

**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
ISTANBUL AREL UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**



**IS GLASS CEILING THE ONLY OBSTACLE FACED BY
WOMEN IN THEIR WORK-LIVES?**

MASTER'S THESIS

RAMEEN MASOOD

İSTANBUL, 2024

**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
İSTANBUL AREL UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**



**IS GLASS CEILING THE ONLY OBSTACLE FACED BY
WOMEN IN THEIR WORK-LIVES?**

MASTER'S THESIS

RAMEEN MASOOD

SUPERVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. AYLIN ERDOGDU

İSTANBUL, 2024

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The Jury finds that “**IS GLASS CEILING THE ONLY OBSTACLE FACED BY WOMEN IN THEIR WORK-LIVES?**” submitted by **RAMEEN MASOOD** on 23.06.2024, successfully passed the defense examination in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Graduate School of Istanbul Arel University for the degree of Master's Thesis in Executive Master of Business Administration.

Jury Members	Signature
Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aylin ERDOĞDU
Member Asst.Prof.Ali Anil UNSAL
Member Asst.Prof.Sahver OMERAKI CEKIRDEKCI

It was approved on with decision no. by Istanbul Arel University, Graduate School Executive Board.

.....

Prof. Dr. Ali AKDEMİR

Director of Graduate School

OATH STATEMENT

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

23.06.2024

RAMEEN MASOOD

ABSTRACT

IS GLASS CEILING THE ONLY OBSTACLE FACED BY WOMEN IN THEIR WORK-LIFE?

MASTER'S THESIS

RAMEEN MASOOD

**GRADUATE SCHOOL, ISTANBUL AREL UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
(SUPERVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. AYLİN ERDOĞDU)**

İSTANBUL, 2024

The term "glass ceiling" describes the obstacles women encounter when trying to move up the corporate ladder. It includes all of the difficulties and barriers that women encounter when attempting to go up the professional ladder and achieve the highest positions possible. The consequences that arise from its existence (for women) are obvious, yet they are hardly discussed. Women are negatively impacted by this phenomena in Pakistan, Turkey, Germany, and many other nations. This study reveals the root causes of the glass ceiling as well as the various negative effects it has on women, including how it obscures their goals. In addition to numerous other challenges, women encounter in the job are sexual harassment and gender inequity. The study's data was gathered through two methods: female-completed surveys and thematic analysis. The purpose of this research is to determine whether the glass ceiling is, in fact, the largest barrier that women encounter at work, or if other barriers—such as sexual harassment and gender inequality—pose a bigger challenge. While it was found that in certain nations, the "glass ceiling" is the largest barrier facing women, in other nations, sexual harassment and gender inequality could be seen as bigger challenges.

Key Words: Glass ceiling, Gender wage gap, Gender inequality, Sexual harassment, Promotions in top management

ÖZET

KADINLARIN ÇALIŞMA HAYATINDA KARŞILAŞTIĞI TEK ENGEL CAM TAVAN MI?

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

RAMEEN MASOOD

İSTANBUL AREL ÜNİVERSİTESİ LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
YÖNETİCİLER İÇİN İNGİLİZCE İŞLETME
(DANIŞMAN: DOÇ. DR. AYLİN ERDOĞDU)

İSTANBUL, 2024

Cam tavan terimi, kadınların kurumsal merdivenleri tırmanmaya çalışırken karşılaştıkları engelleri tanımlamaktadır. Kadınların profesyonel basamakları tırmanmaya ve mümkün olan en yüksek pozisyonlara ulaşmaya çalışırken karşılaştıkları tüm zorlukları ve engelleri içerir. Varlığının (kadınlar açısından) doğuracağı sonuçlar ortadadır, ancak bunlar pek tartışılmamaktadır. Pakistan'da, Türkiye'de, Almanya'da ve diğer birçok ülkede kadınlar bu olaydan olumsuz etkileniyor. Bu çalışma, cam tavanın temel nedenlerini ve kadınlar üzerindeki çeşitli olumsuz etkilerini, hedeflerini nasıl kararttığını ortaya koyuyor. Kadınların iş hayatında karşılaştıkları birçok zorluğun yanı sıra cinsel taciz ve cinsiyet eşitsizliği de var. Araştırmanın verileri iki yöntemle toplandı: kadınların doldurduğu anketler ve tematik analiz. Bu araştırmanın amacı, cam tavanın aslında kadınların işyerinde karşılaştıkları en büyük engel olup olmadığını veya cinsel taciz ve cinsiyet eşitsizliği gibi diğer engellerin daha büyük bir sorun teşkil edip etmediğini belirlemektir. Bazı ülkelerde kadınların karşılaştığı en büyük engelin "cam tavan" olduğu tespit edilirken, diğer ülkelerde cinsel taciz ve cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin daha büyük sorunlar olarak görülebildiği görüldü.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cam tavan, Cinsiyetler arası ücret farkı, Cinsiyet eşitsizliği, Cinsel taciz, Üst yönetimde terfiler

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT	i
ÖZET	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
PREFACE	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Glass Ceiling And Other Obstacles	2
2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF GLASS CEILING	6
2.1 Glass Ceiling in the Corporate Sector.....	6
2.2 How Glass Ceiling Affects Different Companies.....	7
2.3 Factors Contributing to an Increase in the Glass Ceiling.....	8
2.4 Results of the Study	9
2.5 Glass Ceiling and the Incumbency Advantage	9
3 THE NEGATIVE RIPPLE EFFECT	20
4 GENDER SORTING AND THE GLASS CEILING IN HIGH TECH FIRMS	31
4.1 Gender Sorting and Glass Ceiling.....	31
4.2 Glass Ceiling in External Hiring Processes	31
4.3 Glass Ceiling in Different Disciplines	32
4.3 Glass Ceiling Across All Levels of an Organization	33
4.4 Challenges Faced and Results of the Study Related to Glass Ceiling	34
5 HOW TO BREAK THE GLASS CEILING AND INTERNATIONALIZATION	45
5.1 Dependent and Independent Variables in the Study	46
5.2 Tackling Potential Selection Bias	46
5.3 Results and Findings Inferred from the Study	49
6 THE EXISTENCE OF THE GLASS CEILING IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES	59
6.1 The Hypothesis that is Being Tested.....	59
6.2 Factors that were Considered in the Study.....	62
6.3 Results of the Study	62
6.4 The Other Obstacles Faced by Women at their Workplaces	61
6.5 The Glass Ceiling in Developed Versus Developing Countries	62
7 METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS	78
8 DISCUSSION	84
9 CONCLUSION	90
10 REFERENCES	92
11 APPENDIX	97
Appendix A Survey Questions.....	97
12 CURRICULUM VITAE	98

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 5.1 Co-relation between sustainability performance and the glass ceiling.....	46
Figure 5.2 Gender Diversity in Taiwan's Firm.....	45

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 6.1 Result of Study	62
Table 7.1 Demographical Information of the study participants. (N=350)	79
Table 7.2 Psychometric Properties of Scales Used in the study (N=350)	81
Table 7.3 Correlation between research questions (K = 350).....	82
Table 7.4 CEO gender as a predictor (K = 350)(Regression Testing).....	83
Table 7.5 One-Sample T Statistics.....	86
Table 7.6 Data Set 1 and Analysis	86
Table 7.7 Data Set 2 And Analysis	87
Table 7.8 Fit Indices for Structural Models	89
Table 7.9 Consequences Of Glass Ceiling Phenomena	89
Table 7.10 Correlations between Glass Ceiling, Organizational Performance And Employee Satisfaction.....	90
Table 7.11 Sectorial Distribution of Employees By Gender.....	90

PREFACE

First of all, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Prof. Dr. Aylin Erdogan for the guidance and support throughout the entire process of my thesis.

I am definitely thankful to my dear friends who helped, supported and encouraged me throughout the critical process of my thesis, such as data collection and analyzing the research. I am also grateful to my friends and colleagues who allocated their time for me several times.

I would like to thank my dear family for their unconditional love, support and help during all my life. They also gave me endless support in this process. I would like to give a special thanks to my sister for always being with me and supporting me.

23.06.2024

RAMEEN MASOOD

1 INTRODUCTION

The challenges that women encounter in their professional lives are not new; rather, they have existed ever since they were granted the right to work. Males predominate in most departments inside a company, whether they be marketing, finance, human resources, procurement, or any other department (Kristof 2009).

Each country has a different glass ceiling in terms of its extent. The argument that women in poor nations face far worse conditions than those in industrialized nations has received a great deal of support. Norway's implementation of a law mandating that by 2008, forty percent of directors must be women serves as evidence for this assertion. To find out if this is a wise choice, studies on the fundamental distinctions between men and women have been conducted (Marini, 1990; Croson and Gneezy, 2008).

Each country has a different glass ceiling in terms of its extent. The argument that women in poor nations face far worse conditions than those in industrialized nations has received a great deal of support. Norway's implementation of a law mandating that by 2008, forty percent of directors must be women serves as evidence for this assertion. To find out if this is a wise choice, studies on the fundamental distinctions between men and women have been conducted (Marini, 1990; Croson and Gneezy, 2008).

Gender disparities were believed to be the main causes of gender inequality and the glass ceiling, hence a great deal of research has been done on the general differences between the two genders. The following discrepancies have been noted. Men are more likely than women to fabricate and falsify in order to increase profits (Dreber and Johannesson, 2008). Psychological surveys revealed that gender disparities stemmed from a sharp discrepancy in the fundamental beliefs held by each gender, while another research revealed that gender differences differ significantly between nations (Schwartz and Rubel, 2005).

Men were shown to prefer competitive circumstances over women, which is another difference in the results (Niederle, Segal, and Vesterlund 2008). Gender

discrimination based on unfounded stigmas, such as the belief that women are too "feminine," is one reason why males are climbing the corporate ladder more quickly than women (Branson 2006). There aren't enough women at the top, therefore it's become harder and harder for researchers to come to the right conclusions. Just 14.8% of the 500 seats on the Fortune board were occupied by women (Catalyst, 2007).

Even in developed nations like Australia, Canada, Japan, and Europe, there aren't many female directors. According to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), 2006 and the European Professional Women's Network (EPWN), 2004, the percentages in these nations range from 0.4% to 10.6%. This paper will focus on a number of topics that affect women, including gender inequality, sexual harassment, and the glass ceiling as a barrier to women's career advancement. The greatest challenge facing women in their professional lives will be identified through a comparative analysis of these topics. We'll talk about how the existence of the glass ceiling varies throughout nations. Moreover, there is uncertainty about whether women in underdeveloped nations truly have it worse than women in affluent nations.

1.1 Glass Ceiling And Other Obstacles

Dana M. Britton and Christine L. Williams (2020) assert that systematic barriers affect women at all organizational levels. These challenges may come in the shape of ingrained gender bias, which can show up in a number of ways, such as never being promoted throughout the promotional process. Glass ceilings in most organizations are caused by two basic factors: gender oppression deeply ingrained in men and direct discrimination. In the corporate environment, gender bias results in women being viewed as less valuable. As a result, women are more vulnerable to various forms of discrimination, such as sexual harassment, which infringes upon their rights as both human and employee.

According to Ferre & Purkayastha (2019), women's inferiority is guaranteed to exist in all occupations due to the design of institutional structures and social settings. Men are given advantages based only on their gender. In the meantime, the prevailing mentality among workers does not support, let alone embody, equal treatment for women. The challenges that women encounter upon being elevated to supervisory roles are deemed less detrimental to their professional lives than other impediments

like sexual harassment, which undermines their self-worth and reputation in both the personal and professional domains.

Women at all hierarchical levels face disadvantages in the labor force that only get worse as they go up the corporate ladder. This is a result of the ingrained belief held by male CEOs and managers that only men should be promoted to higher positions and that women should obediently fill the few lower positions that are allotted to them. Therefore, is the glass ceiling the result of women experiencing increased discrimination at higher levels or is it the result of women experiencing discrimination at all levels combined? According to some studies, the former meaning of the glass ceiling is preferable (Britton and Williams, 2018). However, scholars such as Ferre and Purkayastha (2018) contend that a blend of these two definitions more precisely encapsulates the core of the glass ceiling because in the actual corporate sector, this is what happens on a daily basis.

The cross-sectional material that has been gathered by scholars worldwide has been very helpful since it has set the groundwork for future research. According to Baxter and Wright (2017), precise data on the glass ceiling phenomena can only be gathered if the appropriate individuals are questioned at the appropriate times. A representative sample would be limited to working women in the corporate sector, or women in other occupations where they have been denied opportunities for advancement on multiple occasions. Despite sharing the gender, women who do not work, i.e. housewives, are not an adequate sample. The few men whom researchers surveyed and questioned had prejudicial beliefs regarding promotions for women.

When Hibbs & Locking (2021) surveyed women on this subject, they also looked at the idea that there is a stronger glass ceiling at the top of the hierarchy than at the bottom. If this is the case, are developed and developing nations experiencing the same phenomenon? An intriguing query that comes up in this situation is: do males know about the uneven distribution of promotion prospects and the glass ceiling that is rising? Such queries serve as the foundation for additional study. As a result, the glass ceiling issue won't be eliminated until men and women everywhere acknowledge this fact.

Another sign of the glass ceiling is the difference in the income levels of men and women. When two people work in identical positions, women are sometimes paid less for completing the same amount of labor—sometimes even less—despite having more or longer work histories. Susan (2020) came to the startling conclusion that there was a pay gap not only in the corporate sector but also in other industries, such as education, where men professors made more money than female lecturers in comparable roles. The multifaceted character of the glass ceiling extends beyond decisions on promotions, as there may still be differences in the earnings of the sexes at companies when a reasonable proportion of women receive promotions to higher positions. The term "glass ceiling" refers to a variety of distinct corporate structures; it is not a single, static aspect of inequality but rather a complex web of interconnected, dynamic threads.

Glass ceilings come in various forms, but they can be broadly classified into three categories according to James et al. (2019): status, management promotion, and remuneration. To have a greater knowledge of the origins and impacts of each distinct type of glass ceiling, other forms of gender bias may also be categorized into general categories. If the term "glass ceiling" is used metaphorically, it describes a barrier at higher levels that women are unable to overcome, though they are still able to advance up to the ceiling. The metaphorical term overlooks the reality that women face glass ceilings at lower business levels.

It was discovered that, aside from the glass ceiling, the largest challenge encountered by women in the workplace is sexual harassment perpetrated by CEOs and top managers. The majority of organizations worldwide are rife with this immorality. In addition, preconceptions and other gender-biased concerns are something that women must deal with on a daily basis. Research by Anders Bjorklund (2018) in the US indicates that there is a glass ceiling in every company since men typically have a greater likelihood of being promoted than women at every level of the hierarchy. When asked about the detrimental consequences of the "glass ceiling" on their professional careers, a sample of women participating in this study gave predictable responses: 80% of them.

Researchers adjusted for employee age, experience level, and job quality in a study by Edin & Richardsson (2017) and found that women faced discrimination at all levels of the hierarchy while men were promoted to higher positions.

2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF GLASS CEILING

The philosophy of an organization can influence the level of partiality that women experience at all levels of its hierarchy. The very philosophy of eradicating the glass ceiling must be induced into the vision and mission of an organization (Maria Paz Espinosa, 2011). When the decisions to hire or promote a woman are made, implicit gender biases take over and contribute to an increase in the strength of the existing glass ceiling (Eva Ferreira, 2012).

2.1 Glass Ceiling in the Corporate Sector

Until recently, the problem of glass ceiling failed to receive its due attention in the corporate sector. It has now become a metaphor for all of the promotional opportunities that women are unfairly deprived of (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, *The Wall Street Journal* 1986). The glass ceiling inequality is quite similar to a gender or racial bias in that it tends to negatively influence the profile of female employees even when they are given the chance to work at higher levels in the organization (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001).

The gender pay disparity only gets worse as one rises through the corporate ranks. For example, a female employee who works as a CEO and a floor manager will make less money than a male employee in these roles (e.g., Arulampalam, Booth, & Bryan, 2007; Gardezabal & Ugidos, 2005; Morgan, 1998). Regardless of how long an employee has worked at a given company, the likelihood that a female employee will be promoted instead of a male employee decreases (e.g., Elliot & Smith, 2004; McDowell, Singell, & Ziliak, 1999; Zeng, 2011; Olson & Becker, 1983; Maume, 1999; Gjerde, 2002).

In addition to looking at other organizational issues, a quantitative study was done to examine the glass ceiling problem. The ratio of male to female employee promotions was computed, and conclusions were taken from the findings. There was a noticeably greater proportion of men receiving promotions (Baxter & Wright, 2000). Comparing various organizations revealed a lower percentage of women at the top (e.g., Bain & Cummings, 2000). The collected empirical evidence revealed that the

negative consequences of the glass ceiling are relatively constant, even in different types of professional situations (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010).

Even though the glass ceiling is a well-known phenomena, discrimination based on race and gender is one of the main elements contributing to its presence in the corporate sector (Wirth, 2017). The fact that men predominate in large company teams is another significant but underappreciated issue. Top-level managers tend to choose males over women when assembling teams for significant assignments. males are more suited to oversee projects and operations within the organization, particularly those crucial to the HR, marketing, and finance departments—the three departments that form the backbone of every firm (Powell, 2020).

Deeply ingrained in managers' thoughts is the notion that males are more capable of handling these responsibilities and that their minds are more suited to solving organizational problems; this biased mindset unconsciously incites bias. One further ingrained belief held by upper management is that men are typically the business's intellectual leaders (Cinamon & Rich, 2021).

This belief is based on the following statistics: most CEOs are men, most businesses are founded by men, and most top management is made up of men. Due to the broad adoption of this attitude fostered by corporate culture, bias permeates a disproportionate number of employment decisions (Powell, 2019).

2.2 How Glass Ceiling Affects Different Companies

Because of the term's continued ambiguity, corporate organizations are free to give it alternative meanings. Because of this, it is impossible to compare different research to one another (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010). Although studies show that this has not been the case, the labor market is meant to set the pay of all workers based on productivity (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010). Sometimes employers are prepared to give up large earnings in order to preserve the status quo, such as elevating male staff members over female staff members (Becker 1957).

Similarly, even in situations where the productivity levels of men and women are similar, decisions about compensation and promotions are made based on the race and gender of the employees, in violation of the protocols and guidelines set forth in

the company's code of conduct (Arrow, 1972, 1973; Phelps, 1972). It can be challenging to distinguish between racial and gender disparity in some organizations, as well as the degree of the glass ceiling that exists there (Milgrom and Oster 1987). One of a company's most crucial investment decisions is its human resource, and discrimination based on gender might raise expenses (Coate & Loury, 1993a; Lundberg & Startz, 1983).

Observing the productivity of minorities, whether it is on the basis of gender or race, contributes to the increase in cost of human capital and simultaneously adds to the depth of glass ceiling that exists in a company (Coate & Loury, 1993a; Lundberg & Startz, 1983). Mentorship and homophilic preferences further contribute to the glass ceiling effect. For example, if a male mentor wants his protégé to be a male as well, it automatically follows that fewer female workers will undergo relevant training (Arrow, 1972, 1973; Phelps, 1972).

2.3 Factors Contributing to an Increase in the Glass Ceiling

The implicit bias that societal pressures instill in people is allegedly the most dominant source of surge in glass ceiling. This bias presents an impediment in the recruitment of employees (Espinosa & Gardeazabal, 2020; Kleinberg & Raghavan, 2019). Another explanation for the problem is the unconscious gender stereotypes that are deeply grounded in the minds of managers. The perpetual bias that continues to proliferate the perception women as less capable than men cultivates an unfair hiring process for half of the world's population (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010).

The percentage of women at each hierarchical level was computed, and the ratio of men to women at each level was drawn in order to provide thorough deductions about the glass ceiling impact (Espinosa & Gardeazabal, 2020; Kleinberg & Raghavan, 2019). It was assumed for the sake of this study that prejudice is pervasive and ongoing. Negative effects on women were pervasive, even in organizations where there appeared to be less prejudice at the highest levels (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010).

The selection processes with gender neutral features designed by the HR departments in organizations are not objectively free of prejudice in most cases and

do, in fact, contribute to the glass ceiling effect (Kleinberg & Raghavan, 2019). To curtail gender disparities internally and externally, the reasons behind it must be identified and mitigated (Samblanet 2010). A feasible corrective measure that may be employed is the formulation of policies that will enhance diversity at all levels (Purcell, 2019).

2.3 Glass Ceiling and the Incumbency Advantage

Incumbency advantage is the term used to describe the situation in which underrepresented groups, such as women and minorities, are not afforded equal opportunities to be represented in politics (Fox & Lawless, 2021). In the political sphere, decision-makers make choices based on the implicit assumption that there should be a greater proportion of men than women on all platforms; this is known as the inertia or incumbency advantage towards women (Welsh, 2020). The rationale stated by these decision-makers is that it seems irrational to pick women in an area where women have been traditionally absent (Purcell, 2022).

Most institutions operate on the stereotype that women are unfit to handle power and authority which is why, predominantly; men are designated to leadership roles and end up demonstrating themselves as powerful leaders. The inheritance laws of a country also have an impact on the extent of glass ceiling (Welsh, 2020). Laws of most countries explicitly state that only the son(s) can inherit the business owned by his father; this is especially typical in developing countries where women are considered the inferior gender. Daughters, regardless of their capability in terms of skills and experience, cannot be designated the CEO (Li Yu Chen, 2019).

Anyone who has even a passing interest in politics can see the stark differences between the two genders in this field of work (Lynn, 2021). Women are given the position of Chief Staff Officer in exchange for years of faithful service to a political candidate. When it comes to the position that they independently want to hold, they are not given the same opportunities. On the other hand, men gain a great deal from this glass ceiling and climb the political ladder remarkably faster (Wirth, 2022).

This can be attributed to the gender bias present in the minds of citizens in a particular country. The mindset that only men amount to proper political candidates dates centuries back (Denton, 2018). Taking into consideration the progression in human rights, women should be able to break through the glass ceiling in these political arenas and should find it convenient to opt for presidential candidacy themselves instead of being tied to meager roles such as Chief of Staff for their male colleagues. The patriarchal mindsets of people in the White house must be reconstructed to shatter the glass ceiling that is conspicuous in every corner of the office (Zeytinoglu, 2020).

A prominent stereotype in the mass of corporate sectors reduces women to submissive followers who should offer their support for men in every role and job. This adds to the glass ceiling significantly (Zane, 2021). This idea composed of the supporting role of women is glorified in household settings where women are assigned the dormant role of a caretaker obliged to cater to the needs of her husband. Similarly, it is projected in office settings within business organizations that women work. They are offered the role of secretaries wherein they are expected to “support” any male, who is professionally “senior” and hence superior, both in terms of authority and prestige (Kirchmeyer, 2020).

When advertisements are run for the job of a secretary, the description entails that the applicant be a woman rather than a man as a prospective candidate for the job; this is prime example that conveys how pervasive the stereotype of women working in lower-level roles really is (Tyson, 2019). The type of job opportunities offered to women are the only jobs that can be accessed or accepted by women, so this forms yet another constituent to the glass ceiling, all the while making it next to impossible for women to progress up to higher positions. The presumption that women are meant to do secondary jobs, and are predisposed towards supporting roles only, is infused into the minds of women from a young age to warrant their compliance when they are offered (secondary) jobs later on in their lives (Zane, 2020).

Instead of being motivated to attain professional success through ambition, by capitalizing on their skills and capabilities, women are conditioned to believe that their calling in life is to be a good partner to their husband and a good mother to their children; they are encouraged to get a ‘rich man’ for themselves. These core belief

systems are pressed on to the minds of women so that they progress at a slower rate than men (Klenke, 2017). These values buttress the glass ceiling in ways more than one. The absence of female leaders in business organizations, specifically at the position of CEO, is a source of discouragement for female employees who work in lower positions because this renders them incapable of imagining themselves in positions of high power and authority. This lack of vision leads to a lack of ambition and thus contributes to the glass ceiling indirectly (Olsson, 2022).

The vision and mission of a company should clearly state that all employees must be treated equally throughout recruiting procedures and decisions, as well as other primary decisions related to the future of the business (Davidson & Cooper, 2020). This will be a milestone that can help decrease gender inequality in the workplace which, in turn, may create a positive ripple effect and lead to a reduction in the level of glass ceiling in the company (Jackson, 2021). The vision and mission of an organization also govern the culture of that company. A company with a positive work culture ensures that female employees are treated fairly, such that they gain self-confidence to occupy a seat at the board room table one day, or even lead the firm! This positive work culture will also set off an increase in employee loyalty because female employees will associate positive feelings with working at the corporation (Davidson & Cooper, 2020).

The culture of most corporations is inhospitable for their female employees due to discrimination against them at every level of the company (Cinamon & Rich, 2019). This hostile work culture alters the self-perception of both the genders to such an extent that they simply cannot picture women at the position of a CEO (Jackson, 2018).

When men are handed the power to deal with every adverse situation that arises in the firm, they are provided the necessary training to deal with these contingencies. Women are unable to deal with such situations because they aren't equipped with any prior training relevant to them. This unfair treatment of female employees needs to be dealt with by the top-management so that women get an equal chance at success and an equitable shot at becoming the CEO (Davies-Netzley, 2018).

Another issue that contributes tremendously to toxic work environment is the emotional and physical harassment faced by women at work (Wood & Lindorff, 2021).

Women are abused by men in positions of power. This practice is rampant worldwide because the steps necessary to counter this obstacle are not being administered by the responsible parties (Su & Di, 2022). Power lies in the hands of men who are often corrupt, and instead use it to manipulate and exploit women in whatever way they deem fit. Hence, sexual harassment is another hindrance that women face in their work-lives (Wirth, 2020).

A company's laws should mandate fair treatment for women at every level of the organization in order to remedy these situations (Davidson & Cooper, 2019). The company's laws should also include a number of stern punishments for any individual who harasses an employee. The penalties may range from hefty fines to imprisonment, depending upon the severity of the perpetration (Cinamon & Rich, 2018).

A lot of CEOs have gotten away with sexually harassing women despite these acts being declared supposedly utterly unacceptable throughout the world; only fitting punishments can guarantee obliteration of these acts. When women were inquired about the reasons as to why they did not come forward after these incidents, the majority revealed that they feared getting fired without any severance pay. The second most popular reason for reluctance towards exposing this behavior was that no one in the corporation had been punished for these crimes before (Greenwood, 2022).

Another inimical effect of the glass ceiling is women being compelled to make various sorts of adjustments according to the men in the company (Elmuti et al, 2021). When asked, women elaborated that they had to modify their meeting schedules and other business-related responsibilities in accordance to the schedules of their male colleagues. The precedence credited to men during business meetings is also worth mentioning in the discussion around the expansive effects of glass ceiling on women (Simpson, 2020).

Men have a significant edge over women in the corporate world because they have their own informal social networks. These informal get-togethers involve a variety of recreational activities, such as going out for coffee or sports with peers (Fisher, 2019). Typically, these peers are business acquaintances who hold similar positions inside the company. Men benefit greatly from these informal gatherings in

terms of advancing in their careers, since they may share information about the nation's business climate (Thompson, 2018).

Women are, once again, disadvantaged because of their gender being considered secondary to men for no reason except that they do not get opportunities to form such informal networks within and without the business (Vianen, 2022). Since the majority of employees are men, it follows that this be the case. This translates to disadvantages for women in terms of their career, as they may be less aware of the strategies of their competitors. Eventually, it becomes a daunting task to gauge the business environment (Lyness, 2021). Moreover, women are deprived of assistance with upward mobility which is a major benefit that materializes from these informal meetings (Klenke, 2020).

When male managers are given the task of hiring or, more specifically, promoting people, they often concentrate on a number of unrelated factors, such as the false notion that pregnant women leave the company (Denton & Zeytinoglu, 2022). The woman's skill set, commitment, and devoted service to the organization are disregarded. Rather, when it comes to making decisions about promotions, these male managers are entirely focused on the downsides (Zane, 2021). When male managers made the choice, men were typically elevated to senior authority positions. The glass ceiling is greatly reinforced by this panel, which is made up of male managers who hold executive positions in every company (Kirchmeyer, 2020).

Instead, a panel of both male and female managers should consult with each other before taking important decisions to make sure that promotions are unbiased (Rajan & Krishnan, 2019). The promotion decisions are crucial to every employee's career, therefore, they should be taken after a careful analysis of the skill set, dedication, and values of every employee who is considered for the promotion (Lewis, 2018).

Studies to determine what brings the glass ceiling into existence brought another astonishing detail to light: it is not just male managers who feel threatened when a woman is promoted or hired, but female managers too feel threatened when a new woman is hired or promoted within the organization. This sentiment stems out of the fear that their own position will become less important in the firm (Fagenson,

2022). This insecurity is bound to surface, considering the limited number of females working within the firm. So, naturally, existing female employees feel threatened when another is added to the mix (Bramdser, 2021).

Another contributing factor that strengthens glass ceilings in different countries is the process of external hiring that has become a fairly common practice in the modern corporate world (Wirth, 2020). Women working in the corporation miss a fair chance at being promoted to higher levels when firms hire from the outside via external sources (Ragins et.al, 2019). Instead of employees from external sources, the internal workforce should be trained to equip them with the skills needed to take over the positions that need replacing. A usual kind of external hiring often practiced is outsourcing work to freelancers. Instead of this practice, additional responsibility and power should be handed over to female employees within the organization who are already working for the firm (Jackson, 2018).

According to a widely held belief that has endured in businesses until this day, a woman's first duty is to provide for her family (Schneer & Reitman, 2022). It is the belief of male managers in both senior and junior roles that women are incapable of juggling work and family obligations; they assume that if given the option, women would choose to stay with their families over pursuing their career goals (Zane, 2021). Male managers must be dissuaded from holding these false beliefs in order to break down the glass ceiling and provide women with the employment opportunities they so richly deserve (Bass, 2020).

Many nations have laws pertaining to equal pay, however in reality, these laws are not well implemented (Frankforter, 2019). Men are paid more than women for all jobs, including corporate and teaching jobs, regardless of any other factor besides gender (Linney, 2018). Many nations have also developed anti-sex discrimination legislation, but their execution has been agonizingly slow, and women are still subjected to severe discrimination, particularly in the corporate sector. If these laws and regulations are not implemented correctly and quickly, they will not have much of an impact on breaking down the glass ceiling (Borg & Gall, 2017).

The discrepancies between the two genders are present at both small and large stages, the job conditions and the status offered to women in their workplaces differs

significantly compared to men who work at the same level in the same corporation (Heilman, 2016). Some reasons researchers have found to be at the root of these unfair differences involve different guidance and vocational opportunities provided to both genders (Townsend & Mattis, 2022). Men are provided with requisite training needed to fulfill any and every task that an organization may ask of them, whereas women are deprived of such opportunities on account of their gender (Davidson & Cooper, 2021).

Additionally, men are equipped with male mentors who supervise their tasks to ensure they get the training necessary for taking over the senior roles. On the contrary, women are often not provided any such support that may allow them to excel professionally (Cinamon & Rich, 2020). The glass ceiling has been sustained for so long owing to the threat that men feel from women coupled with their irrational fear of an equal division of power between both genders i.e. women will rebel against them and take control of the business. This insecurity is especially ubiquitous in developing countries where women have to fight twice as hard for equal job opportunities (Levinson, 2019).

Trade unions have become a significant part of business corporations in recent years. They are aimed at representing the rights and voices of every employee, regardless of their race, gender, and/or status (Zane, 2022). Nevertheless, men reap more benefits from unionized support compared to women. This unequal assistance provided for women is another factor that toughens the invisible barriers that women encounter when ascending the hierarchy (Frieze et.al, 2021).

Another factor that adds to the hindrances faced by women is the prejudiced attitudes of the society, especially the male counterparts, towards working women; they are discriminated against and labeled masculine as they are perceived as a threat to the status quo that is globally predominant: a one that blatantly disadvantages the female gender (Wood & Lindorff, 2020).

The high expectations placed on women by society and by men also bring about the glass ceiling. Issues such as taking care of a child at work would be easily resolved if appropriate measures were taken to remedy this. For example, daycare centers being set up in offices to facilitate working mothers (Ragins et.al, 2019).

Longer breaks given to men, among countless other unequitable advantages, demonstrate the difference between corporations' willingness to facilitate male and female employees (Wirth, 2018). By reason of the societal pressures being fixated on them, such as caring for the elderly of the house, cooking food etc., women miss the opportunities to socialize with some of the most important decision-makers at the firm, while their male counterparts utilize these opportunities to earn favor from the top-level management (Morrison & Glinow, 2022).

Another substantial disadvantage women face in the corporate sector is that the cultures in business environments have been constructed by men who shape the entire organizational hierarchy and communication according to their convenience and affinity (Ammer, 2021). These cultures reinforce the concept of gender dominance and other beliefs that elevate men as more able to handle organizational problems. These corporate environments contribute to the glass ceiling in innumerable ways (Konrad & Cannings, 2020). For corporations to be more equitable in their policies, they should revamp the culture and redesign it in a way that equally caters to both genders. (Becker, 2019).

In order to achieve leadership status in corporations, women have to overcome innumerable challenges and obstacles that their male counterparts do not even have to think about, this fact stands proof to the extent of gender disparity in corporations (Kimberly et al, 2018). A diversity of genders in operational and marketing teams can lead to a better understanding of different customer bases. In companies that hire an equal number of males and females, it has been observed that the shortcomings of male employees have been reasonably compensated by their female counterparts. Thus, gender equality seems to hold promising rewards for corporations if they choose to adopt these values (Cinamon & Rich, 2022).

A common belief among male managers is that women should fight harder if they want to bag opportunities of similar value (Becker, 2021). This is a harmful assumption; when male employees are interviewed, they are viewed as valuable assets and their skills are assessed fairly, whereas, when female employees undergo the process, their gender constitutes the pre-dominant factor that influences the interview panel's decision about them (Metz & Theranon, 2020). To ensure impartial decisions, it should be declared compulsory for the managers to undergo extensive management

training programs where they are taught to treat all candidates equally, regardless of their gender, race, or any other factor that may contribute towards discrimination against one employee from the other (Gibelman, 2019).

Despite women in the workforce being a topic that has been researched since 1970, no concrete findings have been derived from many of these studies (research 2018). No conclusions that can be implemented with sizeable viability are extracted when this research is explored in depth. Moreover, the methods that can improve the position of women in their work lives have not been implemented adequately by the managers (Elmut et.al, 2022).

This is partially due to the fact that no top executive or manager—who is male—has made an effort to comprehend the situation from the viewpoint of a woman. Because there aren't many women in leadership roles like CEOs or at higher levels of the organization, their opinions haven't been considered. Because of this, surveys on topics like the "glass ceiling" tend to overrepresent the attitudes of men, which at best results in conclusions that are confusing and imprecise. (Schneer & Reitman, 2021).

Glass ceiling was not acknowledged as a real issue in the past and was, in fact, ignored by men in almost every country because it did not serve their career ambitions (Mitra, 2020). Ignorance towards this barrier would mean lesser competition from women so men would ascend the corporate ladder more easily. The lack of competition would also mean that men would secure close to all seats in the board room (Kanter, 2019). In recent years, however, women have been more vocal about demanding their rights and speaking up about issues at their workplaces; the major issue being the glass ceiling that has become unbreakable due to a plethora of factors (Bajdo & Dickson, 2018).

It is imperative for women occupying leadership roles to embrace a leadership approach that aligns with the organizational culture (Mayer, 2022). They must use leadership techniques that their male supervisors and senior male executives will find admirable. They are therefore unable to use the leadership style that best suits them, which prevents them from operating in a way that is most beneficial to them personally (Oakley, 2021). Being genuine to themselves and their teams as leaders prevents

women from being independent managers, which poses a barrier to their independence.

Majority of male managers prefer an aggressive approach and a top-down communication style. Automatically, this is normalized early on in the company (Olsson, 2020). These norms are also commonplace in large corporations that support equal pay and other equality-based legislations on a surface level. The female employees that join corporations where this norm is already in practice have to adjust accordingly, no matter how hard the transition may be (Rajan & Krishnan, 2019).

The glass ceiling has also been greatly influenced by the labeling culture that exists in organizations (Loden, 2022). The labels placed on male and female managers differ drastically, both literally and in connotations. When male managers follow an autocratic style of leadership and allow top-down communication, they are labeled as competent leaders e.g. strong and powerful (Frieze et al, 2021). In stark opposition, when women use the same tools to manage their teams, they are labeled masculine, bossy, and aggressive. The connotation behind these labels has an adverse effect on the confidence of female managers, because they may doubt if they are getting their message across effectively, or perhaps are failing as a leader (Loden, 2020).

When a woman climbs the corporate ladder up to the position of a senior executive, she is seen as someone who does not accord an ample importance to her family; someone who, according to society, is not doing what she is supposed to do (Paris, 2019). These conventional views result in significant barriers for women in their professional lives and are a major factor in the glass ceiling that hangs over the heads of those who work arduously every day to achieve success (Chaffins, 2022).

The internal struggle of women in terms of exhaustion as well as their external struggle in terms of the challenges in their professional lives transfigure into a decreasing number of women ambitious to ascend the corporate ladder. Subconsciously, they embrace defeat and internalize that the only positions they will be offered at a corporation are the lower-level jobs, no matter how much they aspire to grow (Fuqua & Cangemi, 2021).

The glass ceiling poses a major problem because not only does it limit the internal beliefs of women about themselves but also deprives corporations from making use of the talents of both genders in the most fruitful way. Gender-based stereotypes believed by the citizens of a country constitute a major factor that fosters the formation and strengthening of the glass ceiling (Sagrestano, 2018). Men are automatically positioned as providers in domestic spheres with all the dominant roles assigned to them (Olsson, 2020). Women are viewed as child-bearers and nurturers. They are mostly placed in submissive or subordinate roles. These problematic gender roles are projected in professional settings as well, where women are allotted secondary, lower-level roles involving menial tasks i.e. the role of a secretary (Eagly, 2019).

3 THE NEGATIVE RIPPLE EFFECT OF GLASS CEILING

Numerous investigations on the subject of the "glass ceiling" in law firms have been carried out by Hull and Nelson (2015); these studies verify that, even in cases where women achieve partner status, their pay remains lower than that of male employees assigned to comparable tasks. The phrase "sticky floor" has been used in a research by Reskin and Padavic (2015) to characterize a common phenomenon that women encounter at work: it refers to a scenario in which women are offered low-management positions while males are typically assigned to all white-collar jobs.

Furthermore, Fernandez and Sosa (2016) noted that in some businesses, the glass ceiling manifests itself in a different way: male employees are given the most powerful clients because of the belief that women should only work with clients who make minimal financial contributions to the business. The capacities of female employees are undermined by this behavior. According to a research by Gorman (2016), one well-known example of a company where women are treated differently than men in terms of workload, income, and promotions is the legal profession. Just 17% of partners leading law firms are women, despite the fact that women make up half of law students at universities—a disparity that has grown significantly in recent years due to gender discrimination.

According to Goodman (2016), more than half of the women who answered a "Sexual Experiences Questionnaire" distributed to a number of female employees at various companies reported having experienced sexual harassment at some point in their careers. According to Noonan et al. (2016), the degree to which women are denied positions of power and prestige when they attempt to apply their skills, despite the fact that they are admitted to law schools based on social norms, is a measure of the strength of the glass ceiling.

According to Elliot and Smith (2017), the glass ceiling is more noticeable at higher hierarchical levels than it is at lower ones, according to the findings of every study done on this subject. According to Kanter (2017), the glass ceiling is a particular kind of gender discrimination that exists in a variety of corporate settings, including manufacturing corporations, law firms, social work agencies, science institutions, state-level bureaucracy, and even clerical positions. In their analysis, Kay and Hagan

(2017) listed a number of variables, one of which was the low level of public knowledge of this phenomena and the lack of major steps made to eradicate it, even in nations where awareness of it is somewhat higher.

Dencker (2017) claims that even with the introduction of several policies, such as the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to lessen the impact of the glass ceiling, most businesses' anti-discrimination efforts are merely token ones that don't significantly increase the proportion of female employees. In their research, Beckman and Phillips (2017) discovered that in addition to sexual harassment and the negative impacts of the glass ceiling, women also experience issues such as being treated less favorably in meetings, not given due consideration when it comes to particular workplace issues, and being seen as the other gender regardless of their qualifications and experience.

Hagan (2017) claims that in order to assess the effect of the glass ceiling on women, studies held constant other variables such existing labor hours and qualifications. Nevertheless, it was found that practically all organizations exhibit the glass ceiling effect. Gibelman and Schervish (2017) demonstrated that because they were provided with the best opportunities, male employees were able to advance to higher career responsibilities in management social work professions. Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2017) found that multiple researchers found that as one ascended the corporate ladder, the severity of the glass ceiling and the frequency of sexual harassment increased as well.

According to Cotter et al. (2018), some scholars have cast doubt on the veracity of this claim, questioning whether these obstacles are real or have persisted for some time due to insufficient efforts to remove them. According to Rosser (2018), this finding is startling because, despite a sharp rise in the number of women entering the workforce in recent years, none of them hold senior positions in businesses, demonstrating the existence of the "glass ceiling," an imperceptible barrier that affects people at all levels of employment.

Maume (2018) provided evidence that the widespread perception that prevents women from advancing to leadership roles is that they are incapable of holding positions of authority. According to Beckman and Phillips (2018), a number of academics computed the likelihood of males becoming partners in law firms, and they

all came to the same conclusion: regardless of their background and skill set, men had a 50% chance of becoming partners.

According to Curran (2018), research on the subject of whether the glass ceiling was the largest problem facing women in the workplace revealed that the two main challenges facing women at work are sexual harassment and gender inequality, which both contribute to the glass ceiling. Tabak (2018) emphasized that one major effect of the glass ceiling is the underrepresentation of women on boards of directors. Addi-Racah (2018) discovered that even in schools, there were more men in leadership roles.

However, women of color, Latinas, and women from other ethnic minority groups also frequently encounter a glass ceiling in commercial corporations, according to Elliot and Smith (2018). According to Huffman and Cohen (2018), research from many nations revealed that the glass ceiling is a global problem that requires immediate attention to guarantee equitable working conditions for women everywhere. It is not just a problem in developing nations.

The glass ceiling effect explains why women, despite their accomplishments and abilities, are unable to progress past a particular level in their companies, according to a study done by Meyer (2019) on female subjects. According to Kornblut (2019), the subject of the "glass ceiling" is so complex that many have written newspaper pieces examining different aspects of it; one such piece is "Does a Glass Ceiling Persist in Politics?" that was published in the Washington Post.

A study conducted by Meyer (2019) revealed that the term glass ceiling encompasses the artificial barriers that exist between a woman's qualifications and her career goals in her pathway, especially if the goals include her ascension in the hierarchy within the corporation that she works for. According to Gorman and Kmec's (2019) analysis, sociological research on this topic shows that there are significantly more white men in upper management than there are women working for the organization overall at all hierarchical levels.

On the contrary, Harlan and Berheide (2019) asserted that the motivation of the workforce is said to be taken into account when hiring employees. However, a variety

of researchers observed that even when women showed a higher level of motivation compared to their male counterparts, they were refused the job on the basis of their gender. Harlan (2019) noted that nepotism and red tape also comprise some of the obstacles, apart from glass ceiling, that women encounter in their work-lives.

Ayalon (2019) observed a sample of women working in a variety of subordinate roles and discovered that another important indicator of the glass ceiling that impedes women's career development is the overrepresentation of women in subordinate job roles, whether they are employed by corporations in the primary, secondary, or tertiary sectors. A study conducted by McGuire and Reskin (2019) noted that even when the race and ethnicity of women were kept constant, similar results emerged; thus confirming there is indeed a glass ceiling that obstructs the career opportunities available to women on a daily basis.

Baxter and Wright (2019) underlined a crucial limitation afflicting some of the studies conducted on glass ceiling: only the women who were still working as part of the labor force were taken into account, whereas the women who had left their jobs specifically due to the effects of glass ceiling were not a part of the sample, so they were unaccounted for. Purkayastha (2019) underscored that certain characteristics that are demanded for the role of a manager can often be masculine in nature; several researchers criticize the notion that such questions are not included in the surveys.

According to Nagourney and Leibovich (2020), women, regardless of being at a top or managerial position in companies, are unable to crack the glass ceiling that the society has created. Furthermore, Clark (2020) stated that the questions in these articles were also based on how so few people are aware of the glass ceiling and what can be done about it.

Berheide (2020) pointed out that another type of discrimination which contributes largely to the glass ceiling is that women are not allowed both horizontal and vertical mobility in most corporations; men are facilitated when they decide to relocate their jobs while women working in the same positions remain stagnant for years.

In research conducted by Sullins (2020), an assumption about the manufacturing industry has been debunked recently by several researchers; it was based on the premise that since the manufacturing sector requires identical work from both women and men, there would be no glass ceiling in the manufacturing industry. Nevertheless, the researchers concluded the presence of glass ceiling in this sector as well.

Research by Britton and Williams (2020) pointed out that studies interlinking the problems of sexual harassment and glass ceiling discovered that several women had to contend with sexual harassment at the hands of their male CEOs in order to ascend the corporate ladder (e.g., inappropriate demands were made in exchange for a promise of higher position).

Patricia Funk (2021) highlighted that studies conducted on glass ceiling, especially in the corporate sector, reveal that female and male managers handle issues differently which may be one of the reasons for it. According to a study conducted by Renee (2021), this is in part due to the vast differences in the core values and systematic beliefs of men and women; another plausible explanation is that the attitude of men and women towards risk is different.

Research by Adams (2022) called attention to the polarities between male and female directors; this may classify as another reason why glass ceiling persists. Research conducted by Britton (2022) indicates that female directors are less concerned with power and do not consider the magnitude of power they may lose when making decisions. Huffington (2022) reports that more research shows women are less likely than men to stay out of dangerous circumstances; Kirk (2022) elaborated that this translates to having a woman on the Board of Directors likely leading to more productive decisions because of (higher) risk factor.

Simone de Beauvoir (1949) asserts in her book, “the Second Sex” that patriarchy must be overthrown if women are to have equal opportunities in the corporate sector. She briefly discusses the existence of glass ceiling which obstructs women from achieving job equality. She implores that this patent gender inequality be overcome to make way for a brighter future for women in the corporate sector.

Adams and Ferreira (2009) looked into the connection between firm success and gender diversity in the boardroom. According to the research, businesses that have more female executives perform better than those that don't, challenging the notion that women are unable to reach leadership positions due to the glass ceiling. Bakker (2016), focusing on the hospitality industry, explored the barriers faced by women in advancing their careers and indicated that the glass ceiling persists in this sector, limiting women's access to senior management roles and impeding their career progression.

Smith & Ryan (2022) investigated the relationship between perceived discrimination and work-family conflict, as well as how the glass ceiling affects organizational commitment. The results show that work-family conflict and perceived discrimination act as a moderator for the detrimental impacts of the glass ceiling on organizational commitment.

According to Johnson et al. (2018), mentoring plays a critical role in helping women overcome the glass ceiling and succeed in STEM fields.

The glass ceiling greatly contributes to the gender pay gap, according to Cheng & Ku's (2021) investigation into the relationship between the two in the financial services industry. This finding highlights the significance of tackling the glass ceiling in order to achieve pay fairness.

Lopez et al. (2019) focusing on women of color in corporate leadership positions examined the intersecting effects of gender and race on the glass ceiling phenomenon and identified unique challenges faced by women of color and emphasized the need for intersectional approaches in addressing the glass ceiling.

Wang & Caza, 2020 investigated the relationship between the glass ceiling, women's leadership aspirations, and self-efficacy beliefs. The findings suggest that the glass ceiling negatively impacts women's leadership aspirations and that self-efficacy acts as a mediator in this relationship.

Li & Liu (2017), while examining the effect of the glass ceiling on employee turnover intention, highlighted the mediating role of perceived career prospects. The study emphasizes that the glass ceiling leads to lower perceived career prospects,

which, in turn, increases turnover intention among affected employees. Miller et al. (2018) explored the relationship between the glass ceiling and entrepreneurial intentions, with a focus on gender differences. The findings reveal that the glass ceiling can motivate women to pursue entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional career paths.

Smith et al. (2021) compares the leadership behaviors of individuals above and below the glass ceiling. The findings suggest that those facing the glass ceiling exhibit different leadership styles characterized by adaptability and resilience.

Kumar & Bhanugopan (2019) state that mentoring and sponsorship programs can play a crucial role in helping women break through the glass ceiling and achieve career advancement. Li et al. (2021) found that diverse teams can act as a mechanism to overcome the barriers of the glass ceiling and potentially enhance team performance.

Nguyen & Bhatnagar (2019), focusing on the corporate sector, investigated the role of gender and ethnicity in the glass ceiling phenomenon within managerial positions. The research results indicate notable differences in professional advancement according to gender and race, underscoring the continued existence of the "glass ceiling." Additional empirical data supporting the existence of the glass ceiling and its influence on impeding women's advancement to senior positions was supplied by Fletcher & Sueyoshi (2020).

González-Moreno et al (2019) reveals specific barriers faced by women in creative roles and emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to overcome the glass ceiling in this sector. Ahern et al. (2020) found that gender-diverse boards positively correlate with firm performance, challenging the perception that gender diversity compromises organizational structure and harmony. Moreover, Jackson & Wilson (2021) highlighted the role of organizational culture in perpetuating or mitigating the glass ceiling phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusive cultures to address gender disparities.

Indian managers' perceptions of the "glass ceiling" and their level of professional satisfaction were studied by Shalini Strivastiva and Poornima Madan. 237

middle-level managers from Delhi/NCR were included in the sample. The association between perceptions of a glass ceiling and professional happiness was found to be unfavorable. This effect can be lessened by organizational identification and trust. Talented women can be retained with improvements in HR policy and culture.

Bertrand et al. (2017) examined gender disparities in pay and promotions among executives, providing empirical evidence of the glass ceiling phenomenon. The study highlights the existence of significant gender gaps in executive compensation, indicating the presence of barriers preventing women from reaching top leadership positions.

Men are 50% more likely than women to locate a spouse, according to Kay and Hagan's (1998) research; these findings are supported by numerous other studies (Abel, 1989; Beckman and Phillips, 2005; Curran, 1986; Hull and Nelson, 2000). There is still a significant gender pay disparity that widens as women climb the corporate ladder, even when they become partners (Kay and Hagan 1995). Even after controlling for position type, specialization, law school quality, academic standing, labor supply, present work hours, family circumstances, and organization type, there is still a gender pay disparity (Hagan 1990; Noonan et al. 2005). Contrary to what Carly Fiorina believes, women can only go so far up the promotion ladder even with their human capital and motivations.

Smith et al. (2018) explored the existence of the glass ceiling phenomenon and its impact on gender differences in advancement opportunities within organizations. They examined factors such as gender bias, stereotypes, and lack of access to influential networks that contribute to the glass ceiling effect and highlighted the need for organizations to address these barriers and implement inclusive practices to promote gender equality in career advancement.

Smithson, J., Anderson, E., & Johnson, M. (2022) analyzed data from a large sample of companies and provided evidence that organizations with higher gender diversity in leadership positions tend to outperform those with lower diversity. The findings suggest that breaking through the glass ceiling positively influences organizational performance. Gomez, M., Lee, S., & Patel, R. (2019) stated that women find unique challenges while penetrating through the glass ceiling and underscored the

need for a comprehensive understanding of gender and ethnic dynamics in addressing barriers to career progression.

Eagly & Carli (2007) carried out an influential study for a comprehensive analysis of the glass ceiling phenomenon from both domestic and international perspectives and define the glass ceiling as the invisible barriers that hinder women's advancement in professional settings, highlighting the persistence of gender disparities in leadership positions.

Laufer (1999) also explains the opposite viewpoint, which holds that women are concentrated in feminine fields such as education and nursing but nevertheless hold lower job categories than men. To retain women, employers are starting to promote women more systematically and implement family-friendly policies, but women are still making modest inroads into non-traditional fields like law, information and communication technology, computer science, and engineering. According to Pigeyre and Bender (2008), women are more likely to choose the legal field; in 1992, there were 32% of women practicing law; by 2002, that number had risen to 53%.

As per Eagly's (1987) social role theory, the manager's image is frequently linked to a man with attributes that are considered "masculine," like assertiveness, autonomy, competition, and aggression (Weyer, 2007). It follows that women, who for millennia have been linked to opposite traits (such as teamwork, listening, sensitivity, and empathy), would be less dedicated to their work and incapable of managing (e.g., Weyer, 2007). Women's evaluations and decisions are negatively impacted by these gender stereotypes (Lyness and Thompson, 1997; van Vianen and Fisher, 2002).

Consequently, female managers are given different duties early in their careers than their male counterparts. They are then faced with two constraints: (a) they run the risk of being negatively judged and evaluated if they defy male norms, and (b) their colleagues will make negative comments about them if they adopt a "masculine" attitude (Oakley, 2000; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Mavin, 2008; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010).

According to Belghitti and Kartochain (2008), women were more likely than men to experience unemployment when they qualified for engineering programs despite attending prestigious universities and earning excellent marks. This suggests that the glass ceiling may also be a significant issue in the engineering field. Therefore, regardless of a woman's degree of education, experience, or skill set, the glass ceiling would still apply. Therefore, it is important to view the glass ceiling diachronically, meaning that promotions to managerial positions and career advancements for women should be taken into account rather than the proportion of women in those roles at any given moment (Cotter et al., 2001).

Furthermore, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that women comprised 29.1% of chief executive officers in the workforce in 2021. According to the September edition of the 2021 "Women CEOs in America" study, there were 41 female CEOs of Fortune 500 businesses, an increase of 10.8% from the year before. Despite the fact that it was a record high, just 8.2% of Fortune 500 businesses had female CEOs.

Research by Lyness and Heilman (2006) has demonstrated that female line managers face harsher advancement requirements than their male counterparts. According to Beehr et al. (2004), women are especially receptive to and supportive of promotions based on performance.

Employees who see disparities in how a company treats women are more likely to assume that there is a glass ceiling in the workplace, according to Elacqua et al. The number of men and women holding the highest positions in the organization varies, despite the fact that gender disparities may be negligible when it comes to things like promotions at every level of the hierarchy (Agars, 2004).

"Women like me are disadvantaged by this invisible barrier, even with equal competence and skills," stated Deborrah Ashley, a marketing strategist, trainer, and founder of Thrivoo, a LinkedIn consulting and training company. She worked in corporate marketing for twenty years prior to founding her own business. Ashley went on, "Being a woman has ramifications already, so this is especially true for women of color. We find ourselves in a more challenging position when we are compared to white women since we are typically viewed as inferior."

During their investigation into the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling effect, including gender bias, stereotypes, a lack of mentorship opportunities, and work-life balance issues, Smith et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of organizational policies, diversity initiatives, and leadership support in addressing and removing the barriers associated with the glass ceiling in order to promote gender equality in the workplace. Furthermore, Li & Wu (2020) discovered that the existence of these obstacles has a detrimental impact on women's work engagement and job satisfaction. However, they also discovered that mentorship and organizational support can greatly lessen the detrimental effects of the glass ceiling on job satisfaction.

Overall, the assessment of the literature finds a significant amount of data that points to the glass ceiling phenomenon, which prevents women from advancing in a variety of professional domains. The studies consistently highlight the challenges faced by women in breaking through the glass ceiling, including limited access to leadership positions, disparities in career advancement opportunities, and the perpetuation of gender biases and stereotypes.

The findings also emphasize the negative impact of the glass ceiling on firm performance, organizational commitment, career satisfaction, and gender pay equity. They highlight the need for inclusive organizational cultures, mentorship and sponsorship programs, diversity initiatives, and supportive leadership to address the glass ceiling and promote gender equality in the workplace.

Even while there has been progress in some areas and industries, research indicates that the glass ceiling and gender gaps still exist, necessitating continued efforts to remove these obstacles and give women more equitable chances. It is evident that in order to make significant progress toward gender equality at all levels of leadership, a thorough and multifaceted strategy encompassing adjustments to organizational policies, cultural norms, and social attitudes is required. Finally, the findings highlight the significance of ongoing investigation, lobbying, and group efforts to establish workplaces that are genuinely fair and welcoming to women.

4 GENDER SORTING AND THE GLASS CEILING IN HIGH TECH FIRMS

A significant volume of research on glass ceiling has been centered on high tech firms (Roberto M. Fernandez, 2019). Most studies highlight internal hiring biases, however, a noteworthy factor that has often escaped popular notice is the bias that exists in external recruitment and hiring processes (Santiago Campero, 2020).

4.1 Gender Sorting and Glass Ceiling

The internet is a popular means of applying for jobs and there is a meagre possibility of an internal hiring bias when it comes to this method. Among people applying to 441 small and medium sized high tech firms, a discovery related to the glass ceiling was made; it existed because of both internal and external hiring processes (Santiago Campero, 2020).

A trend of handing lower-level jobs to women was observed on the supply-side of businesses (Fernandez, 2019). Another type of bias, known as the screening bias, against women, was observed (Kelly, 2017). In order to eradicate gender discrimination, remediation policies aimed at reducing the glass ceiling need to be devised (Dobbin, 2018).

The lack of research renders many questions about the glass ceiling unanswered, in particular the mechanisms that generate it; there is an obvious gap in research (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2019). In recent years, studies have been conducted to answer the following question: why are women denied the rewards that come with promotions? (Reskin, 2018). Biases are implanted within organizational processes which is why, as we climb up the hierarchy, women are absent (Bielby, 2020).

4.2 Glass Ceiling in External Hiring Processes

As per some researchers, if the root cause of the glass ceiling is to be uncovered, the limitations of looking only at the internal processes must be abandoned and an exhaustive analysis should be conducted into the external and internal factors instead (Ragins, 2019). Frameworks like the SWOT and PESTEL analysis can be used

to examine the downsides faced by the businesses in terms of discrimination and other such factors (Mattis, 2018).

Allocative hiring processes that cause sex segregation along the vertical lines of businesses crystallize the glass ceiling substantially (Petersen, 2021). When job vacancies are to be filled by people from outside of the organization i.e. if external hiring is the procedure is in place, more positions are offered to men than women (Bidwell, 2022). The same pattern was observed in firms that were start-ups; more male employees were hired by the human resource departments (Keller, 2016).

The internal policies targeted at neutralizing gender biases in organizations are unlikely to be effective enough towards external hiring processes, because, usually, outside professionals are hired to conduct these without any help from the inside personnel of the organization (Piore, 2018). Policies designed to eliminate gender discrimination in screening processes proved to be of limited use in minimizing the glass ceiling (Doeringer, 2019).

A policy that turned out to be somewhat effective in reducing the level of disparity among genders outlined the production of more gender-equitable pools through better recruitment policies (Bidwell, 2018). If an equal number of candidates are present in the pool from which the employees are to be selected, the bias of selecting male-only employees will be reduced significantly, as per some researchers (Keller, 2020).

4.3 Glass Ceiling in Different Disciplines

Glass ceiling is the term used to describe the disproportionate gender inequality in disciplines such as economics and sociology (Cotter et.al, 2021). In the past few years, researchers have been trying to distinguish the multiple mechanisms that strengthen glass ceilings in labor markets and within different professions; this focus has been amongst their top priorities (Shropshire, & Cannella, 2022). Organizational outcomes like initial job level, turnover, and wages were studied by researchers to figure out why women were disadvantaged at all these levels (Kay & Hagan, 2020).

Another limitation of studies that focus solely on internal biases is that the competition between men and women for jobs is not taken into account; this is why

the major causes behind the existence of glass ceiling cannot be identified accurately with sufficient validity (Bidwell & Mollick, 2021). Men benefit more from the shifts in different labor markets compared to women because of the bias mechanisms already in place (Lyness & Judiesch, 2019). Some studies by researchers provide concrete evidence that indicates that external processes alone can lead to a glass ceiling (Fernandez & Abraham, 2019).

A number of scholars from various disciplines of sociology and economics have pointed out that hiring process is the time period within which the human resources department can get away with biased decisions with ease (Collinson, Knights, and Collinson, 2018; Jencks, 2017; Petersen, Saporta, and Seidel, 2020, Petersen & Saporta, 2021). One explanation for this is the policy of no individual holding authority to lodge a complaint against biased recruiters, even if the candidate pool is unfairly selected (Petersen & Saporta, 2020).

4.3 Glass Ceiling Across All Levels of an Organization

Studies in which fake but well-matched CVs for both genders were created and submitted to the HR departments of different firms, a pattern of discrimination was identified between the two genders. Men were given a clear preference over women by majority of the human resource departments (Azmat & Petrongolo, 2017). In order to determine the real causes of glass ceiling across all levels of hierarchy, a distinction must be made between internal and external barriers to the achievements of women in organizational hierarchies (Cohen et al, 2018).

The candidates competing for the job, those who make it through the hiring process, and those who are finally selected by recruiters, need to be profiled to figure out how the glass ceiling emerges in external processes (Hassink & Russo, 2020). In the studies that have been conducted, the dependent variable, a focal point for researchers, are the candidates who survive the selection process; these subjects constitute the basis of the study very dominantly, without even considering other external factors (Dreher & Cox, 2019).

A recent study specified internal and external biases across all organizational levels. The firms selected for this study had two factors in common: they were high-

tech firms, and they had flat organizational structures; both of these made them easier to study. This study concluded that internal bias alone does not lead to the formation of glass ceiling in most countries. There are, in fact, external factors such as external hiring processes that not only cause but enhance this phenomenon (Fernandez & Mors, 2020).

4.4 Challenges Faced and Results of the Study Related to Glass Ceiling

Demanding screening biases, upon consideration, played a minor role in contributing to the glass ceiling (Fernandez & Mors, 2019). Another study conducted on the biasness surrounding the candidate pool revealed that women applied to lower-level jobs most of the time whereas men, possessing the confidence needed to apply for white-collar roles, applied to high-level jobs (Kmec, 2018). A high-tech firm turned out to be an ideal setting to work out the root cause of glass ceiling in several studies because this type of firms has historically been dominated by men (Koput & Gutek, 2021).

A major hurdle that researchers experienced when conducting studies in high-tech firms was the daunting task of obtaining access to relevant data; often, there were numerous hierarchal difficulties and red tape involved (Gorman, 2020). A study found that employers do indulge in gender bias by selecting women for sedentary jobs like cleaning, and men for jobs that require technical use of their mental abilities and skillset (Kmec, 2018).

In order to achieve well-grounded results, there needs to be a clear correlation between the independent and dependent so that cause-and-effect relationship may be derived. Hence, conclusive inferences can be drawn on the basis of this relationship such that truly effectual progress can be made towards the resolution of an issue as widespread as the glass ceiling that exists in every organization in spite of the many laws made for employee protection (Cappeli, 2019).

Women as leaders in high-tech firms are expectedly confused when trying to choose a leadership style to employ because, irrespective of their choice, they often run into criticism by both the higher management and their male colleagues (Eagly, 2022). For instance, if women adopt a direction method similar to men, they are

dubbed as hyper-masculine, and the organization may allege that they are not being feminine enough i.e. they are not capitalizing on their feminine instincts in favor of the company. On the contrary, if they adopt a feminine style of leadership that embraces their feminine qualities, they are labelled inefficient and inadequate. The men in some organizations are quick to assume and spread the misgiving that these women should not have been placed in high power positions, and that men should be appointed promptly to replace them, so that an appropriate leadership mannerism may be administered to run the organization more efficiently (Sagrestano, 2021).

Mentoring is yet another tool that is not equitably accessible to women. This contributes a great degree to the invisible barriers that are present within an organization (Powell, 2020). Men are provided mentoring to guarantee their imperative professional development to succeed in their careers. It also ensures that men get the right professional advice at the right time. Mentors in some business organizations guide them in their career planning, providing them with a blueprint that they can refer to, so that climbing the corporate ladder transforms into a more feasible experience. In contrast, women are left out of many of these lucrative opportunities that come with the package of mentoring; they are left to fend for their own selves (Aguinis & Adams, 2019).

Contacts are needed as references to boost the chances for acquiring future jobs. Networking is one source which can be used to develop contacts (Langford et.al, 2018). Networking is another tool, out of many others, that are largely exclusive be use by men only, because they have the luxury to hold informal meetings outside their firms at a time that suits them; this is especially the case in high-tech firms. The lack of networks for women is a key factor that contributes to the already burdensome glass ceiling. To remedy this, family responsibilities should be equally divided among men and women in a home, and firms should work towards providing more equal networking opportunities for both genders (Bell et.al, 2017).

Men at higher levels in organizations are unable to maintain impartiality in their judgement regarding female employees, which further amplifies the glass ceiling (Eagen, 2022). The prejudices and biases at the root of decisions, at times, happen to be highly unfavorable to women who do their job truthfully in trying to ascend the ladder in high-tech firms, battling hundreds of obstacles every day. A survey

conducted with 500 members of the Institute Of Women's Leadership concluded that the majority of women believed that they were not given equal opportunities in any firm, especially in high-tech firms where their male counterparts were given proportionally more chances. Another finding derived from this study was that, if women were to advance forward at the same pace as men, introducing advanced training and educational programs for women is necessary (Davies Netzley, 2021).

One of the primary limitations of this study was that it was conducted entirely online through surveys (Jackson, 2020). Therefore, direct contact between the researcher and the respondents was missing. This is thought of as a limitation because the researcher, if present, can conduct an in-depth analysis through elaboration and reiteration of the survey questions for the respondents to better grasp exactly what is being asked.

This study was conducted in the United States which introduces another limitation. The findings of the study are wholly applicable to the United States region only, because there are a lot of cultural differences between the US and other countries. Nevertheless, one of the biggest strengths is that only women in corporate positions were surveyed. This means that the findings derived from these surveys were satisfactorily accurate (Townsend & Mattis, 2019).

A rather underestimated effect of the glass ceiling that serves as an impediment to women in corporate positions worldwide is that they spend the majority of their work-lives being confined to middle-management positions (Ragins, 2018). This is especially the case when a woman has exceptional qualifications such that it is simply unfathomable to confine her to a mismatched level of job. Unfortunately, such women are allocated middle-level jobs in the business because the management does not want to offer higher-level jobs to them.

The norm in many organizations is to promote only men to the positions of senior executives and CEOs, especially in high-tech firms. This is, in part, because of the common misconception that men are better at technology than women. This is also one of the stereotypical biases that are held against women in many firms. Another typical prejudice about female employees is that they do not have sufficient energy to exert at their job, since they are drained due to their household chores; thus, it is only

logical that they be appointed at positions that have comparatively simpler job descriptions. Men, on the contrary, are believed to give their best to their jobs due to the absence of responsibilities at home (Wirth, 2017).

When allocating investment to women who work in the management and other sectors, the HR departments of various firms tend to invest less in women compared to men in terms of capital and training programs, because women retire earlier than men in the majority of the cases (Lewis, 2022). This unequal treatment magnifies the negative consequences characterizing the glass ceiling. Researchers argue that the quality of an employee's work does not correspond to the time they work at the firm during their employment period. Bearing in mind this inverse relationship between the time period and quality of work, an equal amount of investment should be allotted to male and female employees (Bramdser, 2021).

Men have a greater opportunity for investing in firm-specific skills, specifically those related to technology (Schneer & Reitman, 2020). This unfair advantage contributes to the glass ceiling because having position-specific skills means that men progress to executive positions quicker.

Another widely prevalent generalization about women working in the corporate sector, especially in high-tech firms, is that they are happier to substitute a high-level position in the firm and settle for a lower pay than their male colleagues, for lesser hours of work, in order to have more time to fulfill their familial responsibilities. Maternity leave given to women is regarded as a negative implication associated with hiring a woman, because it translates to more absences than men working the same job (Zane, 2020).

Senior managers tend to have a bias against women that they do not possess the characteristics imperative to working well in managerial roles (Lewis & Fagenson, 2019). If these pre-conceived notions about women continue to dominate the perceptions of senior managers, it will be utterly difficult to shatter the glass ceiling. The structures of power and the uneven distribution between men and women informs the attitudes and beliefs of women about themselves as well as the perception of others towards them. For instance, the fact that all the male employees are given jobs at senior positions, but women have to settle for jobs in the lower management,

inhibits their own positive beliefs about themselves and shapes the culture of the organization in such a way that women remain stagnant in the job roles that they originally start with, constituting no significant personal or professional growth (Burgess & Tharenous, 2018).

Challenges in the workplace are necessary for growth of employees (Lueptow, 2022). In high-tech firms, often, the challenging work and the decisions that require employees to engage intellectually and tap into their innovative abilities are assigned to men, while women are given mundane, everyday tasks. This is also an obstacle that women experience in their work-lives; it supports the glass ceiling by limiting the upward mobility of women in an organization. An important factor that is considered during promotion decisions is the experience of the employees (Stelter, 2021).

The experiences of men in terms of the time that they have been employed at the company, and in terms of the experiences that they have shared with their fellow colleagues, are better than that of female employees. This is yet another consequence of the glass ceiling and other unfair practices in the organization that obstruct women from getting equal opportunities so that they can acquire these necessary experiences (Hite & McDonald, 2020).

The “toxic male culture” where men support and advocate the rights of their fellow men and discriminate against the female employees in their firm is also another factor that contributes to the glass ceiling in organizations (Ho et al, 2019). The notion of men as the more emotionally stable and achievement-oriented gender adversely affects the performance evaluation and promotion aspects of a woman’s work-life. Since more men are CEOs, they are looked upon as role models by other men, but most women are deprived of this right because female CEOs are scarce. This affects the motivation levels and the morale of working women and makes them less confident to demand an equal pay (Chaffins, 2018).

Some of the characteristics attributed to a leader include self-reliance, straightforwardness, and the ability to effectively communicate with the employees as to what needs to be done (Fuqua & Cangemi, 2022). These attributes are associated with men and are dubbed masculine traits that every man (naturally) has. This gender-based stereotype prompts the recruiting team, and whoever is in control of a promotion

decision, to promote men to leadership positions without giving women a chance, even when they qualify.

Researchers point out that despite these aggressive traits in men, an appropriate amount of empathy is needed just as essentially to understand employee concerns. Empathy and open communication are just some of the positive traits that women have to offer in leadership positions. Researchers state that when women are allowed to be their true selves in organizations, they make level-headed, compassionate leaders that a firm needs to be successful, because in today's competitive business environment, a good flow of communication between employees and employers has become a necessity (ONeill & Blake-Beard, 2021).

Flexible managerial styles are in demand at workplaces, because leaders who know how to operate with flexibility are crucial for global business expansion (Klene, 2020). Women are deemed more flexible in their leadership roles, and they are able to create progressive work environments for employees. In opposition to popular belief, breaking the glass ceiling promises a lot of advantages to organizations; they will be able to invest in their employees based on their practical skills instead of other discriminatory factors such as gender or race.

Another type of discrimination that has substantially expanded the glass ceiling is the unfair treatment of women who belong to minorities. Women who belong to ethnic or racial minorities face a greater amount of discrimination at work during both hiring and promoting processes. The glass ceiling also encompasses all the invisible barriers against women who belong to minorities (Kanter, 2019).

A principal challenge faced by women in organizations in terms of the glass ceiling is that they are unable to explain the advantages of inculcating a feminine leadership style to their male colleagues and senior executives, owing to the dominant gender bias existing in the majority of organizations (Loden, 2018). The glass ceiling makes it next to impossible for women to voice their opinions and concerns on matters as miniscule as these.

Females, who are able to cut through the barriers and succeed in getting promoted to higher level positions, are those who combine their feminine traits, such

as compassion and nurturing, with some masculine traits like assertiveness (Paris, 2022). The leadership stereotypes underlying promotional procedures subconsciously implicate that it is necessary for women to internalize a combination of traits if they are to get promoted to the position of senior authority, and especially if they are to maintain their leadership position within the corporation. Another reason why women are unable to climb the corporate ladder as fast as men constitutes the unbelievably high expectations placed on women by the employees and managers within the organization. Men are believed to be born leaders who can lead female employees with ease, but women are made to feel burdensome corporate pressure. More often than not, women are forced to give in to the pressure and invest all their energy into keeping their job secure rather than aspiring to ascend to a higher position (Mayer, 2021).

The unfair standards of society when it comes to women are a major factor that contributes to the glass ceiling (Budig, 2020). When men are considered to be hired or promoted, their age or the number of children are irrelevant. On the other hand, both these factors are taken into consideration when hiring women, further hardening the glass ceiling. Younger women and women who tend to have fewer children are promoted to senior executive positions.

Another factor that came to light during various studies on the glass ceiling is that if a woman has a higher level of education, she is more likely to be hired. Researchers stated that 88% of men were ignorant of the issues facing women in the same organization that they worked in, the reason being that men end up experiencing a much milder form of barriers, especially when working at high-tech firms (Rea & Parker, 2019).

A misplaced effect of the glass ceiling on the women working in the corporate sector, who are trying to pave their way to the top of the organization, is that they may have to alter their appearance, personality, and in some cases, even their speech styles (Johnson & Christensen, 2018). Although this is a sad reality, it is one that women have to live in, a reality that men are not even aware of.

A controlled number of men and women were interviewed in a study and asked for their opinions on the glass ceiling and power structure of the organization. The results and conclusions of the study were fairly predictable. The men believed that

women should focus on their family lives and that the corporate world should function with the same dynamics as it currently does, with men in most dominant positions. The women disagreed drastically, and stated that they believed a radical change was needed and that power within corporate structures should be distributed evenly among men and women (Siebert et al, 2022).

The discrepancy that surfaced in the opinions of both genders during the interviews is further proof of the fact that a glass ceiling is an unfortunate reality. The studies on it have made it abundantly clear that men should be made more aware of this phenomenon; it has existed right in front of their eyes for a long time now (Creswell, 2021). Solutions and measures should be offered as to how the glass ceiling may be cracked to improve the lives of women.

A rather surprising finding that researchers stumbled upon in their studies was when women adopted autocratic and masculine styles, they were not perceived positively by either men or women in some organizations. Other organizations, however, demonstrated a positive response to women adopting leadership styles similar to the men present in senior positions in that organization (Johnson, 2020).

Another barrier that women reported facing in business corporations was the fear that men had in terms of their own career advancement (Siebert et al, 2019). Out of this fear, men tend to inconvenience the female employees that work with them. Ultimately, women had to perform better and work extra hard to make sure they were on the same page as their male colleagues. Some plausible strategies that can be used to improve the position of women in corporations include drafting women into advanced education and training programs (Creswell, 2018).

Another realistic strategy that can help reduce the glass ceiling is forming networking groups for women. Informal meetings outside the workplace can be held with people who are employed in similar positions at another organization. An additional positive outcome of networking groups is that women who are employed in senior positions at firms can mentor the ones in lower-level positions (George & Mallery, 2022).

This would be a two-way beneficial situation, because the mentors will be able to learn a thing or two about lower-level platforms in the corporation from their mentees, whereas the mentees would get the chance to make use of the insights that their mentors have to offer. These strategies can help in providing women with the leverage that they need to compete with their male colleagues. Additionally, if these strategies are executed properly, they may lead to softening of the glass ceiling, all the while providing additional benefits for women (Gurer, 2021).

One of the tools to break through the glass ceiling is advanced training programs. It was discovered that 70% of women, during research, believed that their chances of obtaining a high-level position improved due to the training programs that they undertook (Coughlan, 2020). Some also claimed internal networking was one of the reasons behind them securing a high-level management job.

The connections that they developed inside the firm were viable and thoroughly useful for them when they got promoted. Career tracking is another tool that can be employed by women to cut through the glass ceiling. Through keeping track of their own careers, women can ensure their progress is in the right direction. Any weaknesses and strengths can be highlighted, and dealt with through career tracking if it is done properly (Bass, 2019).

The issue of putting in extra work hours is also a detrimental consequence of the glass ceiling. This is a recurrent issue, yet it is one that is downplayed (Dipboye, 2018). In order to achieve the status that their male colleagues are accorded openly, women have to make extra effort in the form of extra work hours that often go unnoticed by their senior employees when they are taking promotion decisions. Some women also strategize by performing extra well and proving their ability time and again to get promoted to senior-level positions.

The most unfair aspect of these situations for women was that even when they had worked in an organization for many years, they had to prove their value to their employers repeatedly in order to maintain their positions at the corporation, and still had a slim chance of being promoted to a higher-rank. Another strategy that certain women used to get promoted/hired in corporations, especially high-tech firms, was that they developed unique skills such that they could offer what other employees

could not; this ascertained their hiring and promotion in the majority of cases (Kanter, 2022).

A study found that in the majority of cases where women were not being offered higher-management positions, it was because they were not being adequately trained (Larwood & Wood, 2021). A job that pays better, provides a higher job status, and provides opportunity to break the glass ceiling eventually, can only be attained if the requisite educational and training needs of the firm are met.

These factors should be considered by women who aspire to excel in their corporate jobs and aim to break the glass ceiling one day. For internal networking, the managers at top-level should actively encourage women to participate in these socializing activities as they do with their male protégées. One way for company leaders to accomplish this is by incorporating certain practices into their HR department policies so that it can be ensured that every employee, regardless of their gender, is given an equal shot at improving their personal and professional lives (Nieva & Gutek, 2020).

High-level executives in some corporations provide specialized training to male employees so they can excel in their careers effortlessly (Bartol, 2019). This career tracking and evaluation by senior-level managers encourages men to work harder and results in them attaining high-level positions. Women, however, are deprived of this special training and have to work by themselves to excel in their careers. This discrimination further exacerbates the glass ceiling.

The most effective training strategy to encourage junior employees to take over senior-management positions is formal mentoring. However, the “old-boys network”, if nothing else, only further augments the glass ceiling by making it onerous for women to be accepted for formal mentoring. This is because the old mentoring model of a young trainee and an old trainer has been followed for a long time in the United States. It is next to impossible for women to gain the same advantage that men have at their disposal because of this model. An effective resolution of this issue would entail the formation of formal mentorship bonds between young female employees and women that work at senior-level positions in corporations (Riger & Galligan, 2018).

Women are classified as intruders when they try to become a part of a network predominated by men (Alvesson & Billing, 2022). This is because men are more comfortable with men, so when a woman tries to form a network within the corporation, men do not exhibit a welcoming behavior. This only trigger the strengthening of the glass ceiling that long hovers over the heads of women. When women do achieve a higher-level position, they are scrutinized and criticized way more than the men who work at the same level (who may even make more mistakes). Women have to perform well consistently to be promoted. This leads to excessive level of pressure on them which may, in turn, restrict their work productivity (Burke & McKeen, 2021).

Since this unhealthy pressure is rarely experienced by men, they work with a relaxed mind which may result in higher productivity levels than their female counterparts (Davidson & Burke, 2020). A limitation that comes up when analyzing the existing literature on glass ceilings is that studies which employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to draw conclusions are scarce in number. Regardless, such studies and research are required for more in-depth conclusions about the glass ceiling and the ways to dismantle it. The Silicon Valley serves as an example of how women have to face a glass ceiling in their work-lives, especially in high-tech firms. Most of the startups and companies in the Silicon Valley hire male programmers only and when it comes to promotion, men are promoted to senior ranks such as senior manager and CEO (Kanter, 2019).

5 HOW TO BREAK THE GLASS CEILING AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies that are implemented by the host country affect gender diversity to a great extent. If CSR policies are progressive, a larger number of women are promoted to managerial positions (Lin Wen Ting, 2022).

The sustainability performance of a host country affects the levels of employment of female managers in a firm (Fox, 2020). The better the performance of a host country is in terms of sustainability, whether it is related to employees, or the overall policies developed and enacted by the country, the higher the number of female employees (including the ones in managerial positions) will be present in the company (Mun & Jung, 2021). This model is especially applicable to Taiwan.

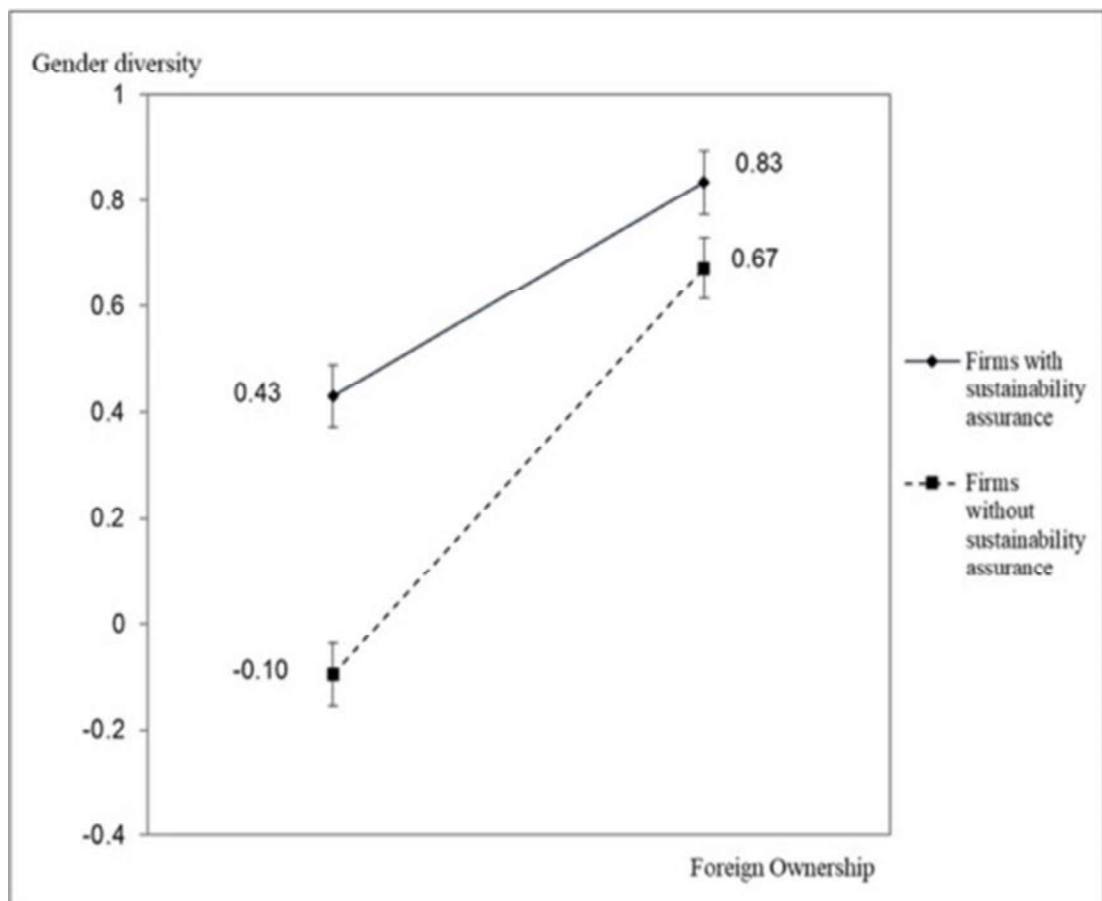


Figure 5.1 Gender Diversity in Taiwan's Firm

Source: <https://vpn.lums.edu.pk/proxy/1d040c52/https/www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969593122000968?via%3Dihub>

Another graph from the study conducted on firms in Taiwan shows that there is a direct relationship between the assurance of sustainability and gender diversity. It can be inferred from that, where there is more assurance of sustainable policies, gender diversity is higher, whereas it is comparatively much lower where there is less sustainability assurance. The absence of sustainability assurance can then be considered one of the significant causes of the glass ceiling (Huffman et.al 2020).

5.1 Dependent and Independent Variables in the Study

The dependent variable in the study was the possibility of women in the positions of managers in a firm. The method used by Mun and Jung was used to calculate these odds (2020). The number of female managers was divided by the number of male managers who were currently present in the firm. The results showed substantial discrimination between the number of female and male managers. The number of female managers was very less and most of the managerial positions were occupied by men in almost every firm in Taiwan (Martin, 2019). An odd detail revealed in this study was that a majority of managerial positions were occupied by women in a few firms; this exemplifies that the glass ceiling effect can be reduced significantly if policies that foster gender diversity were implemented in more firms (Anderson, 2018).

The independent variable was the host country's sustainability performance. The relationship between this variable and glass ceiling was measured in the study (Kurtulus, 2021). Some control variables were also included to help clarify the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The firm's size was one of the control variables; it was calculated by the total number of assets owned by each firm. Another control variable was the age of the firm which was calculated as the total number of years that had passed since the founding of the firm. Age was regarded an important control variable because of the following assumption made by the researchers: the older the firm is i.e. the longer it has existed in the market, the higher the gender inequality that exists in the firm.

5.2 Tackling Potential Selection Bias

The extent of glass ceiling and the amount of gender diversity are measured properly only when all levels of the firm are considered. When such a large sample is involved, sample biases can seep in. The Heckman model was used to eliminate these gender biases. This model has two steps to stamp out biasness: the first step is to create a selection equation, and the second step is to analyze an outcome equation (Certo & Woo, 2021).

According to the findings based on this model, fewer women were hired in the manufacturing sector, because a popular belief among firms was that jobs in this sector were more suited to men than to women (Yang, 2018). Foreign investors were more likely to invest in firms that had a higher percentage of women; this trend was prominent in many firms, because the industry, as a whole, is trying to move towards a more equitable representation of women and men in the workforce. It can be concluded that the glass ceiling effect is negatively correlated to the amount of foreign investment in a country; the greater the glass ceiling effect, the lesser the foreign investment and vice versa (Angrist, 2019).

Moreover, additional analyses were conducted to ensure that the results of the study were robust and well-founded. The effect of Taiwan's government agency known as the FSC on the level of gender diversity and the number of sustainable policies adopted by firms was observed, and it was revealed that there exists a positive correlation between the policies implemented by the FSC and both the gender diversity and the sustainable policies adopted by FSC. As the number of policies implemented by the FSC to encourage gender diversity increased, so did the other two variables (Pischke, 2022).

This study has contributed significantly to the literature on glass ceiling, because it sheds light on corporate social responsibility policies. The results and findings of this study suggest that firms that adopt sustainable policies have a higher degree of gender diversity. In comparison, firms that develop policies without prioritizing sustainability have a less diverse workforce (Park & Ghauri, 2020).

An inverse relationship exists between the glass ceiling effect and sustainable CSR and other policies. Among other important findings that researchers gathered in this study was that foreign firms and MNCs preferred companies that had sustainable policies and greater gender diversity. This means actively working towards minimizing the glass ceiling effect may prove beneficial for companies, because it may lead to a higher number of MNCs wanting to work with them (Scott, 2019).

Another correlation observed in this study was between the age of firms and the number of female managers employed in that firm. The older the firm, the lesser the number of female managers employed. Similarly, the newer the firm, the more diverse and inclusive it was. This may be in part due to the failure of older firms in adapting to the changing industrial conditions (Ahlstorm, 2020).

A primary strength of this study is that, even though most studies investigating the issue of the glass ceiling focus on internal factors, the impact of external institutions on gender diversity has been analyzed in it. A limitation, however, is that it includes and investigates firms in Taiwan only, thus limiting its scope (Aggharwal & Jah, 2019).

Consulting and coaching that is specifically devised to help women advance in their careers is an effective strategy that can be exercised to break the glass ceiling which symbolizes a cumbersome barrier for women who wish to progress in their careers. The Institute for Women's Leadership is an example of the kind of organizations that can assist women in reaching their maximum potential at corporations.

The IWL exists in the US only. It has helped scores of women make progress with their positions at the respective corporations that they work at. Racial discrimination also contributes to the glass ceiling. Undoubtedly, white women face a lot of obstacles in their pathway to success, but women of color and Hispanic women may face even more. The anti-discrimination laws at corporations should be strictly and consistently administered to halt this unfair bias and reduce the extent of the glass ceiling henceforth (Acker, 2022).

Opportunity seeking is another strategy that can be adopted by women to overcome the hurdles they face at work. Opportunity seeking denotes the practice wherein women try to pursue as many promotional opportunities as they actively can to overcome the possibility of these positions being offered to the male employees who work with them and already have a lot of these promotional opportunities at their disposal.

A common way that women pursue opportunity seeking strategy is that they entertain higher salary offers from outside the firm. This is because it results in two possible outcomes: the first is that they are able to land a job offer from a company that offers a higher pay, and the second is that their current company offers them higher salary to match that of the other firm. Both these outcomes, brought about by utilizing this strategy, bring women closer to shattering the glass ceiling for themselves (Wright et. al, 2021).

When the two strategies, namely advanced education and training, and formal mentoring, were compared through surveys, it was revealed that formal mentoring was a more successful strategy in reference to women being promoted to senior executive levels. The point of view related to formal mentoring of women in middle-level management positions differed from that of women in senior-level positions.

The women in middle-level positions stated that formal mentoring was less effective than internal networking. The latter, in their opinion, served multiple purposes, and the connections made during internal networking by women were viable for longer periods of time. Women at the top-level positions, on the other hand, stated that formal mentoring was the strategy that should be applied by women in every corporation to break the glass ceiling (Eagly & Carli, 2020).

Some measures to be incorporated by senior managers in corporations include an examination of workplace practices that hinder the professional development of women, magnifying the already existing glass ceiling. The procedures followed during recruitment and promotion of women must be assessed by managers to verify that they are objective and impartial.

The promotion process can be tailored to detect any sign of biases against women in terms of their gender or race. For instance, this process can be made more structured; a direct advantage of this is that it will have more transparency, so the managers who succumb to biases would be held accountable. When deciding the best fit for a job, managers should reach a decision based purely on relevant factors such as merit and skillset of the candidates instead of unrelated factors like gender or race (Williams, 2019).

Equal treatment of male and female employees can bring about considerable advantages to a corporation, such as a higher turnover, low absenteeism, and a more reputed corporate image. This is especially beneficial in today's world where women are actively demanding more rights in their personal and professional lives. Strategies to break the glass ceiling can be mapped out by surveying women that work in different industries; this is crucial because the obstacles that women face in one type of industry may differ from those in another industry.

A study conducted to determine the strategies which may prove effective in cutting through the glass ceiling found that the strategy of career tracking was the least effective strategy when it comes to helping women in their careers. This signifies that corporations better not waste excessive their resources and time in trying to track the careers of women, but should instead apply other effectual strategies such as formal mentoring to get more positive results (Budig, 2018).

Formal mentoring programs can be integrated in the corporation's activities to achieve an equal working environment for their female employees. The introduction of more gender diverse programs is another strategy that firms can practice to lessen the extent of glass ceilings present in their work environment. Gender diversity in a company benefits it greatly, because the best skill sets of both male and female employees can be put to use in trying to achieve higher sales and profits. To secure a greater chance at promotion, women require a combination of strategies like advanced training, unique skillset, internal networking, and formal mentoring. This will not only help them attain senior-executive level positions, but also bring them one step closer to weakening the glass ceiling that exists in the majority of corporations where they work (Cohen, 2022).

When women in senior management positions were asked about the qualities that one should possess in order to get promoted to these senior-level positions, a majority of them expressed that flexibility is a great quality, a one which is most likely to result in promotions for female employees at their companies. To elaborate, being flexible means to be in support of innovative change; for instance, if the corporation develops new corporate policies or if the work culture or the company's structure changes. It also signifies working in the direction that the senior-level managers want their employees to work in. By adopting this strategy, women can strategically demonstrate their willingness and eagerness, as they evolve alongside the company, to the managers that make the promotion decisions at higher levels.

Another strategy that has worked for many in terms of getting a promotion and thus breaking the glass ceiling is the development of skills that are crucial to succeed in the corporate environment. These skills can range from excellent communication skills to great leadership qualities, depending on the industry that women choose to work for. The mastery of such skills would generate higher chances at promotion and an even higher chance of contribution to the dismantling of the glass ceiling (Huffman, 2021).

Racism against women constitutes a pivotal factor to the glass ceiling. White women, in comparison to women from other races, are offered positions more easily at the top-level of a corporation. Unfortunate as it is, women from other races, such as Hispanic women, have to face additional obstacles on their way up the corporate ladder. This unfair treatment, rooted in nothing but a bias against women of color, leads to rigidity of the glass ceiling in many corporations. Despite there being a ton of anti-discrimination laws in place at corporations on paper, this racial bias against women continues to exist.

The main reason behind this prejudiced conduct is the negligence of managers who should have ensured proper implementation of laws targeting these issues. Even for promotions in administrative positions, women have to try twice as hard as men to secure the top-level positions. This is further true for jobs where women possess the more suitable skill set needed to excel at that particular job. This gender discrimination in administrative jobs also leads to formation of the glass ceiling (Hultin & Szulkin, 2020).

The persistently ongoing racial and gender discrimination is not discussed and scrutinized enough. Inevitably, the lack of awareness about these issues contributes to the strengthening of problematic barriers. Women are snubbed at all levels in a corporation, because the reality of the glass ceiling is not talked about openly in corporations. The lack of women at top positions also makes it harder for the women in lower positions to seek inspiration to reach the top. This happens because, when women are employed at top-levels in a corporation, they are more considerate and helpful towards female employees at lower levels in the corporation.

The wage gap between men and women at lower levels is smaller when women are present at the top of the organizational hierarchies and vice versa. There are several processes that comprise the glass ceiling such as gender inequality processes and racial inequality processes. Some researchers have gone so far as to identify some inequality regimes in an organization. These regimes exist because there is a huge discrepancy in the way managers treat the two genders. All these processes and inequality regimes cause major roadblocks in the way of women who are trying to grow in their careers to achieve the top positions, simultaneously contributing to the enhancement of the existing glass ceiling (Prokos & Padavic, 2019).

The glass ceiling patterns in Norway and Sweden are quite similar to those in the US corporations, according to many researchers. Systematic inconsistencies exist in the amount of power and control given to men over women; majority of the senior executives are men, so the power to make important decisions and control over the company's operations rests in the hands of men. This vastly unequal distribution of power leads to the development of a glass ceiling in corporations.

These disparities alone are enough to demotivate working women. The unequal salaries paid to employees on the basis of their gender are another factor that continues to sustain the glass ceiling. The severity of the glass ceiling in different corporations varies, nonetheless a glass ceiling is present in almost every corporation, even those that claim to be advocates of equal rights or feminist organizations. Some discrepancies that have materialized in these corporations but are kept hidden from the public eye include unequal employment security and benefits (Connell, 2018).

The politics in a corporation that lead to an increasing discrimination between men and women also augments the invisible barriers for women. The people in charge of sculpting the culture in organizations, and those who instigate and handle office politics, are primarily men. Organizational politics come into play when important hiring and promotional decisions are in motion.

The majority of men in corporations serves to guarantee that the employees who get promoted are male, and these (male) managers further influence the hiring decisions that are undertaken by the HR department. To resolve this issue, which poses a risk of greater discrimination between men and women, procedures and laws should be out in place so that these senior-level executives can be held accountable; this will help reduce the detrimental consequences to an extent (Walby, 2022).

A woman's race is many a times a pivotal factor upon which corporations discriminate against her. Women who belong to racial minorities are very unlikely be made CEO in a company dominated by a (regional) majority. For example, a Hispanic woman may not be made the CEO in a company that is run mostly by Americans. This racial discrimination extends to women's religion as well; for instance, a woman who follows a different religion (i.e. one that is not the religion practiced by the dominant majority) will not be given a chance at promotion to a position at the higher level if the company that she works for is run mostly by men who are Christians. This case shows consistency throughout developed and developing countries.

The facade of allocating equal rights to women in theory glosses over all these real problems. Even the organizations that appear liberal and feminist have racial and religious biases implicated into their systems throughout the organization. The most that these managers seem to accomplish is granting some promotions to white women to flaunt that equality legislations are being taken seriously at their corporation. The hostile and unwelcoming culture of a corporation, based on these gender and racial biases, does nothing other than condoning the glass ceiling on a daily basis (Cunningham et.al, 2021).

Another distinction made between male and female employees at corporations, that adds to the glass ceiling, is the fact that most of the blue-collar, lower-level job positions are allocated to women, while men are deemed more worthy of holding

white-collar, high-level jobs. The sexist and discriminatory attitudes and assumptions at the foundation of these allocations can be traced back to the conception of these corporations. Various studies conducted on the phenomena of glass ceiling resulted in a shocking finding that even in developed countries like the US, where the rights of the women are advocated vociferously by men and women alike, women from races such as African-American and Hispanic are excluded from any positions of authority in majority of the firms operational in the United States.

The level of discrimination differs between organizations that have steep hierarchies and organizations and those with a flatter organizational structure. Steep hierarchies usually denoted autocracies where men were solely in power and in control of all the executive decisions being made in the corporation. On the other hand, organizations with a flatter organizational structure distributed responsibility of tasks more equally between men and women compared to the former (Kvande & Rasmussen, 2020).

Gender disparities that bring about the glass ceiling in corporations peak at the top-levels of organizational hierarchy. According to researchers, this means that the higher a woman tries to get on the hierarchal level, the more resistance she is met with in the form of gender and racial biases. A stark contrast was established between giant organizations and small firms in reference to the number of promotions that women were able to secure annually.

At bigger corporations, women had as few as one or two job promotions yearly, whereas they were promoted much quicker at smaller firms, provided they prioritized their work over their familial responsibilities. However, even in small firms, it was found that there were certain conditions that women had to fulfil in order to be promoted. These include putting in longer hours at work; their male counterparts at large corporations and small firms did not have to put in extra efforts to secure these promotions (Styhre, 2019).

A strategy that most corporations employ when trying to reduce the extent of the glass ceiling present in their work environments is the introduction of team work so that the internal networking may enable women to do better in terms of job promotions. According to researchers, this strategy alone cannot work sufficiently in

securing job promotions for women. Thus, it has to be supplemented by other strategies to help women excel in their careers, and in breaking the glass ceiling. Even when women are promoted to managerial positions, they are kept on a lower pay roll than men and are given minimal responsibilities; they are not able to work their way upwards in the hierarchy of the corporation.

The level of authority that women have in a managerial job is less than that allotted to a man in the same role. It is this seemingly subtle way of discrimination that lead to the origination of a glass ceiling. The most important decisions and tasks are assigned to male managers rather than the women working at the same level as them. Due to being in charge of these crucial decisions, men are able to rise quickly to the top of the hierarchy, but women are ‘stuck’ working as managers for years. These systems, that ultimately result in such profound gender discrimination, are conventionally put in place by the male CEOs and senior-executives (Ferree & Martin, 2018).

Women tend to be promoted quicker if they follow the male managerial role i.e. if they manage tasks, supervise teams, and take decisions in ways resembling the ways of their male colleagues. The job descriptions of numerous jobs, especially managers, include at least an eight-hour availability of the employee, precluding the time taken to commute. These extensive periods of time can often be spared only by men, because they do not have additional responsibilities attached to managing a family.

Based on this fact alone, women are put into a category that is unable to fulfill its work duties properly. Operating under this assumption, organizations do not give women the job positions at higher levels of the business. Women, therefore, are compelled to carry the three-layered burden of their work, their family life, and a sexist workplace. These three factors, when combined with the racial and ethnic discriminations faced by women, make it next to impossible for them to ascend the hierarchal ladder. Naturally then, their attempts at breaking the glass ceiling are largely unsuccessful (Scott, 2017).

Family friendly policies can be assimilated into HR policies at a corporation to help women progress to higher levels. These policies allow women to work as hybrid

employees (working remotely on some days and working on site the other days). This is a viable strategy that can be implemented to overpower the effects of glass ceiling, because it will allow women to have more time to achieve a balance between their familial responsibilities and work-life simultaneously. Such policies can also include working part-time on some days of the week and working full-time on the others.

However, family friendly policies may have a downside when it comes to reducing gender inequality at work because employees who avail these policies, i.e. women, will be deemed less committed to their jobs than men, and a male dominated culture will prevail at the corporation as more women opt for part-time jobs and work on site less frequently. These policies may also inhibit the promotion of women as they will be absent from the corporation more so than before. In doing so, such policies actually risk increasing the extent of the glass ceiling at corporations rather than decreasing it (Nelson, 2022).

Another form of discrimination against women, that contributes significantly to the existence of a glass ceiling, at corporations is them working as personal assistants to managers. Researchers found that some male managers did a small percentage of their actual work and instead assigned a majority of it to their assistants, who were women in the most of the cases. The male managers took full credit for the work, and as is the norm, the female assistants were paid a proportionally low salary for completing many of the major tasks that were essential for smooth running of the company, on behalf of their bosses. When job evaluation systems were installed at these corporations to evaluate the amount of work that an employee had done, the extra work done by female assistants went unaccounted, because it was not included in the job description of an assistant.

The absence of proper tools and systems to hold such incompetent men accountable in these corporations contributes to the glass ceiling substantially, all over the world. Arguably the most unfair factor that came up with regards to this finding is that these women working in the position of assistants were seldom ever promoted to the positions of managers. These findings further validate the fact that there is an entire system in place by male managers that denies women their rightful promotions at the right times.

Another unfair basis of all these discriminatory measures was that women were regarded among those who belong to a category of subordinates, and men were perceived to belong to a category of leaders. A gender doubled bind is faced by women in corporate jobs. This implies that women are considered either too soft and feminine, or too masculine and assertive. The qualities of leadership demanded of men, however, are mostly reasonable and complementary to their characters. Women, on the contrary, are held up to unrealistic ideals, all the while having to overcome the already massive glass ceiling (Glenn, 2021).

Co-workers' attitudes towards the women are another cause of the glass ceiling. If women try to stand up for a cause that is important to them, or if they try to stand up for their rights, they are labeled as bold by their male co-workers and seniors. This influences the attitudes of these men towards them in their daily work-lives. The jobs that are offered to women are not the ones requisite for a promotion, because most of the important jobs, that are actually stepping stones to the top, are offered readily to men.

Promotion decisions are usually made by corporate boards. Given that these boards consist mainly of men in the majority of corporations, it is no surprise that racial and gender discrimination comes into play when decisions are being made. Men are preferred over women at every level of the hierarchy as they are perceived 'natural leaders' who can lead the firm to success. The fact that these biases exist even within corporate boards, that are supposed to be neutral in forming all their decisions, leads to the existence of a glass ceiling in organizations (Smith, 2020).

The wage gap that exists between men and women also augments the glass ceiling in corporations. The salaries of women when they are promoted to managerial levels are lesser than those of men because a pre-existing image of women, that they are less competent workers compared to men, is rampant throughout the organization. The supervisors' attitudes towards male and female employees who work under them further exacerbates the glass ceiling, because men are assigned duties that are more likely to lead to promotion, while women are assigned duties that are fairly basic and ones that make no substantial contribution to their career within the firm.

The race and gender of the workers informs the treatment that they receive from their supervisors. This bias is clearly observable in the informal interactions between these supervisors and their employees; these overt factors significantly solidify the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling also exists in the domain of legal organizations. It is manifested by the simple fact that supporting roles are assigned to woman in law firms, while men are made junior partners at these corporations even though they put in minimal work. The reward system also leads to an increase in the gender disparity and elevates the glass ceiling (Kanter, 2019).

Racial inequalities are a dominant cause of the glass ceiling. Black women are mostly not offered positions at the top and are forced to encounter unequal treatment based on not just their gender but their race too. They tend to face a higher number of negative situations at their workplaces, and the number of obstacles in their way is doubled, owing to their race and ethnicity. Many types of discrimination are hard to document because they occur within individual interactions between managers and employees without any witnesses or external recording by anyone else.

The impact of these racial discriminations is such that women in some cases become highly dispirited, so much so that they abandon any plan(s) to proceed to the top of the corporate ladder. Another obstacle that black women and women from other minorities suffer when working at a corporation is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is also difficult to document, as it targets the victim mostly within settings that ensure privacy and lack of evidence, so others in the workplace may not have slightest of the clue as to what happened behind the closed doors. Sexual harassment is also one of the major obstacles faced by women in their work-lives, of which many instances remain unresolved to date. A study found that the problem was also very common in developed countries, despite additional laws and legislation for the protection and upholding of women's rights that put in place in recent years (Barker, 2018).

6 THE EXISTENCE OF THE GLASS CEILING IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Glass ceiling has become a metaphor for describing the deplorable working conditions of women and the wage gap between men and women that exists in the marketplace. Though it exists in almost every country, the extent of the glass ceiling phenomenon varies in different countries. Some countries like Sweden offer better and more equal opportunities for women. However, countries like the USA, that are apparently progressive, have a workplace environment that is based on cutthroat competition, and glass ceiling exists at a substantial level in its marketplace.

6.1 The Hypothesis that is Being Tested

The hypothesis that is tested in most of the comparative studies conducted on countries is usually based on the assumption that as women try to move higher up in the hierarchy, the invisible barriers against them increase (Morrison et al, 2021). Even in the 21st century, women are being discriminated against on the basis of mere gender (Jason, 2020).

The culture and the power dynamics between genders in a country also determine the level of glass ceiling. If the power dynamics of the country are such that men are given precedence in every role, whether it is within family dynamics (as the head of the table) or at offices where they are given the title of managers and CEOs, the glass ceiling presents a serious barrier for women at their workplaces (Wright, 2020).

On the other hand, if the distribution of power is more even between men and women, and if women are treated with the same respect as men, the glass ceiling effect has a lesser impact on careers of the former. A question that arises often on the topic of glass ceiling is about the person who is to be blamed for the creation of these obstacles. Is it the managers at the higher levels? Is it the society? An all-inclusive answer is that the culprit is indeed a combination of all of the above. The society strengthens the beliefs of men in every country; these beliefs affirm that they are the superior gender and this, then, translates into their superior job positions as managers (Fierman, 2017).

A factor often ignored in most of the studies related to glass ceiling is that most women who work in countries like the US, Australia, or Sweden, work part-time jobs due to the innumerable responsibilities they have in their family lives. The roles that women have in their families have not evolved as much as would be considered sufficient. The fact that part time jobs generally do not involve a high level of promotion opportunities might explain, in part, why women are not being regularly promoted to the higher levels of the hierarchy (Baxter, 2021).

Another reason behind this is that promoting part-time managers incurs costs for the organization. The number of men working full-time jobs is significantly higher than the number of women. Hence, the higher level of promotional opportunities for men. More women are likely to work for the state than the corporate sector in the US. Conventionally speaking, a lower number of promotional opportunities are available when one works for the state as compared to the corporate sector. This trend, wherein more women are working for the state, has recorded an increase in recent years due to movements like MeToo, and the general rise of feminism. These factors, however, fail to explain why there is such a large wage gap between the two genders on every level of the organization (Kalleberg, 2020).

Managerial Level	Men	Women	% of Women	Men (Promotion Rates)	Women (Promotion Rates)	Ratio
Top Managers	100	1	1	-	-	-
Manager Level 4	200	4	2	50	25	2:1
Manager Level 3	400	16	4	50	25	2:1
Manager Level 2	800	64	7.5	50	25	2:1
Manager Level 1	600	256	14	50	25	2:1
Line Supervisor	3000	1024	24	50	25	2:1
No management	6400	4096	42	50	25	2:1

Gender Implicit Bias and Glass Ceiling Effects:

Source: <https://vpn.lums.edu.pk/proxy/1d040c52/https/eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=5&sid=19096a0c-1c1d-4330-a9b6-8d2dd77369ff%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=120605960&db=buh>

A survey was conducted by taking samples from companies to determine how many women worked at different levels of the organization in the US. The results clearly show that a larger number of women work as line supervisors and non-management i.e. the lower levels in business institutions. These levels of the business that consist of manual jobs are mainly assigned to women because of an unwarranted discrepancy that exists between genders (Reskin, 2022).

Another result of the study worth mentioning is that there is a huge discrepancy in the number of top-level managers. Men are mostly appointed at manager levels 3 and 4. All top managers are men. All findings and results of this study point to one detail: the glass ceiling phenomenon is not a myth, but a very real obstacle in the way of women at workplaces in every country, no matter how developed the country may seem to an outside eye. The US has, in recent years, passed many new laws to lessen the discrimination against women in workplaces, but it seems that all these laws were of little to no value, as can be inferred from the results of the study above. A more proactive approach towards the glass ceiling will perhaps result in a more disinterested workplace for women who now make up half of the workforce in almost all countries (Padavic, 2021).

6.2 The Other Obstacles Faced by Women at their Workplaces

There are many complications, other than the glass ceiling, that women suffer at the workplace. Studies list these obstacles, including sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, gender pay gap, and racial and ethnic discrimination. During the hiring process, female candidates are asked personal questions during panel interviews, such as their marital status, whereas men are questioned about their credentials and/or qualifications only (Hultin, 2020).

Undeterred by the plethora of laws that are supposedly in place to provide women with the support, safety, and security, pregnancy discrimination exists openly in companies. These laws are unable to make much of a difference. Women are viewed as emotional beings who take their decisions based on their emotions rather than relying on rational judgment and logical factors. This sexism is based entirely on discrimination towards a whole gender with little or no scientific proof to validate if women really are emotional creatures (Jacobs, 2019).

Sexual harassment is listed as one of the most common issues faced by women in their workplaces. Even with a lot of safety laws for the protection of employees against such criminal practices in the company's own rule book, women are sexually assaulted by their co-workers and managers who view them as objects.

This objectification of women presents a cumbersome hurdle that mangles the path that women try to pave for them to achieve success in business. Men, on the other hand, are given both promotions and pay raises, even if the work they do is mediocre at best. Another daunting obstacle for women in workplaces is the fact that they are judged on the basis of their character, instead of their qualifications or skillset. Men have an unfair advantage over women in almost every field, because their qualifications and skills are the only criteria assessed when they apply for a job.

6.3 The Glass Ceiling in Developed Versus Developing Countries

The glass ceiling is a phenomenon that exists in businesses all over the world, be it a developing country or a developed one. Anyhow, women in developed countries find it easier to break through the glass ceiling in some corporations relative to developing countries. This is accounted for by a number of different reasons; the backward mindset of people in most of the developing countries being one of them. In countries like India and Pakistan, specifically in the rural areas, it is a preconceived notion that women are capable of performing manual jobs only. This belief along with others similar to this creates a glass ceiling for women residing in these places (Kanter, 2018).

Every country has a different level of glass ceiling. A cardinal factor that affects the density of glass ceiling is its policies. China is a fitting example of this fact. When

the Chinese government developed and implemented its One-Child policy, Chinese women were able to join the workforce in large numbers, because their responsibilities at home were reduced. In sharp contrast to this, a family, on average, has more than three children in each household in the rural areas of many developing countries.

This increases the responsibilities of the women who marry into these families, ultimately reducing the number of women in the workforce. The values and norms of a country also impact the extent of glass ceiling in that country. This implies that, in a developed country like the US, women find it easier to go out, look for a job, and start working, because their society accepts women as part of its workforce. Counter to this, the values that are instilled in people in some third world countries, which are scarcely developed, hold them back from viewing women as an equal part of their workforce (Smith, 2019).

The gender inequalities within a corporation are so deeply entrenched and invisible to an outsider that it has become next to impossible to achieve gender equality (Vallas, 2018). The invisibility of these gender inequalities facilitates further consolidation of glass ceiling because it remain undetected and therefore, unresolved. Awareness about the scope of inequality within a corporation varies country to country, so the extent of glass ceiling within that corporation varies. The awareness level of both genders in reference to them has risen in developed countries due to recent campaigns about women's rights.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that inequalities have ceased to exist at corporations in developed countries, but it does indicate that some preventive measures have been taken to bring down the number and extent of obstacles. In developing countries, unfortunate as it is, awareness about gender inequality is still quite insubstantial, so it follows that very few changes are under way in corporations to bridge the gap between the two genders. This steep contrast can also be attributed to the scope of education in developed versus developing countries. The better educated the women are in a country; the more aware they are about gender inequalities, and vice versa. Awareness about the problem is a pre-requisite to prompt a reduction in the level of glass ceiling (Morgen et al, 2022).

Managers try to conceal some forms of inequality behind legal procedures at some corporations. For example, avoidance in promoting women workers during promotion processes (Charles & Grusky, 2021). One method used by managers to downplay the extent of inequalities at their corporation is forbidding employees from bringing up a discussion about their salaries with each other. This is to ensure that male employees do not accidentally reveal that they are paid more than their female counterparts for doing the same amount of work.

Such schemes used by managers at corporations are instrumental to the glass ceiling. A major problem faced by researchers trying to gather information on this phenomenon is that male managers and workers at companies do not acknowledge gender inequality as an issue; it is viewed by them as a process that has existed in the company from the time that it was founded; meaning that they view it as something natural and normal for any company. This ignorance within the corporation makes it harder to identify these patterns and take up the steps to remedy them as appropriate.

Racial inequalities are also ignored by the dominant group in almost every corporation. The dominant group in the majority of corporations was identified as white men who work at the top-levels of the organization. For example, racist insults hurled at the minorities are disguised as jokes (Wharton, 2020).

In most countries, the control mechanisms at corporations are designed in ways that end up reinforcing inequalities at every level of the hierarchy (Padavic & Reskin, 2019). Women and people from racial minorities can rise to the top positions only if they follow and adhere to the system of injustices that has been put in place by male managers. These unfair mechanisms contribute to strengthening the already impenetrable glass ceiling. No employee is allowed to challenge these mechanisms; if the marginalized groups challenge these systems, they are fired. Hence, these mechanisms stay intact and continue to benefit one gender that set up these systems in the first place.

These controls are put in place so that power held by male managers remains unchallenged and so do the toxic work culture brought into existence through these mechanisms. The devices employed for putting such a system in place range from rewards to the level of wages awarded to employees who remain compliant, and a

direct control system that includes rules that are to be followed by every employee; if such a rule is broken by any employee, they may face serious consequences at the hands of their supervisor. This punitive reward-based system is just one of the many tools utilized by managers to maintain and uphold the system of inequality that has persisted in their corporations for years now (Reskin & Roos, 2018).

Researchers found that in some cases, even when the top-level management tried to implement changes to breach the glass ceiling, the male managers working at the middle-management level tried to foil the process due to the advantages bestowed upon them by the continued existence of gender inequality in the organization (Mishel et al, 2017). For actual changes to be made in an organization in order to penetrate the glass ceiling effectively, the top, middle, and lower management levels have to come together to resolve gender and racial inequality issues in the organization. The hindrance caused by middle level management can lead to fewer jobs for women at the senior-level and fewer promotional opportunities for them, solidifying the glass ceiling effect (Smith, 2022).

Heavily rewarding heroic male problem-solving attitudes institutes the glass ceiling in a majority of organizations (Hartmann, 2021). When male managers solve basic issues related to the firm, they are rewarded by the top management and rendered heroics, whereas the important tasks accomplished by women are brushed under the carpet, instead of being admired. These deep-seated practices in an organization supplement gender inequality at all levels.

When male managers were asked about the reasons behind the under-representation of women at the top-levels of corporations, a majority answered that the individual failings of women were the sole reason; only a few of them recognized the faults that were present in their corporation's system. The systems are designed such that white male managers are seen as natural leaders, so if a person from another gender or race manages to achieve the position of a CEO, it is seen as unnatural by many in the company. Such is the state of division and clash between races and genders (Ely & Meyerson, 2020).

The glass ceiling effect has infiltrated organizational structures to such an extent that whenever firms are downsizing, they fire more female workers than male

without a thought about the adverse effects of it on their lives (Wacjman, 2019). A possible solution that can help improve the situation for women in their workplaces, and one that will reduce the extent of the glass ceiling, is the advocacy of women's rights through social movements outside of the corporations. This will raise awareness about the issues faced by women during their daily work-lives and place more pressure on the top-level management to take measures targeted at reducing the level of inequality at their corporations.

The considerable wage gap between the two genders has nothing to do with years of schooling, the skill set of the workers, or even the experience that they have in the corporate world. In actuality, the gender inequality present in all corporations is the main factor to blame here. The differences in working conditions of employees i.e. their office spaces, the quality of their colleague's work, do not affect the wage gap at all (Willis, 2018).

A wage gap is found at all levels of a corporation, lower, middle, and top, however, the wage gap increases going up the corporate ladder (Burawoy, 2017). This means that women are paid substantially less than men at the top-level of the hierarchy. The fact that there exists a wage gap between the two genders further attests to the existence of glass ceiling. Researchers found this problem to be a widely prevalent phenomenon, which meant that a wage gap exists in the US as well as Sweden and other countries, thus proving that a glass ceiling does indeed exist and hinders the access to opportunities that women have in their work-lives. The glass ceiling has also been called a gender specific phenomenon, meaning that the gender inequality is such that women are considered the 'other' gender, while men enjoy lucrative work opportunities and a higher wage level on the basis of their gender (Acker, 2022).

Glass ceiling has numerous adverse effects on the work lives and the overall quality of life for women. It was found that women, even when they work over-time, were paid less than men who worked only the hours required by the firm (Royster, 2021). This signifies that women working extra hours are paid the same salary that men are paid to do the bare minimum for the firm. This unfair distribution of salaries is yet another circumstance which supports the existence of glass ceiling at corporations.

Countries that otherwise provide equality in every aspect of life for both genders, such as Sweden, are also maligned by a vast discrepancy between the wages paid to women and those paid to men. The familiar pattern of an increasing wage gap for women as they go up the corporate ladder was observed in Sweden. In many countries like the US, UK, and Australia, the wage gap at the bottom of the hierarchy was quite minimal compared to the wage gap at the top-levels of management. Women working as senior executives were also being paid less than their male counterparts, even though both were performing the same tasks within the same time span. There was a substantial difference between the amount of salary being paid to men and women in leadership positions (Glenn, 2020).

Women from minorities and those who are immigrants also have to bear the brunt of the glass ceiling (Bell et.al, 2019). Immigrant women are often paid less than immigrant men. Henceforth, the wage gap phenomenon is definitely being termed a gender-phenomena because there is no other apparent basis of this discrimination. So, to answer the question “is glass ceiling the only obstacle that women face in their work-lives?”, it can be said that other obstacles such as sexual harassment also go hand-in-hand with the problems associated with glass ceiling that women are forced to encounter on a daily basis.

Immigrant women and women from minorities also face issues such as verbal harassment in the forms of insults by the top-management. Only a limited number of corporations make this sort of harassment a punitive crime. At the majority of corporations, however, men are able to play the gender card and come out of accusations unscathed (Ridgeway, 2018).

The gender gap, in terms of the wage distribution and other gender inequalities, as a woman ascends the corporate ladder, is wider in Sweden compared to the US (Hochschild, 2017). This may be attributed to the fact that women in recent years have advocated their rights more vocally in the US in the form of rallies and strikes compared to Sweden. Wage gap and other inequalities at the bottom of the hierarchy are somewhat similar in both the US and Sweden. The point to be noted here is that trade unions in both the US and Sweden advocate for equal pay for both men and women at corporations. The observations made in these studies focusing on the glass ceiling take this factor into consideration.

The glass ceiling effect was stronger in Swedish firms in comparison to the firms in US. This might be the case because the average labor market opportunities in the US have shown positive improvement for women over time. An explanation to justify the difference in the wages paid to women and men is that there exists a difference in the characteristics of both genders. So essentially, men are paid a higher amount because they are believed to have the necessary characteristics crucial to functions of a leader (Jacobs & Gerson, 2022).

Another explanation offered for the gender disparity in markets, and one that largely contributes to the glass ceiling all over the world, is that markets reward various characteristics and skills possessed by men and women in different quantities (Stone, 2021). This denotes that men are rewarded more because they are perceived to be more apt at handling the challenging situations that arise at the workplace. This assumption has been debunked by many researchers working on this phenomenon as they clarify that women have the characteristics and skills that, albeit being unlike those of men, are necessary for the success of businesses in their own ways, and that women deserve to be rewarded for these skills, much like men have been rewarded since the beginning of time (Etzkowitz & Gupta, 2020).

Gender inequality and glass ceiling are present in small as well as large firms, regardless of their size or departments (Glass, 2019). When calculating the amount of pay that should be paid to an employee, the employee's education or experience levels should be the focal points of consideration in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, due to subconscious discriminatory notions, the employee's gender becomes a factor that influences the decision of their wage. Researchers found that in companies owned by the government, the existence of a glass ceiling made it impossible for women to advance in their professional careers. Even though the only criteria that matter for these government jobs should be merit, the glass ceiling, being as entrenched as it is, averts women from getting the jobs that they desire, even when they are perfectly fit for them on the basis of the predefined merit. Their gender causes them to lose opportunities that are offered to their male colleagues. When variables such as the level of education and the years of experience were controlled, the gender gap was greater at the top of the hierarchy than at the lower levels even in this case scenario. (Skuratowicz & Hunter, 2018).

Occupational segregation is also one of the leading causes of the glass ceiling (Enarson, 2017). Women are hired in occupations that pay relatively less, while men are hired in high-paying occupations hinged on the assumption that they are more suited to such jobs, thus reinforcing the glass ceiling in corporations. When the factor of occupational segregation was controlled, the difference in the wages paid to women was still higher at the top of the hierarchy than the bottom and the glass ceiling effect was felt more by women at the top positions as compared to the ones at lower level.

The marital status of men and women has different effects on their positions at an organization. Married men tend to be paid more and assigned more important jobs. Married women, on the other hand, are assigned less important jobs and are paid less. This discrimination, which springs out of the marital status of employees, leads to persistence of the glass ceiling, and makes it very difficult for women to choose between a happy married life and a successful career. Men are neither expected nor forced into making such trade-off decisions (Royster, 2022).

Another obstacle experienced by women in their work-lives is the dilemma associated with deciding how to conduct their business “like a man” so that they are paid more at their respective jobs (Eagly & Carli, 2021). When women adopted working styles similar to men and worked full-time, they were still paid less than the men working in the same occupations. Researchers discerned that gender-wage gaps and a glass ceiling at the top of the hierarchy were due to the differences in rewards offered to men and women at the top, both monetary rewards and fringe benefits. The characteristics that both genders had influenced the level of the glass ceiling only in some cases.

As employees, women deserve the same rewards for their efforts and work as men. Corporations should integrate accountability systems in their practices and procedures to ensure that there is no discrimination against women when it comes to rewards, especially at the top of the hierarchy. The glass ceiling effect encompasses personal, institutional, and societal barriers, faced by women in their work-lives that hinder their professional advancement (Brown & Misra, 2020).

An appropriate solution endorsed by multiple researchers to help undo the effects of glass ceiling was that the concept of the glass ceiling must be clearly

communicated to human resource professionals so that they understand exactly what it is (Reskin, 2019). This is important because a Human Resource Professional's job description often entails hiring and firing decisions. If the managers working in this department are cognizant of how important the female workers' contributions are to the organization, and how detrimental the glass ceiling can be to the lives of women, they may become capable of bringing about the changes needed to improve the work-lives of women (Tomaskovic-Devey et.al, 2018).

Having female employees does not just improve a corporation's reputation but also diversifies the skill set in the organization, because men and women tend to differ in their strengths and weaknesses (Figart et.al, 2017). The Human Resource management in a company needs to be made aware of the adverse effects of glass ceiling, if it is to be weakened. This is particularly important because the HR department is often consulted by the company's CEO for strategic changes planned or in process. If it suggests positive measures that can, to an extent, nullify the effects of the glass ceiling, the CEO is more likely to implement these throughout the organization, thus making it a better workplace for women. In many developed countries like the US, discrimination against employees on basis like gender, race and religion is illegal.

Despite these stern laws, a glass ceiling does exist in the majority of firms in the US. Developing countries are considerably behind in terms of equality laws, so the legislation and laws in developing countries needs to be worked on, to make it easier for women working in the corporate sector. Legislations that promote equality, such as equal employment opportunities (EEO), should be made part of the law in developing countries (the ones where it is yet to be included in company laws). For developed countries, where these regulations already exist, they should be implemented properly so that the intended benefits from such legislations actually reach the women (Burawoy, 2016).

Affirmative action plans (AAP), especially the utilization sections that are present within the AAP, compare the number of women that are available in the market for a certain job that is being offered at the company and the number of women that the company has actually employed (Pierce, 2022). Companies that do not follow these laws seriously can be fined heavily as a punitive measure. Glass ceiling audits are

another type of audit that some companies are required to conduct so an accurate assessment of the discrimination prevalent in the company can be made.

Under the guise of unavailable seats, women are unfairly denied access to training programs that train employees in essential managerial skills; this holds women back from being promoted to managerial positions. Men are given necessary training to develop these requisite skills at the beginning of their employment (at the very start of their careers). As a result, more men work as senior-level executives at the top-level than do women. This further strengthens the already existing glass ceiling (Krefting, 2021).

The barriers placed in a woman's pathway to gain the line experience which is a must for working senior-level jobs comprise another obstacle that women have to face in their work-lives (Martin & Meyerson, 2020). Male managers and CEOs at firms attempt to maintain the existing status quo by ensuring that more men get promoted to senior positions annually than women. The discomfort that white male managers feel when women or people from any other race work with them pushes them to ensure that no women or minorities are promoted to senior levels.

Another leverage utilized by some male managers is converting their extra-curricular activities, for example golf, into informal meetings with their senior managers and CEOs; this helps them improve their chances of promotion. Women are unable to avail such benefits. Organizations are not given enough incentives nor are they held accountable, so they encourage diversity, both in terms of gender and race. In light of this, the incentives offered to companies with a more diverse workforce should be boosted. Similarly, companies that demonstrate little to no interest when it comes to diversifying their workforce should be carefully assessed by the government (McIntosh, 2019).

The views of a company's CEO are very important in determining the level up to which women are promoted to in that company (Korvajarvi, 2018). If a CEO believes in equality, the company offers more equal opportunities to all employees regardless of their gender, and women can ascend the corporate ladder relatively smoothly and vice versa. CEOs should recognize the need for change in the hiring and promotion policies of their companies. These changes have to be implemented

properly to reduce the extent of glass ceiling in the company. The interpersonal leadership style used by women is discouraged in the majority of companies, and the leadership styled centered on pure logic and directness employed by men is encouraged. This encouragement allows men to feel satiated at their jobs, while the discouragement at every level in the organization sets women back from progressing in their careers. Women who tend to use a direct communication style do better at companies in terms of fitting in and securing promotional opportunities compared to those who stick with the leadership styles that they may be comfortable with, who do not feel the need to change themselves just to fit in perfectly with the corporation's male centric culture (Perrow, 2017).

Generally, women reflect more flexibility in their leadership styles than men (Hearn & Parkin, 2022). It was discovered that women incorporated several different leadership qualities into their directing style when they were promoted to senior positions. They also appeared more flexible when trying to decide company-related matters. Women tended to use leadership styles better suited to the people and the culture of the company rather than the ones they were familiar with. Companies that broke through the glass ceiling performed better than those who did not, both in terms of profits and outcomes.

Top management teams which contained a larger number of women did better in their financial performance than did those which hardly had any women and were primarily male dominated. A surprising finding revealed that even though the number of women working is increasing rapidly, the pay gap between men and women is also increasingly annually. This further proves the existence of a glass ceiling in companies. Women of color have to face more obstacles in addition to those faced by white women. Women of color may be discriminated against by white women who view them as a threat to their own promotional opportunities, because the number of women promoted every year is alarmingly small in a majority of the companies.

The credibility of women of color is constantly questioned by the managers in a company. Their education and experience levels are often undermined, and they are discriminated against based on their race and ethnicity. There is a general lack of institutional support that can help overcome these racial and gender-based discriminations (Edin & Richardsson, 2021).

Women are perceived less geographically mobile than men owing to the heavy family responsibilities that they are burdened with; this results in less international promotional opportunities for women (Blau & Kahn, 2020). The glass ceiling effect comes into play when the majority of international promotions and mentors on international assignments are provided to men, because of the assumption that women will not be willing to relocate to advance their careers due to their constraining societal roles. This leads to a lack of global female managers, which may pose a disadvantage for a company that operates all over the globe, as it fails to effectively utilize the potential of its (female) workforce.

The fact that career models are developed only for men in most companies places women at a crucial disadvantage and augments the glass ceiling effect. This is just one example of the lack in organizational support offered to women internationally. Upon asking women in Europe about the glass ceiling through surveys, it was confirmed that there indeed was a glass ceiling that existed in the majority of firms, and that these women had to face the brunt of it very early on in their careers, because their company has offered little to no promotional opportunities to them. Most of them, domestic and global, were offered to their male counterparts, thus enabling them to develop their career profiles ten times faster than any woman working in the company for years (Palme & Wright, 2019).

The support of an influential mentor may be tapped on to by women to overcome the glass ceiling. Though this strategy has its fair share of difficulties, it is an effective technique according to some women. This strategy can work exceptionally well if it is coupled with others such as trying to avail every opportunity available at the corporation for professional growth or with the strategy of exceeding the company's performance expectations in tasks (Garland, 2018).

These strategies are only successful when pursued consistently and correctly by women. Therefore, they have to be much more calculative in their jobs than men, who often do not feel the need for an additional effort, as they are presented with promotions as a general right in corporations. A position that women can assume to break the glass ceiling is that of an entrepreneur or a business owner wherein they start their own business from scratch and have the power to make decisions to determine things such as employee equality, and more. This is an approach that women of color

can also employ in order to have equal rights and leadership positions that they are, otherwise, deprived of in the corporate world (Scandura, 2017).

The core values and culture of an organization have to be identified by the HR department, and then gradual alterations must be made to these elements so the glass ceiling can be broken down. This can be done by taking small steps such as ensuring that the practices which result in the isolation of women in the informal structures of the organization are brought to a halt. Eventually, in the grander scheme of things, pay inequality should also be targeted and worked on. The cooperation of the top management is necessary to put these solutions into action. The top-management in the majority of corporations with glass ceilings is unwilling to change their traditional organizational structure, and is, in fact, very much against any changes that may put more power in the hands of female employees, because it would mean a lower level of authority for themselves (Morrison et.al, 2022).

Another strategy that can be of use to the HR departments in corporations is ensuring that diversity is made a criterion in the measurement of an organization's success. This would ensure the inclusion of more women in the workforce and at senior positions. Training and spreading awareness among workers about the barriers faced by women and how to overcome them is another method that can be used to dismantle the glass ceiling gradually. Change-management diversity programs can be scheduled monthly for managers who are ignorant of the problems faced by their female employees. These programs may include imparting knowledge about the advantages of having a diverse and gender equal workforce to motivate managers to work towards gender equality within the organization (Wright, 2021).

Retention programs and leadership development programs can be devised and implemented for women; these can be developed by HR departments in corporations to curtail the glass ceiling effect. The advancement of women can be tracked to analyze their progress in terms of promotions. These systems can also hold managers accountable if they use unfair hiring and promotion processes to promote more men than women. Researchers found that old-fashioned sexist behavior was one of the main reasons behind glass ceilings in corporations. Moreover, sexism also morphs into other obstacles for women, such as sexual harassment. Male executives and CEOs in such corporations believe that women are inferior and choose to harass them in ways that

they deem fitting. In order to get rid of issues that arise because of sexism that prevails within organizations, legislations must be implemented to punish managers who are a part of immoral activities, making the work-lives of women unbearably difficult and making it hard for them to “fit in” at their workplaces (Fierman, 2020).

Even when women become managers, they are isolated from internal networks within the organizations, meaning that they are unable to reap the same benefits from this networking that male employees in the corporation do as a part of such networks. Researchers, through casual observation, found that it is crystal clear that lower-level clerics and workers are usually women, and the top-level positions belong to men. Systematic analysis further proves that in countries such as Denmark, Japan, US, Sweden, Germany, and Australia, corporations tend to employ men at the top-level of their corporations and assign lower-level positions to women. In all of the countries above, the obstacles that women faced due to the glass ceiling increased as they went up the corporate hierarchy. Other obstacles faced by women such as sexual harassment was also found to be somewhat similar globally, with just a small number of laws and legislations implemented properly to overcome these issues, especially in developing countries (Reskin & Padavic, 2019).

The glass ceiling effect is so prevalent in the majority of corporations that a term has been coined to describe the gender inequalities that exist in these companies; the term is ‘gender-gap in authority’. This term clearly declares that the positions that give employees higher level of authority are given to men. Occupational and organizational sex segregation is present at all levels of a hierarchy, leading to an intensification of the barriers faced by women, such as the way their fellow employees treat them. Jobs at companies are divided into two categories: management and non-management. The management category jobs are assigned to men and jobs under the non-management category are assigned to women based on the assumption that men are better at managerial jobs than women (Hultin, 2018).

The gender gap in authoritative hierarchy was greater when the qualifications of all the employees were taken into consideration. At all levels of the hierarchy, corporations where women were more qualified than men at most levels, the gender gap was more pronounced. This does not mean that a glass ceiling did not exist in firms where men were more qualified than women in the majority of hierarchal levels.

Other factors, such as the experience level of the women at latter firms, were more than that of men. Regardless, female employees were being paid less than their male counterparts. The “net gender gap” was calculated for firms in the US, and clear evidence of a glass ceiling was found at the majority of corporations, with minimal effort dedicated to rectifying the unfair working situations. The odds of a man being a bottom-level manager were found to be significantly lesser than those of women in countries such as the US, Australia, and Sweden (Jacobs, 2017).

When women overcome the many obstacles to get to the relatively authoritative positions, they still do not get rewarded with executive positions. This is one of the reasons that a certain percentage of women comply with the rules and are content with lower-level positions, because the belief of not being a good enough worker has been instilled in their minds by society and their fellow employees. In the US, the glass ceiling was most prominent at the top-management levels of the corporation. In Australia and Sweden, however, the glass ceiling had already reached a significant level at the middle-management and lower levels of the hierarchy, and the gender gap increased only when women progressed upwards in the hierarchy. In Australia, women were more likely to face a higher glass ceiling at the middle-management level, so they could not progress to the top-management positions (Jaffee, 2022).

In the US, it is more difficult for women to overcome the obstacles that can help them enter the authoritative hierarchy than getting a promotion (Reskin & Roos, 2020). Contrary to this, getting a promotion in Sweden, when women have entered the hierarchy, is more difficult than overcoming the obstacles to enter the hierarchy. The fight for women’s rights in the US means that more political energy is devoted to fighting for the rights of women in the workplace in corporations in the US. In Sweden, on the other hand, people are less aware of these issues, and women are less vocal about the problems that they encounter at their workplaces, which results in lesser employment practices designed to eradicate gender inequality. The overall culture and norms of a country can also determine the level of the glass ceiling in its corporations. The more women are aware of their rights in a country and the more they fight for it, the more gender equality legislations are likely to be included in that particular country’s employment policies and the higher the probability of reducing the glass ceiling in that country. Some researchers argue that women have started joining the

labor force in large numbers only recently, so it makes sense that they be employed at the lower-level and are offered lesser pay than their male counterparts who have been part of the workforce for much longer. A counter to this argument put forward by other researchers is that the education and experience levels of women should be considered before employing them at lower levels. For example, if a woman is more qualified than a man who has applied to the same position, the woman should not be rejected just because she is a woman; she should be given the said position instead of the man who is objectively less qualified, and the only ‘edge’ he possesses is that of being a man (Kalleberg, 2019).

Another obstacle faced by women in their professional lives is the more competitive selection process that they are put through. Such processes are highly rigorous, and men do not face such excessively intense obstacles during the course of their careers. These unfair inclusions when it comes to the hiring and promotion of women are further proof of the existence of the glass ceiling. These rigorous processes should validate that women are better trained than men for the senior managerial positions, but unsurprisingly, men still move up the hierarchy faster, and sometimes that happens even without the necessary skills/training required for higher positions. When it comes to everyday jobs such as jobs at a grocery store, women are employed as cashiers or assistants, and most of the managerial positions are allocated to men. The glass ceiling can be recognized clearly in all aspects of life, if one looks closely (Wright & Baxter, 2018).

Women face the glass ceiling in political arena as well (Hibbs & Locking, 2019). Female candidates running for the office of President are not considered as befitting a candidate as the men running for the same position with similar qualifications. Misogynistic remarks and insults are hurled at them, and every attempt is made by the men in relevant offices to hinder the journey of women. Social movements including the ones that demand more rights and equality for women in every aspect of life have made some difference in evolving the laws and legislations in corporations. Unfortunately, not many women have been able to benefit from these changes, because there is still a lack of women in leadership positions that possess actual practical influence in the corporate world (Edin & Fredriksson, 2018).

7 METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Surveys were the major tool I utilized to map out the degree of the glass ceiling in different nations and provide an answer to my research question, "Is glass ceiling the only obstacle faced by women in their workplaces?" I designed a poll with ten questions so that women from Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey may respond and share their thoughts with me. To ensure that working women could accurately understand the meaning of the glass ceiling and compare it to other obstacles they face in their respective workplaces, I limited my sample to women who are currently employed by different companies.

The respondents' demographics are distributed over a range of categories. Ladies between the ages of 22 and 45 were requested to respond to a glass ceiling survey. Women who are currently employed in the business sector made up the sample that was chosen in order to guarantee the accuracy of the conclusions drawn regarding the existence of the "glass ceiling." These women were from Turkey, Lebanon, or Pakistan. The survey that was done for the thesis included 350 respondents in total.

The survey responses were tallied using a Likert scale. In essence, a Likert scale is a kind of assessment that researchers use to gauge how survey participants feel about a certain subject. When conducting surveys, a Likert scale can be used to calculate the opinions and objections of the sample regarding a certain issue. Likert scales come in a variety of forms, including 5- and 7-point versions.

When conducting the surveys in this study, a 5-point Likert scale was employed. The responses on the Likert scale with five points were: strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; and disagree strongly. This scale assisted in determining the sample's viewpoints on various facets of the glass ceiling.

A sample of 350 was chosen using a convenient sampling approach. Subsequently, SPSS was employed on the gathered surveys, yielding the subsequent outcomes.

The results analysis points to the glass ceiling influence on women's employment circumstances in the workplace. The response values from 350 employees in co-working scenarios were indicated by the analytical results.

Table 7.1 Demographical Information of the study participants. (N=350)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Do you believe that equal salaries given to men and women in your country?			
	Yes	68	19.4
	No	282	80.6
Is the CEO of the company you work at a:			
	Male	297	84.9
	Female	53	15.1
Do you believe the workplace laws in your country provide enough support for women?			
	Yes	81	23.1
	No	269	76.9
Do you believe that women have to work harder to achieve a senior position in an organization than men?			
	Yes	293	83.7
	No	57	16.3
Do you agree with the following statement: My gender affects my chances of receiving a promotion at my workplace?			
	Strongly agree	120	34.3
	Agree	132	37.7
	Neutral	35	10.0
	Disagree	31	8.9
	Strongly disagree	32	9.1
Do you believe women can perform better in some tasks than men in a workplace in some capacities?			
	Yes	324	92.6
	No	26	7.4

Do you believe women in developed countries face less obstacles in their workplace than women in developing countries?			
	Yes	288	82.3
	No	62	17.7
Have you heard of women facing sexual harassment in their workplaces?			
	Yes	207	59.1
	No	143	40.9
Do you agree with the following statement: The viewpoint of a woman often not heard at a meeting until it repeated by a man.			
	Strongly agree	38	10.9
	Agree	130	37.1
	Neutral	91	26.0
	Disagree	76	21.7
	Strongly disagree	15	4.3
Do you believe that gender inequality has reduced over the years?			
	Yes	302	86.3
	No	48	13.7

**Note: f = frequency, % = percentage*

Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages related to the study topic, highlighting potential trends in the responses. Do you think that in your nation, men and women are paid equally? The answers are No (f = 282, % = 80.4) and Yes (f = 68, % = 19.4). Does the CEO of the company you work for have a male (f = 297, % = 84.9) or female (f = 53, % = 15.1) gender? Do you think that women are given enough support in the workplace in your country? No (f = 269, % = 76.9) and Yes (f = 81, % = 23.1),

Do you think it takes more effort for women than for males to advance to a top position in an organization? Reject (f = 57, % = 16.3) and Accept (f = 293, % = 83.7) Do you think that having a different gender will hurt my chances of getting promoted at work? Strongly disagree (f = 32, % = 9.1), disagree (f = 31, % = 8.9), agree (f = 132, % = 37.7), and strongly disagree (f = 32, % = 9.1) are the different responses to the

survey. Do you think women are capable of doing some jobs in the workplace better than men? Reject (f = 26, % = 7.4) and accept (f = 324, % = 92.6).

Do you think there are less barriers for women in wealthy nations than in underdeveloped nations at work? The answers are No (f = 62, % = 17.7) and Yes (f = 288, % = 82.3). Do you know of any instances where women are subjected to sexual harassment at work? In all cases—No (f = 143, % = 40.9) and Yes (f = 207, % = 59.1)— Do you concur with this statement? In meetings, women's opinions are frequently ignored until they are voiced by men. Very agree (f = 38, % = 10.9), agree (f = 130, % = 37.1), disagree (f = 76, % = 21.7), and strongly disagree (f = 15, % = 4.3) are the different responses. Do you think that as time has gone on, gender inequality has decreased? Affirmative (f = 302, % = 96.3) and negative (f = 48, % = 13.7).

Table 7.2 Psychometric Properties of Scales Used in the study (N=350)

	K	M	(SD)	Range		Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Actual	Potential	Stati	Std. E	Stati	Std. E
Q1	350	1.80	.39	1 – 2	1 – 2	-1.55	1.30	.41	.26
Q2	350	1.15	.35	1 – 2	1 – 2	1.95	1.30	1.82	.26
Q3	350	1.76	.42	1 – 2	1 – 2	-1.27	1.30	-.36	.26
Q4	350	1.16	.36	1 – 2	1 – 2	1.83	1.30	1.37	.26
Q5	350	2.20	1.25	1 – 5	1 – 5	.98	1.30	-.07	.26
Q6	350	1.07	.26	1 – 2	1 – 2	3.26	1.30	8.68	.26
Q7	350	1.17	.38	1 – 2	1 – 2	1.69	1.30	.89	.26
Q8	350	1.40	.49	1 – 2	1 – 2	.37	1.30	-1.87	.26
Q9	350	2.71	1.05	1 – 5	1 – 5	.25	1.30	-.73	.26
Q10	350	1.13	.34	1 – 2	1 – 2	2.11	1.30	2.50	.26

**Note: α = Cronbach's alpha, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, and k = Number of Items*
Range Min = Score Minimum; Range Max = Score Maximum, Q1: Do you think that men and women in your nation are paid equally?, Q2: Is the firm you work for led by a, Q3: Do you think your nation's working regulations give women adequate support?, Q4: Do you think it takes more effort for women than for males to advance to a senior position in an organization?, Q5: How much of the following statement is true? Does my gender influence my chances of getting promoted at work? Q6: Do you think women are capable of outperforming men in the workplace in some capacities? Q7: Do you think that

working-class women have it easier than working-class women in industrialized nations?, Q8: Do you agree with the following statement: A woman's perspective is frequently ignored in meetings until a man repeats it? Q9: Do you agree with the following statement? A woman's perspective is frequently ignored in meetings until a man repeats it? Q10: Do you think that throughout time, there has been less gender inequality?

Table 7.2 indicates the least deviation of the responses indicating majority of the answers are congruent. Values indicate the negative skewness at Q3 and Q5. Whereas rest are positively skewed indicating the responses in the positive direction. Kurtosis indicates majority values lie in platykurtosis and leptokurtosis.

Table 7.3 Correlation between research questions (K = 350).

Variables	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Q1	-	-.17**	.55**	-.50**	-.49**	-.21**	-.24**	.14**	-.34**	-.01
Q2	-	-	-.20**	.07	.23**	.03	.03	.03	.10*	-.07
Q3	-	-	-	-.47**	-.48**	-.15**	-.17**	.16**	-.26**	.04
Q4	-	-	-	-	.50**	.17**	.34**	-.16**	.39**	-.06
Q5	-	-	-	-	-	.18**	.36**	-.24**	.29**	-.02
Q6	-	-	-	-	-	-	.06	-.05	.11*	-.01
Q7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.23**	.11*	.05
Q8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.10	-.24**
Q9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.28**
Q10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Note: Q1: Do you think that men and women in your nation are paid equally?, Q2: Is the CEO of the organization where you work a, Q3: Do you think your nation's working regulations give women adequate support?, Q4: Do you think it takes more effort for women than for males to advance to a senior position in an organization?, Q5: Do you agree that having a female gender influence my chances of getting promoted at work?, Q6: Do you think women are capable of outperforming men in the workplace in some capacities? Q7: Do you think that working-class women have it easier than working-class women in industrialized nations?, Q8: Do you concur with the assertion that In meetings, women's opinions are frequently ignored until they are voiced by men. Q9: Do you agree with the following statement? A woman's perspective is frequently ignored in meetings until a man repeats it? Q10: Do you think that throughout time, there has been less gender inequality?*

** = very important at. Significant at.05, 01*

Table 7.3 indicates majority values in the range of significant correlation but not in strong correlation with the p value > 0.05.

Table 7.4 CEO gender as a predictor (K = 350)(Regression Testing).

	B	Std. E	B	T	P
Q1	-.06	.06	-.07	-1.03	.29
Q3	-.10	.05	-.12	-1.91	.05
Q4	-.11	.06	-.11	-1.74	.08
Q5	.06	.01	.22	3.33	.00
Q6	-.02	.07	-.02	-.39	.69
Q7	-.02	.05	-.02	-.42	.66
Q8	.06	.04	.08	1.47	.14
Q9	.00	.02	.01	.21	.83
Q10	-.05	.05	-.04	-.89	.37

**Note: Q1: Do you think that men and women in your nation are paid equally?, Q3: Do you think your nation's working regulations give women adequate support?, Q4: Do you think it takes more effort for women than for males to advance to a senior position in an organization?, Q5: Do you agree that having a female gender influence my chances of getting promoted at work?, Q6: Do you think women are capable of outperforming men in the workplace in some capacities? Q7: Do you think that working-class women have it easier than working-class women in industrialized nations?, Q8: Do you agree with the following statement: A woman's perspective is frequently ignored in meetings until a man repeats it? Q9: Do you agree with the following statement? A woman's perspective is frequently ignored in meetings until a man repeats it? Q10: Do you think that throughout time, there has been less gender inequality?*

According to Table 7.4, there is a significant correlation between the gender of the CEO and my odds of being promoted at work. ($\beta = .22$, $P = .00$, $B = .06$). This shows a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval. Here, the results are the product of regression testing. Regression testing is a kind of software testing that's meant to confirm any updates made to a program without interfering with its overall ability to function. The model being employed is a structural equation model. Regression testing has many benefits, including increased accuracy, fewer errors, and increased confidence in the results.

8 DISCUSSION

Taking everything into account, it is reasonable to argue that the glass ceiling is only one of many barriers that women encounter at work and that it has been and will continue to be a major issue for them. Researchers have discovered that there is significant prejudice against women when it comes to putting them in senior positions in businesses, even in nations like Sweden where there is purportedly greater gender equality.

One of the surprising conclusions of this research is that the glass ceiling exists mostly because of the fears of those in positions of power, who have little desire to change the hierarchy or power dynamics within their organizations.

This thesis provides some information in response to the initial research questions. The existence of the "glass ceiling" in practically every industry has been proven. The answer to the issue of whether the glass ceiling is the only barrier women encounter in the workplace is obvious: no, there are additional barriers that prevent women from advancing in their careers, such as sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination.

Implicit bias and unconscious gender stereotypes contribute to the rise of the "glass ceiling." Due to this prejudice, recruiting practices are unjust to women and hinder the recruitment process (Purcell, MacArthur, and Samblanet, 2010). Recent studies have looked into the gender wage gap within businesses as well as the gender ratios and percentages of women at various hierarchical levels in order to provide a thorough knowledge of the magnitude of the glass ceiling effect (Jones et al., 2021).

It is shocking to see that there are significant salary differences in organizations with approximately equal gender representation as well, underscoring the pervasiveness of gender inequity in the workplace. The persistence of the glass ceiling effect is facilitated by HR departments' frequent failure to create gender-neutral selection procedures (Kleinberg & Raghavan, 2019).

Many nations have laws pertaining to equal pay, however in reality, these laws are not well implemented (Frankforter, 2019). Men are paid more than women for all

jobs, including corporate and teaching jobs, regardless of any other criteria save gender (Linney, 2018). While anti-sex discrimination legislation have been developed in a number of nations, their execution has been agonizingly slow, and discrimination against women persists, particularly in the corporate sector. If these laws and regulations are not implemented correctly and quickly, they will not have much of an impact on breaking down the glass ceiling (Borg & Gall, 2017).

Regarding the glass ceiling phenomenon, more research and studies are being done on it because women are becoming more aware of its existence and how negatively it affects them now that they are claiming more rights based on statements made on significant political and social platforms. The most important findings are that the glass ceiling persists because little is being done to address it, even when variables like the age and race of the two genders are controlled.

These findings suggest that more work needs to be done to break through the glass ceiling and transform organizational structures in order to provide women equal representation at the top of the corporate ladder. These findings have significant implications, one of which is that the glass ceiling problem affects many aspects of life. Given the current state of feminism, women should have equal opportunity at work now more than ever.

One of the methodologies' weaknesses is that the sample may have included women from other nations, such as the US. The relevance of the glass ceiling and other issues faced by women in the workplace has only grown over time, and these are issues that will retain the same level of relevance, if not more, in the future. Some recommendations that can be made here are that this topic is not as well researched as it should be, so researchers should definitely dedicate more attention and resources to this topic.

The research topic of whether the glass ceiling is the only barrier women confront in the workplace has a clear response in light of the study's findings. This question has a definite "no" response. One of the many obstacles that women encounter in their day-to-day careers is the "glass ceiling." The primary arguments made on this subject are that there is a glass ceiling in every nation and that in-depth study is necessary to remove this barrier. Researchers have offered the following

recommendations: individuals in high authority positions, both men and women, should be trained on how to challenge the glass ceiling.

Businesses can also significantly contribute to the reduction of the glass ceiling by educating their staff about it, fostering a culture of support for women at work, and ensuring that decisions concerning promotions to higher positions within the company are done fairly and without regard to gender. When deciding who should be promoted, the skill set of the individual should be taken into account rather than their gender. Pay for the corresponding employee must also be taken into consideration. Paying female employees the same as men employees for the same job title is a big move that a corporation may take that may drastically lessen the glass ceiling. If such progressive improvements are implemented in businesses, we might have a chance in the near future to permanently eliminate the glass ceiling.

Regarding the additional challenges raised by this research, such the sexual harassment that women experience, stronger safety regulations that are rigorously and completely implemented by businesses are required. Adequate instruction on how to treat female coworkers and superiors should be given to men. One other challenge addressed in this essay is the prejudice against women based on race and ethnicity, particularly toward women of color.

Human resources professionals should ensure that newly hired staff members receive appropriate sensitivity training. In order to prevent prejudice based on people's races and ethnicities, this training ought to be given as soon as the recruiting process concludes. Another way to address pregnancy biases in the workplace is to raise awareness of these prejudices among employees and offer training on how to overcome them.

Numerous studies conducted worldwide have shed light on this issue, revealing that even in countries like Sweden, often perceived as having relatively higher gender equality, there is pervasive discrimination against women when it comes to their placement in senior roles within businesses. The Scandinavian countries, known for their progressive policies and commitment to gender equality, have made significant strides in reducing gender gaps in various areas. However, the glass ceiling has not

vanished, indicating that there are deeper-rooted systemic factors at play that need to be addressed.

This realization has sparked increasing attention to the subject, leading to ongoing studies and research aimed at understanding and addressing the glass ceiling more effectively. Researchers, policymakers, and organizations are working together to unravel the complexities of this issue, examining its causes and consequences, and proposing strategies for breaking this barrier. The recognition of the glass ceiling as an ever-increasing problem has also been amplified by women themselves due to negative conditioning and internalized misogyny, who are now more conscious than ever of its existence and are experiencing its adverse effects to an alarmingly high extent.

Noteworthy findings from various studies indicate that even when controlling for variables like age and race between both genders, the glass ceiling remains intact due to insufficient measures taken to address it systematically. While individual efforts and initiatives have made a difference for some women, comprehensive and coordinated action is necessary to dismantle the structural and cultural barriers that perpetuate gender disparities in the workplace.

To address inequality and shatter the glass ceiling, it is crucial to identify and mitigate the underlying causes both internally within organizations and externally within society as a whole. Implementing diversity-enhancing policies at all levels emerges as a viable corrective measure. Organizations need to adopt proactive strategies that go beyond tokenism and foster a culture of inclusion and equal opportunity for all.

One key aspect of this approach is the implementation of policies that promote diversity and inclusion within organizations. This can include targeted recruitment efforts aimed at attracting and hiring qualified female candidates, as well as the establishment of mentoring programs that provide guidance and support to women as they navigate their professional journeys.

Addressing the glass ceiling requires more than just internal organizational efforts. It necessitates a broader societal transformation to challenge deeply ingrained

prejudice and norms that perpetuate gender inequality. This includes initiatives to promote gender equality in education, media representation, and cultural narratives. By challenging traditional gender roles and expectations, we can create an environment that encourages women to aspire leadership positions and provides them with the necessary support to succeed.

In addition, creating a culture that values and celebrates gender diversity is crucial in dismantling the biases that contribute to the glass ceiling effect. Organizations must foster an environment where gender equality is not only respected but actively promoted. This can be achieved by challenging preconceived notions, promoting inclusive behaviors and attitudes among employees, and providing training and awareness programs to address unconscious biases.

Furthermore, organizations should prioritize the development and advancement of women leaders through targeted leadership development programs, networking opportunities, and sponsorship initiatives. By recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives and contributions of women, organizations can create a more equitable and inclusive workplace that makes all members better off.

To conclude the discussion, the glass ceiling remains a mighty barrier for women, even in countries with a reputation for gender equality. That being said, by implementing proactive measures to address the underlying causes and promoting inclusion, organizations can pave the way for women to break through this barrier. It is essential for corporations to recognize the potential of women in leadership positions and to provide the necessary support system for them to thrive. Only by collectively working towards gender parity can we create a truly equitable and healthy society that fosters the talents and contributions of every individual, regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. Implementing diversity-enhancing policies at all levels emerges as a viable corrective measure (Purcell, 2019). This includes strategies such as targeted recruitment efforts, mentoring programs, and flexible work arrangements (Carter & Silva, 2023). The result of these efforts, if appropriately and adequately implemented, will emerge in form of a better and fairer world.

9 CONCLUSION

The results indicate that the glass ceiling has been and will continue to be a major issue in the years to come. Researchers in all of these studies have discovered that there is significant prejudice against women when it comes to offering them positions at the top of a firm, even in nations like Sweden where gender equality is supposed to exist.

Unexpected research revealed that the insecurity of those in positions of authority, who have little desire to alter the hierarchy and power dynamics within their organizations, is a major contributing factor to the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling has been found to exist in practically every industry, and this research has largely addressed the topic of whether it is the only barrier that women confront in the workplace.

In response to statements made on significant political and social platforms in recent years, women are becoming more conscious of the glass ceiling and its effects, as they are believed to be entitled to greater rights. As a result, there is a current surge in studies and research on this subject. The most important findings that have been emphasized are that a glass ceiling still seems to exist and that not much is being done about it, even when variables like the age and race of the two genders are controlled.

These results suggest that more work needs to be done to break through the glass ceiling and transform organizational structures so that women are equally represented at the top echelons of corporations as their male counterparts. These studies have significant implications for how vital it is to address the "glass ceiling" issue in all spheres of life, particularly in light of the growing feminism movement and the necessity to provide equal chances for women in the workplace in order for them to enjoy the same rights as men.

Some recommendations that can be made in this regard are that this topic has not received as much research as it deserves, and that scholars look into it further because the glass ceiling's significance has grown over time and will continue to be a topic of discussion in the future. The primary claims stated in relation to this subject are that there is a glass ceiling in place in every nation and that further investigation

into this area is necessary to get over this barrier. The following are some suggestions that researchers have made. Individual coaching on breaking over the glass ceiling should be provided to both men and women in positions of great authority.

Businesses may also significantly contribute to the reduction of the glass ceiling by educating their staff about it, fostering a culture that supports women, and ensuring that decisions about promotions to higher positions within the company are made fairly, regardless of a candidate's gender. When deciding who should be promoted and how much an employee should be paid, it is better to take into account their skill set than their gender.

Paying female employees the same as male employees for the same job title is a significant step that a corporation may take to help reduce the glass ceiling. In the upcoming years, there may be an opportunity to permanently remove the glass ceiling if these adjustments are implemented in businesses.

10 REFERENCES

- Adamovic, M., & Leibbrandt, A. (2022). Is there a glass ceiling for ethnic minorities to enter leadership
- Adamsand , R. B., & Ferreira, D. (2009). Breaking the Glass Ceiling: The Effect of Gender Diversity on Administration Quarterly, 39(3), 484. <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3897830751/on-the>
- Ahern, K. R., Dittmar, A. K., & Xu, Y. (2020). Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Gender Diversity and Firm Performance in the UK Context. The British Accounting Review and Critical Review to Inform Higher Education Research. Research in Higher Education, 50(5), 460–482.
- Bakker, M. (2016). The Glass Ceiling Effect on Women's Career Advancement in the Hospitality Industry. Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism
- Belief in the American Dream. American Journal of Political Science, 60(4), 1006–1025. Bertrand, M. (n.d.). The glass ceiling. Coase Lecture, London School of Economics.
- Bertrand, M., Black, S. E., Jensen, S. C., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2017). The Glass Ceiling Effect: Evidence from Executive Compensation. The Review of Economic Studies Boardroom Performance. The American Economic Review
- Boeri, T., Severgnini, B., & Stabile, M. (2021). Earnings Inequality and the Glass Ceiling: Evidence from European Countries. Journal of Labor Economics Business Source Premier.
- Canadian Journal of Economics, 48(2), 529–560. <https://doi.org/10.1111/caje.12135> Carvalho, I., Costa, C., Lykke, N., & Torres, A. (2019). Beyond the glass ceiling: Gendering tourism ceiling in qatar's public sector. Elsevier Ltd.
- Chen, Y., Kim, S., & Liang, B. (2018). The Influence of Organizational Culture on the Glass Ceiling Effect. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies
- Cheng, M., & Ku, K. Y. (2021). The Glass Ceiling and Gender Pay Gap: An Analysis of the Financial Services Industry. Journal of Business Ethics
- Cohen, J. A., Dalton, D. W., Holder-Webb, L., & McMillan, J. J. (2020). An Analysis of Glass Ceiling Composition Matter? RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 2(4), 194.
- De Beauvoir, S., & Parshley, H. M. (1949). The Second Sex. <https://cds.cern.ch/record/2728998> doctors_ a qualitative narrative inquiry. Pakistan Medical Association.
- Downing, K. (2022). A glass ceiling smashed? Reflecting on gender equity in the discipline of history.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). The Glass Ceiling: Domestic and International Perspectives. *Gender and Social Psychology*

Fendler, W. (2016). Breaking the Glass Ceiling on Wikipedia. *Feminist Review*, 113(1), 103–108. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2016.9>

Fernandez, R. M., & Campero, S. (2017). Gender Sorting and the Glass Ceiling in High-Tech Firms. Fernandez, R. M., & Rubineau, B. (2019). Network Recruitment and the Glass Ceiling: Evidence from Two

Firms. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(3), 88. <https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2019.5.3.05>

Fletcher, A. J., & Sueyoshi, A. (2020). Examining Workplace Gender Diversity and Its Relationship to the Glass Ceiling: Evidence from the UK. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 35(2), 170-186. Flippin, C. (2017). The glass ceiling is breaking, now what? -.

Gao, J., Caliendo, M., & Lee, D. (2020). Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Glass Ceiling: Evidence from a Large Healthcare Organization. *The Review of Economics and Statistics German academic career ladder. Applied Economics Letters*, 30(9), 1189–1193.

Glass ceiling – An illusion or realism? Role of organizational identification and trust on the career satisfaction in Indian organizations

Gomez, M., Lee, S., & Patel, R. (2019). The Intersection of Gender and Ethnicity in the Glass Ceiling: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Diversity Management*

González-Moreno, Á., Ariza-Montes, A., & Fernández-Portillo, A. (2019). Unveiling the Glass Ceiling in Creative Industries: Investigating Women's Career Advancement. *Frontiers in Psychology*

Gupta, P., & Saini, D. S. (2018). Examining the Glass Ceiling and Women's Career Development: The Role of Self-efficacy and Organizational Support. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*

Hausknot, D. (2020). The environmental state and the glass ceiling of transformation. *Environmental Heinrichs, K., & Sonnabend, H. (2022). Leaky pipeline or glass ceiling? Empirical evidence from the History Australia*, 20(1), 20–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2022.2114805> Hora, J. (2016). Shattering the highest and hardest glass ceiling, once and for all. -.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24640766?searchText=glass+ceiling&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSear>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26556298?searchText=glass+ceiling&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSear>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26760838?searchText=glass+ceiling&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSear>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41275171?searchText=glass+ceiling&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv19m65dr.14?searchText=glass+ceiling&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch>

Industrial and Commercial Training, 48(6), 311–319. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ict-02-2015-0017> Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 70(1), 73–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793916668875>

Jackson, J. F. L., & O’Callaghan, E. (2009). What Do We Know About Glass Ceiling Effects? A Taxonomy

Jackson, J., & Wilson, J. (2021). The Influence of Organizational Culture on the Glass Ceiling Effect. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*.

Javdani, M. (2015). Glass ceilings or glass doors? The role of firms in male-female wage disparities. Johnson, L. M., Martinez, L. R., & Cruz, J. (2018). Breaking Barriers: The Role of Mentoring in Overcoming the Glass Ceiling for Women in STEM Fields. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*

Journal of Organizational Effectiveness, 9(3), 372–400. <https://doi.org/10.1108/joepp-06-2020-0098> Kalinoski, G. (n.d.). Women at the top: How female CRE executives are smashing the glass ceiling.

Kebede Debela, B. (2020). 8 glass ceiling and glass wall and women in local governments: Evidence from Keohane, N. O. (2020). Women, Power & Leadership. *Daedalus*, 149(1), 236–250.

Kholiq, A., & Halimatusa’diyah, I. (n.d.). Does gender blindness improve gender equality? -Lee, D. H., & McClean, C. T. (2021). Breaking the Cabinet’s Glass Ceiling: The Gendered Effect of

Li, X., & Liu, W. (2017). The Influence of the Glass Ceiling on Employee Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Perceived Career Prospects. *Journal of Business Ethics*

Li, X., & Wu, C.-H. (2020). The Glass Ceiling Effect and Job Satisfaction: A Moderated Mediation Model.

Lopez, F. Y., Moore, L. A., & Aranda, E. (2019). Exploring the Intersectionality of the Glass Ceiling: A Study on Women of Color in Corporate Leadership. *Journal of Management Inquiry*

Luo, R., Nettasinghe, B., & Krishnamurthy, V. (n.d.). Mutual information measure for glass ceiling effect in MacCarthy, C. (2011). A higher glass ceiling. -.

Maheshwari, M., & Lenka, U. (2022). An integrated conceptual framework of the glass ceiling effect management. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 79–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.12.022>

Manzi, F., & Heilman, M. E. (2021). Breaking the glass ceiling: For one and all? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 121(1), 1-15.
Michelmore, K., & Sassler, S. (2016). Explaining the Gender Wage Gap in STEM: Does Field Sex

Miller, D. L., & Robertson, J. R. (2020). The Impact of Leadership on the Glass Ceiling: An Empirical Investigation. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*

Miller, T., Del Carmen Triana, M., & Lumpkin, G. T. (2018). The Glass Ceiling and Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Gendered Perspective. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*.

Nadeem, A., & Yasmeen, R. (2023). The kaleidoscope of the glass ceiling: Experiences of Pakistani female. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 202(1), 1-15.
Naguib, R., & Madeeha, M. (n.d.). Making visible invisible: Exploring the role of gender biases on the glass ceiling. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 181(1), 1-15.
Newman, B. J. (2016). Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Local Gender-Based Earnings Inequality and Women's

Nguyen, H., & Bhatnagar, N. (2019). Understanding the Role of Gender and Ethnicity in the Glass Ceiling: A Study of Managerial Positions in the Corporate Sector. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 34(7/8), 554-572.

O'Brien, D. Z. (2015). Rising to the Top: Gender, Political Performance, and Party Leadership in Parliamentary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 1022-1039.
Perceptions in the Accounting Profession. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 164(1), 17-38.

Petersen, L. E., Forret, M. L., & Park, H. (2019). The Glass Ceiling and Organizational Culture: A Qualitative Study. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 38(1), 17-37.
Political Experience in Presidential Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(6), 992-1020.
Politics, 29(1), 17-37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/096444016.2019.1680062>
positions? Evidence from a field experiment with over 12,000 job applications. *Elsevier Inc*, 34(2), 101655.
preferential attachment models. -. public bureaucracies. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/gm-09-qid=fastly-default%3A87fd9ca21a45e7580c868cb1faf6d5f1>

Smith, J., Johnson, L., & Williams, M. (2018). The Glass Ceiling: An Exploration of Gender Differences in Advancement Opportunities. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(1), 1-15.
Smith, J., Johnson, L., & Williams, M. (2020). The Glass Ceiling: An Examination of Gender Differences in Workplace Advancement. *Journal of Gender Studies*

Smith, L. M., Helms, M. M., & Burke, R. J. (2021). The Glass Ceiling and Leadership Styles: A Comparative Analysis. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 36(1), 1-15.
Smith, R. (2010). Money, benefits and power: A test of the glass ceiling and glass escalator hypotheses. -. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93(1), 1-15.

Smithson, J., Anderson, E., & Johnson, M. (2022). The Impact of Gender Diversity on Organizational Performance: Evidence from the Glass Ceiling

Index. *Journal of Applied Psychology* Social Psychology, 120(2), 257–277. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000260>Sokhey, A. E. (2015). On the Edge of a Glass Cliff: Women in Leadership in Public Organizations. Public

The Impact of the Glass Ceiling on Job Embeddedness: A Study of Professional Women" (Wang & Li, 2018) The Role of Mentoring and Sponsorship in Advancing Women's Careers" (Kumar & Bhanugopan, 2019) Titkow, A. (2006). Do men have their own glass ceiling? -.Understanding what the glass ceiling is and how it affects women in the workplace

Valantine, H. A., Collins, F. S., & Clayton, J. A. (2018). The Glass Ceiling in Academic Medicine: A Systematic Review. *JAMA* Wang, L., & Caza, A. (2020). The Glass Ceiling and Women's Leadership Aspirations: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* west shoa zone, oromia national regional state, ethiopia. -.women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(1), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021>

Written by Melanie Lockert; edited by Jasmine Suarez Mar 10, 2022, 10 Zhang, C., & Basha, D. (2023). Women as leaders: the glass ceiling effect on women's leadership success in [Original source: <https://studycrumb.com/alphabetizer>]

11 APPENDIX

Appendix A Survey Questions

Q1. Do you believe that equal salaries are given to men and women in your country?

Q2. Is the CEO of the company you work at a:

Q3. Do you believe the workplace laws in your country provide enough support for women?

Q4. Do you believe that women have to work harder to achieve a senior position in an organization than men?

Q5. Do you agree with the following statement: My gender affects my chances of receiving a promotion at my workplace?

Q6. Do you believe women can perform better in some tasks than men in a workplace in some capacities?

Q7. Do you believe women in developed countries face less obstacles in their workplace than women in developing countries?

Q8. Have you heard of women facing sexual harassment in their workplaces?

Q9. Do you agree with the following statement: The viewpoint of a woman is often not heard at a meeting until it is repeated by a man?

Q10. Do you believe that gender inequality has reduced over the years?

12 CURRICULUM VITAE

Name Surname : Rameen Masood

ORCID : 0009-0001-5124-0755

Education

2015 – 2016 Alevels Beaconhouse School System-Economics

2016 – 2019 BSC Forman Christian College-Business Marketing

2021-2024 EMBA Arel University