

**ASSESSING GENDER INEQUALITY AND LACK OF WOMEN AND WOMEN OF
COLOUR IN UPPER MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM**

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God, the maker of heaven and earth

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ABSTRACT

ASSESSING GENDER INEQUALITY AND LACK OF WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOUR IN UPPER MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

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Gender inequality and the underrepresentation of women in upper management positions pose significant challenges within organizations, hindering progress towards achieving gender equity and diversity. The general objective of this study is to assess gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London. Two theoretical frameworks guide the study namely: Intersectionality, which explores how multiple social identities intersect to create unique experiences, and Social Role theory, which examines how societal norms shape gender roles and behavior. The research design is cross-sectional design within the mixed methods approach. The study population consists of all employees at Transport for London, with a sample size of 80 determined statistically. A multi-stage cluster sampling method was used to select participants from four subsidiaries and eight departments in the organisation. Data were collected using questionnaires for quantitative data and in-depth interviews for qualitative data. All qualitative data collected was analyzed and arranged in themes. Quantitative data on the other hand was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the study include that barriers to equal representation of gender in the workplace included limited female mentors in top management (31.2%) and perceptions of unequal consideration for both men and women for positions (43.8%). Discriminatory practices against women of colour were reported, including racial references by co-workers and perceived qualifications based on skin colour. The Chi-square test results show a statistical significant relationship between men and women responses and men being perceived to be more capable of carrying out official management tasks compared to women ($p=0.00$), men and women being believed to earn the same salary for the same tasks ($p<0.00$), both men and women being perceived to have equal opportunities for wage increase ($p<0.00$) and bonuses as well as human resource decisions being seen as creating barriers for female employees to take on qualified job positions ($p=0.00$). The study concludes that through continued research, advocacy, and concerted action, meaningful progress can be achieved towards a more equitable and inclusive future for all employees irrespective of their gender or race.

Keywords: Gender inequality, women, women of colour, upper management, United Kingdom

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Gender inequality is banned by international law (Save the Children, 2023) and the Sustainable Development (Goal 5) is aimed at achieving equality and empowering women and girls (United Nations, 2018). Furthermore, gender equality is a human right (UNICEF, 2015). Gender inequality is an unequal treatment and opportunities provided to people but which favors mostly men over women. Gender inequality refers to the condition wherein men and women are not afforded equal rights and opportunities in various social, economic, and educational settings (Zhu, 2021). Gender inequality refers to the legal, social, and cultural context in which individuals' sex and/or gender determine varying rights and levels of respect for women and men, resulting in unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the expectation to conform to stereotypical social and cultural roles (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). It is also the presumption which upholds that men are relatively more competent and that women are lacking in mental capacity than men and thus are considered less qualified for top management positions (Mordi et al., 2011; Kellie, Blake & Brooks, 2019). Gender inequality reinforces power imbalances and perpetuates harmful stereotypes and biases, limiting the potential of individuals to thrive and contribute fully to their societies (UNICEF, 2015). Gender inequality limits countries' chances of progress as they forfeit potential growth that could have come from women who are excluded from the growth processes, education, work and healthcare while limiting the extent to which growth can impact on the poverty status of women (African Development Report, 2015).

Gender inequality occurs everywhere and at every stage of life. It presents itself in personal, family and social relationships and also in institutions and in public policies (UNICEF, 2015) as well as in communities, nations and the global societies. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2022) enumerated manifestations of gender inequality to include: uneven access to education, lack of employment equality, job segregation, lack of legal protections and lack of bodily autonomy. Others include poor medical care, lack of religious freedom, and lack of political representation, racism, societal mindsets and workplace discrimination.

Gender inequality in the workplace is influenced by broader societal stratifications and societal divisions based on gender (Ogunrin, Iyayi & Eghafona, 2011). Discrimination against women in the workplace is linked to human resources management (HRM) policies, practices, decision-making as well as its execution which affects women's recruitment, training, remuneration, and promotion into managerial positions and these are obtained because they are traditionally developed by and for men (Munongo, Shallone, Pooe & David, 2021; Stamaski & Son Hing, 2015; Wani, Ruchi & Dastidar, 2019). Gender inequality in the workplace comes in the form of occupational gender segregation, employment gender discrimination, glass ceiling, gender salary discrimination, difficulties in compensation in the case of pay and bonuses (Shimen, Shizhi & Man 2019; Holgersson, 2012); gender bias whereby employees prefer men to women as managers; inability of women to rise to high positions as a result of misconceptions, biases, and stereotypes (Lee, 2021); and lack of support or feedback by mentorship (Oakley, 2000). Also, reports have shown that women earn less than their male counterparts in the formal work sector, are more inclined to live in poverty, are less likely to hold jobs in the formal work sector, and do a greater proportion of homework (Jacobsen, 2011).

According to Zhang (2013), there is a notable distinction in the treatment of women compared to men within the workplace, particularly concerning remuneration which is termed the gender pay gap. It refers to a measure of equality that highlights the disparity in earnings between males and females within an organization and across all jobs (Plan International, 2023). The gender pay pertains to disparities in the average earnings between men and women. This includes compensation, whether in the form of monetary payment, non-monetary benefits, net earnings from self-employment, or total earnings from both employment and self-employment (Oelz, 2013). The gender pay gap is influenced by various factors including occupational segregation, discrimination, and the undervaluation of women's work (UN Women, 2020).

Due to the gender pay gap, men hold 62% of managerial positions while women hold 48% (Lean In, 2023). Furthermore, women encounter various types of job limitations in 86 countries, and in 95 countries; equal pay for equal work is not ensured (The World Bank, 2022). Studies show that in the European Union (EU), there was a gender employment gap of 10.8% in 2021. The gender employment gap within the European Union (EU) shows significant variation among its member states. In 2021, Lithuania had the smallest pay gap of 1.4%, followed by Finland (2.0%), Estonia (3.7%), and Latvia (4.8%). These four countries were the only ones with a gender employment gap below 5%. On the other hand, five member states reported gaps of 15% or higher, namely Czechia (15.4%), Malta (16.4%), Italy (19.2%), Greece (19.8%), and Romania (20.1%). This disparity is primarily due to lower female labor market participation rates in these countries (European Commission, 2022). In the United States, women earned about \$.82 for every dollar men earned (GAO, 2022). In rural Africa, women experience a significant gender pay gap of 40 to 46 percent compared to men. In rural areas, the gender pay gap varies, ranging from a statistically insignificant 12% in Tanzania to a substantial 77% as recorded in Nigeria (Van den Broeck, Kilic & Pieters, 2023). In the United Kingdom, the average pay gap for full-time workers

is 13.1%, which rises to 16.2% for part-time workers, as reported in the 2020 Gender Pay Gap in the UK (Indeed, 2023). However, in 2022, the mean hourly gender pay gap in the United Kingdom is at 5.45% while the median is at 9.71% (Department for International Trade, 2022).

Women's involvement in the labour force is expected to increase economic productivity, and evidence has shown that increasing women's participation in the workforce leads to economic growth (Uzoma et al., 2015; Okoroafor & Iwueke, 2019). Also advancing women's employment could add \$12 trillion to global gross domestic product and also boost some countries' economic output by as much as 35 percent (World Economic Forum, 2022). Research has also shown that over time and in many nations women are involved in paid jobs and as their incomes increase, they also increase their participation in paid work. This has been attributed to the increase in manufacturing jobs, particularly in textiles, in both the United States and the United Kingdom (Goldin, 1990; Simonton, 1998). This thus implies that as salary increases so do female labour-force participation which shows that societies benefit as women enter into the paid work sector (Jacobsen, 2011). Additionally, studies have further revealed that women have a leadership style that prioritizes team management, which is generally classified as one of the most beneficial leadership styles due to its great concern for people and tasks (De Mascia, 2015). Despite the gains of gender equality at workplaces, males are still preferred as male senior managers over women. This preference makes it more challenging for women to advance to senior management positions which are usually occupied by men (Rishani et al., 2015).

While women, in general, face gender inequality in the workplace, women of colour experience additional and distinct forms of discrimination. Native American, Latina, and African women, in particular, encounter heightened levels of gender inequality. According to Lean In (2023), women of colour also experience a wider pay gap which further pushes them to the edge

of poverty. Women of colour are faced with the challenge of intersectionality at work. U.S Government Accountability Office reported that in the United States, Hispanic or Latina women earned approximately 58 cents for every dollar earned by White men, resulting in a pay gap of 42 cents. Similarly, Black or African American women earned around 63 cents (a pay gap of 37 cents), while White women earned roughly 79 cents (a pay gap of 21 cents) for each dollar earned by White men (GAO, 2022). Due to the demeaning and oppressive attacks women face at work, they seek remote jobs most times. Also, black women are more likely to be questioned for their expertise, asked to produce evidence to prove their expertise and experience and also more likely to face micro aggression at work (Lean In, 2023). Many studies have explained that gender inequality exists in the workplace and highlighted that women often face both sexism and racism and also work in a discriminatory environment and these affect their career advancement. However, little is known about the barriers caused by gender inequality that women have to overcome to reach leadership positions in transport industries in the United Kingdom. This study therefore seeks to assess gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom.

1.2 Research Problem

An organization's upper management consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Executive Director and the Board of Directors. They are the major decision-makers in organizations. Reports have revealed that women are mostly not positioned at the top of the pyramid (Zivian, 2021). Men hold a higher percentage of managerial positions compared to women, and the gender gap is prevalent in terms of human capital and educational attainment (Lean In, 2023; AFDR, 2015). In 2022, the global percentage of women in senior management positions reached a record high of 32%, indicating progress in their representation. However, despite this growth, women continue to be inadequately represented in leadership roles (Forbes,

2023). Among Fortune 500 corporations only 7.4%, or 37 Chief Executive Officers, were women (United Nations, 2020). In Asia, New Zealand recorded the highest representation of women across various company levels in the region, including 32% women on the board of directors, 28% at the executive level, 34% in senior management, and 43% in the overall workforce. Singapore has the highest proportion of women in C-Suite positions, with 14% female CEOs and 26% female CFOs, along with the highest percentage of women in the overall workforce in the region, reaching 44% (Equileap, 2022). In the United States of America, 32.5% of all senior managers are women, while 67.5% are men (Zippia, 2023). In the United Kingdom, there is also a noticeable disparity in leadership roles, often referred to as the power gap. In the United Kingdom the proportion of women in upper management grew from 25.7% by 2020 to 22.5 % in 2019 (Zivian, 2021). The BBC also reported that men occupy 62% of managerial positions, while women hold only 38% in the United Kingdom (Indeed, 2023).

Women are frequently disregarded for high positions, despite their abilities, resulting in gender inequities in the workplace and this discrimination further leads to the underrepresentation of females in top management positions (Akhtar, 2008; Lee, 2021). This can be attributed to various barriers including stereotypes, biases, and restricted access to networks and opportunities for career progression (UN Women, 2018). Human resource policies and practices that can hinder women from getting to upper management positions include lack of Gender Diversity Initiatives (Konrad, Kramer & Erkut, 2008). Also, unconscious bias in performance evaluation can lead to lower ratings and fewer advancement opportunities for women (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman, 2012). Gender inequality and the underrepresentation of women in upper management positions pose significant challenges within organizations. This glass ceiling effect limits women's upward mobility and representation in decision-making positions

and poses a barrier to the achievement of gender equity and diversity thereby reinforcing gender inequality (Catalyst, 2021).

Although women face gender inequality in the workplace and experience hindrances from getting to upper management positions; women of colour experience it differently and most times they have worse outcomes. Women of colour are also significantly underrepresented in senior leadership positions, with only one in every five holding such roles being a woman, and only one in twenty-five being a woman of colour. According to Zippia (2023) white individuals make up the largest proportion (67.9%) of senior managers, with Hispanic or Latino individuals comprising the second largest group (14.9%). Asian individuals represent 6.3% of senior managers, while Black or African American individuals make up 6.1%. In England, as reported by Manchester (2021), approximately 1.2 million women of Black and mixed-race backgrounds with Black ancestry are employed across various sectors and organizations. However, these Black Professional Women in England face significant barriers to career progression, irrespective of their valuable contributions, due to a strong glass ceiling. Furthermore, women of colour may experience a lack of role models and mentors who share their racial and gender identity, making it challenging to find support and guidance for career advancement (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2018). Also, women of colour may face unique challenges due to the double jeopardy of experiencing gender and racial discrimination simultaneously, which can hinder their progression to upper management positions (Avery, Hernandez, Hebl, Wyland, Ryan & Earl, 2018). Certain factors have been identified by studies that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions. They include intersectional bias and stereotyping which create additional barriers for women of colour, as they face both gender and racial biases in the workplace (García-Rodríguez, & Mendoza-García, 2021). Women of colour in particular, are more likely to have their expertise questioned, be required to provide additional evidence to prove their capabilities

and experience, and are more susceptible to experiencing micro-aggressions in the workplace (Lean In, 2023).

Studies have highlighted the persistent disparities and barriers that women face in advancing to leadership roles, highlighting the need for further examination and intervention. Roth, Purvis, and Bobko (2012) conducted a study that revealed females generally received slightly higher scores than males in terms of job performance (mean $d = -.11$, 80% credibility interval of $-.33$ to $.12$). Interestingly, the analysis also indicated that ratings of promotion potentially favoured males. Organizational culture also poses obstacles to the advancement of women in reaching top management positions. Makor, Onyango, Attyang, Bantu & Onderi (2016) in their study found that a significant majority of the participants (88.2%) expressed their belief that the criteria for appointment, recruitment, and promotion within the university were biased against women who entered academia later in their careers and acknowledged that the inadequate documentation of policies concerning senior management staff at the university had impeded women's advancement to top management positions.

Transport for London was selected as the area of study due to its significant workforce; this comprises both male and female employees, including women of colour. Also, the organization has consistently reported its progress for about five consecutive years, aiming to achieve gender parity and address the gender pay gap within the organization (Transport for London, 2022). Several studies have emphasized on other industries and studied other organizations in the United Kingdom, however, there are no known studies on the discrimination women in general as well as women of colour working in transport industries encounter and have to overcome to get to upper management positions. Furthermore, there is no known study on the existence of gender inequality and barriers that women of colour and other women employees in

Transport for London have to overcome to advance to leadership positions. Therefore, this study intends to assess gender inequality and the lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The research area is Transport for London, a governmental entity established in 2000 that has a staff strength of 28,000. Transport for London holds the responsibility for managing the majority of transportation systems within London, United Kingdom (Transport for London, 2022). The organization apart from having a significant workforce, have both male and female employees as well as women of colour who are the major interests in this study. The study generally aims to assess gender inequality and the lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom. Specifically, the study examined the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position, the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management positions, the existence of gender pay gap, factors that lead to gender pay gap, human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions and factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London United Kingdom.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Gender inequality in the workplace disproportionately affects women and encompasses issues such as occupational segregation, discrimination, limited access to managerial roles, and salary disparities. Biases, stereotypes, and organizational structures perpetuate these inequities, resulting in the underrepresentation of women in high-level positions. In theory, this study aims to contribute new insights to the existing body of literature on gender inequality and lack of women

and women of colour in upper management positions in the transport industry. This study therefore served as a source for future reference and encourages further researchers to further study issues bordering around gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in transport companies.

Furthermore, this study provided data on the existence of gender inequality in the United Kingdom and equally explored the existence of barriers hindering female employees from reaching the top executive level in organizations. Additionally, this study unraveled the extent and pattern of barriers women of colour in a transport organization experience and how it affects their upward mobility in the organization. Also, this study explored women's strategies at overcoming gender inequality and barriers in attaining leadership positions in organizations and equally unraveled the benefits of achieving gender equality in organizations. Through this study also employers of labour, human resource personnel and other stakeholders would be informed on the importance of ending workplace gender inequality and ending all forms of discriminatory practices that inhibit women as well as women of colour from taking up leadership positions in an organization.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The general objective of this study is to assess gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London. The specific purposes include:

1. To examine the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position of Transport for London.
2. To find out the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position of Transport for London.
3. To examine the existence of gender pay gap in Transport for London.
4. To determine the existence of human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions.

5. To assess the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions
6. To find out possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Does equal representation of women in upper management position exist in Transport for London?
2. What are the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management positions in Transport for London?
3. Does gender pay gap exist in Transport for London?
4. Are there human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London?
5. What are the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London?
6. What are the possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0: Introduction

This section presents a detailed interrogation of extant literature on the definitions and perspectives to the major concepts related to this study.

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature

2.1.1 Concept of gender inequality

Gender equality is the principle that all individuals, regardless of their gender, should have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources and benefits. It upholds the idea that no one should be discriminated against or disadvantaged by gender. Achieving gender equality is considered a fundamental human right, and it involves addressing and eliminating disparities and biases that favor one gender over another. Gender inequality is a form of social discrimination that arises from cultural disparities in gender roles, which are socially constructed (Wani, Ruchi & Dastidar, 2019). Gender inequality is a situation in which individuals or groups are discriminated against or disadvantaged by their sex or gender. Gender inequality also refers to the legal, social, and cultural context in which an individual's sex and/or gender determines varying rights and levels of respect for women and men, resulting in unequal access to/or enjoyment of rights as well as the expectation to conform to stereotypical social and cultural roles (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). It involves the systematic privileging or prioritization of one gender male over another female in various aspects of life, including social, economic, and political spheres (Save the Children, 2023), as well as in various aspects of life, spanning multiple domains such as marriage and family, employment, education, culture, religion, and sports (Else, 2018). Gender bias and subsequent gender-based discrimination originate during early childhood. Right from birth, girls and boys encounter unequal societal norms and expectations related to gender roles as well as disparities in access to resources and opportunities. These disparities have enduring and far-reaching effects throughout life. Save the children, 2023).

2.1.2 Concept of gender inequality in the workplace

Gender inequality in the workplace is influenced by broader societal stratifications and societal divisions based on gender which is similar to inequalities based on race and class (Ogunrin, Iyayi & Eghafona, 2011). Gender inequality in the workplace refers to the disparities and biases experienced by individuals based on their gender, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, pay, promotions, and work-related treatment (UN Women 2019; United Nations 2021; ILO 2020). Research findings consistently demonstrate the persistence of gender stereotypical beliefs and sexist practices rooted in traditional and cultural norms within societies. These beliefs and practices continue to have spillover effects, impacting the workplace as well. Therefore, it can be inferred that discrimination against women remains prevalent in today's competitive work environment worldwide. Consequently, women are often deprived of opportunities that are readily available to men (Smith & Wesson, 2020; Johnson et al., 2018).

Gender inequality in the workplace mostly affects women, and this is attributed to human resource practices, such as policies, decision-making, and implementation, which affect their recruitment, training, remuneration, and advancement on the job. Although women account for half of the total world population, they remain underused, constituting less than one-third of the actual workforce (Lagarde 2013). Despite the increasing number of qualified and trained women working in various corporate organizations and sectors of the economy, they are still largely underrepresented in the decision-making process (Babic & Hansez, 2021). Abolade (2021) also discovered that there is no equality between genders, that women face gender discrimination, and that they still play second fiddle, which further affects sustainable development.

The present worldwide rate of female participation in the workforce is slightly below 47%, whereas for men, it stands at 72%. This represents a significant difference of 25 percent and

certain regions experience an even wider gap exceeding 50 percent (International Labour Organisation, 2022). According to Equileap's 2022 report, the average gender equality index for companies in the Asia-Pacific region stands at 33%. Australia emerges as the leading performer in gender equality within the region, particularly excelling in offering flexible work options. Approximately 80% of companies in Australia have flexible hour policies, and 69% provide flexible location policies. Hong Kong stands out as the only country, both regionally and globally, to have completely closed its gender pay gap across all company levels (Equileap, 2022).

Furthermore, women encounter various types of job limitations in 86 countries, and in 95 countries, equal pay for equal work is not ensured (World Bank, 2022). In the European Union (EU), there was a gender employment gap of 10.8% in 2021. The gender employment gap within the European Union (EU) shows significant variation among its member states. In 2021, Lithuania had the smallest gap of 1.4 percentages, followed by Finland (2.0%), Estonia (3.7%), and Latvia (4.8%). These four countries were the only ones with a gender employment gap below 5%. On the other hand, five member states reported gaps of 15% or higher, namely Czechia (15.4%), Malta (16.4%), Italy (19.2%), Greece (19.8%), and Romania (20.1%). This disparity is primarily due to lower female labor market participation rates in these countries (European Commission, 2022).

According to a 2016 survey conducted by the International Labour Organization and Gallup, 20% of men and 14% of women who expressed this viewpoint hold the belief that it is unacceptable for women to have paid employment outside of their homes. Additionally, many women reported facing disapproval from their immediate families regarding their choice to work outside the home (International Labour Organization, 2022).

Gender inequality in the workplace manifests in the form of a gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and unequal burden of unpaid care work, gender-based harassment, and

glass ceiling. On average, women tend to earn lower wages than men, even when performing the same work or work of equal value. This gender pay gap is influenced by various factors, including occupational segregation, discrimination, and undervaluation of women's work (UN Women, 2020). Gender inequality is evident in the unequal distribution of men and women across industries and occupations. Certain fields, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), are predominantly male-dominated, while caregiving professions, such as nursing and teaching, are often female-dominated (International Labour Organization 2018).

In addition, occupational segregation is a prevailing trend in which women are disproportionately concentrated in specific industries and occupations, often in lower-paid and less-prestigious roles. This pattern of occupational segregation significantly contributes to the gender wage gap (World Economic Forum 2020). In addition, gender-based discrimination serves as a key factor in preventing women from pursuing higher-earning medical specialties and assuming leadership positions (WHO, 2019). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2022) also reported that one of the contributors to gender inequality within employment is the division of jobs in most societies. This is because men are believed to be better equipped to handle certain jobs than their female counterparts are. Most of the time, these jobs pay the best. Unfortunately, this discrimination results in lower incomes for women. In addition, women take on the primary responsibility for unpaid labor, so even as they participate in the paid workforce, they have extra work that never gets recognized financially (UNDP, 2022).

More so, women face an unequal burden of unpaid care work, encompassing responsibilities like childcare and household chores, which disproportionately impacts their capacity to engage fully in paid work and restricts their career opportunities (UN Women, 2019; World Bank & UN Women, 2012). Juggling work and family obligations continues to pose difficulties for numerous women. Insufficient access to flexible work arrangements and

inadequate support systems can impede the advancement of women in their careers (UN Women, 2019; Allen & Finkelstein, 2014).

Women further encounter discrimination and bias throughout the recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes. Decision-making in these areas is often influenced by stereotypes and gender biases, resulting in inequitable treatment and limited opportunities for women to advance in their careers (World Economic Forum, 2020; UN Women, 2018). Gberevbie et al. (2014) in their study revealed that gender stereotyping, cultural beliefs, and the behavior of male counterparts pose obstacles for women seeking higher positions within the institutions.

Women may encounter gender-based harassment, exclusion from opportunities, and stereotypes that diminish their capabilities and contributions (UN Women, 2019; Catalyst, 2020). As a result, their professions are typically associated with lower levels of pay and social prestige (England, 2010; World Health Organization, 2019). In Asia, Japanese companies are actively addressing sexual harassment, with 52% of them publishing anti-sexual harassment policies, the highest percentage in the region. Professions that are predominantly female, such as care giving and nursing, often face devaluation by societal norms influenced by gender (Equileap, 2022). Gender-based violence and harassment can be prevalent in the workplace, creating hostile environments that hinder women's professional growth and well-being (UN Women, 2019; International Labour Organization, 2019).

Women have low representation in all three categories of leadership positions. They are however most prevalent among non-supervising managers, whose duties include operational decision-making rather than staff management. Since supervisory responsibilities differ for men and women in terms of the type of contract assigned, age, and the employment status of

subordinates may likely to maintain the labor market's segregation (Biletta, Mullan, Parent-Thirion & Wilkens, 2018).

Furthermore, UNDP (2022) reported that only 6 countries in the world give women the same legal work rights as men. In fact, most economies give women only three-quarters of the rights of men. According to the report of the United Nations (UN) High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, fewer women than men of working age were in paid employment in 2016, and even when women are paid, they tend to work in jobs with relatively low earnings, poor working conditions, and limited career prospects (UN 2016). Furthermore, AFDR (2015) posited that low levels of human capital characterize many countries in Africa and sadly so, levels of human capital are much lower for women than for men. Studies show that if employment became a more even playing field, it has a positive domino effect on other areas prone to gender inequality. Implementing policies that remove labor market distortions and creating a level playing field for all gives women the opportunity to develop their potential and to participate in economic life more visibly (IMF 2013). Empowering women in all aspects of life is a challenge for global organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and other foreign and local funding agencies who have been providing funding and technical assistance to improve women's status, particularly in emerging economies and developing countries (Shahin & Malik, 2022).

2.1.3 Factors that Promote Gender Inequality in the Workplace

Despite the crucial contributions of women to organizational performance, their representation in management positions face obstacles stemming from global challenges, personal hurdles, perception gaps, cultural factors, limited networks and mentors, as well as increased scrutiny (Smith & Wesson, 2020; Johnson et al., 2018). Also, research has revealed the persistence of gender stereotypical beliefs, along with prevailing sexist norms and cultural

practices in our societies. Zivian (2021) noted that gender stereotypes are prevalent in culture, and thus determine the roles that women and men should play in society. More so, women are typically viewed as the one with caring obligations, whereas men are expected to work hard and provide financial assistance to the family. As a result of social structures and working conditions, women are more likely to prioritize caring responsibilities above work, and as a result, women are more likely to be employed on a part-time job contract. Given that women are seen as the primary caregivers within families in many societies, the prevailing view regarding women in senior leadership positions is that they pose a significant risk. Working mothers are frequently discriminated against and subjected to disadvantaged positions (Kiser, 2015). They are perceived to lack motivation and not serious in their careers because they have children, despite evidence to the contrary (Van Esch et al., 2018).

According to Rhode (2003), women frequently experience problems in obtaining mentors and gaining access to networks of support and counsel. According to the study by Linehan and Scullion (2001), women participants observed a key barrier to their professional progress as lack of mentoring and networking. The study conducted by Lee (2021) also discovered that female employees lack equivalent networking and mentorship opportunities as their male counterparts, and organizations perpetuate workplace gender inequality by neglecting to support women's advancement opportunities. In the workplace, gender bias exists in form of employees' preference for men to women as managers. This is true for both male and female employees, and female employees have even been socialized to regard men as superior managers to women (Lee, 2021). Women have remained in lower to middle management positions, hardly rising to high positions. The gender preference for top management positions, such as chief executive officers, vice presidents, senior vice presidents, and directors, has historically been male, with misconceptions, biases, and stereotypes impeding advancement (Lee, 2021). Also, according to a Harvard

University study, female employees are less likely to identify positively with other women based on their gender, and senior women are rarely seen as acceptable role models for top jobs (Visser, 2011). As a result of unconscious bias, women seeking leadership roles frequently face a lack of backing from their female colleagues. This gender bias has resulted from women's conscious and subconscious stereotypes (Neck, 2015).

Also, according to the Gender Equality Index 2019, 56 percent of women in the European Union do not have access to flexible working arrangements, compared to 53 percent of males in the private sector. This suggests that men have more opportunities for flexible work. Additionally, 21 percent of men have complete flexibility in structuring their working hours, as against 17 percent for women (Gender Equality Index, 2019). Furthermore, women have more access to flexible working allowances in Sweden and Norway. As a result, because women bear more care obligations, any difference in flexible working arrangements between men and women implies a greater possibility of women seeking other options to balance their personal and professional lives, such as opting to work from home.

According to Adeosun and Owolabi (2021), married women are more deprived at the workplace. Women sometimes are negatively affected by pregnancy and maternity leave. Morgan, Walker, Hebl and King (2013) through their study found that applicants who are expecting a child are treated with hostility than those who are not. Akgunduz and Plantega (2012) conducted a study on the effects of parental leave on various market outcomes for women across European countries between 1970 and 2010. However, the study revealed that maternity leave of roughly 20 weeks has a positive influence on women's labor force participation and it benefits the nursing mother because it allows her time off work for the delivery of a child but if a woman wishes to advance to the top of the corporate ladder, she must consider the length of her maternity leave because the longer the leave, the less likely she will be promoted. This thus implies that the

amount of time one puts into work is used in determining how well the individual works. Therefore, nursing mothers are seen as not as productive as men (Elsbach, Cable & Sherman, 2010).

Empirical data supports the existence of the glass ceiling, proving that the scarcity of female managers is due to a combination of wide-ranging socio-cultural circumstances rather than the purported characteristics of the female character. Cultural norms, insufficient formal care, unequal distribution of care responsibilities and unpaid work at home between men and women, the belief that there is an inadequate number of female workers that qualify for executive, and a lack of female role models in senior positions are examples of glass ceiling affecting women in the workplace (Holgersson, 2012). According to the research on women who do break through the glass ceiling and achieve positions of leadership, it was found that their experiences frequently differ from those of male managers. Women have greater chances to be assigned insecure leadership roles with a higher risk of failure, either because they are appointed to head a crisis-affected organization or team, or because they are not provided with the resources and support necessary for success (Ryan & Haslam, 2005) and this situation is referred to as glass cliff (Biletta, Mullan, Parent-Thirion, & Wilkens, 2018).

Women assume leadership positions to lead companies during failure or challenging times. In the study involving graduates of business, law and high school students found that more of the respondents believed that female leaders contributes to failures in the workplace and lack the competence to implement important company decisions (Sabharwal, 2015). The study also discovered that they have greater chances of failure when they encounter challenging circumstances and that female executives face indirect forms of bias and are presented with fewer chances for leadership roles and decision-making authority (Sabharwal, 2015).

Men exhibit aura of superiority over women in the workplace and use that to oppress the women thereby encouraging women executives to have feelings of inferiority. This attitude of feeling superior may lead them to as if they more rights to occupy and executive positions than their female colleagues (Kiser, 2015). Additionally, lack of career planning and mentoring was also identified as reasons preventing women from reaching the top. As noted by Oakley (2000), women are also frequently barred from upper management due to insufficient early career tracking, and a lack of feedback from a mentor or a person in a higher position may hinder promotion.

Another factor used to oppress women in the workplace is found within human resources (HRs) practices (Stamaski & Son Hing, 2015). This is because women are thought to be better at housework while men are better suited to working outside to support their families (Zhu, 2021). A study by Castilla and Benard (2010) used three trials points with 445 managers. They were asked to give bonus, promotion, and termination recommendations for various employee profiles and to examine their effects; found out that when organizations openly promote based on merit, male employees are chosen for executive positions over an equally qualified female employee thereby offering him a bigger monetary compensation. Several studies have found that women are assigned fewer hard assignments than their male counterparts. In their study, De Pater, Van Vianen and Bechtoldt (2010) discovered that female employees had fewer demanding workplace experiences than their male colleagues and that supervisors' task distribution decisions are gender-blind, and that women may have fewer demanding employment experiences than men. Also, the prospect of part-time work is positively associated with female labor-force participation (Schoen & Rost, 2020) on the other hand; part-time contracts might have a detrimental impact on women's career development and long-term income.

2.1.4 Concept of equal representation of women in upper management position

There is a significant underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making positions, which can be attributed to various barriers including stereotypes, biases, and restricted access to networks and opportunities for career progression (UN Women, 2018). Women face barriers when it comes to accessing leadership roles and positions of power within organizations. This "glass ceiling" effect limits their upward mobility and representation in decision-making positions, reinforcing gender inequality (Catalyst, 2021).

In 2022, the global percentage of women in senior management positions reached a record high of 32%, indicating progress in their representation. However, despite this growth, women continue to be inadequately represented in leadership roles (Forbes, 2023). Among Fortune 500 corporations only 7.4%, or 37 Chief Executive Officers, were women (United Nations, 2020). In Asia, New Zealand demonstrates the highest representation of women across various company levels in the region, including 32% of women on the board of directors, 28% at the executive level, 34% in senior management, and 43% in the overall workforce. Singapore boasts the highest proportion of women in C-suite positions, with 14% female CEOs and 26% female CFOs, along with the highest percentage of women in the overall workforce in the region, reaching 44% (Equileap, 2022). In the United States of America, 32.5% of all senior managers are women, while 67.5% are men (Zippia, 2023). In the United Kingdom, there is also a noticeable disparity in leadership roles, often referred to as the "power gap." The British Broadcasting Corporation also reported that men occupy 62% of managerial positions, while women hold only 38%. Moreover, the same source highlights that women in male-dominated fields are more likely to experience "imposter syndrome," which arises from a lack of adequate representation and leads to self-doubt regarding their own professional capabilities (Indeed, 2023).

Catalyst (2022) posited that as individuals climb higher up the corporate hierarchy, the number of women decreases. Similarly, a study conducted by Mercer in 2020, which examined over 1,100 organizations globally, revealed a pattern of limited female representation in leadership positions. The analysis found that there were 23% female executives, 29% female senior managers, 37% female managers, 42% female professionals, and 47% female support staff (Edwards, Guzzo, Jackson, Knoepflmacher & Nalbantian, 2020). However, according to the Women in Business report (2021), the representation of women in CEO and managing director positions increased significantly from 15% in 2019 to 26% in 2021. Also in 2020, women comprised nearly 45% of teachers in tertiary education, a significant increase from the less than 35% reported in 1990. Despite these advancements, there is a noticeable trend in many countries where the representation of women decreases as they progress through academic ranks, resulting in a limited number of women attaining senior and leadership positions within higher education institutions (Galán-Muros, Bouckaert & Jaime Roser, 2023). Nevertheless, the Fortune Global 500 reported an unprecedented 23 female CEOs in 2021, including six women of colour (Hinchliffe, 2021).

2.1.5 Concept of Barriers to Equal Representation of Women in Upper Management Position

Studies have shown that women are not usually at the top of the pyramid in organisations. According to Lee (2021), women are routinely overlooked for high-level positions, irrespective of their qualifications, resulting in gender disparities in organisations. Gender inequality has been observed to exist in top management positions, which leads to female underrepresentation (Akhtar, 2008). Over the years, many studies have revealed that there are biases when it comes to women taking on leadership jobs in management. Women are less likely to be chosen as

leaders, and the same leadership conduct is frequently rated more highly when assigned to a male rather than a female. Furthermore, males are frequently rated more positively.

Women suffer setbacks at work due to several human resource activities such as policies, decision-making, and implementation that have an impact on them. Women sometimes are negatively affected by pregnancy and maternity leave. Maternity leave benefits the nursing mother because it gives her the opportunity to take time off work for the delivery of a child but if a woman wishes to advance to the top of the corporate ladder, she must consider the length of her maternity leave because the longer the leave, the less likely she will be promoted (Akgunduz & Plantega, 2012). Also, nursing mothers are seen as not as productive as men (Elsbach, Cable & Sherman, 2010).

The glass ceiling contributes to the scarcity of female managers because of the wide-ranging social and cultural circumstances rather than the purported characteristics of the female character (Holgersson, 2012). However, women who succeed in breaking through the glass ceiling and achieve positions of leadership have different experiences from the male executives because they are more likely to hold insecure leadership positions with a higher risk of failure with minimal resources and support that are necessary for them to succeed as executives (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Women in leadership are assumed to lead companies to failure as they are regarded less competent at executing crucial company decisions (Sabharwal, 2015). Women are also barred from upper management due to insufficient early career tracking, and a lack of feedback from a mentor or a person in a higher position may hinder promotion (Oakley, 2000). Human resources (HRs) practices also affect women's upward movement as men are preferred over women during

promotions (Stamaski & Son Hing, 2015). Also, men are chosen even when a man and woman are qualified for an executive position (Castilla & Benard, 2010).

In addition, women are exposed to fewer tasking assignments than their male counterparts and they have fewer demanding employment experiences than men (De Pater, Van Vianen and Bechtoldt (2010).Part-time work might have a detrimental impact on women's career development and long-term income (Schoen & Rost, 2020). Flexible working arrangements will be an alternative for women so as to help them balance personal and professional lives.

2.1.6 Barriers to Equal Representation of Women in Upper Management Positions of Organizations

Barriers to achieving equal representation of women in upper management positions manifest in various forms. Furthermore, job challenges are considered crucial for the advancement of individuals in management positions and for achieving career success. Nevertheless, multiple studies have revealed that women are given fewer challenging assignments compared to their male counterparts. De Pater, Van Vianen and Bechtoldt (2010) conducted a study that uncovered the disparity between male and female employees in terms of demanding workplace experiences. The research indicated that supervisors' distribution of tasks is influenced by gender, leading to women having fewer opportunities for challenging employment experiences compared to men. Notably, the employment rates of women have increased over time and despite the substantial presence of women in the labor market, women continue to be underrepresented in managerial positions across these countries (Kato & Kodama, 2017). This disparity highlights the persistent gender imbalance in leadership positions within these societies.

Organizational culture poses obstacles to the advancement of women in reaching top management positions. Makor, Onyango, Attyang, Bantu & Onderi, (2016) in their study found that a significant majority of the participants (88.2%) expressed their belief that the criteria for

appointment, recruitment, and promotion within the university were biased against women who entered academia later in their careers and acknowledged that the inadequate documentation of policies concerning senior management staff at the university had impeded women's advancement to top management positions.

Additionally, the glass ceiling is a widely recognized barrier that limits women's advancement to top leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This invisible barrier restricts women from reaching executive and board positions. Also, gender bias in hiring and promotion decisions is a persistent issue. Research has shown that both explicit and implicit biases can affect the evaluation of female candidates (Heilman, 2012). Women often face challenges related to work-life balance, particularly in roles with demanding hours and high expectations. These challenges can hinder career progression (Kossek et al., 2011). The burden of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities often falls disproportionately on women. Balancing work and family responsibilities can be challenging, resulting in limited career advancement opportunities and reduced work-life balance (ILO, 2018).

Women may also encounter barriers related to the absence of mentorship and sponsorship, which are crucial for career development (Ragins, 2007). Furthermore, implicit biases and gender stereotypes can impact decision-making at all levels of an organization, affecting women's opportunities for advancement (Rudman & Glick, 2001). The scarcity of women in top leadership roles can perpetuate the underrepresentation of women, as there are fewer role models and advocates (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Organizational cultures that do not prioritize diversity and inclusion can create barriers for women's career progression. Inflexible policies and practices can also hinder women's advancement (Powell & Butterfield, 2015).

2.1.7 Concept of Gender Pay Gaps in Organizations

According to UN Women, women tend to earn lower wages than men on average, even when performing the same work or work of equal value. This gender pay gap is influenced by various factors including occupational segregation, discrimination, and the undervaluation of women's work (UN Women, 2020). Zhang (2013) posited that there is a notable distinction in the treatment of women compared to men within the workplace, particularly concerning salary and job positions. These two factors serve as crucial indicators of gender inequalities.

In the United States women earned about \$.82 for every dollar men earned (GAO, 2022). Also in the States, the gender pay gap varied by level of education: it was greatest for women with less than a high school diploma or equivalent, and was smallest for women with a bachelor's degree (GAO, 2022). In the United Kingdom, the average pay gap for employees in full-time positions is 13.1% while it is higher for those in part-time positions (16.2%) as reported in the Gender Pay Gap in the UK: 2020 (Indeed, 2023). In 2021, the gender pay gap in the European Union (EU) amounted to 12.7%, and there has been very little change in this figure over the past ten years. This signifies that, on average, women earn 13.0% less per hour compared to men (European Commission, 2023). In rural Africa, women experience a significant gender pay gap of 40 to 46 percent compared to men, although this is notably lower than the pay gap observed in high-income countries. In the rural areas however, the gender pay gap varies, ranging from 12% as recorded in Tanzania to 77% as seen in Nigeria (Van den Broeck, Kilic & Pieters, 2023).

Also data from United Kingdom in 2022 indicates a slight decrease in the overall representation of women, with their percentage dropping from 53.1% in 2021 to 52.7%. Women continue to be overrepresented in administrative positions, comprising nearly 58% of colleagues in the lower quartile and almost 54% in the lower middle quartile. Although there have not been much changes in the overall figures compared to the previous year, there has been a notable increase in women in the lower quartile (up to 57.9% from 50.8% in 2021), accompanied by a

smaller decrease in the lower middle quartile (down to 53.9% from 56.2% in 2021). The gender pay gaps are attributed to the distribution of the workforce (GOV.UK, 2022).

The gender pay gap pertains to disparities in the average earnings between men and women. This includes compensation, whether in the form of monetary payment, non-monetary benefits, net earnings from self-employment, or total earnings from both employment and self-employment (Oelz, 2013). Women encounter various types of job limitations in 86 countries, and in 95 countries, equal pay for equal work is not ensured (The World Bank, 2022). This indicates that the proportion of men of working age who were employed was 10.8 percent higher than that of women. It is among the most visible manifestations of gender inequality. Women often earn less than men for performing the same work or work of equal value (European Commission, 2023). This gap can be attributed to factors such as occupational segregation, discrimination in pay practices, and limited access to promotions and high-level positions (AAUW, 2020). The limited progress in women's career advancement cannot be attributed to a gender disparity in educational attainment. In several countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, and the United States, the number of college-educated women actually surpasses that of college-educated men. Despite women's impressive educational achievements, the persistent underrepresentation of women in advancing their careers has raised significant concerns among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers across various OECD countries (Kato & Kodama, 2017).

Furthermore, the gender pay gap remains a considerable issue which affects working women. The gross gender pay gap, expressed as a percentage of male wages, varies significantly across countries. The lowest wage gap, at 10 percent, is observed in Denmark, while the highest, nearing 40 percent, is found in Korea in 2014. It could be argued that such a persistent gender pay gap may discourage women from pursuing career advancement actively. To support evidence-

based policy-making, a substantial body of evidence on the potential impact of management practices on the gender pay gap would be highly beneficial (Kato & Kodama, 2017).

Studies have revealed a disparity in the distribution of hierarchical positions at the Mexican National Health Institutes, indicating a gender imbalance which affects individuals occupying the (highest or lowest) ranks in the hierarchical order. Despite comprising the majority of the healthcare workforce, women in Mexico continue to be inadequately represented in executive and directive management roles within national healthcare organizations (Rivera-Romano, Fresno, Hernández-Lemus et al., 2020).

2.1.8 Factors That Lead To Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap, which refers to the difference in average earnings between men and women, can be influenced by various factors. Studies have identified several factors that contribute to the gender pay gap. According to the World Health Organization (2019), disparities in gender participation within the global health workforce are influenced by several factors. These include men having greater access to education, training, and formal employment opportunities. Historical discrimination against women, limiting their access to higher-status and higher-paid specialties, has resulted in a scarcity of female role models, gender stereotypes, and, in certain countries, formal restrictions on women's work during nighttime hours also exists. Additionally, the disproportionate burden of unpaid reproductive work on women may discourage them from pursuing certain specialties. Cultural stereotypes can also dissuade men from aspiring to join predominantly female professions like nursing. Furthermore, gender discrimination persists in the entry into higher-status specialties and leadership positions (World Health Organization, 2019). Other factors include:

- i. Occupational Segregation:** Women and men tend to be concentrated in different industries and occupations, with some sectors offering higher salaries than others. This occupational segregation plays a significant role in the gender pay gap as certain industries and professions may have lower average wages due to historical gender norms and biases. Women and men tend to be concentrated in different industries and occupations, leading to wage disparities (Blau & Kahn, 2017).
- ii. Gender Discrimination and Bias:** Discrimination and bias against women in the workplace can lead to unequal pay. This can take the form of direct discrimination, such as paying women less for the same work as men, or indirect discrimination, where factors like biases in hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation processes disadvantage women. According to the World Health Organization (2019), gender-based discrimination plays a significant role in preventing women from pursuing higher-paying medical specialties and assuming leadership positions. The pervasive and dominant gender stereotype that assigns men as breadwinners and women as homemakers and childcare providers continues to persist in various cultures. This stereotype plays a significant role in occupational segregation by either devaluing women's contributions in the labor force or restricting their participation in it. Consequently, gender segregation gives rise to a variety of inequities, including lower salaries, limited access to on-the-job training, and fewer opportunities for women in female-dominated professions to exercise authority (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Reskin, 1993 in World Health Organization, 2019). A study conducted by Ogunrin, Iyayi, and Eghafona (2011) discovered that manifestations of gender inequality in employment differ across different contexts and evolve over time. Furthermore, Makor, Onyango, Attyang, Bantu and Onderi (2016) found out through their

study that gender discrimination acted as a barrier for women seeking to ascend to top leadership positions.

- iii. Unequal Access to Promotions and Leadership Positions:** Women often face barriers to career advancement, including limited access to promotions and leadership positions. This can result from various factors, such as unconscious biases, stereotyping, and lack of representation and mentorship opportunities. Discrimination and biases in hiring, promotion, and pay decisions contribute to the gender pay gap (England & Bearak, 2014).
- iv. Work-Life Balance and Caregiving Responsibilities:** The unequal distribution of care giving responsibilities between men and women can affect women's ability to work full-time or pursue higher-paying careers. Balancing work and family responsibilities, particularly during periods of child-rearing or eldercare, can impact women's career progression and earning potential. The unequal distribution of care giving responsibilities affects women's ability to work full-time and impacts their earning potential (Budig & England, 2001).

2.1.9 Human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions

Shimen, Shizhi and Man (2019) in their study identified that gender discrimination in Human Resources Development have four forms of manifestation which includes: occupational gender segregation, employment gender discrimination, glass ceiling, and gender salary discrimination. They also compared the likelihood of foreign funded enterprises and private organizations and found out that gender salary discrimination is more likely to happen in private enterprises, and occupational gender segregation and glass ceiling are more prevalent in foreign funded enterprises. Women are confronted with difficulties with compensation, such as pay and

bonuses. A recent study found that women receive 82 cents on every dollar compared to men in similar positions and they often face negative perceptions when they request for promotions or salary increases (Perdue, 2017).

Gender stereotypes are pervasive in culture, according to Zivian (2021), and they govern the roles that women and men should perform in society and even at work. Unsurprisingly, a woman is often considered the one with caring responsibilities, while a guy is viewed as the one who works hard and gives financial support to the family. Employees prefer men to women as managers, and women predominantly occupy lower to mid-level management roles and seldom progress to senior positions due to misconceptions, biases, and stereotypes (Lee, 2021). Women seeking leadership roles frequently face a lack of backing from their female colleagues (Visser, 2011).

The level of sexism among corporate decision makers can influence their chances of making gender biased HR-related decisions or encourage them to adopt sexist human resource policies in their organizations which can have negative work outcomes for women (Cailin & Leanne, 2015). Within the fields of human resource management and organizational behavior, various perspectives exist regarding gender differences in job performance evaluations. Some researchers argue that males tend to receive higher evaluations compared to females across different situations involving the measurement of job performance. However, it is important to note that despite these evaluations, females may actually perform better or have superior job performance compared to males. Roth, Purvis, and Bobko (2012) conducted a study that revealed females generally received slightly higher scores than males in terms of job performance but the analysis also indicated that ratings of promotion potential favored males, suggesting that the assessment of promotability should be further examined as a potential factor contributing to differential promotion rates.

Some human resource policies and practices that can hinder women from getting to upper management positions is the lack of gender diversity initiatives. Organizations without specific gender diversity initiatives or targets may struggle to address gender imbalances in upper management (Konrad, Kramer & Erkut, 2008). Also, unconscious bias in performance evaluation can lead to lower ratings and fewer advancement opportunities for women (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman, 2012).

Research has shown that when men possess the same characteristics as women for managerial positions, they tend to be perceived more positively (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Whether women possess or lack certain traits, both scenarios can result in a perceived lower performance compared to men, leading to the perception that women are less suitable. In terms of peer ratings, women tend to receive even more negative evaluations from other women and are more inclined to choose a man over a woman as a leader (Eagly & Carli, 2003). These descriptive stereotypes can impose a greater cost on organizations due to the perception of women's inferior performance and the association of women with unsuccessful companies. This perspective aligns with the concepts of the Glass Cliff and the Think Crisis-Think Female phenomena, which suggest that women are often blamed and set up to fail in challenging situations (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

The phenomenon of peer rating stereotypes can be attributed to the Queen Bee Syndrome, which suggests that women who succeed in male-dominated environments may be more inclined to hinder the advancement of other women (Derks, van Laar, & Ellemers, 2015). Also, lack of flexible work arrangements affects women in the workplace. Limited availability of flexible work arrangements can hinder women from balancing work and family responsibilities, affecting their career progression (Kossek & Thompson, 2016).

Limited access to mentoring and sponsorship programs equally hinder women from getting to upper management positions. This implies that women may have limited access to mentoring and sponsorship programs that facilitate career development and advancement opportunities (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Furthermore, lack of transparent promotion processes which comes in the form of non-transparent promotion processes can lead to biases and favoritism, hindering women's chances of advancement to upper management positions (Kabacoff & Hemenover, 2011). In addition, Gberevbie et al. (2014) conducted a study among the academic staff of Nigerian Government Universities in Lagos State, revealing that gender stereotyping, cultural beliefs, and the behavior of male counterparts pose obstacles for women seeking higher positions within the institutions.

Other human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions is gender pay gaps and compensation practices. Gender pay gaps and compensation practices that perpetuate wage disparities can discourage women from pursuing or being considered for upper management roles (Catalyst, 2020).

2.1.10 Factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions

Although women face gender inequality in the workplace and experience hindrances from getting to upper management positions; women of colour experience it differently and most times they have worse outcomes. The 2018 Women in the Workplace Study reported that women of colour are significantly underrepresented; far less likely than others to be promoted to managers, more likely to face daily discrimination and less likely to receive support from their managers. The study further found that for every 100 men promoted to manager, only 60 black women are and 40% of black women have had their judgment questioned in their area of expertise while only 27% of men have and 35 percent of black women said their manager promotes their contributions

to others as against 46% of men who said same (McKinsey & Company, 2018 cited in Hunter-Gadsden, 2018).

Women of colour also experience mistreatment relating to their gender, race, ethnicity, religion in the workplace. Discrimination, harassment, stereotypes and micro-aggression are some of the mistreatments experienced by them. The gendered process also leads to over-scrutiny of Black women's work and their expertise and professionalism. Furthermore, as reported by European Network Against Racism (2016) some Black women have been mistreated and discriminated against because of their hair type and styles and are subjected to the imposition of uniform codes that do not allow them to wear some black hairstyles and classify them as unprofessional hairstyle. Also, Rozina (2016) revealed that for some religious minority women face discriminatory stereotypes surrounding their religion because they are referred to as being conservative. Women of colour are differently affected by inequality in the workplace because they are significantly underrepresented; far less likely than others to be promoted to manager, more likely to face daily discrimination and less likely to receive support from their managers. They also experience mistreatment which relates to gender, race, ethnicity and religion in the workplace as well as harassment, stereotypes and micro-aggressions (Network against Racism, 2016).

U.S Government Accountability Office reported that in the United States, concerning the pay of White men, women from historically underserved racial and ethnic backgrounds experienced a larger pay disparity compared to White women. For instance, Hispanic or Latina women earned approximately 58 cents for every dollar earned by White men, resulting in a pay gap of 42 cents. Similarly, Black or African American women earned around 63 cents (a pay gap of 37 cents), while White women earned roughly 79 cents (a pay gap of 21 cents) for each dollar earned by White men (GAO, 2022). According to Zippia (2023) white individuals make up the

largest proportion (67.9%) of senior managers, with Hispanic or Latino individuals comprising the second largest group (14.9%). Asian individuals represent 6.3% of senior managers, while Black or African American individuals make up 6.1%.

Studies have identified factors that could hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions. They include intersectional bias and stereotyping which create additional barriers for women of colour, as they face both gender and racial biases in the workplace (García-Rodríguez, & Mendoza-García, 2021). Also women of colour may experience a lack of role models and mentors who share their racial and gender identity, making it challenging to find support and guidance for career advancement (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2018). Furthermore, women of colour may face unique challenges due to the double jeopardy of experiencing gender and racial discrimination simultaneously, which can hinder their progression to upper management positions (Avery, Hernandez, Hebl, Wyland, Ryan & Earl, 2018). Another challenge is the limited access to networking opportunities, such as professional associations or social connections, can impede women of colour from building relationships and accessing influential networks that facilitate career advancement (Cech, Blair-Loy & Hegewisch, 2020). Biases in performance evaluations and promotion processes can disadvantage women of colour, leading to lower recognition of their contributions and fewer opportunities for advancement (Roberts & O'Reilly, 2018). There is a need therefore, to assess the manifestation and the intersectionality nature of gender inequality in Transport for London.

2.1.11 Solutions to the Barriers Faced by Women that Hinder their Upward Movement to Management Positions

In 2016, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Gallup collaborated to survey women worldwide about their preferences regarding paid employment, caregiving responsibilities, or a combination of both. The results revealed that an astonishing 70% of women, regardless of their current employment status, expressed a desire to work in paid jobs (ILO, 2022). In order to promote the employability of women and ensure equal treatment regardless of gender, it is imperative for management styles to align with principles of social corporate responsibility, sustainability, and organizational ethics. This entails respecting the unique qualities and needs of each employee (D'Ovidio et al., 2018; Di Fabio; Melo, 2021). Studies have provided evidence-based recommendations for addressing the barriers faced by women in reaching management positions. They highlight the importance of organizational policies, cultural changes, and support systems to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Also, organizations can establish and support diversity and inclusion initiatives to promote equal opportunities for women in leadership positions (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). Specific policies need to be implemented to tackle gender inequalities in academia. These policies should encompass initiatives aimed at raising awareness about gender inequality and fostering a culture of gender equality within organizations. By creating a supportive environment, these measures can contribute to addressing gender disparities effectively (Galán-Muros, Bouckaert & Roser, 2023).

Furthermore, offering mentoring and sponsorship programs specifically tailored for women can provide guidance, support, and opportunities for career advancement (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). More so, raising awareness about unconscious bias and providing training programs can help reduce bias in performance evaluations, promotions, and decision-making processes (Milkman, Akinola & Chugh 2015). Offering flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, and supportive work-life balance initiatives can enable women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014).

Therefore, developing inclusive leadership behaviors and promoting diverse leadership styles can create an inclusive organizational culture that supports women's career advancement (Ely & Meyerson, 2010). In addition, implementing transparent promotion processes, clear criteria, and objective evaluation methods can help minimize bias and ensure fairness in decision-making (Valian, 1998).

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies

In this section, efforts were made to review previous empirical studies carried out by researchers in this topic.

2.2.1 Barriers preventing women from reaching senior management roles

Ali, Abbassi, Zareen, Ujan, Anwar (2011) studied Gender discrimination in the workforce and its impact on the employees in Pakistan. The research delved into the issue of gender discrimination in the workforce and its repercussions on employee satisfaction, motivation, commitment, enthusiasm, and stress levels. The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire that was administered to 526 participants, including both males and females. The participants represented a diverse range of employees from lower, middle, and higher categories in both public and private health and education departments in Hyderabad and Jamshoro districts. The extent of gender discrimination in the workforce was evaluated using an independent samples t-test. The analysis revealed that females experienced a higher degree of discrimination compared to males, particularly within private organizations. Consequently, the research findings suggest that gender discrimination is more prevalent in the private sector than in the public sector. Furthermore, to assess the impact of gender discrimination on various aspects of employees' well-being, including satisfaction, motivation, commitment, enthusiasm, and stress levels, and the study employed the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results indicated that gender discrimination has several adverse effects on employees.

Also, Berdahl (2009) in another study involving both male and female employees from five organizations numbering 238 found out that women in male-dominated organizations were harassed more than women in female-dominated organizations whereas women in male-dominated organizations with relatively masculine personalities were the most sexually harassed.

Further, the age at which one can retire for men and women varies globally. Men however retire later than women (Zhu, 2021).

Lahti (2013) also studied *Women and Leadership: Factors That Influence Women's Career Success; Female Leaders' Reflections on Their Career Development and Leadership*. This research was motivated by the observed disparity between male and female leaders, both on a global scale and within Finland. The central aim of the thesis was to identify the key factors that influence women's career progression and to propose strategies for increasing the representation of women in leadership roles. Qualitative research methods were employed employing four women occupying leadership positions in well-known Finnish organizations. Additionally, an online questionnaire was distributed to solicit input from more women in prominent roles. The research findings reveal a multitude of factors, contributing to the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions. These factors were categorized into three levels: societal, organizational, and individual. The study highlights the roles played by traditional gender roles, organizational culture, and women's self-perceptions and competencies in shaping their career advancement. Organizational decisions, such as recruitment and career progression opportunities, were identified as crucial in directly promoting female leadership. Furthermore, the research suggests that the prospects for women to attain leadership positions vary across different sectors, and the marked gender-based segmentation of the Finnish labor market acts as a hindrance to gender equality and the career advancement of women.

Barger, (2021) also studied *Gender Inequality in the Workplace* and recruited 235 respondents in a quantitative survey. The study shows that a significant portion of the respondents acknowledged the presence of gender bias in the work environment. 52.77% of respondents agreed; 13.19% of respondents disagreed and 34.04 have no opinion/Neutral on the existence of

gender bias in the workplace. This data supports the idea that a substantial portion of the population is aware of the existence of gender bias in the workplace, aligning with historical evidence and broader societal discussions on the topic. Also, a significant majority of the respondents (over 81%) acknowledged the existence of traditional gender roles. This aligns with historical evidence and suggests that these roles have been deeply ingrained in society over the generations. Furthermore, 76.6% of respondents believed that gender roles should not be taught, indicating a strong desire for progress and a departure from these traditional ideas. This sentiment reflects a societal shift towards more inclusive and egalitarian values, where individuals are not confined to gender-based roles. This is a positive sign that many people advocate for change and break away from historical gender norms.

Rincón, González and Barrero (2017) also assessed *Women and leadership: Gender Barriers to Senior Management Positions*. The primary objective of this research was to examine the underrepresentation of women in top corporate leadership roles and to pinpoint the key factors contributing to this gender disparity. Additionally, it seeks to propose policies and strategies aimed at achieving gender balance in decision-making positions within organizations. To assess the representation of women in senior positions, the study used a secondary data collected from the European Commission's "Women and Men in Decision-Making" database, which provides information on the presence of women in key roles within the largest publicly-listed European companies. This analysis is complemented by data from the Economically Active Population Survey conducted by the Spanish National Statistics Institute and data from the Catalyst census, which includes information on Fortune 500 companies. Furthermore, the study incorporated insights from a comprehensive literature review conducted through searches on Google Scholar and databases such as ABI/INFORM Global, Emerald, and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences. This literature review examines various scholarly journals to identify factors that

explain the current status of women in decision-making positions and to propose strategies for increasing the representation of women in senior management roles. The research underscores the significant gender imbalance in decision-making positions, highlighting that most of the barriers preventing women from reaching senior management roles are associated with gender stereotypes.

Ajonbadi (2011) also studied Impediments to women's career advancement: The Nigerian experiment. The researcher employed an exploratory qualitative methodology involving in-depth interviews with 72 executive and middle managers. The study investigates the obstacles hindering the career advancement of women in their pursuit of top management roles and the associated difficulties within the Nigerian environment. The data collection process involves structured interviews conducted with women employed in various sectors, including manufacturing, banking, insurance, telecommunications, and two public service sectors in Nigeria. The research findings indicate that female managers perceive significant challenges arising from two main sources: individual factors, which encompass cultural expectations placed on women within family dynamics and Nigerian societal norms, and organizational factors, which pertain to the specific contextual challenges faced within their workplaces. These barriers collectively impede women's progress in reaching the highest positions in their careers.

2.2.2. Need for a balanced team

Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek, and van Praag (2013) studied the Impact of Gender Diversity on Team Performance. The researchers formed 45 teams comprising a total of 550 students, adhering to the college's guidelines that discouraged single-sex teams or teams with only one member of a specific gender. The primary discovery from their research indicates that business

teams with a balanced gender composition outperform teams that are predominantly male, particularly in terms of achieving higher sales and profits. Additionally, the study recommends teams with an equal mix of genders perform at least as well as teams predominantly composed of females.

Furthermore, Betheja (2019) investigated Gender Peer Effects in the Workplace: A Field Experiment in Indian Call Centers. This research paper presents the findings of a randomized controlled trial investigating the impact of gender integration on work productivity. The study was conducted in call centers situated in five different Indian cities, involving a total of 765 employees who were randomly assigned to either mixed-gender teams (comprising 30-50% female colleagues) or control groups consisting of same-gender teams. The results reveal that there were precisely zero effects observed on both productivity (intensive margin) and the share of days worked during the study period (extensive margin) for individuals assigned to mixed-gender teams. However, there was an overall increase in the secondary outcome related to peer monitoring and team support for women who were part of mixed-gender teams compared to those in all-female teams. For male employees, the study found that when assigned to mixed-gender teams, those with progressive gender attitudes exhibited higher productivity compared to their counterparts with regressive gender attitudes. Furthermore, there was an overall increase in secondary outcomes such as knowledge sharing, dating, and comfort with the opposite gender for male employees in mixed-gender teams when compared to those in all-male teams.

2.2.3 Discrimination against women of colour

Hypolite (2019) studied Black Women's Journey to Executive Leadership. This qualitative case study aimed to investigate the experiences of Black women who have attained executive leadership positions at predominantly White institutions of higher education in the

United States. The primary research question guiding this study was: What are the experiences of Black women who serve in executive leadership roles at these institutions? The study involved a carefully chosen sample of 10 Black women executives currently occupying leadership positions at various institutions across the nation. Data collection methods employed in this study comprised structured interviews, member-checking interviews, and a personal reflective narrative. The collected data underwent analysis using a typological analysis approach rooted in Hatch's (2002) framework. The study identified five major themes that exerted significant influence on the journey of these Black women toward achieving executive leadership positions. They include the presence of glass ceilings and sticky floors, resiliency of women leaders, social networking and the role of faith and family which means that participants emphasized the importance of their family and friends, pivotal mentoring relationships, and the support they received from their respective institutions in their pursuit of executive leadership roles.

2.2.4 Wage differences between men and women employees

Young (2010) also studied Gender differences in precarious work settings. In this research, Human Capital Theory and Gender Stratification Theory are employed to address three key research questions regarding the gendered aspects of precarious employment, the influence of human capital investments and family responsibilities on precarious employment, and how these investments and obligations affect men and women differently. The study defined high-quality, non-precarious employment as jobs that are well-paying offer benefits, provide union protection, and involve full-time work. Drawing on data from respondents in the United States, the study's findings indicate the following: that gender plays a significant role in the likelihood of individuals working in low-quality, precarious job settings, with women being more prone to such employment; that there are discrepancies in benefits and union protection between genders that

can be attributed to variations in men's and women's human capital, family commitments, and other work-related circumstances and finally that there are gender disparities in wages and part-time employment status which stem from workplace discrimination against women.

2.2.5 Organization's need to promote policies for the advancement of women

Oparanma (2011) also investigated the Challenges of Upward Mobility of Women in Organizations: The Nigerian Context. This study aims to assess the extent to which women have been able to progress to higher managerial positions within organizations, focusing on the context of Nigeria. The research involved a sample of 192 female employees selected from 31 commercial banks located in Rivers State, Nigeria. Questionnaires were distributed to collect data, and the responses received were subjected to statistical analysis, specifically using the Chi-square (X^2) test. The study tested three hypotheses, and the findings indicate that (i) there is a meaningful association between the demographic characteristics of women (such as education, gender, age, marital status) and their ability to advance within organizations. (ii) There is a significant relationship between the personal ambitions and aspirations of women and their upward mobility in organizations. (iii) There is a significant relationship between an organization's promotion policies and the advancement of women within the organizational hierarchy.

2.2.6 Women's leadership abilities

In a study that compared females' leadership abilities to those of males; the result showed that women-led teams are more capable of achieving "cohesion, participative communication, and cooperative learning" (Post, 2015). From a business standpoint, women executives deliver benefits such as improved financial performance, heightened creativity and productivity, stronger corporate social responsibility practices, as well as enhanced decision-making skills (Glass et al., 2016; Visser, 2011).

2.2.7 The need for mentors for women workers

Furthermore, another study by Dworkin, Maurer and Schipani (2012) which surveyed 1396 people regarding the mentoring relationship, of which 31% of them were women discovered amongst others that companies should develop mentorship and mentee programs, especially if the company is controlled by men and that women with great potential should be paired with a powerful company executives in order for women to effectively advance to top management positions.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the theories that were used to explain and support this study. Theoretical framework provides a structured foundation for organizing and directing the research. It helps researchers define the scope of their study, identify key variables, and establish clear research questions. No single framework can completely explain gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in the workplace. Therefore Intersectionality Theory and Social Role Theory were adopted as the theoretical frameworks for this study.

2.3.1 Intersectionality Theory:

Explaining gender inequality and the lack of women, and women of colour, in upper management positions within organizations requires a comprehensive and intersectional theoretical framework that takes into account various social, cultural, economic, and structural factors. One such framework that has gained prominence is the intersectionality theory, which was initially proposed by Crenshaw (1989). She is a prominent advocate of civil rights and critical race theory and examined the interconnectedness of various social identities and the associated experiences of oppression, control, or prejudice that result from these overlapping aspects. This framework recognizes that individuals hold multiple social identities (such as gender, race, class,

sexuality, ethnicity, sexual orientation and more), and these identities intersect to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression. Intersectionality helps to explain how the challenges faced by women, in general, are compounded for women of colour due to the intersection of gender and race, leading to a more complex form of discrimination and disadvantage. The theory acknowledges that these intersecting identities cannot be examined in isolation, as they create unique and often compounding experiences of discrimination and disadvantage.

Intersectionality provides insight into the reasons why certain women face an elevated vulnerability to gender-based violence, encounter a more significant wage disparity, and have restricted entry to economic prospects compared to others (Thurston, nd). The intersectionality theory helps us understand that although women face the problem of underrepresentation in upper management position; women of colour experience more challenges in the context of leadership and upper management roles. Women of colour experience a complex interplay of gender and racial discrimination, which can lead to particularly daunting barriers when seeking advancement in organizations.

Intersectional theory when applied to the study of gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in the workplace explains how women of colour are often subjected to both gender and racial bias. Also in attempts to promote diversity, organizations may place women of colour in visible roles without providing sufficient support or addressing underlying biases. This tokenism can lead to isolation and feelings of being scrutinized, creating additional challenges for career progression. Furthermore, stereotypes that stem from both gender and racial biases can intersect to create unique obstacles. For example, Black women may encounter stereotypes of being aggressive or angry, which can negatively impact their advancement. And also, women of colour may struggle with finding a balance between assimilating into predominantly white

leadership cultures and maintaining their authentic identities. This dilemma can impact their confidence, decision-making, and sense of belonging in leadership roles.

Critics pointed out that the theory was subject to criticism due to its inclination to oversimplify individuals into distinct demographic elements, as well as its utilization as an ideological instrument to oppose other feminist theories.

2.3.2 Social Role Theory

Social role theory was developed by Eagly in the 1980's. The theory is a social psychological theory that pertains to sex differences and similarities in social behavior. Its key principle is that differences and similarities arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society (Eagly & Wood, 2016). The Social Role Theory posits that societal norms, expectations, and beliefs about gender roles influence individuals' behavior, shaping their choices, aspirations, and opportunities. In many cultures, these gender roles have been historically divided, with women being associated with nurturing and domestic responsibilities, while men are linked to leadership, authority, and decision-making roles (Eagly & Wood, 1999). These stereotypes, often referred to as gender role beliefs, develop as individuals observe behaviors exhibited by males and females, leading them to make assumptions about inherent qualities associated with each gender (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

The Social Role Theory provides insights into the gender disparities observed in upper management positions within organizations. The traditional division of labor based on gender roles has led to the reinforcement of stereotypes and biases that impact hiring, promotion, and leadership opportunities. The societal belief that leadership roles are "masculine" and suited for men can lead to unconscious biases when evaluating candidates for top management positions.

This bias can disadvantage women who do not conform to the perceived leadership mold (Heilman, 2001). The concept of the glass ceiling, a metaphorical barrier that restricts women's advancement to top leadership positions, can be understood through the lenses of the Social Role Theory. Societal norms have contributed to the establishment of this barrier and thus limit women's access to positions traditionally reserved for men. This theory is however critiqued based on its inadequate explanation of the socialization process.

2.3.3. Summary of theoretical framework

The Social Role Theory underscores how societal expectations and gender norms can shape individuals' perceptions of leadership and influence organizational practices. Understanding how these norms have contributed to gender disparities in upper management is crucial for organizations to challenge these biases, promote diversity and inclusion, and create environments that support women's advancement into leadership roles. Intersectionality theory equally underscores the importance of recognizing the multidimensional nature of discrimination and disadvantage. In the context of women of colour's underrepresentation in upper management, understanding the complex interactions between gender, race, and other identities is crucial for organizations to create inclusive policies, address systemic biases, and provide tailored support to ensure that women of colour have equal opportunities to succeed in leadership positions.

3.3.4 Conceptual framework

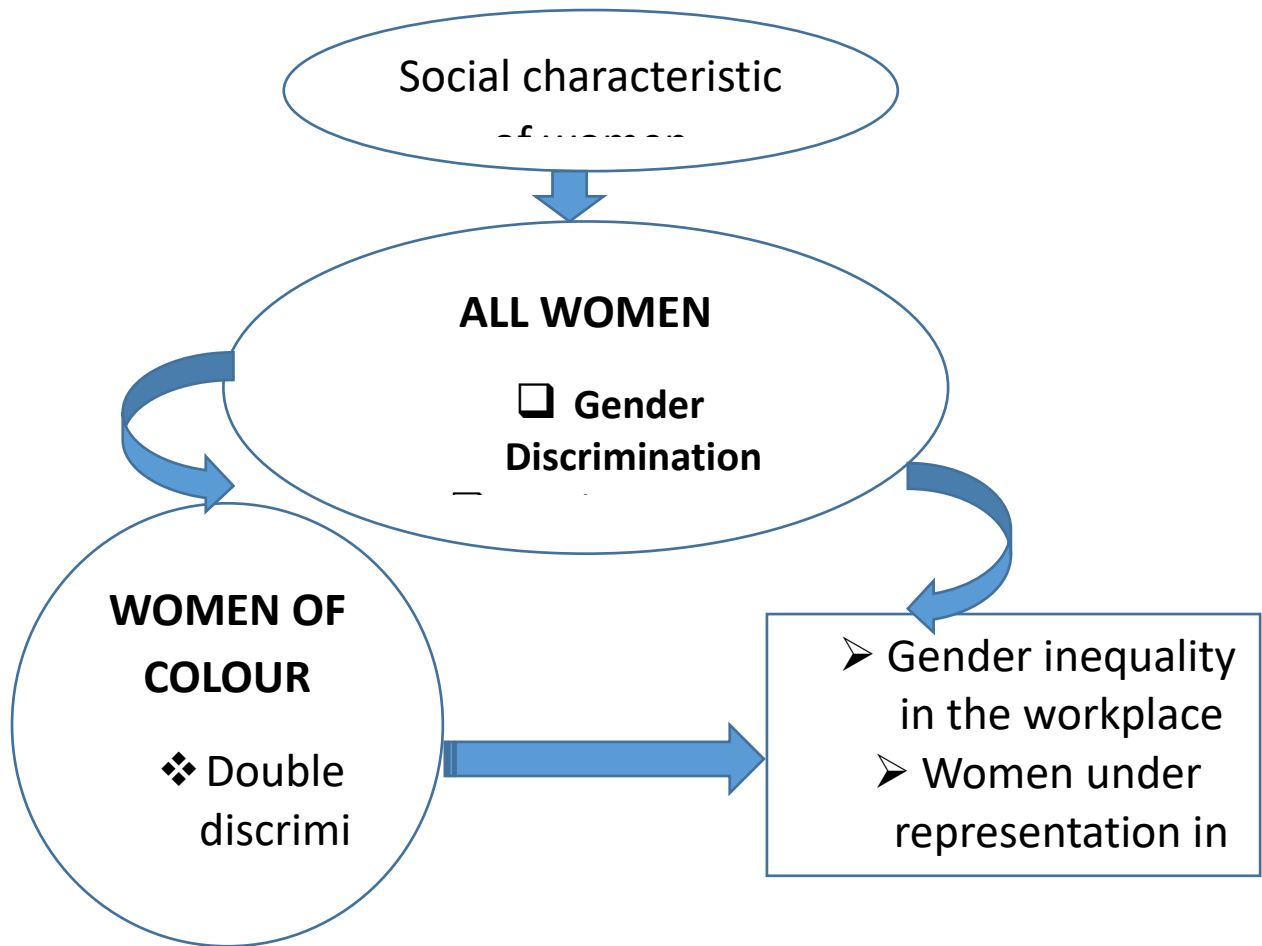


Fig 2.1

Conceptual Framework using Intersectional Theory: Source Modified from Intersectionality Theory by Crenshaw (1989).

Fig 2.1 shows the conceptual framework, modified from Intersectionality Theory, for the understanding of the nature and manifestation of gender inequality in the workplace. It shows that although gender inequality affects all women employees because of their gender, that it doubly affects women of colour for being women and for their race and skin colour and thus leads to their underrepresentation in upper management position of organizations.

3.1 Significance Of The Topic In Relation To The Literature Reviewed

This study aims to address the issue of gender inequality and the underrepresentation of women, and also women of colour, in upper management positions within Transport for London, United

Kingdom. To provide a comprehensive understanding of this topic, a thorough literature review has been conducted. The literature review helped in defining and clarifying key concepts such as gender inequality, underrepresentation of women in upper management positions and the various factors that promote gender inequality in the workplace. It further laid the foundation for understanding the terms and their significance within the context of this study. The literature review also explored various theories and frameworks related to gender inequality and women's representation in leadership roles. This theoretical underpinning provided a lens through which to analyze the findings and draw meaningful conclusions. By reviewing studies conducted by researchers worldwide, the literature review allows for a global perspective on the issue. It helped to identify common trends, challenges, and potential solutions that have been observed in different contexts. Through the review, the study identified gaps in existing research. In this case, it highlights the limited focus on black women and the absence of studies addressing the unique challenges faced by women of colour in reaching upper management positions in the transportation sector. The review ensures that the study is contextually relevant. While gender inequality is a widespread issue, its manifestations and contributing factors can vary across industries and regions and therefore the need to study its effects on women and women of colour in a transport industry located in the United Kingdom. Thus the literature review serves as a knowledge foundation for these efforts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed for conducting this research. It provides a structured overview of the research approach, the target population, the sample size determination, and the sampling method employed. Additionally, it elaborates on the data collection tools and procedures, as well as the techniques for data analysis.

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The study intends to provide answers to the research questions bordering on the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London; the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London; the practice of gender pay gap in Transport for London; the factors that lead to gender pay gap in Transport for London; the existence of human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London; the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London and the possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions.

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

Intersectionality framework was propounded by Crenshaw (1989). The framework recognizes that individuals hold multiple social identities (such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and more), and these identities intersect to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression. Intersectionality helps to explain how the challenges faced by women

in general are compounded for women of colour due to the intersection of gender and race, leading to a more complex form of discrimination and disadvantage. Intersectionality provides insight into the reasons why certain women face an elevated vulnerability to gender-based violence, encounter a more significant wage disparity, and have restricted entry to economic prospects compared to others (Thurston, nd). The intersectionality theory also helps us understand that although women face the problem of underrepresentation in upper management position; women of colour experience more challenges in the context of leadership and upper management roles. Women of colour experience a complex interplay of gender and racial discrimination, which can lead to particularly daunting barriers when seeking advancement in organizations. Intersectional theory when applied to the study of gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in the workplace explains how women of colour are often subjected to both gender and racial bias. And they may be excluded from leadership positions due to stereotypes related to both their gender and race, making it harder for them to break through the glass ceiling.

Social role theory on the other hand was propounded by Eagly in the 1980's. The Social Role Theory posits that societal norms, expectations, and beliefs about gender roles influence individuals' behaviors, shaping their choices, aspirations, and opportunities. In many cultures, these gender roles have been historically divided, with women being associated with nurturing and domestic responsibilities, while men are linked to leadership, authority, and decision-making roles (Eagly & Wood, 1999). These stereotypes, often referred to as gender role beliefs, develop as individuals observe behaviors exhibited by males and females, leading them to make assumptions about inherent qualities associated with each gender (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The Social Role Theory provides insights into the gender disparities observed in upper management positions within organizations. The traditional division of labor based on gender roles has led to the reinforcement of stereotypes and biases that impact hiring, promotion, and leadership

opportunities. The societal belief that leadership roles are "masculine" and suited for men can lead to unconscious biases when evaluating candidates for top management positions. This bias can be a barrier to women who do not conform to the perceived leadership mold (Heilman, 2001).

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

Research Objectives: The general objective of this study is to assess gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position of Transport for London.
2. To find out the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position of Transport for London.
3. To examine the existence of gender pay gap in Transport for London.
4. To determine the existence of human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London.
5. To assess the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions
6. To find out possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided this study.

1. Does equal representation of women in upper management position exist in Transport for London?
2. What are the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London?
3. Does gender pay gap exist in Transport for London?
4. Are there human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London?
5. What are the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London?
6. What are the possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions?

3.4 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive cross-sectional design under the mixed methods approach. The mixed methods research approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in conducting a research study. The use of multiple methods was for the purpose of merging data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The study utilized cross-sectional research methodology to capture a momentary snapshot of a population or particular group, aiming to comprehend their characteristics, behaviors, and/or attitudes during that specific time frame.

It also allows for comparison of different groups to identify similarities or differences in the variables of interest.

3.5 Population and Sample

The study population is made up of all employees in Transport for London United Kingdom. Transport for London has ten subsidiaries namely: London Underground, London Buses, DLR, London Over ground, TfL Rail, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the Emirates Air Line. (Transport for London, 2022). The organization has a total of 26,048 employees with 75.4% male employee population and 24.6% female employee population at the end of 2022 (Transport for London, 2023).

3.6 Participant Selection

To achieve the sample population, a multi stage cluster sampling procedure, which entails successive selection of subsidiaries, departments and respondents, was employed. Transport for London has ten subsidiaries namely: London Underground, London Buses, Docklands Light Rail(DLR), London Overground, TfL Rail, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the Emirates Air Line (Transport for London, 2022). These ten subsidiaries formed the sampling frame for the study. Therefore, at the first stage, simple random sampling by balloting was used to select four out of the ten subsidiaries of the organization. At the second stage, simple random sampling by balloting was also be used to select two departments each from the four subsidiaries in Transport for London. At the third stage, 20 male and female employees were selected from each of the subsidiaries based on availability sampling method. Therefore, four subsidiaries, eight departments and 80 male and female respondents were recruited for this study. To select the qualitative participants, two participants were selected from each of the four subsidiaries and they include 8 mid and senior management employees that were purposefully selected.

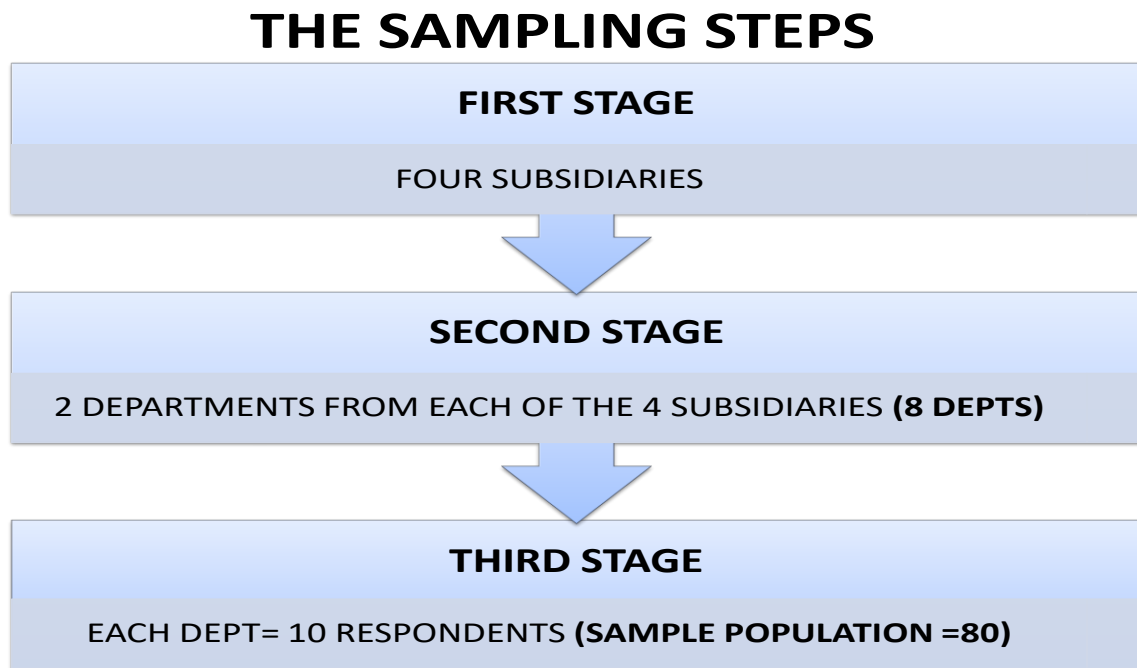


Fig 3.1 shows the sampling steps for the study

3.7 Instrumentation

The major instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. They were administered to both male and female respondents and it was used to collect information on their respective socio-demographic characteristics as well as data on the existence of equal representation of women in upper management positions and the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management positions. The instrument also provided data on the existence of gender pay gap, the existence of human resource policies and practices that could hinder women from getting to upper management positions and factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions. In addition, possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions were also sought.

Qualitative data on the other hand were collected using in-depth interview (IDI). The in-depth interview was used in order to draw out the needed information from the mid to senior management employees. In-depth interview was employed instead of focus group discussion

because it would be difficult to gather the desired participants at once due to the nature of their jobs and work schedules. A total of eight (8) IDIs were conducted in the four subsidiaries of the organisation. Two participants were selected from each of the four subsidiaries. The IDI guide were made up of open-ended questions accompanied with probes aimed at providing wider exploration of the employees' observations, experiences, practices and predicaments in reaching upper management position in Transport for London, United Kingdom.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the employees with the help of two research assistants who were trained for two days on the concepts, aims and methods of data collection, as well as how to ensure that the instruments were properly completed. All the questionnaires were self-administered. Also, the qualitative method was based on phenomenology. This is because the study sought to explore people's experiences in details. Therefore, a total of eight in-depth interviews were conducted and two in each subsidiary with female employees of Transport for London, United Kingdom.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The researcher and the research assistants approached the respondents in their various offices to administer the questionnaire. Also for the in-depth interview, the participants were also approached in their various departments and were interviewed in their offices or over the telephone as requested or preferred by the participants. The researcher employed self-administered method as the respondents were left to fill out the instruments themselves. For the qualitative data collection, the interviews were conducted by the researcher while a note taker

took notes of the discussions. Notes were taken instead of tape recording so as to protect the participants and assure them of the confidentiality of their responses.

3.10 Data Analysis

Since this is a mixed study, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. For the quantitative data analyses, descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency tables were employed in characterizing the respondents. Chi-square test analyses were used to test agreement on key variables between the male and female respondents and to illustrate the relationships. The qualitative data analysis was carried out using thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis is indeed a method commonly used for analyzing qualitative data. It involves identifying patterns or themes within the data to understand the underlying meaning. While this method is flexible and can be adapted to various research contexts, it typically follows steps such as familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes, and finally, reporting the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the qualitative data collected was analyzed by repetitive data reading and categorization into themes according to the purposes of the study and key responses that best complement the quantitative data were chosen.

3.11 Research Design Limitations

The research design limitations included that the employees had limited time for interviews or surveys due to work demands. This affected the researcher's ability to collect data from numerous numbers of them. To counter this challenge, the researcher overcame this challenge by recruiting two research assistants. In addition, due to the sensitivity of the study topic, some respondents initially were reluctant to participate in the survey but this was countered by assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodology for the research, including the research approach, sample population, sample size determination, sampling method, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques. The study aims to address questions related to gender inequality and underrepresentation of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London. The specific objectives and questions addressing women's representation, barriers, and gender pay gap, HR policies, and solutions were addressed. Two theoretical frameworks were chosen to guide the study: Intersectionality, which explores how multiple social identities intersect to create unique experiences, and Social Role Theory, which examines how societal norms shape gender roles and behavior. The research design chosen is cross-sectional design within the mixed methods approach, allowing for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The study population consists of all employees at Transport for London, with a sample size of 80 determined statistically. A multi-stage cluster sampling method was utilized to select participants from four subsidiaries and eight departments in the organisation. Data were collected using questionnaires for quantitative data and in-depth interviews for qualitative data, with open-ended questions and probes in the in-depth interview guide. Questionnaires were administered to employees of Transport for London with the assistance of four research assistants. All qualitative data collected were analyzed and arranged in themes. Quantitative data on the other hand were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Potential limitations included limited participant availability and fear of disclosure. The use of research assistants and the assurance of confidentiality helped to address these challenges.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Preamble: This chapter discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and other findings from the field data which explored Gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour from upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom. A total of eighty questionnaires were administered to the respondents and recorded a hundred percent return rate. The study was carried out between September and December, 2023.

4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4.1 Socio-demographics characteristics of respondents

Variables	Descriptions	Frequencies	Percentage s	Total(%)
Sex	Male	35	43.8	80(100.0)
	Female	45	56.2	
Age	18-25years	18	22.5	80(100.0)
	26-35years	22	27.5	
	46-55years	27	33.75	
	56years & above	13	16.25	
Race	Whites/Europeans	34	42.5	80(100.0)
	Other races	46	57.5	
Religion	Christianity	33	41.2	80(100.0)
	Islam	15	18.8	
	Atheist	15	18.8	
	Others	17	21.2	
Level of education	Primary	2	2.5	80(100.0)
	Secondary	53	66.2	
	Tertiary	25	31.2	

Length of service	1-5years	21	26.2	80(100.0)
	6-10years	24	30.0	
	11-15years	14	17.5	
	16-20years	11	13.8	
	21-25years	6	7.5	
	26-30years	4	5.0	
Job levels	Senior MGT	10	12.5	80(100.0)
	Middle MGT	33	41.2	
	First level mGT	13	16.2	
	Junior staff	24	30.0	

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Male respondents were 43.8% while female respondents were 56.2%. This signifies a fair representation of both sex. The ages of respondents were 18-25years (22.5%), 26-35years (27.5%), 46-55years (33.75%) and 56years & above (16.25%). The races of the respondents were 42.5% for Whites/Europeans while other races were (57.5%). This implies that all races were included in the study. The religious affiliations of the respondents include: Christianity (41.2%), Islam (18.8%), atheist (18.8%) and other religion (21.2%). The Christianity is the prominent religion as seen from the data. The level of education of the respondents include primary (2.5%), secondary education (66.2%) and tertiary education (31.2%). The length of service of the respondents include: 1-5years(26.2%), 6-10years(30.0%), 11-15years (17.5%), 16-20years (13.8%), 21-25years (7.5%) and 26-30years (5.0%). The job levels of the respondents are senior management (12.5%), middle management (41.2%), first level management (16.2%) and junior staff (30.0%).

4.2: Research Questions One: Does Equal Representation Of Women In Upper management Position Exist in Transport For London?

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents by the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES FREQ(%)	NO FREQ(%)	DON'T KNOW FREQ(%)	TOTAL FREQ(%)
1.	Over the past twelve months have you been promoted?	54(67.5)	26(32.5)	0(0.0)	80(100.0)
2.	Are men promoted more than women in your current workplace?	35(43.8)	35(43.8)	10(12.4)	80(100.0)
3.	Do female employees have difficulties maintaining work balance and family responsibilities?	39(48.8)	41(51.2)	0(0.0)	80(100.0)
4.	Are female employees made to give up a position for the opposite sex even when you are qualified?	41(51.2)	30(37.5)	9(11.3)	80(100.0)

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of respondents by the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London. The result shows that 65.7% of the respondents affirmed that over the past twelve months they have been promoted while 32% have not been promoted. An in-depth interview participant also stated thus:

I became a Group Station Manager. That was where the promotion stopped. Yet the company claims to have an equal policy (60year old female IDI participant).

Also, 43.8% of the respondents agreed that men are promoted more than women in your current workplace while 43.8 declined; however, 12.4% indicated that they did not know. Furthermore, on whether the respondents currently have difficulties maintaining work balance and family responsibilities; 48.8% agreed while 51.2% disagreed. On whether female employees made to

give up a position for the opposite sex even when they are qualified; 51.2% indicated yes, 37.5% indicated no while 11.3% indicated that they did not know.

4.3 Research Question Two: What are the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London?

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents on the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES FREQ(%)	NO FREQ(%)	DON'T KNOW FREQ(%)	Total FREQ(%)
5.	Do you have female mentors in top management positions at your current workplace?	25(31.2)	55(68.8)	0(0.0)	80(100.0)
6.	Do men and women have equal chances of being considered for a position at your current workplace?	35(43.8)	28(35.0)	17(21.2)	80(100.0)
7.	Do you consider men more able to carry out official management tasks than women?	28(35.0)	38(47.5)	14(17.5)	80(100.0)
8.	Are men and women given the same tasks at work at your current workplace?	21(26.2)	29(36.2)	30(37.5)	80(100.0)
9.	Do you feel like female employees have to work harder at your job to get promoted?	53(66.2)	27(33.2)	0(0.0)	80(100.0)

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.3 provided responses on research questions two which asked what are the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London. On whether the respondents have female mentors in top management positions at your current workplace, 31.2% agreed while 68.8% disagreed. Furthermore, 43.8% of the respondents agreed that men and women have equal chances of being considered for a position at your current workplace while 35.0% disagreed and 21.2% did not know. Also, 35.0% indicated that men are more able to carry out official management tasks than women while 47.5%

disagreed and 17.5% however did not know. On whether men and women are given the same tasks at work, 26.2% agreed, 36.2% disagreed while 37.5% indicated that they did not know. Also, 66.2% agreed that female employees have to work harder at their jobs to get promoted while 33.2% disagreed. A qualitative participant also stated thus:

*I joined as a leading rail man. That was the least job
you could get in the company. We worked so hard.
Did everything from cleaning the toilets, platforms,
washing the walls, every menial job. I gave my
life to the company(60year old female participant).*

4.4 Research Questions Three: Does gender pay gap exist in Transport for London?

Table 4.4: Distribution of respondents on the existence of gender pay gap in Transport for London

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES FREQ(%)	NO FREQ(%)	DON'T KNOW FREQ(%)	Total FREQ(%)
10.	In my current workplace, men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks	43(53.8)	21(26.2)	16(20.0)	80(100.0)
11.	In my current workplace, men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses	33(41.2)	19(23.8)	28(35.0)	80(100.0)

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.4 shows that 53.8% of the respondents indicated that men and women the same salary for the same tasks while 26.2 indicated otherwise however, 20.0% of them did not know. Furthermore, on whether men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses; 41.2% agreed, 23.8% disagreed while 35.0% did not know.

4.5: Research Question Four: Human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in the workplace

Table 4.5 Distribution of respondents on human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in the workplace

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES FREQ(%)	NO FREQ(%)	DON'T KNOW FREQ(%)	Total FREQ(%)
12.	Do human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on a qualified job positions?	24(30.0)	24(30.0)	32(40.0)	80(100.0)
13.	Does your organization have an equal opportunity policy that makes sure no woman is discriminated?	27(33.8)	31(38.8)	22(27.5)	80(100.0)
14.	Does your organization have a training policy that covers both women and men?	23(28.8)	30(37.5)	27(33.8)	80(100.0)

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.5 shows the distribution of respondents on human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in the workplace. The results revealed that 30.0% of the respondents agreed that human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on a qualified job positions, 30.0% disagreed while 40.0% did not know. The qualitative study also found out thus:

HR Policies not being transparent. PRP is not transparent. It gives the men an edge over the women(56year old female participant and staff member)

Additionally, 33.8% indicated that their organization have an equal opportunity policy that makes sure no woman is discriminated against, 38.8% disagreed while 27.5% indicated that they did not know. Moreso, on whether their organization has a training policy that covers both

women and men; 28.8% agreed, 37.5% disagreed while 33.8% did not know. The qualitative study also supported the above findings as she said thus:

*Most of the people interviewing are men...Men tend to favour men.
When most of the interview panels are men, it becomes the “big boys’
Company (50 year old participant and female staff).*

4.6: Research Questions Five: Factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace

Table 4.6 Distribution of respondents on the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES FREQ(%)	NO FREQ(%)	DON'T KNOW FREQ(%)	TOTAL FREQ(%)
15.	Do you have co-workers who refer to you according to your race/skin colour?	18(22.5)	25(31.2)	37(46.2)	80(100.0)
16.	Have you taken up acting or secondment roles but was not given the position?	21(26.2)	55(68.8)	4(5.0)	80(100.0)
17.	Have you been considered less qualified due to your skin colour?	28(25.0)	52(65.0)	0(0.0)	80(100.0)

Source: Author’s field report 2024

Table 4.6 asked question to determine the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace. The table shows that on whether the respondents have co-workers who referred to them according to their race/skin colour; 22.5% said yes, 31.2% said no while 46.2% did not know. On whether they have taken up acting or secondment roles but was not given the position; 26.2% indicated yes, 68.8% indicated no while 5.0% did not know. A qualitative participant further stated the following:

Taking up secondment roles without being taken for the

*position happens a lot. When a position is vacant and the most qualified person to take over is a black person, the company will run an external campaign to fill that position while the black person is “Acting”. When they then employ a new person, the qualified black person still trains them before they resume office***(56year old female participant and staff member).**

Another in-depth interview participant also stated thus:

People of colour are so despondent they don't bother trying
(45year old female participant and staff member)

On if they have been considered less qualified due to your skin colour; the result showed that 25.0% said yes while 65.0% indicated no. The quantitative study further discovered the following:

Segregation of the blacks is a very big issue. Not enough people of colour in upper management, so no mentors
(52year old, female participant and staff member)

Another IDI participant also added thus:

*To be a black female in senior management, you have to go through the hoops, the politics, the heartbreak, everything. You have to be a puppet saying ‘yes’ to everything they tell you to do. Once you question you fall out of favour and your promotion stops there. I became a GSM after 30years something that takes white women less than 10years if interested and direct recruit is a graduate***(60year old female participant)**

4.7 Research Questions Six: Possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions

Table 4.7 Distribution of respondents on the possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions

S/ N	Variables	SA FREQ (%)	A FREQ (%)	U FREQ (%)	D FREQ (%)	SD FREQ (%)	Total FREQ (%)
18.	Women need role models and mentors to guide and support them	35 (43.8)	18 (22.5)	22 (27.5)	5 (6.2)	0 (0.0)	80(100.0)
19.	Companies should work towards closing gender gap	40 (50.0)	21 (26.2)	11 (13.8)	8 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	80(100.0)
20.	HR policies should not favor one gender over the other	36 (45.0)	26 (32.5)	17 (21.2)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	80(100.0)
21.	Men and women should be treated as equals in the workplace	28 (35.0)	27 (33.8)	19 (23.2)	6 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	80(100.0)

Source: Author's field report 2024

Table 4.7 provided an answer to the research question which inquired on the possible solutions to the barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions. On whether women need role models and mentors to guide and support them; 43.8% strongly agreed, 22.5% agreed, 27.5% were uncertain while 6.2% disagreed. On whether companies should work towards closing gender gap; 50% strongly agreed, 26.2% agreed, 13.8% were uncertain while 8.0% disagreed. Furthermore, on whether the HR policies should not favor one gender over the other; 45.0% strongly agreed, 32.5% agreed, 21.2% were uncertain while 1.25% disagreed. On whether men and women should be treated as equals in the workplace; 35.0% strongly agreed, 33.8% agreed, 23.2% were uncertain while 7.5%. Additionally, the qualitative participant stated that:

Employ more women in every department including HR.

Once they have enough women in all departments, the

Competition will become on merit (50 year old participant and female staff).

4.8 Chi-Square Test Analysis

Table 4.8 Chi-square table showing the sex of respondents cross tabulated by their responses to the variables of interest

Variables	Sex/ Gender	Freq(%) Yes	Freq(%) No	Freq(%) Don't Know	Freq(%) Total	Chi- square (χ) p=0.05
Over the past twelve months have you been promoted?	Male	26(74.3)	9(25.7)	0(0.0)	35(100.0)	p=0.3
	Female	28(62.2)	17(37.8)	0(0.0)	45(100.0)	
Are men promoted more than women in your current workplace?	Male	15(42.9)	18(51.4)	2(5.7)	35(100.0)	p=0.2
	Female	20(44.4)	17(37.8)	8(17.8)	45(100.0)	
Do you currently have difficulties maintaining work balance and family responsibilities?	Male	21(60.0)	14(40.0)	0(0.0)	35(100.0)	P=0.16
	Female	18(40.0)	27(60.0)	0(0.0)	45(100.0)	
Do you have female mentors in top management positions at your current workplace?	Male	9(25.7)	26(74.3)	0(0.0)	35(100.0)	p=0.2
	Female	16(35.6)	29(64.4)	0(0.0)	45(100.0)	
Do men and women have equal chances of being considered for a position at your current workplace?	Male	15(42.9)	9(25.7)	11(31.4)	35(100.0)	p=0.10
	Female	20(44.4)	19(42.2)	6(13.3)	45(100.0)	
Do you consider men able to carry out official management tasks than women	Male	6(17.1)	22(62.9)	7(15.6)	35(100.0)	p=0.01
	Female	22(48.9)	16(35.6)	7(15.6)	45(100.0)	
Are men and women given the same tasks at work at your current workplace?	Male	6(17.1)	16(45.7)	0(0.0)	35(100.0)	p=0.21
	Female	14(31.1)	13(28.9)	0(0.0)	45(100.0)	
Do you feel like you have to work harder at your job to get promoted?	Male	20(57.1)	15(42.9)	0(0.0)	35(100.0)	p=0.12
	Female	33(73.3)	12(26.7)		45(100.0)	
In my current workplace, men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks	Male	10(28.6)	12(34.3)	13(37.1)	35(100.0)	p=0.00
	Female	11(24.4)	31(68.9)	3(6.7)	45(100.0)	
In my current workplace, men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses	Male	4(11.4)	9(25.7)	22(62.9)	35(100.0)	p=0.00
	Female	29(64.4)	10(22.2)	6(13.3)	45(100.0)	
Do human resource decisions make it difficult for you to take on qualified job positions?	Male	5(14.3)	10(28.6)	20(57.1)	35(100.0)	p=0.00
	Female	19(42.2)	14(31.1)	12(26.7)	45(100.0)	

Does your organization have an equal opportunity policy that makes sure no woman is discriminated against?	Male	11(31.4)	15(42.9)	9(25.7)	35(100.0)	p=0.8
	Female	16(35.6)	16(35.6)	13(28.9)	45(100.0)	
Does your organization have a training policy that covers both women and men?	Male	8(22.9)	12(34.3)	15(42.9)	35(100.0)	p=0.29
	Female	15(33.3)	18(40.0)	12(26.7)	45(100.0)	
Do you have co-workers who refer to you according to your race/skin colour?	Male	16(17.1)	12(34.3)	17(48.6)	35(100.0)	p=0.5
	Female	12(26.7)	13(28.9)	20(44.4)	45(100.0)	
Have you taken up acting or secondment roles but was not given the position?	Male	11(31.4)	7(20.0)	17(48.6)	35(100.0)	p=0.4
	Female	10(22.2)	14(31.1)	21(46.7)	45(100.0)	
Have you been considered less qualified due to your skin colour/race?	Male	1(2.9)	18(51.4)	16(45.7)	35(100.0)	p=0.11
	Female	8(17.8)	20(44.4)	17(37.8)	45(100.0)	

Source: Author's field report 2024

The study utilizes Chi-square analyses to examine the relationship between respondents' gender (male or female) and key variables under investigation. The significance level ($p < 0.05$) is used to determine if observed differences are statistically significant. The purpose is to identify variables that show significant associations with respondents' gender. Therefore Chi-square analyses were conducted to compare male and female responses on key study variables. The Chi-square test statistics measure the extent to which expectations align with observed data. The significance level ($p < 0.05$) helps determine if observed differences between male and female responses are statistically significant. The analyses aim to assess the level of significance of being male or female in relation to other variables investigated in the study. The goal is to identify variables that demonstrate statistically significant associations with respondents' gender, shedding light on gender-related perceptions and disparities within the study context. The results show that sex of the respondents are only significant with men considered to be able to carry out official management tasks than women ($p < 0.00$), men and women earning the same salary for the same tasks ($p < 0.00$), men and women having equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses ($p < 0.00$) and human resource decisions making it difficult for them taking on a qualified job

positions ($p < 0.00$). Also in support of how human resource decisions make it difficult for employees to take on qualified job positions; an in-depth interview participant also mentioned thus:

I got tired of fighting. I wasn't even given Area Manager's position after being GSM for more than 8 years. But some DSMs got AM jobs. What's that? I got pushed aside to Ambassador's Manager. That was the final straw. It was like being made irrelevant. I know a DSM that was on maternity leave during FFTF process but was given Area Manager Position. Because of her skin colour, I am a black woman and never got substantial role as an Area Manager at the stations. I knew it was time to leave. So I just stayed around for 3 years to make my service full 40 years then retired (60 year old female participant)

4.9 Summary of Findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that:

- Male respondents were 43.8% while female respondents were 56.2%.
- The ages of respondents were 18-25 years (22.5%), 26-35 years (27.5%), 46-55 years (33.75%) and 56 years & above (16.25%).
- The races of the respondents were 42.5% for white/Europeans while other races were 57.5%.
- The religious affiliations of the respondents include: Christianity (41.2%), Islam (18.8%), atheist (18.8%) and other religions (21.2%).
- The level of education of the respondents includes primary (2.5%), secondary education (66.2%) and tertiary education (31.2%).
- The length of service of the respondents include: 1-5 years (26.2%), 6-10 years (30.0%), 11-15 years (17.5%), 16-20 years (13.8%), 21-25 years (7.5%) and 26-30 years (5.0%).

- The job levels of the respondents are senior management (12.5%), middle management (41.2%), first level management (16.2%) and junior staff (30.0%).

On the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London, the result shows that:

1. 65.7% of the respondents affirmed that over the past twelve months have you been promoted while 32% have not been promoted.
2. 43.8% of the respondents agreed that men are promoted more than women in their current workplace while 43.8 declined; however, 12.4% indicated that they did not know.
3. 48.8% of the respondents agreed that female employees have difficulties maintaining work balance and family responsibilities while 51.2% disagreed.
4. 51.2% indicated that female employees have been made to give up a position for the opposite sex even when they are qualified; 37.5% declined while 11.3% did not know.

On the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London, the study found out that:

5. 31.2% have female mentors in top management positions at your current workplace while 68.8% disagreed.
6. 43.8% of the respondents agreed that men and women have equal chances of being considered for a position at your current workplace while 35.0% disagreed and 21.2% did not know.
7. 35.0% of the respondents indicated that men are more able to carry out official management tasks than women while 47.5% disagreed and 17.5% however did not know.
8. 26.2% agreed that men and women are given the same tasks at work, 36.2% disagreed while 37.5% indicated that they did not know.
9. 66.2% agreed that they feel that female employees have to work harder at their jobs to get promoted while 33.2% disagreed.

On whether gender pay gap exist in Transport for London, the study found out that:

10. 53.8% of the respondents indicated that men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks while 26.2% indicated otherwise. However, 20.0% did not know if men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks in their organization.

11. 41.2% agreed that men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses, 23.8% disagreed while 35.0% did not know.

On the human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in the workplace, the study revealed that:

12. 30.0% of the respondents agreed that human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on a qualified job positions, 30.0% disagreed while 40.0% did not know.

13. 33.8% of the respondents indicated that their organization have an equal opportunity policy that ensures no woman is discriminated against, 38.8% disagreed while 27.5% indicated that they did not know.

14. 28.8% of the respondents agreed that their organization have a training policy that covers both women and men, 37.5% disagreed while 33.8% did not know.

On the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace, the study discovered that:

15. 22.5% of the respondents agreed that they have co-workers who referred to them according to their race/skin colour; 31.2% said no while 46.2% did not know.

16. On whether they have taken up acting or secondment roles but was not given the position; 26.2% indicated yes, 68.8% indicated no while 5.0% did not know.

17. On if they have been considered less qualified due to your skin colour; 25.0% said yes while 65.0% indicated no.

To determine the possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions, the study found out that:

18. On whether women need role models and mentors to guide and support them; 43.8% strongly agreed, 22.5% agreed, 27.5% were uncertain while 6.2% disagreed.

19. On whether companies should work towards closing gender gap; 50% strongly agreed, 26.2% agreed, 13.8% were uncertain while 8.0% disagreed.

20. On whether the HR policies should not favor one gender over the other; 45.0% strongly agreed, 32.5% agreed, 21.2% were uncertain while 1.25% disagreed.

21. On whether men and women should be treated as equals in the workplace; 35.0% strongly agreed, 33.8% agreed, 23.2% were uncertain while 7.5%.

The Chi-Square analyses which tested sex of respondents against the study variables show that:

22. There is a significant relationship between sex of respondents and men being considered to be able to carry out official management tasks than women ($p < 0.00$).

23. There is a significant relationship between sex of respondents and women and men earning the same salary for the same tasks ($p < 0.00$).

24. There is a significant relationship between sex of respondents and women having equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses ($p < 0.00$).

25. There is a significant relationship between sex of respondents and human resource decisions making it difficult for individuals to take on a qualified job positions ($p < 0.00$).

4.10 Conclusion

The study revealed the complex interplay of workplace dynamics influencing gender equality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom. Findings indicated mixed views on promotion rates, with 65.7% reporting promotions in the past year. However, concerns were raised about gender disparities in promotions, with 43.8% perceiving bias towards men. Work-life balance was a concern for nearly half of the respondents (48.8%), while over half (51.2%) reported instances of gender-based position sacrifices. Additionally, barriers to equal representation of gender in the workplace included limited female mentors in top management (31.2%) and perceptions of unequal consideration for both men and women for positions (43.8%). Gender biases regarding task allocation and promotion efforts were also highlighted. Regarding salary parity and opportunities for wage increases, opinions varied, reflecting uncertainty or skepticism among respondents. Also, human resource policies were studied and it was found that a significant portion perceived challenges in accessing qualified job positions for female employees are due to HR decisions.

Furthermore, only a third confirmed the existence of equal opportunity and training policies for both genders. Discriminatory practices against women of colour were reported, including racial references by co-workers and perceived qualifications based on skin colour. Proposed solutions emphasized the need for role models and companies' commitment to closing gender gaps. Additionally, respondents advocated for unbiased HR policies, and gender equality in the workplace. Furthermore, the Chi-square test result shows a statistically significant relationship between sex and men being perceived to be more capable of carrying out official management tasks compared to women; men and women being believed to earn the same salary for the same tasks; both men and women being perceived to have equal opportunities for wage increase, and bonuses as well as human resource decisions being seen as creating barriers for female employees to take on qualified job positions (all at $p < 0.05$).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with presentation and discussion of the data collected between October and December, 2024. Eighty copies of the survey instrument were administered to respondents who were employees of Transport for London, United Kingdom who are aged 18 years and above. Also integrated in the analysis are qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with female employees of the organization.

The discussion of study results follow a definite sequence to make for easy comprehension. That is, the chapter is structured in different parts, namely, the socio-demographic information of the study subjects, existence of equal representation of women in upper management position, barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position, existence of gender pay gap, human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions, factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions and possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions in Transport for London.

5.2 Socio-demographic Information of the Respondents

The respondents include both males (43.8%) and females (56.2 %). It was necessary to use both males and females in order to find out their experiences and views about gender inequality in Transport for London. The respondents were aged between 18 and 60 years and all races were accommodated in the study (42.5% for White/Europeans and other races 57.5%). The majority of the respondents were from the Christian faith (41.2%) and also, respondents with secondary education (66.2%) and tertiary education (31.2%) were more. Furthermore, most of the

respondents were employees who have worked between 6-10years (30.0%) with many of them in middle management (41.2%) positions.

5.3 Discussion of Research Question One: Does equal representation of women in upper management position exist in Transport for London?

The first research question sought to find out the existence of equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London. The result shows that a majority of the respondents (65.7%) affirmed that over the past twelve months they have been promoted. Also, less than half of the respondents (43.8%) affirmed that men were promoted more than women. This could translate to more men moving closer to upper management position to than the females. Another study by Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010) equally found out through their study that although female employees are under sponsored and are not advancing in their organizations. Without sponsorship women are unlikely to be appointed to top positions and they may also be more reluctant to go for higher positions as a result. They further highlighted that sponsorships are very important for most organizations as Deutsche Bank, Unilever, Sodexo and IBM Europe who have established sponsorship programs to facilitate the promotion of high-potential women.

Almost half of the respondents recruited for the study (48.8%) indicated that female employees may have difficulties maintaining work balance and family responsibilities. Another study that was carried out in Nkangala District by Khomotso (2016) also found that women in management positions face conflict between their work role and family responsibilities. The participants also indicated that they needed support from spouses, families, employers, supervisors and colleagues in order to cope with their multiple roles.

In addition, the study also found out that the majority of the respondents (51.2%) agreed that women have been made to give up a position for the opposite sex even when they are qualified. This usually may discourage female employees and Ellemers (2014) noted that women who feel undervalued at work are tempted to opt out.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Two: Are there barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London?

The study also sought to find out the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management positions in Transport for London. The study found out that the majority of the respondents (68.8%) disagreed that they have female mentors in top management positions in their organization. The implication is that the employees either do not have females in upper management positions or that the female managers are not willing to mentor the younger ones. As revealed by Schuchard (2022) traditionally, access to mentorship and sponsorship are more limited for women than men especially in male-dominated industries like the financial services industry. Having mentors at work act as sponsors to help their mentees reach new career trajectories by advocating on their behalf.

Furthermore, less than half of the respondents (43.8%) agreed that men and women have equal chances of being considered for the same position in their organization. Similarly, Chaturanga (2021) in his study also revealed that effective leadership is traditionally determined by masculine traits and women's feminine traits are considered to be soft or gentle traits and therefore are not suitable for leadership positions. Thus this stereotype negatively affects the assessment of women's abilities and their self-confidence, and women sometimes erroneously believe that they cannot advance to leadership positions. And even when she attains such a position, the men wants her to over perform (Correll, 2001). Another study by Akpinar-Sposito

(2013) found out that women who believe that glass ceiling phenomenon will operate to their disadvantage may be less likely to apply for open positions than equally qualified men

Also, 52.5% agreed that men are more able to carry out official management tasks than women. Women may be perceived by some managers or executives as not possessing enough of the male-type or leadership qualities required for promotion to senior-level positions and this may hamper their progress (Skelly & Johnson, 2011). A study also carried out by Akanbi and Salami (2011) also found that the majority of the respondents prefer to work for men rather than women because women were considered as hard to work (Tabassum et al., 2021).

On whether men and women are given the same tasks at work more of the respondents 64.8% agreed while 36.2% disagreed. The stereotyped perception that women lack effective leadership characteristics is a consistent characteristic of Thai corporations and causes women to experience barriers to career progressions (Napasri & YuYkondi, 2015). Yang (2011) identifies the persistence of similar gender-stereotyped images of women in organizations in China.

Furthermore, 66.2% agreed that female employees have to work harder at their jobs to get promoted. A study by Gorman and Kmec (2007) in Britain and the United States found that employers enforce more stringent performance expectations for women than on men in the same position and even when men and women hold identical job positions, women put in more effort and dedication to their jobs than the men.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Three: Does gender pay gap exist in Transport for London?

The gender pay gap is a metric that measures the difference in pay between women and men in an organization or similar organizations. The study also sought to unravel the existence of gender pay gap in Transport for London and found out that slightly above half of the respondents (53.8%) indicated that men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks while 47.2% indicated otherwise. Another study undertaken by Mukherjee and Patel (2020) also identified the gross discrimination faced by women in different fields of work, the existence of gender pay gap and various factors which affects the gender pay gap. The World Economic Forum (2017) in Tabassum et al., (2021) noted that an average gender gap of 32.0 percent existed in four areas, which include: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival as well as political empowerment. According to a 2017 Eurobarometer survey, 69% of both European women and men believe that women earn less than men. A staggering 90% of Europeans find it unacceptable for women to be paid less than men for the same work or work of equal value. Additionally, 64% of European workers support pay transparency and consent to the publication of average income according to the staff gender within the company (Marie Lecerf Members' Research Service, 2023).

Furthermore, on whether men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses less than half of the respondents agreed (41.2%). The importance of having equal wage increase for men and women is to avail the women the opportunity to provide education, healthcare and healthier food for their children (Human Rights Career, nd) themselves and for their other dependants.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question Four: Are there human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London?

The study also examined the human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London. The results revealed that 60.0% of the respondents agreed that human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on qualified job positions. Zafarullah (2000), who studied Bangladesh, reported that performance appraisal systems were heavily prejudiced and often contained inconsistent remarks or statements. Barkhuizen, Masakane and Sluis (2022) also discovered that social perceptions and stereotype as well as masculine corporate culture could limit women's career development. However, on the contrary, Babcock, Recalde, Vesterlund and Weingart (2017) in their study which examined the allocation of a task that everyone prefers to be completed by someone else such as writing a report, serving on a committee amongst others found that women volunteers, more than men volunteers, agreed to tasks with low promotability and as such since women hold tasks that are less promotable than those held by men, the women therefore will progress more slowly in organizations.

Also, the study found majority of the respondents (62.2%) agreed that their organization have equal opportunity policy that makes sure no woman is discriminated against. Equal opportunity policy can be made possible by instituting transparency and accountability to the organization which entails fair treatment and standing against everything that leads to abuse and discrimination (Personio, 2024).

The study also reported that 37.5% disagreed that their organization has a training policy that covers both women and men. Training plans are considered crucial as it helps employees

develop and contribute to learning culture and improvement in the organization. Therefore having a training policy that covers both women and men will ensure improved performance, future leadership, talent retention, innovation and competitive advantage to the organization (Learned, nd). Women however, may opt not to apply due to challenging or leadership roles if they fear that they lack the ability to perform such roles (Tabassum, et al., 2021).

5.7 Discussion of Research Question Five: What are the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London?

The study further attempted to determine the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace and discovered that only 22.5% of the respondents agreed that their colleagues referred to them according to their race/skin colour. In addition, on whether they have taken up acting or secondment roles but was not given the position because of their race; a majority of the respondents disagreed (68.8%) while 32.2% agreed. This implies that positions and responsibilities which the employees are qualified for and which they are called upon to take on in the absence/resignation/retirement of the employee handling the tasks are not eventually given to them rather they are replaced when another staff whom the management prefers is recruited or appointed, even though they are capable of carrying out the tasks.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (35.0%) agreed that they have been considered less qualified due to their skin colour. A study by Lean in (2020) reported that for every 100 men promoted to manager, only 58 Black women are promoted, despite the fact that Black women ask for promotions at the same rate as men (LeanIn.Org & McKinsey.com, 2019). In addition, for every 100 men hired into manager roles, only 64 Black women are hired. This

thus implies that fewer Black women are promoted at every subsequent level, and the representation gap keeps getting wider.

Furthermore, according to research from LeanIn.Org and SurveyMonkey (2020), in the year 2020 Black women were almost twice as likely as white men to report being laid off, furloughed, or had their hours and/or pay reduced because of COVID-19. Shonwumi (2023) found in her higher education study that white women often fail to provide clear support to their Black colleagues and may even obstruct their career advancement. Furthermore, when Black women assume leadership positions, the conventional traits associated with leaders frequently clash with the stereotypical expectations of Black Women.

In addition, Bahn and Cumming (2021) admitted that there is limited research on the experiences and obstacles women of colour face in terms of employment, opportunities for career advancement, and earnings in the U.S. labor market as they are filtered through the interplay of race and gender. Also, McGrew (2018) revealed the discriminatory nature of the workplace segregation faced by African American women as workplace segregation is seen as inefficient, profoundly distortionary and dampening Black women's wages and weakening aggregate growth. In addition, Alonso-Villar and Coral del Río (2017) in their study revealed that it was only from 1990 onward that African American women with either some college or university degrees had lower segregation (as compared with their peers) than those with lower education.

Bahn and McGrew (2017) revealed that like other women of colour, Latinas face multiple structural barriers in the U.S. labor market, including both gender discrimination and racial and ethnic discrimination. Empirical evidence suggests that these dual barriers extend beyond their individual impacts, potentially leading to heightened economic challenges specifically for Latina women. Mandel and Semyonov (2016) observed a significant reduction in racial disparities

between 1970 and 1980, followed by a continued decline at a slower pace until 2000. However, at the dawn of the new millennium, this positive trend reversed for both genders. The resurgence of the racial pay gap during this period can be attributed to the rise in overall income inequality, a plateau in occupational segregation, and an escalation in the unexplained segment of the gap, which they linked to economic discrimination.

More so, Del Río and Alonso-Villar (2015) in their work, found that segregation levels were higher for Asian men compared to Black men during 2008–2010. However, the perception of this segregation appeared to be positive for Asians but negative for Black individuals. Furthermore, although Hispanic men experienced higher levels of segregation compared to Hispanic women, the situation seemed to be worse for Black women.

5.8 Discussion of Research Question Six: Research: Possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions

The study also assessed the possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions in Transport for London. Many of the respondents strongly agreed (43.8%) and agreed (22.5%) that women need role models and mentors to guide and support them. This is to help them visualize their goals and provide them with the necessary template for a successful career.

The majority of the respondent strongly agreed (50%) and agreed (26.2%) that their companies should work towards closing gender gap. This was also recommended by Oladottir, Christiansen, Gunnarsdóttir and Kristjánsdóttir (2021) as they suggested for a gender-quota on top-management-team positions for the companies that fall under the board gender-quota legislation; an implementation of gender equality policy by the corporate boards; and, that leading

institutional investors, such as pension funds should implement a gender equality policy as part of their ownership strategy.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed (45.0) and agreed (32.5%) that the HR policies should not favor one gender over the other. This is important because according to women, HR practices are avenues where women are subjected to harmful work ethics as concerning their policies and decision making, hiring, training and pay as well as promotion (Starski & Hing, 2015).

Also, more of the respondents strongly agreed (35.0%) and agreed (33.8%) that men and women should be treated as equals in the workplace and Ata, Ljubica and Can (2020) in their study findings revealed that gender inequality has a causal effect on real economic outcomes at the industry level. Also, by using a large sample of emerging-market and developing economies the researchers were able to show that the industries with a typically greater share of women in their employment compared to other industries grow relatively faster in more gender-equal countries. Furthermore, on ensuring that women of colour are not marginalized, Lean in (2020) recommends that companies should set representation targets for black women, track and share progress toward these goals, and reward success.

In addition, Chi-square analysis was carried out to show the male and female respondents' views on the key variables of the study. This was to clearly show the two gender's agreement to what is obtainable in their organization. The results show statistical significance in the responses of males and female on men and women earning the same salary for the same tasks ($p=0.01$); men and women having equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses ($p=0.00$) and human resource decisions making it difficult for female employees to take on qualified job positions ($p=0.00$) in Transport for London. The results implies that men and women earning the same

salary for the same tasks in Transport for London; men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses in Transport for London and human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on qualified job positions in Transport for London. The findings of several studies suggest that employers harbor concerns about how women employees manage stress and their interpersonal skills. Studies indicate that while women can handle stress and work under pressure, they may not perform as effectively as their male counterparts. Moreover, women employees are more susceptible to stress-related illnesses due to the pressures they face both at home and in the workplace (Davidson & Cooper, 1992). These perceptions often impede women's career advancement.

Finally, cultural constraints, particularly prevalent in developing countries, dictate that women should assume traditional roles as housewives, mothers, and caretakers, rather than engaging in formal employment (Myerson & Fletcher, 2000).

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Gender inequality is considered a violation of international laws and it poses a hindrance to Sustainable Development Goal 5. Gender inequality persists globally, favoring men over women in various spheres. It includes unequal treatment and opportunities, limiting women's rights and perpetuating harmful stereotypes and biases. In the workplace, gender inequality manifests through occupational segregation, salary disparities, and limited access to managerial roles, influenced by societal biases and organizational structures. Furthermore, women particularly women of colour, face intersectional discrimination, experiencing wider pay gaps and unique challenges in career advancement. Despite evidence showing women's positive impact on economic growth and their effective leadership styles, barriers such as stereotypes, biases and representation in upper management positions still exist. Transport for London serves as a focal point for this study due to its significant workforce and reported efforts towards gender parity. The literature review chapter comprehensively defined and clarified key concepts surrounding gender inequality and the underrepresentation of women in upper management, providing a theoretical framework for analysis. By reviewing global research, it identifies common trends, challenges, and gaps, also regarding the experiences of women of colour in the transportation sector. The study draws on Intersectionality and Social Role Theory to understand the complex interplay of gender, race, and societal norms shaping workplace dynamics.

The methodology chapter outlined the research method, population, sample size determination, and methods of data collection and analysis employed in this study. A mixed-methods approach which combines both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews was

adopted, with a cross-sectional design providing a snapshot of the organization's current state. A multi-stage cluster sampling method was adopted with questionnaires administered to 80 male and female employees. Also, in-depth interviews with eight mid and senior management employees purposively selected from four subsidiaries was also adopted. Data analysis chosen was the descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

The fourth chapter discussed the results collected from the eighty survey responses and qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with female employees. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents revealed a diverse mix of genders, ages, races, religious affiliations, and educational backgrounds, with a notable presence in middle management positions. On the research question which aimed at determining the existence of equal representation of women in upper management; the study found that while a significant portion of respondents reported recent promotions, a notable percentage acknowledged male dominance in promotions and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance among the female respondents. Concerning barriers to equal representation, findings revealed the lack of female mentors in top management and perceived disparities in task allocation and promotion opportunities for the female employees. The existence of a gender pay gap was acknowledged by a substantial portion of respondents. Regarding HR policies, many respondents expressed uncertainty about the presence of policies addressing discrimination and training opportunities. Additionally, concerning women of colour, significant percentages reported experiences of racial bias in the workplace, including being referred to by race and facing obstacles in career advancement. Solutions to barriers hindering women's progress included the need for role models, gender equality advocacy, and fair HR policies. Chi-square analyses revealed significant relationships between respondents' gender and perceptions of management tasks, equal pay, HR decisions, and opportunities for advancement.

The fifth chapter presents and discusses the findings from the data collected with from the study while making references to similar findings in related studies by various researchers across the world.

6.2 Implications

This study is aimed at assessing the existence of gender inequality and barriers faced by women, including women of colour, in attaining upper management positions. By exploring these issues, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on gender inequality in the workplace and provides insights for addressing systemic barriers and promoting gender equity and diversity. Gender inequality in leadership positions is a social issue with broader implications beyond the organization. By studying gender inequality and the lack of women, particularly women of colour, in upper management positions within a transport company, it allows for an assessment of the prevailing organizational culture within the transport company. It also provides insights into the inclusivity and diversity practices within the company especially in transportation sector of the economy. The study provided the basis to identify the systemic biases or barriers that prevent women, especially women of colour, from advancing to leadership roles. The study findings further revealed the need to provide equal opportunities for career advancement for both male and female employees in order for the organizations to attract and retain a diverse pool of talent, enhancing innovation, creativity, and overall organizational performance. This study further confirmed that men are perceived to be more capable of carrying out official management tasks compared to women and also that men and women are believed to earn the same salary for the same tasks. The study findings also supports other researchers' findings that both men and women are perceived to have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses and that human resource decisions are seen as creating barriers for female employees to take on qualified job positions.

6.3 Recommendations for further research

Further researches recommended include:

1. Conducting qualitative study to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations of women of colour aspiring for leadership roles in the transport industry.
2. Conducting longitudinal studies to track the progression of women and women of colour in upper management positions over time in order to analyze trends, patterns, and changes in representation, organizational policies, and diversity initiatives.
3. Conducting comparative studies on the experiences and outcomes of women in the transport industry with those in other sectors or industries to identify sector-specific challenges and opportunities.
4. Conducting comparative studies across different countries or regions to understand variations in gender equality initiatives, cultural norms, and societal attitudes towards women in leadership roles.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has provided comprehensive insights into the pervasive issue of gender inequality and the underrepresentation of women, and women of colour, in upper management positions within Transport for London, United Kingdom. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed a diverse workforce, reflecting various genders, ages, races, religious affiliations, and educational backgrounds. Despite this diversity, significant disparities persist in the representation of women in upper management roles. The significance of addressing systemic barriers and promoting diversity and inclusivity in organizational leadership cannot be overstated, as evidenced by the findings of the study. In light of these findings, it is imperative for Transport

for London and similar organizations to prioritize gender equality initiatives, challenge biases, and create inclusive environments supportive of women's advancement into leadership positions. Furthermore, with the adoption of Social Role Theory which underscores how societal expectations and gender norms can shape individuals' perceptions of leadership and influence organizational practices was visibly evident in the findings. Also, Intersectionality theory which equally underscores the importance of recognizing the multidimensional nature of discrimination also shows how women of colour suffer twice as much as other women due to racial discrimination. Therefore, by implementing evidence-based strategies and fostering a culture of diversity and equality, organizations can harness the full potential of their workforce and contribute to broader societal goals of gender equity and sustainable development. In all, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on gender inequality in the workplace, offering valuable insights for addressing systemic barriers and promoting gender equity and diversity in organizational leadership. Through continued research, advocacy, and concerted action, meaningful progress can be achieved towards a more equitable and inclusive future for all employees irrespective of their gender.

APPENDIX A: STUDY COVER LETTER

Department of Business and Management
Swiss School of Business and Management
Geneva

Dear Mr/Ms,

Letter of Introduction

I am a postgraduate student of the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. I am conducting a research on Gender Inequality and Lack of Women and Women of Colour in Upper Management Positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom. You are one of the selected respondents for this research. I therefore urge you to kindly provide the information required to the questions below. I assure you that your answers are strictly for academic purposes only and would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you immensely for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours truly,

Ifeoma Okoronta

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire on gender inequality and lack of women and women of colour in upper management positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom

SECTION A: Socio-demographics

1. Sex: 1. Male () 2. Female () 3. Other ()
2. Exact Age
3. Race: 1. White or European () 2. Black () 3. Other race ()
4. Religion: 1. Muslim () 2. Christian () 3. Atheist () 4. Others please indicate.....

5. Level of education 1. No formal education () 2. Primary education () 3. Secondary education () tertiary education ()
6. How long have you worked in transport for London? 1. 1-5years () 2. 6-10years () 3. 11-15years () 4. 16-20years () 5. 21-25years () 6. 26-30years () 7. 30years & above()
7. Job levels: 1. senior management () 2. Middle management () 3. First level management() 4. Senior staff () 5. Junior staff ()
8. Working position: 1. Permanent staff () 2. Contract staff ()

Section B: Equal representation of women in upper management position in the workplace

Kindly tick the appropriate box				
S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
9.	Over the past twelve months have you been promoted?			
10.	Are men promoted more than women in your current workplace?			
11.	Do women have difficulties maintaining work/life balance and family responsibilities?			
12.	Are women made to give up a position (secondment or acting role) for the opposite sex even when you are qualified?			

Section C: Barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in the workplace

Kindly tick the appropriate box				
S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
13.	Do you have female mentors in top management positions at your current workplace?			
14.	Do men and women have equal chances of being considered for a position at your current workplace?			
15.	Do you consider men more able to carry out official management tasks than women?			
16.	Are men and women given the same tasks at work at your current workplace?			
17.	Do you feel that women have to work harder at their jobs to get promoted?			

Section D: Does gender pay gap exist in the workplace

Kindly tick the appropriate box				
S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
18.	In my current workplace, men and women earn the same salary for the same tasks			
19.	In my current workplace, men and women have equal opportunities for wage increase and bonuses			

Section E: Human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in the workplace

Kindly tick the appropriate box				
S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
20.	Do human resource decisions make it difficult for female employees to take on qualified job positions?			
21.	Does your organization have an equal opportunity policy that makes sure no female employee is discriminated against?			
22.	Does your organization have a training policy that covers both women and men?			

Section G: Factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in the workplace

Kindly tick the appropriate box				
S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
23.	Do you have co-workers who refer to you according to your race/skin colour?			
24.	Have you been stepped down or denied a position due to your race because of your race?			
25.	Have you been considered less qualified due to your skin colour/race?			

Section H: Possible solutions to barriers faced by women that could hinder their upward movement to management positions

Kindly tick the appropriate box Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD)						
S/N	Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
26.	Women need role models and mentors to guide and support them					
27.	Companies should work towards closing gender gap					
28.	HR policies should not favor one gender over the other					
29.	Men and women should be treated as equals in the workplace					

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Introduction: Dear respondent, you have been selected to participate in this study aimed at assessing Gender Inequality and Lack of Women and Women of Colour in Upper Management Positions in Transport for London, United Kingdom. We understand the implications of gender inequality in the workplace around the globe. However, we are particularly concerned about the Gender Inequality and Lack of Women and Women of Colour in Upper Management Positions in the workplace and its implications on your organization and workforce.

- a. **Voluntary nature of participation:** Participation in this research is voluntary, based on your willingness to be enlisted in the study. You are free at any stage to withdraw from the study. Your withdrawal does not attract any reprisals whatsoever.
- b. **Study Procedure:** You will be asked to describe your work experiences and practices over the years. This will be in the form of a discussion which will last approximately a maximum of 45-50 minutes.
- c. **Risks:** There is no known risk which you will be exposed to because of your participation in the study.
- d. **Benefits:** There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation will aid us proffer solutions to Gender Inequality and Lack of Women and Women of Colour in Upper Management Positions in the workplace.
- e. **Confidentiality:** All information obtained will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be used against you. Also, the analysis of data and presentation of results from this study will be aggregated and will not reveal your identity. Additionally, all the transcripts will be destroyed after the study and this session will not be tape recorded.

Thank you.

APPENDIX D: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH EMPLOYEES OF TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Questions

1) Does equal representation of women in upper management position exist in Transport for London? Probe for:

- The number of employees in senior management positions in their workplace.
- The number or percentage of women in the company's senior management position.
- Whether women have fair chances in hiring process
- Whether women have fair chances in promotion
- Whether women have fair chances in advancement into leadership positions

2) What are the barriers to equal representation of women in upper management position in Transport for London? Probe for:

- Why women do not have fair chances in hiring process
- Why women do not have fair chances in promotion
- Why women do not have fair chances in advancement into leadership positions

3) Does gender pay gap exist in Transport for London? Probe for:

- a. Whether men and women earn the same salary for the same job function
- b. Reason for the differentials if gender pay gap exist
- c. The people that promote gender pay gap
- d. How gender pay gap can be curbed or be totally eliminated

4) Are there human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions in Transport for London? Probe for:

- The specific HR practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions

- How to curb or eliminate human resource policies and practices that hinder women from getting to upper management positions

5) What are the factors that hinder women of colour from reaching upper management positions in Transport for London? Probe for:

- Discrimination due to their skin colour
- Discrimination on employment
- Discrimination on promotion
- Discrimination on advancing to top management positions
- Being stepped down or denied a position due to their race
- Losing positions due to skin colour
- Losing deserved respect in the workplace

6) What are the possible solutions to the barriers faced by women in Transport for London that hinder their upward movement to management positions? Probe for:

- How gender inequality in the workplace can be curbed in their organisation

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