**CHRISLAND UNIVERSITY**

**OVERCOMING THE GLASS CEILING: AN ANALYSIS OF PREVALENT PERSONALITY TRAITS ASSOCIATED WITH CAREER ACHIEVEMENT IN WOMEN**

**(MIRACLE KELECHUKWU AHIAKWO)**

**ABSTRACT**

The glass ceiling phenomenon refers to the discrimination within companies against women, which prevents career advancement past middle-management level positions. The scarceness of women in executive-level positions is solid support for the need to examine the personality traits (openness, extroversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness) associated with career achievement among women who have been able to attain top leadership roles. The Big Five personality theory, Theory of Optimism/Pessimism and Learned Helplessness theory guided the study. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 111 women across 3 career levels (top executive, mid-level, and entry-level). They were recruited to participate in the survey through purposive sampling after completing an online screening questionnaire to determine their eligibility. The 4 personality traits were assessed using the Big 5 personality inventory. The data was analyzed using chi-square independent test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression, at p≤0.05. Extroversion, neuroticism, openness and conscientiousness jointly predicted career achievement (F(4, 106) = 6.30; Adj.R2 =0.19) accounting for 19% of the variance. Only openness independently predicted career achievement (β = 0.22), while extroversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness did not. Women in top executive (x = 21.91±2.82) and midlevel (x = 20.38±3.13) respectively scored significantly higher on openness than their counterparts in entry level. Extroversion, neuroticism, openness and conscientiousness jointly influenced career achievement. Women in top executive and midlevel careers were more open to experience. To overcome the glass ceiling effect and attain top executive career level, women need to be open to experience.