

The Impact of Gender Diversity in Leadership Positions in Asian Countries

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Bachelor of Business Administration in
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Submitted to Mr. Ivo Ponocny

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Abstract

The gap in gender diversity occurs in company leadership positions in every country around the globe. This study will specifically address the issue of gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. The author will provide background information on this subject and compare it to Western countries. The aim is to identify the impacts of gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries considering cultural, religious, organizational socialization, and quality of work-life factors. Additionally, the author will explain how the "glass ceiling" exists and affects Asian countries - mainly focusing on the cultural differences in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, and India. In China, Hong Kong, and Korea, the main issue is Confucianism. In Japan, it is Ryōsai Kenbo, and in India, Hinduism. The author will be interviewing five women holding leadership positions in different companies based in the countries listed. The author will analyze how she views those factors affecting the leadership positions in Asian countries and how Confucianism, Ryōsai Kenbo, or Hinduism impact these countries. The author will discuss what advantages women bring to companies. She will also explain her ideas on how governments and companies could work together to help women get better integrated into companies, especially in leadership positions. This study provides recommendations on breaking the "glass ceiling" and closing the gender diversity gap.

Keywords: gender diversity, leadership positions, Asian countries, glass ceiling, culture, religion, organizational socialization, quality of work-life, Confucianism, Hinduism, Ryōsai Kenbo, China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, India

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List of Abbreviations

U.S.	United States
U.K.	United Kingdom
Q.W.L.	Quality of Work-life
H.Q.W.L.	Higher-order needs in Quality of Work-life
L.Q.W.L.	Lower-order needs in Quality of Work-life
C.E.O.	Chief Executive Officer
H.K.	Hong Kong
H.R.	Human Resources
WEF	World Economic Forum

1 Introduction

Gender Diversity has been an issue throughout global leadership positions in the working environment for decades. It could be identified as a worldwide phenomenon since female representatives consistently lack positions on corporate boards (Singh & Terjesen, 2008). Less than 15 percent of women are on corporate boards, which consist of members from the United States of America (U.S.), United Kingdom (U.K.), Canada, Australia, and many European countries (Singh & Terjesen, 2008). However, in some Asian countries, less than 0.2 percent of the boards include women (Singh & Terjesen, 2008). This data shows a massive imbalance in representation in Asian countries compared to Western countries since there are fewer women in leadership positions in Asia than in the West.

In Asia, the economy has grown throughout the past few decades, yet not many changes have been made to women's supposed roles (Cho et al., 2017). Therefore, because of these presupposed rules, it is hard for females to move upward into management positions in their work, due to the lack of gender diversity in the workforce. By looking to solve these issues of deficient gender diversity, through identifying aspects of how women can impact the working atmosphere, explaining why cultural background affects leadership positions, and examining the existence of the "glass ceiling," it is possible to enlighten readers about the gender diversity problem (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). Readers will begin to learn how to improve equality in gender, close the cultural gap, and break the "glass ceiling" in the work environment. Additionally, this enlightenment will also help provide more opportunities for women to display their talents. This study will illustrate the impact of gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries and how the improvement of women's rights and equality will affect companies. It will also propose solutions for closing the remaining gender diversity gap in the workplace.

1.1 Background of Study

In Asian countries, several factors affect the leadership positions taken by men or women, such as traditional culture and religious beliefs (Cho et al., 2017), social attitudes, educational barriers, and lack of childcare (Madgavkar & Sneader, 2018). Some cultures believe women should only have family and household duties (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). However, having more women working in management positions could benefit a company's organizational health and financial performance. Having more women in management positions can emphasize development and collaboration (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Not only are there these differences in cultural norms, but gender diversity also lacks support from the government (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Lastly, the metaphorical, but real, "glass ceiling" (Johns, 2013) is also one of the main factors that affects how women move upward into leadership positions. Using this background information regarding gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries can help people understand the importance of being informed about the very real difficulties women are facing.

1.2 Definition of "Glass Ceiling"

The expression "glass ceiling" was invented by *The Wall Street Journal* magazine about twenty years ago. It refers to obstacles that seem to exist, which hold both women and minority groups back from reaching the upper levels of the corporate management (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). The "glass ceiling" is essentially an invisible obstacle that women and minority groups face when trying to break into positions in middle and upper management (U.S. Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, as cited in Chin 2010). In Asia, however, the "glass ceiling" is due to different factors, those being mainly cultural and religious traditions (Pai & Vaidya, 2009).

2 Aim of this Research

"The World Economic Forum's (2016) Gender Gap Report ranked China 99th, India 87th, Indonesia 88th, Japan 111st, Korea 116th, Malaysia 106th, Sri Lanka 100th, and Thailand 71st out of 144 countries in the combined evaluation of economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment in terms of women's status compared with their male counterparts" (Cho et al., 2017). According to this information, Asia's gender gap (Cho et al., 2017) is alarming. Therefore, this research aims to identify factors in Asian countries that lead to the existing gap in gender diversity in the workplace and identify several solutions to close the gap.

2.1 Research Questions

These research questions are designed to help focus on the objectives and aim of this research. Said questions would also help develop the questions for the questionnaire that will be used for the interviews. The research questions are as follows:

1. Why is there a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries?
2. What are the factors that are affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries?
3. Why are there fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?
4. How could the working atmosphere and government better help and support females in leadership positions?

2.2 Hypothesis

"The recent WEF (2014) *Gender Gap Report* ranked China 87th, India 114th, Japan 104th, and Korea 117th out of 142 countries in the combined evaluation of economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment in terms of women's status compared with male counterparts" (Amornpipat et al., 2015). Therefore, this research identifies the

main reasons that impact gender diversity in leadership positions in China (including Hong Kong), India, Japan, and South Korea.

In traditional culture, Confucianism's value has dominated people's attitudes and behaviors for over 2000 years in China (Li & Sun, 2017) and significantly affected the Korean family and work culture (Kee, 2008; Park & Cho, 1995; Shim, 2005, as cited in Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). This research aims to discover whether Confucianism is the main reason for gender diversity in leadership positions in China and South Korea.

Hypothesis 1. *Confucianism has a significant impact on gender diversity in leadership positions in China and South Korea.*

In India's society, the ideology of Hinduism is the most impactful reason that naturalized women's subordination (Ghosh & Narendran, 2017). This research aims to discover whether Hinduism is the primary reason for gender diversity in leadership positions in India.

Hypothesis 2. *Hinduism has a significant impact on gender diversity in leadership positions in India.*

The traditional view, Ryōsai Kenbo, is deeply rooted in Japan, where males are expected to work while females are responsible for housework and child-rearing (Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017). This research aims to determine if Ryōsai Kenbo is the key factor- impacting Japan's gender diversity in leadership positions.

Hypothesis 3. *Ryōsai Kenbo has a significant impact on gender diversity in leadership positions in Japan.*

3 Literature Review

Due to the lack of gender diversity, improving gender diversity in leadership positions can positively affect how women perform, behave, and evaluate their attitude and satisfaction towards their positions.

As is shown in Table 1 (Taj, 2018) on the right, according to the Women Board Directors of Asia Report by Corporate

<u>Regions</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Asia	12.8
Northern Europe	35.6
Western Europe	23.6
US/Canada	20.9

Table 1 – Percentage of Women Leadership in Several Regions

Women Directors International, Asia only has 12.8 percent of working women in leadership positions. Meanwhile, in Western regions, the percentages of women in leadership positions are far higher. These include 35.6 percent in Northern Europe, 23.6 percent in Western Europe, and 20.9 percent in the U.S./Canada (Taj, 2018). These numbers show a need for change, so leadership positions in Asian countries may become more diverse. Before women and minorities became successful in reaching their leadership positions, they faced many different obstacles, or barriers, erected by society, government, and the business hierarchy (Johns, 2013). These four main barriers were identified in 1995 in the Glass Ceiling Commission report (Johns, 2013). Barriers that existed within society included a deliberate lack of opportunities to achieve fulfilment, as well as the existence of a prejudicial bias against cultural, gender and skin-color differences (Johns, 2013). Leadership positions can also be impacted by situations and organizational cultures (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001, as cited in Chin & Eagly, 2010). Figure 1 below shows that several factors can affect gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries.

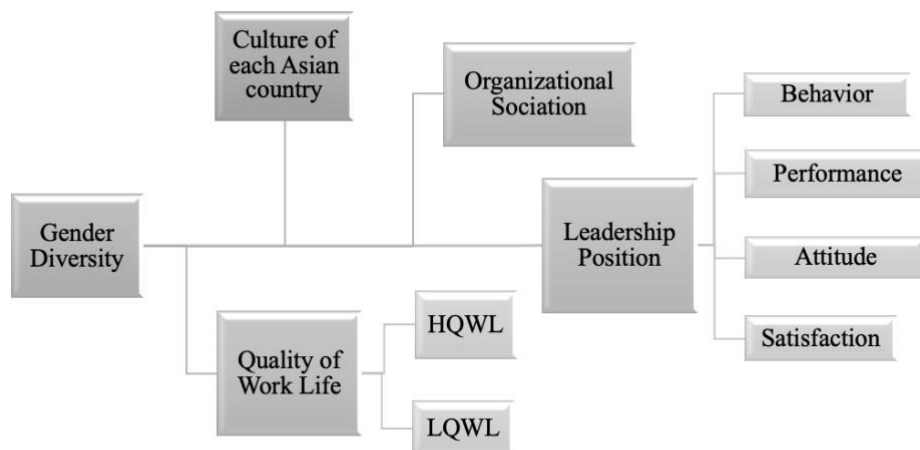


Figure 1 – Factors that Affect the Gender Diversity in Leadership Positions in Asian Countries

One influencing factor is the culture of each Asian country. Asian culture is tied to family status and longstanding gender inequality, which exists culturally within the family unit; thus, Asian countries are subsequently more male-dominated in management positions (Lee et al., 2014).

Secondly, there is the concept of organizational socialization, meaning newcomers acquire contextual and role-specific knowledge, job skills and integrate into the organization (Louis, 1980, as cited in Kowtha, 2018). Women tend to be more sociable than men in most situations; however, if the work environment is predominantly made up of men, women tend to become less social than men (Lee et al., 2014). There might even be gender stereotypes (Braun et al., 2015) or gender biases involved (Greer & Virick, 2012). Gender stereotyping is related to male and female traits that have been ascribed by society, such as the idea that women should take care of their families, and only men are suited to leadership positions which have long work hours and require high commitment levels (Byron, 2005, as cited in Braun et al., 2015). Gender bias is when decisions are needed to be made in an organization (L. Roberson, Galvin, & Charles, 2007, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012), and women's behaviors are identified from their identities as females in society (Ely, 1994, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Besides, in the male-dominated organization, women would not be in high-level positions due to men failing to recognize that the working environments are inhospitable to women's advancement to high-

level positions (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Organizations should provide uniform policies for workers and integrate individuals into the working atmosphere (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). For example, organizations should promote deserving females to demonstrate opportunities for fair employment in the company (Flanders & Anderson, 1973; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Women could help build up productivity and profitability (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Promoting women also provides a positive relationship within the workplace's diversity, such as between the genders, races, and sales performances of individuals (MaKay, Avery, & Morris, 2008, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Some companies even develop a reward system to improve and contribute to managing gender diversity in the working climate (Kalev et al., 2006; Wentling, 2004, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Companies can also give more opportunities in training, networking, defining career paths clearly, providing access to cross-functional experiences, and attention to promotability decisions (Catalyst, 1996, 2003a, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012). Furthermore, they can also provide more opportunities to have assignments in high-visibility environments (Salob & Greenslade, 2005, as cited in Greer & Virick, 2012).

The last factor affecting the lack of gender diversity in leadership positions is the quality of work-life (Q.W.L.) factor, defined as "employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace" (Sirgy et al., 2001, as cited in Lee et al., 2014). Q.W.L is divided into two parts: higher-order needs (H.Q.W.L.), reflecting the satisfaction of the employees with social, esteem, self-actualization, knowledge, and esthetical needs (Sirgy et al., 2001; Marta et al., 2011, as cited in Lee et al., 2014), and lower-order needs (L.Q.W.L.), including the satisfaction of employees of their health, safety, economic, and family needs (Lee et al., 2014). Women in leadership roles experience an L.Q.W.L. in more instances than men in management positions, perhaps since females do not compare their pay and

working conditions to other female workers but instead, compare them to males (Lee et al., 2014). This factor can influence women's performance, behavior, attitude, and satisfaction in leadership positions, making women appear less capable when they are not. This erroneous perception will then negatively influence opportunities for other women seeking positions in upper management.

3.1 Impacts of Gender Diversity

In Asia, traditional gender roles and stereotypical attitudes towards women have held them back from education and employment (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). Table 2 on the right (Lee et al., 2014) compares the number of marketing managers in

<u>Variables</u>	<u>(%)</u>		
Thai	N = 152	US	N = 230
Gender		Gender	
Male	50.3	Male	46.0
Female	49.7	Female	54.0

Table 2 – Marketing Managers: US vs Thai

Thailand versus the U.S. In Thailand, an Asian country, there were 152 respondents (N stands for the number of respondents.). Of these respondents, 50.3 percent of marketing managers were male, and 49.7 were female (Lee et al., 2014). Meanwhile, in the U.S., one of the Western countries, there were 230 respondents; 46 percent of marketing managers were male, and 54 percent female (Lee et al., 2014). A noticeably greater percentage of women are working in leadership positions in the U.S. than in Thailand. This data suggests that in Western countries, gender diversity is more established than in Asian countries. Additional examples include the fact that only seven percent of South Korean managers are female, compared to 21 percent in Hong Kong and 19 percent in China (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). In Taiwan, however, female managers believe they have more opportunities to be promoted. This means younger Taiwanese women face fewer obstacles from the glass ceiling issue since 19 percent of females are in managerial positions in Taiwan, representing 41 percent of the total worker population (Pai & Vaidya, 2009).

On the other hand, in the Asia-Pacific region, 19.6 percent of women work in parliament, which is much more in line with the 19.0 percent in Europe and 19.5 percent in the U.S. (Kinias, 2018). It appears that women are gaining ground in the workforce due to changes in societal perceptions in Asian countries. However, the overall percentage of women in leadership positions is still low, even though there is a high proportion of women in the workforce of Asian markets (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012).

Furthermore, according to the 2018 Hays Asia Salary Guide, only 29 percent of the respondents of Hong Kong’s working women are in management positions.

This makes it the second-lowest ranking region in Asia for having women in leadership roles, as shown in Table 3 (Moon, 2018) on the right. It is just above Japan with 22 percent, lower than

<u>Regions in Asia</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Hong Kong	29
Japan	22
Malaysia	38
Mainland China	31
Singapore	30

Table 3 – Management Positions Percentage of Women in Asia’s Regions

mainland China, with 31 percent, Singapore with 30 percent, and Malaysia ranking the highest with 38 percent (Moon, 2018). It is ironic that Hong Kong still needs to improve a lot to reach gender equality in their organizations since this city is considered to be very westernized in its culture and political structure. As Kiersten Barnet, deputy chief of staff to the Chairman at Bloomberg, said, "The irony is that the region also has highly educated women with strong work experience who contribute to economic growth in their own right" (Moon, 2018).

This statistical information illustrates that most women in Asian countries are not in leadership positions due to many factors, including the double burden on female labor participation. The double burden is defined as "the workload of people who work to earn money, but who are also responsible for significant amounts of unpaid domestic labor" ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). This double burden did not only happen in Asia but also in Western countries. It led to society accepting the traditional gender roles that both genders have paid jobs, and women tend to spend more time on household

chores and caring for family members than men ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). Furthermore, men spending time working a paid job is more valuable to society than domestic labor. Women spending time on domestic labor is more valuable than them working paid jobs ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). For instance, in Western countries, such as Italy, women have been categorized as the primary person for care duties, household responsibilities, and activities (Patimo & Pereiro, 2017). It also happens in Asian countries, in which the cultural norm expects women to take care of the family ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). So, many working women decided to give up their careers to focus on taking care of the family since there were not many childcare and elderly day-care services in society (Patimo & Pereiro, 2017). The factor that leads to a double burden in countries is gender ideology with the "beliefs about appropriate behavior for men and women" ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). It shows that each gender should occupy their own roles, women as caretakers and men as providers ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). Another factor is societal pressures, including the thinking in economic and domestic terms, such as women being seen as unlikely to do well at a paid job due to asking for maternity leave ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). Females worldwide have a double burden impacting their decision-making towards their careers and family. Different cultures also affect them. For example, married women in Japan are expected to give their full effort as devoted wives and mothers after returning home from their full-time jobs ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). In Latin America, even though men interact with their children and help partly with the housework, most of the household responsibilities are done by women ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). Also, in Europe, although men were more likely to play and interact with children and tackle some of the house tasks, they would not divide the household tasks equally with the women and would not want to take care of the children daily ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021). These examples show that although men "believe in the principle of equal sharing of domestic labor", they often fail to achieve it ("Double Burden | Cultural Anthropology", 2021).

Thus, Western men are willing to help women, but in Asian countries, it is still challenging to ask men to help women with domestic work.

Other factors include a lack of female role models to influence and motivate women trying to advance and a lack of networking opportunities for women to make connections with other individuals to help with their upward advancement (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Networking is essential as it could lead women to grow and succeed in their careers (Coleman, 2008, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). Networking includes joining professional associations, participating in social activities outside of the workplace that would benefit a person's visibility and perhaps, advancement (Fisher & Vilas, 1991; Roane, 1993; Kramer, 1998; Barton, 2001; Wellington & Catalyst, 2001, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). Women tend to have fewer social networks due to their companies providing fewer opportunities for them (Forret, n.d., 2006, as cited in Hopkins et al., 2011). Their attempts to network is often impacted simply by the way an organization structures itself. Because of this, women repeatedly have less chances to interact with those in authority who make the important decisions related to hiring and promotions. If they are not seen, their work is not recognized (Hopkins et al., 2011). Another aspect that leads to women lacking networking opportunities is the "old boy's" network (Wanigasekara, 2016). This network is a relationship which has developed over many years between the men of an organization of shared history, beliefs and fraternization from which women are excluded (Moonet & Ryan, 2008, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). Neither can they easily break into these circles. Therefore, women cannot identify their unique skills and are often left out from informal communications of the various networks in existence (Hopkins et al., 2011) since the formal, informal, or personal network is consistently linked with male privilege (Coleman, 2010, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). For instance, sometimes, male managers have discussions during their washroom breaks or on lifts (Ghazali et al., 2010, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). Also, some male business relationships are formed at golf courses, exclusive country clubs, executive sky-boxes at sporting events, and other such facilities (Simmons, 2011, as cited in

Wanigasekara, 2016). In the end, it is hard for females to enter males' social networks and develop their own networks within them. Finally, gender stereotyping is also a minor aspect that leads to women's lack of networking opportunities. In past years, stereotyped society women as less knowledgeable and as the weaker sex (Cohen & Huffman, 2007, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). They had limited legal rights and career opportunities, and their primary role was labeled as housewife and mother (Simmon, 2011, as cited in Wanigasekara, 2016). Thus, organizational structure, male-dominated working environments, and gender stereotyping are the aspects that affected women's networking, which impacts women not be able to achieve success and become effective in leadership positions.

3.2 Cultural Difference

Females' identities are different in each culture, and cultures are formed on a patriarchal past in which men held more power than women (Dixon, 2011). Women were not commonly working outside of the home years ago. Instead, they were subjugated to be housewives while their husbands worked outside the home to earn all the money (Dixon, 2011). History shows that the feminist movement happened both in the West and in Asia. There were women's movements not only in Asian countries but also in Western countries, such as in the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe. There were three waves of the women's movement, which helped women globally increase their rights (Dixon, 2011). In Western countries (the U.K. and the U.S.), the first wave of the movement was during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ("History and theory of feminism", 2021). It initially focused on gaining equal contract and property rights for women, opposing chattel marriage, and married women's ownership by their husbands. As the movement progressed, it became mainly about women's suffrage and gaining political power for women, such as voting rights ("History and theory of feminism", 2021). The second wave started in the early 1960s and lasted until the late 1980s ("History and theory of feminism", 2021). Centering on women's liberation's actions and ideas, it also focused on women's culture and social rights, inequalities in politics, and leading women

to understand the aspects of their lives ("History and theory of feminism", 2021). In the early 1990s, the third wave began. It continued with the second wave's primary focus. It tried to gain success from the failures that had occurred and tried to challenge or avoid the essentialist definitions of femininity ("History and theory of feminism", 2021).

These three waves of women's movements have significantly changed and affected Western society in a positive way. Undertakings such as the women's suffrage movement aided in initiating greater access to education for women. This, in turn, began the drive towards more equitable pay with men, as well as the right for women to own property in their own name. Women earned the right to initiate divorce proceedings and "no-fault" divorce actually became a 'thing.' A big step forward was in the right of women to make individual decisions regarding pregnancy. ("History and theory of feminism", 2021). It shows that Westerners can undoubtedly adapt to new thinking and ideas, break the barriers for women faster and make it easier to reach gender equality, promoting gender diversity in leadership positions.

3.2.1 China

In China's history, the May Fourth Feminism Movement during the 1910s and 1920s was the women's movement advocating equality between the genders, free love and marriage, educational opportunities for women, and women's labor force participation (Li, 2000). The movement motivated China to make changes to society to make a stronger nation (Stacey, 1983, as cited in Li, 2000) by pushing forward women's liberation (Li, 2000). However, this movement only impacted the urban and elite women and did not impact the women who lived in rural areas back in that period (Li, 2000). Then, the People's Republic, a new government after 1949, committed to gender equality; as Mao Zedong said, "Women hold up half the sky," to reflect that women's status was acknowledged and praised by the government (Li, 2000). The new government was a fresh start for women in gaining more equality in society, including in the working fields. However, it did not significantly impact females individually, and another reform movement began at the end of the 1970s (Li, 2000). It led

to a massive change and success in China's economy. However, it did not positively affect women's status, especially women in rural areas (Li, 2000).

Therefore, even though there were movements in the past trying to help females have equal status as males in China, and China's society has a high female labor participation rate, there are still limitations for these working women. Two of these limitations include an apparent discrepancy in criteria for promotion between men versus women and a dismissive viewpoint towards the importance of gender diversity in leadership positions in the Chinese workforce (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Furthermore, in "traditional Chinese culture, women were inferior to men" (Li & Sun, 2017). The philosophy of "filial piety" of Confucius (551-479 B.C.) impacted the systematic, long-standing, and deep-rooted sexist ideologies and practices in China (Li, 2000). "Filial piety" – meaning "women must obey men, citizens must obey their ruler, and the young must obey the elderly," has firmly maintained the social order in China for thousands of years (Li, 2000). Another such cultural influence is Confucianism's religion, which has shaped people's behavior and attitudes for over 2000 years (Li & Sun, 2017). Confucianism purports beliefs known as a female's three obediences and four virtues (Li & Sun, 2017). The three obediences are that "unmarried women had to be obedient to their fathers, married women to their husbands, or their sons if their husbands died" (Jia, 2015, as cited in Li & Sun, 2017). The four virtues were "good appearance and manner, ability in housework, appropriate language, and self-control" (Bell, 2010, as cited in Li & Sun, 2017). Although commendable in their time, these archaic stereotypes affect women's behavior and society's expectations to this day. Since society's expectations towards women have not changed, their subsequent advancement in today's workplace is hindered.

Additionally, due to the hold Confucianism has had on Asian society in the past, women had fewer education opportunities; instead, they were taught to be subservient to men and learn the virtues of being docile and obedient (Li & Sun, 2017). Hence, today, women still do not usually get recognition when they

achieve a successful career path. However, they are quickly recognized for being a good wife, daughter, or mother. Therefore, the Chinese Confucianism culture erects a barrier for women between their traditional roles and the leadership positions they seek and deserve in the workforce. They are sabotaged before getting their foot in the proverbial business door. Today, even though the traditional cultural background still exists and is valued, the socialists in China promote equality in gender and "liberal orientations towards women's combining economic and family roles" (Shu & Zhu, 2012, p. 1103, as cited in Braun et al., 2015). As a result, China is trying to improve gender diversity in leadership positions.

3.2.2 India

In India, the belief that women should take care of the family is firmly established. For example, "as professional women, they are expected to be committed to their work, 'just like men,' at the same time as they are normatively required to give priority to their family" (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005, p. 41, as cited in Braun et al., 2015). As a result, many women are thwarted by that influence and end up leaving the workplace, even those in senior positions, to take care of their family (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). This is due to society's Hindu religious beliefs. In Hindu society, women were treated in a subservient manner to men. They did this because they believed it to be necessary for the survival of their culture and their moral beliefs (Ghosh & Narendran, 2017). It means "ideology, economic dependency on the male head of the family, class privileges and veneration bestowed upon conforming and dependent women of the upper class, and finally the use of force" (Chakravarti, 1993, p.580, as cited in Ghosh & Narendran, 2017). Because of the promotion of a patriarchal ideology, women in India must accept being in a subordinate position in society and embrace being proud of their husbands' status (Ghosh & Narendran, 2017).

There were women's movements throughout the years: non-cooperation (1920-21), civil disobedience (1930-21), and Quit India (1942) (Krishnaraj, 2012). These movements were mainly wives, sisters, or followers of male leaders

fighting for gender equality rights (Krishnaraj, 2012). In the 1970s, there was also reformism on gender discrimination in India's society (Krishnaraj, 2012). However, it did not show any colossal process of leading to success in gender equality because of how India's Hindu religious background pre-establishes a social role for the genders. Women are essentially forced into servitude roles, bearing the responsibility of taking care of their family, serving their husbands and children instead of working in corporations.

3.2.3 Japan

The traditional philosophy in Japan is that women stay at home after marriage. Sixty percent of women in Japan quit or change their jobs after getting married (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Another common stereotype that exists in Japan is that females tend to have a low level of ambition (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). Ironically, that stereotype seems to be perpetuated by Japan's traditional culture: Ryōsai Kenbo, 'the good wife and wise mother' (Welsh, Memili, Kaciak, & Ochi, 2014, as cited in Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017). It alludes to the traditional view that men are expected to work, while women are responsible for housework and child-rearing (Cho et al., 2015, as cited in Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017). This social model establishes the viewpoint that when men are involved in childcare, they are seen as not paying enough attention to their careers. It also establishes the position that when women go out and work, they do not care about their children enough (Kano, 2015, as cited in Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017).

Under these circumstances, women in Japan tend to stay at home to take care of their family instead of working or pursuing a career, since the social norms make it difficult for them to hold positions in the workforce. Even though in the early 1970s, there were feminist movements, including women's mobilizations (Shin, 2011) and the women's liberation movement (Matsui, 1990), which criticized the traditional gender roles of wives and mothers (Shin, 2011), these movements pointed out the importance of gender equality policies and the government's responsibility to incorporate the practical realization of gender diversity. The Japanese government had formulated the "Vision for a Gender Equal Society

and the Plan for a Gender Equal Society 2000" (Shin, 2011), which led to an increase of Japanese housewives leaving their homes to find paid employment (Matsui, 1990). There have been slight changes in gender diversity in Japan due to the women's movement, but more time is needed to fully overcome the outdated, traditional culture.

3.2.4 South Korea

There are "deep-rooted cultural biases" against women working in Korea (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012), which, like China, is due to Confucianism (Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). Though defined previously, Confucianism also includes the following beliefs: "respect for elders, loyalty to superiors, good human relations, filial piety, and a gender divide" (Kee, 2008, as cited in Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). These beliefs manifest themselves as hierarchical classism, in that "all individuals have their own roles and responsibilities according to their identity and social class" (Kee, 2008, p.4, as cited in Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). Korea's working women are affected by this hierarchy since they are seen as a supposedly lower class. Women are told to obey and respect men's authority and perform several roles as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law (Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). Men are seen as their families' heads, taking wage-earning roles outside the household (Kim, 2013, as cited in Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017).

Additionally, a 'glass fence' exists, which is explained as the idea that women should keep away from taking active roles outside the house, as there is a substantial barrier standing between the role of women at home and the role of men at work (Kim, 2013, as cited in Cho, Kang, & Park, 2017). Since Confucianism also impacted Korea, that country also had a women's movement similar to China's. In the late 19th century, the Korean women's movement's first wave was against Confucian politics and culture (Hur, 2011). It led to a second and a third wave of the movement around 1905 and 1919, respectively (Hur, 2011). These movements were the women's education movement and the movement of women's activism in the national socialist liberation (Jayawardena, 1986b, as cited in Hur, 2011). However, it seems that those movements did not

significantly impact Korea, just like China. Like the other aforementioned Asian countries, women in Korea will more often make the choice to work at home, raising children and caring for elderly parents rather than to pursue careers for themselves in the same manner to which men are encouraged.

3.3 Women's Performance and Contribution in Corporations

When women are leaders in an organizational setting, their leadership style can be more transformational than men's, particularly in mentoring and developing co-workers and subordinates in their organizations (Chin & Eagly, 2010). Beyond that, women tend to maintain a positive managerial approach that includes rewarding reasonable efforts rather than solely reprimanding bad ones (Chin & Eagly, 2010). This demonstrates the natural nurturing quality that women possess to a greater degree than men and that men find it difficult to nurture. According to "Ralph Norris, former C.E.O. of Commonwealth Bank of Australia, 'Women in leadership. It is just good business. There is no difference in leadership potential between women and men; making sure he or she can capture a better share of high-performing women is better for the organization.'" (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012) and "Sabrina Lin, vice president, and managing director of the company's marketing organization in the Asia Pacific, Japan, and Greater China, 'diversity in teams leads to more innovation, more out-of-the-box thinking, and more collaboration'" (Chen, Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, & Wong, 2012). When women are at the top management level, they positively impact organizational allegiance and adherence and boost motivation (Bilimoria, 2006, as cited in Azzi et al., 2016). Therefore, small companies and large organizations alike are starting to realize the value of increasing the number of women in leadership positions due to their high-performance levels and their contribution to the workplace. Companies are also trying to improve their management systems to become more flexible and less hierarchical in order to allow the skills that women managers bring to the table to be identified as those that fulfill their current needs (Alvesson and Billing, 2000, as cited in Azzi et al., 2016).

3.3.1 Definition of Difference Feminism

Difference feminism emphasizes that there are biological differences between men and women (Birmingham-Reyes, 2015). It is about acknowledging the differences in behavior among women that need to be addressed by men and women to achieve more actual equality (Changfoot, 2007). Women are being recognized to be different from men, and each of them is a different individual. Women should be attaining rights equal to men, and there should not be any judgment placed upon the differences.

3.3.2 Definition of Transformational Leadership Style

Leadership style is perceived as being transformational when a manager leads in such a way that influences those under him to excel in their endeavours and display deep levels of dedication (Ayman & Korabik, 2010) imbued with values (Bobrowski et al., 2014). This facets of this leadership style are displayed through the ability to influence and inspire subordinates, to motivate them to succeed, to give each staff member their due consideration, and to stimulate those under him/her intellectually with challenges and opportunities for growth (Bass & Avolio, 1996b, as cited in Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Lastly, a transformational leader presents a role model for others through their confidence by garnering others' trust and sharing their visions (Bobrowski et al., 2014).

4 Methodology

In this section, the research design and methods will be outlined, the sample size will be described, and the data collected from interviews will be analyzed.

4.1 Research Design

This research design provides a framework for the study (Sileyew, 2019). It is a questionnaire for interviews with several women in leadership positions in different Asian countries. Interview questions were developed through the research process. Interviews, which were conducted by phone calls, were designed and administered to gauge how these women feel about their particular company's level of gender diversity in its leadership positions, to identify the

factors that affect females in management positions, and to determine if they are able to offer suggestions they think would help improve how females can reach leadership positions.

With this in mind, a descriptive research design will be applied to this study. It acknowledges the issues impacting gender diversity in leadership positions in several Asian countries and proposes some solutions. This research design also allows the researcher to collect important information about gender diversity in current leadership positions in Asian countries, helping the researcher organize data from several interviewees on the impact of gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries.

4.2 Research Methods

This research uses qualitative information from primary sources. The data collected from the interviews identifies in which Asian country the interviewees are working, what leadership position they fill, how gender diversity affects them in their leadership roles, and how they overcame any difficulties they encountered being a female in a leadership position. Having the interviewees' basic background information leads to a better understanding of their perspectives in choosing which factors (cultural, organizational, and Q.W.L.) are the main ones they face. Interviewees will also provide their ideas on how the government and companies could improve or solve the issue. Since the data is from primary sources, the interviewees' information is considered trustworthy.

4.3 Sample

The sample size will be five women in leadership positions in different Asian countries. Interviewees are chosen from the social network that the author possesses, if possible, including one from each country mentioned in the literature review. The interviewees are Ms. Lam Mei Yuk May, Assistant General Manager (Human Resources) at Kai Shing Management Services Limited, Chinese (Hong Kong); Ms. Mona Relwani, Quality Assurance Director at a U.S.-based company, Indian; a female Director at Wells Fargo Bank, Japanese and Taiwanese; Ms. Janice Lee, Event Director at Informa

Markets, Chinese (Hong Kong); and Ms. Christine Kim, Commercial Manager at a mining company, Korea.

5 Data Analysis

5.1 Interviews

According to interviewee Ms. Lam (Appendix 1), Assistant General Manager from Kai Shing Management Services Limited, gender diversity is administered equally and fairly within positions of the Human Resources (H.R.) department. She believes that cultural differences are the main cause of any gap in gender diversity which might exist in leadership positions in Asian countries. She also credits different family situations as they pertain to cultural gender differences, such as males working and females staying at home, as factors towards an increase in the gender diversity gap, causing there to be fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries than there are in the West. She also believes that cultural-religious factors could contribute to the lack of gender diversity in leadership positions, depending on the country. Ms. Lam thinks both factors affect the gender diversity gap in Hong Kong, but she thinks it is religious factors that affect the gap more in other countries, such as Islam, practiced in several south-east Asian countries. On the other hand, she does not necessarily agree that there are fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to the West. She does feel there are fewer females in leadership positions in China and India due to the traditional culture; however, nowadays, the education system in China is improving, and more females are attending school. In fact, in Hong Kong, there are more females than males enrolled in universities. She does not feel the "glass ceiling" exists in Hong Kong and believes that it depends on the female's perspective. She also does not think Confucianism applies to modern society in Hong Kong, but it might still impact in some instances, such as rural areas. She mentioned that females now have a greater opportunity to achieve higher education, giving them deeper insight, higher reasoning skills, and gaining more work experience, depending on their individual perspectives. She does not believe that having a company

policy, such as regulating how many females have to be in leadership positions, would be a good idea. She believes it should depend on the individual woman's suitability for the job, her ability to do the job, and her time management skills. She thinks the government could provide daycare facilities to take care of the children of working mothers. Companies could also provide other facilities, such as baby feeding rooms for the employees who have children, improving women's support in leadership positions. Ms. Lam believes that women working in leadership positions benefit the companies because they look at things from different perspectives. She also believes that they can flexibly arrange time management. As a result, she feels that education and culture have positively influenced gender diversity in Asian countries in the past few years. The perceived value of women working in leadership positions has changed. There are now services provided for childcare, and the government offers better babysitting facilities to help women advance in the workplace.

Interviewee Ms. Relwani (Appendix 2), Quality Assurance Director of a U.S.-based Asian company, said she works for a U.S.-based recruitment firm with their Hong Kong operation. Their Hong Kong offices have many females in managerial and senior leadership roles, but this may be because of their business's nature: temporary recruitment, payroll management, and recruitment or Human Resources related business. They have many more men in senior roles in their other offices across Greater China and the U.S. Ms. Relwani also talked about their operations in Hong Kong, where around 30 percent of the staff are male, and 70 percent are female. Many senior leadership teams are made up entirely of women rather than men, even when their company gives both genders equal opportunities to enter leadership roles. She thinks cultural influences are the leading factor when a gender diversity gap exists in Asian countries' leadership positions. She feels that although people are starting to perceive men and women as equal, the Asian culture still has stereotypical views that men are more powerful, aggressive, and committed to their work than women. There is also a perception that males use facts and figures in their decision-making, while emotion plays more of a role in women's decision-

making processes. Besides, in Asian culture, the stereotypical view is that men generally are the breadwinners for the family. Thus, there is less expectation for them to participate in household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children. It is believed they can thus better focus more on their jobs without the burden of household-related distractions. Meanwhile, people tend to think that women, who must take care of their homes, children, and other household chores, will lack focus on the duties of their job positions. She also talked about how religious factors could affect gender diversity in leadership positions depending on the Asian country. Since she is Indian, she listed an example from her own country. She explained that Hinduism is the main religion in India, where there are requirements, such as fasting on certain days. Women may need to take time off work to go to the temples during the fasting period. Due to the Hindu religious background, married Hindu women need to fast on Karwa Chauth, a fasting ritual (Das, 2019). However, in other countries such as Thailand, the Buddhist belief is that all men must be ordained. If they have not already done so before beginning their career, they may have to apply for leave from work to become a monk for a while. Still, she does not think religious background is the main reason fewer females are in leadership positions in India and other Asian countries. Instead, she believes it is the cultural norm in Asia, especially India, where the cultural stereotype makes people perceive males as superior to females, thus giving them more leadership opportunities. She also talked about how cultural background might still affect the working environment, and, as such, the "glass ceiling" probably exists in Asia. However, with a reduced number of children in each family and women getting the help needed to manage their homes, more and more women are entering the workforce today. They are breaking free from the stereotype and proving they can apply themselves and meet their position's demands. Whether they need to work long hours or travel with work, they are demonstrating they can perform their duties as equally well as men when they are in leadership positions. However, Ms. Relwani feels that the Q.W.L. for females in leadership positions in Asian countries is negatively affected. Since women generally need to take care of their children, family, and work, they need to give up something

to gain something else. As such, they must see it as a trade-off that is entirely worthwhile. If women are to succeed, they need to balance both aspects of their life, work and home, ensuring both facets are being taken care of, and neither one loses out. She also explained that she feels women benefit the company because they are generally more detailed and organized than men and work with their hearts. They bring empathy and intuition to leadership roles. Women regularly see things that men do not. Also, women often have different views and perspectives of looking at things for the company. If a company has a mixture of men and women in leadership roles, this gender diversity can benefit the organization. Other potential benefits include an increase in business performance, a better overall company reputation, and an increased customer base, which in turn increases revenue and profits, broadens ideas, promotes better decision-making processes, and improves the diversity of management styles between the genders. She also identified why there have traditionally been fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries than in Western countries. She said that in Asian countries, many females, especially the older generation, do not work. Based on Asian culture, many women tend to become housewives, responsible for managing their households instead of going out to work. Today, however, with the cost of living rising and women completing higher education, many tend to go out to work. However, they do not work to build long-term careers. There is still a stereotype in Asian culture that women need to devote time to family, household chores, and bringing up their children. Due to these cultural norms, women generally do not get to take advantage of as many advancement opportunities as those in Western countries. This stereotype in Asian countries influences people's perspectives towards females and males in leadership positions. Finally, Ms. Relwani suggested that the government should encourage companies to provide opportunities for everyone equally and offer them some benefits or incentives for including women. This could come in the form of monetary rewards or public recognition, such as Women Entrepreneur of the Year and Best Leadership Award Female, to motivate companies to provide opportunities for females.

The unidentified interviewee, a female director from Wells Fargo Bank (Appendix 3), talked about her personal experiences related to gender diversity in her work environment. She stated that she is Taiwanese, working in Japan. As a foreigner in Japan and a female, she occasionally feels frustrated because sometimes, during a call or meeting with a Japanese client, the client requests to meet with her male colleagues for no other reason than that she is a foreigner and a female. She also reported that some of her other female colleagues had had similar experiences. However, she feels that working in an international bank is better than working at traditional Japanese companies. Based on her experience and that of her friends or colleagues, this interviewee stated she does not think the gender diversity gap in leadership positions is as vast of an issue in countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, as it is in Korea and Japan. Based on her experience of the current situation, more men are currently in senior positions in those two countries and are more frequently chosen for those positions over women. Due to diverse cultural backgrounds, circumstances might vary in different countries. The perspective also exists that women should stay at home to take care of the children and family while men should work. She said she had lived in Japan for 20 years, and in that country, there is social pressure that tends to allow fewer females to work than men, even when their abilities are comparable. For most families, the men go out to work while the women stay home and take responsibility for the family. She feels cultural factors negatively affect gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. In Taiwan, the conventional belief is that everyone goes out to seek employment, and they are all treated equally. However, when she came to Japan, people did not feel that way. If a woman said she was getting married or became pregnant, people assumed she would quit her job. This led to a cultural shock for her as a director at the Wells Fargo Bank. Nowadays, some families still ask women to quit their job and stay at home after marrying or having children. She does not think religion is a factor that hugely impacts this point of view. She also thinks people have the perspective that because women need to take care of the family, they cannot focus 100 percent on their job. This perception is particularly prevalent towards women of childbearing age;

companies consider that these women will need to take extended maternity leave and also repeatedly take special leave to take care of a sick child. Therefore, companies will choose men rather than women for management positions because they are of the mindset that men can give 100 percent focus to their jobs. However, in her American-based company, some U.S. colleagues/directors are not afraid to say they need to take one or two days off due to family matters. Western society is more accepting of this issue, so such requests are not judged negatively. However, since Japanese society judges it negatively, women in management positions will not say they need to take a day off due to family issues, nor will they bring up the subject to address it at meetings. Also, she thinks traditional Japanese thinking or views, such as Ryōsai Kenbo (Good Wife, Wise Mother), are the main reasons fewer females are in leadership positions in Japan because they think males should work and females should take responsibility for the home and family. Contrary to the above view, the interviewee thinks women working in leadership positions can benefit the company, depending on the person. Moreover, if many women are in senior positions, she believes they could make the whole organization softer and more well-balanced. Thus, she acknowledges that in the 20 years since she came to Japan, more women are working after they get married or pregnant. The government has also tried to announce policies and strategies to help females set up more babysitting networks. Some large companies set up internal kindergarten classes to let children study in the same complex where their mothers work. However, Japan still needs time to improve even more, and Japanese society needs to agree on female and male equality. Thus, she suggests there is a need for more babysitting and housekeeping services to be set up to help working women feel more comfortable and enable them to have more equality with men in the workplace. The cost of these services should not be so high as to be prohibitive in nature, being too costly for families to make use of them. If possible, providing flexible working hours would allow both men and women to spend time with their families, since in most Asian countries people work until seven or eight at night. For example, during the current COVID-19 situation, she and her husband worked at home, and it was the first time that she

could have dinner with her husband during weekdays. Working at home provided more flexibility for them.

Interviewee Ms. Lee (Appendix 4), Event Director at Informa Markets, said that she is used to working with other international companies and many different cultures since she works in an international company's Hong Kong office. She agrees that the cultural differences which exist in Asian countries do lead to a gender diversity gap but not solely in leadership positions. Ms. Lee feels the gender gap happens almost everywhere, with some exceptions. She has not noticed its existence in her leadership capacity in the company for which she works. She also does not think that cultural and religious factors affect gender diversity in leadership positions in all Asian countries, only in some of them. For example, some Japanese people might not work with Indian people in her experience due to cultural factors. Ms. Lee also does not think the "glass ceiling" exists. Additionally, she asserts that due to the tradition and culture in some Asian countries, such as India, Japan, and Korea, men dominate leadership positions, not a "glass ceiling." She believes culture is the main factor that negatively impacts women and gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries, such as in Muslim countries. Cultural and organizational socialization factors affect females in leadership positions because, in some cases, their religious dress requirements might create particular racism. She also talked about how she does not think Confucianism is a factor that leads to fewer females in leadership positions in China and Hong Kong, since in Hong Kong particularly, many females are working in leadership positions, such as the Chief Executive of Hong Kong. She thinks Confucianism affected this issue decades ago in China, but today, more women are working in leadership positions, and society is adapting to new thinking. She also outlined how the working atmosphere could improve from healthy company culture and if the government would support and promote more education for women. In Hong Kong and China, she feels the new generations are adopting a new way of thinking, so more women are beginning to work in leadership roles. This is partly because, with an improved education system and more opportunities to

study overseas, today's generations have a broader vision of the world. Finally, she talked about how women in leadership roles can benefit a company. She believes that women are more caring and sensitive. It is easier for them to show empathy to colleagues than it is for men. Being a working mom herself, she observes that working moms are often better at time management, helping the company be more organized with the time scheduling of their tasks.

Interviewee Ms. Kim (Appendix 5), the commercial manager at a mining company, talked about her personal experience related to gender diversity in her workplace. She indicated she was working in a male-dominated company, which rarely included females. She has also worked in a gender-diverse company in past years. She talked about how cultural differences lead to the gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries, but the situation is improving. She believes the quality of work-life is the main factor that affects females in leadership positions in Asian countries because of how companies function. In general, their working environments affect how women think about their worth and what they could bring to the company. If companies do not attempt to help women ideally balance their work and home lives, they will reduce their working productivity and lessen their work efforts. Also, in Hong Kong, she thinks everyone is permitted to work in leadership positions fairly. She does not think religion is an influencing factor. As for the "glass ceiling," she does not think it exists in Hong Kong. However, other countries might vary. She believes the "glass ceiling" might still exist in Korea but that the issue has improved. It is Ms. Kim's opinion that family values are stronger in Asian countries than in western countries. These values state that men should work and women should stay at home, take care of family and children and not work after marriage or pregnancy. For example, in Korea, where she was born, fewer women are working since the workplace atmosphere is not friendly towards women working. Due to the fact that society prohibits women from working while pregnant, there is a lower birth rate in Korea since women are choosing work over childbearing. This has prompted the government to attempt to make improvements to the issue. She also talked about Confucianism as the main

reason for fewer females in South Korean leadership positions. She explained that newer generations have different ideas from their ancestors, and the number of women in leadership positions is rapidly increasing in Korean society. However, the old mindset has not been changing or improving as fast as society is changing. This opposing set of circumstances is stressful and puts pressure on the younger generations and can affect the development of their values. It can be confusing when different social norms are accepted between companies. For example, Ms. Kim previously worked in a steel company, which provided on-site care for the workers' children. They were allowed to bring their children to a nursery and then go to work. Such accommodations can help female employees focus on their work and allow nursing mothers to feed their children when necessary. Therefore, she thinks that having infrastructures in place, such as good child care services, encourages and supports women that work. Moreover, she believes there have been improvements in Korea since companies there are developing those very infrastructures to help women take care of their children. Although she feels there are still improvements that could be made, daycare and housekeeping services are available at low prices in Hong Kong, so improvements would have to be developed in other areas. In relation to the workplace's social environment, since women tend to talk more about family things during non-working hours, women who work in the same company might have similar topics to discuss rather than only discuss their work.

5.2 Results

After examining the five interviews held with various women in leadership positions, their responses can be summarized as indicating cultural and Q.W.L. issues as the main factors affecting gender diversity in Asian countries. Cultural factors lead to the norms, backgrounds, and stereotypical views that could impact gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. These vary in each Asian country. For example, the Director of Wells Fargo Bank said, *"Cultural, because in Taiwan everyone feels that it is generally accepted for everyone to find a job equally and society supports it. However, when I came to Japan, people do not feel that way. If females said they are getting married or*

getting pregnant, people assume they will quit their job. This led to a cultural shock for me. Nowadays, some families still ask females to quit their job and stay at home after marrying." This statement shows that not all Asian people are open to new ways of thinking or can adapt quickly since some countries might still think the traditions are the main rules or guides they should follow. On the other hand, the Q.W.L. factor balances their working time and family time, which might vary from each person's, company's, or country's background. For instance, Ms. Christine Kim, Commercial manager at a mining company, said, *"Quality of work-life is the main factor that affects females in leadership positions in Asian countries because how the companies function and their working environments affect how women think about their value and what they could bring to the company. If the companies do not fit the females' ideals in balancing their work-life, females will reduce their working productivity and lessen their work efforts."* This statement expresses that some of the females think Q.W.L. is more vital to them. They think that having a workplace which respects both their wish to have a personal life and time with their family and their desire to be provided with opportunities to demonstrate their worth and value to the company is equally important. These two statements show that having different backgrounds affects how factors impact gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries.

Besides the above summarization, it can also be interpreted that in Hong Kong and China, Confucianism does not significantly impact gender diversity in leadership positions because society changes and adapts to the new thinking. Just like Ms. Janice Lee, Event Director of Informa Market, said, *"I do not think Confucianism is a factor. I think it happened decades ago in China. However, nowadays, there are more females who are working in leadership positions, so Confucianism does not apply, and society is adapting to new thinking. In Hong Kong, many females are working in leadership positions, such as the Chief Executive of Hong Kong."* Nevertheless, Confucianism does significantly impact gender diversity in leadership positions in Korea due to the traditional viewpoints not changing or improving as fast as a society. According to Ms.

Christine Kim, Commercial manager at a mining company, *"I think Confucianism is the main reason fewer females are in leadership positions. New generations have different ideas, and society is advancing faster. However, the old concept has not been changed or improved as fast as the society is changing. Therefore, it puts pressure on or confuses the younger generations and moves or motivates them to develop their own values. For example, I worked in a steel company before, which provided care for the children in the same building, so the females can bring their children to nursery school and then go to work. This can help women focus on their work and allow them to have lunch with their children from time to time or nurse their infants when necessary."* Also, traditionally thinking, Ryōsai Kenbo does significantly impact gender diversity in leadership positions in Japan as reported by the Director of Wells Fargo Bank, *"They think males should work, and females should take responsibility for their families."* However, Hinduism does not significantly impact gender diversity in India. According to Ms. Mona Relwani, Quality Assurance Director at a U.S.-based company, *"I do not think religious background is the main reason for fewer females being in a leadership position. Rather, I think it is the cultural norm in Asia, especially India, where the cultural stereotype makes people perceive males as superior to females, thus giving males more leadership opportunities."* These statements from interviewees identify that when the people of Asian countries can adapt to new ways of thinking and changes in society, the traditional ways of thinking or religious background do not significantly impact China (including Hong Kong) and India. In contrast, when society cannot improve in adapting to new thinking, traditional thinking will still significantly impact, such as in South Korea and Japan. However, all Asian countries are trying to overcome the norms that affect gender diversity in leadership positions. Some countries might be faster and more efficient, others might be slow and resistant to change, so it might take them many more years to address the entire issue.

Nevertheless, the existence of a "glass ceiling" in Asian countries is not unanimously agreed upon by all the interviewees, as it depends on each culture

individually. Three interviewees feel it does not exist in China (including Hong Kong). One interviewee thinks it exists in some industries in Korea; one interviewee says it exists in Japan, and one interviewee feels it exists in India. Since Asian society is advancing in its attitude towards women in the workforce compared to the past decades, the "glass ceiling" is slowly disappearing. As Ms. Mona Relwani said, *"the cultural background might still affect the working environment and, as such, the 'glass ceiling' probably still exists in Asia. However, with more and more women coming into the workforce nowadays and the reduced number of children in each family, women are breaking free from the stereotype and proving that they can stay focused and meet the demands of their work. Whether they need to work long hours or travel with work, they are demonstrating they can perform their work tasks equally to men when they are in a leadership position."* It shows that with society's development in Asian countries, the barriers preventing women from reaching leadership positions decrease.

The five interviewees agreed that there are significant benefits to having women in companies' leadership positions. The following points summarize their thoughts which refer to difference feminism, since women regularly provide different views or perspectives than men, bringing diverse ideas to the company. Also, women are usually more sensitive, empathetic towards others, and intuitive by nature, offering alternate methods of management skills. Women are generally better at time management, as well, which, among other things, could help the company become more organized and more efficient. It shows that companies are using the access-legitimacy paradigm of diversity management. Within the companies' environment, management continuously tries to increase diversity among customers, clients, or the labor pool (Ferdousi & Kamal, 2009). For example, Ms. Mona Relwani mentioned that if a company can have a mixture of men and women in leadership roles, this gender diversity can bring multiple benefits to the table, including an increase in business performance, better reputation for the company, increased revenue and profits, increased ideas, better decision-making processes and improved diversity of

management styles between the genders. Consequently, having women in leadership positions in a company could enrich its diversity, improve its reputation, increase performance, and expand its customer base.

After providing their views on the paramount factors impacting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries, the interviewees also provided some ideas on how companies and governments could increase the number of women in leadership positions. For example, Ms. Christine Kim talked about having infrastructures, such as good child care support, which would help working mothers take care of their children and encourage and support females. Governments could encourage and provide rewards to companies that provide equal opportunities for both genders and offer further education for women. Companies could provide flexible working hours and affordable infrastructures, such as day-care facilities, nursing rooms for infants, lunchrooms for older children, nannies, and housekeeping services for working women's families. The government could also subsidize these services' costs since they usually are very expensive to the average member of society.

6 Conclusion

In this report, the interviewees' data shows that having varied backgrounds gives a different perspective on gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. It states that culture is one of the main reasons, but there could also be other factors such as Q.W.L. or females' distinct perspectives that affect gender diversity. Confucianism's and Ryōsai Kenbo's impact on gender diversity in leadership positions in South Korea and Japan was confirmed. However, it was not supported by the interviews that Confucianism and Hinduism impact China (including Hong Kong) and India with regard to gender diversity in leadership positions. Since all the interviewees have an international background, they view things more diversely, so their opinions might be considered more international than traditional. Therefore, this report's data is essential for the reader to understand women's experiences in leadership positions in China, India, Japan, and South Korea. These countries provide a

diverse background and a good variety of examples of the factors that impact gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries.

Knowing those perspectives provides feedback ideas for improving gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. Adopting and providing more opportunities for increased gender diversity in the working atmosphere would particularly help organizations embrace the changing times and the new ideas and perspectives they bring, strengthening the existing leadership team (Taj, 2018). Having more women working in leadership positions can help companies develop creativity, innovation and openness, reinforce their reputation ("Women," 2019), and make better-quality decisions (Fernando et al., 2016). It was also mentioned by Ms. Mona Relwani, *"If a company can have a mixture of men and women in leadership roles, this gender diversity can bring multiple benefits to companies, including an increase in business performance, better reputation of the company, and increased customer base, which in turn increases revenue and profits, broadens ideas, betters the decision-making processes and diversity of management styles between the genders."* This verifies that having wider gender diversity in leadership positions provides many alternative views, which can benefit the companies in many different ways. Consequently, corporations and governments should support and encourage women to have more women reach leadership positions in their career paths.

On the other hand, this report's findings do not show the viewpoints of the traditional perspective. For future research, the writer suggests finding interviewees working at local companies that do not have international backgrounds from each country. Having this more traditional interview pool will help readers understand the various standpoints and offer a different perspective on which are the main factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries. Also, reviewing the interviewees' differences by comparing their international and local backgrounds will give a

more accurate representation of all of the gender diversity found in different Asian companies.

6.1 Recommendations

This report's recommendations are targeted at Asian countries because they need to improve gender diversity in leadership positions within both governments and companies. Organizations should encourage and help women who want to learn skills necessary to readjust to the labor market, guide them in their career paths, and change the corporate attitude towards women in the workplace by informing corporations of the benefits of providing more flexible working hours (Madgavkar & Sneader, 2018). Increasing the number of women in high-ranking positions would serve to provide role models for other women and encourage them to reach for leadership positions of their own. Providing services or facilities to help working mothers take care of their pre-school-aged children is essential. As the Director of Wells Fargo Bank talked about, the *"Company should set up babysitting and housekeepers services to provide help for females to take care of the family and children."* These services can reduce females' stress and worry about family issues and encourage them to focus more during their work hours. This report recommends that the governments of Asian countries better encourage women to seek higher education and help them do so with scholarships and grants. Like Ms. Janice Lee stated, *"The government could support and promote more education for females."* When women obtain a better education, they are better suited to seek management positions. Governments should also encourage educational institutions to help women decide on a career path and have programs that educate society to look at women in leadership positions in the same way they look at men in leadership positions (Li & Sun, 2017).

It is also recommended that companies and organizations in Asian countries initiate leadership programs which focus on improving gender diversity. These programs should include initiatives such as flexible working hours, mentoring programs, networking events, and corporate women networks (Bobrowski et al.,

2014). Also, helping women enrich their networking in the labor market would benefit their working environments by positively changing culture and gaining a larger talent pool for succession planning (Catalyst, 1999, as cited in Hopkins et al., 2011). The recommendation to the employees in senior leadership positions is to use women's networking to promote gender diversity, show others how gender diversity can bring positive outcomes to the company, and know its importance with its expectations (Hopkins et al., 2011). Along with increasing women's networking, it is also essential to recommend that companies change their organizational structure to foster a more active role in advancing women's careers in leadership (Hopkins et al., 2011). For example, Ms. Mona Relwani suggested, *"The government can encourage companies to provide opportunities for everyone equally, as well as provide some benefits or incentives, such as rewards or recognitions for companies to motivate and provide opportunities for females, such as Women Entrepreneur of the Year and Best Leadership Award Female."* This demonstrates that companies are encouraged to include more guidelines or facilities, but having rewards or incentives could also help expand gender diversity in leadership positions.

Another recommendation for society is that people should be educated not to always turn to traditional views of a woman's role. New expectations and attitudes should replace society's old social expectations by valuing women's efforts in the careers they pursue and all their aspects of life in self-representation (Li & Sun, 2017). Women's expectations will change with the growth of women leaders' development and as positive views of women spread throughout society once people see more of the positive results they bring to companies or organizations.

The last recommendation is for females. If they want to have a partner, it is important for them to find a life partner that supports them in both their career and their family. If a woman decides she wants to have children and raise a family, she needs to consider how family roles will be fulfilled by conversing with her prospective spouse before getting married. The couple needs to discuss

who will be taking care of their elderly parents, whether they will have children, who will be managing the child care, and who is taking care of which part of the family duties (McLean & Sritanyarat, 2017). Women who have support from family members, by dividing family duties, become less stressed and perform better when working.

6.1.1 Breaking the "Glass Ceiling"

The "glass ceiling" can only be broken through the collaborative efforts of working women, governments, employers, and institutions of education (Johns, 2013). It is not an easy process; several actions must take place. Governments need to promote gender equality by focusing on how to break the "glass ceiling" for women (Johns, 2013). Government policies should be developed that work to demolish discriminatory practices against women. Also, initiatives should be created to break down the barriers holding women back from leadership positions (Johns, 2013).

Additionally, companies in Asia should set up rules that protect employee equality and comply with government policies. They should provide programs that help women reach their leadership potential, support them with motivating incentives, and help them develop goals to guide them through their career paths (Johns, 2013). Even though the "glass ceiling" is slowly fading within Asian countries, it is crucial to change society's viewpoint so that it accepts women working after marriage and childbirth. Applying all those things can help break the "glass ceiling" in Asian countries.

6.1.2 Closing the Gender Diversity Gap in Corporations

In corporations, those in leadership positions, such as C.E.O.s, should encourage employees of both sexes to help each other. They should make a concerted effort to recruit women into leadership positions by helping them identify their strengths, and boost their confidence in order for them to take risks, providing networks for communication, and providing job performance appraisals that offer constructive criticism so women can improve and advance appropriately. Furthermore, workplaces should offer flexible workplace policies that create a

supportive structure for both men and women to balance work and family respectively (Taj, 2018). The Director of Wells Fargo Bank also mentioned, *"If possible, provide flexible working hours, let females and males spend time with the family since in most Asian countries, people work until 7 or 8 pm. For example, during the current COVID-19 situation, my husband and I work at home and it is the first time that I can have dinner with my husband during weekdays. Working at home provides more flexibility for us."* It means having flexible working hours would be helpful for women in balancing their work time and personal time, such as spending time with their family. The flexible working arrangements can provide support by accessing information and technology for communications. Women can telecommunicate (working from home) and thus be more flexible and variable with their working hours (Hamzah, 2017). These initiatives will benefit companies by helping more women reach leadership positions and improving the company across many different levels (Johns, 2013). Beyond supporting gender equality policies and systems in the workplace, it provides a gender-friendly climate overall and a better representation of women in managerial positions (Kawaguchi, 2011, as cited in Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017). Thus, women are more comfortable in their organizations and motivated to work when policies are created to support gender equality (Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017). Therefore, it is recommended that corporations organize training for managers with regard to supporting and providing a positive environment to develop women's leadership (Horimoto & Nakamura, 2017).

If the government, society, and companies in Asian countries would encourage and support women working in leadership positions and provide equal opportunities for both men and women, the gender diversity gap that exists would be greatly diminished, higher productivity at companies would be realized, and a better society would be created.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview A

Name: Ms. Lam Mei Yuk May

Job Position: Assistant General Manager (Human Resources)

Company's Name: Kai Shing Management Services Limited

Nationality: Chinese (Hong Kong)

<p>Please talk about a personal experience related to gender diversity in your working atmosphere. Are there any other experiences you can provide?</p>	<p>In the Human Resources department, the positions or the roles are mainly equal and fair.</p>
<p>Do you know about the experiences of other working women?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Do you think cultural differences are leading to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, why?</p>	<p>Yes, because different family situations and gender differences, such as males working and females staying at home, could lead to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions.</p>
<p>Do you think there are cultural and religious factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, what?</p>	<p>It depends on the country. I think in Hong Kong, cultural rather than religious factors are affecting gender diversity in leadership positions. However, I think maybe, in some countries, the religious factors might affect it, such as religion, Islam.</p>
<p>In your own opinion, why do you think there</p>	<p>I do not think so, but it feels like not many females are in a leadership position due to the</p>

<p>are fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?</p>	<p>traditional culture of China and India. However, nowadays, in China, the education system is growing, and more females attend school. Also, Hong Kong has more females in university than males.</p>
<p>How do you think the working atmosphere and government could be improved to support females in leadership positions?</p>	<p>I do not think having a policy in a company that says how many females it needs in leadership positions should be a good idea. Also, I think it depends on the women's ability if they fit the position and how are their personal ability and time management skills. The government has nurseries that could help women take care of their children when they need to work. Companies could provide facilities to help the staff who have children, such as baby feeding rooms.</p>
<p>Do you think the "glass ceiling" exists in your own country? If it does, how is it affecting the working environment?</p>	<p>I do not think it exists in Hong Kong. It depends on the female's perspective.</p>
<p>How do you think women working in a leadership position can benefit the company?</p>	<p>Think they can offer other perspectives and can help arrange flexible time management.</p>
<p>In Hong Kong, do you think Confucianism also applies to why fewer</p>	<p>I do not think it applies to nowadays society, but before, it might have had an impact. Now more females have more ability to have a higher education, so they have more insight to</p>

<p>females are in leadership positions? If so, why?</p>	<p>lead them to think more and gain more experience working. It also really depends on the female's perspectives.</p>
<p>Do you know of any changes or improvements in China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, or South Korea that have helped females into leadership positions in the past few years?</p>	<p>I think changes in education and cultural influences from other countries. The values of females working have changed. There are services provided for childcare, and the government has provided higher and better babysitting facilities to help the female.</p>

Appendix 2 – Interview B

Name: Ms. Mona Relwani

Job Position: Quality Assurance Director

Company's Name: U.S.-based company

Nationality: Indian (worked in Thailand before and working in Hong Kong)

<p>Please talk about a personal experience related to gender diversity in your working atmosphere. Are there any other experiences you can provide?</p>	<p>I work for a U.S.-based recruitment firm with their operation in H.K. Our company in H.K. has many females in managerial and senior leadership roles because of our business's nature, which is temporary recruitment, payroll management, and recruitment / H.R. related. We do have many men in senior roles across our other offices in Greater China and the U.S.</p> <p>Just for your reference, in our Hong Kong operations, around 30% of the staff are male while 70% are female. As such, many senior leadership teams are female rather than male, so our company definitely gives females and males opportunities to enter leadership roles equally.</p>
<p>Do you know about the experiences of other working women?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Do you think cultural differences are leading to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, why?</p>	<p>Yes. Although people are starting to perceive men and women as equal; generally, the Asian culture still has stereotype views that men are more powerful, aggressive, and committed to their work than women. There is also a perception that males use facts and figures in their decision-making, while emotion plays a role in females' decision-making processes. In</p>

	<p>addition, in Asian culture, the stereotypical view is that men generally are the bread-earner for the family. Thus there is less expectation for them to fulfil household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children. As such, they are believed to be able to focus more on their jobs with less household-related distraction. Meanwhile, people tend to think that women need to take care of their homes, children, and other household chores and thus may lack focus on their job positions.</p>
<p>Do you think there are cultural and religious factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, what?</p>	<p>Yes, the cultural factor is the same as the question above, and religious factors depend on the countries. For example, in India, the main religion is Hinduism, where there are requirements such as fasting on certain days that women may need to take time off work to go to the temples. However, in other countries such as Thailand, the Buddhist belief is that all men must be ordained, and if they have not already done so, they may have to apply for leave from work to become a monk for a while.</p>
<p>In your own opinion, why do you think there are fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?</p>	<p>In Asian countries, many females, especially the older generation, do not work. Based on Asian culture, many women tend to become housewives and become responsible for managing their households instead of going out to work. Nowadays, with the cost of living rising and women completing higher education, many tend to go out to work, but</p>

	<p>they do not work to build their careers. There is still a stereotype in Asian culture that women need to devote time to family, household chores, and bringing up their kids. Due to these cultural norms, women generally do not get as many opportunities as in western countries. This stereotype in Asian countries builds people's perspective of how they look at females and males in leadership positions.</p>
<p>How do you think the working atmosphere and government could be improved to support females in leadership positions?</p>	<p>The government can encourage companies to provide opportunities for everyone equally as well as provide some benefits or incentives, such as rewards or recognitions for companies to motivate and provide opportunities for females such as Women Entrepreneur of the Year, Best Leadership Award Female, etc.</p>
<p>Do you think the "glass ceiling" exists in your own country? If it does, how is it affecting the working environment?</p>	<p>The cultural background might still affect the working environment and, as such, the "glass ceiling" probably exists in Asia. However, with more and more women coming into the workforce nowadays, reduced number of children in each family, and women getting the help needed to manage their homes, women are breaking free from the stereotype and proving that they can stay focused and meet the demands of their work; whether they need to work long hours or travel with work, they are demonstrating they can perform their work tasks equally like men when they are in a leadership position.</p>
<p>How do you think women working in a</p>	<p>Women are more detail-oriented, organized, and work with their hearts, i.e., they bring</p>

<p>leadership position can benefit the company?</p>	<p>empathy and intuition to leadership. Females might see things that men did not see and can have different views and perspectives of looking at things for the company. As such, if a company can have a mixture of men and women in leadership roles, this gender diversity can bring multiple benefits to companies, including an increase in business performance, better reputation of the company, increased customer base, which in turn increases revenue and profits, increased ideas, better decision-making processes and diversity of management styles between the genders.</p>
<p>Which factors (cultural, organizational socialization, and quality of work-life) do you think affect females in leadership positions in Asian countries? Why?</p>	<p>Quality of work-life, because women generally need to take care of their children and family as well as work, so they need to give up something to gain something else. As such, they must see that it is a trade-off that is worthwhile. Work-life balance is important to them, to help and make sure both aspects of their lives are on the right track, so they will not be losing either of the sides.</p>
<p>In India, do you think the religious background, Hinduism, is why fewer females are in leadership positions? If so, why?</p>	<p>I do not think religious background is the main reason for fewer females being in a leadership position. Rather, I think it is the cultural norm in Asia, especially India, where the cultural stereotype makes people perceive males as more superior to females, thus giving males more leadership opportunities.</p>

Appendix 3 – Interview C

Name: (does not want the name to be shown)

Job Position: Director

Company's Name: Wells Fargo Bank

Nationality: Japanese, Taiwanese

<p>Please talk about a personal experience related to gender diversity in your working atmosphere. Are there any other experiences you can provide?</p>	<p>I am Taiwanese, and I am working in Japan. As a foreigner in Japan and also being a female, I feel frustrated sometimes. This is because sometimes, during a call or meeting with a Japanese client, the client requests to have another of my colleagues to have the meeting as I am a foreigner and not a male.</p>
<p>Do you know about the experiences of other working women?</p>	<p>Some colleagues also have a similar experience. However, since it is an international bank it is better than in traditional Japanese companies.</p>
<p>Do you think cultural differences are leading to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, why?</p>	<p>Based on my experience, and hearing from my friends or colleagues, the gender diversity gap in leadership positions is not a huge issue in some counties, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, compare to Korea and Japan.</p>
<p>Do you think there are cultural and religious factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, what?</p>	<p>I think cultural factors affect gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries, but I do not think religion is a huge factor that impacts it.</p>

<p>In your own opinion, why do you think there are fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?</p>	<p>Based on experience, as well as the current situation, more males are in a senior position. Males are chosen more than females. Due to different cultural backgrounds, it might vary in different countries. Also, there is a perspective that females should stay at home to take care of the children and family, while males should work. I stayed in Japan for 20 years, and there is social pressure that tends to allow fewer females to even when comparing their abilities to males. For most families, males work and females take responsibility for the family care.</p>
<p>How do you think the working atmosphere and government could be improved to support females in leadership positions?</p>	<p>In order to have females working more comfortably and working equally with males, the company should set up babysitting and housekeepers' services to provide to help females take care of the family and children. Also, lower the price for those services. If possible, to provide flexible working hours, let females and males spend time with the family, since in most Asian countries, people work until 7 or 8 pm. For example, during the current COVID-19 situation, my husband and I work at home and it is the first time that I can have dinner with my husband during weekdays. Working at home provides more flexibility for us.</p>
<p>Do you think the "glass ceiling" exists in your own country? If it does,</p>	<p>I think people have the perspective that females need to take care of the family, so they cannot focus 100% on their job and</p>

<p>how is it affecting the working environment?</p>	<p>depending on their age, pregnancy may be an issue meaning women will need to take 2-3 months of maternity leave and sometimes family leave to care for a sick child. Therefore, the companies will choose males rather than females as they believe men can focus 100% on their jobs. However, in my company, some U.S. colleagues or managers do not feel afraid to say they need to take one or two days off due to family issues and people do not judge it as negatively as the society accepts it. However, in Japan since the society judges it as negative, women in senior management would not say they need to take a day off due to family issues at the meeting.</p>
<p>How do you think women working in a leadership position can benefit the company?</p>	<p>It depends on the people. Many females if they are in senior positions, make the whole organization softer and well-balanced.</p>
<p>Which factors (cultural, organizational socialization, and quality of work-life) do you think affect females in leadership positions in Asian countries? Why?</p>	<p>Cultural, because in Taiwan everyone feels that it is general for everyone to find a job equally and society supports it. However, when I came to Japan, people do not feel that way. If females said they are getting married or getting pregnant, people would assume they will quit the job. This leads to a cultural shock for me. Nowadays, some families still ask females to quit their job and stay at home after marrying.</p>

<p>In Japan, do you think traditional thinking or views, such as Ryōsai Kenbo, are the main reasons that fewer females in Japan are in leadership positions? If so, why?</p>	<p>Yes, because they think males should work, and females should take responsibility for their families.</p>
<p>Do you know of any changes or improvements in China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, or South Korea that have helped females into leadership positions in the past few years?</p>	<p>In these 20 years, there are more females working after they get married or pregnant in Japan. The government has also tried to announce some policies and strategies to help women, such as setting up more babysitting networks. In some large companies, they set up internal kindergartens for the females to let their children study there, so they are able to work. However, Japan still needs time for more improvements and needs society to agree on females' and males' equality.</p>

Appendix 4 – Interview D

Name: Ms. Janice Lee

Job Position: Event Director

Company's Name: Informa Markets

Nationality: Chinese (Hong Kong)

<p>Please talk about a personal experience related to gender diversity in your working atmosphere. Are there any other experiences you can provide?</p>	<p>Since I work in the Hong Kong office of an international company, I am used to working with other international countries and many different cultures, but I have no experiences that relate to gender diversity in my working atmosphere.</p>
<p>Do you know about the experiences of other working women?</p>	<p>I do not know any since there is not anything that happens in my company.</p>
<p>Do you think cultural differences are leading to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, why?</p>	<p>I agree that cultural differences lead to a gender diversity gap but not in leadership positions in Asian countries. The gender diversity gap happens everywhere, but the gender diversity gap in leadership positions does not exist from a leader's perspective.</p>
<p>Do you think there are cultural and religious factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, what?</p>	<p>I do not think so in my country, but cultural and religious factors might impact gender diversity in leadership positions in some Asian countries. In my opinion, some Japanese might not work with individuals from India due to cultural factors.</p>

<p>In your own opinion, why do you think there are fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?</p>	<p>Due to the tradition and culture in some countries, such as India, Japan, and Korea, males are the majority in leadership positions.</p>
<p>How do you think the working atmosphere and government could be improved to support females in leadership positions?</p>	<p>The working atmosphere could improve from the company culture. The government could support and promote more education for females.</p>
<p>Do you think the "glass ceiling" exists in your own country? If it does, how is it affecting the working environment?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>How do you think women working in a leadership position can benefit the company?</p>	<p>Women are more caring and sensitive. When showing empathy towards colleagues, it is easier for women than men. Being a working mom, I know they are good at time management, which can help the company to be more organized in time management for their tasks.</p>
<p>Which factors (cultural, organizational socialization, and quality of work-life) do you think affect females in</p>	<p>I think culture is the main factor, but I think in Muslim countries, cultural and organizational socialization factors affect females in leadership positions because, due to their dress requirements, it might create certain racism.</p>

<p>leadership positions in Asian countries? Why?</p>	
<p>In China, do you think Confucianism is the main reason fewer females are in leadership positions? If so, why? Is this the case in South Korea as well, or is it different? If so, why?</p>	<p>I do not think this is a factor. I think it happened decades ago, but nowadays, there are more females who are working in leadership positions, so Confucianism does not apply, and society is adapting to new thinking.</p>
<p>In Hong Kong, do you think Confucianism also applies to why fewer females are in leadership positions? If so, why?</p>	<p>I do not think this is a factor. In Hong Kong, there are many females working in leadership positions. The Chief Executive of Hong Kong is a female.</p>
<p>Do you know of any changes or improvements in China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, or South Korea that have helped females into leadership positions in the past few years?</p>	<p>In Hong Kong and China, I think there is a new way of thinking from the new generations; that is why there are more females working in leadership positions. Also, the new generations have a broader vision due to more opportunities for studying overseas and a better education system. In Japan and Korea, I think if women are to become successful in leadership positions, they need to work harder.</p>

Appendix 5 – Interview E

Name: Ms. Christine Kim

Job Position: Commercial manager

Company's Name: Mining company

Nationality: Korean

<p>Please talk about a personal experience related to gender diversity in your working atmosphere. Are there any other experiences you can provide?</p>	<p>I have work experience in a male-dominant company, and which rarely employs females. I also have work experience in a multi-gender company.</p>
<p>Do you know about the experiences of other working women?</p>	<p>I do not think so.</p>
<p>Do you think cultural differences are leading to a gender diversity gap in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, why?</p>	<p>Yes, I think so, but I think they are improving.</p>
<p>Do you think there are cultural and religious factors affecting gender diversity in leadership positions in Asian countries? If so, what?</p>	<p>In Hong Kong, I think it is equally fair for everyone working in leadership positions, and I do not think religious factors affect it. Other countries might vary.</p>
<p>In your own opinion, why do you think there are</p>	<p>Family values are very strong in Asian countries, more so than in western countries,</p>

<p>fewer females in leadership positions in Asian countries compared to Western countries?</p>	<p>such as males should work, and females stay at home to take care of family and children, and females should not be working after marriage or pregnancy. For example, in Korea, where I was born, fewer females work since the environment does not want females to work. Also, there is a low birth rate in Korea because society dictates that they must stop working once they have children, so they decide not to give birth and continue working. So, now the government is trying to make improvements to the issue.</p>
<p>How do you think the working atmosphere and government could be improved to support females in leadership positions?</p>	<p>I think having the infrastructures, such as good child care support, helping working mothers take care of their children also encourages and supports females in the workplace.</p>
<p>Do you think the "glass ceiling" exists in your own country? If it does, how is it affecting the working environment?</p>	<p>In Hong Kong, I do not think so. In Korea, it might still exist in some industries, but it has improved.</p>
<p>How do you think women working in a leadership position can benefit the company?</p>	<p>I think females talk more about family things during non-working hours, and females working together in the same company might have the same topic to talk about rather than only talking about their work.</p>

<p>Which factors (cultural, organizational socialization, and quality of work-life) do you think affect females in leadership positions in Asian countries? Why?</p>	<p>Quality of work-life is the main factor that affects females in leadership positions in Asian countries because how the companies function and their working environments affect how women think about their value that they could bring to the company. If the companies do not fit the females' ideal balancing their work-life, females will reduce their working productivity and lessen their work efforts.</p>
<p>In South Korea, do you think Confucianism is the main reason fewer females are in leadership positions? If so, why, and is it different from the way it occurs in China?</p>	<p>Yes, new generations have different ideas, and society is advancing faster. However, the old concept has not been changed or improved as fast as the society is changing. Therefore, it puts pressure on or confuses the younger generations and moves or motivates them to develop their own values. For example, I worked in a steel company before, which provided care for the children in the same building, so the females can bring their children to nursery school and then go to work. This can help women focus on their work and allow them to have lunch with their children from time to time or nurse their infants when necessary.</p>
<p>Do you know of any changes or improvements in China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, or South Korea that have helped females into leadership</p>	<p>I think there have been improvements in Korea since there are infrastructures developing for females to help them take care of their children. However, there are still improvements that need to be made. In Hong Kong, there have been low-cost domestic</p>

<p>positions in the past few years?</p>	<p>housekeeping and child care services for a long time, so there are not many improvements I can see that can be made there.</p>
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