



ASHESI UNIVERSITY

**CAN THE FEMALE GLASS CEILING BE SHATTERED IN PRIVATE
CORPORATE GHANA?**

Undergraduate Thesis

By

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Supervised by Dr Sena Agbodjah Agyepong

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of theses established by Ashesi University.

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ABSTRACT

Underrepresentation, inequity, and career development in senior leadership roles continue to be barriers for Ghanaian women in the private corporate sector, stifling their performance. This qualitative descriptive phenomenological study aims to investigate and comprehend the female glass ceiling in the workplace. The glass ceiling is a figurative social barrier that prevents women from rising through the ranks of management and senior roles in a company or industry. Many studies in this field have focused on perceived hurdles to women's advancement into leadership roles and the lived experiences of women who have succeeded, without emphasising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the female glass ceiling. This research was undertaken to fill this gap in the existing literature. The study was conducted using interviews and surveys from a sample of four women in the auditing and banking sector to capture their views on this problem and find a way forward. These findings revealed that Ghanaian women leaders are still underrepresented in organisations and face challenges in pursuing professional careers due to a lack of support from policymakers and human resource employees. The findings may help policymakers, and human resource professionals reassess and change organisational policies by encouraging women to pursue the same career advancement chances as males through inclusion, corporate assistance, and education. This knowledge may influence organisational performance by promoting good social change across all organisations.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, COVID-19 pandemic, Private sector, Women in leadership, Underrepresentation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity

DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The iniquitous metaphor, the career glass ceiling, describes the unwritten, unseen, or unacknowledged barriers restricting women from advancing to higher roles in what can be said to be a heavily patriarchal society. According to Amakye et al. (2021), while the number of women in senior positions in Ghanaian corporations rose from 19 per cent in 2004 to 25 per cent in 2007, women without senior positions increased from 33 per cent to 34 per cent during the same period. Although the number of women in the corporate environment has increased, women are still a small minority occupying high positions in the corporate leadership environment (Amakye et al., 2021). No matter the qualifications possessed, there are always obstacles in the path of corporate women, preventing them from soaring high (Amakye et al., 2021). Also, only 5.2% of women hold leadership positions in Standard & Poor's 500 firms in the U.S. and 37.1% in Canada (Amakye et al., 2021). It is evident, from this account, that the issue of the underrepresentation of women in the corporate world is not peculiar to only some parts of the world but it is, however, a global problem. This is regardless of the industry they find themselves in because once they identify as a woman, they face this invisible barrier.

According to Kurtz (2013), a role commonly held by women in the private sector is the Company Secretary position at 72%. He also stated that although many women are qualified enough for other jobs, the idea that females should only hold secretarial positions was coined in the early 20th century, when employers realised that women could be paid lower wages to do that kind of work (Kurtz, 2013).

Societal and cultural norms have defined the roles of men and women. This has resulted in categorising job roles with women relegated to company secretary or a nanny. Decker (2018) argues that a pathway problem prevents women from advancing on the back of this. Even though women go through school and have all the needed qualifications, they are missing in the corporate leadership environment leaving their male counterparts to strive for excellence (Decker, 2018). In the opinion of Decker (2018), a leader must possess qualities such as ambition, drive, and candour, though these traits are regarded as ‘masculine.’ He highlights that women tend to do most of the ‘soft work’ in organisations, like planning for events, acting as confidantes, and the like. All these activities undermine the authority of women and reduce the time they must focus on career-advancing work (Decker, 2018).

As if being underrepresented and manoeuvring this glass ceiling in the job market is not enough, women faced a tough challenge when the COVID–19 pandemic hit. Maintaining jobs, earning a stable income, and balancing family-work-related issues became a grave issue (Dzansi et al., 2021). When countries locked down due to the pandemic, women’s employment dropped by 23% globally compared to the 13% drop men experienced in the first week (Dzansi et al., 2021). This shows that a crisis impacts all genders differently, with women bearing its brunt. Women who still had jobs and worked from home faced their fair share of challenges. From taking care of children, caring for the sick and elderly at home to balancing all work-related activities. Women thus faced a more challenging time juggling all their responsibilities (Loftus, 2021). With all the arising problems, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic could set women back half a decade, suggests Loftus (2021).

These statistics piqued an interest concerning the impact of COVID-19 on the glass ceiling and female employment. With the researcher being a woman whom one day hopes to climb up the corporate ladder, there has been a concern about how these trends influence her motivations and aspirations. This research thus aims to understand and explore the unspoken metaphors that set a glass ceiling for what women can accomplish in the workplace, how the pandemic impacted their work-life and suggest solutions to help construct a new narrative for women.

1.1 BACKGROUND

It is widely believed that men have a better shot at business and leadership positions than women because it is easier for them to get elected to high political offices and get top executive positions in business (NW et al., 2015). Radu (2017) stated that it is easier because men possess traits like assertiveness, individualism, and task orientation, considered masculine and were traditionally thought to be the best way to lead. However, the success of a leader depends on how they can lead their team to achieve set goals, and there is no manual to achieving that. Both men and women can equally possess these skills to lead effectively and should be given a fair shot (Radu et al., 2017).

This myth has become a reality as companies lack the readiness to hire women for top positions, hindering them from reaching the peak of the social ladder (NW et al., 2015). On the authority of Menand (2020), diversity and affirmative action have been the recent norm. Most firms and organisations make it a point to hire affirmative-action or diversity officers, having them ensure that they include women and other minorities in the hiring and promotion process once they meet the relevant qualifications (Menand, 2020). Menand

(2020) stresses that these officers do not have to give these underrepresented parties preferential treatment but must ensure they are in the hiring pool once they qualify.

In the opinion of Strachan et al. (2004), workplaces have introduced progressive and inclusive equity programs through human resource management policies. This creates diversity in employment and helps firms fulfil their organisational objectives, including productivity and profitability. Some policies like the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) have been put in place to help increase the presence of women in business organisations (Strachan et al., 2004). Affirmative action programs have begun to be introduced, according to Hellwig (2021), to ensure that people from previously discriminated against or disregarded groups have an equal chance — and are not underrepresented — in their jobs. Although this is actively practised in some firms, women still feel left out. This is because nothing is done to accommodate their needs.

Structurally, it can be said that adjustments have not been made for women to rise successfully to high positions because societal norms have not changed (Miller, 1991). Miller (1991) explained that during the 1930s, it was seen that men and women were channelled informally and formally through social pressures and personal motives into specialities within various occupations that were consistent with gender. Rendon (2016) explains that there are no support systems to help women balance their work-life with chores and other maternal duties. Most women complain about their work schedules and not being able to balance them with family issues since there are no clear boundaries set between both work and family life (Rendon, 2016).

In the authority of Connely (2020), whether women were laid off or working from home, men had an added advantage. This was so because women accounted for 55% of the

20.5 million lost jobs worldwide during the COVID pandemic, thus leaving more men in the workforce than women (Connley 2020). Most women who worked from home had to take on more hours of childcare. Aside that, they had no workstation to perform their organisational duties. However, it was deduced from a study that 77% of men like to work at home because pressure from the children is minimal, and they are twice as likely to have workstations at home to work efficiently (Loftus, 2021). This advantage the men possess makes their lives relatively easier.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Men have a greater chance at business and leadership roles than women since they are more likely to be elected to high political positions and have top executive positions in businesses (NW et al., 2015). This style of thinking causes the problem of the female glass ceiling. The term “glass ceiling” refers to an invisible upper limit beyond which it is difficult or impossible for women to progress in corporations and other organisations. It refers to the invisible hurdles that keep women from advancing in their careers, increasing their earnings, and expanding their opportunities. (Lewis, 2019).

Despite gains in public awareness and the dismantling of negative social conceptions, underrepresentation and the gender gap continue to be barriers to Ghanaian women leaders pursuing professional careers (Appiah, 2020). The increased discussion about the gender gap and leadership in companies and the role preconceptions and bias play in women’s underrepresentation has revealed the amount of work needed to improve Ghanaian women’s career development possibilities and representation (Appiah, 2020).

The main challenge that this study will address is the low number of Ghanaian women in leadership roles, resulting in their underrepresentation at the highest levels of

management, which can impact organisational performance (Appiah, 2020). Thus, this challenge would be explored during the COVID-19 era to observe if this problem worsened or improved during the pandemic.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to understand better the glass ceiling for women in the Ghanaian private corporate sector, how it can be shattered, and the impact COVID -19 had on the glass ceiling. This research also helps to layout a roadmap on how women can rise to the top of leadership positions under different conditions. It will be centred on a few questions which will help us answer the main research question: Can the female glass ceiling be shattered in private corporate Ghana, especially amidst a global upset, such as the COVID-19 pandemic?

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. Is there evidence of the female glass ceiling in the Ghanaian private corporate sector?
- 2a. Are there women in the Ghanaian private corporate sector who have been able to break this glass ceiling in specific job fields during the COVID-19 era?
- 2b. What are the best ways women can soar past this invisible barrier in the Ghanaian private corporate sector, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic era?

The specific objectives to aid in addressing these research questions are:

1. To identify and explain the corporate glass ceiling focusing on the Ghanaian private corporate sector during the COVID-19 era.

2. Identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID19 era.
3. To make recommendations that will constitute a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceilings in the various industries in the Ghanaian private corporate sector.

1.4 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE/ JUSTIFICATION

The study and discussions in this report will help to understand and bring to light the implications of the existence of the glass ceiling. When people visualise a manager in their minds, they always imagine a man. This is linked to misogynistic inclinations. According to the Harvard MBA program, women make up 26 per cent of the students (Hamel, 2021). Thus, the number of women in high leadership positions should have been higher. This pertains to the sexism problem in the workplace once more (Hamel, 2021). In the authority of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the invisible barrier, the glass ceiling, is a blockade in women's advancement when trying to attain high leadership positions in the workplace. This problem remains obdurate and has become a massive drag on the economy (University of Chicago Booth School of Business, 2018).

The advantages of having women in the workplace are well proven, ranging from increased productivity and collaboration to encouraging corporate dedication and reducing employee burnout (Hyder, 2019). Furthermore, bridging the gender gap can boost GDP by 35%. The research will also show why having a diverse leadership group in the workplace is beneficial to a company's bottom line. (Gaspero, 2019). Powers (2018) explains that increasing diversity in firms' leadership results in innovation and good financial

performance. The research was conducted across eight countries with different industries and company sizes to confirm this. It was seen that these companies which had increased diversity had a direct effect on the bottom line and had an increase in revenue of about 19% (Powers, 2018).

Lastly, the study will highlight the impact of COVID-19 on the female glass ceiling. Recently, career advancement has been associated with in-person office presence, and as women prioritise their home lives, they will be disadvantaged when it concerns leadership and career opportunities (Loftus, 2021). The career decision on child availability will be exacerbated further as women who shouldered the lion's share of household responsibilities during the pandemic would find it difficult to return to work (Loftus, 2021).

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Different research approaches will be conducted in this study based on the specific objectives that the researcher aims to achieve. The first objective is to identify and explain the corporate glass ceiling; this objective used a literature review and secondary data consisting of research studies, blogs, news research articles, and peer review articles.

The second objective is to identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID19 era. This objective used a qualitative approach that focused on interviews and surveys of women who have risen to the top in their job fields.

The last objective is to make recommendations that will constitute a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceiling. This objective utilised strategies and recommendations of women in high positions to help younger females to learn from it.

Content analysis was used to analyse data collected from the first two objectives to arrive at this.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This research contains a front matter which includes the title page, declaration, acknowledgements, abstract, and table of contents. It consists of five chapters: the introduction, the literature review, key findings and results, conclusion, and recommendations.

The abstract gives a brief outline and overview of the entire research by summarising questions asked in this paper, methods outlined to answer questions raised, and key findings in the study. This research also includes an introduction which is the first chapter. This chapter consists of the background of the study, the inspiration for the research, a summary of the methodology, and an overview of the entire paper.

The second chapter is the literature review. This chapter contains a detailed review and critique of the literature's theoretical, conceptual, and empirical study. It gives insight into literature and findings concerning the topic area and helps find gaps and inconsistencies the writer intends to fill. The third chapter, the methodology, provides a detailed description of how research questions will be answered. Data and other findings from the study are discussed in detail. This includes how the data was obtained, i.e., through existing literature, a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach, or a phenomenological approach.

The last two chapters focused on the conclusions and recommendations. These chapters summarise the entire research and suggest further studies that can be conducted on the topic. These chapters also suggest how the glass ceiling problem can be eradicated.

The summary includes key objectives, research questions, methodology, and key findings from the paper. The recommendations pinpoint the gaps and weaknesses in the research and provide suitable solutions and policies for the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Delving into the second chapter of this research paper, an in-depth analysis of existing literature will be conducted and evaluated - the career glass ceiling for women in the Ghanaian private sector. This section integrates varying literature reiterating the subject matter by investigating the challenges women face and their success stories in an attempt to break the female career glass ceiling. It will highlight key areas that will consist of an empirical review that will focus on: (a) Relevant theoretical model, (b) Supporting work: Industry, Career, Society, and family, (c) Effects of disruption, (d) The Ghanaian career space, (e) Women in Leadership: Barriers and the way Forward, (f) Literature gap.

2.1 RELEVANT THEORETICAL MODEL

One of the most pressing issues is the widespread opposition to women and minorities achieving management positions at the highest levels. (Fritscher, 2017). This problem is the driving framework identified in this research and is described as the glass ceiling theory.

According to Fritscher (2017), the term ‘glass ceiling’ was coined in the 1980s by feminists in corporate America. It applied to both women and people of colour. As time went on, the phrase spread and became popular in other parts of the world. In the business world, the glass ceiling metaphor refers to the blockade on an employee’s advancement through the ranks of an organisation. Nothing precludes a woman from getting promoted in theory, but women can see that the higher up in the firm they are, the more promotions, salary hikes, and chances they should have. Rather than reaching the same level of success as their contemporaries, women who hit glass ceilings are stymied by intangible barriers

that prohibit them from progressing. This tyranny becomes irritating because it is hidden and unobservable. A glass ceiling in the workplace endures subtly rather than a visible barrier that can be easily identified.

A few years after this term was first coined, women in managerial positions rose from 22% in 1993 to 34% in 2002 (Fritscher, 2017). Although this was an improvement, women were still underrepresented in top-level management. This was because jobs were still highly segregated by traditional occupational standards, predominantly in service-sector and caretaking occupations. The issue affected people of colour, and white women were more likely than women of colour to work in management positions. In the authority of Kagan (2021), the glass ceiling theory is based on many assumptions that include other forms of discrimination and inequality. Women are affected by the glass ceiling despite their level of education, experience, or skill in a business environment (Kagan, 2021). To completely comprehend this issue, it is necessary to concentrate on the processes involved in women's career advancement and promotions to managerial positions rather than the number of women in those roles at any given time (Babic & Hansez, 2021). The term "glass ceiling" also refers to the widening disparities between men and women as they progress through their professional careers. Women are primarily underrepresented in senior-level jobs and earn less than their male counterparts (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2018).

2.2. SUPPORTING WORK: INDUSTRY, CAREER, SOCIETY AND FAMILY

Gender differences in occupations began in the early centuries during the World War when men and women performed stereotypical tasks (Miller, 1991). During that time frame, men and women were channelled informally and formally through social pressures

and personal motives into occupations consistent with their gender. In the authority of Miller (1991), perceptions of what men and women must become originate from early life experiences and thus shape people's future expectations of their roles.

With several men away from home and on the battlefield, women had to step up to fill positions that men initially held. Some of these positions include manufacturing and agricultural positions as well as frontline positions as well. This ushered women into more active roles in the job world (Miller, 1991). As women became more visible in the job sector, they learned to balance work-related activities with household chores and maternal care (Miller, 1991).

To curb this problem, some companies are trying to put measures in place to accommodate women's needs, allowing them to soar high and reach their maximum potential. Most of these companies want to integrate diversity and affirmative action in their workplace. For example, a company like Johnson and Johnson has made it a point to include such programs in their firm to give women an equal chance for promotions and other company-related activities (Rabbitt, 2021). However, as some companies try to help women, other firms are still battling the glass ceiling. Companies in the technology industry, legal firms, accounting firms, and banking firms, among others, suffer severely from the glass ceiling (Rabbitt, 2021).

2.2.1 Industry

With a sample of 60 Tech companies, it was realised that about 27% of entry-level employees in the tech company are women; however, only 14% of these women hold executive positions in these same companies (Bachman, 2018). This industry has been made unattractive to females primarily because of inequality in wages and organisational

culture favouring men (McDonald, 2019). Also, most of these women are not taken seriously at workplaces and are given little to nothing to do to showcase their talent and skills. Finally, women avoid the technology industry altogether because of a lack of visible and accessible role models or stereotypes about technology careers (McDonald, 2019).

Another industry that suffers from the glass ceiling is the legal sector. Fifty percent of women enter law school, 39% become law associates, and just 13% of these women have become partners of major law firms (Korzec, 2000). These statistics are very disheartening because women are pushed aside from entry-level in law school to partner level in the legal career phase. Furthermore, some men seek to maintain a "boys' club" attitude in law companies because they see business as a "locker room" and prefer to work with males rather than women (Korzec, 2000).

The banking and accounting firm are also significant sectors that suffer severely from the glass ceiling. Around the world, only 4% of women hold CEO positions in prestigious financial institutions (Meeks, 2014). However, women make up only 13% of executive committee members or juniors, and almost a third of these committees are purely male. Gender conflicts have restricted women from identifying as accountants since it is perceived that these positions have been reserved for men (Meeks, 2014).

2.2.2 Career

Society thought that a woman's place was at home, caring for her husband and children, rather than at work. It was feared that if women entered the workforce, valued feminine characteristics such as meekness and submissiveness would be lost. (Akinyi, 2014). In large organisations, there is a persistent problem of gender bias regarding

women's job advancement (Sharma and Seharwat, 2014). Women are still perceived as weak, emotional, and unaggressive in upper management roles in some countries. It has been discovered that gender-based discrimination exists at the senior level. However, women are equally capable and skilled as men in performing their assigned tasks (Sharma and Seharwat, 2014).

Akinyi (2014) stated that women who succeed are those who can strike a balance between "masculinity" and "femininity" without becoming trapped in a double bind. More males willing to spend the time and energy to advise, teach, and advance women along their career paths and into leadership ranks will be required to achieve parity in the most senior tiers of businesses (Sharma and Seharwat, 2014). Women in positions of leadership are already more likely to mentor other women. More male mentors are thus required.

2.2.3 Society

According to Ertan & Inal Cavlan (2020), it is believed that having a glass ceiling was preferable to having a gendered social system where work was "made by men and for men" and patriarchy defined job duties in terms of gender, resulting in stereotyping and discrimination (Ertan & Inal Cavlan, 2020). Ertan & Inal Cavlan (2020) suggested that men and women's behavioural expectations and perceptions about their abilities and capabilities were shaped by the glass ceiling in gender-specific roles (breadwinner versus homemaker).

This viewpoint is consistent with social role theorists, who argue that women are not associated with executive performance because of their nurturing, communal, and supportive nature (Ertan & Inal Cavlan, 2020). This type of temperament is thought to be incompatible with top executive profundity, leading to unconscious gender stereotyping.

"Think leader, think male," according to Ertan & Inal Cavlan (2020) since women are stereotyped as being gentle and compassionate while males are stereotyped as brutal and achievement oriented.

2.2.4 Family

Individuals within the organisation may choose to act with the notion that women pursuing a career are in some manner breaching cultural values due to the linkages between organisational and societal culture (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001). This is especially true for mothers because it has long been thought that women with primarily gender-related characteristics, such as motherhood, are treated less favourably than their male counterparts or even their female counterparts who do not have to care for dependent children (Harris, 2010). Organisations that require long hours of labour, on the other hand, make it particularly difficult to manage jobs and motherhood at the same time, implying that a woman must strike a balance between work and family, as well as other personal responsibilities (Harris, 2010). When a male counterpart is climbing up the corporate ladder in his mid-career, the female counterpart may be forced to take career interruptions to raise a family or attend to family demands, preventing women from being considered a possible corporate contender (Ertan & Inal Cavlan, 2020).

2.3 EFFECTS OF DISRUPTION

A market disruption occurs when markets refuse to function normally and is marked by huge market drops. Physical threats to the stock exchange market or irregular trade might cause market disruptions. In either situation, the interruption causes widespread panic and creates a chaotic market (Hayes, 2020). The world has suffered many disruptions

like the great depression and COVID-19 that sent it to a standstill and caused interference in the job market.

From 1929 to 1939, the Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialised world - a long-term economic downturn that left the country in mass unemployment and posed a severe threat to jobs and family life. Extreme social and psychological shifts, as well as significant financial losses, impacted many people. One factor was the 1929 stock market crash.

Furthermore, due to the failure of banks, people lost their funds (Women During the Great Depression, 2017). Due to a lack of funds, factory workers were laid off in large numbers. However, one group of people saw an increase in employment rates: women. Between 1930 and 1940, the number of employed women in the United States increased by 24%, from 10.5 million to thirteen million (Rotondi, 2021). The main reason for their increased employment rates was that the occupations open to women, referred to as "women's work," were in industries less affected by the stock market. Even though women's employment paid less, they were less volatile.

Women in the workforce eventually expected lower pay and fewer perks (Rotondi, 2021). This set the glass ceiling in motion as women were good enough for these jobs and found it hard to rise to other positions. This increased the existence of men in more prestigious occupations that paid higher (Rotondi, 2021).

The pandemic that hit the world in 2020 also affected women gravely. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation and a partial economic shutdown have significantly impacted the world, especially people's jobs and livelihoods (Engemann,

2020). In developing countries, informal labour accounts for 70% of women's employment, and informal occupations are the first to disappear during economic downturns. According to a new study, the industries that the COVID-19 crisis hit were firms that employ many women, such as the restaurant, hospitality, and tourism industries (Engemann, 2020). Because offices were closed due to the epidemic, most employees were forced to work from home. Also, schools were closed, and children had to school from home. This caused parents, especially women, to do both work-related activities and either home school or take care of children and older citizens in the household (Milliken et al., 2020).

During the pandemic, the shift to remote work blurred the lines between work and home life, resulting in role confusion, interruptions, and increased work-family conflict.

Whether women were laid off or worked from home, men had an advantage, according to Connely. Women accounted for 55 per cent of the 20.5 million jobs lost globally, leaving more males in the workforce than women (Connley 2020). Most women who worked from home had to take on greater hours of childcare. Aside from that, they lacked a workstation to carry out their administrative responsibilities. According to research, 77 per cent of males prefer to work at home since there is less pressure from their children, and they are twice as likely to have workstations at home to work efficiently (Loftus, 2021). This advantage afforded to men makes life easier for them.

2.4 THE GHANAIAN CAREER SPACE

2.4.1 Private Corporate Ghana

The expansion of the private sector has been acknowledged as a technique of expediting the rapid industrialisation desired by developing countries. In this light, Ghana

launched the Structural Adjustment Programme in the late 1980s, emphasising the private sector as the country's primary growth engine (Hoedoafia, 2020). The private sector employs over 90% of the workforce and is a key driver of economic growth (Hoedoafia, 2020). It generates increased earnings, revenue to pay for public services, and a road to improve creativity, productivity, and technological diffusion.

Nonetheless, there has been a growing interest in the private sector in Ghana since the late 1980s. This is primarily due to the public sector's mediocre performance and failure to create jobs and achieve the anticipated economic prosperity for the country (Hoedoafia, 2020). Also, the private sector was championed due to the poor performance of state firms in Ghana, which failed to meet the country's industrialisation dream. As a result, the private sector was tasked with reviving and revitalising the economy, creating jobs, and hastening the transition to long-term economic development (Hoedoafia, 2020).

As evidently stated above, the private sector accounts for most jobs in Ghana, and the largest employer is the agricultural sector. This sector accounts for about 74% of men, more than half of the entire Ghanaian population, leaving women to hold a minority stake in this industry (Baah-Boateng, 2015). Also, the ratio of employed men to women in the private sector is 71:46, which is very disproportional. All around the world, women are concentrated in low productivity, low-paying jobs. They own and operate small companies and work on small farms; they are overrepresented among unpaid workers and in the informal sector, and they rarely rise to positions of power (World Bank, 2011).

The Ghanaian economy has shown its bias towards men in the private job sector; nonetheless, it is seen that the essential indicator of a woman's status anywhere in the world is her level of economic participation (Baah-Boateng, 2015). Every known society divides

and specialises in labour tasks to some extent to improve efficiency and aid survival, and this division of labour has been done along sex lines, with men carrying out tasks that take them outside the home and women restricted mainly to homecare, childbearing, and childcare (Baah-Boateng, 2015).

2.4.2 Women in the Workspace

Since their introduction into the economy to compensate for the loss of male earning power during the two world wars, the number of women in the workforce has risen rapidly during the last 60 years (Hind, 2015). As a result of this growth in numbers, women have entered a considerably broader range of vocations, ranging from supportive, nurturing roles like teaching and nursing to every walk of vocational and professional life (Hind, 2015). As time passed and modern technology was developed, the work of secretaries became obsolete as most of these new technologies did most of the work. Women thus evolved from secretarial positions to administrative and executive roles being assistants to CEOs and heads of companies (Hind, 2015). Although it was not much of a change, women began to advance from these positions to other service sector work like travel assistants, flight attendants and the like.

Women currently get over 60% of bachelor's and master's degrees, suggesting that there is no shortage of qualified women entering the pipeline (Connley, 2020). Even the most driven women may feel out of reach when confronted with unconscious bias and lack workplace support (Connley, 2020).

In the early 1900s, women held about 18.8% of jobs in the Workspace but currently hold approximately 57.4% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). During this evolution,

women have significantly impacted the job field. Even though female labour force participation has been progressively increasing in most nations, they still have a long way to go. Indeed, most discussions about women and work focus on how the economy affects them; we know less about how women affect employment and the economy. When looking at U.S. Census statistics from 1980 to 2010, it was clear that as more women entered the workforce, they raised productivity and salaries (Weinstein, 2018).

Although it may seem logical to assume that a larger workforce will result in improved productivity and salaries over time, the economic theory implies that two things could happen: If more women choose to work as a result of changing attitudes toward work, this will boost labour supply while lowering salaries due to increased competition. However, if women enter the market because of more employment options, earnings should rise because of the shift in labour participation due to higher demand. In either situation, as more women enter the workforce, the workforce's skill set may shift (Weinstein, 2018).

Companies must put concrete plans in place to develop women at work, according to (Connley 2020), to guarantee that women do not lose faith. This includes unconscious bias training, equal access to sponsorship and mentorship opportunities, and fair hiring and promotion of women. This involves fostering a climate where women can easily use paid time off and flex time. More organisations need to implement policies and practices that allow women to "be their best self at work," according to (Connley 2020), for women to advance.

2.5 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: BARRIERS AND THE WAY FORWARD

In a recent World Bank report, developing countries were overrepresented, highlighting various legal barriers for women: in 104 nations, women are excluded from specific occupations. There are no rules against workplace sexual harassment in fifty-nine nations, and in eighteen countries, husbands can legally prohibit their wives from working. Even when legal restrictions are absent, significant cultural barriers exist, especially in most developing countries (Hailey, 2019). In comparison to men, around 50% of working-age women are employed globally, compared to 75% of men. On the other hand, these numbers do not tell the complete story. In third-level schooling, women are likewise outpacing men. Africa is now the world's only region where women receive fewer third level qualifications than men, albeit by a slight margin (Hailey, 2019).

Although things are getting better, there is still a lot to be done to help our women. Over the last several decades, it has been common knowledge that improving women's status is one of the most critical levers of global growth. When women are educated and able to earn and control income, infant mortality reduces, child health and nutrition improves, agricultural productivity rises, population growth slows, economies expand, and poverty cycles are ended (Devex Editor, 2018). Also, women were perceived as more successful than males during economic disturbances, according to a 360-degree review completed between March and June 2020. Out of 19 leadership effective skillsets, women had a score of 13 and men were rated only on one skillset — technical/professional expertise, which goes to say that women are more effective during a crisis (Zenger & Folkman, 2020)

According to Ernst and Young, a company with 30% female leaders can increase its net margin by up to six percentage points (Bartash, 2021). So, if we can increase the number of women in high positions in our industries, we can be confident that it will have a beneficial impact. If corporations prioritise women's sponsorship and advancement worldwide, the world will be a better place, and the glass ceiling can be shattered (Hailey, 2019).

2.6 LITERATURE GAP

After reviewing a plethora of literature, it became evident that there is a gap in the literature available on the female glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana and insufficient literature on the impact of COVID-19 on females in the Ghanaian private corporate sector. Also, the data analysis revealed some interesting patterns that represented the depth and breadth of problems, opportunities, relationships, and perceptions that characterise women's experiences in corporate leadership positions. Some recurring themes are childbearing responsibilities, and widespread conceptions about women at work, including discrimination, sexism, and prejudices, among other things.

Thus, further studies should be conducted as it will help provide a roadmap for women to break the glass ceiling even in the event of disruptions like COVID-19.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Kumar (2010), research methodology is significant since it demonstrates the researcher's approach to conducting the study and collecting and analysing data. The importance of this study is to provide insight into why the glass ceiling exists, the effects the pandemic has on the glass ceiling and how it can be shattered in private corporate Ghana. It will also reveal any limitations discovered during the research process. Most importantly, it will add to the existing literature on the glass ceiling and serve as a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceilings in the various industries in the Ghanaian private corporate sector.

This chapter will explain how appropriate data will be acquired and managed for this research, where it came from, and how it was evaluated to conclude at the end of the study. The chapter discusses the research strategy, design, and method employed in this dissertation.

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy is a step-by-step process that guides the research analyst's thoughts and behaviours, allowing the analyst to research in a systematic and timely manner, resulting in high-quality data and detailed reporting (Enactus et al., 2020). A research strategy aids in the selection of appropriate data collection and analysis methodologies. There are two main types of research strategies: qualitative and quantitative. However, an in-depth study reveals other alternative techniques, including Explanatory, Analytical, Applied, Fundamental, Exploratory, Critical, Interpretive, and Predictive research strategies (Enactus et al., 2020).

For this research, a qualitative and explanatory approach was used. A qualitative approach is a way of collecting non-numerical data by observation. It is useful when the researcher wishes to grasp the underlying reasons or perspectives on specific facts or issues. It employs a variety of approaches, including interviews, observations, textual material, open-ended surveys, oral history, and focus groups, to gain insight into the research issue and help achieve the research's objectives (Enactus et al., 2020). A qualitative approach was employed because this study focuses on when, where, and how frequently the glass ceiling phenomena occur.

An explanatory research approach is used when the researcher wants to describe a particular situation (Enactus et al., 2020). This approach was used since the researcher seeks to explain the glass ceiling theory and its impact on women and firms.

Thus, to capture an in-depth analysis of the perceptions and stories of women in private corporate Ghana, which is the first objective of this study, data was obtained through desk studies, an empirical review, interviews, and surveys.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Sacred Heart University (2020), "a research design integrates the many components of a study coherently and logically, assuring that the researcher will effectively solve the research problem; it is the blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis. Thus, the research design is a blueprint that serves as a road map for locating valid answers to a research question.

3.2.1 Desk Study

Based on the aims and objectives of this paper, the researcher used a literature review from secondary data that consists of research studies, blogs, news research articles,

and peer review articles. In doing this, the focus was placed on papers that explored the role of women in society, stereotypes placed on women, family planning and childbirth, the private corporate Workspace in Ghana, leadership roles and qualities of both men and women, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These keywords were explored to give readers a general picture of women and how the glass ceiling exists.

A literature review of archival studies in the various job industries or documentation reviews was used to collect this research data. Literature was also obtained from a historical standpoint which involved searching for and extracting information and evidence from original archives. This painted a clear picture of how the issue arose.

Lastly, the researcher will utilise strategies and recommendations of women in high positions to help younger females to learn from it. This will be carried out using existing literature that will explore the success stories of the women who have reached the pinnacle of their careers. The researcher intends to take the approaches mentioned above to give an accurate overview of the glass ceiling and provide insight into the current situation. This will help establish a blueprint for young females seeking to go head-to-head with their male counterparts.

3.2.2 Empirical Study

There exist various types of research designs, and the main ones include the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Qualitative researchers investigate phenomena in their natural settings to comprehend or interpret them according to the meanings people give them (McLeod, 2019). This study also takes an explanatory method, which means it will try to figure out what is going on, obtain new ideas, ask questions, and deal with qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2007). When a thorough understanding of a topic or

phenomenon is required, this data collection method is used (Saunders et al., 2007). Thus, a qualitative approach is employed because the researcher seeks to engage an in-depth analysis of the glass ceiling by answering the research question and providing details that investigate the personal experiences of women in a bid to create wholesome research and provide a roadmap to their success.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Research methods are the tools and instruments that a research analyst uses to do research. They might be qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of the two. The data for this study was gathered qualitatively. Qualitative data collecting methods gather non-numerical data that focuses on the "why" part of behaviour by pulling insights from the opinions, experiences, and feelings of people involved in the study (Saunders et al., 2009; University of Surrey, 2016). This method will be employed because qualitative research allows you to explore questions about human experiences that are difficult to quantify. Since this research investigates the glass ceiling among females in private corporate Ghana, human experiences will be the nidus for this research.

The focus will be placed on females in the Ghanaian private corporate sector. This is because one out of every twenty-six women in Sub-Saharan Africa, one out of every six to nine males in the workforce in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one out of every six to nine men in the workforce in the United States make it to a senior management position (IFC, 2018). The private sector was settled on because it accounts for over 90% of jobs in Ghana. It also generates increased earnings, revenue to pay for public services, and a road to improve creativity, productivity, and technological diffusion (Hoedoafia, 2020). Since the glass ceiling theory is being explored, a sample population of two females

per industry will be used - women in senior management positions in an auditing firm and a banking firm. Thus, top auditing and banking firms will be sampled.

Sampling these firms will give insight into the researcher's results, which would help lay out a roadmap for rising young females in the Ghanaian job sector. This sample size was settled on because every five years, according to Twum, the number of women who have been accepted to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ghana increases steadily. However, none of the people in the sample was at the top of their respective companies' hierarchies. (Twum, 2013). Also, females in the banking sector were sampled because women held 21.9% of senior positions in financial organisations in 2019, with that number expected to rise to 31% by 2030—still far short of parity (Nkrumah, 2021).

To answer the research questions and reach a sound conclusion, in-depth interviews and surveys were used to collect primary data. These elements will be used with existing secondary data. These tools would be used because the researcher seeks to gain information from the experiences of these women. Interviews were held with women in top positions at their various offices to answer a few questions asked in the interview guide (See Appendix 1). The researcher for quality assurance policies recorded these interviews. Surveys will be sent out to the public to explore the existence or non-existence of the glass ceiling in various organisations (see Appendix 1).

3.4 CONCLUSION

The chosen research strategy was a qualitative and exploratory approach since the expected results were based on the vivid explanation of the glass ceiling theory and the experiences of females in the private corporate sector. A desk and empirical study were also conducted to gain more insight into the problem. The tools used were interviews and

surveys administered to the public to get a fair idea of the existence of the glass ceiling theory.

	OBJECTIVES	METHOD EMPLOYED
1	To identify and explain the corporate glass ceiling, focusing on the Ghanaian private corporate sector during the COVID-19 era.	Desk Study
2	Identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID19 era.	Desk Study, Empirical study – Interviews and Surveys
3	To make recommendations that will constitute a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceilings in the various industries in the Ghanaian private corporate sector.	Analysis of outcomes from desk study and empirical study

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the results obtained from women in private corporate Ghana using in-depth interviews and data obtained from the public through surveys. The primary aim of the interviews was to fulfil the second objective of the study: to identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana. Also, the survey helped to satisfy the third objective of the study. The chapter analyses interview and survey results using content analysis by grouping data under primary themes and sub-themes.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

From the literature review presented in Chapter 2, it was evident that many industries in private corporate Ghana suffer from the glass ceiling. Due to this, interviews were conducted amongst two industries in private corporate Ghana: the banking and auditing sector. Four interviews were conducted with women in these industries who were all Ghanaians and above 35 years. The number of years interview participants had worked ranged from 10-20 years. All four ladies interviewed for this study were married with children and had master's degrees. The surveys cut across different sectors in Ghana and were open to both male and female participation. Survey participants also fell under the same age category as interviewees with the same experience level in their respective job sectors.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

By asking study participants questions, this report employed surveys and semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection to get them to communicate their thoughts and experiences. Interviews lasted for about 30-40 minutes. This study used simple random sampling to select interview participants from various women in the Ghanaian private corporate sector. This research was anonymous. There was thus no recording of the participant's biographies and confidential information. Also, participants' identities were anonymous during the discussion of the results.

Following IRB permission, this study's data collection approach included several planned activities. Four participants were contacted using the information provided by the various workplaces of the research participants. This was done by contacting the Human Resource Manager from each firm, who then provided personal information of some women to the researcher to help conduct interviews. A report on the study's (i) objective, (ii) nature, and (iii) participants' participation were given to the participants. In addition, surveys were sent out to the public to provide basic information and answer a few questions about the glass ceiling. Responses from eight-six survey respondents served as additional information for the study and aided in the validation of some of the data collected from the interview.

The sections below will present the findings from the survey that will authenticate narratives from the interviews conducted with women in private corporate Ghana.

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The survey conducted of eighty-six participants showed that 67.4% were female, and 32.6% were male (see figure 2). This indicates that females were the more

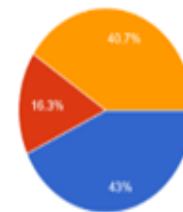
representative sample. As they are the target population for the study, findings will be more consistent with the literature and understanding of the problems; they will enrich the study and help provide solutions and recommendations for crucial decision-making. Figure 3 shows the C-level staff (senior management staff) that most respondents have in their organisation (40.7%). From other responses, it was evident that only about 17% of women fall in the upper percentile (50% to 100% of C-level managers). This validates the literature, suggesting that there is no even distribution of C-level managers in a firm since men hold more of these positions in the upper percentile (see figure 3).

Gender
86 responses



Male
Female

How many C-Level/ senior management staff do you have in your organization?
86 responses

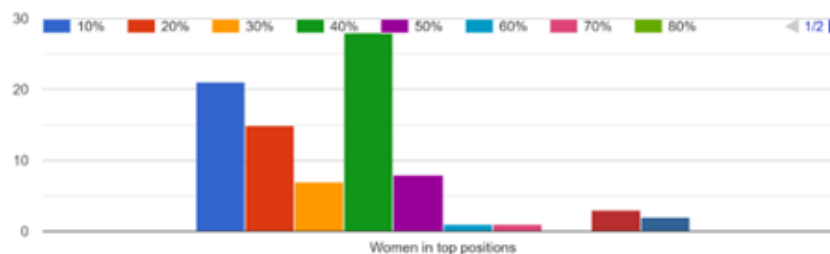


1 - 5
6 - 10
10 or more

Figure 2: Respondent's Gender

Figure 3: Senior Management Staff

What percentage of the C-level/ senior management staff within your organisation are women ?



Women in top positions

Figure 4: Senior Management Female Staff

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

With the permission of each research participant, the study captured audio from each interview. Transcripts were created from each of the recordings, and a thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the study. This is because it assisted in detecting themes and trends in the interview data (Mortensen, 2019). The researcher's first stage in data analysis was to establish themes into sub-themes, and finally, patterns were developed. Stifling growth, opportunities available for women and the future for women were the three themes that emerged. Figure 5 depicts the sub-themes that each topic encompasses.

<div>THEMES</div> <div>SUB THEMES</div> <div>SUB THEMES</div>	STIFLING GROWTH	OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR WOMEN	THE FUTURE FOR WOMEN
	Equal opportunity	Recruit and promote based on talent and potential	Favouring family-work life balance
	Family-work life balance	Gender-neutral networking	Training and mentorship
	Societal and occupational prejudice	Flex-time options for all	Enforcement of affirmative action
	Political systems	Zero tolerance Policy	Policy to create 50-50 gender balance
	Labour market conditions	Eliminate evaluation bias	Education
	Attitudinal issues	Encourage mentoring relationships	Enabling environment

Figure 5: Thematic Analysis

Image Source: Interview Data

From Figure 5 above, diverse themes and sub-themes have been identified and will be explained in the subsequent paragraphs, and evidence from the data collected will be used to support these themes. In addition, these themes were derived from the questions posed during the interviews conducted. Survey responses will be used to back these analyses. Questions asked were: (i) What factors hinder women from rising, (ii) What opportunities are made available for women to rise and (iii) What measures do you reckon can be put in place (a policy, procedure etc.) to support even more women, to reach higher levels of leadership in corporate institutions?

4.4.1 Theme: Stifling Growth

The research participants believe that certain factors hinder the advancement of women in their various workplaces. From the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2, some major issues that stifled the growth of women were attitudinal problems, family-work-life balance, and societal and occupational prejudice. Consistent with data collection, the most prevalent responses deemed to stifle the growth of females in leadership were attitudinal issues, labour market conditions, political systems, societal and occupational prejudice, family-work life balance and equal opportunity. These responses stemmed from women's personal experiences and pointed out that these factors are a massive obstacle in their career path since they occasionally influence recruitment decisions and promotions. Thus, existing literature has been validated by data obtained from interviews conducted and survey responses.

One research participant made this very evident when she said, "*Some people in the workplace often perceive women in leadership positions to have attitudinal problems because they always seem bossy and disrespectful in meting tasks to co-workers*" (Research

participant, 2022). These findings are consistent with that of Agarwal (2018). He explains that "when a woman does not fit the role assigned to her and tries to claim a typically masculine position, she is seen to be deviating from the norm. As a result, a resolute woman may be seen as "brusque" and "abrupt" and may be penalised for the same type of leadership action that a man receives praise for. This undermines the authority of a woman and may portray her as unfit for the role, which stagnates her career advancement in the long run.

From survey responses, research participants had the chance to select as many factors as possible that stifle the growth of women. Prevailing factors which respondents agreed stifled women's growth were family-work life balance and social and occupational prejudice. When given a chance to explain why the glass ceiling may still be an issue, a survey respondent said, *"I see the challenge in terms of natural factors such as childbirth and how they slow one down unless the organisation makes special concessions for such cases, but they don't"* (Research Participant, 2022). This corroborates the issue of family-work life balance as women struggle to strike a good balance between them.

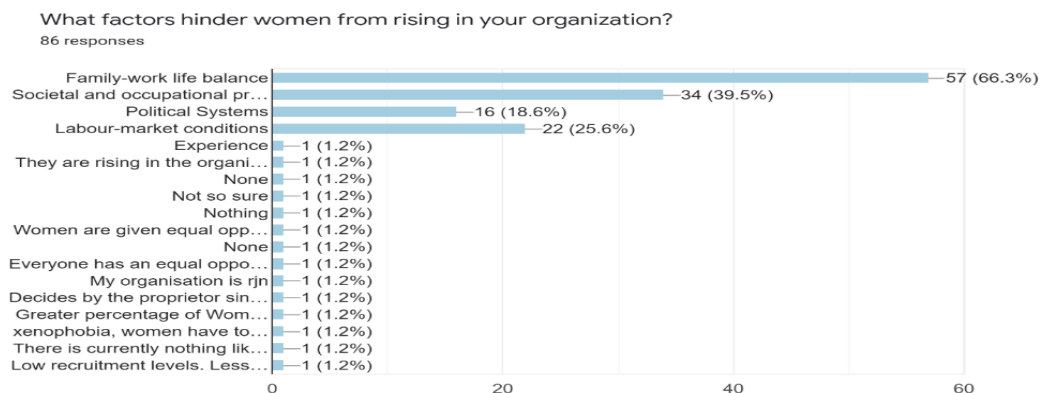


Figure 6: Factors that hinder women from rising

4.4.2 Theme: Opportunities Available for Women

As the conversation went on, the women being interviewed mentioned a few opportunities that could be made available to them to help them in their career advancement. Also, from the surveys sent out, a few men agreed that what most women suggested could help shatter this invisible barrier. A male respondent agreed that there should be flex time options for all, and recruitment and promotion must be based strictly on talent and potential. Most women supported these options because, with flex time, their work schedules could be adjusted to suit their work life and family life, especially after childbirth.

Women should be given opportunities to champion organisational causes. They should be able to express themselves, their skills, desires, and leadership abilities in many ways. Assessing them and giving them opportunities based on their qualifications will go a long way to help in shattering the glass ceiling. Furthermore, providing feedback training might assist supervisors in making more specific and favourable observations. Mentoring and coaching on a strategic level will also be beneficial in the growth of females in every organisation.

To validate these findings, survey results show that some opportunities available for women are recruiting and promoting based on talent and potential, encouraging mentoring relationships, promoting gender-neutral networking, and providing flex-time options for all (see Figure 7). This is consistent with a response from a research participant during the conduction of interviews. *"There is a report that assesses how well employees have been able to do their assigned targets, and we are measured on various products that the bank is supposed to provide to customers. From this assessment, only employees who*

have attained a certain target qualify for promotion despite their gender" (Research Participant, 2022). Thus, it is conclusive that the survey results validate interview responses obtained from research participants.

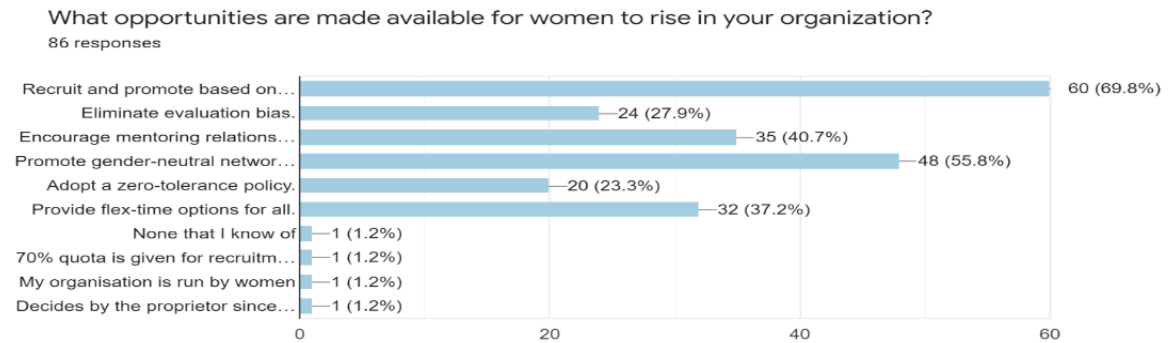


Figure 7: Opportunities Available for Women

4.4.3 Theme: The Future for Women

To help shatter the glass ceiling and provide a roadmap for women to go toe to toe with their male counterparts, the future of women should be cushioned to prevent anything that could stifle the growth of a woman in the Workspace. Favouring family-work life balance, training and mentorship, enforcement of affirmative action, policy to create 50-50 gender balance, education, and an enabling environment are all prospective solutions to shattering the glass ceiling, as stated in the interviews, and backed by survey data below (see figure 8).

One survey participant explained, *"As a female physician, I do not feel there are defined/ real restrictions for career advancement, but the reality is in deciding between career advancement versus decreased presence at home to nurture the family"* (Research Participant, 2022). This goes to say that if measures are put in place to enforce a favourable family-work life balance, women would have an equal opportunity to climb up the

corporate ladder. This response is consistent with another interview response: "*Women should be provided with family-friendly flexibility policies based on the unique requirements of a particular job*" (Research Participant, 2022).

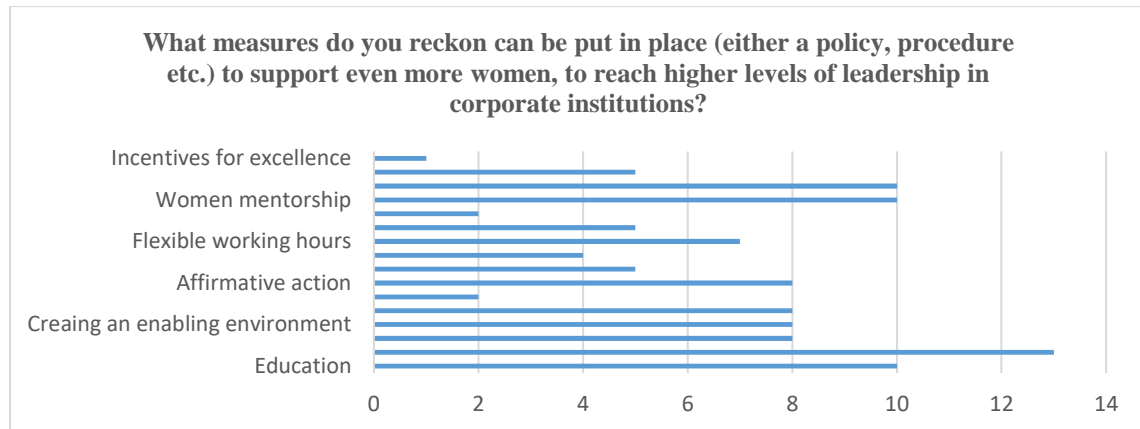


Figure 8: The Future of Women

4.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

The first research objective was to identify and explain the corporate glass ceiling in the private corporate sector during the COVID-19 era. About 15% of the survey respondents believe the corporate glass ceiling exists from research gathered. One research participant stated, "*Although policies have been set to eliminate biases against women in the corporate space, our society is predominantly masculine. Very few women are getting the opportunity to rise into higher management roles.*" This is very consistent with research because, according to Kagan (2022), the glass ceiling remains in many industries, and men still hold over 50% of executive roles in corporations and other areas of authority. Even though these barriers are receiving more attention, they are nonetheless prevalent in the workforce.

The study's second objective was to identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID-19 era. These two sectors specifically were the banking and auditing sector. Women in these sectors are seen to be slowly rising to the top. From a few conversations the researcher had with some research participants, one woman said, *"With hard work and discipline, I persevered because I always want to go the extra mile."* She further explained that the nursery her firm built was a big help in helping her nurture her career to become the co-head of sales. Also, for the auditing sector, another woman attributed her climbing up the corporate ladder to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though it made work and social life boring, she could strike a good balance between work and family life which helped her career.

From both interviews and the survey responses, two prevailing responses to overcome the glass ceiling were flex time, training, and mentorship. About 50 women agreed that juggling work and family life would be easier if they had flexible working hours. One woman said, *"If I had the chance to come to work a bit later or leave earlier, it would help me put everything in order and help ease the early mornings and late-night stress."* Also, another said, *"My firm gives an extra month for maternity leave, and it helps to put everything in order at home before I start work again. Also, the office put people in charge to update you on anything you miss when you get back to work, making life easier."* These initiatives taken by these firms, coupled with enforcement of affirmative action, will help women to rise steadily in the Workspace.

The last objective of this study was to make recommendations that will constitute a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceilings in the various industries

in the Ghanaian private corporate sector. The data collected concluded that women would be able to rise and go toe-to-toe with their male counterparts once certain policies were implemented. These suggestions include favouring family-work balance, organising training and mentorship workshops, enforcing affirmative action, creating a 50-50 gender balance, and fostering an enabling environment for women to successfully thrive in the corporate field.

Companies can help women achieve this by creating a fine line between work and family life and an enabling environment for women to thrive where supportive people exist to help in their career advancement. Enforcing an affirmative action policy to create a 50-50 gender balance will create an avenue for equal opportunity where employees can learn from one another and have a fair shot at climbing the corporate ladder. Lastly, with education and training and mentorship programs, workshops can be organised to help build the skill sets of women to give them a shot at leadership. By training and *educating a woman, a whole nation is educated*. Thus, taking a shot at this will help firms advance.

4.6 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The results of the qualitative interviews and surveys were summarised in this chapter. The participants' experiences and the data collected met the four research objectives. Following the findings, the research objectives were discussed and analysed to fully understand the existence or non-existence of the corporate glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the research, its findings, ramifications and makes recommendations to women, especially in the Ghanaian private corporate sector. It places emphasis on how the research objectives were met, the research's drawbacks, recommendations for stakeholders, and research for future studies. The goal of this study was to find out how the female glass ceiling can be shattered in private corporate Ghana.

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

It is often assumed that men have a greater chance at business and leadership roles than women since it is simpler for them to be elected to high governmental posts and obtain top executive positions in businesses (NW et al., 2015). This way of thinking has set the female glass ceiling in place, a social barrier preventing women from rising through the ranks of management and senior roles in a company or industry.

Thus, this study sought to understand how the female glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana has led to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, which has set a barrier to what women can achieve. Even though things are improving, there is still a lot that can be done to assist females in reaching the pinnacle of their careers. In a community where talent is evenly distributed, a society that does not fully utilise the leadership skills supplied by women is innately inefficient. (Booth School of Business, University of Chicago, 2018).

To understand this blockade, two sectors in Ghana, the banking and auditing sector, were analysed to investigate how this glass ceiling can be shattered. These sectors were chosen because, according to Twum (2012), the number of women who qualify to be

members of Ghana's Institute of Chartered Accountants increases steadily every five years. However, none of these women were at the top of their firms' hierarchies (Twum, 2013). Females in the banking sector were also sampled since, in 2019, women held 21.9% of top positions in financial organisations, and this was estimated to rise to 31% by 2030—still far short of parity (Nkrumah, 2021). Semi-structured interviews and surveys were data analysis tools used to gather data from four women in each sector and eighty-six survey respondents. Surveys were employed to authenticate interview responses.

After data collection, data was analysed using thematic analysis to develop three major themes: stifling growth, opportunities available for women, and the future for women. Sub-themes were further developed, explained, and backed by responses from some surveys and evidence from the literature, as interview data was the premise used to explore this problem.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS & SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Existing literature in Chapter 2 highlights major issues women face in the work world. Prevalent issues that arose were attitudinal problems, family-work-life balance, and social and occupational prejudice. These were consistent with data findings extensively analysed and discussed in Chapter 4.

Based on the findings and analysis in Chapter 4, the subsequent conclusions can be made. From data gathered, it is evident that the female glass ceiling exists in private corporate Ghana. In the survey conducted, about 30 women and 15 men agreed to the existence of the female glass ceiling. However, from the different responses, though the respondents stated that there was no glass ceiling, their different responses could suggest a vast challenge that the respondents are oblivious to. This data supports the researcher's first

objective to identify the female glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana. In data gathered, research participants mentioned flex time, training, and mentorship as ways they broke the female glass ceiling. This supports the second objective, which was to identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID-19 era.

Three major themes emerged as hindrances to the female glass ceiling: stifling growth, opportunities available for women, and the future for women. Interviews and surveys pointed out that the growth of women is stifled in the workplace because of some obstacles like attitudinal problems, family-work life balance, and social and occupational prejudice. These responses were based on women's own experiences, and they highlighted how these characteristics could be a major stumbling block in their career path because they can affect recruiting and promotion decisions. According to Nkosi (2021), women's hiring, progression, and turnover rates are likely to stay lower than men's due to some 'chokepoints'. Cultural stigma and restrictions, a restrictive organisational culture, a lack of a defined plan, and little or no direct men involvement in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs are just a few of the 'chokepoints' or impediments to gender equality.

Though there are hurdles women must overcome to reach the top, some research participants also highlighted some opportunities available for women to soar past these barriers. Most research subjects mentioned that education, training, and mentorship programs, as well as eliminating evaluation bias, are opportunities that can aid in advancing the career of women. This is consistent with one of the responses from a survey participant, *"More women may not have higher academic pedigrees compared to men. Thus, there need*

to be policies such as mentorship or affirmative action programs to help them attain high positions".

To validate these findings, survey data (see Figure 7 in Chapter 4) mentioned a few opportunities respondents agreed were available to help women thrive in their career journey. Identifying these obstacles to growth in women's careers, research participants suggested policies that can be put in place to help brighten the future of women in the corporate world. These policies must be backed with stringent implementation plans to make a difference in the advancement of the careers of these women. While inclusiveness is an integral part of the DEI, accountability should be passed down from top to bottom. Line managers, both men and women, must play a critical role in fostering an inclusive workplace culture, which benefits female representation and DEI.

Also, the future of women should be guarded to prevent anything that could inhibit a woman's growth in the workplace to assist shatter the glass ceiling and create a roadmap for women to go toe-to-toe with their male counterparts. During the interview sessions, suggestions such as favouring family-work life balance, training and mentorship, affirmative action enforcement, policy to achieve 50-50 gender balance, and education were mentioned as ways women could overcome this bias.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

From collecting and analysing data from the various interviews and surveys conducted, these are some recommendations identified that will constitute a blueprint on how women can overcome the glass ceiling. Policymakers and human resource personnel must implement flexible work schedule policies to aid Ghanaian women leaders who struggle to balance their jobs with family obligations. This will go a long way to help

women create more job satisfaction and alleviate their stress trying to strike a favourable family-work life balance.

Secondly, policymakers and human resource managers should conduct gender-sensitive mentoring and networking programs to help women advance. This type of training would help less experienced female leaders and their male counterparts eliminate or diminish preconceptions or bias and encourage open-mindedness among Ghanaian women.

Lastly, Lawmakers should implement laws that will enforce affirmative action in all business institutions. This will provide opportunities for women to progress steadily in the business field.

The table below highlights the research objectives of the study and specific recommendations pertaining to the female glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana.

	OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	To identify and explain the corporate glass ceiling, focusing on the Ghanaian private corporate sector during the COVID-19 era.	Structurally, it can be said that adjustments have not been made for women to rise successfully to high positions even during the pandemic. However, to correct this, lawmakers should implement laws that will enforce affirmative action in all business institutions.
2	Identify women who have been able to shatter the corporate glass ceiling in two sectors in Ghana and document how they have overcome the glass ceiling, especially during the COVID19 era.	From research data gathered in the banking and auditing sectors, prevailing responses from the interviewees were flex time, training, and mentorship. To overcome the glass ceiling, policymakers and human resource personnel must implement flexible work schedule policies to aid Ghanaian women leaders who struggle to balance their jobs with family obligations.
3	To make recommendations that will constitute a blueprint on how young females can overcome the glass ceilings in the various industries in the Ghanaian private corporate sector.	To help young women advance, there should be gender-sensitive mentoring and networking supported programs conducted by policymakers and human resource managers.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

When gathering primary data, the researcher used a single data collection strategy, limiting the insights from the phenomenon under investigation. Also, under the two sectors in Ghana, the banking and auditing sector, only four organisations were involved in the study, which provides a small sample size and may cause data to be skewed. Furthermore, with the short time the researcher had to conduct this study, the busy schedules of some women were a hindrance in carrying out the intended eight interviews.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For further research, research analysts can use multiple data collection and data analysis methods like focus group interviews and case studies to give a broader understanding of research findings, which will help enrich the study. Also, a future study is needed to better understand how Ghanaians perceive job advancement.

Lastly, women in lower management levels who occupy leadership positions could also be considered in future studies to measure the representation of women in leadership. This can help reduce gender disparity in the workplace.

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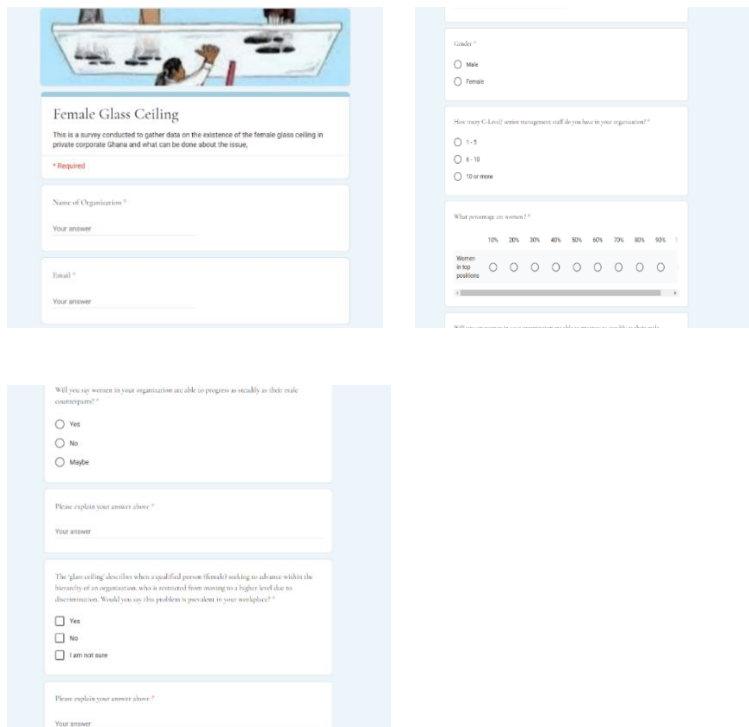
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview Guide

- How did your background, education or culture influence your career path?
- What has your career journey been like? Where did you start from, how has it been?
- Why did you choose the career path you currently are on?
- What are the positive and negative milestones in your career journey?
- Where do you see yourself headed in the future?
- Do you think there are support systems in place to help women reach their career destinations currently? If yes, what are they, and how can they help women in their career path?
- What do you think should be done to help women excel?
- How has the pandemic affected you and other women you know?

APPENDIX 2: Survey Guide



Female Glass Ceiling

This is a survey conducted to gather data on the existence of the female glass ceiling in private corporate Ghana and what can be done about the issue.

*** Required**

Name of Organization ¹

Your answer

Email ²

Your answer

Gender ³

☐ Male

☐ Female

How many C-Level senior management staff do you have in your organization? ⁴

☐ 1-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 10 or more

What percentage are women? ⁵

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Strongest in top positions

100%

Will you say women in your organization are able to progress as quickly as their male counterparts? ⁶

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

Please explain your answer above ⁷

Your answer

The glass ceiling describes when a qualified person (female) seeking to advance within the hierarchy of an organization, who is restricted from moving to a higher level due to discrimination. Would you say this problem is prevalent in your workplace? ⁸

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please explain your answer above ⁹

Your answer