

## Glass Ceiling Beliefs among Female Lecturers in Selected Universities in South-Western Nigeria: The Role of Educational Qualification

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated glass ceiling beliefs among female lecturers in selected universities in South-Western Nigeria, investigating the role of educational qualification. The study was a cross-sectional survey research. A total number of 122 female lecturers participated in the study, in which three (3) (2.5%) of the participants were within age group of 21-30 years; 11(9.0%) were within the age group of 31-40years; 37(30.3%) were within the age group of 41-50 years; 41(33.6%) were within the age group of 51-60 years while 30(24.6%) of the participants were within the age group of 61-70 years. Questionnaire format was utilized for data collection. Obtained data were analyzed using statistical test of t-test for independent measures. The result therefore revealed that female lecturers with Masters Degree were significantly different from female lecturers with Ph.Ds on women's beliefs in Glass Ceiling {t (120) = 2.13, p<0.05}. Specifically, the result revealed that Female Lecturers with Masters Degree were not significantly different from Female Lecturers with Ph.Ds on women's beliefs in Glass Ceiling, in terms of "Women face no barriers to promotions in the University work Environment {t (120) = .53, p> 0.05}; Female lecturers with Masters Degree were not significantly different from Female Lecturers with Ph.Ds. on women's beliefs in Glass Ceiling in terms of Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotion {t (120) = 1.83, p>0.05}. The result also showed that female lecturers with Masters Degree were not significantly different from female lecturers with Ph.Ds. on women's beliefs in Glass Ceiling in terms of "Being in the limelight creates many problems for women" {t (120) = .19, p> 0.05}.

The results were discussed extensively and it was concluded that, to some extent, educational qualification did not play significant influence on women's beliefs in Glass Ceiling among female lecturers

**Keywords:** Glass, Ceiling, Female, Lecturers, Universities, South-Western, Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of glass ceiling beliefs has received considerable attention in literature, from academics, professionals, politicians, researcher, policy makers and even students (See Ojo et al, 2023). Accordingly, there has been strong evidence of the under-representation of women in leadership positions in many countries such as Australia (Davidson, 2009; Maginn, 2010; Still, 2006 cited in Smith, Crittenden and Caputi, 2012), China (Tan, 2008), France (Barnet-Verzat and Wolff, 2008 cited in cited in Smith, Crittenden and Caputi, 2012), South Africa (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2010; Mathur-Helm, 2006 cited in cited in Smith, Crittenden and Caputi, 2012), United Kingdom (Davidson, 2009; Thomson et al., 2008) and United States (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Fassinger, 2008 cited in cited in Smith, Crittenden

and Caputi, 2012). The glass ceiling metaphor is frequently used to describe the obstacles and barriers in front of women seeking promotions to the top levels of organizations (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005; International Labour Office, 2004; McLeod, 2008 cited in cited in Smith, Crittenden and Caputi, 2012).

Essentially, women's access to leadership positions and authority in Universities and society in general is limited by social norms, organisational cultures, and structure collectively referred to as 'the Glass Ceiling', the term "Glass Ceiling" was coined in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* report on corporate women by Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986). The Glass Ceiling is a concept that most frequently refers to barriers faced by women who attempt, or aspire, to attain senior positions (as well as higher salary levels) in corporations, government, education (Universities) and nonprofit organizations. It can also refer to racial and ethnic minorities than men when they experience barriers to advancement. For the purpose of this article, the Glass Ceiling is discussed regarding women in

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academics with a focus on advancement to senior positions.

The “Glass Ceiling” is one of the most compelling metaphors for analyzing inequalities between men and women in the workplace. Although attitude towards the women’s role as homemakers is changing to being career people, only some women have made their approach to gradually climb up the management and leadership ladders (Crosy, Williams and Biernat 2004). The image suggests that although it may now be the case that women are able to get through the front door of managerial hierarchies, at some point they hit an invisible barrier that blocks any further upward movement. As one of the early writers who used the metaphor commented, the Glass Ceiling is “a transparent barrier that kept women from rising above a certain level at a workplace (Tan, 2008). In clear terms, it is clear to note that women are seen as less suitable for leadership roles as they are most likely thought to exhibit communal characteristics, while leaders need to fulfill the descriptive stereotype of being agentic.

The phrase glass ceiling was first used in 1984 in an adweek profile of gay Bryant, who at the time was the editor of working woman magazine. In that profile, she was quoted as saying, “women have reached a certain point- called the glass ceiling... in the top of middle management and they’re stopping and getting stuck.” In 1985, the national chairwoman of the national organization for women (NOW) used the phrase in an interview with united press international, stating that without the woman’s movement, women would have no chance of moving beyond the glass ceiling.

In 1991, Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin completed the Glass Ceiling Initiative Report, which confirmed the existence of the invisible artificial barriers that blocked women and minorities from advancing up the corporate ladder to management- and executive-level positions. Robert Reich, chairperson of the Glass Ceiling Commission, stated that this “Ceiling” was a refutation of social justice for a large portion of the population. He also saw it as a problem that has negatively affected American business by hindering some of the most qualified applicants from important positions of power simply because of their race or gender (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

The report revealed that although women made up nearly 46% of the total workforce at the time and earned more than half of all master’s degrees, 95% of senior-level managers were men and the earnings of female managers accounted for less than 70% of their male manager counterparts. During the decade since the commission’s report, things have improved somewhat in that women managers now earn an average of 72% of their male colleagues’ salaries. Male and female minorities were less well represented in management. After the Civil Rights Act of 1954 and the introduction of affirmative action during the mid-1960, legal barriers to their hiring and promotion were removed, yet their representation in the higher echelons of business was a fraction of their overall presence in the labour force. Some see this as proof of the existence of a split labour market in which racial/ethnic minorities receive lower remuneration than do Whites and are unable to get even entry-level positions in industries that have been long dominated by Whites, White males in particular (Weyer, 2007).

This concept has been adapted to address barriers to women in specific industries such as the stained Glass Ceiling to describe the difficulty women have had in ascending to the highest levels of the ministry, the Glass Ceiling when examining the dearth of women in agriculture-related industries, and the political Glass Ceiling that bemoans the slow pace of women’s advances in the political realm. (Vera, 2004). In the world of academia, the combined effects of a glass ceiling and a maternalwallare thought to interact to hinder women’s advancement in the ivory tower because of choices made in relation to child-bearing responsibilities. Another variation is the Glass Cliff, which refers to a woman in a position of professional disaster if she fails, (Crosy et al., 2004).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study was to assess the influence of educational qualification on women’s belief in Glass Ceiling among female lecturers selected union South-Western Nigeria. Specifically, the study shall investigate the influence of educational qualification on:

- Glass ceiling beliefs in terms of “women face no barriers to promotions in the University work environment” among female lecturers.
- Glass ceiling beliefs in terms of “Jealousy from Colleagues prevents women from seeking promotions” among female lecturers

- Glass ceiling beliefs in terms of being in the limelight creates many problems for women" among female lecturers

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

Gender bias is found in psychological theories, research, and even the way research is undertaken. When discussing examples of gender bias, it is important to first outline the different forms gender bias can have. Alpha bias acknowledges valid and lasting differences between the two genders and can have the effect of reinforcing gender stereotypes, whereas beta bias minimizes or even ignores the differences between women and men. Both types of bias are thought to have evolved from androcentrism - that is Psychology being dominated by males and/or masculine interests where male behaviour is perceived as 'the norm' ([www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d)).

One example of gender bias in psychological theories can be seen from the psychodynamic work of Freud. Accordingly, Freud attempted to explain femininity as a variant of failed masculinity, his work illustrates women as inferior to men, largely due to supposed 'penis envy'. The alpha bias in Freud's work extended to explaining the vanity of women, by stating that women wish to make up for their initial sexual inferiority by focusing on their physical 'charms'. Freud also noted that females were unable to experience the same Oedipus complex that was crucial to a boy's gender development. However, despite Freud's research being obviously gender biased, some psychologists, notably Bruehl, have dismissed this as merely being the result of the patriarchal society in which he lived. Other critics, including Honey (1926) state that Freud overlooked the fact that men may envy a woman's ability to conceive and bear offspring, he assumed that women had 'nothing worth envying' ([www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d)).

Another psychologist's work that has come under fire is Kohlberg. Kohlberg's dilemmas were based on abstract, male-orientated principles, by which he produced a theory of moral reasoning which he claimed represented both males *and* females. Kohlberg's generalization was inherently flawed as his research included no female participants, thus suffers from beta-bias, ignoring the

differences between men and women. However, Kohlberg's study is also alpha-biased as his conclusions exaggerate an enduring difference in morality between men and women as Kohlberg and Krammer found women 'morally deficient', despite not including any female subjects. Kohlberg later wrote that women's moral deficiency was a result of them mainly living at home. This links to Bowlby's maternal deprivation hypothesis which implies that women need to stay at home and care for children. Both declarations are essentially biased, the latter enforcing gender stereotypes.

Gilligan's research has been found to oppose that of both Freud and Kohlberg regarding its approach. Gilligan proposed that men and women have *differing* morality, neither being inferior. The theory explains that women develop morality regarding care, whereas men seek justice. However, even this approach is flawed because it tends not to be supported by research. Only eight out of one hundred and eight studies found gender differences. However, Gilligan's research promotes female qualities that are often perceived as inferior, for example a woman's tendency to care and nurture, but even Gilligan's work is not entirely unbiased as it minimizes the individual differences between women and it is based on stereotyping, although her theory is supported by the evidence of Taylor's research in 2000 which demonstrated attachment behaviour and females' ability to form defensive networks when subjected to stress. This links in with the biological explanation that a female's investment in offspring leads them to respond to stress in an entirely different manner to males ([www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/attachment.php?attachmentid=41292&d)).

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research design

The study was a cross sectional survey which equally utilized ex-post facto design. This design was found appropriate because the authors were not involved in active manipulation of variable(s) of interest. However, the independent variable was educational qualification (i.e. Masters Degree Vs Ph. D). The dependent variable was Glass Ceiling Beliefs. The study carried out in some selected universities, state universities and private universities. These universities were selected in Osun, Oyo, and Ondo states. In each selected state, three (3) categories of university were chosen (i.e. one Federal University, One State University, and One Private University)

making up a total of nine selected universities across three states.

**Participants**

A total number of 122 female lecturers took part in the study as participants. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are displayed in able 1 below.

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants in the study**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age group:		
21-30 years	3	2.5
31-40 years	11	9.0
41-50 years	37	30.3
51-60 years	41	33.6
61-70 years	30	24.6
Grade level:		
Assistant	17	13.9
Lecturer	60	49.2
Lecturer II	12	9.8
Lecturer I	16	13.1
Senior lecturer	6	4.9
Associate	11	9.0
professor		
Professor	63	51.6
Years of work:	23	18.9
1-10 years	23	18.9
11-15 years	7	5.7
16-20 years	6	4.9
21-25 years		
26 years and		
above	89	73.01
Highest educational qualification:	33	27.09
degree		
Master		
Ph.Ds		

**Procedure:**

This study was targeted at women lecturers and these lecturers were randomly selected at the existing Universities in South-Western Nigeria. The Universities sampled for this study included Osun State University, Osogbo, Bowen University, Iwo; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNNAB), Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso; Lead City University, Ibadan; Federal University of Technology, Akure, and Adekunle Ajasin

University, Akungba Akoko. Only three (3) States in South Western Nigeria were selected for the study.

**STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS**

Obtained data for the study was subjected to both the inferential and Descriptive statistics. Specifically, descriptive statistics utilized for this study included Frequency Distribution, Percentage and specifically, the only inferential statistics adopted in this study was t-test for independent measures.

**INSTRUMENT:**

The study utilized questionnaire format for data collection. The questionnaire was made into two (2) sections, namely section A and section B. The section A of the questionnaire was designed to elicit socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The socio-demographic characteristics include age group, educational status, and grade level.

Section B of the questionnaire measured Glass Ceiling beliefs. It is a 38-item scale titled Career Pathways Survey and was developed and designed by Smith, Crttenden and Caputi (2012). At the initial stage of developing the scale, forty items about career progression of women were used in the initial testing of the CPS (Smith, Crttenden and Caputi (2012). Several items were based on information gathered from women attending corporate workshops given by the first author (Smith, Crttenden and Caputi 2012). Other items in the survey were identified from research which was reported by Eagly and Carli (2007 cited in Smith, Crttenden and Caputi 2012). The CPS attempts to assess levels of four factors: Resignation, Acceptance, Resilience and Denial. Importantly, each item on the CPS reflects a perception about how women face difficulties in their career progress (Smith, Crttenden and Caputi (2012). On the whole, after the scale was made to go through series of stages such as factor analysis, the final scale items were made to be 38 items and the reported Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was found to be high.

The Career Pathways Survey was designed for women at all levels of careers, from staff to top management and the scale has a response format likened after Likert-type format which ranges from “Strongly Agree” (SA), “Moderately Agree” (MA), “Slightly Agree” (SA), “Uncertain” (UN), “Slightly Disagree” (SD), “Moderately Disagree” (SD) and “Strongly Disagree” (SD). In scoring the

scale items therefore, “strongly Agree” (SA) was scored 7, “Moderately Agree” (MA) was scored 6, “Slightly Agree (SA) was scored 5, “Uncertain” (UN) was scored 4, “Moderately Disagree” (SD) was scored 3, “Moderately Disagree” (MD) was scored 2 while “Strongly Disagree “ (SD) was scored 1. However, some items were scored in the reverse from, in which “Strongly Agree” (SA) was scored 1, “Moderately Agree” (MA) was scored 2, “slightly Agree” (SA) was scored 3, “Uncertain” was scored 4, “slightly Disagree” (SD) was scored 5, “Moderately Disagree” (MD) was scored 6 while “Strongly Disagree’ (SD) was scored 7. In this particular study, a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.87 was reported for the scale. This suggests the scale has a very strong reliability coefficient.

**RESULTS**

This section presents the result of the study. Four (4) hypotheses were stated and tested in the study. Specifically, the hypotheses were tested by t-test for independent measures. The results are stated in different tables below. In all, four (4) hypotheses were stated and tested.

**HYPOTHESIS ONE**

This stated that educational qualification would significantly influence overall Glass Ceiling beliefs among female lecturers. The result is presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2: A Summary table of t-test for Independent Measures showing the influence of Educational Qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs among female Lecturers**

DV	Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	P
Women face no barrier to promotions in the University Work Environment	Masters Degree	89	167.87	14.63	120	2.13	<.05
	Ph.D	33	161.27	16.62			

The result in table 2 above showed clearly that educational qualification significantly influenced Glass Ceiling beliefs among female lecturers in the selected universities {t (120) = 2.13, p<.05}. in support of this, a look at the mean difference on

Glass Ceiling beliefs revealed clearly that female lecturers with Master Degree ( $\bar{X}$ = 167.87) reported higher on Glass Ceiling beliefs than female lecturers ( $\bar{X}$ = 161.27). Based on this therefore, the hypothesis one was fully supported by the result of the study.

**HYPOTHESIS TWO**

This stated that educational qualification would significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “Women face no barriers to promotions in the University work environment”. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is shown in table 3 below.

The result in table 3 above showed that educational qualification did not significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “women face no barriers to promotions in the university work environment” {t (120) = .53, p>.05}. In support of this, female lecturers with Master’s Degree ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.61) had a slightly higher mean score on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “women face no barriers to promotions in the university work environment” than female lecturers with Ph.Ds ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.39). Therefore, the hypothesis two was not supported by the result of the study.

**HYPOTHESIS THREE**

This stated that educational qualification would

significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotion”. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures and the result is shown in table 4 below.

**Table 3: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Educational Qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “Women face no barriers to Promotions in the University Work Environment”**

DV	Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	P
Women face no barrier to promotions in the University Work Environment	Masters Degree	89	3.91	1.93	120	.53	>.05
	Ph.D	33	3.39	2.02			

**Table 4: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Educational Qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "Jealousy from Colleagues Gives Prevent Women from Seeking Promotions".**

DV	Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	P
Women face no barrier to promotions in the University Work Environment	Masters Degree	89	4.16	1.44	120	1.83	> .05
	Ph.D	33	3.64	1.30			

The result in table 4 above revealed clearly that educational qualification did not significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotions" {t (120) = 1.83, p> .05}. In support of this, female lecturers with Masters Degree ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.16) reported a slightly higher mean score on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotions than females' lecturers with Ph. Ds ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.64). In this vein therefore, the hypothesis three was not supported by the result of the study.

#### HYPOTHESIS FOUR

This stated that educational qualification would significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "Being in the limelight creates many problems for women". The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5: A Summary table of t-test for independent measures showing the influence of Educational Qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "Being in the limelight creates many problems for women"**

DV	Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	P
Women face no barrier to promotions in the University Work Environment	Masters Degree	89	4.64	1.34	120	-.19	> .05
	Ph.D	33	4.70	1.30			

The result in table 5 above revealed that educational qualification did not significantly influence Glass ceiling beliefs in terms of "Being in the limelight creates many problems for women" (t(120)=-.19, P>.05).

Therefore, the hypothesis four was fully supported by the result of the study.

#### Discussion of Findings

This study was meant to investigate Glass Ceiling beliefs among female lecturers in selected universities in South-Western Nigeria, assessing the role of educational qualification. The study was borne out of the reasons to empirically

provide necessary on the influence of educational qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs, particularly among female lecturers in Nigerian universities.

The study stated and tested four hypotheses. The hypotheses were put to testing adopting the statistical test of t-test for independent measures. The results are clearly indicative of the impact of educational qualification on Glass Ceiling beliefs. The first hypothesis which stated that educational qualification would significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs among female lecturers was fully supported by the result of the study. The result clearly indicated that female lecturers who were holders of Masters Degree ( $\bar{X}$ = 167.87) experienced more Glass Ceiling beliefs than female lecturers who were holders of Ph.D ( $\bar{X}$ = 161.27). Accordingly, the hypothesis was fully supported by the result of the study.

The second hypothesis which stated that educational qualification would significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "women face no barriers to promotions in the university work environment" was not supported by the result of the study. The result clearly portrayed that female lecturers who were holders of Masters Degree and Ph.D. were not significantly different on Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of "women face no barriers to promotions in the university work environment".

The third hypothesis which stated that educational qualification would significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of

“Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotion” was not supported by the result of the study. The result clearly revealed that female lecturers with Masters Degree and female lecturers with Ph. Ds were not significantly difference on the specific Glass Ceiling belief in terms of “Jealousy from colleagues prevent women from seeking promotion”.

The hypothesis four which stated that educational qualification would significantly influence glass ceiling beliefs in terms of “Being in the limelight creates many problems for Women” was not supported by the result of the study. So, it was made clear that female lecturers who were holders of Masters Degree and Ph.D were not significant different on glass ceiling beliefs in terms of “Being in the limelight creates many problems for women”.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings above, it is concluded therefore that:

- Educational qualification did not significantly influence overall Glass Ceiling beliefs among female lecturers
- Educational qualification did not significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “Women force no barriers to promotions in the University work environment” among female lecturers.
- Educational qualification did not significantly influence Glass Ceiling beliefs in terms of “Jealousy from colleagues prevents women from seeking promotions” among female lecturers
- Educational qualification did not also influence Glass ceiling beliefs in terms of “Being in the limelight creates many problems for women” among female lecturers

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations can be offered. University communities can have awareness program to change workers perceptions on women leaders since most of the respondents have agreed that male workers are discomfort having them as seniors. Therefore, management committees of universities are expected to engage each lecturer individually and map a clear and concise succession path for each individual. Here, most powerful barrier is gender stereotyping. If the work females want to change the attitudes of others regarding traditional myth that women are

home makers and they cannot work as males, they must show that they are able to do work at maximum level as university expect. University also could help the female workers by examining the organization’s informal culture, traditions and norms that may work against women and conducting awareness program to bring to an end of those. Also, to enable women who are in employment to advance their careers, organization could support the provision of training and other developmental mechanisms that will also affect to change their attributes regarding organization to a positive side.

It is a reality that the concept of glass ceiling beliefs has been on important feature of work organizations. Based on the findings obtained above, it was made very clear that female lecturers and glass ceiling beliefs was not influenced significantly by their educational qualification, indicating that glass ceiling beliefs might have been formed even earlier in life before the start of any career among women.

However, the beliefs about glass ceiling can be reduced to the barest minimum if certain actions are boldly taken in work organization such as in the University community.

In terms of recommendation, University managements could help the female lecturers by examining the University’s informal culture, traditions and norms that may work against women and conducting awareness programmes to bring to an end of beliefs women hold concerning their jobs or career.

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