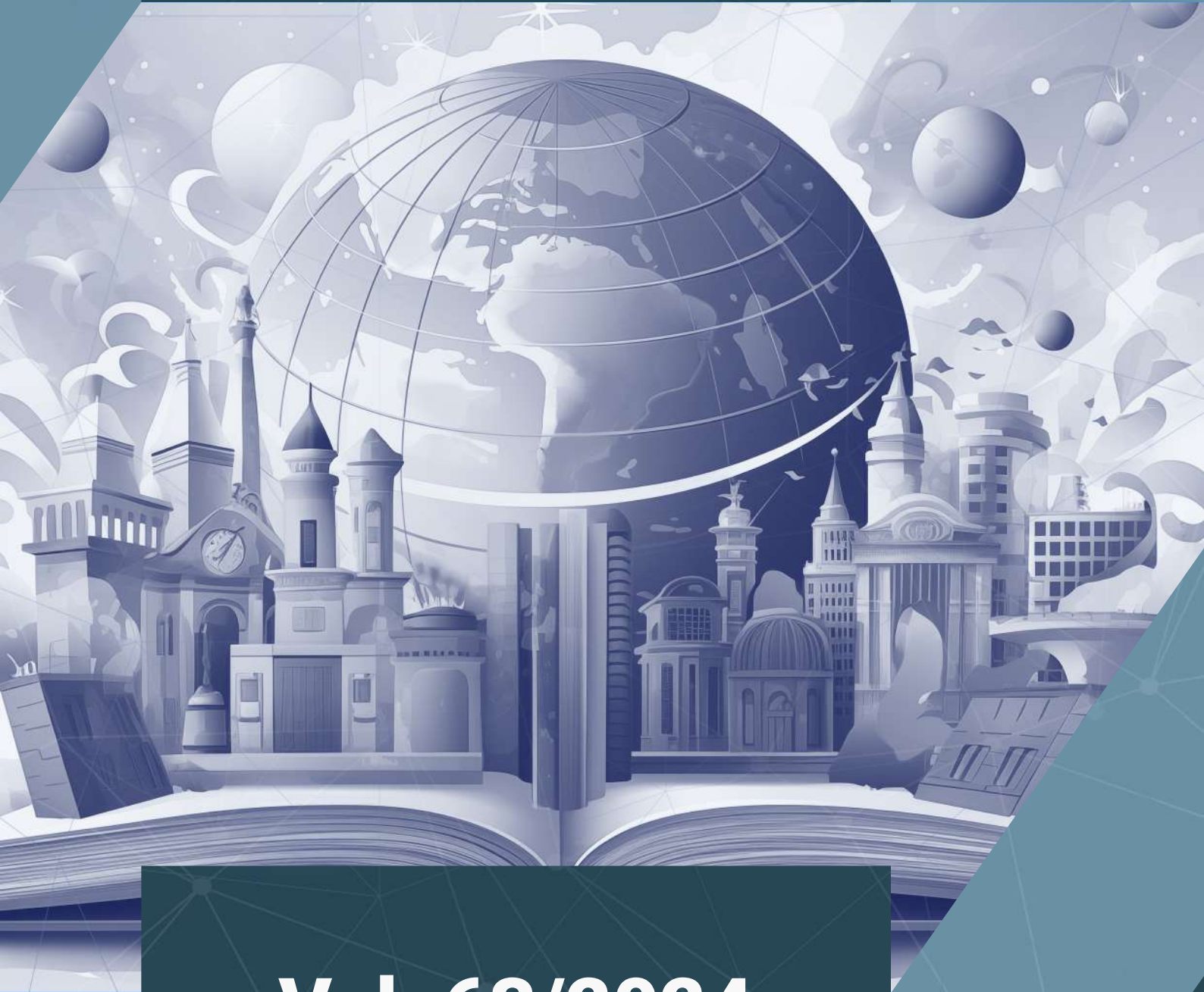




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Gender-Based Challenges in Women's Leadership Careers: A Literature Synthesis

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Abstract. The international community's initiatives to promote sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on gender equality under SDG 5, have garnered substantial recognition for women leadership. Women who hold leadership positions offer distinctive viewpoints that contribute to workplace positivity, innovation, and decision-making. Nevertheless, they encounter significant obstacles, such as underrepresentation, bias, and restricted opportunities for advancement. This study examines the challenges faced by women in their leadership careers and the influence of organizational practices. This investigation employs a library research methodology to investigate a variety of reference sources, such as books and prior research, in order to establish a theoretical framework regarding women's leadership. Content analysis is employed to synthesize and interpret pertinent data from sources published within the past decade, thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the information through expert commentary and inter-library checks. The article's objective is to investigate the internal and external challenges that women encounter in their pursuit of professional advancement, as well as the impact of organizational biases and stereotypes on their leadership roles. It suggests that these factors create barriers and imply implications for increasing the number of women leaders by reviewing literature on management and career studies. The results indicate that women's career advancement is substantially hindered by gender biases, stereotypes, and structural obstacles. Women's leadership aspirations are impeded by societal and organizational expectations, despite the progress made in gender equality. The study underscores the necessity of comprehensive strategies to eliminate these biases and foster inclusive leadership environments.

Keywords. Gender Equality, Women Leadership, Organizational Challenge, Career Advancement, Stereotypes

Introduction

The international community has been making strides toward sustainable development since the United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. It is important to note that SDG 5 is designed to attain a more advanced level of gender equality. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the attention given to gender issues affecting women and women leaders, which is consistent with this objective. The advancement of gender equality is contingent upon the presence of women in leadership positions. For example, they contribute distinctive perspectives and experiences to leadership roles, which leads to improved decision-making, increased innovation, and a more positive work

environment (Hughes et al., 2018). Women leaders are also inclined to adopt a more inclusive and collaborative approach, which promotes a more productive and positive work environment (Minehart et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, women encounter substantial obstacles in their pursuit of leadership roles, including bias, underrepresentation, and restricted opportunities for advancement (Kulkarni, A., & Mishra, 2022). The low proportion of women in top management and on boards of directors is ascribed to both biological gender obstacles and socially constructed gender challenges (Pierly et al., 2022). It is essential to acknowledge the importance of women's leadership in organizations and society as a whole, and it is necessary to endeavour to dismantle gender stereotypes and prejudices. This encompasses the promotion of the notion that leadership is not limited to a single gender and the challenge of conventional gender roles.

In spite of advancements, organizational environments frequently continue to be rooted in conventional gender roles, which in turn limit leadership concepts to a single gender. The pervasiveness of gender bias in numerous organizations is exacerbated by the rigid expectations of women's roles in the workplace (Longman et al., 2018). Gender bias is the unequal treatment of individuals based on their gender, which can be conscious or implicit. Conscious gender biases are attitudes and beliefs about gender that individuals are aware of and express intentionally, whereas unconscious gender biases are unintentional and frequently outside of a person's awareness. Discrimination, prejudice, and gender stereotypes—social preconceptions about individuals based on their gender are the consequences of both forms of gender bias. As a result, women encounter gender-related challenges at every tier of an organization, from entry-level positions to exiting the organization (Chaudhry et al., 2021).

Gender stereotypes are also prevalent in the workplace, with numerous women experiencing a glass ceiling in male-dominated environments as they advance in their careers. The glass ceiling is a substantial impediment to the career advancement of women, predominantly because of the perception that they are incongruous with higher management or leadership roles (Arghode et al., 2022). This is a profound gender-based challenge that necessitates a significant amount of effort to resolve. Consequently, it continues to be a persistent impediment for a significant number of women who aspire to make a meaningful contribution to their organizations (Cross et al., 2019). Conversely, the glass ceiling's surmounting does not render gender-based stereotypical obstacles for women obsolete. Additional leadership-specific stereotypes are frequently encountered by women who achieve leadership roles, which are based on their gender, qualities, and perceived capacity to lead effectively. These challenges are indicative of a more general societal trend to associate leadership with masculine characteristics, which results in unfavorable perceptions of women leaders who do not meet these expectations. Women's career advancement as leaders is significantly impeded by gender-based stereotypes, necessitating a significant amount of effort and perseverance.

In light of this context, the objective of this literature review is to investigate the internal and external obstacles that women leaders encounter when attempting to advance their careers within organizations. Additionally, we examine the gender-related challenges that women frequently face in the workplace and the influence of organizational practices on their leadership careers, as organizations have a substantial impact on the careers and values of women leaders through decisions based on gender biases and stereotypes. By reviewing the literature on management and career studies relevant to the challenges women encounter in achieving leadership positions, we propose how external and internal factors create obstacles for women to ascend the organizational hierarchy to top leadership positions. Furthermore, we

address the implications of practices that may contribute to the growth of the number of women leaders.

Methods

This research employs a library research methodology. Library research involves examining a variety of reference sources, including books and similar previous research results, which are beneficial in establishing a theoretical foundation for the problem under investigation (Cooper & Valentine, 2019). The concepts and descriptions concerning the women's leadership were developed using this library research procedure. According to Johnshon (2018), the stages in library research are as follows: developing a broad understanding of the research topic, locating information that corroborates the topic, emphasizing the research's focus, locating and organizing the requisite reading material, reading and taking research notes, reviewing and enriching the reading material, and reclassifying the reading material before commencing writing.

The reference database for studies that develop concepts and descriptions regarding women's leadership management and career studies includes sources published within the last 10 years in both Indonesian and English. These sources are obtained offline and online, including books, journals, and articles. The data analysis technique employed in this investigation is content analysis. This analysis involves selecting, comparing, combining, and arranging a variety of meanings until the pertinent ones are identified (Thompson, 2021). To ensure the reliability of the review process and to prevent and overcome misinformation (human misunderstandings that can occur due to a paucity of library writers), inter-library checks and literature re-reading are conducted, with emphasis on expert comments (Davis, 2020). By utilizing this comprehensive library research methodology, the study aims to build a robust theoretical framework for understanding the development of women's leadership and the challenges they face in leadership roles.

Result and discussion

External Factors Influencing Women Leadership Challenges Stereotypes and Gender Biases

Overcoming common gender biases and stereotypes is necessary for women in order for them to be able to break through the glass ceiling and achieve leadership roles in businesses. On the other hand, they are confronted with extra challenges that stem from biases and stereotypes that are peculiar to leadership. Second-generation gender bias is characterized by subtle and difficult-to-detect forms of unfair treatment of employed women in comparison to men. Smith et al. (2020) have identified two distinct categories of gender bias: first-generation gender bias, which is intentionally created by society and organizations, and second-generation gender bias. There are two distinct categories of gender bias. Most of the time, this bias is unconscious and remains hidden from a person's awareness. According to Lauer et al. (2019), first-generation gender bias is commonly synonymous with conscious gender bias, which is defined as the intentional mistreatment of persons based on their gender, particularly that which is directed toward women. This mistreatment leads to discrimination and prejudice throughout society and organizations. The term "second-generation gender bias" was coined by Williams (2012), who defined it as an unconscious bias that is not intentional and frequently takes place without the personal awareness of an individual.

Due to the fact that many organizational structures are regarded as being male, it is common for there to be both conscious and implicit gender prejudices present when an

individual first enters an organization. For instance, prejudice against women in a given sector may be the result of the stereotype that they are less capable than males, despite the fact that they are equally capable (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Gender stereotypes, which are social statements made about individuals based on their gender, frequently generate conscious gender bias, which manifests itself in a variety of ways, including discrepancies in compensation and possibilities for promotion (Davis, 2020). Furthermore, cultural ideas are the source of unconscious gender bias in the workplace, which manifests itself in the form of organizational structure and supervision. This unintentional obstacle to women's advancement is a result of this. The interaction patterns that favor males over females contributed to the development of this bias. According to Cheryan and Markus's research from 2020, gender stereotypes are the root cause of both conscious and implicit gender biases, which in turn leads to a limited comprehension of the skills and social expectations associated with the conduct typical of each gender.

Gender stereotypes are beliefs and expectations regarding the qualities and behaviors of women and men. These beliefs and expectations are referred to as "misconceptions." According to Jones et al.'s research from 2020, social institutions and relationships, such as the media, education, and family, typically reinforce and culturally share these prejudices. Different forms of gender stereotypes can be broken down into two categories: prescriptive and descriptive. The gender-based characteristics that lead to outliers were identified by Beehler (2023) as descriptive gender stereotypes. In accordance with this preconceived notion, women are not seen to be appropriate for positions of authority. To give one example, masculine stereotypes are typically associated with agency, whereas female clichés are frequently associated with communality. According to Porter (2023), in many different civilizations, women have traditionally been regarded as caregivers who have a poor social position and are not prepared to participate in the workforce.

Women are said to perpetuate and contribute to gender biases through the imposition of certain limits and expectations on themselves (also known as "should" or "should not"), according to prescriptive gender stereotypes regarding women. This results in women being subjected to discrimination on a consistent basis, even in workplaces where the gender ratio is equal. According to Dirik (2021), the lack of fit model is a phenomenon that challenges individuals who do not adhere to standard gender norms and expectations. This phenomenon is generally referred to as the appraisal of persons based on preconceptions and stereotypes. As a result of a woman's deviation from the stereotyped gender norms, there is a lack of compatibility between the woman and the job or task that is being evaluated. According to Fanning et al. (2021), this contributes to the perpetuation of cultural expectations surrounding gender roles, which in turn influences the evaluations of persons who demonstrate diverse attitudes and behaviors.

A woman who is forceful and takes on leadership responsibilities, for instance, may be seen as less warm and inviting than a woman who exhibits typical feminine features. This is because aggressive women tend to lead by example. It is possible that she will be subjected to discriminatory treatment and poor assessments as a consequence of this. This may include being denied promotions or not being recognized for the achievements she has made. On the other hand, a man who takes on a leadership role is more likely to be evaluated as competent and effective due to the fact that his behavior is compatible with gender stereotypes regarding masculinity. According to Banchefsky and Park (2019), the phenomenon of gender stereotypes leads to a bias in hiring practices that favors men in occupations that are dominated by men and women in jobs that are dominated by women. By their very nature, gender stereotypes are the

source of prejudices that are directed against women in the process of advancing their careers. Because of this, the path that female leaders in organizations take and the careers that they pursue are heavily impacted by the prejudices that pertain to them.

Sticky Floor and Glass Ceiling

According to Fapohunda (2018), the term "glass ceiling" often refers to the undetectable barriers that inhibit women from progressing to senior posts inside a company. Women are faced with a unique obstacle as a result of this occurrence, which hinders their advancement to positions of leadership and restricts their access to positions of authority and influence at higher levels within the organization. In order for women to achieve leadership positions, they frequently have to overcome the glass ceiling, which is a persistent and systemic barrier.

This phenomena is also connected to the sticky floor effect, which takes place when women who are unable or unwilling to break through the glass ceiling are confined to low-paying occupations that are dominated by women and have few chances for promotion and flexibility. When referring to the need of avoiding the glass ceiling, which may result in a lack of possibilities for many women to move beyond entry-level employment, the metaphor of an adhesive floor is used to emphasize the significance of this issue. In spite of this, it also shows that there are certain women who may be able to overcome these obstacles and gain positions of greater authority. According to Kaftandzieva and Nakov (2021), the first step in a woman's career as a leader is frequently her success in breaking over the glass ceiling.

In addition, breaking through the glass ceiling involves more than simply the efforts of individuals; it also demands the adaptation of organizations and the backing of those organizations. Providing women with assistance in overcoming these obstacles requires the implementation of policies that promote gender equality, as well as mentoring programs and leadership training. By cultivating an inclusive culture that places a high priority on a variety of leadership styles, organizations have a responsibility to actively work toward the elimination of these invisible barriers. Both the glass ceiling and the sticky floor effects can be addressed by businesses in order to establish a more egalitarian atmosphere in which women are afforded equal opportunities to achieve success and take leadership roles. The combination of personal resiliency and structural support has the ability to dramatically improve women's prospects for leadership and career advancement.

Labyrinth of Leadership

The argument put up by Akkaya (2020) is that women are required to navigate a career maze, regardless of whether or not they are able to break through the glass ceiling. Despite the fact that the writers acknowledged that women are capable of achieving success as leaders, they underlined that the career labyrinth might be tough to navigate due to the impediments that are tied to gender. In the context of women's careers, the metaphor of a labyrinth suggests that leadership and advancement may be difficult to achieve, but they are not impossible. This is because these paths involve a multitude of intersections that require endurance, effort, and careful navigation. There are a number of elements that might have an effect on the promotion chances available to women. These aspects include the culture of the business, the interpersonal interactions, and the gender stereotypes that exist. Fixed conceptions, such as the idea that women are not appropriate for leadership roles or that they should prioritize family over work, are responsible for perpetuating gender role stereotypes that are detrimental to the success of

women. Additionally, the advancement of women is further hampered by male-centric company cultures and policies that promote male personnel. This is a significant barrier to advancement. According to Mwashita et al.'s research from 2020, women frequently face challenges when attempting to develop networks that are comparable to those of their male colleagues. This is because promotions are heavily impacted by networks of interpersonal contacts.

The fact that women frequently suffer a dearth of visible role models and mentors who are able to lead them through these intricate paths is another factor that contributes to the complexity of the career maze. Because there is a lack of instruction, it can be challenging for women to imagine themselves in positions of authority and to comprehend the processes that are required to obtain such positions. In addition, women may be required to juggle several commitments, such as those related to their families and their jobs, which adds an additional degree of complication to the process of advancing their careers. By providing women with clear pathways, supportive networks, and flexible work arrangements that fit a variety of living situations, organizations that acknowledge and address the multiple problems that women confront can help pave the way for women to fulfill their full potential as leaders.

Women Leadership Prototypes

For the purpose of elucidating the prototypes of women's leadership styles in organizations, the gender-social role theory asserts that gender differences are the outcome of the social roles that men and women assume in society. The Socialization Theory proposes that individuals acquire and internalize gender roles through the process of socialization. This theory provides an explanation for the development and continued existence of gender stereotypes. The presence of agentic characteristics, which are typically associated with men, is indicative of a tendency to be forceful, domineering, and self-assured. Conversely, community qualities, which are typically linked with women, show a potential to be caring, kind, nurturing, and concerned for the well-being of others (Altamimi et al., 2022).

Due to the fact that women tend to take a non-traditional approach to leadership, they are generally seen to be less capable for leadership roles than men. One example is the research conducted by Cannito et al. (2023), which discovered that gender and emotional stereotypes can be a barrier to the success of female CEOs. Because of the widespread perception that women are more emotional than men, the process of selecting and evaluating women in leadership roles might be unfairly skewed. As a consequence of this idea, women are frequently associated with the perception that they are less capable of controlling their emotions and are subjected to penalties for showing emotions that imply authority.

It is possible for gender and societal preconceptions to have an effect on how people perceive people who appear to be in leadership positions. The results of their research suggested that the mental representations of ordinary males and male leaders might be similar. This would result in a high congruence between male stereotypes and leadership qualities such as authority. According to Braun et al. (2018), women leaders were seen to have a greater influence than women who did not hold leadership positions. This finding suggests that gender stereotypes may be a factor that hinders the achievement of women in leadership positions.

As a result of the fact that women are less likely than males to be given hard duties by their managers, they are deprived of substantial prospects for professional growth, as stated by Amakye et al. (2022). This dearth of possibilities hinders the progression of one's career and contributes to the perpetuation of gender differences inside businesses. In situations where they are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, women are capable of achieving greater results. When the number of women officers who receive suitable leadership

development is increased, for example, the performance of women police officers is improved, and a wider variety of viewpoints and experiences are brought to the table (Ruzungunde et al., 2020). This is because the number of women officers who receive adequate leadership development is increased.

It is imperative that organizations put into place policies and procedures that encourage gender equality in leadership positions in order to combat these prejudices. The creation of mentorship programs, the provision of training that tackles gender prejudices, and the intentional pursuit of diversity in leadership posts are all examples of this objective. Through the cultivation of an atmosphere that places equal importance on both agentic and communal characteristics, companies are able to capitalize on the distinctive capabilities of each and every leader, thereby boosting both overall performance and innovation. Not only do these kinds of activities help women succeed in their careers, but they also contribute to a culture within the organization that is more welcoming and productive.

Think Manager–Think Male And Consider the Crisis—Consider the Women

In addition to gender stereotypes, the "think manager–think male" mentality on the competency and leadership style of a leader is a contributing factor in the difficulties that women face when they are in positions of authority. According to this theory, the reason that males are favored in organizations is because of the subjective attributes of leadership that are associated with masculinity. On the other hand, women leaders are usually viewed as being more democratic, transformative, and interpersonally focused (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). This is in contrast to male leaders, who are more likely to embrace authoritarian and transactional leadership styles that are in accordance with masculine stereotypes. Authoritarian leadership, which is a style of leadership that is both directive and powerful, and in which the leader is the one who makes decisions for the group, has been shown to be more strongly related with traditional male gender roles and values, according to research. As a consequence, civilizations that are dominated by men tend to support it. According to Wolfram et al.'s research from 2020, men are more likely to be considered as important leaders when they demonstrate forceful and robust behavior. On the other hand, women who exhibit comparable behavior may not be viewed positively.

Contrary to the "think manager–think male" notion, the "think crisis–think women" preconception says that women are more adept at managing crises and hard conditions due to their nurturing and compassionate natures. This is in contrast to the "think manager–think male" concept as stated before. In the course of an inquiry into this phenomena, Post (2019) came to the realization that women were more likely to be chosen as leaders during times of crisis. This is due to the fact that emergencies require leadership attributes that are not normally associated with male leaders. It is important to note that the perception of the suitability of leaders for crisis leadership jobs is significantly influenced by gendered characteristics as well as the nature of the crisis. The researchers found that gendered traits, such as assertiveness and empathy, have a significant influence on the perception of leadership suitability in times of crisis (Wu et al., 2021). In order to address gender biases in leadership, it is necessary to have a nuanced understanding of the interactions between gendered traits, gender, and situational factors.

To expand further, these prejudices not only influence how others perceive women, but they also have an effect on the possibilities that are actually open to them. It is possible that women will be neglected for leadership roles during periods of stability, but they will suddenly be considered during times of crisis. This reinforces the notion that women's leadership is only appropriate under specific circumstances. As a result of this situational leadership bias, women

may experience career paths that are inconsistent with one another, which contributes to the perpetuation of the gender gap in leadership positions. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance for businesses to acknowledge and aggressively battle these biases by promoting women into leadership roles based on their credentials and potential, regardless of the setting in which they are being promoted. By doing so, companies have the ability to cultivate an environment that is more equal and inclusive, and that supports the different leadership styles and strengths of their members.

Double Bind and Reaction

When women utilize a leadership style that is consistent with gender stereotypes, they frequently find themselves in a difficult situation because of the expectations of society. It is expected of them that they will assert themselves and project an image that is male in order to be considered competent. On the other hand, if their actions are interpreted as being very pushy, then it is possible that they will be regarded as unlikable. If, on the other hand, their behavior is extremely feminine, it is possible that they will be seen as lovely but incompetent (Parkinson et al., 2019). This double bind is especially difficult to deal with in environments that are controlled by men, because women may find it more advantageous to embrace leadership approaches that are usually associated with men.

According to Tatum et al.'s research from 2022, women are more likely to adhere to gender stereotypes in their interpersonal relationships, which can have an effect on the leadership styles they employ. When women assume a male manner in order to be seen as leaders, they are frequently subjected to criticism for breaking gender standards through their behavior. The unfavorable reactions of certain males to the changing roles and expectations of women in society are the source of this backlash. These males continue to perpetuate outdated attitudes and behaviors that are detrimental to the advancement of women. The retaliation is particularly harsh against women who display masculine mannerisms and work in occupations that are usually associated with men. This further restricts their actions to conform to gendered or challenged norms. Based on Zhu and Chang's research from 2019, these mismatches, which are caused by gender preconceptions, make it more difficult for women to achieve success in leadership roles.

Women are continuously required to negotiate between competing expectations, which can contribute to severe psychological stress for them. This double bind can also lead to significant psychological stress. This stress may have an impact on their overall job performance as well as their level of happiness with their profession. Organizations have a responsibility to acknowledge and address these issues by cultivating a culture that supports various leadership styles and by giving training to all employees on the effects of gender bias. The impacts of the double bind can be mitigated via the implementation of supportive policies, such as mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives. These policies make it possible for women to lead in a genuine manner without the need to comply to competing stereotypes. By doing so, companies have the ability to create an environment that is more inclusive with the goal of allowing all leaders, regardless of gender, to flourish.

Glass Cliff and Queen Bee Syndrome

Women are more likely to be appointed to precarious leadership positions during crises, which is a consequence of the think crisis–think women effect, which extends beyond the glass ceiling. A glass cliff is established by this preconception, which equates women with superior crisis management abilities, resulting in women occupying leadership roles during

periods of economic decline. Morgenroth et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis on the glass cliff phenomenon, determining that women are more likely than males to be appointed to precarious leadership positions during crises. This implies that women in leadership positions frequently encounter high-risk circumstances, which complicates their ability to achieve the same level of status as men. Senior and junior women may experience challenges in the workplace as a result of the pressure to maintain their positions, which may be experienced by women who have successfully surmounted a variety of leadership challenges. The "queen bee syndrome" is a phenomenon that arises when successful women leaders exhibit more masculine leadership characteristics and distance themselves from other women (Netshitangani, 2019).

The queen bee syndrome is a consequence of gender discrimination and detrimental gender stereotypes, which pose a threat to the professional development of women. Less successful women may experience a loss of motivation for career advancement, while successful women may choose to distance themselves from the women's movement or avoid their careers (Cannito et al., 2023). In contrast to the queen bee syndrome, certain researchers contend that women top management has a positive impact on the status of women in organizations by serving as role models (Fapohunda, 2018). This discovery implies that the queen bee phenomenon is a response to external pressures rather than an inherent aspect of women behavior.

Internal Factors Influencing Women Leadership Challenges **Self-Gender Stereotypes**

Self-gender stereotypes are the development of gender-stereotypical attitudes and behaviors that are impacted by organizational gender norms. These prejudices cause individuals to internalize these biases, which leads to the formation of self-gender stereotypes. When women are successful in overcoming obstacles such as the glass ceiling, they frequently internalize these prejudices without even being aware of it. Internalization of this kind has a substantial impact on women's self-evaluation, professional choices, and sense of self-sufficient ability. According to Caldwell and Wojtach's research from 2020, women have a tendency to underestimate their leadership qualities and demonstrate lower levels of self-efficacy than men do. This phenomenon is most prominent in sectors that are dominated by men and in which women are underrepresented, which can result in feelings of isolation and a decrease in confidence. According to Priddy (2018), women typically experience feelings of pressure to comply to gender standards regarding their behavior and communication style. This pressure causes women to undervalue their performance and leadership abilities, which in turn leads to a reduction in their sense of self-efficacy.

These preconceived notions imply that gender perceptions have an effect on how women perceive themselves, which in turn has an effect on their sense of identity, self-esteem, and self-confidence. In light of this, it is essential for women to have self-assurance regarding their capabilities and accomplishments (Ruzungunde et al., 2020). Taking women's leadership styles as an example, when they are constrained by socially mandated roles and stereotypes, their sense of self-efficacy may drop. On the other hand, women are more likely to experience an increase in their sense of self-efficacy when they embrace leadership styles that are more flexible and collaborative. The transformational leadership style is one that is frequently embraced by women (Banchefsky & Park, 2018). This style of leadership is frequently connected with traditional gender social roles that are associated with the feminine gender. According to a number of studies, mentoring and coaching have the potential to effectively support the development of women's leadership skills and to boost their sense of efficacy.

It has also been found through research on self-gender stereotypes that women have a tendency to tolerate discrimination and prejudice that is based on gender stereotypes. For instance, women have a tendency to underestimate how others perceive them, whereas men frequently have a tendency to exaggerate how others perceive them. The research conducted by Akkaya (2020) revealed that implicit biases against women continue to exist within businesses, particularly with regard to the manner in which the outcomes of men and women leaders differ based on their own judgments. While women who underrate their leadership activities earn higher scores on perceived risk of derailment and poorer performance evaluations from their supervisors, women who overrate their leadership behaviors receive higher scores on both of these metrics. Males, on the other hand, are less likely to suffer adverse effects when they are overestimated. As a result of gender stereotypes and the role congruity hypothesis of prejudice, which suggests that women who underrate their leadership conduct may achieve better outcomes, there is a bias against women who hold leadership positions.

With a particular emphasis on women working in disciplines that are traditionally dominated by men, such as surgery and veterinary medicine, Morgenroth et al. (2020) investigated the dynamic interaction between internal and external factors that influence individuals' decisions to make sacrifices for the sake of career progress. According to the findings of their research, women are less likely than males to be willing to make compromises in their careers due to the persistent presence of sexism and incompatibility with their professional superiors. It is important to note that although while men and women make decisions in a comparable manner, their perceptions of success possibilities are influenced by the structural factors that exist in the workplace.

Tokenism

Individuals who belong to a minority group that is numerically smaller than the majority, with the majority influencing and controlling the culture. Tokens are individuals who belong to this minority group. Tokenism places these individuals under the pressure to adhere to gender stereotypes and imposes psychological burdens, such as the necessity to outperform male colleagues and the pressure of being viewed as representations of their gender in the workplace (Porter, 2023). Tokenism also places social pressure on individuals to conform to gender norms. Due to the existence of preconceptions, individuals may have fewer opportunities to gain experience and develop their skills, which can be detrimental to their leadership abilities. The result is that women who are considered tokens frequently have the perception that the environment of the organization is unfair, and the fact that they are considered tokens increases the possibility that they will leave the organization (Nielsen & Madsen, 2019). There is a distinct difference in the impact that tokenism has on the token status and managerial aspirations of male and female workers in public sector workplaces from one another.

An investigation into gender-based tokenism in female and male occupations was carried out by Collica-Cox and Schulz (2020) in the form of a qualitative study. According to their findings, being a member of a minority group does not directly result in tokenism; nevertheless, it does have an impact on the social division of labor between men and women. The token experience is influenced by a number of other factors, and not all members in the dominant majority are responsible for creating limiting circumstances. On the other hand, in the presence of dominating groups, both female and male tokens are subject to professional conflict and challenges. When compared to males, women who are facing occupational mismatch have less prospects for promotion, but men who are in similar circumstances tend to accomplish these promotional opportunities more quickly. In a finding that is quite intriguing, it was shown that

men were able to manipulate token status into token gains, whilst women continued to confront inferior status in comparison to men.

Gender Stereotype Threat

The harm posed by gender stereotypes is comparable to that of tokenism. (Villanueva-Moya & Expósito, 2021) This phenomenon happens when individuals suffer anxiety and dread of confirming negative gender stereotypes when performing duties connected with their gender, which hinders their performance which in turn hinders their goals. A number of studies have demonstrated that the danger of gender stereotypes has a negative impact on the performance of women, particularly in STEM professions and leadership posts. For instance, in industries that have traditionally been dominated by men, a danger of stereotyping might weaken a woman's interest in the sector and reinforce the notion that she does not belong there. Furthermore, people who identify as belonging to a minority group are susceptible to being subjected to stereotypes, which can have a negative impact on their performance and goals when they are placed in the appropriate social setting. As an illustration, men are more susceptible to the dangers of stereotypical threats in situations that call for emotional sensitivity, whereas women are more susceptible to these dangers in sectors that are dominated by men. It has been suggested by Akanji et al. (2024) that removing stereotypes from the workplace could contribute to a reduction in gender inequality.

A study conducted by Dunlap and Barth (2019) investigated the impact that stereotype threats have on the aspirations and leadership positions of women. After exposing women who were susceptible to stereotype threats to commercials that were related to gender stereotypes, they then had them complete a task that required leadership. According to the findings, the ads triggered the activation of gender stereotypes in sensitive women, which resulted in a reduction in their desired level of leadership. This effect did not take place in a setting that was safe for women's identities, which suggests that the activation of female stereotypes has an impact on women's desires to hold leadership positions, but that this impact can be minimized by such an environment.

Froehlich et al. (2020) claimed that ways in which individuals react to challenges to their identities are contingent on both individual and interpersonal aspects. When women are in positions of authority, having role models to look up to can safeguard them from identity attacks. It is possible for successful women to demonstrate that women can achieve success in domains relevant to stereotypes, which can improve social belongingness and protect against perceived challenges to identity. Nevertheless, role models can have paradoxical consequences, as comparing oneself to a successful person can be motivating and provide optimism, but it can also bring to light one's own shortcomings while doing so. The protection against stereotypes that can be found in leadership positions can be facilitated by role models, who also play an essential part in the lives of women.

Gender Stereotype Internalization

According to Thompson (2019), the term "gender stereotype internalization" describes the process by which social roles, features, behaviors, and expectations that are based on gender stereotypes penetrate an individual's attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and self-evaluations. Frequently, these biases have an impact on the career decisions that women make. For example, according to gender stereotypes, males are more likely to bargain than women are. This is because men tend to negotiate more frequently than women. It is possible for women to incorrectly assume that they are incapable of taking on leadership roles or that they do not

possess sufficient abilities due to the assumption that women have poorer negotiation skills and are less willing to bargain.

Researchers Hentschel et al. (2019) investigated the ways in which recruitment advertising influences the willingness of women to work. It is common for women to feel that they do not belong in traditionally masculine jobs and positions, which can result in unfavorable performance expectations and career choices that are self-limiting. Using language that is more feminine in recruiting advertisements has been demonstrated to be effective in promoting women to higher organizational levels, according to the authors. A lack of self-assurance among women regarding their capabilities and accomplishments, on the other hand, can be a factor that contributes to gender imbalance in the workplace. As a consequence of this lack of confidence, women tend to underestimate their own capabilities in terms of leadership, which in turn contributes to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and ultimately ends in identity minimization and a lack of confidence.

Fritz and van Knippenberg (2019) conducted research to determine how the gender of a supervisor, the amount of assistance they provide, and the amount of job control they have influence the leadership aspirations of male and female employees. They discovered that female workers reported lower levels of leadership aspiration than their male counterparts, particularly when they were supervised by a male. A considerable reduction in the gender gap in leadership aspiration was observed, however, when female employees were assigned to supervisors who were also female. The association between the gender of the supervisor and their intention to be a leader was also significantly influenced by the supervisor's level of job control. Compared to male employees, female employees who reported having male supervisors reported having lower levels of job control, which led to a lesser aspiration for leadership. However, this was not seen among male employees.

According to research conducted by Arghode et al. (2022), women who internalize gender stereotypes may cause themselves to believe that they are unable to assume leadership responsibilities or that they do not possess the essential abilities. One example is how the gender identification of women might influence their perception of themselves as leaders. The research conducted by Minehart et al. in 2020 found that female leaders who have a positive interpretation of their gender identity have less identity conflicts and higher levels of enjoyment. These leaders also regard leadership as a desirable objective rather than an obligation. The self-perceptions of women can contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, which can result in an underestimating of their identities and a lack of self-confidence. In addition to the opportunity and power that are offered by the company, the self-identity, self-efficacy, and underestimating of capabilities that women have are critical variables in the growth of their careers as female leaders.

Conclusion

The literature review emphasizes the multifaceted obstacles that women encounter when ascending to and maintaining leadership roles. Women's career advancement is substantially impeded by external factors, including stereotypes and gender biases. These biases, which can be both conscious and unconscious, can influence decisions regarding employment, promotions, and perceptions of competence. The glass ceiling and labyrinth of leadership, which are pervasive gender stereotypes, limit the opportunities of women and present additional obstacles for those who aspire to high-level leadership positions. In addition, the landscape is further complicated by the concepts of think manager-think male and think

crisis-think women, as women frequently encounter biased evaluations and increased scrutiny due to traditional gender norms.

Additionally, women leadership challenges are significantly impacted by internal factors. Women's self-gender stereotypes and internalized biases influence their self-efficacy, career choices, and self-evaluation. The dread of confirming negative stereotypes and the pressure to conform to gender expectations can erode the confidence and aspirations of women. These challenges are further exacerbated by tokenism and gender stereotype threats, as women in minority positions frequently endure increased scrutiny and psychological burdens. A comprehensive strategy that encompasses the promotion of gender equality, the provision of mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women, and the cultivation of inclusive organizational cultures that prioritize diverse leadership styles is necessary to address these issues.

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