

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
LEGON

WOMEN AT WORK: A STUDY OF THE GLASS CEILING PHENOMENON AMONG MANAGERIAL  
WOMEN IN GHANA.



THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN  
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ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE.

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## DECLARATION

I, Dorcas Gyekye, the author of this thesis do hereby declare that except for references to other people's work, which I have duly acknowledged, the study herein presented is the first of its kind to be carried out in the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, Legon, during the 2011/2012 academic year under the objective supervision of Dr. Maxwell Asumeng and Dr. Charity Akotia. This work has never been submitted in any form, whole, or part for a degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signed.....

**Dorcas Gyekye**  
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**Date**

This work has been submitted for examination with our approval as supervisors.

Signed.....

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**(Co-Supervisor)**

**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my wonderful family for giving me strength to complete this.



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To start, I thank the Almighty God who has been so gracious and merciful unto me from time past till now and has guided me up to this point.

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## ABSTRACT

Studies conducted in recent times have indicated that women's advancement into top echelon positions in organizations have been hindered by the glass ceiling barrier. The present study sought to identify the authenticity of this finding among managerial women in the Ghanaian context and how these barriers can be overcome. Using the Miles and Huberman's approach, the in-depth interview responses of twelve women managers from four organizations in middle and senior levels were content analysed after they were purposively sampled out of the population. Results of the study revealed the following as barriers to women's efforts in climbing the career ladder: same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of initiative. Of the barriers found, work-family conflict was found to be the most prevalent. The study also found that organizational/institutional support, mentoring, personality; time management and personal sacrifice were ways by which women believed these barriers can be broken. These findings are consistent with earlier findings that women encounter the glass ceiling barrier whilst climbing to the top.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
Chapter One.....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0. Background of the study.....	1
1.1.1. Women in Management.....	3
1.1.2. The Glass Ceiling Explanation.....	5
1.1.3. Managerial Women’s Challenges.....	10
1.1.4. Women in Ghana.....	14
1.2. Aims/Objectives.....	15
1.3. Research Questions.....	16
Chapter Two.....	17
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.0. Introduction.....	17
2.1.1. Manager-as-a Male Stereotype Hypothesis.....	17
2.1.2. The Social Role Theory.....	19
2.2. Theories related to Advancement of Women into Senior Management.....	21

2.2.1. Perceived lack-of-fit theory.....	21
2.2.2. Role Congruity theory.....	23
2.3. Review of Related Studies.....	25
2.3.1. Studies on the glass ceiling phenomenon.....	25
2.3.1.1. Studies on organizational factors.....	25
2.3.1.2. Studies on stereotypes, prejudices and biases.....	32
2.4. Rationale.....	35
2.5. Operational Definition of terms.....	37
Chapter Three.....	39
<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>39</b>
3.0.Introduction.....	39
3.1. Population/Sample.....	39
3.2. Organization/Data Collection.....	43
3.3. Research Design.....	44
3.4. Materials/Measures.....	45
3.5. Procedure/Data Collection.....	45
3.5.1. Interview of Managers.....	47
3.5.2. Reliability and Validity.....	48
3.6. Transcription of Interview data.....	49
3.7. Data Analysis Technique: Content Analysis.....	50
3.8. Ethical Considerations.....	51
Chapter Four.....	53
<b>RESULTS.....</b>	<b>53</b>
4.0.Introduction.....	53
4.1. Main Theme 1: Pull factors/Barriers.....	53

4.2. Main Theme 2: Facilitators/Push factors.....	62
4.3. Chapter Summary.....	77
Chapter Five.....	79
<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>79</b>
5.0.Introduction.....	79
5.1. Contributions.....	94
5.2. Limitations of the study and Future Research.....	96
5.3. Conclusions.....	97
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	
<b>APENDICES.....</b>	
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	
APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.....	
APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT.....	

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0. Background of the study

For most people, particularly adults, work comprise, will comprise or has comprised a major part of their existence. They are either found working, actively searching or preparing for work or comfortably retiring from work. Work is thus, the pivot of every human activity (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). In tending a garden for instance, baking a cake, nurturing a child, presiding over a board meeting, overseeing the operations of an organization or even playing football, one may be said to be engaged in work or not. This difference is largely dependent on the person involved and his/her underlying purpose thus creating a distinction between work and leisure.

Work has been put into various categorizations by several authors. Padavic and Reskin (2002) categorizes work into three main forms known as forced work, paid work (also known as market work) and unpaid work. According to them, forced work is work performed under compulsion which provides little or no pay or any form of support. A typical example of forced work is the work performed by slaves or prisoners.

Paid or market work is the type of work that generates earnings, for example the work of a company secretary. Most people consider this form of work as 'real' work.

The third form of work is the unpaid work, also referred to as non-market work. It includes the work that people perform for themselves and others like cooking for the family.

The distinction between these three forms of work is believed to be an aftermath of industrialization because for a large part of history, most people then considered their work to be a continuation of their lives and not a discontinuous unit from other segments of their lives. In

other words, life to them was work, just as it was rest and recovery from work (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). After industrialization and the development of capitalism, work became equated to paid activity such that as the number of workers increased in “paid jobs” people began to treat paid work as the only “real work” devaluing the unpaid work that people did in their homes (Bullock, 1994; Padavic & Reskin, 2002).

Most women before *World War Two* had been engaged in unpaid work. Their task was mainly to take care of the home and support their husbands’ career fulltime (Schwartz & Zimmerman, 1992). Women first entered the world of paid work in large droves during the *Second World War* when they had to serve as replacement workers for the active working age males who had then been called into military duty. Now, before the integration of women into the workforce, women working at that time were considered temporal workers. Their work was second place to marriage and childbearing which were considered to be their primary responsibilities (Guttek & Larwood, 1987). Jobs such as teaching, nursing and clerical work were in the 19<sup>th</sup> century considered to be appropriate only for single women (Nieva & Guttek, 1981). Thus less than 3% of married women in 1890 worked outside the home. By the late 1970s however, almost half of all married women and 40% of all women over age 16 were working (Domenico & Jones, 2006) though they still viewed employment as secondary to their domestic responsibilities (Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin & Frame, 2005).

The ensuing result of the continuous increase and bloat in the number of women workers all over the world has carved a niche for the “working woman” to be accepted as a norm and not a social oddity (Catalyst, 2002). This “growth spurt” has been on a constant high in most countries worldwide. For instance, the European Commission (2010) reports that female employment rate has been constantly rising and in 2008 hit 59.1%. The number of women employees in Britain has also increased by 2 million (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994). Again in 2001, in Hong Kong, statistics indicate that there has been a 39% growth in women participation in paid work as

compared to their men. In Ghana, also, out of the 51.2% females that forms the population, 48% of women are in the paid workforce.

Besides, the growth rate of women in paid work has overflowed its traditional restrictions to cut across sectors. In the field of science for instance, between 2002 and 2007, the growth rate of women scientists and engineers as compared to men was averagely 6.2% as against 3.7% respectively. Furthermore, in traditionally male domains such as accounting, business and law for instance, women have been found to constitute about half the graduates of these professional schools (Catalyst, 2002; Davidson & Burke, 2004) although a lot of women are still overrepresented in traditionally female domains such as teaching, nursing and clerical domains.

The tremendous growth in women's numbers in employment has not been in isolation of some variables. It has been instigated by a number of changes that has characterized society and the labour market. Prominent among these structural factors are decline in fertility rates, increased female education, expansion of the tertiary sector, consolidation of welfare systems (Poggio, 2010), more industrialized economies, expansion of financial services, opening up of the service sector, growth in public sector and political and legal changes (Davidson & Burke, 2002). Goldin (1990) has asserted that the combination of educational opportunities for women and the increasing number of clerical jobs in the US economy for instance has instigated the steady nature of increase in female workforce participation following the post-*World War Two* decade.

### **1.1.1. Women in Management**

Despite the tremendous feats that women have attained by breaking into paid workforce and professional arenas, their pace of growth toward top management has been slower than that of a snail. Wirth (2001) describes this pace as slow and uneven depending largely on the country and

culture. Consider countries such as Norway, US and Canada, where there seems to be a widespread of gender equality (OECD Observer, 2005), the percentage of working females as against the percentage of managers worldwide are [26%], [45%] and [35%] respectively (Burke & Davidson, 2004). On the local scene, of the 48% female working force in Ghana, only 8% are in managerial positions (Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2000) with below 10% in policy making positions (Ofei-Aboagye, 1996). These figures echo global trends where only 2% of women worldwide occupy top managerial positions (Burke & Davidson, 2004).

The great disparity between the number of women in top management or senior management and the number beneath this level, specifically, lower levels leaves an impression that in-between the lower rank and the topmost rank of women's career ladder, there is an occurrence that inhibits women's growth. According to Bullock (1994), at some point around the middle of most career ladders there appears to be a 'glass ceiling' which prevents all but a few women from getting to the top (p.28) and this is responsible for fewer women being in top management.

Earlier assertions made revealed that, this occurrence was as a result of women lacking job relevant skills, education, or experience (Carli & Eagly, 2001). However, findings from Powell and Butterfield (1994) and the US Department of Labour (1995) have disproved this assertion. Contrarily, women in recent times have obtained requisite qualifications and experience that they need on the job but in spite of that, women continue to be marginal at the top ranks of management (Catalyst, 2003). In fact, in 2002, data circulated by the US Bureau of Labour revealed that of all the executive, administrative and managerial positions held in the US, female leaders held about 46% and this was an indication of women's zest for amassing required management or line experience that was initially thought to be missing or lacking (Weyer, 2007). Again in the US, women comprise almost half of the graduates of professional schools such as accounting, business and law (Burke & Davidson, 2004; Catalyst, 2003) disputing the assumption that the lack of education that makes women unable to progress in their careers.

Attempts made by researchers to theoretically explain men and women variances in managerial experiences and career advancement have emphasized the following levels of analysis: Individual (such as personal attributes), Situational, Organizational and Societal barriers (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006). Early studies focused on person-centred theories or individual level of differences in men and women's attributes. According to person-centred theories, gender disparities experienced by men and women when advancing their careers are as a result of deficiencies in women's human capital, qualifications, or other relevant attributes in comparison to their fellow male counterparts (Ward, Orazem, & Schmidt, 1992). These explanations were however not accepted because of lack of empirical support unlike explanations on external barriers as the basis of gender gap in managerial outcomes (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006; Morrison & von Glinow, 1990).

### **1.1.2. The Glass Ceiling Explanation**

The glass ceiling was adopted as an alternative explanation to describe women's lack of representation in upper management. Coined in the mid-eighties (1986) by a Wall Street journal article, the glass ceiling phenomenon has been defined by the US Department of Labour (1991) as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization". The word 'strong' has been used to describe this barrier because even though it is not physical or visible, it appears to have a persistent capability of directly or indirectly preventing women from moving into senior levels in the organization. Unlike formal career barriers such as education or requisite work experience, this barrier, is known to be artificial and less tangible, secured or anchored in culture, society and psychological factors (Neera & Shoma, 2010). According to Foley, Kidder and Powell (2002), the glass ceiling barrier is subtle enough to be transparent and yet strong enough to cut members off from upper management positions where high pay and other rewarding benefits abound.

In 1995, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission in its report concluded that three types of barriers confront managerial women's advancement namely: organizational, societal and governmental.

The organizational barrier also known as the internal business barrier comes about as a result of the variance between what corporate leadership says it wants to happen and what is actually happening. The report enumerated the following organizational barriers: outreach and recruitment practices that do not seek out or reach or recruit minorities and women; corporate climates that alienate and isolate minorities and women; pipeline barriers that directly affect opportunity for advancement; initial placement and clustering in staff jobs or in highly technical and professional jobs that are not on the career track to the top; lack of mentoring; lack of management training; lack of opportunities for career development, tailored training, and rotational job assignments that are on the revenue-producing side of the business; little or no access to critical developmental assignments such as memberships on highly visible task forces and committees; special or different standards for performance evaluation; biased rating and testing systems; little or no access to informal networks of communication; and counterproductive behaviour and harassment by colleagues. The internal structural barriers are believed to be within the direct control of business.

Second, there are societal barriers. These barriers, according to the report may be outside the direct control of business and is in two main types. They are the supply barrier and the difference barrier. The supply barrier refers to the lack of qualified women and minorities because of inequities in the nation's educational system (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission report, 1995). The difference barrier also refers to the stereotypes, prejudices, and biases that individuals harbour about cultural, gender, or racial differences (Federal Glass Commission report, 1995). The supply barrier relates to educational opportunity and attainment whilst the difference barrier relates to conscious and unconscious stereotyping, prejudice, and bias founded in gender, race,

and ethnicity. Of all the types of barriers identified in the report, prejudice was found to be principal.

Lack of vigorous, consistent monitoring and law enforcement; weaknesses in the formulation and collection of employment-related data (making it difficult to ascertain status of groups at the managerial level and disaggregate the data); inadequate reporting and dissemination of information relevant to glass ceiling issues are the governmental barriers responsible for women's low numbers in managerial positions (Federal Glass Commission report, 1995).

The glass ceiling barrier precludes women from top level jobs on the basis of their status as women. As a result, women are denied the opportunity to be senior managers. This limited opportunity for promotion or mobility experienced by women managers is what Baron, Davis-Blake and Bielby (as cited in Lyness & Terrazas, 2006) explains as being differential from men's. According to them, men's promotion into leadership positions is based on their potential as leaders whereas women's promotion is adjudged on the basis of performance (Van der Boon, 2003). This difference in the criteria selection encountered by men and women for the same position (managerial) puts women at a disadvantage because of this uneven playing field.

Apart from the differential criteria in promotion for male and female managers, limited promotion opportunities has also been said to be due mainly to organizational restructuring or delayering of management positions (Broadbridge, 2010). This leads to fewer positions and levels to rise to in the organization known as the bottleneck effect (Broadbridge, 2008).

Furthermore, women are faced with limited opportunities in organizations because they occupy the secondary jobs which are less important, offer low pay, and have more limited promotional opportunities (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006). Two structural barriers are to blame for this: horizontal segregation and vertical segregation.

Horizontal segregation is the under (over) representation of a certain group in occupations or sectors not ordered by any criterion (Bettio & Verashchagina, 2009) or the concentration of women and men in certain professions or sectors of economic activity. It explains that women study in distinct areas which the labour market does not appreciate and that is the reason why women tend to be concentrated in certain sectors of the economy. For instance, Estevez-Abe (2002) noted that women were more likely to invest in general skills and or in skills that are less prone to deteriorate after not being in use for some time. In organizations that are horizontally segregated, it is men that occupy the higher status and powerful positions or management jobs leaving the lower status and less powerful positions or jobs to be occupied by women (Blau, Ferber & Winkler, 2002). Horizontal segregation is also partly responsible for the pay gap in gender wages (Blau & Ferber, 1987) which is currently at 81.2% for female earnings (Lowen, 2012). Poggio (2010) found that of the 30% average of women managers, they appeared to be concentrated in particular types of sectors and organizations. For instance, they are overrepresented in health and educational sectors (over 60%); other services, wholesale and retail sectors (over 40%). Meanwhile, they were evidently underrepresented in traditional male sectors like manufacture & mining, construction & electricity, gas and water supply. Costa (2000) in an earlier had also found that in Nordic countries women were primarily employed in education, health care, child day care and social services confirming that the women indeed tend to be overrepresented in certain sectors.

Vertical segregation refers to the under (over) representation of a clearly identifiable group of workers in occupations or sectors at the top of an ordering based on 'desirable' attributes – income, prestige, job stability etc, independent of the sector of activity (Bettio & Verashchagina, 2009). This concept explains the structures that make women leaders concentrated in the middle and lower levels of the management hierarchy leaving the lion's share of senior level management pie in the hands of men (Blau, et al., 2002; Lyness & Terrazas, 2006). According to

Hajnalca (2010), vertical segregation is a source of women's low incomes because of their equally lowered presence at higher levels of professional hierarchies. Vertical segregation has at times been referred to as the "glass ceiling".

These barriers that exist in organizational structures, educational and economic systems' structure and even the social order are created by a process of exclusionary practices which consecutively eliminate women, people of colour, and other disadvantaged groups as candidates for higher positions (Harlan & Berheide, 1994). Such exclusionary practices in the corporate world which may result in the glass ceiling include practices such as recruitment, retention and promotion (Oakley, 2000). This is because at the top management level, objective credentials used as the basis for promotion (for example, level of education) are regarded as less important thus male decision makers at the top are more likely to engage in gender-based models and criteria for selection making the prevention of bias and discrimination from interfering in decisions very complex (Davidson & Burke, 2000; Burke & Nelson, 2002). In fact, such decision processes at the senior levels are described as mostly unstructured and unscrutinized (Davidson & Burke, 2000; Burke & Nelson, 2002).

The glass ceiling also causes immobility in women. Immobility can occur in all occupations. However, where the job limits are equal in all occupations, then it is the case of the glass ceiling because it causes discrimination in career advancement. Equal job limits leads to career advancement discrimination and as such plays a major role in the glass ceiling (Reskin & Padavic, 2002; Maume, 2004). In cases where women were mobile, their mobility patterns were found to be more similar in terms of their previous jobs where they either moved into position of management or a new company and this had important consequences for women.

Women in the executive suite encounter other structural barriers such as male-dominated culture, men highlighting cultural boundaries between men and women, lack of mentoring, dependence

on formal career management processes, stereotypical perceptions and difficulty in obtaining opportunities for geographic mobility (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006) and this reflects the kind of interactions that exist between men and women at upper organizational level.

The glass ceiling does not only result in women occupying lower level positions but also women earning lower incomes as compared to men even when they occupy similar senior positions or perform the same job functions as men. In the US and Sweden, the most gender advanced countries, the median female wage lies in the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of males. Certain cultural and structural barriers seem to keep women from earning more money. For example, according to the Federal Glass Commission report (1995), African American men with professional degrees earn 79% of the amount earned by white males who hold the same degrees and are in the same job categories. A study conducted for the report found out that even after a decade of graduation from the Stanford University of Business School, men were eight times more likely to be CEOs than women.

### **1.1.3. Managerial Women's Challenges**

Women in management have reported being confronted with four persistent challenges. These are societally based stereotypes and assumptions, male-dominated management hierarchies, limited job opportunities, and difficulties associated with managing competing demands from family and other non-work responsibilities and these challenges are similar to the ones reported over 30 years ago (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006).

From Schein (1973) seminal studies to Heilman's (1983) theory, research showed that the attributes ascribed to successful middle managers (eg. assertive, forceful, ambitious) are believed to be more similar to men than to women. Recent studies have tried to ascertain whether the increased numbers in women's representation have made an impact in these stereotypic beliefs of perceived requirements of management jobs (Powell, Butterfield & Parent, 2002) and findings

indeed indicate that there has been some impact. However, regardless of the reported changes, gender stereotypes continue to be a key obstacle in women's advancement into top management (Catalyst, 2003, Catalyst & The Conference Board, 2002).

Women face limited job opportunities because of the kind of jobs they hold which are affected by structural barriers such as vertical and horizontal segregation and male-dominated power structures (Lyness & Terrazas, 2006). Two kinds of jobs exist in the organization and these are known as primary and secondary jobs. Primary jobs are associated with important responsibilities, high pay and good promotional opportunities. Secondary jobs are jobs that are less important, offer low pay and have more limited promotional opportunities. As a result of the structural barriers, women are found to occupy secondary jobs whereas men are concentrated in primary jobs (Blau et al, 2002). Most especially, this is more common where women lack general management or line experience which acts as a barrier to women's career.

Line experience or perceived requirements also acts as a limitation for women's job opportunities. Line jobs are jobs that are high in status and power and it involves directing essential organizational activities. Thus, these jobs are seen mostly to require stereotypic male attributes, such as forcefulness and achievement orientation. These requisite characteristics of line jobs are likely to elicit perceptions of a lack of fit between female attributes and the job requirements as compared to the characteristic requirements of staff support jobs and female attributes (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Line management experience is generally required before anyone can advance to the higher level of managerial positions (Wellington, Kropf & Gerkovich, 2003). Research shows that men were more likely than women to be found occupying these jobs whereas women were more likely to occupy staff specialist or support positions (Jacobs, 1999; Blau et al., 2002). Also, it was found that among staff managers, women were less likely than men to move to line positions or to different functional areas (Lyness & Schrader, 2006).

Negative consequences associated with token representation of women are also another challenge faced by women managers. In organization with token numbers of 15% or less women, Kanter (1977) found out that their token numbers produced important negative consequences especially for women who worked in traditionally male-dominated organizations. According to Kanter (1977) women's token status affects their interactions with the dominant group which in this case are men leading to negative consequences such as exclusion from informal interactions with men and heightened performance pressures due to their visibility. Research emphasizes the usefulness of informal networks to men as being integral for getting promoted than for women (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Also, relatedly, women managers in male-dominated organizations also obtained lower performance ratings than for women in other types of jobs (Pazy & Oron, 2001) signifying the negative effect of their token numbers.

Another persistent challenge for women in management is balancing work and family responsibilities. In order to show commitment or total dedication, a quality Kanter (1977) noted organizations expected from their managers, women managers especially those in male-dominated organizations, felt compelled to work long hours (Simpson, 1998). The challenge came from having to engage in the primary responsibility of childrearing and household tasks regardless of the number of hours spent on work. Simpson's (1998) study found that women managers themselves reported work-family conflict as a main source of pressure they underwent constantly. Kirchmeyer (2002) also found that marriage and children were negatively related to measures of managerial success for some women of a US MBA program but positively related for men. This explains the reason why some female managers and executives in the US and Britain, were found to be less likely than their male counterparts to be married or have children (Kirchmeyer, 2002; Omar & Davidson, 2001).

Related to the glass ceiling are the terms 'glass cliff', 'glass walls' 'glass escalator' among others. The 'glass cliff' explains the situation where women are set up to take a fall based on the

opportunities they are given. In the sense that, women are appointed into senior levels in organizations that are already failing or which events have long been set in motion before the leader and as saving very little for the leader to do. When women fail in such circumstances, they 'confirm' the belief that women are not successful leaders but which is not the case. In other words, these women stand before a 'cliff' ready to fall. The glass escalator describes what happens in female dominated occupations where the fewer men tend to occupy the top positions in these organizations faster and quicker than males. It therefore suggests that men in these occupations take the escalator to the top suite. 'Glass walls' describe barriers to women's horizontal mobility and their ability to move laterally into more powerful positions in the organization. A complementary concept to the glass ceiling is the 'sticky floor'. This concept describes the forces that tend to maintain women at the lowest levels in the organisational pyramid (Maron and Meulders, 2008). Therefore, the invisible barriers that undermine employment equity and limit women's advancement towards it stretches from the "glass ceiling" at the top all the way to the "sticky floor" of low-paying, low-mobility jobs at the bottom of the labour market (Harlan & Berheide, 1994).

Mathur-Helm (2002) has identified three criteria which according to him when present will cause a glass ceiling to occur. The first is when despite similar credentials women (and minorities) face barriers in their career advancement. Two, when due to limited promotional prospects, women are discouraged from the initial placement on the job ladder. The last of these, is when there is reluctance on the part of organizations to place women in position where they can make an impact on organization's profitability. These three criteria create a conducive atmosphere for the glass ceiling phenomenon to occur thus women faced with these conditions are believed to be operating under the glass ceiling.

Despite the high numbers of women that have entered into managerial realms, very few women make it to the top. A lot of these women cluster near the bottom of professional and organizational hierarchies with lower earnings, lower authority, and lower advancement potential than their male counterparts. Studies have shown that though men and women graduates enter the workforce at levels comparable to each other in terms of similar credentials and expectations their corporate experience and career paths begin to diverge soon after path (Davidson & Burke, 2000). For instance, in a longitudinal study of comparably qualified MBA-program graduates where men and women started out in similar positions, women tagged behind men in career advancement and compensation with time, signifying that the women may have come across greater or more organizational barriers than men (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Schneer & Reitman, 1995).

#### **1.1.4. Women in Ghana**

Women's role in the Ghanaian society cannot be underestimated. They serve as procreators of the next generation and as producers and providers of goods and services especially in the traditional ages. In modern ages, women in Ghana continue to play important and significant roles in the labour force. Currently, women make up about 48% of the labour force in Ghana according to a recent 2012 report published by the World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN>) but out of this only a marginal few are working in positions of senior management or decision making and power. Many traditional perceptions of women as being inferior to men abound in Ghanaian communities and parlance. For instance, the Akans have a proverb that goes like "if a woman buys a gun, it lies in the room of the man" This shows the perception of superiority of the man over the woman. Thus these traditional perceptions continue to prevail in people's attempt to 'preserve' the African culture or values which in turn justifies the subordination of women.

The outcry and subsequent increased awareness of women/ gender issues has led to numerous governments including the government of Ghana and other non-governmental bodies advocating for women's participation in many respects. For instance, the establishment of the National Council on Women and Development and the Ministry of Women and Children's affairs are examples of such initiatives. Others include the signing and ratification of the Universal declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. These are all attempts by the government to help remove some workplace barriers and help women to move up at their various workplaces. Nevertheless there is yet a wide gap between the ratio of men to women in top management and leadership positions (Panford & Boahen, 2002). Inadequate number of women representative in senior management is likely to impact women negatively because these are where policies and decisions that will affect them are made. Olojede (2009) noted that male values are reflected in public decision-making bodies because it is men that dominate these public decision-making bodies. This therefore necessitated a study of this nature to investigate why there are very few women managers at the top of executive echelons in the Ghanaian community.

## **1.2. AIMS/ OBJECTIVES**

This study set out to do the following:

1. To ferret out the nature and extent of the glass ceiling in Ghana.
2. To explore the barriers that managerial women in Ghana face and identify the most prevalent one.
3. To find out the factors that have been instrumental in assisting women to climb up the career ladder.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What factors account for the low number of women in top management?
2. What factors have propelled women to ascend to top management?
3. How can women overcome these factors?

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. INTRODUCTION

The composition of women in senior management levels continue to be skewed relative to their male counterparts despite the many achievements women have chalked in the workplace. This chapter tries to explain the phenomenon of the glass ceiling based on relevant theories and literature. The first part explains some traditional theories and models such as the manager-as-male model and the social role theory. The focus then shifts to specifically centre on theories that has dealt actually with the advancement of women into senior management positions such as the perceived lack of fit theory proposed by Heilman (1983) and Eagly and Karau's (2002) theory on role congruity. Lastly, the chapter will examine and discuss some relevant studies and literature in the area.

##### 2.1.1. Manager-as-a-Male Stereotype Hypothesis

According to this view, women are fewer in leadership positions because people view leadership positions in terms of its gender type and the characteristics required for success in those positions (Schein, 1973). These requisite characteristics are characteristics more commonly associated with men than with women (Schein, 1973, 2001, 2007), an explanation that has been called the "think-manager-think-male". In other words, people 'gender stereotype' who the ideal manager is or should be and these stereotypes advances bias against women especially during the processes of managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions (Schein, 2007) and this is what accounts for the marginal numbers of women in leadership positions. Findings from a South African study by Booysen and Nkomo (2010) confirm this "think-manager- think-male" hypothesis. The men in the study, scored higher for the ratings of men as managers than the women though the ratings were found to be more robust among black men. This study

confirms and supports the initial finding of Schein (1973) which established a relationship between gender role stereotyping and characteristics perceived as requisite for success as a manager.

Contemporary views have shifted from the “think-manager-think-male” paradigm mainly because of the many challenges and criticisms it has faced. For instance, the theory suggests that people think of managers and leaders as more ‘male’ and less ‘female’. Evidence from some studies have shown that contrarily, women are not regarded as less good leaders than men, though they are perceived as inferior to men in power and status (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Langford & MacKinnon, 2000; Williams & Best, 1990a). Besides, few studies have even shown that women are evaluated somewhat even more favourably than men, especially involving investigations where implicit attitudinal measures were used to assess the strength of the association between male and female category labels and evaluative words (Carpenter, 2001). It is believed that this could be as a result of the communal aspects of the female gender role which was not explained by the think-manager-think-male theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Another reason why the theory has lost its initial appeal is because it lacks context specificity in the sense that it does not differentiate and explain under which context some women are discriminated against whilst others are not (Eagly & Karau, 2002). One would have thought that the many challenges and lost appeal for the think-male-think-manager theory would have improved perceptions of female suitability in leadership positions and consequently female representations in management would have increased by now. However, females underrepresentation in leadership positions continue to persist suggesting that there is more to the phenomenon than the extension of a generalized negative attitude toward women.

### **2.1.2. The Social Role Theory**

After the traditional stereotypic view was lambasted for its special focus and belief in the explanation that women's unsuitability for leadership positions was mainly because of extended negative attitudes, Eagly (1987) proposed the Social Role Theory, a revised and extensive socialization stereotypes theory.

The theory proposes that the differences observed in men and women's behaviour stem from the contrasting distributions of men and women into social roles. In other words, the belief that people have of a particular sex originate from the observations of the role being performed by people of that particular sex. Thus women and men fill certain gender and social roles, and their beliefs and behaviours are dictated by the stereotypes they attach to these roles (Franke et al., 1997 as cited in Wood & Lindorf, 2001).

Eagly (1987) defined social roles as socially shared expectations that apply to persons who occupy a certain social position or who are members of a particular social category (Biddle, 1979; Sarbin & Allen, 1968 as cited in Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender roles on the other hand talk about what men and women actually do and what they ought to do.

The Social Role theory argues that men and women behave differently in social situations and assume different roles, due to the expectations that society puts upon them (including gender stereotyping). Therefore, for normalcy to exist in any given social relationship or for any social interaction to run smoothly, it is imperative or critical that both role occupants understand their social position, share the behavioural expectations associated with their positions in society (themselves and others as well), and, for the most part, enact those expectations and scripts (Biddle, 1986; Jackson, 1998 as cited in Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Under this theory, there are two kinds of gender roles: injunctive and descriptive. Injunctive norms describe the expectations about what people ought to do or ideally would do. Descriptive norms are expectations about what people actually do. The distinction between these two kinds

of gender roles describes why gender roles in general exhibit the power to influence behaviour. Whereas injunctive norms elicit emotions that are very strongly tied to disapproval emotions, descriptive norms are more hinged towards 'surprise' emotions.

This explains why not all women leaders are frowned upon and not all are respected.

Majority of the beliefs held by people as a result of expectations pertain to communal and agentic attributes (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Communal characteristics such as being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle are ascribed more strongly to women whereas agentic characteristics such as aggressiveness, ambitiousness, dominance, forcefulness, independence, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and proneness to act as a leader are ascribed more strongly to men. Carpenter (2001) for instance concluded that when leadership roles expected women to exhibit communal characteristics, women received more favourable evaluations than men. This suggests that expectations placed on women cause them to be evaluated as good leaders and not the actual behaviours they display or the traits they possess. Thus the evaluations of women according to this theory may or may not be biased depending on whether they conform to societal expectations or not.

Using this same theory to explain the glass ceiling phenomenon, it presupposes first of all that the expectations-that women will exhibit communal qualities and men agentic qualities-influences a person's attributions relating to previous promotion success (Wood & Lindorff, 2001). For example, one study reports that women perceive few or a lack of opportunities for promotion to senior management than men (Parker & Fagenson, 1994).

Secondly, gender incongruence occurs when women depart from their typically normative nurturing and caring roles (communal attributes) to assume managerial positions ascribed to agentic/male characteristics.

The Social Role theory has an advantage over the traditional stereotype view. Specifically, it embraces and explains the construct ‘injunctive norms’ which was not explained by the traditional stereotype view.

Furthermore, because of its context-specificity the theory sufficiently explains why some women are discriminated against in some roles but not in others. For instance when they occupy roles that exhibit their communal characteristics women receive favourable evaluations (Carpenter, 2001) and received unfavourable evaluations when the roles involved exhibiting agentic characteristics.

As insightful as the social role theory may be, it does not seek to explain how gender roles coincide with other roles such as leadership roles.

Also, if people are stereotyped by the socialization process of their expectations, the theory is inadequate in explaining why only some and not all members of the group acquire that stereotype.

## **2.2. Theories Related To Advancement Of Women Into Senior Management.**

### **2.2.1. Perceived lack-of-fit theory**

Heilman (1983) asserts that there is a perceived lack of fit between stereotypic attributes of women and requirements of management roles and this is what accounts for few women in top managerial positions. This perception of fit or a lack of it leads to performance expectations of occupation and gender stereotypes. Thus perceivers make up their minds very early during an encounter. In other words, people possess either positive or negative predispositions toward a perceived person and his/her performance mainly because of his / her sex and the ‘fit with the occupation. According to this theory, the reason why women are few in leadership positions is because there is a perceived incongruence or ‘lack of fit’ about our expectations of how women should behave and how we expect leaders to also behave and these incongruence produce

expectations of failure (for women). Conversely, when the perceived fit is in congruence then it leads to positive expectations of success (as in the case of men).

In 2001, Heilman expanded her original theory to include two distinct constructs namely, descriptive and injunctive aspects of gender stereotypes. These two elements she noted could result in lowered evaluations of women managers. The descriptive aspects of stereotypes refer to beliefs that men possess agentic attributes (forceful, independent, decisive) whereas women possess communal attributes (kind, helpful, concerned about others). The theory asserts that people perceive a better fit between requirements of senior management jobs and agentic attributes than communal attributes.

Out of this emerged the femininity-competence double bind, a dilemma faced by women leaders that put them in a lose-lose situation. If a woman is seen to be too feminine or exhibit communal leader characteristics, she is perceived as a less capable leader because of the male characteristics associated with leadership positions. Nevertheless, if a woman leader displays agentic leader characteristics, she is perceived as defying her gender role by acting as a man and therefore frowned upon. This created a lose-lose situation for women leaders as any of the characteristics they displayed still affected them. One way they have had to deal with this or attain success is by developing a style with which men are comfortable (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). Thus Heilman (2001) concluded that gendered organizations and gender role stereotyping are the major impediments that frustrate the rise of women into top managerial positions.

This lack-of-fit model despite its focus on social and leadership roles, was inadequate in explaining how some women have managed to break through to top managerial hierarchies exhibiting communal characteristics and how some women leaders in senior positions who exhibit 'manly' characteristics still manage to earn the respect of colleagues and management.

### **2.2.2. Role Congruity Theory**

Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory has some similarities to Heilman's (1983; 2001) theory and the social role theory (Eagly, 1987), but it more directly addresses the issue of bias against women as leaders by arguing that communal attributes associated with stereotypic perceptions of the female gender role are inconsistent with agentic qualities generally believed to be needed for success as a leader. The Role Congruity Theory propounded by Eagly and Karau (2002) explains prejudice towards female leaders and why they continue to be marginalized in leadership positions. The Role congruity theory, just like the social role theory, is based on treatment of the content of gender roles and their importance in promoting sex differences in behaviour (Eagly et al., 2000). However, it goes beyond the social role theory by considering the congruity between gender roles and other roles, especially leadership roles. It also specifies key factors and processes that influence congruity perceptions and their consequences for prejudice and prejudicial behaviours (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The basic principle is that perceivers blend the information associated with a gender role and a leader role. Thus in observing an individual who occupies a leadership position, places a competition on one's expectation of him on the basis of his gender and expectations of him based on his position as a leader. Two forms of prejudice arise when there is an incongruity between the two roles (or expectations of the roles).

The first form of prejudice toward women is the perception of women as less favourable than men as potential occupants of leadership roles. Under this prejudice, women aspirants, though qualified, are not given the opportunity to become leaders because of the incongruence between their gender roles and the leadership roles. There is evidence to suggest that women feel that they are often unfairly by-passed for promotions. This lowers the expectations and aspirations of women who want to climb into leadership positions (Bellamy & Ramsay, 1994). One study revealed that female managers are less likely than their male counterparts to aspire to a position

in senior management and less likely than their male colleagues to expect an executive position prior to retirement (Hede & Ralston, 1993).

This first form of prejudice toward female leaders is established from incongruity between the descriptive content of the female gender role and a leadership role which automatically leads to the absence or lessening of the prejudice. This happens because either the incongruity is weak or is absent (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Moderators believed to affect this kind of prejudice are masculinity of leader role, sex of perceivers, cultural milieus, certain feminine personal characteristics (e.g., pregnancy, feminine dress and grooming), among others.

The second form of prejudice women face is the evaluation of behaviour that fulfils the prescriptions of a leader role less favourable when it is enacted by a woman. A study found out that the reason why women felt bypassed was because older men in the organisation would not want to report to a woman (Bellamy & Ramsay, 1994). Some empirical research indicates that management roles are seen as male domains (e.g. Orser, 1994; Schein & Mueller, 1992). This has pushed some women into service sectors in fulfilment of the roles expected of them which according to Still (1993, p86) 'satisfies' their career aspirations but not 'maximise' them.

Additionally, some people have been found to resist women's authority in extremely masculine leader roles when they suspect that women are not qualified for them (Carli, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

Accordingly, the second form of prejudice takes its source from incongruity between a leader's behaviour and the injunctive content of the female gender role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). For example, if a leader role is defined more agenticly or a woman so completely fulfills a leader role's agentic requirements, the more likely that such a woman will elicit unfavourable evaluation because her behaviour deviates from the injunctive norms of the female gender role.

The moderating condition that affects the second form of prejudice which is as a result of the reactions based on the incongruence between the injunctive aspects of the gender role and the leader role is perceivers' personal endorsement of these norms especially depending on the definition of the leader role, the weight given to the female gender role, and personal approval of traditional definitions of gender roles. Specifically, the more agentically a leader role is defined or the more completely women fulfil its agentic requirements; the more likely such women are to elicit unfavourable evaluation because their behaviour deviates from the injunctive norms of the female gender role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The importance of the role congruity theory of prejudice is that it explains into details the different aspects of stereotypes and social roles with a special emphasis and analysis on leadership which is very relevant to the study of the glass ceiling.

## **2.3. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES**

### **2.3.1 Studies on the glass ceiling phenomenon**

Over the past two or more decades there has been many findings regarding the glass ceiling phenomenon. Earlier studies into this phenomenon tried to find out whether it was traits or characteristics inherent in women that made their ascent very slow. Subsequent studies after that turned the focus to organizational and societal variables. Corporate climate and corporate pipeline are the two main organizational factors known to affect the glass ceiling whereas stereotypes, prejudices and biases comprise the societal variables.

#### **2.3.1.1. Studies on organizational factors**

The culture of an organization is believed to be the bedrock of all behaviour in that organization (French & Bell, 1999). It is the collection of traditions, values, policies,

beliefs, and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do and think in an organization (McLean & Marshall, 1993). The pervasive nature of culture in terms of 'how things are done around here' and common values, beliefs and attitudes has a significant effect on organizational processes such as decision-making among others (Mullins, 2010).

The corporate climate relates to the prevailing atmosphere surrounding the organization and is an indication of employees' feeling and beliefs of what the organization is about.

The culture and the type of climate that exists in an organization is strongly related to employees progression. The recent emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, economy, performance measures, etc. has according to Miller (2009) created an environment where stereotypical masculine skills such as competitiveness, command-control behaviours and achievement are valued. Organizations which are also characterized by masculine organisational culture have been found to inhibit female progression to senior managerial and leadership positions (Yoder, 2001).

Recent findings by Miller (2009), indicated that public sector managerialism, characterised by gendered organizational culture in the UK and consequent transactional and stereotypical masculine styles of management, inhibits female career progression. This case study also found that managerialism in the UK public sector created certain inefficiencies by limiting the potential of women. The study concluded that majority of women are marginalised by a masculine organisational culture and males' consequent transactional and stereotypical masculine styles of management, has implications for managerial career progression and succession management.

Broadbridge (2010) also supports that organizational culture among other factors act as a barrier and was the reason why women were still underrepresented at senior levels in the UK.

Some organizational practices have been found to be associated with the number of women in management. This is because these practices affect decision making processes in the organization. Dreher (2003) in discussing how organizational practices affect its decision making, found a positive association between the number of work-life human resources practices provided in 1994, the percentage of lower-level managerial positions held by women in the 1980s and early 1990s and the percentage of senior management positions held by women in 1999. Also, there was a partial mediation between the effect of lower-level female representation on senior level female representation and a positive association of the percentage of senior management positions held by women in 1999 and number of work-life human resource practices provided in 1994 (Dreher, 2003).

Another common organizational practice is the practice of long hours which is able to ensure visibility, a key strategy crucially found to be related to a place at the top (Cross, 2010). Working long hours, usually after the normal closing hours gives the impression of hard work and commitment and most prominently permits visibility. Visibility is considered to be an indicator of effectiveness and women who are lose out on promotions to men as a result (Escandon & Kamungi, 2008). In her interesting discovery whilst investigating the impact of individual and organizational barriers on female managerial career progress in Ireland, Cross (2010) found that participants attached much importance to visibility, a career strategy they thought was crucial to career progression and being seen as committed to the organization through a culture of long working hours as contractually required. The women felt left out because according to them, they lacked mentors and

useful networks at the top. In an attempt to make up for 'lost' hours, some of these women took work home. Broadbridge (2010) for instance noted that to have a career in retail meant long and even sometimes unsociable hours and it was these long hours that was regarded as integral to career progression.

Relatedly, in the accounting field, Morley, Bellamy, Jackson and O'Neil (2000) found the existence of a 'blokey' culture in which men excluded women from social activities and this negatively influenced the promotion opportunities of women within the field.

Another visible organizational factor known to affect the level of position and speed of ascent is the kind of network built. At the top of the echelons, there exists an Old Boys' Network which has been found to impeded women's climb up the career ladder and rather facilitates men's way up. Aside the lack of mentors and work-family conflict, women participants in Cross's (2010) study found the cause of their 'left-out' feeling to be lack of useful networks.

Similarly, Hakak, Holzinger & Zikic (2010) found a lack of networks as part of the challenges faced by Latin American immigrant professionals in Canada and cumulatively the organizational culture of long hours and old boy's network tended to negatively affect women's climb up.

Important work attitudes such as organizational commitment, job involvement and job satisfaction known to affect men and women's work was examined by Lyness and Thompson (1997) in their study of matched samples of men and women executives. They found no significant gender differences. In actual fact, they rather found more similarities than differences for successful men and women executives on measures of developmental experiences associated with advancement (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Such developmental experiences include the likelihood of reporting opportunities to start up new

businesses or the likelihood of turning around businesses that were in trouble (McCauley, Ruderman, & Ohlott, 1994). Similarities were also found between matched male and female managers on self-reported masculinity scores associated with some measures of career advancement (Kirchmeyer, 2002).

Among other things, management and leadership (top executives) have a great extent of influence on the nature of corporate culture (Mullins, 2010). In other words, the kind of leader or manager and the type of style they use have a lot to do with the type of corporate culture that pervades in an organization and the culture of an organization has been directly found to affect career progression. Thus the role of leadership behaviour is very critical to effectiveness and chances of advancement. This is because a leader's own behaviour is believed to be a major determinant of his/her effectiveness and chances for advancement (Eagly et al, 2000). Hence many studies have looked at the various leadership styles exhibited by men and women to find the differences and similarities between the two in relation to what the results they achieve as leaders.

In a meta analytic study of leadership styles of men and women, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen (2003) examined and analysed 45 studies of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. They found that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders and also engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviours, a component of transactional leadership. Male leaders were generally more likely to manifest the other aspects of transactional leadership (eg. active and passive management by exception) and laissez-faire leadership. In earlier studies examining the same leadership styles, Eagly and Johnson's (1990) found that there was a tendency for women to lead in a more democratic and participative style than men. Bass (1998) studies also revealed that women, more than men, adopted a transformational style, especially an aspect that involved a focus on the development and mentoring of followers and attending

to followers' individual needs (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Vinkenbunrg, van Engen, Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011).

More recently, Powell, Butterfield, Alves, and Bartol (2004) found that male leaders were described as more transactional than women and that female leaders were viewed as being more transformational than men. Although most studies have found significant differences between men and women in their respective leadership styles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Eagly, 2007; Broadbridge, 2010) no real differences have been found in the results men and women achieve as leaders (Chemers, Watson & May, 2000; Morgan, 2004; Anderson, Lievens, van Dam & Born, 2006). A few others have even found similarities between male and female executive leaders as compared to middle men and women managers (Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003).

All these findings are relevant because though it shows significantly qualitative differences in the type of leadership that both male and female leaders employ the inconsistent nature of the findings indicate that leadership style perhaps has little to do with the results that leaders achieve. That is, if the leadership styles of women differ from the leadership styles of men, and yet the results they achieve are similar, or in the reverse situation where they may have similar leadership styles and yet still achieve results that are different, then leadership style must have little to do with results.

There have been other leadership behaviour factors such as collaborativeness, nurturance and emotional intelligence that have been reported as important in today's studies of leadership behaviour unlike earlier studies that focused on power and control (Goleman, 1995). In the field of emotional intelligence for instance, Mandell and Pherwani (2003) demonstrated that women scored higher than men in their tests. This they attributed to

women's ever present desire to lead which was restrained because of political, economic and social restrictions. Evans (2010) also found that in consideration to leadership styles, emotional Intelligence facilitates the emergence of women leaders.

An important organizational factor is the structure and this can either aid or hinder a woman's career (Harlan & Berheide, 1994.)

Personal factors based on psychosocial attributes, such as personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioural skills of women themselves have been known to hinder women's career advancement. Prominent personal factors are self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges "to go up the ladder", women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle a crisis (Bond, 1996). Meanwhile personal factors such as, assertiveness, confidence, resourceful creativeness, loyalty and trustworthiness is believed to help women to ascend to senior management positions (Singh & Shahabudin, 2000).

The findings indicated that subtle discrimination expressed in form of exclusion and perception women as incompetent signified lack of acceptance, perceived lack of job satisfaction was influenced by low self-confidence and lack of support. Personal and organizational factors negatively influenced career growth (Chowwen, 2006).

Women felt left out because they lacked mentors and useful networks at the top and also work-family conflict made it very difficult to work longer hours compared to men. Some even took work home in an attempt to make up for 'lost' hours.

Findings from a study conducted by Costa, Terracciano, and McCrae (2001) in examining the different personalities of men and women showed that the differences between men and women were small relative to how much an individual varied in their respective genders.

### **2.3.1.2. Studies on stereotypes, prejudices and biases**

While attitudes toward women are changing, stereotypes still exist where men and women behave in the same way, but their actions are perceived in different ways (Ameedy, 1999). Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination exist in many forms in male-dominated organizations. These stereotypes may be blatant or subtle. Some of these behaviours exhibited are questioning of women's competence, sexual harassment, social isolation (Collinson, Knights, & Collinson, 1990; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Kanter, 1977; Martin, 1992). A common perception is that men and women are different in abilities, interests, and mentality thus they are evaluated differently when showing the same behaviour. Research has focused mainly on the perceptions of available opportunities and achievement, prejudices, stereotypes, and biases of people in the organization that confront women and make them unable to climb above the glass ceiling.

Another stereotypic assumption is that women are more likely to quit their jobs for family responsibilities or other reasons which leads to subsequent discrimination in hiring, promotion or other employment decisions. Earlier findings reported high rates of turnover or employment disruptions for women more than men (Schneer & Reitman, 1990; Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1996; Tharenou, 1999). Recent findings have contradicted these findings. For instance, Lyness and Judiesch (2001) in their longitudinal study on voluntary turnover of 26,359 managers established that turnover rates for women managers were lower than for males.

There have been traditional arguments supporting prejudice against women in terms of lower wages and lesser workplace authority ascribed with the phenomenon of the glass ceiling as women's lesser human capital in terms of education, training, and work

experience. However, women's human capital investments have increased (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

In Ofei-Aboagye's (1996) study for instance, she found out that lack of education, managing domestic responsibilities as well as demonstrating commitment in one's profession, lack of requisite skills and lack of resources to invest in self-development were the variables responsible for keeping women in the low echelons of work.

In assessing attributions for career progress, Wood and Lindorf (2001) concluded that on the belief that gender-based policies hindered careers, females were stronger on that dimension thus confirming the belief that sex differences does exist in the attributions made by managers for their own career progress.

According to Wood and Lindorff (2001) the socialisation of women leaves them with a perception that they have fewer opportunities than men for advancement to senior levels of management. This is evident in Foster's (2001) finding. In soliciting for the views of women academics in a UK university about their career prospects, equal opportunities and the conflicts they experience between work and personal lives, with a background of formal equal opportunities policies and gender monitoring systems of the university, he found that very few women have progressed into senior academic roles. They continued to be handicapped by well-ingrained structural and cultural barriers and by promotion systems that still largely relied on the publication records of candidates for appointments and promotions. Some it was discovered had opted to put their careers on hold because of domestic and family responsibilities whereas a few others had resigned themselves to never achieving senior positions because of these commitments. This study suggests there are widespread effects of the discriminatory behaviour against women that may be derogatory to an organization's effectiveness and performance.

One such study examined, the relationship between attitudes toward members of ethnic or cultural minority groups and men and women in authority or leadership positions using The Ethnocultural Empathy Scale and Gender Authority Measure which was completed by 317 participants (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008). Results yielded showed a positive relationship among the attitudinal measures, indicating that individuals who expressed more empathy toward individuals from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds are likely to have positive perceptions of women in authority/leadership positions. Furthermore, the gender differences in perceptions suggest that, relative to males, females are more likely to report higher levels of ethnic or cultural empathy and also have higher preference for women in leadership and authority positions (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008).

Responses to stereotypes range from deleterious threat responses to more benign reactance responses. Initial research into the impact of stereotypes on targets generally demonstrated the pernicious effects of stereotype threat, defined as the apprehension that individuals feel when they are at risk of confirming a negative stereotype about their group (Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998). Stereotype threat undermines individuals' assessments of their abilities and results in decreased performance and it has been shown to play an important role in the underperformance of minorities (Aronson et al., 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Stereotype vulnerability effects according to Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005) undermines women's leadership aspirations. They however argue that presenting women with an identity safe environment eliminates this vulnerability. Additionally, Bergeron, Block, and Echtenkamp (2006) found that men outperformed women on a managerial task but only when it was a masculine sex role-typed task; this effect disappeared on a feminine sex role-typed task.

Stereotypes are not always met with vulnerability responses. In fact, research has shown that when gender stereotypes are primed explicitly women sometimes respond by engaging in stereotype countering behaviours; that is, demonstrating stereotype reactance (Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001). In a typical example, Kray and colleagues (2001) showed that women blatantly presented with the gender and bargaining stereotype outperformed men at the bargaining table.

Though attitudes towards women are changing now, studies still indicate that stereotypes still continue to exist though in more subtler forms now. These gender stereotypes when, presented as facts, can be damaging to women's career progression.

#### **2.4. RATIONALE**

Some researchers believe that the organization stands at a lose when it allows barriers in whatever form to encumber employee's talents from fully being exploited (Morrison, White, & van Velsor, 1987; Guy, 1992). The Glass ceiling is a barrier known to exclude women from top echelons and this deprives organizations of the diversity that businesses now need in order to compete successfully. Therefore barriers, whether intentional or unintentional, act as threat to the proper functioning, efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. It has therefore become critical that organizations select the best candidate from a large pool of applicants which includes women not only to benefit from having the best candidate but also increase diversity which has become key in today's economies. Studies show that gender diversity at the top has great pay-offs for organizational performance (Catalyst, 2007). This study will benefit women and organizations in particular to enhance diversity need by identifying the factors that are conducive for women's growth and or rise and the factors that impede this growth. Besides, the study, will help organizations create healthy and conducive environments for women to help tap

the very best out of them and also serve as a motivation for organizations to hire more women and increase diversity. It will also motivate women to keep pushing and achieving.

The achievements of the few women who have made it to the top is comparable to their male counterparts. There has been evidence to suggest that women can be equally effective as men and that they also display virtually the same amount of prototypically good leader behaviour as men though they continue to be hindered from reaching the top. The challenges that women face could be the result of why their numbers continue to be marginal. This study will provide an insight into what women climbing the career ladder experience in terms of the challenges and their coping strategies. This is necessary for women who are either facing or about to face these challenges to know the barriers and adapt strategies that are functional (and have been tried by the other women) to help overcome them. It will also help organizations seeking to promote the advancement of women to know these barriers and eliminate them in order to fully utilise their potential.

Government's efforts at paring inequality or inequity in men and women has been tremendous. Such efforts such as the concession for female students in the Public Universities, Affirmative action in parliamentary nomination, Advocacy for the girl child to be sent to school (FCUBE) among others have undeniably encouraged more women into leadership positions. Recent figures released by the Ghana statistical service in May 2012 shows that women form a whopping 51.2% of the population and outnumber males in all 10 regions. Despite these efforts and figures, it is the majority of men that occupy top managerial, powerful and decision making positions in Ghana. Given the number of women in the population and the workforce, estimated to keep rising, it is only fair that decisions and policies affecting this majority (women) must take their viewpoints into consideration. This means empowering women into positions of power and including them

in decisions and policies that affect them, in order to have policies that take accounts of both genders into consideration.

Though studies exist in abundance on gender, very little is known about it in the Ghanaian context and this is very crucial because Zander and Romani (2004) found in their study that for interpersonal leadership elements, men and women differed significantly across countries. Their findings indicate that preferences of managers vary across countries. It also presupposes that the factors or variables that will influence one leader from a country may not influence another leader from a different country. So there is a need to examine this topic in the Ghanaian context. The findings of this study will meet that gap by explaining the extent to which Western research findings are generalizable in Ghana, which is an interdependent society with a different culture from the West (Javidan & Dale, 2005).

Finally, studies on women in Ghana have been under researched and they merit closer attention because women form a majority of the working class, a figure that might keep growing. This study will contribute to the little or non-existent literature available in Ghana.

## **2.5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

**Stereotypes:** A set of ideas or perceptions that people possess about how women should be and act in order to ‘fit’ the category they paint in their mind as women irrespective of whether there are individual differences or not.

**Top/ senior managers:** Women who make or are involved in making policies and decisions in a company.

**Middle managers:** Women who implement policies or decisions already made by senior managers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives detailed descriptions of the study's methodology which includes the organization/setting in which the study took place, the sample size and its characteristics, the sampling technique, the research design, and the materials employed in the study. The chapter as well, explores the data collection procedures in line with ethical guidelines and practical challenges and discusses how data collected was managed and analysed.

#### **3.1. POPULATION/SAMPLE**

The population for this study consisted of women managers all across Greater Accra region occupying senior and middle management positions whose population is unknown. Using purposive sampling technique, twelve (12) women managers were sampled for the study. Purposive sampling techniques according to Teddlie and Yu (2007), are mostly employed in the use of qualitative studies and 'may be defined as selecting units (e.g. individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions' (p.77). This sampling technique therefore was appropriate for this study because of the specificity it demanded in answering its research questions. Additionally, Maxwell (1997) explains this type of technique as most appropriate for specific settings, persons, or events because it serves as an important source of obtaining vital information that cannot be gotten from others. Thus, the choice of this sampling technique was appropriate in that pertinent information relating to women managers were ascertained.

With consideration to the scarcity of women managers at top executive positions, purposive sampling technique offered a crucial advantage over other sampling techniques

because it allowed the researcher to concentrate, identify and address only women managers who were the main concern of the study.

The selection criteria of inclusion were women managers who had been on the job for at least two years for middle management and five years for senior management as at the time of the study. Thus it excluded middle managers who had not been on the job for a minimum of two years and also senior managers that had not been on the job for at least five years. The basis of this selection criterion is that middle managers with the required two (2) years of experience and senior managers with the required five (5) years of experience would be able to understand the ins and outs of their jobs and important organizational elements since most organizations promote staff between six (6) months and three years of occupying the position. Thus two (2) years minimum and five (5) years minimum for middle and senior managers respectively was considered adequate.

Women junior managers were excluded from this study because, of all managerial positions occupied by women, they form the majority suggesting that recruitment of women into junior positions come with no or very minimal obstruction. The problem arose or became evident when women tried to move from these levels to senior levels. For this reason, the researcher chose to focus on women in middle management and senior management who seemed to be confronted with the problem of progression in relation to their numbers.

The respondents came from four (4) organizations: University of Ghana, Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission, PZ Cussons Ghana and Unilever Ghana Limited. The method used for sampling these organizations was convenience sampling. First and foremost the organizations were chosen based on their size. These four organizations apart from being very diverse in the services they provide are fairly large institutions. Thus the likelihood of

finding women managers who fitted the criterion selection was greater in these organizations than most hence their being sampled. Also, these organizations were chosen because the researcher wanted to have a fair representation of both the private sector and the public sector in the data. Lastly, organizations these days are reluctant to open their doors to outsiders including researchers. Researchers have to wait extensively for days, weeks and even months for the go ahead to collect data which slows down the research or protracts its time of completion. For this reason, having a contact person in the organization facilitates both the groundwork enquiries and even cuts short the waiting period. On this basis, the researcher chose these organizations because of the advantage of contact persons in these organizations.

At the University of Ghana, interviewees came from three (3) directorates namely; Academic Affairs, Human Resource and Public Administration. At the Academic Affairs directorate, there were two (2) respondents who partook in the study and they were both senior assistant registrars.

One assistant registrar from the Human Resource directorate was also sampled and interviewed for the main study.

The last directorate to be interviewed was the Public Administration directorate. From this directorate, one assistant registrar was interviewed for the main study.

At the second organization, Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission (PURC), two women were interviewed. One was a director of Consumer Operations and the other a director of Public Administration and together they both partook in the main study.

The third organization, PZ Cussons Ghana was a private manufacturing company. In this organization two women were interviewed for the main study. One was a talent manager in the Human Resources department and the other, a senior financial manager of the finance department.

At the last organization, Unilever Ghana Limited, two women were additionally interviewed for the main study. One was an assistant manager from the Supply and Procurement department and another, a reward and workforce specialist from Workforce Administration and Reward also under the Human Resource department.

A total of twelve (12) female managers in reputable Ghanaian organizations were interviewed for this study. Of this, six (6) were in senior or top level management and the other (6) were from middle management. The respondents were drawn from the populations of the University of Ghana, Legon, Unilever Ghana Limited, Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission (PURC), and PZ Cussons Ghana Limited. Of these populations, two represented the public sector, that is University of Ghana and PURC and two represented the private sector that is Unilever Ghana Limited and PZ Cussons Ghana Limited. From the public sector there were a total of nine (8) respondents and four (4) from the private sector.

All the respondents possessed extensive educational and managerial experience. The majority of women indicated that they hold a Master's degree (8) or an equally qualified certificate (eg. ACCA) from accredited bodies in their chosen areas of specialization. Only one (1) had a Bachelor's degree and was looking to do her Master's degree. Most of them had also been in their current organization for over five (5) years.

Finally, out of the twelve women interviewed, nine (9) were married, two (2) were single and one (1) was a divorcee. Eight (8) women had children whilst four had no children. On the average, each respondent had two (2) children and the average age of their youngest child was nine (9).

### **3.2. ORGANIZATION/DATA COLLECTION SETTING**

As a result of the nature of the study, data was collected from four (4) different sites. Respondents were selected from the following organizations: the University of Ghana, Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission, Unilever and PZ Cussons. The Greater Accra region was chosen as the study site because of its high concentration of major organizational headquarters which was believed to engage highly skilled women in Ghana.

The University of Ghana is one of the highly reputable public universities in Ghana and considered the most prestigious in West Africa. It was founded in 1948 and currently has over 38,000 students. They aim to provide quality tertiary education to both locals and foreigners. It is made of about 14 distinct units or administrative directorates.

The Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission of Ghana is an independent body set up to regulate and oversee the provision of the highest quality of electricity and water services to consumers. Presently, they regulate electricity and water sources and are required to approve charges for the supply, transportation and distribution of electricity, natural gas and the bulk storage of transportation of petroleum products.

Unilever Ghana came into being on July 14, 1992 when UAC Ghana Limited, reputed for excellence in marketing and distribution, and Lever Brothers Ghana Limited strong in manufacturing, merged to form Unilever Ghana Limited. Unilever is one of the country's leading suppliers of fast-moving consumer goods in three main divisions - Foods, home care and personal care.

PZ Cussons Ghana Limited, a leading public company was formed in Ghana in 1934 and acquired its status as a public company in 1976. Its initial activities were importing, exporting and general trading. As it stands now, PZ Cussons Ghana is an entrepreneurial

company involved in manufacturing and marketing their products. The company with a staff of 500 has four main brands: Home Care, Personal Care, Nutrition and Electrical.

The general idea behind the selection of two government and two private organizations was to obtain a fair knowledge of women across a spectrum of sectors and have a fairly representative number of both the private and public sectors.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study utilized a qualitative methodology to address its research questions. Specifically, the use of interviews was the main method of collecting data. According to Cassell and Symon (1994), qualitative designs allows for an in-depth examination of participants' subjective perceptions or 'lived experience'. Thus the choice of qualitative design for the present study was expedient because it helped to achieve the study's aim of understanding the nature and extent of the glass ceiling in Ghana by allowing participants to provide rich, in-depth descriptions of their experiences which was key to understanding the dynamics of the phenomenon.

Another strength that the qualitative methodology offered this study was richness of context. Evans (2010) has explained that because qualitative methods or designs pay particular attention to studies in contexts especially where cultural differences play a major role; it allows subtleties and hidden nuances that are not sufficiently captured in other methodologies to be adequately covered. Thus in line with this study's focus on the Ghanaian context, this particular research design was convenient for revealing any subtleties or cultural differences that might have existed or escaped other studies that used other methodologies.

### **3.4. MATERIALS/MEASURES**

With the help of Sony digital dictation machine, model ICD-BX112, the researcher mainly used interviews to collect data by recording respondents' interviews for later transcription and subsequent analysis. The interview guide followed a semi-structured format giving a certain level of consistency for all respondents though flexible enough to allow participants to come up with relevant information that could lead to new areas. Respondents were first questioned on their demographic features such as; length of period on job, professional expectations, marital status, among others. Examples of the questions asked include 'how long have you held this position for' and 'what was your professional expectation when you first came into this organization?' Also, examples of other questions used for the interview include 'in your opinion, what are the prospects for professional advancement in this place?' and 'what are some of the factors that have assisted in your career development?' (Refer to Appendix 1)

Apart from one participant that was apprehensive for her interview to be recorded for political reasons and therefore refused to be recorded and preferred instead for the researcher to write out all her responses, all the participants gave their consent for the interview session to be recorded. Besides, the researcher also had a notebook and pen in hand to write down any interesting observations.

### **3.5. PROCEDURE/DATA COLLECTION**

The main source of data collection was the use of one-on-one or individual interviews. The interview started by the researcher firstly introducing herself and explaining what the study was about, the general aims and objectives of the study. This was to build a rapport first

and foremost with participants such that they do not feel intimidated by the researcher's presence.

To start the samples' selection process, the researcher informally contacted the four organizations to find out if there were women who fell in the category of middle and senior managers who fitted the inclusion criteria. After receiving confirmation, an introductory letter from the Department of Psychology, introducing the researcher was obtained and taken to these four (4) organizations seeking permission to conduct interviews of women managers who wanted to partake in the study. Generally, it took between two to four weeks for the letter to go through bureaucratic organizational processes and reach appropriate parties involved. Within this period, researcher paid several calls and visits to the organization to facilitate the process. In some cases, the visit to the organization proved beneficial because it opened an opportunity to meet the managers in question especially the senior ones and interact with them. After the interaction, many of them were quite happy to be part of the study and this prompted quick responses and early appointments for the researcher.

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was first conducted on two assistant registrars of the University of Ghana to test the appropriateness of the questions and to ascertain its content validity. Of the two respondents used in the pilot study, one was from senior management and the other from middle management. After the pilot study, some further questions such as (has your personality in any way been instrumental in your occupying this position?) were added to the original interview guide whereas others were also modified and or maintained.

### **3.5.1. Interview of Managers**

There were two phases of the interview. The first phase included collecting responses from participants based on the guidelines of the semi-structured interview guide. The second phase took place after six (6) weeks after the end of the first interview and this was the verification stage. In this phase, the researcher went back to verify if data and conclusions made from it corresponded or reflected what participants had earlier given.

After establishing a rapport with the interviewees, the first phase of the interview started by explaining what the glass ceiling was all about and what the aims and objectives of the study were. Most of the interviews were conducted in participant's individual offices which were mostly enclosed. Some however had open offices especially the middle managers. The nature of the office and the jobs in Academic Affairs of the University of Ghana for example, made it a somewhat 'students den'. Thus students kept walking in and out with one problem or the other that needed immediate attention. Some members of staff also interrupted once in a while. These 'walk-ins' and slamming of doors caused some form of distraction that was unavoidable because of the nature of their work and office. In another instance at the Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission, though the office was enclosed and quiet, because the office was situated close to a major road, outside interferences like tooting of cars could be heard quite clearly in the office. These environmental noises sometimes drowned out responses and they had to be repeated. Apart from these, the interview went smoothly and on the average lasted about 30minutes per session. The second interview because it was just to confirm and validate previous data, lasted averagely for ten minutes per session for each participant.

### 3.5.2. Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in quantitative research usually refers to credibility which is found in the instrument construction (Golafshani, 2003). Since “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2001; p. 14) in qualitative research, the credibility of the instrument depends largely on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). Therefore, the ability and effort exerted by a researcher determines whether data is valid or reliable during qualitative studies.

In a similar vein to quantitative studies, biases are expected to be absent from qualitative data or studies in order to be considered reliable. Opare-Henaku (2006) further expands this view by asserting that reliability in qualitative studies does not imply getting the same results. Instead it requires reporting and proper documentation of events. Also, the concept of ‘consistency’ and ‘dependability’ has both been related to the concept of reliability in qualitative research (Clont, 1992; Seale, 1999). Thus to ensure reliability in the present study, there was adequate documentation of events, examination and verification of the data which ensured its consistency, precision, replication and verification.

Many researchers of the qualitative paradigm have developed their own concepts of validity to mean these three core concepts quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). Whereas Davies and Dodd (2002) explains rigor as exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing; Silverman (2000) equates validity to truth which includes clarity and accuracy of circumstances that precede data creation.

For this reason of validity (clarity), the study employed the use of a semi-structured interview guide as a means of collecting data in a clear unambiguous way so as to give some level of consistency to the data. This involved asking participants the same sets of questions and at the same time making the questions flexible enough to give room to emerging ideas.

In both cases of reliability and validity, clarity and accuracy are key. Hence, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue a convergence of reliability and validity in qualitative research in the sense that a demonstration of validity is sufficient to establish reliability (p. 316). Patton (2002) coincides that in addition to a researcher's ability and skill in any qualitative research, reliability is a consequence of the validity in a study. On this basis the present study as a result of establishing clarity and accuracy was both reliable and valid.

### **3.6. TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW DATA**

According to Atkinson (1998) two major approaches exist in the analysis of interview data and these are transcription and interpretation of interviews such that they adhere to laid down objectives. Transcription allows audio or visual data to be translated or converted into written text or form. Though an arduous task, during the process of transcription, there is an ultimate need to ensure that every transcript captures needed information in a genuine and truthful manner and simultaneously take into account the purpose of the research analysis (Edwards, 1993). In line with this, the audio recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim as a 'true' representation of what each participant thought.

### **3.7. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE: CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Using Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach, the interview data was rigorously analysed using content analysis. Their approach objects to detect relationships among social events that are legitimate and stable based on the patterns and frequencies that are associated with these events (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They highlight that data analysis is made up of three concurrent stages known as data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification stages. These stages are concurrent because they are intricately interlaced such that they are not entirely independent of each other.

The data reduction stage involves editing, categorizing and organizing the research data collected. This is done by writing summaries, coding, teasing out themes, making clusters, making partitions, writing memos among others which are inherent in the data (Punch, 2005). Data display is the next stage. Here, data is put in an organized or compressed assembly of information to permit conclusions to be drawn from it. The data is displayed in the form of tables, matrices, graphs, charts, networks and relational models. The last of the stages is the conclusion drawing/ verification stage. These conclusions are the researcher's interpretation of the findings from the data.

Consistent with procedures outlined above, data was first reduced by the researcher transcribing all the audio recorded interviews into written text form. To ensure accuracy, the researcher cross-checked written transcriptions with the audio recordings several times. This allowed the researcher to edit and straighten out inconsistencies so that the final transcript became the true form of the actual recordings. Thereafter the researcher got acquainted with the data by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts over and over again.

Next was the coding stage. This involved highlighting certain potential patterns in the data together with some supporting data. This was done so that data do not lose the context in which it was presented in and was done for all the individual transcripts. Then all the codes with its supporting data or extracts were collated together. After coding, the next level was the search for themes. This involved comparing, grouping and organizing the codes into similarities and observed patterns. Thus themes that were similar were put together. From this, relationships were identified which differentiated themes from subthemes.

Finally, the data was analysed based on whether they fall under barriers (pull factors) or facilitators (push factors). Having done this, the results were interpreted with reference to theory and literature. All participants were represented by at least one interview extract to ensure fair representation. The interview extracts are used as instances to indicate and validate the existence of a theme/ sub-theme.

### **3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Quarshie (2011) says this concerning ethical issues “adhering to ethical requirements helps promote, among other things, the purpose of the research through original knowledge production rather than fabrication and misinterpretation of data” (p.42).

Among all the ethical considerations, the most prominent issue is the issue of informed consent which requires that participants in a study are provided with information that would give them a fair idea about the aims and objectives of the research (Silverman, 2006). Thus the researcher made sure to explain the aims and objectives of the study to each participant including a general overview of the glass ceiling phenomenon each time before the interview started.

Furthermore, the principle of Confidentiality was strictly adhered to. Participants were assured that information being collected was going to be used for educational purposes and nothing besides that. Also, another way the researcher ensured participants' confidentiality was collecting their names and complementary cards after and not before the interview. This was done to reassure them of anonymity and also to make them feel comfortable throughout the interviewing process. Afterwards, the researcher instead used pseudo names as a means or system of identifying who the participants were.

Aside this, the ethical guidelines of the Graduate Committee of the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana was adhered to.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.0. Introduction

The present study explored the glass ceiling phenomenon among managerial women in selected Ghanaian organizations. Based on this main objective, the study specifically sought to identify the various barriers that confront managerial women as they climb to the top; find out the most prevalent type that confronts Ghanaian women managers; enumerate factors that are instrumental to women's career development; and suggest strategies to be employed to curtail this trend.

#### 4.1. Main theme 1: Pull factors/Barriers

One main theme that emerged from the data was pull factors. The pull factors were the factors that acted on women to keep them in inertia. From the analysis, these factors were the glass ceiling barriers that allowed women a glimpse of the top but strongly held them in place in their current position. These forces seemed to pull them behind in their efforts of forging forward towards attaining higher positions. These factors were coded under five sub-themes. These are: same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of initiative.

##### Same-sex Rivalry

Contextually, it pertained to women at the top putting obstacles in the way of other women below them or frustrating their efforts at climbing to the top, the more closer they got to the top because they felt threatened. Consider this account of one director:

*I started out as an assistant PR (public relations officer) from GIPC (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre). I've gone through, I've been assistant PR, I've been PR. I've been the senior PR officer; I've been the assistant manager PR. I've been at manager PR. I've been, I've started from the scratch. 22 years I've gone through the ranks. My dear, the people who always pulled me down were my own gender. My own gender.*

She continued:

*A woman will make sure that you won't get there.....we are our own enemies. Till we are able to recognize that we are not a threat to each other, we will be where we are. To be very honest with you, we will be where we are because you see, a woman in a certain position should be able to make sure that the woman down there should come up but we don't do that.*

She emphasized how this same-sex rivalry is perpetuated:

*If I didn't want to act in a certain way for my boss who is a woman I was penalized. I was hated. A hate campaign will be set up against me because a woman wanted me to do something and I didn't do or a woman thinks that am this, am that.....*

She continued with a typical example of her experience:

*I took my leave, I had 36 days in a year, so I used my leave to go to school. Specifically, I went to do my Masters and even when I was doing my Masters, it was a woman who wrote that I don't have leave to go and do my Masters. So I came back from one of the semesters and there was a long letter on my table and I read through. About 3pages telling me why I cannot do the Masters and*

*if I have to do the masters, I have to quit the job. And it was a woman. Meanwhile I used my spare time to do my assignments.*

She believed that this rivalry was a result of the perception of threat. She said:

*.....you see, she had a Masters. I didn't have a Masters. So she thought once I get my Masters I might be coming close. So she had to block it.*

Thus, negative perceptions of threat by women in higher positions; lead them to react in biased ways against women in lower ranks which subsequently frustrate their efforts at climbing the career ladder.

#### Work-family Conflict

Rising to the pinnacle of their careers was a major aspiration most of the respondents interviewed cited. However, all of them irrespective of their single, divorced and married statuses acknowledged that juggling the roles of a wife, mother, home-maker, housewife and manager at work was a major hindrance to their career development and progression.

For instance:

*.....as a woman with a family, the challenge has been trying to balance time, there are times when I wish I could carry work home to give it more attention, but you get home and there is the family also waiting for you. A few times I tried but I came back with the work undone or wake up in the middle of the night to do the work and come back to the office.*

Another senior executive also remarked:

*.....I know that is mostly women problems. Instead of leaving your house to run down, you sacrifice; you want to be somewhere that you will not be. The*

*toll will not be too much on you where you can take care of your house. In my situation, the toll was so much and I still had to take care of my house.*

One respondent also recollected the burdensome challenges of family responsibilities she had to go through especially when her children were younger:

*Well! It's a bit better now; when my children were smaller it was a challenge like combining taking care of them and having enough time for them. But now that we are through, it's a little bit easier.*

Similarly, another manager said:

*I think parenthood, like taking care of children it's one [of the barriers]because it depends on who the woman is, if the woman tends to use the children as an excuse, the person will not be able to go far.....*

Consider also another account:

*Yes I have one child. A boy. He is seventeen years. I want to have another one but I told you when I was having sex, it came to my mind that if I get pregnant, my work will be messed up so I use protection. You see that is also a barrier you know. Once you become pregnant, then everything is out of place. So at this level (director), I said let me use protection.*

She further explains:

*..... I have been married before. I made a choice to leave because I saw it hindering my work.*

*Marriage is a beautiful thing..... but it is also a barrier. It is a barrier because if you have children, I have children. I have been through it. One will*

*suffer. Either your job suffers or your children suffer. So it is what you want to choose and especially if you are married because, you need to look after husband. You need to look after your children .They are your responsibility. If you make one suffer then there is a problem. So that is also a barrier.*

One manager in her response said that the responsibility associated with womanhood such as becoming pregnant, and taking care of children was a major hindrance to women's progression. Though unmarried, she believes that:

*I think it has to do with the fact that we [women] have to give birth to the children. Because may be it will not be said but let's say in a year if you get pregnant and go for maternity leave, you go home for 3 months and some people also take their annual leave [of about a month]. So let's say you go home for 4 months. So out of the 12 months, you are off for.....and have 8 months over here. If I have my target for the beginning of the year, and maybe I go off for 4 months, I only have 8 months to achieve those targets.*

She continued:

*It's really, really tough for you because someone has the full 12 months to achieve it [target ] but maybe you have gone off. And sometimes, if you have kids, you know people, maybe their kids fall sick, you have to go off, and you don't come to work. It's not as if it happens every time but all these things add up.....*

She highlighted the importance of sacrificing certain promotional opportunities that could help develop one's career as a result of family. She narrates:

*You know, if the position involves travelling or once in a while you have to go for a course. We have other, sometimes you have to go to Cote D'Ivoire for 3 months, 6 months or you go outside Africa, like South Africa or Indonesia or somewhere for about 6 months. And you really think, do I really want to leave my family behind and go? Because maybe you will like to go but your husband will be like, ok, how can you go somewhere for 6 months and then leave your kids behind and then what happens? It means that you are torn between staying with the family or following up your job. And for most women who have made it to the top, most of them are single. Maybe they have been married before but their marriages have not really worked.*

Another respondent had this to say:

*.....is the fact that I have to battle, go through the issues of like my domestic work I should say with my career or something. you find that a lot of male colleagues wouldn't have to because they having wives at home taking care of things so on the institutional level, I think we all face the same challenges and so on. But the women, for me as a woman, I have that additional burden of taking care of domestic issues.*

For women who are nursing mothers, this challenge is especially difficult. Consider the account of one senior manager who was a nursing mother:

*.....I think the greater one [barrier] is child bearing. Childbearing because when you take seed, after a certain time, you have to go for maternity leave and it takes time for you to come back. And even after you have come back, you do have the half day system for 1 year. During the half day, if certain programmes are organized in the afternoons, which you will benefit from; you*

*may lose them because you are doing half day..... I think that this is just the thing that takes us from or take women off work while men are performing their functions and if there is any prospect they [men] can move on. We have to take care of the family and also our jobs, when this come in, it's a problem.*

From the above extracts, work-family conflict as a pull factor, limits women's career opportunities for promotion or mobility. Such opportunities like cross-country or cross-border mobility; (excluding women from) knowledge gained from participation in career or work-related seminars or workshops (which becomes impossible during period of maternity leave or half-day for first year of birth or even sick leave days for children) and impossibility in meeting set targets (as a result of maternity leave, half-day programmes or even sick leave days for children). These opportunities if given to women will advance their careers considerably.

### Gender Role Socialization

Another sub-theme which emerged from the data was gender role socialization. In the study, it describes the ways/upbringing, values and mind-sets that people have as a result of the learning that they received from parents and the society. Gender roles created from socialization have tasked women with the primary responsibility of the family and domestic chores. Thus, career women are burdened with additional responsibilities aside their normal work responsibilities when they get home like taking care of the children and husband. A manager reflected on how her current career accomplishment contrasted with her upbringing. In her account she recalls:

*Well! Maybe the domestic, socialization should I say, which gives women so many more chores, domestic chores and so on, domestic responsibilities than men.*

To further illustrate how women's failure to progress was largely due to how they were socialized, another manager explained:

*I think because of our extended family system, you know, like our culture, people feel that ok; a woman should behave as a woman. You shouldn't be aggressive, fighting men, trying to be you know all over the place. So I think most women have really come down even though they can do something, they don't really come out to show that they can do it because they feel that you have made yourself like man-woman, you feel you can do anything. So because of the comments that people will say, because of our culture, like women you are supposed to tone down and be calm and all that.*

She continued:

*So people don't even come out to try and [...] that you can do something. Even though they can do it, they wouldn't try it because they feel that a woman should not be like that. You have to be calm, submissive, fighting and things and all that. So I think our culture is also, the fact that women must be calm, not try and be hard all over the place. That one is also not helping.*

Another account reports:

*.....And your mentality. With you as a woman, what you think about yourself. If you are still going to think as a traditional woman, it won't work. If you want to be a career woman, well our mothers don't understand 'career woman'. Not all of our mothers do. If I should close work like 8 and I get home at 10. My mother will not understand why a married woman should be coming home at that time.....*

Furthermore, a respondent recounts that:

*Sometimes people think that wherever you get to, [fail] to see yourself as a woman and therefore if the man [...] you have a male colleague, you should see yourself as the woman. This is not a husband and wife relationship.....*

This factor tended to pull women away from the career ladder because it prevented women especially married ones from taking additional responsibilities at the workplace that could advance their promotional opportunities. Gender role socialization has the ability to open up the individual to take up challenges and as a result move up the career ladder or remain at the same level in order to fulfil not just their current responsibilities at work but at home too. The negative effect of gender role socialization limits the individual's ability to take up a managerial position.

#### Lack of Initiative

The lack of initiative here captures attitudes that are not pro seeking in terms of excelling in current positions and aspiring for higher managerial positions. From the study, this includes women's aspirations, focus, determination and plans.

Most respondents mentioned that, lack of aspiration on the part of women is a major hindrance for their career advancement. To illustrate:

*A lot of the time where we are or what we are able to achieve depends not only on the institution but also on our personal determination to get to or to achieve the goals that we've set for ourselves. So well, since some institutions there might be the gender issues and some [ .....] fair to others but I think it's the way you go about dealing with those issues . The way you focus on the goals*

*that you've set for yourself. Sometimes even the goal that you've set for yourself if you are determined.*

Also:

*People get too comfortable with what and sometimes it's their own mind-set that if i get here, i should be ok. So you don't push. That is one [barrier].*

The importance of these attitudes cannot be overemphasized as they instigate how one would remain or progress. Consider this extract:

*I believe that no matter what the role you can carve it to suit yourself and make it interesting so that work doesn't become tedious. So you just need to understand your role and find easy ways of doing what otherwise would be a difficult task.*

Based on the above, managerial women in Ghana are mainly confronted with the following pull factors or challenges; same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender-role socialization and lack of initiative.

#### **4.2. Main theme 2: Facilitators/Push factors**

Career or professional development accounts for individuals' progression in organizations. Employees' ability to further their education, acquire professional certificates in their areas of specialization was found to be a major positive influence on their careers. Specifically, for the respondents, all except one had a master's degree and they believed this has been instrumental in their obtaining their current jobs.

*I was educated by my parents and for me that has really assisted me in my career growth, even to this point,.....*

For instance, a manager gives an example of how educational qualification coupled with experience gives headway in progression:

*Because if am a lecturer, I have my PhD[by requirements], I come in as a junior lecturer and the university requirements say that if I have a certain number of publications you can apply to be a senior lecturer, you can apply to be an associate professor, nobody is going to stop you.*

In context, the push factors are those factors that the respondents agreed helped them to cope and sustain their momentum until they were able to finally reach the top. They tend to buffet one against the effect of the pull factors. Six sub-themes emerged from this major theme: *Organizational/ Institutional support, mentoring, personality, religiosity, time management and personal sacrifice and organizational fairness.*

#### *Organizational/Institutional Support*

Most respondents indicated that, organizational/institutional support has impacted significantly on their professional advancement. For instance:

*The equality [with men] that we are looking for is the fact that women should have an opportunity to educate themselves, to go to school, to be in a trade, to support the woman.*

This institutional support comes in three forms: promotional opportunities organizations offer, funding from institutions and supportive organizational policies. The first form, promotional opportunities, talk about organizations that make available unlimited

opportunities across national borders and different fields for all individuals including women in order to develop individual careers.

To illustrate the unlimited opportunities across national borders available in her organization, one executive explains:

*There are opportunities everywhere; in Nigeria, in Kenya, in the UK, in Greece. All you need to do is to excel in what you do and if the group [organization] finds that we need you there, once you are open to that, you will go.*

She also talks about these opportunities being across fields:

*And there are people who come here as marketing people and they turn out to be maybe finance staff if that is your strength....So wherever you want to go in, you have the opportunity to do it. There's a vast experience for people to learn and the firm or business encourages you.*

Another form of support which participants revealed helped them immensely is institutional funding.

*Because we have a lot of professional development seminars and workshops and so on, and the University also from time to time if you come across something, a program which you feel or think that it will advance you professionally, the university helps you with funding and support to partake in such programs. So there's a lot of institutional support for yourself.*

Again:

*Some people are doing some Masters programme, they [organization] may not pay in full but they support you. I think they agreed for a certain number of years to support you or I think pay half your fees. And once you are doing [exams], you are given some time to learn as well so when you have to close early your boss understands.*

Similarly, a procurement manager talks about how her organization funds their professional examinations.

*And for us in supply chain, we also have these professional papers that we write. It's called Certified in Inventory and Production Management. So for the managers, we are selected to write it. There are 5 levels. Once you pass each level and then write all 5 papers you get certified and that is paid for by the business and you are given 2 chances to write it.*

*Because there are several opportunities here if you want to for you to develop as well. Here, if you really want to get somewhere it's possible because merit is used. It's not just like you are picking favourites and all. Once the opportunity is there and they believe that you can do it, it will be given to you*

Aside promotional opportunities, respondents agreed that organizational policies that took women into consideration helped them to climb up. For example:

*It's a diversity agenda, they call it..... We want to see more women in senior roles. So if you are a woman and you are performing you are [given] that opportunity.*

Another manager from the same organization further explains:

*We have this thing called management trainee where we employ certain people who are trained to be managers. And with this thing, if they are selecting people, 60% of these must be women. If they can't 60%, then at least it must be 50-50 with the guys. But if not, they cannot take anybody at all so the company is really focused in this area. They are to make sure that more females are employed.*

She continued to recount how her organization's policy on hiring had helped her get a job in the first place:

*...even when I came for the interview, [.....]I think they were looking for 2 people so they wanted to take one woman and one man. And when they were cutting down with numbers, because there were 2 guys and myself and they were just looking for 2 people. No. There were 3 guys and myself. They were looking to sign, so at the whole last interview, they knew that they were going to keep me in and take one guy.*

Moreover, she mentions management's new policy that allows managers to work from the house and not always being physically present:

*Because now for the managers we all have [been given] laptops so [that] you can work from home. You don't always have to come to the factory. You can work from home and then again, delegate for someone to do something for you.....*

Another organizational policy to support women advancement is having a department that caters for that particular kind of need. To illustrate:

*... if somebody applies to maybe further themselves in education it's allowed. There is actually an advocate for professional development in this organization who does that kind of job.*

### *Mentoring*

Mentors according to Kram (1985) provide career development and psychosocial functions such as coaching the protégé, provision of problem-solving and a sounding board (counselling) etc, which is associated with facilitating protégé's advancement in an organization. Mentoring was found to be a key factor in advancement or progression for the career woman. A respondent mentioned that, she had reached this far because she had a good mentor.

*If you have somebody you look up to, somebody you can talk about your career with, it helps (a mentor). When I was at Deloitte, I had one of the partners as my mentor. He is somebody I can even call at midnight and we discuss issues, career issues. So when I wanted to leave Deloitte for instance, I discussed it with him. He said, yeah I understand you. You have been here for 10 years. What again can you learn? It's a cycle.*

From the above extract it is clear that having mentors implied having someone to consult with when it comes to decisions about work, promotions, mobility, transfers, etc. These mentors usually have better knowledge and assessment skills due to their long tenure of work, qualifications and working experience than their protégés; therefore decisions made after consulting with mentors are more likely to be geared towards one's career advancement.

### *Religiosity*

Religiosity pertains to the strong belief that uncontrollable events, be it good or bad emanate from a supernatural Supreme Being, who is all-powerful, understanding and can ultimately take away negative situations if one remained in close contact with Him. This belief thus affected the rate of communicating with the supernatural being. In other words, the higher the contact kept, the higher the possibility of a favourable answer or turning the negative into positive. This tended to relieve some anxiety and tension and as such became a coping tool for the women who used it. Religiosity was thus found to play an important part in helping women by helping them cope. For instance, one respondent says this:

*So it's someone to urge you on. You take your Christian life serious as well. I am from a Christian family and I have sought to practice my Christianity as best as i can so that also helps.*

One director explains how this belief is responsible for her boldness and efficiency in dealing with challenges:

*I am a Christian and I will be very honest with you. I cope with everything with God and prayer. That is me. Yes there are times that you feel down that you are being maltreated in a certain way but my only weapon is God and prayer. I will be very honest with you. That is my weapon. I don't depend on any human being. Yes, people will give me support but my boldness and dealing with my challenges, I deal with it on my knees. And God has been good to me.*

She continued to say:

*I worship a God who is all-knowing, who is all-encompassing and he decides where I will go. I make wishes. I hope for things. But in my life at the end of the day, He decides.*

There is a high tendency for people that are religious to attribute their successes and current positions to God. For instance:

*So for me, I never dreamt when I entered PURC (Public Utilities and Regulatory Commission), that one day I will be a director. There were barriers. The recommendation was made when I was a manager. I wasn't made the director. It [recommendations] was made when I was senior manager, I wasn't made the director. And it dragged on since 2007, it just happened last year. So when it is time, God will make a way. You cannot decide what you will be. He will pass you through fire, brimstone, to polish you like when gold is being polished. So when the time comes, He will decide where you will be.*

Similarly, another manager elaborates:

*I think first of all for me, somebody who is a Christian, I think I got here because God gave me favour, because there was a test and we were over hundred, and then it was the top thirty or forty who were invited for a first interview, and then I remember when I came for my interview, I was there with five other men, in my badge, there wasn't any woman there. Then we went to a bigger panel: second interview. I must say it's the favour of God*

From the participants' responses, religiosity as a facilitator was vital in making them resilient to barriers until they had a chance to move to the next hierarchy of management.

It also helped them to cope with whatever challenges came their way because by constantly praying about it or keeping in contact with God, it gave them a chance to pour out all pent-up emotions, stress and anxiety that would have otherwise have affected their work. Thus prayer was an effective ‘talking cure’ for participants who used it. Finally, religious participants believed that everything happening in their lives was from God and as such they had no direct control over it. In addition, they believed that everything God did in their lives was for their own good. This put them at ease to accept situations as it is with the trust that God will in due time lift them to senior positions.

#### *Support from significant others*

Support talks about an individual receiving needed help and understanding from required quarters. Support came from four main sources: Partners/family, friends, colleagues and house-helpers. The amount available to women either enabled women to cope with pressures especially related to work-family conflict or vice-versa. In terms of peer/colleague support for instance:

*You have somebody you can talk to and the support from your team. Always understand that there are different people but we make the team. And also understand that are bad days for somebody so during those times, you help the people through it and it works.*

Another kind of support is partner/family support:

*The kind of man you also marry is another. So if you can have a good network of family and friends, you can work on your mentality; have a right mindset. And if you can have the understanding of your husband, you will be fine.*

In terms of spousal support:

*Fortunately, I don't have a too demanding husband so it makes life, to have the support of your husband, it makes life very easy.*

A manager explains how family support has been instrumental to her career progression:

*I think my family has also helped. Someone like my mum. My mother is a single mother and she's really forceful. By God's grace she was able to go to the university and she believes in education. So if you want to do something, she will encourage you that you should do it. It doesn't matter how many times that you have to try it. So I think the push from her has helped and then my siblings.*

She goes on to talk about the support from friends and colleagues and how beneficial it has been to her:

*And then also from, friends that I've worked along with. Because if you see other people in [.....] positions, you also want to be like them or even be better. So I think my family and my friends, and then also, even at the workplace, you know that everybody is working hard to be able to get somewhere so encouragement from other people.*

The last form talks about support or help from house-help. Consider this account:

*Because when I got here [current position], things were bad and times were so hard. I had to find somebody who at least will be there to give my children food*

*before I got home. Because there's no way a husband will wait for you to get home at 10pm before you give them food to eat. So that's how I managed to cope by finding a fulltime somebody that I had to pay through my nose to keep my house for me.*

This presupposes that support is a vital force that propels women into top management and coming from whatever form (even if one had to pay for it) still helped to relieve or free women in order to carry on with their careers.

#### *Time Management and Personal Sacrifice*

Most of the married respondents were concerned about their career and family especially their children. However, they indicated making progress in both spheres of life required time management and sacrifice. Time management involved apportioning time for each activity so as to be able present what is expected of one at any given time. Personal sacrifice also describes weighing the options between two decisions and selecting the most appropriate under the circumstance that gives maximum comfort and benefits.

*The first thing was to manage my time and to sacrifice my own development. I know that is mostly women problems.*

Also:

*Well! I think remaining focused on what I want to do, work hard, making a lot of sacrifices. For instance, I pick my children when I have like deadlines to meet or something, I pick my children from school, I bring them here (work), we all sit down, they do their homework whilst am also doing my work.*

*Sometimes, coming in over the weekends to work, sending a lot of work home and so on.*

Another respondent also said that a way of meeting expectations at work and home was to manage her time profitably. Consider her report:

*I think when I get to work I try to stay at my desk, ..... when people get to work they want to say hello to 101 people, have a chat with 101 people, go for lunch and spend two hours, I don't do that. So when i get in, i try to get in early, an least 8:00am and I try to stay in my office, i don't go out, the people come to me, and i don't see them off all the way to the gate i don't do that because my work is here waiting for me. So I try to maximize my time, I don't go out for lunch. I used to but for me it's a waste so I will get a snack and take it at lunch time, because you have to wait for the food to be served, it's all time so I try to maximize my use of time at work so that I can get as much as I can from.....*

It is inferred from this that, maximum use of one's time will help especially mothers to balance their careers and family life very well without which it becomes a barrier. Efficient use of time therefore helps women to achieve set goals and as a result serves as a propelling force to attain higher.

#### *Personality and Career Success*

Most of the respondents acknowledged the significant role personality played in their career success. Personality thus refers to the nature of the person in how they relate to

other people in their work environment. To illustrate how her personality accounted for her career success, a manager recounts:

*because of the way you relate to people, like if I have something to do, you know the work that we do we rely on people. If you want information from someone, the person is also doing something. They have their own work to do. They are busy so it's not like because you want information, they have to stop whatever that they are doing and help you out. So if you can relate to people with respect, if you need something from them, they are eager to help you. So it's not like you having to 'bribe' somebody or go the extra mile but because of the way you have treated them in the past, they are always eager to help you out.*

Again:

*As for my personality, yes, crazy as I am. No am not crazy actually. I know how to balance both I should say. I like openness and so in academic affairs because we deal with students. We deal with all kinds of publics your personality counts because you should be able to deal with them. When I came to the Admissions office [which needed patience]I don't know where I got the patience from. Apparently, it just came natural to me.*

One respondent, contrary to this thought that personality did not play much of a role in her climb up:

*I don't think so. It has in a way but not my job. Some people think am too outspoken. I don't think it has. Maybe I did my job well. I try to do my best.*

### *Organizational Fairness*

Another factor found to be of great relevance to managers was organizational fairness in terms of promotions. This explains whether decisions on promotions followed a systematic procedure and decisions arrived at were perceived to be clear and correct based on the laid down procedures. The respondents indicated that promotion in their organizations was not gender bias. Most of them mentioned that irrespective of sex, promotion decisions were based on performance appraisal records and achievement of targets. That once you worked hard or played your part, you were rewarded with promotion. To emphasize fairness in promotion decisions, consider this account:

*Because we [managers] have appraisals just like everywhere else and ours is called PDP. That is Personal Development Plan. When we enter a new year, we have this thing like Excel that has everything so for us. Our goals are we call it 3 plus 1. So you have 3 goals that you have to achieve and the plus 1 has to do with yourself, your own development. So we have an online called NMS where you go and do online courses. And for us in supply chain, we also have these professional papers that we write. It's called Certified in Inventory and Production Management.*

She continued:

*So for the managers, we are selected to write it. There are 5 levels. Once you pass each level and then write all 5 papers you get certified and that is paid for by the business. But you are given 2 chances to write it. After the second you have to pay for it yourself. But then, once you get this professional certificate, you can use it anywhere else and not just Unilever.*

Another woman manager had this to say:

*Like I'm saying, the university setting, it doesn't matter whether you are male or female, you are green or blue. Once you qualify for the place, it doesn't matter whether you are a man or woman, you can get there. So it really doesn't make any difference whether I'm a woman or man. I'm here because of my merits and not because I'm a woman.*

The perception of the organization as fair forms a level ground for both genders to operate freely in an environment they believe is devoid of discrimination. Perceived fairness also leads men and women to consider their experiences and chances as the same. Likewise, most of the respondents acknowledged fairness in terms of their experiences and chances as compared to men in their organization as the same though they acknowledged that it might not be in some other organizations. For instance:

*I think they are the same. The people, men that I met here. I have to spend 6 years here. There are men who have spent more than 6 years and they are still on this current position. So I don't really think it is about gender.*

She continued:

*Because when you come to a place like University setting, men and women are given the same chances so if you [.....] to be good, you are able to raise yourself to a level that people recognize your work and your existence so to say. But if you will decide to sit aloof, I think ..... I think that it's all about hard work. Strive to work hard and you will be able to make it wherever.*

Another manager further says:

*I think it's on an equal level because .....when we came to the job, everybody is treated the same way. Whatever the guys are doing, the women are also doing the same thing. It's nothing [.....]*

Although for one respondent, this perception of organizational fairness was not constant but variable:

*It depends on what you think; i mean what you are looking at. I believe so.*

In sum, promotion decisions was perceived as clear and fair by a majority of the respondents with clearly visible procedures for promotion.

To sum up, the push factors are factors responsible for pushing women into top positions. They include organizational/institutional support, religiosity, mentoring, personality, time management and personal sacrifice and finally organizational fairness.

### **4.3. Chapter Summary**

From the data analyzed, several issues were made evident.

- That career development of middle managers looking to move to top management are affected by two main factors that either pull them and caused them to remain static (barriers/pull factors) or push(facilitators/push factors) them to move to top managerial levels.
- The pull factors comprise : same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of aspiration

- Push factors include: Organizational/ Institutional support, mentoring, personality, religiosity, time management and personal sacrifice and organizational fairness.
- Depending on how strong each element exerts on a middle manager, she is likely to move to top management or stay at middle management.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

With impressive numbers, women have entered into all forms of organizations. However, the journey from middle to top management has been a survival of the fittest and as such women all over the world with Ghana as no exception who have been able to get to top management positions have been very few. This study sought to establish if the sort of obstacles encountered by women were structural barriers explained by the glass ceiling phenomenon. It also addressed how these barriers can be overcome or managed successfully. Using Miles and Huberman's approach to content analysis, relevant findings from the study and its implications are discussed below.

#### **Pull factors/Barriers**

Results of the study revealed that same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of initiative are very influential factors that tend to direct the relationship of women's career advancement negatively. These factors have also been found by other studies to negatively influence career advancement.

#### ***Same-sex Rivalry***

Same-sex rivalry refers to women at the top putting obstacles in the way of other women below them or frustrating their efforts at climbing to the top, especially the closer they got to the top because they felt threatened. The study found that, the harder a woman exerted effort to move to senior managerial positions, the greater women at the top, resisted their efforts because of the feelings of threat. This supports the concept of prejudice (Devine, 1989). It explains that social identifications make an individual conform to group norms.

As a result, the more important an individual's social identity is to him and the stronger his attachment feelings to the group; the more likely he is to react prejudicially to threats from other groups (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). Thus senior managers who felt strongly about their status would conform to the 'norms' at the top, typically, the Old Boy's Network where people at the top preferred males over females to occupy vacant positions even if they both have the same qualification.

Prejudicial attitudes or acts of prejudice are known to defend the sense of self against anxiety that arises from insecurity or inner conflict. Fear has been found to be one emotion that is associated with prejudice (Doyle-Portillo & Pastorino, 2011). This explains why senior level women engage in same-sex rivalry behaviours. This may be as a result of the feelings of 'threat' or 'fear' that their positions and statuses as being the only women at the top of the organizational hierarchy will be endangered when other women 'flood' the top. Thus, in restoring their threatened sense of security they tend to engage in certain open or subtle behaviours, that ensures other women stay out whilst they remain. This finding suggests that senior women managers will engage in prejudicial or discriminatory acts in order to protect their self-esteem (being regarded as 'special' or important to be part of top management) from being threatened.

Finally, this phenomenon can be described by the queen bee syndrome. This syndrome was first defined by Staines, Jayaratne, and Tavris (1974) as a woman in a position of authority who views or treats subordinates more critically if they are female. So though women in power or senior positions succeeded by themselves, but like the queen bee, they refuse to help other women up.

Consistent with this syndrome is Goldberg's (1968) findings. In his study, he asked women students of Connecticut College to judge the value of short articles attributed to either a

male or female author. He found that the articles actually received lower ratings when it was attributed to a female author and most importantly found that women were rather prejudiced against women.

In more recent studies, Escandon and Kamungi (2008) found that there was a wrong perception of a vacant wide space that allowed and also accommodated Kenyan women in leadership. They reported that contrary to that widely-held perception, the actual available space was rather narrow and that many women were scrambling to fit into that same space. As a result fellow women staff most especially those at senior levels were not supportive as they are made out to be but rather perceived each other as competitors. They corroborated the adage that women are their worst enemies because a move into senior management made some uncooperative, jealous and spread malicious rumours which created stress for other women at the workplace.

### ***Work family conflict***

Work-family conflict is the equal demand placed on a woman by her work and family.

Results from the study revealed that all participants, including those that were married and unmarried, had children or no children, were in senior levels or middle levels admitted to work-family conflict being the greatest challenge that women face.

According to Ganster (2005), managerial work involves a pace that exerts considerable physical and mental demands on all individuals regardless of sex. Hence occupying a managerial position in an organization alone is demanding without adding extra responsibilities from other sources.

The role conflict theory, posits that participation in one role is made very difficult as a result of the participation in another. In other words, women's role as home-takers affects their role as managers in the organization because both roles are fighting for equal

attention. This creates tension as the concentration of performing one role affects the other role.

Consistently, research has found this particular challenge of work-family conflict to be persistent among women. For instance, Linehan and Walsh (2000) found that no matter the number of hours women worked, they still took the primary responsibility of childrearing and household tasks.

This negatively affected their rate of career progression. In a typical longitudinal study by Kirchmeyer (2002) with mid-career graduates of a US MBA program, he found that marriage and children were negatively related to measures of managerial success such as income and promotions for women. Though it was found to be positively related to managerial success for men.

Whelan-Berry and Gordon's (2000) study of professional women showed that they set limits on either work or family, developed individual definitions of success, and changed their work setting, among others.

A possible explanation why work-family conflict continues to be a persistent challenge is because, managers who took leave of absences for family issues had little time within which to finish job targets set out for the year. Unlike others, mothers who for instance took maternity leaves shortened their working year by at least 3months or 4months. Some even admitted that it took a while after the leave of absence to be fully submerged in the work as before they left.

Another reason why this was a challenge in the present study is because during the period of their absence, women believed that the 'out of sight, out of mind' syndrome could be working against them. That is, they are forgotten about during the period of their absence and it is only people who are visible to management that catch attention and as a result get promoted.

Also, there is the erroneous belief that management positions demand attention and dedication which women do not have. Women are believed to be distracted by the constant attention that they have to give to their families especially when their children are young. Management also believe that women will be directed by their families when it comes to decisions on promotional opportunities thus women are considered last if considered at all for promotional opportunities depending on whether she has a family or not.

Furthermore, the age of the respondents coupled with the age of children could be offered as a reason why women face work-family conflict. This is because between the ages of 20's and 30's getting married and or having a family becomes a priority for most women in Ghana even career women. This 'need' for marriage and children stems out of the Ghanaian culture which attaches so much importance to marriage and family to the extent that it uses marriage as the basis for assigning reproductive, economic and non-economic roles for individuals. According to Takyi and Oheneba-Sakyi (1994), this entrenched belief has implications for social relations based on people's statuses. For instance, they asserted that unmarried women are often viewed differently from the married. This is probably the reason why a significant number of women in Ghana are married by age 20 (Ghana Statistical Service, 1999; Cohen, 1998). Thus, for the career woman in her early adulthood, succeeding on the home front is as equally important as succeeding in her career. This tends to put undue mental pressure (implied pressure) on her based on what she thinks the society expects of her. Though it may be unsaid, the society holds the woman responsible for the home as it is seen as her primary duty whether or not she has a career. So for most career women who aim to be successful or ascend higher ranks, the desire is not only career related but to manage the home effectively creating tension between work demands and family demands as both demands are physically and mentally

draining. In the study, most of the participants who were in their 30's and married also had young children making their roles double challenging according to them.

Though the introduction of house-helpers to keep the home for a career woman has become common in Ghana, quite a number of men believe that the role of washing and cooking especially for the husband should be a wife's job and not a house-help's. Whereas some women equate help from house-helpers as threatening to their families, others perceive it as a sign of failure and would rather struggle to juggle both roles which in the end affect either one or the other.

### ***Gender Role Socialization***

In the study, gender role socialization described the ways/upbringing, values and mindsets that people have as a result of the learning that they received from previous generations or societal expectations as playing certain distinct roles.

Pervasive societal expectations seem to serve as a constraint limiting women's choices in terms of their roles and that of men. The findings of the study indicated that many women are unable to progress as a result of the societal expectations of who a woman should be and what their roles are. This finding is in line with Eagly's (1987) Social Role theory. According to the theory, men and women behave differently in social situations and assume different gender roles due to the expectations the society places on them. Thus their behaviour and attitudes is guided by what the society expects they ought to do and not as a result of their skills, capabilities and abilities. This is what Eagly (1987) describes as injunctive norms. She further explains that for normalcy to exist in any given social relationship or for any social interaction to run smoothly, it is imperative or critical that both role occupants understand their social position, share the behavioural expectations

associated with their positions in society (themselves and others as well), and, for the most part, enact those expectations and scripts (Biddle, 1986; Jackson, 1998 as cited in Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The role carved out by the society for the woman is to first of all be a mother, wife, sister, girlfriend, etc and make the home. Failure on the part of women to conform to these injunctive norms elicited emotions of disapproval from members of the society. This is what one respondent explained that for women to be accepted and not frowned upon they had to 'tone down' their abilities so they do not come across as being aggressive or manly', characteristics associated with men and not women.

According to Smulders (1998) the reason why gender role socialization continue to hinder women's advancement to senior positions is because people carry gender- based roles, irrelevant to the work place, to the work place and these gender roles are consequently kept in place because the actors of these roles, both dominant and subordinate, subscribe to social and organization reality. This explains why some people expect a husband-wife relationship where the husband is the head of the woman even at the workplace and will resist any authority exercised by women towards them.

### ***Lack of Initiative***

Newman (1993) identified among other things that one's ability and hard work acted as facilitators of women's career advancement. On the reverse, without hard work and ability, women's journey upward would adversely be affected. This supports findings from the study because most women interviewed thought that without hard work, planning and focus, it would be almost impossible for anyone to climb the senior level ladder.

Based on findings, women have a double responsibility of outperforming men for the same kinds of rewards (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Nelson & Burke, 2000). This implies that women need equal or higher levels of ambition as compared to men and must be willing to work extra hard to achieve successful career advancement.

### **Push factors**

The study revealed that organizational/ institutional support, mentoring, personality, religiosity, time management and personal sacrifice and organizational fairness are all positive factors that in good measure tends to catapult women into senior levels. This supports the structural or organizational perspective of the feminist theory. The theory admits that a fundamental change in structural barriers which are the cause of women's marginal numbers such as a change in institutional policies and practices eliminates inappropriate discrimination. Some positive factors such as the presence of organizational guidance, good mentoring systems, proper staff development programmes for women, transparent appointment and promotion procedures, support services for women, access to information technology and flexible work schedules improve women's careers and eventually their advancement and numbers at the top of the hierarchies.

### ***Organizational/ institutional support***

Results of the study indicated that organizational support was an important ingredient for success. Likewise, studies have shown that support from the organization and its members

was the most significant to career advancement (Burke, Konyucu, & Fiksenbaum, 2006; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Tumwesigye, 2010).

Organizational support comes in three forms: promotional opportunities organizations offer, funding and supportive policies. Respondents agreed that one of this support forms have been instrumental in their ability to attain current positions. Studies show that in general women executives emphasize the significance of support networks in either the organization, industry or profession as a means of stimulating career achievement (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Specifically, Burke, Konyucu and Fiksenbaum (2006) concluded that the consequences of organizational support were positive for women because they found that women who reported more supportive organisational experiences engaged more in their work and were generally more job and career satisfied.

Similarly, Abdul Ghani Azmi, Syed Ismail, and Basir (2011) found that advice from immediate boss was considered the most important among a host of factors that facilitated Malaysian Muslim women to progress. They agreed that policies such as assigning equal tasks and having equal opportunities to further studies as well as opportunities to equal pay facilitated women towards career advancement.

Organizational policies that enclose a criterion for top management support and commitment is according to Burke, Konyucu and Fiksenbaum (2006) a step in the right direction because a change in organizations' policies can help women to shatter attitudinal glass ceiling that they encounter throughout their careers (Sandhu & Mehta, 2007).

The present study found that most respondents believed that organizational support has impacted significantly on their professional advancement. A reason for this finding could be that respondents perceived employers' provision of opportunities through funding of tuition fees, organizing relevant programmes needed for personal development or providing polices that took women into consideration was an indication of management's

commitment to women and they being regarded as an asset to the organization. This reflected on their responses on intentions to leave. When asked if they intended to stay in their current organizations for the long term, many respondents indicated that they would like to remain in their present organizations mainly because of the kind of support and opportunities available. This is in line with what Tumwesigye (2010) found in his study on perceived organizational support and turnover intentions. Results of his study indicated that support is positively related to organizational commitment whereas both organizational commitment and support are negatively associated with turnover intentions. Also, Dawley, Houghton & Bucklew (2010) found perceived organizational support to be a predictor of turnover intention.

### ***Mentoring***

Mentoring was mentioned by one respondent as one of the factors that was instrumental in her attaining her current senior position. Studies have confirmed the criticality of social relationships and mentorship in women's career advancement (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Combs, 2003; Ibarra, 1993; Wentling, 2003). This is because women tend to generally advance through a combination of critical social relationships and particular performance strategies (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Mentors are of importance because they offer two general types of behaviours or functions: career development functions, which is believed to facilitate the protégé's advancement in the organization, and psychosocial functions, which is believed to contribute to the protégé's personal growth and professional development (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). They are associated with providing positive outcomes for protégés such as promotions (Scandura, 1992); higher incomes (Dreher & Ash, 1990); mobility (Scandura, 1992) and career satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989) than non-protégés.

Though the female interviewee had a male mentor, that mentorship-protégé relationship still impacted significantly on her. This could be as a result of the prominent position of the male mentor who was a partner in an auditing firm. In accordance with this, Naff (1995), found that having male mentors actually facilitated women to advance in their careers because male mentors, he believed, seemed to hold more powerful positions in the organization.

Olsson and Pringle (2004) also highlighted on the qualities that women need to possess in order to advance their careers. Qualities such as creativity, risk taking, self-confidence, ability to make decisions and think strategically, possessing people skills and being politically astute they believed advanced a women's career. Meanwhile, Dreher and Ash (1990) stressed on having the opportunity to display talent and competence to senior management and to acquire information through informal network as the major facilitators or needed qualities.

### ***Personality***

Qualitative studies on women's advancement as cited in Akinyele (2007) report that personality or perceptions of women's personality traits can assist or derail their careers (Morrison, White & van Velsor, 1992; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). In his study, he found that personality trait can function as moderators, by showing that ambition weakens the positive effect of training and development on women's managerial advancement, and that masculinity and adaptability (traits) strengthen the relationship between work hours and managerial advancement.

The results of the present study on personality as a facilitator were mixed. Whereas some thought it had influenced them to an extent, others thought it had no relevance to their ascent. This is because when asked to describe themselves using adjectives, most of the respondents came up with varied adjectives that were almost distinct categories from each other. This implied that most of these managers were not similar to each other in terms of who they were. This discounts explanations that leaders are born and not made.

### ***Religiosity***

Psychologists have admitted that faith of a person has positive effects on the person (Zeig, 2001). Religion has some variables that act as a stress-buffering role in coping with important negative life stresses and even daily stress (Fabricatore, Handal, & Fenzel 2000). Religion and stress tend to have a positive correlation and religion/faith does also positively affect stress (Zeig, 2001). According to James and Samuel (1999), a person's spiritual growth can be a positive effect of highly stressful life experiences. In other words, people who are very spiritual or religious have faced very stressful life experiences.

In a related study, Fabricatore, Handal, and Fenzel (2000) examined 3 hypotheses in an attempt to show how personal spirituality has an effect on well-being. Using 120 undergraduates, they tested the following hypothesis: stressors would have a negative impact on subjective well-being; personal spirituality would positively predict subjective well-being; and personal spirituality would moderate the relationship between stressors and subjective well-being. The results showed that whilst personal spirituality significantly added to the prediction of subjective well-being, it was found to moderate the relationship between stress and life satisfaction thus allowing those with a deep personal relationship with God to maintain satisfaction with their life even in the face of stressors. Also, using his earlier (Fenzel, 1996) spiritual life integration model, he asserted that individuals, with

a relationship with God and also integrate their relationship into daily living will use that relationship to deal with life's difficulties.

This seemed to be the case for one senior director interviewed who maintained a close relationship with God whilst going through challenges of career advancement. This therefore implies that women react to barriers of career advancement as they would to highly stressful situations. Since stress and religiosity is known to have a positive correlation, women's high level of faith in God can be said to be as a result of the varying degrees of barriers they have faced. Such that they grow resilient in the face of challenges which helps them to overcome them.

### ***Support from significant others***

Family pressures and lack of spousal support at home have been found to undermine women's ability to devote themselves to their career advancement (Nelson & Burke, 2000).

Supporting roles played by significant others such as spouses, family members, colleagues/peers and paid support such as nannies and house-helpers indeed help facilitate women's career advancement by helping them to balance work and family.

Particularly spouses have been known to be significant sources of support for working women in their desire for balance (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Rao, Apte, & Subbakrishna, 2003). Ezzedein & Ritchey (2009) in a study to explore coping strategies devised by executive women in family relationships in advancing their careers and maintaining a career/family

balance revealed that when it comes to support, most of their respondents acknowledged the presence of supportive husbands that permitted their advancement.

Aside this, the women in their study mentioned the support they received from their families especially mothers and children and friends as also being a significant source of push to their careers. Most especially, the respondents believed that their parents played a major role in encouraging their academic achievements and professional pursuits by way of their upbringing (inculcating the belief that they could do anything they set out to do), setting examples for them and offering invaluable advice.

Also, in the same study, where professional support was concerned, they mentioned peers and support networks within the organization and in the industry or profession in general as their source of strength.

This finding support the findings of the present study and this is mostly because Ghana has a collectivist culture which places so much function on family both nuclear and extended and as such people tend to inter-depend on each other the more.

### ***Personal sacrifice and time management***

Results of the study establish that women who want to develop career and family at the same time needed to balance their lives by judiciously using their time and making personal sacrifices in order to have both.

The reason for how personal sacrifice acts as a push factor can be found based on conflict and conflict resolution. Just as workplace conflict works in the workplace between employers and employees; conflict exists between the roles of the woman as a career woman and as a family woman. Among a list of methods used to settle workplace conflicts, compromise have been suggested to be the best because it settles conflicts with a win-win approach. Compromise involves both parties sacrificing at least some of the

original demands. This concept relates to personal sacrifice engaged in by women as a strategy of settling the 'conflicting demands' of work and family.

Time management is related to planning as it involves apportioning some time limits for tasks. Time management is important because it helps to know which task demand immediate attention and to do them; which ones are undone and how one's goals are being met.

### *Organizational fairness*

This explains whether decisions on promotions followed a systematic procedure and decisions arrived at were perceived to be clear and correct based on the laid down procedure. Results of the study indicated that promotion in organizations was not gender-biased. Most of them mentioned that irrespective of sex, promotion decisions were based on performance appraisal records and achievement of targets that they considered to be fair.

This next explanation is founded on the theory of organizational justice by Greenberg (1987), specifically, procedural justice. This refers to the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes. It explains that when individuals feel that they have a voice in the process or that the process involves characteristics such as consistency, accuracy, ethicality, and lack of bias then procedural justice is enhanced (Leventhal, 1980).

Similarly, Hyung-Ryong (2000) conducted a study on organizational justice as a mediator of the relationships among leader-member exchange and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in a lodging industry. He found that distributive justice had a direct positive influence on job satisfaction and was negatively related to turnover intentions. Whereas distributive justice was found to have a strong impact on procedural justice; procedural justice had a direct positive influence on job satisfaction. It

was however negatively related to organizational commitment, and was positively associated with turnover intentions.

This finding therefore explains why most of the respondents who thought that promotion decisions were fair in their organization had intentions to stay in the long term.

### **5.1. Contributions**

The study has contributed to the understanding of the barriers that continue to persist in the lives of career women. The study revealed that women do indeed face challenges that hinder their career progression from middle management to top management. Among the barriers identified are same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of initiative. Studies have consistently shown that work-family conflict, gender role socialization and a lack of initiative are the challenges that faced women when studies on the glass ceiling began and continue to persist after all these years (Catalyst, 2003; Chovwen, 2006; Federal Glass Commission, 1995; Hakak, Holzinger & Zikic, 2009). Aside these factors known to instil a glass ceiling barrier for women moving from middle management to senior management, the study found that another barrier that affects women that have rarely been reported is same-sex rivalry (Ellemers, & van den Heuvel, 2004). This contributes to a new understanding of the barriers that women face. This finding is of great importance to today's organizations because this queen bee behaviour suggests that senior women may be reacting to difficult male-dominated environment (where there is the usual practice of men alienating women) in order for them to adapt. This causes senior women managers to distance themselves from the group. Organizations should thus create environments that are free of male dominated cultures such that both

women and men at various managerial levels can identify with the 'group', feel part of it and as such feel committed to members' welfare. Also, it falls on organizations to encourage women networks by organizing functions that bring women of various managerial levels together where interactions both formal and informal can take place. This exposure will help senior women managers to cease perceiving other middle women managers as the 'outgroup' competing with them over the same resources. It will also help middle managers receive mentorship and colleague support which have been found to push women up the career ladder.

In suggesting strategies to overcome barriers that women encounter, results of the study indicated that support both from the organization and significant others coupled with organizational fairness do have positive effects on women or acted as facilitators of their career advancement. These elements support studies done in the area and has been linked to intentions to leave. Thus for organizations aiming to tap maximally employees talents and skills, especially women, findings from this study gives a lead that there is a need to ensure fairness and support for female managers as it has been linked with job satisfaction whilst job satisfaction has been ultimately linked to job performance. This means that policies surrounding promotions should be as clear cut and accessible as possible in order to avoid ambiguity which inhibits feelings of fairness. Organizations can also support women by engaging in positive policies that consider an interface of women's work-life and family life. For instance, flexible work or time schedules where women can choose the time to start work but still work the full hours required. This will assist women to efficiently balance their work and family load which the study found to be a main factor that hinders their career progress. On the other hand, the women themselves should be encouraged to ask for help. If for instance combining household duties and work

responsibilities is overwhelming they can ask for help from partners and family members and even employ people if needs be without feeling inadequate as women.

Also, mentoring, personal sacrifice and time management and religiosity have all been found to have derived benefits of coping with pressure and overcoming barriers. This is because of the expert advice offered by mentors to their protégés on career choices. Also, mentors can serve as a sounding board for the grievances of their protégé's making it an efficient way of releasing workplace stress and anxiety. This helps women to be able to cope. Thus there is the need for organizations to encourage and institute both formal and informal forms of mentorship because it has been found to have positive effects when instituted properly.

Aside workplace organizations, religious bodies should also encourage the formation of associations such as Business Women fellowships and clubs, etc where women in the same category can join and be involved in religious activities and also have informal interactions with other women.

Finally, findings from this study have contributed immensely to the little to non-existent knowledge/literature on the glass ceiling in Ghana which can guide other researchers and can be used as reference materials for students.

## **5.2. Limitations of the study and Future Research**

As with every study, this study had its share of limitations that needs to be considered in regards to the significance of the study.

First and foremost, the sample size considered for the study was 12. Thus the study lacks the ability to generalize based on its small sample size although Cassell and Walsh (2004) maintains that for qualitative studies, 12 is an appropriate number. While the findings of this study cannot be generalized to a population, its rich nature in description should enable

women in similar positions to recognize themselves in the accounts and identify with it (Amedy, 1999).

Secondly, the nature of some of the participants' office (open nature) allowed walk-ins and distractions and this could have had an effect on the results of the study by limiting to an extent the amount of information that could have been derived from interviewees.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The present study set out to explore the glass ceiling barriers that impede women's career advancement among managerial women in Ghana.

At the end of the study, it was found that four main barriers impede managerial women of Ghana. These are same-sex rivalry, work-family conflict, gender role socialization and lack of initiative. The study also found that measures that helped women buffer the effects of the glass ceiling barrier were: Organizational support, religiosity, mentoring support from significant others, personal sacrifice and time management and organizational fairness. As the study was conducted among some middle managers and senior managers, it is believed that future research should turn a focus on studying whether these barriers are also existent for lower level managers.

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## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Part 1-Background (Personal Information)**

1. How long have you worked in this organization?
2. Tell me about your academic and professional background.
3. What is your current marital status?
4. Do you have children? How old are they? Do you have any intention of having more?
5. What were your professional expectations, goals or aspirations when you first came into this organization?

### **Part 2**

1. What is your current position?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. How would you describe yourself in 5 adjectives?
4. Do you perceive a glass ceiling to be in place at your workplace?
5. How do you think other people perceive your occupying this position?
6. What do you think of yourself as occupying this position?
7. In your opinion, how are your prospects for professional advancement in your current company? Why?
8. What factors have been instrumental in your occupying this position?
9. What are the greatest challenges you faced or are facing in your current company?
10. Do you intend to stay at your current company in the long term?

11. In hindsight how do you see your experience of occupying this position in comparison to men with the same qualification and experience? Please provide an example.
12. How do you see your chances for professional advancement if compared to men in a similar role as yours? Please provide an example.
13. What are the factors that have assisted in your career development?
14. What were or are your main challenges or acted as barriers during their ascent?
15. How are you coping with these challenges or how were you able to overcome these challenges?
16. How does your job climate or organizational culture help in reducing or escalating these barriers?
17. What are your career needs, goals and aspirations now?
18. Would you say it has changed from when you first came into this organization?
19. What are the factors that have hindered your career advancement?
20. What are your future goals and perceived barriers to reaching those career goals and aspirations?
21. Has your personality in any way accounted for your success?
22. What leadership style would you say you use on your subordinates?
23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

PSYC 2/33/02

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

MISS DORCAS GYEKYE

The above-named is an M.Phil Industrial & Organizational Psychology Student at the University of Ghana, Legon.

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the M.Phil degree, Miss Dorcas Gyekye has to write and submit an original thesis.

She has selected the topic: “Women at work: A study of the glass ceiling phenomenon among managerial women in Ghana”.

To enable her collect data for her work she would need to conduct interviews. She has selected your institution as suitable for her data collection.

Any assistance you may give her would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

(Dr. B. Amponsah)

### **APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

#### **Key:**

R- Researcher

A- Answer

R: Please how long have you held this position for?

A: i think about two years.

What was your professional expectation when you first came into this organization?

A: Issue is i have known PZ for a long time because when i was in Deloitte i was auditing PZ so i really did understand their business. So i wasn't overly, i mean, it's not like walking into a totally new place because i had been here, work with them and i knew a lot of people and i knew what to expect before i joined them.

R: So you didn't have any expectation? Let me try and explain. When i say expectation, I mean maybe within a specific time frame you set for yourself, you expect to achieve something or a certain result or even position. Was it like that for you when you first entered this organization?

A: Oh yeah. i joined as a grade 4 as i told you. By then, they weren't too many grade 4s as in chartered accountants working. I think when i came i was the only chartered accountant. Most of them were writing the professional exams but they had not yet qualified. The finance director who was there was a chartered accountant. But apart from him i think i

was the next chartered accountant. About two people were writing their final professional exams. So i knew that if i came and i performed the possibility of me moving up fast was high. And that was one of the reasons why i joined and it wasn't surprising when after about 2years which included probation anyway, i was promoted to this position

R: How would you describe yourself in 5adjectives?

A: i think i am an open person. I say things to people, if for instance you do something that i don't like, i will first tell you before even if i have to discuss it at any forum, i do that. But at least i call you and talk to you and let you know that i didn't like what you said.im not the type, i really do not encourage people talking about other people. And in an organization sometimes those things do happen, i try to be an example for people so things that i believe in, i do them for people to take a cue from me. I think am also a very jovial person. I have a good sense of humour and i believe that you don't necessarily have to have this manager-subordinate relationship. i think that you need to work as a team .so what you have are different people with different qualities contributing to a team. And you should be able to identify what the other person does best and put that to use.

R: In your opinion, what are the prospects for professional advancement in this place?

A: Very very very varied. If you want to vie (branch) into any other area you have the liberty because we are a group of companies and we are entrepreneurs so PZ is into so many things. If you are here you don't have to look at yourself as working for PZ Ghana alone. What you need to understand is that you are working for PZ. There are opportunities everywhere; in Nigeria, in Kenya, in the UK, in Greece. All you need to do is to excel in what you do and if the group finds that we need you here, once you are open to that, you will go. And there are people who come here as marketing people and they turn out to be maybe finance staff if that is your strength. There are other people who came in as finance

but you realise that they can do better maybe in supply chain or better in marketing and they end up.....So wherever you want to go in, you have the opportunity to do it. There's a vast experience for people to learn and the firm or business encourages you so they support your further education.

R: In terms of money do they pay your fees?

A: They support. Some people are doing some Masters programme, they may not pay in full but they support you. i think they agreed for a certain number of years to support you or i think pay half your fees. And once you are doing [samples], you are given some time to learn as well so when you have to close early your boss understands.

R: So in general you are saying that the prospects are very good?

A: The prospects are very good. It depends on what you are looking for .i mean every individual has their own plans and sometimes it's the company that the individual, so it's how the company fits into the individual plans.

R: What are the greatest challenges that you have faced or are facing now as a manager?

A: As for challenges, i think, its sometimes trying to balance your social life and the work. It's a bit demanding. More so if you have strict reporting deadlines. For instance we have just finished the year. We need to close the books. We need to open the New Year and by the next Tuesday, we have to be reporting because every operating unit needs to send their needs to send their report so that they can be consolidated. So the reporting timelines are quite strict and sometimes you have to be in the office till late to be able to accomplish that. That is what happens to senior managers because you to make sure what needs to be delivered is delivered. It doesn't matter what goes into getting it delivered. If it means you have to stay extra hours late, you have to. If you are a junior staff, they will be happily

doing that because they know they will clock some overtime but you don't have that. So it's challenging but i think as human beings we, life without challenges is actually boring so you will enjoy the challenges when they come. More so when you know that it's not every day. There are times and for us in the finance department, at least your deadlines, they don't change. We know that at the end of the month so all through the month, you know that at the end of the month at least 2 or 3days you will be busy so you plan according to that.

R: So how are you coping with that? Based on the challenges you said?

A: i think i am fortunate. i live close to my office so the issue of spending hours in traffic doesn't come in. And more so, because i live close to the office, even if i leave late, i still manage to get home before my husband who is coming from Accra. That's one. And career women, a wife and you know your duties so you plan. Over the weekend you try to think ahead and make provisions for the week so that days that you have to close late the family will not necessarily have to suffer for it. So i think that's how I've been managing .fortunately, i don't have a too demanding husband so it makes life, to have the support of your husband, it makes life very easy.

R: Do you intend to stay here in the long term?

A: Unless there is an extremely, how do i put it? I'm thinking of what the offer can push me because just yesterday i was talking to a friend and i said that even now, if you ask me to come for an interview in Accra, i will have to think about it. Because I'm so comfortable with living with....it's so good to live close to your office. It's so relaxing. Sometimes i wake up at 6.00am and am able to get to the office by 7.30am. So unless the offer is extremely....i really don't think it's always about money because here i get the challenges

that i need in my life and you see the prospects. So sometimes you look at what the financial returns are but you also have to look at the cost and see where you want to trade.

R: How would you or at what stage of your career do you think you are in now?

A: i think am still growing in my career. I qualified in 2003. I had worked with Deloitte for 10 years and i think after 10 years i felt that there wasn't any new thing to learn in the audit profession because i had audited almost all manner of companies so i needed something new so i came to the manufacturing. When i came here i realized that there's a lot more out there than i thought it was because most of the transactions that we do here, we learnt in school and you never.... i mean when you auditing, you go , they have done the transactions already. You only review, which is very different from when you have to generate and so i think am still enjoying. i think every year there's something new that comes up. Last year we were doing some field lease transactions. This year, we have done some [...] transactions so every year. You know when the cedi depreciation, the cedi started rising high then we needed to take cover. We use a lot of foreign currency and you need to buy dollars at forward rates. For instance, yesterday, one of our hedges matured at 1.884 but now the dollar is at 1.93/1.95 which means we have bought it at a good price. I'm in charge of trade so we need to manage [...] make sure we are putting the money into good use and all those things, practical things that you don't get really [...] and i see there are other things that i need to understand. This role that i have taken is also quite new being in charge of the account payable. It helps you to deal with a lot more of our suppliers, trying to set credit terms, agree, go into negotiations with them. So you get to know, and it's putting your training in practice which is very interesting.

R: So do you think you have reached your peak?

A: No. I am still in the middle. There's much much more to learn. And i haven't had the experience with board of directors. For instance having to present to them, sit at board level for discussions, which is the next level of my career.

R: In hindsight how do you see your experience of you occupying this position in comparison to men with the same qualification and experience?

A: I don't see men women as a..... i think we are a team. And i see us as different human beings approaching things in different ways. I haven't really given it a thought that if i were a man, i would have gotten a better [.....].no i think it's all about the individual. What you want to achieve, how you want to go about it and it's all about your work talking for you. So everything is in the performance. If you are performing, you will be given more challenges.

R: What are some of the factors that have assisted in your career development?

A: A lot. If you have somebody you look up to, somebody you can talk about your career with, it helps, a mentor. When i was Deloitte i had one of the partners as my mentor. He is somebody i can even call at midnight and we discuss issues, career issues. so when i wanted to leave Deloitte for instance, i discussed with him. He said, yeah i understand you. You have been here for 10years. What again can you learn? It's a cycle .so it's someone to urge you on. You take your Christian life serious as well. I am from a Christian family and i have sought to practice my Christianity as best as i can so that also helps. You have somebody you can talk to and the support from your team. Always understand that there are different people but we make the team. And also understand that are bad days for somebody so during those times, you help the people through it and it works.

R: In your opinion what are the 3 main factors that hinder career advancement particularly those in Ghana?

A: Laziness. People get too comfortable with what and sometimes it's their own mind-set that if i get here, i should be ok. So you don't push. That is one. Sometimes too the family. But i think God created women as multi-tasking people so we have been equipped to handle so many things at the same time. Other times, you finish your school, you want to marry. Some people will want to finish taking care of your kids before they think about their career. Other people will combine and may excel or may not be able to do that combination well. But i think everything that you want to do is within you so it all depends on you. And you have to take the decision that i want to do this. And you can do it.

R: If women want to move similar positions what 3 solutions or procedures would you suggest? In terms of individual, organizational and societal?

A: I think they should improve their leadership skills, excel in what they do because it's your performance that will take you there. But when you are there you also need to know how to manage people and manage expectations around you. Most of the times, I think you have to stand up to the position you are holding. Sometimes people think that wherever you get to, [fail] to see yourself as a woman and therefore if the man [...] you have a male colleague, you should see yourself as the woman. This is not a husband and wife relationship. It's a corporate world and most people will say the world is a man's place so if you are there you need to prove yourself. You don't have to behave like a man to be there. You still ill need your female and the feminine instincts to do your things the way you should do them. So i think it's how to manage, you have to manage the expectations around you.

R: That is the individual?

A: Yes.

R: What about the organization? What can they do to make women to move to these positions?

A: The organization should just give a level ground for all to play.

R: What about the government?

A: I think that as society evolves, so we have moved from once a woman was the one taking care of the children when women were generally the housewives. Now women play important roles even in the lives of their husbands. And so society should acknowledge them. That a society evolves and even traditions even change so at every point in time we should live up to those expectations.

R: How do you think others perceive you in terms of you being a senior manager?

A: Maybe sometimes they may say that this woman is troublesome, she's too demanding, too strict. I remember sometime i was fumbling this in the [.....] washroom. In the morning when i came i demanded to meet all the ladies in the office. So i talked and when i finish i just said it's that clear? And everybody said yes madam. So those are some of the things. The time as i said, if i don't want to see this thing here. If you put it there i will pick it up. I will make sure i tell you i don't want it lying here that's why i have picked it up so you don't do it.

R: Leadership by example?

A: Yes.

R: What perception do you have of yourself or women in similar positions as you?

A: I think my role is ok. I believe that no matter what the role you can carve it to suit yourself and make it interesting so that work doesn't become tedious. So you just need to understand your role and find easy ways of doing what otherwise would be a difficult task.

R: What are your future goals?

A: I mentioned one. I've not yet had an experience with being for instance a member of board. So that's what i am aspiring to. I am just another step from reaching there. That's the next level.

R: When you get there, do you think that will be the peak.

A: That will bring satisfaction but it doesn't mean that's all you aspired to. And am sure once you are there then your aspiration also moves up