Strategic Implications of Glass Ceiling on the Professional Leadership of Career Women Development in the West African Sub-Region

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Abstract

Women’s ascent to leadership positions and authority in organizations and society is limited by social norms, organizational cultures, and structures collectively referred to as ‘the glass ceiling’. The society views leaderships and authority as exclusive reserves on men. The result of the domination is a male paradigm is that women leaders are out of place in foreign territory, “travellers in a male world”. The model of the leadership has traditionally been masculine and, while these stereotypes remain, they succeed in perpetuating the dominant place for men in management. The paper investigated issues concerning female’s participation in senior management in organizational settings and the glass ceiling that affects their career. It also explored the visible and invisible barriers that have kept women from reaching upper levels of leadership. Drawing heavily on historical and secondary data, the paper reviews the trends of career barriers, glass ceilings and proffered suggestions to eliminate these barriers towards development of the women folks and identifies areas for further research and highlights points of consideration for management of institutions.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Women Stereotypes, Cultural factors, Gender Perceptions, economic development.

1. Introduction

Careers are traditionally thought of as a meaningful progression through a series of related jobs (White, 1995). “Career is traditionally defined as an ordered sequence of development extending over a period of years and the introduction of progressively more responsible roles within an occupation” (Mavin 2001). This definition assumes a linear upward progression (movement from a position of relatively low status, responsibility and remuneration, to a higher position). It is argued that traditional corporate career development models have largely been premised on male workplace experiences, values and goals. This may explain why career development models have tended to describe stage progression career paths, in which the individual moves in a predictable, ordered manner through a series of related jobs and each one provides him with greater prestige and financial remuneration (O’Leary 1997).

The issue of women being more likely than men to require a job which allows them flexibility, such as career breaks to have children, or look after elderly relatives, appears to be generally ignored in such career models (Flanders 1994). Larwood and Gutek (1987) point out that the modal pattern of men's careers is unlikely to ever provide a good fit for the modal pattern of women's careers. The first argument is the discrimination women face, which leads to fewer opportunities and slower progress, making other alternatives more attractive. The typical assumption is that women are far less committed to work than men.

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and far less able to undertake a full-time career, still remains – when it comes to career, given a choice between a man and a woman with equal qualifications, the employer will see the woman as the greater risk. “When it comes to promotion and career development, women are judged not so much on their abilities and achievements, but on assumptions about their family life, responsibilities and future intentions. Men are treated as workers, not parents; but women are always seen as mothers” (Flanders, 1994). A common experience of many employed women is the conflict between work and family roles. Research studies have shown, Lewis and Cooper (1988), Mavin (2001), Burke and Vinnicombe (2005) suggest that a large proportion of women experience conflict regarding ability to play the role of wife, mother and worker simultaneously. Women are often forced to choose between upward mobility in career and family stability in the home, or even a family at all, and with the religious setting of Nigeria particularly in the Higher Education sector, the institution’s management would not want to constrain a female worker’s marital responsibilities and therefore consider them less likely for higher positions. Marital status plays a part in upward mobility especially in the academic setting, as marriage connotes a sense of responsibility, diligence and sacrifice traits and therefore only those married are usually considered. Kelly and Marin (1998) point out that corporations look less favourably on married women when it comes to promotion, even married women themselves are less likely to expect advancement than those who are single. They argue that in addition to marital status, as one's rank increases, the likelihood of divorce increases, indicating that conflict over family and work responsibilities as well as the wife's potential job transfers are frequently cited as problems in the marriages of career women. There are a number of women's career theories (see Hall, 1976; Farmer, 1985; Powell and Mainiero, 1992; White, 1995; O'Leary, 1997), which focus specifically on the experience of women. White (1995) commented on her own study of successful women that, no matter what the occupation, successful women in this study passed through specific life stages and showed strength of commitment to their careers. These are based on the decision whether or not to have children and the timing issues associated with becoming a mother and/or having a career. The choice of women in management and in organisation to have children is still not viewed as positive by society and organisation. White (1995) argues that her model of successful women's life span development shows that the majority of successful women displayed high "career centrality". These women worked continuously and full-time, fitting their domestic responsibilities around work (hence facing the concept of becoming "superwoman" and the societal guilt associated with this role) or choosing to remain childless or unmarried. However, these are not mainstreamed in management literature, organisation strategy and policy or in career management practice and therefore have little impact on the future careers of women in management.

2. Review of Related Literature

These past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women who are pursuing managerial and professional careers (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Valentine and Godkin 2000). Many of these women have prepared themselves for careers by undertaking university education, where they now comprise almost half of the graduates of professional schools. Research suggests that these graduates enter the workforce at levels comparable with their male colleagues and with similar credentials and expectations but it seems that women's and men's corporate experience and career paths begin to diverge soon after that point. Women are gaining the necessary experience but still encounter a glass ceiling (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). The term “glass ceiling”, was first used in a 1986 Wall Street Journal report on the corporate woman (Hymowitz and Schelhardt 1956), which described the access to the top for the corporate woman as blocked with tradition and prejudice. Since this publication, the term glass ceiling has come to mean the invisible barrier that keeps women and minorities from rising above a certain level in corporation, which are attributed to gender rather than ability to handle jobs (Jackson 2001). The situation currently demonstrates that on the whole, while women maybe better qualified and motivated to enter organisations (which appear to be able to successfully recruit and hire capable women), organisations have difficulty in developing and retaining managerial women and advancing them into the ranks of leadership. The glass ceiling that women encounter refers to a subtle, almost invisible but strong barrier that prevents women from moving up to senior management. It is also apparent that women experience prejudice the moment they enter
organisations, it is the impact of these subtle and not so subtle experiences that limits women's career opportunities (Bartol 1978). Employers who do little to encourage women into higher positions in management are seriously restricting the resources and the diversity of skills and experience available to them, thereby failing to make the best use of existing female employees (Bjerk 2008). Women who feel that they are not being given a fair chance soon start looking for an alternative employer (Mavin 2001). Organisations cannot afford to under-utilise or lose this talent. To compete effectively as an institution it is important for gender glass ceiling issues to be addressed (Board watch 2013). There is the need to understand the barriers encountered by women in organisations; there is the need to understand why they are encountering particular work experiences to reach a reasonable understanding and adequate management practice.

- **Women in West Africa**

Nigeria’s 80.2 million women and girls have significantly worse life chances than men and also their sisters in comparable societies (Gberevie et al 2014). Violent compounds and reinforces this disadvantage and exclusion. Women are Nigeria’s hidden resource. Investing in women and girls now will increase productivity in this generation and will promote sustainable growth, peace and better health for the next generation (Ogbeide 2010). Regardless of their educational qualifications, women earn consistently less than their male counterparts. In some cases they earn less than men with lower qualifications. Women occupy fewer than 30% of all posts in the public sector and only 17% of senior positions. Nigeria’s House of Representatives has 360 Members of these, 25 are women. Only about 4% of local government councillors are women (Ogbeide 2010). The majority of women are concentrated in casual, low-skilled, low paid informal sector employment (Lawanson 2004). The reproductive roles that women play, often lead them involuntarily to prefer low quality, poorly paid, part-time but relatively flexible employment. Reproductive roles also mean that women often forgo promotion to highly paid jobs if these involve anti-social hours or frequent travel away from their families.

- **Investigation of the Factors Promoting “Glass Ceiling” in Organizations in West Africa**

  - **The Role of Culture**: cultural barriers are associated with prejudice and bias, and society, gender, and colour-based differences

  - **The Perception & Stereotype Barrier**: Men are viewed as the leaders in organizations, whilst women are supportive followers, making women in male-dominated offices inclined to see themselves as leaders or seek leadership roles. Also women’s traits as women are seen as essentially different from men in terms of their need for connection to others, and their preference for working in a humanistic, social and inclusive way for the common good of the organisation and society (Omotayo, Iyiola and Adeniji 2013). Men are seen as individualist, power-seeking, natural team leaders. Some believe that the differences, such as women’s lack of ambition, are simply biological. Other explanations are that women are socialised to be different, as girls are expected to be social, play quietly, look attractive and take pleasure in “girly” activities, whilst boys get dirty, explore, play team games and fight to be the leader.

  - **Corporate Climate**: West Africa’s corporate climate is still not receptive to diversity, reporting, differing, communications style and ideas of what is appropriate and acceptable and can create barriers to the women and this can influence advancement on their career towards upper management. Women have to manage their emotions particularly carefully, as well as their language, their dressing and their social interactions with male colleagues and clients (Omotayo, Iyiola and Adeniji 2013). They also have to deal with more junior women who may not welcome their success and may resist their authority. Were the culture is male-dominated, as at the top of most business organisations today, women have to expend a lot of energy on understanding and acting appropriately in their jobs, without female role models and social support. They often seek to make male peers and superiors comfortable with their presence, to reduce the friction from having a different style and voice. This is energy which their male peers do not have to expend.
One of the most resistant barriers for women has been the old boys’ network, an informal social grouping of those in power, who limit access to those who are similar to themselves either by background, position or personal characteristics. Whilst women may achieve senior posts, they do not necessarily gain entry into the network. The women are thereby excluded from social support, information and opportunities. This social closure does not only impact women but also those from other minority groups, as well as often those from a different class, or educational background. This is particularly strong in science, engineering, technology, IT organisations. Challenging entry requires understanding of the underlying shared cognitive structures of the old boy community and their way of doing things. Having to work harder and be better than male counterparts, having to ask for promotions and having to ask for international assignments.

✔ Family Responsibility: women with major child caring or elder care responsibilities, find it difficult to engage in after-hour activities and are likely not considered for promotions into management so as not to affect their marital responsibilities. Balancing home life and career, constant awareness of being a woman in a man’s world and less time available for networking due to domestic commitments (Omotayo, Iyiola and Adeniji 2013).

✔ Professional Style: 76% of female executives surveyed felt that they had to develop a professional style with which male managers would be comfortable, as many organizations embrace a male-oriented management style, where direct and aggressive behaviour is the norm. However, when women embrace this style, they are frequently labelled as “bossy” and “pushy”, whereas men using the same behaviours are labelled “leaders” (Mavin 2001).

In research studies, in leadership, aggressiveness, objective thinking, dominance, competition, and decisiveness are characteristics found within. However, when women display these traits, they often receive negative evaluations; while men displaying same are positively evaluated.

Women report the perception that if they adopt a “feminine” managerial style, they run the risk of being viewed as ineffective and if they adopt a “masculine” style, they will be criticized for not being feminine (Ragins et al 1998).

The transactional style often preferred by men depends on position power and formal authority, whereas women leaders tend to have a more transformational style, based on personal respect, mutual trust, regard for the contribution that each team member can bring, and the development of individual and often diverse talent (Ogbeide 2010). Women tend to prefer to lead from within their group, sharing success and developing the next generation of managers. However, successful women in male dominated organisations, who have few female role models ahead of them, tend to emulate more masculine styles. Women without same gender role models often see their corporate leaders as very masculine in style and hence do not see themselves as fitting the model for leadership. This can lead to women feeling frustrated, scaling down their ambitions, or leaving if they see a blocked career path ahead.

• Female Leadership Benefits

There are arguments that female representation in leadership brings informational and social diversity benefits to the top management team, enriches the behaviours exhibited by managers throughout the firm, and motivates women in middle management (Twenge & Campbell 2008). When a woman joins a firm’s top management team, the team becomes more diverse, both in terms of social categorization and information (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan, 2004) as women may thus have additional insight into important strategic questions, especially those that relate to female employees, and trading partners. In 2010, research by McKinsey found that gender diversity was supported best where a company had management commitment, women’s development programs, and a set of enablers that tracked diversity progress, examined human resource processes, and provided support such as child care. Overt discrimination has been driven out of organizations (Fronc 2003); subtle gender discrimination still exists and accounts for the lack of movement in shattering the glass ceiling. Such discrimination, exemplified in various work practices and cultural norms, is so entrenched in organizations that it is difficult to detect, and only incremental steps
aimed at changing bias can chip away at the barriers that keep women from moving into senior levels (Branson 2012). Companies, can practice assimilation (i.e., having women adopt more masculine attitudes), accommodation (i.e., offering programs such as mentoring, flexible work arrangements, and alternative career tracks), and leveraging gender differences (i.e., sensitivity training). Academic education must also play a role in promoting leadership gender diversity in creating tomorrow’s leaders. Educational leadership programs frequently embrace predominant leadership theories that fail to help students step beyond a narrow structural model and equip them to address issues of social justice, diversity, and gender. If we are to see significant changes within the next generation of leadership, educational institutions must create and implement leadership development programs that include issues concerning gender diversity and transformational leadership in order to change preconceived ideas, bias, and assumptions about women’s leadership abilities (Derks et al 2011). This perspective does provide a deeper understanding of why the situation is so slow to change. It is not enough for the women to change. They are players, intruders in an unequal social system. With our understanding of the individual and the organisational perspective, it is clear that they do not operate in isolation from the wider society in which they exist. We need the systemic view too. As the business world globalises, and more women take up leadership roles in other domains such as government, the image of the leader is slowly changing (Cutler & Jackson 2002). We are starting to see women at the top who not only have succeeded in business, but also have families. Some have husbands in the new role of stay-at-home father, whilst others have nannies and domestic help. It is now becoming common for organisational concierge services to provide help with dry-cleaning, travel and deliveries, whilst some large firms provide crèches and emergency care support, freeing the female senior executive from some of the daily and the unexpected tasks.

3. Discussion

- **What can Employers do about the Glass Ceiling?**
  
a) **Ask the Women:** Focus groups with women can help identify whether the culture is supportive or gender-biased. Perceptions can be as damaging as reality, and hence communication is really important. Regular surveys of how women are feeling about their careers and their views of the culture are very useful in identifying trends and areas that need attention.

  b) **Support a Women’s Network:** Women’s networks are springing up around the world, providing a female friendly place for women to meet, to share experiences and to undertake career development together. Women’s networks are starting to be proactive in building networks with female clients, and developing female-targeted products and services. This is great for business, as well as making the culture more friendly and supportive for women.

  c) **Reverse Mentoring of Board:** Often the interactions of board members with female executives are very limited, and so they may be unaware of how gendered the organisation feels to women (Gberevie et al 2014), and how that leads to negative career consequences that impact the female talent pool. But this can be addressed by reverse mentoring, where directors are mentored by some of the talented women at the threshold to senior positions, so that the leadership team understand better the culture of the organisation. This is working very successfully in some major corporations.

  d) **Monitor not Just Proportions but Flows:** As organisations start to deal with the lack of women at senior levels, they start to measure the proportions across divisions and levels. That is fine as a first step, but it should be followed by monitoring of the flow of promotees, the flow of those getting opportunities, to make sure that women are included, and if not, to examine why not, and to hold managers accountable for developing women as well as men in their teams.

  e) **Leaders to set an Example:** Role modelling by leaders, walking the talk, is so powerful, it needs no further comment.

  f) **Succession Planning:** Developing talented people takes a long time, and it needs to be systematically undertaken, and reviewed to ensure that those with the required talents and capabilities can develop to their
full potential, regardless of their gender. This can be cascaded down the organisation, but in the end, it is the leader’s responsibility.

g) Promote best Practice for Women and Men: There is sometimes a backlash by men when special interest is shown to women – forgetting that women are very much in the minority at leadership levels, and that women want to be integrated, to make a contribution through the development of their talents too. That will provide a wider talent pool for the future of the business. Best practice for women will also mean a better environment for men too, as initiatives such as flexible working and parental support policies are established. Women want to play a fuller role in a fair and equal workplace. This should be a win/win outcome for women, employers and men too.

• What can HR Personnel do About it?

a) Examine the Organizational Culture: Review HR policies and practices to determine if they are fair and inclusive (e.g., pay differences, history of promotions to senior positions, affirmative action plans). Examine the organization’s informal culture: look at subtle behaviours, traditions and norms that may work against women (Cheung & Halpern 2010).

Through surveys and focus groups, discover men’s and women’s perceptions about the organization’s culture, their career expectations and what drives their intentions to stay or leave. Identify the organization’s best practices that support women’s advancement. Map the strengths and weaknesses of policies and programs.

b) Drive Change with Management Commitment: Support top-management commitment to talent management, including women in senior positions. Require line management accountability for advancement of women by incorporating it in performance goals (Hobbler et al 2009). Train line managers to raise awareness and understand barriers to women’s advancement.

c) Educate and Support Women in Career Development: Emphasize the importance of women acquiring line management experience. Encourage mentoring via informal and formal programs. Acknowledge successful senior-level women as role models. Support the development and utilization of women’s networks inside and outside the organization (Roth 2007).

Create and implement leadership development programs for women, including international assignments, if applicable.

• What can Women do about it?

It is a list of recommendations to help them navigate the glass ceiling, rather than wait for the organisation and society to change. These efforts should make a considerable difference.

Motivation, Career Success: First, women need to understand themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and their motivations. In particular, they need to consider what career success means to them, as individuals as well as in their organizations. Do they seek high rewards and status, or recognition as an expert, as someone with influence, security, autonomy, mastery of their job, personal growth and development, work life balance or change and challenge? These motivations may change, and women need to be aware of them. Women need to have confidence in their undoubted talent, celebrate their successes and have more of a “can do” attitude (Omotayo, Iyiola and Adeniji 2013). If they ignore the glass ceiling, manage their career themselves as far as they can, and see themselves as legitimate potential leaders, regardless of gender, then they are probably more likely to get through it.

Context, Constraints and Work Life Balance: Understanding of one’s situation is essential, as that provides the framework within which the career is developed. If women have responsibility for others, especially children, then that will give them advantages but also constraints in what they can do and give to the organisation. Reviewing the situation is important, as things change, and if something isn’t working well, then women need to find a better solution (Williams 2005). An acceptable or desirable level of work/life
balance is important, but priorities are constantly changing on a day-to-day basis as well as the longer term. It isn’t easy – but life is a challenge.

**Role Models, Language, Behaviour and Mentors:** When women don’t have any female role models, it can be difficult to know how to behave in new situations, such as joining an important committee (Williams 2005). But they shouldn’t wait till they find the perfect match. Women can benefit from informal mentors; they can watch men and women role models as to what is 10 effective and what is not. Women’s language is different too, women say please (and that important thank you too!) more often, they apologise too quickly. They are often reluctant to put their well-thought out point forward assertively, then regret not doing so when someone else says it and gets the credit. We encourage women to dress for the level above their present position, and to act with confidence and appropriate language.

**Profile, Reputation and Impression Management:** Our research shows that women need to manage their profile, their reputation rather more actively than many do at present. They should see impression management as a tool, not exaggerating but branding their leadership qualities.

**Understanding Organisational Politics:** Women often take such a negative view of organisational politics, but they need to see this as the way things get done at senior levels, the way that information is shared, the way that different power bases resolve their conflicts and come to mutually agreed outcomes (Heilman & Okomoto 2007). It’s all about relationships, and women should be better at this.

**Personal Development and Leadership:** Taking risks is an essential part of leadership, and women often prefer security. But to succeed, experience of risk is essential, and with that come dealing with failure, learning from it and moving forward (Mavin 2001). Women shouldn’t downscale their levels of ambition if they have a period of maternity leave or part time work, but rather prepare to re-launch themselves when they do have time and space in their lives to renew their ambition and go for promotion. They can learn from good role models, practice small acts of leadership and extend their competences and identity as a leader.

**Networking:** This is a great opportunity for women, but usually they network with other women, or with those who are less powerful in the organisation. Building links into the higher levels can be daunting (Mavin 2001), especially if the people up there are mostly male. But it gets easier with practice. One piece of advice is to read the financial press, and the annual report, so that one has a view on the state of the business, its market and its sector. That way, the informed woman will be seen as someone who knows the business, someone with an interesting point of view.

**Adding Value:** The final piece of advice for women is to know what value they add, and where they add it to the business. They should know what is valued by those above them, which may be different. Remember that the value has to be relevant and visible to the gatekeepers of opportunities if recognition is to be given.

### 4. Conclusion

- Firstly, there is the need to dispel the many myths which surround the working woman, inspite of the progress she has made so far. It is a fact – a very regrettable fact—that many men and some women, do not believe that a women can progress at work by hardwork alone. This attitude places a lot of constraint on the few who are fortunate to possess the necessary educational qualifications and training.

- Secondly, the formal education of women as well as their training for professional jobs, must be intensified if women are to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. Without the necessary education and training, no amount of labour legislation can change the status quo.

- Thirdly, women’s organizations must act as more than focal meeting points for women. They must be seen as pressure groups working actively for the betterment of the conditions of women including their working conditions. Women workers must take active part in trade union affairs at all levels. When that happens, the present situation where women are never taken into active participation in the planning and design of programmes designed for them would change.
• The forth suggestion is that both Federal and state governments should set up day care centres and family planning clinics. The day care centres would enable nursing mothers to go out to work with the knowledge and confidence that their babies are in competent and safe hands. Family planning clinics would help families to plan when to have children and how many they should have.

Employers must be proactive in their commitment to gender diversity and equity before the glass ceiling can be broken. Comprehensive, organization-specific programs that address breaking down structural, organizational, and cultural barriers are essential. This includes setting voluntary targets for female representation on boards, executive committees, and senior management and engaging in active outreach and recruitment of women. Leadership development approaches need to be designed that not only help women develop critical leadership skills but also help them identify and leverage their strengths, become comfortable in taking risks, increase their confidence, and provide tools and techniques for circumventing existing barriers. Women themselves need to create their own social capital by developing networks of support, seeking sponsors within their workplace organizations, securing mentors, promoting themselves, and communicating the value that they bring to the workplace.

5. Recommendations

The improvement of the status of women in managerial positions requires action at the national, local and family levels. There must be a change of men’s and women’s ideologies towards their roles and responsibilities in society, and an understanding of the joint responsibility of men and women in developmental participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life.

Employers Role

Employers may assist in the establishment of day care centres for babies of female employees to compensate for the lack of help and still maximise the potentials of the women employees. This will consequently, enable them to actively perform in management positions and do very well. There should be the introduction of flexible working hours so that workers especially women, can organize their working hours in the best way to suit their home conditions especially child-care arrangements. There should be a stop to all the bias towards promoting women, retrenchment and lay-off of labour as women as a result of their marital responsibilities. Economic planners can also identify growth sectors and analyze the job descriptions to pinpoint those areas which require appropriate female skills. Then they should develop appropriate women’s training and placement programmes.

Society’s Role

Discrimination based on religion, tradition or custom such as the pudah system which prevents healthy and even educated women from contributing their quota to national development should be eliminated. The elimination of the various forms of discrimination against women will improve their career progression status, give them equal opportunities for advancement, and enhance their job satisfaction and productivity. In the general social setting in the country, there is need for a change of attitude of parents towards their children by avoiding preferential treatment to boys. Proper education should be given to all children. Tolerance, understanding and encouragement to attain great heights in an honest manner must be the tenets of everyday life by parents in teaching their children. Men and women should be viewed as equal partners in national development. Hence, equal opportunity must be given to both sexes.

Couples must realize that there is a need for adequate spacing between births through effective practice of family planning. In this respect, husbands should be urged to place the welfare of their wives and offsprings in mind rather than the traditional belief of prestige and value attached to the procurement of a large number of children. It is when the family is well planned and the allocation of duties in the household are synchronized among the family members that women can perform most efficiently at their jobs. Moreover, the increasing separation of home from work for women in modern sector labour force demands that arrangements should be made so that other duties conflict less with her occupational career (Ibarra et al 2010)
Women’s Role

Women on their part can do a number of things to improve their participation in the labour force, among these are the following:-

- Identify, their abilities and those in others, and gainfully utilize these to the benefit of all other women in the workplace and their immediate environment.
- Make concerted efforts to create time and opportunity to get involved in collective women activities in the workplace and the neighbourhood. This calls for adequate planning and time management so that such activities do not impair the work situation and the home.
- Allow for progressive education and self-development
- Encourage others in order to remove undue fears and suspicion.
- Be involved in all such activities that seek to promote constructive and positive interest of women in general.
- Educate their daughters to appreciate their role in life and encourage them to face challenges of life on equal footings with their brothers.
- Women grouping in work situations and other spheres should be encouraged in order to create forum for discussions and exchange of ideas and experiences in the hope of promoting a common front.

A better way of viewing leadership style is to move from the bi-polar male-female divide to consider masculinity and femininity as separate dimensions of the leadership construct. This allows an individual’s style to be reviewed on both dimensions, so that leadership style could be high on the more expressive, feminine (transformational) as well as on the traditional instrumental masculine (transactional) characteristics. In this way, women are likely to see that they fit more of the profile of leadership, and extend their ambitions, rather than withdrawing from the competition. Those responsible for setting the values of the organisation, and designing training programmes for managers can integrate this more facilitative model of leadership, so that more women see that they might fit the leadership mould in the future. Women should be encouraged to move out of jobs characterized by low productivity and low wages and show efficiency as well as career aspirations so that they can penetrate the higher earning and higher skilled jobs. But education is the main catalyst which can propel the desired greater female labour force participation, especially in the skilled and highly productive jobs. It is necessary, therefore, to eliminate all forms of barrier to female education, such as custom, religion, illiteracy of parents, poverty etc. The greater drop-out rates from school among girls than boys, due to factors such as the need to help at home, especially so in the rural areas, pregnancy and early marriage need to be curtailed. Women themselves must also change their laissez-faire attitude to work. They must look upon efficiency and effectiveness as a means of advancement so as to challenge those members of the public who do not believe that women can win promotion mainly on the basis of hard work. Women have a lot to do in eradicating factors which hinder their progress at work and in proving to the men folks and society at large that they hold a very important position in society and their opinions must be sought in matters affecting them. The West African working woman must have specific career goals for which she is well qualified. In addition, she must discover and use effective and acceptable channels for dealing with resentment that she may have over discrimination and at the same time create workable means of resolving role conflicts.

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