Impact of Glass Ceiling Factors on Women Career Development in IT Companies in Sri Lanka

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This research study assesses the impact of glass ceiling factors such as personal factors, family factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors on women career development of executive-level female employees in the IT industry in Sri Lanka. The study was a quantitative and cross-sectional one. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. The simple random sampling technique was applied to select the sample of 101 respondents. The data were analyzed mainly using correlation and regression analyses. The results showed a strong negative relationship between glass ceiling factors and women career development. It is suggested that women should understand the importance of the glass ceiling issues and should actively confront them in order to make their career development.

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Background

Career development is the most significant component of employee satisfaction and retention in an organization (Shabbir et al, 2017). Greenhaus et al. (2010), defined career development as a lifelong process of becoming aware of, exploring, and experiencing factors that influence various aspects of a person's life. According to the Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey Annual Report (Department of Census and Statistics, 2019), the economically active female representation in Sri Lanka remains at 35.4%. Further, when considering the female occupational group, the professional occupation represented 13.5%.The manager and senior officials denoted 6% while the male counterparts accounted for 8.4%. The same survey results showed that the proportion of female employees with secondary and higher education is greater than that of male employees; while the female education level remains at 11.9%, the males was at 5%. The female education level is high in Sri Lanka compared to men. Still, women employees' representation in the managerial occupation is less than of male counterparts.

The glass ceiling is a metaphor that describes the barriers experienced by female employees when they advance through the organizational hierarchy (Kulik & Rae, 2019). 'Celling' stresses the limitation to the upward career progress of women is subjected to; and 'Glass' referred to the fact that though the limitation is apparently not written in any rule book, it is nevertheless an established fact understood by both genders (Bhatnagar & Mathur, 2015). However, the obstacles to women achieving high managerial positions in an organization are a universal phenomenon (Sharma & Kaur, 2019). Some prior researchers have assumed that the glass ceiling included various barriers such as personal, family, organizational, and cultural barriers which are less substantial and are surrounded by the culture and the society (Powell & Butterfield, 2003). These are identified as artificial barriers while the level of education or career breaks are identified as natural barriers.

The present study differs from the previous one in the following respects. Some research studies have been investigating the impact of the glass ceiling on female employees' career development considering one factor at a time. That means considering only the impact of personal barriers or organizational barriers or societal barriers on women's career development. Therefore, this investigated the impact of the glass ceiling including personal, family, organizational, and cultural factors on women's career development. Further several research studies have been done in the western context. Some studies have attempted to find out the applicability of this in the Asian context. However, in the Sri Lankan context, few research studies were done relating to this topic in the banking and Garment industries. We could not find a single study relating to the Information Technology (IT) industry. Hence, there is a contextual gap that warrents more research studies and come up with findings and conclusions to rectify the problem. Therefore, this study sought to fill the research gaps by examining the impact of glass ceiling factors on women career development with special reference to the IT industry in Sri Lanka.

Statement of the Problem

In today's competitive world retaining talented employees is very important. To retain the employee in the organization, it is necessary to give proper concern about employees' career development. Female labor force participation has increased all over the world during the last few decades (Kiaye & Singh, 2013). However, women's participation in the formal labor market is lower than men's. The Sri Lankan ICT workforce is still largely constituted of men (Weerasinghe, 2018). Hence, it can be identified as a male dominant industry. Further, many jobs in the IT industry especially managerial positions are consid-

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ered more as masculine than feminine (Gutek, 2001).

After having an interview with an HR manager in a major IT company, we could identify that women have fewer career development opportunities than men. The organizations give priority to men's career growth because most female employees leave their jobs in the middle of their careers. In the exit meetings, the organizations found that female employees leave jobs due to difficulties they face in order to develop and progress in their careers. Typically, female employees have to face barriers such as personal barriers, those from the family, obstacles within the organizations, and simply because of the culture as an Asian country. However, there is equal opportunity for men and women in entry-level job positions. Still, unfortunately, proportionately, less number of women reach middle and top management levels since they have to face glass ceiling factors while advancing in their careers.

When female employees face discrimination in career growth and face difficulties in career advancement they are not committed to work, they cannot give their full potential to work, and their motivation and performance decrease; their productivity declines, and ultimately they may leave the organization. Due to these unfavorable consequences, there is an immediate necessity to resolve this problem.

Victor and Shamila (2018) indicated that personal factors, family factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors have a negative relationship with women career development. However, Victor and Shamila exposed an insignificant impact of organizational factors on women career development. On the other hand, Uduwella and Jayatilaka (2019) found that personal factors have a significant positive impact on women career development while organizational factors have a significant negative impact on women career development and cultural factors have not had any impact. Thus there are contradictory findings in the extant literature. Further, in the Asian context, there were several studies done to investigate this problem. However, in the Sri Lankan context, there was no study to investigate this problem in the IT industry.

Objectives of the Study

I. To identify the impact of personal factors on women career development.

II. To identify the impact of family factors on women career development.

III. To identify the impact of organizational factors on women career development.

IV. To identify the impact of cultural factors on women career development.

V. To assess the association between glass ceiling factors and women career development.

VI. To identify the most significant among the selected four glass ceiling factors that influence women career development.

Women Career Development

Sears (1982) defined career development as the total assemblage of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to form the individual career over a life span (as cited in Nassredine & Easa, 2020). In Sears' definition, career development is emphasized as an assemblage of several forms. However, Greenhaus (2010) in his definition emphasized the ongoing series of stages characterized by unique concerns and themes.

The women's career development process was examined by O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) through the path of work-related experiences over the life course; career pattern, the personal and professional factors and relationships impacting those paths; career context and the set of beliefs that direct those work experiences; career locus and career beliefs. Moreover, they mentioned that women's career patterns are characterized as ordered or emergent. On the one hand, they suggested that an ordered career pattern consisted of stable, predictable movement through the organizational hierarchy which is strategically planned and executed, reflective of the choice of learning opportunities, and involved long-term planning to accommodate other life roles. On the other hand, an emergent career pattern reflected career moves that are more reactive than proactive, unforeseen twists and turns, disturbances for non-career activities and aimed to accommodate features of one's career other than traditional work.

Further, career locus referred to the main idea from which career orientation, motivation, and success originate O'Neil & Bilimoria (2005). According to an internal career locus reflects the belief that individual females are in charge of creating and managing their future careers and are responsible for their own career success. Further, an external career locus reflects the belief that an individual's career success and opportunities are due to chance or good fortune, external interventions such as others offering career opportunities to female employees or taking them away, or as a result of organizational involvements such as downsizing or governmental rules.

Furthermore, the career context can be described in terms of organizational, societal, or relational. Organizational context emphasizes the influence of organizational structure such as policies, procedures, environment, and culture (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The societal context referred to the effect of society at large on women's choices or concerns. It included prospects of women, gender role socialization, economic circumstances, and discrimination. The relational context emphasizes the negative and positive influence of key personals such as a spouse, children, and parents and the professional relationships such as managers, peers, and clients on women's career and life choices.

Glass Ceiling Factors

The 'glass ceiling' is a concept from the 1980s that describes an invisible barrier that blocks the access of women to

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the top management in an organization (Singh, 2007). The term was coined in 1986 in Wall Street Journal Report on corporate women by Hymowitz and Schelhardt. Morrison and Glinow (1990) mentioned women being adequately represented in the workforce but hardly present in the managerial positions labeled as 'the glass ceiling', "a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it has prevented women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy'' (as cited Bhatnagar & Mathur, 2015:130).

The Gendered Organizational Structure Model (GOSM) describes the basic career barriers formed by the glass ceiling (Victor & Shamila, 2018). Personal factors, family factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors were the four in this model. Individual constraints can affect the person's ability to function as a human being in relation to his or her quality as a leader or manager. Family commitments or responsibilities play a vital role in women employee's life. Still, women take most responsibilities in household work which makes it an issue for them to balance work and family life without sacrificing either (Smith & Crimes, 2007). Cross (2010 as cited in Nchabira, 2013) stated that having children makes a significant barrier to women and tension exists in them during the childbearing years. Further, it was revealed that there is an incompatibility between career advancement and childbearing appears as it is only women who take time out of their careers to have children. Within the organization, there are some factors that make barriers for women. Meyerson (2001) stated that organizational culture and structure were not often designed to accommodate women's values (as cited by Victor & Shamila, 2018). Further, Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) found human resource practices, organizational culture, organizational network, interpersonal relations, role modeling, and minimum efforts as organizational barriers. Cultural factors describe that women employees can observe their career dream only after being satisfied with the culturally accepted roles. Women who are positive, antagonistic, and self-governing were seen as those who are performing outside of societal norms (Victor & Shamila, 2018).

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Women Career Development & Glass Ceiling Factors

Different research studies have found various reasons for women career development barriers such as not being prepared for promotion to management, challenges that face combining a managerial career with family life, not being willing to relocate to another geographical area, and gendered stereotypes (Hunt & Rasmussen, 2010). Therefore, the

glass ceiling factors which influence women career development were explained by using different theories like person-centered theories, social role theories, situation or organization theories, interaction theories, human capital theories, and preference theories. Thus the glass ceiling factors are supported by theories (Kiaye, & Singhe, 2013; Hakim, 2006).

April et al. (2007) found that person-centered theory is concerned with the skills, traits, and behaviors of women in order to break the glass ceiling. According to Terjesen and Singhe (2008), women were found lacking in qualities such as confidence, ambition, leadership skills like assertiveness, and influencing behavior compared to men. A study by Jain and Mukherji (2010) indicated that Indian women avoid competition and are challenge averse since they did not like the competitive environment where they are supposed to be. In addition, Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) mentioned lack of self-confidence and negative attitudes as individual barriers which hinder women career progress in Sri Lanka.

According to Kiaye and Singhe (2013), situational or organizational theories focused on a work environment in which women employees aspire to be in higher management positions. A supportive corporate culture allows women employees to work with flexible schedules and a non-supportive corporate culture effects badly on women's careers. The inadequate corporate practices such as networking, mentoring, flexible working hours, and family-friendly initiatives are the strong glass ceiling barriers in Singapore (Dimovski et al., 2010). Further, Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) found that unfair promotion policies and various management styles serve as an organizational barrier to women's career development.

Social roles and social stereotypes which hinder women's career progress were focussed areas of social role theory. The perception that men perform better than women in higher positions is a belief that is made by the culture which resists women's easy entry to higher positions (Al-Manasra, 2013). According to Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) the informal culture, traditions, and norms work in contradiction to women's career development, and those beliefs can be restricted through conducting awareness programs.

Interaction-centered theory indicates women employees' self-induced inaccessibility through networks made barriers to their career advancement.

Interaction-centered theory indicates women employees' self-induced inaccessibility through networks made barriers to their career advancement (Kiaye, & Singhe, 2013). The deficiency of mentor-mentee relationships makes it difficult to obtain skills, abilities, and attitudes for leadership and managerial positions for women (Goveas & Aslam, 2011). The human capital theory implied that women representation in management is a choice made by themselves, which is a decision

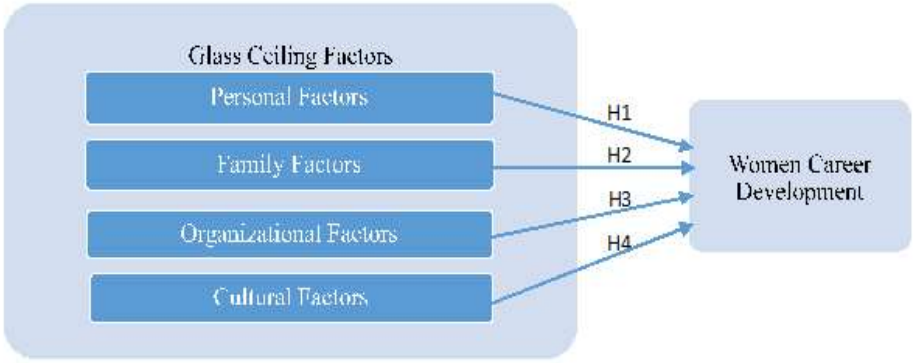
made to invest in their education and training. These employees provide higher value to their family responsibilities and accordingly differ from their male counterparts (Kiaye, & Singhe, 2013).

The preferences theory was the newest that explains women's preferences between family and corporate work. This is a historically informed, prospective, and multidisciplinary theory (Hakim, 2000 as cited by Hakim, 2006). According to this theory, women work-life preferences are divided into home-centered, adaptive, and work centered. Both the home-centered and work-centered are minority women. However, adaptive women have a preference for combining corporate and family work without giving priority to either. The preferences made by women act as a barrier to their career growth (Lathabhavan & Balasubramanian, 2017).

Conceptual Framework & Methodology

The conceptual framework of the current study is illustrated in fig. 1. Building on the evidence in extant literature the glass ceiling factors; personal factors, family factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors were identified as independent variables affecting the dependent variable of the study, women's career development.

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Hypotheses

Based on the reported empirical evidence and theoretical explanations, the below mentioned hypotheses are advanced in the current study to be tested with primary data.

H1: There is a significant impact of personal factors on women career development of executive-level female employees in the IT industry.

H2: There is a significant impact of family factors on women career development of executive-level female employees in the IT industry.

H3: There is a significant impact of organizational factors on women career development of executive-level

female employees in the IT industry.

H4: There is a significant impact of cultural factors on women career development of executive-level female employees in the IT industry.

Research Design

This study relies on quantitative methodology as it provides better guidance than the qualitative studies. We collected preliminary data to get an idea as to how a particular phenomenon occurs within the studied discipline and also secondary data to prove and support the findings. The research philosophy used is positivism. Further, the study is an explanatory one in which we try to test the cause and consequence relationship between the variables.

Since the study was carried out within a quantitative framework we use the deductive method of reasoning. That means the reasoning begins with the consideration of the theoretical background based on which the hypotheses are developed. The study did not rely on a purely deductive approach since the hypotheses are based on assumptions.

Data for the study were collected within a specific time period and there was no subsequent extension. Therefore, this study was cross-sectional in nature. Further, it is based on a field study since no experiment was undertaken. Further, the unit of analysis was individual, viz. the executive-level female employees of IT industry in Sri Lanka.

The Sample

The population of this study comprises four global market IT companies in Sri Lanka. We selected the IT industry since this industry is the fourth largest export earner of the country. Further, these four companies are only located in the Colombo district of Sri Lanka since they are dealing with the global market. We study the population of 140 female employees who are working at the executive level of these IT companies. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, the suitable sample for this study was 103 respondents. Thus, sample 103 was derived out of 140 women executives using random sampling. Simple random sampling was done based on the employee name list which was collected from specific companies. Thus, we were able to represent the population equally and proportionately when deriving the sample.

Measurement Scales

The construct 'women career development' was assessed using the scale taken from Jawahar and Hemmasi (2006). The coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.629. Eight (8) items were used to measure the construct which was anchored on a five-point Likert scale as in the original scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

To measure personal factors, we adapted the measurement scale developed by Bazazo et al. (2017). Personal factors assess through two dimensions;

personal traits and personal skills. The coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.838 in the study of Bazazo et al. (2017), and they have also suggested that the scale be used in similar studies in the future. To measure family factors, we adopted the scale developed by Nchabira (2013), and the coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.782 in the study of Nchabira (2013). Further, to measure the organizational factors, we adapted the standard measurement scale developed by Bazazo et al. (2017) and assess the organizational factors through two dimensions; organizational practices and organizational structure. The coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.790 in the study of Bazazo et al. (2017). Cultural factors were measured through the standard measurement scale developed by Nchabira (2013) and the coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.806 in the study of Nchabira (2013). Further, in these all measurement scales respondents rated their level of agreement for the items on a five-point Likert scale anchored from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Survey Administration and Response Rate

Altogether 110 questionnaires were distributed online mode, as a google form to respondents directly. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire based on their experience. All the Likert scale items in the questionnaire were anchored on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Out of 110 questionnaires distributed, 103 were responded. However, out of those 103 respondents 2 responses were discarded since they chose the same rating for all the items on the Likert scale. Hence, we entered only 101 fully completed responses into SPSS.

Sample Composition

The age group of 30 – 36 years was dominant within the sample with a share of 48.5%. The second dominat group was aged between 24 and 30 years representing 42.6% of the sample. Other age groups represented a few percentages of the sample. The majority of the respondents in terms of the highest education completed was a degree consisting of 67.3% of the sample and there were no respondents in the category of advanced level (A/L). The working experience of 3 – 6 years was dominant representing 58.4% of the sample. However, there were a few employees (@%) who had work experience of more than 10 years.

Testing of Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant impact of personal factors on women career development

According to the results of the Pearson correlation (Table 1), there is a correlation between women career development and personal factors. Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is -0.760 and it shows there is a negative strong relationship between women career development and personal factors. Further, the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level as sig

Table 1 Correlation Statistics of Personal Factors

		Women Career Development	Personal Factors
Women Career Development	Pearson Correlation	1	-.760**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Personal Factors	Pearson Correlation	-.760**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

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

(2-tailed) is less than 0.01; which is 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that, statistically there is a significant relationship between women career development and personal factors.

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Table 2 Regression Model Summary – Personal Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.760[a]	.578	.574	.38671

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Factors

According to the results in Table 2, 57.8% (R Square = 0.578) of the variation of the dependent variable; women career development could be significant (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.05) explained by the independent construct in the research model; personal factors. Thus, H1 is accepted on the ground that, statistically, there is a significant impact of personal factors on women career development.

There is a significant impact of personal factors on women career development.

H2: There is a significant impact of family factors on women career development

Table 3 Correlation Statistics of Family Factors

		Women Career Development	Family Factors
Women Career Development	Pearson Correlation	1	-.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Family Factors	Pearson Correlation	-.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

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

There is a correlation between women career development and family factors (Table 3). The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is -0.796 and it shows there is a negative strong relationship between women career development and family factors. Further, the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level as sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that, statistically, there is a significant relationship between women career development and family factors.

There is a significant relationship between women career development and family factors.

Table 4 Regression Model Summary – Family Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.796[a]	.634	.630	.36022

a. Predictors: (Constant), Family Factors

According to the results depicted in Table 4, 63.4% of the variation in women career development could be (Sig. = 0.000) explained by the independent construct in the model; family factors. Thus H2 is accepted because, statistically, there is a significant impact of family factors on women career development.

There is a significant impact of family factors on women career development.

H3 There is a significant impact of organizational factors on women career development

Table 5 Correlation Statistics of Organizational Factors

		Women Career Development	Organizational Factors
Women Career Development	Pearson Correlation	1	-.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Organizational Factors	Pearson Correlation	-.829**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

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

According to the results in Table 5, there is a correlation between women career development and organizational factors. Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is -0.829 and it shows there is a negative strong relationship between women career development and organizational factors. Further, the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level as sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant statistical relationship between women career development and organizational factors.

Table 6 Regression Model Summary – Organizational Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.829[a]	.688	.685	.33252

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Factors

As shown in Table 6, 68.8% (R Square = 0.688) of the variation of the dependent variable; women career development could be significantly (Sig. = 0.000) explained by the independent construct in the research model; organizational factors. Thus, according to the regression results, H3 is accepted and that there is a statistically significant impact of organizational factors on women career development.

There is a statistically significant impact of organizational factors on women career development.

H4: There is a significant impact of cultural factors on women career development

Table 7 Correlation Statistics of Cultural Factors

		Women Career Development	Cultural Factors
Women Career Development	Pearson Correlation	1	-.736**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Cultural Factors	Pearson Correlation	-.736**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

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

There is a correlation between women career development and cultural factors (Table 7). Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is -0.736 and it shows there is a negative strong relationship between women career development and cultural factors. Further, the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level as sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.01. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between women career development and cultural factors.

Table 8 Regression Model Summary – Cultural Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736[a]	.542	.538	.40276

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Factors

About 54.2% (R Square = 0.542) of the variation of the dependent variable; women career development could be significantly (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than

There is a statistically significant impact of cultural factors on women career development.

0.05) explained by the independent construct; cultural factors (Table 8). According to the regression results, H4 is accepted and that there is a statistically significant impact of cultural factors on women career development.

Stepwise Regression Analysis

The results of the stepwise regression analysis indicated that organizational factors had the highest beta contribution 68.8% to the variance in women career development. Further, personal factors contributed about 5%, and together the organizational and personal factors explained about 73.8% variation in women career development. Therefore, it is identified that the organizational factors as the most significant of the glass ceiling factors which impact women career development. Even though the study has four independent variables as possible candidates for inclusion in the regression equation, the SPSS ultimately choose only two of those predictors hence two variables were left out of the analysis.

Table 9 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.829[a]	.688	.685	.33252
2	.859[b]	.738	.733	.30615

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Factors
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Factors, Personal Factors

Findings

The current study found a strong negative relationship between women career development and personal factors; Pearson correlation being -0.760 and significant at 0.000. The R Square value is 0.578 and the sig value is 0.000. Hence, results accepted the H1 hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of personal factors on women career development. Victor and Shamila (2018), found a small negative relationship between women career development and personal factors and identified a significant impact of personal factors on women career development in Finance sectors. Further, Uduwella and Jayatilaka (2019) found a significant positive impact of personal factors on women career development in the banking industry.

The present study found a strong negative relationship between women career development and family factors; Pearson correlation being -0.796, significant at 0.000. The R Square value is 0.634 and the sig value is 0.000. Hence, results accepted the H2 hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of family factors on women career development. Victor and Shamila (2018), found a small negative relationship between women career development and family factors and identified a significant impact of fam-

ily factors on women career development in Finance sectors.

The current study found there is a strong negative relationship between women career development and organizational factors; the Pearson correlation being -0.829 and significant at 0.000. The R Square value is 0.688 and the sig value is 0.000. Hence, results accepted the H3 hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of organizational factors on women career development. However, Victor and Shamila (2018), found that organizational factors have an insignificant impact on women career development in finance sectors. Further, Uduwella and Jayatilaka (2019) found that organizational factors have a significant negative impact on women career development in the banking industry.

In the present study, we found a strong negative relationship between women career development and cultural factors; the Pearson correlation of -0.736 and significant at 0.000. The R Square value is 0.542 and the sig value is 0.000. Hence, results accepted the H4 hypothesis that there is a significant negative impact of cultural factors on women career development. Victor and Shamila (2018), found a small negative relationship between women career development and cultural factors and further identified a significant impact of cultural factors on women career development in finance sectors. Moreover, Uduwella and Jayatilaka (2019) found that there is no significant impact of cultural factors on women career development in the banking industry.

This study found organizational factors as the most significant glass ceiling factor which has an impact on women career development.

Hence, when comparing the findings of the current study with extant literature, we were able to identify some differences since some of the previous research has been on qualitative studies. Further, this study found organizational factors as the most significant glass ceiling factor which has an impact on women career development.

Recommendations

Women employees should avoid the challenges which have been created by themselves by improving their level of confidence. Improving their own confidence level and being more ambitious about their career help them to face problems more successfully and to advance in their career development. Women employees should improve their emotional intelligence by learning how to control their emotions. Hence, there is a feeling that female leaders or managers are dependent on emotions as a result of which they might make biased decisions. It can be a huge barrier for women. In order to manage family-related barriers, female employees should be able to mainly improve their time management skills since it can avoid long working hours and enhance the chance of success. Moreover, women should understand the importance of the glass ceiling issues

and should actively confront them in order to reach the expected career progress.

Organizations should provide flexible working hours for female employees. It gives more opportunities for those employees. In addition to that organizations can provide time off for men to take care of family responsibilities hence it will reduce the burden on women employees. Organizations can introduce a fair performance evaluation system that has more consistency and transparency and give clear guidance and information in order to do it in a better way. Further, organizations should provide mentoring programs for female employees assisting them to get a good picture of their careers since they have many commitments in life when compared to male employees. The organizations should provide more opportunities such as training and development programs even overseas to make them feel that they have the same career development opportunities as male employees without any gender discrimination.

The male employees working in an organization should equally treat female employees and should give them respect and should help them to create a good working environment within the organization. HRM professionals can introduce different programs to enhance women employees' morale, attitudes, and skills building. Further, they can make programs to enhance relationships among employees in order to build good networks within the organization.

Limitations & Directions for Future Research

The study had some limitations during the research process. Firstly, the survey's focus was women and hence there is a possibility of gender biases in responses. If there were male participants, then the validity and credibility of the study might increase since the findings can be generalized for a larger population. Further, the current COVID-19 situation in the country affected the research study since the data collection was done through an online survey. Therefore, we could reach a small sample size considering only a single industry. Furthermore, this study has been conducted based on the quantitative approach and it would be better if the mixed method was used. Moreover, when studying the impact of glass ceiling factors on women career development, we assumed that other factors affecting the variables are remaining constant. Further, time management has been a challenge since the availability of limited time.

We suggest using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative approaches for future researchers to obtain the most validated results of the study. Further, we suggest taking the male responses with female responses in order to do a comparative analysis for the same study. We also propose to take a larger sample focusing on a cross section of industries without constraining to one industry. It will enable comparative analysis among industries relating to the study area.

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