



Assessing the impact of the “glass ceiling” on Organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees in South African Public Universities

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DECLARATION

I, Lungile Sabelo Masango, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification.

Furthermore, it represents my own opinions, ideas and not necessarily those of the selected public universities of South Africa. I further declare that all the sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'L' followed by a long horizontal stroke and a final flourish.

LS Masango

27 August 2025

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my queenly wife, Matlhodi Kgomotso Masango. This work represents far more than an academic milestone; it is a testament to your unwavering faith in my abilities and your steadfast support. From the moment I embarked on this journey, you stood firmly by my side, encouraging my ambitions, celebrating every small victory, and comforting me through every setback.

In the quiet hours of the night, when fatigue and doubt threatened to overwhelm me, your presence and words of wisdom illuminated my path. I am grateful for your confidence in me, even during the times when I was unsure of myself. You are a wife of noble character, worth far more than rubies, and you live by the values of Proverbs 31.

I'm deeply grateful to have you as my partner, best friend, source of peace, and greatest blessing on this journey of life. Your gentle guidance has helped me rediscover my dreams whenever I've lost sight of them, and your selfless love continues to inspire me. My heart overflows with endless affection for you, Mama Wezingane Zami.

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Finally, a special shout-out to my late nephew **Lungile Mmeli Masango**. I am deeply grateful to God for entrusting us with a soul as beautiful as yours. I undertook this journey with you in mind. Your memory has been a guiding light, inspiring me to persevere even when the path seemed challenging. May your soul continue to rest in God's eternal peace.

ABSTRACT

South Africa's public higher education sector continues to experience a disproportional representation of women in senior leadership roles, even years after the end of apartheid. This may be attributed to an invisible/transparent systemic barrier or obstacles that restrict career advancement for women and minorities, despite their equivalent qualifications and performance which is called "glass ceiling". The objective of this investigation was to evaluate the influence of the glass ceiling on the likelihood of quitting and the level of organisational commitment among female employees who are not academics at public universities in South Africa. Utilising a quantitative, cross-sectional survey that included 120 participants, perceptions of the glass ceiling were assessed on four distinct dimensions: acceptance, resilience, resignation, and denial.

The results suggested that all variables were substantially correlated with a variety of organisational commitments (affective, normative, continuity). Resilience and resignation were significantly anticipated to affect the intention to resign, indicating that both women who strive to surmount obstacles and those who acquiesce to them may be more inclined to depart. The glass ceiling was discovered to diminish positive commitment while strengthening continuation commitment.

The results underscore the importance of universities in dismantling structural and cultural barriers through transparent promotion processes, mentorship, and anti-discrimination policies. The study will add more insight into the impact of invisible barriers in higher education and calls for further longitudinal research.

Keywords: intention to quit, Glass ceiling, organisational commitment, non-academic staff, higher education institutions, South Africa, public universities, selected University.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPU	Selected public universities
GCP	Glass Ceiling Perceptions Scale
OCQ	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
CPS	Career Pathways Survey CPS
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
KMO	Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

- *Glass ceiling*: “is a metaphor for the barriers preventing women and other marginalized people from reaching higher levels of professional success” (Reiners, 2024).
- *Employee turnover*: “the number of employees that resign or retire from a company and need replacing over a specific period” (Pavlou, 2024).
- *Organisational commitment*: refers to the level of engagement and dedication team members feel toward their individual jobs and the organisation (Wainwright, 2023).
- *Non-academic employees*: are individuals employed by educational institutions, particularly universities, who are not directly involved in teaching or research activities. Instead, they fulfil administrative, technical, support, and service roles that contribute to the institution's functioning (Bordia, 2023).
- *Public university*: is an institution of higher education that is established and funded by the government, specifically the Department of Higher Education and Training (Council on Higher Education, 2024).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	VI
DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS	VII
LIST OF TABLES	XI
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XI
CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	3
4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	3
4.1 Primary objective:	3
4.2 Secondary objectives of the study:.....	4
5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
5.1 Primary research question.....	4
5.2 Secondary research question.....	4
5.3 Research design and methodology	5
5.3.1 Research design.....	5
5.3.2 Research Paradigm	5
5.3.3 Research Methodology	5
5.3.4 Target and study population	5
5.3.5 Sampling	6
5.3.6 Data collection and measuring instrument	6
5.3.7 Data analysis	8
5.4 Ethical consideration	8
5.4.1 Voluntary Participation.....	8
5.4.2 Informed Consent	9
5.4.3 Confidentiality	9
5.5 Limitations of the research	9
5.6 Outline of the dissertation	9
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE.....	11
ABSTRACT	11
INTRODUCTION.....	12

PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	13
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
Theory frameworks	15
Glass ceiling	16
<i>Key criteria that define the glass ceiling and set it apart</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Glass Ceiling beliefs.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>The glass ceiling and legislation</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>The Impact of the Glass Ceiling on Employee Behaviour</i>	<i>21</i>
Organisational commitment	22
<i>Dimensions of Organisational Commitment.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>The Impact of organisational commitment on employee behaviour.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Intentions to quit	23
<i>The Impact of Intention to quit on employee behaviour.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Relationship Between Glass Ceiling and Organisational Commitment	25
Relationship Between Organisational Commitment and Intentions to Quit.....	26
Relationship Between Glass Ceiling and Intention to Quit	27
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	27
PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION	28
SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	28
RESEARCH METHODS	29
Research approach, sample and procedure	29
MEASURING INSTRUMENTS.....	32
Section 1: Demographic Data.....	32
Section 2: Views on the Glass Ceiling and Its Effects	32
Section 3: Organisational dedication.....	32
Section 4-Intention to Quit.....	33
Statistical analyses	33
RESULTS	34
Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)	34
Descriptive statistics.....	37
Correlational analysis.	38
Regression analysis.....	39
Mediation analysis	40
DISCUSSION	43
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION	46
LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES.....	47

CONCLUSION	48
CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
3.1 CONCLUSION	53
3.1.1 Conclusions based on theoretical findings	53
3.1.2 Conclusions Based on Empirical Findings	55
3.2 LIMITATIONS	57
3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	58
3.3.1 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions.....	58
REFERENCES.....	60
ANNEXURES	68
Annexures A: Questionnaire	68
Annexures B: Consent Letter.....	73
Annexures C: Ethics Approval Letter Of Study.....	74
Annexures D: Research Data Gatekeeper Committee Approval Letter	76
Annexures E: Language editor's letter	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	South African Legislative and Policy Framework Addressing the Glass Ceiling	17
Table 2:	Demographic profile of respondents	27
Table 3:	Exploratory factor analysis (EFA): Glass Ceiling Perceptions Scale	32
Table 4:	Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of all the variables considered in this study	33
Table 5:	Reliability and descriptive statistics of scales used in this study	34
Table 6:	Correlational analysis	35
Table 7:	Regression analysis	36
Table 8:	Mediation (direct) effects of organisational commitment dimensions in the relationship	38

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Number of men and women as Vice-Chancellors in South African public universities	13
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CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1 INTRODUCTION

South African history carries a deep legacy of discrimination, most notably during and even after the apartheid era, which profoundly shaped women's experiences in society and the workplace. Under apartheid, most of the Black population, particularly women, were subjected to systemic segregation and disenfranchisement. These historical inequalities continue to influence social structures today, including those within universities (Moyo, 2022:1)

According to Macupe (2020), in 2020, women made up 54% of the total staff quota at universities in South Africa. However, they hold only 38.9% of all leadership positions. Between 2015 and 2020, out of 20 Vice-Chancellor posts filled, only five were held by women. It is noteworthy that during this period, all vacant Vice-Chancellor positions previously held by women were filled by men.

The ongoing under representation of women in senior leadership roles inside public universities is not merely an equitable concern; it is a critical factor in enhancing the academic landscape for the future. Research indicates that gender-inclusive leadership teams contribute to better decision-making, organisational performance, and innovation. By addressing the root causes and seeking solutions, universities can fulfil their roles as beacons of knowledge and enlightenment, setting an example for an inclusive and equitable future (Hoyer, 2024:14).

Despite progress towards gender equality, South African public universities still grapple with the "glass ceiling" which is defined as an invisible barrier that keeps some groups, usually women and minorities, from getting to the top levels of salary scale or leadership position, even when they are qualified and performing well (Dyantyi, 2024:349-351).

This study will investigate the depth to which this perceived barrier affects the organisational commitment and intention to quite experienced by non-academic female employees in public universities in South Africa. This research aims to furnish critical data and recommendations for the higher education sector to enhance its capacity to

effectively tackle, mitigate, or eradicate workplace inequality by examining women's the impact of glass ceiling and affirming their value and significance in the professional environment.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite legislative frameworks and institutional policies that promotes gender equality, female non-academic staff remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions at South African public universities (Rustin, 2021). This underrepresentation suggests the continued existence of a glass ceiling, where women experience invisible yet significant barriers that limit their career progression irrespective of qualifications or work experience (Reiners, 2024).

Female non-academic staff who encounter such barriers often face limited opportunities for promotion, training, and career development. these experiences may lead to perceptions of unfair treatment and workplace discrimination, particularly where gender and race intersect (Phiri,2019). When employees perceive that advancement opportunities are restricted, their sense of belonging and organisational commitment may weaken (Barkhuizen, Masakane and Van der Sluis, 2022).

Lack of organisational commitment among employees is a concern because it is associated with reduced job satisfaction, lower performance, and an increased intention to resign For affected individuals, this may result in emotional disengagement, stalled career growth, and decisions to seek employment elsewhere. For universities, increased turnover among skilled non-academic staff can lead to operational disruptions, increased recruitment and training costs, and a loss of institutional knowledge (Soken-Huberty, 2022).

Although gender inequality in higher education has been widely discussed, limited research has focused on the experiences of female non-academic staff and how the glass ceiling influences their organisational commitment and intention to quit. this lack of focused research limits universities' ability to understand the extent of the problem and to

develop targeted strategies aimed at improving employee retention, workplace equity, and organisational effectiveness (Baines, 2020).

3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to enhance our theoretical understanding of the ways in which the glass ceiling influences the organisational commitment and intention to quit of female employees who are support staff in universities . It will enhance our understanding of this phenomenon by illuminating the complex dynamics that are at play. Furthermore, the researcher will identify and categorise the specific challenges that non-academic female employees encounter as a result of the glass ceiling, thereby contributing to the refinement and expansion of the theoretical framework.

Additionally, by addressing diversity, inclusion, and fostering career advancement opportunities for all employees, the study will provide organisations with actionable recommendations to mitigate the impact of the glass ceiling. These actionable insights will directly benefit the industrial sector, enabling informed decision-making regarding diversity and inclusion initiatives, ultimately fostering a more equitable workplace.

The study will also encourage open communication between employees and management, which will create a more welcoming workplace culture, make employees happier, and help keep them.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.1 Primary objective:

The aim is to assess the impact of the "glass ceiling" on resignation intentions and organisational commitment among non-academic female employees at two specified public universities in South Africa.

4.2 Secondary objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the correlation between organisational commitment and the glass ceiling among female non-academic employees at the designated public university.
- To ascertain the correlation between the glass ceiling and the intention to resign among non-academic female employees at the selected public university.
- To evaluate the correlation between organisational commitment and intention to resign among female non-academic employees at a particular public university.
- To investigate whether the glass ceiling and organisational commitment are significant predictors of the intention to resign and organisational commitment dimensions among non-academic female employees in selected public universities.
- To assess whether organisational commitment acts as a mediator in the relationship between the glass ceiling and the intention to resign among non-academic female employees at a specific public university.

5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.1 Primary research question

How does the glass ceiling affect the organisational commitment and intention to quit of non-academic female employees at South African public universities?

5.2 Secondary research question

- How does organisational commitment among non-academic female employees in selected public universities relate to the glass ceiling?
- How does the glass ceiling affect non-academic female employees' intention to quit?
- How do non-academic female employees at selected public universities feel about their organisational commitment and their intention to quit?
- Does intention to quit and the dimensions of organisational commitment among non-academic female employees in South African public universities significantly predict organisational commitment and glass ceiling ?

- Could organisational commitment serve as a mediator in the relationship between the glass ceiling and employees' intention to quit?

5.3 Research design and methodology

5.3.1 Research design

Is a blueprint or plan that defines the study process, including methods of data collecting, sampling, and analysis (Khanday & Khanam, 2023, p. 367). Cross-sectional data will be employed by the researcher to facilitate the simultaneous measurement of multiple variables. Moreover, this design was chosen to enable the collection of data from numerous respondents quickly (Bhat, 2020; Bryman et al., 2014: 104).

5.3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Bryman *et al.*, (2014:12) Positivism is an epistemological paradigm in academic study that promotes the use of natural scientific approaches to comprehend social realities. The researcher will employ a positivist research paradigm to evaluate hypotheses and examine the interrelations among variables.

5.3.3 Research Methodology

This research will employ quantitative methodology, characterised by structures and patterns derived from mathematical analysis of data. Obtaining mathematical data is a prerequisite for the quantitative technique, which is then followed by an objectivist and deductive strategy. Moving from the complex and unknown to the known is a component of the deductive approach (Atta et al., 2015:22; Bryman et al. 2014:31; Yilmaz, 2013:311).

5.3.4 Target and study population

The target population is the comprehensive collection of objects or individuals from which a sample can be obtained (Simich, 2018:40). The population in this study comprises all non-academic female employees at selected public universities.

Based on the 2024/2025 Statistics from the selected university, the non-academic female staff population, totalled to 1,276, it comprised of the following non-professional

administrative staff, 496 support professionals, 232 technical staff, and 278 service/crafts staff.

5.3.5 Sampling

Beukes (2019: 11) defines a sample as a subset of individuals, commonly termed responders or participants, chosen from a particular population group. Sampling is the procedure via which respondents or participants are chosen (Beukes, 2019:13). The researcher will employ a convenience sampling approach for this study, which means the researcher will only focus on participants who are readily available or accessible (Alvi, 2016:29).

The sample will be taken from selected public universities in South Africa. The researcher will focus on 300 non-academic female staff members out of a total of 1,276 non-academic female staff members for this study. A sample size of 300 is deemed sufficient to provide statistical reliability and representativeness of the target population. For social science research, normal recommendations say that a sample of roughly 300 people is enough to get a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error for a population of this size. This sample size is also easy to work with when it comes to collecting data, and it has adequate statistical power to allow for significant analysis and generalisation of results to the larger population (Singh and Masuku, 2014:8).

The inclusion criteria will encompass non-academic female employees from a designated public university who are proficient in English and possess a smartphone or computer with internet connectivity.

Male employees, academic staff members, and individuals not employed at the selected public university are not eligible to participate. In addition, the study will exclude non-academic female employees who are not proficient in English or lack access to a smartphone or computer with internet connectivity.

5.3.6 Data collection and measuring instrument

An online questionnaire will be utilised to gather the necessary data for this study. Even though online questionnaire general might have a low response rate as much, there are

many good reasons to choose it. First, online questionnaire is a cheap and quick way to reach people at many public universities that are spread out across the country. This method cuts down on printing and travel costs and lets people fill out the questionnaire when it's convenient for them, which can boost participation among staff who work (Shiyab et al., 2023).

Second, collecting data online protects people's privacy and anonymity, which may lead to more honest and accurate answers, especially when the study is about personal or work-related issues. Online questionnaires also make it possible to automatically collect data, which lowers the chance of making mistakes when entering data and makes it easier to analyse data quickly (Wu, Zhao and Fils-Aime, 2022).

To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, the questionnaire will incorporate pre-existing measurement scales that have been previously developed and empirically validated in related studies. The use of validated scales ensures consistency in measurement, allows for comparability with prior research, and strengthens the overall methodological rigour of the study (Boateng et al., 2018).

The following questionnaire will be used:

- *Demographic information* like gender, race, age, level of education, ethnicity, and job position to describe the sample. The privacy and anonymity of individuals will be safeguarded in the processing of this information. For instance, the researcher will refrain from soliciting personal information, including names, surnames, ID numbers, or employee numbers. The demographic information that has been requested will be exclusively used to characterise the sample. An online cloud that is password-protected will be used to store the information that has been collected.
- *Glass Ceiling Perceptions Scale (GCP)* will be utilised to assess the glass ceiling as an independent variable. The scale evaluates aspects of Stereotyping, Deception, Emotion, Equality, Balance, Support, and Open-mindedness.
- To assess Organisational Commitment, the researcher will employ the *Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)*. The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) is a tool that is employed to assess organisational commitment. It looks at

commitment from three different angles: affective, continuance, and normative. It has been demonstrated to be a reliable and valid research tool (CIPD, 2021:5).

- The researcher will employ the *Intention to Quit Scale* to assess the intention to quit. Bluedorn created this scale in 1982, and Akca used it in 2017. Akca found that the scale has one dimension and four items, and that people have to say how likely they are to quit the organisation.

5.3.7 Data analysis

Statistical analysis of the data will be performed by the researcher to identify correlations, trends, and patterns among variables. A statistical consultant will collect and analyse the data using IBM's SPSS software (version 25.0, 2018). The measurement instrument's validity will be assessed through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and its reliability will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the mean inter-item correlations. The threshold for credibility of results is a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 53).

Descriptive statistics will be computed for the means and standard deviations. In order to determine which personality characteristics (independent variables) contribute to the variability in decision-making styles (dependent variable), a regression analysis will be implemented. In multiple regression, effect sizes are computed using the formula $f^2 = R^2 / (1 - R^2)$, with practical significance thresholds set at 0.01 for small effects, 0.09 for moderate effects, and 0.35 for large effects (Steyn, 2000).

5.4 Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations play a vital role in guiding the direction of any scientific work. The following ethical norms will be followed to protect and care for the participants:

5.4.1 Voluntary Participation

Oliver (as cited in Masango, 2020:33) asserts that participants are free to disengage from the study at any time without feeling compelled to continue. A consent letter will be provided to prospective participants, which will contain exhaustive information to help them make an informed decision about their participation. Participants will be explicitly

informed that their participation is voluntary, and they will have the ability to withdraw at any time during the survey procedure.

5.4.2 *Informed Consent*

By guaranteeing that participants have a comprehensive grasp of the research, informed consent helps to promote cooperation and reduce any possible anxiety, resistance, or uneasiness. Information answering the participants' questions will be included in the consent letter. Participants will be provided with a consent form (Appendix B) to sign in order to verify their intent to participate in the study.

5.4.3 *Confidentiality*

Participants will be assured that all information gathered via the questionnaire will be maintained with strict confidentiality and securely stored in accordance with Shento's (2004) guidelines. The participants will be informed that the data collected will be exclusively used for research purposes. The final research report will exclude any personal details or identifying information. When direct quotations are included, consent from participants will be obtained, ensuring their anonymity is maintained using pseudonyms. (Kang & Hwang, 2023:6)

5.5 Limitations of the research

Study limitations encompass its imperfections or deficiencies. These constraints may stem from factors such as research design, methodology, materials, and more, potentially affecting the outcomes of the researcher's investigation (Sirisilla & Sirisilla, 2023).

Below are some of the possible limitations of this study: The researcher holds a managerial position at the selected public universities, which may lead to participants providing socially desirable responses. Finally, the researcher's managerial function may introduce the potential for personal bias, which could impact the research process and the interpretation of findings (Bergen & Labonté, 2020).

5.6 Outline of the dissertation

Chapter 1: This chapter delineates the research objectives, specifies the research questions, articulates the problem statement, and provides a concise overview of the

research design and methodologies. It also outlines the study's context. The ethical considerations and limitations of the investigation are discussed.

Chapter 2: This chapter outlines the research study, including a comprehensive literature review, theoretical framework, and examination of the results. The correlation between principal variables within the study's context is analysed, and the data's relevance to the research questions is emphasised.

Chapter 3: This chapter summarises the primary conclusions of the study and outlines the recommendations based on the research findings. This analysis examines the implications for future research, policy, and practice, emphasising strategies to overcome the obstacles identified in the study.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE

Title of Article: Evaluating the influence of the "glass ceiling" on organisational commitment and turnover intentions among non-academic female staff at South African public universities.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the "glass ceiling" on organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female staff in South African public universities. A cross-sectional survey methodology was employed using non-probability sampling (n=120).

This study indicates that employees' perceptions of the glass ceiling, including resignation, acceptance, denial, and resilience, are highly correlated with a variety of forms of commitment, including continuance, affective, and normative commitment. It indicates that resilience and resignation significantly predict employees' intentions to quit, particularly among women who either persist through barriers or feel resigned to them.

Overall, the research suggests that the glass ceiling can diminish positive forms of commitment, such as normative and affective commitment, while reinforcing continuance commitment, which reflects staying in a job out of necessity rather than choice. This underscores the impact of invisible barriers on employee retention.

According to the findings, to foster genuine dedication and reduce barriers, institutions must address systemic issues, promote equitable career growth, and cultivate an inclusive environment. Following the provision of theoretical contributions, management implications, and practical advice, the study's limitations indicate a need for additional research to be conducted.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, non-academic staff, intention to quit, Organisational commitment, South Africa, university, higher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

In 1996, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was enacted, guaranteeing that all individuals are entitled to the same legal rights and prohibiting discrimination against individuals based on their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. In theory, this legal framework establishes the nation as a champion of gender equality and human rights. However, the historical legacy of racial segregation and entrenched patriarchal systems continues to shape the lived realities of South African women in the labour market. For decades, Black South African women faced numerous forms of oppression that limited their access to education, jobs, and financial independence (Mbuli, 2022:1).

In spite of the removal of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the most unequal nations in the globe. The reason for this is that the pay disparity between men and women has not narrowed, even though policies have changed and workplaces have undergone transformation. This contradiction emphasises the intricate and enduring nature of structural inequality, indicating that it requires solutions that extend beyond mere legislation to achieve its complete eradication (Francis & Webster, 2019:789).

A prominent indicator of this imbalance is the glass ceiling phenomenon. Women, despite their skills and capabilities, encounter an artificial and often imperceptible barrier termed the "glass ceiling," which hinders their progression into senior management roles due to bias (Eghlidi and Karimi, 2020:28). Gender equity legislation and empowerment frameworks underscore the government dedication to equality; however, the presence of this intangible barrier illustrates the limitations of formal regulation in effecting substantive change. Studies have demonstrated that women's involvement in leadership roles not only fosters a positive organisational culture but also improves decision-making, innovation, governance, and financial performance on a global scale (Keller, 2024:24). Despite these established advantages, women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions in South Africa and the global community (Chanda & Ngulube, 2024:274).

The South African public higher education industry illustrates this imbalance; universities claim to be hubs of reform, equity, and knowledge creation; but, women continue to be sidelined from key decision-making roles. In 2020, women comprised 54% of university

staff, yet they held only 30% of leadership positions. Only five of the 26 public universities are currently led by female Vice-Chancellors (BWSA, 2021; Kela et al., 2024:34). Moreover, despite women comprising a significant portion of student enrolments and academic staff, this representation fails to result in equitable access to leadership roles (Wheeler & Wiese, 2024:2). The slow pace of change shows how strong gender norms and institutional cultures are that subtly but powerfully support exclusionary practices.

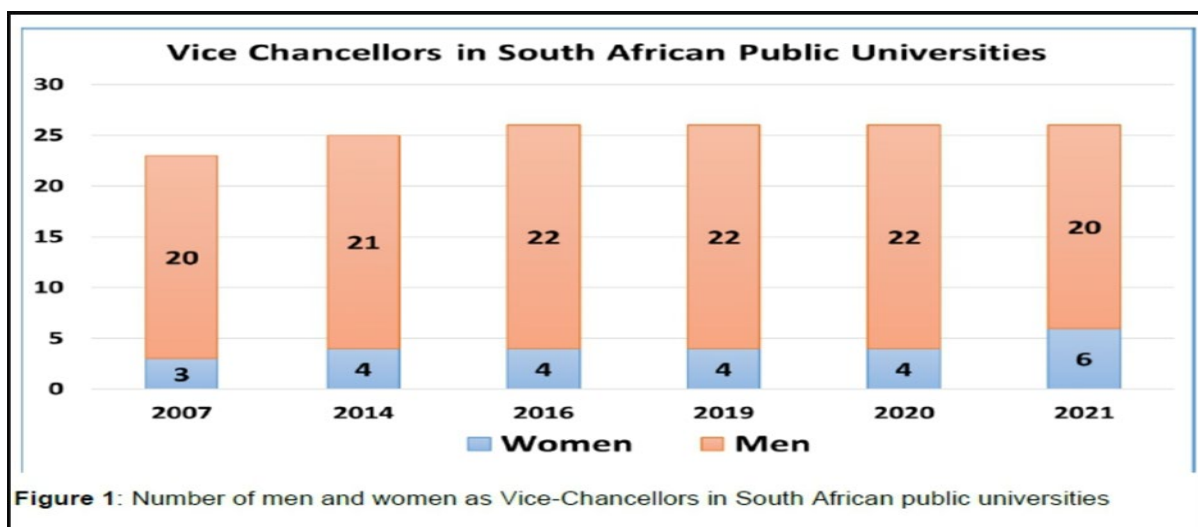
The objective of this investigation is to evaluate the influence of the glass ceiling on the organisational commitment and intention to resign of non-academic female employees at public universities in South Africa. The ultimate objective of the research is to offer evidence-based insight into the systemic barriers non-academic women face in South Africa's public universities and to help develop policies that promote gender parity, fortify institutional cultures, and retain qualified female professionals in the university system.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Historically, women have been confined to low-paying and unfulfilling jobs due to entrenched societal norms that portrayed them as less capable than men. Due to the shortage of labourers during World War I and II, women entered male-dominated positions, challenging some of these stereotypes (Tekin & Keskin, 2017:307).

Over time, women have increasingly pursued higher education to improve their employment prospects. However, the glass ceiling has persisted since equitable access to leadership positions has been restricted (Williams, 2023:1).

Figure 1: Number of men and women as Vice-Chancellors in South African public universities (Moodly, 2021:185).



(Moody, 2021:185)

Within South Africa, this challenge is particularly visible in public universities where women and minorities remain disproportionately underrepresented in senior leadership. Systemic barriers persist in impeding women's ascent to senior management positions, despite some progress (Kela et al., 2024:45; Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021). Figure 1 shows in 2007 only 3 of 23 Vice-Chancellors (13%) were female, increasing only marginally to 6 out of 26 by 2021 (Moody, 2021:185; Tau, 2023:154). This slow pace of transformation highlights the enduring challenges women face in gaining access to executive leadership.

This study focused on non-academic female employees in South Africa's public universities, a demographic that is frequently overlooked in discussions regarding higher education leadership and gender transformation. Non-academic staff are essential to the operational efficiency and long-term strategic direction of universities; however, their experiences regarding career advancement and organisational barriers are insufficiently examined. The objective of the present study is to examine the influence of perceptions about the glass ceiling on two critical outcomes: organisational commitment, which represents the emotional and psychological attachment of employees to their institution, and intention to resign, which indicates the probability of turnover. In order to improve comprehension of the experiences of female employees in the higher education sector who may have encountered a glass ceiling in the workplace and the subsequent effects on their organisational commitment and intention to quit, current deficiencies in the existing literature must be addressed (Baines, 2020:13).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory frameworks

Theoretical frameworks may be employed to examine the correlation among the glass ceiling effect, organisational commitment, and intention to quit. Social Exchange Theory offers a valuable framework for evaluating this relationship by emphasising that employment relationships are regulated by reciprocal exchanges, wherein favourable treatment by the organisation is met with positive attitudes and behaviours, including commitment and diminished turnover intentions (Ahmad et al., 2023).

When employees feel that they are being treated fairly, recognised, and given chances to move up in their careers, they are more likely to stay with the company and less likely to want to leave. On the other hand, when women face discrimination, unfair promotion decisions, or limited access to leadership opportunities because of the glass ceiling, they feel like the exchange relationship is unfair, which makes them less committed to the organisation and more likely to leave (Lee &). In this context, perceptions of unfair treatment indicate a failure in the reciprocal social exchange, consequently eroding employees' psychological attachment and heightening the probability of withdrawal behaviours.

Theory of Organisational Justice explains the influence of fairness beliefs on employee attitudes and actions. Organisational justice includes employees' perceptions of fairness concerning outcomes (distributive justice), decision-making processes (procedural justice), and interpersonal treatment (interactional justice), all of which affect employees' evaluative judgements about the organisation (Obalade & Mtembu, 2023).

Women are more inclined to perceive inequity in the presence of a glass ceiling. For example, restricted advancement chances undermine distributive justice, biased or ambiguous processes compromise procedural justice, and discriminatory encounters damage interactional justice (Downes, Hemmasi & Eshghi, 2014:).

Research indicates that when employees perceive unjust treatment, their commitment to their employment diminishes, and their desire to go increases. This is due to their perception of unfair treatment as a violation of the psychological contract inherent in employment (Watanabe and Kwarteng, 2024:3).

Glass ceiling

Many scholars and activists disagree on where the term "glass ceiling" came from. A speech by Marilyn Loden (2017) in 1978 is often regarded as the first instance of the term being used. Around the same time, the Wall Street Journal used the word in connection with Hewlett-Packard and credited Marianne Schriber and Katherine Lawrence. Gay Bryant, then the editor of Working Woman magazine, made the term popular in an Adweek article in March 1984. She said that women were getting to the "top of middle management" but getting stuck. In 1984, she wrote The Working Women Report, which provided more detailed information about the concept. The term "glass ceiling" was introduced to the public in 1986 by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt's Wall Street Journal article "The Glass Ceiling: Why Women Can't Seem to Break the Invisible Barrier That Blocks Them from the Top Jobs" (Kela et al., 2024:35). Babic and Hansez (2021:2) characterise the glass ceiling as "subtle yet enduring barriers supported by discriminatory, both conscious and unconscious, behaviours and attitudes that inhibit talented women or minorities from advancing to senior management roles." The phrase "glass ceiling" refers to unseen barriers that impede women's progression to senior leadership roles in their careers (Reiners, 2024). It delineates situations where a qualified individual's progression within an organization's hierarchy is obstructed at a certain level due to discrimination, predominantly racism or sexism (Hing et al., 2023:3).

The term of a "ceiling" represents a barrier or obstacle that limit or prevent career upward mobility, and the term "glass" refers to the fact that this barrier is transparent unwritten, unofficial, and not immediately apparent (Nazmul et al., 2016:2). Despite being a subset of workplace discrimination, the glass ceiling differs from other types of inequality due to certain features (Kagan, 2024).

Key criteria that define the glass ceiling and set it apart

Four primary requirements are outlined by Kulik and Rae (2019) to facilitate our understanding of the glass ceiling's significance and its impact on individuals, especially women and ethnic minorities in the professional environment:

- **Unexplained Discrimination:** The first point is that the glass ceiling isn't about differences in skills, experience, or performance. It's about unfair treatment that can't

be explained by job-related factors. If two equally qualified people have different outcomes based on gender or race, it's a sign that hidden biases may be at play.

- **Hierarchical Effect:** The second point is that inequality gets worse the higher you go up in an organisation. It's not just that women or minorities face barriers; they face even tougher ones when trying to reach top leadership positions. This highlights how organisational hierarchies often reinforce inequality.
- **Blocked upward mobility:** The third criterion focuses not just on who holds high-level positions now, but also on who has the chance to get there. It reminds us that the glass ceiling is about restricted opportunities for growth and promotion, not just current statistics.
- **Growing Over Time:** The final point is about how these inequalities build up. As people progress through their careers, the gaps between groups often widen. This means it's essential to examine career progression over time, rather than just at a single point, to truly understand the impact of the glass ceiling.

These criteria collectively establish a thorough framework for recognising and comprehending the specific elements of the glass ceiling within an organisation. By using these criteria, researchers and organisations can gain a better understanding of the nature and magnitude of gender and racial differences in career advancement opportunities (Van Veelen & Derks, 2022).

Glass Ceiling beliefs

According to prior research on the glass ceiling, the career pathway survey has identified four distinct categories of beliefs: denial, resignation, acceptance, and resilience (Mukherjee, 2023:3-6).

Denial reflects a hopeful perspective among women on the glass ceiling, as they see that both genders encounter virtually identical challenges in achieving top management roles. Women exhibit a constructive outlook regarding their career progression, holding the belief that there is no bias against them in senior management roles, as both genders encounter similar challenges in their advancement (Mohamed, Elsaid and Ela, 2023:5).

Resilience is a valuable trait in women because it demonstrates that they believe they can handle the challenges that come with the glass ceiling effect. Resilience

demonstrates that women maintain a positive attitude about advancing in their careers, as they continue to believe they can advocate for their rights to promotions and professional growth, despite the presence of glass ceilings. (Khalid & Aftab, 2023:4)

Resignation reflects a belief among women regarding the glass ceiling, as they perceive greater obstacles compared to men in their pursuit of top management positions. Numerous significant factors contribute to the challenges they encounter in overcoming this barrier. Women often exhibit a negative outlook regarding the glass ceiling effect, as they encounter challenges in attaining higher positions in comparison to men (Khalid & Aftab, 2023:4-5).

Acceptance reflects a supportive perspective among women in organisations, where they prioritise family-oriented goals over aspirations for promotion or leadership roles. Acceptance represents a limiting belief among women regarding career advancement, as they often acknowledge that family commitments influence the glass ceiling. Women who hold the belief in a glass ceiling tend to lack the ambition to pursue top management positions and are often reluctant to assume additional responsibilities (Khalid & Aftab, 2023:4-5).

The glass ceiling and legislation

South Africa has developed a robust legislative and policy framework aimed at reducing gender inequality and addressing barriers, including the glass ceiling, in workplaces such as the higher education sector. While the persistence of structural challenges remains, the following key pieces of legislation and frameworks are central to capping or mitigating the glass ceiling

Table 1: *South African Legislative and Policy Framework Addressing the Glass Ceiling* (Mwashita, Zungu and Abrahams, 2020:1078-1079)

Legislation / Policy	Purpose / Key Provisions	Relevance to the Glass Ceiling
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa	Prevents discrimination and guarantees equality (Section 9 Equality Clause).	Establishes the legal foundation for gender equality in all sectors, including higher education.
Labour Relations Act (LRA) No. 66	Encourages equitable labour practices and safeguards employees from discrimination or dismissal that is unjust.	Empowers women to challenge discriminatory workplace practices that hinder promotion.
Employment Equity Act (EEA) No. 55	Eliminates unfair discrimination and requires affirmative action for designated groups, including women.	Directly targets barriers to advancement and obligates institutions to increase women's representation in senior management.
Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) No. 75	Establishes minimum standards for working conditions, including maternity and parental leave.	Supports women's capacity to manage work and family obligations, thereby mitigating the structural disadvantages that are frequently invoked to justify their exclusion from leadership positions.
Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) No. 4	Prohibits unfair discrimination and systemic barriers based on race, gender, and other grounds.	Addresses indirect discrimination and organisational cultures that perpetuate the glass ceiling.
Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act No. 53	Promotes economic participation of black South Africans and women in business and management.	Encourages organisations to promote women into leadership roles through incentive-based scoring.
Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill	Proposed to enforce gender equity measures across sectors, strengthening accountability mechanisms.	Although not fully enacted, it reflects the state's commitment to dismantling barriers to women's leadership.
National Plan for Higher Education	Directs the transformation of the higher education sector with a focus on equity and redress.	Highlights gender equity in staffing as a key transformation goal.

White Paper for Post-School Education and Training	Sets out a policy for an equitable and inclusive post-school system.	Strengthens the fundamental principle of gender equity in the transformation of higher education.
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The Impact of the Glass Ceiling on Employee Behaviour

The presence of a glass ceiling establishes an unseen obstacle that hinders the advancement of talented individuals, significantly influencing employee morale within organisations. The interaction between the glass ceiling and employee attitudes and behaviours encompasses numerous positive and negative aspects (Khalid & Aftab, 2023:1-4).

Experiencing the glass ceiling can be a significant source of demotivation, as it restricts an individual's access to opportunities essential for their professional growth and work performance. This hurdle, in turn, contributes to a decline in job satisfaction, as employees grapple with the frustration and perceived unfairness associated with limited care (Imadoğlu *et al.*, 2020, p. 88).

According to Li and Ding (2022), some individuals facing the glass ceiling can also respond with remarkable resilience and heightened effort, transforming adversity into motivation for enhanced performance. This subset of employees not only overcomes obstacles but also demonstrates a determination to excel, potentially serving as inspirational figures within the organisation.

The glass ceiling, in its paradoxical nature, may inadvertently become a mechanism for selecting highly motivated individuals for leadership positions. While the glass ceiling undeniably presents substantial challenges, it simultaneously acts as a catalyst for growth, resilience, and positive organisational change. The narrative surrounding the glass ceiling is one of complexity, as individuals and organisations navigate its obstacles, discovering opportunities for progress and transformation along the way (Babic & Hansez, 2021).

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is defined by Herrera and De Las Heras-Rosas (2021:2) as the degree to which employees are inclined to remain with the organisation, exhibit dedication, and align with their workplace. In contrast, Lee, Tan, and Javalgi (2010:131) contend that organisational commitment is a "psychological state" or a powerful force that induces an individual to act in accordance with one or more organisational objectives. Ali Shurbagi (2014:128) defines organisational commitment as "a bond or linking of the individual to the organisation." Organisational commitment is defined as "the psychological attachment an individual has to the organisation, reflecting the extent to which the individual internalises or adopts the organization's characteristics or perspectives."

Dimensions of Organisational Commitment

There are numerous theories regarding organisational commitment; however, Meyer and Allen's three-dimensional model is the most widely accepted among researchers. Three components comprise this model. (Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021:2-3, Rachidi & Lephoto, 2023:332).

- The first component "Commitment to Continuity" (CC), is predicated on the concept of social exchange. It implies that an individual's dedication to the organisation increases as they make incremental investments over time. While these investments may appear inconsequential, they impede the individual's ability to voluntarily withdraw from the organisation (Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021:2-3).
- The second component, termed Affective Commitment (CA) is a psychological concept that focuses on the deep emotional bond between a person and an organisation. The employee's genuine wish to stay on the job because they share its objectives and values is what distinguishes it. The worker receives certain psychological advantages in return, such as feeling appreciated and supported. (Rachidi & Lephoto, 2023:332).
- The third perspective, Normative Commitment (NC), place its focus on the employee's work ethic and sense of duty, which compels them to consistently perform their job at a high level, regardless of the prevailing circumstances. The concept of normative commitment has sparked various interpretations of its role and significance as a research component (Rachidi & Lephoto, 2023:333)

The Impact of organisational commitment on employee behaviour.

Increased organisational commitment is frequently associated with improved job performance, since dedicated personnel tend to be more motivated and involved in their duties (Dita and Thrun, 2024:5). Belias et al. (2015) assert that organisational commitment fosters job satisfaction by aligning personal values with corporate objectives, thereby creating a favourable work environment. Committed individuals are more likely to be engrossed at work, demonstrating a strong devotion and interest in their current position. This commitment also translates into a willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours, contributing to the overall functioning and effectiveness of the organisation (Dasgupta & Dey, 2024:406).

On the other hand, organisational commitment protects against plans to leave, as devoted workers are less likely to consider leaving. Sypniewska (2020) claims that dedicated workers have a reduced tendency towards inappropriate or unproductive behaviors, indicative of their deep commitment and connections with the organisation. Lastly, being committed to your job may help you avoid burnout by mitigating the effects of work-related stress. Grasping these interconnections may guide organisational initiatives designed to provide a supportive workplace and improve both employee welfare and organisational performance (Al Balushi et al., 2022:125-126).

Intentions to quit

In organisational behaviour research, the concepts of turnover intention and intention to quit are closely related but not entirely synonymous. Turnover refers to the termination of the employer-employee relationship, and turnover can be either voluntary or involuntary (Appollis, 2010:33). Voluntary turnover is characterised by employees' self-initiated departure in pursuit of improved employment conditions, opportunities, or job satisfaction. Involuntary turnover refers to employer-initiated separation resulting from retrenchment or dismissal due to misconduct or non-performance-related factors. (Van Vulpen, 2021).

Appollis (2010:33-34) defines intention to quit as an employee's clear and intentional desire to leave their workplace or organisation independently Xue *et al.* (2022) *define* intention to quit as a psychological state indicating an individual's planned departure from their current employment within a specific time frame, often within the next year. The intention to quit is a human resource term that denotes an employee's intention or deliberate action to resign from

their current position within a specified time frame. This concept is a precursor to actual turnover and a key focus in HR management strategies (Lazzari et al., 2022:281).

The Impact of Intention to quit on employee behaviour.

The intention to quit among employees can significantly influence various aspects of their attitudes and behaviours within the workplace. Firstly, employees contemplating leaving their jobs often exhibit diminished job performance. This decline may stem from feelings of disengagement or dissatisfaction with their current role or organisational environment, leading to lower levels of motivation and productivity (Ahmetoglu *et al.*, 2020).

According to Madumo (2021) a strong intention to quit is typically associated with lower job satisfaction. Employees considering leaving may harbour discontent with various facets of their job, including compensation, workload, or interpersonal relationships, which contribute to overall dissatisfaction and potentially affect their morale and commitment to their work. An inverse correlation exists between the intention to resign and organisational commitment. The firm's objectives, values, and overarching mission are less likely to be upheld by employees who are considering leaving the organisation, as they are more likely to exhibit a diminished emotional attachment and loyalty (CIPD, 2023).

Employees with high levels of intention to quit may demonstrate reduced work engagement. This diminished engagement could manifest as a lack of enthusiasm, dedication, or absorption in their work tasks, as they may feel disconnected from their roles or the organisation's objectives (Masum *et al.*, 2016). The intention to quit may affect workers' readiness to participate in organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). If they are contemplating leaving, they may be less inclined to exceed their job responsibilities or make a positive impact on the organisation, which could result in a decrease in the level of cooperation and support among their colleagues (Fan, Wider, and Chan, 2023).

Alexander (2016) indicates that an increase in deviant or counterproductive behaviours may be observed among employees with a high intention to quit. These behaviours, such as absenteeism, tardiness, or workplace conflicts, may arise due to decreased investment in adhering to organisational norms or meeting job expectations, particularly if employees feel disengaged or detached from their roles.

Employees who exhibit elevated levels of intention to resign are more susceptible to exhaustion, as per Felicia *et al.* (2023). This may be the result of the tension and uncertainty that accompany the idea of leaving one's job, which can result in individuals feeling emotionally depleted, disconnected, and less accomplished. Ultimately, this can lead to increased levels of burnout in the workplace.

Understanding the interrelationships is crucial for organisations to identify potential turnover risks and implement strategies to mitigate them. By addressing issues that lead to job discontent, strengthening organisational commitment, and establishing a positive work environment, organisations can attempt to minimise workers' intention to quit and its unfavourable consequences on workplace dynamics and performance (Alexander, 2016).

Relationship Between Glass Ceiling and Organisational Commitment

The organisational commitment of female employees is closely correlated with the glass ceiling. Research suggests that lower organisational engagement among female employees is linked to higher corporate glass ceiling effects. This suggests that women become less dedicated to the organisation when they encounter invisible barriers to advancement (Khuong & Chi, 2017:260).

Although the link between organisational commitment and the glass ceiling is not definitive, Tiwari, Mathur, and Awasthi (2025:2–3) discovered a moderate correlation between the two, suggesting that these obstacles significantly influence employees' perceptions of their organisations. Because they feel that their opportunities for recognition and advancement are limited, women are less inclined to participate in long-term organisational goals when the glass ceiling persists.

Galsanjigmed and Sekiguchi (2023:369) contend that women workers exhibit less organisational commitment in settings with high levels of discrimination against women and masculine stereotypes. This study draws attention to the negative effects of gendered organisational cultures, which are typified by frequent discrimination, a lack of support, and the undervaluation of women's efforts. Women may become less committed to the organisation in these circumstances if they feel unwelcome and disrespected.

Furthermore, research suggests that the glass ceiling has a substantial impact on the career advancement of women. The absence of opportunities for advancement, unequal access to mentorship, and exclusion from decision-making processes all impede the professional development and sense of belonging of women within the organisation. (Khalid & Aftab, 2023). Cabeza et al. (2011) contend that the glass ceiling's discriminatory characteristics impede women from completely dedicating themselves to the organization's objectives. Women are less inclined to support the organization's objectives when they perceive that their advancement is consistently hindered. In addition, they may contemplate alternative career paths or even depart the organisation.

Relationship Between Organisational Commitment and Intentions to Quit

The relationship between organisational commitment and the intention to resign is a critical factor in comprehending employee behaviour within organisations (Ramakhula-Mabona, 2014:126). Among the characteristics that employees with greater organisational commitment are more likely to demonstrate are increased effort, loyalty, and engagement. However, an employee's intention to resign indicates that they are dissatisfied with their current position or organisation, do not perceive any opportunities for advancement, or have personal reasons (Nuwagira et al., 2023).

In general, a higher level of organisational commitment is associated with a lower intention to resign. Workers are considerably less inclined to contemplate resigning when they possess a profound emotional attachment to their employer, comprehend the substantial expenses associated with departing, and perceive a moral obligation to remain. Conversely, workers who are less dedicated to their company are more likely to consider quitting, which increases their intentions to do so (Potgieter et al., 2021).

This relationship is deep and can be altered by several factors that affect its functioning. For instance, workers who don't feel very committed to their company may nonetheless not want to leave if they are happy with their jobs (Ahmad, 2018:77). The presence of alternative employment options, with the organisational culture and existing support structures, might significantly influence turnover intentions (Bwowe, 2020:163).

Organisational Commitment can be strengthened, and the likelihood of turnover can be reduced through the creation of an encouraging organisational culture that prioritises the well-

being of employees, offers opportunities for development and growth, and promotes honest leadership practices. (Maloba & Pillay-Naidoo, 2022:4).

Relationship Between Glass Ceiling and Intention to Quit

Job satisfaction may be adversely affected by the perception of a glass ceiling. Amponsah-Tawiah et al. (2019) have observed that employees who perceive an invisible barrier as preventing them from achieving their maximum potential within an organisation may experience a decrease in their level of satisfaction with their career trajectory.

This dissatisfaction can act as a push factor, motivating them to search for a more equitable work environment where their contributions are recognised and rewarded (Swift et al., 2016). Additionally, the perception of a glass ceiling can undermine an employee's commitment to the organisation and sense of belonging. The desire of an employee to remain and contribute can be diminished because of feeling undervalued and obstructed from advancement, which can ultimately result in increased turnover intentions. (Mensah et al., 2014).

The impact of the glass ceiling on turnover intentions can also be moderated by various organisational factors. A supportive and inclusive culture, strong leadership that actively promotes diversity and inclusion, and access to mentors can all play a role in mitigating the negative effects of a perceived glass ceiling (Riyadh *et al.*, 2014).

The glass ceiling presents a significant challenge for organisations seeking to retain talent, particularly among women and minorities. By dismantling these barriers through diversity and inclusion initiatives, providing equal opportunities for advancement, and fostering a culture of fairness and transparency, organisations can create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. This will ultimately lead to reduced turnover and a more robust and diverse workforce (Mensah et al., 2014).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to evaluate how the "glass ceiling" affects the organisational commitment and intention to quit of non-academic female employees in South African public universities. To help achieve the primary goal, the following secondary goals were developed:

1. To ascertain the impact of the glass ceiling on the organisational commitment of non-academic female personnel at public universities in South Africa.

2. To ascertain the relationship between the glass ceiling and the intention of non-academic female employees of South African public universities to resign.
3. To ascertain the relationship between the organisational commitment of non-academic female employees at South African public universities and their intention to resign.
4. To ascertain whether the glass ceiling and organisational commitment are substantial predictors of the intention to resign and other dimensions of organisational commitment among female non-academic employees in South African public universities.
5. To ascertain the extent to which the relationship between the glass ceiling and the intention of non-academic female employees to resign in South African public universities is influenced by organisational commitment.

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What effect does the glass ceiling have on non-academic female employees' organisational commitment and intention to quit?

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do non-academic female employees in South African public universities respond to the glass ceiling and organisational commitment?
- How does the glass ceiling affect non-academic female employees' intention to quit in South African public universities?
- How do non-academic female employees in South African public universities feel about their organisational commitment and their intention to quit?
- Do the dimensions of organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees in South African public universities significantly correlate with the glass ceiling and organisational commitment?
- Does organisational commitment act as a mediator between the glass ceiling and non-academic female employees' intention to quit in South African public universities?
- Does organisational commitment mediate the association between the glass ceiling and the intention to quit among female non-academic employees?

RESEARCH METHODS

Research approach, sample and procedure

To test the hypothesis concerning the correlation between organisational commitment, intention to resign, and the glass ceiling, this study implemented a positivist paradigm. The term "positivist paradigm" signified the researcher's objective to conduct a thorough analysis of an event or rigorously evaluate a hypothesis in their research (Editage Insights, 2021).

The quantitative research approach was selected for this study due to its objective to assess the established theoretical frameworks of the glass ceiling, intention to resign, and organisational commitment, rather than to generate novel theories. Several variables were measured at a specific point in time using a cross-sectional research approach (Bhat, 2020; Bryman et al., 2014, p. 104). Non-academic personnel from three select public universities' campuses comprised the study sample.

The researcher obtained authorisation from the Faculty Scientific Committee (SciCom), the Research Ethics Committee (REC), and the gatekeeper committee prior to data collection. Primary data was acquired through an online questionnaire. Participants granted their consent prior to participating in the survey. The questionnaire's link was distributed via Daily Comms, an online university communication network focused on public universities. To accumulate additional data, reminders were issued that directed individuals to a survey link, thereby enabling them to complete the questionnaire. Upon obtaining authorisation to conduct research at the three campuses of the selected public colleges. Before completing the research questionnaire, respondents provided their informed consent.

The purpose of the study was disclosed in the informed consent letter, which also indicated that participation was voluntary and confidential. By designating a code to each respondent during data collection, processing, and distribution, the confidentiality of the respondents was respected and preserved, rather than the use of personal identifiers.

From a total of 1276 female non-academic staff members at designated public universities, a sample of 300 participants was selected. The inclusion criteria included female non-academic personnel from a designated public institution who were proficient in English, had access to a computer, and the internet. The exclusion criteria included male non-academic staff, all academic personnel, and female non-academic staff who were either not proficient in English or lacked access to a computer and the internet.

The selected public institution has three campuses, and the target demographic consists of 1276 non-academic female employees. This group is the primary focus of the investigation into the impact of the "glass ceiling" on organisational commitment and intention to leave. The dataset was refined to include 119 complete responses that are suitable for data analysis. To profile the sample, respondents were requested to submit demographic information, including their age, gender, greatest level of education, and years of experience in their current position. Table 2 illustrates the demographic profile of the sample respondents.

Table 2: *Demographic profile of respondents*

Category	Class	N	%
Gender	Male	2	1.7%
	Female	116	98.3%
Age	18-24	9	7.4%
	25-34	40	33.1%
	35-44	40	33.1%
	45-54	21	17.4%
	55-65 or above	11	9.1%
Educational level	High school(matric) and below	16	13.4%
	College	10	8.4%
	Bachelor's Degree	54	45.4%
	Honour's Degree	19	16%
	Master's Degree	14	11.8%
	Doctoral Degree	6	5.0%
	Other	1	0.8%
Ethnicity/Race	African	89	73.6%
	White	25	20.7%
	Coloured	4	3.3%
	Indian	3	2.5%
	Asian	-	-
Employment Status	Employed full-time (Permanent)	104	87.4%
	Fixed-Term Appointment (≥ 2 years)	11	9.2%
	Temporary Appointment (1 year or less)	4	3.4%
Type of Employment	Academic staff	9	7.7%
	Non-academic /support staff	108	92.3%
Work Experience	0-5 Years	30	25%
	6-10 Years	38	31.7%
	11-15 Years	22	18.3%
	16-20 years	15	12.5%
	21-25 Years	6	5%
	26+	9	7.5%

MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The study used pre-existing questionnaires. The validity and reliability of the questionnaires have already been established because the measuring tools are pre-made. The four sections of the study questionnaire were as follows:

Section 1: Demographic Data

The study gathered demographic data, including age, faculty institution location, gender, academic background, and years of experience in the respondent's current role. Demographic information was gathered to describe the sample; it was not used to compare groups or conduct additional analysis.

Section 2: Views on the Glass Ceiling and Its Effects

Assessed women's perceptions of the glass ceiling using the CPS scale, which was modified from Smith et al. (2012). Some of the items were perceived as harsh or sexist, so to mitigate the emotional risk, the original intent was preserved, but the wording was modified to better align with a South African sample. The CPS scale was modified for this study and replaced with a four-point Likert scale, which prompts respondents to evaluate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

By rating the respondents' answers to the pre-posed questions, a Likert scale helped ascertain their perceptions. More dependable and trustworthy responses were obtained when multiple items were provided (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021:183).

Section 3: Organisational dedication

According to Gutierrez, Candel, and Carver (2012), the (OCQ) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire is a commonly used instrument for evaluating organisational commitment. This questionnaire assesses organisational commitment from three different angles: affective, continuance, and normative commitment, as described by Gutierrez et al. (2012). As confirmed by Kimberlin and Winterstein (2010), the OCQ has proven to be an effective research tool in terms of validity and reliability, much like the COI.

Section 4-Intention to Quit

Intention to Quit Scale: Using Bluedorn's (1982) scale, Akca (2017) found that it has one dimension and consists of four items, asking respondents to rate their likelihood of leaving the company in the near or distant future on a 5-point scale (e.g., "I often consider quitting").

Statistical analyses

The primary research data were analysed using quantitative techniques in order to investigate the relationship between the variables. Data collected from Google Forms, a web-based survey platform, were subjected to statistical analysis using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Prior to conducting exploratory factor analysis, frequencies were implemented to characterise the demographic data. This analytical method was employed to investigate the factorial structure of the measured variables in the study. Cronbach's alpha was implemented to assess the reliability of the measuring instruments employed in this investigation.

Descriptive statistics were then conducted using a variety of quantitative tools to characterize and analyse unprocessed data (Modipane *et al.*, 2019:6). Measures of dispersion (variance and standard deviation), measures of central tendency (mean, mode, and median), measures of frequency (percent and frequency), and distribution measures (kurtosis and skewness) are the four primary categories into which descriptive statistics are classified. The mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were among the procedures selected for data analysis in this investigation (Misra *et al.*, 2019:68).

Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to assess the direction and intensity of the relationships between the variables; however, this method did not imply causality, but rather the existence of correlations. Effect sizes were classified as minor (0.1), medium (0.3), and large (0.5) by Steyn's (2000) classification. When the p-value was less than 0.05, they were considered significant at a 95% confidence level.

Furthermore, a regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the glass ceiling dimensions (independent variables) could explain the variance in organisational commitment and intentions to resign (dependent variables). The formula $f^2 = R^2 / (1 - R^2)$ was employed to determine the effect sizes for multiple regression. Practical significance thresholds

were established at 0.01 for small effects, 0.09 for medium effects, and 0.35 for large effects (Steyn, 2000).

The basic mediation and moderation modelling was conducted using the process macros version 4 of Hayes (2017), which is installed as an add-on in IBM SPSS. The objective was to ascertain the extent to which organisational commitment influences the relationship between the glass ceiling dimensions and intentions to quit, and under which conditions.

RESULTS

This section commences with the findings of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), succeeded by descriptive statistics. The following section delineates the results of the correlation analysis, succeeded by a discourse on the outcomes of the regression analysis. The section ultimately closes with the mediation analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Principal component analysis was used in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine whether the items of the individual scales were suitable. The Glass Ceiling Perceptions Scale (GCP) of Prasad (2018) was used to measure the independent variable, which included levels of Stereotyping (6 items), Deception (5 items), Emotion (3 items), Equality (3 items), Balance (3 items), Support (3 items), and Open-mindedness. Maximum likelihood extraction and Oblimin rotation were used to independently enter the subscales' items into an EFA to ascertain the load on the intended factors. Contrary to the initial results and the theoretical framework (Prasad, 2018), the results of this analysis suggested poor and problematic loadings of the items on the intended seven factors. This led to the next step in the EFA of the total scale, where four factors were extracted in line with the prevailing theory on the conceptualisation of the glass ceiling concept. This analysis is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: *Exploratory factor analysis (EFA): Glass Ceiling Perceptions Scale*

	Factor Loadings	Factor				
		F1	F2	F3	F4	Uniqueness
DE3	Jealousy from co-workers prevents women from seeking promotions.	0.623	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.615
ST4	Women are more likely to be hurt than men when they take big risks necessary for corporate success	0.591	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.599
DE4	Women leaders suffer more emotional pain than men when there is a crisis within their teams.	0.590	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.549
DE2	If women achieve promotions, they might be accused of offering sexual favours	0.563	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.646
ST5	Women commonly reject career advancement as they are keener to maintain a role raising children	0.478	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.650
BA1	Smart women avoid careers that involve intense competition with colleagues	0.476	0.000	0.307	0.000	0.592
BA2	Women prefer a balance life more than gaining highly paid careers.	0.445	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.655
EQ3	Even women with many skills and qualifications fail to be recognized for promotions	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.940
ST3	Women are capable of making critical leadership decisions.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.931
ST1	Networking is a smart way for women to increase the chances of career success.	0.000	0.724	0.000	0.000	0.444
DE1	Women are just as ambitious in their careers as men	0.000	0.620	0.000	0.000	0.612
EQ2	Women have the same desire for power as men do.	0.000	0.590	0.000	0.000	0.572
ST2	A supportive spouse/partner or close friend makes it easier for a woman to achieve success in her career	0.000	0.546	0.000	0.000	0.674
EQ1	Women have reached the top in all areas of business and politics.	0.000	0.445	0.000	0.000	0.626
DE5	Daughters of successful mothers are inspired to overcome sexist hurdles.	0.328	0.356	0.000	0.000	0.762
OM3	Women face no barriers to promotions in most organizations.	0.000	0.000	0.631	-0.305	0.541
SU2	Women are less concerned about promotions than men are.	0.000	0.000	0.556	0.000	0.606
EM1	Women face no barriers to promotions in most organizations.	0.000	0.000	0.540	0.000	0.715
EM2	Talented women are able to overcome sexist discrimination.	0.000	0.000	0.465	0.000	0.753
EM3	Motherhood is more important to most women than career development.	0.000	0.000	0.431	0.000	0.623
OM1	Women in senior positions face frequent putdowns of being too soft or too hard.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.744	0.447
OM2	Women's nurturing skills help them to be successful leaders.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.569	0.621
SU3	The support of a mentor greatly increases the success of a woman in any organization.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.370	0.725
SU1	Women who have a strong commitment to their careers can go right to the top	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.736
BA3	Women leaders are seldom given full credit for their successes.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.324	0.895
ST6	Women and men have to overcome the same problems at the workplace.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.826

The four factors extracted were labelled Acceptance (F1), Resilience (F3), Denial (F3), and Resignation (F4). Items EQ3, ST3 and ST6 did not load any of the extracted factors meaningfully, and items DE3 loaded on F1 and F2, while OM3 loaded on F3 and F4, in which case the factor with the highest loading for the item was considered.

Next, the items of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were collectively entered into a EFA using maximum likelihood extraction and Oblimin rotation to determine if the load on the intended three factors. Contrary to the theoretical framework (Prasad, 2018), the results of this analysis suggested poor and problematic loadings of the items on the intended three factors. This followed the inclusion of the items in EFA's for the intended factors separately. After recoding two items for both normative and continuous organisational commitment, as well as poor loadings, three unifactorial solutions were extracted, labelled as affective, normative, and continuous organisational commitment. The four-item ITQ scale yielded a single-factor solution. The results of the unifactorial analysis for all scales used in this study are reported in Table 4 below.

Table 4: *Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of all the variables considered in this study*

	Number of items	Eigen value	Variance explained	KMO	Factor loadings range	Bartlett's test of Sphericity
Acceptance	7	2.26	.32	.79	.49 - .63	<.001
Resilience	6	1.89	.32	.70	.37 - .72	<.001
Denial	6	1.53	.31	.71	.59 - .75	<.001
Resignation	4	1.30	.26	.67	.44 - .65	<.001
Affective commitment	6	1.76	.40	.71	.48 - .72	<.001
Normative commitment	6	2.30	.38	.69	.47 - .67	<.001
Continuous commitment	4	2.51	.63	.77	.67 - .83	<.001
Intentions to Quit	4	2.93	.74	.81	.80 - .91	<.001

Inspection of Table 3 suggests and confirms the unifactorial solutions. The selection of a unifactorial solution was based on the sharp reduction (below 1) of the eigenvalues of the second factor, as well as the inspection of the scree plot. All scales obtained higher than 1 eigenvalue, KMOs exceeding .69. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test is an approach to see if the data is good for factor analysis.

The test determines whether the samples for each variable in the model and the entire model are adequate. The proportion of variance across variables that is common variance is illustrated by the statistic. Kaizer suggests that a KMO value between 0.70 and 0.79 is regarded as moderate, while a value between 0.80 and 0.89 is considered meritorious. Table 3 further demonstrates that factor loadings are considered acceptable when they exceed 0.37. The dataset can be utilised with a data reduction approach if the p-value from Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is less than the specified significance level (.01). Next, the descriptive statistics and the scales' reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficients) were examined in the investigation. These numbers are illustrated in Table 3.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are employed in the social sciences to provide a concise summary of the most significant features of a dataset, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and variability (range, standard deviation). Table 5 below shows the results of the investigation of the scales' reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficients) and the descriptive statistics.

Table 5. *Reliability and descriptive statistics of scales used in this study*

Variable	Cronbach	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Acceptance	0.77	2.92	0.78	-0.10	-0.65
2. Resilience	0.69	4.04	0.70	-0.80	1.74
3. Denial	0.68	2.34	0.78	0.71	-0.01
4. Resignation	0.63	4.06	0.71	-0.40	-0.63
5. Affective Commitment	0.69	2.84	0.82	-0.05	-0.45
6. Normative Commitment	0.66	3.04	0.76	0.28	-0.55
7. Continuous Commitment	0.80	3.12	1.01	-0.01	-0.78
8. Intentions to quit	0.88	3.21	1.24	-0.31	-1.08

Looking at Table , most of the scales are just below or above the crucial number for Cronbach alphas of 0.70, which shows that they are reliable. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered good, 0.80 or higher is preferred, and 0.90 or higher is optimal. Taber (2017) stated that Cronbach alphas between 0.67 and 0.87, such as those in this study, are considered fair.

It can be beneficial to examine what Cronbach's alpha becomes when a certain item is deleted. If deleting an item significantly increases Cronbach's alpha, the item may not belong in the measure.

In this instance, two items have been eliminated from the ongoing organisational commitment scale. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that obtaining a high Alpha value can be difficult when the scale contains fewer than 10 items. In such instances, an Alpha value of 0.5 or higher is considered acceptable (Pallant, 2020). In this case, values below 0.5 should be of concern; however, this is not the case in this investigation. Next, correlation analysis will be examined. Typically, a skewness value between -1 and +1 and a kurtosis value between -2 and +2 are regarded as normal. Conversely, values that fall outside of these parameters exhibit a significant degree of non-normality.

Correlational analysis.

One of the objectives was the determine the relationships between the dimensions of the variables (glass ceiling, organisational commitment and intentions to quit) considered in this study. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6 *Correlational analysis*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Acceptance							
2. Resilience	0.07						
3. Denial	0.38**	0.17					
4. Resignation	0.02	0.32**	0.09				
5. Affective Commitment	0.14	0.15	0.00	0.07			
6. Normative Commitment	-0.19*	-0.44**	-0.16	-0.38**	-0.34**		
7. Continuous Commitment	0.23*	0.39**	0.11	0.27**	0.42**	-0.72**	
8. Intentions to quit	0.21*	0.03	0.07	0.13	-0.44**	0.23*	-0.27**

Acceptance showed strong positive associations with Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Intentions to Quit, and Denial. However, Acceptance demonstrated a strong negative relationship with Normative Commitment.

Resilience was positively and strongly related to Denial, Affective Commitment, Resignation, and Continuance Commitment. In contrast, Resilience exhibited a strong negative association with Normative Commitment.

Denial exhibited a positive correlation with Continuance Commitment, but a significant negative correlation with Normative Commitment. In the same vein, the intention to resign was significantly and positively correlated with Continuance Commitment.

Additionally, a strong and positive correlation was observed between Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment. Normative Commitment was significantly and positively correlated with intentions to cease, while Affective Commitment exhibited a significant negative correlation with intentions to quit. Lastly, a substantial inverse relationship was observed between Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment.

Regression analysis

Another objective of the study was to examine the extent to which the glass dimensions account for variance in the different components of organisational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) as well as intentions to quit. This analysis was conducted using the SPSS programme, and the results are presented in Table 7 below

Table 7: Regression analysis

Variable	Affective commitment	Normative commitment	Continuous commitment	Intentions to Quit
1. Acceptance	0.163	-0.164	0.218*	0.220
2. Resilience	0.150	-0.340**	0.334**	-0.027
3. Denial	-0.089	-0.009	-0.049	-0.026
4. Resignation	0.023	-0.268*	0.159	0.142
R	0.218	0.533	0.466	0.25
R ²	0.047	0.284	0.217	0.063
Adjusted R ²	0.014	0.259	0.189	0.030
F ²				

The regression analysis investigated the degree to which the dimensions of the glass ceiling (Resilience, Acceptance, Resignation and Denial) account for variation in the components of

Organisational commitment (Affective, Continuance and Normative) and Intentions to Quit. The results in Table 6 show that the glass ceiling dimensions accounted for 5% of the variance in Affective Commitment ($R^2 = 0.047$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.014$), 28% of the variance in Normative Commitment ($R^2 = 0.284$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.259$), 22% of the variance in Continuance Commitment ($R^2 = 0.217$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.189$), and 6% of the variance in Intentions to Quit ($R^2 = 0.063$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.030$).

None of the glass ceiling dimensions were statistically significant predictors of Affective Commitment and Intentions to Quit, which means they didn't have a direct effect on these outcomes. Conversely, in the context of Normative Commitment, Acceptance ($\beta = -0.164$) and Resilience ($\beta = -0.340$, $p < 0.01$) emerged as significant predictors, indicating that elevated levels of these glass ceiling dimensions correlate with diminished normative commitment.

Acceptance ($\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.05$) and Resilience ($\beta = 0.334$, $p < 0.01$) were significant positive predictors of Continuance Commitment. This indicates that employees who sense greater acceptance or demonstrate resilience are more inclined to stay with the organisation due to the perceived costs associated with departure. Resignation and Denial did not significantly predict Continuance Commitment.

Denial and Resignation had less predictive power than Resilience and Acceptance overall across the organisational commitment dimensions. These results suggest that different types of commitment are influenced by distinct factors that create a glass ceiling.

Mediation analysis

The final objective of this study was to ascertain whether the dimensions of organisational commitment serve as mediators in the relationship between the dimensions of glass ceilings and intentions to quit. This analysis utilised the SPSS program, and the results are displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Mediation (direct) effects of organisational commitment dimensions in the relationship between dimensions of the glass-ceiling (IV) and intentions to quit (DV)

Predictor: Acceptance	Estimate	SE	Bootstrapping CI	
Mediators			Upper	Lower
1. Affective commitment ($p=.14$)	-0.108	0.072	-0.249	0.034
2. Normative commitment ($p=.08$)	-0.086	0.048	-0.180	0.009
3. Continuous commitment ($p=.04$)	-0.118	0.057	-0.229	-0.008
Predictor: Resilience	Estimate	SE	Bootstrapping CI	
Mediators			Upper	Lower
1. Affective commitment ($p=.11$)	-0.125	0.078	-0.278	0.027
2. Normative commitment ($p=.01$)	-0.232	0.089	-0.407	-0.058
3. Continuous commitment ($p=.01$)	-0.231	0.083	-0.394	-0.068
Predictor: Denial	Estimate	SE	Bootstrapping CI	
Mediators			Upper	Lower
1. Affective commitment ($p=.99$)	-0.899	0.065	-0.129	0.127
2. Normative commitment ($p=.15$)	-0.060	0.042	-0.142	0.022
3. Continuous commitment ($p=.28$)	-0.048	0.044	-0.133	0.038
Predictor: Resignation	Estimate	SE	Bootstrapping CI	
Mediators			Upper	Lower
1. Affective commitment ($p=.48$)	-0.052	0.074	-0.196	0.092
2. Normative commitment ($p=.01$)	-0.216	0.079	-0.370	-0.061
3. Continuous commitment ($p=.02$)	-0.151	0.065	-0.279	-0.023

Table 8 illustrates how organisational commitment (continuance ,affective, and normative,) influences the relationship between glass ceiling dimensions (acceptance, resilience, denial, and resignation) and employees' intentions to quit. The meaning of these results depends on the significance levels (p -values), the size and direction of the estimates, and the confidence intervals (CIs). The mediation effect is confirmed when the confidence interval excludes zero, which suggests a statistically significant indirect effect.

1. Acceptance as Predictor

The analysis shows that acceptance as a predictor has mixed results. There are negative relationships between affective commitment (Estimate = -0.108, $p = .14$) and normative commitment (Estimate = -0.086, $p = .08$), but their confidence intervals cross zero (CI = -0.249 to 0.034 and -0.180 to 0.009, respectively), which means that they don't significantly mediate the relationship between acceptance and intentions to quit. However, continuous commitment shows a statistically significant mediating role (Estimate = -0.118, $p = .04$), with a CI of -0.229 to -0.008. Because the CI doesn't include zero, this means that continuous commitment helps explain how perceptions of acceptance affect employees' plans to leave.

2. Resilience as a predictor

Resilience exhibits more robust and consistent mediating effects. Affective commitment (Estimate = -0.125, $p = .11$) trends in the anticipated negative direction but lacks significance, as its confidence interval (-0.278 to 0.027) encompasses zero. On the other hand, normative commitment (Estimate = -0.232, $p = .01$; CI = -0.407 to -0.058) and continuous commitment (Estimate = -0.231, $p = .01$; CI = -0.394 to -0.068) both have a big effect on the relationship. This implies that increased resilience indirectly diminishes intentions to resign by enhancing employees' sense of obligation (normative) and their perceived costs of departure (continuance).

3. Denial as a predictor

None of the organisational commitment dimensions show significant mediation when denial is viewed as the predictor. Affective commitment (Estimate = -0.899, $p = .99$; CI = -0.129 to 0.127) unequivocally indicates no significant effect, given the elevated p -value and the confidence interval encompassing zero. In the same way, normative commitment (Estimate = -0.060, $p = .15$; CI = -0.142 to 0.022) and continuous commitment (Estimate = -0.048, $p = .28$; CI = -0.133 to 0.038) are not significant. This shows that the mechanisms of organisational commitment have no effect on denial as a glass-ceiling perception that influences intentions to quit.

4. Resignation as a predictor

For resignation, the pattern mirrors that of resilience, yielding substantial indirect effects. Affective commitment (Estimate = -0.052, $p = .48$; CI = -0.196 to 0.092) does not demonstrate mediation. But both normative commitment (Estimate = -0.216, $p = .01$; CI = -0.370 to -0.061) and continuous commitment (Estimate = -0.151, $p = .02$; CI = -0.279 to -0.023) are important

mediators. This suggests that when employees take a resignation stance regarding the glass ceiling, their intentions to resign are partially influenced by their perceived moral obligation to remain with the organisation and their assessment of the costs related to departure.

The results show that not all aspects of organisational commitment function as mediators equally. Affective commitment consistently fails to exhibit significant mediation across all predictors, indicating that employees' emotional attachment to the organisation does not significantly influence the relationship between perceptions of the glass ceiling and intention to quit. Instead, normative and continuous commitment are the more important mechanisms. More specifically:

Continuous commitment mediates acceptance and resignation, indicating that employees' decisions to remain or depart are influenced by cost–benefit analyses regarding the glass ceiling. Normative commitment acts as a buffer between resilience and resignation, demonstrating that feelings of duty or loyalty to the organisation are especially important when people consider quitting because they feel they cannot advance. Denial does not cause any significant mediation, which means that when employees reject or deny the existence of the glass ceiling, their organisational commitment does not have a big effect on their intentions to leave.

In conclusion, these findings indicate that perceptions of the glass ceiling have an indirect impact on the intention to quit, but only through specific aspects of organisational commitment. In this case, normative and continuous commitment are the most important paths, while affective commitment appears to be less important. This suggests that organisations need to make employees feel more obligated and invested in the company as a way to reduce the risk of turnover in places where people perceive a glass ceiling.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this research was to evaluate the influence of the glass ceiling on the organisational commitment and intention to resign of non-academic female employees at public universities in South Africa. The relationships between organisational commitment, intention to resign, and glass ceiling perceptions were examined through the analysis of data collected from 120 respondents.

The study also explored the predictive and mediating effects of organisational commitment between the glass ceiling and intention to quit. The findings revealed that perceptions of a glass ceiling significantly influenced organisational commitment, particularly normative and continuance commitment, while their direct effect on the intention to quit was limited. Instead, organisational commitment served as a crucial mechanism through which the glass ceiling indirectly influenced turnover intentions. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the complex role commitment plays in translating perceptions of gender barriers into quitting behaviours, confirming the achievement of the study's primary objective. (Forootan Eghlidi & Karimi, 2020:32; Louw, 2023:64; Satardien, 2014:102-104).

The **first secondary objective** was to evaluate the relationship between the glass ceiling and organisational commitment among non-academic female employees in South African public universities. The results confirmed significant correlations between the four glass ceiling dimensions (acceptance, resilience, resignation, denial) and organisational commitment. Specifically, resilience and acceptance were positively associated with continuance commitment but negatively associated with normative commitment. These results align with previous findings that perceptions of workplace barriers influence the type and quality of commitment employees develop toward their organisations (Babic & Hansez, 2021:2; Reiners, 2024).

The **second secondary objective** was to investigate the relationship between the glass ceiling and the intention to quit. The indicated that resilience and resignation were the only statistically significant predictors of intention to quit. This means that employees who exhibit resilience or feel resigned after encountering the glass ceiling are more likely to consider leaving the company.

Acceptance also showed a positive relationship with intention to quit. Denial did not show a significant relationship with intention to quit, indicating that the level of denial experienced by employees did not statistically predict their likelihood of leaving their job. In other words, whether an employee acknowledged or dismissed potential problems in their work environment didn't influence whether they were considering quitting. These results support previous studies which established that the glass ceiling has an influence on the turnover intention of employees. (Hidayah & Fuad 2019:79; Siwela and Van der Bank, (2021:11)

The **third secondary objective** was to establish the relationship between organisational commitment and intention to quit. The results confirmed significant associations between these variables. Affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intentions, while normative commitment was unexpectedly positively associated with turnover intentions, suggesting that obligation-based commitment may create frustration leading to withdrawal. quality and type of commitment influence employee retention and quitting behaviour (Fazio *et al.*, 2017:520; Meyer & Allen, 1997:12; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015:436).

The **fourth secondary objective** was to determine whether the glass ceiling serves as a significant predictor of organisational commitment dimensions and intention to quit. The regression results indicated that the glass ceiling significantly predicted normative and continuance commitment but did not directly predict intention to quit. Organisational commitment dimensions, on the other hand, emerged as stronger predictors of turnover intentions. These findings highlight that perceptions of a glass ceiling shape commitment patterns, which in turn influence employee retention.

The **fifth secondary objective** was to determine the mediating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between the glass ceiling and intention to quit. Mediation analysis confirmed that normative and continuance commitment mediated the relationships between acceptance, resilience, and resignation with turnover intentions. No mediation effects were observed in relation to denial. This suggests that employees' intentions to quit are not directly triggered by perceptions of barriers, but rather through their influence on the type of organisational commitment employees hold.

The **sixth secondary objective** was to determine the moderating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between the glass ceiling and intention to quit. This objective was **not achieved**, as a moderation analysis was not conducted in the study. The absence of testing moderation limits the extent to which interaction effects between glass ceiling perceptions and commitment could be explained in relation to turnover intentions.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The findings of this study have several important implications for managers and human resource practitioners within South African public universities:

The study highlights that the glass ceiling, particularly dimensions such as resignation and resilience, significantly influences both organisational commitment and the intention to quit. Managers should critically assess institutional policies, practices, and cultures that may implicitly hinder the upward mobility of non-academic female employees. Removing these barriers is not only a matter of equity but also essential for talent retention and organisational stability (Shongwe, 2019:48).

Given the association between resilience and normative and continuance commitment, it is vital for leadership to cultivate a work environment that promotes personal growth, career development, and psychological safety. Empowering female employees by providing mentorship, leadership training, and fair promotion opportunities can enhance their sense of belonging and long-term commitment (Ngobeni, Swarts & Lessing, 2024:161)

Since resignation and resilience are significant predictors of the intention to quit, managers must proactively engage employees who demonstrate high levels of frustration or demotivation linked to perceived career stagnation. Regular career progression reviews, open communication channels, and supportive performance feedback can help mitigate resignation and turnover intentions (Shongwe, 2019:60).

To counteract the denial and acceptance of the glass ceiling, university management must implement robust policies that promote gender equity and diversity. These should include measurable outcomes, transparent recruitment and promotion procedures, and targeted interventions to ensure female representation at all organisational levels (Chanda and Ngulube, 2024:287).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

For universities to effectively address the impact of the glass ceiling on organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees in South African public universities, University management should develop or implement policies and guidelines that facilitate the implementation of transparent promotion and career advancement pathways. Many women feel stagnated in their roles due to a lack of visibility into how career progression works, especially for non-academic staff. Clearly defined and communicated criteria for promotions, coupled with merit-based evaluations, will enhance perceptions of fairness, leading to increased commitment and decreased turnover.

University management should establish a Task team or committee that will help universities investigate Gender Equity and Inclusion. Such a structure must audit institutional practices, policies, and workplace cultures that may unintentionally disadvantage women and minority groups. By identifying and addressing systemic barriers, universities can build trust and demonstrate a genuine commitment to gender equality. This task team would be responsible for developing action plans, monitoring progress, and recommending corrective measures when necessary.

Training programs focused on diversity, anti-discrimination, and unconscious bias should also be made mandatory for all staff members . These initiatives will help reshape organisational culture and eliminate subtle yet pervasive forms of gender bias. Managers and supervisors must be equipped to recognize and challenge discriminatory practices, ensuring fair treatment for all staff members.

Finally, management should conduct anonymous exit interviews and regular organisational climate surveys to gather honest feedback from staff. This feedback can help identify underlying reasons behind resignations and gauge perceptions of equity, inclusion, and opportunity. Timely responses to such feedback can prevent further attrition and improve the overall employee experience.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

While conducting the study, the researcher encountered several difficulties. This study has some limitations, just like any other empirical study (Burns & Veeck, 2020:489 490). First, the cross-sectional design limits the capacity to draw conclusions about causality. For example, despite the existence of glass ceiling barriers, female employees' low organisational commitment may still lead to higher intentions to leave. It is reasonable to assume that the causal direction suggested in the study's conceptual framework is more plausible given the established evidence linking glass ceiling factors to decreased organisational commitment (Cohen et al., 2011:219).

Secondly, the study's data is derived from a singular data source, self-administered questionnaires, which may have introduced common method bias. The systematic error variance linked to measuring a study's constructs using a single method is known as "common method bias" (Kock et al., 2021:1).

Based on the individual characteristics of the respondents, the self-administered questionnaire approach may potentially result in respondent-related method bias in the study. For example, different personality factors could influence stylistic reactions (Baumgartner and Steenkamp 2001:145).

Moreover, systematic error variations may also result from measurement-related procedure bias. Given that most respondents in South Africa may not speak English as their first language, the scales' exclusive English presentation might lead to differences in how the items are interpreted. Every effort was made to reduce additional biases associated with measurement. Shorter scales were used in the study to alleviate the fatigue that long questionnaires can sometimes cause (Kock et al., 2021:3).

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the glass ceiling impacts organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees at South African public universities. The findings showed that perceptions of the glass ceiling, specifically acceptance, resilience, denial, and resignation, are significantly linked to different forms of commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) and employees' likelihood of considering leaving their institutions. Resilience and resignation were significant predictors of intention to quit, indicating that women who either push through barriers or feel resigned to them are more likely to consider leaving.

Overall, the results suggest that the glass ceiling can weaken positive forms of commitment, such as affective and normative commitment, while reinforcing continuance commitment, which reflects staying in due to necessity rather than choice. The study confirms that organisational commitment can partly explain how experiences of the glass ceiling translate into turnover intentions, showing how deeply invisible barriers shape retention. These insights emphasise the need for universities to address structural obstacles, ensure fair career progression, and foster an inclusive culture to strengthen genuine commitment and reduce avoidable

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CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONCLUSION

3.1.1 Conclusions based on theoretical findings

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between the glass ceiling, intention to quit in the workplace, and commitment to the organisation, particularly in settings where gender and racial disparities persist.

The glass ceiling comprises subtle yet enduring obstacles, reinforced by both conscious and unconscious discriminatory behaviours and attitudes, that impede the advancement of women and minorities to senior management roles. (Babic & Hansez, 2021:2; Reiners, 2024). This "glass" ceiling is often hidden in unwritten, unofficial rules, and it is a "ceiling" because it stops people from moving up even if they are qualified (Nazmul et al., 2016:2). The glass ceiling is a type of discrimination that happens at work, but it has its own unique traits that make it different from other types of discrimination (Kagan, 2024). Kulik and Rae (2019) delineate four definitive criteria:

- (1) Unexplained Discrimination: career disparities that are not explicable by pertinent job factors, such as education, experience, or performance;
- (2) Hierarchical Effect barriers intensify at higher organisational levels;
- (3) Blocked Upward Mobility reduced access to senior roles and promotion opportunities; and
- (4) Cumulative Growth of Inequality: career gaps between groups widen over time. These criteria provide a comprehensive framework for identifying and analysing the scope and persistence of the glass ceiling (Van Veelen & Derks, 2022).

The glass ceiling significantly influences workplace dynamics and employee behaviour. Employees encountering these barriers often experience reduced job satisfaction, demotivation, and frustration stemming from perceived unfairness (Imadoğlu et al., 2020:88). In some cases, however, such challenges foster resilience and drive, motivating individuals to outperform expectations (Li & Ding, 2022). Women's ideas on the glass ceiling, such as denial, resilience, resignation, and acceptance, shape their reactions to obstacles, which in turn impact their ambition, engagement, and long-term career advancement. (Mukherjee, 2023:3-6; Khalid & Aftab, 2023:4-5).

The emotional attachment and loyalty that employees experience towards their organisation are referred to as organisational commitment (Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021:2; Ali Shurbagi, 2014:128). It is widely accepted as a factor that affects performance, satisfaction, and retention. Meyer and Allen's three-component model defines commitment as follows: Continuance Commitment, staying due to accumulated investments and perceived costs of leaving; Affective Commitment, remaining because of emotional alignment with organisational goals; and Normative Commitment, staying out of moral obligation or perceived duty (Rachidi & Lephoto, 2023:332-333). High commitment correlates with greater job performance, satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Belias et al., 2015; Baba Dita & Thrun, 2024:5), while low commitment increases turnover intentions and susceptibility to burnout (Al Balushi et al., 2022:125-126).

The intention to quit defined as a deliberate and conscious decision by an employee to voluntarily abandon their position (Appollis, 2010:33; Lazzari, Alvarez & Ruggieri, 2022:281) is one of the most reliable predictors of actual turnover. Factors such as job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and perceived inequities increase this intention, which can result in decreased performance, reduced organisational citizenship behaviour, and increased counterproductive behaviour (Alexander, 2016; Fan et al., 2023). High turnover intentions are also associated with increased burnout risk (Felicia et al., 2023).

The literature reveals strong interrelationships between the three study variables. Glass ceiling perceptions weaken organisational commitment by reducing employees' sense of belonging and fairness, particularly among women working in male-dominated environments (Khuong & Chi, 2017:260; Korabik & Rosi, 1991). Lower commitment, in turn, correlates with higher turnover intentions (Ramakhula-Mabona, 2014; Ahmad, 2018). Moreover, the glass ceiling can directly fuel turnover intentions by diminishing career satisfaction and limiting opportunities for advancement (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2019; Mensah et al., 2014). These patterns create a reinforcing cycle where inequitable organisational structures lead to reduced commitment and increased exit intentions, resulting in the loss of skilled talent.

Breaking this cycle requires targeted organisational strategies. The literature highlights the importance of inclusive cultures, transparent promotion criteria, equitable access to career development resources, and active diversity and inclusion policies (Riyadh *et al.*, 2014). Mentorship programmes, leadership training for underrepresented groups, and strong, ethical leadership are also essential to dismantling structural barriers. Strengthening organisational

commitment by aligning organisational and employee values, recognising contributions, and fostering supportive environments can reduce turnover intentions (Ngobeni et al., 2024:161).

Theoretical evidence positions the glass ceiling as a critical organisational challenge with deep implications for commitment and retention. Its persistence undermines fairness, erodes loyalty, and fuels intentions to quit, making it both a human rights concern and a strategic business risk. Organisations that address these barriers stand to benefit from greater workforce stability, enhanced employee engagement, and improved diversity in leadership outcomes that contribute to long-term organisational resilience and competitive advantage (Tiwari et al., 2019; Watanabe & Kwarteng, 2024:12).

3.1.2 Conclusions Based on Empirical Findings

This study primarily aimed to investigate the correlation between the glass ceiling, organisational commitment, and turnover intention among non-academic female staff at public institutions in South Africa. Data were gathered from 120 respondents and evaluated to investigate direct correlations among the research constructs, as well as the mediating effect of organisational commitment on the relationship between the glass ceiling and the intention to quit. The findings indicated that the four dimensions of the glass ceiling acceptance, resilience, denial, and resignation accounted for differing levels of variance in affective, normative, and continuance commitment, as well as in the intention to quit, although not all dimensions were significant predictors.

Assessment of the relationship between organisational commitment and the dimensions of the glass ceiling was the initial objective of the study. As per the findings, continuance commitment was positively correlated with resignation and denial, while normative commitment was negatively correlated. This suggests that employees who either feel resigned to the glass ceiling or deny its existence may remain in the organisation out of necessity rather than loyalty, consistent with earlier research indicating that perceptions of a glass ceiling lower affective and normative commitment but can increase continuance commitment (Paul et al., 2019). Acceptance and resilience also showed positive associations with continuance commitment, reflecting that awareness of and coping with barriers may still lead to a sense of being “trapped” in the organisation as a result of a scarcity of alternatives

The second objective was to ascertain the correlation between intention to quit and organisational commitment. The results indicate that the intention to cease was negatively

correlated with affective and continuance commitment, which is consistent with previous research (Williams & Hazer, 1986; Cohen, 2000; Elangovan, 2001; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001; Gbadamosi et al., 2007; Felfe et al., 2008). Interestingly, normative commitment displayed a positive association with intention to quit, suggesting that when employees feel obligated to stay without genuine emotional attachment, they may experience internal conflict, increasing their desire to leave (Wiener, 1982; Jaros, 1997).

The third objective was to examine the correlation between the intention to quit and the glass ceiling. Resilience and resignation emerged as significant predictors of intention to quit, with employees who display resilience or resignation being more likely to consider leaving the organisation. This aligns with evidence that resilience plays a significant role in influencing turnover intentions (Hidayah & Fuad, 2019). Acceptance also showed a weaker positive relationship with intention to quit, while denial demonstrated no significant relationship (Monyaki et al., 2022).

The fourth objective was to determine the mediating role of organisational commitment in the relationship between the glass ceiling and intention to quit. Continuance commitment was found to mediate the relationship between acceptance and intention to quit, suggesting that employees who acknowledge the glass ceiling may remain if they perceive high costs associated with leaving (Setsena et al., 2021). Both normative and continuance commitment mediated the relationships between resilience and resignation and intention to quit. For resilience, this implies that employees may remain out of obligation or necessity but may also consider leaving if advancement barriers persist (Yusuf, 2023). For resignation, mediation suggests that employees who have abandoned aspirations for advancement may remain until circumstances change or better opportunities arise (Shere, 2020). No mediating role was found for organisational commitment in the relationship between denial and intention to quit, indicating that employees who do not recognise the glass ceiling may base their turnover decisions on factors unrelated to gender-based career barriers (Downes et al., 2014).

Overall, the empirical findings highlight that perceptions of a glass ceiling influence the type and strength of organisational commitment among non-academic female employees in South African public universities and, consequently, their turnover intentions. Addressing structural barriers to advancement could foster affective and normative commitment, while reducing reliance on continuance commitment, thereby lowering intentions to quit.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

This research project, like other empirical investigations, has limitations. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the capacity to make causal inferences from its results (Louw, 2023:99).

The conclusions of this research are predicated on a singular data source, specifically a self-administered questionnaire, that may lead to common method bias. Common method bias is the systematic error variance that results from the use of a single technique to evaluate the constructs of a study (Kock et al., 2021:1). This research is susceptible to common method bias, as the self-administered questionnaire data collection may expose the study to respondent-related method bias, which is a result of the unique characteristics of the respondents. Baumgartner and Steenkamp (2001:145) found that specific personality traits may induce responses that are unique to everyone.

The systematic error variances may be influenced by measurement-related method bias. Although English is not the predominant language of many respondents in South Africa, the scale's exclusive provision in English may lead to discrepancies in the interpretation of scale items. The results of this investigation may not accurately represent the perspectives of the general populace. The research population was selected using non-probability sampling, which led to sampling bias that impeded the equal statistical likelihood of selection for all population members (Bryman et al., 2014:171). It is important to exercise caution when extrapolating the study's findings, as the research sample may not accurately reflect the population (Cohen et al., 2011:237).

Finally, the low response rate observed in this study indicates a possible occurrence of non-response bias. Researchers frequently invite university staff to participate in research questionnaires due to their close proximity, which can potentially lead to survey fatigue. Despite the expectation of a low response rate, measures were implemented to mitigate this by broadening the study population. However, the decreased participation restricts the generalizability of the findings and prompts an inquiry into whether the results would have been consistent had the entire sample completed the survey (Louw, 2023, p. 99).

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

The impact of the glass ceiling on the organisational commitment and intention to quit of non-academic female employees demands immediate strategic and practical interventions. Higher education institutions need an inclusive, equitable, and supportive workforce to support institutional effectiveness and sustainability (Aboramadan et al., 2020b:628).

Clear Promotion and Career Development Guidelines: University management should develop and implement clear policies that define transparent career progression and promotion pathways, particularly for non-academic staff. Due to a lack of awareness regarding career advancement procedures, many women experience stagnation. When properly communicated, clearly stated merit-based promotion criteria will improve perceptions of fairness, boost organisational commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Louw, 2023:99).

Creating Gender Equity and Inclusion Task Teams: Organisations should set up specialised task forces or committees to examine workplace cultures, policies, and practices to find structural obstacles that disadvantage women and minority groups. To demonstrate a sincere commitment to gender equity and foster institutional trust, these teams must develop action plans, track progress, and propose remedial actions (Louw, 2023:99).

All employees are required to participate in mandatory training programs on diversity, anti-discrimination, and unconscious bias. These programs help eradicate subtle gender biases and change organisational culture. To ensure fair treatment for all workers, managers and supervisors must be able to recognise and confront discriminatory practices (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001:145; Kock et al., 2021:1).

Organisational Climate Surveys and Anonymous Exit Interviews: To get candid input on views of opportunity, inclusion, and equity, management should regularly administer organisational climate surveys and conduct anonymous exit interviews. Such input can pinpoint the root causes of resignations and direct prompt actions to improve employee retention and satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2011:237).

Fostering Trust via Equitable Organisational Practices: It's critical to foster trust between employees and management. Policies that promote trust, such as job security, open performance reviews, and opportunities for professional growth, should be given top priority by

leaders. Employee trust and commitment are increased by such policies, which promote a culture of justice and respect (Searle et al., 2011:182; Chughtai & Buckley, 2013:414).

Commitment of Leadership to Gender Equality and Ethical Behaviour: Leadership must demonstrate a strong commitment to both gender equality and ethical behaviour. Integrating equity into the organisation's basic principles and day-to-day activities empowers female employees and promotes inclusivity. These initiatives will be bolstered by leadership development programs that emphasize gender sensitivity and inclusive leadership (Liden et al., 2014:1447; Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001:145).

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ANNEXURES

Annexures A: Questionnaire

Demographic Information:

1. Gender:

Male	
Female	
Non-binary/Other	

2. Age:

Under 18	
18-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55-65 or above	

3. Education Level:

High School or below	
Some College	
Bachelor's Degree	
Master's Degree	
Doctoral Degree	
Other (please specify)	

4. Ethnicity/Race:

African	
White	
Coloured	
Indian	
Asian	
Other (please specify)	

5. Employment Status:

Employed full-time (Permanent)	
Fixed-Term Appointment (>/=2 years)	
Temporary Appointment (1 year or less)	
Other (please specify)	

Perceptions of the Glass Ceiling and it's consequences

	Stereotype	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Uncertain	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree
1	Networking is a smart way for women to increase the chances of career success.	1	2	3	4	5

2	A supportive spouse/partner or close friend makes it easier for a woman to. achieve success in her career.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Women are capable of making critical leadership decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Women are more likely to be hurt than men when they take big risks necessary for corporate success.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Women commonly reject career advancement as they are keener to maintain a role raising children	1	2	3	4	5
6	Women and men have to overcome the same problems at the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
	Deceptive					
7	Women are just as ambitious in their careers as men.	1	2	3	4	5
8	If women achieve promotions, they might be accused of offering sexual favours.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Jealousy from co-workers prevents women from seeking promotions.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Women leaders suffer more emotional pain than men when there is a crisis within their teams.	1	2	3	4	5

11	Daughters of successful mothers are inspired to overcome sexist hurdles.	1	2	3	4	5
	Emotion					
12	Women face no barriers to promotions in most organisations.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Talented women are able to overcome sexist discrimination.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Motherhood is more important to most women than career development.	1	2	3	4	5
	Equality					
15	Women have reached the top in all areas of business and politics.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Women have the same desire for power as men do.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Even women with many skills and qualifications fail to be recognised for promotions	1	2	3	4	5
	Balanced					
18	Smart women avoid careers that involve intense competition with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
19	Women prefer a balance life more than gaining highly paid careers.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Women leaders are seldom given full credit for their successes.	1	2	3	4	5
	Supportive					
21	Women who have a strong commitment to their careers can go right to the top	1	2	3	4	5
22	Women are less concerned about promotions than men are.	1	2	3	4	5

23	The support of a mentor greatly increases the success of a woman in any organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
	Open-minded					
24	Women in senior positions face frequent putdowns of being too soft or too hard.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Women's nurturing skills help them to be successful leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Women face no barriers to promotions in most organisations.	1	2	3	4	5
	Organisational commitment					
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
2	It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation right now.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I would feel guilty if I leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
11	One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5

12	My organisation deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5
13	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
17	If I had not already put so much of myself into this organisation, I might consider working elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I owe a great deal to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
	Intentions to quit					
1	I feel that I could leave this job.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am actively looking for other jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
3	If I was completely free to choose, I would leave this job.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am thinking of leaving this job	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire! Your insights are valuable in understanding and addressing issues related to the glass ceiling.

Annexures B: Consent Letter



CONSENT LETTER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Dear Participant

I am conducting study on Assessing the impact of the “glass ceiling” on Organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees within South African Public Universities. An electronic questionnaire of structured questions with direction on how to answer will be used as information collection tool, please familiarize yourself with the content of the consent document and provide a signature if you agree with the contents.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time.

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

Your data from which may include any personal identifying information (for example, demographics) will be handled in line with the rules formulated in the **Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013)**. The following is important to note in line with the Act:

- You are also under no obligation to complete personal information (i.e., demographics).
- There will be no negative consequences to you if you decide not to provide personal information (i.e., demographics).
- You can request access to your personal details at any time to change the information.
- The booklets and data will be securely stored for a period of five years at the University when collected. Only the student and her supervisor will have access to the data, and it will not cross the borders of South Africa.

Annexures C: Ethics Approval Letter Of Study



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-484
Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

22 August 2024

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on, 22/08/2024 the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Assessing the impact of the "glass ceiling" on organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees within South African Public Universities.

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof L.T.B. Jackson

Student: L.S. Masango (22030069)

N	W	U	-	0	0	7	4	0	-	0	0	-	A	4
Institution			Study Number						Year		Status			

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type:

Commencement date: 22/08/2024

Risk: Minimal

Expiry date: 22/08/2025

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- None.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
 - The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
 - Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
 - The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Annexures D: Research Data Gatekeeper Committee Approval Letter



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Support Department
Tel: 061210344
Email: Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

Economic and Management Sciences
Research Ethics Committee (EMS-
REC) on behalf of Research Data
Gatekeeper Committee (RDGC)

NWU RDGC PERMISSION GRANTED LETTER

Based on the documentation provided by the researcher specified below, on 8 October 2024 Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC), on behalf of the North-West University (NWU) Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) hereby grants permission for the specific project (as indicated below) to be conducted at the NWU:

<u>Project title:</u> Assessing the impact of the "glass ceiling" on organizational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees within South African Public Universities. <u>Project leader:</u> Mr Lungile Masango <u>Researcher/Project Team:</u> Prof Leon Jackson and Prof Lungile Ntsizwana <u>Ethics reference no :</u> NWU-00740-24-A4 (North-West University) <u>NWU EMS-REC reference no:</u> NWU-00740-24-A4 <u>Specific Conditions:</u> • None. <u>Approval date:</u> 8 October 2024 <u>Expiry date:</u> 8 October 2025

General Conditions of Approval:

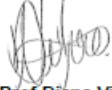
- The NWU-RDGC and EMS-REC will not take the responsibility to recruit research participants or to gather data on behalf of the researcher. This committee can therefore not guarantee the participation of our relevant stakeholders.
- Any changes to the research protocol within the permission period (for a maximum of 1 year) must be communicated to the EMS-REC and NWU-RDGC. Failure to do so will lead to withdrawal of the permission.

- The EMS-REC and NWU-RDGC should be provided with a report or document in which the results of said project are disseminated.

Please note that under no circumstances will any personal information of possible research subjects be provided to the researcher by the EMS-REC and NWU-RDGC. The NWU complies with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI). For an application to access such information please contact Ms Annamari De Kock (018 285 2771) for the relevant enquiry form or more information on how the NWU complies with PAIA and POPI.

The EMS-REC and NWU-RDGC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

Annexures E: Language editor's letter



Dynamic Language &
Translation Specialists

Antoinette Bisschoff
71 Esselen Street,
Potchefstroom
Tel: 018 293 3046
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Language@dlts.co.za
CC No: 1995/017794/23

Sunday, 05 October 2025

To whom it may concern

Re: Confirmation of language edit, typography and technical precision

The MBA dissertation "Assessing the impact of the "glass ceiling" on Organisational commitment and intention to quit among non-academic female employees in South African Public Universities" by L.S Masango (22030069) was edited for language precision. Direct interview quotations from participants were spell-checked only.

Final, last-minute corrections remain the responsibility of the author.