DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

IDENTIFYING THE EXISTENCE OF THE GLASS CEILING AND EXAMINING THE IMPACT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE EXECUTIVES IN THE VIETNAMESE BANKING SECTOR

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IDENTIFYING THE EXISTENCE OF THE GLASS CEILING AND EXAMINING THE IMPACT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE EXECUTIVES IN THE VIETNAMESE BANKING SECTOR

By

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec New Zealand, the degree of Master of Business.

Candidate’s Declaration:

I confirm that:

- This thesis is my own work.
- The contribution of supervision and others to this thesis is consistent with the Unitec’s Regulations and Policies.
- The research for this thesis has been conducted in approval with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedure, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this thesis by the Unitec Ethics Committee.

The Research Ethics Committee Approval Number is: 2013-1043

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ABSTRACT

Glass ceiling refers to both visible and invisible barriers that stop women from advancing to the top positions. As the glass ceiling exists in most contexts, should it be assumed that the low participation of female executives in the boardrooms in the Vietnamese banking sector is the effect of glass ceiling? Are female executives fully aware of the multiple layers of the glass ceiling in their organizations? Do they choose to confront it, or are they happy with the current situations?

Therefore, an empirical research in the context of Vietnam is needed to provide more empirical findings to the literature. In addition, research should be conducted from various perspectives to have a more comprehensive understanding of the degree of the glass ceiling and its effect on leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. The literature review in the research puts the focus on the glass ceiling and its multiple layers, the differences in the leadership styles between male and female managers/leaders and the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness/organizational performance.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to conduct the research. The self-administered questionnaires were responded by sixty eight participants, who came from three of the largest banks in Vietnam. The interviews were carried out subsequently with the participation of ten interviewees in supervisory and middle managerial positions.

The results of the data analysis revealed that the glass ceiling effect did exist in the Vietnamese banking sector. The obstacles originated from various sources including social stereotypes, corporate practices, family-work conflict and women themselves. The findings also supported the differences in the leadership styles between male and female managers/leaders and showed greater preference for male executives in the Vietnamese banking sector. However, following the study’s results, there were benefits of removing the glass ceiling to organizational success. Finally, it was recommended that both banks and women themselves should take action in enhancing women’s career development.

More research is needed concerning the relationship between glass ceiling and organizational culture or differences between higher and lower level of leaders/managers in leadership/management styles and their effectiveness. These variables are important to provide a more thorough understanding about the glass ceiling issue and its effects.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Although we weren't able to remove that highest, hardest glass ceiling right now, thanks to you, it has started to break.

(Clinton, 2008 as cited in Iz Quotes, 2013)

1.1 Introduction
Chapter One gives a summary of the background of the research, then raises the main research question and sub-questions. Finally, it offers an overview of the chapters so readers are clear about how the study is organized and structured.

1.2 Background
Glass ceiling, a term which just appeared in literature in the 1980s (“Glass ceiling”, 2013) has attracted attention of a great number of scholars and researchers including Bell, McLaughlin & Sequeira (2002); Pichler, Simpson & Stroh (2008); Hoobler, Wayne & Lemmon (2009); Dimovski, Skerlavaj, & Mok Kim Man, (2010); Adams & Funk (2012) and Al-Manasra (2013).

The glass ceiling effect, which refers to the barriers that stop women from advancing to the top positions in their organizations (Smith and Crimes, 2007 as cited in Al-Manasra, 2013), is a form of gender discrimination (Bell et al., 2002). It is associated with human resources, one of the most important resources that brings the competitive advantage to organizations (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2010).

Research into the link between human resources (female executives) and strategic objectives in order to improve the performance of organizations is also part of strategic human resources management (SHRM) (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2010). Investigation of the multiple layers of glass ceiling that female executives are facing can help organizations to engage the right people for the right jobs and make full use of their unique qualities to support organizational performance (Hartel & Fujitomo, 2010).

However, the glass ceiling is a multifaceted phenomenon because it is the cause and effect of multiple factors. Sometimes the causes and effects are visible but sometimes they are hard to notice. However, results of various studies have confirmed the benefits of abolishing the glass ceiling in the organization to include the bringing in of a larger pool of talent to make the organization more
representative, ethical, productive, innovative and financially successful (Northouse, 2013).

Vietnam is a developing nation with an impressive social and economic development rate since its transition from planned to market economy in the late 1980s (World Bank, 2011). The country ranked 73rd among 136 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2013, which implies that gender equality has still not been achieved (Anjaiah, 2013). The features of the Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese culture perceptions toward gender equality have had substantial impact on understanding the barriers that Vietnamese women meet in their career progression.

The study focuses only on the Vietnamese banking sector, which consists of state-owned credit institutions, a number of joint stock commercial banks, joint venture banks, branches and representatives of foreign banks, wholly foreign-owned banks, finance and leasing companies and the hindrance factors to women’s career advancement in this sector. In the meantime, the Vietnamese banking sector is facing a lot of challenges. Nine banks had to restructure because of poor performance. The bad debts ratio in 2012 increased rapidly by 66% in comparison with that in 2011 while profit decreased by 40% (C.V, 2012). There are many reasons for this including the instability in the credit and interest rate policy of the Vietnamese government since 2011 (Quach, 2011).

Meanwhile, one fifth of banks in Vietnam are being run by female executives (TTVN, 2013), and a question has been raised “will the situation be better if there are more female executives in the banking sector?” That question has set the theme for this study which is to try to find the answer to the question: “does the glass ceiling exist, does it affect the participation of female executives in the boardroom in the banking sector in Vietnam, and is there any relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness?”

Some researchers such as Kristof (2009) blame the failure of banks around the world on male domination in banks. Therefore, leadership/management styles of the two genders were also assessed in order to gain an insight into the relationship between gender in the boardroom and leadership effectiveness because each style will have a different impact on the followers’ behaviours and lead to diversity in economic results (Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999).
1.3 Research overview
First, the researcher introduces the background of the study provides an overview about the glass ceiling, the Vietnamese banking sector and the researcher’s motivation to implement the research.

Secondly, a literature review on glass ceiling, the reasons for its existence, the relationship between gender and leadership/management styles and the connection between gender and leadership effectiveness was carried out to assess what has been already known about the topic. The mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative were adopted to collect data.

Thirdly, quantitative data was collected from three banks, which are among the largest bank in Vietnam, using a structured survey to examine the existence of the glass ceiling in the sector, classify the factors that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder and identifying the relationship between gender and leadership/management styles as well as between gender and leadership effectiveness. Qualitative data was gathered from ten interviews with those three banks’ supervisors and managers to verify and deepen the results from survey.

Finally, data were analysed, demonstrated in graphs and figures and discussed. Finally, a comparison between the results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis and findings from the literature were executed to see whether the findings of this study match, contradicts or broaden literature. Recommendations were made as a result of the findings.

1.4 The research questions
The research seeks to answer the main research question - **Does the glass ceiling exist and affect the participation of female executives in the boardroom in the Vietnamese banking sector, and is there any relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness?**

Under the fundamental research question, there are five main areas addressed in this research:

1. To identify the barriers that prevent women in the banking sector from being promoted to higher positions;
2. To clarify and evaluate whether there is any difference between males and females’ leadership styles;
3. To clarify and evaluate whether there is any relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness;
4. To identify any benefits of increasing the equal opportunities for women in career advancement.
5. To offer recommendations that help to enhance women’s career advancement?

The research Sub-Questions derived from these areas are as follows:
1. Does the glass ceiling exist in the Vietnamese banking sector?
2. What are the barriers that prevent women from being promoted to higher positions?
3. Are there any differences among male and female leaders/managers?
4. What is the effect of female participation in executive positions in the banking sector’s boardrooms?
5. What are the benefits of increasing the number of women in managerial positions?

Besides the Main Research Question and the five main areas of this research, this study is also based on four hypotheses as stated below:

H1- Glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector prevents women from being promoted to higher positions.

H2- There are differences in the leadership/management styles among male and female.

H3- There is a connection between gender and leadership effectiveness.

H4- The removal of the glass ceiling may bring benefits to banks.

1.4 Thesis outlines
There are six chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 of the thesis describes the following:

- Research background
- Research overview
- Research main question and sub-questions
- Thesis outline

Chapter 2 of the thesis describes the following:

- A literature review on glass ceiling and its multiple layers
• Glass ceiling in the context of Vietnam
• The relationship between gender and leadership/management styles
• The relationship between gender and leadership/management effectiveness

Chapter 3 of the thesis describes the following:

• The research methodology
• The research paradigms
• The criteria of methodology selection
• Methods of data collection and analysis
• Ethical consideration
• Validity and reliability of the study

Chapter 4 provides the analysis of the results from the survey and interviews and discusses the following:

• The results and findings of the questionnaires
• The results and findings of the interview

Chapter 5 is the discussion of the results and findings from Chapter 4 and describes the following:

• The discussion of the questionnaires
• The discussion of the interview

Chapter 6 of the thesis describes the following:

• The conclusion of the study
• Recommendations to enhance women’s career advancement
• The limitations of the research
• Future research opportunities
• The closing statement.

1.5 Chapter summary
To sum up, Chapter One discusses the elements which form the settings for the study including defining the term “glass ceiling” as well as explaining the context of the research. It also states the main researched areas and research questions as well as sub-questions. Lastly, it presents the map of the study to assist readers in navigating the study.
The next chapter provides a critical review of the previous studies on the glass ceiling effect in different contexts, gender inequality in Vietnam, the link between gender and leadership/management styles, the connection between gender and leadership/management effectiveness and the benefits associated with the removal of the glass ceiling in previous research.
Chapter Two is a literature review of the glass ceiling, the distinction between males and females in leadership styles and its effect on leadership effectiveness. The overview of Chapter Two is presented in Figure 2.1 as follows:

**Figure 2.1: Structure of Chapter Two**

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two provides an insight into gender and gender inequalities; then discusses the definition of glass ceiling and its multiple layers. It aims to seek the reasons for the existence of the glass ceiling. It also investigates the differences in leadership styles between male and female and finally considers if the glass ceiling and the leadership style difference have impacts on the performance of organizations. Finally, the gender issue in the Vietnam context will be reviewed.

### 2.2 Glass ceiling and its multiple layers

The term “glass ceiling” was first used by American writers on the topic of women in the workplace in the 1980s (“Glass ceiling”, 2013). According to Lamp (2001) as...
cited in Insch, McIntyre & Napier (2008), glass ceiling refers to the invisible or artificial barriers that prevent women from being promoted to the highest positions in organizations, regardless of their abilities and achievements. The glass ceiling is categorized to be the third form of sex discrimination along with overt discrimination and sexual harassment (Bell et al., 2002).

2.2.1 Gender understanding and definition
The word gender originates from the Latin word *genus* which means “kind”, “type”, or “sort” (Medical News Today, 2011). While sex refers to “the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women”, gender refers to “the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (World Health Organization, 2013, para.2).

From the moment a person is born, he or she is categorised as a boy or a girl. Consequently, he or she will be treated based on the gender. For example, boys will be given toy guns while girls will be given dolls to play with. When they grow up, men will be expected to become the breadwinners in the family; meanwhile, women will be expected to do the household chores and take care of children. However, there are some boys who like to dress like girls and vice versa. There are some girls who display masculinities and boys display femininities. There are some boys who only love to be with boys and girls love to be with girls. Thus, becoming a man or a woman is not a fixed state (Connell, 2002) and the perceptions about gender-appropriate behaviour are changing. For example, New Zealand government passed a law legalising same sex marriage in April 2013 (Davison, Young, Shuttleworth & Backhouse 2013). Therefore, it can be said that gender is more socially constructed rather than fixed by nature (Connell, 2002).

The term *sex discrimination* and *gender discrimination* will be used interchangeably in this study due to the same definitions of the term by scholars and researchers in literature. Sex/gender discrimination refers to the unequal and harmful treatment of people because of their sex (Benokraitis, 1997).

2.2.2 Gender inequalities in society
Article 1 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (The United Nations, n.d., para.9). Article 2 in the same document also stresses that
a person should not be discriminated against for his or her race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (The United Nations, n.d.). Therefore, gender equality is a human right that no one can take from other people.

However, gender discrimination is still a widespread issue all over the world. Discrimination can be seen both directly and indirectly in different forms, in different fields and in different societies despite the dissimilarities in economic, social and technological developments.

In politics, even Hillary Clinton, who is considered the “most powerful woman in American politics” (Tomasky, 2013) shared her experience of being "kidded, ribbed and chided in boardrooms across the country" just because she defended women’s issues (Miller, n.d.). Britain’s choice of a British leader to appear on the 5-pound note completely left women out: Winston Churchill instead of Margaret Thatcher – the most important British prime minister in the last 50 years – was chosen (Chu, 2013). In science, the classic case of Rosalind Franklin, who played a critical role in the discovery of the structure of DNA in 1953 but lost most of the credit to her male colleagues, James Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins who were granted the Nobel Prize, is worth mentioning (Stasiak, 2001).

The 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) presented a ranking of the region with high discrimination and low discrimination as illustrated by Figure 2.2:
Figure 2.2: The 2012 SIGI rankings

Source: SIGI (2012a)

The countries in which women are still highly discriminated against are mostly situated in the area of Sub-Saharan Africa while countries with the lowest level of discrimination are from Latin America (SIGI, 2012b). In Mali, one of the strongest democracies in the region, women still live in poverty (SIGI, 2012c). In Iraq, a man can marry more than one wife (SIGI, 2012d). According to the Ministry of Health of China, more than 336 million abortions have been carried out since China’s one-child policy came into effect because parents generally prefer baby boys to baby girls (McGovern, 2013). In India, the issue of violence against women has worsened due to the recent case of young women being raped and murdered (Chelala, 2013). In Vietnam, although Vietnam’s Civil Code states that both sons and daughters have equal opportunities in terms of inheritance, in practice sons will often inherit parental houses and land while daughters only receive symbolic items (SIGI, 2012e). And the glass ceiling in the workplace is “a reflection of social and economic gender inequality” (Wirth, 2000, p.1).

2.2.3 Gender inequalities in the labour market
Oxfam New Zealand (2013) states that “You’re more likely to be poor if you are a woman. That’s a fact” (para.1). The organization also presents some data that shows gender inequalities in the labour market:

- Women make up 75% of the world’s work force
Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours  
Women produce the majority of the world’s food  
Women earn only 10% of the world’s income  
Women own less than 1% of the world’s property 

(Oxfam New Zealand, 2013, para. 3)

The contemporary case of Wal-mart, one of the biggest retailers in the world, which was sued for discrimination against women (Hines, 2012) once again, confirms the continuity of sex discrimination till now.

Williams and Dellinger (2010) list three dominant sociological theories that explain the gender inequalities in the workplace: socialization theory (Parsons, 1955), a theory of gender inequality by Rosabeth Moss Kaster (1977) and human capital theory (Polachek, 1981; Blau, Ferber & Winkler, 1998, Pavadic & Reskin, 2002). Socialization theory explains that the choice of career of boys and girls, men and women is based on society’s definitions of masculinity and femininity (Parsons, 1955 as cited in Williams & Dellinger, 2010). However, the former professor of Harvard Business School – Kanter (1977) as cited in Williams and Dellinger (2010) argues that women developed feminine qualities because they were put in the situation that they had to in order to successfully complete assignments and men would develop the same qualities if they were in the same positions. Human capital theory succeeds in rationalizing gender inequalities at work by different preferences of men and women but fails to explain the upward trend of women’s educational attainment and increasing labour force participation rates (Williams & Dellinger, 2010).

2.2.4 Gender inequalities in senior positions
Only three women: Angela Merkel – Chancellor of Germany, Sonia Gandhi – President of Indian National Congress and Dilma Rousseff – President of Brazil Facebook appear in the Forbes’ list of the 20 most powerful people in the world in 2013 in comparison with 17 men in the same list (Forbes, 2013b). Therefore, the saying “the blunt truth is that men still run the world” by COO Sheryl Sandberg is still valid (Abcarian, 2013).

The number of women executives in the Fortune 500 leadership positions has stabilized in the past few years. The Catalyst Research Center for Equity in
Business Leadership exhibits women’s participation in top positions between 2009 and 2012 as can be seen from Figure 2.3:

Figure 2.3: Women executive officers in the Fortune 500

![Bar chart showing women's participation in top positions from 2009 to 2012]

Source: Catalyst(2013a, para.1)

The 2013 situation is not better. On the 2013 Fortune 1000 lists, the number of women (21 CEOs) accounts for only 4.2 per cent of Fortune 500 CEO positions and 4.6 per cent of Fortune 1000 CEO positions (Catalyst, 2013b).

Most researchers such as Bell et al. (2002), Insch et al. (2008), Daft and Pirola-Merlo (2009) or Nel, Werner, Du Plessis, Fazey, Erwee, Pillay, Mackinnon, Millet & Wordsworth (2012) recognize the smaller number of female executives in comparison with that of male executives in all the fields throughout the world despite the increasing number of females in the workforce and in managerial positions (Powell and Grave, 2003, as cited in Mok Kim Man, Skerlavaj& Dimovski, 2009). Bell et al (2002) quoted Korabik (1992) that “the higher the post, the fewer the women”.

2.2.5 Reasons for the existence of the glass ceiling

There are various reasons for the existence of the glass ceiling or the so-called “the Leadership Labyrinth” (Northouse, 2013, p.352). Generally speaking the explanations can be categorised into four different layers in which the first layer seems to be most visible to the public and the others seem to take root deep inside
people’s minds. The sequence is based on the principle of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which describes the pattern that human motivations generally move through from the lowest level – physiological needs to the highest level – self-esteem and then self-actualisation (Kenrick, 2010). Figure 2.4 shows the multiple layers of the glass ceiling.

**Figure 2.4: Different layers of glass ceiling**

![Figure 2.4: Different layers of glass ceiling](image)

Source: Developed by the researcher

The **first** layer of the glass ceiling, which seems to be most visible to the whole, is women’s lower human capital investment in training and job experience than men (Eagly & Carli, 2004, 2007 as cited in Northouse, 2013). Job experience and training are imperative because the better the employees are trained, the better they performed (Du Plessis & Frederick, 2010) and employees’ performance is taken into account when managers consider promotion (Gibbs, 2008). However, sometimes women do not have the necessary job experience to be promoted simply because they do not have the opportunities to gain the job experiences to advance to higher positions (Bell et al., 2002; Insch et al., 2008). As executives, women are required to be on foreign assignments but they do not receive enough support from their organizations. Moreover, many corporate activities such as fast track
programmes, individual career counselling and career planning workshops were available to men, but less available to women (Selmer and Leung, 2003 as cited in Insch et al., 2008). Furthermore, women also face employment discontinuity because of maternity leave and child rearing. As a result, their chances for job experiences or promotion might be affected.

Williams & Cuddy (2012) reveal surprising statistics about working mothers “If a woman has a child, her chances of being hired fall by 79%; she is 50% as likely to be promoted as a childless woman” (p.96). For female workers in general, it is not easy to be on maternity leave and resume work after several months. Laws in many country allows approximately 12 weeks of parental leave. For example, a female employee in New Zealand is entitled up to 14 weeks of paid leave (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2012). However, it is even more challenging for female executives to go for around three-month’s leave. The case of Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer who took only two weeks for maternity leave has received a lot of criticism from the public (Daily Mail Reporter, 2013). When female workers return to work from parental leave, they even might face the risk of losing their jobs or illegal discrimination (Akoorie, 2013), which is referred to as “maternal wall bias” by Williams & Cuddy (2012).

The second layer is due to gender differences. Insch et al. (2008) cited Byrne (1971) to explain the causes of the glass ceiling by the similarity-attraction theory. The business world has been dominated by men, who tend to recruit and promote the people who look, think and act like them. Meanwhile, a lot of research has shown gender differences in traits including intelligence, social skills, initiative and the ability to persuade (Eagly & Carli, 2007 as cited in Northouse, 2013). In organizations whose managerial positions are mostly occupied by men, male networks, sometimes known as “good-old-boys club” still exist and it is not easy for women to join those networks (Klenke, 1999 as cited Dimovskiet al., 2010). Klenke (1999) as cited in Dimovskiet al. (2010) also adds that informal networking is vital in exchanging information, making career planning and strategizing, and providing professional support and encouragement. Besides, men tend to know what they want and ask for it rather than women do (Administrative Professional Today, 2011). Adecco’s 2011 Workplace Outlook Study interviewed both men and women about whether they would receive a salary raise or promotion and the result
reveals that 40 per cent of men (in comparison with only 29 per cent of women) thought they would (Administrative Professional Today, 2011).

The third main reason is gender stereotypes (Bell et al., 2002). Stereotyping refers to the fact that the treatment or judgement of one person is based on the generalised characteristics associated with the group that person belongs to (Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman & Tyler, 199 as cited in Pichler et al., 2008). Women are recruited into positions that are assumed to be more suitable for women than men. For example, women often become managers in personnel or human resources, but only managers from finance, sales or marketing can be promoted to the top positions in American organizations (Elmuti, Lehman, Harmon, Lu, Pape, Zhang & Zimmerle, 2003, as cited in Insch et al., 2008).

Another aspect of gender stereotypes which prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder is the case when women adapt their styles and work in more masculine ways, they are judged more severely by both their male and female counterparts than men who do the same thing (Cox, 1996). Women really face a dilemma here as “if they adopt a ‘feminine’ managerial style, they run the risk of being viewed as ineffective, and if they adopt a ‘masculine’ style, they are criticized for not being feminine” (Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998 as cited in Dimovski et al., 2010, p.314).

Furthermore, in many cultures women are expected to be responsible for doing household chores and taking care of children while men are the breadwinners, which can restrict women’s career options. Meanwhile, the findings of a research project by Castano, Martin, Vazquez and Martinez (2010) which surveyed 242 male and female senior executives in Spain revealed that 89 per cent of the spouses/partners of the women worked full time, in comparison with only 51 per cent of those of the male executives. In other words, almost half of the male executives in the sample had a spouse or partner with limited or no professional commitment, which means male executives’ spouse or partners have more time to devote to household responsibilities. As a result, male executives receive more support from their spouses or partners than female executives do (Castanoet al., 2010). Hence, undoubtedly gender stereotypes are obstacles to women in selection and promotion decisions (Welle & Heilman, 2005 as cited in Pichler et al., 2008).
Lastly, one very critical reason that prevents women from advancing to higher position is the “psychological glass ceiling” (Austin, 2009, p.xi). Austin (2009) claims that women have the real ability for career advancement but they do not have faith in the fact that they can reach the top in their profession: “I will fully and completely develop my intellect – but then I’ll put it on the back burner. I’ll have a career – but I won’t be a career woman. I’ll be good, but not great” (p.xiv). Some women even find it impossible to be successful in private and professional life simultaneously (Austin, 2009). Robinson, an American novelist, states that “Still, I wonder if more women artists, musicians and writers aren't household names because we don't have enough faith in our own pursuits to give ourselves the time we desperately need to be transformed by a creative vision. Maybe that glass ceiling isn't really made of glass at all, but of sticky little fingers, dishes piled in the sink, and mortgages that demand two incomes” (n.d.). All in all, the highest and hardest ceiling that women have to break are the barriers they create themselves.

Nietzsche, the German philosopher in the 19th century said that the worst enemy of a person is himself or herself (n.d.). In the children’s folk tale “Cinderella”, also known as “The Little Glass Slipper”, if Cinderella did not go to the ball and meet the Prince there, her wicked and evil stepmother would have never become a barrier to her happy-ever-after life. The reason for this psychological glass ceiling may take root from the lack of role models for women. They need images of strong and successful women to see themselves as strong but they are just surrounded by powerful images of men and weak ones of women (Cox, 1996). Furthermore, the limited number of women in senior positions also leads to the scarcity of female role models (Castano et al., 2010).

In summary, the understanding of gender should be put in the social context. Gender inequalities are widely noticed in all aspects of life. The number of male executives still greatly surpasses the number of their female counterparts and there are many reasons leading to this situation. It takes root both from the external and visible factors to women such as the lack of experience, gender differences and gender stereotypes and from the internal factor – the psychological glass ceiling that women build themselves. It is artificial and invisible so it is harder to break. Therefore, incremental and then quantum changes in the attitudes and activities of both corporations and female executives themselves may help to provide women with more opportunities for career progression.
Identifying the existence of the glass ceiling and classifying the reasons answered the first research question of this study as discussed in Section 1.4 above.

2.3 Difference between males and females in their leadership styles

2.3.1 Gender difference research

Is it true that “men are from Mars, women are from Venus” (Gray, 1992)? Sex difference is one of the most studied issues in psychology, sociology and political science (Connell, 2002). The belief that men and women have different sets of traits has been held for a long time. Women are perceived to be more nurturing, suggestible, talkative, emotional, intuitive, and sexually loyal while men are more aggressive, tough-minded, taciturn, rational, analytic, and promiscuous (Connell, 2002).

That belief had remained strong until it was challenged by findings of various studies on gender difference. Rosenberg (1982) as cited in Connell (2002) concludes that there is no discrepancy between male and female mental capacities. Hogrebe (1985) as cited in Connell (2002) did find the sex difference, but it just made up one per cent of the variation in scores. Van Leeuwen (2013), a gender study scholar, attests that there are very few consistent differences in psychological traits and behaviours of males and females. If the discrepancy exists, they are average but not absolute differences (Van Leeuwen, 2013). Gender research in different contexts and fields also reach the same conclusion such as recent studies by Yurtsever, Ozyurt and Ben-Asher (2013) on gender differences in buyer-seller negotiations with samples selected from middle managers in Turkey and González-Garrido, Gómez-Velázquez, Sequeira, Ramos-Loyo and López-Franco (2013) on gender differences in visuospatial working memory.

2.3.2 Gender differences in leadership styles

The literature has not yet given a final conclusion on the topic of the difference between males and females in their leadership styles. The conclusion of one of the leading scholars in leaders and leadership has been valid till now: leadership is one of the most observed but least understood phenomena on Earth (Burns, 1978 as cited in Singh, Nadim & Ezzedeen, 2012).

On the one hand, a variety of researchers noted differences when comparing leadership styles of the two genders. Rosener (1990) when asking male and females
leaders to describe their leadership performance and how they influence their co-workers and subordinates found that women tended to describe themselves as transformational while men tended towards transactional.

Transactional leaders clarify the roles and task requirements of employees, initiate structure, provide appropriate rewards and try to be considerate towards and meet the social needs of employees.

Transformational leaders focus on tangible issues such as vision, shared values, ideas to build relationships and diversify activities, and to find common ground to engage followers in the change process (Samson and Daft, 2009, as cited in Nel et al., 2012, p.373).

Findings by Tannen (1995) as cited in Eisner (2013) are also consistent with Rosener’s (1990). She asserts that working women interact in ways that focus on relationship, people, collaboration, and furthering rapport whilst working men interact in ways that focus on power, task, showing their ability and knowledge, challenging others and resisting challenges and seeking to win. Ashmore, Del Boca & Wohlcrs (1986) and Eagly & Johnson (1990) as cited in Gardiner and Tiggemann (1999) also share the same point of view in gender differences in leadership style, whereby women leaders tend to focus on interpersonal relations and task accomplishment more than do men.

The recent study by Talent Innovations confirms the aforementioned differences in leadership style of two genders. The results from the analysis of approximately 14,000 UK leaders and managers to identify the differences in how men and women were rated against a set of 18 leadership competencies show men and women have different strengths. Men have more strategic vision, commercial focus and personal impact while women perform better in planning and managing activities, and show more interpersonal skill; thus, women may make better project managers (Kennard, 2012). The conclusion of research by Adams and Funk (2012) with a sample ranging from board members to vice CEOs and CEO in 288 Swedish companies complies with the aforementioned findings of other studies that male and female directors bear no resemblance in their core values and risk attitudes, but not in a way that male and female differ in the general population. Adams and Funk (2012) even go further in explaining the gap in values among male and female directors are dependent on the cost of choosing a career for women.
On the other hand, the other school of thought debates that there are no, or very few, differences between male and female leadership styles. Quader (2011) when comparing two genders’ leadership styles quotes François Héritier, a French anthropologist states that there are no fundamentally different traits between a male and female leader and the reasons for the differences do not lie in the biological characteristics but lie in the cultural phenomenon over history throughout the world. Eagly & Johnson (1990) as cited in Northouse (2013) argue that women only lead in a more interpersonally oriented and less task-oriented manner than men in settings where behaviour was more regulated by social roles.

Findings by Bartol (1978), Dobbins & Platz (1986), as well as Powell (1990) as cited in Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson (2013) also reveal very few differences in male and female leadership styles. Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson (2013) present the findings of Kanter (1977) that some female executives changed their styles in order to be accepted in the male-dominated environments. In the recent research by Eisner (2013), the results, after the researcher interviewed 80 executives, completely contradict the findings of Rosener (1990) and Tannen (1995). Eisner (2013) finds that both male and female executives concentrate on people/relationship and task/result aspects of work equally.

All in all, although the studies whose findings confirm the differences in leadership styles between male and female executives outnumbered those that do not, this topic has still remained ambiguous. The reason is explained by Powell (2011) as cited in Eisner (2013) which concludes that laboratory and field studies on this field may produce different results. Therefore, more studies should be carried out to reach the consensus on the topic.

2.4 Gender and leadership effectiveness/organizations’ performance

The literature review of this study on the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness and/or organizational performance showed ambiguous results. There are three opposing perspectives: one favours men, one favours women, and the last considers two genders the same.

There has been a long-held belief that leadership effectiveness equates with masculinity and being male (Eagly & Karau, 2002 as cited in Singh et al., 2012). The study by Singh et al. (2012) which focuses on leadership effectiveness as perceived by their male and female followers provides the evidence that both male
and female followers prefer a male leader. Heilman, Block & Martell (1995) as cited in Quader (2011) argue that “women were found to be less desirable candidates for management positions” (p.6) because their competencies were believed to be lower than those of men. In order to become an effective manager or leader, one should have competence, independence, and rationality. Those traits are often believed to be possessed by men.

Nevertheless, Bass & Avolio (1994) carried out a survey of followers that rated women and men leaders on leaders’ characteristics that produced a contradictory result. Female leaders were rated higher than males on the characteristics that are vital for an organization’s growth and flexibility (Daft & Pirola-Merlo, 2009).
As shown in Figure 2.5 above, women leaders tend to have more idealized influence, inspirational influence, and intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration than their male counterparts. Subordinates also felt more satisfied with female leaders and viewed them as more effective. There might be three explanations for the results including male chauvinism, lower expectations by
followers on female than male leaders and “tendencies of women to be more nurturing, interested in others and more socially sensitive” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p.556). A more recent report by Taylor, Morin, Cohn, Clark, & Wang (2008) as cited in Carnes and Radojevich-Kelley (2011) shows that women outrank men in seven out of eight leadership traits. Both Kristof (2009) as cited in Adams &Funk (2012) point out that financial firms are dominated by men, which might be the reason for the poor performance of banks in the light of the ongoing financial crisis. UK Labour Party’s deputy leader – Harman even accused male domination as being the cause of the financial crisis (Morris, 2009 as cited in Adams & Funk, 2012).

The last school of thought referred to in this research supports that **men and women** are **equally** effective leaders. Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani (1995) conclude that gender does not have an influence on an organization’s success. Male and female leaders are effective in different settings. For example, women’s leadership styles might be more suitable in educational, government or social service settings while men’s styles might be more appropriate in military settings (Eagly et al., 1995).

While there has not been a final conclusion about the relationship between glass ceiling and organizations’ performance, it is still crucial to achieve greater gender equality in the workplace and in the society as a whole. Northouse (2013) notes two important reasons for this.

**Firstly**, the equal opportunities for everyone to be in leadership roles will provide a diverse pool of talents; as a result, greater organizational success will be gained. Different people have different types of knowledge and other intellectual capital, which are referred to as knowledge stocks by Morris, Snell and Lepak (2005). If these knowledge stocks can be effectively managed, combined and renewed, they will generate the sustainable competitive advantage for the organizations (Morris et al., 2005).

**Secondly**, findings from a great amount of research by Bosco&Columb (2009); Catalyst (2004); Forsyth (2010); Nielsen & Huse (2010) and Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hasmi &Malone (2010) as cited in Northouse (2013) reveal that women participating in the leadership roles will help make organizations more representative, ethical, productive, innovative and financially successful. Cooper (2001) as cited in Dimovski et al. (2010) stresses that the involvement of women
from the grass roots to the senior management level should be in both the short term and long term objectives of organizations.

The recognition of the differences (if any) in the leadership styles among male and female leaders and its impact on the organizations’ performance provided the answers to the second research question of this study as discussed in Section 1.4 of this report.

2.5 Glass ceiling in Vietnam context

2.5.1 Gender equality in Vietnam

In comparison with other countries in the region, Vietnam has an impressive track record in gender equality – the number of women in parliament is greater than that in the UK and Canada (United Nations Vietnam, 2010). The Vietnamese government has shown many efforts in achieving gender equality by issuing laws on gender equality and joining the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (Viet Nam News, 2013). Nonetheless, the traditional attitudes that favours men over women still linger (United Nations Vietnam, 2010). Many girls in the remote areas do not have access to education; they have to drop school and get married at a very young ages (Viet Nam News, 2013). They even have to suffer from domestic violence (Viet Nam News, 2013).

The number of women in leadership positions nowadays is still very few (United Nations Vietnam, 2010) in spite of the fact that Vietnamese women used to play an important role in defeating the outside invaders and securing national independence in history (Truong, 2008). In the year 40 A.D Vietnam was under the harsh control of a Chinese governor. The Trung sisters – Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, daughters of a Vietnamese general, gathered an army of around 80 thousand people to fight against the Chinese and gain independence for the Vietnamese people. It is said that if the Trung sisters had not resisted the Chinese, there would have been no Vietnam today (Women In World History Curriculum, 2012). However, according to the 2011 statistics by the Vietnam Women’s Union, the number of women in leadership positions in political organizations accounted for only 8 per cent in party committees at the central level, 11 percent at the provincial level, 15 percent at the district level and 18 percent at the commune level (Vietnamplus, 2013). There are only two female government ministers out of 22, which constitutes 9 per cent. The
Table 2.1: Percentage of male and female leaders at all government levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female at director level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>2494</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass organisation</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2641</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>3922</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass organisation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3929</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Centre for Women Studies (2012) as cited in Munro (2012, p.10)

Although there are some positive signs in women empowerment, they are just temporary (Teerawichitchainan, Knodel, Vu & Vu, 2010). In the National Assembly, the percentage of female deputies even decreased in the last decade, from 27.3 per cent in the 2002-2007 periods to 24.2 per cent in the 2011-2016 periods (Vietnamplus, 2013).

There are a number of causes of the low representation of female leaders in Vietnam which is divided into two groups: institutional barriers and attitudinal factors (Munro, 2012). According to Munro (2012) institutional barriers include ineffective target system which requires a female candidate to meet a higher criteria level in order to be voted. Another barrier is winnable seats that put women in the election ridings where they have to compete against men with higher qualifications and more experience. The retirement age regulations, which set the retirement age of women as 55 years old compared with 60 years old for men, really limits the chances for female career advancement. Work rotation and training, and career support networks are not available for women.

Other institutional barriers such as women’s limited professional skills and education, poor human resource planning and lastly ineffective implementation of
gender-based legislation also hinder their promotion to top positions. Meanwhile, attitudinal factors include the Vietnamese society and the organizations’ perception about gender roles in the family and in the workplace (Munro, 2012). Many countries in Asia, Vietnamese cultures, customs, and beliefs are heavily affected by Confucianism which views that “a woman’s duty is not to control or take charge” or “Woman’s greatest duty is to produce a son” (Munro, 2012). All these barriers have generated a thick glass ceiling which is extremely hard for Vietnamese women to break.

2.5.2 Gender issue in the banking sector
The Vietnamese banking sector consists of state-owned credit institutions, a number of joint stock commercial banks, joint venture banks, branches and representatives of foreign banks, wholly foreign-owned banks, finance and leasing companies. The State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) plays the leading role in the sector (The State Bank of Vietnam, 2012). Before the 2000s, the four largest state-owned banks dominated the sector but since 2006 some private banks have started to take off, co-operate with some foreign banks and have gained great accomplishment (Ogimoto, 2013).

Along with the Vietnamese government’s open door policy and the commencement of the market mechanism in the 1980s (Sakata, 2013), the Vietnamese banking sector has slowly changed itself from a centrally coordinated sector to a market economy (Kovsted, Rand & Tarp, 2005). There are several factors which lead to the gradual liberalisation including the French civil law tradition, the Vietnamese bureaucracy with the leaders’ preference for social and political stability, the close link between the state own companies and the financial sector and importantly the crisis at the early stage of the reform (Kovsted et al., 2005).

However, as time passes by, the more open the Vietnamese banking sector is, the more damage it has to suffer from crisis in the region and in the world. When the East Asian Financial Crisis hit the region in 1997, the Vietnamese banking sector was not affected as badly as the other neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Indonesia (Kovsted et al., 2005). Nonetheless, a study by Tran, Daly & Ellis (2013) concludes that the transmission effects of the Global Financial Crisis (starting in the US in the early 2007) to Vietnam, is greater than any other market in the East Asian region.
Since Viet Nam became the World Trade Organization's 150th member on 11 January 2007 (World Trade Organization, 2013), the Vietnamese banking sector has undergone even bigger changes. The penetration of foreign-owned banks and the market liberation for foreign capital have intensified the competition within the sector and split it into “banks that are enhancing competitiveness” and “banks that are defeated” (Ogimoto, 2013, p.168).

The faster changing environment in the banking sector will generate bigger challenges for the top executives in the banking sector to manage changes and achieve organizations’ effectiveness.

Nevertheless, there is a disappointing fact that there has been no woman holding the top position in SBV since its foundation 60 years ago (TTVN, 2013). Among 540 senior staff in 37 banks in Vietnam, 124 of them are women, which makes up only 23 per cent (TTVN, 2013). Among 124 female leaders, only 2 of them are CEOs (from Oceanbank and BacABank) and 7 of them are chairwomen (from NamABank, Vietcapital Bank, HD Bank, Bao Viet Bank, SCB, SeaBank and MekongBank). However, this rate is relatively higher than that in more developed countries. In the year 2011 only 11% of corporate managers and senior executives in the banking sector in the UK are female (Institute of Leadership & Management, 2011). In the Czech Republic, the rate of female participation in managerial roles is even just 4.4% (Deloitte, 2013).

To sum up, the low representation of female leaders in the Vietnamese banking sector aligns with the gender imbalance in Vietnam. Very few women can reach the top positions in organizations due to both cultural and administrative factors. Gender equality can only be achieved with the advocates from the government, organizations and the public.

2.6 Chapter summary
Gender inequalities can be observed in many cultures, and societies, in the labour market and senior positions despite the level of development. The common perception of the glass ceiling, the invisible or artificial barriers to women’s career advancement, has been found in most research on this topic. Researchers generally note the smaller number of female executives in comparison with that of male executives in all the fields throughout the world despite the increasing number of
females in the workforce and in managerial positions (Bell et al., 2002; Insch et al., 2008; Daft and Pirola-Merlo, 2009; Mok Kim Man et al., 2009; Nel et al., 2012).

The explanations for the existence of the glass ceiling can be categorised into four groups: human capital, similarity-attraction theory, gender stereotypes and the psychological glass ceiling. The first three groups are the external factors from corporate cultures, climate and practices while the last one is the internal factor from women themselves. In the end, it is women who choose to confront the glass ceiling or accept it as an excuse to give up on career progression (Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011).

Findings on whether men and women lead differently and which gender makes better leaders still remain uncertain. However, most scholars such as Northouse (2013) agree that it is imperative for organizations to diversify the workforce to ensure the organizations’ competitive advantage and effective performance.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology, the research paradigms, the methodology selection criterion, the data collection and data analysis method implemented of the study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

It's a responsibility for anyone who breaks through a certain ceiling gives a hand to those who haven’t (Spacey, n.d. as cited in Brainy Quote, 2013.)

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter Two, the literature review revealed that the glass ceiling has been realizable all over the world including the Vietnam banking sector due to a number of glass ceiling layers. Although there has been no consensus among scholars on which gender makes better leaders, studies in most research shows that it is crucial to remove the glass ceiling to make organizations more effective and efficient. Chapter Three gives an insight to the research paradigms as well as the methods used in other similar glass ceiling research. This chapter also describes the research method adopted, data collected, the sample selection, the questionnaire and interview questions development process, the data analysis techniques, the ethical consideration and lastly the discussion of the validity and reliability of the study.

The philosophical perspective which shapes researchers’ approach to research is the backbone of any research. The research paradigm which gives direction to this study is post-positivism. This methodology concentrates on empirical observation and theory verification (Creswell, 2009).

The researcher considered three methods to conduct the study including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The debate among scholars on the most effective method for research has lasted over the years because each method has its advantages and drawbacks. However, based on the research paradigm, the researcher found the mixed methods to be the most appropriate method for this study. The quantitative method using an online survey was cost and time effective. The respondents can choose to get access to the questionnaires at any time convenient for them. The qualitative method involving the in-depth interview can avoid the fact that the true nature of the phenomena misses because of limited choices in the questionnaires and the inability of respondents to find the answers which most closely match their opinions.

Along with the data collection process, data analysis was discussed. While the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyse quantitative data, QSR NUD*IST Vivo (NVivo) was used for qualitative data
analysis. They both are well-known software used by a massive numbers of researchers in social sciences. The last part of the chapter discusses the ethical considerations related to this study as well as its validity and reliability.

3.2 Research paradigm

Research paradigm, a popular term used in social sciences has been defined by a number of scholars. One of the most classic definitions is given by Kuhn (1970) which states that paradigm is the guidance to theory and research. It is “a set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990 as cited in Hussain & Sanders, 2012). The definition used in this research is that “a paradigm is a way of examining social phenomena from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012, p.140). It also appears in different research under other names such as epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998 as cited in Creswell, 2009), broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2000 as cited in Creswell, 2009) or worldview (Creswell, 2009). It consists of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Houghton, Hunter & Meskell, 2012).

The research paradigm has some important functions that include giving the definitions of what the nature of reality and knowledge is, which values are associated with the areas of research and how the researcher gathers, and analyses data (Tracy, 2013). There are two main paradigms that underpin research: positivism which is also known as rationalistic, empiricism and interpretivism, which is referred to as naturalistic, constructivism, phenomenology (Henderson, 2011). Positivists reckon that reality is objective and theory should be deductive whereas interpretivists believe in the possibilities of emerging theory, and contextual processes that focus on meanings, and perspectivity (Henderson, 2011). Positivists use a quantitative approach while interpretivists adopt a qualitative approach (Saunders et al., 2012).

There are many criticisms of both paradigms so new paradigms such as post-positivism consequently arise. Positivism and interpretivism can be considered as two extremities of a continuous line of paradigms (Collis & Hussey, 2009). This research uses post-positivism which lies in the middle of the continuum of paradigms, and is shown in the Figure 3.6 below:

**Figure 3.6: Characteristics of the qualitative-quantitative research continuum**
Post-positivism focuses on identifying and assessing the causes that affect the outcomes. It also aims to test and verify theories so we have a better understanding of the world (Creswell, 2009). Post-positivism also frees researchers from the dilemma emerging from “our awareness of the historicity of our thought and the historicity of our values” as they can be either cognitive or moral blindness if they ignore one of the factors (Hamati-Ataya, 2012, p.303). Along with positivism, it associates objectivity with value-freedom (Hamati-Ataya, 2012). The introduction of post-positivism does not imply that positivism or interpretivism is no longer valid but just adds a paradigm that is worth being taken into consideration (Henderson, 2011).

3.2.1 Preceding glass ceiling research
The methodology in previous research on glass ceiling was considered when the decision on appropriate methodology for this research was made. The number of researchers implementing quantitative approach outnumbered those that used the qualitative method. One example of a recent research adopting a quantitative method was the study carried out by Adams &Funk (2012) in the context of Sweden. They surveyed directors and CEOs of publicly traded firms in Sweden in order to find answers to the research question “Are women in the boardroom different from men?”. Meanwhile, an example of a qualitative method was the research by Barragan, Mills &Runte (2010) on the Mexican glass ceiling.

The summary of a list of methods in other studies on glass ceiling is as follows:
Table 3.2: List of methods used in preceding studies on glass ceiling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative approach</th>
<th>Qualitative approach</th>
<th>The mixed methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kolade &amp; Kehinde (2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adams and Funk (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Castano et al. (2010)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dimovski et al. (2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elacqua, Beehr, Hansen &amp; Webster (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hoobler et al. (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mok Kim Man et al., (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Morrison, Schreiber &amp; Price (1995)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pichler et al. (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Methodology Selection Criterion

The researcher evaluated a number of alternative approaches to inquiry (Creswell, 2009) or research methodologies (Mertens, 1998 as cited in Creswell, 2009) such as qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods designs. Each has its own purposes, advantages as well as drawbacks. In the end, the researcher’s choice on the most suitable research strategy is based on the research problems and its purposes (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

3.3.1 Evaluation of the relevance of a quantitative approach

Quantitative methods have been widely used by researchers in different fields such as psychology, economics, sociology and even criminology (Dantzker & Hunter, 2000). Business managers and/or leaders also employ a quantitative approach to make important business decisions. For example, Hewlett-Packard used quantitative techniques for capacity forecasts and choices of locations of stock. Quantitative methods can be said to make businesses succeed or fail (Wisniewski, 2009).

“Quantitative methods allow social researchers to systematically quantify the world we live in” (Donley, 2012, p.17). The data collection methods often include experiments and surveys (Donley, 2012). They can produce the data in the form of
numbers and statistics. The results generated are easy to classify, generalise or investigate causal relationships (University of Southern California Libraries, 2013).

The purpose of the study is to investigate the barriers to women’s career advancement and the degree of the glass ceiling effect. In the meantime, the quantitative data will offer the results in the form of numerical values (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Hence, the degree of the glass ceiling might be more measurable. In addition, literature review highlights some ambiguous findings on the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness. Therefore, statistics provide methods and theory which is applied to quantitative data, especially in the case of uncertainty (Collis & Hussey, 2013), and will be a suitable approach. A further reason that confirms the relevance of a quantitative approach is its cost and time effectiveness when the researcher has to deal with a large number of respondents and the results can be generalized from the sample to the big population (the Vietnamese banking sector).

However, the quantitative method has some drawbacks. The problems can originate from either researchers or respondents. Researchers may miss the true nature of the phenomena due to limited choices of answers in a question presented in the questionnaires. The respondents might not be able to find the answers that closely assemble their opinions. As for respondents, they might fail to follow the instructions, return incomplete answers, or answer questions in a way that does not reflect their own opinions due to their mood or time constraints (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

3.3.2 Evaluation of the relevance of a qualitative approach

Similar to quantitative methods, qualitative methods have been used in many social fields such as poverty, drug abuse and criminal involvement (Donley, 2012). While a quantitative approach tends to put emphasis on answering the questions like who, what, how many and how often, qualitative methods focus on interpreting reasons and motivations for perceptions, beliefs and behaviours of people (Donley, 2012). Bryman (2012) noted three particular features of a qualitative research: an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, a stress of the qualitative method on understanding the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants and lastly the implication that the social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals. The
Qualitative method often includes in-depth interviews, focus groups, observation and document review (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009).

The in-depth interviews were adopted to have an insight into the female executives’ difficulties in climbing the corporate ladder and their views towards their own career success. Their responses do not have to be limited within the suggested choices from the questionnaires. This approach helps to extend the understanding about the topic.

Similar to the qualitative method, it also has some weaknesses. It is criticised to be “too impressionistic and subjective” (Bryman, 2012, p.405). It is also too dependent on the researcher viewpoints about what is considered to be important, and the relationship between the researcher and the people studied (Bryman, 2012).

3.3.3 Evaluation of the relevance of mixed methods

Quantitative methods usually result in findings with a high degree of validity while qualitative methods usually result in findings with a high degree of reliability (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The qualitative data will enlarge the richness and the depth of the numerical data (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, the employment of both quantitative and qualitative methods is chosen. Born in 1959 when two researchers Campbell and Fisk studied the validity of psychological traits, the concept of mixing two methods has increasingly been used by researchers in different fields (Creswell, 2009). It also helps to increase both the validity and reliability of the study. “The quantitative and qualitative data can be merged into one large database, or the results used side by side to reinforce each other” (Creswell, 2009, p.14). All in all, the mixed method complements the value as well as reduces the drawbacks of each method. The employment of both methods may give us a better insight into a phenomenon than the employment of a single one (Bryman, 2012, p.649). Rajendran (2008) concludes the relevance of the qualitative and quantitative methods in science by quoting a wine maker “blending is the key to success”.

3.4 Method of data collection

3.4.1 Data collection

The possibilities of data collection is summarised as shown in Table 3.3 below
Staff and management teams in some Vietnamese banks were chosen as respondents to the questionnaires and seventy responses were collected. Ten in-depth interviews were carried out after the completion of questionnaires as qualitative data needs to be examined within context, and requires the collection of background information (Collis & Hussey, 2009). By the time the researcher finished gathering the responses from the questionnaires, she had already had the background information to enhance the sensibility of the qualitative data. A pilot study was carried out before the stage of data collection. The questionnaire and interview questions were sent to five people to test for adequacy.

All the questionnaires and interviews were in English as the staff and management teams in the focus groups are English literate. They have to meet the English efficiency requirement by either attending the English tests of the banks or submitting the results of one of internationally-recognised English language tests including International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) when applying for jobs in Vietnamese banks (BIDV, 2013; Vietinbank, 2013 & SHB, 2013).

The respondents of both questionnaires and interviews were from bank A, B and C in Vietnam. The participants in the interviews were derived from the respondents to the questionnaires. The purpose of having the same individuals in both samples is to
make the data and results more comparable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 as cited in Creswell, Plano Clark & Garrett, 2008).

3.4.2 Questionnaires

Self-administered online survey was proposed for the study as it offers more benefits than the traditional survey. The advantages are faster feedback, more cost-effective and higher confidentiality. It also can reach a large number of respondents faster and participants can respond to the questionnaires at the earliest convenience (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2013). The online questionnaire could be found in www.qualtrics.com. The web-based link of the questionnaires was forwarded to staff in Bank A, B and C; then responses were collected.

Questionnaires employed the checklist and rating scale. The checklist collected data about respondents’ demographic characteristics. Likert scales were used to evaluate on a continuum respondents’ behaviours and attitudes.

In the questionnaires, respondents were given clear instructions on how to mark their responses. The questionnaire for the research is found in Appendix 1. Respondents answered the questionnaires individually and anonymously.

3.4.3 Interviews

The in-depth interviews with duration of between twenty to thirty minutes were carried out. Interviews were conducted face-to-face on a one-to-one basis between the researcher and a single participant so that interviewees could freely express their attitudes about the topic. All the interviews were semi-structured, and the order of questions may depend on the flow of the conversation (Saunders et al., 2012). In addition they will be audio-recorded with participants’ permission and subsequently transcribed (Saunders et al., 2012). A list of interview questions is found in Appendix 2.

3.4.4 Data analysis

There are a wide range of computer programs available for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Some programs have more features than the others. The researcher’s decision is based on the criteria suggested by Creswell and Maietta (2002) as cited in Creswell (2013) including “the ease of using the program, the type of data it accepted, its capability to read and review texts, its provision of
memo-writing functions, its processes of categorization, and its analysis features” (p.209).

The collected quantitative data was analysed using SPSS – one of the most widely known and widely used software packages for quantitative data analysis. Although there are some competitors, SPSS can be considered as the industry leader (Bryman, 2012). It was also chosen because of numerous advantages to data analysis. Both exploratory data analysis and confirmatory data analysis are employed to test hypotheses. Although techniques in exploratory data analysis are used for presenting frequencies, measuring location, measuring dispersion, and measuring change, techniques in confirmatory data analysis are used for estimating from samples, measuring association, measuring difference and forecasting (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Tables and diagrams will be presented initially to explore data followed by significance testing.

As for qualitative data, recordings of interviews will be transcribed and then relevant data selected to develop a database. QSR NUD*IST Vivo known as NVivo will be employed to analyse the data. Data will be organized, classified, and coded through nodes to identify all the relevant data that share the same themes and then look for explanations. After coding is finished, initial propositions will be formed and then compared with direct quotations from interview respondents. Propositions from different respondents will also be revised to analyse if they support or refute the initial propositions. The last stage is to compare the results of the research with other studies’ findings to see if they match or contradict.

3.5 Ethical consideration

This research study was approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) from July 2013 till July 2014. The Research Ethics Committee Approval Number allotted for this research is 2013-1043.

Firstly, introduction letters including the research overview and purposes will be sent to prospective respondents in Bank A, B and C. The consent forms to conduct the questionnaires and interviews were signed by the Deputy Managers and Manager of Bank A, B and C. Participation in the survey and interviews was entirely optional and voluntary. Participants could choose to attend or withdraw from the research at any time. There was also no financial incentive for participants involved in this research project.
Respondents were sent a questionnaire online via www.qualtrics.com with information relating to the research. No personal information was saved in order to ensure that the responses to the questionnaire were anonymous. After that, interviews were conducted to provide a deeper understanding about the issue. The interviews were recorded upon the participants’ permissions.

Respondents were made aware that the collected data was to be kept confidential. All responses to online questionnaires were kept in a file, password protected, while the tape recorder and its information are stored in a safe place and locked in the cupboard at the researcher’s premises. Only the researcher and her supervisors have access to the collected data.

3.6 Validity and reliability of the research

One of the most significant aspects of any research is to ensure its validity and reliability. The research used triangulating data sources that refer to the use of multiple sources of data and/or different research methods to study the same phenomenon (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Triangulation not only lessens bias in data sources, methods and investigators (Jick, 1979 as cited in Collis & Hussey, 2009), but also results in greater validity and reliability than a single method (Denzin, 1978 as cited in Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Potential threats to validity associated with both quantitative and qualitative components were identified and defined. Quantitative data was collected from different banks in order to avoid the interaction of selection and treatment – threat to external validity (Creswell, 2009). Both pilot test and the actual survey used the same instrument (online questionnaires) so that instrumentation - threat to internal validity (Creswell, 2009) was eliminated.

Interviews were executed with a high quality tape recorder, and the findings were conveyed by “rich, thick description” to improve the validity of qualitative data (Creswell, 2009). As the researcher comes from the same culture background with respondents, bias the researcher may have brought to the study was clarified. Of most importance, the participation of another expert – the researcher’s supervisor from the period of research proposal till the completion of the research helped to diminish research data biases and subjective judgments, and added more validity to the research (Creswell, 2009).
3.7 Chapter summary
This research was carried out at three joint stock commercial banks in Vietnam. They are among the largest banks in Vietnam and fit the nature of the topic of this research.

This chapter describes the methodology implemented to carry out this research. Based on the objectives of the research, the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approach is proposed. The in-depth interviews will be carried out after the completion of questionnaires. Ethical approval for the study was obtained before the data collection process and consent forms were signed by deputy managers and managers of the three banks.

The data was collected from staff and management teams in bank A, B and C. Ten people in managerial roles derived from seventy surveyed participants were interviewed. Before the official survey was sent to respondents and interviews were carried out, an initial survey and a list of interview questions were sent to five people to ensure their clarity and that they were error-free. The initial survey was piloted to ensure that the survey was easy to understand and free of errors.

The next chapter analyses all the data obtained from the survey and discusses the findings of the results.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

If you believe you can do a thing, you are right. If you believe you are not capable of doing that thing, you are also right (Ford, n.d. as cited in Forbes, 2013a).

4.1 Introduction
Chapter Three discussed the research paradigm, the appropriate research methodology to collect and analyse all the data as well as the study’s validity and reliability. This chapter describes the findings obtained from both the online survey and interviews carried out afterwards.

The findings of both the survey and interviews are discussed in the same structure and pattern based on the themes of the literature review, which helps to make data triangulation feasible and pave the way for more detailed discussion in the next chapter.

The first section of this chapter deals with the findings from the online survey. Demographic data such as gender, age group, level of education, level of income and work position brings an overall picture of the participants’ background. Respondents’ perceptions on the existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sectors, the differences (if any) between male and female in their leadership styles, and the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness are revealed. The collected data are presented in tables and charts. Next, the researcher analyses findings from the interviews. The same themes are presented but with in-depth analysis from interviewees’ responses.

4.2 Responses to questionnaires
The designed questionnaire has 29 questions. There are 68 participants from three banks responded to the questionnaire. SPSS was used to analyse data.

4.2.1 Demographics data
Demographic data was collected in order to identify participants' background information such as gender, age group, level of education, level of income and work position. The outstanding characteristics of demographic data are presented in figures and table below:

- Gender
Female made up 89% of respondents, which outnumbered the amount of male respondents. Smith (2008) provided a possible explanation for the higher survey response rates for females than males. They are more likely to value behaviour consistent with connective selves (England, 1989 as cited in Smith, 2008). If responding to a survey is considered behaviour associated with connective selves and is more appreciated by anyone who possess that personality, researchers can look forward to more female respondents (Smith, 2008).

**Figure 4.7: Gender**

- **Age group**

The majority of respondents were between 24 to 29 years old, which accounted for roughly 70%. The second largest group of respondents in terms of age were between 30 and 39 years old. It is critical to collect information about age because people at different stages of life may have different outlooks. For example, among full-time employees in New Zealand in 2008, people in the age group of 65 years old and above were the most satisfied with their work-life balance while people in their mid-career (between 35 and 44 years old) were the least satisfied (Ministry of Social Development, 2010).
- Education

The number of respondents graduating with a Bachelor Degree (43 respondents) almost doubled the number of those graduating with a Master Degree (24 respondents). Only one participant had a PhD.

- Marital status

More than half of the respondents, 54.4% were still single. Nearly one third of the surveyed participants were married with children and the rest of respondents were married but did not yet have any children.

Figure 4.8: Age group

Figure 4.9: Marital status
• Income

Nearly half of the respondents earned between 10 million VND to 19.900 VND per month, which was higher than the average income of Vietnam population. According to World Bank (2013), GDP per capita of Vietnam in 2012 was US$1596, which indicates that on average a person earns approximately US$133 per month (equal to roughly 2.8 million VND at the exchange rate of 21085 VND for one US dollar). The group that had salaries from 5 million to 9.900 million VND was the second largest in terms of size. Very few respondents received a salary below 5 million VND or above 20 million VND.

• Job position

Professional staff constituted approximately 50% of respondents in the surveyed banks. The number of office support staff made up about 30% of participants. The number of respondents in supervisory and middle managerial positions was almost the same, which accounted for 8.8% and 5.9% respectively.

**Figure 4.10: Job position**
• **Work experience**

Most respondents (45.6%) were at the early period of their career. The duration of service of more than one third of participants was between 4 to 6 years. The percentage of respondents who had from 7 to 10 years work experience was 10.3% and the rest of the respondents were employed for more than one decade. The longer time the employees work, the less interested they are in training and career development because training programs mostly aim at younger employees (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Young employees can be energetic and enthusiastic about career advancement, they are asserted to be more narcissistic than older colleagues and lack consistency in their business plan (Under30CEO, 2013).

**Table 4.4: Work experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of work experience (in years)</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2. **The existence of glass ceiling in the Vietnam banking sector**

In order to examine participants' attitudes towards the glass ceiling in the Vietnam banking sector, bank staff were asked to rate the extent to which they felt barriers existed that prevent women from advancing to top positions. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (to no extent) to 5 (to a very great extent) was used for rating responses. The findings are presented in Figure 4.11 below:
Half the respondents to the survey felt the glass ceiling existed to a moderate extent. The percentage of participants who felt the existence of the barriers to a great extent was 16.2%. Very few respondents acknowledge the existence of the glass ceiling to a very great extent or to no extent at all. This result helps to answer the first sub-question raised in Chapter One and conforms to the conclusions of other studies on the glass ceiling in other contexts (Dimovsk et al., 2010; Barragan et al., 2010; Devi Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013).

When respondents evaluated if there are obstacles for them to overcome in order to get promoted in their organization, the majority of them (39.7%) recognize the barriers to a little extent. One third felt obstacles to a moderate extent. However, it is of interest to know that 23.5% of respondents do not feel there are any hindrances.

The independent sample T-Test, which is used to compare means between two groups on the same dependent variable (Laerd Statistics, 2013), gave the mean of 2.14 for male and 2.20 for female with a standard deviation of 0.690 and 0.819 respectively. Levine’s Test for Equality of Variances 0.209 and the significance 0.878 were both greater than the P-value 0.05 which suggested that there is no difference among male and female in their perceptions about the existence of the glass ceiling in their organizations.
Question 13 explored in further detail the existence of the glass ceiling by asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with seven statements on women’s roles in organizations. The findings of this question are presented in Table 4.5 below:

**Table 4.5: Respondents' level of agreement or disagreement towards women's roles in organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe women are as capable as men serving in senior executive positions</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, women are provided with equal opportunities to be promoted</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, the number of women serving in managerial positions is increasing</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women are not easily promoted from entry-level positions into middle management</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women are under-represented in the boardrooms</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women do not receive the same salaries as men that perform the same jobs</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, competitiveness in women is viewed as a negative trait</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my company, women have to perform better than their male counterparts to be promoted to the same position</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that the majority of respondents (63.2%) had faith in the fact that women had as many abilities, knowledge and skills as men did to work in senior positions.
In respondents’ organizations, more than half of them (55.9%) believed that women were given the same opportunities as men to be promoted to higher positions. A small percentage (2.9%) of participants strongly held the belief that men had more favourable conditions for being promoted.

Nearly half of the participants observed that the number of females in managerial positions in their organizations was growing with 20.6% of respondents strongly agreeing with the upward trend in the number of women in managerial positions. It can be deduced that there are more and more women in managerial roles.

In the meantime, the number of respondents who disagreed that it was not easy for women to be promoted from entry-level positions (42.6%) doubled that of respondents who agreed with the statement (23.5%).

In top positions, 25% of surveyed bank staff thought that there should be more women while 38.2% disagreed that they were under-represented in the boardroom.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.1%) disagreed that women did not receive the same salary as men, which contradicted the literature review on salary gap which was in favour of men. The American business world offers a completely different picture where women are often paid less than men. The gender pay gap has even enlarged by 10 per cent in comparison with last year’s figure (Casserly, 2013).

The percentage of participants (38.2%) disagreed that competitiveness in women was viewed as a negative trait. It is of interest to acknowledge that men were stereotypically considered more competitive and tended to be more eager to compete than women (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2011).

Although most of respondents felt that women are as capable as men of serving in senior positions, 35.3% of them had to admit that they had to have better performance than men in order to be promoted. Grant Thorton (2013) explained the high expectation for women’s performance by quoting Wolters Kluwer’s McKinstry “Women have to achieve better results because there are fewer of them” (p.11).

All in all, eight statements about the role of women in organizations offer the answer to the second sub-question and provide further details to the first sub-question.
The next question in the survey went further in seeking the difficulties that respondents felt women meet in their career advancement and provide deeper insight into the second sub-question. The findings are summarised in the Table 4.6 below:

**Table 4.6: Obstacles in women's career advancement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Not an obstacle</th>
<th>Minor obstacle</th>
<th>Noticeable Obstacle</th>
<th>Significant obstacle</th>
<th>Huge obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate structures and practices that favor male employees</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td><strong>38.2%</strong></td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of sufficient self-confidence and timidity</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions that women should not be in a position of authority over men</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td><strong>35.3%</strong></td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of equal career development opportunities for women</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td><strong>38.2%</strong></td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient number of women role models in highest levels in the Vietnamese banking sector</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td><strong>27.9%</strong></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of enthusiasm in taking on high-stake and challenging assignments</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td><strong>35.3%</strong></td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions that women’s careers are NOT as important because they are not the primary family provider</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td><strong>35.3%</strong></td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of adequate general management and/or line experience</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td><strong>33.8%</strong></td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers’ lack of genuine commitment to equality of genders and advancement of women</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td><strong>36.8%</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male domination of senior positions</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td><strong>35.3%</strong></td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women not being willing to make the sacrifices needed to get and remain in senior positions</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td><strong>39.7%</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s conflicting work and family demands</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td><strong>36.8%</strong></td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions that MEN make better managers than WOMEN</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td><strong>29.4%</strong></td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of ambition, in comparison to men</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td><strong>29.4%</strong></td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The impediments that women face in their career progression originate from sources including society, their organization, their family and themselves.

Firstly, society’s perceptions towards women’s career advancement really hinder their progress. The majority of participants (35.5%) gave feedback that the perceptions that women should not be in a position of authority over men was a significant difficulty while one third of them considered that perception was a noticeable obstacle. In addition, more than one third of respondents (35.3%) reflected that the Vietnamese society’s viewpoint that women’s careers are not as important as men’s because they are not the breadwinner noticeably hindered their career progression. Those gender stereotypes as earlier mentioned in part 2.5 (the second chapter) of this study certainly slowed down women’s progress in their career path.

The second group of obstacles came from organizations. The number of respondents who felt that corporate structures and practices that favour male employees significantly blocked women’s career advancement tripled the number who did not consider that an obstacle existed at all. Additionally 38.2% of participants felt that the lack of equal career development for women was a significant obstacle while 36.8% of respondents considered their employers’ lack of genuine commitment to gender equality was a noticeable impediment.

Furthermore, 35.5% of respondents thought male domination of senior positions prevented them from getting promoted to the highest level. The reason might be due to the similarity-attraction theory discussed in Chapter 2 of the study which explained that men tended to recruit and promote the people who look, think and act like them.

Likewise, 27.9% of surveyed people felt there was an insufficient number of women in the highest level of the Vietnamese banking sector and it was a significant challenge if they wanted to climb the corporate ladder. Stories about successful people have been the motivational tool for a long time (Halvorson & Higgins, 2013). If women in the banking sector have more successful women in their field to look up to, they will feel more motivated towards their career advancement.
The last category of barriers emerged from women themselves. First of all, half of the surveyed staff found women’s feeling of inadequacy a significant barrier. Moreover, 29.4% of participants responded that the obstacle originating from women’s lack of ambition in comparison with men was noticeable. Another remarkable limit to women’s career advancement according to 35.3% of respondents is their lack of enthusiasm in taking on high-stake and challenging assignments.

Based on the views of 33.8% of respondents, women also did not have adequate general management and/or line experience, which significantly affect their promotion. More than one third of participants (39.7%) believed the fact that their unwillingness to make the sacrifices needed to get and remain in senior positions was a noticeable obstacle. Last but not least, many women were managers and mothers at the same time. According to 38.8% of respondents women sometimes felt they could not balance their family life and work, which significantly demotivated them in career progression. As mentioned in Chapter 2 Literature review, women themselves regard the psychological glass ceiling as the hardest barrier.

In order to gain a deeper insight into the final obstacle, participants were asked if they wanted to work in senior positions. The number of respondents who longed for high managerial positions (76.5%) was much greater than the number of people who said no, or neither yes or no. 47.1% of respondents answered that they had faith in the fact that they had enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial positions while 39.7% did not have sufficient confidence.

Mean for male respondents was 1.14 whereas mean for female was 1.70. Standard deviation for male was 0.378 in comparison with 0.696 for female. Levene’s Test for the equality of variances was 0.07 and the result of significance was 0.042 which were both greater than the P-value 0.05. This suggested that there was no difference between male and female in their belief in the fact that they have enough abilities for higher positions.
Table 4.7: Group statistics for the belief in the fact that you have enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief in the fact that you have enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial positions</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-tabulation analysis, which is often used to analyse categorical data (“Cross tabulation analysis, 2011), recorded the relationship between age group and the belief in the fact that they have enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial positions. A total of 68.8% of respondents whose age is between 24 and 29 were most confident in that fact while 70.4% of participants in the same age group responded that they did not feel confident. It is of interest to know that 75% of respondents in that age group were not sure whether they had enough abilities or not. The results of the cross-tabulation analysis were presented in Figure 4.12 below:

**Figure 4.12: Respondents' level of confidence in the fact that they have enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial position in terms of age group**

Lastly, participants were asked to rate the importance of the glass ceiling issue using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (important) as part of the
illumination for Area 1 and sub-question 1 in Chapter One of this study. The majority of respondents (36.8%) considered the glass ceiling issue somewhat important to their organizations while 23.5% of them thought it was an important issue organizations should take care of.

Among two genders, mean for both female and male attitude towards the importance of the glass ceiling issue was 3.57. Standard deviation was 1.172 for male and 1.176 for female. In terms of age group, 68% of respondents from 24 to 29 years old found the glass ceiling issue somewhat important, whereas 62.5% of respondents in the same age group found it important.

4.2.3 Differences in leadership styles between male and female leaders/managers

Question 10 in the questionnaires examined participants’ views towards their preferences to work with female leaders/managers. The focus of this question is Area 2 and sub-question 3 in Section 1.4 of the research. The number of respondents who liked to work under female executives’ supervision constituted 50%. Meanwhile, 35.3% of them preferred male leaders/managers and the rest (14.7%) did not think the gender of their leaders or managers would matter. The findings were shown in the figure 4.13 below:

**Figure 4.13: Preference to work with male or female leaders/managers**

![Pie chart showing preference to work with male or female leaders/managers]

Respondents also added some comments with their choice, which were summarised in the table below:
Table 4.8: Respondents' comments on their preference to work with male or female leaders/managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male managers/leaders</th>
<th>Female managers/leaders</th>
<th>Gender does not matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Male managers are not affected by the personal issues. The ability to manage, control and express emotions is a part of emotional intelligence (Shahzad &amp; Bagum, 2012).</td>
<td>• Female managers are more sympathetic and good at communication skills.</td>
<td>• Vision, knowledge and skills of a person are more important than that person is male or female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Their way of thoughts are simple and not as complicated as female’s.</td>
<td>• They are supportive and have good vision.</td>
<td>• Each gender has his or her own strengths and weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They focus more on their work than their female counterparts because they do not have to take time off from pregnancy and child caring.</td>
<td>• They are more careful.</td>
<td>• I care more for productivity and quality of the work than gender of my leaders/managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are more decisive.</td>
<td>• They are flexible but not good at dealing with work stress. They react to stress differently from men both psychologically and biologically (Verma, Balhara &amp; Gupta, 2011).</td>
<td>• It depends on different situations and the nature of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are born leaders. This viewpoint supports the “Great Man theories” which indicates that leaders were born with leadership traits and natural abilities (Daft &amp; Pirola-Merlo, 2009).</td>
<td>• They are friendly and helpful. It is easy to share thoughts and feeling. Since they were at a very young age, they were encouraged to be collaborative and interactive by their parents, schools and media (Quader, 2011).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are confident and work well under pressure.</td>
<td>• They have a good level of concentration at work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are more open-minded.</td>
<td>• They put priority on their staff’s quality of life while their male counterparts only focus on disciplines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are quick learners and easy to work with.</td>
<td>• They are well-organized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They can handle different tasks at the same time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 Gender and effectiveness of male and female leaders

Question 11 dealt with the effectiveness of male and female leaders in the Vietnamese banking sector and aims to answer sub-question 4 in Chapter One. Between the two genders, 60.3% of respondents chose men to be more effective leaders than women while only 11.8% chose women. Around one third of participants thought they were equally effective in the leadership roles. The reason respondents’ comments that male were more effective they were similar to when they chose who they would like to work with between male and female managers/leaders. The explanations can be divided into two main groups: one associated with male personality and one associated with society.

Firstly, men have some outstanding personalities that were suitable in managerial roles and made them work effectively include decisiveness, confidence, quick at learning new things, good at dealing with pressure, and are open-minded.

Secondly, they do not face career discontinuity due to maternity and parental leave. The Vietnamese society has still been deeply affected by Confucianist principles which favour men rather than women (Nguyen, 2011). Household chores and child rearing were considered women’s duties, which explained that male managers/leaders had more time to concentrate on their careers. This results in a higher effectiveness and efficiency in men than women.

4.2.5 Benefits of the removal of glass ceiling

A Likert scale was also used to explore participants' attitudes towards the advantages of removing the glass ceiling in the Vietnam banking sector. Participants were asked to rate from 1 (Not important) to 5 (Important). The findings are presented in Table 4.9 below:
Table 4.9: Respondents' viewpoints towards the benefits of the removal of glass ceiling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Neither important nor not important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing productivity</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing costs</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing employee turnover</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing employee satisfaction</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlarging pool of management talent</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving decision making</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing customer satisfaction</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing creativity</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing competitiveness</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting government regulations</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding equal opportunity issues</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s the right thing to do”</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly the majority of respondents selected “somewhat important” for all the statements on the benefits of eliminating the glass ceiling in the banking sector. 42.6% of participants agreed that removal of the glass ceiling would lead to a rise in productivity whilst 32.4% decided that it would result in reducing costs for organizations. In the meantime, the elimination of the glass ceiling would reduce employee turnover according to 35.3% of respondents. Other benefits included increasing employee satisfaction and bringing more talents to organizations based on opinions of 44.1% of surveyed people. Decision making was improved and customer satisfaction would increase according to 38.2% and 35.3% of respondents respectively. Around half of participants agreed when the glass ceiling in the banking sector was erased, creativity and organizations’ competitiveness would grow. Only 30.9% thought that the removal of the glass ceiling would meet government regulations whereas 35.3% believed it would avoid the equal opportunity issues. Lastly, nearly half of respondents (42.6%) concluded it was the
right thing to do. In conclusion, this finding sheds light on the Area 4 and helps to answer sub-question 5 of the research.

4.3 Responses to interviews

Lead Question

Do you have any difficulties in career advancement?

Response from respondents

In my opinion women meet a lot of difficulties in their career advancement because there are a lot of things they have to do in life in addition to career. Their youth life is between 20 years and 35 or 40 years old. During that period they have to get married, have children and fulfil other family duties. Therefore, those responsibilities will take 3 or 4 years of their youth life from fully devotion to work. As a result, their career advancement is slower than men’s.

Lead question

Does your family or organization support you in being promoted to a higher managerial position?

Response from respondents

Both my family and organization supports me in my career advancement. But my priority is my family. The time I spend on work and work facilitating activities now is reduced in comparison with when I’m still single.

Lead question

In your opinion, are your skills and knowledge now sufficient for you to advance to higher managerial positions?

Response from respondents

As for knowledge, there is a famous quotation “Study, study, study”. Knowledge is unlimited so I can’t say I have enough knowledge. As for skills, when you want to climb the corporate ladder, you have to update yourself with a lot of new skills. And sometimes, people haven’t even realised which skills they have since they actually do the job.
Lead question

Is there anyone in your organization who provides guidance and support to staff to climb the corporate ladder?

Response from respondents

Yes, my manager. She really understands and sympathizes with me when I have to take care of some family responsibilities. However, honestly I have to say, my professional field is more suitable for women, so their chances of getting promoted are higher. My manager not only sees the talents and competences inside women which are suitable for the jobs but also understand the difficulties associated with family matters women met. For example, when I have to take maternity leave, she doesn’t consider it a disadvantage in my promotion.

Lead question

Among male and female managers/leaders, who do you prefer to work with?

Response from respondents

It is such a difficult question for me. At the moment, I’m very happy with my female manager. Male managers may not be affected by emotions while working; however, they also lack sympathy for female staff or junior managers.

Lead question

In top managerial positions such as CEO or general managers, who do you think is more effective among male and female?

Response from respondents

I think male CEO/general managers are more effective because they are less affected by emotions while working. They also have more time for work.

Lead question

Who is more effective among your male and female counterparts? Is there any difference in effectiveness and efficiency due to genders?
Response from respondents

Whether genders affect work’s effectiveness or efficiency or not depends on the features of the work itself. As for me, working with male counterparts has more fun, perhaps because different gender attracts each other. Thus, it is easier to reach a consensus than with female counterparts.

Lead question

In your opinion, which factor is the most important to reach the top position?

Response from respondents

Of most importance, a person should know how to assess staff’s abilities and should evaluate them fairly.

Lead question

Who possess that characteristic among male and female?

Response from respondents

Female managers are better in assessing staff abilities but male managers are fairer. Men are less affected by emotions. Sometimes a female manager often has her favourite junior; thus, when making decision, she is affected by that affection.

4.3.1 The existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnam banking sector

The research found that all interviewees highlighted there were a huge number of difficulties that women had to face in their career advancement, which answered the first and second sub-questions in Section 1.4 Chapter One and confirmed the existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnam banking sector. The challenges stemmed from society, organization (external factors) and themselves (internal factor).

The first external factor is the society stereotypes. Vietnamese people start to enter the professional life at the age of 23 after they finish their undergraduate level. Men are expected to fly higher in their career while women are expected to find “good” husbands and get married. As Interview J shared:

Women when reaching a certain age have to face the pressure of getting married from both their parents and society. Instead of being encouraged to
accumulate knowledge and experience for career advancement, they are expected to get married and have children.

After marriage, Vietnamese women are expected to put family at the first place and then their career and passion. They have to take care of their children and the household chores. This finding was in conjunction with the finding from the quantitative data as presented in part 4.3.2 of this chapter. As mentioned by Interview F:

*My parents-in-law also do not want me to stay at work too late at night. They help me to take care of my kid when I am at work so of course they don’t want me to go home late. Moreover, they also want their grandkid taken care by his own mother and father.*

The fact that family was prioritised greatly affected women’s career because they could not devote all their minds and thoughts on their job. Even when their supervisors or managers gave them the chances to show their abilities, they failed to show it. As a result, their chances of promotion reduced. Additionally even when their family supported them to climb the corporate ladder and their husband shared with them parts of family responsibilities, no interviewee was encouraged to reach the top positions. Interviewee H and J insisted:

*They support me to reach the middle managerial position but not the top position like CEO or general manager. Everyone says that women should not too ambitious in the career.*

The second external factor came from the organization. Most of the time men would be more considered as potential candidates for higher managerial roles. The second factor actually originated from the first factor as men do not have to spend time on child rearing. Thus, they can fully devote to their job. If a woman was being considered to a higher position and she was going to go on maternity leave, the activities of her team, department and organization will be badly impacted, especially when the new rule in Vietnam allowed women to go on six-month’s maternity leave. Interviewee J also explained further:

*Also after 6 month of maternity leave, women may be lagged behind in terms of knowledge. Men do not meet those barriers so they can climb the corporate ladder faster.*
Therefore, women who were single or married with grown-up children would have more opportunities to get promoted than women who are married with young children.

In addition, as men were not busy with family responsibilities, they had more time to go on business trips, go to business entertainment to expand their networks and show their skills and competencies to their superior. Interviewee B demonstrated:

*In Vietnamese culture, going for party or lunch is a norm in doing business. Most of the business contracts will be successful while partying or going to lunch/dinner with customers. That’s when men can show more skills than women. It is also easier for men to expand their connections. For example, sometimes, men also take part in a lot of sport activities. There they meet their senior and make friends with them easier. Thus, their chances of promotion are higher than women’s.*

Furthermore, there was not enough support provided for women’s career progression. Most of the interviewees were not aware of the availability of mentors or mentorship programs. Their direct supervisors did provide guidance and support but there were no official mentorship programs in their organizations.

As for internal factors, women did not acquire and demonstrate some “soft” skills needed for leaders/managers such as interpersonal skill in comparison with men. Interviewee B mentioned:

*The next difficulty is women’s lack of interpersonal skills. When meeting customers or business partners, men often show more interpersonal and communication skills than women do.*

Besides, many women did believe that child rearing and other family responsibilities were their duties and should be prioritised. Most respondents also stressed that to them their family always came first.

**4.3.2 Differences in leadership styles between male and female leaders/managers**

Results from interviews which supported Area 2 and the third sub-question showed the differences in leadership styles between male and female leaders/managers. Some respondents preferred male managers while some respondents liked to work with female managers more.
Table 4.10 below displays the differences in the way the two genders lead/manage, which explains the reasons for respondents’ preferences.

Table 4.10: Interviewees’ opinions towards the differences in the leadership/management styles among two genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male leaders/managers</th>
<th>Female leaders/managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Male managers provide their subordinates a lot of chances to take risks and prove themselves. Nonetheless, as Interviewee A commented, this approach was only suitable for experienced staff. As for beginners or fresh graduates, they did not know where and how to start the work.</td>
<td>• Female managers required high work quality. However, they did provide guidance and support to help their subordinates to achieve the standard of the work that they set while their male counterparts did not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They had higher level of tolerance and better vision in comparison with female.</td>
<td>• They were more careful and paid attention to details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They were better in creating plans and strategy for organizations.</td>
<td>• They had better professional knowledge in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They were more generous. On the contrary, their female counterparts paid too much attention to unnecessary details, which created an uncomfortable atmosphere for their staff.</td>
<td>• They were more sympathetic to their staff’s matters while male were sometimes too conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They were more decisive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They were more intelligent and had a faster work pace.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Although female managers were better at assessing staff’s abilities, male were fairer in staff’s performance appraisal. Female managers often assess based on emotions rather than facts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3 Gender and effectiveness of male and female leaders

Some interview participants concluded that the answer to the question “who is more effective among two genders?” depended on the characteristics of the job and different departments. This is the attribute to Area 3 and the fourth sub-question. Interviewee A shared:

*In the banking sector there are many different fields such as loans and credit, international payment. Loans and credit department often requires leaders to make quick decisions, and have a lot of connections; thus, male*
managers are more effective. However, my field requires paying attention to
details and carefulness; therefore, female managers are more suitable.

However, that explanation might be more applicable to the middle managers.
Findings from interviews also demonstrated a big number of respondents who
believed men were more effective in the top position like CEO or General Manager.

Interviewee E insisted the fact that the number of men in top positions in the
banking sector outnumbered the number of women showed male leaders/managers’
effectiveness. Other reasons that helped to explain their effectiveness were similar
to why respondents preferred one gender to another. For example, men were
described as being better at strategy making. They did not have to spend time on
family matters so they can devote their whole time to their work. Moreover, they
were more decisive which would help to solve the problems faster. As a result, in
the same period of time, men can handle more tasks than women. As Interviewee E
mentioned:

A good business strategy and plan will generate high profits for
organizations. In addition that person should be decisive. The current
business environment is changing at a very fast pace, so a delay in decision
making may bring damages to the organizations.

In addition, Interviewee E also observed that most the important decisions in her
organization were made by male executives. Female executives were only given the
tasks that were considered not as important as their male counterparts’. When she
was asked about the accuracy of the decisions made by male executives, she added:

I think 70% of decisions made by male managers are effective. 30% of the
failure is due to their conservativeness. They always think they are right and
make decision fast without taking into considerations other people’s ideas
and opinions.

Furthermore, they were said to have better interpersonal skill, broad network and
connections, which might benefit the organizations. Leimbach (2013) asserted that
managers’ ability in creating effective international network was vital to the success
of their organizations. As Vietnamese male managers had more spare time, they
could invest in expanding the network, which subsequently made them more
effective in the top positions.
Finally, men were concluded to be impartial in performance appraisal. In addition to the fairness of appraisal procedures set up by the organization, employees’ perceptions over managers/leaders’ implementation of the produces (which is known as “interactional fairness”) will greatly affect their job satisfaction, satisfaction with their supervisors, and performance (Swiercz, Bryan, Eagle, Bizzotto & Renn, 2012).

There were some respondents who did not give the proper answer to the question because simply they did not have the chance to compare the effectiveness among male and female leaders/managers. Interviewee H commented:

"Most CEOs in Vietnamese banking sectors are male so I don’t have chances to compare their effectiveness."

4.4 Chapter summary

Chapter Four provides analysis of collected information from online survey and interviews in the form of descriptions, tables and figures. Data was collected from staff, head of departments and managers of three banks in Vietnam. Table 4.11 below summarises the main findings of the study from both sources:

Table 4.11: Summary of the major findings of the study from the mixed methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>The major findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Glass ceiling did exist in the Vietnamese banking sector. The barriers to women’s career’s advancement emerge from three main sources: Social stereotypes which assume that men are breadwinners while women are in charge of household chores, child rearing and other family responsibilities. Organizations do not provide sufficient support for women’s career progression. Women themselves are not confident. They also lack some necessary skills to be effective in top positions. Lastly, they themselves are more committed to family responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Men and women were different in their leadership/management styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There are mixed viewpoints to the effectiveness of male and female leaders/managers. However, the number of respondents who chose men to be more effective leaders/managers was greater than the number of those who chose women to be more effective or men and women to be equally effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The removal of glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector did offer some benefits to organizations and the sector as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data analysis supplies empirical findings to the inconclusive literature review in Chapter Two and helps to answer the main research questions and sub-questions. The findings from interviews verify and strengthen the results of the online survey.

The next chapter, Chapter Five discusses and analyses in further detail the findings from the mixed methods.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Can you have a family if you want one ... and still have the career you desire? (Hymowitz, 2013)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presents the findings of the analysed data from interviews and online survey. This chapter further discusses the findings in connection with the literature in Chapter Two in order to gain deeper insight into whether the results support, extend, or contradict previous studies on the similar topics. It also seeks to answer the main research question, the sub-questions as well as test the hypothesis raised in Chapter One.

Demographic data and gender-of-interviewer effects were also taken into consideration during the first and second level of analysis to reduce biased results. The structure of Chapter Five is similar to that of Chapter Four to maintain coherence and cohesion of the study.

5.2 Bank staff’s profile and gender-of-interviewer effects

Findings indicate that male respondents to the online survey (11%) made up a very small proportion in comparison with female participants. There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. Firstly, the survey was carried out in a female dominated environment. Secondly, there are a numerous studies which show a gap in the response rate among male and female respondents such as Landis, Sullivan & Sheley (1973); Galla, Frisone, Jeffrey & Gaer (1981); Lueptow, Moser, & Pendleton (1990); Tu & Liao (2007) as cited in Flores-Macias & Lawson (2008).

54.4% of respondents were single and 26% of the surveyed participants were married with children. The rest of respondents were married but did not yet have any children. A cross tabulation of age with marital status found that the majority of respondents (38.2%) who were between 24 and 29 years old were single as illustrated in Figure 5.14.
This result supported the trend observed by many studies including Vu (2009) that the age at first marriage of Vietnamese women is increasing. Marital status plays an important role in better understanding about the glass ceiling because once a woman gets married, her domestic responsibilities will increase (World Trade Press, 2010). When she is single, she only has to take care of herself, but when she enters the marriage life, she has to take care of her husband, children, and even her husband’s family. The role of women as mothers, housewives, home-makers and managers can make it harder for women to meet their commitment at work (Clark, 2000 as cited in Devi Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013). When women fail to meet the demands of their job, their career outcomes are badly affected (Voydanoff, 2005 as cited in Devi Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013). The result from the interviews analysed in section 4.3.1 also shows that the marital status and the number of children women have will have an impact on their chances of promotion.

The outcome from the online survey as described in Figure 4.10 in Section 4.2.1 reveals a small percentage of respondents in supervisory and middle managerial roles in comparison with professional and office support staff. Supervisors refer to respondents who work as team leaders or heads of projects while middle managers were responsible for the performance of departments. This result was in accordance with the fewer number of supervisors and managers in banks than that of staff. Table 5.12 shows a cross tabulation of gender and positions of respondents in their organizations.
Table 5.12: Participants' gender and positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office support</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional staff</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory position</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle managerial position</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Position</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Sex</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the female respondents, 8.2% of them were supervisors and 4.9% were middle managers while of the male respondents, the percentage of supervisors was equal to that of middle managers.
In addition to respondents’ profiles, “Gender-of-interviewer effects” (Huddy, Billig, Bracciodieta, Hoeffler, Moynihan, and Pugliani, 1997) were also worth being noted as Galla et al. (1981) as cited in Flores-Macias and Lawson (2008) insist that a female interviewer receives more non-traditional responses from respondents. This study is one of the difficulties that women meet in their career progression and carried out by a female researcher who comes from the same culture with respondents. Therefore, based on the standpoint theory which affirms that a social location can affect human perceptions (Zaytseva, 2010), it can be deduced that the researcher might understand the challenges that respondents have to face better than a male interviewer and respondents might feel more comfortable to share their feelings and points of views and offer more critical responses to the researcher (Kane &Macaulay, 1993).

Although there are mixed viewpoints on the standpoint theory (Hekman, 2013) and on the gender-of-interviewer effects (Flores-Macias & Lawson, 2008), the issue is well aware of and the gender of interviewer is taken into account into to avoid the potential biases in the analysis and discussion stage of the report (Flores-Macias & Lawson, 2008).

5.3 Discussion of the questionnaire

Besides the five main areas of this research, this study is also based on four hypotheses as stated below:

H1- The glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector prevents women from being promoted to higher positions.

H2- There are differences in the leadership/management styles among male and female.

H3- There is a connection between gender and leadership effectiveness.

H4- The removal of the glass ceiling may bring benefits to organizations

5.3.1 The existence of the glass ceiling

The examination on the existence of the glass ceiling and classification of factors which hinder women’s career progress focus on Area 1 and sub questions 1 and 2 in Section 1.4 of this report.
Data analysis from the survey confirmed that women in the Vietnamese banking sector had to face various barriers in their career progression at both industry and organization level. At industry level, 50% of respondents felt the existence of the glass ceiling to a moderate extent while 16.2% of them even felt them in a great extent. At organization level, 39.7% of them recognize the barriers to a little extent. Likewise, one third of them felt them to a moderate extent. This result is in full compliance with the conclusions of previous studies in different contexts ranging from research on developing countries such as Nigeria (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013) to developed nations such as Singapore (Dimovski et al., 2010), from private sectors (Castano et al., 2010) to state bureaucracies (Storvik & Schöne, 2008). Being the first research on glass ceiling in the context of the Vietnamese banking sector, it helps to extend the literature by adding one more empirical case to literature as well.

5.3.1.1 Women’s roles in organizations
This research shows a strong advocate for women’s sufficient capability of serving in senior positions with 63.2% of online survey participants believing in the fact that women had as many abilities, knowledge and skills as men did (See Table 5 in Section 4.2.2). The faith in women’s abilities is a crucial factor in lifting women’s self-confidence and creating a sense of urgency in removing the barriers to women’s advancement. However, Sharpe (2000) and Barbara (2005) as cited in Kolade and Kehinde (2013) argue that women demonstrate more leadership and management skills than their male colleagues do. They are praised for producing higher quality works, being better at setting goals and mentoring based on the findings of California-based Hagsberg Consulting Group study carried out in 2000 (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013).

In the meantime, 55.9% of respondents thought that women had equal chances to climb the corporate ladder like men did. Interestingly roughly 85% of male respondents within their gender believed in equal opportunities for women but only approximately 52% of female participants within their gender had the same opinion. This finding contradicts the results of a survey by Bain (2010) as cited in Brief (2011) that 80 per cent of the female and 50% of male respondents believe that women do not have equal opportunity for promotion into senior management positions.
Greater opportunities in job promotion, a type of non-financial rewards, have a significant impact on job satisfaction, which subsequently affects employee performance, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, employee turnover intentions or turnover, and job attitudes (Lan, Okechuku, Zhang & Cao, 2013). It is a very effective motivating tool for employees who do not work for money but for higher social status, power, self-esteem (career orientation) or the social value of their work (calling orientation) (Lan et al., 2013). Organizations will benefit because unlike other types of resources such as money and machinery, the more organization utilise human resources, the higher quality and greater quality it generates (Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis & Ngalo, 2011).

Data analysis also reveals the increasing number of women in managerial positions, which is in line with the findings of earlier research in literature such as Al-Manasra, 2013; Buckalew et al., 2012). However, the aforementioned studies and real life situation of the Vietnamese banking sector (124 female vs. 416 male senior staff) reaffirm the senior position as “a male-dominated field” (Buckalew et al., 2012, p.145).

Although there were more and more female managers, 23.5% of respondents thought that women met many difficulties to be promoted to middle managerial from entry-level positions. There are numerous reasons why moving through the ranks from entry-level positions are challenging for women including lack of right qualifications, lack of chances for workplace learning (Radford, 2009). Some women simply were stuck in the lower rank due to the gender biased recruitment process and insufficient informal networks (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013). Nevertheless, 42.6% of participants disagreed that it was not easy for women to be promoted to middle managerial posts.

In top positions, interestingly while the researcher assumes respondents might agree with the insufficient number of women in the boardroom, 38.2% of respondents disagreed that women were under-represented in the boardroom. Meanwhile, only 25% of them thought there should be more female executives. The majority of respondents’ viewpoints on the ease of being promoted for women and the “reasonable” percentage of women in middle management and top positions despite the reality that those positions are still “Men’s club” suggest some possible explanations. Promotions within their organizations were based on employees’ own
merits. There were few or no barriers for women in their organizations to get promoted to middle management; thus, any high performers who showed leadership and management talents, and tried to get higher positions would be given chances. It was also possible that respondents were happy with the current situation and they felt no need to increase the number women in the boardroom.

The result of data analysis also showed half of the respondents (47.1%) disagreement with the fact that there was a pay gap in favour of men, which is contradictory to some studies’ findings which reveal a pay discrepancy among two genders (Casserly, 2013; Oxfam New Zealand, 2013; Guarini, 2013). In the banking sector specifically, for every dollar a male bank staff member earns, his female counterparts only receive 96 cents (Andersen, 2012). The positive pay gap for men exists, as part of the sticky floor/glass ceiling effects (Guarini, 2013) because women lack confidence to negotiate pay (Belgorodskiy, Crump, Griffiths, Logan, Peter & Richardson, 2012). Women also have different viewpoints and responses to competition in the workplace, which consequently affect their outcomes and performances. As a result, they are paid less especially in the performance-based jobs (Manning & Saidi, 2010). Pay gap will lead to job dissatisfaction (Andersen, 2012) and affect employees’ and organizations’ performance as a whole. Although there are numerous of studies confirming the existence of pay gap, there is also some research reaching the same conclusion that there is no pay inequality. For example, results of a study on glass ceiling in the context of Nigerian construction industry (a male-dominated field), 52.8% of the respondents see no differences in pay among male and female workers with the same qualifications and experiences at different levels in organizations (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013).

The online survey’s findings illustrate the disapproval of 38.2% of respondents over the statement that competitiveness in women was viewed as a negative trait. As the characteristics of a person, competitiveness refers to ‘the enjoyment of interpersonal competition and the desire to win and be better than others’” (Spence & Helmreich, 1983, p. 41 as cited in Fletcher, Major & Davis, 2008, p.900). There has been a large part of literature in the past which assume that men were more competitive and eager to compete than women (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2011) because most of the past studies focused on men (Nel et al., 2011). Nonetheless, some recent studies (Ahmed, 2011) found there is no difference among two genders in competitiveness. As in general competitiveness is considered male-stereotypical style, but any
women who demonstrate competitiveness might be perceived negatively (Cuadrado, Morales, & Recio, 2008; Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998 as cited in Dimovski et al., 2010). However, among respondents this study shows a more open-minded attitude towards competitiveness in women. It can be deduced that Vietnamese banking environment respects and encourages competition and the subordinates have positive attitude about women’s desire to succeed.

Although data analysis show the agreement of respondents on the adequate capabilities of women in comparison with men in senior positions, the upward trend of women in managerial posts, an open-minded view towards women’s competitiveness traits, 35.3% of them could not deny women had to be better performers than men in order to be promoted. This finding is in line with Thornton (2013)’s observation on the higher expectation for women’s performance.

To sum up, the existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector is examined in details by further analysing and discussing the eight myths around women in organizations. Some findings are consistent with literature but some are specifically applicable only to the banking sector in Vietnam.

5.3.1.2 Obstacles to women’s career advancement

Data assessment also contribute evidence to the existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector by evaluating a list of difficulties or layers of the glass ceiling women might meet in their career advancement. Some obstacles are visible but the others are vague because they lie in people’s minds. There are several criteria researchers used to categorise those impediments including sources (Dimovski et al., 2010; Al-Manasra, 2013; Kolade & Kehinde, 2013), form of discrimination (Bell et al., 2002) or visibility of the difficulties (this study). The discussion of obstacles to women’s career progression was based on both on sources and visibility as criteria for classification. Fourteen statements concerned with the obstacles which hinder women’s career progression were grouped into four main sources: society, their organization, their family and themselves.

Firstly, women’s career advancement is affected by the Vietnamese society’s negative perceptions towards women in high positions and women’s roles in the family. A total of 35.5% of respondents criticised that the perceptions that women should not be in a position of authority over men was a significant difficulty. One third of them even responded that perception is a noticeable obstacle. Moreover,
35.5% of participants replied the belief is that women’s careers are not as important as men’s prevented them from career progression noticeably. The view that the role of women is inferior to that of men is very common in many belief systems in the world such as Confucianism and Hinduism (Apworld, 2013). In Hinduism, women had no public authority while Confucianism believed that women should be obedient to their husbands (Apworld, 2013).

Being a neighbour of China and under the Chinese colony for thousands of years, Vietnam has been influenced by Confucianism which puts a strong emphasis on women’s roles as daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, and mother-in-law, and expects them to fulfil the wishes and needs of their fathers, husbands and sons (Ebrey, n.d.). Although the influence of Confucianism has reduced over the years, “The Four Virtues (to be skilful in her work, modest in her appearance, soft-spoken in her language, and principled in her behaviour) and The Three Obediences (to father, husband and then son) remain powerful ideals for feminine behaviour” (Rydstrom and Drummond, 2004 as cited in Locke, Hoa & Tam, 2012, p.12). This perception might result in the Vietnamese society’s expectation that women should stay at home and accomplish their roles as wives and mothers and women’s negative perceptions about themselves if they fail to meet those expectations.

As the society is not in favour of women in higher roles than men, women might not be chosen to be promoted in top positions despite their qualification, experiences, knowledge and competences. Additionally, when women are born and raised with the belief that they are secondary, few women would have enough confidence and ambition to reach the top. They also tend to spend more time on domestic responsibilities more than their partners because they consider these are their main duties. This is a factor which adds to gender stereotypes and the “psychological glass ceiling” (Austin, 2009) as discussed in Chapter 2. This result supports the findings by Hoobler et al., (2009) which conclude that instead of the actual family-work conflict, bosses’ perceptions over female employees’ family-work conflict actually limit their chances of promotions.

Secondly, women face many challenges due to corporate practices and culture. Around 38% of participants saw corporate structures and practices that favour male employees a significant obstacle. More than 39% of respondents in the study by Dimovski et al., (2010) in the Malaysian context agreed that men receive more
organizational support and trust than women. Evidences of non-supportive corporate policies and practices were also found in the Lebanese banking sector (Jamali et al., 2006 as cited in Özbilgin & Syed, 2010).

Biased corporate structures and practices have a negative impact on women’s attitudes, which subsequently influence organizations’ performance. When women feel they are discriminated against, they might feel threatened and lose their trust in the organization, especially in time of uncertainty (Stawiski, Deal, & Ruderman, 2010). As a consequence, staff turnover rate will grow and organizations might lose their talented employees.

Women not only have to cope with partial corporate practices and policies but also receive inadequate equal career development and employers’ genuine commitment to gender equality. 38.2% of respondents considered the former factor a significant obstacle while 36.8% of participants regarded the second factor a noticeable impediment. Wentling (2003) as cited in Man et al. (2009) indicates that the more knowledge, skills and professional development opportunities women have, the higher are the chances of promotion. However, women’s access to job training or career counselling is limited in comparison with men (Bell et al., 2000; Insch et al., 2008). Very few companies make efficient attempts in giving them access to all training and career development programs (Metz, 2003 as cited in Man et al., 2009). These two factors are attributes of the first layer of the glass ceiling aforementioned in Chapter 2.

Additionally, 35.5% of respondents thought male domination of senior positions in the banking sector restricted them from rising to the top positions. The barriers arise due to the similarity-attraction theory Byrne (1971) as cited in Insch et al. (2008). Moreover, the promotion decision makers for top positions are more likely to promote the people who are similar to them. Therefore, women’s chances to rise to the top positions are reduced by the power of numbers in a male-dominated environment (Kanter, 1977) as cited in Powell & Butterfield, 1994).

As a result of male domination of senior positions, there were very few female executives. 27.9% of respondents felt the lack of female role models in the Vietnamese banking sector was a significant obstacle for them.
The last category is associated with the first and the last layer of the glass ceiling discussed in Section 2.2.5 in Chapter Two. The first and visible layer is the difficulties connected to women’s lack of experiences, the conflict between work and family responsibilities. A total of 38.8% of participants found the difficulties to balance their family life and work significantly prevented them from progressing further in their career. The other obstacles including women’s lack of confidence, ambition and enthusiasm are harder to notice. Women’s lack of ambition in comparison with men was a noticeable obstacle according to 29.4% of participants. 39.7% of the respondents also did not believe in the fact that they would have enough abilities, skills and knowledge to work in top positions.

The lack of experiences originates from the partial corporate practices and policies as well as the lack of organizations’ support and commitment as discussed above. Women’s lack of confidence and ambition might be the result of the feeling of inferiority in the society and organizations, and lack of advocates and encouragement from family and organizations. The female brain has more estrogen and progesterone, two hormones which make a woman more sensitive to emotional nuance; thus they are more responsive to disapproval or rejection (Ball, 2008). Moreover, human beings are likely to look for self-verfication (other people’s reflection on the belief someone holds about him or herself). If women find negative feedbacks about themselves, they will be more likely to believe those evaluations (Ball, 2008). As a result, their self-confidence and timidity diminish.

Results of a survey in the British context show that 48% of respondents believe they would have gained greater achievements in their career if they had more confidence (Winter, 2013).

**H1 and Area 1:** The result of the survey data analysis supports H1 that there are plenty of factors that might affect women’s career progress. The Tables (4.5 and 4.6) represented in Section 4.2.2 of the report affirm the existence of the glass ceiling and categorise the barriers to women’s career advancement.

Some factors originate from the society, their organization but some are created by themselves. However, all the factors are interconnected and some are causes and effects of others. Hence, the removal of the glass ceiling will be dependent on the shift in the society’s and organizations’ perceptions towards women’s roles and women themselves.
5.3.2 The differences in the leadership styles among male and female

The survey outcomes demonstrate mixed viewpoints towards male and female leadership styles. While only 14.7% of respondents did not believe gender of their leaders/managers would matter, around 85% of participants chose male or female as more desirable leaders/managers to work with. This finding endorses the proposition that there are the differences between male and female leadership/management styles (Rosener, 1990; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999; Kennard, 2012; Eisner, 2013).

Male leaders/managers were said to be more focused, decisive, confident and open-minded. They were more impartial and never let personal issues affect their work and evaluation of employees. A possible explanation might be that men have a higher level of trait emotional intelligence than that of women given the fact that the ability to manage and express emotions is the key attribute of emotional intelligence (Shahzad & Bagum, 2012). In general they were also easier to work with.

On the other hand, women were portrayed as being more sympathetic, supportive, friendly and helpful. In addition, they were good at communication skills; hence, it was easy for subordinates to share their thoughts. Female leaders/managers also tended to be more involved in improving their subordinates’ quality of life while their male counterparts were criticised for focusing too much on discipline. Besides, they were well-organized and good at creating vision for the business.

However, they were not as good as men in dealing with stress at work. One justification for women’s poor management of stress at the workplace, especially for married women might be that they are under too much pressure from maintaining the high position and from fulfilling domestic responsibilities at the same time, as discussed 5.2.1. Other factors contributing to stress at work for women include heavy workload, time pressure, their inability to make personal relations and their limited social visits (Sultana, 2012).

This result was consistent with findings of Rosener (1990) and Tannen (1995) as cited in Eisner (2013) women’s emphasis includes relationship, people, collaboration, and furthering rapport whilst men’s focus are on power, task, and showing their ability and knowledge.
**H2 and Area 2:** The result supports H2 which hypothesises that there are differences in leadership styles between male and female. Figure 4.13 and Table 4.7 displayed in Section 4.2.3 and discussed with literature concentrate on the second area of the study and show a sharp distinction in the leadership styles between the two genders. The differences result from gender differences and social stereotypes and pressure on women.

### 5.3.3 Gender and leadership effectiveness

The relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness/organizations’ performance is still inconclusive in the literature. Further analyses of the data revealed the mixed opinions among respondents on the more effective gender as leaders/managers. Nevertheless, 60.3% of respondents chose men to be more effective while only 11.8% chose women. The result was in compliance with that of Eagly & Karau (2002) as cited in Singh *et al.* (2012) and Heilman, Block and Martell (1995) as cited in Quader (2011), but did not conform to findings by Bass & Avolio (1994) and Taylor, Morin, Cohn, Clark, and Wang (2008) as cited in Carnes and Radojevich-Kelley (2011).

An analysis of respondents’ comments on why males were more effective than female executives were similar to their preferences to work with male and female managers/leaders. There are two main reasons: men’s personalities and management styles and gender discrimination. Male leaders/managers display innumerable leadership traits which contribute to the leadership effectiveness such as high level of emotional intelligence, decisiveness and confidence. Moreover, they do not have to deal with gender inequalities which put more burdens on women’s shoulders, lessen their time and energy to contribute to their careers, and indirectly affect their effectiveness.

However, all the characteristics and management styles of female leaders as described by respondents are matched with the characteristics of transformational leaders. A lot of studies have provided evidence to show the positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizations’ outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004 as cited in Kovjanić, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke & Dick, 2012). A possible explanation for the choice of survey participants is the fact that the views of respondents on effectiveness of male and female leaders are affected by their perceptions of leaders, stereotypes and expectations (Riggio, 2010).
**H3 and Area 3**: The result supports H3 which hypothesises that there is a correlation between gender and leadership effectiveness. This section set out to examine Area 3 as mentioned in Section 1.4 Chapter One. The reasons male leaders/managers were voted to be more effective were exhibited in Section 4.2.4. Subordinates’ perceptions, stereotypes and expectations of leaders were taken into consideration when the phenomenon was examined.

**5.3.4 Benefits of removing the glass ceiling**

The elimination of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector might bring various advantages to organizations as shown in Table 4.9 in Section 4.2.5 Chapter Four of this study. As a matter of fact, the twelve benefits were interdependent. When female employees from entry level to top position felt they were treated equally with the male counterparts, they had more chance to grow in their organizations, they would feel more satisfied. Satisfied employees are more productive, innovative, and loyal, which subsequently lead to a decrease in employee turnover, an increase in employee morale, resulting in increased employee productivity and employee satisfaction leads to customer retention (Gallup Reports, 2006 as cited in Mochama, 2013).

Only 30.9% thought that meeting government regulations was somewhat important whereas 35.3% supported the importance of the equal opportunity issues to a moderate extent. Nearly half of respondents (42.6%) concluded it was “the right thing” to do.

Among twelve statements relating to the benefits of abolishing the barriers to women advancements, *enhancing competitiveness* was chosen by the highest number of respondents (approximately 53%) to be somewhat important to organizations. A boost in competitiveness is one of the most important goals of organizations because it allows companies to gain high profits; in contrast, a lack of competitiveness can push them to bankruptcy (Audretsch & Walshok, 2013). In the past, technological advances and innovations are considered as the main sources to generate competitiveness for companies; however, in the knowledge economy today, effective human resources management even becomes more critical (Terpstra & Limpaphayom, 2012). Therefore, removing the barriers to women’s progress in the Vietnamese banking sector will contribute to Vietnamese banks’ effective
human resources management practices and consequently help them to gain an edge over their competitors.

**H4 and Area 4:** The result supports H4 which hypothesises that removing the glass ceiling brings many benefits to the organizations. Table 4.9 in Section 4.2.5 was further analysed in comparison with literature ratified the benefits that the elimination of the glass ceiling brings to organization. This section relates to Area 4 and attempts to answer the sub-question 5 as discussed in section 1.4 of this study.

**5.4 Discussion of the interviews**

**5.4.1 The existence of the glass ceiling**

The examination on the existence of the glass ceiling and classification of factors which hinder women’s career progress with a focus on Area 1 and sub questions 1 and 2 in Section 1.4 of this report seek to provide further evidence and gain a more thorough understanding on the difficulties women meet.

Findings from the interviews support the proposition that there were barriers hindering women’s career advancement, which was consistent with findings from the questionnaires and other research in literature. Furthermore, analysis from ten interviews provided a better sense of the difficulties that women met specifically in the Vietnamese context.

The most outstanding and frequently mentioned barrier (mentioned by 70% of interviewees) was gender stereotypes, which chained women from the time when they were little girls till when they grow up. A girl is expected to get married and have children rather than to pursue further education and career development. She also has to face the “peer pressure” and if she does not get married at “a certain age”, she might feel there is something wrong about herself.

After marriage, although child rearing is supposed to be shared among couples, the wife always takes a primary role. She cannot spend as much time and efforts on work as when she is still single. Even though she works full time, she will be the one who stays home when the kids are sick or wake up when they cough or cry in the middle of the night (Marks, 2011). She will be the one who picks up the kids from school most of the time. She will be criticised if she is not available when her children need her (Marks, 2011). There is a common saying in Vietnam: “Con hư tài mẹ” (If a child is spoiled, it is her/his mother’s fault), which assumes the sole
and primary role of mothers in child rearing. Hence, due to social expectation and family responsibilities, Vietnamese women have to refuse chances of promotion or fail to compete with men, especially in top positions, as commitment and devotion are inseparable with the top roles (Castano et al., 2010).

Further data analyses of the interviews also showed the consistency with literature that women do not receive the same support from their family to reach the top position like men do. Moreover, 60% of the sample indicated that they family and husband did encourage them to get higher positions, but not to the top because of the conflict between work and life. In middle managerial positions they were still expected to carry out their household chores and childcare. However, while men often receive more emotional support from their spouses, spouses in the same occupation are more likely to provide informational support, i.e., useful information, advice and guidance than those working in different fields (Wallace & Jovanovic, 2011).

Women’s marital status is taken into account when they are considered for higher positions. This finding supports the notion that there is a correlation between marriage and promotion. Results from a survey by the American Historical Association revealed that it took married female history professors longer to be promoted than unmarried female history professors whilst married and unmarried male history professors are promoted faster than their female counterparts, regardless of the women's marital status (The Huffington Post, 2013).

Furthermore, the Vietnamese government’s two-child restriction unintentionally provides women with two children or single women more chances to be promoted. One explanation for this finding is that women with only one child are expected to go on a six-month maternity leave, which may disrupt the organizations’ activities. In addition once they return to the workplace after six months, their professional knowledge and skills need to be updated. Thus, they are not as potentially promotable as their single colleagues, or two-child mothers. As a result, there is a need for further investigation if the new policy (the extension from three-month to six-month maternity leave) will facilitate women’s career or hold them back. Productivity of the respondents should be taken into account in order to reduce the biased results (DePaulo, 2013).
In addition to the aforementioned external factors from society and organizational practices, the internal factor that prevents women from rising to the top is they themselves believe child rearing and family responsibilities are their priorities. Therefore, some women were willing to give up career advancement because they were afraid that they could not maintain the work and life balance (Buckalew et al., 2012). Around 30% of respondents in a study by Parker (2009) indicated that they could not advance in their career because of family obligations and responsibilities (Buckalew et al., 2012).

Furthermore, it is not all about the Vietnamese culture and Confucianism to blame for women’s slow progress to top positions. Men and women do have different biological characteristics. There is no age limit for men to have children but for women, age determines the ability to get pregnant and have children (Guthrie, 2013). Meanwhile, the best time for both men and women to devote to work and get ahead in their career is at the same period that women should have children. Thus, women have to face much greater pressure in comparison with men, which badly affect their chances of promotion.

The last barrier to women’s career advancement based on interview analysis is women’s lack of interpersonal skills, especially in dealing with customers. This finding is not entirely surprising because the explanation for this lies in the domestic responsibilities discussed above. Anyone who wants to learn any skills need time and practice. Women simply are occupied with their family responsibilities, so they have to refuse informal meeting with customers in restaurants or in sport events. As a consequence, they do not have opportunities to accumulate necessary skills and experience for promotion.

However, narratives from a male manager also revealed that the barriers exist partly because of women’s priority on their physical appearance which prevents them from gaining the experiences and skills. They seemed to be reluctant to go on business trips with unfavourable weather condition just because it might affect their looks. “They always have to appear like it’s 9AM” (Marks, 2011, p.2). It is lack of enthusiasm in accomplishing assignments that contributes to slow progress of women to senior positions.

**H1 and Area 1:** The result of the analysis of interviews also supports H1 that there are numerous factors that stop women from advancing to top positions. Quotations
from interviewees in Section 4.3.1 of the report confirm the existence of the glass ceiling and categorise the barriers to women’s career advancement. In addition to the similar factors discovered from the quantitative data analysis in Section 4.2.2, the results from qualitative data analysis reveals new factors that add to the barriers to women’s career progression.

5.4.2 The differences in the leadership styles among male and female

According to the analysed data of the interviews in Section 4.3.2, male and female leaders differ in their leadership/management styles. This finding is in accordance with the outcomes of the survey and findings of previous study including Rosener (1990) or Eisner (2013). While male managers/leaders in the Vietnamese banking sector show a more task-oriented leadership style, their female counterparts show a more relationship-oriented style (Northouse, 2012).

Similar to the findings of the survey, male managers were described as being decisive and quick at handling tasks. Decisiveness is an important trait of leaders/managers because the quicker decision are made, the more work is done. It also helps to avoid “risk aversion” (the inability to move forward with decisions) or “analysis paralysis” (the on-going process of information collection which lengthens the decision making process) (Steinbrecher, 2013). On the contrary, female managers/leaders were claimed to be too careful and detailed, which created an uncomfortable atmosphere for their staff and delay in the decision making process. In today’s fast changing business world, immediate reactions and decisions are crucial to organizations’ success; otherwise business continuity will be disrupted. For example, while two main competitors of Nokia – the used-to-be world No.1 mobile maker, i.e., Apple and Samsung are very innovative in the smartphone segment with powerful operating systems iOS (for Iphone) and Android (for Samsung Galaxy), Nokia is too slow in introducing MeeGo. When MeeGo was released in the market, it was too late. Nokia was subsequently acquired by Microsoft due to failure to compete in the market (Lomas, 2012).

However, whether male leaders/managers’ quick decisions results in efficiency and effectiveness of work outcomes or not was not tested. Quick decisions can lead to mistakes as necessary information needed to make right decisions is not gathered adequately. Richard Heitz, a neuroscientist at Vanderbilt University asserts that "When we try to do things too quickly, we tend to make more errors and then when
we slow down we tend to be more accurate” (Ghose, 2012, para. 2). Therefore, effective business leaders should listen, involve and value other people’s opinions.

Following the results of the qualitative data analysis, in addition to being decisive, male managers give their subordinates more empowerment than females. Employee empowerment refers to “a planned and systematic process of transferring power, authority with responsibility and accountability, to the employees by the managers” (Ghosh, 2013). Fernandez & Moidogaziev (2013) argues that it is one of the most effective HR practices that facilitate to keep organization competitive and innovative. It also increases job involvement, job satisfaction, career satisfaction and organizational commitment (Noorliza et al, 2006 as cited in Ghosh, 2013). Nonetheless, it is only applicable given the fact that employees have sufficient work experience and the ability to work independently.

Data analysis also show that male managers were more impartial and less affected by emotions when making decisions or giving feedback on subordinates’ performances than females. The result aligned with a huge amount of previous studies that supported the connection between gender, emotions and emotional expressivity (Latu, Mast & Kaiser, 2013).

Being emotional has both good and bad sides. On the one hand, female managers/leaders might be more understanding, and sympathetic to their staff. For example, a female employee cannot focus completely on work because her son is ill. Her female manager might let her leave work earlier while a male manager might not understand the worry of the mother and only allow her to leave after the office time. The reason that lies behind women’s interpersonal interconnectedness is during childhood they were encouraged to interact, cooperate with others and express their emotions and themselves (Quader, 2011).

On the other hand, female managers tend to fail to control emotions and make decisions based more on emotions than male. If employees feel the decisions are biased, it will badly influence their behaviour and attitudes. Particularly in performance-based jobs, partial evaluation of staff abilities and skills will subsequently have an impact on organizations’ productivity, effectiveness and competitive advantage (Boachie-Mensah & Dogbe, 2011)
Furthermore, male leaders/managers’ strength lies in the ability to create plans and strategy for organizations. This finding supports Kennard (2012) who insisted that men were better at strategic vision. A survey by Zenger and Folkman (2012) with the sample consisting of 7280 leaders in some of the most successful organizations also reached the same conclusion that men scored higher than women in the ability to develop strategic perspectives.

Unlike male leaders/managers, women have a different set of traits, skills and leadership styles. Data analysis also show female leaders/managers’ have a high requirement for work quality. However, they did provide guidance and support to help their subordinates to achieve the standard of the work that they set while their male counterparts did not. One the one hand, the employees will feel supported and more confident in finishing the jobs. One the other hand, creative ideas will be limited because employees just follow the previous approach. They also do not have chances to take risk as well as show their talents.

Furthermore, they were said to have better professional knowledge in the banking field than males by both male and female participants. It is opposite in the field of political knowledge where women tend to demonstrate lower level of knowledge (Dolan, 2011).

**H2 and Area 2:** The result supports H2 which hypothesise that there are differences in leadership styles among male and female. Table 4.10 shown in Section 4.3.2 and discussed with literature focus on Area 2 of the study and continues to show a set of contrast features in the leadership styles among two genders. This section answers the third sub-question as mentioned in Section 1.4 of this research.

**5.4.3 Gender and leadership effectiveness**

There are diverse points of view on the relation among gender, leadership effectiveness. Data analysis in Section 4.3.3 in Chapter Four revealed that there is weak correlation between the two variables in the middle managerial positions but strong correlation at the top. This finding is contradictory to the result of the study by Zenger & Folkman (2012) which indicated that at a lower level women were rate higher than men as better overall leaders, but the gap grew wider in higher positions. The respondents’ viewpoints on fitness of gender in the middle managerial roles are also the same as the stereotypes attributed to each gender.
In the top position, male leaders/managers are considered to be more effective by the majority of respondents (70%). The finding is consistent with that of the quantitative data and a research by Singh et al. (2012). The phenomenon can be explained by respondents’ preference of male in leadership/management role to female including men’s strength in strategy creation, broader connections, decisiveness, fairness and commitment to work due to less domestic responsibilities. Various studies have confirmed the positive relation between leadership effectiveness and the traits that male leaders/managers in the Vietnamese banking sector. For instance, evidence on the facilitation of networking on leadership effectiveness were detected in both quantitative studies by Kim & Yukl (1995) and qualitative studies by Amabile et al. (2004) as cited in Yukl (2012).

There are several possible explanations for the choice of male leaders/managers to be the more effective. First of all, it cannot be denied that men have numerous skills, abilities and competencies which are crucial to become effective leaders/managers. Second, from the quantitative data analysis, women were often expected to perform better than men in the same role. One respondent in the study by Zenger and Folkman (2012) shared that female leaders were put under the pressure of making no mistake. High expectations might affect subordinates’ and peer’s assessment on their effectiveness as if male and female have the same performance, males will be perceived to be more effective.

It also is of interest to know that culture has significant impact on leaders, leadership styles and subordinates’ attitude and behaviour towards leaders (Hofstede, 1996; Schein, 2004; House, et al., 2004 as cited in Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013). Therefore it is necessary to investigate how Vietnamese culture, value and attitude have an effect on respondents’ feedbacks.

The Hofstede culture dimensions is one of the most well-known approaches which aims to explore how cultural values have an impact on behaviour and how people view leadership (Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013). The most updated dimensions include power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Vietnam’s scores on the five dimensions are illustrated in Figure 5.15 as follows:
Hofstede et al. (2010) also offer interpretation on the cultural dimensions of Vietnam. Vietnam’s high score on power distance (70) implies that people are more likely to accept a hierarchical order and inequalities. Leadership style of managers is more autocratic than democratic or participative. The low score on individualism versus collectivism suggests that Vietnam is a collectivistic country in which people often use “we” instead of “I”. Vietnam scores 40 on masculinity versus femininity, which means the country has a feminine society, consensus is valued. The score on uncertainty avoidance (40) implies innovation is not considered as a threat. The high score on long-term versus short-term orientation makes Vietnam a long-term orientation culture. The same orientation is found in other South East Asian nations.

To some extent, the cultural dimensions facilitate to understand the glass ceiling effect in Vietnam. Vietnamese culture which people tend to accept inequalities will make the glass ceiling harder to break. Respondents’ viewpoints on masculine and feminine characteristics are still affected by those attributed to each biological sex (Barragan et al., 2010).

**H3 and Area 3:** The result supports H3 which hypothesises that there is a correlation between gender and leadership effectiveness. The purpose of this section is to examine Area 3 as mentioned in Section 1.4 Chapter One. The evidence for male leaders/managers’ effectiveness over their female counterparts with narratives
from interviewees were presented in Section 4.3.3. Other variables such as subordinates’ expectations and the Vietnamese culture were further discussed to reduce the bias in the results of the study.

5.5 Chapter summary
Quantitative and qualitative data were further analysed in comparison with each other and literature to ensure the accountability and credibility of the study. The results support H1 to H4 and answer the main research questions together with sub-questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

In addition to the consistency with literature, some findings were beyond the researcher’s expectation such as the disapproval of the inequality in pay in the banking sector. All in all, this research not only helps to reinforce results of previous studies but also offers one more empirical finding to literature.

The table below summarises the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data in comparison with the literature review:
Table 5.13: Summary of the findings of the mixed methods in comparison with literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research findings</th>
<th>How the research findings support the literature</th>
<th>How the research findings extend the literature</th>
<th>How the research findings contradict the literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is an existence of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector.</td>
<td>Gender inequalities are found in most contexts at different social, economic and technological development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to women’s career advancement emerge from society stereotypes, lack of support from organization and from women’s lack of necessary skills and confidence. Society stereotypes are the most frequently mentioned difficulties hindering women’s progress.</td>
<td>Sources of women’s barriers to career progression are from society, organizations and themselves</td>
<td>There is no clear effort of challenging the glass ceiling in Vietnam.</td>
<td>No pay inequality is found in the Vietnamese context and competitiveness is not viewed as a negative trait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and women were different in their leadership/management styles. Men tend to adopt autocratic style while women tend to adopt the democratic style</td>
<td>Men tend to be transactional leaders while women tend to be transformational leaders</td>
<td>Male leaders were more impartial than female leaders in performance appraisal. Women exhibit better knowledge than men do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although there were mixed viewpoints to the effectiveness of male and female leaders/managers, male were chosen to be more effective by the majority of respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There are a huge amount of studies which showed women to be a more effective leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The removal of the glass ceiling in the Vietnamese banking sector did offer some benefits to organizations and the sector as a whole.</td>
<td>The removal of the glass ceiling will bring more talents to organizations, and make organizations more representative, ethical, productive, innovative and financially successful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Six provides conclusion, recommendations, limitations as well as implications of the study.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

No glass ceiling was ever shattered by someone who only cried and complained but never took action. (Melanie Hope, n.d. as cited in Goodreads, 2013)

6.1 Introduction
The results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis were further analysed and discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six summarises the overall findings and offers some recommendations from both female managers and organizations’ perspectives. It also notes some limitations associated with the implementation and completion of the study, proposes some implications for future research and ends with a closing statement.

6.2 Findings
The main purpose of this research is to explore whether there are equal opportunities for women to be promoted to executive positions in the banking sector in Vietnam. If the glass ceiling effect (the invisible or artificial barriers that prevent women from being promoted to the highest positions in organizations, regardless of their abilities and achievements) does exist, the study then investigates the relationship between gender and leadership styles as well as the correlation between gender and leadership effectiveness.

A survey was conducted to collect background information, as well as attitudes and behaviour of banks’ staff and managers towards the glass ceiling issue. Interviews with supervisors and managers in three banks in Vietnam were carried out subsequently to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and also verify the findings from the survey. Data analysis and discussion answered the main research question raised in Section 1.3 in Chapter One together with the six sub-questions.

The study confirmed the numerous factors that hinder women’s career success in the Vietnamese banking sector and stop them from reaching the top positions in their organizations. Most of the factors identified in the Vietnamese context were consistent with the literature but there were some features which were found in the Vietnamese context only.

The first sub-question dealt with the existence of the glass ceiling. There were 68 respondents taking part in the survey and indicated their level of agreement on eight myths on women’s roles in organizations. The main conclusion is that although
there were some positive signs such as no existence of pay inequality, the open-mindedness on women’s competitiveness, the increasing number of women in managerial roles and the belief in women’s capability in serving in senior positions, women do face discrimination. They had to try harder and perform better than men to be promoted in the same position according to more than 35% of respondents. Data from interviews also revealed 100% of respondents felt the existence of difficulties for women to reach top positions.

The second sub-question investigated in details the factors that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder. The most significant factor observed from the survey is women’s lack of confidence and timidity based with 50% of respondents’ agreement. Other crucial factors include lack of equal opportunities for women (38.2% of respondents’ agreement), perceptions that women should not be in a position of authority over men (35.3%), corporate structures and practices that favour male employees (38.2% of respondents’ agreement), women’s lack of management skills and experience (33.8% of respondents’ agreement), the belief that men make better leaders than women (29.4% of respondents’ agreement), the lack of women in top positions as role models (27.9% of respondents’ agreement) and women’s work and life conflict (36.8%). The most frequently mentioned barrier according to the interviewees is the difficulty to maintain the work and life balance and negative stereotypes about women’s role and ability.

The third sub-question sought the answer to the inconclusive literature on the differences between male and female leaders/managers. Both survey and interview results revealed many differences between the two genders’ leadership/management styles. Male managers/leaders in the Vietnamese banking sector tend to adopt a more task-oriented leadership style whilst their female counterparts tend to exhibit a more relationship-oriented style.

The fourth sub-question aimed to discover the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness and tried to conclude whether males or females make better leaders/managers. Data analysis from questionnaires and interviews show a greater preference for men in the leadership/management position though there were also some respondents who thought female leaders/managers were more effective or both genders were equally effective. However, it should be noted that respondents’ opinions towards leadership/management styles and leadership effectiveness were
also affected by the Vietnamese culture which favours men, respondents’ perceptions, stereotypes and expectations towards female leaders/managers.

The fifth sub-questions explored the respondents’ attitudes towards the benefits of removing the barriers to women’s career advancement. Overall, all respondents though the benefits were somewhat important and there were a wide range of advantages involving in the elimination of the glass ceiling. The highest voted benefit was that the removal of glass ceiling enhances organizations’ effectiveness by more than 52% of respondents.

Lastly recommendations were made based on the literature, and from the data analysis and discussion in Chapter Four and Five of this study.

6.3 Recommendations

Through quantitative and qualitative data analysis and discussion, the study identified some internal and external factors – both invisibly and visibly which hinder women’s career progression. Some recommendations that help women to advance in their career were derived from those factors. This section focuses on Area 5 mentioned in Section 1.3 in Chapter One.

6.3.1 Recommendations for women

• Women should avoid the challenges that they create for themselves by improving the level of confidence as discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.

• Women should understand the importance of the glass ceiling issues and actively confront them.

• Women should improve their emotional intelligence by learning how to control their emotions as some respondents commented in Section 4.3.2 that their female leaders were dependent on emotion and as a result, some decisions they made were biased.

• Women should improve their leadership skills such as strategy making and decisiveness – two skills that male leaders/managers outscored them and interpersonal skills especially when dealing with customers.

• One of the most frequently mentioned factors in responses to both questionnaires and the interviews is work-life conflict. Therefore, women should improve their time management skill. Effective time management can avoid long
working hours and enhance chances of success. They can prioritise tasks into essential, important and low value. When their time is managed properly, they can also spend valuable time with their family and improve their work-life balance as well as reduce stress for themselves. Moreover, once they can prove to their family that their work will not reduce time for family, they will receive more encouragement and support to get ahead in their career.

- To combat the stereotype that men make better managers than women, women should prove themselves that they have enough knowledge, skills and abilities to be in top positions.

### 6.3.2 Recommendations for organizations

- Organizations should realise the benefits of the importance of the glass ceiling and provide some programs to raise their employees’ awareness on the gender inequalities and the glass ceiling issues because as shown in Table 4.6, more than 36% of respondents thought that their employers’ lack of genuine commitment to equality of genders and advancement of women was a noticeable obstacle. While the national culture is embedded in people’s minds and have an effect on organizational culture, organizations can take initiative to change their organizational culture to create a biased and discrimination free environment.

- Organizations should provide training and development programs targeted for women since respondents claimed that men receive more organizational support than women as mentioned in Section 5.3.1.2.

- Organizations should provide mentoring programs both formally and informally to help women realize their career path. From the data analysis, there was no mentoring program detected in the surveyed organizations.

- Organizations should provide flexible working hours for women. It is extremely important for women who have young kids because the time they spend on child rearing are greater than those who have grown up kids, do not have kids or are still single.

- In addition to the introduction of flexible hours for women, organizations should also provide time off from work for men to take care of family responsibilities, so the burdens on women will be reduced.
• Organizations should give clear guidelines and information on performance appraisal, and promotion. As some respondents complained that some decisions that women leaders/managers made were based on emotions, enhancing the transparency in regulations and decision making process might make employees more satisfied.

• It is recommended that organizations hold informal meeting groups for women so they can share the experiences as well as open their networks.

In summary, practices that facilitate gender equality and the removal of the glass ceiling might increase the cost for organizations but in the long run the pros will definitely outweigh the cons. The better the employees are treated, the higher profits and productivity that organizations have in return as job satisfactions is one the most crucial factors to improve employees’ performance and organizations’ performance as a whole (Buckalew et al., 2012).

6.4 Limitations
This study had some limitations during the research process. First of all, the survey’s focus was women; thus, there is a possibility of gender influences on the responses. The response rate from male participants was significantly lower than that from female. If there is higher response rate from male and female respondents, the validity and credibility of the study may increase and the findings can be generalised to a larger population.

Secondly, some women might be more sensitive to the glass ceiling than the others or they might be more attached to the organizations than others so some biased results might be generated.

Thirdly, the study used the mixed methods approach which produced a huge amount of qualitative and quantitative data. The analysis process involved more processes than a single method; therefore, during the analysis when the researcher tried to arrange both qualitative and quantitative research under the same theme, some data may be left unintentionally by the researcher.

Furthermore, the insignificant number of interviewees from a supervisory and management roles (eight respondents) was a drawback of a study, especially when inferences were made.
Lastly, some variables such as organizational culture which has a significant impact on the existence of the glass ceiling and corporate practices have not been well addressed and examined. Therefore, the study might have some potential bias and findings might be greatly affected.

6.5 Future Research Opportunities

Further research extending the results of this study is proposed as follows:

• In future research, differences between higher and lower level of leaders/managers in leadership/management styles and their effectiveness should be discussed. It might reveal some factors that contribute to the low participation of females in the boardroom.

• There is the scope for research with the same topic but the focus will be on the occupation of female executives’ spouses as it might affect the level of support that they receive; as a result, it might become a factor that influences the glass ceiling effect.

• The correlation between female leaders/managers and the improvement in organizations’ practices on gender discrimination should be examined in further detail. A question was raised during the completion of the study: “Do women leaders bring more equal opportunities and career advancement to their female employees than male leaders do?”

• The Vietnamese government’s new policy that gives women six-month maternity leave should be examined if it has undesirable effects on female participation on boardrooms, i.e., intensifying the problems instead of solving them.

• There are prospects for the same research but in different industries or comparative studies among countries to understand more about this multifaceted phenomenon.

• It is suggested that the future research can be conducted with more executive participants to enhance the accuracy of the findings.

• Future research on the factors that determines leadership effectiveness and their relations with organizational performance is expected because in literature leadership effectiveness is mostly assessed by leadership traits from the perspective
of subordinates but there has been measurable evidence or quantified data detected so far.

- There is scope for research on women’s duration of service and their difficulties in staying in the top positions.

6.6 Chapter summary
Chapter Six presents the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and discussion. There is a unknown proverb “God helps those who help themselves”, so recommendations not only for organizations but also for women are made. Limitations as well as implications for the study are subsequently highlighted.

6.7 Concluding statement
In conclusion, being the first study on the existence of the glass ceiling effect in the Vietnamese banking sector, it helps to verify the existence in one more context of barriers to women’s career progression, especially to the top position. It also adds the unique features associated with the Vietnamese context only such as the disapproval of the inequality in pay in the banking sector. Although there is still some work to be done and a long way to go for women to gain gender equality due to the Vietnamese traditional culture, the researcher does hope the study will raise the awareness of the banking sector in the importance of the glass ceiling issues and the benefits of removing it for better organizational performance.
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APPENDIX 1: THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Are there any equal opportunities for women to climb the corporate ladder? What are the barriers to women’s career advancement in the banking sector?

2. Do you feel a glass ceiling exists in your company?

3. Do you feel a glass ceiling exists in the banking sector?

4. Explain who you think, between males and females, make better leaders?

5. Describe your experience with male and female leaders?

6. Do you prefer to work with male or female counterparts?

7. Do you like to work for an organization with female executives?

8. Do you feel your gender has an influence on your chance of being promoted in your current organization?

9. Have you had a mentor in your current organization?

10. How much time have you spent on family responsibilities?

11. What is the most important factor, in your opinion, to become an effective leader?

12. Do you consider working for your current organization in the long term?

13. Do you feel you have enough support from your family for career advancement?

14. Do you feel you have enough support from your current organization for career advancement?

15. What is your expectation to improve your organization’s performance as a whole?
APPENDIX 2: THE QUESTIONNAIRES

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Are you working for a bank? Please circle one answer.
   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. Other (Please specify) _____________________

2. Please indicate your gender. Please circle one answer.
   A. Male
   B. Female

3. Which of the following age groups do you belong to? Please circle one answer.
   A. Below 18 years
   B. 19 - 23 years
   C. 24 - 29 years
   D. 30 - 39 years
   E. 40 - 49 years
   F. 50 and above

4. What is the highest level of education you have already completed? Please circle one answer
   A. High School
   B. Diploma
   C. Bachelor’s Degree
   D. Post Graduate Diploma
   E. Master’s Degree
   F. PhD
   G. Other (Please specify) __________________________

5. Please indicate your current marital status
   A. Currently single, with no young children living at home
   B. Currently single, with one or more young children living at home
   C. Currently married, with no young children living at home
   D. Currently married, with one or more young children living at home

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT WORK

6. Which income range describes your monthly personal income? Please circle one answer
   A. Below 5,000,000 VND per month
   B. 5,000,000 – 9,999,000 VND per month
   C. 10,000,000 – 19,999,000 VND per month
   D. 20,000,000 – 49,999,000 VND per month
   E. 50,000,000 VND per month or more
7. Please indicate which of the following best describes your current position. Please circle one answer

A. Office support  
B. Professional staff  
C. Supervisory position  
D. Middle managerial position  
E. Top managerial position  
F. Other (Please specify) __________________________

8. How many YEARS have you worked for your current employer? Please circle one answer

A. 3 or less  
B. 4-6  
C. 7-10  
D. 11-15  
E. 16-20  
F. Over 20

9. How many TOTAL YEARS of work experience have you had?

A. 3 or less  
B. 4-6  
C. 7-10  
D. 11-15  
E. 16-20  
F. Over 20

10. Who do you think, between male and female, make better leaders?

A. Male  
B. Female  
C. Other (Please specify)  

11. Do you like to work for an organization with female executives?

A. Yes  
B. No  
C. Other (Please specify)  

12. Do you prefer to work with male or female counterparts?

A. Male  
B. Female  
C. Other (Please specify)
13. Please indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement with each of the following questions. Please check a response for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe women are as capable as men of serving in senior executive positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, women are provided with equal opportunities to be promoted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, the number of women serving in managerial positions is increasing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women are not easily promoted from entry-level positions into middle management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women are under-represented in the boardrooms</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women do not receive the same salaries as men that perform the same jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>In my organization, competitiveness/assertiveness in women is viewed as a negative trait</td>
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<tr>
<td>In my company, women have to perform better than their male counterparts to be promoted to the same position</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. Some people say there is an invisible barrier or a GLASS CEILING that hinders or excludes women from advancement to upper management positions. To what extent do you think that such a barrier exists IN TODAY’S VIETNAMESE BUSINESS WORLD? Please circle one answer.

A. To No Extent  
B. To a Little Extent  
C. To a Moderate Extent  
D. To a Great Extent  
E. To a Very Great Extent

15. To what extent do you feel a glass ceiling exists in your organization? Please circle one answer.

A. To No Extent  
B. To a Little Extent  
C. To a Moderate Extent  
D. To a Great Extent  
E. To a Very Great Extent
16. Do you believe pay inequality exists between males and females with the same credentials in your organization? Please circle one answer.

A. Yes, a LARGE pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF FEMALE employees (i.e., females earn more than males).
B. Yes, a MODERATE pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF FEMALE employees.
C. Yes, a SMALL pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF FEMALE employees.
D. No, THERE IS NO PAY INEQUALITY between male and female employees (i.e., both earn the same).
E. Yes, a SMALL pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF MALE employees.
F. Yes, a MODERATE pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF MALE employees.
G. Yes, LARGE pay inequality exists IN FAVOR OF MALE employees.

17. In your opinion, GENERALLY, how much of an obstacle/impediment to women’s career advancement are each of the following factors? Please use the scale below. Please check a response for each item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Not an obstacle</th>
<th>Minor obstacle</th>
<th>Noticeable Obstacle</th>
<th>Significant obstacle</th>
<th>Huge obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate structures and practices that favor male employees</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of sufficient self-confidence and timidity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceptions that women should not be in a position of authority over men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of equal career development opportunities for women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient number of women role models in highest levels in the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese banking sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of enthusiasm in taking on high-stake and challenging</td>
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<tr>
<td>assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceptions that women’s careers are not as important because they are</td>
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<tr>
<td>not the primary family provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of adequate general management and/or line experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employers’ lack of genuine commitment to equality of genders and</td>
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<tr>
<td>advancement of women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male domination of senior positions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

119
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not an obstacle</th>
<th>Minor obstacle</th>
<th>Noticeable Obstacle</th>
<th>Significant obstacle</th>
<th>Huge obstacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women not being willing to make the sacrifices needed to get and remain in senior positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s conflicting work and family demands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceptions that men make better managers than women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s lack of ambition, in comparison to men</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

18. Do you want to work in a senior position?  
A. Yes  
B. No  

19. Do you believe you have enough skills, abilities and knowledge to be in managerial positions  
A. Yes  
B. No  

20. How important is the removal of glass ceiling to your organization? Please check a response for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing productivity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing employee turnover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing employee satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitating recruiting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhancing customer satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhancing competitiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlarging pool of management talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlarging pool of executive talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>Neither important nor unimportant</td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting government regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoiding equal opportunity issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It’s the right thing to do”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

21. Given all the issues facing your organization, how important is the issue of glass ceiling
A. Unimportant
B. Somewhat important
C. Neither important or unimportant
D. Somewhat important
E. Important

22. If you have further opinions, please indicate:

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Thank you very much for your participation
APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Identifying the existence of the glass ceiling and examining the impact on the participation of female executives in the Vietnamese banking sector.

My name is Thi Thu Thao TRAN and I am a Master of Business student at Unitec Institution of Technology. Part of my degree programme involves a research paper on a subject of my choice. My research topic looks at the glass ceiling and its effects on the participation of females executives in the boardroom in the Vietnamese banking sector. I have the approval of Unitec Business School (UBS) to carry out the research.

What we are doing
I want to find out whether there are equal opportunities for women to be promoted to executive positions in the banking sector in Vietnam. If the glass ceiling effect (the invisible or artificial barriers that prevent women from being promoted to the highest positions in organizations, regardless of their abilities and achievements) does exist, the study will investigate the relationship between the glass ceiling and the performance of organizations.

What it will mean for you
I want to ask you to answer the questionnaire on glass ceiling. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. However, because of our schedule, any withdrawals must be done within 2 weeks after you respond to my questionnaire.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only I – the researcher and my supervisors will have access to this information.

Please contact me if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor:

My supervisor is Dr Andries Du Plessis, phone 815 4321 ext. 8923 or email aduplessis@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2013-1043

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 12/07/2013 to 12/07/2014. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

My name is Thi Thu Thao TRAN. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Business degree in the School of Business at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is: to explore whether there are equal opportunities for women to be promoted to executive positions in the banking sector in Vietnam. If the glass ceiling effect (the invisible or artificial barriers that prevent women from being promoted to the highest positions in organizations, regardless of their abilities and achievements) does exist, the study will investigate the relationship between the glass ceiling and the performance of organizations.

I request your participation in the following way:
Answering the questions on the glass ceiling survey

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you have any queries about the research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My supervisor is Dr Andries Du Plessis, phone 815 4321 ext. 8923 or email aduplessis@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2013-1043

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 12/07/2013 to 12/07/2014. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Identifying the existence of the glass ceiling and examining the impact on the participation of female executives in the Vietnamese banking sector.

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researchers and their supervisor. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: ………………………….. Date: ……………………………

Project Researcher: Thi Thu Thao Tran Date: ……………………………..

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2013-1043

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 12/07/2013 to 12/07/2014. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.