



## The “Glass Ceiling” and Empowerment of Qatari Women for Employment in Qatar

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### ABSTRACT

The Qatar Leadership Center that works with the mandate of creating future leaders for the country has also followed the path of giving equal opportunity for developing male as well as female leaders in the country. The researcher having gone through the leadership training at the Qatar Leadership Center and having interacted with fellow Qatari women, feels that even through this program the dominance of men in workplaces has not been addressed and creating women leaders and women role models remains to be fulfilled.

This research has helped in consolidating and highlighting from the study of the literature the effects of the Glass Ceiling and women employment in higher levels of organizations and its impact in the middle-east region in general and Qatar in particular.

Besides, the research has analyzed various methods of detecting the Glass Ceiling and has adopted the survey based purposive sampling method to seek evidence of the Glass Ceiling by studying Employee Engagement and Satisfaction in Qatari organizations.

Finally, the research has also highlighted that Gender Equality needs to be addressed at all levels of the organization in Qatar.

The research has recommended the introduction and change in certain processes and policies that will lead to higher effectiveness rates of employment and improve engagement and satisfaction of employees with the organization.

**Keywords:** Glass Ceiling, Empowerment of Qatari Women, Employment in Qatar.



## 1. Introduction

Qatar is rapidly transforming from a traditional conservative and modest society to a more open, modern and technologically advanced society. Qatar has made significant strides over the recent years in increasing the participation of women in higher education and in the Qatari workforce (*Scott-Jackson, 2015*). Women comprise 24% of the Qatari population and 18% of the workforce (*MDPS, 2015*), and they remain concentrated in entry-level administrative jobs (*Al Ansari, 2012*) and mostly in the public sector.

The research (*Documents 2, 3 and 4*) conducted as part of this DBA program has seen evidence of the fact that in spite of their higher graduation rates than men, women tend to remain in middle-management jobs or entry-level jobs and do not move up to higher levels of management.

Qualitative and quantitative tests as witnessed in other western countries (*Simbula et.al, 2011*) were discussed in length in Documents 3 and 4 and in relation to the Qatar job market to compare this phenomenon to known causes such as the Glass Ceiling Effect (*Cotter et.al, 2001; Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986*). A five-level gender equality maturity framework (*Evanthia and Marina, 2018*) was also used to test the maturity level of organizations in Qatar to establish gender equality across all levels of the organization. The results thus far indicate that strong reasons exist for the Glass Ceiling effects in the Qatari job market due to men dominating the workplace in higher rungs of the organization especially senior roles in leadership and management and such roles are stereotyped to suit men only. It is also to be noted that women voluntarily and in a self-inflicted manner stop progressing in their careers in order to strike a good work-life balance and focus more on family needs. The dominating factor amongst these two reasons has come out to be the male stereotype which has been the finding in this research.

Unfortunately lack of national policies and lack of government incentives (*Metcalf, 2008*) has led organizations to ignore this social problem and women are witnessing limited career progression while men enjoy the benefits of both leading organizations and the government bodies that create policies and decisions in relation to women.

In spite of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (*QSDP, 2008*) and its mandates to establish gender equality at work, limited progress has been noticed (*Wirth, 2001*) except in the recent past where women have taken up leadership roles (*Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, 2004*) and moved into higher positions within the companies owned by the Government and other Government organizations.

The main issue surrounding the lack of a comprehensive solution is that extensive research in the area has not yet been established through either academic engagements or societal forums like witnessed in other countries (*Powell and Graves, 2003*) and



hence the problem is getting ignored in most organizations. Findings of such researchers in other countries with similar socio-economic structures has also taken into consideration to bring reforms both in the society and in government and commercial organizations to address the problem of Glass Ceiling.

The questions thus being pursued in this research are:

1. What are the reasons for the gender inequality in higher levels of Qatari Organizations – is it “*the Glass Ceiling*” or “*Sticky Floors*” or other reasons such as lack of qualifications and motivations amongst Qatari women that prevent them from moving up the ladder?
2. What are the incremental changes that can be taken by Qatari government agencies to influence existing policies within Qatari organizations to bring about gender equality in all levels of Qatari organizations?

Following on from previously conducted work the focus of the research in Document 5 of the DBA program is to make a clear distinction between the two likely reasons i.e. whether the lack of progression of women in their careers in Qatar is due to the Glass Ceiling Effect as seen in other developing countries or it is due to the voluntary and self-inflicted lack of enthusiasm to progress into senior roles by women themselves due to the Islamic and patriarchal society and the influence that this has had on women in Qatar and the entire middle east region in general (*Ermis-Mert, 2018*).

Having a clear distinction of the reason for the Glass Ceiling, the solution for how to approach the problem in order to solve it will become explicit from the recommendations of this research. The researcher believes this work will benefit decision makers in Qatar to take societal beliefs, reforms and organizational policies to the next level in supporting the progress of women in their careers.

As for the literature review, it will be focused on appending to the literature review that has already been conducted in documents 3 and 4. In these previous documents, the literature survey covered the topic of Glass Ceiling in detail taking into consideration its definition, misunderstandings of the concepts and the similarities and differences it has between its features in other countries and Qatar.

In document 5, the literature survey will focus more on Qatar’s career scenario for women i.e. how progression of women depends not only in them finding a job and working but also moving up their career path and working in higher levels of the organization. The usefulness of this phenomenon to achieve the country’s vision will also be investigated in depth comparing the Qatar scenario to that of other countries. Women in Qatar being already educated and holding good skill sets to work in higher roles in Qatari organizations, will have a natural progression to lead Qatari companies and hence help the society as a whole to establish gender equality across all levels in the organization and not just in total numbers. The literature survey will also help



build the questions for the online survey that is the instrument for primary research in this document and focus the reasons for the choice of the Employment Effectiveness probe questions used in the survey.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Glass Ceiling phenomenon and its cause

Despite their increased rate of participation (*Powell and Graves, 2003*) in work, women face significant challenges at work (*Bano and Fatima, 2016*). Their career advancement especially into the higher levels of the organization and management is limited (*Eagly and Carli, 2007*) and academicians and industry experts refer to this phenomenon as the Glass Ceiling (*Enid and Singh, 2013*). There are different theories such as interaction centered theory (*Enid and Singh, 2013*), social role theory (*Terjesen and Singh, 2008*) and the human capital theory (*Hede and Ralston, 1993*) that place the causes of the Glass Ceiling effect on a self-inflicted manner on women themselves.

The interaction centered theory (*Enid and Singh, 2013*) claims that women have a less propensity to interact and make clear their career ambitions within their work organization. As per this theory, they don't make a definitive self-desired move but rather wait for opportunities to come their way before attempting to move up in their career path. As for the social role theory (*Terjesen and Singh, 2008*), women have been recognized as persons who have more interest than men in maintaining a social life that is more important to them than a professional life i.e. closeness to the family, maintaining family relationships and spending time with friends and maintaining social networks rather than pursuing a career ambition. This phenomenon, as per the research, makes women less capable candidates for a career move above a certain level.

The human capital theory (*Hede and Ralston, 1993*) believes that women place more emphasis on domestic responsibilities and therefore voluntary choices related to work differs from their male counterparts. Hence, there is a distinct reason why women tend to keep to a certain grade level in the workplace that is just to maintain a secondary family income and not aim for anything that would disengage them from their social commitments.

With these theories existing in academic literature, human resource practitioners in industry will tend naturally to believe that women are not capable to move up their career path and it is but natural to see promotion of men higher than women as a phenomenon in most business organizations. This perception of women self-inflicting the Glass Ceiling upon themselves looks to be the easy comfort zone of thinking for



human resource practitioners however, if this belief is challenged and women are themselves probed with the thought, there might be other views that may emerge which is what is the aim of this research.

To support this claim, where there is a different view regarding women's self-propensity to move up the organizational ladder, a research conducted amongst working women in India (*Lathabhavan, 2018*), in active employment, were investigated to probe the relationship between working women's Glass Ceiling beliefs and their Job Satisfaction. It was concluded through this research that there is a correlation between the two and that if women have been satisfied with their nature of job and the work environment it is more likely that they would consider moving higher up in their career path.

This research (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) also leads to the belief that women in all levels of the organization are the most important source of information to draw conclusions of any form of research on the features of the Glass Ceiling. To corroborate this research in the context of Qatar and to also use both men and women in analyzing the phenomenon of the Glass Ceiling this research will focus the effort towards developing a relationship between the Glass Ceiling and Employee Engagement with the organization.

To further prove the point about that the effect of the Glass Ceiling is not only true for women but also men, it was found that male nurses may see limited career progression compared to female nurses in a hospital or old-age care home (*Mullan and Harrison, 2008*). Hence the same effect of the Glass Ceiling can be applied to any minority population that works as a subset of a larger population in any organization.

Hence, even though it is mostly applicable to women working in male dominant organizations, it is clear from the literature that the usual causes are a combination of social structures, personal beliefs and organizational policies that lead to the existence of the Glass Ceiling in organizations.

It has been seen during the course of this research in document 3 and document 4 that the situation in Qatar is not an exception with regard to the Glass Ceiling and women's career progression in higher levels of the organization and it remains an issue that has not been boldly addressed either by the Qatari organizations where they work or the senior leadership of the country that drive the policies surrounding the same.

In the context of the GCC (*Gulf Cooperation Council*) countries, which is one of the most challenging regions in the world for women seeking to move up their career ladders or break the "Glass Ceiling effect" to move into senior roles in management (*Keddie, 2008*), most challenges arise out of factors such as the traditionally (or rather historically) patriarchal society, lack of government policies regarding women's promotion to higher grades and the lack of balance between office and home routines between men and women.



Qatar has been a typical patriarchal society like any other GCC country (Syed, 2010) which has led women to be passive in demanding their rights or to go against the male dominance in decision making whether it is at home or at work (Syed, 2010). The absence of policies and incentives for government organizations and public sector companies to establish equality of genders in workplaces (Scott-Jackson, 2012) especially in senior roles continues to dominate the situation at the workplace. The societal norms whereby men and women share the burden of bringing external wealth to the family (by doing a job or conducting a business) but don't do the same when it comes to working at home, the burden of work is entirely on the women (Spar, 2013). This leads to a less work-life balance for females and hence leads to their early voluntary retirement from work and hence the Glass Ceiling.

Such reasons have led fewer women to enter the workforce in the GCC countries, and even fewer to make it to senior positions than in almost any developed region. Too many women also opt out of their career before they get to senior levels.

In this context, a research by the Pearl Initiative on Women's careers in the GCC countries (Imelda et.al, 2015) analyzed data from 600 senior women across the GCC region including Qatar. This research puts the problem in perspective. The report states that only 45% women find it feasible to achieve a positive work/life balance and combine a high-power career with a family. Even though three quarters of respondents in this research feel that their families are supportive of their education and career, they are still hampered by traditional family structures and role models and little evidence to suggest that social attitudes are changing. 76% of respondents believe that within the workplace the most important direct influence on women's careers are their male colleagues mostly who are their line managers. The management practices that promote behaviors that lead to negative consequences for the promotion of women in their careers are not monitored or tracked as much as it is done in the western world. Hence, men tend to ignore the problem and if not solved now will be a bigger problem to solve as women have a higher graduation rate than men in the country and hence will form the major workforce of the future. The Qatar National vision 2030 (QSDP, 2030) that supports the participative nature of both men and women in the Human Capital Development of the country will not be achieved if the situation is not solved now. The lesser graduation rate of men will also mean that those who lead organizations currently and, in the future, will perhaps lack the educational qualifications to run such organizations.

Nearly 80% of the respondents feel that simply being a woman puts them at a disadvantage at work, and this was even more profound in countries such as Bahrain and the UAE (Imelda et.al, 2015). As a result of this situation, many women opt out by taking career breaks, while others opt out by starting their own businesses or becoming self-employed, where they can have more control about how and when they work. But too many opt out by leaving the workforce entirely (Imelda et.al, 2015). This is also proven through another research conducted not only in the GCC but also in the near region such as Iran (Javadian and Singh, 2012).



It is envisaged in this research that Qatar's leadership vision of a transformed society by the year 2030, (*QSDP, 2008*) has been the first step and has had a positive impact in favour of the women workforce in that it has made the men and women to mutually realize that achieving equality at work and abolishing negative influences such as the glass ceiling (*Scott-Jackson, 2015*) are good for the society. However, the Qatar National vision does not emphasize on the fact that the representation of women in the human capital of the country should be at all levels of the organization and especially in the leadership roles where currently they are a minority. Here there is a gap that this research will highlight and perhaps help the senior leadership in the country to look at the problem more holistically.

## 2.2. Engagement and Satisfaction as indicators of the Glass Ceiling

Work engagement and work satisfaction (*Bakker and Leiter, 2010*) is one area of popular thought in the investigation of the Glass Ceiling and its effects. This has been made possible through the field of positive psychology (*Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014*) and in many cases has led to better understanding of work-related well-being (*Albrecht, 2010; Bakker and Leiter, 2010*) among practitioners and researchers.

The existence of the Glass Ceiling leads to less engagement with the work and hence can cause negative impacts to the performance of the organization (*Akkermans et al., 2015*) as a whole. Global competition, high paced innovation, new communication technologies (*Derks et al., 2015*), new career aspects and unpredictable changes in the labour market reaffirm the importance of employees being completely engaged in work (*Shimazu et al., 2015; Timms et al., 2015*). Although there are vast amounts of research work reporting on work engagement, very little deals with its implications on a women's career especially the relationship between Glass Ceiling and Engagement. Some of the methods that have been successful elsewhere to break the glass ceiling is to treat phenomenon such as the glass ceiling as a social problem. However, such tactics can only see the problem turn around gradually. For faster and more effective results, a change in mind-set combined with processes and policies and organizational incentives could motivate organizations to address the problem in its entirety.

In order to achieve this mighty task, the problem at hand should be understood in its entirety and not just presumed to be the generic problem usually found in other developing countries i.e. to brand every women's career progression issue as the Glass Ceiling Effect. Experiences from other countries as they moved from being patriarchal societies to gender-neutral societies do help in understanding the problem at hand however we need to ensure that we are tackling the problem in its right form.

Job satisfaction, a well-researched construct of numerous studies, has the glory of being part of many classic theories in management such as two-factor theory



(Herzberg, 1966), equity theory (Adams, 1963), and social influence theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Being a well-researched area, studies in job satisfaction have also dealt with women's viewpoint on job satisfaction as compared to men's (Furnham, 2012; Bender et al., 2005). Despite the fact that women's expectations from their jobs, socialization behavior and value perception about the job have been found to be different from that of men (Furnham, 2012; Bender et al, 2005), there have been few studies that connect glass ceiling beliefs to job satisfaction.

Although there is now increased participation of women in the workforce, their underrepresentation in higher posts is an unresolved problem for social sciences and women's studies (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Powell and Graves, 2003) to resolve. Given that abrupt changes in business environment – both internal and external – determine the importance of work engagement for an employee (Akkermans et al., 2015; Derks et al., 2015; Shimazu et al., 2015; Timms et al., 2015) and job satisfaction has become an essential consideration for organizations (Pacheco and Webber, 2016), a study of women's views on such aspects would provide more insights into the areas that need to be reformed for their empowerment and to shatter the glass ceiling.

Hence, in addition to the already carried out research this research looks at the glass ceiling from a psychological viewpoint, i.e., glass ceiling beliefs and important career aspects – work engagement and job satisfaction.

This study can be compared to a similar recent study (Lathabhavan, 2018) done in India wherein cross-sectional data have been collected from women employees in the banking sector in India. India is passing through a demographic transition, with a bulge in the working age group, which may encourage more women to enter the work force because of the decline in family size (Kumar, 2014). Moreover, India is a rapidly developing country and different institutions are working for the greater empowerment of women (Mishra et al., 2015). The service sector contributes almost half of female employment participation all over the world, of which banking provides more opportunities for women, since it values more feminine attributes such as teamwork, caring, serving and communication. Data were collected from different public, private and foreign banks across the country and these statistics apply to India as well. (Bezbaruah, 2015).

In this work, the authors show the direct and indirect relationships between glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction through work engagement. Towards this goal, their study investigated the role of glass ceiling beliefs on work engagement; the direct role of glass ceiling beliefs on job satisfaction; the role of work engagement on job satisfaction and the mediating role of work engagement on job satisfaction.

The research helped to prove the hypotheses that optimistic beliefs, denial and resilience show a significant positive relationship with work engagement. Denial of the existence of a glass ceiling reduces tension in women and, indirectly or unknowingly, makes them optimistic. With respect to resilience, the day to day level





of resilience can be positively related to the work engagement through greater vigour. These beliefs allow women to be optimistic, expect good things to happen to them, and experience high levels of work engagement. Optimism is known to be associated with physical and psychological states of wellbeing whereas pessimism provides negative outcomes.

The research also investigated the phenomenon on men and found that men find it easier to rise in their career than women, despite equal education, qualifications and skills. Such career barriers not only affect career development but also negatively affect career decision and self-efficacy. The glass ceiling belief resignation prevents women from breaking the glass ceiling because of the perception of insurmountable career barriers along their journey to higher posts. This in turn shows a negative side of self-efficacy in their career. Since self-efficacy acts as a self-motivating mechanism and causes employees to set goals and expend greater effort, it is positively related to work engagement.

Researchers have (*Smith et.al, 2012*) found that acceptance shows a negative relationship with work engagement. Bakker et al. (*Bakker et.al, 2007*) found that job resources were positively related to work engagement. Most of the determinants of job satisfaction, such as autonomy, and feedback, come under the category of job resources. Additionally, various studies in different areas of research have found work engagement to be positively related to job satisfaction. A study among teachers (*Hoigaard et al. 2012*) and a different study among nurses (*Giallonardo et al., 2010*) showed a positive relationship among work engagement and job satisfaction, and both included women as the majority of respondents.

Despite women's acknowledged disadvantages with regard to autonomy, pay, and promotion opportunities, their job satisfaction is not lower than that of men (*Furnham, 2012*). The reasons for this have been explored. First, the expectations of women are lower than those of men (*Bender et al., 2005*), because they compare themselves with specific cohort career groups, such as other women, not men. Secondly, women are not as inclined as men to express discontent or rage in an open society. Third, men and women value different aspects of the job; women value intrinsic aspects such as relationships in the organization, and work conditions, whereas men value extrinsic aspects such salary prospects, career growth, and company prestige.

In order to improve organizational performance, management attention has started to focus on positive organizational concepts (*Cameron and Dutton, 2003*). Denial and resilience are considered optimistic constructs in glass ceiling beliefs (*Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014*). Optimism and resilience, which are parts of the psychological capital, show strong positive relationships with job satisfaction (*Bakker and Leiter, 2010*). In yet another study (*Smith et al., 2012*) showed that denial of the Glass Ceiling is positively related to job satisfaction.



Women face more family-work conflicts than men, which in turn act as barrier for career development (*Enid Kiaye and Maniraj Singh, 2013, Hakim, 2006*). Researchers have shown that family-work conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction (*Buonocore and Russo, 2013; Masuda et al., 2012*).

Researchers (*Smith et al., 2012*) have showed the negative impact of resignation on job satisfaction. However, little is known about the relationship between acceptance and job satisfaction, although there is evidence that optimism has strong positive effects on job satisfaction.

Work engagement mediates among job aspects and behavioural outcomes and provides significant outcomes (*Sulea et al., 2012; Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008*). Researchers (*Yalabik et al., 2013*) have also found out that work engagement mediates the relationship between employee attitudes and outcomes, including job satisfaction.

Hence this research aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction, with work engagement as a mediator. While the study by Lathabhavan (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) has provided empirical support for many specific links none of the previous studies has attempted to integrate these variables into a comprehensive model, which is what is being pursued in this research.

The above findings of this research were one main reason to choose the probes of Job Satisfaction and Job Engagement as appropriate to measure the extent and existence of the Glass Ceiling in Qatari organizations in this research.

In middle eastern societies such as Qatar, one of the major hindrances of a woman's career progress is family responsibility including child-care and family-work conflict (*Syed, 2010*). Despite improved economic freedom, women are still highlighted as homemakers who are supposed to nurture their family members' health. It is also opined that, among working women, work-family conflict is negatively related to work engagement.

The model pursued in this research has similar characteristics to what was measured by Lathabhavan (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) which used a system called CPS (*Smith et al., 2012*). The CPS used in their model assessed levels of denial (10 items), resilience (11 items), resignation (10 items) and acceptance (7 items) in glass ceiling beliefs. A seven-point Likert scale was used by the researchers with anchors 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Sample items were "Women and men have to overcome the same problems at the workplace" (*denial*), "Women have strength to overcome discrimination" (*resilience*), "Women believe they have to make too many compromises to gain highly paid positions" (*resignation*), "Motherhood is more important to most women than career development" (*acceptance*).



The purpose of the reported research was to examine glass ceiling beliefs, work engagement and job satisfaction. The Lathabhavan (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) model has thus captured the perception of the importance of women employees as the source of information. Their study used the CPS model to examine how women's glass ceiling beliefs are related to their job satisfaction through work engagement. More specifically, that women's glass ceiling beliefs (denial, resilience, resignation, and acceptance) could predict job satisfaction through work engagement. In addition, they hypothesized that denial and resilience would be positively related to work engagement, and resignation and acceptance would be inversely related to work engagement. In line with the positive psychology approach (*Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Bakker and Leiter, 2010*), they extended the focus on work engagement to include glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction. They also claim that this was the first study to test the mediating role of work engagement in glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction. Their main hypotheses were largely supported by the data and this showed how work engagement (fully) mediates the relationship between glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction.

They extended previous research in this field into predictors and consequences of work engagement. Their study also reaffirmed glass ceiling beliefs as a potential predictor of work engagement.

Smith et al. (*2012*) on the other hand found little support for the relationships among denial, resilience, acceptance and work engagement whereas the Lathabhavan study (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) showed strong support among these. Secondly, the study contributed to glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction in a direct model. As expected, work engagement positively relates to job satisfaction, reaffirming previous studies in this area (*Hoigaard et al., 2012; Giallonardo et al., 2010*). Finally, the study contributed to knowledge of the mediating role of glass ceiling beliefs and job satisfaction.

Although the perception of glass ceiling beliefs as a predictor of job satisfaction (*Smith et al, 2012*) was already analyzed, in the Lathabhavan model (*Lathabhavan, 2018*), the researchers have included work engagement as a mediator linking them. Their findings show that women's optimistic glass ceiling beliefs – denial and resilience – removes barriers, the women feel more engaged in work, which is, in turn, helps towards increased job satisfaction. They have also found in this study that the pessimistic glass ceiling beliefs – resignation and acceptance – related negatively to work engagement and resulted in the women being less engaged in their work, thereby providing lower levels of job satisfaction.

The study confirms that work engagement has a strong impact on job satisfaction (*Hoigaard et al., 2012; Giallonardo et al., 2010*). Changes in gender or attitude impact the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction. This can be taken as an observation tool or primary test in order to find out the attitudes of employees. The relationship between glass ceiling beliefs and work engagement is



new in the literature of both the glass ceiling and work engagement. With this, women's views and their engagement with their work can be recognized. Since glass ceiling beliefs predict job satisfaction through work engagement, it adds an entirely new dimension for women's empowerment, work engagement, and job satisfaction research.

This study helps individuals understand their own attitude towards job satisfaction and glass ceiling beliefs, which might be hidden or unknown to them as in the Johari window (*Luft and Ingham, 1961*). This study may help individuals decide which beliefs they must hold on to, and which must be changed or eliminated in order to enhance engagement in work and job satisfaction. This study will be helpful to women job aspirants, so that they can choose an appropriate job according to their beliefs; for example, those who score high on acceptance beliefs could to choose work from home, or have flexi-time jobs and part time jobs and hence enhance work engagement and job satisfaction levels.

For an organization, this study can be considered as a tool to check the glass ceiling beliefs of women that would help human resource management functions such as hiring, promotion, succession planning, training and counseling. This study can be used to understand the problems women face in their work which, in turn, can help in understanding their engagement with work, job satisfaction and attitude towards the glass ceiling.

The social implications of this work have also been used to work on public policy issues. Results from this study have been used to empower women, since it shows their attitudes towards job satisfaction and the glass ceiling. If women's attitudes towards the glass ceiling can be generalized to geographic, ethnic, and professional domains, social reformers and policy makers can work in these areas to promote progress. Hence positive results can be studied and encouraged further and negative results can be suppressed through proper remedial measures and policies.

In their recommendations for further work, the authors (*Lathabhavan, 2018*) recommend that since the potential relationship among the constructs over a period of time is unpredictable, and that because beliefs and views may change with time, longitudinal studies can be considered for better understanding. Longitudinal studies mean that before reaching any conclusion on one particular situation multiple surveys at multiple times of the year and perhaps conducted over multiple years should be used to corroborate the results.

Secondly, self-reporting styles may be associated with problems of social desirability. However, the data were collected anonymously, and study participants were assured of confidentiality. Future work may make use of a 360-degree approach to surveying – including supervisors, colleagues, subordinates and other stake holders, or any of these stakeholders. Multiple views can be compared to avoid error.



Thirdly, being a new area of research, there were a lot of limitations with respect to respondent groups, the work area, industry, and different career aspects considered in the study. Hence, future researchers have been advised the larger scope of studying different target groups, such as entrepreneurs, social workers, and employees of different organizations. Future work may also consider different industries that treat women differently, such as nursing, and underrepresented areas, such as defense.

The study considered only two important career aspects – work engagement and job satisfaction. Future work may take more career aspects into consideration in order to provide more insights in this area.

Using this study, this research has selected the eleven probes for job satisfaction and job engagement as given in the methodology section namely: energy level to work; career development plan; commitment to overall wellbeing; fulfilment of Career Objectives; challenges to move up in the organizational ladder; employee endorsement for others to join the same organization; employer image building – employer of choice; reasons if any for career being held back; opportunities for progress in career; initiatives currently under way to correct career path for employees; channels for feedback.

### **2.3. Why should we solve the problem of women's lack of career progression?**

As per the study conducted on women in the academic profession in Europe (*Doherty and Manfredi, 2010*), it was found that the movement from gender inequality to equality has several issues that are not all related to how men should accommodate women at work but rather what happens in terms of culture and society that helps build a smooth transition of the society to create gender neutrality in work places and most importantly at all levels in the workplaces. A framework to assess the maturity level of such gender neutrality (*Doherty and Manfredi, 2010*) as the society achieves step by step progression formed a useful guidance tool to move from inequality to equality in a smooth manner. Hence any society like that of Qatar has to adopt either a policy based scientific approach to force organizations to move into gender neutral work environments or there has to be the effect of creating societal changes by training the mindset gradually of both genders to accept each other as equal at work. At the end of the process we transform into what adds value to the way we work and perform.

Needless to say, that establishing gender neutrality at work places can be advantageous for organizations and nations as a whole especially in Qatar, characteristics of the problems women face in their careers that are unique to Qatar by comparing issues within Qatar to those in the near and far regions. This will then help



establish the baseline of where Qatar stands in respect to the Glass Ceiling and whether it is external factors that cause women's lack of career progression or is it their own self-inflicted causes that are more dominant in causing the lack of progress.

The nature of the gap between where Qatar is and where it would like to be in the future as per the national vision 2030 can thus be established if the results of this research are used as a steppingstone in the right direction.

While it is complex to define a direct relationship between the lack of career progression in women and the organizations' performance, it is still crucial to achieve greater gender equality in the workplace and in the society as a whole for two important reasons (*Northouse, 2013*). Firstly, the equal opportunities for everyone to be in leadership roles will provide a diverse pool of talents and hence greater organizational success will be gained. Different people have different types of knowledge and other intellectual capital, which are referred to as knowledge stocks (*Morris et.al, 2005*). If these knowledge stocks can be effectively managed, combined and renewed, they will generate the sustainable competitive advantage for the organizations (*Morris et al., 2005*). Secondly, findings from a great amount of research (*Bosco et.al, 2009; Catalyst, 2004; Forsyth, 2010; Nielsen & Huse, 2010; Woolley et.al, 2010*) reveal that women participating in the leadership roles will help make organizations more representative, ethical, productive, innovative and financially successful. Researchers (*Cooper et.al, 2001*) stress that the involvement of women from the grass roots to the senior management level should be both the short term and long-term objectives of organizations. The recognition of the differences (if any) in the leadership styles among male and female leaders and its impact on the organizations' performance is the premises on which the perception of current Qatari corporate leaders should change.

While the above review focuses more on differences in leadership style and its subsequent impact, studies have also found differences attributed to diversity depending on the nature of the task or job profile. For example, a study of gender-diverse and same-gender groups performing a radio assembly task revealed no performance differences between the two groups (*Myaskovsky et.al, 2005*). In this case, the nature of the task (i.e. simple and mostly physical) may be a relevant factor in the research of the latter whereas a more cognitive task might yield different results.

In one of the more revealing studies that analyzed this idea, (*Bowers et.al, 2006*) reviewed data from 13 studies involving a total of 2,258 people. The types of diversity included gender, personality and ability. Measures of performance included some combination of the quality, quantity and accuracy of teamwork. He concluded that although none of these types of diversity appeared to have significant direct effects on team performance, when the task to be performed was rated as highly difficult (complex), significant performance advantages occurred for the diverse groups compared to the homogeneous groups.



The work reveals insight into yet another aspect worth consideration. They examined the relationship between employee perceptions of diversity among managers and non-managers and perceptions of firm performance. Based on their analysis they report strong support for a positive relationship between perceptions of diversity and perceived performance. A practical implication that they draw from the study is that: “Organizations need to be sure they focus on initiatives that have a positive influence on employee perceptions of diversity within the ranks of senior managers and among non-managers” (Allen et al., 2008, p. 32).

This study suggests that organizational interventions that affect employee attitudes toward diversity may also affect – or at least be related to – attitudes towards firm performance. Although the value of this work is limited by a reliance on perceptual measures, what employees believe about their employers is certainly a determinant of employee behavior. Consequently, the management of perceptions is worthy of constant attention by organizational leaders.

Having said that there are also studies that divide the impact of gender neutrality into three outcomes: one favours men, one favours women, and the last considers two genders the same. There has been a long-held belief that leadership effectiveness equates with masculinity and being male (*Eagly and Karau, 2002*). The research (*Javadian and Singh, 2012*) focuses on leadership effectiveness as perceived by their male and female followers provides the evidence that both male and female followers prefer a male leader.

Researchers (*Heilman et.al, 1995 as cited in Quader, 2011*) argue that “women were found to be lesser desirable candidates for management positions” because their competencies were believed to be lower than those of men. In order to become an effective manager or leader, one should have competence, independence, and rationality. Those traits are often believed to be possessed by men. Nevertheless, researchers (*Bass & Avolio, 1994*) carried out a survey of followers that rated women and men leaders on leaders’ characteristics that produced a contradictory result. Female leaders were rated higher than males on the characteristics that are vital for an organization’s growth and flexibility. Women leaders tend to have more idealized, inspirational influence, and intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration than their male counterparts. Subordinates also felt more satisfied with female leaders and viewed them as more effective. There might be three explanations for the results including male chauvinism, lower expectations by followers on female than male leaders and “tendencies of women to be more nurturing, interested in others and more socially sensitive” (*Bass & Avolio, 1994*). A report (*Taylor et.al, 2008 as cited in Carnes and Radojevich-Kelley, 2011*) shows that women outrank men in seven out of eight leadership traits. Both (*Kristof, 2009 as cited in Adams & Funk, 2012*) point out that financial firms are dominated by men, which might be the reason for the poor performance of banks in the light of the most recent financial crisis. UK Labour Party’s deputy leader – Harman even accused male domination as being the cause of the financial crisis (*Morris, 2009 as cited in Adams & Funk, 2012*). The last school of



thought referred to in this research supports that men and women are equally effective leaders. (*Eagly et.al, 1995*) conclude that gender does not have an influence on an organization's success. Male and female leaders are effective in different settings. For example, women's leadership styles might be more suitable in educational, government or social service settings while men's styles might be more appropriate in military settings (*Eagly et al., 1995*).

McKinsey and company have been investigating the relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance for several years. McKinsey's 2015 report *Diversity Matters*, (*McKinsey, 2015*) examined proprietary data sets for 366 public companies across a range of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The research looked at metrics such as financial results and the composition of top management and boards. The findings were that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Companies in the bottom quartile both for gender and for ethnicity and race are statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns than the average companies in the data set (that is, bottom-quartile companies are lagging rather than merely not leading).

This McKinsey study also shows that in the United States, there is a linear relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and better financial performance: for every 10 percent increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (*EBIT*) rise 0.8 percent. Racial and ethnic diversity has a stronger impact on financial performance in the United States than gender diversity, perhaps because earlier efforts to increase women's representation in the top levels of business have already yielded positive results. In the United Kingdom, greater gender diversity on the senior-executive team corresponded to the highest performance uplift in the data set: for every 10 percent increase in gender diversity, *EBIT* rose by 3.5 percent. While certain industries perform better on gender diversity and other industries on ethnic and racial diversity, no industry or company is in the top quartile on both dimensions.

The unequal performance of companies in the same industry and the same country implies that diversity is a competitive differentiator shifting market share toward more diverse companies.

As the focus of this research is on studying whether the "Glass Ceiling" effect or the self-inflicted lack of enthusiasm amongst women to move up in their careers is causing the lack of gender diversity in higher levels of Qatari organizations, findings from an earlier McKinsey study on effects of gender diversity in top leadership is also relevant. The study conducted between 2008 and 2010, concluded that companies with more diverse top teams were also top financial performers. The study looked at the executive board composition, returns on equity (*ROE*), and margins on earnings





before interest and taxes (*EBIT*) of 180 publicly traded companies in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It focused on two groups that could be measured objectively from company data: women and foreign nationals on senior teams (the latter being a proxy for cultural diversity).

The findings were consistent: for companies ranking in the top quartile of executive-board diversity, ROEs were 53 percent higher, on average, than it was for those in the bottom quartile. At the same time, EBIT margins at the most diverse companies were 14 percent higher, on average, than those of the least diverse companies. The results were similar across all but one of the countries studied; an exception was ROE performance in France; but even there, EBIT was 50 percent higher for diverse companies.

This overall review of the above discussed literature points to several considerations: It is important to examine different dimensions of diversity not only gender but also ethnicity, age e.tc which seem to have a different degree of impact on performance, depending on the specific situational conditions (e.g. nature of the task at hand); diversity's positive effects can be tapped by providing supportive processes, i.e. measures of diversity management; both the factual degree of diversity and the subjectively perceived diversity seem to influence performance, so both deserve attention. It is also clear that diversity including gender diversity does give a competitive edge and is a differentiator in terms of performance especially in today's knowledge-based economies that depend more on cognitive tasks.

Hence from the above literature we can conclude that breaking the social evils and bringing in gender diversity in the workplace not only increases the satisfaction of the male and female employees but also benefits organizations by increasing productivity and the return on investment.

However, in order to achieve this task in Qatar we must define and understand the nature of the problem whether it is the glass ceiling or the self-inflicted lack of enthusiasm amongst women in Qatar which is the next part of the literature review.

#### **2.4. Nature of the problem of women's careers in Qatar:**

Having understood the necessity to solve the problem and bring in gender equality through all the rungs of an organizational ladder, let us now examine the nature of the problem in Qatar. The problem can be of two types that is caused by external influences of the majority on a minority i.e. males on females and those that are caused by self-infliction by the minority i.e. females themselves.

For example, in case of Qatar it could be argued that influences by male employees such as stereotyping, male friendly policies and less exposure of females to leadership roles is a general phenomenon that can be blamed towards lack of career progression amongst women.



These statements are proved from the study conducted on women in senior roles by the Pearl Initiative in the GCC countries including Qatar. The study gives insights into the gender bias women face in the corporate environment and how they react to it sometimes accepting the bias and self-inflicting the Glass Ceiling on themselves.

Only 27% of the study respondents agreed that the leadership in their own organization is committed to having women in senior roles, and 48% believed to have suffered from conscious and 62% from unconscious gender bias at work. The more years a woman has been working, the more strongly she is likely to feel this, which may reflect either in a greater awareness borne of experience or increasing levels of bias as women move into senior roles. Around 40% believed there is conscious bias in most organizations in their market, but as many as 71% believe there is unconscious prejudice. Businesses from the GCC are more likely to exhibit conscious bias than multinationals, which is a measure of how much progress needs to be made in changing attitudes. It is not surprising, likewise, that non-GCC nationals report more examples of unconscious bias than GCC national women (75% against 62%).

The above discussion interestingly points out to a phenomenon called “unconscious bias” wherein gender stereotyping becomes so engrained in organizational culture that unconsciously it is perpetuated in varied forms.

Literature on these subject asserts that people’s perceptions and behavior are filtered through gender stereotypes, despite personal beliefs and commitment to egalitarianism. This includes reliance on gender schemas that designate women as oriented towards family and men towards their careers. They attribute women’s success to external factors such as luck, help from others or special circumstances, whereas men’s success is attributed to internal factors such as skills and ability. Gender stereotypes and biases are particularly pertinent in traditionally male-dominated environments such as managerial and professional ranks of large corporations or hierarchical organizations. Research supports the idea that stereotypes and biases are more likely to be activated when decision-making is informal, non-transparent and subjective; then, evaluators’ internal schemas about women generally influence their decisions, as opposed to specific knowledge about particular women surveyed (Bielby *et.al*, 2003).

Cultural stereotyping and inadequate self-perception also hamper women’s career advancement. Gender biased legislation, as well as limited access to finance and networking can act as disincentives for women to enter or exit the labour market and to pursue careers.

The above discussion has put forth the barriers for women who aspire to senior leadership roles in the Middle Eastern context. The challenges faced by Arab women are similar in many respects to other women in many parts of the world. However, while this discussion emphasizes on “sameness” of the challenges faced it simultaneously investigates the “differences”. As in a globalized world it is



imperative to acknowledge local customs and practice within the Middle East and specifically within Qatar maintain strong commitment to Islamic cultural values. Women's groups, governments and organizations advocate the interface between the Islamic and universal construction of human rights and stress the family as a foundation of an Islamic state (*UNIFEM, 2004; Badran, 2005*) and argued by the author (*Torraco, 2004*) different cultural and political contexts requires us to rethink the challenges and choices for how we frame and research women and human resource development in the global economy. The implication is that Western or global experiences and knowledge of leadership may not provide the most appropriate model with which to improve women's economic role in the Arab region (*Metcalf and Rees, 2006*) as also stated in previous documents of this research. Ethical and critical organization scholars have noted that leadership development is inextricably linked with notions of rights, status and broader community development (*Al Dabbagh, 2009; Al Faisal, 2006*). In this respect it should be highlighted, that Arabic heritage and political constitutional frameworks provide a moral environment that values the contribution of men and women and serves as an alternative model to that one advocated by western political systems and values. In valuing local knowledge, and responding to the global, regions can devise leadership systems for themselves.

The research on Globalization and the effect on women's Glass Ceiling beliefs (*Marinakou, 2012*) also reviews the position of women in the GCC by situating their experience within the framework and rhetoric of globalization in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the diverse institutional and cultural mechanisms that influence gender dynamics in the region. The overarching questions - How do the ways the GCC responds to the demands of globalization impact the position of women in its workplaces? And, more generally, what are the dynamics of the interaction between women, globalization, states and societies in the Gulf region and what are the outcomes of these diverse forms of interaction?

Globalization can be defined as "a complex economic, political, cultural, and geographic process in which the mobility of capital, organizations, ideas, discourses, and peoples has taken a global or transnational form (*Moghadam 1999*).

Globalization consists of social, economic and political adjustments that people may embrace to epitomize their culture and incorporate it with the world. It is a concept that has its economic, social and political roots and consequences.

The Arab world is diverse economically, socially, historically and politically. Yet Arab people are linked in a variety of ways. The great majority are linked by common language (*Arabic*), religion (*Islam*) and cultural identity and heritage (*Ahmed, 1998; Ali, 1995, 1999; UNIFEM, 2004*). Globalization processes and economic opportunities remain uneven, between countries, within countries and between individuals (*Acker, 2005; UNIFEM, 2004; World Bank, 2003a, b, c*) The region continues to face social transformations, demographic shifts, economic waves of affluence as well as civil strife (*Ali, 1999; Noland and Pack, 2004; Norris and*



*Ingleheart, 2002*). Consistent with the contradictory nature of globalization the impact on women has been mixed (*Walby, 2005; Pfeifer and Posusney, 2003*). One feature of economic globalization has been the generation of jobs in export processing, free trade zones and world market factories as well as ecommerce and finance, especially in oil/gas-rich economies such as Bahrain, UAE and Saudi Arabia. Labour market policies such as Qatarization, Emiratarization, Omanization, Bahrainization and Saudiazation have also created job opportunities in public administration for women (*Adler, 2004; Moghadam, 2003, 2005*). Important factors limiting women's progression are the recruitment and HR practices of private sector organizations in the Arab region. There is reluctance by private sector institutions to employ women partly due to social norms and partly due to additional costs that may be incurred for maternity provisions (*Al-Lamki, 2000; Kingdom of Bahrain and ILO, 2002; Wirth, 2001*). It should be noted, however, that women themselves prefer to work for public agencies since the working conditions and benefits are often more favourable (*Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2003; Wirth, 2001*).

Qatar should also take impetus from many Middle Eastern states that have made significant efforts in improving institutional frameworks that can tackle inequalities (*Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 2004; UNIFEM, 2004; World Bank, 2005*). Following the Beijing conference which called for countries to develop National Action Plans (NAP) for women, the majority of ME states have established independent women's ministries or sections to ensure that women's issues are included in public policy planning and development. These bodies advocate the empowerment of women in a range of areas including economic empowerment, social empowerment, legal rights awareness, capacity building for women as well as working to incorporate gender mainstreaming principles in all aspects of public administration and policy planning. An objective of these units is also to start the process of data collection on women's work and status in their regions in order that they benchmark progress and can prepare gender-sensitive development plans (*UNIFEM, 2004*).

Further, the importance of the Arab region to the world economy and the requirement of Arab societies to expand into new markets have made women's empowerment important development policy agendas (*Hearn et al, 2006*).

State's policies to enhance female educational opportunities can partly be attributed to pressures of globalization and creating an educated workforce.

The positive relationship between women's education and nonagricultural employment is marked throughout the Middle East. Census data reveal that each increase in the level of education is reflected in a corresponding increase in the level of women's nonagricultural employment and a decrease in fertility. Education seems to increase the aspirations of women in certain sectors of society for higher income and better standards of living. Moreover, it has weakened the restrictive barriers of traditions and increased the propensity of women to join the labor force and public



life. These social changes have had a positive effect in reducing traditional sex segregation and female seclusion and in producing a generation of middle-class women who have achieved economic independence and no longer depend on family or marriage for survival and status (*Moghadam V. 2003*)

On the other side, according to authors (*Bahry and Marr, 2005*), Qataris today expect unmarried women who have finished high school or university to work. Some women work to help their families cope with the rising cost of living and some prefer working to the boredom of staying at home. Some also “want to make use of the knowledge they have gained to ‘prove themselves’ and to be useful members of society” (*Bahry and Marr, 2005*). It is believed from this study that local attitudes are changing not because of a self-motivated cultural shift or government led efforts or public policies but the presence of large numbers of female foreign workers from different cultures and from the influence of the internet, television and other international communications media. These experiences expose Qataris especially Qatari women to cultures where it is commonplace for women to work side-by-side with men and to compete equally for career advancement (*Bahry and Marr, 2005*).

Is this situation unique to Qatar only? Women in the MENA region face similar barriers as other women in the world to reach top positions in business and management. One of the key challenges, is that women face the double burden of work and family care responsibilities. Research in the GCC countries indicated that women considered balancing work and family/life as the single most important obstacle to their career aspirations.

Hence inferring from the above studies and statements by experts in the region the situation in Qatar can be modelled to one of the Arab region where women have taken the brunt of the male dominance in work places and hence are experiencing problems in moving up the organizational ladder.

To prove this further, I can rely only on hindsight as a Qatari women working in a public shareholding Qatari company as the studies that have researched Qatari women in the workforce are extremely scarce. This points out the fact that increase in awareness required amongst Qatari females to actively participate, remain and progress to senior roles in the workforce is a must for the future of the nation. The closest to highlighting this problem is 1997, when the government adopted a Qatarization policy aimed at increasing the percentage of Qatari citizens in the workforce. The government’s goal was that at least 20 percent of employees in all sectors should be Qataris. To neutralize the loss of public-sector benefits to Qataris employed in the private sector, all Qataris were made eligible for social benefits regardless of where they are employed. The policy does not differentiate employees in terms of gender so both public and private employers have been motivated by the Qatarization policy to hire women as well as men in order to meet Qatarization goals. This has opened and expanded employment opportunities for Qatari women. The legislative framework for women’s participation and advancement in the workforce is



also much advanced in Qatar as compared to some other countries in the region (Felder *et.al*, 2008). However, the other barriers still remain like social expectations concerning appropriate work for Qatari women and the relatively high average Qatari wage demands to meet the Qatari lifestyle. This makes it unlikely that Qatari women will be attracted to low paying labor-intensive jobs. They will likely need a high level of skill to participate in the work force at higher levels (Bahry and Marr, 2005).

Hence based on the regional study and that of Qatar, the following can be said about women employment in Qatar and especially about their career advancement to higher levels in the organization:

- a. Qatari women are currently mostly employed to meet nationalization targets.
- b. Qatari male dominant patriarchal culture has crept into the workplace and is influencing the way Qatari women progress in their careers or the way Qatari women are able to think about their future.
- c. Qatari women cannot challenge the status quo if they continue to have a demand for high wages that then leads to limited job opportunities for women.

The leadership of the country is trying to rectify the situation but has not taken any practical steps to curb the effect especially in balancing the gender at all levels in Qatari organizations.

They have only been successful in forcing public sector organizations to maintain the ratio of nationals to expatriates at a fixed number. It is required that the government can control the problems facing Qatari women employees by educating and transforming the culture so that women can accept all types of roles and not only the ones that are high paying.

There is a certain amount of self-inflicted glass ceiling from the female employees as is seen in the case of other middle-eastern countries and that is mainly due to a combination of the fear of moving up and the adoption of the social norms that working in higher positions is not meant to be for women.

## 2.5. Can gender inequality be self-inflicted?

Gender equality does contribute to higher organizational performance as examined in the literature review above. However, if it is left to individuals to establish equality, it can be ignored and can lead to over a period of time a self-inflicted workplace practice like what is suspected in Qatar. Women are retiring early without any specific reason or leaving work to start their own business because they don't derive the financial benefits from work that support their lifestyle, or they are not getting the satisfaction of working and running a family at the same time.



This self-inflicted inequality by Qatari women can be related to similar situations in other parts of the world. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) conducted benchmark analyses of 44 multinational companies in different parts of the world to explore the gaps in gender diversity. It opines that cosmetic and temporary changes do not succeed in shattering effects of gender inequality such as the glass ceiling when women employees move up the organizational ladder. Their research shows a need for strategic, fact based and very systematic approach to diversity management. They have recommended that putting in place best practices in gender diversity must be a priority for those on the top, e.g the CEO and senior managers must have responsibility for delivering diversity results and they must act as role models. Another phenomenon will be that diversity is a means not an end, to shattering the Glass Ceiling, it is important to demonstrate concrete need for action by analyzing the gender issues that are specific to the region and that persist in any society such as the traditional patriarchal society issues in Qatar. It should also mean that diversity doesn't imply preferential treatment for women or minorities. Business leaders must make it clear that diversity is about hiring and promoting the best employees but having career paths that meet the gender needs in the organization. Diversity is not a Public Relations gimmick. Diversity management is not credible unless the progress is visible and measurable. Diversity is not just for women; men must be equally represented on any gender diversity project team. Diversity is cross divisional, it's important to involve representatives from units outside of Human Resources (HR) at an early stage to initiate change processes and guarantee a companywide shift in mindset.

Most researchers such as (*Bell et al., 2002; Insch et al., 2008*), recognize the smaller number of female executives in comparison with that of male executives in all the fields throughout the world despite the increasing number of females in the workforce and in managerial positions (*Powell and Grave, 2003, as cited in Mok Kim Man et.al. 2009*) and (*Bell et al, 2002, quoted Korabik, 1992*) that "the higher the post, the fewer the women". A lot of them recognize that the phenomenon is a combination of what is caused by external influences and self-infliction.

Hence what drives us to reflect on what is the common strand that runs throughout the world in keeping the negative growth of women through the career ladder intact regardless of the country we are in? We see that similarities exist consistently regardless of geographic location. Yet what might be more surprising (*and tends to come up less often in conversations with women leaders*) is that from our early years, we subconsciously learn the unchallenged gender norms and rules of the societies we grow up in. Leaders do not recognize how dramatically what we learn in our early years shapes our educational path and impacts our beliefs and behaviors as we enter adulthood and the workplace. We also find that many companies' beliefs and systems have not evolved much from legacy 19th and 20th century thinking. In the past, companies were fairly homogeneous and organizational values systems, working practices and decision-making processes have not necessarily kept pace with their



mixed gender, multi-cultural, and diverse workforces. This lack of evolution not only hinders company productivity and growth, but also impacts the attraction, recruitment, and retention of a talented and global workforce.

This phenomenon then creep into the workplace and how women are treated differently in the workplace in different geographic markets. It is to a large extent a reflection of how they are treated in the society. It is inescapable that there are specific legal and religious constraints that prevent women performing similar tasks to men in professional environments and indeed, many countries still have laws incompatible with the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (*CEDAW*).

The concept of “sticky floors” (*Morgan, 2015*) has thus arisen in studies of social problems in society. The authors say that sometimes women are to be blamed or the organizational policies are to be blamed towards women developing a laid back nature at work where they stay over satisfied and content by working in junior roles and don’t make the effort to develop themselves to progress through higher levels of the organizational ladder.

This phenomenon must be investigated in Qatar through this research as it is very likely that the existence of “sticky floors” goes un-noticed when it comes to complaining about the “glass ceilings” in organizations.

The literature above has indicated societal norms creeping into the workplace and this is one reason for sticky floors. However, there are other factors as well such as the work-life balance and the mobility of husband-wife partners to pursue their individual career paths. For example, if Fred is married to Judy and Fred is an Executive Chef in a 5 star hotel and Judy is a management consultant working in a consultancy, there might arise a situation that Fred has to move to a location to pursue his career ambitions and Judy has to give up her career ambitions in order to stay together with her husband. This happens very commonly and, in such situations, women or even for that matter some men would not opt for a career that makes them move places to progress through the organizational ladder. They would rather stay in a lower level job and pursue a stunted career ambition fulfilling their family commitments instead.

However, even in this case the burden of unpaid care work at homes primarily falls on women. If paid and unpaid work are combined, women work longer hours than men in nearly all countries, including all countries in the MENA region. On average, women do at least 2.4 times more unpaid care and domestic work in Qatar (*UN Women, 2015*). If this is the case, then there is a good reason to investigate glass ceilings and sticky floors together through this research.

Care services must be affordable, accessible, of appropriate quality and respectful of the rights and dignity of both caregivers and care receivers, but in most countries care





services are still scarce, and where they exist their coverage and quality are often uneven.

Policy responses to the care needs of dependent adults—including frail elderly people and people with disabilities—have been slow to develop, even in developed countries. Public expenditure on elderly care remains low. Families, friends, neighbors and community networks provide the bulk of long-term care, with women assuming most of the related unpaid work (*Progress of World's Women Report, 2015*)

The literature points out that unpaid care work coupled with lack of family friendly policies at the workplace play a critical role in women either choosing to remain out of the workforce or quitting midway. Unpaid care-work consisted of work neither paid for nor recognized in policy or formal sectors. Its burden on women had increased substantially following cuts in social protection and service programs caused by the global economic crisis.

In addition to the barriers mentioned above, a study (*Jouharah and Abalkhail, 2016*) a lot of insight into barriers women face when trying to progress within the workplace, in the middle eastern context. Access to *wasta* is an important factor that will likely influence a woman's career because it is prevalent in the Arab business world and also in Qatar. *Wasta* is a person and/or an act who intercedes that another may obtain something and is similar to the concept of *guanxi* in Chinese society.

*Wasta* affects both men and women in the Arab world. In the study, women in different levels of management supported that a lack of *wasta* was a hindrance to growth. Part of the specific frustration associated with this barrier is that if a woman is better qualified for a job than a man, the man may still receive the job if he has the necessary connections. This poses a problem for women seeking to advance in this region, as even if the woman receives more education, her lack of connections may keep her from moving forward within the company (*Tlairs & Kauser, 2010*).

Because *wasta* is associated with family status, it seems plausible that a woman coming from an influential family has more of an opportunity to advance in the workplace than one coming from a less well-known family. Women remain under-represented in management and leadership positions worldwide, and the situation varies from country to country. For example. in 2013, women held 24 percent of senior management positions globally, with only 1 percent in the UAE, 19 percent in the UK and 51 percent in mainland China (*Catalyst, 2014*). These differences are attributed to patriarchy which is embedded in the social, legal, political and economic systems of different cultures in different ways (*Malti-Douglas, 2007*).

Consequently, women's situation in both the workplace and home varies depending on their culture and society. This study focuses on women's careers in the Arab Gulf States, described by Metcalfe (2008) as a highly patriarchal socio-cultural context and one that affects women's career choices. patterns and conceptualizations of success (*Afiouni, 2014*).



The importance of professional networks within the workplace environment has been extensively explored from a Western perspective in the literature, and research findings indicate that these networks have a significant impact on both men's and women's career advancement to top leadership positions (*Davidson and Burke, 2011; Cross and Linehan, 2006; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011a; Singh et al., 2006*). However, in the context of Arab countries, few studies have considered networks and how they impact on the career development of employees with the workplace.

RQ1. What is the phenomenon *wasta* and how does it manifest itself within the Gulf countries in public sector organizations?

RQ2. How does *wasta* impact on women's career advancement to leading positions?

Exists on the issue of *wasta* or networking connections and its impact on

women's career success in the Arab region. The study provides fresh insights into the importance of social networks in the Arab Gulf region and the use of *wasta* within the workplace environment. This includes both the beneficial and also the potential blocking effects of *wasta* on individual careers resulting in limitations in career progression for individuals who do not have access to appropriate *wasta* and strong family connections. These insights may be used to inform human resource management practices to ensure that organizations make best use of all their talent. Furthermore, the study also attempts to "give voice" to women's experiences and to understand their work challenges.

Broadbridge (2010, p. 6) describes social capital as "the ability of people to acquire benefits through their membership in social networks or other social structures and the reputation they have because of their connections" and she identifies that it brings benefits to both the individual and also the organization. Social capital helps women to gain benefits such as increased visibility, support and upward mobility, increased career and job satisfaction and respect and recognition within the organization (*Adler and Izraeli, 1994; Apospori et al., 2006; Shen and Kram, 2011; Ragins, 1989; Singh et al., 2006; Broadbridge, 2010*). Other researchers report similar findings and contend that social capital plays a significant role in women's career advancement to the senior management level.

In the UK, Singh et al. (2006) investigated women's corporate networks, and their study revealed that women manage to work across boundaries by building strong networks which support their career development, as well as increasing their visibility within their organization. This study complemented the work of Tymon and Stumpf (2003) who identified that social capital can provide a competitive advantage to individuals and consequently access to networks is an important ingredient in enabling women to access senior positions. It is worth noting that it is not only access to the networks that is important but also taking action as a result of engagement with networks which leads to increasing one's social capital (*Tymon and Stumpf, 2003*).



This is confirmed by the research of Cross and Linehan (2006) who examined the experiences of female managers to understand the reasons behind the scarcity of senior female managers in the high-tech sector in Ireland. They concluded that organizational decisions were based on access to information which gained through formal and informal networks, and decisions were made, and promotion promised through informal networks. In the same vein, Adler and Izraeli (1994) confirmed that it is women's lack of social networks that holds them back from advancing to higher levels.

There are important distinctions between informal and formal networks as indicated in Durbin's (2011) discussion of networks, gender and knowledge creation. Formal networks are easily identified in an organizational context. Informal networks can exist alongside formal networks and tend to be broader, less hierarchical and are created or developed for social and/or business reasons. Dm-bin (2011, p. 93) suggests that "women-only networks tend to be formal while men-only networks tend to be informal".

The term "old boys" network is used to describe informal gendered networks, often based around common educational experiences, sports, private clubs or other connections, which enable men to gain influence and support from each other and so promote each other's careers or interests. As these informal networks are by their very nature closed to women, they present barriers to the advance of women into leadership positions and gaining influence (Rindfleish and Sheridan, 2003; Wirth, 2004; Forret).

Within the Arab context, access to professional and social networks is very different to that in Western societies, and the culture and customs of Arab society mean that they are strictly gendered (Barakat, 1993; Joseph, 1996). In addition, there is a marked absence of organizational programmed to facilitate the advancement of women's careers, and this results in women managers relying on their families for career support (Abalkhail and Allan, 2015). Abdalla (2015), researching Arab women senior executives, found that women were impeded in their careers as a result of exclusion from networks.

The role of family is important in Arab societies for women who wish to progress their careers, e.g. Tlaiss and Kauser (2011a) and Al-Lamki (1999) observe it is vital for women to gain support from their male family members (*husbands, fathers or brothers*) or other strong family connections. Their work supports earlier research by Singh (2008) who focused on female directors in top companies in Jordan and Tunisia, and found that family connections, i.e. *wasta*, helped women to gain non-executive positions in banking and development. Male family members and their connections play a major role in supporting women through the education system and then helping them to achieve success in their promotion within organizations. Thus, without the support of influential male family members, Arab women may find it challenging to access information and resources. This does not mean that Arab



women do not have their own informal networks, but it is important to acknowledge that women's networks are often tied to men's networks (Metcalfe, 2006). The importance of family connections or *wasta* in the Arab region is explored in more detail in the following paragraph.

Family connection in most Arabic region are built on the notion of tribal affiliation and solidarity (*alsabiyya alqabaliyya*) [Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), in the edition of 1967, Ibn Khaldun, 1967] which is one of the most cherished axes of social organization (Al-Rasheed, 2010; Barakat, 1993). The role of tribe (*qabali*) and kinship (*qarabah*) system ties is crucially important in understanding the system of values in the Arab countries (Barakat, 1993; Joseph, 2000). For example, the solidarity of the kinship system is based on the concept that kin relations are sources of security on various levels, including emotional, social, economic and political (Barakat, 1993; Joseph, 2000). Hofstede (2001) reported that the Arab culture is a collectivistic culture that emphasizes strong group commitment and loyalty to group members, and families are the key players that secure a strong *wasta* (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). *Wasta* is viewed as an informal system of connections or personal relations that provides social support to family members (Al-Tarrah, 2007; Joseph, 1996). It is worth noting that the phenomenon of *wasta* is found not only in the Arab countries but also in other cultures; for example, in Russia, it is called *Blat* and, in China, *Guanxi*. *Wasta* may be seen as equivalent to what is known in the West as "the old boy network" or having the right family background (e.g. *nobility*) to help a person get things done (Hutchings and Weir, 2006).

Hofstede (2001) went on to argue that the workplace environment within the Arab context is influenced by the structure and culture of the social environment, including values, norms, artefacts, regulations and rules. Consequently, it is important to understand *wasta*, as it provides insights into how decisions are made and people operate within organizations in the Arab states (Cunningham and Sarayah, 1993). The idea that men and women may have different access to *wasta* through their different solidarity (*alsabiyya alqabaliyya*) being one of the most cherished axes of social organization" (Al-Rasheed, 2010, p. 184). This remains the case, despite the fact that Islam brought with it the idea of *umma* (the Islamic community) loyalty to which, and collective identity with which, replaced that to and with the tribe (Al-Rasheed, 2010). The role of tribal (*qabali*), kinship (*qarabah*) and family (*ailah* or *usra*) system ties is basic to understanding the value system of these countries (Barakat, 1993). As such, the society is characterized by a patriarchy system, which is defined as "the prioritizing of the rights of males and the justification of those rights within kinship values which are usually supported by religion" (Joseph, 1996, p. 14). Moghadam (2004) reported that the "patriarchal contract" as a system is still strongly reinforced in the Arab states which reflect on the supply and demand for female labour (Moghadam, 2004).

Furthermore, although women in the Arab Gulf region are given opportunities to work in both the public and private sectors, they are found predominately in the



public sector and only in certain fields, i.e. education health and social work (*UNDP, 2006; World Bank, 2009*). It appears that the public sector has been the best available option for women in the Gulf States (*UN, 2011; World Bank, 2009*), and it provided a more supportive environment with regard to their employment and career development (*Metcalf, 2011*) as compared with the private sector. As a result of the importance of this sector as employers of women, this study focuses on women leaders in the public sector in the Arab Gulf States.

The above literature places emphasis and provides pointers on solutions for breaking the Glass Ceiling in the Middle Eastern context and hence can be applicable to Qatar as well.

The US Federal government research has coined the definition of the Glass Ceiling as follows (*Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995*): “Artificial Barriers to the advancement of women or minorities”.

This was further explained to be “an unseen yet non-breached barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder” (*Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995*). The inclusion of minorities in the definition is to be noted which proves that the victims don’t necessarily have to be women.

However, even if it is applied to women only, it is clear from the above characteristics of the Glass Ceiling that it should only be used to a job-related inequality that is unexplained considering a person’s experience and qualifications in a job. There is evidence in the literature to relate the Glass Ceiling to the levels of motivation of the different genders (men and women) to move into higher levels of the organizational ladder (*Rindfleish, 2000*). The author (*Rindfleish, 2000*) argues against women saying they have in general lesser motivation than men to progress above a certain level in their careers due to their commitments outside of work and especially in giving time to the family and hence inflict a self-made Glass Ceiling on themselves. This phenomenon is what I term above as “Sticky Floors” but I would not relate “Sticky Floors” to lack of motivation but rather to the excess of job satisfaction to stay down where they are.

In addition to the lack of motivation, psychologists have found another factor causing the Glass Ceiling which is that many high performing female employees undergo the impostor syndrome (*Langford and Clance, 1993*) which is underplaying their achievement as a matter of luck or an act of God rather than a product of their hard work, educational attainments and dedication to their career. The prevalence of this syndrome is higher in women than men. These are issues that cannot be solved at an organizational level, but awareness can be created to ensure that female employees don’t get into any of the circumstances that could cause this syndrome to occur. Imposter syndrome is a feeling of self-doubt. The feeling that one day we’re going to be caught out as a total fraud’. The fundamental fear is being unmasked and revealed



as a fake. It particularly afflicts successful individuals and is more common after a significant accomplishment or award, David Bowie was notorious for his battles with low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. Michelle Obama also admits being a sufferer. A recent study found that 25% of male medical students and 50% of females suffered from imposter syndrome and it is significantly associated with burnout [1]. It also has a significant effect on, doctors' self-assessment at all stages in their careers [2] and is thought to be one of the barriers to gender equality. Feeling like a fraud is entirely normal for successful people. High achievers are relatively successful in comparison to others. They have usually been compared to others since early childhood, so they value the process of comparison and more acutely aware that they are being compared. It's when awareness of being evaluated and caring passionately about the outcome conflict that imposter syndrome may result. My favourite anecdote about imposter syndrome comes from author Neil Gaiman: 'Some years ago, I was lucky enough to be invited to a gathering of great and good people: artists and scientists, writers and discoverers of things. And I felt that at any moment they would realize that I didn't qualify to be there, among these people who had really done things. On my second or third night there, I was standing at the back of the hall, while a musical entertainment happened, and I started talking to a very nice, polite, elderly gentleman about several things, including our shared first name. And then he pointed to the hall of people, and said words to the effect of, "I just look at all these people, and I think, what the heck am I doing here? They've made amazing things. I just went where I was sent." And I said, "Yes. but you. were the first man on the moon. I think that counts for something." And I felt a bit better. Because if Neil Armstrong felt like an imposter, maybe everyone did. Maybe there weren't any grown-up s, only people who had worked hard and also got lucky and were slightly out of their depth, all of us doing the best job we could, which is all we can really hope for.' [3]

The Glass Ceiling effect can only be negated if qualifications, experience and motivation are rightfully normalized between the affected parties i.e. men and women or majority and minority groups. It is an easy stop for researchers to blame the gender bias or male stereotyping that are of course the common cause of the Glass Ceiling.

However, it is evident both from personal experience and the existing literature that men can no more openly express their bias or stereotype. Even in patriarchal forms of society like that in Qatar, both men and women have started realizing the potential of running organizations jointly and hence the bias and stereotypes can only occur through legacy and flawed organizational policies. This is the area that organizations must focus using tools such as the Five Level framework to keep themselves steering clear of the gender equality issues and moving both the genders amongst the employees into higher rungs of the organization if they have rightly worked for the same.

From the above definitions and discussions we have established three distinct characteristics of the Glass Ceiling which is related to gender equality at work but not related to equality of pay and work attributes and which that the Glass Ceiling is



abstract and unseen hence needs handling using abstract tools and methods. It has also been established that the Glass Ceiling is mostly visible in higher rungs of the organizational ladder given that the men and women have equal opportunities and intent to move up the ladder.

Hence it is necessary to investigate whether the Glass Ceiling has the typical characteristics discussed above i.e. prevalent as a result of discrimination and domination of one gender over the other and prevalent in higher rungs of the organization more than the lower rungs. Is the Glass Ceiling amongst women caused by lack of self-motivation to move up due to reasons such as Sticky Floors, or the Impostor Syndrome or any other motivational factors is another factor that needs investigation.

## 2.6. Qatar's response to gender inequality:

Has the government in Qatar or any other lobby or agency made a positive effort in this direction to study the effect of gender inequality or to bring in gender equality or break the gender inequality in higher levels of Qatari organizations? The literature review shows that the Qatari government has made public commitments both locally and within Qatar and internationally within the UN to provide equal opportunity employment for both men and women. The force behind the transformation in Qatar can be said to a large extent, the Qatar National Vision, wherein it has been recognized that the importance of investing in human capital is to have a strong, developed economy and to facilitate the transfer of technologies. It has become essential that Qatari society acquires the capabilities, knowledge and skills to pave the way for the country's socio-economic development. Therefore, the key challenge for Qatar in the coming future relates to realizing its national vision as sustainable economic growth requires a skillful and diverse workforce. Male labour force participation is at 76% (The Gender Gap Report 2014, World Economic Forum & United Nations Statistics Division) and hence more has to be done to ensure that women gain more share of this number towards equal opportunity employment. Qatar is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (*SDG's*) and in this context Qatar's permanent mission to the UN has emphasized (*State of Qatar, 2014*) on improving family policies to help mainstream employment of women and place emphasis on the role that family plays in achieving universal primary education, the empowerment of women, and, among other things, promoting gender equality, which is fundamental to crafting a sound Post-2015 Development Agenda. Designing and implementing family policies, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, work-family balance, intra-generational mobility, social integration and intergenerational solidarity have immeasurable importance and impact on development. These are the words stated in the Statement of the State of Qatar before the *SDG's* OWG 10 (*State of Qatar, 2014*).

Although the country's commitment is still based on the traditional male headed model of a "family" unit, this commitment at a global platform is a crucial indicator



of increasing commitment to address gender inequalities in the labour market and promote equality in business and work life balance. Qatar's commitment to the SDG's which includes Goal 5 on gender equality and women empowerment reaffirms political will to work towards equal opportunities for women.

Central to this discussion is addressing the role and commitment of the state, included in preserving and adequately utilizing policy space through dynamic design of national economic, social, and environmental policy tools and mobilizing development-focused institutions. Examples from other countries (*Sandberg, 2013*) show that state policies play a crucial role in breaking the glass ceiling effect by promoting equal opportunity policies. It plays a crucial role in helping women enter work, remain in the workforce (*Ben-Galim and Silim, 2014*), and progress to decision-making roles within organizations. Important lessons can be learnt from Europe and other countries on women friendly policies like the importance of affordable childcare for women's employment and advancement opportunities. Countries with affordable and high-quality childcare systems tend to have higher maternal labor-force participation. Likewise, paid parental leave, with genuine choices for both parents, can be a retention tool that reduces the impact of the so-called motherhood pay penalty and also aids women's long-term prospects by offering mothers and fathers the flexibility to work and to care. Flexible work also can benefit both women and men, particularly those with caring responsibilities, if the culture of a workplace supports it.

Hence it is necessary through this research to investigate the actual nature of the problem and advise the government and senior leadership on the way towards establishing gender equality at work.

This is particularly required at this point of time because in Qatar statements that are supposed to move the society to establish equal opportunity and employment for men and women are not backed up by policies and processes that will ensure that the rhetoric will turn into reality.

To start with let us take the educational attainment of Qatari women. There are evidences to prove that the government provides generous scholarship support for academically qualified individuals to study abroad and attain knowledge and skills to work in key positions within Qatari companies. However, family responsibilities, cultural tradition, and social attitudes in Qatar continue to limit many women from taking advantage of this opportunity to be highly skilled. If they do get past the educational qualifications, there are further barriers in finding the right job to match the skill. The survey (*Stasz, et.al 2007*) on post-secondary education opportunities in Qatar, asked the 1998 and 2006 cohorts about the barriers they saw to getting a job. The question is highly relevant, because there is currently a mismatch between women's career choices and the demand for workforce in different fields. Those most prone to unemployment, in addition to the least educated men, are the most educated Qatari women. This is also corroborated by the Planning Council of Qatar (*Planning*





*Council, 2005*). Qatar aims to build a modern world-class educational system that provides students with a first-rate education, comparable to that offered anywhere in the world. The system will provide citizens with excellent training and opportunities to develop to their full potential, preparing them for success.

In a changing world with increasingly complex technical requirements. The system will also encourage analytical and critical thinking, as well as creativity and innovation. It will promote social cohesion and respect for Qatari society's values heritage and will advocate for constructive interaction with other nations with the targeted size and quality of expatriate labor that are determined by Qatar's leadership and people.

Qatar is currently experiencing high rates of population growth due mainly to massive urban development, large-scale investment projects and rising government expenditure. These factors have led to a large increase in the ratio of expatriates to locals in the labor force, and a particularly sharp and unanticipated rise in the immigration of unskilled workers. The composition of a nation's population will determine the nature of its society.

Qatar must determine a suitable size and quality of its expatriate labor force. It must weigh the consequences of recruiting expatriate workers in terms of their cultural rights, housing and public service needs, as well as the potential negative impact on national identity, against the anticipated economic benefits that accrue from an increase in the numbers of foreign workers in the total labor force world-class educational system that equips citizens to achieve their aspirations and to meet the needs of Qatar's society, including: Educational curricula and training programs responding to the current and future needs of the labor market High quality educational and training opportunities appropriate to everyone's aspirations and abilities. English language was the biggest barrier among Qatari Women in private sector to be promoted for a higher position or get the opportunity to be hired in Oil and Gas field and financial field due to their weakness in English Languge Accessible educational programs for life-long learning. A national network of formal and non-formal educational programs that equip Qatari children and youth with the skills and motivation to contribute to society, fostering: a solid grounding in Qatari moral and ethical values, traditions and cultural heritage and a strong sense of belonging and citizenship Innovation and creativity Participation in a wide variety of cultural and sports activities Well-developed, independent, self-managing and accountable educational institutions operating under centrally determined guidelines.

An effective system for funding scientific research shared by the public and private sectors and conducted in cooperation with specialized international organizations and leading international

research centers. And significant international role in cultural and intellectual activity and scientific research. Broad investments in certification and training programs by



public and private institutions incentives for Qataris to enter professional and management roles in business, health and educational sectors High quality training opportunities for all citizens, corresponding to their ambitions and abilities Increased opportunities and vocational support for Qatari women Targeted participation of expatriate labor. Recruitment of the right mix of expatriate labor, protecting their rights, securing their safety, and retaining those who are outstanding among them by public and private institutions Incentives for Qataris to enter professional and management roles in business, health and educational sectors High quality training opportunities for all citizens, corresponding to their ambitions and abilities Increased opportunities and vocational support for Qatari women targeted participation of expatriate labor: Recruitment of the right mix of expatriate labor, protecting their rights, securing their safety, and retaining those who are outstanding.

Some of the women of the 1998 cohort were not currently working or looking for work and reported family responsibilities as the main reason for their unemployment. Other women in this cohort reported that they considered the high level of competition and the lack of job openings to be their greatest barriers. Hence despite the intent to fund the education there is little effort made by government and public agencies to match the skills required to the skills attained.

Further, the educational attainment has also societal challenges. A majority of the female students in the 2006 cohort believed that their willingness to work hard will help them get a job or career of their choice. However, almost 40 percent of these female students expected the lack of adequate English language skills to prevent them from achieving the kind of job or career they want.

As part of this same study in Qatar, (*Stasz et.al, 2007*) information about women's attitudes toward work and factors affecting their career choices and the job characteristics they most value it was found that for the first-time young Qatari women were systematically asked these questions. They accepted that religious beliefs and parental advice were the top two factors that Qatari women in both cohorts of secondary school graduates said they took into consideration when making career choices. However, 88 percent of the females who graduated in 2006 also thought it was important that their future careers reflect their own personal interests. Hence government and public agency intervention to change the public mindset seems the biggest gap in the solution building towards gender equality in Qatar. The literature can further substantiate the evidence for the solutions for breaking the glass ceiling in Qatar from what has been achieved in the global context.

For example, In 1991, the U. S. Department of Labor set up the Glass Ceiling Commission (1991-1996) to study barriers that applied to progression of not only women, but also of minorities residing in the United States. It focused on barriers and opportunities in three areas i.e. the filling of management and decision-making positions; developmental and skill enhancing activities and compensation and reward systems. The study identified the differences and similarities in barriers confronting



men and women of historically under-represented groups -- African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Native Americans, and Individuals with disabilities, White women, and women in low-paying occupations. The economic consequences of glass ceiling and workforce diversity initiatives were explored, and the use of enforcement techniques in eliminating glass ceiling barriers were examined. The Commission acknowledged that "glass ceiling" is a concept that betrays America's most cherished principles. It is the unseen, yet unreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.

In UK, the government's third annual progress report in 2014 found women occupy a fifth, or 20.7 percent, of positions in FTSE 100 companies. Women only account for 6.9 percent of senior executive roles in the FTSE 100 where there are only four women chief executives. Germany, despite being led by a female chancellor, has few women in top management positions in its blue-chip companies. Management circles in German business are still a man's world. A meager 13 percent of German companies have a woman in management position, compared to an EU average of 14 percent.

The average share of senior management jobs held by women is just 21% globally, only 9% of CEO positions are held by women. It is a worldwide pattern, but with a noticeable tilt towards women executives in the BRIC states and in Southeast Asia's economies: 26 % and 32% of senior management roles in these two regions respectively are held by women.

A country's economic context also shapes the progression of women in leadership positions. Women are advancing into senior leadership positions at a much faster pace in developing countries, whereas in developed countries, rates are, at best, reaching a plateau and in some cases, even declining. Generational differences, educational background, industry, and level of leadership also intensely impact how women experience gender-based prejudices at work, and how they manage themselves and others.

While there may be different levels of participation of women in leadership roles in different countries including the GCC, it is evident that it is a global phenomenon that that creates a barrier for women, irrespective of geographical location.

As stated earlier both men and women underestimate how strongly our context i.e our early years, educational path, culture and upbringing play a critical role on shaping our beliefs and behaviors. Hence, any institution that aims to shatter the glass ceiling effect should be able to detect/ identify precisely where female leaders will benefit from support across common developmental themes.

Glass ceiling can thus be shattered when the gender diversity agenda is taken up as a long-term initiative that will happen over a period of time, across many time zones, in



many different operating units and often in surprisingly different cultural scenarios. E.g companies that may have a robust gender diversity strategy in North America may have to adapt it when they set up shop in China. Studies underscore the importance of managing gender diversity strategies according to different cultural context. In this backdrop this research will contribute valuable evidence on how companies in public and private sector in Qatar manage their gender diversity to shatter the glass ceiling. How multinationals operating in Qatar adapt their strategies to the cultural context and how far as it succeeded in shattering the glass ceiling.

While we consider the steps to change, we at the same time, should also recognize the limits to change including those imposed by a country's or a region's location within the economic zones of the capitalist world system. Development strategies and state economic policies are not formulated in a vacuum; they are greatly influenced, for better or for worse, by world-systemic imperatives. Although most of the large MENA countries are semi periphery countries, the function of the region within the world system thus far has been to guarantee a steady supply of oil for foreign, especially core-country, markets, and to import industrial goods mainly from core countries. One result has been limited industrialization and manufacturing for export. Another result has been limited employment opportunities for women in the formal industrial sector, as capital-intensive industries and technologies tend to favor male labor.

Several Middle Eastern countries have received loans of the IMF and World Bank, which in return demand structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Economic privatization and economic liberalization are part of these SAPs. Privatization: SAPs entail, amongst others, cuts in expenditures and shrinking down public sectors to reduce budget deficits and opening up the economy for private entrepreneurs to increase economic development. In most Middle Eastern countries, horizontal job segregation has led to a feminized public/governmental sector, because of better facilities for women and less gender discrimination in those sectors. Dismantling the public sector for economic liberalization disproportionately decreases women's opportunities (Amin & Al Bassusi, 2004).

One important dimension of social change following increasing integration with the world economy in the region has been the weakening of the patriarchal and traditional kinship systems. Demographic changes, including patterns of marriage and fertility behavior, have followed from state-sponsored economic development, state-directed legal reforms, and women's educational attainment. Industrialization and urbanization have disrupted kinship-based structures, with their gender and age hierarchies. In some cases, revolutionary states have undermined patriarchal structures, or attempted to do so, through legislation aimed at weakening traditional rural landlord structures or the power of tribes. Often this type of change comes about coercively. Whether changes to the patriarchal family structures come about gradually and nonviolently or rapidly and coercively, the implications for the status of women within the family and in the society are profound.



The objective of the literature review above was to explore the impact of emerging global trends on the situation of women and on gender relations in workplaces within the Middle Eastern context. It does not, therefore, claim to be a comprehensive discussion. The underpinnings of the above discussion emphasize the need for creating better employment opportunities for women in the formal and private sector and specific efforts to translate high educational attainment into employment.

In this document, i.e. Document 5, the research topic of Glass Ceiling will be investigated to establish the specific causes of whether the phenomenon exists in all or only certain organizations like Government entities where there is no commercial impact. It will also establish how employment effectiveness can be impacted if the problem of the Glass Ceiling is solved in all organizations.

In so doing, there are three actions that form part of the research methodology in Document 5 which are, to update the Literature Survey for any further research or items not addressed in the literature survey conducted in the previous documents. This has been done above.

The next action is to conduct a Qualitative online survey using the theme of Qatari Employment Effectiveness in order to extract an unbiased opinion from employees in Qatari organizations of their day to day circumstances at work and establish whether the Glass Ceiling is a matter of serious concern amongst employed men and women. The logic being absence of job satisfaction and engagement will indicate that Glass Ceiling does exist (*Salancik et.al, 1978*) in the Qatari job market as this was established in other regions also. It is also required to co-relate the updated literature survey to the findings through the survey and recommend policy corrections and societal changes that will help achieve true gender equality at work in Qatar.

Based on the research experience gained through documents 3 and 4 in the field of primary research on the subject of Glass Ceiling, the researcher will explore Glass Ceiling indicators again but using an online survey of working men and women in Qatar.

### 3. Methodology

The national vision aims to transform Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of sustaining its own development and providing in a highly standard of living for its population and future generation.

The state of Qatar aims to achieve this through the following four pillars.

Human development, social development, Economic development and Environmental development. Human development aims are to development of all Qatar's people to enable them to sustain a prosperous society. The Qatar leadership Center that works



with this mandate of creating future leaders for the country has follow the path of giving equal opportunity for developing male as well female leaders in the country. I was one of the selected females among 150 male and female age between 25-55 years for the Executive Program within the Qatar leadership center. I planned to approach them for the Qualitative survey for document 5. They were aware that I'm conducting DBA Program within Nottingham Trent University in UK. I approached them by sending them a letter through their emails and What's up messages that you are going to receive online questioner related to the DBA program. "The Qatari Employment Effectiveness". Approval from their employers were placed a total of 76 response were received and analyzed out of the total of 150 invited for the survey. The balance of the response was not received or incomplete.

Thank you for agreeing to consider participating in this research project. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand the reasons why we are carrying out the research and what your participation will involve. We would be grateful if you read the information in this document carefully and discuss it with colleagues or other people if you wish. Please feel welcome to get back to us if anything is unclear, and to take as much time as you need to decide whether or not to take part. The proposed research is independent of any other study being conducted in Qatar on the topic of employment of Qataris.

What is the purpose of the study?

The Qatari Employment Effectiveness study will help understand whether or not Qatari employees have a clear career progression as they move from junior to senior roles in an organization. Similar research in other countries have pointed to several important improvements in the way employees are treated and policies are built such that employees are promoted and move up the organizational ladder depending upon the value that they add rather than the relationships that they build at work. Such progression means employees can fulfil career objectives that they have planned to achieve as long as their objectives can align to the value addition that the organization delivers to society.

What we will be doing?

We will be conducting an online survey using the survey monkey online survey tool. The responses to the survey should be submitted online and these are open ended questions with no multiple-choice answers but rather free-text responses to the problem that you are facing at work.

Who is running this study?

The study is being conducted by me, Buthaina Hasan Al Ansari. I am supervised by Dr Valerie Caven and Dr Helen Shipton of Nottingham Business School.



Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, and you will also be asked to sign the consent form (part 2) attached. After submitting your responses, if you would like to withdraw your responses, you will be free to do so within four weeks after the closure date of the study that will be available in the survey link as well as communicated to you by email. If you decide not to take part, or to withdraw at any stage, you will not be asked to give us any reasons.

What do you want me to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be studying the online questionnaire thoroughly and providing me with answers for the questions in a clear and concise manner. The answer should be your best response to what you are facing as a Qatari employee of a Qatari organization. Please don't answer any question that may not be applicable to you. The answers must reflect your own experience of the issues that you face at work. The answers have no right or wrong answers neither do you have to select from a choice of answers. Please write in the free-text space given below each question what you think is the best response for the question. We have provided some thoughts for you to consider in order to understand the question better. These thoughts don't allude to any answer but rather point you in the right direction of understanding the question better.

What will happen to the information I give in the survey?

Upon receiving your survey response and other responses from other participants I will consolidate the results and draw patterns in the responses to benchmark and compare the effectiveness of career progression of Qatari employees. Problem areas if they were similar to those faced in other countries will be addressed in my findings. In case new problem areas that are unique to Qatar are discovered, then these will be analyzed further, and conclusions made appropriately.

How will you protect my confidentiality and anonymity?

The data collected from the survey responses will be handled only by myself in line with data protection principles and NTU's approved research protocol. Electronic files will be kept on password protected computers that are not accessible to any other person. All transcripts will be fully anonymized and any information that identifies you or your organization, or that gives any clues to your identity, will be removed. We are confident that these precautions will ensure that no-one will be able to trace



your survey responses back to you or your organization. Only I will have access to recordings. Following Graduation, the data from all surveys will be destroyed and the relevant files erased.

We would like to reassure survey respondents that such information will be treated confidentiality. Extracts from the survey responses will be used in the final report. To protect your anonymity all names, places and organizations will be changed or referred to as 'organization x', 'respondent 1'. You will not be named or otherwise identified in any publication arising from this project unless your role forms part of a narrative that is already in the public domain (for example, if you were the named author of a published document or gave evidence to a public inquiry relevant to the study). No unpublished opinions or information will be attributed to you, either by name or position.

What are the possible benefits?

We hope that you will find the survey questions interesting and will take satisfaction from helping me with my research project.

What are the disadvantages and risks in taking part?

The main cost to you will be the time needed to be complete the online survey. The main risk is that you might give us information that is detrimental to you or your organization, or that runs counter to data protection laws. We are confident that we have mitigated this risk and that the arrangements described above will prevent any of your information being shared with anyone outside the research team i.e. my supervisors and myself. For this reason, we believe that the risk of detriment is very low.

What will happen to the results?

The findings will be included in my final year project document and seen only by my supervisor, a second marker and possibly as part of a sample reviewed by an External Examiner to ensure NTU's quality procedures are followed.

Has anyone reviewed the study?





The proposal for this project has been vetted and approved by my supervisor on behalf of the College Research Ethics Committee. Through the research there are stringent reporting requirements back to this committee and my supervisor as regards the progress of the research and any issues or concerns are raised here. NTU is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the project. The university's ethical approval procedure has been consulted and there is no requirement for a DBS check.

For more information, please contact me Buthaina Hasan Al Ansari at the address below:

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Survey based research are of two types i.e. exploratory or confirmatory (theory testing) and descriptive survey (*Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993; Filippini, 1997; Malhotra and Grover, 1998*). The survey method used in this research will be a combination of being confirmatory and descriptive i.e. it will test Employment Effectiveness within Qatari organizations using 11 employee satisfaction and engagement related probes such as Energy Level at work, Career Path Guidance, Challenges to move up the Organizational ladder, Work-Life balance and the overall care given to the employees while in employment. With such Employee Satisfaction and Employee Engagement indicators, the existence of the Glass Ceiling in Qatari companies can be probed to not only reveal whether it exists or not but also the reasons why it exists. These two indicators form an easy assessment of the likelihood of Glass Ceiling as discussed in earlier documents as well as several earlier researches (*Nelson and Shraim, 2014*).

To set the context of this methodology, document 3 compared the findings from the literature survey on the topic of the Glass Ceiling using a qualitative survey with the face-to-face survey approach. The survey respondents were employees of government owned entities in Qatar. It helped to establish comparison based on common opinion, the unique features of the Glass Ceiling prevalent in Qatar to other parts of the world. The results showed how other researchers in the literature have found the phenomenon to affect the countries where the research was conducted and how similar or different were these to Qatar.



By completing Document 3 the prevalence of the Glass Ceiling in Qatari organizations was established but the reasons were not immediately evident from this research.

Document 4 then moved the research logic further by investigating using desk based research on how women employees in one particular organization ie Ooredoo in Qatar were facing the problem of the Glass Ceiling and the fact that this was partially being addressed through policies and remedial action by the management of the company. It further confirmed the fact that the Glass Ceiling is a common social circumstance that has to be addressed by all organizations in Qatar to move forward in its Vision 2030 Agenda where Empowerment of Women is of prime importance.

The research objectives stated once again are what are the reasons for the Glass Ceiling (if it exists) for women employment in Qatar and whether the methods of solving the Glass Ceiling in terms of long-term solutions for the country.

Employee Effectiveness probes employed in the survey will not lead the survey respondent to make any direct conclusions of the research but rather allude towards the existence or absence of indicators that will then lead to the conclusion of whether it is the Glass Ceiling effect or some other phenomenon in the organization.

Reasons for the Glass Ceiling, if it exists can also be derived and solutions suggested based on this methodology. In order to achieve this outcome, the title of the survey was also chosen to be Employment Effectiveness.

Employment Effectiveness has been used by several researchers (*Locke, EA, 1969*) to test Employee Engagement and Satisfaction and hence whether the symptoms and effects of the Glass Ceiling exist or not in organizations. Solutions that can lead to solving the issue can also emerge through such primary research.

The results of the primary research survey employed in this document helps establish patterns of satisfaction and engagement that can then be traced back to whether women will be able to continue or leave the organization at a certain stage of their career.

Hence the survey findings will form the most important component of the primary research in establishing the links in Qatar between the causes and the solution of the problem of the Glass Ceiling.

For the survey based Qualitative Research using online survey tools, the survey sampling method proposed is "Purposive Sampling" (*Given, 2008*) which is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. There are seven types of purposive sampling methods available namely, maximum variation/heterogeneous purposive sample, homogeneous purposive sample, typical case sampling, extreme/deviant case



sampling, critical case sampling, total population sampling and expert sampling (*Given, 2008*).

It is believed that for the purpose of this research and the fact that it focuses on certain groups of people working in particular types of environments, the purposive sampling method using homogeneous purposive sample (*method 2 above*) can help obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money in conducting the research. Purposive sampling method proves to be effective when only limited numbers of people can serve as primary data sources due to the nature of research design and aims and objectives.

The sampling units or homogeneous groups for purposive sample method are detailed in the survey itself that is given below:

The above eleven questions or probes addresses the topic of the Glass Ceiling by examining in a subtle manner the effectiveness of employment in Qatar through engagement and satisfaction of the employee with the organization. In order to investigate the proposition of Glass Ceiling the survey respondents were questioned in different ways about their engagement levels with their current organization. The questions were also formulated to check for the reasons for low engagement levels, which could be a lack of career path or other cultural issues (*Khan, 2013*). These symptoms are indicative of the presence of the Glass Ceiling especially if respondents have no other reason to leave the organization.

This helped to examine the topic of Glass Ceiling in an indirect and subtle manner without leading the respondent to agree or disagree to the existence of the Glass Ceiling. The questions were based on aspects such as engagement levels in lower and higher levels of the organizations, the existence of a career path and the fulfillment of career objectives.

A total of 76 men and women working in various Qatari companies responded to the survey request. The overall requests sent were about 150. This gave the response rate as being 51%. Findings from the survey have been correlated to the findings from the literature survey to recommend action items that can be used to reduce if not eliminate the phenomenon of Glass Ceiling in Qatar.

Further analysis of the reasons why the proposed questions were chosen are that the energy level to work (*Karatepe, 2013*) is one of the key factors why an employee will be satisfied or engaged to continue progressing at work. Negative energy levels (*Mauno, S., and Ruokolainen, M.*) are usually caused by lack of co-worker support and participative thinking to achieve any organizational task. Silo mentality or separation of work outcomes based on organizational processes can also cause the employee to maintain energy levels adequate to achieve work outcomes but perhaps not to continue working in the organization. Low energy level to work in the organization can lead to an indication of disengagement of the employee with the



organization. It can be an indirect indicator of the Glass Ceiling as well, especially if the employee is in the mid-career level.

As for the next question on the career development plan it is clear that planning a career is both an effort of an individual and the organization and is usually a mapping of personal goals to organizational objectives (Christensen, T., & Johnston, J. 2003). The existence of a career path will indicate that employees will remain in employment till such time that they can fulfill their career objectives and maintain their energy levels at work. The presence of the career development plan means that there is less likelihood of the existence of the Glass Ceiling.

As for the next question on the commitment to overall wellbeing it is clear that the overall wellbeing of an employee is an organizational commitment to expect and retain long term engagement of the employee with the organization (Kovjanic, et.al., 2013). This has been a major research theme especially on the topic of women employment and gender equality at work. If employees perceive a lack of commitment to their overall wellbeing, then it can indicate the absence of engagement and an indirect indication of the Glass Ceiling.

As for the next question on the fulfilment of Career Objectives, the career development plan (Lent, et.al, 2000) and fulfilment of career objectives are related themes in this survey. It helps test qualitatively the existence of the Glass Ceiling in a direct manner. Positivity in being able to fulfill career objectives indicates that employees will complete their career plan and remain in employment and hence absence of the Glass Ceiling.

As for the next question on the challenges to move up in the organizational ladder, it is clear that the inability to move up the organizational ladder is a direct indicator of the Glass Ceiling (Li, 2002). This question analyzes qualitatively the causes of such challenges and can also lead to the solutions to the problem.

As for the next question on the employee endorsement for others to join the same organization it is clear that Employee Endorsement (Tang, et.al 2002) is a positive employer brand and it encompasses all the features of a great employment experience such as the career path, commitment to overall wellbeing and also policies that enable establishment of gender equality across all rungs of the organizational ladder.

As for the next question on the employer image building of being the employer of choice, this question in the survey, helps to study the previous question from the point of view of the employer. If the employer is keen to retain and develop good employees, then this indicator should be positive and an indicator for the absence of the Glass Ceiling.

As for the next question on the reasons if any for career being held back, this is a catch-all situation analysis of any other point that is perhaps specific to each survey respondent. Glass Ceiling indicators can be seen if the answers indicate accordingly.



As for the next question on the opportunities for progress in career, it is clear that career progression, is an angle of the former question and an indication of the presence or absence of the Glass Ceiling. Career Progression has to be in line with the career objectives (Nagin, et.al, 2002) and this provides the maximum engagement.

As for the next question on the initiatives currently under way to correct career path for employees, it is clear that this question was inserted to find if solutions are already underway within Qatari organizations to solve the Glass Ceiling issues if they exist.

As for the next question on the channels for feedback, these channels are one way of helping employees express their feelings against all aspects of their employment. Absence of feedback channels can lead to dissatisfaction and also the existence of the Glass Ceiling (*Driggers, 2018*).

#### **4. Findings from the Qualitative Survey:**

##### **4.1. The Survey structure and analysis methodology:**

Sample Survey Questionnaire

Qatari Employment Effectiveness

The sample survey questionnaire will be as follows:

I, Buthaina Al Ansari, am pursuing a doctoral research in the field of business administration. If you have received this communication, it is because you have been nominated by a friend who believes that you are someone who can provide independent unbiased opinion about your work. The attached participant consent form and project information has all the details that you need to know in order to participate in this survey. I would appreciate if you could read the attached participant consent form and the information about my research and answer the questions in this survey to the best of your ability.

I promise to keep your responses confidential and also use it only as findings of my research and not for any other purpose. I also promise to secure the data collected through your responses and that of all other survey participants and not to undermine the confidentiality in any way. Please don't participate if you are not in agreement of the data security and privacy information provided or other details in the consent form. You are once again assured of complete confidentiality whether you consent or don't consent to participate in the survey.



Please first fill in your personal information, which is confidential and will not be used to reveal your responses to anyone. This personal information will only help me construct a statistical and demographic information about all the responses put together.

Please mark your Gender                      Male      Female

Your present Age Range                      24 and below

25-30

30-35

35-40

40-45

45-50

50-55

55-60

Please mention your job role    Junior                      Senior                      Middle Management

Senior Management    Executive Management

Length of Service (combination of all places worked after completing undergraduate college education)

1 – 5 years    5 – 10 years                      10 – 15 years

15 – 20 years                      20 and above years

What type of Organization do you currently work?

Government

Private

Public Shareholding

Self Employed

Please provide your responses to the best of your ability to the following questions. In answering the questions, I suggest below some themes to guide your answer. You may find the themes relevant. Or you may prefer to add your own ideas. Please use as much space as you need to share your thoughts in response to the question.



Q1. How do you describe your energy to work in your current organization? Consider the following in your answer:

- Are you motivated enough to continue working in your current role because it will help you achieve your career objectives?
- Do you come to work everyday looking forward to engage with your managers and your colleagues in a productive manner?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging at work and that your managers and colleagues treat you with respect and consider you to be a valuable member of the team?
- Will you take leave from work when you know that there is a lot to be done and that you might spend more time than usual at work?

Q2. Do you have a career development plan for yourself? Consider the following in your answer:

- Do you have a plan for yourself based on your career goals and does anyone in the organization like the HR manager or your own line manager evaluate this on a periodical basis?
- Have you planned your move step by step to reach where you are currently in your career?
- Do you believe that you should keep building your skills to work in different types of roles within the organization and at different levels?
- Does your organization encourage you to develop your skills based on the organizational needs?
- Do you attend training programs that are relevant to your career goals?

Q3. Describe your organization's commitment to your overall wellbeing. Consider the following in your answer:

- Does your organization offer you time off from work to spend with your family?
- Does your organization consider your needs with regard to your young children such as maternity/paternity leaves or childcare?
- Does your organization reimburse or compensate you for your children's education expenses?

Q4. Considering your responses to questions 1-3 above will you fulfill your career objectives in your current organization and at the same level or higher levels? Consider the following in your answer:



- Your energy levels at work are so high that you cannot contemplate moving out of your job or even out of your department
- You feel that you contribute positively and add value to yourself and the output of your organization which you recognize as much as the organization recognizes the same
- You are motivated and empowered to achieve your career objectives
- Your organization takes care of your career as well as family/personal needs so well that you don't have to look anywhere else to fulfill your goals in life

Q5. Describe your current challenges at work in terms of how easy or difficult is it for you to move up the ladder and work in higher roles or to fulfill your career objectives? Consider the following in your answer:

- Do you feel that you are getting enough exposure in your current role to challenges that will help you work in higher roles?
- Does your organization promote people on merit or because of whom they know and their influence level in the organization?
- What will you do to move up your organization, work hard and add value to the organizational outputs or will you make contacts and network with people to make your presence felt?

Q6. Do you feel you should recommend your company to other friends to work here as it provides opportunities to career progression? Consider the following in your answer:

- You are so proud of your work and your colleagues that you recommend your close relatives and friends to join your place of work in other words you are a proud apostle of your organization.
- You want to recommend your organization to others because it helps fulfill your career objectives and hence it should help others as well if they have similar goals in life.

Q7. How well does your organization promote itself to be an employer of choice? Consider the following:

- Your organization first looks within before externally for any vacancies or new roles that arise within the organization.
- Your organization believes in promoting its own people and their well being and hence brands itself as an employer of choice.





•Your organization is concerned about each an every employee at all levels of the organization and recognizes the effort of each individual in achieving the vision of the organization.

Q8. What challenges or barriers have you faced that have held back your career? Consider the following in your answer:

•Is gender bias an issue that you feel could be influencing your growth? Are both genders equally represented at all levels of the organization – junior and senior?

•Is the availability of work-life balance an issue in higher roles?

•Is the company undergoing change all the time and hence does not allow you to focus on the skill set that will help you move to a higher role?

•Does the company have policies for career progression or is it purely based on the skill set required for the higher role?

Q9. What are the opportunities provided for you to progress in your career? Consider the following in your answer:

•Regular follow up with you of the status of your self-development and skill development path that helps you to move up your career.

•Availability of role models and good examples of how someone should progress in their career and move up the career path.

•Trigger management discussions in the event of lack of career progression and forcing employees to incrementally move up or re-plan their progression path.

Q10. Describe any initiatives currently underway in your organization that are considered to be corrective actions to setting a career path for all employees male and female. Consider the following:

•If there are no initiatives please answer – No initiatives.

•Organizations may run a campaign for career path creation for select high performing employees.

•Companies may conduct an initiative to link training of employees to match organizational needs and employee skill gaps.

Q11. Describe the channels available to you to provide feedback to your organization to improve its operations with regard to its employees. Consider the following:

•Intranet site to collect employee concerns and feedback.



- Periodical surveys conducted within the organization to know employee engagement levels and their motivation to continue serving the organization
- Public forums to address employee concerns

The work conducted in the previous documents of this DBA research has established that there is gender inequality in the higher levels of Qatari organizations. This could be the Glass Ceiling effect or other problems that have led women to step out of employment when they reach mid-career level.

The Qualitative Survey conducted in this research titled Employment Effectiveness survey uses an exploratory cum confirmatory strategy (*Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993*) to determine the nature of the inequality existing in Qatari organizations.

This was done through the survey by constructing the same with no indication to the problem of Glass Ceiling but rather pointed to the effectiveness of employment and also engagement with the organization that both men and women are working with. This kept the responses unbiased towards agreeing or disagreeing with the actual problem being investigated and obtaining unbiased answers.

The survey set seven probes and four repeat probes on various factors described in the methodology of this research to find reasons for the gender inequality in higher levels of Qatari Organizations – is it “the Glass Ceiling” (lack of ability or opportunity to move up) or “Sticky Floors” (lack of enthusiasm or motivation to move up)?

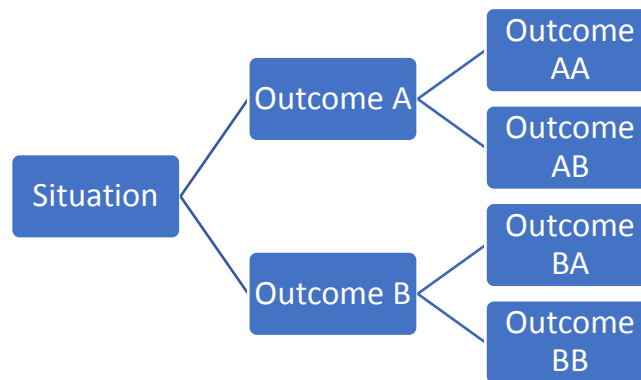
The survey also helped to probe the solutions in the mind of the employees that would perhaps relieve the gender inequality problem in higher levels of the organization by addressing the question: What are the incremental changes in the opinion of the survey respondents that can be taken by Qatari government agencies to influence existing policies within Qatari organizations to bring about gender equality in all levels of Qatari organizations?

The Decision tree method has been used to derive findings from the research especially on how each aspect of Employee Effectiveness that was probed in the survey influences the existence of the Glass Ceiling in the organization.

Decision tree is a popular tool used in operations research (*Keeny and Raifa, 1976; Von Winterfeldt and Edwards, 1986*). A decision tree is a flowchart-like structure in which each internal node represents a "test" on an attribute (e.g. whether a coin flip comes up heads or tails), each branch represents the outcome of the test, and each leaf node represents a class label (decision taken after computing all attributes). The paths from root to leaf represent classification rules.

In decision analysis, a decision tree and the closely related influence diagram are used as a visual and analytical decision support tool, where the expected values (or expected utility) of competing alternatives are calculated.

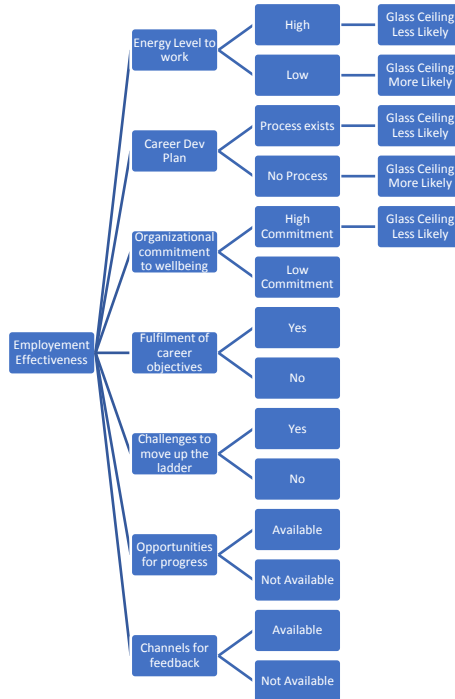
A decision tree hence consists of three types of nodes: Decision nodes (represented by the “Situation” box in Fig 1, Chance nodes (represented by “outcome A” and “outcome B” and End nodes represented by “outcome AA, AB, BA, BB” etc).



**Figure 1: Decision Tree Analysis**

Decision trees are commonly used in operations research and operations management. It is also used as a descriptive means for calculating conditional probabilities.

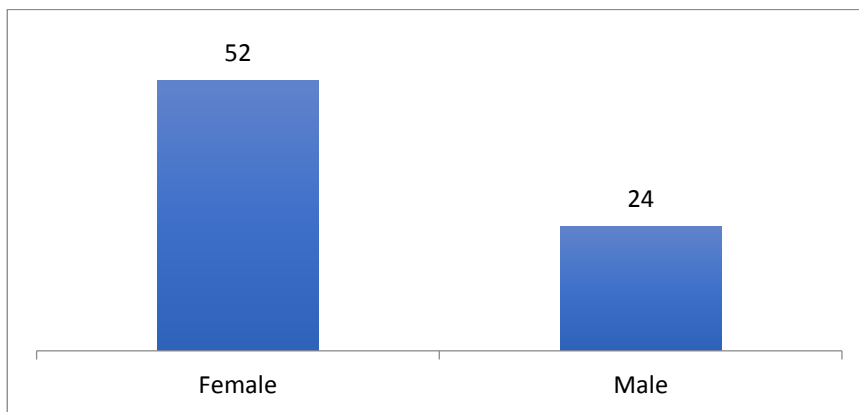
The decision tree to be employed to derive conclusions from the survey is as follows:



**Figure 2: Decision Tree used in the Employment Effectiveness survey analysis**

#### 4.2. Demographics:

The first set of questions established the demographics of the survey respondents. A total of 76 responses were received and analyzed out of the total of 150 invited for the survey. The balance of the responses was not received or incomplete. The ratio of male to female amongst the respondents was as follows:

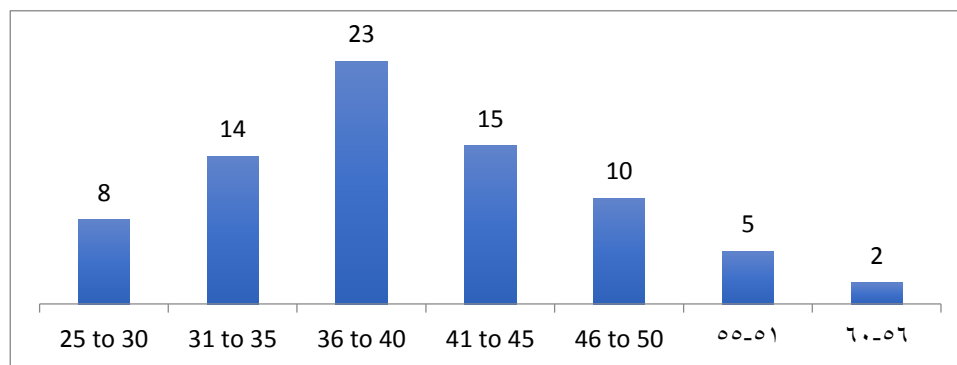


**Figure 3: Split between males and females in the responses**



This provides a bias towards female opinion more than male however, the invited population to the survey consists of an equal number of males and females. The fact that a higher proportion of females than males chose to respond to the survey indicates that the former are perhaps willing to express an opinion whether positive or negative. This willingness to participate in an online survey as opposed to a face to face survey where there is an extra degree of personal obligation indicates that women have issues relating to employment more than men and they want to express an opinion. This phenomenon in particular is not being noticed for the first time but rather in several previous survey, based research work (Forza, 2002) where the willingness to participate in the survey indicates the willingness to express an opinion on the topic of survey. It also shows that those who are ready to discuss (ie females) are perhaps those that are affected by employment issues in the workplace.

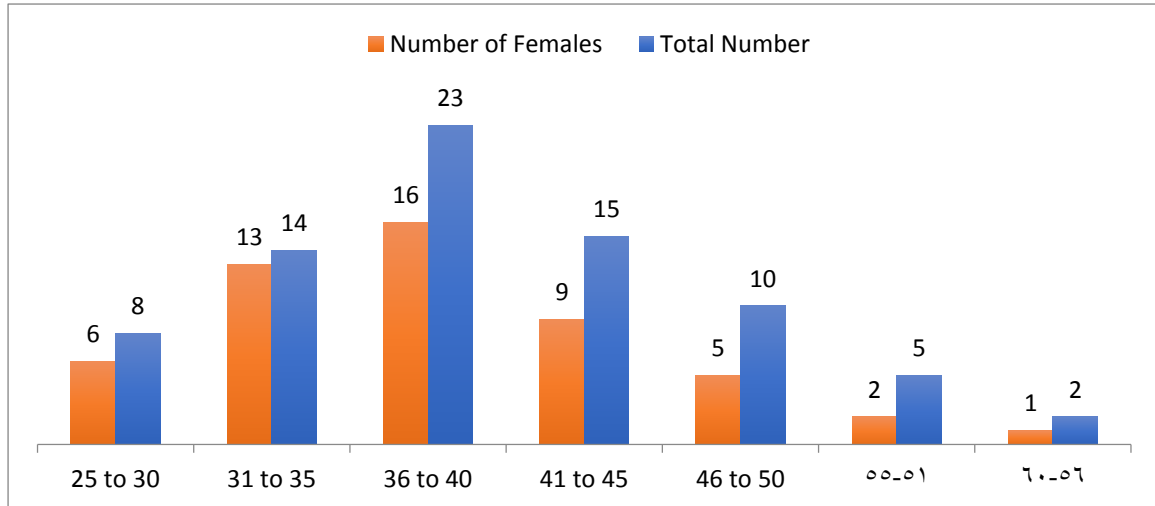
The age group of the respondents were as follows:



**Figure 4: Split between age groups of the survey respondents**

The age group split provides adequate coverage of the various employee ages that could contribute to the solution of the problem. The maximum was found to be in the group of 36 to 40 years the typical age group when an employee would have gained 10 to 15 years of work experience and is looking to move into senior roles in the company.

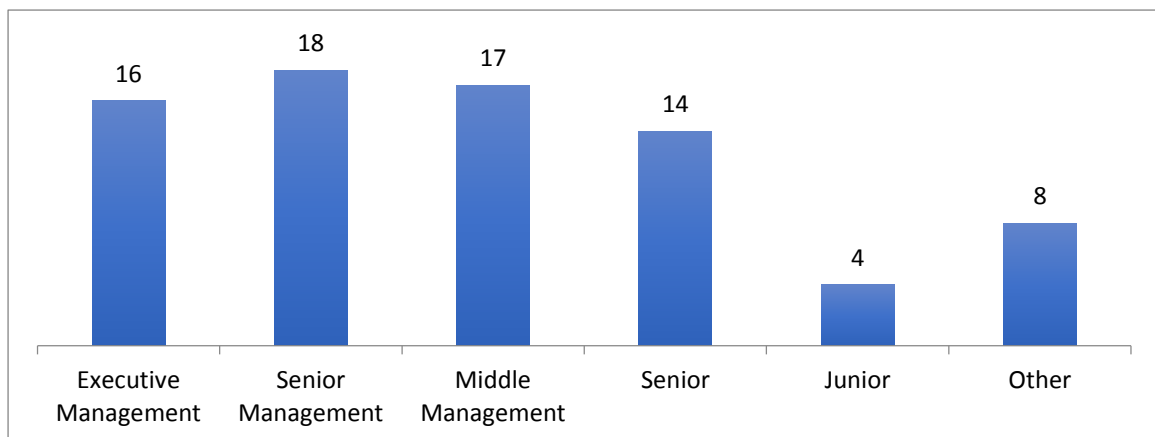
When superimposed, the female population within the survey respondent age groups the number of females in most age groups is higher than that of men.



**Figure 5: Number of Females in the Survey Population**

This shows that the population of the females up to the age of 40 is dominating the respondent population which also indicates that the females above the age of 40 are either not willing to respond or the number of males in this age group are more than females.

The current employment status or positions held by the respondents also indicates that the majority of them are in their mid or high career level and they being the right population to survey for the objectives of this research and to make effective use of the assumptions around Glass Ceiling if it exists in their respective organizations.

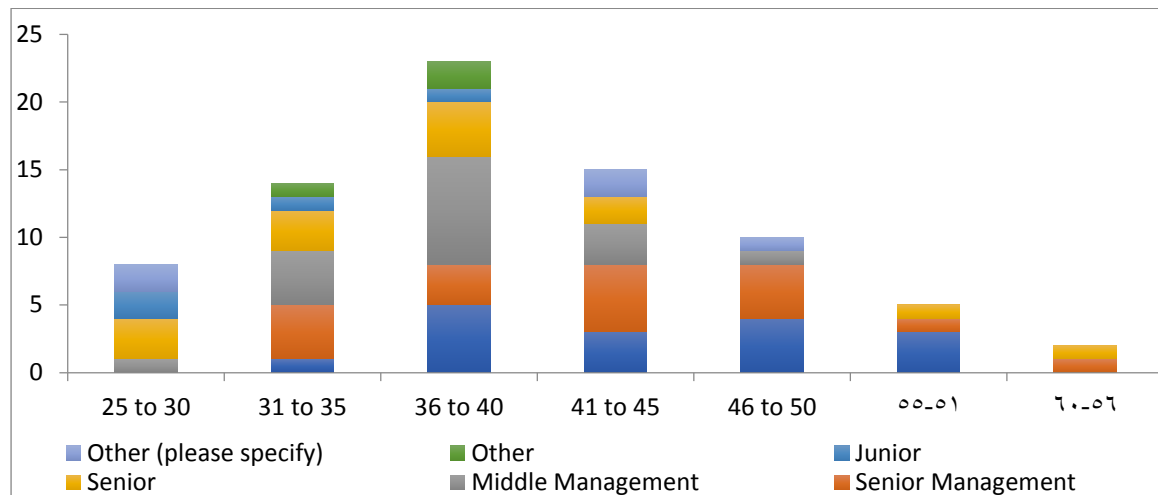


**Figure 6: Current employment status of the survey respondents**

Another angle to examine the population of respondents is their age group vs gender vs their employment status and this also shows that as the seniority of the respondents

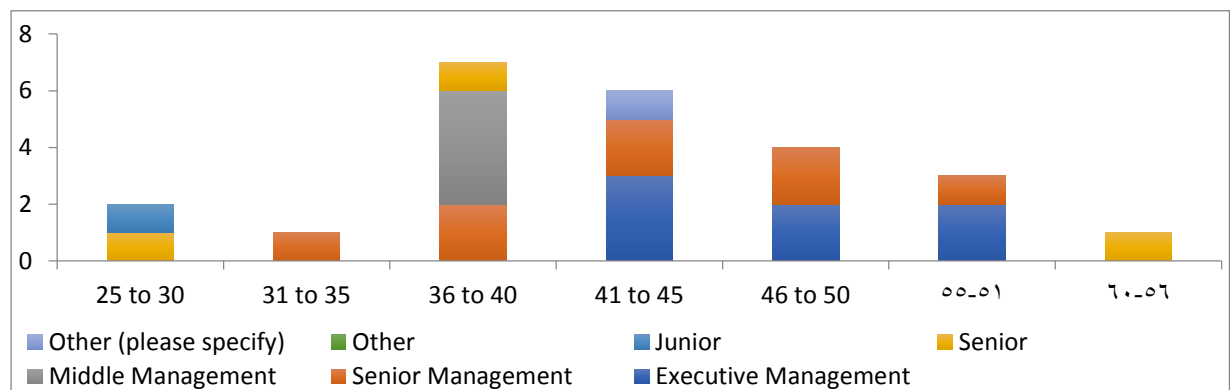


increases their employment status also is in the higher categories but with decreasing numbers.



**Figure 7: Age Group vs Employment Status of the survey respondents**

The same graph for males is different as there is less evidence of the respondents being in junior roles as they progress in age.



**Figure 8: Age Group vs Employment Status of the survey respondents (male)**

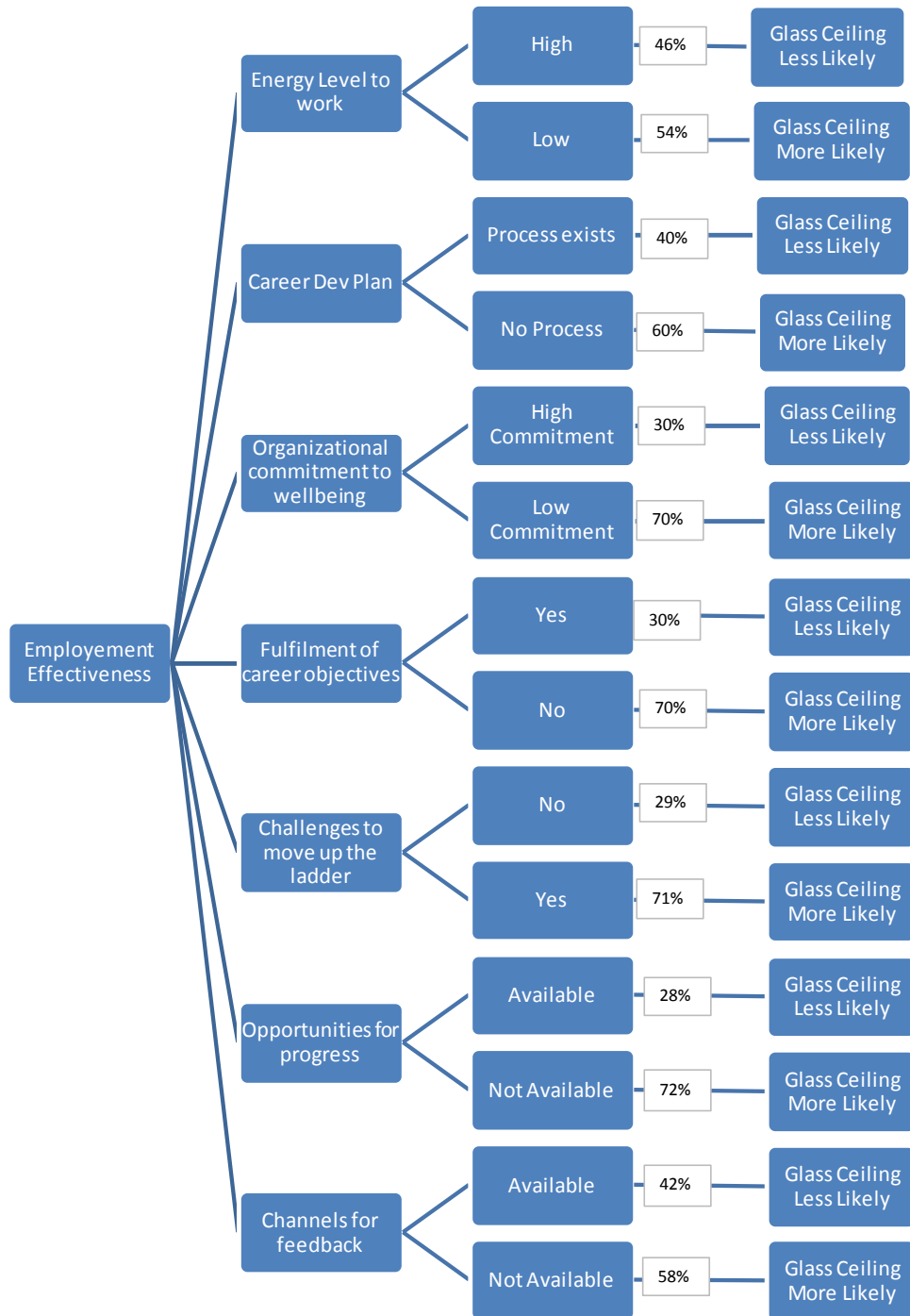
This age and employment split itself shows how males vs females are progressing in not just one but almost all public sector and government organizations in Qatar. Despite being more qualified and educated in Qatar, females are not prevalent in the higher echelons of management and this shows that the gender inequality in the higher order of employment is clearly evident from the Figures 5 and 6.



### 1.1. Analysis of responses:

The probes employed to test the existence or absence of the Glass Ceiling are explained in the Methodology section of this document. The findings are first mapped in the Decision Matrix below and then detailed findings are given following the same. It can be seen that against every probe indicator the positive and negative responses are given in percentages. Most of the probes indicate that the negative responses are higher than the positive responses indicating a likelihood of dissatisfaction and the thus the existence of the glass ceiling.





**Figure 9: Decision Tree based analysis for employment effectiveness survey amongst employees in Qatari companies**



These results are further substantiated if we analyze them for women only and men only employees.

Overall as can be seen, the effectiveness of organizations in Qatar in maintaining satisfaction and engagement of women employees is low. As can be seen in the comparison between the decision tree for the overall rating the dissatisfaction level in women employees is higher than that of men.

Using the employment effectiveness probes in the survey the following have been recorded as findings from the research survey against each probe question:

**Probe 1: Energy to work in the current organization:**

Here females report a lower energy level than males. Lower energy levels usually comes from the lack of a challenging and interesting work environment that adds value to the career goals of the employee (Niederle, and Vesterlund, 2007). The negative response rate towards this probe indicates that females will probably work only to earn a wage and not really contribute towards the positive outcome of the organization.

Males also report a low energy level but higher than females. This area of work management perhaps needs to be addressed for the entire population of males and females in Qatari organization and especially that it should generate a sense of belongingness to the place of work. Lack of motivation to achieve i.e. the ability of the employees to perform and be rewarded for the performance with promotion or praise usually generates the lack of energy to perform at work (Kee, 2006). This phenomeon has been reported in previous research as well (Kee, 2006; Nelson and Shraim, 2014) and was hence used as a probe in this research and the results do show that the area of energy levels at work has to be addressed by the management of Qatari organizations.

"Will you take leave from work even if there is work exegencies?" This question tests the protest or dissatisfaction level amongst employees with regard to the energy level at work. If an employee lacks energy at work the natural tendency will be to take leave especially when there is a surge in the work load. The affirmative replies shows that yes, there is a protest level existing in the work place. Such protest levels are usually temporary but repeated protests can lead to permanent protest of leaving work or retracting to one's one comfort zones at work. The employees will not challenge themselves (probe number 5) to perform in higher roles or add positively to the overall outcome of the organization. Out of the 76 respondents only 35 (less than 50%) have chosen not to respond to this question. The answer has been left blank. This could indicate two situations i.e. either that it is a position of protest or it could be a position of not willing to answer in the negative. In both situations abstaining from answering the question leans the person towards disengagement. Many survey respondents have not responded to this question i.e. 41 out of the total of 76 respondents have left the response as blank. This could be mainly because of the lack



of clarity in the question and its link to the fact that the question alludes to the fact that the leave is taken at time of work. It perhaps puts the respondent in a dilemma of how to respond. However, from the people who have replied with a “No” i.e. 35 out of 76 respondents they are mainly male i.e. 20 are male and 15 are female in the 35. It is also probably an indication that men are more attached to the work and more engaged as they are getting the career path whereas their female counterparts could be experiencing things differently. As for those who have responded i.e. 41 out of 76 respondents, only 5 have replied in the affirmative (comment of “Yes”) and 1 “maybe”. However, the interesting fact is that all these respondents are females in the mid-career level and above the age of 35. They are all holding middle or senior management positions. The question clearly points to “taking leave during work exigencies”. If a person feels he or she should not help or support the organization during times of work exigencies then it is a clear pointer towards disengagement. The fact that all respondents who did respond in the affirmative are females indicates that there are very few females who do move up the ladder and those who do are not engaged enough to contribute to the organization in a positive manner. As for the 36 respondents who have responded negatively, there seems to be an equal mix of male and female but slightly more females than males. Out of the 17 females, 12 are in senior and middle management roles and above the age of 30. It clearly shows that females who have moved up the ladder are showing commitment to the work. Males who have responded negatively are almost all above the age of 35 and in senior management positions who show commitment towards work with this aspect of the question.

The next sub question in this main question is to examine “any other aspect” of interest that is not covered by any of the sub questions in the main question. 12 out of the 76 respondents chose to enter a comment. Out of the 12, 8 are female and 4 males. Amongst the 8 females there is a mix of junior and senior employees. While some of the females have used this opportunity to express their gratitude to participate in the survey others have shown signs of disengagement such as office politics, lack of salary rise etc. Once again, the intent to provide a response to such a situation of taking feedback has been higher in females. They see more concerned about the work and want attention to solve their problems.

On the topic of engagement the next sub question was to test the sense of belonging where only 48% (32 respondents) have replied in the affirmative and 27 of these 32 are above the age of 35 (ie employees working in the mid-career level). Also out of the 32, 51% (17 respondents) are females and working in the mid-career level. The balance of 49% (15 respondents) are males working mostly working senior management level. As for the balance of 52% of respondents (44 out of 76 respondents) for this question their reply is either blank or categorical “No” i.e. not engaged or other comment indicating a negative opinion to the question. The majority of these respondents (34 out of 44 respondents) are females and mostly (30 out of 34) in



the above the age of 35. Analysis of their employment level also shows that they have not reached senior management or higher levels within the organization.

### Probe 2: Do you have a career development plan for yourself?

A career development plan is an employment effectiveness probe that indicates to a great extent the nature of engagement and satisfaction in the work environment. The existence of the career development plan will provide visibility for the employee of his or her career growth and hence the engagement to continue in employment. Females have reported lower level of positivity than male employees in the response to this probe question. The existence of the career development plan at a personal level is positive. However, the replies indicate that these personal plans are not being formalized by the organization that the survey respondents work for. This indicates that there is commitment from the employee to work on their development goals but the organizations do not seem to reciprocate with a similar approach.

The question in this probe that asks about whether employees have planned their move step by step to higher levels is another question that helps probe the satisfaction and engagement of the employee with the work place. A step-by-step approach means that they know exactly where they should be in mid-career level and to achieve the same what development goals should they work upon. Negative outcome on this probe especially for female employees shows that this is an area that needs to be addressed for improving engagement levels and this can certainly influence the Glass Ceiling.

The question "Do you believe that you should keep building your skills to work in different types of roles within the organization and at different levels?" indicates in both males and females that yes, there is a willingness to build their skills and work in higher levels in the organization. The availability of a self-intention to create a career plan and work in higher levels of the organization is a clear indication of the absence of "sticky floors". If this is the case the lack of gender equality in higher levels of management and grades is a clear indication of the presence of the Glass Ceiling.

Matching employee skills to organizational needs was the next probed question and here the indication was also negative. It indicates that employees are willing to attend training but perhaps to secure their future in other organizations or towards planning a self-employment career. Very few responses, especially amongst females indicated that they are interested to match organizational needs to their development goals.

### Probe 3: Organization's commitment to overall well-being of the employee

This probe relates to matters such as health, education of children, holidays, accommodative approach in case of nursing kids or special needs. Most of the male employees have rated this to be positive and that organizations in Qatar are accommodative in their approach towards employee welfare. However, female employees have responded with a negative feeling for this probe.



Female employees especially above the age of 30 show a negative rating for the same probe and mainly because of certain family commitments that perhaps male employees are not exposed to. This is to do more with the social structure of the society and that female employees will face a higher family commitment than male employees (Syed, 2010). This is also one typical reason why women employees will leave employment if not provided with the right work-life balance.

Qatar being a family focused society where the integrity of the family relationship is treated as the highest societal value like in any other middle-eastern society (Shaya, 2017), this particular probe about employee well-being is very important to break the Glass Ceiling. Women employees may at a certain stage give up on work if it does not allow them to meet their family commitments. It has repercussions on family life and the commitments that females have in society. If female employees have to contribute positively at work, especially in this part of the world, this would be one area of change that has to be addressed either through slow societal changes towards shared family commitments between males and females or by organizations providing the facilities to female employees to manage their affairs in office and home in a smooth manner.

**Probe 4: Will you fulfill your career objectives in your current organization and at the same level or higher levels?**

The answers to the energy level at work was mostly negative and more so in females. They would for lack of energy at work probably leave their current job and take up other jobs outside of work or start their own business. As per majority opinion they would certainly not complete their working life in the current job. This is a clear indication of the lack of camaraderie at work and lack of visibility to reach higher levels of management or senior positions.

Positive contribution to the work is another area of concern and lack of visibility between what the organization's objectives are and what the employee is trying to achieve at work can also lead to dissatisfaction which is visible in the replies. This will lead to dissatisfaction and perhaps an indirect way of hitting the Glass Ceiling.

Overall this probe has indicated that majority of the younger employees will not complete their career objectives or working life in their current organization. Older employees who have perhaps reached seniority levels in management have not either replied to this question or are males who have a positive answer. It gives a clear indication that after a certain stage employees will hit the Glass Ceiling or leave employment for other opportunities outside of work.

**Probe 5: Challenges at work.**

This probe was a confirmative stance in the survey to see if employees especially female employees are facing the challenges that are typical of the Glass Ceiling.



The first question was probing the engagement level of the employee in terms of how challenged he or she feels in working in the current role. Higher level of challenges will boost energy levels and even perhaps keep the employee engaged to achieve more. However, in case of the survey respondents, most of them have been negative. The junior female employees have indicated that they are feeling challenged and engaged but in the next question they have indicated negatively. This clearly indicates that they are trying to achieve and engage with the organization in their younger age however, when they reach the senior roles of management the same is not possible.

Promotion on merit is a clear indication of the absence of the Glass Ceiling. The majority including males have replied that this is not the case. This means that promotions are based on how employees network and showcase their networking power to move into higher levels of management and not on merit of their performance at work. This reason is a major indicator of the Glass Ceiling because in such circumstances the minority population with less networking opportunities will not be able to move to the higher levels of management.

The next question seeks directly the answer to the question that whether promotion can be based on engagement with the organization or networking with senior management. The answers clearly indicate that promotion is not meritorious but rather based on people's contacts and the way that they can present themselves to senior management. The findings of the study 2002 study on employee endorsements by Tang et.al (Tang et.al, 2002) that employees are usually not satisfied with organizations only because of the monetary benefits but rather how they can achieve overall satisfaction and achievement in life through their work. This will help them endorse the company they work for and hence indicates a positive behavior at work as well. The fact that both males and females have indicated negatively, shows that employees have not really found value in their engagement with work and perhaps consider it only as a source of income rather than an entity where they need to add value as much as the organization needs to add value to their lives.

**Probe 6 and 7: Do employees recommend others to join the organization and does the organization promote itself as the employer of choice?**

The next probe also questions the employer and how they promote themselves as an employer of choice. Do they like to move themselves towards managing their image as a good employer?

Employees were first probed about the likelihood of the employer to consider internal promotions for senior roles compared to hiring talent from outside the organization. Both the first and second questions in this probe are about internal promotions and recruitment internally in case of vacancies in the organization. This is a clear indication of how well the organization likes to position itself with its employees especially for its concern for their promotion and movement into higher roles. The negative feelings for this probe especially amongst female employees indicate that



organizations are not concerned about internal promotions and do not develop their own talent for futuristic roles. This is also a clear indication of the Glass Ceiling.

The third sub-question in this probe was about the concern for employees by the organization. This shows the level of empathy that organizations have towards their employees. This was also negative and this negativity was recorded for case of both males and females. It is a clear indication that employees will probably leave employment in face of any other eventuality such as an opportunity to do their own business or some other organization which provides better concern for their career.

#### Probe 8: Challenges faced at work

The next probe question was about the challenges faced at work and it directly asks questions related to the gender bias, work-life balance, management of change and policies for career progression.

Regarding gender-bias the males have responded with a neutral i.e. neither positive or negative sentiments. However, the females have reported a negative sentiment and especially amongst the older respondents. This shows that the gender bias feeling is experienced more as an employee spends more time in the organization.

With regard to work-life balance both genders had a negative sentiment. The older survey respondents however, have responded with an acceptable balance. This indicates that as employees spend more time in the organization, they feel that they have the luxury of allocating and delegating work to the employees reporting to them and have a better work-life balance. The only indicator of the Glass Ceiling with regard to this factor is the fact that the more junior employees have reported this sentiment negatively which means they may not complete their career objectives if this phenomenon persists.

With regard to policies or career progression the responses were again negative throughout the population of survey respondents and more so with regard to the female employees. Even if some organizations do have good or balanced policies towards the same, lack of communicating the same to employees can also lead to this particular predicament.

#### Probe 9: Opportunities available for career progression.

The first sub-question tested the regular follow up of the organization with regard to the career path progression of its employees. Here the responses were negative both for males and females and not many responses for the older employees. This indicates certain lack of concern for employees career path progression which then becomes the problem of the employee himself or herself to take care of the problems facing their career and its progression.



Availability of role models is a very important factor in breaking gender equality barriers like the Glass Ceiling. As is obvious the importance of a north star to look up to as the employee charts his or her career and working life for senior roles in the organization is a very important aspect of any organization. This question was purposely placed in the survey to find out how inspirational are leaders in the Qatari organizations that employees can actually look up to them as role models. Unfortunately, the responses were yet again negative. This is one solution area that can be immediately addresses where organizations should create both women and men leaders who are inspirational and act as role models for others to look up to and work towards achieving the same.

Discussing management issues with regard to career progression was the next question with regard to this probe. The fact that most employees have not taken part in such discussions is an indicator that the Glass Ceiling does exist as there is no concerns being raised or discussed with regard to the same within the organization. Open Discussions and feedback are an important mechanism of breaking such barriers and this is a solution area for the Glass Ceiling that immediately needs to be addressed.

#### Probe 10: Initiatives to bring about Gender Equality in the workplace

The next probe question was around the initiatives that organizations are conducting to break the Glass Ceiling or at least bring about gender equality in the workplace. The responses were mainly “unknown” or “not really” etc. which means that even if some initiatives are being conducted, there is a lack of communication of such initiatives within the employees. The importance of awareness especially amongst male employees to be aware of the problems around gender equality is a must in Qatari organizations. Such initiatives were the result of change in other countries as reported by other researches. Hence, this would also make one of the solutions for breaking the Glass Ceiling.

#### Probe 11: Channels of Feedback

This was the final probe question placed in the survey to find out how receptive is the organization to receive feedback from employees with regard to their employment issues. Some respondents recognized that such channels exist but the lack of formalization of the channels causes a lack of usage of the same. Employees if don't see a formal process to receive feedback and track the information given therein it can easily lead to dissatisfaction and employee disengagement. This is another reason for the cropping up Glass Ceiling. Minority populations usually rely on a feedback mechanism to maintain equilibrium and this is one of the solutions to break the Glass Ceiling.





With the above overall findings from the survey, it can be said that the effect of the Glass Ceiling is evident and the solutions that can be immediately implemented as well as over a long period of time are both evident. In the discussions section of this document the findings will be compared to other similar findings and the solutions related to what is logically relevant and also corroborated through previous research.

## 5. Discussions:

The objective of the research was mainly two-fold. The first objective was to conduct a Qualitative online survey using the theme of Qatari Employment Effectiveness in order to extract an unbiased opinion from employees in Qatari organizations of their day-to-day circumstances at work and establish whether the Glass Ceiling is a matter of serious concern amongst employed men and women. The logic being absence of job satisfaction and engagement will indicate that Glass Ceiling does exist in the Qatari job market as this was established in other regions also.

The second objective was to co-relate the updated literature survey to the findings through the survey and recommend policy corrections and societal changes that will help achieve true gender equality at work in Qatar.

### 5.1. Discussions on the Findings:

The decision tree mechanism employed in this research indicates that an overall dissatisfaction is registered amongst the Qatari working population and hence the overall effectiveness of working in Qatari organizations can be placed at a level of 33% which mean 67% (2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the working population) will leave work or perhaps work for just earning a wage to meet family commitments. Engaged employment i.e. that which generates positive outcomes for the employee as well as the employer which has the qualities of innovation, progress and positive contribution or value addition to the product that the organization delivers to the public is missing as per the survey.

In the eleven probes employed to test the level of engagement and satisfaction with work, and thus the presence or absence of the Glass Ceiling, employees especially the female employees have indicated being disengaged more than the males and hence perhaps they will leave work when they reach their mid-career level. This is a clear indication of the existence of the Glass Ceiling.

The male employees being more satisfied than the females is also an indicator that perhaps the policies that are currently governing the Qatari organizations are more male focused and the male stereotypes surrounding these policies does not help the female population to progress in the career as much as the male population.

The findings of the research indicate that there are several similarities and differences between the findings of similar research conducted in other parts of the world.



The literature survey has indicated two prominent ways of investigating the Glass Ceiling and these have been the Gender Wage Gap where a higher wage gap indicates absence of a particular gender in employment and hence the Glass Ceiling.

The second method is to find out how effective is the employment and whether employees are satisfied and engaged at work that they will be able to fulfill their career ambitions and their career within their current organization. The lower the satisfaction and engagement the higher will be the chance of the Glass Ceiling.

This research has used the latter approach and used the Decision Tree mechanism to map the overall satisfaction of the employees in Qatari organizations with the likelihood of whether they will continue or not in the organization after a certain age level or experience i.e. the Glass Ceiling.

The use of the Decision Tree mechanism has been effective in drawing the conclusions pattern from the research and also mapping the responses to the outcome of the research.

The method of Decision Tree to be used to derive conclusions in a survey acts as a simple yet powerful statistical tool for classification, prediction and interpretation that has several potential applications in operations research. The mechanism has the advantages of simplifying complex relationships between variables by dividing original input variables into significant subgroups. It is easy to understand and interpret and also easy to handle when there are missing values without having to resort to any regression analysis of data. It is also robust in case of outliers in statistical data.

As with all analytic methods, there are also disadvantages of the decision tree method that have been taken into consideration in this research. The main disadvantage is that it can be subject to sometimes as an over fit or under fit of the outcome, particularly when using small data sets. The problem can limit the robustness of the resultant decisions. It is for this reason that when applying any decision multiple "nodes" or decision points should be used to probe the same problem area and this is what was done as part of this research thus eliminating the problems associated with this particular phenomenon.

A comprehensive review of the statistical literature of classification tree methods that may be useful for future researchers who want to learn more about the statistical theories behind the decision tree method is available through other literature. There are several applications of decision tree models that have not been considered for review or description in this research.

With regard to the findings from the survey, it can be said that the satisfaction and Engagement levels are negative amongst females more than males. The reason for females continuing to work despite being dissatisfied and disengaged more than males is perhaps to fill a gap till they get their next better opportunity to work in an



organization where they can fulfill their career objectives. This is one major reason to believe that women will not fulfill their career objectives in the current organization and hence leave work indicating the presence of the Glass Ceiling.

Women employees have not exhibited any sign of not willing to grow in their careers that is no sign of "sticky floors". There were several probes and repeat probes that were used to find out the same and all of them indicate that women are willing to continue in employment as long as they have a clear career path, are provided challenging work assignments, provided the right work-life balance with the right channels to provide feedback to employers on how to improve at work.

Self-development i.e. career plan for the self and the challenges faced at work show that the employees have the motivation to grow in their career and achieve more for themselves and the organizations that they serve but perhaps the opportunities and the policies don't go hand in hand to provide a congenial environment to produce a positive outcome towards breaking the Glass Ceiling.

If employees are willing to work with higher energy levels and also have a career development plan that supports their career objectives and are able to provide positive or negative feedback, it means that they want to grow in their organization however, circumstances such as the Glass Ceiling are limiting them from getting there.

The probes on career progression and career path also indicate that women are willing to participate in higher levels of management and perform in the same but are not being supported in this mission by the policies and stereotypes existing in Qatari organizations.

Glass Ceiling exists in Qatari organizations in mid-career level and has been expressed through a combination of dissatisfaction and disengagement with the organization especially by women employees in this age range. They are likely to leave the organization if suitable opportunities arise outside of the organization and if action is not taken in creating a participative style of working so that they maintain high energy levels and higher engagement with the organization.

The non-existence of inspirational women role models is also another area of concern amongst women employees that needs attention from the management of Qatari organizations. The changes on gender equality at all levels requires policy and societal changes however, the creation of women role models will help in creating an objective setting mindset for both women employees and the society on a whole to work towards solving the problem at a faster pace. This particular phenomenon has been discussed in length in document 4 and examples are found in several European societies that have created inroads in breaking the Glass Ceiling by adopting this approach.

In case women are inflicting a Glass Ceiling upon themselves by resisting to progress in their career the probes in the survey have found that there are ways and to break



that also as there is willingness amongst women to work towards formalization of a career path and to have opportunities to discuss their progress at work in a conscious manner. The survey probes that indicate this phenomenon are the willingness to move to higher positions especially amongst women is positive and hence indicates that women have the intent to take the next career step but other circumstances as indicated by other probes are hindering the progress. The probes with regard to career development plan being low for both men and women is also an indicator that it is not about the lack of willingness to move forward with the career but the absence of the plan. The lack of a career path that indicates a career development plan and step by step approach towards reaching a goal which means the amount of work to be done or time doing significant contribution to the organization based on which an employee will get the promotion to higher levels in the organization. This vision if not clear it is likely that employees will hit a Glass Ceiling and then perhaps leave or stop working progressively in the organization.

Majority of the respondents especially in the higher age groups i.e. above 35 years old reported low energy levels and not motivated to work. The reason perhaps that they are still at work is probably because of lack of accountability between output and pay and whether or not they work, they would perhaps be paid to fill a vacancy. This especially shows up in employees who have spent a longer time at work in an organization. In order to reemphasize this point the engagement with leadership was also queried in the probe 1. Majority of the respondents have not registered a reply to this probe question. However, it is clear from those who have responded that there is quite a lot of similarity between motivation to work and the engagement with leadership i.e. that the motivation and engagement with leadership of employees is going down with age and experience in their respective organizations and perhaps their coming to work is only to earn a living. To add to this phenomenon if all those who remain with growing age in the organization happen to be all or mostly males then it is very likely that females will not continue to remain engaged or pursue their career after the mid-career level.

It clearly shows that females have a higher disengagement with the organization as they move up the ladder of employment and they are in this case likely to leave the organization or continue working for a pay and a living rather than fulfilling any career objectives. It also shows that organizations are not making a strong move towards balancing gender equality in all levels of the organization.

The other aspect of this phenomenon is that the sense of belonging in the affirmative or engagement to the organization could also mean Sticky Floors where employees are simply lazy or lack motivation or are complacent to move up the ladder and would rather work with less responsibilities and not move up the ladder to accept more responsibilities.

The investigative aspect of taking time off from work is also an indicator of the Glass Ceiling. Taking time off regularly does reflect upon the engagement with work and it



is also an indication of how the employee will perform at work i.e. always excited about having to go from work and not really feeling himself or herself at work. Taking leave in situations when the organization actually needs the presence of the employee at work i.e. work exigencies. This also shows how engaged or connected is the work environment and the employee.

## 5.2. Solutions to solve the Glass Ceiling applicable to Qatar

As for the solutions to solve the Glass Ceiling the research and the qualitative survey used in it has pointed out several solutions that can be implemented. Policy changes, Process changes and Culture changes are the three broad areas of how to achieve the desired outcome of breaking the Glass Ceiling.

Changing policy and its associated processes in organizations are considered in this research to be low hanging fruits or short-term quick win solutions as they can be enacted through management decisions, discussions and mandates in a short period of time.

Cultural changes on the other hand require societal influence and perhaps change of mindset that can be considered to be long-term solutions to reach a solution to the problem. It is desired that organizations in Qatar and the senior leadership through governmental agencies, women lobbies and the media promote both the small term and the long-term solutions simultaneously so that there will be enough traction to achieve the solutions in a long-lasting manner.

The solutions are discussed below:

Policy and Process changes as short-term solutions to break the Glass Ceiling are to do with the fact that every employee deserves a career path, motivation to achieve the career path and a progress report of where he or she is relative to the career path. This is a low hanging fruit for all organizations to adopt as a solution for the Glass Ceiling. This solution consists of creating policies and processes for creating and managing career paths of all employees. It has been clearly indicated that employees will engage more with the organization and contribute positively if they know that by achieving certain milestones in their career, they can be given a promotion or move into more challenging tasks provided by the positions in higher management. The career path discussion has been found as a solution in other researches as well which has been discussed in the literature survey of this research. The main factor surrounding the success of the career path initiatives are the visibility that it provides to the employee to work in senior roles in the organization and also to shoulder responsibilities in lieu of better opportunities in the future. Positive contribution to current day work also increases when employees are motivated with what is to come in the future. Targeted performance levels can easily be achieved by providing the much-needed visibility in the work pattern today and in the future.



Building a work-life balance can help female employees a lot in building a liking for their job and also contributing positively towards the work and perhaps continuing in work to achieve their career objectives and thus breaking the Glass Ceiling. Organizations can build a concerted effort as Qatar is a closely connected country where organizations can easily collaborate on this front through common forums and governmental agencies. A common policy on how to support female employees with their family and work commitments will generate a lot of good will amongst the female employees to continue in work and fulfill their career objectives and hence break the Glass Ceiling. The literature survey has also indicated several examples of this case in the Europe and the USA where building a framework for time off work and combined parenting i.e. paternity and maternity leaves help the employees to be more engaged and loyal to the organization that they work for and hence break the Glass Ceiling.

Exposure to more challenges or making work more interesting is an organization specific phenomenon and each type of organization can have its own unique way of addressing this solution. A common way of finding out how to address the problem and hence find a solution is are employee engagement surveys conducted periodically within the organization that can help leaders understand how to improve the engagement levels by making the work culture more interesting, transparent and challenging for the employees. If the outcome of the surveys is taken as action items by each organization and they work towards it, the employees will remain engaged with the organization till they fulfill their career objectives and retire in the organization hence breaking the Glass Ceiling.

Exposure of employees to work in higher management roles is also a process-based change that many organizations can implement in the short term. They need to build processes within the organization to move employees to different positions for short period of times as hands on experience and also perhaps create mentor-mentee pairs where mentees can get exposure to higher levels of working in the organization especially with regard to decision making, managing people and leading a change. Such exposure will create a sense of responsibility as has been discussed in the literature survey and found in other parts of the world. Such responsibility can create loyalty and engagement with the organization and also break the Glass Ceiling.

Channels and mechanisms to provide feedback to the organization both through direct line managers and confidentially through other feedback channels such as idea management portals or grievance committees can help also build a process based solution to improve the engagement and hence break the Glass Ceiling. This is a useful mechanism to break the barriers of communications at work and help employees talk and solve their problems rather than to keep pondering over the problem and perhaps taking a hard decision to leave the organization so as to alleviate the problem. Feedback can be related to work related issues or even product related issues where junior employees may individually or collectively decide to provide positive feedback and recommendations to the organizations to change the product or



output for the better. Feedback has been also seen in the literature to be a positive contribution to work culture improvements and creating a positive engagement with work. It can certainly help in breaking the Glass Ceiling.

Appointment of women role models is another solution that is envisaged as a short term solution that is easily implemented especially with the creation of the Qatar Leadership Center where men and women are being trained as leaders and a central pool of leadership has been very well constituted in the country. It means Qatari organizations can now start putting women leaders as role models in prominent positions and contributing positively to the organizations that they work for and hence becoming a guiding north star to the junior women employees in Qatari organizations to take inspiration and imbibe their progress and hence also aspire to be leaders of the future. This has been discussed in length as a quick win in breaking the barriers of the Glass Ceiling and making the employment in higher roles of Qatari organizations interesting for the women employees.

Culture changes as long-term solutions to provide a congenial work environment to deliver higher energy levels of employees during work is a culture shift that has to be developed within Qatari organizations. It means there are challenges posed by the tasks assigned to employees, periodical communication of work requirements and high engagement of the leadership to keep the employees motivated and inspired to work. This will then lead to the energy level to deliver work as high and the work tasks will become more challenging and interesting and hence improve the working life of the employees. It will hence help them to continue in work and thus breaking the Glass Ceiling. This culture shift will also happen if the short-term process based shifts are addressed. As has been shown through the literature survey and the responses from the survey respondents in this research, this is a major area of concern and people do want to change the situation as long as organizations and the leadership within them are able to support such cultural shifts. Employees can be more engaged and productive if the work energy is maintained high and there is continuous follow up and challenging assignments that encourage the employees to improve his or her performance at all times. Such a culture shift requires to build up transparency and open sharing of work related objectives that every employee has been allocated. It adds to the participation of the employee in the work and creates an excitement to come to work every day and also perform to one's maximum level. It is hence a mindset change and a culture-shift, which is likely to take some time to implement. It can be enacted by creating for example, open plan offices rather than cabin type closed door office rooms. It can also be created by making policies on the number of times that employees should meet each other in the workplace and follow up on the tasks that are allocated to each other. It can also be improved by making the tasks more challenging for the mind and interesting for the employees. Tasks should be such that they are interesting to deliver and yet contributing positively towards the output of the organization.



Visibility of how the employee's output actually contributes to the output of the organization is also another area of work culture shift required in Qatar that builds up the energy level to perform at work. This phenomenon is a culture shift more than a process shift. It involves the employees to share the tasks that directly or indirectly add value to the output of the department (culture shift) or organization that they work for. It also requires an understanding of who is the immediate i.e. direct customer and the indirect customer of one's work output (process shift). Based on this knowledge the work can be structured in such a way that employees see directly the value that they contribute or add to the work output and hence the value that it generates for the organization. It also requires managers to communicate to the employees on a regular basis of how their work is actually adding value to the output of the department or team that they work for. In case value is not being added, then appropriate feedback should also be provided in a timely manner to mitigate any disengagement levels that will come about from this phenomenon. Visibility of output and positive contribution to work requirements is a well-researched area that will certainly motivate and enhance employee output and hence their engagement and satisfaction with their work environment. Higher the satisfaction levels, lower will be the chances of hitting the Glass Ceiling.

Breaking the male stereotypes is another area that needs to be worked on from the culture change aspect and as a long-term solution. Currently male employees may not even realize the presence of the stereotype and will perhaps be one of the major causes amongst women to hit the glass ceiling. For example, leadership is a quality that especially in the middle-east, is stereotyped with men and this has been discussed in previous documents of this DBA program. The Qatari society at large has had very few women leaders either leading businesses or community activities or government initiatives. Hence when a woman does strive hard and becomes a leader it is time for the community to celebrate and talk about her success story. However, even in these situations, leadership qualities amongst women are seen to be something that is an imitation of that of men and past researches have indicated the same.

For these reasons of stereotyping, women in the mid-career tend not to go above a level where they need to exhibit leadership qualities. Leaders are of two types, born and made. Even though there are arguments that leaders cannot be made and only have to be born, there is enough evidence to show that leaders can be made. Women in the middle-east are now increasingly embarking on gaining leadership qualities and looking at leadership as their biggest asset to break the glass ceiling and move up. It seems to be the only resort to getting into senior management positions as these positions calls for managing teams, programs and projects. However, women are then also falling into the trap of imitating the male leadership qualities and stereotyping. Women have their inherent leadership qualities that are different to men and where such leadership is required in its original form rather than stereotyped to that of men, women have to utilize these leadership qualities in organizations. Examples of such leadership qualities when compared to men are in managing human resources. For





example, a woman can with her emotions that are different to that of men convince an individual or a team about how to manage a conflict within a team. Men would look at the problem in a digital manner “Yes”, “No” etc. whereas women will go that extra mile and look at the inner shades of gray in a subject and deal with the situation emotionally and patiently rather than just on the merits of who said or did what. Why don’t organizations use these leadership qualities to their advantage rather than depending only upon men leaders for any situation? The answer is again not to be found in any book or law but the mindset of people which includes women. When it comes to leadership qualities, people are prone to assess and recruit people who can display male like leadership and hence the vacuum of women leaders starts.

Overall the discussions on the findings of this research have highlighted the problem areas of the Employment Effectiveness in both male and female employees in Qatar and the cause of the Glass Ceiling. Solutions leading to solving this problem form the recommendations of this research and also lead to further work in the area of human resource management that has to be looked at holistically in order to deliver a long lasting solution to the problem and make both men and women equal in both pursuing and gaining higher management positions in Qatari organizations.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations:

A step by step approach is recommended to be adopted in Qatar as follows:

Step 1: Create awareness of the importance of gender equality in all parts of Qatari organizations. This should also be led at the national level in government departments and in public sector companies and by having public forums to discuss the importance of gender equality.

Step 2: Create a cultural shift by providing male and female employees with career paths right from the start of the career and close monitoring of the same.

Step 3: Create role models for leadership both amongst men and women and hence establish the basis for gender equality in all rungs of the organizational ladder.

Step 4: Reward and incentivize organizations that demonstrate gender equality and monitor and track it religiously as an organizational key performance indicator.

The major conclusions to be drawn from the consolidation of literature is that the Glass Ceiling and its features are related mainly to women at work and every organization and Qatar, as a country on a whole, should be conscious of it and solve it in order to move the Human Development agenda of the Qatar National Vision 2030 forward. Statistical indicators of women being more educationally qualified than men



but not being trained and job-enriched to work in higher levels of management and senior positions within Qatari organizations is clear evidence of the existence of the Glass Ceiling and hence the necessity to solve it.

The survey and its findings have clearly indicated that women have not inflicted the Glass Ceiling upon themselves. There are evidence to believe that they care and are aware of the importance of a career path and achievement of career objectives at every level of the organization and that they also need to fulfill career objectives as much as men. However, due to the lack of certain processes that can promote the progress of both men and women purely based on merits of the work and not on the gender, the Glass Ceiling has been noticed and is a clear evidence of the need for reform. Culture based changes are also required to make these new processes effective and these cultural changes are related both to the traditional patriarchal mindset of the people in general and the work cultures in Qatari organizations.

The presence of the Glass Ceiling in Qatari organizations was clearly evident through this research. Eleven probes were used to gauge the effect of the Employee Satisfaction and Engagement and thus lead to the detection of the Glass Ceiling. The survey findings were analyzed by employing The Decision Tree method that is a common practice in operations and management research to find out how much impact does each sub-factor have on the final outcome or conclusion of a particular phenomenon. The presence of the Glass Ceiling was clearly evident through the survey and the analysis using the Decision Tree method. The characteristics of the Glass Ceiling in terms of how it has set in due to the lack of processes and policies was also part of the analysis and has indicated that such change in policy and process can immediately deliver the required results to break the Glass Ceiling. Short term and Long term solutions have been discussed in length recommended to be studied and implemented in Qatari organizations.

Gender equality is usually treated as a whole i.e. if men and women are equal in number in employment across organizations then it is treated as "equality achieved". What organizations across the nation need to look at is gender equality at each level of the organization and ensure that it is achieved in all levels. Entry-level jobs usually have women in higher numbers than men and this is because of the higher graduation rate of women than men. This will ensure that social problems such as the Glass Ceiling are kept on check and women can contribute as much as men to the progress of the nation and the community at large.

It will then improve the condition of women and break the effects of the Glass Ceiling so that they also fulfill their career objectives in Qatari organizations as much as men. The research has been very unbiased in obtaining the feedback from women and men and has analyzed the responses in depth. Hence it is recommended that the findings and discussions of the research form important inputs to the study of female employment in Qatar.



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## Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

### Survey Questionnaire used for online data collection:

Please first fill in your personal information, which is confidential and will not be used to reveal your responses to anyone. This personal information will only help me construct a statistical and demographic information about all the responses put together.

Please mark your Gender	Male      Female
Your present Age Range	24 and below 25-30 30-35 35-40 40-45 45-50 50-55 55-60
Please mention your job role	Junior Senior Middle Management Senior Management Executive Management
Length of Service (combination of all places worked after completing undergraduate college education)	1 – 5 years 5 – 10 years 10 – 15 years 15 – 20 years 20 and above years
What type of Organization do you currently work	Government Private Public Shareholding Self Employed

**Table 1: Survey Questionnaire - Part 1 (Questions on Demographics)**



Please provide your responses to the best of your ability to the following questions. In answering the question I suggest below some themes to guide your answer. You may find the themes relevant. Or you may prefer to add your own ideas. Please use as much space as you need to share your thoughts in response to the question.

Q1. How do you describe your energy to work in your current organization?

Consider the following in your answer:

- Are you motivated enough to continue working in your current role because it will help you achieve your career objectives?
- Do you come to work everyday looking forward to engage with your managers and your colleagues in a productive manner?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging at work and that your managers and colleagues treat you with respect and consider you to be a valuable member of the team?
- Will you take leave from work when you know that there is a lot to be done and that you might spend more time than usual at work?

Q2. Do you have a career development plan for yourself?

Consider the following in your answer:

- Do you have a plan for yourself based on your career goals and does anyone in the organization like the HR manager or your own line manager evaluate this on a periodical basis?
- Have you planned your move step by step to reach where you are currently in your career?
- Do you believe that you should keep building your skills to work in different types of roles within the organization and at different levels?
- Does your organization encourage you to develop your skills based on the organizational needs?
- Do you attend training programs that are relevant to your career goals?

Q3. Describe your organization's commitment to your overall wellbeing.

Consider the following in your answer:

- Does your organization offer you time off from work to spend with your family?
- Does your organization consider your needs with regard to your young children such as maternity/paternity leaves or childcare?
- Does your organization reimburse or compensate you for your children's education expenses?



Q4. Considering your responses to questions 1-3 above will you fulfill your career objectives in your current organization and at the same level or higher levels?  
Consider the following in your answer:

- Your energy levels at work are so high that you cannot contemplate moving out of your job or even out of your department
- You feel that you contribute positively and add value to yourself and the output of your organization which you recognize as much as the organization recognizes the same
- You are motivated and empowered to achieve your career objectives
- Your organization takes care of your career as well as family/personal needs so well that you don't have to look anywhere else to fulfill your goals in life.

Q5. Describe your current challenges at work in terms of how easy or difficult is it for you to move up the ladder and work in higher roles or to fulfill your career objectives?  
Consider the following in your answer:

- Do you feel that you are getting enough exposure in your current role to challenges that will help you work in higher roles?
- Does your organization promote people on merit or because of whom they know and their influence level in the organization?
- What will you do to move up your organization, work hard and add value to the organizational outputs or will you make contacts and network with people to make your presence felt?

Q6. Do you feel you should recommend your company to other friends to work here as it provides opportunities to career progression?  
Consider the following in your answer:

- You are so proud of your work and your colleagues that you recommend your close relatives and friends to join your place of work in other words you are a proud apostle of your organization.
- You want to recommend your organization to others because it helps fulfill your career objectives and hence it should help others as well if they have similar goals in life.\

Q7. How well does your organization promote itself to be an employer of choice?  
Consider the following:

- Your organization first looks within before externally for any vacancies or new roles that arise within the organization.
- Your organization believes in promoting its own people and their well-being and hence brands itself as an employer of choice.
- Your organization is concerned about each and every employee at all levels of the organization and recognizes the effort of each individual in achieving the vision of the organization.



Q8. What challenges or barriers have you faced that have held back your career?

Consider the following in your answer:

- Is gender bias an issue that you feel could be influencing your growth? Are both genders equally represented at all levels of the organization – junior and senior?
- Is the availability of work-life balance an issue in higher roles?
- Is the company undergoing change all the time and hence does not allow you to focus on the skill set that will help you move to a higher role?
- Does the company have policies for career progression or is it purely based on the skill set required for the higher role?

Q9. What are the opportunities provided for you to progress in your career?

Consider the following in your answer:

- Regular follow up with you of the status of your self-development and skill development path that helps you to move up your career.
- Availability of role models and good examples of how someone should progress in their career and move up the career path.
- Trigger management discussions in the event of lack of career progression and forcing employees to incrementally move up or re-plan their progression path.

Q10. Describe any initiatives currently underway in your organization that are considered to be corrective actions to setting a career path for all employees male and female.

Consider the following:

- If there are no initiatives, please answer – No initiatives.
- Organizations may run a campaign for career path creation for select high performing employees.
- Companies may conduct an initiative to link training of employees to match organizational needs and employee skill gaps.

Q11. Describe the channels available to you to provide feedback to your organization to improve its operations with regard to its employees.

Consider the following:

- Intranet site to collect employee concerns and feedback.
- Periodical surveys conducted within the organization to know employee engagement levels and their motivation to continue serving the organization
- Public forums to address employee concerns

Thanks for your time. As the researcher I will ensure that I will not share your responses with anyone but publish my research findings based on aggregated answers from all the survey responses.



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**Table 2: Questionnaire Part 2 (Survey Questions)**