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The Glass Ceiling: An Analysis of Women Working for Federal Agencies

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The Glass Ceiling: An Analysis of Women Working for Federal Agencies

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Certificate of Approval

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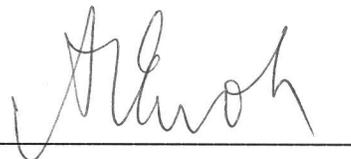
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The Glass Ceiling: An Analysis of Women Working for Federal Agencies

Executive Summary

Over the years, discrimination based on gender has become a topic of concern. The purpose of this study is to investigate the percentage of women and men working in the federal government agencies. This research also looks into public policies that are designed to improve bureaucratic representation of women in the United States. The paper begins with an explanation of the glass ceiling concept and key findings of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. This section is followed by a review of theories that explain why women are discriminated against and why it is important to have women working in public administrative positions. Immediately following the theory section is a segment that explores some of the important legislative policies that have helped women to where they are today.

By comparing the percentage of men and women working in the general schedule (GS) classification and the Senior Executive Services (SES), the researcher has found that women are slowly becoming more equally represented in the federal agencies. Each year the percentage of women working in the GS classifications and SES has increased, but women still have a long way to go before becoming equal to men. The research finds that there is a 10 percent decrease between the top GS levels and the SES, and a 15 percent difference in the number of women between the GS-1 to GS-5 levels compared to GS-12 to GS-15 levels.

In conclusion, federal agencies can increase the number of women working by improving their retention rate and developing them into productive role models for other women that are either in the process or considering applying for a job with a federal agency. This research will help public administrators see the areas and agencies that need the most improvements to help increase the percentage of women in the years to come.

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The Glass Ceiling: An Analysis of Women Working for Federal Agencies

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The Glass Ceiling: An Analysis of Women Working for Federal Agencies

Introduction

In the last decade Sonia Sotomayor joined the Supreme Court, Hilary Clinton and Sarah Palin ran in presidential campaigns, women represented 17 percent of the House and Senate; women made up 50 percent of the workforce, and earned 57 percent of undergraduate degrees (Pollitt 2010, 1). However, women are still only earning 77 cents to every male dollar earned (Pollitt 2010, 1). Women are continuing to make small strides in becoming equal members of society, but unfortunately they are still largely under-represented in the upper management positions of the federal government. In the private sector, only 6.6 percent of corporate executives are women (Bullard 1993, 190). As of 2001, women occupied only 13 percent of the federal government's Senior Executive Service (SES) positions, but fulfilled 85 percent of all clerical positions (Mani 1997, 545). It is important for women to be a part of all government agencies especially in upper management positions that make critical policy decisions. Having women in the decision making process is critical to implementing effective policies. Women bring new ideas and subjects to the table that help ensure all people and issues are being represented.

Statistics and legislation have demonstrated that employment discrimination based on gender happens less frequently than in past years (Bearfield 2009). Therefore, the focus of research has shifted from looking at why women are not getting hired at all to the form of discrimination that is preventing women from being promoted to upper management positions. The barriers women face when attempting to advance their careers have changed over the years. Previous research has shown that some of the barriers women face when advancing their careers includes education, seniority, mobility, having a mentor, and having children (Lewis 1986;

Grandjean 1981; Markham et al. 1983; Vertz 1985; Kelly et al. 1991). As society and expectations of women change, so have the obstacles encountered by women. Some of the current challenges women face when advancing their careers includes experience, education, relocation, time devoted to the job, and having children (Naff 1994; Lane 2003; Dolan 2004; Riccucci 2009; Cotter et al. 2001). The presence of hurdles preventing women from advancing to top management positions demonstrates that a glass ceiling may still exist.

Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling concept was first introduced in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* report on corporate women (Hymowitz and Schellhardt 1986). Hymowitz and Schellhardt describe the glass ceiling as an unofficial barrier to opportunities within an organization or company which is perceived to prevent classes of workers, particularly women, from advancing to higher position. Another definition given to the glass ceiling belief is the "unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements" (U.S. Department of Labor 1995b, 4). Although discrimination on the basis of gender was illegal at the time the article was published, the issue was still occurring. It was the article about the glass ceiling in the *Wall Street Journal* years later that brought to light the problem and made the issue more main stream. As a result of this report, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was created by President George H. Bush as a part of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (U.S. Department of Labor 1995a).

The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was created to "identify the glass ceiling barriers that have blocked the advancement of minorities and women as well as the successful practices and policies that have led to the advancement of minority men and all women into decision

making positions in the private sector” (U.S. Department of Labor 1995b, 3). It was the purpose of the Commission to research what made the private sector so successful in promoting women to these top positions in hopes of duplicating the same procedures in the public sector. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission is a bipartisan body consisting of 21 members with the Secretary of Labor as the chairperson. The Glass Ceiling Act, under the Civil Rights Act of 1991, authorizes that the Commission must:

- (1) Examine the preparedness of women and minorities to advance to management and decisionmaking positions in business;
- (2) Examine the opportunities for women and minorities to advance to management and decisionmaking positions in business;
- (3) Conduct basic research into the practices, policies, and manner in which management and decisionmaking positions in business are filled;
- (4) Conduct comparative research of businesses and industries in which women and minorities are promoted to management and decisionmaking positions, and business and industries in which women and minorities are not promoted to management and decisionmaking positions;
- (5) Compile a synthesis of available research on programs and practices that have successfully led to the advancement of women and minorities to management and decisionmaking positions in business including training programs, rotational assignments, developmental programs, reward programs, employee benefit structures, and family leave policies; and

(6) Examine any other issues and information relating to the advancement of women and minorities to management and decisionmaking positions in business (Glass Ceiling Act 2001).

Purpose of the Study

Most of the initial research done on the glass ceiling concept was conducted using data from the private sector. Included in this initial research is the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, which published its first report only discussing data collected within the private sector. It was not until the second report that the Commission applied the private sector principles to the public sector. Although in recent years more research has been developed on the glass ceiling concept and how it relates to government entities in the public sector. Authors such as Naff (1994) have found that similar factors that affect women working in the private sector also affect their counterparts in the public sector. It is a serious problem that women are unable to obtain higher positions within their agency despite being equally qualified to their male counterparts. If women are able to reach these higher, upper management positions in the private sector, what is the public sector missing? Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to compare the percentage of women and men working in the federal government agencies, and uncover public policies designed to encourage or improve bureaucratic representation of women. This research expands the current inquiries on the topic of the glass ceiling in the public sector by investigating women working for agencies in the United States federal government.

We have seen that overtime women are slowly becoming equals within the federal government work force. Women, as a whole in the federal government, hold almost 50 percent of all federal jobs (Naff 1994, 507). From 1985 to 2007, women have gained 22 percent in the

number of Senior Executive Service (SES) appointments (Bearfield 2009, 383). Although, over time there has been an increase in the percentage of women in the upper management levels, such as GS-12 through GS-15 and the SES, the overall percentage in those top positions is drastically decreased from those working in lower positions. This research explores this dilemma and begins with a review of the literature, applicable theories, and past legislations that have helped women to advance professionally to where they are today. Next, the research presents the methodology used to identify the percentage of women working in the upper levels of federal government and also provides an analysis to see if over the last decade the percentage of women in the Senior Executive Services has increased. Lastly, the research concludes with an explanation of the findings and recommendations on how to improve the equitable representation of men and women in the top management positions within the United State federal agencies.

Literature Review

There are many theories that explain the working relationship between men and women. It is important in the context of public administration and equal representation for the people that theories involving the public sector be reviewed. When striving to understand a concept and improve its principles, it is important to understand the basic principles and theories. In addition to understanding theories, one must understand policies and legislation that, over the years, have shaped the advancement of women within organizations. There has been much legislation passed over the past few decades that have helped contribute to the advancement of women in their careers, in both public and private sector positions. In order to improve for the future, it is essential to know what has happened in the past. This is why it is important to review previous

legislations that helped to expand the current opportunities that women have in obtaining the upper management positions today.

Equity

In terms of public administration, this topic applies to the principle of equity. The equity principle advances the idea that all citizens should be treated equal and be allowed equal access to services. The idea of equity was included in the first publication of the Principles for the American Society of Public Administration (Mertins et al. 1981). Under the section on professional ethics, the authors describe the “pursuit of equality, which is to say citizen A being equal to citizen B, and equity, which is to say adjusting shares so that citizen A is made equal with citizen B” (Frederickson 1990, 229). To be a successful public administrator, it is important to promote equity among all people. The lack of representation of women in top positions of federal government agencies shows that there is still some disconnect in equity among men and women. In order to be an effective agency, equity between genders needs to continue to be a topic of discussion.

Theory

According to the theory of representative bureaucracy it is important for governments to include all demographics, including women, in government positions in order to represent all types of people within the jurisdiction (Lim 2006). Originally the topic of representative bureaucracy was introduced by Donald Kingsley in 1944, but many other scholars have since added more information to his original research. One of these authors, Krislov (1974), describes this theory as “unity- in diversity- tolerating, even celebrating, the distinctiveness of subgroups

as contributing to a synthesizing realization of the whole person as an American” (1974, 423). It is after all the ultimate goal of governments to work for and represent its entire population of people, and the most successful way to do this is by having a diverse group of people working within the government. Therefore, the underlying concept of representative bureaucracy is that if the views and attitudes of public administrators are similar to those of the general public, then the decisions made by administrators will have a positive response from the public. In addition to this, Meier and Nigro (1976) reinforce that “The theory of representative bureaucracy, thus, begins with the following definition of responsiveness: If administrators and the public share value orientations, then the administrators will advocate and pursue courses of action the public would if it were able to congregate and had the administrators' expertise and information” (Meier and Nigro 1976, 458). This public administration theory applies to the concept of the glass ceiling because it is important to have women actively involved at all levels of government, especially in roles that involve policy making decisions. The idea of women being a part of the decision-making process helps to ensure that women’s issues and rights are being represented. The representation of women brings administrators one-step closer to complete representative bureaucracy.

In addition to looking at gender and equal representation among government agencies, an examination of the organizational structure and how gender relates is equally as important. Moss Kanter’s (1977) theory of sex discrimination demonstrates the idea that when managers look to promote an employee, upper management will pick a candidate that has similar management styles and techniques as those doing the hiring. This theory focuses on the need for social assurance and power in numbers (Powell and Butterfield 1994; Acker 1990; Gregory 1990). Kanter (1977) attempts to demonstrate that organizational behavior is due to the structure rather

than the characteristics of the individuals that work within an agency. According to the theory, women poses feminine traits and behaviors in response to being placed in low level, dead end positions. On the other hand, women who are placed in high-level positions exhibit the same behaviors and attributes that men, in equal positions, demonstrate. Kanter recognizes these behaviors in early organizational structures by saying:

A 'masculine ethic' of rationality and reason can be identified in the early image of managers. This 'masculine ethic' elevates the traits assumed to belong to men with educational advantages to necessities for effective organizations: a tough-minded approach to problems; analytic abilities to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal, emotional considerations in the interests of task accomplishment; a cognitive superiority in problem-solving and decision making (Kanter 1974, 43).

This theory is helpful in explaining why women advance to high positions in the public sector, and break through the glass ceiling, because it shows that in order for a woman to excel she must demonstrate certain male working characteristics. If more women begin to fill upper management positions, then the social norms of most organizations would change and more women will be given promotional opportunities.

Legislation

The first type of legislation that helped the advancement of women is gender quotas. Currently more than one hundred countries have policies requiring the selection of female candidates into office, and over fifty countries have adopted quota laws (Krook 2008). Quotas are adopted in many countries because of women's mobilization, strategic incentives of political

elites, consistency with existing political norms, and transnational sharing (Krook, Lovenduski, and Squires 2009). In addition to countries implementing quota laws, political parties often adopt quotas for similar reasons. Some of the reasons for applying quotas include women activists, electoral system, and diffusion and competition, and party characteristics (Caul 2001). Regardless of the reason how they are adopted, quotas have to be addressed in order to position women in higher political offices where they may be able to represent and contribute to feminist issues. By increasing the number of women actively participating in political forums, they will be able to promote feminist views in order to improve women's overall social, economic, and political condition.

Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 is another legislative piece that has helped to level the playing field for women. The purpose of the EPA was to secure equal pay for women who had equal job responsibilities as men. Amended under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the EPA prohibits federal agencies from paying employees of one gender a lower wage than employees of the opposite sex for performing equal work under equal working conditions (Equal Pay Act 1963). The act is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and according to its website, the act "prohibits sex-based wage discrimination between men and women in the same establishment who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions" (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2010). The only permissible pay discrimination under the act includes circumstances in which pay differentials between men and women in the same job title are due to (1) seniority system, (2) merit system, (3) system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production, or (4) differentials based on any other factor other than gender. This law was one of the first legislation to suggest that there should be equal compensation between women and

men with equal positions and some studies suggest that the EPA is still considered one of the best attempts in closing the gender pay gap (Crampton, Hodge, and Mishra 1997). One of the benefits of having classification systems, such as the general schedule and Senior Executive Services is that it helps to eliminate pay discrimination. Appendix C shows the pay for each grade level and step for the general schedule, and the pay levels for the Senior Executive Services. These pay scales are used to designate a salary amount based on job qualifications and experience, and this helps to promote equal pay among men and women.

The next two legislative acts deal with the issue of gender discrimination. The Civil Rights Act (CSA) of 1964 outlawed major forms of discrimination against African Americans and women. Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act explains that discrimination of any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin is prohibited. It is the responsibilities of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce the regulations and to file suits on behalf of employees if the law is broken (Civil Rights Act 1964). This legislation is key to the advancement of women because it made it illegal for all employers to not hire or promote a woman on the basis of gender. Women finally had the opportunity to get their foot in the door and be treated somewhat equally. Although this was a federal regulation, it only applied to private employers and organizations receiving federal assistance, and at the original time of the passing it did not apply to the federal civil service (Hays, Kearney, and Cogburn 2003).

It was the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1972 that amended Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and extended coverage to the public sector. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, government-owned corporations, Indian tribes, and federal employees were not covered under the provisions. After the amendment was made with the passing of the

EEOA, the coverage was extended to governments, government agencies, and political subdivisions (Nigro, Nigro, and Kellough 2007). By bringing state, local, and federal government entities under the coverage, more affirmative action incentives were implemented in the public sector. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces the EEOA employment practices at the state and local level, while the U.S. Civil Service Commission reaffirms the EEOA at the national level (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2010). For the purpose of the foregoing analysis, this law has the largest impact. It is the law that gave women the opportunity to be finally reviewed for higher positions. Prior to this law, most women would not have been considered for management positions. The EEOA mandates that women should be given the option to be considered for management and top administrative positions.

Methodology

This investigation utilizes an exploratory case study method with the use of academic articles and statistical data to develop the research. The study explores women working within all federal government agencies at different grade levels. During this research, two classification systems were reviewed: the general schedule (GS) classification and Senior Executive Services (SES) classification. The general schedule was created under the Classification Act of 1949 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2010a). The GS classification has a range of levels of difficulty and responsibility for covered positions from grades GS-1 to GS-15. Each grade level has certain job qualifications and responsibilities, and education requirements. The job qualifications, job responsibilities, and education requirements can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B. Those three factors determine what grade level an employee will enter when beginning to work for the federal government. Those factors also determine what qualifications an employee needs in order to

receive a promotion up to the next grade level from where they currently have a position. Also, only certain types of jobs can be classified under the general schedule standards. Appendix D shows the general characteristics of work classifiable under the general schedule.

For employees to enter in to the Senior Executive Services they must possess certain core personal qualities. Appendix E explains these core standard qualities that a person must encompass in order to be promoted into the SES classification. The Senior Executive Services classification is described by the Office of Personnel Management as:

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is comprised of the men and women charged with leading the continuing transformation of government. These leaders possess well-honed executive skills and share a broad perspective of government and a public service commitment which is grounded in the Constitution. The keystone of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the SES was designed to be a corps of executives selected for their leadership qualifications.

Members of the SES serve in the key positions just below the top Presidential appointees. For a qualitative comparison example, SES members working in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) have status equivalent to general or admiral rank of their uniformed counterparts. In general, SES members are the major link between the Presidential appointees and the rest of the Federal (civil service) work force. At the executive level, they operate and oversee nearly every government activity in approximately 75 Federal agencies.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) manages the overall Federal executive personnel program. OPM Staff provides the day-to-day oversight of and assistance to

agencies as they develop, select, and manage their Federal executives (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2010c).

All the statistical data that are used for this research were obtained from the Office of Personnel Management's federal employment statistics. These statistics can be found at the OPM website (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2010b). The study attempts to answer the following research questions: (1) Has the percentage of women increased in Senior Executive Services positions from 1999 to 2009? (2) Is there a higher percentage of women currently working in the upper management positions within the GS-12 to GS-15 levels than in the Senior Executive Services positions? (3) Is there a higher percentage of women working in the GS-1 to GS-5 levels than in the GS-12 to GS-15 levels? Statistics pertaining to general schedule and SES were used to answer the research questions. The researcher used a trend analysis to see if the percentage of women has increased over a ten-year period for the first research question. For the remaining two research questions, the study used the most recent statistical data available.

Strengths

Some of the strengths of the research are the amount of data available from the United States Department of Labor and the United States Office of Personnel Management. Both agencies have a tremendous amount of statistics on the workforce, including both general public and specifics like federal government employees. These statistics are a tremendous asset to the research because it provides the ability to find relevant information that answers all research questions presented. Another strength of this research is the ability to focus on just women in the federal government. By looking into all working women, the research would be large and vague. To overcome this problem, the researcher focused on only women working in federal

government agencies for an in-depth analysis and evaluation of specific grade levels and details of the women.

Limitations

Although the amount of data available is a strength of the research presented, it also has some limitations. There is a wealth of statistical information on the OPM website and without knowing exactly what information is needed to complete the research, there is a chance to get lost in the extensive amount of figures. It is a challenge to sort through all the data available to find exactly the figures needed. Another limitation to this case study method is that it is hard to generalize the results across multiple agencies. There are many agencies involved and despite being detailed in the data available, it is not specific enough to generalize the results across all federal government agencies. The last limitation of the research is the inability to demonstrate cause and effect conclusions. By looking into women in the federal government as a whole group, there is no ability to show if a certain new legislation caused an increase in the amount of women working for the federal government or an increase in the amount of women appointed to the Senior Executive Services.

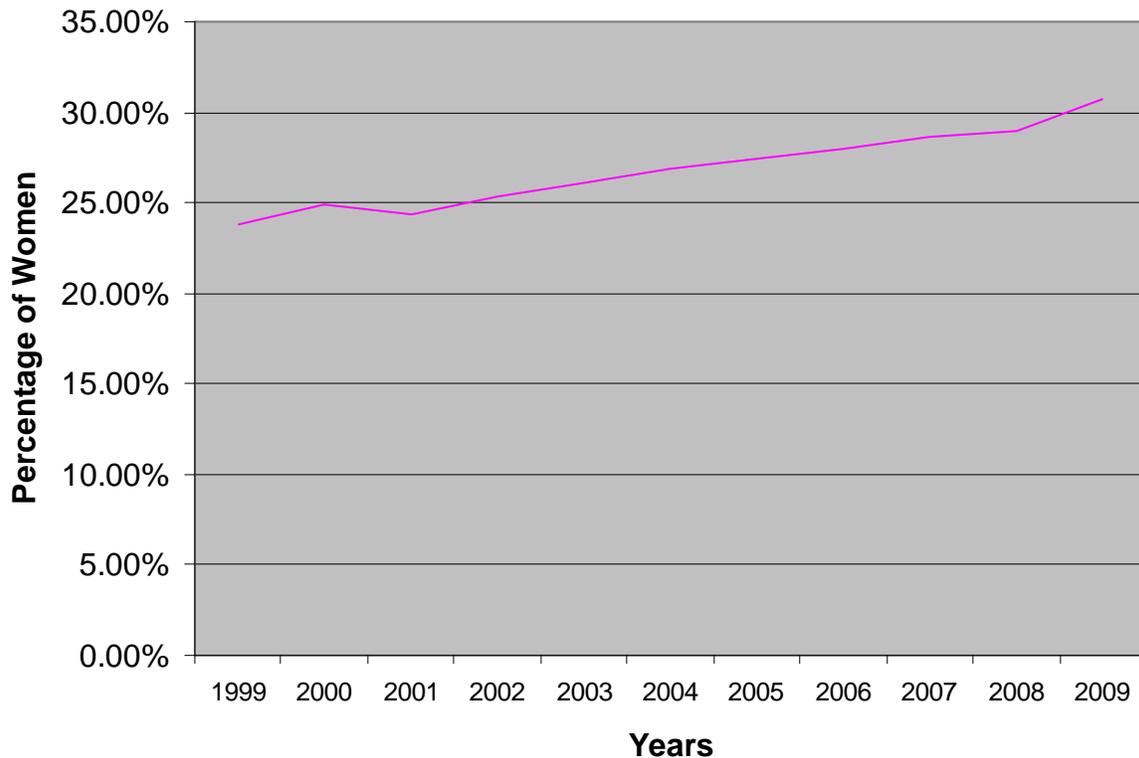
Findings

This case study compiles key information on the percentages of women working within the United State federal government agencies. Data from 1999 through 2010 were used in order to get the most current results possible. By looking at both yearly information and current 2010 data, the researcher was able to discover the most accurate data that present the situation as it is occurring today.

Question 1

The first research question in this study is “has the percentage of women increased in Senior Executive Services positions from 1999 to 2009?” The reason for looking into this question is to see if over time women are becoming more equal, in numbers, to men in the Senior Executive Services. The data for this question show that in the ten year period being investigated, 1999 to 2009, women have increased from 23 percent to just over 30 percent. Therefore, the answer for this research question would be yes, the percentage of women has increased in the Senior Executive Services from 1999 to 2009. With the exception of one year, there has been a steady increase of female workers into the SES each year. Figure 1 illustrates the increase in the percentage of women over the ten year period.

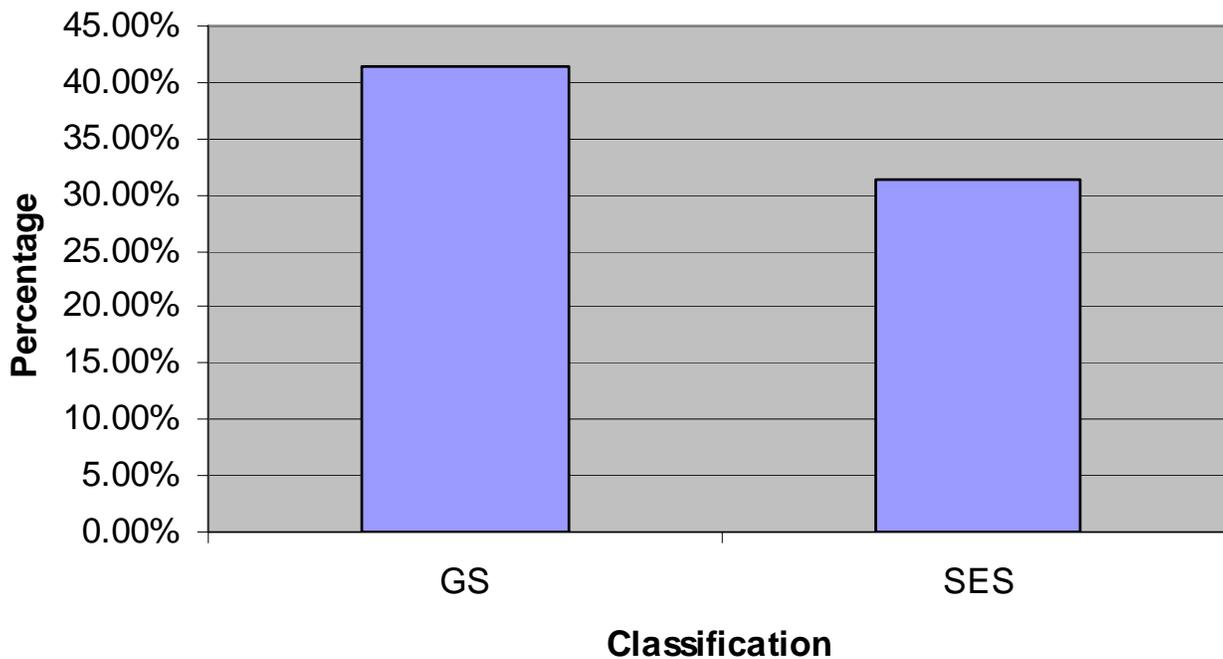
Figure 1. Percentage of Women in the Senior Executive Services



Question 2

Research question two, in this analysis, is designed to explore if there is a higher percentage of women currently working in the upper-management positions within the GS-12 to GS-15 levels than in the Senior Executive Services positions. The purpose of this question is to see if there is a glass ceiling present when trying to move above the general schedule classification and into the SES. The research from the data show that there are a higher percentage of women working in the GS-12 to GS-15 levels than in the SES. Figure 2 shows that there is almost a ten percent difference in women between the high GS classification and the SES classification. As a result, the answer to this research question is yes, there are an overall higher percentage of women working in the GS-12 to GS-15 levels than in SES. In the GS classification, the overall percentage of women is 41 percent. Compared to that, the SES has just 31 percent women. That is, a 10 percent decrease between the two levels.

Figure 2. Percentage of women working in the GS-12 through GS-15 and SES



The significant data for the second research question is established by breaking down the GS classifications and comparing it to the numbers in the SES classification. Figure 3 shows that there is a significant drop in the number of women between the GS-13 and GS-14 level. There is also a considerable drop between the GS-14 and GS-15 level; with the most evident decline between the GS levels and the SES classification. The numbers continue to decrease as the levels increase. Figure 4 confirms the same decrease in the percentage of women when moving from the GS-12 level to the SES. This figure also shows the most significant decrease in classification levels is between GS-15 and SES. The data demonstrate that there is some type of barrier that is keeping women from reaching the higher positions. The GS-12 has 44 percent of women and GS-13 is 40 percent women. While the GS-14 has 38 percent, and the GS-15 has 35 percent women.

Figure 3. Number of Women in each Classification Level

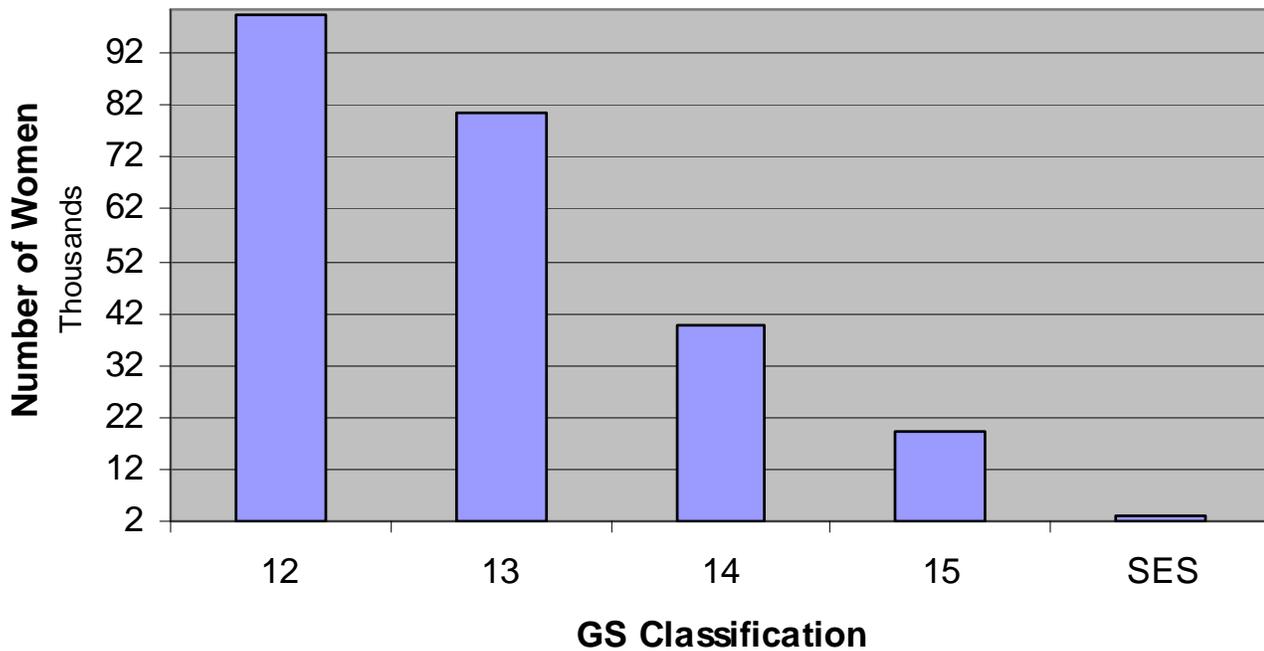
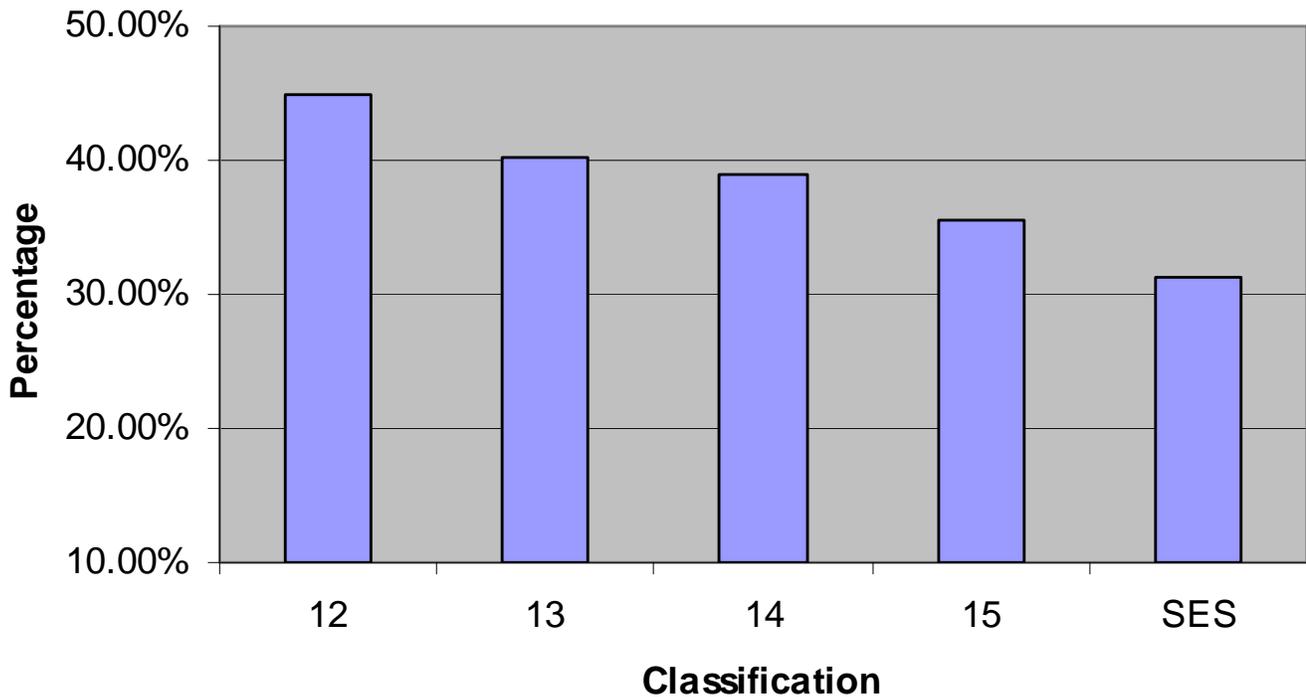


Figure 4. Percentage of Women in each Classification Level

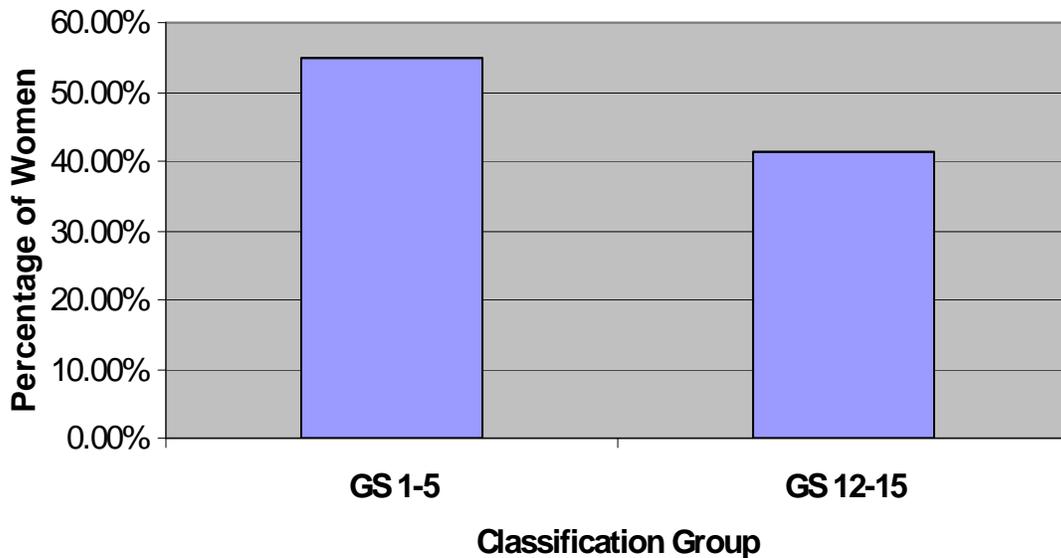


Question 3

The third research question states “Is there a higher percentage of women working in the GS-1 to GS-5 levels than in the GS-12 to GS-15 levels?” This question is important to the research because it demonstrates that there are more women working in the lower clerical level type positions than in the higher upper management positions. After analyzing the data, the finding supports the idea that women are less equal as they reach the top of the organizational hierarchy. The total percentage of women in GS-1 to GS-5 is 55 percent. In contrast, the proportion of women in GS-12 through GS-15 is a faintly 41 percent. Figure 5 demonstrates that over 50 percent of the workers in the GS-1 through GS-5 classifications are women. Furthermore, the graph shows that the percentage of women in the GS-12 through GS-15 is scarcely over 40 percent. Based on the research results, the answer to the third research question

is yes, there are a higher percentage of women working in the GS-1 to GS-5 levels than in the GS-12 to GS-15 classifications.

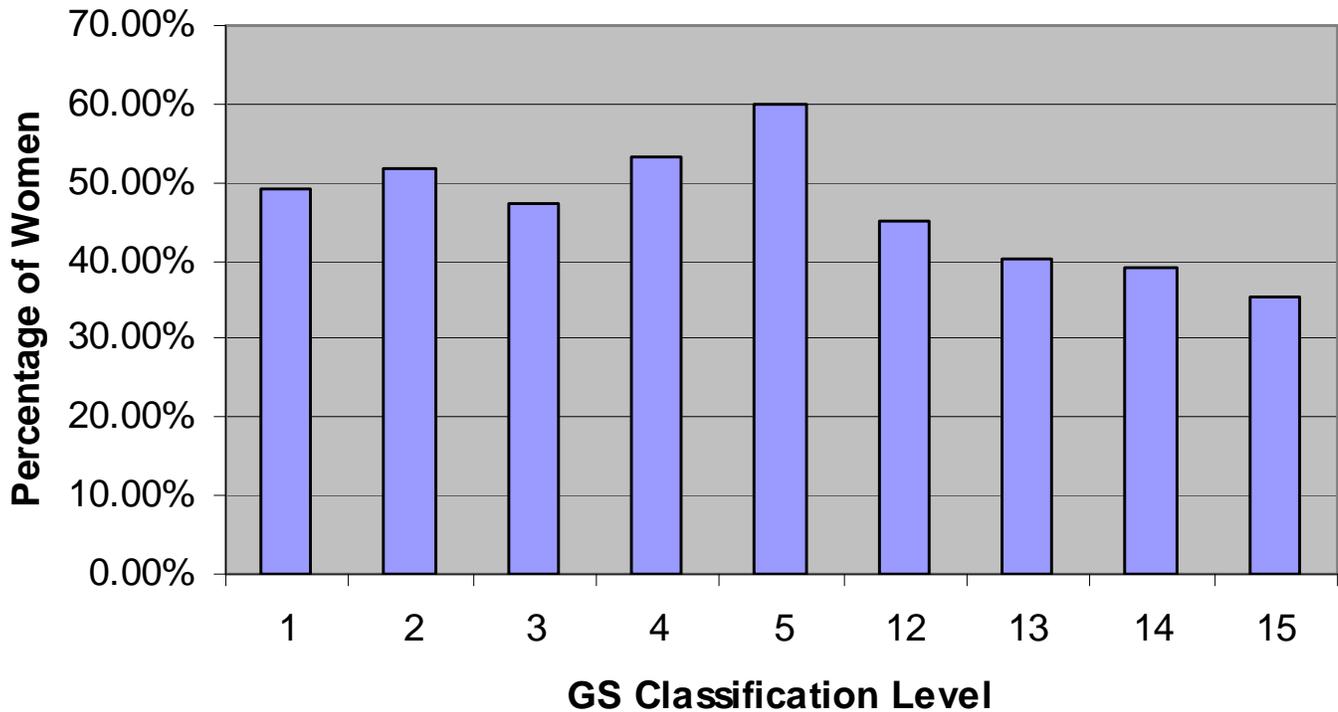
Figure 5. Percentage of Women in the GS-1 to GS-5 and GS-12 to GS-15.



Breaking down the classifications, even further, shows an exceptional disconnect between the two groupings. There is a clear decrease in the percentage of women from the GS-1 to GS-5 and the GS-12 and above classes. The first five classifications are almost all at 50 percent or higher. The change between the GS-5 classification and the GS-12 level is almost a 20 percent decrease in women. Also, moving from the GS-12 to GS-15, the percentage of women continues to decrease. As the levels increase from the GS-1 to GS-5 the percentage of women continuously increases with the exception of a minor decrease between the GS-2 and GS-3. However, the opposite happens as the classifications increase from the GS-12 to GS-15. Between

these upper levels, the percentage of women decreases as the classification increased. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of each classification and the percentage of women in each category.

Figure 6. The Percentage of Women in Different GS Classification Levels



All these data illustrate that there is still some type or types of barrier that women face when trying to reach the top management positions. It is clear that the major hurdle for women to face is between the lower GS levels and the upper GS levels. The overall drop in the percentage of women is much greater between the low GS classifications, such as GS-1 through GS-4, and the higher levels, such as GS-12 to GS-15. Although the hurdle may be smaller, there are still obstacles that women must face when trying to reach the very top level of the organizational hierarchy. The percentage of women in the Senior Executive Services was the

lowest of all the three explored categories. At 30 percent, the Senior Executive Services has the longest to go in order to reach some type of equity between men and women.

The GS-1 to GS-5 classifications have reached an equilibrium between the percentage of men and women working in those classes. There are just as many women working in those levels, as there are men. However, these lower levels of jobs have historically been overflowing with women due to the easy nature of the job duty. Although the percentages in the upper levels of management are not close to being equal between men and women, the result of research question number one shows that there is hope for the future. Also, question one illustrates that as time goes on, the percentage of women working in higher levels of government will continue to increase. This gives hope that one day there will be no barriers or hurdles that women will have to face when advancing their careers. Moreover, question one reveals that with time women will break through the glass ceiling and be able to obtain any position they desire.

Policy Implications

Most of the policy implications that emerge when coping with an increased number of women working in the federal government are from a human resource perspective. Whenever the hiring, firing, and benefits of employees are involved, human resources must be present. It is important that human resource departments follow certain policies in order to keep an evenly balanced working circumstance for everyone. Some policies that may be impacted by an increased percentage of women working in the federal government agencies will involve compliance with federal laws and health insurance benefits as discussed below.

Compliance with civil rights legislation

Throughout the years many federal legislative policies have been implemented to create equal working conditions. These policies have been put into place to help reverse years of discrimination against women in the workforce. Therefore, as more women are obtaining positions within the federal government, it is imperative that the human resource departments comply with all the federal laws pertaining to civil rights. It is not only important to abide by these laws in order to help women to be treated equally in work settings, but it is also important so the agencies do not get themselves in legal tribulation. By not obeying the laws set forth, such as the civil rights acts, they may face penalties and fees. Once the working environment becomes more equal for both genders, some of these laws and regulations may begin to change. If equality becomes the norm, there may be a time when the laws can be changed or abolished, just as the times are changing and discrimination is being abolished.

Health Benefits

Adding women to the mixture in a working environment brings additional health benefit needs. Women need extra benefits when it comes to having children and these benefits do not necessarily apply to men. Men do not need an extended period of time for maternity leave or specialized female doctors. These extra benefits should be added to the healthcare plan in order to accommodate all employees' healthcare needs. Not only do women themselves need extra healthcare plans, but also many women have dependents that also need coverage. With men no longer providing the main source of income for a household, they do not necessarily have all the

children covered under their fathers' insurance. Many moms have to include the children on their insurance.

Recommendations

Research involving gender can have many other factors that play a part in the overall findings of the research. Consequently, it can be difficult to determine if gender was the sole purpose of an outcome or if there were multiple factors. This research focused only on women in the area of United States federal agencies, but there are other factors that may have an impact on the results in the future.

Ethnicity

In addition to gender being a major factor on discrimination, race also plays a significant role. Ethnicity has been a discriminating factor for many years. Even today people are still facing discriminatory actions because of their ethnicity. Not being hired for a position and not getting a promotion to another job are two examples of situations where someone may experience discrimination based on ethnicity and gender. The combination of gender and race affects the employment experiences and opportunities of federal workers (Ricucci 2009). One researcher, Bearfield (2009), says that “one is inclined to believe that the future of social equity research lies in questions that address the *intersection* of race and gender as opposed to approaches that deal with them as separate categories” (2009, 383-384). Because these two factors go hand in hand, it is important to view them together when conducting research. Strong results can be concluded when looking at just gender or just ethnicity, however, the most accurate results when researching discrimination will be to look at gender and ethnicity together.

Individual Department Cabinets

This research explores women that work for all the federal government agencies. However, looking into specific cabinet departments could change the results of the research. There are certain job categories that are more geared toward women and some cabinets that are more highly populated with men. For example, men stereotypically dominate the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Defense. However, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services may have more women than the norm because women typically occupy those types of jobs. Agencies that deal with income security and social services have uniformly higher percentages of women (Bowling et al. 2006). Therefore, looking into the percentages of women in each specific cabinet department may be necessary to see if there are some departments that need additional help. Some of the cabinets may be close to the 50 percent equality between men and women, but some may be further away. Therefore, it is highly recommended that future research should include the investigation of individual department cabinets.

Additional General Schedule Levels

Another recommendation would be to look at additional general schedule levels. This research includes only the bottom five levels and the top three levels of the general schedule. It may be helpful to look at the women working in the mid-level management positions and not just the top management levels. The equality levels may be different in middle management positions such as GS-6 to GS-11 levels. It would benefit future research to look at the general schedule classification levels.

In addition to exploring the general schedule, it is recommended that future researchers examine classification types other than the general schedule and Senior Executive Services. Not all agencies use these types of classifications. Looking at additional classification standards such as factor evaluation system and federal wage system may help future research by opening up the possibility of reviewing data in different professional areas. Therefore, it would be beneficial to investigate the specific classification style used when looking at specific agencies and cabinet departments.

Conclusion

Overall, the number of women working in the federal government is slowly beginning to improve in terms of bureaucratic representation. As women gain more work experience, they will catch up to the decades of experience that men have. The research has shown that over time women have increased their percentage in both the general schedule classification and Senior Executive Services. Although the percentage of women is increasing each year, there are a few conditions that can help the percentages to increase more rapidly. Maintaining the number of women currently employed in federal agencies will help to eventually increase the overall percentage of women. Also, maintaining the number of women already working for the federal government will help to improve their retention rates and reduce their recruitment needs. In addition to these women helping in their recruitment and retention effort, they also help in setting an example and becoming role models for future federal female employees.

Retention over Recruitment

One way to help increase the percentage of women working in federal agencies is by retaining them in their current position. If federal agencies begin to lose female employees to the private sector, the overall percentage of women will decrease. Therefore, it is key to keep women working within the federal agencies. With the current decline of employee performance and with many of the baby boomers on the verge of retirement, there is going to be an influx of job openings in all levels of government. According to Hays, Kearney, and Cogburn (2008, 66), 60 percent of federal employees will be eligible for retirement within the next 10 years, and 40 percent of those employees will actually retire. Within those able to retire, more than 90 percent of the Senior Executive Service will be up for retirement (Hays, Kearney, and Cogburn 2008, 66). This retirement tsunami will leave many open positions that can be filled by promoting women into those vacant positions. By retaining the employees that the government already has, they can save money and improve morale. Higher retention rates turn into lower recruitment needs and an overall better work environment. If government agencies can improve employee retention with better training, there will be less need to continuously improve recruitment needs. With the retirement wave quickly approaching, governments will need employees with the experience and skills to replace the high executives that are leaving. All these retention efforts can work for the benefit of women. With the first line of recruitment being retention, it also creates role models that help improve the number of women applying for federal agency positions.

Women as Role Models

Having women in top management positions develops them into role models to other women working within the agency. These role models can encourage other women to go after the promotions and upper management positions. As more women begin to obtain these high profile positions, social norms within the work environment will begin to change, making it more acceptable and easier for women to be in management positions. Not only will this encourage more equitable balance between men and women in the top positions, but it will also mean that more women's rights issues can be addressed. Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) observe that:

Another potential mechanism is that the presence of fellow group members in positions of political power engenders a belief that government is responsive to group interests and that group members are capable of affecting political outcomes. More women politicians will mean more pro-women policies; that is, that government will be more responsive to women's concerns (2006, 234).

It is after all the objective of the federal government to represent and support all the people living in the United States. The theory of representative bureaucracy supports the idea of being able to represent all people and all issues by having an equal number of persons from each interest group. This is why it is so critical for women to have a comparable percentage to men working in the federal government. Having more women in these positions will hopefully help advance women's rights issues.

It has been the purpose of this study to compare the percentage of women and men working in the federal government agencies, and uncover public policies designed to encourage or improve bureaucratic representation of women. The researcher found that although women are

still lacking behind men in the overall percentages, they are slowly beginning to become more equal. A glass ceiling is still present for women trying to reach top management positions in federal agencies. However, the research illustrates that this ceiling is slowly beginning to crack. As this research continues in the future, it will provide public administrators more details on the areas and agencies that need the most improvement. Hopefully as the years go on, women will become equal working partners to their male counterparts and there will be no presence of any glass ceiling barriers.

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Appendices

Appendix A. General Schedule Grade Level Descriptions for Clerical and Assistant Work

GRADE	NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY
GS-1	Performs simple, routine, or repetitive tasks which require little or no subject-matter knowledge.	Work is closely observed, controlled and checked; few guides or instructions apply.
GS-2	Performs several related steps or tasks in varying sequence; applies knowledge of terminology and basic procedures.	Work is closely controlled and spot-checked in progress and upon completion; detailed, specific guides apply to the work.
GS-3	Performs many different tasks in processing different kinds of forms or transactions; work requires good understanding of structure and workflow in the organization served	Routine assignments are performed independently unless problems occur; supervisor gives instructions on new assignments and reviews more difficult work; a large number of procedural guides apply, some of which are memorized.
GS-4	Performs a full range of assignments consisting of related steps, processes or methods; responses differ in nature and sequence; requires knowledge of an organization's programs and operations, rules and processes.	Exercises initiative in completing recurring assignments; uses judgment in selecting appropriate guidelines and procedures from among a number of specific references.
GS-5	Performs standard and non-standard assignments involving different and unrelated processes or methods in varying sequence; work requires extensive knowledge of rules, operations, or business practices.	Follows accepted practices in resolving non-recurring problems and meeting deadlines; completed products are evaluated for effectiveness in meeting goals; extensive guidelines in the form of instructions, manuals, and regulations are applied.

GRADE	NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY
GS-6	<p>a. Clerical Work: Processes a wide variety of transactions subject to different sets of rules and regulations. b. Technical Work: Performs a segment of the evaluative work of an administrative function; identifies issues or problems and seeks alternative solutions consistent with applicable regulations.</p>	<p>a. The employee is regarded as an expert source of information on processing transactions; completed work is reviewed for conformance with policy and regulatory requirements; numerous and varied guidelines are adapted and applied. b. Works independently in completing assignments; completed work is reviewed for effectiveness in meeting goals; guidelines such as regulations, evaluation criteria, and precedents have gaps in specificity.</p>
GS-7	<p>Performs specialized duties in a defined functional or program area involving a wide variety of problems or situations; develops information, identifies interrelationships, and takes actions consistent with objectives of the function or program served.</p>	<p>Work is assigned in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines; the employee works independently in resolving most conflicts; completed work is evaluated for conformance to policy; guidelines, such as regulations, precedent cases and policy statements require considerable interpretation and adaptation.</p>

Source: Information accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
<http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/gsclder.pdf>

Appendix B. Education Requirements for General Schedule Grade Levels

Grade	Qualifying Education
GS-1	None
GS-2	High school graduation or equivalent
GS-3	1 academic year above high school
GS-4	2 academic years above high school, or Associate's degree
GS-5	4 academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree, or Bachelor's degree
GS-7	Bachelor's degree with Superior Academic Achievement for two-grade interval positions, or 1 academic year of graduate education (or law school, as specified in qualification standards or individual occupational requirements)
GS-9	Master's (or equivalent graduate degree such as LL.B. or J.D. as specified in qualification standards or individual occupational requirements), or 2 academic years of progressively higher level graduate education
GS-11	Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree, or 3 academic years of progressively higher level graduate education, or <i>For research positions only</i> , completion of all requirements for a master's or equivalent degree
GS-12	<i>For research positions only</i> , completion of all requirements for a doctoral or equivalent degree

Source: Information accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
<http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/chart.asp>

Appendix C. Pay scales for General Schedule Grades and Senior Executive Services

General Schedule Pay Scales

GS Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
1	\$17,803	\$18,398	\$18,990	\$19,579	\$20,171	\$20,519	\$21,104	\$21,694	\$21,717	\$22,269
2	\$20,017	\$20,493	\$21,155	\$21,717	\$21,961	\$22,607	\$23,253	\$23,899	\$24,545	\$25,191
3	\$21,840	\$22,568	\$23,296	\$24,024	\$24,752	\$25,480	\$26,208	\$26,936	\$27,664	\$28,392
4	\$24,518	\$25,335	\$26,152	\$26,969	\$27,786	\$28,603	\$29,420	\$30,237	\$31,054	\$31,871
5	\$27,531	\$28,345	\$29,259	\$30,173	\$31,087	\$32,001	\$32,915	\$33,829	\$34,743	\$35,657
6	\$30,577	\$31,596	\$32,615	\$33,634	\$34,653	\$35,672	\$36,691	\$37,710	\$38,729	\$39,748
7	\$33,979	\$35,112	\$36,245	\$37,378	\$38,511	\$39,644	\$40,777	\$41,910	\$43,043	\$44,176
8	\$37,631	\$38,885	\$40,139	\$41,393	\$42,647	\$43,901	\$45,155	\$46,409	\$47,663	\$48,917
9	\$41,563	\$42,948	\$44,333	\$45,718	\$47,103	\$48,488	\$49,873	\$51,258	\$52,643	\$54,028
10	\$45,771	\$47,297	\$48,823	\$50,349	\$51,875	\$53,401	\$54,927	\$56,453	\$57,979	\$59,505
11	\$50,287	\$51,963	\$53,639	\$55,315	\$56,991	\$58,667	\$60,343	\$62,019	\$63,695	\$65,371
12	\$60,274	\$62,283	\$64,292	\$66,301	\$68,310	\$70,319	\$72,328	\$74,337	\$76,346	\$78,355
13	\$71,674	\$74,063	\$76,452	\$78,841	\$81,230	\$83,619	\$86,008	\$88,397	\$90,786	\$93,175
14	\$84,697	\$87,520	\$90,343	\$93,166	\$95,989	\$98,812	\$101,635	\$104,458	\$107,281	\$110,104
15	\$99,628	\$102,949	\$106,270	\$109,591	\$112,912	\$116,233	\$119,554	\$122,875	\$126,196	\$129,517

Source: Data accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/pdf/gp.pdf>

Basic Pay for Members of the Senior Executive Services Pay Scales

Structure of the SES Pay System	Minimum	Maximum
Agencies with a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System	\$119,554	\$179,700
Agencies without a Certified SES Performance Appraisal System	\$119,554	\$165,300

Source: Data accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/pdf/es.pdf>

Appendix D. General Characteristics of Work Classifiable under the General Schedule

The material below summarizes the general characteristics of work classifiable under the General Schedule. (The general categories of work described are not reflective of the multitude of position titles in General Schedule occupations. Basic titles such as *specialist, analyst, investigator, examiner, technician, assistant, operator, clerk, or aid* are used in series for administrative, technical, or clerical work. The titles of professional positions usually reflect the field concerned; e.g., *engineer, chemist, or accountant.*)

1. Professional Work

Professional work requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education.

Work is professional when it requires the exercise of discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials, and methods.

There are situations in which an employee meets the formal education requirements for a particular professional field but does not perform professional work. This may be due to a lack of professional work to be done, or it may be because the organization and structure of the assignment does not require a professionally qualified employee. In such situations, the position is classified in an appropriate nonprofessional series, based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and the qualifications required to do the work.

Professional occupational series follow a two-grade interval pattern and are identified as professional in the series definitions. If a series definition does not state that the work covered is professional, it should not be considered professional for classification purposes.

2. Administrative Work

Administrative work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts, and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. While these positions do not require specialized education, they do involve the type of skills (analytical, research, writing, judgment) typically gained through a college level education, or through progressively responsible experience. Administrative work may be performed as a part of the principal mission or program of an agency or subcomponent, or it can be performed as a service function which supports the agency's mission or program. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing the basic programs, policies, and procedures which facilitate the work of Federal agencies and their programs. They apply a knowledge of administrative analysis, theory, and principles in adapting practice to the unique requirements of a particular program.

Administrative occupational series typically follow a two-grade interval pattern.

3. Technical Work

Technical work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional or administrative field. It involves extensive practical knowledge, gained through experience and/or specific training less than that represented by college graduation. Work in these occupations may involve

substantial elements of the work of the professional or administrative field, but requires less than full knowledge of the field involved.

Technical employees carry out tasks, methods, procedures, and/or computations that are laid out either in published or oral instructions and covered by established precedents or guidelines. Depending upon the level of difficulty of the work, these procedures often require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision.

Some technical work may appear similar to that performed by employees doing beginning professional or administrative work in the same general occupational field. Technical work, however, typically follows a one-grade interval pattern and does not require the application of knowledge and skills equivalent to those required for two-grade interval work. Classification decisions are based on duties and responsibilities, qualifications required, career patterns, management's intent in designing the position, the purpose of the work, and recruiting sources.

4. Clerical Work

Clerical occupations involve structured work in support of office, business, or fiscal operations. Clerical work is performed in accordance with established policies, procedures, or techniques; and requires training, experience, or working knowledge related to the tasks to be performed. Clerical occupational series follow a one-grade interval pattern.

Clerical work typically involves general office or program support duties such as preparing, receiving, reviewing, and verifying documents; processing transactions; maintaining office records; locating and compiling data or information from files; keeping a calendar and informing others of deadlines and other important dates; and using keyboards to prepare typewritten material or to store or manipulate information for data processing use. The work requires a knowledge of an organization's rules, some degree of subject matter knowledge, and skill in carrying out clerical processes and procedures.

5. Other Kinds of Work

There are some occupations in the General Schedule which do not clearly fit into one of the above groupings. Included among these are series such as the Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-081, and Police Series, GS-083. The series definition or classification standard should indicate whether the series is one- or two-grade interval.

Source: Information accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
<http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/gshintro.pdf>

Appendix E. Executive Core Qualifications for Senior Executive Services.

Successful performance in the SES requires competence in each ECQ. The ECQs are interdependent; successful executives bring all five to bear when providing service to the Nation.

Executive Core Qualifications:

1. Leading Change

This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.

2. Leading People

This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts.

3. Results Driven

This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.

4. Business Acumen

This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically.

5. Building Coalitions

This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals.

Guide

Source: Information accessed from the Office of Personnel Management on October 12, 2010
http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESQuals_2010.pdf