Women leaders' career advancement

A three-level framework

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Contents:

Women breaking through the proverbial "glass ceiling" has been the topic of many popular press articles and a challenge for organizations at virtually all levels. This paper examines what helps and hinders women in their career progression up to and through that ceiling. Through an examination of respected and published women in leadership research literature, we set out the 11 key factors across three levels that play a vital role in women's career advancement into senior roles.

IBM defines career progression as "the number of promotions an individual obtains and as the progression in the organizational hierarchy." The central goal of this paper is to explain how these 11 factors work differently for men's and women's career progression, and why they should be a focal point when individuals and organizations try to address the slower progress of women to senior roles. Furthermore, the paper sets out to describe some of the relationships between these elements. The understanding of what holds women back from progressing as rapidly as men in organizations is critical if we are to identify the solutions that yield significant and lasting results. The framework we set out emphasizes the importance of sponsored mobility and hypothesizes that women's careers are held back by deficiencies in social capital. The framework is based on a rigorous review of the academic research literature, and much of the framework has been validated in "real-life" organizational interventions that have been reported in the practitioner literature.

The 11 factor, three-level framework proposed in this paper sets out IBM's conceptual approach for its women in leadership research. It is the foundation for a program of rigorous, empirical work that is designed to validate and further refine this framework. As such, this paper acts as a progress report in an ongoing, extensive research program of women in leadership conducted by IBM.

The benefits of increased gender diversity and its links with organizational performance

Much of the research into the benefits of having more women in senior roles focuses on women's representation at board level. While the evidence for a link between increased gender diversity at board level and an organization's financial results has been mixed over the years, more recent studies show a clear positive link between greater gender diversity and a variety of organizational performance indicators across different industry sectors, countries and time periods (see Terjesen, Sealy and Singh, 2009, for a detailed review; also Joy et al., 2007; and for executive boards: Desvaux et al., 2007, and Barta, 2012). A frequently cited analysis run by Catalyst[1] on 2001 to 2004 data, for example, shows that Fortune 500 companies with more women board directors outperformed those companies with fewer women board directors by 53 percent on return on equity, 42 percent on return on sales and by 66 percent on return on invested capital. Generally, companies with three or more women board directors showed above average financial performance across these three measures. These positive links were demonstrated across many industries.

It is important to remember, however, that a correlation between gender diversity in board composition and company financial performance is not necessarily an indication of a causal relationship between these two variables. Just as women's representation at board level may lead to better company performance, better company performance may make it easier for firms to focus on greater diversity at senior levels. A second set of studies shows that while there is a link between women's representation at board level, or top management level, and a company's performance, this link may only hold in certain situations: in conditions of market turbulence and uncertainty (Rost and Osterloh, 2010), in companies that lack strong monitoring processes and are less-well governed (Adams and Ferreira, 2008), or for companies with a strong strategic focus on innovation (Deszö and Ross, 2011).

However, aside from the link between women's representation in senior roles and an organization's financial performance, broader organizational benefits to senior level gender diversity have been identified (Terjesen, Sealy and Singh, 2009). Some of these broader benefits include: better corporate governance, greater independence of board directors and a more civilized boardroom culture (Terjesen et al., 2009; Adams and Ferreira, 2008).

Furthermore, we should consider the talent management argument. Women represent almost 50 percent of the workforce in many industries and companies. With organizations having to draw on their best talent to stay competitive in a global and complex marketplace, failing to consider half of the talent pool makes little sense. Finally, there is the increasingly important reputational argument. Gender diversity at board level reflects well on the company and demonstrates to customers and clients, many of whom are women, that they are taken seriously and well-represented. With the increasing focus on gender diversity, organizations with no women or very few women at senior levels tend to receive negative attention. Facebook provides an example of such negative publicity surrounding its board make-up when it announced its intention to go public in Q1 of 2012.[2]

The 3-level framework and general career progression pathways

The three levels of the framework proposed in this paper relate to:

- The individual woman herself and her career management behaviors.
- A woman's immediate work environment and her access to important career resources.
- The wider organizational context and the predominant organizational culture.

Figure 1 provides an overview of these three levels, together with their respective set of the 11 factors. It is important to note that the three-level framework focuses on factors that are within the power of an organization to address. Undoubtedly, wider societal factors such as attitudes toward working mothers, childcare provisions and government regulation have an impact on women's career progression, but are outside the power of an organization to address.
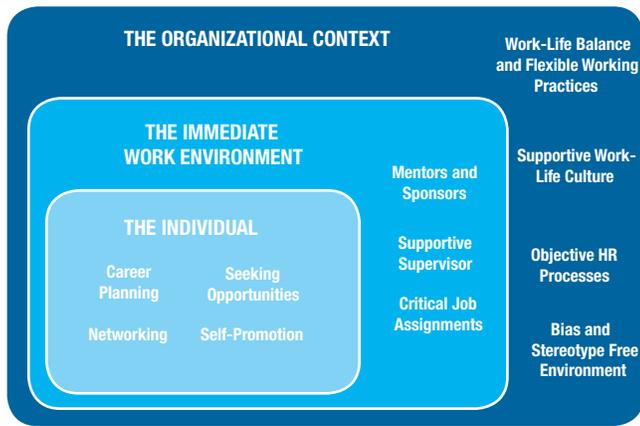
Figure 1: The 11-factor, 3-level framework of women's career advancement

Before we examine the 11 factors across the three levels that the research indicates make a difference to women's career advancement, let us first take a brief look at the general ingredients for and mechanisms of career progression for both men and women.

Career progression pathways

There are two pathways that are often proposed as routes through which employees advance in organizations: contest mobility and sponsored mobility (Turner, 1960, Ng et al., 2005).

Contest mobility emphasizes the importance of effort in an open and meritocratic contest. Virtually anyone can win, irrespective of their background, so long as they work hard and put in enough effort. Behaviors such as initiative, risk-taking, perseverance and common sense are also highlighted as being rewarded in this model of upward mobility as they allow a "contestant" to make the most of what he or she has to offer and to compensate for virtually any weaknesses (Turner, 1960; Ng et al., 2005). These behaviors map closely to the leadership behaviors we often expect senior managers to display. Sponsored mobility, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of being chosen for career progression by senior leaders. Irrespective of how hard you try, unless senior leaders deem you to have desirable characteristics and to be worthy of being "elected into their private club," career progression will not take place (Turner, 1960; Ng et al., 2005). The term "old boys' network" is frequently used to describe

the process through which senior managers, who are predominantly white, middle-class males, choose to nurture and help advance younger men with similar characteristics. These two pathways are conceptual forms of mobility and in reality a mixture of both drive career progression.

Our framework also draws on two critical ingredients to career progression: job performance and promotability, the former playing an important role in the contest mobility pathway and the latter in the sponsored mobility pathway, as set out in *Figure 2*. Job performance is a measure of a person's outputs delivered to date and is mostly a retrospective assessment as part of a performance appraisal. Promotability, on the other hand, assesses a person's readiness to take on new challenges and the likelihood of being successful at those in the future. It is therefore a forward-looking assessment.
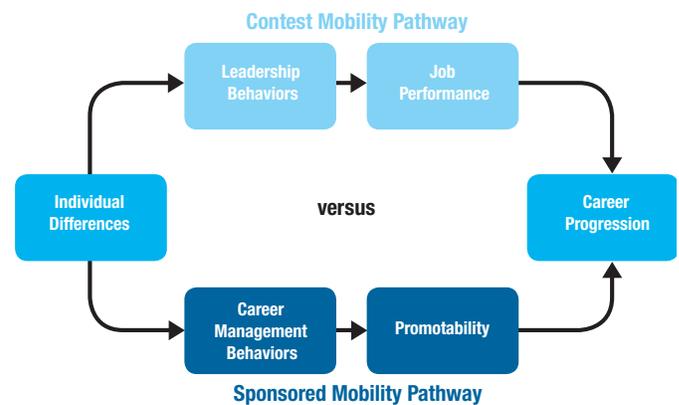

Figure 2: Career progression pathways

In the contest mobility pathway, the demonstration of effective leadership behaviors, such as initiative, risk-taking and perseverance, is linked to increased job performance which in turn increases the likelihood of promotion and career progression. At the same time, a person's career management behaviors, such as networking and sharing personal successes, help to increase the likelihood of being deemed promotable by senior leaders, as these behaviors help a person to be noticed by senior leaders.

Career progression pathways for women

We will now look at how these two pathways work for women. First we will examine the contest mobility pathway. While women tend to display a slightly different pattern of leadership behaviors, for example, relying upon more democratic and participative decision-making and showing more empathy, the differences in reported leadership behavior between men and women are actually relatively small (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Eagly and Carli, 2003).

Therefore, not surprisingly, a large range of different studies have shown that men and women are seen as equally effective leaders (Roth et al., 2010). This evidence shows that the contest mobility pathway works well for women: high-potential women manage to display effective leadership behaviors, which in turn help them to perform well in their role as leaders and be evaluated as such by their managers, peers and direct reports.

When we consider the sponsored mobility pathway, however, the evidence shows that women are less readily considered promotable compared to their male counterparts. Roth et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis shows that men are rated as being more promotable than women. The authors point out that gender becomes a less important cue during retrospective performance appraisals, as substantial task-specific information is available. Therefore, bias and prejudice are unlikely to play a role in the assessment, and women are rated as equally effective in their performance as men. However, in situations where an individual's promotability is considered, an assessor has to make assumptions about the individual's likely future performance. Much less task-relevant information is available as the individual under evaluation has yet to perform in the new role. As a result, gender cues and assumptions about men's superior competency become more prevalent. Subtle yet important differences in how senior managers make promotion decisions about male and female candidates have been reported elsewhere and are in line with Roth's findings (Ruderman et al., 1996). In short, when women are judged on what they have achieved to date, they tend to receive a fair hearing; when women are judged on what they are yet to do, false assumptions about men's superior capability often come to the fore (Roth et al., 2010).

As a result, women need to pay particular attention to developing others' perceptions of their promotability. They can do this by actively working on establishing visibility, familiarity and a reputation for delivering outstanding results (Hurley and Sonnenfeld, 1998; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003). The behaviors that can help women increase others' perception of their promotability are the focus of the individual level of our career progression framework: career planning, opportunity-seeking, politically-skilled networking and self-promotion.

The fact that the contest mobility pathway seems to work well for women has led us to emphasize the sponsored mobility pathway at the individual level. This of course is not meant to indicate that women, their managers and employing organizations should neglect the development of other leadership behaviors. However, to increase the number of women in senior roles, more concerted efforts have to be made in developing behaviors that tend to be less well-developed in women.

Beyond the individual level of our framework, *Figure 3* shows how the remaining factors from the "immediate work environment" and the "organizational context" levels can be mapped against the two different mobility pathways. The factors can be broadly clustered into:

- One group of factors that are more closely linked with the contest mobility pathway, human capital and objective processes. These are: access to critical job assignments, objective HR processes and the availability of flexible working solutions (marked gray in *Figure 3*).
- A second group of factors that are more closely linked with the sponsored mobility pathway, social capital and people elements. These are: sponsors, supportive supervisors, and bias and stereotype free environments, and a work-life culture (marked black in *Figure* 3).
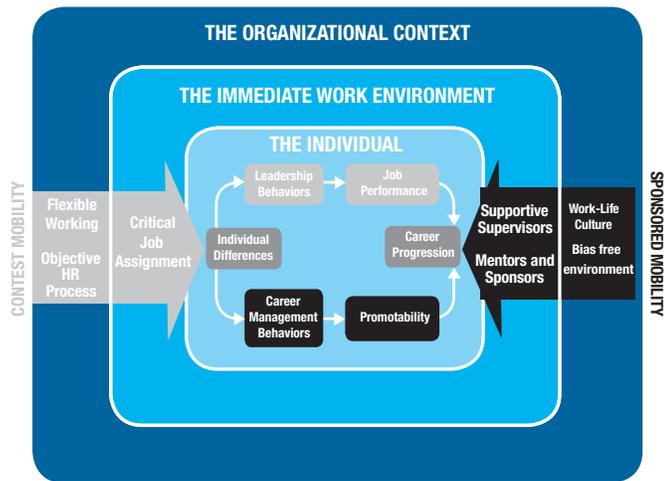
Figure 3: Mobility pathways

At this stage, the allocation of the factors in our framework to either the contest mobility or sponsored mobility pathways is largely conjecture, and the research evidence does not allow us to make any firm conclusions. For this reason, one of the focal points of our forthcoming empirical research phase will be to explore the link between the factors in the outer two levels of our framework and the two different mobility pathways.

The individual

This inner (individual) level of our framework concerns women's leadership and career management behaviors in the workplace. It highlights what women can do for themselves in order to help their career progression. While there are a host of other factors at the individual level, such as cognitive ability, personality and values, that are likely to have an impact on women's career progression, the framework focuses on the behaviors that are the easiest to change, and so most likely to make a difference.

To help a woman increase her visibility, become better known in senior management circles and build a strong reputation, the framework proposes four career self-management behaviors as part of the sponsored mobility route:

- Career planning
- Politically-skilled networking
- Risk-embracing opportunity-seeking
- Self-promotion

Career planning

Career planning refers to the initial exploration of one's career values and strengths, subsequent goal setting and, finally, implementation strategies to achieve these goals (Noe, 1996). It has been linked to increased career satisfaction, pay and promotion prospects (Ng et al., 2005), and is particularly important for women as they tend to face more hurdles to career progression than men.

While men tend to follow a linear career progression moving to roles of ever-increasing seniority (Evetts, 2000), women often have to take a step off the fast track for a period of time to accommodate caring responsibilities for young children or elderly relatives (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003).

Women also face the "think manager – think male" stereotype (Eagly and Karau, 2002), which refers to the fact that male characteristics are more aligned with the role of a manager or senior leader than are female characteristics.

Finally, with fewer role models and reduced access to senior mentors, women are also less likely to receive career guidance. Employees rarely get formal career guidance at work. Career advice is usually obtained through observing how more senior employees manage their careers in an organization (role models), or by being given informal advice by more senior employees who are willing to help a junior employee develop her career (a mentor).

With these additional hurdles to overcome, setting ambitious and concrete career goals as well as finding effective strategies to achieve them is particularly important for women.

Politically-skilled networking

Networking for women really is as important as the popular press and campaign groups would have us believe. Interestingly, the academic research shows that there are some less-known mechanisms that disadvantage women in this area.

Networking efforts are often aimed at senior members of an organization for the purpose of gaining visibility. Networking can help an individual gain new roles and facilitate the sharing of personal successes (Sturges, 2008; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010). Networking also plays an important role in acquiring benefits and prestige through knowing the right people in an organization, also known as "social capital". Women are less likely to acquire such social capital through networking and are less likely to be part of powerful networks. As women are often more junior in an organization than men, they have less access to resources and important contacts, making them less desirable networking partners (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010).

Furthermore, there is evidence that men and women actually network differently. While men use networks for career-building, women frequently use them for affiliation and emotional support (Broadbridge, 2010). It is the career-focused networking that brings significant advantages to career progression.

It is not only the type of networking that matters, it is also the time that much networking takes place. With childcare constraints, out-of-hours networking can be problematic for women, limiting their opportunities to network.

Finally, the concept of political skill is closely linked to networking. Political skill is all about being good at understanding people and using this knowledge to influence others to act to one's own advantage. It allows us to get along with others, become more visible and tap into a network to gain much needed resources, all of which are contributors to increased career mobility and career success (Ferris et al.,

2005). Women have been shown to suffer from what has been called "political skill deficiency" (Blass et al., 2007). This refers to the fact that women's mentors are not senior enough and/ or fail to provide them with insights into organizational politics, which reduces their networking effectiveness. Having access to senior, politically-savvy mentors who can help a woman decode the political landscape of an organization and help her improve the effectiveness of her networking activities is very important.

Opportunity-seeking

This behavior refers to seeking new roles that are career-enhancing and being prepared to take some risks, such as trying a role in a new functional area. Such roles allow women to develop the skills, experience and contacts that will help them to progress in their career (Sturges, 2008). The importance of looking for new assignments, being mobile, and willing to change jobs and employers has been emphasized repeatedly in this context (Sturges, 2008).

There is also evidence that men and women look for job opportunities and promotions differently. Women are less likely to take risks, and they may feel the need to meet a much higher percentage of job requirements than their male colleagues before they apply for a new role (Still, 1994). Women also seem to need more encouragement from mentors in order to take on new challenges (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003). The reason for this, as shown in the negotiation literature, may be that women are less likely to ask for things, such as more money, and that they have learned that contravening female stereotypes (being passive and communal rather than driven and competitive) can lead to negative feedback and being sidelined (Wade, 2001).

Women's exclusion from powerful networks also disadvantages them in their job search; they miss out on hearing about new opportunities being discussed in senior networks, and lack the visibility in these networks. Senior decision-makers are less likely to choose a woman who has applied for a role if she lacks visibility. As a result, women report that they obtain fewer senior positions from networking activities (Ibarra, 1993; Torres and Huffman, 2004).

Finally, women face the issue of pure prejudice, making it more difficult for women to get certain types of career-enhancing job opportunities, such as working abroad on an international assignment, or in an operational role. (Linehan and Walsh, 2000; Connerley et al., 2008). All this makes it particularly important for women to proactively and persistently look for new opportunities and to be prepared to take risks in order for a new role to be truly career-enhancing.

Self-promotion

Rudman (1998) defines self-promotion as "pointing with pride to one's accomplishments, speaking directly about one's strengths and talents, and making internal rather than external attributions for achievements" (p. 629). Self-promotion helps to share one's successes, overcome prejudices about women being less competent and obtain sponsorship through senior managers (Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008; Moss-Racusin and Rudman, 2010). There is evidence for differences in how men and women promote themselves; women tend to embrace self-promotion less frequently and readily than men (Dudley and Goodson, 2007; Moss-Racusin and Rudman, 2010). It has also been shown that women can be less willing and less effective at promoting their own achievements because they fear a backlash for breaking the gender stereotypes of female modesty and humility. (Moss-Racusin and Rudman, 2010). Finding ways to effectively and confidently share one's successes without creating a backlash is an important skill for women.

The immediate work environment

This middle level of the framework concerns a woman's immediate work environment and access to three important career resources:

- Critical job assignments
- Supportive supervisors
- Mentors and sponsors

Critical job assignments

There is general agreement that on-the-job learning is the most effective way to develop future leaders (Adair, 2005; McCall, 2010). Critical job assignments are defined as projects or roles for which a person does not currently have the necessary skills, expertise and experience (Dotlich et al., 2004). For women, stretching job assignments not only provide the on-the-job learning they need, they also provide vital opportunities to become visible and to develop a reputation as a capable, well-rounded leader (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003). Women, however, tend to find it more difficult to gain high-profile job assignments (Lyness and Thompson, 2000; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; De Pater et al., 2010). Reasons for this include women's exclusion from networks of decision-makers, bias against women with childcare responsibility, reduced mobility and women's hesitation to put themselves forward for new assignments and promotions (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010; Connerley et al., 2008; Still, 1994).

Women may also be passed over for high-profile assignments when male senior decision-makers make assumptions about what women do and do not want. This has been shown to cause women to be assigned to more local or low-profile projects in the non-profit and healthcare industry whereas men may be assigned to high-profile, global projects in technology and financial services (McCracken, 2000). Job assignments that are important for women include, amongst others: early stretch assignments, operational roles, international assignments, change management and turn-around projects (White et al., 1992; McCall, 2010, Wichert, 2011).

Supportive supervisors

Belief in a person, taking a personal risk by providing access to a new role and personal encouragement are all examples of career support that a supervisor can provide to a direct report (Noe, 1996). Supportive supervisors also play a key role in Turner's (1960) sponsored mobility pathway, which proposes that a supervisor gives chosen employees higher levels of support. Equally, the leader-member exchange literature, which focuses on the quality of a relationship between managers and direct reports, is based on the premise that where the exchange is of high quality, leaders provide employees with more support than stipulated in the employment contract, whereas for those where the exchange is of low quality, only a minimum of support is provided (Liden and Graen, 1980). It has been shown that supervisor support is linked to salary progression, promotability and career satisfaction (Wayne et al., 1999).

Women may get less crucial supervisor support. A supervisor may feel that it is more risky to support a woman than a man; appointing a woman to a high-profile role is likely to attract more attention than if the same role were given to a man. If the woman fails, this failure is much more visible and the supervisor's judgment to appoint the woman may be called into question. This has been called the visibility-vulnerability spiral (Kram and McCollom Hampton, 2003).

Finally, it is worth noting that women may find themselves as "outsiders" in male-dominated environments, and have less favorable relationships with their male managers. They may feel that they need to emulate male behaviors in order to fit in.

Mentors and sponsors

Mentors are more experienced and senior members of an organization who provide support to a mentee's career development. This support ranges from career advice and guidance, to actively providing access to stretch assignments and sponsorship. Research stresses the importance of a mentor's active sponsorship role to help advance a woman's career. Career advice and guidance alone are not enough to help women advance – women need active championing. Sponsors are particularly important as they are able to "lend social capital" to women who might need it in certain situations (Broadbridge, 2010).

While women are just as likely to have mentors as men, the type of mentors they have tend to be different. Women are less likely to be mentored by insiders who are influential and able to pass on valuable information about organizational politics. As a result, women gain fewer benefits from their mentoring relationships (Carter and Silva, 2010). Interestingly, there is also evidence that women and men may seek different types of support from their mentors. As already mentioned, men use mentors and networking in a strategic and instrumental manner, while women access mentors and networks more for emotional support to help them deal with male-dominated environments (Broadbridge, 2010).

The organizational context

The outer area of the proposed framework highlights four organizational factors that play a role in a woman leader's career advancement:

- Work-life balance and flexible working practices
- Supportive work-life culture
- Objective HR processes
- Bias and stereotype free environment

Flexible working practices and work-life balance

Work-life balance and flexible working practices are defined as "the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities" (p. 49) (Hill et al., 2001). Work-life balance and flexible working practices have been shown to be linked to various well-being measures (Marks and MacDermid, 1996), and both are part of the concept that is particularly important for women who still tend to take on the majority of caring responsibilities for children and elderly relatives in addition to their work commitments. As a result, many women need periods of flexible working arrangements. Examples include working part-time, compressed working weeks, job sharing and working from home (Rogier and Padgett, 2004; Lyness and Kropf, 2005).

One work arrangement that has received a lot of attention is part-time work. While potentially a way to reduce the "role overload" that women report when they are responsible for both family and work (Higgins et al., 2000), there is evidence that working part-time is linked to reduced career progression (Lyness and Kropf, 2005; Rogier and Padgett, 2004). Part-time employees are still seen as being as capable as their

full-time colleagues in terms of job performance, however, they are regarded as less promotable (Rogier and Padgett, 2004). Senior managers' concerns that a woman is not able to deal with a senior role on reduced hours, or is not visible enough while working from home have been mentioned as possible reasons for this reduced perception of promotability (Rogier and Padgett, 2004).

Work-life culture
Supportive work-life culture is listed as a separate factor in our framework is to draw attention to the fact that simply providing flexible work options is not enough. Organizations need to create a supportive work-life culture which consists of three different elements:

- Managers who are responsive to employees' work and non-work obligations.
- Work norms that discourage presenteeism.
- A lack of negative career consequences for using flexible working solutions (Thompson et al., 1999).

Without these supportive cultural norms in place, employees are unlikely to work flexibly (Adams, 1995; Higgins et al., 2000; Lyness and Kropf, 2005). This reluctance to work more flexibly is often part of what has been termed bias avoidance behaviors. Drago et al. (2006) define this behavior as "strategically minimizing or hiding family commitments" (p. 1223) in the workplace to avoid the bias people may be subjected to if they are seen to be reducing their commitment to work in order to accommodate child care. Women have been shown to engage in these bias avoidance behaviors more frequently than men. However, having a supervisor who is supportive of one's family commitments is linked to a reduction in trying to minimize or hide these commitments at work (Drago et al., 2006).

Objective HR processes
Liu et al. (2010) state that: "…highly structured work environments, characterized by clear hierarchies and rigid rules, represent situations that allow little room for personal gain through political behavior" (p. 1436). While objective assessment methods, such as assessment centers, have been shown to predict supervisors' performance ratings of employees (Hermelin et al., 2007), the more senior an appointment is the less likely that objective assessment methods will be used. Senior roles are frequently filled by decision-makers who rely on informal endorsements of a candidate by others in their own network. Therefore an individual's social capital, or by whom the individual is known at a senior level, becomes more important than the human capital the individual has acquired (Broadbridge, 2010). Women's exclusion from powerful networks disadvantages them when appointments are made through personal networks rather than through formal selection processes. There is also evidence that some elements of the promotion process may work less well for women. Because women are less likely to put themselves forward for a promotion if they do not feel they have met all the criteria, virtually any promotion process that relies on self-nomination is likely to result in fewer female applicants. As mentioned earlier in the context of career planning, research shows that women need to feel that they meet a relatively high number of requirements in a job description before they apply. Men, on the other hand, apply for new roles based on a much lower perceived match between their own experience and the requirements for a more senior role (Still, 1994; Desvaux et al. 2007).

Bias and stereotype free environment

Even when HR policies and processes are in place, women can still be disadvantaged. This is because those HR policies and processes are often fundamentally biased against women who are stereotyped as communal, nurturing and passive. Men, on the other hand, are attributed with qualities such as action-orientation, individualism and decisiveness (Ruderman et al., 1996). Leadership qualities are often cast in male terms of agency and individualism (Heilman, 1995; Metcalfe and Altman, 2001). As a result, women find it more difficult to meet expectations. Women who behave counter to gender stereotypes, i.e., in an assertive, action-oriented and individualistic manner, are penalized and regarded as less likeable and less competent. Men do not face the same penalty when they contradict male stereotypes by acting in a communal and nurturing manner (Pratch and Jacobowitz, 1996). The more senior women become in their careers, the more their roles are in contradiction with gender stereotypes and the more likely they are to be disadvantaged by selection criteria (Hopkins et al., 2008). In addition to the bias and stereotypes inherent in definitions of leadership success, individuals such as recruiters and managers hold a myriad of, sometimes unconscious, biases that can play an important role in women's failure to obtain senior roles (Dick and Nadin, 2006; Heilman, 2001; Ruderman et al. 1996).

Summary

Our framework sets out some of the differences in how men and women act, perceive and are perceived in the workplace, particularly with respect to progressing their careers. We also explore the challenges that women face in their immediate work environment and the organizational context. Across these three levels, the paper highlights 11 different factors as particularly worthy of attention when trying to address the slower progression of women to senior management positions. While we still need to test the precise pathways and mechanisms of the 11 different factors proposed in this paper, the existing research already confirms the importance of these factors in addressing senior level gender inequality.

Next steps

As shown in *Figure 4*, we believe the organizational context will shape elements of the immediate work environment, and both the immediate work environment and organizational context in turn will shape a woman's beliefs, actions and choices about her career. Research to date suggests that it is the career management behaviors in particular that warrant

further attention as they are both important and often less well-developed in women. A woman's individual behaviors are linked to an assessment of her performance, both her past performance as assessed through performance appraisals but also her potential future performance as measured in promotion discussions.
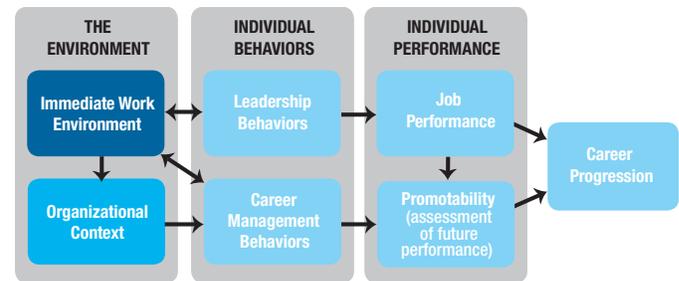

Figure 4: Preliminary career progression model to be tested

In 2012, IBM undertook a five-country survey in the US, UK, Brazil, Japan and China of 2,500 men and women in professional and managerial roles.[3] This study validated the relative importance of the 11 factors outlined in this paper.

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Ines Wichert, Ph.D., formerly Senior Psychologist and lead for women in leadership research and product development, Kenexa, is a chartered occupational psychologist with many years of industry experience. She holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the University of Cambridge.

Her new book, "Where Have All the Senior Women Gone? 9 Critical Job Assignments for Women Leaders", was published by Palgrave Macmillan. Ines regularly speaks and writes on the topic of women leaders for, among others, BBC News, Fortune 500 Most Powerful Women's Summit, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, and The Financial Times.

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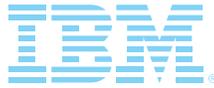
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1 This study was authored by Lois Joy, Ph.D., Director, Research, and Nancy M. Carter, Ph.D., Vice President, Research, at Catalyst Inc. and by Harvey M. Wagner, Ph.D., Professor, Kenan-Flager Business School, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Sriram Narayanan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Eli Broad School of Business, Michigan State University, East Lansing. http://catalyst.org/knowledge/bottom-line-corporate-performance-and-womens-representation-boards.

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