GLASS CEILING AND EMPLOYEE LOYALTY IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between glass ceiling and employee loyalty in five Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria, Workplace Policy influence Employee Commitment and Employee Satisfaction respectively. The work was anchored on Glass Ceiling Theory developed by Marilyn Loden in 1978, The study employed a survey research design with a total population of 17,805 from female teaching and non-teaching staff of the selected Federal Universities. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 391 female staff from five Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria, selected through a stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistic. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between glass ceiling and employee loyalty. Therefore, we rejected the null hypotheses and accepted the alternate hypotheses. The study concluded that understanding the relationship between glass ceiling and employee loyalty is essential for creating a positive work environment that values employee commitment and satisfaction in Federal Universities. The study recommended that Federal Universities need to implement transparent and inclusive workplace policies, representation quotas, to enhance engagement within the Federal Universities. By prioritising efforts to dismantle the glass ceiling, Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria can cultivate a loyal and motivated workforce, contributing to their long-term success and effectiveness in higher education.

Key words: *Glass ceiling, Employee commitment, Workplace policies, Employee satisfaction, Unfair representation, Higher education institutions*

Introduction

Employee loyalty is a critical factor in the success and sustainability of organisations, including Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria (Salau, Worlu, Osibanjo, Adeniji & Ogueyungbo,2020). Loyal employees contribute to a positive work environment, higher productivity, and reduced turnover rates. In the context of academia, where

collaboration and institutional memory are essential, fostering loyalty among staff is paramount (Bieliauskaitė, 2021). Loyal employees are frequently distinguished by their propensity to go the additional mile, their low turnover rates, and their advocacy for the company both within and outside of the organisation (Crisp, 2021). However, the presence of barriers, such as the glass ceiling, can significantly affect this loyalty.

The glass ceiling refers to the invisible barriers that hinder the advancement of women and marginalised groups in the workplace (Kapoor, Sardana & Sharma, 2021). In Federal Universities, this phenomenon can lead to a lack of representation in leadership roles, which can, in turn, negatively affect employee morale and loyalty. Glass ceiling is typically ascribed to a range of issues, including unconscious prejudices, Lack of flexibility in working conditions, bias in promotion and a lack of mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for underrepresented groups (Blanchard & Blanchard, 2020). In Federal Universities across South-East Nigeria, unfair representation and poorly designed workplace policies are significant factors undermining employee loyalty and institutional stability Salau, Worlu, Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola, Olokundun, & Ogueyungbo,(2020). These universities often operate within complex administrative and socio-political environments where favoritism, Gender bias and lack of transparency can influence decision-making processes, hiring practices, and staff promotion Egboh,Obiorah & Mokwunyei. (2023).When staff members teaching or non-teaching feel that they are not fairly represented in leadership roles or decision-making bodies, they may perceive the system as unjust Miller, (2021). For example, when appointments to key positions appear to favor men more than women, it fosters a sense of marginalisation. This perception can deeply affect morale, leading to reduced job satisfaction and commitment.

Glass Ceiling and Employee Loyalty in Federal Universities in South-east, Nigeria is a key issue that adds to substantial challenges. It is the invisible barriers preventing certain groups, particularly women and minorities, from advancing in their careers, poses significant challenges in Federal Universities in South-east, Nigeria. This issue is compounded by various factors that influence employee loyalty, particularly unfair representation, workplace policies,

Unfair representation within the academic and administrative structures of Federal Universities contributes to a culture that undermines employee commitment. When employees perceive that leadership roles are predominantly occupied by a specific gender or ethnic group, it can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement among underrepresented groups. This lack of diversity not only affects morale but also diminishes the sense of belonging, which is crucial for enhancing loyalty and engagement. Workplace policies in these institutions often fail to promote inclusivity and equity. Policies that do not address the unique challenges faced by different employee demographics can exacerbate feelings of isolation and inequity. For instance, lack of family-friendly policies can disproportionately affect women, who often juggle

academic responsibilities with domestic duties. The absence of such supportive measures can lead to decreased job satisfaction and commitment to the institution.The interplay between the glass ceiling and employee loyalty in Federal Universities in South-east, Nigeria raises critical concerns. Unfair representation, ineffective workplace policies collectively contribute to a hostile work environment that undermines job satisfaction and employee engagement. Addressing these issues is essential not only for fostering a more inclusive academic landscape but also for enhancing the overall quality of education and services provided by these institutions.

Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to determine the extent of relationship that exists between Glass ceiling and Employee Loyalty in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The Specific objectives seek to:

1. determine the relationship between workplace policies and employee satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the relationship between unfair representation and Employee Commitment in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling is a metaphorical barrier that prevents women and minorities from advancing to leadership positions that continues to be a significant issue in many Federal Universities. Despite progress in promoting diversity and inclusion, systemic biases and discriminatory practices persist, limiting the career advancement of qualified individuals (Khan, 2022). Glass ceiling is broadly defined as an invisible, but real, barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia & Vanneman, 2019). It is characterised by a level beyond which these groups are unable to rise in the hierarchy, regardless of their qualifications, achievements, or competencies. The concept of the glass ceiling emerged in the late 20th century as women and minorities began to enter the workforce in greater numbers. By the 1970s and 1980s, it became apparent that while significant progress had been made in terms of entry-level employment, women and minorities were conspicuously absent from upper management and executive positions (Taparia & Lenka, 2022). Despite legal protections such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and affirmative action policies, a pattern of exclusion persisted at the highest levels of corporate hierarchies. The glass ceiling manifests in various ways within federal institutions, often subtly but with significant consequences for career advancement. While the barriers are not always

overt, their effects are measurable and far-reaching. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of the glass ceiling is the underrepresentation of women and minorities in top leadership positions. Despite comprising nearly half of the labor force, women hold only a small percentage of CEO positions in major corporations (Catalyst, 2022). Similarly, racial minorities are vastly underrepresented in executive roles, with black, Latinx, and Asian employees facing significant barriers to advancement (Huang, Krivkovich, & Starikova, 2019). This underrepresentation is not limited to the corporate world but extends to academia, politics, and other sectors, underscoring the pervasive nature of the glass ceiling. Another key manifestation of the glass ceiling is the lack of access to "stretch assignments," or high-profile projects that are critical for career advancement. These assignments often serve as proving grounds for leadership potential, and those who are excluded from them are less likely to be considered for promotion (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Women and minorities are frequently passed over for these opportunities, either because they are perceived as less capable or because of concerns about work-life balance, further entrenching the glass ceiling.

Workplace Policies

Workplace policies play a crucial role in addressing the glass ceiling and enhancing employee performance. Recent studies indicate that effective workplace policies can mitigate the effects of the glass ceiling by fostering an inclusive environment that supports all employees' growth and development (Lukić Nikolić & Labus, 2024). One of the key aspects of workplace policies is their ability to create a fair and transparent framework for career advancement. Workplace policies encompass flexible work arrangements that accommodate the diverse needs of employees. By offering flexible scheduling options, remote work opportunities, and parental leave policies that support both mothers and fathers, organisations can create an environment that enables all employees to thrive professionally while managing personal commitments (Khan, 2022). This not only helps in retaining talented individuals but also enhances overall employee engagement and satisfaction. Ultimately, effective workplace policies are essential for dismantling the glass ceiling and fostering a culture of inclusivity that drives performance across the Federal Universities. Addressing the glass ceiling through robust workplace policies is vital for enhancing employee performance and satisfaction.

Unfair Representation

Unfair representation can be understood as the disproportionate inclusion or exclusion of particular groups in areas such as leadership, promotions, hiring, and access to organisational resources (Simons-Profit, 2022). This misrepresentation is not merely a reflection of individual biases but also a structural issue embedded within

organisational cultures, practices, and policies. One of the primary manifestations of unfair representation in Federal Universities is the disparity in leadership demographics. Research has consistently shown that women, ethnic minorities, and individuals from other marginalised groups are underrepresented in top leadership roles (Pogrebna, Angelopoulos, Motsi-Omoijiade, Kharlamov, & Tkachenko, 2024). Furthermore, even when they are present in leadership, they may be tokenised or placed in roles that lack true decision-making power (Eagly & Carli, 2018). This misalignment between representation and actual authority can lead to feelings of disempowerment and disengagement among underrepresented groups, further undermining the potential for a truly inclusive organisational culture.

Employee Loyalty

Employee loyalty can be broadly defined as the extent to which employees feel a sense of allegiance and responsibility toward their Federal Universities, expressed through their intention to remain with the university and contribute positively to its objectives (Wijonarko, Muksin & Rajiani, 2024). The concept is often operationalised through indicators such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. While loyalty is often viewed as a one-dimensional construct, recent scholarship has emphasised its multidimensionality, recognising that employees may exhibit different forms of loyalty depending on various organisational and personal factors (Imtias, Nadeem, Mallick, Ghouri, & Asis, 2022). Loyalty is not static; it evolves in response to changes in the organisational environment, leadership practices, and individual employee experiences (Cullinan, Flannery, Harold, Lyons & Palcic, 2019).

One of the primary dimensions of employee loyalty is affective loyalty, which refers to the emotional attachment an employee feels toward their organisation. Employees who exhibit affective loyalty are motivated by a genuine sense of belonging and commitment to the Federal Universities"s values and mission (Mohammed & Rashid, 2023). Effective loyalty is often contrasted with continuance loyalty, where employees remain with the organisation due to the perceived costs of leaving, such as loss of benefits, job security, or professional relationships (Triguero-Sánches, Peña-Vinces & Ferreira, 2022). A third form, normative loyalty, is driven by a sense of moral obligation or duty to remain with the organisation (Mohammed & Rashid, 2023). Federal Universities with strong ethical cultures and supportive leadership are more likely to cultivate affective loyalty, whereas Federal Universities that offer significant financial or professional incentives may foster continuance loyalty (Wijonarko, Muksin & Rajiani, 2024). This multidimensional understanding of loyalty is essential for Federal Universities seeking to develop strategies that enhance employee retention and engagement.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is commonly defined as the extent to which employees are pleased with their jobs, encompassing both emotional and cognitive evaluations of their work. It includes satisfaction with different aspects of the job, such as remuneration, work-life balance, relationships with supervisors and co-workers, and opportunities for career development (Spector, 2022). These dimensions collectively impact an employee's overall level of satisfaction, which can vary greatly depending on both individual attitudes and organisational policies.

One of the most influential models for understanding employee satisfaction is the discrepancy theory, which posits that satisfaction arises when there is congruence between what employees expect from their job and what they actually experience (Boccoli, Gastaldi & Corso, 2023). According to this framework, employees evaluate their job by comparing the perceived reality of their work situation to their expectations. When these expectations are met or exceeded, employees experience satisfaction, but when there is a gap between expectations and reality, dissatisfaction arises (Stewart, 2022). This discrepancy-based approach underscores the subjective nature of employee satisfaction, as different individuals may have varying expectations and thresholds for what constitutes a satisfying job.

A complementary framework is the job characteristics model, which suggests that certain core job characteristics, such as task variety, autonomy, and feedback, are intrinsically motivating and contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction (Boccoli, Gastaldi & Corso, 2023). Jobs that provide employees with opportunities to use a variety of skills, offer autonomy in decision-making, and provide clear feedback on performance are more likely to generate satisfaction because they fulfill employees' psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Stewart, 2022). This model highlights the importance of job design in fostering satisfaction, suggesting that organisations can enhance satisfaction by ensuring that jobs are structured in a way that meets employees' intrinsic needs.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is generally defined as the psychological bond that individuals form with their organisation, which influences their decision to remain with the organisation and invest effort in achieving its goals (Ren, Jiang & Tang, 2022). While definitions of commitment may vary, the most widely accepted framework is the three-component model (TCM) developed by Eldefonso, Yakobus, and Abun, (2024). This model conceptualises commitment as a multidimensional construct, comprising three distinct components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Each of these components reflects a different type of attachment to the

organisation, and they may coexist within the same individual to varying degrees. Employees who exhibit high levels of affective commitment remain with these Federal Universities because they genuinely want to, motivated by a sense of belonging and alignment with the organisation's values and mission (Meyer & Allen, 2016). This type of commitment is often associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and discretionary effort, as affectively committed employees are more likely to invest in the success of the organisation (Eldefonso, Yakobus, & Abun, 2024)

Theoretical Framework

This study anchors on the Glass Ceiling Theory introduced by Marilyn Loden 1978, The theory examines how perceived inequities in promotion opportunities specifically those linked to gender and race impact employee loyalty and commitment within federal universities in south east Nigeria. Employees who believe that barriers prevent their advancement are likely to feel less loyal to their organisations. This is particularly relevant in federal universities, where a lack of representation among leaders can lead to decreased staff satisfaction and increased feelings of burnout. According to the idea, the glass ceiling has a negative impact on the three fundamental characteristics of organisational commitment: affective, normative, and continuity commitment. As employees face ongoing barriers, they may become cynical about the universities commitment to diversity and equal opportunity, which can lead to higher turnover rates. The Glass Ceiling Theory, proposed by Marilyn Loden 1978, highlights how perceived inequities in promotion opportunities based on gender affect employee loyalty in federal universities in Southeast Nigeria. Critics argue that the theory may oversimplify complex dynamics of loyalty and commitment by focusing primarily on barriers. Key tenets include the notion that perceived barriers lead to decreased affective, normative, and continuity commitment, fostering cynicism and burnout. To counteract these effects, the theory advocates for transparent policies and inclusive practices, emphasizing the need for systemic change to improve employee satisfaction and retention amidst persistent inequalities.

The relevance of the Glass Ceiling Theory to this study lies in its focus on how perceived injustices hinder employees' emotional and psychological connections to their organisation. When individuals perceive that their opportunities for advancement are limited by systemic biases, their loyalty diminishes. To combat these effects, organisations especially Federal universities should implement transparent policies and actively work to eliminate biases. By fostering an inclusive environment that promotes professional growth for all employees, organisations can enhance satisfaction, retention, and overall workforce engagement, thereby mitigating the negative impacts of the glass ceiling on employee

Empirical Review

Pepple, Oseghale, Nmecha, and Nwagu (2024) Explore how female employees experience glass ceiling. This study aims to examine senior female and male employees perspectives on the glass ceiling in the Nigerian banking sector. The study analysed the glass ceiling phenomenon in the Nigerian banking sector through qualitative research involving senior male and female employees. The study conducted 40 interviews, equally divided between 20 senior male executives and 20 senior female executives from 4 Nigerian banks. The findings revealed that the glass ceiling is characterised by a male-dominated meritocratic organisational culture driven by profit maximisation goals, aligning with the meritocratic perspective of role congruity theory.. They concluded that this dynamic significantly impacts the future of women's progression in the banking sector within emerging economies, highlighting the complex interplay between gender-based advancement strategies and organisational perceptions.

Olayinka, Ibukun and Anthony (2024) examined glass ceiling syndrome and Job Commitment of female executives in a consortium of companies, Lagos State, Nigeria. The study aimed at relationship between glass ceiling syndrome and job commitment of female executives in a consortium of companies. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A census study was conducted using census sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed to thirty female executives using purposive sampling technique, the questionnaire was formatted on a four point Likert scale and the study made use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression in analyzing data using SPSS 27.0 version. The findings revealed that there is a 20% weak relationship between personal barriers and affective commitment, 76% strong relationship between organisational barriers and continuance commitment and 65.3% strong relationship between societal barriers and normative commitment.

Popoola and Fagbola (2023) examined work motivation, job satisfaction, work-family balance, and job commitment of library personnel in Universities in North-Central Nigeria. The study examined work motivation and job commitment. The study employed total enumeration technique covering 926 library personnel, with 842 responding (91% response rate). Using validated questionnaires and statistical analysis, the results showed that work-family balance, work motivation, and job satisfaction significantly affected job commitment. Job satisfaction demonstrated the most substantial effect (41%) on job commitment. The findings also revealed significant relationships between work motivation, work-family balance, and job satisfaction. They concluded that university administrators and policy makers should prioritise these factors when planning to improve employee commitment and satisfaction in library settings.

Voordt and Jensen (2023) examined the impact of healthy workplaces on employee satisfaction, productivity, and costs through a narrative review of journal papers and other sources. The study focuses on the impact of healthy workplaces on employee satisfaction. The study covered building research, corporate real estate management, facilities management, environmental psychology, and ergonomics. The findings supported positive correlations between appropriate building characteristics and health, satisfaction, and productivity. While data on economic benefits was limited, mainly regarding reduced sickness absence, the results indicated that investing in healthy work environments is cost-effective. They concluded that understanding these complex relationships is crucial for value-adding management of buildings and facilities.

Idike, Ukeje, Iwuala, Onele, Ekwunife, and Nwachukwu, (2019) studied the practice of inclusive representation in Nigeria bureaucracy through the federal character principle (FCP) experience. The research focuses on inclusive representations and employee satisfaction. The research utilised face-to-face interviews, documentary and thematic analyses. The findings revealed negative effects of FCP on Nigerian bureaucracy due to implementation issues. The results showed persistent inter-ethnic rivalry and national disunity despite the policy's implementation. They concluded that sound governance models should replace FCP, recommending components including citizen participation, collaboration, network building, equity, and stronger regulations.

Onwuchekwa, Onwuzuligbo, and Ifeanyi (2019) studied gender diversity and employee engagement in cable manufacturing companies in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study focuses on gender diversity and employee engagement. Using Survey Research Design with a population of 151 employees, the study employed complete enumeration and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for analysis. The results showed a high correlation (0.965) between gender diversity and employee engagement, statistically significant at 5% level (p-value < .05). They concluded that gender-sensitive organisations foster more engaged employees

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The target demography for this study were all female employees in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The Federal Universities include Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State, Nnamdi Asikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Umahi Federal University of Medical Sciences Uburu, Ebonyi state. The total population participating in this study is 17,805, which includes both teaching and non-teaching female personnel. The study adopts Taro Yamane formula to determine

the sample size. Stratified sampling was used for the sampling techniques and the researchers used it so each state will be grouped into sub groups in the sample and one Federal University picked from each sub group thereby representing the population.

With the formula: $n=\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ a sample size of 391 was determined while stratified random sampling was used to ensure random selection. The study used questionnaire as the best instrument for data collection. The response options of the instruments was coded based on five point Likert scale; (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) moderately agree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree. The instrument was used mainly to get vital information from the respondents. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics and the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science (Version 27) at 5% level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Out of the three hundred (391) questionnaire administered, three hundred and thirty seven (337) copies of the questionnaire were returned. This study used self-administration process to elicit information from the respondents.

Decision Rule:

The decision is determined by the average of the responses of respondents. Strongly Agreed (5 points), Agreed (4 points), Disagreed (3 points), Strongly Disagreed (2 points) and Undecided (1 point). The average of the responses:

$$\frac{(5+4+3+2+1)}{5}=3.0$$

Therefore, a mean score below 3.0 would be considered rejected and a mean score of 3.0 and above would be considered accepted.

Table 1: What is the relationship between workplace policy and employee satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
	Workplace Policy				
1	I believe that the hiring practices at my university are not fair and transparent.	337	3.29	1.293	Accepted
2	There are equal opportunities for promotion for all employees regardless of their background.	337	3.08	1.347	Accepted
3	The Universities take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action against perpetrators of gender discrimination.	337	3.03	1.254	Accepted
4	The universities are making efforts to attract	337	3.42	1.271	Accepted

	and retain quality employees by developing inclusive policies.				
	Employee Satisfaction				
5	The university offers sufficient training and development opportunities to build awareness and skills around diversity, equity, and inclusion.	337	3.14	1.287	Accepted
6	The university provide equal opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship program for underrepresented groups.	337	2.92	1.287	Rejected
7	The University create equal opportunities for career advancement	337	2.91	1.277	Rejected
8	There is equal pay and adequate performance evaluation Metrics.	337	3.02	1.259	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**337**	**3.10**	**1.284**	**Accepted**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 showed the mean ratings on the relationship between workplace policy and employee satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The analysis yielded a grand mean of 3.10 (SD=1.284), which is above the 3.0 threshold, indicating overall acceptance. For workplace policy, respondents positively endorsed efforts to attract and retain quality employees (M=3.42), fair hiring practices (M=3.29), equal promotion opportunities (M=3.08), and disciplinary action against discrimination (M=3.03). Regarding employee satisfaction, respondents accepted the adequacy of training opportunities (M=3.14) and mentorship programs (M=3.00). However, equal career advancement opportunities (M=2.91) and equal pay/performance evaluation metrics (M=2.92) fell below the threshold and were rejected. This suggests that while general workplace policies are viewed positively, specific aspects of employee satisfaction need improvement.

Table 2: What is the relationship between unfair representation and employee commitment in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
	Unfair Representation				
1	Female staff in these Federal Universities face more obstacles to career advancement compared to male colleagues.	337	3.64	1.241	Accepted
2	Male staff receive preferential treatment for promotions and leadership positions in these Federal Universities	337	3.58	1.207	Accepted
3	Promotions and advancement opportunities	337	3.02	1.298	Accepted

	in our institution are based solely on favoritism.				
4	Female staff report higher levels of job dissatisfaction compared to male colleagues in this university.	337	3.48	1.244	Accepted
	Employee Commitment				
5	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging and attachment to this Federal Universities	337	3.37	1.238	Accepted
6	I am not willing to put in extra effort to help this universities succeed**.**	337	3.55	1.237	Accepted
7	My commitment aligns with its actual performance values	337	2.31	1.247	Rejected
8	I often think about leaving these universities to work elsewhere.	337	3.61	1.228	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**337**	**3.45**	**1.243**	**Accepted**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 showed the mean ratings on the relationship between unfair representation and employee commitment in some selected Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria.The analysis produced a grand mean of 3.45 (SD=1.243), significantly above the threshold. All items were accepted except item 7. Under unfair representation, respondents strongly acknowledged obstacles for female staff (M=3.64), preferential treatment for male staff (M=3.58), high job dissatisfaction among female staff (M=3.48), and merit-based promotions (M=3.02). For employee commitment, respondents indicated high thoughts of leaving (M=3.61), unwillingness to put more effort (M=3.55), sense of belonging (M=3.37). Alignment with performance values (M=2.31) fell below the threshold and was rejected. This suggests widespread recognition of unfair representation issues despite maintaining professional commitment.

Hypotheses Testing

Decision Rule:

For the two hypotheses , reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between the variables, while the strength of this relationship is determined by the magnitude of the correlation coefficient (r).

Hypothesis One

H_O: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Policy and Employee Satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between Workplace Policies and Employee Satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria

Table 3: Pearson correlation on the relationship between workplace policy and employee satisfaction

		WP	**ES**
WP	Pearson Correlation	1	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	337	337
ES	Pearson Correlation	.623**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	337	337

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

For hypothesis 1, the Pearson correlation analysis (Table 3) revealed a strong positive relationship between workplace policy and employee satisfaction ($r = .623$, $n = 337$, $p < .001$). Given that the p-value (.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between workplace policy and employee satisfaction in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H_O: There is no significant relationship between Unfair Representation and Employee Commitment in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between Unfair Representation and Employee Commitment in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson correlation on the relationship between unfair representation and employee commitment

		UR	EC
UR	Pearson Correlation	1	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	337	337
EC	Pearson Correlation	.587**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	337	337

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output

For hypothesis 2, the correlation analysis (Table 4) demonstrated a moderately strong positive relationship between unfair representation and employee commitment ($r = .587$, $n = 337$, $p < .001$). With a p-value (.000) less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This confirms a statistically significant relationship between unfair representation and employee commitment in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that there is a strong positive relationship between workplace policy, unfair representation, Employee commitment and employee satisfaction in selected Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria is multifaceted and the presence of the glass ceiling, characterised by barriers to advancement for women, adversely affects employee commitment, and overall job satisfaction. As employees perceive limited opportunities for growth and advancement, their loyalty to the institution diminishes, leading to increased turnover intentions and disengagement. Ultimately, understanding this relationship is essential for creating a positive work environment that values diversity and supports career development. By prioritising efforts to dismantle the glass

ceiling, Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria can cultivate a loyal and motivated workforce, contributing to their long-term success and effectiveness in higher education.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

a. Federal Universities need to implement transparent and inclusive workplace policies with clear accountability mechanisms for enforcement. the adoption of transparent and inclusive workplace policies in Federal Universities will foster equity, trust, and a positive organisational culture.

b. There is need to establish representation quotas and mentorship programs to ensure equitable participation in leadership positions in Federal Universities. It is important to implement representation quotas and mentorship programs to address systemic barriers and promote diversity in leadership. Quotas help to ensure that marginalised groups are included in decision-making roles, while mentorship programs support professional development.

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