

OBSTACLES TO WOMEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to identify the impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development of executive level banking employees in the Colombo district of Sri Lanka. Today, the level of knowledge, talents and performances of females are immensely increasing. However, still women appear to be underrepresented in senior executive positions. Most of the women who works in the banking sector have stick within their junior executive positions for years without career advancements while males are dominating in higher management positions suggesting that they might experiencing a career Glass Ceiling. Hence the study was conducted to identify the impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development of executive level female banking employees of Sri Lanka with special reference to Colombo district banking organizations. The study was quantitative and survey method was followed to collect primary data. Data collected through a structured questionnaire. Random sampling technique was applied to select the sample, and the final sample consisted of 100 female executive level banking employees within the Colombo district banking organizations. Correlation and Regression analysis used as analytical tools. Analysis findings indicated that there is a strong negative relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development and there is a highly significant impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development. On the basis of evidences revealed by the research, confirmed that the executive woman's career life who works in banking organizations within Colombo district is caused by glass ceiling. Some internal and external factors as Individual Factors, Family Factors and Organizational Factors both invisible and visible impacts to hinder women's career progression.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Women career development, Individual Factors, Family

1.1 Background of the Study

In the current world, gender issues related to the women and their career development have become one of the main areas of concern all over the world. From the latter part of the 20th century, the level of participation of women in job market increased significantly. (Black et al, 1999). However, holding the higher position in organizations still occasional (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Most of the cases they are holding middle and lower management positions.

Today, in Asia women account for more than half of the graduate cohort since education is the only way make them prove and realize that they can do the same things as men and can achieve success in career. However, unfortunately, the opportunities for career advancements for women in the industries are slow and less (Tuong,2015). Wilensky (1961) defines it in structural terms in relation to paid jobs as “a succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, (more or less predictable) sequence.” However, Due to different obstacles at the different levels of career ladder women are still under-represented at the top levels of the organizations.

Several types of research have been attempted to evaluate this issue and they have recognized an invisible barrier that keeps the given demographic (naturally applied to women workers) from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy (especially senior management positions) regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Gattrell & Cooper, 2007; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2005, Bombuwela and De Alwis; 2013, kulasekara and De Alwis, 2015). This scenario is known as the Glass Ceiling. The “glass ceiling” is one of the compelling metaphors for examining inequalities between, men and women in the workplace and their career upgrading.

However, the term was used by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1991, in response to a study of nine Fortune 500 companies. The study defined that women and minorities encountered substantial glass ceiling barriers in their careers; these barriers were experienced earlier in their professions than previously thought.

Researchers found that there are different kinds of glass ceiling barriers, Different pay for comparable work, Sexual, ethnic, racial, religious discrimination or harassment in the workplace, Lack of family-friendly workplace policies (or on the flipside, policies that discriminate against people, non-parents, or single parents)...etc

Even though women represent more than half of the population in Sri Lanka, their labour force participation rate is less than men. Men's participation in labour force is twice as women's.

Table 1.1: Population and Labour Force.

	Population (10 years & over)	Labour Force	Labour force participation rate
Male	7,919,105	5,317,553	73.9
Female	8,942,422	2,790,186	36.4

Source: Labour Force Survey

In 2015, estimated economically active population is around eight million and about five million (73.9) of them are males. The female participation rate is around 36 percent. Majority of the women are economically inactive. Even the active 36% is also struggling put their landmark on their careers suggesting that Glass Ceiling related factors may be affected towards them.

Sri Lanka is becoming one of the emerging economies in Asia with the GDP growth of 4.8 and around 6 percent for last 6 to seven years(World Bank report, 2011).To be sustainable in this growth Sri Lanka needs more talent including women. However, unfortunately in Sri Lanka remain in a place where male-dominated only few achieving the top positions in the organizations. The same applies to the banking industry of Sri Lanka where a very low level of top managers and directors can be identified through so many qualified females are working within the industry for years.

Table 1.2: Participation of Female executives at the Director Boards of main Commercial Banks in Sri Lanka

Name of the Commercial bank	No of Director Positions available	No of Female directors	Female Directors Percentage
Commercial bank	10	1	10%
Sampath Bank PLC	11	3	27%
HNB	13	3	23%
BOC	6	0	0%
Peoples Bank	9	1	11%

Nations Trust Bank	11	3	27%
Seylan Bank	10	1	10%

Source: Annual Report 2015

These Indications and Previous researchers lead to a questionable point whether the female executives of banking industry of Sri Lanka are undergoing a career Glass Ceiling. This study is undertaken to recognize this scenario related the female executives level employees who work in Colombo district banking organizations of Sri Lanka.

1.2 Problem Statement

Focusing on gender differences in leadership, women appear to be underrepresented in senior executive positions, suggesting that female banking executives of Sri Lanka are experiencing a career glass ceiling. Even a considerable amount of women participation can be identified in Sri Lankan banking industry they still make up a small share of top executives. Most of the women who work in the banking sector have stick to their junior executive positions for years without career advancements while males are dominating in higher management positions. As the above table illustrates currently a very few women participation can be identified in senior management positions. Since women appear to be underrepresented in senior positions, although they are equally experienced and educated as male workers Females have to face a lot of barriers in their career development.

Though women also are or work as the men worker they may face a lot of barriers in their career development. Consequently, this study examines the following research question.

What is the impact of Glass Ceiling on women career development of executive level female employees of Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka?

Also, this study will reveal what main factors influence women to advance their career success and further what possible suggestions in order to help women having both successful career and happy family. 1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To determine the impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Specific Objective 1: To determine the relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka

Specific Objective 2: To determine the impact of Glass Ceiling and Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka

Specific Objective 3: To give possible suggestion and ideas for women to get both successful career and happy family through overcoming GC.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In recent years, most of the people give a considerable attention to Glass Ceiling concept in a workplace environment. Many types of research have been done on various problems related to women career development. Researchers found that there is a certain gap in the empirical knowledge available, in Sri Lankan perspective on Glass Ceiling. Therefore identifying the impact of glass ceiling on women workers is very important to decision-makers in identifying key workplace issues in order to develop strategies to address and improve the policies for preventing such things.

findings of this study would be a better guideline for managers; to identify managerial woman's problems, the ways to shatter those barriers, students; as a referential material for their studies, policy makers; making and improving policies in organizations with regard to glass ceiling and women career development findings in this research, and other relevant organization and especially for all women workers; identifying things which hinder their career and way to shatter them.

In economic perspective by shattering the glass ceiling can achieve more participation of working women in higher positions and it will be beneficial towards economic growth. Through shattering the GC Sri Lankan economy will be beneficial with more participation of working women in their work environment. Also, it will help to rise up their earning as well. And also it is important for future researchers and future job holders as it provides more knowledge on glass ceiling that affects women career. As the job holders, they will be informed about the ways for securing their jobs or shattering GC. Ultimately it helps to climb up their career. In the case of male job holders, they will be able to identify problems that faced by their counterparts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "glass ceiling" refers to invisible or artificial barriers that prevent women (and people of color) from advancing past a certain level (Morrison & von Glinow, 1990). The U.S. Department of Labor (2011) has defined the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions." As per Jackson (2001) The phrase "glass ceiling" was introduced to depict a world where business women in their attempt to access top positions were blocked by corporate tradition and prejudice.

Although Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights", discrimination is still a widespread issue all over the world.

Quite a few researchers have identified some reasons for the existence of glass ceiling. Afza and Newaz (2008) have proposed five major factors which influence Glass Ceiling (GC) effects in organizations: Management Perception, Work environment, Work- life conflict, Sexual harassment, Organizational Policy. According to Maheshwari, (2012) indicates GC global barriers can broadly be divided into three categories namely, individual, societal and organization related barriers.

A study conducted by Bombuwela and De Alwis, (2013) suggested that factors related to Glass Ceiling should be categorized into 4 main types: Individual Factors, Family Factors, Organizational Factors and Cultural Factors. Individual factor defined as what come from women themselves influence on the outcome which includes confidence, personal traits and ability to sell themselves (Bombuwela and De Alwis, 2013). Family Factors reflects to which extent relationships, Childcare and House work affects to the career development of an employee. Organizational Factors (OF) defined as to which extent the employees see their organization as being responsible for their lack of performance or to what extent organizational barriers that comes from organizational structure and practices influence including organizational policy and management style towards the employee development. Cultural factors considered as a reflection of public perception on the differences in behaviors and personality basing on a person's gender, men or women (Lueptow et al, 2001).

Career development is defined as “an ongoing, formalized effort by an organization that focuses on developing and enriching the organization’s human resources in light of both the employees’ and the organization’s needs” (Byars and Rue, 2004).

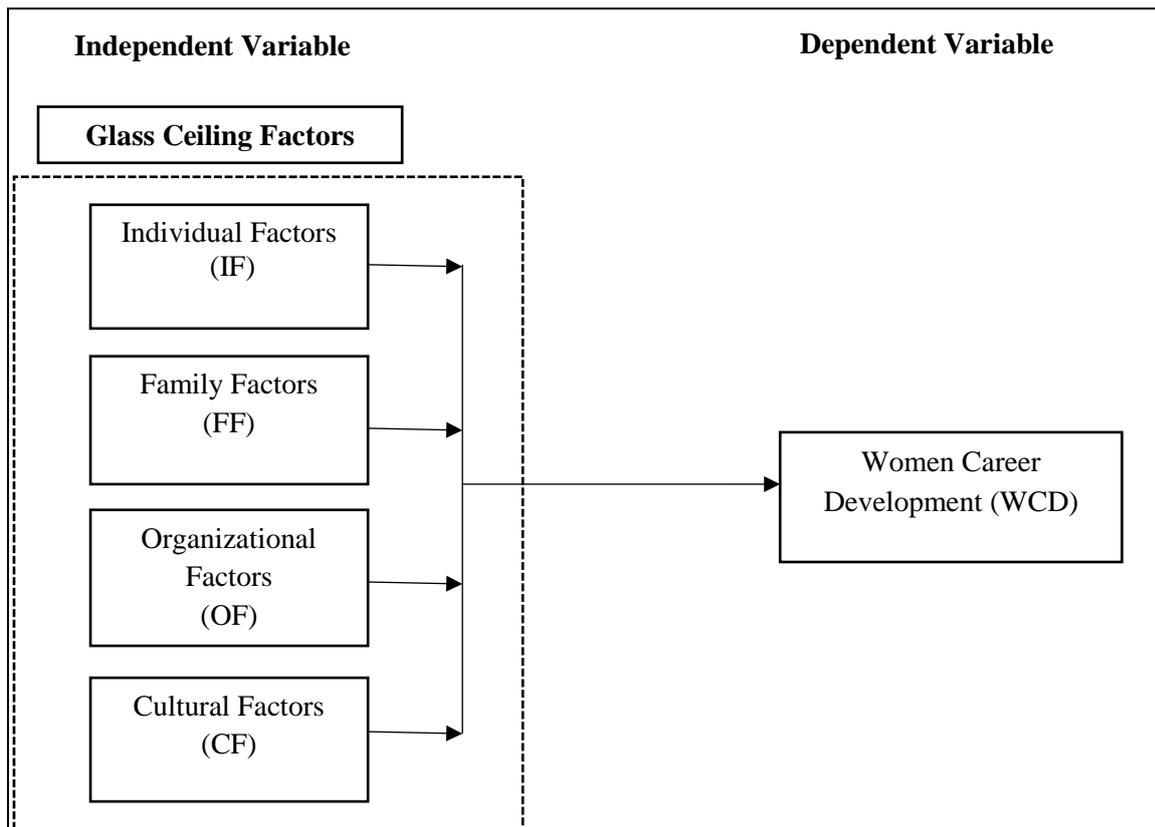
3. METHODOLOGY

This study is to determine the impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka. Further, the study determines the relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka. In addition, this study provides suggestions and ideas for women to get both successful career and happy family through overcoming GC.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

In order to conduct this study, the model of The Glass Ceiling Factors from Bombuwela and De Alwis, (2013) had predisposed. Following figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. The main research idea emphasized by this conceptual framework is, Glass Ceiling influences on Women Career Development. In this framework, Glass Ceiling considered as the independent variable and Women Career Development as the dependent variable.

$$WCD = f(GC) \quad WCD = f(C, F, I, O)$$



Source: Bombuwela & De Alwis, (2013)

Figure.1: Conceptual Framework

Individual Factors reflect which extent individual conditions that coming from themselves as lack of confidence, personal traits and inability to sell themselves influences to the career development. Family Factors reflect which extent relationships, Childcare and Housework affect to the career development of an employee. Organizational Factors reflect which extent the employees see their organization as being responsible for their lack of performance or to what extent organizational barriers that come from organizational structure and practices influence including organizational policy and management style towards the employee development. Cultural Factors refers to which extent beliefs, traditions, and stereotyping influence to the employee development. Women Career Development refers to the amount of career focus, support given by family members to continue the success of person's profession and Attitudes towards Organization of an employee for advancing their career.

3.2 Hypotheses Development

According to the study framework following hypothesis were developed and tested to achieve the research objectives.

Specific Objective 1: To determine the relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka

H1: There is a significant relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development

Specific Objective 2: To determine the impact of Glass Ceiling and Women Career development of executive level female employees in Colombo district banking industry of Sri Lanka

H2: There is a significant impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development

Specific Objective 3: To determine the most influential factor of GC on WCD.

H3: There is a significant impact of Individual Factors on Women Career Development

H4: There is a significant impact of Family Factors on Women Career Development

H5: There is a significant impact of Organizational Factors on Women Career Development

H6: There is a significant impact of Cultural Factors on Women Career Development

3.3 Population and Sample

Population for this research is female banking executives who work in both public and private banking organizations within the Colombo District area. The random sampling method used to determine the sample. The sample of the study consists of 250 executive level female employees representing Colombo district banking industry.

3.4 Data Collection

This research study trusted upon the survey method for collection of data. A standard questionnaire developed by Bombuwela & De Alwis (2013) has been taken as the survey instrument to obtain information required from the executive level female employees.

3.5 Reliability Test

Reliability tests were conducted using IBM SPSS English version 20 to confirm the reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used to test the internal consistency of the instruments. The alpha should be at least .60 ($\alpha = .60$) or higher to retain an item on an

adequate scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Based on the results of the reliability test it has found that alpha value of each variable is greater than .60 which was considered that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Correlation analysis was used in analyzing the relationship between variables. And regression analysis was used to identify the impact of GC on WCD. To gather responses to the study standard questionnaire was distributed to 250 female banking executives in Colombo district thus 134 respondents have returned their questionnaire and 16 questionnaires were rejected on the basis of incomplete information

.4. FINDINGS

4.1 Findings based on descriptive statistics

According to the survey results IF indicator recorded mean value of 2.73. It reveals that the dimension of IF in Colombo district is in low level. FF indicator recorded mean value of 2.60 which reveals that the dimension of FF is in lower level. OF indicator recorded mean value of 2.55. It reveals that the dimension of OF is in lower level. According to the survey results, CF indicator recorded mean value of 2.68. This value is lower than point 3. It reveals that the dimension of CF is in lower level. According to the survey results, GC indicator recorded mean value of 2.64 which exposes that the GC variable is in low level. WCD recorded mean value of 3.98. This value is higher than point 3. It reveals that the WCD of Colombo district is in high level.

4.2 Findings based on the inferential statistics

Testing of hypotheses

Objective 1 of the study: To determine the relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development

Hypothesis 1 -There is a significant relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development

Under the correlation analysis, the correlation coefficient between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development is $r = -0.708$ along with the significant value of .000. Value of (r) is

greater than -0.7 and it can conclude that there is a high negative relationship between Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development. It is significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Objective 2 of the study: To determine the impact of GC on WCD

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant impact of Glass Ceiling on WCD

Under the multiple regression analysis, R Square (R^2) =0.649 is the explained variance in WCD by the independent variable GC (combination of four dimensions of IF, FF, OF and CF). The results indicate that 64.9 % of the variance of WCD of Colombo District private sector banking organizations has been significantly explained by GC. Hence it can be said that other factors have only 35.1% influence on WCD. It can conclude that there is a significant impact of GC on WCD. Hence hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Objective 3 of the study: To determine the most influential factor of GC on WCD

To achieve the above objective researcher developed 4 hypotheses for each dimension of GC.

Hypothesis 3: There is significant impact of Individual Factors on WCD

Under regression analysis depicts P value of IF=0.000, hence $P < 0.05$, indicating that there is a significant impact of IF on WCD. Thus analysis able to reject the null hypothesis H3 is accepted.

Hypothesis 4: There is significant impact of Family Factors on WCD

Under regression analysis depicts P value of FF=0.005, hence $P < 0.05$, indicating that there is a significant impact of FF on WCD. Thus, analysis able to reject the null hypothesis and accept the H4.

Hypothesis 5: There is significant impact of Organizational Factors on WCD

Under regression analysis depicts P value of OF= 0.002, hence $P < 0.05$, indicating that there is a significant impact of OF on WCD. Thus analysis able to reject the null hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Hypothesis 6: There is significant impact of Cultural Factors on WCD

Under regression analysis depicts P value of CF= 0.793, hence $P > 0.05$, indicating that there is no significant impact of CF on WCD. Thus, the analysis fails to reject the null and as a result hypothesis H6 is rejected.

Through the testing of hypothesis to achieve the 3rd specific objective of the study it can conclude that Organizational Factors makes the most impact to the WCD as Of shows the highest beta value of -0.652 and sig value of 0.002.

5. DISCUSSION

On the basis of correlation analysis data of executive level female bankers, the researcher identified that there is a strong negative relationship between glass ceiling and Women Career Development. Depending on the above analysis, the increase in Glass Ceiling causes a decrease in Women Career Development at a high level and vice versa.

The independent variable, GC composed of four sub-variables (IF, FF, OF, CF) and the study has revealed the relationship between each sub-variable of GC and WCD. The study proved that there is a moderate negative correlation between IF and WCD. The correlation coefficient for these two variables was -0.630 with a significant value of .000. It implies that when an individual factor like lack of confidence, lack of personal traits and inability to sell themselves increases, women career progress will decrease. The correlation coefficient between FF and WCD is $r = -.297$ with the significant value .003. There is a weak negative correlation between the FF and WCD. And also there is a significant relationship between two variables. When a family factor like child care and housework increase career progress opportunities for females will decrease. The correlation value of Organizational Factors and Women Career Development is $r = -.719$ with the significant value .000 at 99% confidence level. The result clearly revealed that there is a high negative correlation between the OF and WCD. Also, there is a significant relationship between two variables. It implies that when organizational barriers that come from organizational structure and practices influence including organizational policy and management style increases women career development will decrease. Cultural Factors and Women Career Development also displayed a moderate negative relationship as correlation coefficient value $r = -.385$ and the significant value .000 between two variables with a 99% confidence level.

According to the regression analysis of the study, it has confirmed that the Glass Ceiling has 64.9% influence on the Career Development of Female Executive level employees working

in private sector banking organizations within Colombo district. Hence it can be clearly stated that other factors have only 35.1 % influence on Women Career Development.

The study proved that only IF, OF and FF displays a significant impact on WCD. CFs' P-value 0.793 indicate that FF not a significant predictive of WCD.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Through quantitative data analysis and discussion, the study identified some internal and external factors both invisibly and visibly which hinder women's career progression.

According to research findings among the Glass Ceiling factors, most influenced factor was the Organizational Factor. Most of the employees of the study did not agree with the fairness of the promotion scheme of the organization. Hence, Organizations should give clear guidelines and information on performance appraisal, and promotion. Organizations can have an effect on organizational culture; organizations can take initiative to change their organizational culture to create a biased and discrimination-free environment. In addition, an organization can have awareness program to change the worker's perceptions of women leaders since most of the respondent have agreed that male workers are discomfort having them as seniors. Organizations should provide training and development programs targeted for women. Organizations should provide mentoring programs both formally and informally to help women realize their career path. Organizations should provide flexible working hours for women.

According to research findings among the Glass Ceiling factors, second most influenced factor was individual Factors. Women should avoid the challenges that they create for themselves by improving the level of confidence. Women should improve their emotional intelligence by learning how to control their emotions.

Though the hypothesis related to the impact of GC and WCD was rejected according to the selected sample, previous research conducted by Bombuwela & De Alwis, (2013) it has proved that cultural factors influence to the WCD. Here most powerful barrier is gender stereotyping. To combat the stereotype that men make better managers than women, women should prove themselves that they have enough knowledge, skills, and abilities to be in top positions.

7. IMPLICATIONS

This study was aimed to find out the effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development. Here researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics for achieving the above-mentioned objective. At the end of analysis arrived at a conclusion that Glass Ceiling factors namely Individual Factors, Organizational Factors, and Family Factors had made a significant effect on Women Career Development while organizational Factors also contributed to varying the Women Career Development.

These identified contributed factors of GC and findings will be beneficial to fill the gap of local literature on Glass Ceiling and also findings of this research would serve as a basis for further studies related to this topic of the study.

As the research identified factors of the glass ceiling and Women Career Development to the theoretical aspect, finding and recommendations would also supportive to the implementing the businesses. Hence Organization can take steps to overcome the identified most effective Glass Ceiling factors and to improve the Women Career Development also can be applied to developing women empowerment.

8. CONCLUSION

According to the facts revealed by this research, it is confirmed that the executive woman's career life who works in private sector banking organizations within Colombo district results in glass ceiling effect. Some internal and external factors both invisibly and visibly which hinder women's career progression. As this study proved Individual Factors, Family Factors and Organizational Factors has a significant impact on women career development. Women should understand the importance of the glass ceiling issues and actively confront them. To combat the stereotype that men make better managers than women, women should prove themselves that they have enough knowledge, skills, and abilities to be in top positions. If the work females want to change the attitudes of others, regarding the traditional myth that women are homemakers and they cannot work as males, they must show that they able to do work at maximum level as organization expects.

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