

# **ENHANCING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE GHANA ARMED FORCES: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES**

## **SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION**

It is a well-known fact that women make up a small proportion of security personnel, arguably because of the hostile environment in which they execute their duties (Montgomery, 2011). The security sector is generally considered a demanding and high-risk field. Traditionally, it has been viewed as a domain for men, based on the perception that women are inherently less physically strong (Dewanto, Hanita & Anriani, 2023). Another barrier to the uptake of women into the security services has been noted to be associated with the uniforms. According to Herrmann and Geser (2021), security personnel uniforms confer on the wearers' legitimacy and authority, and thus influence their interaction with the general populace. Consequently, across the sub-Saharan region, the entry of women into the security services, as well as their progression in leadership positions have been met with systemic barriers. In a study conducted in Namibia, it was reported that although an Act of Parliament has been enacted to ensure equal opportunities for both males and females in the security services, especially into roles of decision-making, the appointment of females into such roles have not been as fast-paced as expected (Tangeni, 2018).

### **Problem Statement**

Historically, the military has been regarded as a male-dominated institution, influenced by societal expectations that reinforced traditional gender roles. Women were largely restricted to supportive, non-combat roles such as nursing, clerical duties, and communication services (Henry, 2024). Although efforts toward the inclusion of women in the army have intensified, challenges still remain. Adopted in the year 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325

marked a significant milestone in acknowledging the diverse impact war has on males and females. The resolution emphasizes the crucial role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and advocates for their inclusion in peacekeeping operations of the United Nations (UN) (UNSC, 2010). Consequently, empirical studies are required to determine the prospects and challenges of positioning women in strategic leadership positions in the Ghana Armed Forces.

### **General Objective**

To determine the prospects and challenges associated with women in strategic leadership positions in the Ghana Armed Forces.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the current level of female representation in strategic leadership positions within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF).
2. To identify institutional, cultural, and policy-related barriers that hinder the progression of women into strategic leadership roles in the GAF.
3. To identify potential strategies and reforms that could enhance female representation in leadership roles within the GAF.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the current level of female representation in strategic leadership positions within the Ghana Armed Forces?
2. What are institutional, cultural, and policy-related barriers that hinder the progression of women into strategic leadership roles in the GAF?

3. What are some potential strategies and reforms that could enhance female representation in leadership roles within the GAF?

## **Hypothesis**

Gender-specific policies significantly enhance women's representation in strategic leadership positions in the Ghana Armed Forces, despite prevailing socio-cultural and structural challenges.

## **Scope of Study**

This study will examine the prospects and challenges associated with women in strategic leadership positions in the Ghana Armed Forces, and explore strategies that will enhance the assimilation of women into such roles in the force.

## **Justification for Study**

There is a need to examine the challenges women face in career progression and representation within the Ghana Armed Forces. First, there is scarcity of research conducted to evaluate this situation in the Ghana Army, prompting the necessity for this study to be conducted. Again, despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of women who enlist in the army globally, they remain significantly underrepresented in senior leadership and decision-making roles (Robinson & O'Hanlon, 2020). This disparity is not only a result of entrenched gender biases and institutional limitations, but also stems from structural constraints within the military system (Henry, 2024). These challenges restrict women's professional growth and limit the valuable contributions their leadership could offer.

## **Organisation of Study**

This study is presented in three sections. Section One presents an introduction, problem statement, research objectives, study scope, and a justification for the study. Section Two presents the literature review, citing a theoretical framework and gaps in the literature. Section Three presents the methodology, including the research design, study area, target population, sampling strategy, data collection methods and ethical considerations, as well as the study's limitations.

## **SECTION TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW**

Women qualities such as being empathetic, caring and patient are believed to be complementary to male qualities such as bravery and ambition, and are argued to be both essential in providing security services (Heinecken, 2015). Studies have explored the beneficial and essential role women play in the security forces, for instance, in combating male sexual violence and protecting civilian populations (Heinecken, 2015; Simic, 2010) arguing for the need to increase the number of women recruited into the security forces. In a study conducted to explore gender integration and international peacekeeping in the Ghana Armed Forces, it was reported that military duties can be carried out effectively by women, as by men (Afrim-Narh, 2006). The study argues that military personnel are professionally-disciplined, and obey commands without question, regardless of gender. Thus, these global advocacies and policies that support and encourage gender inclusion in the security services should be rigorously implemented.

### **Gaps in Literature**

Despite an increase in studies pertaining to gender equality and leadership in organizational structures, there is noticeably a dearth of scholarly work to examine the situation in the Ghana Armed Forces. Moreover, existing literature have not provided emphasis on determining the

prospects and challenges with integrating women in leadership positions in the Armed Forces. Addressing this gap will provide valuable insights to both the academic community and for effective policy development in the Ghana Armed Forces.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will examine the Gender Role Theory which posits that there are societal expectations on males and females because of perceived biological and social differences. Consequently, these perceptions influence recruitment, promotion and leadership placement, especially in the context of the armed forces, which is a predominantly male-dominated institution. Further, to effectively determine the prospects and challenges women face in strategic leadership positions, this study shall examine the Glass Ceiling Effect, which suggests that regardless of their qualifications, expertise or achievements, women and the minority in society cannot rise above a certain level in organizational hierarchies.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design:** This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is appropriate to examine such social phenomena as gender disparity in leadership positions in the Ghana Armed Forces.

**Study Area:** This study will be conducted at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, with focus on the military as they are the predominant members of the Armed Forces in that location.

**Target Population:** The target population includes both male and female military personnel across all ranks.

**Study Population:** The study population will comprise of both male and female military personnel who have served in the Ghana Armed Forces for at least five years, as well as human resource leaders who are directly involved in the recruitment and promotion process.

**Sampling Strategy:** This study will employ a purposive sampling strategy in order to select military personnel who possess the relevant knowledge and experience related to the study objectives. A sample size of about 20 participants is anticipated, to ensure data saturation is achieved.

**Data Collection:** This study will utilize primary data, which will be collected through semi-structured interviews.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical approval will be sought from the University Ethics board and relevant authorities in the Armed forces before data collection begins. Participation will be voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained.

**Study Limitation:** A major limitation will be a lack of access to officers of higher rank due to the strict hierarchical structure in the Ghana Armed Forces.

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