

Women and the Leadership Role in Today's Workplace

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ABSTRACT. A recent news article from NBC, 'How Women Give Business in Competitive Edge' talks about gender balance in the work place. For some companies, improving gender balance is about social responsibility, for others it's about compliance and avoiding lawsuits, but what many businesses already know, and what many more are coming to understand, is that having women at the table is a bottom line, business imperative. When both women and men work together, a company will have a far greater breadth of thinking and decision-making. A woman CFO might be better at risk management. Women have different hard-wiring in their brains and consequential thinking, so women look at risk in a very different way, so companies that have this diversity can actually have better results. Gender balance and more women leaders of today's corporate culture have become more and more important in Fortune 500 companies of American. This paper is going to talk about the advantage of recently research about gender balance and more women CEOs in companies that can bring better outcome than only man leaders of a company. Though most of Fortune 500 companies realize that open more opportunities for women and train them to the top position has become a crucial role of company's culture and future growth. It is still has gender stereotype for women leaders and glass ceiling and other barriers for women to go to the top. As the Catalyst recent report about women CEO positions at companies shows that women hold 4.6 percent of Fortune 500 CEO positions and 4.6 percent of Fortune 1000 CEO positions. It has been hard for significant numbers of women to hold strong positions in leadership or in shaping and changing economy, as well as in political and social landscape. A dramatic shift has been witnessed in the 21st century in dynamics of traditional families and greater gender recognition in legislation has helped in pulling divisions of gender-role apart. As a result, women have become more independent economically and socially autonomous. However, unlike men, women are not typically associated with positions of leadership. This inequality is consistently mirrored in pay gaps, in spite of the introduction of equality in pay act. Most women are still earning between 60 – 77% what is earned by men in the United States of America. Glass ceiling effect, work and life balance, an "Ideology" that women should be responsible for child care; mentor opportunities and unintended challenges are the main problems that made women lack of representation at top executive positions. In order to deal with gender stereotype for

women in corporation, more and more companies have advocate gender balance policy and more and more leading companies take gender balance as very important rule to make the corporate culture more diversity and dynamic. The argument of this paper is how important that gender balance in corporate culture and more women CEOs will bring better result of company's outcome.

KEYWORDS: *Gender Stereotype, Gender Balance, Women leaders, Corporate Culture, Glass Ceiling, Fortune 500 Companies*

Recent reports show that 2.4 million women without employment desire to be employed in the same positions as men. With such statistics offering insight to the current behaviours and patterns, the question remains why women's talents and skills are not fully exploited. The role of stereotypes is one of the frequently cited factors in women's unemployment and lower compensations, and it is reinforced by cultural and social norms. Much of research shows that stereotypes about women and men have a great impact on peoples' beliefs about how they should or should not behave. For example, when surveys and studies reveal that women are views as more loyal and communal and men who are regarded as more competent and protective, gender stereotype and hierarchies are reinforced. (Bosak and Sczesny 234).

Although gender stereotypes are not subscribed to by everyone, it is evident that women and men whose behaviors contradict these traditional stereotypes are mostly evaluated negatively by other people. These are issues such as being a career woman or a stay at home dad. Therefore, there are unseen biases on the lifetime exposure of women about what they should be, their behavior, and whom they should represent. In particular, unconscious bias arises from the unspoken assumptions and implicit attitudes, expectations and beliefs that people have about others' roles in society. Studies highlight consistently that both women and men have unconscious biases about gender. For instance, men are viewed as more capable in leadership posts than women and they are, therefore, promoted to these positions more often when handsomely than women. Also, simply having a traditional male job can guarantee one a job but being woman and a mother can reduce the chances of them getting a job by 70%. Therefore, unconscious biases and stereotypes are evident and can be overcome by the willingness to address the immediate judgments of women's employment as well as putting into place procedures and practices to alleviate their potential effects (The CATALYST Report of 2014).

When the psychological evidence is paired with economic factors, the gender equality argument becomes overwhelming. Study after another study indicates that groups excel when their gender balance is equal, or when men are outnumbered by women. For instance, Catalyst reported realized that companies with a high number of women on their in boards representations outperformed those represented by high numbers of men in a very significant way. This shows that if all women desiring employment would get it, the economy would grow significantly. In the long term,

to encourage women's participation in the labor market it is important to ensure that economic growth at both macro and micro level takes place. Following the shortage of skilled workers resulting from the ever increasing ageing population, skills' deficit has been encountered in work places and can only be overcome by depending on the employment of women. Bigger steps should be taken in availing workplaces that are more flexible with better leave policies for parents as well as more chances of employing women. However, this can only be achieved if stereotypes are overcome as they minimize such opportunities by distorting people's way of evaluating others (Katila and Eriksson 78).

Most CEOs who consider gender diversity by setting goals for women in leadership positions and who insists on diverse slates for people in senior positions, and who develop training and mentoring programs get frustrated. This is because it calls for more money, time and efforts to come up with more healthy pipeline of upward mobility of women and in most cases their efforts are in vain. The approaches used by these leaders fail because they often do not address the common fragile process of accepting oneself as a leader and having others view oneself in such capacity. This is because becoming a leader is more challenging than simply occupying a leadership position or adapting the styles of that position, or even acquiring new skills. It calls for a fundamental shift of identity. When organizations advise women to bravely go for leadership roles without coming to terms with the practices and policies that cause a mismatch between how women are viewed and the experiences and qualities people want to see in leaders, the entire process is undermined (The CATALYST Report of 2014).

Research shows that there is a subtle bias in gender that is pervasive in society and in organizations. This affects women and can adversely impact their desire to become a leader. It is also pointed out in research that there are some steps taken by companies to rectify the situation. It is not adequate to recognize and instill proper competencies and skills as if they exist in a social vacuum. A woman's motivation should be supported by the context in matters of leadership as well as increasing the ability of being appreciated and encouraged by others even when she does not behave or look like the contemporary generation of senior executives. What most companies employ today is very different from the ideal solution to the pipeline problem. Traditional high-potential, programs of leadership education and mentoring are important but they are not sufficient enough. Research, consulting and teaching has revealed that there are three more actions that companies can embrace to improve the chances of women gaining a sense of themselves as leaders, to be recognized as such, and ultimately to success. (The CATALYST Report of 2014).

1. Statistics of Women in the Workplace

Historical records indicate that women have not actively been involved in high positions, in the corporate world. Although the world has matured in terms of

democracy and equality, statistics indicate that few women occupy high positions in fortune 500 companies. According to a study by Catalyst, the trend has been consistent for the last four years. The CATALYST Report of 2014 (3) provided data for four consecutive years from 2009 to 2013. The analysis of these data is given in this section.

1.1 The Percentage of CEO's Positions Occupied by Women in Fortune 500 Companies

Fortune 500 companies are among the best performing companies in the world. Such companies have been established in the corporate world using a number of strategies other companies have failed to match. The CEO of such companies is looked upon to deliver according to the changing trends within the corporate world. Examples of such companies include Apple, Google, Facebook, Backlays, and Yahoo among others. The study by CATALYST indicates that there has been little attempt to incorporate women into the upper leadership posts of these companies. The study cites Yahoo as one of the few companies that has taken such a daring step, whereby Yahoo has installed a woman at the top. The study findings are given in the diagram below:

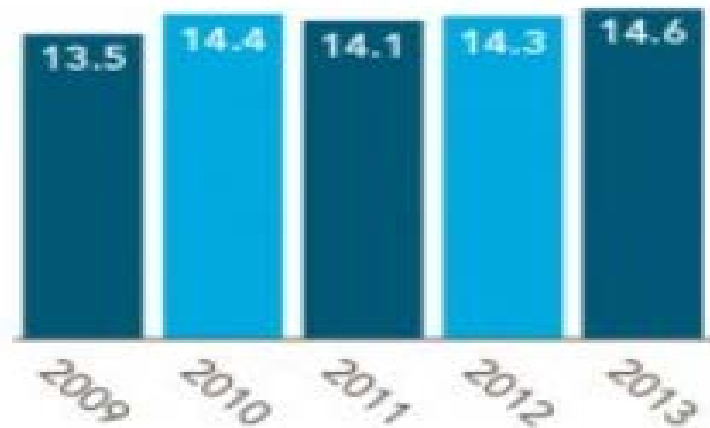


Figure 1: The Percentage of COE's Positions Occupied by Women in Fortune 500 Companies (The CATALYST Report of 2014 1)

From figure 1, there has been a slight improvement in the percentage of women between 2010 and 2013. The study indicates that there were only 0.2 percent increases in the position of women in fortune 500 companies. In fact, between 2010 and 2011, the number dropped by 0.3 percent only to rise the following year by the same margin.

1.2 Board Seats held by women in Fortune 500 Companies

Although the CEO is the final decision maker in fortune 500 companies, his or her decision must be backed by the board of directors. In fact, the board of directors has the power to hire or fire the CEO and thus people who sit on this board wield considerable in the corporate world. They define the corporate strategy of the company and offer their votes in the event the organization decides to undergo a corporate change. The study by CATALYST further indicates that women have not been active in the decision making of the biggest companies in the world because they are not part of the board of directors. The study combined data for 18 years and the results are shown in the diagram below:

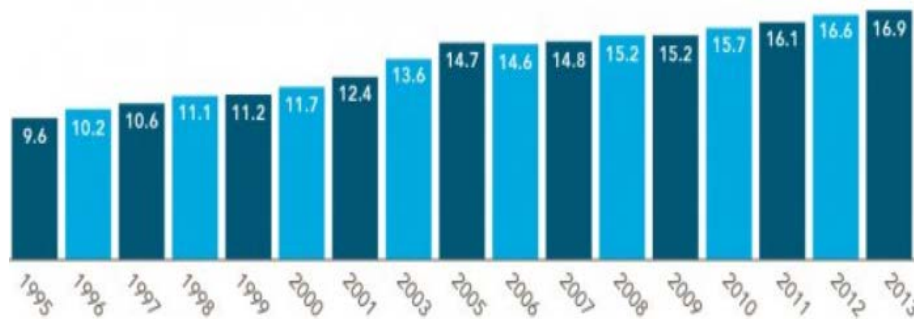


Figure 2: Board Seats held by women in Fortune 500 Companies (The CATALYST Report of 2014 1)

From figure 2, there has been a steady increase in the number of women sitting on the board of directors in fortune 500 companies. In 1995, women comprises of 9.6% of the board of directors, whereas in 2013, the number had risen to 16.9%. Although this is an indication of growth, the growth has been very slow, especially in late 2000s. When compared to the percentage of CEO's positions, the percentage of board seats is slightly higher and this is also a point of discrimination for women in high places. Generally, a CEO is the person whom the entire company looks upon to steer it toward desired growth.

The board of directors is there to offer support and to approve on the issues brought forward by the CEO. This means a CEO has more demanding responsibilities than a member of the board of directors. This means some companies would rather have a woman in the board of directors than at the helm as the CEO. It can further be argued that decision making at the board level is collective, and a woman's voice can be fizzled out. However, the CEO has to make independent decisions based on the prevailing situation of the company, and thus, is more important in terms of strategic growth of the company than the board of directors. In confining women to the board level rather than to the helm as the CEO, fortune 500 companies are demonstrating segregation.

1.3 Women's Share Of Financial Positions, In Fortune 500 Companies

Financial positions are among the key strategic positions in the organization and thus anybody occupying that the position must be aware of the economic situation of the company. At the same time, such a person should be well versed in financial mathematics and be ready to advise the company on matters concerning finances. In addition, fortune 500 companies have a turnover of more than one billion dollars and this is an indication that the financial manager has a huge amount of money to handle. This implies that the financial position is very sensitive post and thus companies must be very considerate when appointing an individual to occupy them. The fact that few women have been allowed into these positions is an indication that there is gender stereotyping in these companies. The CATALYST study indicated that the number of women occupying financial are still very few as shown in the diagram, below:



Figure 3: Women's Share Of Financial Positions In Fortune 500 Companies (The CATALYST Report of 2014 2)

The diagram above is for women occupying board seats as financial directors. From figure 3, it can be stated that there has been a gradual increase in the number of women occupying positions in fortune 500 companies. However, this growth is still very low because as per the 2013 statistics, only 15.9% of women were in financial positions in Fortune 500 companies.

When analyzed in terms of the corporate financial positions, the figure is slightly higher than that those of women occupying the board positions as financial controllers. The data is given in the diagram, below:



Figure 4: Women’s Share Of Corporate Financial Positions In Fortune 500 Companies (The CATALYST Report of 2014 2)

2. Why Women Occupy Fewer Positions at the Top of Fortune 500 Companies

To understand stereotyping of gender at workplace, especially for executive positions, it is vital to analyze both the men and women CEOs. Based on the data from the preceding section, it is possible to speculate on a number of reasons why women are very few in the top positions. According to Hymowitz (5), a number of speculations are on the rise on why there are very few women at the top. Hymowitz (5) states some people think that women are hesitant to serve in the top positions, whereas others claim that women are not qualified enough to serve in the top positions. In addition, other people speculate that women normally quit because of some demands that may include family obligations among others. However, the study by Catalyst indicates that women are segregated at the workplace and this is one of the reasons women do not occupy top seats.

The CATALYST Report of 2004 (2) indicates that women have the same desires as their male counterparts to occupy the topmost positions in the company. This dispels the notion that the CEO jobs have been shunned by women. It points to other causes of fewer women in the CEO jobs. The survey result for this study is shown in the diagram below:

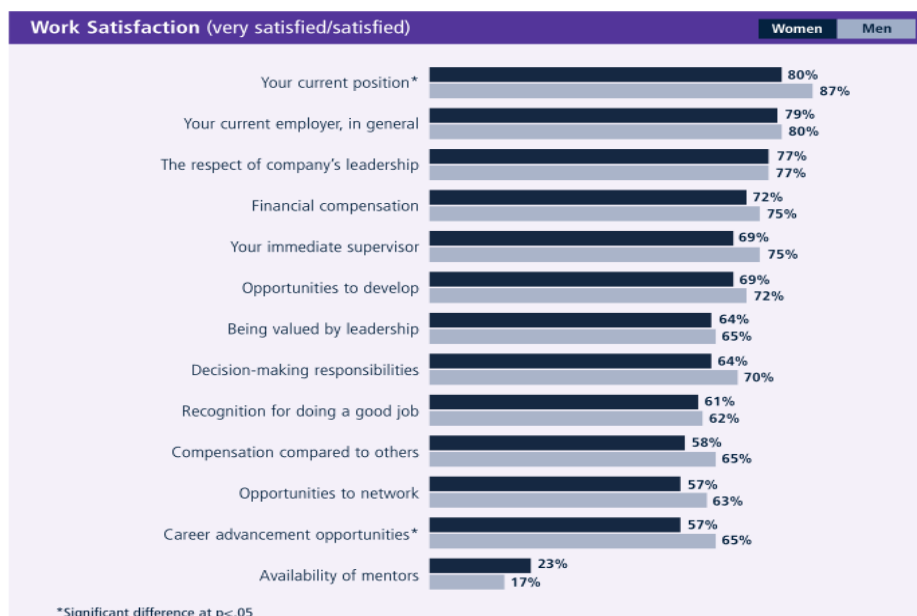


Figure 5: Work Satisfaction among men and women (The CATALYST Report of 2004 3)

The study findings are shown in the table above, and from the study, both male and female respondents reported almost similar findings. The study reported that both men and women had the same satisfaction levels at the workplace. This implies that if women were forced to leave their CEO positions, they would do so for the same reasons as men would do. At the same time, the findings indicate that if women were to come up with strategies to grow their companies, they would do so with the same enthusiasm as their male counterparts and this is an indication that equally men and women are exposed to the same risk factors, as well as success factors when at workplace. If the situation demands that one of them leaves his or her position at work, then he or she should do it at for same reasons (Stone and Lovejoy 62). This finding dispels the notion that women are forced to leave their work positions because they find their positions very demanding. The study indicates men and women can equally excel or fail to use the same prevailing marketing conditions, and this points to other unseen causes (stereotyping) as the main issue that have driven women out of their positions in fortune 500 companies and other institutions.

The study by Catalyst further indicates that both women and men have faced similar issues on their way to their current positions. However, the study indicates that women have faced environmental challenges, as well as stereotyping than their male counterparts. As a result, women have been forced to abandon their dreams of managing big companies, such as Google, and some have been forced out of the

management positions because of the same reasons. The Catalyst study further indicates that women have gone the extra mile to attain a balance in their work than their male counterparts. They have directed their efforts, both at the family and work environment, just to ensure everything is running smoothly. This dispels the notion that women are less hard working than men and cannot make strategic decisions. In fact, the Catalyst study reported that both men and women use fairly similar strategies as shown in the diagram below:

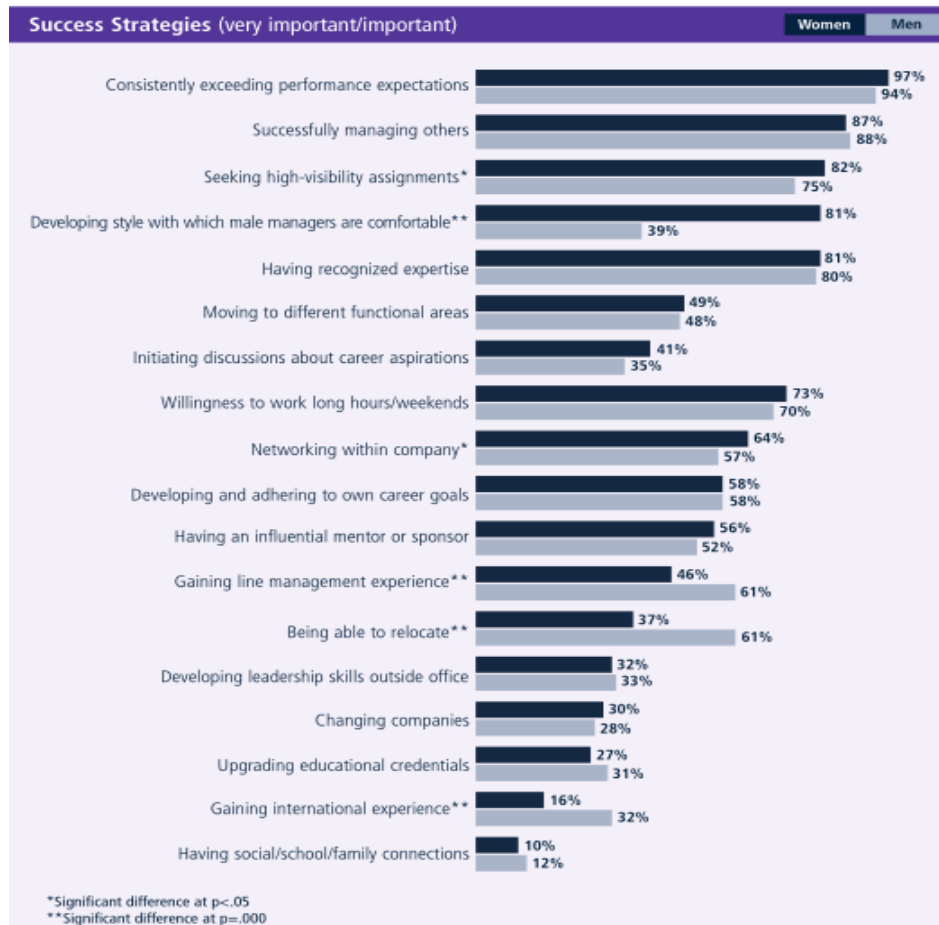


Figure 6: Success strategies (The CATALYST Report of 2004)

Based on the information from the diagram above, it means that a woman can succeed as the CEO of Apple just the same way a male counterpart, such as Steve Jobs, did. In the prior section, it was noted that men would rather have a lady in the board of director's seat than have her in the CEO's helm because of the fear that she

might fail to make the right strategic decision. However, this finding dispels this notion and points to the fact that women have been discriminated in the workplace. Men have deliberately squashed chances of women becoming top leaders without valid reasons.

3. The Glass Ceiling in the Gender Executive and How Women Are Breaking It

In the current labor force, women occupy half of the available positions. The middle level managerial positions are the most flooded positions, whereby women occupy about 42.5% of the available positions. However, the top-level positions have been masked from women whereby only 5% of the women have access to the top positions. Since 1972, there has been little progression in the career ladder of women, whereby women have been limited to the middle level positions in the corporate ladder. The lack of progression can be attributed to the presence of a glass ceiling that shields women from accessing the top. The glass ceiling in this case is an invisible barrier to career advancement in women, and this is based on the organizational and attitudinal bias. About 92% of women in the US executive positions claim that there is a glass ceiling, whereby organizations shields women from advancing in their careers to the top.

The glass ceiling phenomena is costly to the organization because of lost productivity, as well as increased turnover cost. According to the CATALYST Report of 2014 (1), about 80% of women in the study conducted in Fortune 100 Companies claimed that they left their companies because of the glass ceiling issues. To break the barrier, there is a need to focus on three key strategies, and the first one involves understanding challenges women face. The second involves understanding strategies used by women in their career advancement, and the third is having a total understanding of obstacles, as well as organizational climate faced by women.

3.1 Issues That Prevent Hold Women Back In Their Career Advancement

The study by Murphy (77) indicates that there is a consensus among the male executives that women are faced with some deficiencies and thus cannot be trusted with the top leadership positions. The findings are indicated in figure 8 below:

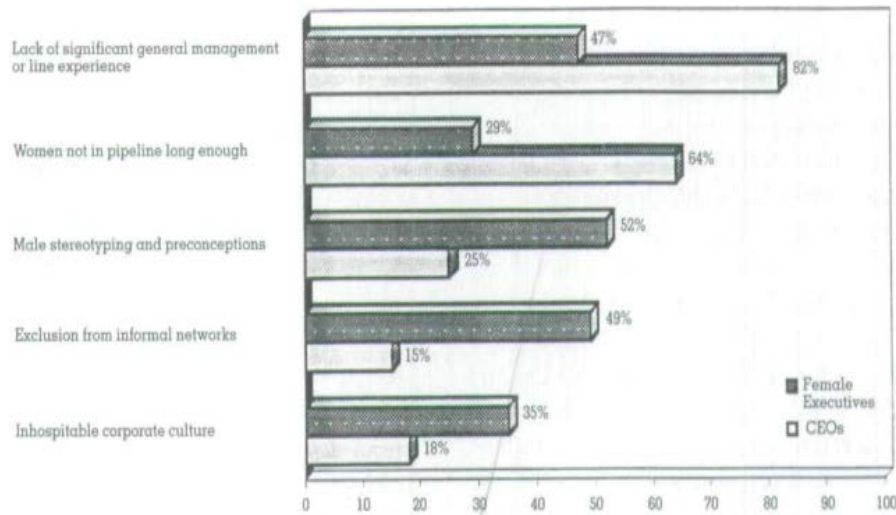


Figure 7: Issues That Prevent Hold Women Back In Their Career Advancement (Murphy 78)

From figure 8, women are perceived to lack experience and significant line management skills as alleged by their male counterparts. Lack of skills and experience is attributed to the fact that most women have no access to these opportunities and thus there is no way they can obtain such experience.

Another challenge is that women have not been in the pipeline for a long time. Women normally opt out of work for a number of reasons and opt in later. One example is a lactating mother who opts out of employment to take care of her child only to come later after the maternity leave. This means most of them have not stayed in the job for a long time and may not have enough experience. Another reason is male stereotyping and misconceptions about women. In general, men view women as inexperienced and incapable of handling important matters and thus they have formed an invisible barrier, whereby they are not ready to accept them into top corporate positions.

3.2 Women's Views of Fellow Women's Lack of Access to the Top Positions

Although men view women as incapable and lacking experience to manage at the top, women points to the lack of conducive work environment as the main glass ceiling. According to a study by Murphy (77), the top conditions that make the work climate inhospitable are evident in all organizations and the first one is fear of managing female managers. Second, men find it hard to be managed by women. Lastly, a number of White men within the organizations fear reverse discriminations

and thus shield women from advancing to the top. The study results are shown below:

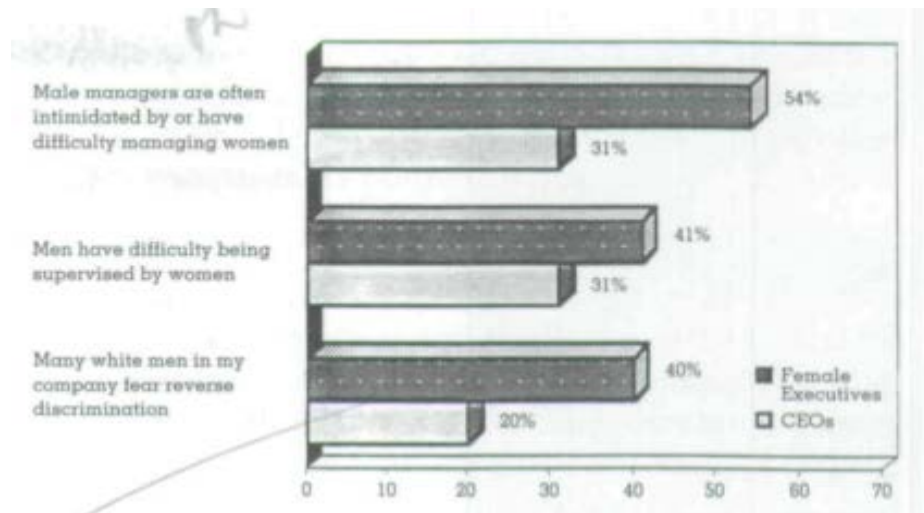


Figure 8: Women's Views of Fellow Women's Lack of Access to the Top Positions (Murphy 77)

3.3 How Women Are Breaking the Glass Ceiling

There are a number of strategies women are using to access the top ladder and they include performing beyond the expectation and with consistency, employing friendly styles at work to ensure men are comfortable, and seeking visible assignments. Women further employ the services of a mentor, network with colleagues of high influence, seek after line management experience, move from one area of functionality to the other, upgrade educational credentials, and gain international experience. The result are shown in figure 10 below:

Strategy	Critical	Fairly Important	Not Important	Did Not Use
Consistently exceed performance expectations	77%	22%	1%	0%
Develop style that men are comfortable with	61%	35%	3%	1%
Seek difficult or high visibility assignments	50%	44%	2%	4%
Have an influential mentor	37%	44%	9%	9%
Network with influential colleagues	28%	56%	9%	6%
Gain line management experience	25%	29%	11%	33%
Move from one functional area to another	23%	34%	20%	22%
Initiate discussion regarding career aspirations	15%	47%	25%	12%
Be able to relocate	14%	22%	17%	45%
Upgrade educational credentials	12%	33%	24%	29%
Change companies	12%	24%	23%	39%
Develop leadership out-side office	11%	41%	29%	18%
Gain international experience	5%	19%	24%	51%

Figure 9: How Women Are Breaking the Glass Ceiling (Murphy 77)

4. Expectations of Exceptionalism

In the contemporary corporate world, men have dominated some positions, whereas women have been sidelined. Although men also suffer from gender stereotyping, women have experienced most workplace segregations, such that there is exist some expectations and anticipations whenever a woman is at work.

Competence judgment, such as consistent performance review reflects assumptions that have never been dealt with. These are differences between women and men that disadvantage the former and advantage the latter. One of the assumptions is that the success of men reflects their skills. This means that when a particular task is said to be masculine, the success of men is attributed to momentary situational factors. Another assumption is that mistakes committed by women reflect incompetence. Conversely, mistakes committed by men are attributed to transitory situational factors, while those of women are attributed to stable personality traits. At times, this pattern is summarized as "what is luck in a woman is skill in man." This is because information that is stereotype-consistent is well recalled than inconsistent stereotype information. This is why mistakes of women, which confirm

their incompetence, may be remembered long after men's mistakes are forgotten. A man may take a big risk and make a mistake that is considered risky, but still he takes chances. When a woman does the same, this becomes a big mistake. As a result, women are not likely to make many mistakes as it is to men (Parent and Moradi 175).

Another assumption is that men, but not women, are judged on their potential. The assumption that men have what it takes to perform and women do not have may lead men being judged on their potential in circumstances where women are strictly judged on what they have already accomplished. When men are judged on their potential and women on their achievement, the prospects of men's job are powerfully accelerated in comparison to women. There is also an assumption that objective rules are rigidly applied to women, but leniently to men. Objective rules are no assurance of objectivity when leniently applied to men and rigidly to women, which is a pattern known as leniency bias. A woman professor said that in the case of ordering equipments, women workers always follow the set budget, but men just purchase equipments and hand in the receipts after which they are reimbursed. The professor continues to report that the computer of her woman colleague crashed and she went through a very difficult process to have her single desktop replaced. However, at the same time, a man colleague in the same department as the woman had bought two computers without following protocols and he was reimbursed (Parent and Moradi 176).

Merit reviews have been realized that they are particularly vulnerable for leniency bias and most promotions rely heavily on merit reviews. It is also assumed that women who are excellent, except not stellar are judged much more strictly and harshly in comparison to men. Because women who are superstars tend to get higher evaluations than fellow men, women who are merely excellent often get lower evaluations than fellow men. Negative information about women gives greater weight than it should be if the information were about men. This is because men benefit from a reflexive presumption of competence. This polarized pattern of evaluations is common especially in workplaces with few women, because women's performance in those cases tends to be scrutinized more closely than it is to men (Parent and Moradi 176).

What is important and the credential that a man has is also an assumption. Evaluators shift standards in ways that are beneficial to men. In a pattern known as casuistry, when a male candidate with excellent educational credentials than the competing women who applied for a professional job, evaluators value education than other factors, thereby giving the male candidate an advantage. However, when a woman with same excellent educational credentials applied for a job, experience is considered over education and this favors a man (Parent and Moradi 175).

There is also an assumption of double jeopardy whereby merit standards differ by race. Glass ceiling stereotypes differ from race to race and they put women of color in double jeopardy. Women of Black color are perceived less favorably than their White counterparts. White women are believed to be more intelligent and competent than Black women. As a result, White women workers are not expected

to be perfect in their workplace, but black women are always sanctioned for lack of perfectionism (Parent and Moradi 175).

5. Criterion For Leaders

5.1 Becoming a Leader

People are identified as leaders when they internalize a leadership identity and build up a sense of purpose. To internalize a sense of an individual as a leader is an iterative process. A person affirms leadership by undertaking purposeful action such as calling for a meeting to rejuvenate a dormant project. The action may be affirmed or resisted by others and this encourages or discourages subsequent assertions. The individual's sense of self as a leader is informed by these interactions and a leader becomes able to communicate how their fitness in the role is viewed by oneself and others (Warnerpar. 5).

As the capabilities of a person's leadership grows and opportunities to illustrate them expand challenging assignments and high-profile and other endorsements in the organization become more likely. Such assertions give the individual the fortitude to move outside the comfort zone and experiment with behaviors that are not familiar as well as the new ways of exercising leadership (Allena 257).

5.2 The Importance of A Mentor

According to Murphy (77), 37% of women who managed to break the glass ceiling stated that the services of a mentor were critical in their career advancement, whereas 44% said that the mentor was very important. This means that 81% of women who succeed in breaking the ceiling glass valued the services of their mentor. Given that the current corporate job market requires a highly performing person at the top, mentorship program will enhance the performance of women and will help those who had opted out to adjust accordingly.

5.3 The Mentor as Guide Not a Judge

A Mentor is a character whose role as a faithful and wise counselor has endured century's passage and whose function has been implemented by organizations recently. He or she should provide both psychological and career guidance. There are several functions of mentors and one of them is coaching, whereby a newly hired person is oriented to values, norms, and climate of academics. Such a person is also provided with concrete strategies for creating a balance between service, research, and teaching. Realistic and concrete deadlines are also negotiated through coaching to ensure that set goals are met (Murphy 75).

Another function of a mentor is advocating or protecting recruits. A mentor should enhance the recruits reputation and visibility. He or she should also be a

gatekeeper to protect recruit from over-extension. A mentor should provide constructive critiques of feedback on scholarly works. A mentor should perform three psychosocial functions including role modeling, counseling, and providing confirmation. In role modeling, a mentor should engage the mentee in activities that are valued by the institution and the discipline being pursued. In counseling, a mentor should truly listen and empathize with matters that the mentee may be experiencing. In providing confirmation, the mentee should be offered constructive encouragement that may lead to enhanced motivation, respect, and feelings of acceptance (Murphy 75).

6. Challenges Facing Mentorship

6.1 Poor Mentor-Protégé Match

At times, mentors may not provide the necessary information required by the protégé and this is quite a challenge. This makes it difficult for the protégé to attain the help required in the pursuit of a career. For the mentorship relationship to work out well, the mentor and the protégé should work together in their own accord. Also, organizations should avail forums to help potential mentors and protégé to successfully come together. In such relatively unstructured forums, protégé and potential mentor can get to learn who they are attracted to naturally and they can later approach each other and enter into mentoring relationships.

6.2 Cultural Issues

At times, the protégé may feel uncomfortable to approach his or her mentor about certain issues at work because of the fear of being annoying and intrusive. It is, therefore, essential in such a case to have structured and set up meetings ahead of time. To ensure that the mentoring relationship starts on a safe point, the protégé should inform his mentor the extent to which his behavior is influenced by cultural issues.

6.3 Lack of Mentoring and Training Structure

Mentors should be trained on how to carry out the process effectively. Without such training, a mentor may fail to meet his or her protégé following the very busy schedules that encountered by most senior people in organizations. This calls for structures of training and mentoring, whereby all protégé should meet their mentors. Training materials, such as books can be availed by the organization to ensure a smooth training. Necessary guidelines should also be given to mentors to understand how to relate with their protégé well. The protégé should also be trained about proper sustenance of the mentoring relationship and on the tactics of pursuing mentors.

7. Achieving Work-Life Balance as a challenge to Women Advancement to the Top Position

The work life balance is an essential factor for women. According to Williams (12), many women opt out of employment because of improper work life balance, whereby they are forced to leave employment for the sake of their families. Women make a lot of tradeoffs in their work life balance compared to men, and most of them end up becoming single parents or jobless married women. Women are thus forced to use more balancing strategies than men, and the first one includes employing the services of a house help. Other strategies include sharing responsibilities with the marriage partner, using daycare services, minimizing personal interests, and relying on the support of family members. Men have an easy time balancing their personal life because they pass their responsibilities to their partners. The study by the CATALYST group unearthed the following strategies as employed by both men and women:

Methods Used to Balance Work and Personal Life ¹¹	Women	Men
Support from others		
Employed outside services for domestic help**	84%	48%
Shared personal responsibilities with spouse or partner**	66%	53%
Used child care services**	45%	12%
Developed strong interpersonal networks outside of work	42%	37%
Handed over personal responsibilities to spouse or partner*	28%	37%
Relied on supportive relatives other than spouse/partner**	22%	3%
Managing personal interests		
Pursued personal interests*	60%	72%
Curtailed personal interests**	56%	41%
Making decisions related to family		
Did not have children**	27%	3%
Postponed having children*	20%	10%
Did not marry/postponed marrying**	13%	3%
Making decisions related to work		
Worked at home	15%	20%
Took a paid or unpaid leave of absence**	8%	1%
Have had a gap in employment*	8%	3%
*Significant difference at p<.05		
** Significant difference at p=.000		

Figure 10: strategies as employed by both men and women (The CATALYST Report of 2014)

From the diagram above, women are disadvantaged when trying to achieve work-life balance than men because their domestic roles are more compared to those

of men. Although it can be argued that family responsibilities ought to be equally shared, women cannot opt out of some responsibilities, such as suckling a child. As a result, focus should be on employing the mentioned strategies to ensure they cope with the work situation.

8. Opting Out Mothers

The spotlight of this paper has been on the issue that affects women at workplace leading gender stereotyping. Given that women have found it difficult to cope with such situations, majority have opted to quit employment for some time. The study by Williams (14) indicates that a number of women have made headlines in the news media because of opting out of employment, and this has been mainly due to the workplace issue compounded with family responsibilities. In fact, Williams (14) indicates that staying home give women a chance to perform prodigious labor whose value is equivalent to \$134,000 per year. In addition, some removal of supportive mechanisms, such as lack of equal work pays between men and women has forced women to opt out. Nevertheless, opting out is a movement championed by a number of people in the society, especially the Christian organizations who want to restore traditional values requiring women to take care of their homes. Such issue ought to be tackled by the media rather than a human resource manager alone.

9. Bridging the Gender Gap

Most CEOs do not know the experience of being a subordinate in their organization because they are in the senior positions. However, there are some who understand this disparity, and that their female workers do not perceive the playing field as level ground. This knowledge is often attained through having personal and direct experiences with female employees and their family members, especially daughters. In the corporate world, it can be achieved by working with members of corporate boards. CEO awareness can also be raised by other interventions, such as such diversity training, cross-gender mentoring, inclusion of gender and diversity issues in executive education, discussions with other CEOs, focus groups featuring women, and other approaches of education by use of media variety.

There is a necessitate for organizations to track women into positions of direct experience with profit and loss responsibility, as well as minimizing gender bias by use of objective performance appraisal systems. Effective mentoring positions can also be facilitated, as well as promotion of life and work balance by implementation of flexible workplace policies and make managers in charge of tracking female employees as well as developing careers. Organizations should also address the definite career needs of midlife women by offering job's designs that are flexible and specialized programs of career path. Top management should give guidance and support to organizations for women to break through the glass ceiling. The gender gap has to be bridged for this to occur.

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