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Causes and Effects of ‘Glass Ceiling’ for Women in Public Institutions of the Ashanti Region, Ghana

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Abstract:

Numerous factors contribute to why women are very much underrepresented in top management levels. It is therefore important to conduct clearer investigations into such issues. The main purpose of the study was to examine the existence, contributory factors and effects of glass ceiling, in public institutions, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, as well as make some recommendations on how to break these glass walls for career women. The entire study was descriptive, that employed questionnaire to collect data from 250 respondents. The findings were that, women glass ceiling is widely prevalent in top and middle management levels within public institutions. Moreover, the study found the causes of glass ceiling to be women’s personal habits and societal prejudice. Also, the study found some key effects of glass ceiling on women and on public institutions. As well, the study found out that both women and public institutions have roles to play, in reducing glass ceiling and helping change people’s attitude, behaviour and perception towards women.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, public institutions, top and middle management, personal habit, societal prejudice, career

1. Introduction

Today’s women are involved progressively in career developments that qualify them to assume occupations, professions and managerial position that have always been known to be earmarked for men. Despite their efforts, they are face with what is termed as ‘Glass Ceiling’. This term, ‘Glass Ceiling’, made its first appearance in research around the 1980s by [i] at the Center for Creative Leadership. [ii] referred to glass ceiling as “a form of gender discrimination that creates barriers to stop women from advancing to the top positions in their respective organizations” (p. 42). Glass ceiling is also faced by women in Ghana [iii]. Ghanaian women have not been equally appreciated as men. Diverse workplace discrimination has been their hallmark and glass ceiling have been their reward [iv]. Even, it was just 2009, that Ghana began to appoint a decent number of women as heads of state institutions [iii]. Also, according to [v], at the end of 2011, of 36 governmental positions available, only six were filled by women, as chief directors of a ministry. Also, in the Ghanaian Election 2016 post-mortem document of [vi], gave some factors that contributed to the loss of NDC in 2016 elections and one of them was the perception of the public voters that, NDC gave some key positions in the political party, to women instead of men. Again, according to [vi], glass ceiling was one major factor that contributed to the loss of the flagbearers’ position in the NDC party and even the loss of the presidential seat by Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, the wife of the former Ghanaian president, Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings.

Also, articles like [iv], confirmed the great existence of glass ceiling in public institutions because, their findings stated that more women (52.3%) than men (47.1%) enter the labour market but men tend to be more economically active and climb to higher levels in the organizational ladders quickly than women. Likewise, [vii] also confirmed that only (7%) of listed companies in Ghana have women in their board of directors. Furthermore, these institutions that have not overcome the problems of glass ceiling have recorded a decreased in their profit margins, shareholders and other aspects of productivity [vii]. So, it is evidential with no arguments that glass ceiling, when adequately researched into, will improve the productivity levels of public institutions in Ghana. For these reasons, the study aimed to examine why women in precise, had not been previously and presently, involved in the top management levels in public institutions in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Therefore, the objectives of the study are four folds:

- To examine the existence of glass ceiling for women at public institutions of the Ashanti Region in Ghana
- To identify the causes of the glass ceiling for women at these public institutions
- To identify the effects of the glass ceiling on women and on these public institutions.
- To suggest ways of reducing the effects of glass ceiling for women at these public institutions

2. Literature Review

The state of women's representation in Ghana's vital portions of its economy, is predominantly worrisome. As discussed earlier, literatures proved the considerable existence of glass ceiling in Ghana, and the need for immediate solution. Literature was therefore conducted in this respect.

2.1. Existence of Glass Ceiling in Institutions

Glass ceiling has been in existence for a very long time from now. Since past, women were considered as substandard than men and were not receiving equal opportunities, education or prospects as their men counterparts enjoyed [viii]. But in recent times, various authors of gender inequality have dissimilar opinions about the existence of glass ceiling in organisations. Although authors like [ix, x and xi] settled on the great existence of glass ceiling in organisations, other authors like [xii, xiii, xiv] argued on the existence of glass ceiling. Akuamoah-Boateng et al. (2003) and Preko (2012) also established the existence of glass ceiling many organisation's top management levels [xv and xvi]. To determine whether or not glass ceiling exist within a specific organisation, [xvii] further defined the following four typical features that can be used to measure the existence of glass ceiling:

"The extent to which employees believe gender difference existed for women in their organisations."

"The level of management (top, middle or lower levels) within the organisation that employees believe gender difference is/are predominant."

"The general feeling of employees if a woman personality is appointed or employed to occupy the highest authority within the organisation."

"A prediction of gender difference against women to increase over the course of a time, based on the proportions of each gender category (male or female) currently supporting women at higher levels in the organisation." (p. 657).

2.2. Causes and Effects of Glass Ceiling for Women

There are various causes of glass ceiling pointed out. One is societal prejudices. In the society, women are respected for spending much time with husbands and children at home instead with time-consuming careers [xviii]. As a result, women always feel that starting up a family causes glass ceiling and halts their career success [xix]. Literature conducted by [xx and xxi], focused on organisational barriers and individual factors or group differences as the two potential causes of the glass ceiling. According to them, organisational barriers are the formal or informal institutional policies or practices against women, while individual factors or group differences are the personal characteristics or habits like fear, pride, lousiness, rudeness, callousness, time mismanagement, negligence, gossipy, toughness, lack of self-confidence and loss of concentration, in women that drop them back in occupying higher organizational levels. Also, [xxii] outlined that, the causes of glass ceiling could precisely come from government, individual personality (women themselves) and Human Resource Practices (HRP) (institution themselves) (p. 221). Again, some business-based barriers to glass ceiling were outlined by [ix]. According to them, prevailing policies that segregate human resources (for example, recruitment practices, job placement and rotational job assignments), lack of mentoring, lack of opportunities for career advancement and promotion, and lenient monitoring of sexual impurity practices such as sexual harassment, are human resource practices that causes glass ceiling against women at the workplaces. Clevenger and Singh (2013) also pinpointed some governmental barriers that causes glass ceiling [xxiii]. These are: the extent of seriousness and consistency by government courts to monitor, tackle and enforce law to of glass ceiling related complaints; the extent to which gender supportive governmental policies affect women and the extent to which employment-related requirements negatively affect women. Thus, glass ceiling could be caused if governmental law enforcement bodies like the courts, parliament and police create a climate that do not pay enough attention gender equality concerns.

The recent study by [xxiv] confirms certain negative effects of glass ceiling on women. He presented that glass ceiling pauses females' interest for organisational leadership and organizational commitments. Tran (2014) also revealed that glass ceiling creates lower self-esteem within the affected [xxiv], and also deny them the capabilities to build networks and support structures for their own career [xxv]. Glass ceiling also causes women to be paid less than men [xvi]. Most people see the glass ceiling as only affect women, but [xvii] extended the effects glass ceiling to encompass organisation itself. Cotter et al. (2001) settled that, glass ceiling affects the organisation's effective management styles by introducing bias and gender imbalance into decision making processes [xvii]. Glass ceiling encourages sexual filths in the organisations, since women tend to believe that the only way they could get to higher heights is to offer sex to male managers who have the power to promote them [xxvii]. Ng and Burke (2005) stated that the one principal effect of glass ceiling, which is increased in female labour turnover, leads to destruction in productivity, and results in the drainage of vital corporate or managerial talents [xxviii]. On the other hand, after going through couple of literatures, no single study is able to find some positive effects of glass ceiling. It was only the work of [xx] who advocated that glass ceiling removes from management, incompetent behaviours like, pride, rudeness and callousness that could be deliberately caused by typical habits of female creatures.

2.3. Strategies to Reduce Glass Ceiling for Women

Several literatures have confirmed some strategies that institutions could adopt to eliminate the glass ceiling in the organization. In this reasoning, some authors have presented some measures such as; educating the public on the contribution of women to organisational development, educating women on important managerial attitudes such as sociability, calmness, confidence and professionalism, empowering women through education, creating interpersonal communication and networks and adopting policies compatible with flexible working schedules [v, xxix]; that could be used to break through glass ceiling for women in the institutions. Also, maintaining some strict rules and regulations against adverse unprofessional acts, such as sexual mistreatment and bribe taking can reduce stereotyping of women. According to [xxvii], a clearly stated punishment for sex harassment or a bribe, could reduce glass ceiling in

any organisation. According to Tracey (2009) probably the single most important strategy to overcome the effects of glass ceiling is the persistent creation and maintenance of professional corporate environments that encourages women to aspire for greater heights within the organisation like, coordinating with interested parties and government to implement favourable human resource policies for women. To reduce glass ceiling in institutions, women are encouraged to work on their natural instincts and characters so that they can be humble, focus on important matters of the organization and stop unnecessary quarrelling, fighting and arguing (Smith, 2015). Again, Tracey (2009) claimed that for glass ceiling to be reduced, women should take up realistic and interesting careers, create networking allies, develop their managerial and I.T skills, professionally deal with issues of sexual harassments and pursue higher educational heights.

3. Methodology

This section discusses how the study was conducted. First, the target population drawn were 588 staff members at the offices of thirteen public institutions (See Table 2 for the list of the thirteen public institutions). A convenient sampling technique was used to select half of the population, thus 294, as sample size. The quantitative approach was adopted to collect data from respondents. Using a questionnaire, the existence, causes and effects of glass ceiling in the public-sector institutions were sought. The questionnaire was also used to seek from respondents, the strategies that could be used to reduce glass ceiling occurrences. The questionnaire items were in five parts, which collected respondent's views on demographic information, existence, causes, effects and strategies to curb the effects of glass ceiling, in that order. Again, the questions were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale, *1=Strongly Disagree*, *2=Disagree*, *3=Agree*, *4=Strongly Agree*. Finally, data were analysed in frequency, percentage, mean and contingency tables and a bar graph. After, appropriate conclusions and recommendations were drawn from findings.

4. Presentation of Results

4.1. Respondents' Characteristics

The study was conducted using 294 sample sizes out of which 250 responded to the questionnaire. Majority (66%; n=165) were females, with the rest (34%; n=85) being males. With respect to their ages, about a third of the respondents (32.8%; n=82) were 48 years and above old, almost another one-third (32.4%; n=81) were within 38 and 47 years old, about 24.8% (n=62) were within 28 to 37 years old, while only a few of them (10%; n=25) were at most 27 years old. With their highest level of education, majority (51.6%; n=129) had their Tertiary education as undergraduate while the next majority (28.8%; n=72) had their Tertiary education as graduate, whereas about one-sixth (16%; n=40) had secondary education and another few, just 3.6% (n=9) had some sort of professional education. On the subject of their years of experience, majority of the respondents (68.8%, n=172) had worked in their respective public institutions between 11 to 15 years, whilst the second majority of the respondents (24.4%, n=61) were at their late period of their career who had worked for more than 15 years and the rest, 17 representing 6.8% of the respondents had worked between 6 to 10 years. Furthermore, their marital status indicated that, majority (68%; n=170) were married, about one-third (31.2%; n=78) were single and only a handful (0.8%; n=2) were divorced. These are represented in Table 1.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	85	34
	Female	165	66
Age	≥48 or 48+ years	82	32.8
	38 – 47 years	81	32.4
	28 – 37 years	62	24.8
	≤27 years	10	25
Educational Level	Tertiary (Graduate)	72	28.8
	Tertiary (Undergraduate)	129	51.6
	Secondary	40	16
	Professional	9	3.6
Working Experience	>15 or 15+ years	61	24.4
	11 – 15 years	172	68.8
	6 – 10 years	17	6.8
Marital	Married	170	68
	Divorced	2	0.8
	Single	78	31.2

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics (n=250)

On the organisational composition of the respondents; the greatest number of the respondents work for the Ghana Education Service (GES) (31.2%, n=78), the Ghana Health Service (GHS) (22.4%, n=56), and the Ghana Police Service (GPS) (14.4%, n=36), with the least number of the respondents working for the district Town Planning institution (0.8%, n=2) as shown in Table 2

Public Institution	Number of staff	Percentage (%)
District Assembly	30	12
Ghana Education Service (GES)	78	31.2
Police Service	36	14.4
National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)	4	1.6
Judiciary	6	2.4
Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)	16	6.4
Ghana Health Service (GHS)	56	22.4
National Health Insurance Service	8	3.2
Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)	3	1.2
Social Welfare	3	1.2
Cocoa Board (COCOBOD)	5	2
Town Planning	2	0.8
Treasury	3	1.2

Table 2: Profile of Respondents from the Public Institutions (n=250)

4.2. Existence of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Sector Institutions

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they believed glass ceiling for women existed in their respective organisations. Their responses were presented in Table 3.

Extent Rations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To no extent	0	0
To a little extent	2	0.8
To a moderate extent	7	2.8
To a great extent	98	39.2
To a very great extent	143	57.2

Table 3: Existence of glass ceiling for women in organisations

From the Table 3, when respondents were asked to rate the overall extent to which glass ceiling existed for women in their organisations, above half of them (57.2%, n=143) rated the extent as a very great one while the second majority (n=98, 39.2%) rated the extent as a great one. This gives an indication that glass ceiling existed for women in public institutions within the Kumasi Metropolitan in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It is with this view that the respondents were asked to indicate the management level within the organisation that glass ceiling existed most. Table 4 presents responses about that.

Management Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Top Management Levels	131	52.4
Middle Management Levels	116	46.4
Lower Management Levels	3	1.2

Table 4: Management level with the common existence of glass ceiling for women

When the respondents were asked to state the managerial level that had been faced with glass ceiling for women within their various public organisations, majority of the respondents which is closely above half (n=131, 52.4%), asserted that, they have observed glass ceiling for women as a common practice at the top-level management levels within their respective organisations. Surprisingly, other high percentage of the respondents (n=116, 46.4%), affirmed that women are also walled from taking positions at the middle management levels within their respective institutions. Further questions that elaborated on the existence of glass ceiling for women sought to know the preference of respondent staff member, for female staff in the top management positions. A decision was made to compare the responses of the two gender groups (male and females). A contingency table was resulted as shown in Table 5.

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Emotions	Feel very good	3 (1.2%)	2 (0.8%)	5 (2%)
	Feel positive and optimistic	9 (3.6%)	5 (2%)	14 (5.6%)
	Think as a balanced in management	14 (5.6%)	4 (1.6%)	18 (7.2%)
	Perceive a comfortable atmosphere	11 (4.4%)	13 (5.2%)	24 (9.6%)
	Have an uncomfortable atmosphere	59 (23.6%)	40 (16%)	99 (39.6%)
	Sense of embarrassment	69 (27.6%)	21 (8.4%)	90 (36%)
Total		165 (66%)	85 (34%)	250 (100%)

Table 5: Emotions towards women in the top management authority

In response as shown in Table 5, the total majority of both male and female respondents (n=99, 39.6%) replied that they will feel an uncomfortable and pressured atmosphere if the personality in the highest authority within their public institution happened to be a woman. Further, 90 of the respondents (36%) replied that they will feel some sense of embarrassment when they were to work under a female top manager. Only 61 of the total respondents (24.4%) responded affirmative that they will either; feel very good (n=5, 2%) or positive and optimistic in achieving organisational goals (n=14, 5.6%) or think it is balanced approach to gender equality in management (n=18, 7.2%) or feel comfortable atmosphere (n=24, 9.6%), when a woman is given a top or highest authority within their public institution.

4.3. Causes of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Sector Institutions

Contributory factors to glass ceiling for female workers were highlighted in Table 6.

Gender Personality Traits	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}
I know women to lack of self-confidence and expertise for higher positions	16	37	68	129	3.61
I know women to easily lose concentration when under pressure	6	12	35	197	3.97
Women are faced with too much time constraints	4	10	48	188	3.86
I know women to be very proud beings	2	5	40	203	4.11
In general, I believe the individual personality traits of women causes glass ceiling	1	8	32	209	4.18
Overall Mean					3.95

Table 6: Causes of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Institutions (Gender Personality Traits)

Table 6 shows that an overall majority (n=197, 78.8%, mean=3.61) knew women to lack the self-confidence and expertise for higher positions like top or executive managers. Other majority (n=232, 92.8%, mean=3.97) also know women to easily lose concentration when under intense pressure. This, they further claimed, was not a good trait to be possessed by any top manager in public institution. Also from Table 6, majority of the respondent perceived that women are faced with too much time constraints (n=236, 94.4%, mean=3.87). Women have limited time to spend being a top manager as they already have a lot other thing to occupy their time with. It was also evident from the table that women are very proud beings. The bulk of the respondents, 243 representing 97.2%, agreed to this (mean=4.11). In general, only a few of these respondents (n=9, 3.6%) agreed that the individual personality traits of women do not cause glass ceiling while the other majority of these respondents (n=241, 96.4%, mean=4.18) were of the opposite view that the individual personality traits of women causes their underrepresentation in the top management positions within public organisations.

Human Resource Practices	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}
There is segregation in the human resource policies that favours only men	50	76	55	69	2.19
I believe personal gender discrimination exist in human resource practices	54	73	57	66	2.17
Permissive act of sexual harassment against women within the organisations	3	11	102	134	3.88
I believe human resource policies discourages women to advance or be promoted	63	68	60	59	1.97
In general, I believe the human resource practices causes glass ceiling for women	65	72	63	50	2.08
Overall Mean					2.46

Table 7: Causes of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Institutions (Human Resource Practices)

The second contextual cause of glass ceiling for women, to consider is the human resource structures in organisations. These responses are presented in Table 7. From the table, slightly above half of the respondents perceived that segregation in the human resource policies equally favours both men and women (n=126, 50.4%, mean=2.19). Also, according to the table, about 127, representing about half, of the respondents believed gender discrimination do not exist in human resource practices (n=127, 50.8%, mean=2.17). Similarly, the majority of the respondents believed that human resource policies encourages women to advance or be promoted just as it encourages men to (n=127, 50.8%, mean=2.17). However, these respondents were of the strong view that sexual harassment against women is a tolerated act within public organisations (n=236, 94.4%, mean=3.88). Generally speaking, the responses in the table scored an overall mean of 2.46, which interprets that, respondents weakly believe that human resource practices and policies are potential causes of glass ceiling for women.

Societal Barrier	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}
I believe women are limited to conscious societal barriers prejudices regarding gender	36	58	85	71	3.27
In the society, women are appreciated when they spend much time with family members (husband and children)	40	51	72	87	3.54
In the society, time-consuming career entry in discouraged for women	41	54	82	73	3.18
In the society, women are deprived of higher level education to the benefit of men.	51	56	75	68	2.58
In general, I believe the societal ideas causes glass ceiling for women	58	53	73	66	2.67
Overall Mean					3.05

Table 8: Causes of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Institutions (Societal Barriers)

According to the data in Table 8, respondents insisted that societal prejudices are never separable from the causes of glass ceiling for women. A hundred and fifty-six respondents (62.4%) believed that conscious societal preconceptions do not favour women and hence, causes some sort of glass ceiling against women in their respective public organisations. (mean=3.27). The data in the table also signals that respondents unquestionably knew that, women are more appreciated when they spend enough time with their husbands and children in execute home duties (n=159, 63.6%, mean=3.54). This can be the reason why the respondents also agreed that the society discourages women to go into time-consuming careers and job positions which will force them (women) to spend much time at their work place to perform managerial duties (n=155, 62%, mean=3.18). Although women could be educated, they are more respected as wives and mothers. Societies perceive that women should mostly stay at home to take care of their families. The response data showed, in the society, women are deprived of higher education (n=133, 53.2%, mean=2.48). There were evidences from the respondents that, in general societal ideas and preconceptions causes glass ceiling for women to occupy top management positions in public organisations (n=131, 52.4%, mean=2.87).

Governmental Barriers	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}
I know the courts do not seriously tackle the complaints regarding glass ceiling for women	111	65	49	25	1.16
I know gender supportive governmental policies negatively affect women.	61	124	36	29	2.07
Government stated human capital requirement that affect wages (e.g., education level, work experience) make women to be paid less than men	32	69	103	49	2.98
I believe the Government lacks positive climate to mainstream gender equality concerns into national development processes	116	70	45	19	1.34
In general, I believe the governmental policies causes glass ceiling for women	118	67	41	24	1.32
Overall Mean					1.77

Table 9: Causes of Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Institutions (Governmental Barriers)

The overall responses from Table 9 revealed a uniform pattern of disagreement governmental policies being a cause of glass ceiling for women in Ghanaian public institutions (n=185, 74%, 1.32), except the statement that sought the perception of respondents on whether the government stated human capital factors adversely affect the wages women to be paid less than men. From the table, respondents undeniably know that courts seriously tackle the complaints regarding glass ceiling for women (n=176, 70.4%, mean=1.16). Also, the respondents in some measure, knew that governmental policies positively affect women in these public organisations (n=185, 74%, 2.07). Governmental policies on gender equality were completely perceived by respondents to have positive contents that favour women just as men and that promotes equality between women and men in national development (n=186, 74.4%, 1.34). However, the majority of the respondents perceived that women are paid less than men because, governmental policies on human capital that affect wages do not favour women as they (governmental policies on human capital) do favour men (n=152, 60.8%).

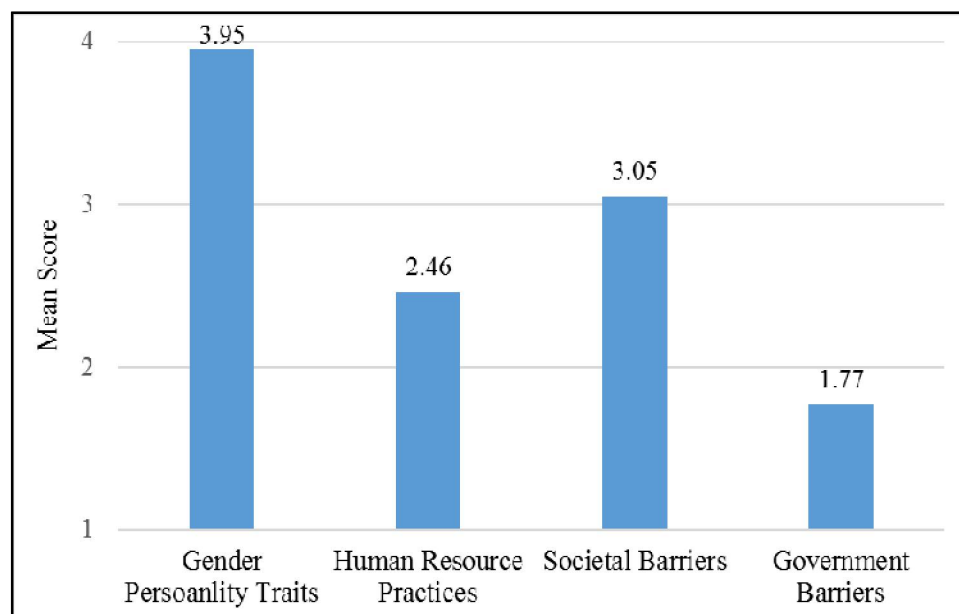


Figure 1: Overall Mean Score Comparisons of the Causes of Glass Ceiling (n=250)

The contributory factors to glass ceiling for female workers were grouped under four themes which were the *Gender Personality Traits*, *Human Resource Practices*, *Societal Barriers* and *Governmental Barriers*. The graph in Figure 1 compares the overall mean scores of these thematic causes of glass ceiling for women to take up top management positions in public institutions. In all, *Gender Personality Trait* scored a high overall mean score of 3.95, which construes that most of the respondents strongly and certainly agreed

that the personality temperaments of women such as their self-unreliable, proudness, talkativeness, quick temperedness, to mention a few, enormously contributes to the glass ceiling against women to take up executive and top management positions within public institutions. The next cause of glass ceiling of women in public institutions was *Societal Barriers* which scored an overall mean of 3.07 on the same 4-point Likert scale. This interprets that, the respondents ordinarily agreed that fixed societal prejudices, preconceptions and ideas about women limits them (women) to enter into time-consuming career paths and higher-level education levels, but encourages them (women) to spend much time with husbands and children at home. Also, according to graph in Figure 1, two of the four contributory factors were found not to cause glass ceiling for women in public institutions of the Ashanti Region in Ghana. Foremost, *Government Barrier* score an overall mean of 1.77 and *Human Resource Practices* scored an overall mean of 2.46 which signifies that the respondents averagely disagreed to these factors as being major causes to glass ceiling against women within the public organisations.

4.4. Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women and on Public Sector Institutions

The open views of respondents were sought on whether both women and public institutions could be affected in any way when women are not being placed as higher authorities within these public institutions. The results were summarised and grouped into positive and negative effects. The results are that, majority of the respondents (84.8%; n=212) were of the open view that the women could be affected in various ways, and mentioned negative effects, including stifling their initiatives and interest for organisational leadership, creating some inferior complex within them (women), denying them expression of their potentials, confinement to only lower or dead-end levels within the institutions and further reducing possibilities for advancement. Other respondents were with clear views that glass ceiling negatively affects the public institutions in plentiful ways, including, unrestrained sexual impurity, promotion of ineffectively bias management style or behaviour, underrepresentation of women in leadership causing imbalance (particularly when women are well-represented at lower levels within the organization), lack of high profile women role models for subordinates, increases labour turnover or decreased labour retention, loss of productivity and to some recorded cases, leads to destruction. Only a few of the respondents (15.2%; n=38) taught otherwise, and who mentioned positive effects, including preventing women pride, incompetent management and preventing flimsy excuses given by women in higher positions such lack of quality time for work, among others. Also, some of the respondents have observed that, when women are often discriminated, many gave up their jobs to start their own businesses or become independent contractors. This increases entrepreneurship and employment rates in Ghana.

4.5. Strategies to Reduce Glass Ceiling for Women in Public Institutions

Respondents were also asked to state their views on some of the strategies they see fit for reducing or breaking through glass ceiling for women in the public institutions. Again, open-ended questions were used to know which of the two categories (women and public institution) plays a major role in putting up strategies to curb glass ceiling. These open opinions of respondents showed that, women have more roles to play than public institution to reduce glass ceiling. These roles include; Being humble in seeking out help from employee affinity groups, minority professional groups and friends (n=237, 94.8%); Dropping blame games and focusing on how to deal with the pressures from stereotyping (n=231, 92.4%); Humbly choosing others as role models both within and outside their institutions (n=228, 91.2%); Blending with the realities of societal and organisational prejudices (n=226, 90.4%); Picking up careers that they enjoy and careers that match their strengths and personality traits (n=223, 89.2%); Diverse networking with strategic allies (n=220, 88%); Developing document creation and digital manipulation skills (n=219, 87.6%); Overcoming the pressures from sexual harassments and bravely reporting related issues to appropriate authorities (n=218, 87.2%); Developing advanced time management skills than that of men's (n=215, 86%); Raising their own professional expertise and self-confidence (n=210, 84%) and; Constant pursuing training and educational opportunities or scholarships (n=205, 82%); Being aware and willing to accept the obstacle they could be faced with for being women (n=158, 63.2%); Building their own flexible tactical plan to achieve career goals (n=141, 56.4%); Developing professional plans on how to tackle discrimination (n=132, 52.8%); Constant improvement and demonstrating of their executive skills (n=130, 52%); Conduct thorough investigations on employers before working for them (n=129, 51.6%) and; Having realistic expectations to be able perform beyond normal potentials (n=126, 50.4%).

Apart from declaring their views on the strategies that women could use to reduce glass ceiling, respondents also stated their opinions on the roles that could be played by public institutions to decrease glass ceiling for women in these public institutions. These roles include; Instilling self-confidence and calmness in women (n=212, 84.8%); Implementing flexible working schedules or policies compatible with women's time and geographical mobility (n=209, 83.6%); Spearheading pathways of women empowerment like provision of educational grants or scholarships (n=207, %); Increasing public awareness of the growing economic contribution of women, to change people's attitude, behaviour and perception towards women (n=207, 82.8%); Improving on some of the human resource policies especially on sexual harassment (n=205, 82%) and; Liaising with stakeholders and government to implement policies that demand lower human capital requirements from women (n=201, 80.4%); Creating and maintaining corporate climates, and cultures that inspire more women into taking up top management positions (n=153, 61.2%) and; Encouraging competitiveness among women at the workplace (n=131, 52.4%).

5. Discussion of Results

This section discusses the findings and results to address the research objectives for this study. The first research objective examined the existence of glass ceiling for women at public institutions of the Ashanti Region in Ghana. Results showed that, glass ceiling for women, very much exist at the top and middle management levels in the public institutions, mostly in GES and the GHS, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. These findings are alike that of [ix, x and xi] who described the great existence of glass ceiling in

organisations but disconfirms the findings of [xii, xiii and xiv]. The study also supported the findings of [xv and xvi] on the existence of glass ceiling at the higher levels of management within the public institutions of Ghana. Further, all categories of respondents clearly showed that they will not feel a comfortable working atmosphere if the personality in the highest authority happened to be a woman. It was even astounding when female respondents had negative perception about their fellow female counterparts occupying higher management level at their workplace. Emotions of these respondent staff members about having women as their top managers proved their non-preference to females taking the highest authoritative positions within public organisations. Per the features laid out by [xvii] to measure the existence of a glass ceiling in any organization, these findings of the study affirm the existence of glass ceiling in Ghanaian public institutions.

The second objective of this study was to identify the contributory causes of glass ceiling for women. Per the findings of this study and in line with other studies like [xx, xxi and xxii], one potential cause of glass ceiling is women personality traits, characters or habits such as lack of self-confidence, fear, pride, inattentiveness, negligence and lack of time management skills. Additionally, per the findings and in line with other studies like [xviii and xix], the other factor that highly contributed to glass ceiling of women in top management levels at the public institutions was the societal perceptions about women embracing such executive positions. More specifically, societies have preconceived that women should be encouraged to only spend enough time with their husbands and children at home. Few intriguing findings of this study showed that, although human resource practices and policies do not significantly contribute to glass ceiling, the little attention of the human resource policies on the act of sexual harassment against women, however, causes glass ceiling against these women. This is also in line with the findings of [ix] who found out that the lenient monitoring of sexual impurity practices by human resource departments of organisations causes glass ceiling. Also, although the findings of this study support that some of the governmental policies clearly create positive climate for women to advance to higher positions, other governmental policies, especially on human capital requirements, directly affect women to be paid with low wages as compared to men. The work of [xxiii] also identified some governmental barriers that causes glass ceiling. Thus, in Ghana, these governmental policies on human capital requirements, such as educational level and years of work experience are elevated such that women find it hard attaining such qualifications and requirements. Women will eventually end up sticking around the lower levels of management within the public institutions where these human capital qualifications or requirement are easily achievable to them.

The third research objective was to examine the impact of glass ceiling on both women and public institutions. Results from open-ended questions proved that both women and public institutions could be negatively affected than being positively affected by the existence of glass ceiling for women in public institutions. Generally, the negative effects of glass ceiling were listed which, among them were; Depressing women's interest for organisational leadership [xxiv]; Denying women the expression of their potentials; Shrinking their possibilities in career advancements; Encouraging unrestrained sexual impurity [xxvii], ineffective management and gender imbalance in management [xvii]; Increasing labour turnover rates and; Loss of productivity or resources (Ng & Burke, 2005). Results also proved that both women and public institutions could also be positively affected by the existence of glass ceiling for women in public institutions. Generally, the positive effects of glass ceiling were listed, among them were; Prevention of incompetent management full of women's pride and arrogance, and preventing management full of personnel with flimsy excuses about lack of quality time for work [xx]. A fascinating finding showed that, there is an increase in entrepreneurship rate in the country, when women are often discriminated. Thus, women tend to leave their places of work and to start their own businesses where they will be their own bosses and control their own affairs, with no worry about glass ceiling activities against them.

The fourth and final objective of the study investigated into some of the strategies that could be used by both women and public institutions to reduce or break through glass ceiling in these public institutions. Again, results proved that although, both women and public institutions have roles to play, women's roles outweigh that of public institutions. Generally, the study suggested certain strategies, among which includes; Improving on humility, self-confidence, time management skills and information technology expertise of women; Professionally dealing with stereotyping; Picking up enjoyable and interesting careers by women; Networking with top managers [xxv]; Professionally handling of sexual harassments acts and; Pursuing higher education; Instilling self-confidence and calmness in women; Implementing flexible working time schedules; Spearheading pathways of women empowerment; Provision of educational grants or scholarships; Improving on some of the human resource policies on sexual harassment and; Creating and maintaining inspiring work climates. Some of these strategies were also found in the work of [v, xxix and xxx].

6. Limitations and Recommendations

The study limited itself to investigating the existence, effects and causes of glass ceiling for women in only public institutions. So, the generalizations based on the findings of this study are limited and might not be applicable to private firms and institutions. Other researchers could therefore conduct a comparative analysis between public and private institutions on the same phenomenon of glass ceiling. This could address specific literature on the implications for glass ceiling in other sectors apart from public institutions that this study was limited to. Future research could also be needed to study the impact of concepts like women empowerment and policies of gender equalities, on glass ceiling among women. Again, a future research could be conducted to examine impact of glass ceiling on organisational productivity and resources.

7. Conclusions and Implications

This paper offered background material and analysis on the causes and effects of 'glass ceiling' for women in public institutions within the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The research also documented the actions that the general public and institutions could take with regard to reducing the extent of glass ceiling practices in state organisations. It was reported in this study that the domination of male in top management positions is widely noted in all public institutions within the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Thus, the study backed the

views obtained in the literatures that, glass ceiling which blocks the upward career advancement of women, is still a reality. This conclusion of the study held the notion that employees of public institutions within the Kumasi Metropolitan in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, very much believe that women do not have the requisite knowledge and ability to be effective top executives or managers. This study found the most prevalent cause of glass ceiling to be women personal characters and societal prejudices about women. As well, the study made relevant conclusion in human resource practices as it offered some key suggestions on how to amend some employment-related policies. The study concluded with some positive and negative effects glass ceiling on women and on public institutions. Also, the strategies to eliminate glass ceiling were categorised in at least two ways. First, in terms of what women themselves could do and second, in terms of what public institutions could also do.

8. References

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