

EFFECT OF THE GLASS CEILING ON WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Gender issues relating to women, and professional growth have been a major source of concern throughout the world in recent decades. According to the International Labor Organization (2020), the world's female labor force participation rate is approximately 45.92%. In Sri Lanka, though women represent more than half of the population, they only represent 34% of the active labour force. Only 21% of senior management positions in both private and public companies are held by women. Sri Lanka is still low, at 8% of more than 1,500 board directors in listed companies. These statistics are supported by extant studies, which indicate that women make up only 7% of the board of directors of private banks in Sri Lanka. The best example is the submission of a fundamental fight petition against Ms. Bimshani Jasin Arachchi's appointment as Sri Lanka's first female "Deputy Inspector General of Police," which has generated a meaningful discussion. Women are appeared to be underrepresented in senior jobs while having the same experience and education as male professionals. This negative mental barrier should be broken, and women should be appreciated rather than oppressed. Thus, the researcher came up with the research question 'Impact of the Glass Ceiling on Women's Career Development in Sri Lanka. Women are appeared to be underrepresented in senior jobs while having the same experience and education as male professionals. Women face multiple obstacles in their career development. This negative mental barrier should be broken, and women should be appreciated rather than oppressed or isolated plus should never be a barrier to females from obtaining more excellent work opportunities. Hence, after considering the above circumstances, the researcher would suggest a relationship between the glass ceiling and women's career development. This research results would have generalizability issues since the sample size is strictly limited to women in Sri Lanka. Further, the study was cross-sectional, where data was collected only once. This will result in being unable to monitor the changes over time.

METHODOLOGY

The research was designed under the positivism philosophy and deductive research approach. The present study was conducted among 210 working female employees of the companies in Sri Lanka out of 250 questionnaires distributed. A pre-tested questionnaire was used, which was developed by (Moorthy et al., 2022). As the total number of observations in the population is unknown, convenient sampling was used. The study's sample comprises female executives and above currently working for private and public enterprises. The scale consisted of 3 dimensions and was rated using a 5-point Likert scale labeled as 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= strongly agree. The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 version and Microsoft Excel 365 were applied. The nominal scale for the demographic information provided by the respondents is effectively summarized using frequency and percentage. Below hypotheses are tested, and the conceptual framework is created (Figure 1).

H₁: There is an impact of an individual factor on women's career development.

H₂: There is an impact of an organizational factor on women's career development.

H₃: There is an impact of a family factor on women's career development.

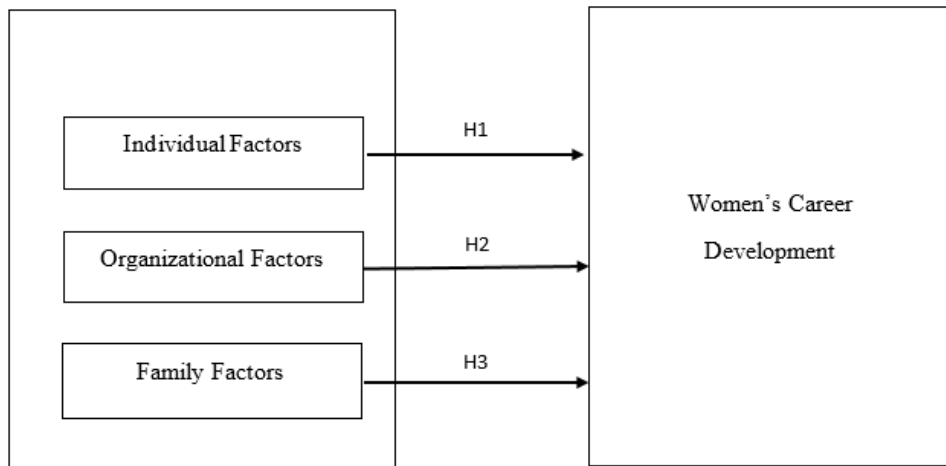


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the study mainly focuses on women's career development, the population is biased and comprises 100% females. The majority (63.3%, n = 133) of the respondents were single, and the remaining 36.7% (n = 77) were married. Approximately 38.6% (n = 81) of the respondents belonged to the monthly income group of Rs. 50,000 – 99,000. or the more than Rs.101,000 income group and most respondents had 2 to 4 years of experience 37.6% (n=79). The majority were from the senior executive level 42.9% (n=90) while employees from the managerial position were almost 32.6% (n=80) in terms of the level of position. The data was tested based on reliability, validity, and linearity in order to check the accuracy of the responses given. However, the items which had lower reliability values were deleted. The reliability is measured based on Cronbach's alpha. Within the current study, as the Cronbach alpha is more than 0.7 it could be stated that the variable are reliable. The validity measure is calculated based on the KMO value. The KMO values above 0.5 indicates that the variables are valid and that it indicates that sample adequately represents for the population (Shrestha, 2021).

Table 1 Reliability and validity measures

Variable value	Number of items	Reliability value	Validity
WCD	7	0.710	0.700
GC	13	0.854	0.881
IF	3	0.754	0.679
OF	5	0.616	0.674
FF	5	0.777	0.784

Notes: (1) WCD- Women's career development; (2) GC- Glass ceiling; (3) IF- Individual factors; (4) OF Organizational factors; (5) FF- Family factors.

Table 2 Results of regression Coefficient

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.234	0.221		10.106	0.000
	IF	0.435	0.202	0.123	2.152	0.165
	OF	0.409	0.126	0.263	3.247	0.001
	FF	0.373	0.114	0.274	3.284	0.001
a. Dependent Variable: Women's career development						
b. R ² 64.9%						

The first and foremost objective was to examine the effect of the glass ceiling on women's career development. The regression analysis is conducted to test the hypothesis; when considering regression analysis between the glass ceiling and women's career development value, the beta value coefficient was 0.555 at the 95% confidence level, which signifies a significant positive impact. The outcomes of this study support earlier findings where according to De Alwis (2017), the regression analysis of that particular study confirmed that the Glass Ceiling has a 64.9% influence on the Career Development of Female Executive level employees working in the private sector banking organizations within the Colombo district in Sri Lanka. The second objective was to examine the effect of individual factors on women's career development. The hypothesis was rejected based on the regression analysis as the sig value is 0.165 and more than 0.05. This signifies that individual factors have no impact on women's career development. This is also similar to the research conducted by Moorthy et al. (2022) that showed low levels of the implication of individual factors towards women's career development. The third objective was to examine the effect of organizational factors on women's career development. The sig value resulted in 0.000. Therefore, the P value is less than 0.01 at a 95% confidence level. Hence, the researcher has enough evidence to say that organizational factors significantly impact women's career development. Moreover, the regression analysis is conducted to test the hypothesis; when considering regression analysis between the organizational factors and women's career development value of the coefficient was 0.263 at the 95% confidence level, which indicated it was a significant moderate relationship between the organizational factors and women's career development in Sri Lanka. The findings of Bombuwela and De Alwis (2017); Wickramaratne (2013) had a similar result. Men are often assigned to decision-making departments in some corporations, while women are given support roles, which usually hinders women's professional advancement (Moorthy et al., 2022). Also found that organizational factor also has a significant impact on women's career development towards career women in Seremban city (Hussin et al., 2019). The final objective was to examine the effect of family factors on women's career development. The P value is 0.01; the sig value resulted in 0.000. Therefore, the P value is less than 0.01. Hence, at a 95% confidence level researcher has enough evidence to say that the family factor has a significant impact on women's career development. Moreover, the regression analysis is conducted to test the hypothesis when considering regression analysis between the family factors and women's career development, which indicated a significant relationship between the family factors and women's career development. Family factors are barriers to women's career progression. This result aligns with the finding of a prior study conducted in Malaysia;

it revealed that there is a significant impact of family factors on women's career development (Moorthy et al., 2022). Accordingly, hypotheses testing is summarized as follows:

Table 2 Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Beta Value	Sig Value	Decision
H ₁	0.123	0.165	Not Supported
H ₂	0.263	0.000	Supported
H ₃	0.274	0.001	Supported

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Women's participation in the labour market rose dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century (Black et al., 1999, as cited in De Alwis, 2017). However, as discussed earlier, a minimum number of females represent executive positions. This study's main objective was to investigate the "glass ceiling" effect on women's access to leadership roles in Sri Lanka. The results indicate an impact of the glass ceiling on women's career development. The organizational and family factors are the main factors in identifying the specific factors that could enable women's career progression. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to an in-depth understanding of women's achievements in top management positions in Sri Lanka, which can be used in many rearrangements. Hence, according to research findings, the most impacted glass ceiling factor is the family factor. More female workers had trouble managing work, family duties, and family responsibilities and did not always have enough time to do everything well. The most significant issue for them was time management. Hence, to help female workers avoid family barriers, organizations can provide daycare centers, leave them on weekends, and give the same flexible office hours and work-from-home opportunities. Another consideration is that our society has been established to support women in their family responsibilities, so there must be a valid reason to offer them some flexibility (Bomuwela & De Alwis, 2013). Another factor is organizational factors which most of the employees in the study did not think the organization's promotion process was fair. As a result, management should treat employee promotions properly. It is preferable to give males and females within the organization rights and obligations, such as the same promotion methods, wage levels based on experience and knowledge, and work responsibilities. Also, they do not see any friendly policies to women's perspective where organizations need to work on a more women-friendly policy system to ensure their justified rights. Additionally, most respondents disagreed with "equal treatment of the management." Management should consult with each worker individually to plan a clear and comprehensive succession plan for each employee. So, based on the findings, this study provides several implications for management, which can consider some future developments towards reducing the impact of the glass ceiling on women's career development. Their participation in all sectors and at all levels without facing any discrimination constitutes the actual cracking of the glass ceiling. Only with greater understanding and empowerment of the leaders of tomorrow would this ceiling be able to be broken.

Keywords: Family factors, Glass Ceiling Theory, individual factors, organizational factors, women's career development

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