Factors that Influence the Glass Ceiling. Evidence from Formal Sector Organisations in Ghana

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Author's contribution

Author EA made substantial contribution to the conception and design, acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data. Author DCA critically revised the paper for important intellectual content and reviewed the draft manuscripts. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate some of the factors that impede on the careers of women. The study is intended to help come out with guidelines for HR practitioners in Ghanaian organisations on how to enhance the career advancement of women as well as help policy makers in making decisions that concerns improvement of the conditions and standard of living of women in Ghana. This research is made up of a literature review which analyses various theories related to the glass ceiling and supported by a survey and semi-structure interviews using themes developed from the literature review. The survey was conducted using self-administered questionnaires to workers in the formal sector who met the respondent specification since purposive sampling technique was used. Also, the snowball sampling was used to identify women in upper levels of organisations for the semi-structured interviewees since their experience on the research topic was crucial to their selection. In all, 50 questionnaires were answered and 3 semi-structured interviewees were conducted in three formal sector organisations in Ghana. The respondents were men and women in subordinate and management positions. The findings from the study revealed that there are few women at the top levels of organisations. This indicates that certain factors prevent women from getting to the upper levels of organisations which signals the existence of the glass ceiling. Also, it was realised that there were four factors which influence the existence of the

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glass ceiling in organisations. These factors are; the role of the government, organisational barriers, the influence of the society and the contributions made by women themselves.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance placed on gender diversity in organisations is a response to the growing number of women in the labour market and the need for organisations to take total advantage of the changing labour force. This is because in the past, women were considered as inferior to men and did not receive the same education and opportunities as them. According to ancient philosophers like Pythagoras and Aristotle; women were seen as "imperfect men". Hence, they did not need the same education as men to prepare them for transformation and change in the world (Anca & Vazquez [1]). This created illiteracy among majority of women and restricted their roles to the homes and to a large extent the informal sector since the formal sector required educated workers (Afedo, Aziale and Ahiekpor [2]). For instance, during the colonial ruling in Ghana, the participation of women in economic, social and political activities was restricted to their homes. This was because women were not educated since their education was seen as unimportant and hence could not be employed in these sectors (Dejene [3]). This created unequal conditions that favoured men which eventually created uneven access to the formal sector because men made most of the major decisions.

Nevertheless, the cause to improve the standard and conditions of women started in the nineteenth century with the formation of women's movements. This helped to strengthen the bond between women, brought to the public arena their rights and created opportunities such as female education by the 1920s (Bolt [4]). In spite of these developments and the devotion of the whole 1975 as the year of the woman by the United Nations (Evans [5]), women have still been counted as part of the minority in upper echelons of organisations (Davidson and Burke [6]). This is because up until the 1980s, organisation theory neglected the gender aspects and viewed employees from a gender natural perspective (Alvesson and Billing [7]). During this time, organisations were built on the principles of profit and maximum growth, aggressive competition, the tendency to make qualitative ideals (money) and the ultimate

measure of success (Alvesson and Billing [7]). Therefore, even though some women were educated around that time, they were still limited to progress in their careers by these factors especially those who worked in the formal sector.

Still, the twenty first century has seen a paradigm shift of women around the globe advancing and occupying higher positions in both corporate and social lives. This is because countries are adjusting and creating more avenues to utilise the talents of women in economic and corporate decision making. For instance, some European countries like Norway, France and Spain have implemented minimum quotas for female board representations in organisations (Copley [8] ;Covert [9]; Davidson [10] and Fontanella-Khan [11]). However, the same cannot be said for women in the formal sector of Ghana because the country as well as organisations in it is still masculine with concepts, programmes and objectives which are made by and for men (Prah [12]). These masculine principles coupled with other factors such as the Ghanaian culture prevent women from working and progressing through the ranks of organisations hence causing gender imbalance in higher levels of organisations and heightening the glass ceiling effect.

The Ghana Statistical Service [13] states that more women (52.3%) than men (47.1%) enter the labour market but men tend to be more economically active and climb organisational ladders quickly than women (Otoo, Osei-Boateng, and Asafu-Adjaye [14]). In addition, Lituchy, Punnett, & Puplampu [15] concluded in their research that over (60%) women in formal sector organisations in Ghana are in non-managerial positions. Also, a research conducted by Amidu & Abor [16] concluded that only (7%) of listed companies in Ghana have women in their board of directors with (93%) of companies having men. This gives an indication that although the labour market participation rate of women in Ghana is higher than men; most women are found in the lower levels of organisations. Thus, it is believed that certain factors hinder the progress of women in getting

to the upper echelons of organisations and this is what this researcher seeks to find.

The business environment of the world today has become complex than several years ago with various possible threats and opportunities that must be negotiated every day. Among these are increasing global competition from businesses around the world, unpredictable global economy and the challenges of staffing and female leadership (Stuart [17]). Out of the many factors that are viewed to contribute to improving and sustaining successful businesses, female management leadership is the one that has received a lot of attention in recent years. However, although having a lot of women in leadership positions in organisations does not necessarily lead to business successes, it helps improve organisational performance according to researches by (Credit Suisse [18]; Mckinsey & Company [19]). In addition, with the projection of talent shortage to become more severe in most of the developed and developing countries, maximising access to the talent of women is a strategic imperative for businesses and countries at large (Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi [20]).

Therefore, since women form more than half of the human capital of the of Ghanaian labour force (Ghana Statistical Service [21]), the key for the future of the nation and formal sector organisationsions is the ability to attract, train and retain the best talent possible. Thus educating, empowering and harnessing the talents and leadership of women fully in the Ghanaian economy, corporate, politics and social lives are key elements to being successful and prospering in this competitive world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Johns [22], glass ceiling is a phrase which refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women and minorities from assuming positions at the top of corporate hierarchies in organisations. In other words, Barreto, Ryan and Shemitt [23] state that the notion of glass ceiling is metaphorical barriers which can be separated from formal or legitimate barriers to progress like education or experience.

All the same, various writers of the glass ceiling have different perceptions and ideas about its existence in organisations. Whereas some such as (Brush [24]; Edward [25]; Ness [26]; Sabharwal [27]; and The Royal Gazette [28]) believe in the existence of the glass ceiling, others such as (Brown [29]; Dubey [30]; and

Quast [31]) argue its existence. Nonetheless, in the Ghanaian formal sector Afedo et al. [2] argue that it does exist. Still, those who believe in the existence of glass ceiling view it from different perspectives. Some such as (Smith, Smith and Verne [32]) see a gender wage gap between men and women with the same or similar qualifications and experiences doing the same or similar jobs. Others on other hand, believe that glass ceiling exist in some jobs such as astronauts (BBC [33]), contractors (Kolade and Kehinde [34]) and IT (Zent [35]) that are seen as more "masculine" in nature or male dominated (Barrios and Toni [36]; Martin and Barnard [37]). For example, Catalyst [38]) states that women form only (25%) or less of the total workforce in these male dominated organisations because the job prove to be challenging for their advancement due to the fact that most of the talent management programs are male biased.

However, this argument is rebuttable as women are employed and now head some of these 'masculine' or male dominated organisations. For example, IBM has (27%) of women as managers, (23%) as corporate executives, and (17%) of its board members are women (Working Mother [39]), and women constitute (66%) of employees in senior levels at Vodafone Ghana (Dowuona [40]).

The classifications of these gender roles in relation to the jobs performed by women and men can be related to the role congruity theory which makes men superior and consider women as secondary citizens.

2.1 The Role Congruity Theory

The role congruity theory states that women are perceived as less favourable occupants of leadership positions in organisations compared to men because they cannot exhibit the behavioural characteristics such as voluble and autocratic needed by leaders (Eagly and Karau [41]). This reflects (Schein and Davidson [42] and Schein [43]) conclusions that when it comes to management positions in most countries, preference is given to men because it is believed that men are better managers than women thus 'think manager think male'. For instance a research conducted by (Akuamoah-Boateng et al. [44]) concluded that duties in upper echelons of organisations in the formal sector of Ghana are seen as preferably a male's job than a female. The above suggests that the perception of men as superiors to women has been a

significant aspect of the socio-cultural philosophy of Ghanaians which makes it difficult for people especially men to accept the view of having women as their leaders. For example, a research conducted by Preko [45] concluded that (69.5%) of 122 sample of men in 17 companies in Ghana agreed that they preferred to work under men than women and also saw managerial positions as more masculine in nature than feminine. In addition, a majority of 200 respondents in 20 organisations in the formal sector concluded that they preferred working for male managers than females because women tend not to possess the leadership qualities needed at the upper echelons of organisations (Afedo et al. [2]).

On the contrary, those not in support of the existence of the glass ceiling in organisations believe that there are more women than men now in the labour force compare to 20 years ago. Also, some women have managed to make strides by progressing to higher positions in organisations thus breaking the glass ceiling (Cooper-White [46]; Cowan [47]; Gledhill and Lodge [48]; McKelvey [49]). Yet, the same cannot be said for women in the formal sector of Ghana as there are still few of them occupying higher positions in organisations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to use primary data which was gathered through open and close ended questionnaires as well as semi-structured interviews. The primary data formed the core information needed to achieve the research objectives. The research design for this study was survey. The survey was used to answer questions such as "Who? What? Where? How much? and How many?. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the fifty-three (53) workers from selected organisations in Ghana. The organisations were; Airtel Ghana, University of Cape Coast and Baron Distilleries. Purposive and snowball sampling technique were used because of the nature of the topic and the scattered nature of the targeted population for the study. The Purposive sampling techniques was used to select the (50) participant for the questionnaires whiles the snowball sampling techniques was used to select (3) women from senior management positions for the interviews.

The data was organized into tables and figures based on the questionnaire given to respondents. The results were then analyzed and converted into percentages and presented in tables. Microsoft excel and SPSS were used for the computation and subsequent analysis of the data collected from the respondents.

Table 1 below gives a brief description of the demographic data used in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Male	Female	Percentage
Gender	17	33	
Age (years)			
18 – 24	3	9	24
25 - 34	8	13	42
35 - 44	3	8	22
45 - 54	1	0	2
55 and above	1	0	2
Levels of education			
Secondary School	2	8	20
Any Diploma	2	18	40
First Degree	8	5	26
Master's Degree	4	2	12
PhD	1	0	2
Organisational hierarchies			
Lower Level	4	27	62
Middle Level	9	4	26
Upper Level	4	2	12
Personal income			
Under 1000	7	24	62
1000 - 1900	3	7	20
2000 - 2900	3	0	6
3000 - 3900	0	1	2
4000 - 4900	1	0	2
5000 and above	3	1	8

4. RESULTS

4.1 Factors that Influence the Glass Ceiling in Formal Sector Organisations in Ghana

Table 2 shows the role the government of Ghana plays to ensure the increase of women in senior management positions in organisations. The results show that overall the government has not really done enough to improve the career of women in organisations. This is because majority (46) agreed with the fact that there is no government involvement for affirmative action to improve the number of women in upper echelons of organisations compared to 4 who disagreed. In addition, 41 people agreed with the assertion that women earn lower than their male counterparts doing the same job with the same or similar qualification as opposed to 9 people who disagreed which support the assertion made

in the literature by (Smith, Smith and Verne [32]) that in general women who perform the same or similar jobs with the same or similar qualifications and experience as men earn lesser than their male counterpart.

From Table 3, the researcher used various variables to assess the contributions organisations make towards the career progress of women. The results show that the respondents mostly agreed with the statements made by the researcher than they disagreed. This indicates that generally the organisational structure and some policies in organisations act as barriers to the career progression of women. This is because according to the 50 respondents 37 of them agreed that woman normally need to work harder than men in order to be promoted in organisations as opposed to 13 people who disagreed with the statement. Also, 43 respondents agreed to the fact that the upper echelons of organisations lack women because organisations did not have any mentoring programs in place to train women for future succession. This is supported by research findings of (Afedo et al. [2]) as stated in the literature and the responses received from the interviewees below;

Question 3: Does your organisation have any mentoring program in place to help improve the career progression of women?

Woman 1: "*My organisation does not have any special mentoring program for women except the general mentoring program for both men and women*"

Woman 2: *"Yes my organisation has but it is only for a short period and for new employees. Aside this, we do not have any special mentoring*

program that increases the number of women in upper echelon of our organisation".

Woman 3: *"No my organisation does not have any mentoring program at all".*

Again 45 participants agreed that glass ceiling exist in organisations because women need time to cater for their families as opposed to 5 people who disagreed with the statement.

Findings from interview regarding women needing time to cater for their families' shows that organisations sometime serve as barriers in preventing women to cater for their families which consequently affect their career progressions.

Question 4: Are there any strategies put in place by your organisation to ensure the advancement and promotion of women especially those with children to higher positions?

Woman 1: *"I think my organisation has an equal opportunity environment but the equal opportunity sometimes does not help. A mother for example who works in a developing country has greater responsibility over her children than her husband so if organisations treat a woman the same way as they treat a man then it becomes a problem especially when the woman has more than two children to take care of on a daily basis. This is because a man will just have to wake up and go to work whereas a woman will have to wake up and clean, cook and take care of her children before going to work. If anything at all probably organisations could have an unequal environment and that would help women especially those who have kids of a certain age because it is a challenge for people who have this kind of situation".*

Table 2. The role played by the government in influencing glass ceiling

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
No government involvement for affirmative actions	19	27	2	2
Women in Ghana earn lower than their male counterparts	13	28	5	4

Table 3. Organisational barriers to the careers of women

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Women have to work harder than men	16	21	10	3
Lack of female mentors	13	30	5	2
Women need to cater for their families	8	37	1	4

Woman 2: *"No my organisation does not have any such strategies which poses a challenge to me because I am treated like a man and work equally with them which affects my family commitments".*

Woman 3: *"No it does not which I think affect the career of women especially those with children".*

Question 5: Does your organisation have any flexible work arrangements to ensure that women especially those with children are able to progress?

Woman 1: *"No but I think organisations should make arrangements like nursery or extra time off for women to be with their kids in this way it will help them integrate more into the organisation".*

Woman 2: *"No my organisation does not have any flexible work arrangements but only follow the statutory requirements which normally affect women with children because they are supposed to resume work three months after delivery".*

Woman 3: *"No but women with children get the statutory amount of maternity leave and the company adds some extra time to it. Upon resumption, they do certain number of shorter hours and leave earlier than their colleagues but aside that there are no such arrangements in place for women".*

Table 4 shows the role the Ghanaian society plays to influence glass ceiling in organisations. It indicates that overall 64 strongly agree and 110 agree responses were received for the statements made compared to 17 disagree and 6 strongly disagree. 45 participants agreed that men are better managers than women compared to 5 people who disagreed. Again, 44 participants were of the view that generally men do not prefer to work under women which support the role congruity theory in the literature,

whilst 6 people disagreed with the assertion. Also, 48 participants agreed that women do not want to take risks and make some sacrifices due to the Ghanaian culture which affect their promotions in organisations whereas 2 people disagreed. This is supported by the results received from the interviewees as shown on Question 6 below;

Question 6: Were you compelled to sacrifice your family and other social lives for your career or you were able to combine both.

Woman 1: *"First of all I am not married and secondly I cannot say I had to give up marriage or anything for anything special".*

Woman 2: *"Yes looking at the nature of work I had to do and knowing very well that I was working in a male dominated organisation, I had to make sure to outperform my male counterparts in order to be promoted. Therefore I had to postpone marriage to a later date as well as sacrifice some aspects of my life especially my social life because I wanted to succeed and get to this level".*

Woman 3: *"Yes but I must say it was not all the time but some sacrifices needed to be made along the line to help improve my career".*

Moreover, 40 participants agreed that there are few women in upper echelons of organisations because there are no publications or literature to motivate them as opposed to 10 people who disagreed.

Table 5 was used to assess the contributions made by women to influence the glass ceiling in organisations. The results revealed that 40 participants agreed that women influenced the glass ceiling by sabotaging other female aspirants whereas 10 people disagreed with the assertion

Table 4. The influence of the society on the careers of women

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Men are better managers than women	18	27	4	1
Men do not prefer to work under women	21	23	5	1
Women do not want to make sacrifices due the Ghanaian culture	11	37	2	
No publication and literature about women	14	26	6	4
Total	64	110	17	6

Table 5. The contribution of women towards the glass ceiling

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Female managers sabotage female subordinates	15	25	7	3

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Existence of Glass Ceiling in Ghanaian Organisations

The results from the various indicators such as salaries, levels of education and hierarchical levels show unequal treatments between men and women in the various organisations. These unequal treatments create invisible barriers called the glass ceiling (Johns [22]) which women are unable to penetrate and climb up the career ladder in their organisations.

5.2 Factors That Influence the Glass Ceiling In Organisations

The factors that influence the glass ceiling in organisations can be grouped into four which are: the role of the government, organisational barriers, the influence of the society and the contributions made by women themselves.

5.2.1 The role played by the government in influencing the glass ceiling in organisations

The government of Ghana has undertaken so many initiatives such as the implementation of the single spine salary structure (Government of Ghana [50]) to improve the general conditions of workers but no particular affirmative actions have been implemented to improve and support women in their careers. The only exceptions are actions taken to increase the number of women in parliament and those to improve girl child education which indirectly sometimes helps with the empowerment of women in the country (Mould-Iddrisu [51]). This gives a cause to worry as organisations have options to implement strategies that will improve the career advancement of women or not. According to the survey, the researcher had 46 agreements as opposed to 4 disagreements that the non-participation of the government in improving the number of women in top management positions discourages them from progressing to higher levels in organisations as indicated on Table 3.1 above. This buttress the statement made in the literature that in Ghana the promotion of women into higher levels of organisations is seen as an ethical and not a legally enforceable issue. Hence, companies have the choice to either formulate policies to increase the participation of women or not (Institute of Business Ethics [52]). This has led to the masculinisation of Ghanaian organisations since there are no legally enforceable measures taken by the government of Ghana like other countries such as Italy, Norway and France (Copley [8]; Covert [9] to keep companies on track.

5.2.2 Organisational barriers to the career advancement of women

The findings from the research suggest that organisations sometimes pose barriers to the career progression of women. This is because the findings from the survey revealed that 37 participants agreed that women have to work harder than men in order to be promoted in organisation in Ghana. However, this conclusion is not far-fetched because several researches have come to the same conclusion. For instance, a research conducted by (Adamson and Eve [53]) concluded that women put in 80 hours per week which is twice as long as their male counterparts. In addition, Bromley [54]) states that five different surveys conducted in the United States and Britain over the past five years came to the same conclusion that women have to work harder than men so as to be considered as good. Therefore, in order for women to be promoted to higher levels within organisations, they have to work harder than men or risk their chance of being promoted and remain at the lower levels. This serves as a barrier for those who aspire to be and those in higher positions. On the other hand, women who want to be promoted and pursue their career by working extra harder than men end up losing their families and sometimes their social lives as confirmed by the results from the research and the findings by (Preko [45]) as stated in the literature.

Another organisational factor that prevents women from progressing through the ranks of their career is lack of mentors. Since companies do not have any specific mentoring programs as pointed out by the participants of the interview

above, then it presupposes that women do not have anyone to guide them throughout their career which eventually results in their low representation in upper echelons of organisations. Again, Burke and McKeen [55] argue that mentoring that is supported by an organisation have a modest impact on outcomes and personal wellbeing measures. On the contrary, since organisations do not support mentoring of female workers even when some women take the initiative, they will not be able to achieve their desired outcomes. In addition, mentoring gives career guidance and psychological support to workers. Nevertheless, a research by (Noe [56]) shows that women have difficulties in establishing mentoring relationship with men. Therefore, since female workers in organisations do not get the chance to be mentored by other females, as there are a handful of women in upper levels of organisations, it affects the mentoring relationship which consequently affects the outcome.

5.2.3 The contribution made by women towards their low representation in top management

The results from the survey revealed that women contribute to their low representation in upper echelons of organisations based on the following discoveries: the queen bee syndrome, and female educational levels.

5.3 The Queen Bee Syndrome

One of the most unfortunate issues that come up during the discussion of women in management positions is the queen bee syndrome. Therefore, the researcher found it as something that is worth investigating using the variable Women in senior levels tries to sabotage those in lower levels.

According to researches by (Drexler [57] and Wrigley [58]), women in top management positions in organisations are reluctant in assisting and supporting other women in lower levels to reach the top. Also, a research by (Afedo et al. [2]) in the formal sector revealed that female managers sabotage other female workers in lower levels of organisations using austere criticisms and most of the times fail to project them as good management candidates. On the contrary, Mavin [59] argues that the queen bee label projects women in management as responsible for the women in management mantle and when they refuse to conform they are

labelled as queen bee and states that women see other women as their natural allies. In another view even though at times women try to help other women, it is sometimes misjudged by other workers within the organisation. In this sight, Kattara [60] argued that when a woman promote other women in organisations such promotions are scrutinised and verified but a male manager can promote other males or women without receiving any such treatments. This implies that even though sometimes women do not conform to the queen bee statuses they are made to by the structures within organisations and their colleagues. Conversely, the analyses of the results indicated that generally female managers in top management positions in organisations have poor attitudes towards other female subordinates as indicated on Table 5. This attitude serves as barrier for women to progress through the hierarchies of their organisations.

5.4 Female Education

The results from the survey confirmed that the educational levels of men in organisations are greater than women as indicated on Table 1 above. Likewise, the report from the Ghana population and housing census (Ghana Statistical Service [61]) shows that the number of men and women in the country decreases as the educational levels increases from nursery to the PhD level. Notwithstanding the above, the amount of decrease in women becomes greater than that of men. This creates a gender gap in the education rate of the population as confirmed by the research results on Table 1.

Consequently the fact that there are few women in the labour market compared to men with the requisite qualifications to occupy top management positions means the number of men will always outweigh that of women in management positions unless women increase their educational levels.

Thus, the above points support the argument made in the literature by (Smith et al. [32]) that normally most of the metaphors of the glass ceiling look at the discriminations against women attempting to climb the organisational ladder rather than assess the attitudes and contributions made by women themselves.

5.5 The Society

The society has a role to play in increasing the number of women in senior management positions but unfortunately the Ghanaian society

has not done much. The research revealed that the principles on which societies in Ghana are built on also influence the number of women in top management positions in organisations. Thus, certain variables were used to determine how these principles affect the participation of women in top management positions.

5.6 Think Manager Think Man

The researcher wanted to analyse the truth of the assertion that men are perceived as better managers than women. Findings from the survey revealed that majority of the respondents' perceived men as better managers and more suitable for management positions than women as indicated on Table 4. This confirms the assumption made in the literature by Schein and Davidson [42] that when it comes to management positions, most countries prefer men to women hence "Think manager think male".

Furthermore, the society considers men as the head of the family which is sometimes transferred into organisations making it difficult for men to accept women as their leaders. Hence, the results from the survey as shown on Table 4 indicate that men do not prefer to work under women. This result confirms the assumption made in the literature that Ghanaians perceive men as superior to women and makes it difficult for them to accept women as their leaders. This finding also supports the research conducted by (Preko [53]) that men prefer not to work under women because they see managerial duties as a man's job and sometimes undermine the authority of female leaders. This situation makes the work of female managers difficult and also discourages other women to aspire for positions in organisations.

According to the survey results, participants agreed that women are not progressing due to inadequate publications about women in management positions. This is because these publications are supposed to serve as motivation to women management aspirants but since they are mostly difficult to come by (Lituchy et al. [15]) it demotivates women who want to go that length. This is because they think their efforts will not be recognised and appreciated.

5.7 The Ghanaian Culture

According to the Ghanaian culture, men are the head of the home and women are responsible for the domestic duties as well as taking care of the children. These role classifications in the Ghanaian societies put much pressure on women who want to progress through their careers to put in much effort both at work and at home in order to be promoted. However, since flexible work arrangement is not a popular practice in Ghana (Bedu-Addo [62]), women have to work extra shifts as well as take care of their families. This situation sometimes forces them to give up either their families or some aspects of their social lives as confirmed by the interviewees in order to succeed in their career (Public Agenda [63]).

6. CONCLUSION

From the above, it was discovered that although there are more women than men in the labour market of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service [13]), only a handful of them are found at the upper levels of organisations in the formal sector creating gender imbalance; hence the glass ceiling (Lituchy et al. [15]).

The analysis of the survey and interview results supported the above assumptions that certain barriers prevent women from progressing through their careers in organisations thus emphasising the existence of glass ceiling. However, a comparison of the findings to the demographic characteristics showed that not all the respondents believed in the existence of the glass ceiling in Ghanaian organisations.

The research identified four main factors that influence the glass ceiling in formal sector organisations in Ghana. The factors are:

1. The role of the government; the government not taking active part in formulating strategies that enhance the career advancement of women in Ghana like other countries.
2. Organisational barriers; Organisations not having any flexible work arrangements for their workers as said by the interviewees as well as no career progression plans like mentoring as answered by the respondents for the questionnaires.
3. The influence of the society; the family commitments of women and the role congruity theory which supports the Ghanaian culture that treats men as superior to women.
4. The contributions made by women themselves; female managers sabotaging other female subordinates and the lack of

qualified women in the labour market to occupy higher positions in organisations due to low levels of education.

Although there are very few data on women in Ghana, most of them concentrate on women in the informal rather than the formal sector. Therefore, there should be more research conducted on women in the formal sector as well as those at the upper levels of organisations so as to encourage the participation of women in management positions as well as motivate other management aspirants. Also research on glass ceiling should consider other possibilities like comparing variables to analyse other aspects of the issue rather than presenting the holistic findings which presents a shallow report of what is actually happening.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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