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## Women in the Workforce: The Voice of Change

Susan J. Cerny

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**WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE:  
THE VOICE OF CHANGE**



Susan J. Cerny, B.A.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of Lindenwood College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science in Administration

1994

## ABSTRACT

This study presents a review of the current literature that pertains to the experiences of women in the male dominated working world. The specific focus of this study is the barriers that prevent women from advancing where men succeed.

When women enter the workforce they tend to be naive about the organizational culture that surrounds them. Women bring with them their natural feminine instincts and behaviors, which are not considered as valuable in the corporate world as male instincts and behaviors.

Because they are entering a "man's world," women are unaware of the subtle and underlying rules of the corporate game. They see men adapting easily and advancing for their efforts, while the women seem to lag behind as if they are carrying an additional burden each step of the way. At the core of that burden is the fact that women do not think, communicate, or behave like men. The burden is further compounded by society's ingrained perceptions and stereotypes of

acceptable feminine behavior, which do not include leadership or effective management characteristics.

Although women have been welcomed into the workforce, they have not received equal pay, recognition, or opportunity for advancement as their male counterparts. Despite their efforts, the progress of women has been blocked by the "glass ceiling," an invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing where men of comparable skills and abilities succeed.

An abundance of researchers have examined a wide variety of issues relating to gender differences in the context of the work environment. The research confirms the hypothesis of this study: **The glass ceiling has been constructed with perceptions and stereotypes of gender differences, preventing women from being accepted as equals in the male dominated business world.**



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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Men and women are different. Differences between men and women come in many forms: biological, sociological, psychological, and behavioral (Loden 11). Some differences are easily observable, while others are more subtle. Physical appearance is the most observable difference, while psychological differences can be more difficult to assess. Research of biological differences has found some fundamental differences between the brains of men and women, which some researchers surmise is the basis for all gender differences (Moir and Jessel 5).

Despite the obvious and subtle differences between the genders, people have a tendency to believe that all other people think as they think, and should act as they act. They are inclined to believe that there is only one "right way" to think and behave. When basic differences are not taken into account, misunderstandings occur and interpersonal interactions become strained for one of the parties, if not both (Tannen 120).



In corporations, when one "right way" of thinking and behaving is accepted and rewarded, people with different backgrounds and behaviors are not valued or utilized to their fullest. They find that they are being told that they are doing things wrong, when they are merely doing things their own, different way (Tannen 122).

Because the majority of corporations were founded and run by men, working women are being told that their way of working is not as effective as the accepted male norms. Dr. Harold Kellner, an organizational consultant and clinical psychologist, spent much of his career studying the effects of the male corporate culture on women managers. He used this analogy:

Imagine yourself as a visitor to some remote part of the world where the language, the local customs and the day-to-day activities and communication patterns are altogether different from anything you have ever experienced before. From the moment you arrive, you feel somewhat awkward and out of place. People regard you with curiosity but remain distant. Your attempts to break the ice are all thwarted by your ignorance of the local customs. ... As time goes by, you begin to feel more and more isolated. Since no one else shares your perceptions of what is happening, you start to doubt yourself. You lose confidence in your own judgement. After several months, you find yourself yearning for home. Nothing about this alien place seems to bring out the best in you. You're too busy trying to figure out the rules to relax and be yourself. What's more, no one even recognizes your frustration. People just seem to be impatient with you for

taking so long to adjust to your new surroundings. (qtd. in Loden 27)

When asked to draw a picture of how women fit into their companies, one participant of "The Executive Women Workshop" drew a picture of a baseball diamond with male baseball players in all of the defensive positions. The woman drew herself at home plate bouncing a basketball, asking in amazement, "What is this game?" Most of the other participants in the workshop drew similar pictures, and were relieved to know that they were not alone in their experiences (Webb 58). Women do not automatically feel at home or welcome in the current business culture.

### Current Business Culture

Business texts from the early twentieth century based organizational models upon the military *Maxims of Napoleon*. The military hierarchy pattern has become the structure universally accepted in the corporate world (Harragan 39). The power in a hierarchy flows from the top of the pyramid structure downward. The premise of the hierarchy is to subdivide large and complex tasks into manageable segments, retaining control of the activities at the higher, central level (Harragan 48). Power within the hierarchy is defined by

the ability to get someone at a lower level to perform the tasks that needs to be done (Schaeff and Fassel 169). Therefore, with each descending level in the hierarchy, the status, power, responsibility, and authority decrease (Harragan 49).

To get ahead in a hierarchical organization, workers must prove their worthiness to move up to the next higher level. Since the typical hierarchical pyramid has decreasing numbers of positions as the level of the jobs increase, competition becomes an integral part of the corporate way of life (Schaeff and Fassel 171).

The need for achievement and competition has been proven to be greater in men than in women (Moir and Jessel 160). While most men thrive on competition, women tend to be negatively affected by competitive situations, especially where personal success requires the defeat of others (Kenton 149). While men are seeking ways to win personal victories, women are searching for ways to be helpful to others (Tannen 129). Because men are driven by competition and winning, they are more willing than women to make extreme sacrifices of time, relationships, health and personal happiness to gain and retain status, power and success (Moir and Jessel 162). The basic differences in how men and women approach competition, contribute to the fact



that women hold a disproportionately smaller number of management level positions than men.

In a study by the Women's Bureau Conference Board, four reasons were given for women's lack of progress into upper levels of organizations:

1. *Discrimination.* Promotions and pay are affected by biases and stereotypes.
2. *Genetics and gender.* The argument that women are simply born with inherent limitations, or that the prospect or actuality of motherhood makes them unsuitable for the work place.
3. *Contradictory expectations.* Women are expected to be tough, but can't be macho; or they're expected to take responsibility, but also to follow advice.
4. *Corporate Culture.* No matter how well a woman performs, corporate policy and social climate are stacked against her (qtd. in Winikow 243).

The term "glass ceiling" has been coined to describe the invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing into the top executive positions of corporations, simply because they are different than the men who are in charge (Morrison, White and Velsor 13). Organizations are welcoming the influx of women workers with open arms filling the low status, low paying positions at the bottom of the skills spectrum (Harragan 49). However, as many women move upward on the

corporate ladder, they discover at some point that they have hit the glass ceiling and can not progress any further. The glass ceiling has been partially formed and maintained by society's perceptions and stereotypes of how men and women should behave.

### Perceptions and Stereotypes

Society has formulated different perceptions and expectations for men and women. Over decades, these perceptions and expectations become stereotypes, which are used as a frame of reference for appearance, behavior, and communication. The following riddle demonstrates the prevalence of stereotypes in society:

The car skidded off the road, and the two occupants, a man and his son, were badly injured. In the ambulance, on the way to the hospital, the father died. The son was taken straight into the operating theater. The surgeon took one look at the patient and gasped, "Oh no ... it's my son." Who is the surgeon? (qtd. in Moir and Jessel 150).

Thoughts of step-fathers, grandfathers, or other male relatives come to mind as a possible solution to the puzzle. Very few people immediately come to the conclusion that the surgeon is the boy's mother. Women do not fit the common stereotype of a surgeon.

Much of what women experience in the male corporate culture is governed by conscious and unconscious perceptions and stereotypes based upon gender. Men are expected to act like men, and women are expected to act like women. If a man appears logical, direct, forceful, masterful, or powerful, his value as a man is enhanced. If a woman behaves in a logical, direct, forceful, masterful, or powerful fashion, her value as a woman is undercut (Tannen 241). In a corporate world that thrives on power and competition, women are significantly handicapped by the biases against feminine qualities of nurturing, kindness, and connection (Cohen 30).

In conversation, men are expected to evaluate, clarify, analyze and control the flow. Women are expected to reinforce, stroke, restore unity and reduce tension. These conversational patterns increase credibility and power for men, and reduce credibility and power for women (Sterkel 17).

In a study by Aries, men and women delivered the exact same speech to an audience of subjects. The subjects perceived the male speakers "as more honest, as doing a better job in giving the facts, and as better justifying the conclusions by the facts" (qtd. in Kenton 143). In situations where the experience, intelligence and rank of men and



women are equal, a variation of perception occurs consistently in gender studies (Kenton 149).

Perceptions and stereotypes are used to categorize all working women as indistinguishable members of one group. The individuality and diversity of women is all too often ignored (Easton, Mills, Winokur 134). In one example, a doctor noticed arthritis in a woman's hand during her annual physical and asked her if it was difficult for her to type. The executive woman informed the doctor that she was the boss and had other people do her typing. The doctor was seemingly embarrassed yet mystified at the anger in the woman's reply.

Another incident happened to a black woman executive who was riding in a hotel elevator wearing a business pant suit. When a man entered the elevator, he told her which floor he needed, assuming that she was a service employee (Easton, Mills, Winokur 135). Women who desire to break the constricting mold that society has created for them have to constantly fight the common perceptions of what women are supposed to do and how they are expected to behave.

### Options for Working Women

Working women have three basic options in the corporate world: adapt to the male-dominated culture, attempt to change the culture, or



start businesses of their own. The nature of the individual woman and the organization for which she is working, will help her determine which option is best for her.

Entire books have been written to help women understand and adapt to the foreign world of male-dominated business. Over a million copies of Harragan's book, Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women, have been sold since its publication in 1978. Harragan gives a thorough explanation of the corporate game, the game board, the rules, the players, the penalties, the objectives, the symbols, signals, style and sex components of the corporate culture. Understanding the culture of organizations can be a powerful tool for women who want to succeed in the business world.

In addition to books, seminars like the one entitled, "Power-Packed Communication Skills for Women," provide women with ideas and skills to increase their effectiveness in organizations. Women are taught communication skills enabling them to make powerful, positive impressions. They are also taught how to handle conflicts and how to gain power in the organization (Dahl 4-5).

All the hints to assist women understand and adapt to the male-dominated corporate culture, although helpful, may not provide the results that women desire. To get ahead, women have been required to

behave and communicate like men. Although some women have been successful in this endeavor, most women do not feel comfortable giving up their feminine qualities to become corporate executives (Cohen 2).

An alternative to adapting to the existing culture is to change the culture. Because organizational cultures develop and emerge over time, cultural change must be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Too much change too fast will alienate many members of the organization (Conrad 6). Despite the natural opposition to change, some women have had success in making changes in their corporate cultures.

Patricia Wallington, Chief Information Officer at Xerox Corporation, was named *Information Week's* "Chief Of the Year" for 1992. Her management style fosters collegiality among her co-workers, regardless of title or rank. Despite her position in a technical area of the business, she devotes considerable time to human resource issues. She has instituted a well rounded training program for her department, including interpersonal skills, as well as technical computer related skills (Leibs 45).

Du Pont Corporation's Vice President of Information Systems, Cinda Hallman, has been trying to instill a new corporate culture emphasizing teamwork and networking within the organization. She has seen progress in her department. Her staff is taking a broader look

at the business, rather than the traditional view of departmental territories that need to be protected at all costs (Appleby 55).

In some cases, the corporate culture is so ingrained that it is impossible to make any significant changes. Many women are leaving corporations to pursue other endeavors. LaVonne Neal, a successful business woman, gave up her management career earning sixty-thousand dollars to become a history teacher earning about one-third the salary. She is much happier in her current occupation because what is really important to her is "making a lasting difference in the lives of the children." (Cheng 120).

Many other women are leaving the corporate world to begin businesses of their own. By 1995, it is estimated that almost half of the new business owners in this country will be women. They are closing the door on the rigidity of corporations and creating new companies where they can make money, have fun, and feel good about what they are doing (Godfrey xxiii).

One of the most successful women entrepreneurs is Mary Kay Ash, founder of the second largest direct sales distributor of skin care products in the United States, Mary Kay Cosmetics. She attributes her success to keeping her life in the proper perspective, "God first, her family second, and her career third." To that end, Mary Kay Cosmetics



does not use sales quotas, has few rules, and allows a flexible work schedule. The Golden Rule is one of the few rules: she treats others as she would have them treat her, and expects the same of her employees (Thompson and Strickland 909).

As organizations take a more humanistic approach toward the way they do business and treat their employees, new guidelines are being formulated and accepted. The new guidelines are replacing the traditional attitudes where the primary focus was success at any cost (Godfrey 53). The following table provides a list of new rules of doing business compared with some of the old, conventional rules:

**Table 1**  
**Old and New Rules of Doing Business**

<b>OLD RULES</b>	<b>NEW RULES</b>
Work, work, work	Work, live, love, learn
Seek money -- alone	Seek meaning and money
The pyramid	The web
Buyer beware	Do no harm
Use it or lose it	Sustain it
Grow fast	Grow naturally
Work or family	Work and family

SOURCE: Joline Godfrey, Our Wildest Dreams: Women Entrepreneurs Making Money, Having Fun, Doing Good, (1992): 53.

Regardless of whether women choose to adapt to current corporate cultures, try to change them, or start their own companies, the working women of today are helping to shape the working world of tomorrow. By the year 2000, forty-seven percent of the workforce will be women, with white males accounting for thirty-two percent of the entering workforce (Edwards 45). There is change in the wind.

#### Predictions for the Future

When questioned on how women will change the corporation, one man answered:

We will see more women, and the kind of assets they bring to business, getting involved in upper-management decisions. It will make these companies more humanized. I think that it has always been one of the major complaints of our society that corporations are this kind of inhuman machine that consumes us all. Yet when one looks at a balance sheet, one never sees personnel listed, even though the people involved in a business are the key element. I think that business has always lacked a feminine side to it. It has always been overly male, overly aggressive, overly competitive. I think those factors comprise the general mistrust toward business. So women will bring to companies something which they need to be worthwhile places (qtd. in Easton, Mills and Winokur 214).

Another man provided an opposing view:

Business will not become more compassionate, nicer or less tough because women are in it. The logic of any situation is determined by the context and the purpose. If you have women boxers, the game is not going to be any different because the name of the game is to win by knocking your opponent out of the ring (qtd. in Easton, Mills and Winokur 215).

Time will tell which one of the men is correct in his prediction. However, as the tried and true management methods begin to fail and the cost of deteriorating morale and productivity increases, organizations will experience growing pressure to change the way they operate. Corporations will need to shift their focus away from a narrow view of management toward a broad view, encompassing the diversity of the workforce (Loden and Rosener 14).

According to Peter Drucker, one of the leading management authorities, the keys to managing in the future will be a thorough understanding of team dynamics. With the increasing number of knowledge workers, frustration with the traditional hierarchical organization will increase. Organizations of the future will be comprised of equal members, without rank. The concept of boss and subordinate will be replaced with teams of associates (Colonna 38).

Given the changing nature of the workforce, there is a growing need for leaders who can stimulate the diverse group employees with



spirit and zest. Such leaders will create a working environment that reflects human values, encouraging and nurturing human growth (Helgesen 235). The female values of empowerment, cooperation, and relationships are emerging as valuable leadership qualities for the future (Helgesen 233).

The working women of today are helping to shape the working world of tomorrow. By sheer numbers alone, their voices are beginning to be heard.

### Summary

The purpose of this study is to review the current literature pertaining to the experiences of women as greater numbers of them aspire to careers in the male dominated working world. Some of the differences between men and women will be highlighted and related to the experiences that working women face. In addition, the study will include some predictions of changes that will result from women having a stronger voice in the future of organizations.



## Chapter II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature relating to the topic of women in the workforce and the changes resulting from their increasing presence in the working world. To understand the changes that women are bringing to the workforce, it is important to look at the existing business culture. Since the current business world was formulated by men, and has traditionally been dominated by men, it is also important to examine some of the basic differences between men and women and how those differences influence the way they work.

#### Current Business Culture

The organizational structure is the foundation on which corporations are built. The structure defines the logical relationships of the functions and authority that are necessary to accomplish business objectives in an efficient manner (Harvey 265). The structure of

contemporary corporations was derived from the military hierarchy (Harragan 39).

The pyramid model is used to depict the flow of power within the hierarchical structure. From a single point at the top, power flows downward to lower layers of employees. Each layer increases in size going down the pyramid, with the largest layer of employees at the bottom of the pyramid (Harragan 48).

Within the hierarchy, there exists a clearly defined and specific chain of command. According to the principles of the hierarchy, authority and information flow downward, level by level, to the employees that are responsible for accomplishing specific tasks. Each level along the chain of command is held accountable for assigned tasks and must pass necessary information about the status of tasks to the level above (Vecchio 506).

In some organizations, employees are required to strictly adhere to the formal chain of command, just as in the military. While in other less formal organizations, levels of the chain may be bypassed (Vecchio 506). The following table lists some of the advantages and disadvantages of the hierarchical structure:

Table 2

**Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of Hierarchies**

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Control	Barriers to change
Order	Reduces employee satisfaction
Efficiency	Reduced discretion
Stability	Red tape
Memory	Power seeking
Rule by reason	

SOURCE: Robert Vecchio, Organizational Behavior, (1991): 507.

By its very structure, the hierarchy fosters competition. Each higher level in the pyramid has decreasing numbers of positions. Competition for promotion up the corporate ladder is fierce (Schaeff and Fassel 171). The competitive environment of the corporation favors men rather than women. Most men thrive in competitive situations, while competition has a negative affect on women, because women do not relish the idea of winning at another person's expense. (Kenton 149).

During the entire twentieth century, there has been relatively little change in the basic structure of organizations (Conrad 95). According to Helgesen, the hierarchical structure has remained a



mainstay in the corporate culture because it meets the male needs for limits and boundaries of relationships in the workplace. The hierarchy also satisfies the male value of the goal over the means by which the goal is attained (52). She also contends, "Many of the rituals of corporate life are not only deadening to the spirit, but also inefficient; ways of reinforcing status that have nothing at all to do with how the job gets done" (240). Women are asked to suppress many of their feminine and humanistic traits at work, and are pressured to conform to the rules that were written and perpetuated by men (Cohen 29).

Schaef and Fassel describe many organizations as addictive, where work takes over people's lives, leaving them powerless to break their addiction (57). The cultures of organizations support, reward, and promote workaholism. Workaholics are addicted to the surge of energy they get from working (131). The "fix" for a workaholic is to be successful and get ahead (130). Like any addiction, work takes over a workaholic's life. The work becomes central to the workaholic's being, resulting in a loss of perspective on reality (132). One man reflected about his addiction to work:

I had become hopelessly addicted to work. I worked for the sake of work and the superficial, fleeting feelings of esteem and accomplishment it gave me...In

work I had found my salvation, my Nirvana -- or so I thought (qtd. in Steinem 91).

This man's drug of choice was extremely seductive because his workaholism was handsomely rewarded. What management has not realized is that the pattern of workaholic addiction is the same as any addiction to alcohol, drugs, or food (Steinem 91). Like all addictions, workaholism is a way of avoiding feeling. When business has no feeling, it is amoral at a minimum, and almost always harmful to the individuals, the organization, or both (Godfrey v).

Although some women have joined the men in the ranks of workaholics, most women are not as willing as men to sacrifice their time, relationships, health, and personal happiness to attain status and power (Moir and Jessel 162). In many organizations workaholic behavior is expected in the upper ranks of management. This workaholic mentality is one factor that keeps women from entering upper management and sends them into businesses of their own (Schaefer and Fassel 43).

In today's organizations, women hold the majority of the positions at the bottom of the pyramid, while men control the positions at the top (Harragan 49). The United States Labor Department Report on the female work force stated:

Women are, without at doubt, still concentrated in the lower paying industries and occupations--secretaries, cashiers, bookkeepers, registered nurses, and waitresses, to be specific. Nearly the same groups we saw ten years ago. On the management level, things aren't much better. If fifty percent of today's entry level managers are women, only about twenty-five percent of today's middle managers are women (qtd. in Cohen 64).

Women are working just as hard, if not harder, than their male counterparts. However, women are stopped short where men advance. Women hit the invisible barrier known as the "glass ceiling" (Cohen 64). While six men in every hundred reach the high levels of corporate power, merely six in every thousand women break the power barrier (Moir and Jessel 156). For women, brains and competence are enough to get them to a certain point in the organizational structure. Then, their inability to fit the mold of male top executives stops them cold (Cohen 64). One female middle manager said, "I know I will never make it to the top and keep my sanity. I feel like a closet female who has to use war words and sport terms and play-act the male game, all day long" (qtd. in Cohen 75).

The performance of women must always be superior to their male counterparts, despite the degree of difficulty (Kenton 155). Using an Olympic diving competition as an analogy, women are required to perform dives with a higher degree of difficulty than the men.



However, the judges disregard the degree of difficulty when giving their scores (Morrison, White, and Van Velsor 60).

Numerous studies confirm the prevalence of discrimination against women in corporations. Working women find themselves continually denied equal pay, prospects for promotion, challenging task assignments, access to responsibility and authority, and opportunities for developing relationships with mentors, sponsors and peers (qtd. in Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley 64). One study of 884 Masters of Business Administration degree holders found that the women in the sample had to work six more years than their male counterparts to receive equal pay (Schneer and Reitman 405).

According to the 1991 United States Department of Labor, there were nearly six million men and nearly six million women in the "Professional" category. The average weekly earnings for the men was \$748, while the women in that category earned only \$559. Professional women earned only seventy-five percent of professional men's salaries. In the "Executive, Administrator and Manager" category, women's average wages were only sixty-six percent of the men's wages (\$504 compared to \$758) (qtd. in Hart 16).

Women in the highest levels of corporations are considered tokens, serving several functions. They give other women in the



organization a perception of acceptance of women at the top. Token women serve as guinea pigs, trying risky ideas and policies that could backfire, thus protecting the male regime. In addition, they serve as a disposable resource whose talents and skills are tapped and then discarded (Melia 30-1).

Many of the male managers are not aware of the problems that women face in the corporate culture (Edwards 55). From one male manager's perspective, "I don't hear bias expressed toward females. I don't personally see signs of a glass ceiling. But statistically, you'd certainly think it's there." (qtd. in Lukovitz 18). Another male manager asserts, "If there are barriers, I don't know where they are." (qtd. in Lukovitz 19). The glass ceiling will continue to be a barrier for women until organizations recognize its existence and work to shatter it (Morrison, White and Van Velsor 157).

An example which clearly depicts the differences in point of view between the genders about the existence of the glass ceiling was presented in a recent episode of the television show LA Law. The scene was a courtroom where a woman lawyer had brought suit against the law firm for which she had been working. The woman was suing the law firm because she had been denied a partnership position with the firm. After dedicating eight years of her life to the firm, having

been lead to believe that her diligent efforts would be rewarded with partnership, the exclusive male ranks of partners had denied her petition for partnership status. Never in the history of the law firm had a woman been appointed to partner, despite their active recruitment of young women lawyers right out of law school.

The defending law firm was represented in court by a male partner and a loyal forty-five to fifty year old female lawyer, who was not a partner. On the stand, the male partner described the female plaintiff as, "demanding, having no sense of humor, rarely smiling, and other associates didn't like working with her." He continued his testimony, "When she didn't get what she wanted, she whined about the glass ceiling and ran to court for protection." From his point of view, they had not appointed a female partner because they had not found a woman who met their criteria for that position. According to the male partner, they had "every intention of appointing a female partner as soon as they found the right one."

In making a case for discrimination based upon gender, the plaintiff's lawyer called the defendant's loyal female lawyer to the stand as a reluctant witness. Submitted into evidence was a copy of the partners' review from when she had been considered for partner a number of years prior. The review stated, "Like most women, she is

good with detail. She is loyal as your dog. Chain her to her house, feed her once a day, and she will give you her loyalty until the end. But definitely not partnership material." Not wishing to be portrayed as the poor woman who had settled for the scraps that were thrown to her by the male partners of the firm, she replied sheepishly and less than convincingly, "I have no complaints about the way I have been treated by the firm."

Although this loyal female lawyer had a very personal and painful experience when she hit the glass ceiling, she did not want to jeopardize the hard-fought gains she had made. Confiding in private to the plaintiff's lawyer, she knew that she had not been treated fairly, but felt powerless against the male partners. Since the male partners did not acknowledge the glass ceiling that existed in their law firm, she knew it would do her no good to complain about it.

In the closing arguments, Ann Kelsey, attorney for the plaintiff represented what her client had experienced,

When she acted assertive, she was labeled pushy. When she acted businesslike, she was termed cold. She was not hired to be pleasant and smile all the time, however, the lack of those qualities were given as reasons for her denial of partnership. She was judged by a different set of rules than her male counterparts. The existing partners used the talents of the women lawyers



and then tossed them aside because they didn't fit the mold of the male partners.

The outcome of this television trial resulted in the jury awarding the plaintiff \$1.5 million. The judge also stipulated that the law firm must extend an offer of partner to the plaintiff. From this decision, it was obvious that the judge and jury recognized the glass ceiling and how the stereotypes and perceptions of the male partners had prevented the plaintiff, along with any other qualified women, from crossing the barrier into partnership status.

Out of the courtroom, the male partner offered the victorious woman lawyer a deal: they would not appeal the decision, which would drag the case out for an extended period of time, if she would accept the cash award now and forego the partnership offer. The woman smiled sweetly and said, "I think I can accept that."

With his business concluded, the male partner and his male lawyer turned to leave. Speaking over his shoulder to the loyal female lawyer who had testified, the male partner said, "Come on, let's go." The final shot of the scene showed the two men walking down the hall beside each other chatting, with the obedient woman following behind them. The court ruling had done nothing to change the male partner's attitude or behavior toward women. There were still no women

partners in the firm and the loyal women continued to be treated as subservient to the men (LA Law). Although this case was a fictional television representation, it summarizes the realities of what many women are experiencing in the corporate world and has been substantiated by research.

Women in the United States are not the only ones that have experienced the "glass ceiling." Despite having a female prime minister for a decade, the Hansard Society reported that the representation of women in national United Kingdom politics has hardly increased since women gained the right to vote (qtd. in Davidson and Cooper 14). Research studies of the perceptions of managers in the United Kingdom found that the qualities needed for managerial positions are more likely to be found in men than women (qtd. in Davidson and Cooper 130). One extremist view about women in the work force came from a United Kingdom scientist in the male-dominated oil industry:

Let's face it. Most women don't want careers, they don't want to be the same as men. I think there's something very odd about a woman who wants to be a manager in our industry, it's odd to choose a masculine career. Mind you, I don't think men should go into nursing either. Men promote men on the whole and that's how it should be. It's unfair to other men if women are treated any differently or if women are promoted because they're women -- this also causes resentment. I think you shouldn't recruit women in the first place. They are a

minority and should be kept out -- too many men resent having women in this industry. They are seen as career blocks and as being candidates for preferential treatment.

However, don't get me wrong. I don't dislike all women who work, they are perfectly OK as long as they stick to traditionally female careers (qtd. in Davidson and Cooper 104).

With male attitudes like that, it is a wonder that women have made any progress in the business world at all. It has been an uphill battle for women thus far, but they are not about to surrender.

Women have experienced difficulties fitting into man's working world. Many of the reasons for the difficulties can be found by exploring some of the biological and behavioral differences between the genders.

#### Gender Differences: Biological

Men walk, talk, act and think differently than women. While some authors point to sociological and environmental differences, Moir and Jessel contend that society and environment alone can not explain the differences between men and women. In their book, Brain Sex: The Real Differences Between Men and Women, Moir and Jessel draw upon a wealth of scientific research to build a strong case that men and women are different because their brains are different. The brain,



which controls all conscious and subconscious activities of the body, is constructed differently and processes information differently between the genders (5).

The gender of the brain is determined in the womb at the time of neural organization (181). According to the scientific research of Moir and Jessel:

There is solid and consistent evidence from scientists all over the world that a biochemical influence in the womb determines and directs the structure and function of our brains. Through the influence of hormones the brain cells 'acquire a "set" which is highly resistant to change after birth.' Male hormone organizes the developing brain into a male pattern which leads to male behavior. Absence of male hormone means that the brain persists in a female pattern, resulting in a female pattern of behavior. This organization of the brain into a male or female neural network is permanent; it can only be modified by altering the hormonal milieu of the womb.

Girls who have been exposed to male hormone in the womb become more assertive and confident, preferring, as children, the company of boys and participation in active, outdoor activity. Boys exposed to female hormone in the womb have their behavior tilted towards a more female pattern. They are less aggressive, assertive and athletic (180).

The male hormone increases aggression, competition, self-assertion, self-confidence, and self-reliance. The female hormone decreases each of these attributes (80). Different doses of the hormones

in the womb shift male brains toward female characteristics and female brains toward male characteristics (87).

While the gender tendency of the brain is etched prior to birth, the differences become amplified with the onset of puberty. At that time, hormones activate and accentuate the variation in the brains of men and women. Agression is attributed to the hormone testosterone. Although all women have some testosterone in their bodies, men have as much as twenty times more than women (103-4). In extreme cases of hormonal effects, men can become violent and irrational, while women can exhibit disruptive mood swings. Normally, men will exhibit more confidence, concentration, and single-mindedness, with their aggression channelled toward ambition and motivation. Women, on the other hand, feel a stronger need to develop and maintain close relationships with others around them (181).

The table below reflects results of scientific research of the brains of men and women. The research shows that men's and women's brains are organized differently, depending upon the category of information being processed.



Table 3

**Brain Organization: The Differences**

FUNCTION		BRAIN LOCATION	SUMMARY
Mechanics of language, e.g. speech, grammar	MEN	Left hemisphere front and back	More diffuse
	WOMEN	Left hemisphere front	More specific
Vocabulary Defining words	MEN	Left hemisphere front and back	More specific
	WOMEN	Both hemispheres front and back	More diffuse
Visuo-spatial perception	MEN	Right hemisphere	More specific
	WOMEN	Both hemispheres	More diffuse
Emotion	MEN	Right hemisphere	More specific
	WOMEN	Both hemispheres	More diffuse

SOURCE: Anne Moir and David Jessel, Brain Sex: The Real Differences Between Men and Women, (1991): 46.

In addition to the differences in the organization of the brain processes, the corpus callosum, which is the bank of nerve fibers that links the right and left sides of the brain, is different between the genders. The corpus callosum in women's brains is thicker and

contains more connections between the right and left hemispheres. This means that more information is exchanged between the two sides of the female brain in a shorter period of time than the male brain (47).

Some scientists suggest that the biological differences between male and female brains explain the discrepancies in emotional responses. Moir and Jessel illustrate the results of the research:

Man keeps his emotions in their place; and that place is on the right side of his brain, while the power to express his feelings in speech lies over on the other side. Because the two halves of the brain are connected by a smaller number of fibers than a woman's, the flow of information between one side of the brain and the other is more restricted. It is the often more difficult for a man to express his emotions because the information is flowing less easily to the verbal, left side of his brain.

A woman may be less able to separate emotion from reason because of the way the female brain is organized. The female brain has emotional capacities on both sides of the brain, plus there is more information exchanged between the two sides of the brain. The emotional side is more integrated with the verbal side of the brain. A woman can express her emotions in words because what she feels has been transmitted more effectively to the verbal side of her brain (48).

Moir and Jessel contend that because of the bias of their brains, women gravitate toward work that has a personal dimension and is socially fulfilling. Most women are happiest when they succeed at something that benefits other people. Men, because of their biological

bias, are interested in dominance and power, both of which are reflected in the organizational hierarchies (157-8). While men are aggressively competing for power as a measure of their success, women get more satisfaction from developing and empowering others (159).

Moir and Jessel are not alone in their findings about differences between the brains of men and women. The anatomical differences in the brains of men and women are echoed in other literature (Loden 1985, Steinem 1992, Campbell 1989). Loden further suggests that the evolutionary selection over millions of years is responsible for the specialization of men's and women's brains (65). Included in Campbell's book, The Opposite Sex: The Complete Illustrated Guide to Differences Between the Sexes, are scanned images of brains, utilizing colors to pinpoint and differentiate brain activity. The scanned images clearly illustrate how men and women process information differently in their brains (90).

While some authors use anatomy and biology to explain differences between men and women, others characterize differences as behavioral. They document results of gender difference research without trying to explain underlying biological causes behind the behavior.



### Gender Differences: Behavioral

Of the behavioral differences between genders, many authors cite communication as the most widespread and common difference.

Communication of men and women is so diverse, so disparate, and so ingrained that it is a wonder that the two genders can understand each other at all (Melia iv). Similar to the differences of language dialects from diverse cultures, Tannen uses the term "genderlects" to define the dissimilarity between the communication styles of the genders (42).

When men and women are not aware of the differences in their communication styles, male-female interactions are subject to misunderstandings and breakdowns that impair both personal and business communication (Sterkel 18).

In conversation, men tend to jockey for status, attempting to secure and maintain a position that is one-up on the others. Women on the other hand, focus on the personal connections underlying the conversation (Tannen 38). While men value their *independence*, women value their *interdependence* (Tannen 40). Men, in an attempt to maintain a position of status or power, protect information or expertise, rather than sharing it. Women, however, feel that their



power is enhanced by sharing information that is helpful to others (Tannen 83).

Women managers are concerned about the welfare of their subordinates, while men are more often interested in their personal prestige and the prestige of the organization (Baker 117). Female managers' concern for the welfare of their subordinates was shown in Working Women's survey of 2,250 respondents. Forty-one percent of the respondents said their female bosses were very sensitive to the balancing act of work and family, compared with only sixteen percent who referred to their male bosses as sensitive to work/family issues (Kruger 42). Maxine Clark, president of Payless Shoes, feels that one of the main differences between men and women managers is that women first consider what is best for the people involved, then they evaluate the related business issues. While men tend to examine what is best for the business, then secondly, look at what is best for the people involved (Clark interview).

Repeated studies have shown that women take fewer turns during a conversation than men, take less time during their turn, are interrupted more often, and are disagreed with more frequently (qtd. in Baker 115). This unequal communication pattern gives more power to men, not only because men tend to dominate conversations, but also

because of the perception that when a woman is silent, it is evidence that she has less power. On the other hand, a man's choice to be silent is interpreted as a show of his power (Tannen 229).

Women are most comfortable talking among friends and peers, where they can feel safe and close. Men are most comfortable talking when they are establishing and maintaining status within a group (Tannen 94). Research studies have shown that male managers are more likely than their female counterparts to communicate in groups of seven-to-ten, while women communicate more often one-on-one with others (MacLeod, Scriven, and Wayne 352).

Listening is an important component of effective business communication. Some men avoid listening at length because it frames them as subordinate to the speaker. Women, on the other hand, consider listening an important way of maintaining personal connections and therefore pay closer attention to listening (Tannen 143).

In his Washington Post column, Richard Cohen stated that whether men are in or out of the workplace, they smile and nod their way through conversations. The majority of men pretend to be listening, but in fact, little of what is being said really registers (qtd. in O'Brien 56).

Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to hold a judicial position on the Supreme Court, said that one of the problems she had encountered along her journey up the legal ladder was, "getting men to listen to her." Even in her current position of authority, she feels that the problem still persists. Her solution to the problem of men not listening to her is to speak very slowly, enunciating each word, so that they pay closer attention to her (qtd. in O'Brien 58).

Even popular cartoonist Cathy Guisewite illustrated the humorous side of the selective listening of men:

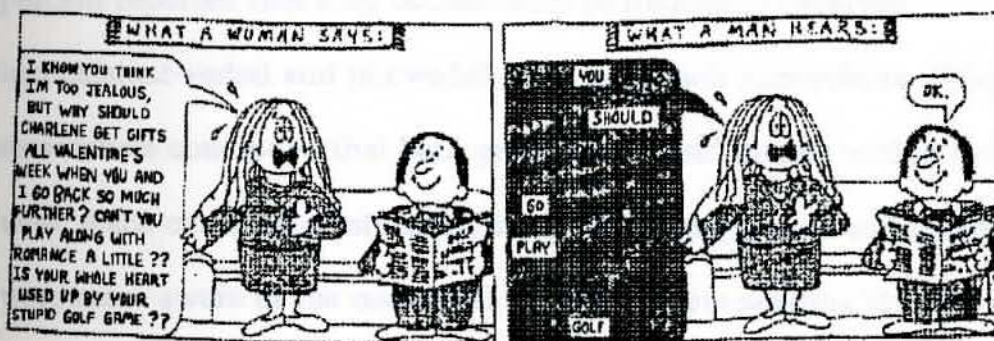


Fig 1. "Cathy" cartoon by Cathy Guisewite.

The listening abilities of women are enhanced by their superior ability to interpret nonverbal cues. Women pay more attention to facial



expressions than men (Graham, Unruh, and Jennings 48). Studies have shown that women consistently maintain eye contact more than men in conversation thus increasing their ability to interpret nonverbal signals (Brownwell 411). Men are sometimes surprised at a woman's reaction to what they say, because they do not realize that women are receiving more messages than just the words that are said (Moir and Jessel 19).

Graham, Unruh, and Jennings found that more than 94 percent of their sample, comprised of 505 professional men and women, felt distrustful or frustrated when they encountered conflicting verbal and nonverbal communications from their supervisors. Of the sample, 45 percent reported that they occasionally or frequently received inconsistent verbal and nonverbal cues from their supervisors. The researchers concluded that both productivity and morale within the work place could be significantly improved if employees and managers were more aware of the nonverbal cues they were sending (56-7).

Another behavioral difference between the genders is how they approach competition and conflict. Studies have concluded that males of all species, across most modern cultures, are more likely than women to engage in aggressive behavior, both physically and verbally (qtd. in Kenton 149). Lois Wyse, president of Wyse Advertising, suggests that "Business women feel comfortable with and will go out of



their way for each other. If men would only put their dukes down, they wouldn't have to worry so much about being emasculated. ... Men for the most part are their jobs, and women are themselves." (Cohen 20).

Studies have shown that men are more motivated by competition than women (Kenton 149, Moir and Jessel 160). For men, the competition itself is the fun, the reward, and what makes it all worthwhile (Harragan 64). A basic masculine need is maintaining the competitive edge. However, women prefer sharing rather than seizing and smoothing rather than confronting (Moir and Jessel 172).

Although women have competed in school and the workplace, most of them continue to find it difficult (Scheele 30). Men have learned since they were children to put winning ahead of personal relationships, to abide by the rules, and sacrifice their individuality for the greater good of the game. Women have learned to cooperate rather than compete, to disdain rules without reason, and to dismiss ideas like the quest for victory if personal and group harmony is at risk (Helgesen 38). Women's avoidance of confrontation and "winner take all" competition makes them vulnerable to exploitation by their competitive counterparts (Tannen 183).

Behavioral differences also manifest themselves in work habits that are distinguished by gender. A study conducted by the American Management Association addressed the subject of managerial work ethics of men and women. According to the results, women managers placed greater importance on efficiency and high productivity than men. Women also rated ability, cooperation, skill and flexibility as more admired personal qualities than the men in the survey (Loden 106).

In a survey of over 2,000 Americans, Patterson and Kim found that sixty percent of the women were loyal to their companies, while only forty-six percent of the men described themselves as loyal to their organizations. More than twice as many men than women felt that the only way to get ahead in business was to cheat. In addition, women are much less willing than men to compromise their ethics and values to get ahead (158). Overall, women exhibit higher moral and ethical standards in business than men (157).

Female leaders have more finely developed interpersonal skills, including the use of feedback, assessing personal impact, sensing skills, and management of feelings (Loden 135). Women managers lead without bruising others and do not display unnecessary ego (Loden 76). Women feel strengthened when they empower others with knowledge

or responsibility. Men, on the other hand, feel threatened when they empower others because they do not want to lose their control (Cohen 25). Women leaders look for the "win-win" situations and partnerships in their business dealings, while men tend to seek the "I win--you lose" situations (Cohen 9).

Cohen presents a sample of the traditional male "good old boy" leadership behavior that still exists in varying degrees within organizations:

- ▶ *It's directive.* "Do this--I don't really care about your problems at home ..."
  - ▶ *It's self-advancement at all costs.* "C'mon--it's a dog-eat-dog world and bleeding hearts don't get to be CEOs."
  - ▶ *It's keeping space between you and others, not connecting.* "Let them get too close, let them know what makes you hurt, and you're dead."
  - ▶ *It's always valuing the bottom line over caring.* "I don't care what the compassionate thing to do is--I care about the *cost effective* thing to do."
  - ▶ *It's always about facts--never feelings.* "Give me rational argument--don't bother me with intuition!"
- (8)

For most men, status, prestige, ambition, and money are tightly woven into a symbol of their success and their egos. Women, on the



other hand, consider money and status less important than the satisfaction of helping others and the personal relationships that they maintain at work. Success and status is not as large a part of the female ego as the male ego (Moir and Jessel 161).

Some of the biological and behavioral differences between the genders, along with social attitudes, have combined to form gender specific perceptions and stereotypes. These perceptions and stereotypes of men and women have significantly contributed to the current business culture.

#### Perceptions and Stereotypes

Men are expected to act like men and women are expected to act like women. As in society, gender specific perceptions and stereotypes are widespread in the corporate culture. A study by the Harvard Business Review in 1985 found that only nine percent of the men and four percent of the women surveyed thought that women do not aspire to top positions in organizations. However, over fifty percent of the respondents thought that women would never be completely accepted in business (Koontz and Weihrich 6).

Women are thought to be best suited for occupations that involve nurturing or teaching, like nurses, teachers, and child care



workers. However, if an occupation involves making important decisions or working with the hands, men are thought to be most qualified (Conrad 232).

Research studies on the perceptions of management qualities reported that subjects used masculine terms like aggressive, objective, self-reliant, and vigorous to describe effective management styles (Kuiper 87). However, studies on the actual behavior of managers have found that there are no differences in the effectiveness of men and women managers (qtd. in Conrad 325).

When women attempt to act like the men around them in business, they are perceived in a different light than most women (Fine 26). Women leaders find themselves walking a fine line of acceptability. To become effective leaders, women must deviate from the passive characteristics of femininity. In so doing, they run the risk of being perceived as unfeminine, undesirable and unlovable (Cantor, Bernay and Stoess 167).

Men and women alike feel uncomfortable with women who are outspoken and behave in an aggressive or ambitious manner (Cantor, Bernay and Stoess 80). Loden presents some of the gender specific stereotypes that frame men's behavior as acceptable, and comparable women's behavior as negative:

Table 4

**HOW TO TELL A BUSINESSMAN FROM A BUSINESSWOMAN**

---

- ▶ A businessman is aggressive; a businesswoman is pushy.
- ▶ A businessman is good on details; she's picky.
- ▶ He loses his temper at times because he's so involved in his work; she's bitchy.
- ▶ He knows how to follow through; she doesn't know when to quit.
- ▶ He stands firm; she's hard.
- ▶ He is a man of the world; she's been around.
- ▶ He isn't afraid to say what he thinks; she's mouthy.
- ▶ He drinks martinis because of excessive job pressures; she's a lush.
- ▶ He exercises authority diligently; she's power mad.
- ▶ He's climbed the ladder of success; she's slept her way to the top.
- ▶ He's a stern taskmaster; she's hard to work for!

---

SOURCE: Marilyn Loden, Feminine Leadership or How to Succeed in Business Without Being One of the Boys, (1985): 38-9.

Stereotypical perceptions have led to unrealistic expectations for women in the working world (Morrison, White and Val Velsor 69).

Unspoken and unconscious biases against kindness, maintaining relationships, and nurturing daily handicap women who strive for success in business (Cohen 30). Women have been told to leave their feminine values at home because they are not welcome in the workplace. On the other hand, the masculine values of men have always been welcomed at work (Cohen 32).

What is perceived as an empowering symbol for a man is not necessarily empowering to a woman. For example, when a man sits at the head of a business conference table, he symbolizes and commands the power of the meeting. However, when a woman sits at the head of a conference table with other men, the power is deflected to a man sitting elsewhere at the table (Baker 118).

A study was conducted by placing identical articles in two booklets, one giving the author as a woman and the other one giving the author as a man. The article carrying the man's name was consistently rated as more valuable and the writer more competent than the same article with the woman's name on it (qtd. in Sterkel 23).

Stereotypes sometimes manifest themselves in not-so-subtle ways. When Linda Winikow was a New York State Senator, she was stopped by the State Police on suspicion of car theft because a woman was driving a car with Senate license plates (Winikow 243). For the



state trooper, it was outside the realm of possibility that a Senator could be a woman.

Both men and women are conditioned by the culture to accept stereotypes about women in business. Studies of perceptions in the workplace have shown that men and women rate masculine characteristics superior to feminine characteristics, and they rate work typically done by men higher than work typically done by women. Women who have been successful attribute their success to luck. On the other hand, successful men credit their own abilities for their success (qtd. in Kenton 152).

A study published in The Wall Street Journal, surveyed 134 male and female middle managers at *Fortune 500* companies. The researchers reported a "perception barrier" between men and women in business:

The majority of men and women surveyed agreed that women will help improve both values and the bottom line, that companies will need to change attitudes and behavior to attract and keep talented women, and that sex-related bias can be changed with training.

At the same time, however, the researchers concluded that "women tend to look at an organization from the top down and conclude that they haven't advanced nearly fast enough, while men look bottom up and think, 'Look how far [women] have come.'" Fifty-eight percent of men, but only 23 percent of women



agreed that a woman can become a CEO on performance alone; and 58 percent of men, as compared to 34 percent of women, said that they think companies will voluntarily change behaviors toward women (qtd. in Lukovitz 18).

Despite common stereotypes and myths about women in business, the bulk of evidence indicates that executive men and women seem to have identical psychological, intellectual and emotional characteristics (Campbell 211). A study of men and women executives, conducted by The Center for Creative Leadership, found that women's scores matched the scores of men in almost all of the personality dimensions measured. Their results are listed in the table below.

**Table 5**

**The Truth About Women Executives**

- 
- ▶ The executive women were *not* more impulsive than the men.
  - ▶ The executive women were *not* better able to reduce interpersonal friction.
  - ▶ The executive women were *not* more understanding or humanitarian.
  - ▶ The executive women were *not* more concerned with presentation or self.
  - ▶ The executive women were *not* more suspicious or touchy.

- ▶ The executive women were *not* less dominant in leadership situations than the men.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less self-confident or secure.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less able to define and attain goals.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less optimistic about success.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less able to cope with stress.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less outgoing or sociable.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less self-disciplined or rational.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less intellectual or able to apply their intelligence.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less insightful.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less flexible and adaptable.
- ▶ The executive women were *not* less even-tempered.

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SOURCE: Ann M. Morrison, Randall P. White, Ellen Van Velsor, and The Center for Creative Leadership, Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?, (1987): 51-2.

Although most studies have found no differences in the management effectiveness between men and women, some differences have been observed. The differences in specific attributes indicate that women would be better managers than men (Conrad 325). For

example, women are more open to communication from others, they can reconcile their concern for people with their concern for bottom-line results, and do not feel threatened by empowering others (Helgesen 31).

Stereotypes and perceptions can be rigid, limiting and judgmental. They minimize the talents, accomplishments and talents of the people involved. By negating people's individuality and value, stereotypes are destructive and can have a dysfunctional impact on organizations (Loden and Rosener 68-9).

Stereotypes are used by the dominant group within organizations to maintain their homogeneity by excluding people with diverse backgrounds. The behavior and performance standards of the dominant group are applied to all employees. For example, aggressive behavior is rewarded by managers who are aggressive themselves. Diverse employees must continually prove their competency to the dominant group, while members of the dominant group are accepted without being continually tested. The control of communication and decision making within the dominant group perpetuates the homogeneity of the dominant group (Loden and Rosener 38). In the vast majority of organizations, the dominant group is comprised of white men. Women have made inroads to the male dominated



business world, but have not been accepted as equals. For women who are willing to continue the quest for equality, the future holds many options.

### Options for Working Women

There are three basic options facing women in the workforce: adapt to the current male-dominated culture, work within the culture to change it, or become entrepreneurs in businesses of their own. Each working woman, depending upon her goals and aspirations, must decide which option suits her best. There is no single definition of success for women and no single path to attain it.

The first option for women is to adapt to the corporate world in which they find themselves. Because the vast majority of corporations were built and are dominated by men, women may need some insight into the male business culture to map a strategy for success. One popular guide for understanding the corporate culture is Harragan's book, Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women. Harragan provides the premise for the ideas in her book:

The antidote for business woman of today is exercise, exercise playing a uniquely female brand of corporate politics. The central strategy in this game depends on analyzing the pertinent male cultural



conditioning which exerts control over men's actions and involuntary reactions in the business environment. That information is essential to pre-plan your own moves accordingly. *The purpose is not to "join them" but to surpass them.* Key maneuvers are contingent on making accurate predictions of your opponent's moves, then outwitting them at their own game (44).

Harragan contends that the vast majority of women who enter business are oblivious to the fact that they have stumbled onto a playing field, where the strictly enforced rules and the criteria for success are understood only by men (23). Some women who perceive that there is a game being played can find themselves playing checkers while their opponents are playing chess. The women recognize the game board, but fail to understand the complexity of the game (34).

The object of the game is money and power, according to Harragan. The rules for success are not always rational or effective for the organization, but nonetheless are rigidly enforced (35). To a large number of women, the rules of the game and the activities going on around them do not make sense, which puts them at a disadvantage (79).

The first move for women who want to succeed in business is to make sure they have a legitimate place on the team. Just having a job does not ensure women a place on the team. If they do not recognize

the positions which make them part of the team, women are relegated to peripheral roles on the sidelines, with no chance to be recognized or score points in the game (81). One way for women to assess their positions within organizations is to look at their job functions from an upper management perspective (155).

Women's concept of honesty, fair play, and teamwork can put them at a disadvantage. In a game setting, lawful deception is admirable, and fair play means following the rules, whether those rules are perceived as fair or not (88-9). Women often think of teamwork and cooperation as synonymous. However, in corporate gamesmanship, teamwork has more to do with following the rules and winning than with cooperation (94).

Women have an arsenal of skills, but many hesitate to use them when it means taking advantage of the weakness of another (138).

Harragan's advice to women who hesitate to use their advantage is:

Come on, come on! You're not "playing house." You're in a ball game. If an opposing player drops the ball, you pick it up and run. If you can distract a rival so he isn't watching his base, you steal a base. If the infield moves closer, expecting you to hit a pop fly, pretend you will but then aim a fast low grounder through the unprotected hole. *That's* what "playing fair" is all about--playing within the rules but so cleverly and astutely that you give the other team a run for its money. And that's

when you gain respect from male associates for your proficiency and talent (138-9).

One of the unwritten tactics of the game of corporate politics is asking for a raise. Women do not realize that by not asking for raises, they fall further behind their male counterparts and can be classified as inconsequential players on the team (237). Women do not take advantage of the power of their positions because they often fail to claim their fair share of the winnings (243). Women must realize that they have to look out for their own interests, because if they do not ask for raises and promotions, they will not get them (255).

Another corporate maneuver, in which women do not actively participate, is the quest for status symbols. One's title, the location and size of the office, furnishings, and company perks are visible symbols of one's status. By not understanding the value of status symbols in the game of corporate politics, women undercut their power and authority (268).

Women frequently mistrust their intuitive feelings in business settings because they are continually being asked to justify their intuition with facts. Despite the pressure to suppress their intuition, women should not ignore their intuitive signals. Even though facts and



data are not immediately available to justify women's intuitive feelings, the rationale most often will be found at a later date (136).

One of the biggest traps into which aspiring women managers fall is performing tasks that are in the secretarial or clerical category. Although they may feel they are doing the organization a favor by helping out, in reality they lower their position in the eyes of their male peers (316). Harragan uses the following analogy to demonstrate her point:

The pitcher or first baseman does not gain his credentials by substituting as the best water-boy or bat-boy the team ever had. Nor does the bat-boy get to be pitcher because he's so terrific at handing out bats. Never forget that team positions are specific assigned duties, highly restricted in function. The symbolic impact of diverting your concentration from your explicit responsibilities to minor tasks tends to classify you as an undependable teammate (320).

Harragan's observations convinced her "that women will forever be short-changed in business unless they perfect techniques and unorthodox modi operandi to compete in a world they never made" (43). To that end, many self-help books and seminars are available for women who desire to dress for success, become more assertive, learn how to say no, avoid getting stressed out, or learn power-packed communication skills (Dahl).



In striving for success, women have been impelled to speak in borrowed voices of tough talk and competition. Women's instinctive tenderness and cooperation have been trivialized and regarded as disempowering (Cohen 4). The pressure for women to behave like men in order to succeed is supported by studies which find that there are no significant differences in the management styles of men and women (qtd. in Loden 70).

The price has been high for women on their way up the corporate ladder. The majority of executive women are not married and are childless. Some of the unmarried have chosen not to marry and others are separated or divorced. One-third of the executive women have consciously chosen career over children (Cohen 45).

Some women with deep battle scars from their hard fought victories have become just as driven and competitive as men. They feel no obligation to mentor or promote the generation of women entering the workforce (Madden 102). Other women, refusing to abdicate entirely to the masculine culture of corporations, are frustrated because they know that there must be a better way (Cohen 20).

The frustration of having to act against their natural instincts has caused many women to reevaluate and amend their meaning of success. One women executive said, "Success isn't any of the things I

thought it would be ... I thought it would be the diamonds and the fur coats. And it turned out not to be outside validation, not external things. No, it's me feeling good about me" (qtd. in Godfrey 81).

As part of a revised meaning of success, some women are making strides to change organizational cultures. Some women who have risen to the middle management ranks see the need to serve as role models and mentors to women who are on their way up (LaPlante 73).

Ellen Gordon, president of the Tootsie Roll Corporation looks forward to the day when "gender is a non-issue and when one doesn't think male or female executive, but just plain executive." She describes her own style as persuasive and insistent but not loud or tough. She realizes the need to keep lines of communication open regardless of rank (Cohen 49).

Ellen Levine, editor-in-chief of *Woman's Day* magazine, is persistent and determined about what she wants to say but feels she is gentler and more considerate in the way she communicates. She strives for a balance, "I wouldn't want to be too sexy, too tough, too soft--but an appropriate mix. I'm a woman, it's what I am, take it or leave it--I won't diffuse it" (qtd. in Cohen 56).

One female middle manager has been successful in bringing her philosophy to her sales department:

- ▶ Put yourself in the other person's moccasins.
- ▶ Treat others as though you work for them even though they work for you.
- ▶ Use incentives rather than quotas to get people to work their hardest.
- ▶ Stress cooperation. People don't have to love each other, but they do have to cooperate with each other.
- ▶ Teach, don't preach. Let other people, not just bosses, make decisions. When you give people power, you give them strength to make you strong.
- ▶ Don't spin people's wheels by challenging them; instead develop a win-win policy. When I win, you win. Do this by rewarding accomplishment and recognizing effort in tangible ways (qtd. in Cohen 72).

Mimi Vandermolen was the first woman in the history of Ford Motor Company to supervise the creation of a new car. In designing the Ford Probe, Vandermolen took into account that forty-nine percent of all cars are purchased by women and nearly eighty percent of all buying decisions are influenced by women. One way that she got the male dominated design team to think of women in their designs was to have them research how women interact with the car: problems



presented by wearing a skirt or having long finger nails, how women sit differently in a car than men, and how high heels affect the angle at which the foot meets the pedals. Vandermolen would like to see more women pursue careers in auto design. To attract women to the field, she serves as mentor to women students at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. (Vandermolen 25-8).

Hunter College, under the leadership of its president Donna Shalala, has instituted a feminine leadership approach within its organization. Cooperation, empathy, collaboration, quality education, and high performance standards have replaced the traditional male leadership model of competition, power, detachment and high control. Shalala reflects,

Some of the most traditional, even chauvinistic managers in this institution have become strong supporters of this strategy because they believe it increases productivity. . . . If someone told them today that this was a feminist strategy, they'd say, "That's not just a feminist strategy, that's good management strategy." They've become believers because they've seen results (qtd. in Loden 257-8).

Women are not alone in seeing the need to change some of the philosophies in corporations. Men like Richard Dooley are professing the need for managers to develop "soft skills." He conducts a two-day

seminar to help managers work better with people, to be more open to new ideas and to nurture creativity. One male participant came away from the session with a new outlook on how to motivate his workers. Once back on the job, rather than getting upset with an employee who had found an error, he praised his efforts to maintain the quality of his work (Wilson 90).

Although some women have been successful in making changes in their organizations, not every woman feels that she has the power or endurance to change the male-dominated, ingrained cultures within organizations. One woman summed up her frustration, "There's no true equality for women. Nobody's sending us to the back of the bus, but we're still disregarded in major ways. We get to speak, but nobody's listening" (qtd. in Post 18). She, along with many other women, has left the corporate world to go into business for herself.

Godfrey sheds some light on the reasons for the influx of women entrepreneurs:

Many women are leaving the giants of the Fortune 500 to start their own businesses. Others choose never to enter the ranks of the giants. No longer content to spend their most productive years in organizations sealed off by a glass ceiling, no longer willing to work in companies that greedily consume all the hours of their life (leaving nothing for self, family, or friends), no longer able to blindly accept old assumptions about what business is

and must be, women are voting with their feet. We are closing the door on corporate rigidity and inventing companies in which we can make money, do good, and have fun. We are creating the stuff of our wildest dreams (xxiii).

According to the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, in 1990 women owned over five million businesses, employing eleven million workers. It is predicted that statistics for 1993 will show that businesses owned by women employed more people than the Fortune 500 organizations (qtd. in Lappen 63).

Some women entrepreneurs are redefining the organizational models for operating their businesses. Barbara Grogan, founder of Western Industrial Contractors, flattened the corporate hierarchy to ensure that information could flow freely between all staff members (qtd. in Billard 70). Grogan's guiding principle is to "pick the right people, and then trust them." By empowering her employees to supervise the operations, she is free to set the vision for the organization and market her business (Helgesen 131). Grogan does not reward workaholism, encouraging employees not to work nights or weekends (Helgesen 134). It is her belief that "women have a mission to humanize the workplace by expressing their love, joy, enthusiasm, and caring" (Helgesen 112).



Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop chain of retail cosmetic stores, defines her philosophy:

I believe in the principles of caring, making intuitive decisions, not getting hung up on hierarchy or all those dreadfully boring business-school management ideas; having a sense of work as being part of your life, not separate from it; putting your labor where your love is; being responsible to the world in how you use your profits; recognizing the bottom line should stay at the bottom (qtd. in Helgesen 5).

The belief of many women entrepreneurs is that the bottom line will be measured at the end of their lives, rather than at the end of each fiscal quarter. They are expanding the definition of wealth far beyond monetary accumulation, to include self-esteem, integrity, family, friends, quality products and services, and contributions to society (Godfrey xxv).

The road for women in their own businesses is not always smooth or easy. They frequently encounter difficulties in gaining financial credit, obtaining contracting opportunities, and face discrimination on many fronts. The national Committee on Small Business found no significant improvement in the treatment of women entrepreneurs between their initial hearings in 1980 and subsequent hearings through 1988 (Godfrey 213).

Despite the fact that working women seem to be fighting an uphill battle, they are not willing to give up the fight. Some women are finding their success by adapting to existing corporate cultures. Other women have gained enough power to attempt to change the climate of the working world, whether it be in corporations or businesses or their own. With increasing numbers and determination, women are influencing change in the workforce.

#### Predictions for the Future

According to a survey of college students published in *The Wall Street Journal*, employees entering the work place are more concerned than any previous group of new employees with intangibles including happiness, good working environment, and opportunities for personal growth. Salary was ranked sixth in a list of job considerations. Rated above salary were satisfaction and fulfillment (qtd. in Helgesen 235).

Given the changing climate of the work place and changes in values of both male and female workers, a need emerges for leaders with the capability to stimulate employees to perform their best with zest and spirit. The new breed of leaders must create an environment that reflects human values while it encourages and nurtures human

growth (Helgesen 235). Women have the ability to instinctively foster and sustain the human spirit (Helgesen 239).

Loden believes that the acceptance of a cooperative feminine leadership model does not necessitate the overthrow of the traditional competitive male leadership model. Most of the men and women managers she interviewed felt that the two leadership styles could work in conjunction very effectively, believing that organizations which encouraged both leadership styles would be most effective and responsive to changing business demands (14). Loden offers the following advice to organizations:

It is time for the blinders to come off. What made American industry grow and prosper in the past was its ability to capitalize on new ideas and move in new directions. To regain our prominence in the world marketplace, new ideas and new approaches to leading and managing are needed once again. Given the high demand that exists today for interpersonal skills, it seems obvious that feminine leadership is precisely the kind of new approach that can help American business manage change more effectively and prosper once again. The resources required to implement this approach already exist. Thousands of women managers are ready. All that is required now is for organizations to let them manage with their heads *and* with their hearts (157).

According to the extensive study of the perceptions of two thousand subjects, conducted by Patterson and Kim, Americans are



completely disillusioned with their leaders. They concluded that business, politics, education, religion, and the media need to accept how incredibly poorly they are doing in the minds of the American people. Everything in the research study pointed to the fact that "women are the underutilized hope for this country's future." Patterson and Kim concluded that the time has come for women to take charge of the Congress, businesses and even the Presidency of the United States (226-7).

In the final analysis, it is the controlling male management that will dictate the rate of organizational change (Easton, Mills, and Winokur 215). The change is likely to be very slow and gradual due to the fact that most organizational leaders do not even acknowledge the existence of gender based discrimination (Baker 124). Although George Bush was quoted as saying, "If America is ever to realize its full potential, we must shatter the glass ceiling that separates women from equal status in all fields," his presidency did little to foster that equality (Anzelowitz, Fredman, Hermelin, Hornaday, Kruger, Lappen, Mall, and Myers 57).

One maverick, W. R. Howell, Chairman and CEO of J. C. Penney, has mapped a game plan for change within his organization:

Top officers must make it clear that diversity at all levels of the company is the right business decision and a company objective. To accomplish this, companies need to take four steps: determine the issues and roadblocks preventing women from gaining advancement; establish a formal plan for their advancement; communicate and implement that plan; and establish accountability if the desired results are not achieved.

Being a consumer-driven industry where 70 to 80 percent of purchases are made by women, [the retailing business] needs to make a commitment to the advancement of women as a strategic business decision. We are an industry that historically has had more women in the pipeline and could have been a role model for other businesses to follow. The failure to maximize their potential deprives our economy of new leaders and new sources of creativity--both of which are critical to the success of any organization. We must change the male-dominated culture, raise awareness and sensitivity and obtain a buy-in from all senior management (Anzelowitz, Fredman, Hermelin, Hornaday, Kruger, Lappen, Mall, and Myers 63).

Similar sentiments are echoed by Paul Hawken, Chairman and CEO of Smith & Hawken. It is his opinion that women bring important new values to the workforce that will drive business forward in the century to come. Women will help business fulfill its role as "restorer of our planet, our community, and our faith in each other" (qtd. in Godfrey v).

It is only a matter of time before a new generation of women shatter the glass ceiling once and for all (Morrison, White and Van

Velsor 156). Until that time, women must remain true to their inner voices and hold fast to their vision of what the world could be like. They must carry the torch of enlightenment into the dark corners of business that thrive on the prejudices and stereotypes that prevent individuals from attaining their highest aspirations. Women are in the workforce to stay and represent the voice of change for the future.

#### Summary/Hypothesis

When women enter the workforce they tend to be naive about the organizational culture that surrounds them. Women bring with them their natural feminine instincts and behaviors, which are not considered as valuable in the corporate world as male instincts and behaviors.

Because they are entering a "man's world," women are unaware of the subtle and underlying rules of the corporate game. They see men adapting easily and advancing for their efforts, while the women seem to lag behind as if they are carrying an additional burden each step of the way. At the core of that burden is the fact that women do not think, communicate, or behave like men. The burden is further compounded by society's ingrained perceptions and stereotypes of



acceptable feminine behavior, which do not include leadership or effective management characteristics.

Women who desire a successful career are forced to abandon their feminine qualities in favor of the accepted male model of corporate behavior. Even then, the women are often not accepted in the circle of male executives. Women who chose to listen to their inner voices, holding fast to their feminine beliefs and behaviors, are written off as having little, if any potential for advancement.

Although women have been welcomed into the workforce, they have not received equal pay, recognition, or opportunity for advancement as their male counterparts. Despite their efforts, the progress of women has been blocked by the glass ceiling, the invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing where men of comparable skills and abilities succeed. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is: **The glass ceiling has been constructed with perceptions and stereotypes of gender differences, preventing women from being accepted as equals in the male dominated business world.**

## Chapter III

### SELECTIVE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a selective review and evaluation of the research studies that pertain to the central hypothesis of this study. Specifically, the research methods that were employed in the studies will be evaluated, including experimental control, sampling techniques, validity, and support of conclusions. In addition, limitations of the research studies will be discussed.

#### The Existence of the Glass Ceiling

In an article about women in the field of public relations, Lukovitz presented some opinions that men had about the existence of the glass ceiling. One male executive stated, "There is no glass ceiling anymore" (19). Another male manager asserted, "If there are barriers, I don't know where they are." (19). A third male manager's perspective was, "Statistics are running one way; perceptions, another. I don't hear bias expressed toward females. I don't personally see signs of a glass

ceiling. But statistically, you'd certainly think it's there." (18). In another article, President George Bush was quoted as saying, "If America is ever to realize its full potential, we must shatter the glass ceiling that separates women from equal status in all fields" (Anzelowitz, Fredman, Hermelin, Hornaday, Kruger, Lappen, Mall and Myers 57). Although four opinions do not constitute enough of a sample to be reliable or valid, they can serve as a basis for researchers to question if a class ceiling does exist for women in business.

In 1987, Morrison, White, Van Velsor and The Center for Creative Leadership published the results of their three year study of top female executives in Fortune 100-sized companies. For statistical information about women in business, Morrison, White, and Van Velsor used Internal Revenue Service reports, research studies, Wall Street Journal special reports, Fortune magazine, and USA Today articles (5-6). The trends of women's progress in the corporate world raised many questions in the authors' minds, which prompted their research study (7).

Morrison, White and Van Velsor began their research study with the premise that there might be a glass ceiling that prevented women from rising above a certain level in organizations (13). They designed their research utilizing a survey format. One questionnaire was



developed to be answered by female executives. A second questionnaire was administered to "savvy insiders" who were defined as executives responsible for selecting candidates for top positions.

The researchers established specific criteria for identifying qualified respondents. This helped insure a relevant and representative sample population (Zikmund 333). Although finding women holding executive positions took some effort, it was accomplished by establishing the sampling frame as organizations within the Fortune 100, contacting each company, and requesting their assistance in the research project. The researchers conducted personal interviews with seventy-six executive women and twenty-two savvy insiders. Answers to the questions were transcribed by the interviewers. This method of in-person interviews helped guarantee the rate of response, however it could have been the source of some inherent biases. For example, the interviewer's tone of voice, appearance, or question rephrasing could have influenced the respondents' answers (Zikmund 166). In addition, the transcription skills of the interviewers could have an impact upon the accuracy and completeness of the responses (Zikmund 150).

Being experienced researchers, Morrison, White and Van Velsor presented some of the possible shortcomings of their research:

As is true of any research, our study is subject to the vagaries of timing and other factors; it is an imperfect study. Our method relies heavily on memory and perception, not simply on facts. Therefore, we can't expect that our data could fulfill all measures of accuracy. And because we guaranteed the confidentiality of the individuals we interviewed and the companies they worked for, we couldn't "check" the stories they gave us. However, accuracy per se is ephemeral in all areas involving people, particularly in management development. Every detail of our results may not hold for every person, yet the patterns found in our analysis, which we report in this book, are solid (12).

Authors of other articles and books stated the existence of the glass ceiling by citing statistics of the percentages of women in executive positions compared to the men in comparable positions. Some authors stated the source of their statistics, while others presented the statistics without providing the source from which their information was derived.

For example, the article "A New Agenda," with interviews by Anzelowitz, Fredman, Hermelin, Hornaday, Kruger, Lappen, Mall and Myers, opened with the following statements, without providing the source of the information:

We are 51 percent of the population, 45 percent of the work force, 41 percent of all managers. And by the end of 1992, woman-owned businesses will employ more people than the Fortune 500 companies. Yet in almost

every workplace arena, from pay to power, women still lag (55).

In another instance of statistical information without its source provided, Madden asserted that, "More than fifty million [women] are working, but only two-and-a-half million have made it to middle management" (xv). She continued, "Nationwide, women above middle management can be counted without getting out the calculator" (xv). In another case, Madden followed her pattern of not providing the source by stating, "Although women are nearly a majority of the employees in Fortune 1,000 companies, they hold only 3-4 percent of corporate boardroom seats. And only 25 percent of the companies that have female directors have more than one" (83). In fact, Madden provided no sources whatsoever in her entire book.

The statistics quoted in the articles and books without providing their sources, may in fact be accurate. However, without any sources furnished, neither the validity nor reliability of the information can be assessed. Common terms, like "middle management," can be defined differently by various researchers. Without knowing the scale upon which the research was measured, (i.e. what constitutes middle management, pay, tenure, benefits, etc.) the validity can not be proven. Likewise, without knowing about the circumstances of the research, the



reliability of the measurement can not be judged. For the purposes of research study, information that is presented without providing its source must therefore be excluded as possible support for any hypothesis.

There were other authors who were more conscientious about providing sources for the research and statistical information that they quoted. For example, Winikow quoted results from a study by the Women's Bureau Conference Board, "There are less than half a dozen female chief executives in the Fortune 500. Only five percent of all corporate board members are women" despite the fact that "women make up nearly half of the U.S. work force" (243).

Cohen quoted the United States Labor Department Report on the current status of females in the work force which stated:

Women are, without a doubt, still concentrated in the lower paying industries and occupations--secretaries, cashiers, bookkeepers, registered nurses, and waitresses, to be specific. Nearly the same groups we saw ten years ago. On the management level, things aren't much better. If fifty percent of today's entry level managers are women, only about twenty-five percent of today's middle managers are women (64).

Research and statistical information given without sources or sufficient data to support the conclusions, cannot be used in a research

study to support a hypothesis. However, statistical information that is quoted from credible sources can be utilized. In the case of the sources used for this study, many of the authors utilized research and statistical information to conclude that the glass ceiling does exist. As reported in many sources, the percentage of women is not consistent throughout all levels of organizations. Women hold substantially more positions than men in the lower ranks of organizations and less positions in the upper ranks.

#### Gender Specific Perceptions and Stereotypes

Kenton, in a research of literature, examined thirty-eight studies pertaining to perceptions of credibility based upon gender. Studies, from as early as 1932, were provided as historical backdrop for more recent research studies. Although this was not an empirical study, Kenton specifically directed the reader to numerous sources for further information about empirical research that had been conducted.

Before examining the research on gender differences in speaker credibility, Kenton presented numerous models that defined the dimensions of speaker credibility (145-7). A consensus model of speaker credibility was derived with the following dimensions: goodwill and fairness, expertise, prestige, and self-presentation (148).

Having a model depicting the dimensions of speaker credibility, Kenton presented research findings of gender differences that fell within each of the four dimensions. Based upon the research, Kenton concluded that 1) women tend to be perceived higher on the "goodwill and fairness" dimension due to their focus on concern for others; 2) because of higher expectations for women, men tend to be perceived higher on the dimension of "expertise" even when credentials are comparable; 3) men tend to be perceived higher on the "prestige" dimension because of expectations and socialization; and 4) men tend to be ranked higher on the dimension of "self-presentation" because of psychological dispositions and societal expectations (150-2). Overall, Kenton summarized that men tend to be perceived as having more credibility as speakers than women (153).

The majority of Kenton's conclusions about gender differences in perceptions of speaker credibility were logically supported by the research cited. However, in the final paragraph of the study, Kenton stated, "In conclusion, women must work twice as hard to be perceived as equal in those areas in which they tend to be perceived as less credible than men" (155). There was no research to support that claim. First of all, there was no research that measured how hard men work to be perceived as credible. Therefore, it would be impossible to judge



that a woman was working "twice as hard" as a man. Secondly, even if women strive to overcome some of the negative perceptions, there is no guarantee that they will ever "be perceived as equal" to men. Kenton's conclusion implies that women can be perceived as equal if they work twice as hard as men. Kenton's study contained many conclusions that were supported by the research presented, however, the final conclusion was unsubstantiated.

In another research study, Baker presented methods for reducing gender bias in managerial communication. The review of literature was based upon the premise that "if women are to achieve power in management, their communication strategies *and* society's perception of women's roles must be changed" (114). Baker presented research on the theory of masculine and feminine traits, including an analysis of Loden's work, Feminine Leadership or How to Succeed in Business Without Being One of the Boys, which was used as a source for this study (114-5). Baker provided the following appraisal of Loden's book:

However well-intentioned Loden's thesis may be, it is based on the position that women with top managerial aspirations have different philosophies and values than their male counterparts--a position difficult to support. Substantial evidence suggests that, when factors such as status within the company and work experience are controlled for, attitudinal differences between women and men managers disappear (115).

Baker cited results from eight research studies that showed more similarities than differences between men and women with comparable positions and years of experience. However, one study was found to support Loden's thesis stating that, "gender differences in leadership effectiveness typically occur with undergraduates, in social settings, or in business settings when differences in position and years of experience are not controlled for" (115). From this research, Baker concluded that women in executive positions possess the values and philosophies of those who hold the power in the male-dominated businesses (115).

As part of the review of research on gender related communication strategies, Baker summarized the results of seventeen studies in a table. Here is a sample of the results:

- ▶ Female proteges were perceived as a greater risk than male proteges.
- ▶ Female [police officers] were caught between conflicting roles.
- ▶ Males accepted assertiveness in females; females disapproved.
- ▶ Males were preferred over females by employees who screen applicants.

- ▶ Subjects assumed the person at the head [of the table] was the leader unless a female was at the head and males were present.
- ▶ Females seen as person-invested and task-engrossed; males as autonomy-invested and image-engrossed.
- ▶ Females, more than males, accepted female managers. Males who worked with females had a more positive attitude toward female managers, but not their communication skills.
- ▶ Males seen as more effective when using expert power; females when using reward-based power. Males seen as more powerful than females (120-1).

Baker asserted that before the opportunities for women in business can improve, managers need to see through existing stereotypes and gender perceptions. Managers also need to admit the existence of discrimination based upon gender (124).

In one example, Baker presented the case of evaluation and promotion procedures with guidelines that were not "sufficiently specific and quantifiable." Without sufficient guidelines, a supervisor, who consciously or subconsciously believes traditional perceptions of women, may criticize or ignore women who do not behave in the accepted traditional manner. As a resolution to this situation, Baker recommended that the guidelines for evaluations and promotions be rewritten to reduce the likelihood of stereotypical judgment (125).



Another recommendation that Baker had for reducing gender discrimination was to offer seminars for managers on the "power implications of verbal and nonverbal behavior." After attending such seminars, Baker contended that managers would become "conscious of what they have been doing unconsciously" (125).

Although Baker's recommendations may have merit, there was no research presented to support the claim that they would reduce gender discrimination within organizations. The proposals could be the basis for further empirical research, however, Baker did not present them as such. Instead, the recommendations were provided as solutions, implying that they would be successful in reducing gender discrimination. After charging Loden with presenting theories that had not been supported by research, Baker proceeded to do the same thing by providing recommendations that were not substantiated.

Because Baker's recommendations were not supported by research results, they should be interpreted as hypotheses rather than conclusions. However, the lack of support for the recommendations does not nullify the value of the remainder of results presented in Baker's study.

The work that encompassed the largest body of research was Moir and Jessel's book, Brain Sex: The Real Differences Between Men

and Women. Among the sources listed were 94 books and 312 journals and magazines published over the past three decades, from 1960 through 1991. Some of the sources were used to verify the biological differences of the brains of men and women, including Progress in Brain Research, Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, and Human Neurobiology. Other sources were used to present behavioral differences between the genders, such as The Behavior of Women and Men, The Inequality of Man, and Sex Differences in Behavior.

Moir and Jessel presented the following ideas on gender perceptions in the introductory chapter of their book:

Many women in the last thirty or forty years have been brought up to believe that they are, or should be, "as good as the next man," and in the process they have endured acute and unnecessary pain, frustration and disappointment. They were led to believe that once they had shaken off the shackles of male prejudice and oppression -- the supposed source of their second-class status -- the gates of the promised land of equal achievement would be thrown open; women would be free at last to scale and conquer the commanding heights of the professions.

Instead, in spite of greater emancipation in terms of education, opportunity, and social attitudes, women are not noticeably "doing better" than they were thirty years ago (6).

The truth is that for virtually our entire tenancy of the planet, we have been a sexist species. Our biology assigned separate functions to the male and female of

Homo sapiens. Our evolution strengthened and refined those differences. Our civilization reflected them. Our religion and our education reinforced them (10).

Although these views may seem broad and universal, Moir and Jessel presented significant evidence to support their claims. They tapped both scientific and behavioral research providing biological reasons behind the differences in the behavior of men and women. One such example is provided below:

Men and women have different approaches of decision-making. For the female, it is a more complex business, because she is taking in more information and taking account of more factors than a male. A woman's strength, and her weakness, is her capacity to perceive, for example, the human dimension of a business decision. Her mind, with its greater sensitivity to personal and moral aspects, and the greater facility with which it connects the elements to be considered, makes the decision altogether more complex than it is for the man, who relies more on calculated, formulaic, deductive processes (168).

Moir and Jessel provided an interesting and well researched view of gender differences. Because of independent research that was conducted in a variety of controlled environments, they contended that social and environmental influences were not sufficient to fully explain the differences between the behavior of men and women. Their



position was presented logically and was supported by a wealth of research.

### Summary

In this chapter a selective review and evaluation of the research studies that pertain to the central hypothesis of this study was conducted. Specifically, the research methods that were employed and conclusions that were presented in the studies were evaluated.

Some of the research sources reviewed were found to be valid and reliable. On the other hand, other sources did not provide enough information to assess their validity or reliability. A number of the authors presented research and statistics without providing the sources from which the information was drawn, while others were thorough in citing their sources. Studies were reviewed that contained conclusions that were substantiated by research, whereas other studies were found that presented unsupported conclusions.

Only studies that were found to be valid, reliable, and supported by previous research will be used in the evaluation of the thesis of this study. Sources and conclusions that were not valid, not reliable, or not supported by research will be excluded.

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report, as accurately and completely as possible, the results of the research presented in this study. Specifically, this chapter will contain a summary of the results from the most pertinent and valid research studies cited.

#### Conclusions about the Glass Ceiling

Morrison, White and Van Velsor and the Center for Creative Leadership published their book, Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?, as a result of their three years of research of women in top executive positions. The analytical and statistical results of the study, along with the questionnaire surveys themselves, were published in the forty-two page appendix of the book. Within the text of the book, the authors discussed specific responses and results of the research study, drawing conclusions about their results. One of the authors' conclusions that

supported the existence of the glass ceiling was, "The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person's inability to handle a higher-level job. Rather, the glass ceiling applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher *because they are women*" (13).

Cohen, in the chapter entitled "Under the Glass Ceiling: The View from Below," declared that, "It's a tough place to be -- just under that impenetrable barrier one can see through but cannot pass through to the scene above" (63). To demonstrate the existence of the glass ceiling, Cohen cited the United States Labor Department statistics that stated that even though fifty percent of the entry level managers are women, only twenty-five percent of middle managers are female (64). Based upon the statistics and other supporting research, Cohen presented the following conclusion:

Working just as hard as our male counterparts, trying to get into the male mode, we're still stopping short where men advance. As the men push forward, unhindered by anything but their own talents, for women, there suddenly appears the oft-touted "glass ceiling." It's invisible, but inviolable (64).

Winikow's definition of the glass ceiling was analogous to others: "The glass ceiling is a transparent barrier that keeps women from rising



above a certain level in corporations" (243). According to Winikow, the glass ceiling has been established at varying levels within different organizations, typically within or just above the middle management ranks. Regardless of where the glass ceiling has been constructed within an organization, most women who desire advancement will encounter the invisible barrier at some point in their careers, simply because they are women (243). Winikow cited a study that was conducted by the Women's Bureau Conference Board in which four reasons were given for women's lack of progress into upper levels of organizations:

1. *Discrimination.* Promotions and pay are affected by biases and stereotypes.
2. *Genetics and gender.* The argument that women are simply born with inherent limitations, or that the prospect or actuality of motherhood makes them unsuitable for the work place.
3. *Contradictory expectations.* Women are expected to be tough, but can't be macho; or they're expected to take responsibility, but also to follow advice.
4. *Corporate Culture.* No matter how well a woman performs, corporate policy and social climate are stacked against her (243).

The authors cited here have joined many others who affirm the existence of the glass ceiling. As stated in Winikow's reference to the

study by the Women's Bureau Conference Board, perceptions, stereotypes and expectations of women in the workforce have made significant contributions to the glass ceiling.

### Gender Specific Perceptions and Stereotypes

Morrison, White and Van Velsor, presented the following analysis and conclusion about gender specific perceptions and stereotypes that exist in the work place:

Mounting evidence indicates that, when careers are matched, women are remarkably similar to men in their characteristics, abilities, and motives. Yet the enormous and sometimes contradictory expectations that people have of women are the result of sex role stereotypes that continue to pervade the thinking of otherwise rational individuals. Stereotype-driven perceptions have led to unrealistic expectations of executive women, and these expectations are part of the environment in which the women must work and live. This environment is qualitatively different from the environment executive men operate in, and this difference may be the crucial--and the only meaningful--difference between male and female executives (69).

In their book, Workforce America: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource, Loden and Rosener quoted several research studies pertaining to the stereotyping of women in business. The conclusions of the studies demonstrate that perceptions influence how men and

women are treated in business situations. In the following conclusions, the term "**others**" refers to people who do not belong to the group of white males that commands the power within most organizations.

- ▶ Women leaders receive negative, nonverbal feedback when displaying behaviors positively reinforced in men.
- ▶ People who display negative, nonverbal reactions to **others** are seemingly unaware that they are doing so.
- ▶ Even when the performance of men and women was perceived to be equal, participants asked to give hypothetical pay raises consistently gave men more.
- ▶ Counteracting negative impressions by becoming more assertive may not work well for **others**. In fact, the more women talked in one study, the more they were ignored (72-3).

In the introduction of their book, Easton, Mills and Winokur stated that "the worlds of women and business met each other unprepared -- in a collision which rivaled the Big Bang" (xi). They concluded that:

Women, and their behavior in the corporate setting, are judged on the peerage of male standards. Positive proof of women's ability to perform is always subject to this skewed criterion and to the two-tiered measure of all women's achievements. As stated before, what a woman



does is not yet separable from the fact that a woman is doing it (45).

One research study presented by Campbell established that gender specific stereotypes operate at an unconscious level. During the study, researchers examined promotions that had been recommended and granted over a period of years. In an analysis of the letters of recommendation, a high proportion of male candidates were commended for their leadership skills, while a high proportion of female candidates were commended for their neat appearances. When questioned about their letters of recommendation, the officers, who were predominantly male, stated that they saw no significant differences between the male and female candidates. The recommending officers were surprised and dismayed to learn of the unconscious bias they had introduced into their letters (194-5).

Kuiper opens her research study with the following paragraph:

Since passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, corporate managers and policymakers have become increasingly aware of the need to monitor all types of corporate practices for evidence of discrimination. Few managers today condone blatant, overt discrimination. However, evidenced of latent discrimination, particularly gender bias, still exists (87).

In the literature review that followed, Kuiper cited research involving male and female subjects where successful management traits were perceived in stereotypically male terms such as aggressive, self-reliant, objective, vigorous and emotionally stable. In conclusion, Kuiper stated that, "In business and professional settings, sex role stereotypes may result in differential performance expectations and evaluations for men and women" (87).

The research study by Fine concentrated on multicultural communication in the work place. In the review of literature, Fine stated many research conclusions relating to gender perceptions including, "perceived differences were more important than actual differences in shaping women's and men's communicative behaviors;" the gender of the speaker, as well as the gender of the perceiver, influenced the perception of the communication; and "women and men experience the world through different cultural assumptions" (261). Fine's conclusion called for an organizational discourse that empowers all by recognizing that voices from non-white male groups are often silenced by those in power. In addition, Fine called for training of those in power to resist the impulse to silence the voices of others (271).

In another study of business communication, Kenton focused on perceptions of gender differences in the credibility of speakers. As stated previously in chapter III of this study, Kenton concluded that 1) women tend to be perceived higher on the "goodwill and fairness" dimension due to their focus on concern for others; 2) because of higher expectations for women, men tend to be perceived higher on the dimension of "expertise" even when credentials are comparable; 3) men tend to be perceived higher on the "prestige" dimension because of expectations and socialization; and 4) men tend to be ranked higher on the dimension of "self-presentation" because of psychological dispositions and societal expectations (150-2). Overall, Kenton summarized that men tend to be perceived as having more credibility as speakers than women (153).

The basis for the research of Moir and Jessel was the differences in the brains of men and women. They contended that the brains of men and women are constructed differently, causing men and women to process information in different ways, resulting in different perceptions, priorities and behavior (5). In a business context, Moir and Jessel presented the following analysis and conclusions about male and female behavior:



The motivation of men and women is different both in degree and direction. There is an inherent difference between men and women in the values either sex assigns to specific achievement, and the effort worth expending in its pursuit.

The bias of the adult male brain expresses itself in high motivation, competition, single-mindedness, risk-taking, aggression, preoccupation with dominance, hierarchy, and the politics of power, the constant measurement and comparison of success itself, the paramountcy of winning.

To the woman -- to the average woman, that is -- this all matters rather less. Men who fail will often offer the excuse that 'Success isn't worth the effort.' To the female mind, this is not so much an excuse as a self-evident truth. Her conceptual horizons are wider, just as she is more receptive in most other respects of her sensitivity (159).

Throughout the world of work, differences between the sexes echo the differences in the bias of their brains. Women gravitate towards work which has a socially fulfilling and personal dimension, in the same way that they are demonstrably more interested in people from their earliest hours. Men, for the same biologically determined reasons, are interested in the worlds of things and of power. Women can predominate numerically in a trade or a profession because it reflects their priorities, but when men enter it they will demand and achieve a disproportionate amount of authority -- because hierarchies and dominance are in the male scheme of things (157-8).

An abundance of researchers have examined a wide variety of issues relating to gender differences. Overall, research confirms that a glass ceiling does exist preventing women from rising above a certain

level in organizations. In addition, researchers have concluded that distinct gender specific perceptions and stereotypes exist toward men and women in the workforce.

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between gender equality and organizational performance. The study will be conducted using a quantitative research design. The study will include a literature review, a hypothesis, a methodology, and a discussion.

### Background

The concept of gender equality has been widely discussed in the literature. It refers to the equal treatment and opportunities for men and women in all areas of life, including the workplace. Research has shown that gender equality is positively related to organizational performance. This study will investigate the relationship between gender equality and organizational performance using a quantitative research design.

The study will include a literature review, a hypothesis, a methodology, and a discussion. The study will be conducted using a quantitative research design.

## **Chapter V**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of this study. A summary of the results from the most valid and pertinent studies will be presented along with a discussion of any limitations of this study. In addition, suggestions for further research will be discussed.

#### Summary

The corporate world has typically been a man's domain. Men built the existing hierarchical organizations and remain predominantly in control of them. When women enter the male dominated corporate world, they are often naive about the environment in which they find themselves. They are unprepared to play the corporate games in which men instinctively participate.

When women attempt to move up within organizations, they typically experience more roadblocks and barriers than their male



counterparts. Within certain limits, women can excel and advance. But sooner or later, they hit the invisible glass ceiling which prevents them from advancing any further.

The following conclusions about the existence of the glass ceiling were presented in the previous chapter:

- ▶ The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person's inability to handle a higher-level job. Rather, the glass ceiling applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher *because they are women*" (Morrison, White and Van Velsor 13).
- ▶ Working just as hard as our male counterparts, trying to get into the male mode, we're still stopping short where men advance. As the men push forward, unhindered by anything but their own talents, for women, there suddenly appears the oft-touted "glass ceiling." It's invisible, but inviolable (Cohen 64).
- ▶ The ceiling is a transparent barrier that keeps women from rising above a certain level in corporations. The ceiling occurs at different levels at different companies, but the main point is that the glass ceiling applies to women simply *because they are women!* (Winikow 243).

Although the sources described the glass ceiling in slightly different terminology, the meaning of the phrase was consistent. The glass ceiling prevents women from advancing within organizations where men succeed.

The existence of the glass ceiling can be confirmed by comparing the statistics of men and women in the upper ranks of corporations. The statistics, which are cited across the spectrum of sources, speak for themselves. Although women comprise almost half of the workforce in America, the percentage of women decreases dramatically with each higher level in the corporate hierarchy, with less than two percent of the top executive positions being held by women (Cascio 61).

Research and statistics of women in business confirm the existence of the glass ceiling. However, the hypothesis of this study encompasses more than the existence of the glass ceiling. The hypothesis is that the glass ceiling is constructed with perceptions and stereotypes of gender differences. These perceptions and stereotypes prevent women from being accepted as equals in the male dominated business world.

Men are expected to act like men and women are expected to act like women. Society has formulated perceptions of what is considered man's work and what is considered woman's work. Men are doctors and women are nurses. Men are the bosses and women are the secretaries. Men are airline pilots and women are stewardesses. Men are the bread-winners and women take care of the home and family.

These are just some of the examples of the stereotypes that have been formulated over the history of our culture.

Along with society's stereotypes of gender specific work roles, extensive research has proven the existence of gender specific perceptions of behavior. Men are expected to be strong, aggressive, and in control. Women are expected to be caring, cooperative, and understanding. If a man appears logical, direct, forceful, masterful, or powerful, his value as a man is enhanced. If a woman appears logical, direct, forceful, masterful, or powerful, her value as a woman is undercut (Tannen 241). Women are perceived as less credible than men in both written and verbal communication (Kenton).

When women attempt to separate themselves from some of the prevalent stereotypes and act like the men around them, they walk a fine line of acceptability (Fine 26). To become an effective leader, women must deviate from the passive characteristics of femininity. In so doing, they run the risk of being perceived as unfeminine, undesirable and unlovable (Cantor, Bernay and Stoess 167). Men and women alike feel uncomfortable with women who are aggressive, ambitious, and outspoken (Cantor, Bernay and Stoess 80).



Gender specific behavior in the context of the business environment has been the topic of many research studies. The following is a sampling of the research conclusions:

- ▶ Successful management traits tend to be perceived in stereotypically male terms such as aggressive, self-reliant, objective, vigorous and emotionally stable (Kuiper 87).
- ▶ Women, and their behavior in the corporate setting, are judged on the peerage of male standards. Positive proof of women's ability to perform is always subject to this skewed criterion and to the two-tiered measure of all women's achievements. As stated before, what a woman does is not yet separable from the fact that a woman is doing it (Easton, Mills and Winokur 45).
- ▶ In business and professional settings, sex role stereotypes may result in differential performance expectations and evaluations for men and women (Kuiper 87).
- ▶ Mounting evidence indicates that, when careers are matched, women are remarkably similar to men in their characteristics, abilities, and motives. Yet the enormous and sometimes contradictory expectations that people have of women are the result of sex role stereotypes that continue to pervade the thinking of otherwise rational individuals. Stereotype-driven perceptions have led to unrealistic expectations of executive women, and these expectations are part of the environment in which the women must work and live. This environment is qualitatively different from the environment executive men operate in, and this difference may be the crucial--and the only meaningful--difference between male

and female executives (Morrison, White, and Van Velsor 69).

These conclusions support the hypothesis of this study.

Perceptions and stereotypes of how women are expected to behave put them at a disadvantage in the corporate world. Men are evaluated against one set of expectations, while women are evaluated against a different, sometimes unrealistic set of expectations. It is more difficult for women to meet the expectations placed upon them because they are not perceived as possessing the favorable masculine qualities of the men in power. In addition, the feminine qualities that women are able to contribute to the corporate environment are not perceived as valuable as masculine qualities.

In conclusion, society has developed and accepted gender specific perceptions and stereotypes pertaining to ways in which men and women should behave. Those common perceptions and stereotypes prevent women from being accepted as equals in the male dominated business world and thus significantly contribute to the glass ceiling that keeps women from succeeding where men advance.

### Limitations

The bulk of the literature on the subject of women in the workforce has been written by women. In this study, an attempt was made to include the attitudes of both men and women. Although some of the sources were authored or co-authored by men, the popular authorities on the subject are women.

The fact that mostly women have researched and written about the glass ceiling may not be a limitation in the eyes of some people, however, research has shown that men are perceived as being more credible than women (Kenton). From that perspective, the research may not receive the attention and consideration that it deserves. Specifically, men may not be convinced that the glass ceiling exists or see the ramifications of the invisible barrier because they perceive it to be an inconsequential women's problem that does not affect them. The research would be enriched and fortified with more participation from men.

### Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the inequities that exist for women within organizations today, significant progress has been made over the past two decades.



The attitude toward working women has changed dramatically during that time. A generation ago, women were expected to stay home and raise their families. Today, most women are expected to contribute to the financial support of the family. As attitudes continue to change, additional research will be needed to measure the changes in perceptions. In addition, statistics of the status of women in business should continue to be tracked and analyzed. In a recent Time magazine, 1990 Census Bureau data for Los Angeles County showed that "women between the ages of 19 and 24 earned 4% more in 1990 than men of the same age did" (30). It would be very interesting to compare that same group in five or ten years to see if the women are still out-earning the men. If current pay scale patterns hold, the men most likely will surpass the women in earnings as both groups move beyond entry level in their careers.

The existence of the glass ceiling is quite often acknowledged only by those affected: the women who find themselves bumping into the transparent barrier. Many of the male managers are not aware of the problems that women face in the corporate culture (Edwards 55, Lukovitz 19). Further, some of the men that do recognize corporate inequities toward women, do not take any extra steps to improve the situation. For example, in the 650 page management text book,

Management, the male authors Koontz and Weihrich devoted less than a page to the strife of women in management. They cited research that demonstrated the "progress toward equality that has been made since 1965" and admitted that, "Some evidence suggests that women do have difficulties making it to the top" (6). They provided no suggestions for male or female managers to understand or alleviate the difficulties that women experience.

In another management text book, Managing Human Resources, the male author Cascio devoted over two pages of his 650 page book to the subject of women in the workforce. The primary emphasis was on how organizations can cope with the family demands placed upon women by providing flexible work schedules, paternity leaves and quality day care (60-1). Although Cascio presented statistics representing the lack of opportunities for women in the higher levels of organizations, he never addressed the problems from a management perspective. Perhaps he did not realize that female students with management ambitions are concerned about more than day care facilities and flexible hours.

Although Vecchio, another management text book author, cited some research of gender differences in the work place, he did not devote any attention to the problems that women face when they

attempt to advance within organizations. Other management text books written by male authors avoided the topic of women in the workforce completely (Thompson and Strickland, Harvey).

Management text books need to present and explore the different experiences of men and women managers. Education of both men and women will help organizations realize the existence of the glass ceiling and the problems that it causes for women. The first step in resolving any problem is recognizing that it exists. Ignoring the issue only prolongs its resolution.

Since women are personally affected by the limitations imposed by the glass ceiling, they must remain true to their inner voices and hold fast to their vision of what the corporate world could be like. They must carry the torch of enlightenment into the dark corners of organizations that thrive on the prejudices and stereotypes which prevent individuals from attaining their highest aspirations. Women represent the voice of change for the future.



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