International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

Challenges Faced by Women in Climbing the Corporate Ladder in a Private Company in the Gauteng Province of South Africa

Authors:

Owen Zivanai Mukwawaya (owen.mukwawaya@smu.ac.za)
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa

Mqemane Tshababa (mqemanetshababa@gmail.com)
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa

Emmanuel Mutambara (emmanuel.mutambara@nwu.ac.za)
North-West University, North-West Business School, South Africa

Abstract:

Despite significant progress in gender equality, women in South Africa continue to face numerous challenges in ascending the corporate ladder within private companies. The study explored the challenges experienced by women in climbing the corporate ladder in a private company in the Gauteng province of South Africa. In order to achieve this, a qualitative study was employed with the aid of open-ended questionnaire. A purposive sample of eight (8) participants were used until data saturation was reached. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The result of the study shows that gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, lack of management support, lack of mentorship, lack of peer support and the queen bee syndrome are some of the challenges experienced by female employees in climbing the corporate ladder in a private company in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The study recommended that the organisation should consider women in management positions and effectively implement the employment equity policies at the workplace as well as doing away with all types of discrimination at workplace.

Keywords:

Queen Bee Syndrome, Leadership, Gender, Discrimination, Corporate Ladder

Submitted: 2026-02-03. Revised: 2026-03-02. Accepted: 2026-03-09.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

Introduction

Literature shows that women's under-representation in management positions is a global issue (Nkosi & Nhumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025). Only 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs and less than 15% of business executives are women in top management roles in the United States of America (Deloitte, 2011). According to the statistics, women make up 11.2% of directors in Australia. Although women make up 74% of the workforce in China, just 8% of them are represented on corporate boards, and only 9% are on executive committees (Sokani, 2025).

One of the biggest changes in leadership in the twenty-first century is the increase of women in positions of authority. This issue has its roots in the time when it was expected of women to take care of the children at home while men went to work (Sairam, Sakeerthi & Madhavhi, 2026; Sokani, 2025). This stereotyped background has produced a hostile environment for women by making the workplace generally inhospitable to them. But as times have changed, women are now working alongside males in similar occupations, improving the welfare of families, society, and the economy as a whole. In an effort to boost diversity and develop future leaders, organisations have pledged to support women's further advancement into leadership roles.

The challenges faced by women in climbing the corporate ladder has been the subject of numerous studies; however, this study focused on a private company in the Gauteng region. Women leaders continue to face toxic workplaces, sexual harassment, criticism of their technical proficiency, and other gender-role stereotypes (Sigwela; 2021). In South Africa, women are still under-represented in businesses when it comes to advancement to senior management roles, even though their population is larger than that of men. Conversely, employment equity and affirmative action policies were developed in South Africa to provide an equal foundation for employment; however, they do not appear to be successfully applied at the organisational level.

Literature shows that women should be given leadership opportunities because they are just as capable as men at leading, and they can foster positive relationships with staff members and help them feel appreciated within the company and this boosts employee productivity and enables the company to function at its peak. Literature shows that men continue to outnumber women in top jobs in South Africa by a 3:1 ratio (Palmer, 2015). Given the aforementioned claims, this kind of research is worthy of consideration since it aims to create equal opportunities for men and women in terms of advancement and career advancement. In light of the above, the study was aimed at:

- Determining the challenges experienced by women in climbing the corporate ladder in a private company in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

Literature Review

Women Representation: The South African Context

On the Global Gender Gap Index Report, South Africa is ranked 18 out of 142 countries and 118 out of 187 countries on average in terms of gender inequality (Gender Inequality, 2018; Global Gender Gap Index, 2018). Although the rating is significantly better on the Global Gender Gap Index report, this ranking indicates that South Africa still has a lot of work to do to address gender disparities. Despite being viewed as an average nation and at one point attributed with continuing to be an "inequality society," the country's Human Development Index (HDI) increased from 0.569 to 0.658, a 15.6% gain between 1980 and 2018 (SAHDR, 2018).

Jewkes et al (2020) claim that the post-Apartheid era, which began in 1994 when the late Nelson Mandela became the first black president, is responsible for the modest improvement in South Africa's efforts to address gender issues as demonstrated above. In these situations, politics and governance can be seen as important actors in the fight to eliminate gender disparities because, once in power, you are the ones who create and approve policies. This was made clear when the Commission was established with the goal of encouraging state arms cooperation with other institutions in the nation to address gender issues, which the government claims were significantly impacted during colonial rule during the Apartheid era (Unterhalter & North, 2017).

In addition to the government's organised legal framework, a number of women from other branches of government and civic organisations actively participated in the push for gender parity in a variety of institutional and societal domains. For example, Poland is now among the few European nations where female lawmakers are actively pushing for legislation that promotes gender equality in the legislature. For South African women lawmakers, this was a wake-up call, and they founded their organisation in 1992 specifically to advance and integrate gender equality into all laws approved by the legislature.

Compared to the apartheid era, a significant number of women and girls began to pursue education. According to literature, there was no access to learning, involvement, or achievement following the end of apartheid and the arrival of a new political order in South Africa, which cleared the path for a significant and radical change in education. Therefore, once everyone works together to try to address the problem of gender imbalances, as was done in the education sector, gender equality can also be achieved in other areas of health, politics, and economic organisation.

Striking for gender parity in private businesses has become a widely recognised issue that impacts women, executives, and organisations at large. Literature indicate that women are similarly taking a long time to advance to positions of decision-making in private enterprises. Consequently, the causes of private enterprises' challenges in effectively implementing gender equity policies were examined. There

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

are many sensitive issues surrounding the gender equality debate, such as moral principles, cultural norms, leadership attitudes and practices, organisational cultures, the histories of various nations, social norms, and human rights principles. However, because gender equity is not given enough attention within the organisation, businesses are not reaching their full potential.

Women also benefited from workplace interventions like setting targets for the proportion of women in leadership positions and developing training and mentorship initiatives. But many of these efforts have failed, and some have even impeded previous progress. Furthermore, there is more gender discrimination at the top of organisations than at the bottom. This suggests that the gender stall is caused by the problem of economic discrimination among female senior management (Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010). Globally, gender equity has advanced slowly; between 2004 and 2014, only 7.4% of the 200 largest companies increased the proportion of female board members.

Theories of Barriers for Women Career Progression

According to published research, a number of factors have contributed to women's lack of career advancement, such as restricted networking and coaching opportunities, rigid work environments, gender discrimination and stereotyping, occupational segregation, and a lack of organisational support systems (Khwela, Derera & Kubheka, 2020). Many hypotheses attempt to explain why women in the twenty-first century are not advancing in their careers. The theories of organisational barriers, cultural and societal barriers, and internal barriers are the main topics of the discussion that follows.

Theory of Internal Barriers

According to this notion, employers, co-workers, and even women themselves may all use stereotypes. Gender stereotypes, according to Khwela (2019), are common assumptions about the psychological characteristics of men and women. According to Khwela, Derera, and Kubheka (2020), gender stereotypes are ideas that are ingrained in people's thoughts and tend to hinder women's advancement into senior management roles (Hurley & Choudhary, 2016).

According to literature, males work for income, while women are often responsible for unpaid domestic tasks and childcare. Given the aforementioned, Khwela (2019) claimed that women's multiple responsibilities at work and at home are likely to hinder their advancement to senior management roles inside the organisation.

Theory of Societal and Cultural Barriers

Ridgeway (2001) reported how working mothers are negatively impacted by the ideal worker mindset. According to literature, working mothers need to prioritise their work and put in less effort. Given this notion, women are likely to face obstacles in their professional advancement. It is important to remember

that in the majority of cultures, girls are discouraged from taking risks and standing up for their future in order to advance in their careers (Sandberg, 2015).

The literature also hinted at the unfavourable perceptions that most communities hold about women, which deter them from assuming senior roles. Due to the social-psychological phenomena, women are perceived as less capable than males, which hinders their ability to advance in their careers.

Theory of Organisational Barriers

According to Sandberg (2015), understanding organisational culture is essential to comprehending the obstacles that women encounter. Organisational culture, is a set of shared meanings, beliefs, values, practices, and group norms that result in behavioural standards pertaining to working conditions. Organisational culture is frequently mentioned as the primary enabler or impediment to work-life policy.

Methods and Data

Study Site and Design

An exploratory research design was employed in this study with the aid of semi-structured interviews. To gather qualitative data, a purposive sample of eight (8) participants was employed. The decision to include women experiencing challenges in climbing the corporate ladder stems from the reality that they are the ones facing difficulties at the private company under study. The study was conducted in a multinational company that specializes with petroleum in the Gauteng province of South Africa and beyond.

Participants

A sample of eighty (8) participants was purposively selected for the study. All the eight (8) participants were females who participated in the present study and their aged ranged from 25 to 55. The majority of the interviewed participants have more than two years of experience in the organisation.

Instrument

A semi structured interview guide was used to collect data from the participants. The interview guide contained questions that sought to understand the lived experiences of the challenges faced by women in llimbing the corporate ladder in a private company in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.

Procedures

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the female participants who work at the private company located in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The interviews last about 30-45 minutes and were recorded for future transcriptions.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

Data Analysis

The data were coded and analysed thematically. This phenomenon was accurately captured by (Basit, 2003) who posited that coding can be carried out by choosing segments of text using line numbering in the document or by highlighting the specific quotation to be coded necessitate listening to all the recorded interviews. Recorded responses were transcribed following the question order in the interview schedule. All the transcribed data was then subjected to an intensive process of coding. Basit (2003) further indicate that the idea behind coding is clearly to see and to attend to relevant phenomena in the research environment; collecting relevants examples of these phenomena and analyzing these phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures. For the foregoing reason, keys phrases and terms were highlighted inorder to develop data categories which were then be merged into themes which describe the phenomenom under observation.

Ethical Clearance

Since it was critical to safeguard the interests and concerns of those who participated in the study, the researcher applied for the ethical clearance and the study was approved by the Sefako Makgatho Health Scineces University.

Results

The following presentation points out the key themes that come out as the key challenges that affect women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organization under investigation.

Theme 1: Barriers

The majority of the participants stated that gender discrimination and gender stereotyping constitutes as the major barriers that affect women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organization under investigation. The presentation below shows how participants responded to the question asked in relation to the major reasons that affect women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organization under investigation.

Sub Theme: Gender Discrimination

Gender inequality has been pointed as the key factor that stand as a major barriers for women career progression within the company under study as one of the participants stated that "*as women we are being discriminated against in relation to promotion*" (P2).

"*Women are discriminated based on their gender"* (P1).

"*Women are not equally considered to be the same as compared to their man counterparts*" (P3).

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

"*Women are always discriminated in relation to career progression*" (P8).

In support of the above view, one of the participants stated that "*women are not given an equal opportunity for career progression as compared to their male counterparts*" (P7).

Sub Theme: Gender Stereotyping

Gender stereotyping has also been raised as one of the key feature that stands as a barrier prohibiting women from climbing the corporate ladder. Literature shows that men normally possess a superiority complex where they take women for granted as work. In light of the above, one of the participants stated that "women *are normally taken for granted at work and are often associated with household chores*" (P1).

"*Gender stereotyping plays a role for career progression at work*" (P4).

In support of the above statement, participants (P3) had this to say, "*women are expected to be submissive culturally hence there is no exception at the workplace. Men considers themselves as above everything".*

Sub Theme: The Queen Bee Syndrome

Literature shows that women in general are not supportive of each other when they are in positions of power within the organizational context. The excerpts below is a clear testimony of the fact that women do not support each other for promotion and career progression:

"*As women, we are not supportive of each other".* (P4).

"*Women have a tendency of not being supportive to each other*" (P2).

"My boss is a woman, and she does not support other women at all" (P1).

"*If a woman is in power, she doesn't want to see another woman closer to her in the organizational structure*" (P5).

"When women are in positions of power, they always want to dominate and are not supportive of each other" (P7).

In the study, most of the women reported that they lack support for each other for promotion and career progression.

Theme 2: Policies

All the participants support the notion that there is poor implementation of workplace policies. The following excerpts is a clear testimony to the notion raised above.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

"*The employment equity policy is in place but the organization seem to favour men with regards to promotion and career progression*" (P8).

"*The employment equity policy is just on paper and it is not implemented at all"* (P3).

"*The policies are just on paper*" (P4).

"*The organization is very good on putting information on paper but it is not implemented practically"* (P2).

"*Management does not properly implement the policies here*" (P6).

"*There is poor implementation of policies at this workplace*" (P7).

"*Poor implementation of policies is a common feature at this workplace*" (P5).

"*Policies are in place but there is poor implementation*" (P1).

The excerpts above demonstrates that there are employment policies at the workplace but not properly implemented.

Theme 3: Lack of Senior Management Support

The majority of participants stated that lack of senior management support is the major challenges women face at the workplace. The presentation shows excerpts that supports the above notion.

The excerpts below show the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organization under study:

"*There is lack of management support when a female employee is appointed for a senior position*" (P7).

"*Top management has no buy in if a female employee joins them in management position*" (P2).

"*Senior management does not support females if they are joined*" (P4).

"*Senior management does not seem to support the upcoming young women*" (P1).

In support of the above notion, one of the participants stated that "*Senior management lack support if women are appointed in senior management*" (P5).

Evidence from the data obtained in this organization shows that senior management lack support for the appointment of female employees in senior management positions.

Theme 4: Lack Support From Peers

In the study, most of the women complained that they lack support from peers for promotion and career progression. When asked about the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

organization under study, one of the participants had this to say, "*here you will be promoted but it sounds as if your peers will be jealousy of you hence, your peers will not support you*" (P3).

In support of the above statement, one of the participants stated that "the *organization does not provide an opportunity where you peers will support you when you are promoted*" (P6).

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the challenges experienced by women in climbing the corporate ladder in a private corporation located in South Africa's Gauteng province. One of the main obstacles to women's professional advancement in the organisation under investigation has been identified as gender inequity. The main factor that prevents women from moving up the corporate ladder has also been identified as gender stereotypes. According to literature, people who are subjected to stereotypes because of their gender, colour, ethnicity, or other traits are more likely to encounter discrimination at work (Kalev et al, 2006). In the workplace, stereotyping can have a number of detrimental implications.

Even with the implementation of anti-discrimination laws and policies, women continue to encounter a number of obstacles to promotion and equitable treatment in the workplace because of their gender, despite the tremendous progress made in achieving gender equality (Nkosi & Nhlumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025). Evidence from literature reported on women's experiences in the workplace, gender discrimination with women experiencing unfair treatment, obstacles to career advancement and limited access to opportunities and resources. In order to solve these problems, the study emphasised the necessity of organisational policies and initiatives of promoting gender equity. The findings of the above study is consistent with the findings of this particulatr study.

Research has indicated that women who encounter prejudice at work have lower levels of confidence and self-esteem than their non-discriminated counterparts (Rosette et al, 2008). Discrimination can affect women's confidence and self-esteem by causing them to feel inferior and insecure. According to Khwela, Derera, and Lubheka (2020), women generally do not assist one another when they have positions of authority within an organisation. Literature demonstrates that the aforementioned discovery is consistent with previous findings, such as: (Nkosi & Nhlumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025).

Contrary to popular belief, literature has shown that women are not the greatest enemies of men, but rather the worst enemies of one another due to a lack of support. Whether in lower-level roles or leadership roles, women typically don't support one another. They serve as an example of the "Queen Bee" concept. Queen Bee behaviour is a term used to characterise female executives who, after achieving high positions, alienate other women and impede the advancement of less senior women (Sokani, 2025). Sokani (2025) further supports this idea by claiming that women create hurdles for

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

themselves since they tend to exhibit low self-esteem and a condescending demeanour, which undermines their confidence. This particular finding is consistent with the findings of this study.

According to literature, there aren't enough women in senior management roles in South Africa; hence, laws pertaining to gender equality must be aligned to enable women to be fairly represented in these roles. Literature further asserts that due to the social-psychological phenomena, women are perceived as less capable than males, which hinders their ability to advance in their careers. According to Furst and Reeves (2008), there are several elements that are connected to the glass ceiling. When the organisational structure and level are broad, the gender gap and obstacles for women in management become more apparent. According to Neale and Özkanlı (2010), the widespread belief that "think manager, think male" is a contributing factor to women's poor managerial skills. Therefore, focussing on "male advantage" instead of just "women's disadvantage" is essential.

Literature shows that a number of internal obstacles continue to impede women's advancement in management positions across a variety of professions (Nkosi & Nhlumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025). The under-representation of women at the senior level has been attributed to organisational structural and cultural barriers. These obstacles stem from businesses' failure to be transparent and accountable during the hiring process, which results in a lack of gender equality. Female candidates are less likely to be hired because both male and female assessors think they are less qualified than male candidates. Additionally, emperical evidence from research indicates that women are marginalised, discriminated against, and ignored in leadership roles in numerous economic sectors. As a result, organisational barriers to women's advancement in management remain difficult and need further research (Sokani, 2025).

The under-representation of women in leadership roles presents another obstacle for women in top positions. Women may find it challenging to locate advocates, sponsors, and mentors who can help them progress in their careers due to this under-representation. A variety of cultural issues also affect women in senior positions. If women have children or take time off to care for their family, they may also be perceived as less capable or dedicated to their work. All things considered, women in senior roles encounter a variety of difficulties that are uncommon for their male counterparts (Nkosi & Nhlumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025

The values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that affect how individuals interact with the organisation and with one another are referred to as cultural factors in the workplace. From pay gaps to under-representation in leadership positions, women have encountered numerous obstacles in the workplace. Women in leadership positions were seen as more transformative, sympathetic, and participatory than men. Administrative and clerical jobs are examples of supportive duties in the workplace that have historically been required of women. Women are now breaking through the glass

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

ceiling and assuming leadership positions across a range of industries, reversing this pattern (Nkosi & Nhlumayo, 2026; Sokani, 2025.

Conclusion

The findings on the challenges faced by women in climbing the corporate ladder within private companies in the Gauteng Province of South Africa highlight the persistent influence of structural, cultural, and interpersonal barriers that limit women's upward mobility. Despite progressive constitutional and legislative frameworks in South Africa aimed at promoting gender equality, women in private sector organisations in Gauteng Province continue to encounter obstacles such as gender stereotyping, limited access to leadership networks, work–family conflict, unequal mentorship opportunities, and subtle forms of workplace discrimination. These barriers collectively reinforce a "glass ceiling" effect, restricting women's representation in senior and executive positions.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces and extends several key frameworks. First, Glass Ceiling Theory is substantiated by the continued presence of invisible yet powerful institutional barriers that prevent women from advancing beyond middle management. Second, Social Role Theory helps explain how deeply embedded societal expectations regarding women's caregiving responsibilities shape organisational perceptions of leadership suitability. Third, Organisational Culture Theory underscores how male-dominated corporate norms in private companies perpetuate informal exclusion from strategic networks and decision-making spaces. Additionally, Intersectionality Theory is particularly relevant in the South African context, where gender intersects with race, class, and historical inequalities, compounding the disadvantages experienced by women in corporate environments.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by contextualising global gender inequality frameworks within the unique socio-economic and historical landscape of Gauteng's private sector. It suggests that traditional leadership and career progression models often grounded in Western, male-centric paradigms may not adequately capture the lived realities of women in emerging economies. Therefore, the study supports the need for an integrated theoretical model that combines structural, cultural, and intersectional dimensions to better explain women's career stagnation in private corporations.

In conclusion, while policy frameworks in South Africa provide a foundation for gender equity, organisational transformation within private companies remains uneven. Addressing these challenges requires not only practical interventions but also a rethinking of dominant organisational and leadership theories to ensure they reflect diverse pathways to leadership. Such theoretical refinement can inform more inclusive corporate strategies and contribute meaningfully to both gender equity scholarship and practice. In light of the above, the study recommended the following:

- Applying affirmative action rules in the workplace.
- putting female employees in management roles.
- doing away with all types of discrimination at work.

References

Auster, E. R., & Prasad, A. (2016). Why do women still not make it to the top? Dominant organizational ideologies and biases by promotion committees limit opportunities to destination positions. Sex Roles, 75(5), 177-196.

Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. Educational research, 45(2), 143-154.

Caulfield, J. (2019). How to do thematic analysis.

Enid Kiaye, R., & Maniraj Singh, A. (2013). The glass ceiling: a perspective of women working in Durban. Gender in Management: An international journal, 28(1), 28-42.

Huffman, M. L., Cohen, P. N., & Pearlman, J. (2010). Engendering change: Organizational dynamics and workplace gender desegregation, 1975–2005. Administrative Science Quarterly, 55(2), 255-277.

Jewkes, R., Jordaan, E., Myrttinen, H., & Gibbs, A. (2020). Masculinities and violence: using latent class analysis to investigate the origins and correlates of differences between men in the cross-sectional UN Multi-country Study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific. Journal of global health, 10(2), 020439.

Hurley, D., & Choudhary, A. (2016). Factors influencing attainment of CEO position for women. Gender in Management: An International Journal, 31(4), 250-265.

Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies. American sociological review, 71(4), 589-617.

Khwela, B. C. (2019). The invisible glass ceiling: A comparative study of women in management positions in private and public sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. MA diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Khwela, B. C., Derera, E., & Kubheka, Z. (2020). Women in leadership and the glass ceiling effect: A comparative study of the private and public sectors in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies, 12(2), 368-383.

Neale, J., & Özkanlı, O. (2010). Organisational barriers for women in senior management: A comparison of Turkish and New Zealand universities. Gender and Education, 22(5), 547-563.

International Journal of Applied Research in Business and Management (ISSN: 2700-8983)
an Open Access journal by Wohllebe & Ross Publishing, Germany.
Volume: 07 Issue: 04 Year: 2026
https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.569

Nkosi, N., & Nhlumayo, B. S. (2026). Denied Leadership: Patriarchal Barriers and Contextual Inequities in Women's School Leadership. Agenda, 1-14.

Palmer, A. (2015). Features that contribute to senior female representation at an organisation. University of Johannesburg (South Africa).

Reeves, D. B. (2008). Reframing teacher leadership to improve your school. ASCD.

Ridgeway, C. L. (2001). Gender, status, and leadership. Journal of Social issues, 57(4), 637-655.

Rosette, A. S., & Livingston, R. W. (2012). Failure is not an option for Black women: Effects of organizational performance on leaders with single versus dual-subordinate identities. Journal of experimental social psychology, 48(5), 1162-1167.

Sairam, Sakeerthi, and R. Madhavi. "Women's Leadership Aspirations in Higher Education: Navigating the Cultural and Societal Barriers." In Understanding Women's Avoidance of Leadership in Higher Education, pp. 229-264. IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2026.

Sandberg, S. (2015). Lean in-women, work and the will to lead.

Sigwela, N. M. (2021). An investigation into the role of women in the spatial planning and development of their settlements that are under the custodianship of traditional leaders: A case study of Cala in Sakhisizwe Municipality, Eastern Cape.

Sokani, A. (2025). Lack Support Systems and Women's Political Participation in South Africa. Social Sciences, 14(12), 693.

Styodana, A. (2015). Challenges on implementing gender equality policy. University of Pretoria (South Africa).

Unterhalter, E., & North, A. (2017). Education, poverty and global goals for gender equality: How people make policy happen. Routledge.