

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP ON WOMEN CAREER PATHS IN THE MIDDLE-EAST: A MEDIATION EFFECT OF GLASS CEILING

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the findings of a study examining the relationship between leadership styles and women's career success in the Middle-East through the mediating role of the glass ceiling. Leadership styles and women's career success in UAE through the mediating role of the glass ceiling were assessed in an empirical study based on a sample size of 466 participants from 14 business sectors. The proposed model was tested through a quantitative paradigm using factor analysis and structural equation modeling techniques. The results from structural equation modeling emphasize a significant negative relationship between the glass ceiling effect and women's career paths. In addition, and more importantly, the results show a significant positive relationship between leadership style and the glass ceiling effect and women's career paths. The study contributes to a better understanding of the nature of women's career paths in a non-western context, the UAE. This study is an attempt to bridge the gap between western theories and the under-researched non-western contexts.

Keywords: Leadership style, Glass ceiling effects, Women's career paths, Structural equation modeling, UAE

INTRODUCTION

During past few decades, although organizations around the world have witnessed a significant increase in the role of women in the workforce (Powell & Graces, 2003), their share in leadership positions is still under-represented (Smith, Crittenden, & Caputi, 2012). This disparity in women's career advancement has brought forth discussions on minimizing gender bias and promoting gender equality in organizations (Fassinger, 2008; Haslam & Ryan, 2008). Amongst many other causes, the presence of the 'glass ceiling' has been identified as one of the most influential barriers that hinder women's advancements to leadership positions (Al-Manasra, 2013). These invisible barriers are mostly located above middle-level management positions, therefore, preventing women from acquiring higher leadership positions in their organizations (Cherian & Farouq, 2013).

The term 'glass ceiling' represents the hidden barriers that obstruct women and minorities from climbing the corporate ladder to acquire leadership and senior management positions (Chow & Crawford, 2004; Ryan, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007). Studies show that women around the world, during some stage of their professional lives, need to break through the 'glass ceiling' to accomplish their career goals (Al-Manasra, 2013; Man & Dimovski, 2009; Smith & Crimes, 2007). Literature also shows that the glass ceiling phenomenon differs from country to country and region to region. No significant organizational barriers for women's career advancements have been found in Norway (Storvik & Schone, 2008), Malaysia (Jogulu & Wood, 2011), and Australia (Dimovski, Skerlavaj, Man, Mandy, & Mork, 2010), but found in the UK (Smith & Crimes, 2007), Malaysia (Man & Dimovski, 2009) and Singapore (Dimovski et al., 2010).

According to Kauser and Tlaiss (2011), in several parts of the world, including the Middle East, females have traditionally facing gender biased social hierarchies that are unfavorable to women. Thanks to its distinguished and reliable infrastructure, a business-friendly environment and a dynamic economy, the UAE has climbed 12 places to 16 in the 2012 World Competitiveness Yearbook rankings (Hough, 2012; UAE Country Report, 2011). Local or foreign organizations operating in the UAE have been adopting best practices in hiring and maintaining a highly competitive workforce. Al-Manasra (2013) argues that, despite the fact that the UAE government has initiated fundamental steps to encourage women to advance their careers to leadership and top management positions, the glass ceiling based on gender bias remains the most challenging problem women face in their professional lives. This may be attributed to gender differences in terms of human capital investment and the higher focus on developmental investments toward males (Cherian & Farouq, 2013; Omair, 2010).

Studies show that the glass ceiling phenomenon differs significantly between the West and the East. The glass ceiling that prevents women advancing to top leadership positions is found to be stronger in Eastern organizations (Al-Manasra, 2013; Metcalfe, 2008). Gender biases and cultural and social variables contribute to a stronger glass ceiling faced by women in the Middle East (Al-Manasra, 2013; Metcalfe, 2008; Dah & El-Kassar, 2009). Due to the scarcity of studies on the barriers to career progression and corporate leadership of women in the Middle East in general, and the UAE in particular, the need for further research in a Middle Eastern context is suggested. This paper examines the influence of the glass ceiling on women's leadership styles and their career advancements. The study further investigates the factors affecting women's career progress and examines relevant leadership styles that help promote gender equality in career development. The paper is expected to be useful for managers and policy makers to deal with the causes and the negative effects of the glass ceiling that hinder the advancement of women to leadership positions.

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT – A CULTURE PERSPECTIVE

Relatively little has been written about the Arab culture in general and work life in particular (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 2001; Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). The discovery of oil and the resultant economic development in the region brought the attention of the world and global business organizations to the region (Bjerke, 1999). Managerial values of leaders, managers and organisational staff in the Middle East are distinct from other parts of the world (Christopher, Jamal, Mohammed, & Darry, 2001). Traditionally, people in this region and their cultural and social outlook are distinct and different from others (Bjerke, 1999). Examples of

some of the key features of the Middle Eastern culture in the context of the study are discussed below:

2.1 Respect for Elders

In the Arab culture, one's age is one of the key factors that determine social respect; the older the person, the more he or she is respected (Brown & Humphreys, 1995). Respect for elders implies a mutual relationship. As the younger respects the elder, the latter must in return take care of the former, provide advice and help to realize his or her full potential (Brown & Humphreys, 1995). However, it should also be noted that in some situations knowledgeable persons are more respected despite their age (Humphreys, 1996).

2.2 Importance of the Extended Family

The family is the fundamental social unit, but a very strong extended family system is the building block of all social organizations in the Arabic culture (HassabElnaby & Mosebach, 2005; Muna, 1980). This networked family primarily socializes the individual into the system and provides him or her with a sense of security and belonging (Humphreys, 1996). In a study of managers' motivations in the Arab culture, Brown and Humphreys (1995) observed that Arab managers are strongly expected to satisfy the social needs of their extended family members and relatives.

2.3 Collectivism

The Arab culture is collectivist in nature and the group and its member expectations has important influence on one's behaviour; similarly, group success is more valued than individual success (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). Arabs feel more comfortable when they are in a group and group activities are always found dominant in traditional Arab societies (Muna, 1980; Humphreys, 1996).

2.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

The Arab culture is risk-averse and people show high intolerance for uncertainty (Brown & Humphreys, 1995). They prefer more stable, predictable situations rather than change and uncertainty (Muna, 1980). Arab managers are observed as conservatives who would prefer an unacceptable present to an unpredictable future (Muna, 1980).

2.5 Masculinity

Masculinity refers to the degree to which gender roles in a society are clearly distinct (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). In high masculinity societies like that of the Arabs, social gender roles are clearly distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Brown & Humphreys, 1995). At work, managers are expected to be decisive and assertive with a greater emphasis on competitiveness and high performance (Humphreys, 1996).

2.6 Deference to Authority

Generally, Arabs are obedient to authority (Ali, 1996; Humphreys, 1996). In the Arab culture, authority is related to positional or social status rather than to knowledge and specialized skills

(HassabElnaby & Mosebach, 2005). Some studies attribute such rigid authority and power distance to widespread corruption and social injustices, especially in publicly owned entities (Ali, 1990, 1996).

2.7 Barriers to Career Paths – Wasta

Understanding *wasta* (power and connections) is key to understanding organizational decision making in the Middle East (Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993). *Wasta* is highly recognized as one of the most influential factors negatively affecting organic career development in the region (UAE Country Report, 2011). It is deeply rooted in the region's culture and influences organizational decision making, which means that right connections and networks get things done relatively easily (Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) argue that *wasta* plays an important role in organizational decision making and people's career advancement, despite the perception that it is an unfair practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Economic Participation of Women in the UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as one of the wealthier and dynamic countries in the region and the world, experiencing great progress in economic and social development in less than fifty years (Gallant, Majumdar, & Varadarajan, 2010). As in many other countries in the region, UAE women have had a late start in access to education and employment opportunities compared to their male counterparts (Gallant et al., 2010). According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (2007), the discovery of oil and the subsequent increase in household wealth contributed to the decrease in economic participation of women in the country. However, in recent years, UAE women have made remarkable progress in their participation in higher education and this catching up has resulted in nearly 40% average annual growth in women's enrolment in tertiary education (Haan, 2004; UAE Yearbook, 2007). Currently, women constitute about 65% of the UAE's university students, though their representation in the workforce is only around 22% (Ministry of Economy, UAE, n.d., UAE Yearbook, 2007). However, the recent *Emiratization* initiative (an initiative to increase the percentage of UAE nationals – *Emiratis* – in the workforce) has increased the share of *Emirati* women in the workforce. The share of women in the UAE's workforce reached about 16.5% in 2004 compared to 11.7% in 1994. Similarly, women's contributions in business increased to 14.7% in 2006 compared to 5.2% in 2002. Statistics show women constitute 20% of the public sector workforce with 30% of them holding decision making roles in the government sector (UAE Yearbook, 2007; Ministry of Planning, 1997; Khaleejtimes, 2005, Glass, 2007). On the other hand, women comprise only 4% of private sector employees in the UAE (UNDP and UNPF, 2007). Women are reportedly experiencing more difficulty in finding and progressing in their jobs (UAE Yearbook, 2007; CLMRI, 2004). This is the context in which the current study becomes more relevant. The latest reports show that UAE women constitute 66% of the public sector workforce, in which 30% are in senior positions (Global Gender Gap report, 2013; UNDP Human development report, 2010). According to Al-Lamky (2007) and Aldabbagh and Assaad (2010), managers in the region perceive a higher association of family-work conflict with women employees and, hence, feel that there is a poor fit for women in leadership roles, which in turn fuels the already existing gender bias traditionally embedded in the culture and negatively influences women's career advancements to senior positions.

The present study draws from the studies of Smith, Crittenden, and Caputi (2012) and Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden (2012, a, b) who measured women's beliefs about career paths in four different situations and women's approaches to dealing with the glass ceiling effect. These four situations are *Resignation*, where women give up or fail to pursue promotions because of social and organizational obstacles; *Acceptance* of the glass ceiling, where women try to be happy with the situation and not seek higher level positions; *Resilience*, where women try to prove themselves and fight to advance their careers; and lastly, *Denial* of the glass ceiling, in which women believe that the glass ceiling does not exist and is only a myth.

3.2 Leadership Styles

Leadership is a dynamic relationship based on mutual influence and common purpose between leaders and collaborators, in which both are moved to higher levels of motivation and moral development as they influence each other to accomplish their goals and objectives (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996). The literature attempts to explain leadership and offers varying approaches to leadership influenced by different variables, such as varying leadership roles and the influence of factors that affect these roles (Skipper & Bell, 2006). Leadership is also understood as the capability to inspire support and confidence among different people that make up an organization (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012). All the definitions of organizational leadership and leadership styles agree on the fact that the focus of leadership positively influences people to achieve common goals. Bass (1990) argues that leadership is the ability to influence subordinates in order to achieve certain goals and objectives. Kim and Maubourgne (1992) explains leadership as the ability to enthuse self-confidence and support among people who work together to achieve organizational goals. Leadership includes motivating individuals and teams and also creating favorable conditions to carry out tasks effectively and efficiently (Pierce & Newstrom, 2006; Northouse, 2010). Dubrin (2004) argues that leadership style is the consistent blend of behavior and attitude which leads to certain uniformity and certainty in dealing with group members. The literature on leadership explains various leadership styles, such as autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, laissez-faire, democratic, participative, transactional, situational and transformational leadership (Mosadeghrad, 2003; Wasden & Guzley, 2004). However, there is an agreement among the majority that no one style best fits all organizations and cultures, and different situations and cultures need different styles. Therefore, leaders need to know when to use specific leadership approaches to be effective in organizations (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

The literature shows that there is a high power-distance between subordinates and managers in Middle Eastern business communities; the ones with the most authority are highly respected (Al-Omari, 2003). Factors such as age, gender and family background also play a significant role in leadership effectiveness in the region (Kauser & Tlaiss, 2011). Managers from this region can be equated to Tropaar's family culture where leaders behave like fathers and protectors of their subordinates and, hence, an authoritarian style of leadership is observed (Cherian & Farouq, 2013; Zahi, 2010). Hofstede (1984) found that the Middle Eastern culture is not so much an individualistic culture and managers tend to view organizational problems as subjective. Hence, managers seeking solutions to problems tend to be firm with their decisions (Omair, 2010). The present study focuses on three leadership styles identified by Lewin, Lipitt and White (1939): Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-faire. These style differentiations are based on the level of follower participation and ways of influence and power exercised by the leader.

3.2.1 Authoritarian Leadership: Eagly and Carli (2003) and Yukl (2002) defined authoritarian leadership as a style in which the leader dictates goals and exercises complete control over subordinates and their activities. In this style, the task is carried out under close supervision and there is least input from subordinates. Because of the full control exercised by the leader on subordinates, this leadership style infringes upon group autonomy and individual creativity (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Randeree and Chaudhry (2007) noted that authoritarian leadership is recommended in situations where the time for group-decision making is very limited and when the leader is the most knowledgeable person about a problem and the solution. Deriving from the features of traditional societies and cultural frameworks in the region, authoritarian leadership style is still seen in many organizations in the UAE and the region (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012). However, this form of leadership is slowly losing its significance (Cherian & Farouq, 2013) as a result of rapid internationalization of the workforce and organizations in the region.

3.2.2 Democratic Leadership: In this leadership style, the leader involves the subordinates' participation and feedback during the organizational decision making process (Pillai & Williams, 2004). In addition, democratic leadership values social equality by means of promoting the subordinates' interests (Yukl, 2002). Decision making in this style of leadership tends to consume more time as it involves employee participation, however, better subordinate participation is facilitated (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Research shows that employees working for democratic leaders show more commitment, loyalty, involvement and creativity than employees working under autocratic leaders (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2004; Yousef, 2000). Many organizations are promoting democratic leadership style in their managerial roles as a tool for acquiring competitive advantage in today's global market (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012).

3.2.3 Laissez-faire Leadership: Eagly and Carli (2003) and Kouzes and Posner (2003) reported that the laissez-faire leader allows the members to work on their own with little or no involvement from the leader. This leadership style is based on the belief that subordinates are sufficiently knowledgeable about their jobs and, therefore, they are given complete freedom to set their own deadlines (Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005). Yukl (2002) argues that this style of leadership is effective only when the leader closely monitors the performance of the team members. It is likely to be successful when the team members individually are self-starters, experienced, skilled and self-motivated (Eagly & Carli, 2003). The key benefit of the laissez-faire leadership style is that it offers team members autonomy which, in turn, leads to higher job satisfaction and productivity (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2004). This leadership style has not been adopted much in organizations in the UAE, primarily because most organizations believe in the significant role leaders play in achieving organizational goals (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2007, 2012).

3.3 The Glass Ceiling Effect

The glass ceiling phrase was first introduced in the 1980s (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007; Mullins, 2005). The glass ceiling is typically seen above the lowest middle-level management positions and prevents women from attaining higher management positions (Glass Ceiling Commission 1995). The barriers include societal, governmental, internal business and organizational structures (Al-Manasra, 2013; Carli & Eagly, 2001). According to Elmuti et al. (2003) and Chow and Crawford (2004), glass ceiling barriers are understated prejudices that hinder women and minorities from progressing and moving forward in their careers. These

barriers are often encouraged by organizational cultures dominated by men and by leadership stereotypes. Research on the glass ceiling effect argues that men do not feel at ease with the idea of women holding leadership positions (Bowling, Kelleher, Jones, & Wright, 2006; Gallant, 2006). Studies demonstrate that men have a better chance than women of climbing up the organizational ladder and being promoted to leadership positions. Furthermore, women may not be considered for high profile projects except when men do not have preferences about such positions (Ryan et al., 2007; Vianen & Fischer, 2002).

Several researchers have discussed reasons for the glass ceiling effect, such as gender related barriers, ethnic barriers, racial barriers, religious discrimination and harassment in the workplace (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Cotter et al., 2001; Maume, 2004; Metcalfe, 2008). According to Cotter et al. (2001 and Gallant (2006), gender disparity is considered to be one of the most influential reasons behind the glass ceiling effect.

In this study, the influence of leadership style on the glass ceiling effect in general, and more specifically in the region, are addressed. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Leadership style has a significant influence on the glass ceiling effect.

3.4 Women's Career Paths

Much has been written about the glass ceiling regarding women's advancement in the workplace, however, it is dispersed across disciplines and industries (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). Eagly et al. (2003) and Weyer (2007) argue that there is robust evidence for the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions around the globe, including Australia, China, France, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. According to Eagly and Carli (2007), gender stereotypes about leadership continue to have an impact on business management. McDonagh and Paris (2012) argue that females are often considered nurturers and rarely leaders. Eagley and Carli (2007, 2009) point out that a new stage in women's leadership advancement has set in, which is referred to as a labyrinth or a maze of career obstacles through which women must navigate to advance through their careers into leadership and top management positions. It is believed that there are paths to the top, but the successful routes can be difficult to discover and can be circuitous (Eagley and Carli, 2007). McDonagh and Paris (2012) support researchers such as Eagley and Carli in the argument that the glass ceiling is no longer acceptable in modern society and there is increasing evidence of women breaking barriers to achieve senior leadership positions. However, it is true that the majority of women still have to face and overcome many difficulties, hurdles and challenges on their way to leadership roles. Examples of the other barriers include unfriendly corporate cultures, lack of leadership development opportunities, lack of confidence, need to balance work and family life, cultural double standards due to subtle or overt discrimination, aggressive competition and stereotyping (Eagley & Carli, 2007, 2009; Harquail, 2008; Ligeikis, 2010; Starzyk, 2013). In light of the Middle Eastern women context, the current study hypothesizes that:

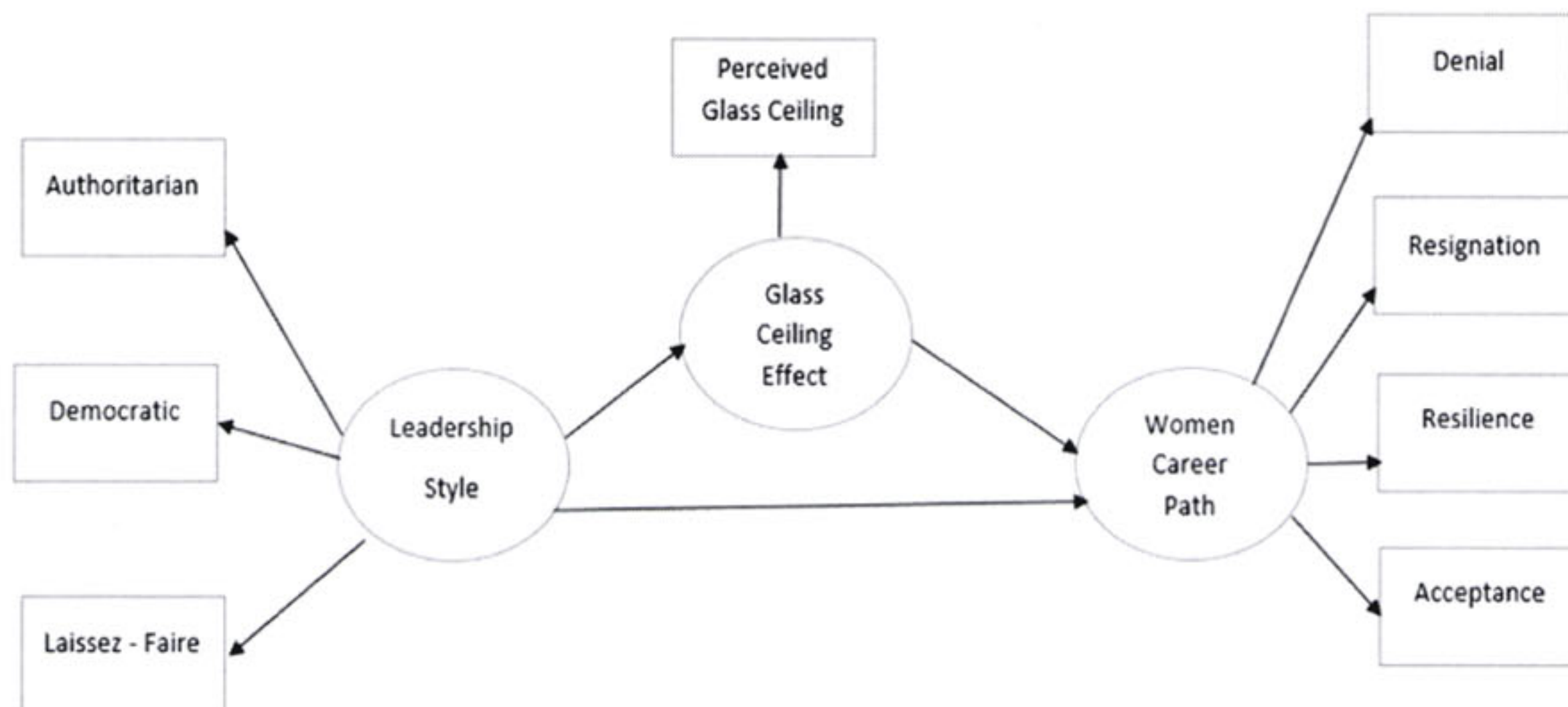
Hypothesis 2: Leadership styles have a positive impact on women's career paths

Hypothesis 3: The glass ceiling effect has a negative impact on women's career paths

4. Conceptual Framework

Most previous studies and literature have examined how the glass ceiling is a result of social structures, religion factors, investment on human capital and gender discrimination (Cherian & Farouq, 2013; Kauser & Tlaiss, 2011; Omair, 2010). The present study is therefore considered fundamental, as it examines the effect of leadership styles on the glass ceiling and then on women's career paths in the UAE. The research model is suggested as given figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Leadership and Women's Career Paths: The Effect of Glass Ceiling in the UAE



THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Participants

As shown in Table 1, the data collection was done from a convenience sample representing 14 sectors (Chemicals, Construction/Real Estate, Transportation, Employment business, Communication, Banking, Healthcare, Retail Sales, Tourism, Automotive, Consumer Products, Legal, Education and Water and Electricity) based in the two main emirates (Abu Dhabi and Dubai) in the UAE. The questionnaire employed was self-administered, having gained prior corporate approval, via inter-organizational mailing systems, as well as through the internet using survey monkey (copy of the questionnaire is available on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=lnfiZNgWXY%2fm9bVEwLrvJIFaOfI3%2flnl1Qp3FIslMyg%3d>)

As advised by earlier studies (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), respondents were given the researchers' contact details along with a cover letter containing any clarifications regarding procedure, understanding and confidentiality, anonymity and confidentiality. Respondents were told that participation was entirely voluntary and confidentiality was assured. Participants who opted to complete hardcopies of questionnaires returned them via sealed envelopes to a secured drop-off box for collection by the researchers only. The survey was conducted over 9 months with an overall response rate of

56%. The final sample size was 466 respondents, excluding questionnaires with 20% missing responses which were not considered.

All the respondents were women with 77.3% of them from middle-level management and the rest of them representing first line and senior level management. Middle-level management was focused on in the survey since earlier studies confirm that the existence of the glass ceiling is mostly experienced by women in middle-level management positions (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The majority of the respondents (63%) were of the age group between 20-30, followed by 28.5% of them above 30 years and 8.5% below 20 years. About 57% of them had work experience of less than 5 years, 27% had 5-10 years experience and 16% had more than 10 years of work experience. The fields of the respondents included Customer Service, Finance, IT, HRM, Operation and general administration.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	below 20	40	8.6
	20 to 30	293	62.9
	above 30	133	28.5
Citizenship	UAE	265	56.9
	Foreigner	201	43.1
Work experience	Less than 5 year	265	56.9
	Between 5 and 10 years	125	26.8
	More than 10 years	76	16.3
Department unit	IT	68	14.6
	Finance	75	16.1
	HRM	70	15.0
	Customer Service	166	35.6
	Operation	48	10.3
	Administration	39	8.4
Job level	Senior Management	44	9.4
	Middle Management	360	77.3
	Supervisory level	62	13.3
Industry	Oil and Petro Chemicals	56	12.0
	Banking	71	15.2
	Telecommunication	64	13.7
	Education	135	29.0
	Healthcare	50	10.7
	Public Utilities and municipalities	90	19.3
	Oil and Petro Chemicals	56	12.0

INSTRUMENTS

Efforts were made to minimize bias as per McGrath's (1986) recommendations. Examples of these strategies include the negative ordering of some of the items in the measurement scales and the random structuring of the scales within the questionnaire. However, most of the measurement scales were selected from previously standardized scales. The instrument included 67 items which covered three dimensions - *Measure of leadership styles*, *Measure of the perceived glass ceiling effect*, *Measure of women's career pathways*. All the questions were on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

5.2.1 Measure of leadership styles: This scale was adopted from Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939). It consists of twelve-items and reflects three different styles of leadership; *Authoritarian* (4 items like "A leader should set direction without input from followers"), *Democratic* (4 items like "A leader should evaluate the progress of work with little input from followers") and *Laissez-faire* (4 items like "A leader should keep followers up to date on issues affecting the work group").

5.2.2 Measure of the perceived glass ceiling effect: This scale was adapted from Patterson (2006). This measure includes 15 items to express the effect of the glass ceiling within the research context. Examples of the statements included: "The Company is not committed to diversity," "The Company is not fully committed to advancing the careers of UAE women," "Family responsibilities hinder UAE women's career advancement" and "The type of leadership in our company plays a significant role in advancing UAE women's careers."

5.2.3 Measure of women's career pathways: This scale was adopted from Smith, Crittenden and Caputi (2012). This 38 item scale measures women's career paths' reactions to the glass ceiling effect within the research context. It is divided into four measures. The first is *Denial* reactions (includes 10 items like "Women starting careers today will face sexist barriers"). Then *Resignation* (includes 10 items like "Women executives are very uncomfortable when they have to criticize members of their teams"). Also, *Resilience* (includes items like "The more women seek senior positions, the easier it will be for those who follow") and *Acceptance* (includes 7 items like "Women are just as ambitious in their careers as men").

DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

In the first stage of data analysis, one dimension Conformity Factor Analysis (CFA) was used. The CFA method is used for dimension reduction problems when the items are of ordinal, interval or ratio scales. The CFA were performed to the data set. Each item with component loading less than 0.5 suggested an existence of some problems with the corresponding items, therefore, such items were removed from the analysis. The analysis suggested removing 19 items out of the 65 items considered in this study (Table 2). It was observed that all items had the same component loadings signs, which indicates the measure of good fitness of the data.

TABLE 2
First Component Variance, Cronbach's Alpha, Loading Range

Dimension	Number	Number	Number	% of	Cronbach's	Component	AVE
	of Cases	of items	Removed items	Variance	Alpha	Loading Range	
Authoritarian leadership	456	4	2	79%	0.731	.89 -.95	0.87
Democratic Leadership	456	4	1	68%	0.749	.64 -.88	0.68
Laissez-Faire Leadership	457	4	0	47%	0.62	.51 - .84	0.67
Perceived glass ceiling	440	15	5	46%	0.869	.65 - .86	0.63
Denial	434	10	6	34%	0.66	.57 - .73	0.46
Resignation	432	10	0	39%	0.826	.53 - .84	0.62
Resilience	412	11	0	60%	0.933	.65 -.93	0.77
Acceptance	434	7	1	44%	0.795	.57 - .89	0.65

The reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the scale. The reliability coefficients for all dimensions were acceptable with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.73 and 0.93, but not for *Laissez-Faire Leadership* (0.62) and *Denial* (0.66) (See Table 2). Moreover, validity was tested using average variance extracted (AVE). All values showed a significant validity (more than 0.5) for all dimensions, but not for *Denial*. Based on this analysis, *Laissez-Faire Leadership* (unreliable) and *Denial* dimensions (invalid) were dropped from any further analysis.

Significant pairwise relationships are observed between mediator dimensions when the absolute correlation coefficient is more than 0.107 at 0.05 significant level. The mean standard deviation and the correlation coefficient of the all the dimensions in the model are computed and tabulated in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations and Pairwise Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1					
2	.778**	1				
3	.086	.068	1			
4	-.107*	-.059	.111*	1		
5	-.026	-.027	.074	.244**	1	
6	-.042	-.054	.069	.344**	.650**	1
Mean	3.1609	3.6263	3.1426	3.1947	3.2267	3.1541
Stdev	1.14317	1.01755	.80266	.68029	.98443	.84496

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). 1 (*Authoritarian leadership*), 2 (*Democratic Leadership*), 3 (*Perceived glass ceiling*), 4 (*Resignation*), 5 (*Resilience*), 6 (*Acceptance*)

In a second step, we analyzed the hypothesized model using structural equation modelling. Then, partially-mediated models and non-mediated models were constructed following the suggestion made by Kelloway (1998). The first partially mediated model includes direct effects of leadership style on women's careers, as well as the hypothesized indirect effects on women careers as a result of the glass ceiling. It is referred to as a "partially-mediated model." In addition, one non-mediated model assumes direct paths from "leadership" to women careers. It is referred to as a "career non-mediated model." According to Hair et al. (1998) and Hu and Bentler (1999), a general set of criteria enables an evaluation of whether models are characterized by an acceptable fit. These criteria include the residual means squared error (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and goodness of fit index (GFI) (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
Criteria for Acceptable Model Evaluation

	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	IFI	GFI	χ^2/df
Acceptable Variable	Less than 0.08		More than 0.9				Less than 3

SEM analyses were performed using a covariance matrix as input to the Analysis of Moment Structure software package (Arbuckle & Wothke, 2003) using maximum likelihood estimation. The missing data were replaced by using the expectation maximization (EM) approach prior to the analysis. The results indicated that the hypothesized model fits the data well. It produces a non-significant chi-square test ($\chi^2/df = 1.884$) and the combination of CFI (0.976); NFI (0.951); GFI (0.976); RMSEA (0.044) and SRMR (0.020) indicated a good model fit as well (Table.5).

TABLE 5
Comparative Fit Indexes for the Structural Models

	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	χ^2/df
Full model	0.044	0.020	0.976	0.951	0.976	1.884
Partially mediated model	0.062	0.034	0.971	0.955	0.973	2.771
Career Non mediated model	0.070	0.022	0.973	0.962	0.975	3.280

The only model that produced a non-significant criterion for the chi-square value/degrees of freedom was the "career non-mediated model." In this case, the combination of the other fit indices produced good results and thus led to an acceptable fit. In summary, all models gave almost similar sets of goodness-of-fit measures, meaning that the full model that includes the

direct and indirect relationships was best used to reflect all the relations between the variables under study. The standardized regression estimates of the measurement model and the structural model are given in Table 6 and Table 7, respectively. However, significant standardized path estimates from this best-fitting model are reported in figure 2.

The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between leadership styles and women's careers. This finding supports the first hypothesis (H1) in this article. Similarly, there exists a significant positive relationship between leadership style and the glass ceiling effect. It is worth noting that the Democratic leadership style has better impact on the glass ceiling, as well as women's career paths. These findings support the second hypothesis (H2). Moreover, we hypothesized in H3 the existence of a negative relationship between the glass ceiling and women's careers. The research findings show a significant negative relationship between these two variables. Furthermore, acceptance of the glass ceiling has the highest significant impact on women's careers. This means that women are satisfied and happy in their current leadership positions and are not seeking high-level positions.

FIGURE 2
Standardized Path Estimates from this Best-Fitting Model

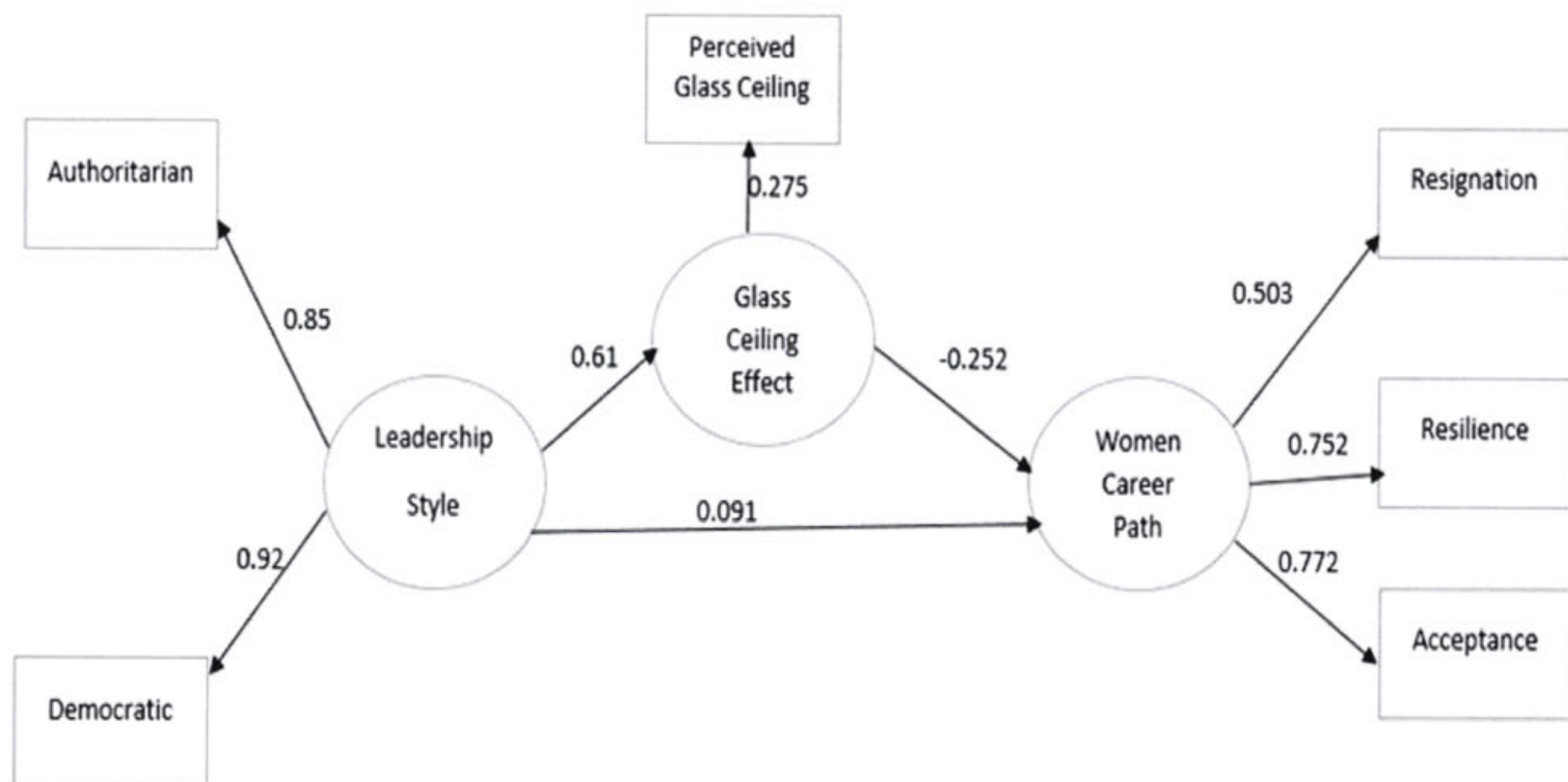


TABLE 6
Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Measurement Model

	Leadership's style	Glass Ceiling effect	Women Career path
Authoritarian leadership	.850*		
Democratic Leadership	.920*		
Perceived glass ceiling		0.275*	
Resignation			.503*
Resilience			.752*
Acceptance			.772*

*Significant at 0.05 level.

TABLE 7
Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Structural Model

			Regression Weights				
			Estimate	Standardized	S.E.	C.R.	P
<i>Perceived glass ceiling</i>	<---	Leadership's Style	.056	.061	.021	2.676	.037
Women Career	<---	<i>Perceived glass ceiling</i>	-.206	-.252	.037	-5.626	.000
Women Career	<---	Leadership's Style	.066	.091	.032	2.028	.043

Last, but not least, a comparison analysis was been made between UAE citizens and foreigners by using the independent *t* test to see if both groups have on average the same pattern towards the variables suggested in the model; namely, the glass ceiling effect and women's career paths. The results in Table 8 suggest that there is no statistical differences between both groups.

TABLE 8
Comparisons between UAE citizens and Foreigner using Independent *t* test

	Group	N	Mean	St. dev	T Value	P Value
Authoritarian leadership	UAE Citizens	265	3.2	1.13468	0.873	0.383
	Foreigner	201	3.107	1.14663		
Democratic Leadership	UAE Citizens	265	3.6465	1.03129	0.591	0.555
	Foreigner	201	3.5904	0.99596		
Perceived glass ceiling	UAE Citizens	265	2.9066	0.75063	-0.019	0.985
	Foreigner	201	2.908	0.81062		
Resignation	UAE Citizens	265	3.1242	0.77032	-0.486	0.628
	Foreigner	201	3.158	0.70546		
Resilience	UAE Citizens	265	3.2248	0.67756	0.606	0.545
	Foreigner	201	3.1869	0.65581		
Acceptance	UAE Citizens	265	3.1709	0.66965	-0.422	0.673
	Foreigner	201	3.197	0.64776		
Leadership's Style	UAE Citizens	265	3.1121	0.80432	-0.735	0.463
	Foreigner	201	3.1343	0.70431		
Women Career	UAE Citizens	265	3.3512	0.55164	-0.311	0.756
	Foreigner	201	3.3376	0.5753		

DISCUSSION

This research paper is the first of its kind in the UAE to shed light on the relationship between women's career success and their beliefs about the effect of the glass ceiling. The study identified the necessity for a reliable and valid scale for women's attitudes about the glass ceiling and their career path success in a Middle Eastern context. Despite the fact that researchers cannot confidently infer any cause-and-effect relationships using cross-sectional data (Smith, Caputi, & Crittenden, 2012), the results indicate that the glass ceiling is not a myth. It is a reality in the research context and is influenced by organizational leadership, as previously supported by Mathur-Helm (2006).

Moreover, there is a need to provide more detailed insight on the usage of career path surveys which compare negative attitudes and behaviors (such as giving up the effort or accepting the status quo) through resignation and acceptance scores with positive attitudes and behaviors (such as going forward with careers or ignoring the existence of the glass ceiling myth) through resilience and denial scores. The results of the study show the exclusion of *Denial* is a result of the fact that Emiratis females have better positions in their careers as they increasingly work in various professions and industries and progress in their careers (Emirati women breaking

barriers, 2013, May 29, *Gulf News*). As discussed by Bennett and Wright (2010), these roles played by the women are supporting organizational growth and keeping the values and beliefs of their national identity. These observations are in line with Smith et al. (2012, a, b) who consider *Denial* as the least optimistic factor to deal with glass ceiling situations. The findings reported in this study are expected to give valuable and relevant input to academics, organizations, policy makers and most significantly to younger generation Emirati females who pave the way for UAE women to brighter and more successful heights.

Laissez-faire leadership style has been found inappropriate and does not fit with Middle Eastern culture and values where the quality of exchanges and relationships between leaders and followers are seen as critical for the long-term success of employees and organizations (Butler, 2009; Randeree & Faramawy, 2011). Consequently, the study has emphasized the significant role of both top-down and democratic leadership styles in boosting the career paths of Emirati females, as previously discussed in earlier studies (Randeree, 2009; Randeree & Chaudhry, 2007, 2012; Randeree & Faramawy, 2011).

Furthermore, the democratic leadership style has been identified as a tool to help support women in their advancement in leadership roles and help them overcome the glass ceiling, as observed by Mathur-Helm (2006). Finally, the results of the current research support the direct negative impact of the glass ceiling on the Emirati women's career paths. This result is in accordance with the findings of earlier studies (Dimovski, Skerlavaj, & Man, 2010; Al-Manasra, 2013) which emphasized that women managers are equally ambitious as males. Therefore, the negative effect of the glass ceiling is considered to be gender discrimination and is attributed to organizational and cultural factors rather than lack of ambition or self-confidence of Emirati females.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS; LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Using a valid and reliable scale for studying the relationship between leadership styles and women's career paths, the current study contributes to a better understanding of the nature of women's career paths in a non-western context. The present study develops a theoretical framework to better gain deeper insight into the different factors behind the metaphoric 'glass ceiling' and the various reasons for negative beliefs about career advancement for Emirati women. In addition, the present study is expected to increase the awareness about issues, such as women's empowerment and gender equality, which may lead to macro-level interventions in the regulation and cultural mindset concerning Emirati women professionals, as emphasized by Douglas and Porcher (2012) and Kiaye and Singh (2013).

Furthermore, as advocated by Bennett and Wright (2010) and Mathur-Helm (2006), the research suggests that HR policy makers and decision makers should support the various factors that enable the vertical career progression of Emirati women, such as fair performance appraisal and task allocation, respect from male colleagues, availability of leadership career opportunities and non-existent self-imposed barriers. The present study highlights the effect of the globalization trend through which organizations can bolster the productivity and the intellectual capital of women managers as a valuable asset.

One of the limitations of the present study is that it focuses only on Abu Dhabi and Dubai. A wider scope of research merits further attention by covering other parts in the region. Also, the questionnaire used in this research was adopted from different resources so as to be sure of

content validity, however, it was very long and consisted of 65 items. A questionnaire with fewer items that are more relevant to the UAE culture could be developed to further enhance this research.

Future research could address the inter-relationships between leadership styles, women's careers and other cultural and demographic attributes. Future research could also broaden the understanding of "the second glass ceiling phenomenon" that is raised by Douglas and Porcher (2012). According to Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013), personal barriers are the most important variables influencing the presence of the glass ceiling, followed by national barriers, cultural barriers and organizational barriers. Therefore, a new longitudinal research agenda that could test the significance of these factors is proposed.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed the relationship between leadership styles and women's career paths mediated by the effect of the glass ceiling in a non-western context. In the data analyses, three models were considered to examine this relationship. These models were developed based on the three hypotheses that were supported by the data. The main findings show that there is a positive relationship between leadership style and both the glass ceiling effect and the women's career paths. However, a negative relationship between the glass ceiling and women's career paths was observed. The results showed that democratic leadership style has more positive effect on the glass ceiling or women's career paths than the authoritarian leadership style. Overall, the study adds to the body of knowledge regarding women's careers and the glass ceiling effect in the UAE, giving other researchers valuable input to include in their future studies.

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