

**THE GLASS CEILING: IS IT BEING SHATTERED?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this descriptive and informative study is to determine whether women are breaking through the glass ceiling today in business. This informative report presents a synthesis of research from 63 writers over the past 25 years. We also wrote a brief review of 22 different commentaries about the glass ceiling.

Although there is some evidence that the glass ceiling is cracking in many institutions, women continue to be under-represented in senior leadership. Many research articles continue to emphasize the need to reduce institutional bias through overhauling hiring and promotion practices and training awareness of implicit cognitive bias. Leader responsibility through role modeling and mentoring have also been highlighted as interventions to promote gender equity.

Selection and promotion decisions should be made by those people who understand how to avoid bias resulting from stereotypes and implicit assumptions. It is also suggested that men need to change their attitudes towards women in the workplace.

## **KEY WORDS**

Barriers, career advancement, careers, gender bias, glass ceiling, stereotypes

## DEFINITION

The words *glass ceiling* signifies that:

Women are blocked from advancing in their careers and the term ‘glass’ is used because the ‘ceiling’ is not always obvious. The barriers usually include salary inequality for the same work, discrimination in promotions, sexual harassment in the workplace, and lack of policies to maintain work-life balance. The glass ceiling was described by Senator Robert Dole in 1991 as “artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevents qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into senior management-level positions” (as cited in Ganguly, Rao, & Dutta, 2017, p. 46).

## INTRODUCTION

The term glass ceiling reached its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. Marilyn Loden is credited for introducing the term in a panel discussion held by her then employer New York Telephone (BBC News, 2017). When looking back over the past 40 years, Loden observed, “... the metaphor continues to symbolise an enduring barrier to gender equality - one that has been normalised in many organisations where there is now a sense of complacency about the lack of women at the top” (BBC News, 2017). Women are blocked from advancing in their careers and the term ‘glass’ is used because the ‘ceiling’ is not always obvious. The barriers usually include salary inequality for the same work, discrimination in promotions, sexual harassment in the workplace, and lack of policies to maintain work-life balance.

Are there still biased perceptions toward women today in business? Is there still a glass ceiling? Applebaum (2006) reported that women still face resistance in conservative business cultures, and the number of boardroom tables at which they hold seats varies widely by industry. In 1995, the Glass Ceiling Commission, a panel sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor found that the glass ceiling was continuing to deny untold numbers of qualified people the opportunity to compete for and hold executive-level positions in the private sector (U. S. Department of Labor, 1995). Further, Weber (1998) found that women executives in the gaming industry, a segment of the hospitality industry, mentioned the old boys’ network as one of the key constraints to their career progression—breaking through the glass ceiling.

This paper is strictly a fact-finding account, developed in an explanatory and review format that consists of a synthesis of research from scholarly and non-scholarly studies about whether women are breaking through the glass ceiling today in business. Because this exploratory study uses no control groups to compare outcomes, this critique has no statistical validity.

## METHODS

Having researched and published about this all-important topic a little over 10 years ago, we wanted to better understand if the concept of the glass ceiling is still in effect today in business. More specifically, our research question was: What are the prevailing themes in the

business literature on the glass ceiling that advances our understanding, from an academic standpoint, of gender equity in senior-level management?

This study looked at the research work of 100 writers and scholars about this topic over the past 25 years. In doing so, we went to OneSearch (2019), at our school's library, drilled down to ABI Inform, and typed in the words glass ceiling: Of the 5,515 articles provided from these search words, we randomly selected 100 critiques that were written about this topic over the past 25 years. These 100 articles were selected because the overview section of this extensive list included these key words. Of the 100 articles and reviews that were selected, 63 were used in this study's write-up, because they were closely related to what we are trying to find out—are women breaking through the glass ceiling today? We also wrote a brief review, in the Review of the Literature section, of 22 different commentaries about the glass ceiling. We say that, because we thought the information was interesting. In addition, we included one published peer-reviewed article and one book excerpt of our own previous published work.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Woman, as leaders, have made great strides over the past decade but still face many challenges—they still do not have equality to men. That said, there are more female leaders now than in any previous time in history. Attitudes toward women have changed as well – feminine characteristics are now accepted alongside traditional masculine ones in leaders. Recent studies show that male leaders are no longer perceived as being more effective than female leaders. Despite these advances, there is still a gap between men and women (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2017). For example, women are still underrepresented in physician leadership (Laurent, Sosenko, Zamfirova, & Hartwig, 2017). Also, the results of a study performed by Ismail, Zulkifli, and Hamzah (2017) clearly show that women are underrepresented in the engineering profession despite the fact that women are making inroads in it. More so, the literature findings conclude that the engineering industry is a patriarchal (male-dominant) workplace environment, where women engineers feel that their perceived value is not necessarily comparable to men. And, in this study's profession (i.e., academia in medical schools), women represent 17% of tenured professors, 16% of full professors, 10% of department chairs, and 11% of medical school deans in the United States (Carnes, Morrissey, & Geller, 2018, p. 145).

As per data from the World Bank, women presently (i.e., as of 2017) represent 39.6% of the global workforce. Nevertheless, several studies in developed countries have reported that while the number of women in the workplace has grown, the number of women in managerial roles has all but stalled. For example, although women make up 45% of the overall S&P 500 labor force, they account for only 37% of the first or mid-level managers in those companies. Moreover, women represent only % of S&P 500 executive and senior-level managers, hold only 19% of its board seats, and comprise only 4.6% of its CEOs (Chullen, Adeyemi-Bello, & Vermeulen, 2017).

According to research performed by Catalyst, an organization devoted to advancing women in the workplace, a mere 57 of 13,000 corporate officers were women, only 96 women ran business units, and only 1.9% of the highest-earning corporate officers were women

(Knutson & Schmidgall, 1999). In a subsequent study of Fortune 500 companies, Catalyst, once again, found that there still was a shortage of women in the top ranks and that there had been few changes in senior-level women's attitudes and experiences within the past seven years (Catalyst, 2003). As recently as 2004, even though some women were close enough to the top positions in firms to be considered in the recruitment pool for senior-level leadership positions, they rarely achieved such positions (Maume, Jr., 2004). In addition, according to Begley (2005) women comprised only 11% of corporate officers in the Fortune 500 companies in America. And finally, according to Catalyst (2011), they still found that women represent less than 3% of Fortune 500 board seats, and a mere 14.4% of Fortune 500 executive office positions (Northouse, 2012, p. 352).

Over the years, women have been only a small minority in the high levels of business management. Nevertheless, fast-forward now—women's lives have changed noticeably over the last fifty years. Women have found themselves in business positions, educational institutions, and public offices they never would have dreamed of filling in the 1950s. Notwithstanding, after several decades of economic, political, and social changes, women are by no means equal partners with men in the highest levels of business and the professions.

Many women who have tried to climb the corporate ladder have hit the glass ceiling and been shunted off the career track (Albelda & Tilly, 1997). In most of the relevant literature, the glass ceiling tends to be conceived of as the barrier formed of qualitative factors preventing women from reaching top hierarchical positions in the labor market (Hultin, 2003).

Throughout the past twenty-five years, several studies, in all industries, have explored the relationship of gender and career success with the purpose of shedding light on the glass ceiling. Gullason (1999) acknowledged that many women desire contingent and alternative employment arrangements because such jobs help them balance work with other, non-labor-market obligations. Tharenou's (1999) study of the impact of family structure on managerial career advancement found men, however, are promoted because they are perceived to have to fulfill the "traditional father role." A few studies found that gender-based factors related directly to motivation, power, leadership, networking, and interpersonal skills, are relevant to the women's lack of advancement when controlled samples were used (Cutler & Jackson, 2002). Lemons (2003) indicated that because there is a lack of female role models in senior-level leadership positions, the paucity of women executives has been identified as a contributing factor to the glass ceiling or a result of it. Maser and Abrams (2004) found that sexism is associated with negative evaluation of an individual female target competing for a masculine-stereotyped organization role; to the extent that a woman poses a threat, hostile sexism will serve to reinforce the glass ceiling to keep her in her (so-called) rightful place. Snowden Publications (2005), in their industry report, acknowledged that women are at a disadvantage and that they need to network more with each other for the sake of mentoring and moral support. The American Society for Training & Development (2006) wrote, in their executive update, that the glass ceiling is believed to be more of a societal obstacle than an individual barrier.

Female executives say they are very confident of their own business capabilities and are more likely to believe that the greatest barriers to their success come not from their own capabilities or even from their own companies' cultures, but from society at large. Hakim (2006)

stated that many feminist scholars insist that there are no natural differences between men and women, and that sex discrimination (direct and structural) is the primary reason for differences between men and women in labor market outcomes (i.e., women reaching senior-level leadership status). Finally, Reis and Verlag (2006) pointed out that the more senior a female manager becomes the more likely she is to think that these barriers include organizational structuring of careers and promotions to the exclusion of women, and male values dominating workplace cultures that prevent women's progression.

Stereotypes strictly based on gender or gender bias have historically placed women in a nurturing, submissive role while men are seen as the dominant, aggressive gender. Women are often considered people-oriented while men are task-oriented. Book (2000) suggested stereotypes persist in that female managers who employ a so-called "feminine style" of management will have trouble succeeding in the workplace. These mostly stereotypical attitudes toward women fan the flames of gender discrimination and its result in business and professions—the glass-ceiling effect.

## INQUIRY

In order to more carefully conduct an analytic exploration of the literature, we narrowed our search to "glass ceiling" in OneSearch (2019). This search parameter produced 5,515 articles. We randomly selected 100 critiques that were written about this topic over the past 25 years. We then looked at 63 articles and/or commentaries that we felt provided specific insights into our research question: What are the prevailing themes in the business literature on the glass ceiling that advances our understanding of gender equity in senior management?

After analyzing these 63 critiques, we found that insights from the themes culled from the articles were better structured into two timeframes: 1) Timeframe 1: (1994 through 2016) and 2) Timeframe 2: (2017 through 2019). The reason for organizing this analysis into two timeframes was to explore more clearly if any trends or breakthrough matters have occurred or, conversely, if these themes are merely an extension of existing concepts.

### **Timeframe 1: 1994 through 2016**

There continues to be evidence that the glass ceiling, in all industries, remains intact in many areas. The following are just a few examples.

Inside the hospitality industry, the American Hotel & Motel Association has had only one-woman chairperson over its 83-year history. Moreover, in spite of the increasing similarities in the background and experience of men and women in (hospitality) management, women remain poorly represented at senior-level leadership (Brownwell, 1994). In addition, although women's participation in the U.S. labor force has increased, and women occupy 44% of management jobs in American companies (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998), top management ranks remain dominated by men (Goodman, Fields, & Blum, 2003).

A report from the U.S. Department of Labor asserted (1995) that the notion of a glass ceiling is a barrier due, to some extent, to institutionalized organizational characteristics and practices (Goodman, Fields, & Blum, 2003).

*United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515, in 1996, is a landmark women's rights glass ceiling case in which the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the long-standing male-only admission policy of the Virginia Military Institute in a 7–1 decision (Strum, 2002). That said, the literature still emphasizes that many women lack the support as well as the confidence necessary to advance to senior-level leadership positions (i.e., in all industries). In addition, the prose points out those women who hold lower-level management positions will not necessarily hold senior-level leadership positions. What is more, when women almost completely dominate an occupation, women's promotion opportunities may still be impaired (Maume, Jr., 1999).

Women are more than twice as likely as men to work part-time, that is, fewer than 35 hours per week (Monthly Labor Review, 2003). For example, in 2004, approximately 26% of employed women usually worked part-time, compared with about 11% of employed men (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005).

The status of women in employment is also reflected in their earning capacities. In 2005, women made up only 31.0% of workers in the highest earnings category (the top fourth of workers by earnings). Moreover, women made up a slight majority of the lowest earning category (the bottom fourth or first quartile), 53.2%, compared with 46.8% for men (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006).

In another study done by Ryan and Haslam (2005), evidence suggests that while women are typically confronted by an invisible barrier preventing their rise into leadership ranks—the 'glass ceiling', men are more likely to be conveyed into management positions by means of a 'glass escalator' (p. 81).

According to Kephart and Schumacher (2005), although women have made some strides in breaking through the glass ceiling, they have a long way to go to reach equality in senior-level management. The paucity (0.0%) of women found in executive positions in this study supports this claim. None of the four following companies surveyed in Catalyst's census, Amgen, Dell, FedEx, and Whirlpool, included any women among their most highly paid corporate officers. Catalyst also found that the percentage of women in corporate officer positions fell from 15.6% to 14.6% and in director positions from 16.4% to 14.7% (Brady, 2007). Moreover, a recent report from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership stated that women leaders still confront a glass ceiling when it comes to progressing to senior positions (Adults Learning, 2007). This is in concert with research that suggests that women still have a tougher time attaining the highest ranks within their professions (Dailey, 2002). Eagly and Carli (2007) identified limitations with the glass ceiling metaphor, including that it implies that everyone has equal access to lower positions until all women hit this single, invisible, and impassable barrier (as cited in Northouse, 2016, p. 399).



As mentioned in April and Shockley's (2007) work, a significant number of professions used to be gender typed and many still are. One was that of eliminating gender bias in recruiting for certain jobs. The Equal Right Amendment, of 1972, was supposed to remedy this. The roots of gender-typing are certainly outdated ideas about what is proper masculine and feminine work, which is based, in part, on the supposedly inferior physical capacity of women.

In a study performed by Schaap (2008), this researcher explored to what extent the glass ceiling exists for women in the Nevada gaming industry. The results of this paper showed that women in the gaming industry have less of an opportunity to demonstrate relevant abilities, such as leadership and conceptual skills, by means of their involvement in strategy implementation. Based on the results of this study, Schaap concluded that if women want to break the glass ceiling, they must begin by understanding the male-dominated system—at least in the short run. Most importantly, women must seek out opportunities to demonstrate the skills that are most important to promotion into senior-level leadership positions.

In a paper carried out by Groysberg and Bell (2013), these researchers found that while boards (i.e., board of directors) claim they strive for diversity, the actual number of female directors remains low; women held only 16% of Fortune 500 board seats in 2012. Further, three themes emerged from the data they collected: 1) Women had to be more qualified than men to be considered for boards. 2) Boards do not know how to leverage diversity. The women said they were not treated as full members of the group, though the men were largely oblivious to this problem. 3) Great talent is not enough to create a great board. Boards need processes and cultures that encourage inclusiveness as well as diversity (p. 89).

As stated by Yukl (2013, p. 372), there are a variety of reasons why the glass ceiling still exists. Some reasons included: lack of opportunity to gain experience and visibility; higher standards for women than men; exclusion of women from informal networks that aid advancement; and lack of strong action by top management to ensure equal opportunity.

Table 1 below summarizes the key themes we found in Timeframe 1. In essence, this body of research confirms that women in the workplace are making strides in entering many industries and institutions that were formally the domains of men (i.e., military, law enforcement, diamond industry, etc.), the glass ceiling still remains intact for senior-level positions in workplaces, whether in industry or public institutions.

***Table 1: Key Themes from Timeframe 1***

1994	Brownwell	Women remain poorly represented at senior-level leadership.
1995	U.S. Department of Labor	Glass ceiling, in all industries, remains intact because of institutionalized organizational characteristics and practices.
1999	Maume, Jr.	Even when women dominate an occupation, promotional opportunities are still impaired.
2003	Goodman, Fields, & Blum	Top management jobs are still dominated by men.
2005	Ryan & Haslam	Men are more likely to be convey into management positions by means of a glass escalator.
2005	Kephart & Schumacher	While women have made some strides in breaking through

		the glass ceiling, they still have a long way to go to reach equality with men.
2007	Vriesendorp; Greer in April & Shockley (eds)	Gender equality in both South Africa and the US continues to lag even as more women are entering the ranks of business and law in significant numbers.
2008	Schaap	Results showed that women, in the gaming industry, have less of an opportunity to advance than men.
2013	Groysberg & Bell	These researchers found that while boards claim they strive for diversity, female directors remain low.
2013	Yukl	This researcher states that there are ten reasons why the glass ceiling still exists for women.

### Timeframe 2: 2017 through 2019

The review of the literature on the glass ceiling over the past 25 years indeed confirms the glass ceiling is shattering at glacial speed. However, during the past two years, awareness to gender inequality has risen to national awareness. The “Me Too” movement has called attention to gender abuse and harassment in society, especially the entertainment and media industries. There were several unintended consequences caused by the “Me Too” movement. For example, the *New York Times* reported that nearly half of the 201 powerful men were replaced by women (Carlsen et al., 2018). The 2018 Mid-term National Elections in the U.S. were also encouraging; a record-breaking number of women were elected to the House of Representatives, filling 100 of the 435 seats (Jordan, 2018). These two events have focused our attention to specifically explore research on the glass ceiling since 2017.

Despite the attention given to the concept of the glass ceiling and recent attention in the media to gender inequality, evidence prevails that barriers to women’s careers do not seem to have diminished significantly. For example, part-time working and being a working mother remain as key roadblocks to careers in many workplaces (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2017). And, according to Xiang, Ingram, and Cangemi (2017), recent research has continued to reveal organizations, with very few exceptions, have continuously engaged in internal promotion biases against women.

Employers that fail to fully understand attitudes towards women as managers will limit the global success of their businesses. At the same time, understanding attitudes alone is insufficient for eliminating the stereotypes biases women managers face. Employers must continue to emphasize training and support in order to remove obstacles while simultaneously increasing opportunities, for women in leadership roles (Chullen, Adeyemi-Bello, & Vermeulen, 2017).

As said by Fernandez and Campero (2017), their research results suggest that, by themselves, bias-remediation policies designed to reduce gender discrimination in screening are likely to be of limited help in addressing the problem of the glass ceiling.

According to Gloor, Morf, Paustian-Underdahl, and Backes-Gellner (2018), female leaders continue to face bias in the workplace compared to their male counterparts. When

employees are evaluated differently because of who they are rather than how they perform, an ethical dilemma arises for leaders and organizations.

In a study performed by Elsaid and Ursel (2018), in 2015, these researchers found that women accounted for about 4.6% of CEOs in S&P 500 companies. This under-representation of women in CEO positions may arise from two sources: 1) Either women are not appointed to CEO positions at a rate equal to men, or 2) Women do not stay in CEO positions as long as men do (p. 162).

In another paper completed by Gupta, Han, Mortal, Silveri, and Turban (2018), these scholars found that although women comprise about 50% of the workforce in the U.S., their representation reduces considerably as one moves up the hierarchy. For example, among Fortune 500 companies, women comprise 4.8% of CEOs, 14.6% of executive officers, and 16.9% of board members (Hanek, Garcia, & Tor, 2016, as cited in Gupta et al. 2018).

In a more recent article by Allen (2018), this management consultant stated the following about the glass ceiling.

Are women setting themselves up to lose by getting these six things wrong?

1. Women don't ask for more - they don't negotiate as well for themselves and don't ask for extra perks.
2. Women undervalue their talents and resist the technical stuff (the so called "hard skills").
3. Women don't own their power to lead and shy away from conflict in the workplace.
4. Women tend to need more flexibility in their schedules and spend fewer hours at work than men.
5. Women don't pace it - they don't understand that they really can't have it all at once.
6. Women are too risk averse - they demonstrate a greater fear of failure.

On the other hand, in February of 2018, the College of William & Mary's Board of Visitors unanimously elected Katherine A. Rowe, currently provost of Smith College and a leader in digital innovation of the liberal arts, as the 28th president of the university. Dr. Rowe will be the first woman, by breaking through the glass ceiling, in William & Mary's 325-year history to hold the presidency position (Staff, 2018). Also, the board mandate bill, known as state Senate Bill 826, was signed in early October by outgoing Democratic Governor Jerry Brown and requires every publicly held corporation in California to have a minimum of one woman on its board of directors by the end of 2019. By July 2021, the bill would require a minimum of two women on public company boards in the state with five members and at least three women on boards with six or more (Aydin, 2018).

As stated by Audrey Murrell (2018), Associate Dean of the University of Pittsburgh College of Business Administration and the director of the David Berg Center for Ethics and Leadership, while more women are reaching top positions in organizations, their experience as being the "only one" in their organization often exposes them to worse experiences and more scrutiny than if they were "one of many." Thus, while the chairman of Tesla is now a woman,

Elon Musk remains the CEO. Furthermore, with the exit of Indra Nooya as CEO of PepsiCo, there are now less than two dozen female CEOs among today’s S&P 500 companies.

And lastly, Harris and Norlander (2019) stated that of the 30 firms they tracked, they found that these organizations had a higher than average percentage of women in top executive roles in 2015. Further, executives at these “best practice” businesses reported that sponsorship from top leadership has been key to the advancement of women in senior roles.

As shown in Table 2, the most recent literature on the glass ceiling takes on a more global perspective—that is, the glass ceiling is showing some evidence of cracking; this differs from the glass ceiling research done prior to 2017.

**Table 2: Key Themes from Timeframe 2**

2017	Human Resource Management International Digest	Part-time working and being a working mother remain as key roadblocks to career advancement for women.
2017	Xiang, Ingram & Cangemi	Their research shows continued internal promotional biases against women.
2017	Chullen, Adeyemi-Bello & Vermeulen	Employers must continue to emphasize training and support in order to remove obstacles for women achieving leadership roles.
2017	Fernandez & Campero	Bias-remediation policies designed to reduce gender discrimination in screening are likely to be of limited help in addressing the problem of the glass ceiling.
2018	Carlsen et al.	New York Times reported that nearly half of the 201 powerful men were replaced by women.
2018	Jordan	A record-breaking number of women were elected to the House of Representatives.
2018	Elsaid & Ursel	In a 2015 study, these researchers found that women accounted for only 4.6% of CEOs in S&P 500 companies.
2018	Gupta, Han, Mortal, Silveri & Turban	These scholars found that while women comprise about 50% of the workforce, their representation reduces considerably as they move up the hierarchy.
2018	Allen	Are women setting themselves up to lose, with the glass ceiling, by getting six key things wrong?
2018	Staff	Dr. Katherine Rowe breaks the glass ceiling by being named the president of the College of William and Mary.
2018	Aydin	California SB826 bill passed requiring public held corporations to include women on its board of directors.
2018	Murrell	While women are reaching top positions in organizations, their experience in their organization often exposes them to worse experiences.
2019	Harris & Norlander	These academics found that exceptional firms continued to have a higher than average percentage of women in top executive roles in 2015.

## IMPLICATIONS

While women are making great strides in securing leadership positions in supervisory and middle management ranks, the glass ceiling remains intact at the highest levels in organizations (Heard, 2001). There are several trends and observations worth noting from this research.

--*The Glass Cliff Phenomenon*. Women are beginning to enter the ranks of senior management. Often, they are “the only one” among their male colleagues who are on the senior team. Women frequently feel that they are “tokens,” and more importantly, are hired to leadership positions that are highly precarious and visible (Gupta, et al., 2018; Elsaid & Ursel, 2018).

--*Institutional Persistence of Gender Bias*. Although women are not breaking through the glass ceiling at a significant rate, gender bias about women’s work ethic is crumbling as they maintain a continuous presence in the labor force, work long hours, and establish a long record of service to their employers (Maume, Jr., 2004). One of the explanations for the continued existence of the glass ceiling in the gaming industry is that women have traditionally been placed in positions that have less visibility, risk, and breadth of responsibility than men do (McDonald & Hite, 1998; Schaap, 2008). More broadly, barriers to women’s advancement in corporations are difficult to eradicate, preventing companies from retaining valuable female talent at great cost to their current operations and the talent pool for future leadership of their organizations (Mattis, 2004).

--*Global Awareness of Gender Inequity*. Global awareness of gender bias and confirmatory evidence of the glass ceiling effects have become more prominent in the literature as shown in Table 2. The European Union was one of the first regions to highlight gender equality. Since the European Union policies on “gender mainstreaming” were adopted in 1998, progress toward gender equality was applauded for raising awareness, but criticized for not providing the implementation impetus to create uniform change in the European Union (Leopold, 2001; Booth and Bennett, 2002). The World Economic Forum produces a report entitled, “The Global Gender Gap Report” which highlights the participation of women in society for over 144 countries; in 2017, the report indicated that 58% of the economic participation gap and 24% of the political empowerment gap between men and women have been closed (Leopold, Ratcheva, & Zahidi, 2017). The World Economic Forum observes that the performance on closing the gender gap has improved significantly in the Nordic countries, but no country has successfully closed the gap (Leopold, Ratcheva, & Zahidi, 2017).

--*Role of Organizations and Leaders*. In a McKinsey study of 279 companies, about half of its employees feel that employers made gender diversity a priority, and 20% felt of their companies gave lip service to gender diversity (McKinsey & LeanIn.org, 2018). Personal dynamics, organizational dynamics, and cultural dynamics significantly influence women career advancement (Tinuke, 2018). Different values lead to different behaviors, which lead to different motivation as to why someone wants to step into a leadership role (Jenni, 2017). The McKinsey and LeanIn.org (2018) showed that 45% of the men and 33% of the women aspired to top jobs in their companies; for employees

who did not aspire to become top level executives in their respective companies, 42% of the women and 35% of the men expressed too much time away from their families (McKinsey & LeanIn.org, 2018). Moreover, flexible work hours and family-friendly policies at workplaces are necessary to retain working mothers (Ismail et al., 2017). In some countries and industries, men still believe that a woman is simply not capable of doing as well of a job, or better, than a man can do. These stereotypic perspectives generally lead to micro-aggressive behaviors in which collegial respect, raises based on merit, and promotions are negatively impacted (Ganguly, Rao, & Dutta, 2017).

And lastly, this analysis of the glass ceiling demonstrates that persistent awareness and re-tooling organization processes and structures remains elusive, yet necessary to promote gender equity in the workplace (Gloor et al., 2018). Leaders, through mentorship and fostering a culture of diversity, can make the necessary changes in their organizations; it takes patience, persistence and grit.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While we feel the information presented is persuasive, and, at times convincing, we did not conduct an independent research study. This paper is only intended to be an observational assessment of 63 different articles and/or reports, one peer-reviewed article and one book passage (i.e., of our own previous work), on the discipline of the glass ceiling. That said, we decided to pursue an evocative investigation so that the reader could better understand gender equity with respect to the glass ceiling. Still, the primary focus of this paper was on learning and/or on teaching issues in management and/or organizational studies (i.e., including all aspects of leadership).

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