propositions provide the mechanism to test whether the hypothesised model of this study fits the data to be collected. The major theoretical and practical contributions of this study have also been highlighted and discussed.
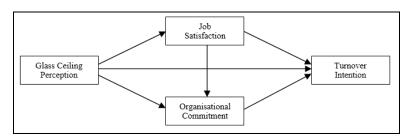

Fig 1: The Proposed Conceptual Model

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