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Study on Glass Ceiling Factors Affecting Women's Career Development with Special Reference to Sri Lankan Construction Industry

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Abstract: The Glass ceiling is one of the foremost compelling metaphors, which is used to analyse the imbalance between male and female workers within the work environment. The purpose of this study is to understand the glass ceiling factors affecting on women's career development in Sri Lankan construction industry. The study aims to get a good understanding of the underrepresentation of females in top management positions and the reluctance to cultivate their professional careers in the industry. To accomplish the objective both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. By means of quantitative analysis, a structured questionnaire was distributed among a sample consisting of 53 female middle managers. The results of regression analysis discovered individual factors, and gender stereotype has positively affected the career development while family responsibilities do not have a significant influence on career development. The findings reveal that some of the barriers mentioned in the literature are prevalent in the Sri Lankan context except family responsibilities. For qualitative analysis, five lady senior managers in the construction industry were interviewed. According to their perception organizational culture, social-cultural factors and environmental factors are the significant factors which affect the career development of women. The study findings further offer some strategies to break those glass ceiling factors in an organizational context as well as personal characteristics. The company should give more opportunities for female employees. Apart from that people must individually have a thirst for developing their professional careers, and they must be willing to take risks and always think out of the box.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, Women career development, Individual factors, Family responsibilities, Gender stereotype

Introduction

Males and the females are the pillars of the society, without considering the equal participation of them in all domains of life there is no significant growth. Since the Stone Age females have been contributing to the social-economical life with males, but considerably less labour force (Sadaquat,M.B.,&Quarr-tul-ainA.S., 2010). In the past, people thought that woman ought to act as a full time housewife and takes care of her family rather than being a portion of the labour force. This understanding has changed considerably over the years as ladies have shown their capability in skills and knowledge to men (Domenico, D.M., & Jones, K.H, 2006). Meyerson (2001) also highlighted that in past men were treated as the monetary suppliers while women were seen as domestic guardians and caretakers. Only a

few or no women allowed to enter the business world and let alone to hold managerial positions. That is why the industry is dominated and run by men (Meyerson, 2001).

International Labour Organization (2018) recorded that the female labour force participation rate is only 47.88%. (ILO, 2018). In Sri Lanka, the female population is above fifty per cent of the total population, but their contribution to the workforce is only 33.6% as of 2018. Also noted that economically inactive people is about 7.8 million and the majority are females (74.1%). According to the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey Annual Report (2018), out of 74.1% economically inactive females are engaged in housework and, it is more than 60%.

Although the number of female entry into the labour force has slightly improved, they get significantly lower wages compared to men (Tinklin, T., Croxford, L., Ducklin, A., & Frame, B., 2005). Society looks down to discriminate the women by thinking they are only skilled to fulfil the lower managerial position (Rashid, A.M., Bakar, A.R., Asimiran, S. & Loh, P.T., 2009). In many countries in the world, women have a good rate of entering primary schools and universities. However, they are not getting equal openings at higher levels of establishments (Wentling, R. M., 2003). In (ILO, 2016) also reported that even though there is an important improvement in women's education in past years, it has not been translated into similar advancement in the working industry where gender inequality exists.

According to Grant Thornton (2012), there was only twenty-one per cent of senior management position are universally held by ladies in both private as well as the listed businesses (Thorton, 2012). So it is vital to understand why females under presented in senior management positions in the organizations (Hoobler, J. M., Wayne, S. J., & Lemmon, G., 2009). Grant (2017) again highlighted that internationally, 1 in 4 senior points is currently seized by a woman and compared to 2016 it is a slight increment, but apart from that number of businesses with zero women in senior positions also gone up. The report reveals that only 1% of women in top management category has climbed from 2016 to 2017 (24% in 2016 and 25% in 2017) and at the same time quantity of organizations with zero female input into management has also risen at the same rate (from 33% in 2016 to 34% in 2017).

The construction industry is globally considered as one of the key contributors to the national economy. This applies to the Sri Lankan construction industry too. According to the Central Bank Annual Report (2018), the contribution of Sri Lanka's construction industry to the country's GDP was 6.8% in 2018. The construction industry in Sri Lanka reflects an upward drift, because of the post struggle.

Typically a construction industry is a masculine industry and female have been going steadily towards occupations, professionals and managerial jobs which were reserved for men previously. Despite this welcome, there are only very few ladies who hold higher management positions in the construction industry. It is created that ladies are stood up by noteworthy barriers to joining the industry and as well as to reach the senior positions in the organizations.

The study was conducted to obtain the following objectives. "To find out the key glass ceiling factors affecting on women carrier development", "To determine how Individual factors, Family responsibilities and Gender Stereotype impact the career advancement of middle management female employee in the construction

industry" and, "To find out the strategies to overcome the above factors". The review was done by choosing 6 key construction companies which are holding the membership of "Major Constructors of Sri Lanka" (MCSL) Association. It was found that a very low proportion of women (12.7%) reported being occupied in the construction industry. There is a distinguished difference in the top-level female managers in the industry. Percentage breakdown of male and female in senior management category is 95.3% and 4.7% respectively. Sri Lankan Labour Demand survey in 2017 stated that when considering the occupational group there is only 5.5% of managers are in the construction industry. Here the manager group contains chief executives, corporate managers, and managers who developed and coordinate strategies and activities of the organizations. Generally, they are in the higher management category. All others are middle and lower flat employees. Such as engineers, lawyers, economists (Sri Lanka Labour Demand Survey, 2017). The objective of this survey is to get better thoughtful of the factors that affect women career development in the industry.

Literature Review

The objective of this survey is to get better thoughtful of the factors that affect women career development in the industry. The study was reinforced by many theories and models which provide clarification of the blockades to women career progression.

Theoretical Literature Review

The "Gender role theory" states that convictions be in the society regarding the roles that are suitable for every sexual orientation and males and females are need to have or develop the features steady with the one's relegated part (Wood, 2008)."Social cognitive theory on the individual characteristic" by Browns and Hackett in 1987 recognizes the collaboration of individual attributes, exterior nature variables, behaviour in career development. The theory emphases on the impact of self-efficacy convictions and results desired on targets and behaviours (Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). Behavioural difference between male and females are described in the 'Social Role Theory' which was developed in 1980 (Eagly, 1987). As per the theory, the behaviour happens due to gender stereotype, that means the typical roles related to gender (Strodtbeck, F. L. & Mann, R. D, 1956). The Feminism Theory was trying to lighten the sexual discrepancies and the overthrow of ladies. By this theory, it is trying to reach the generous and endorsement of women through the present scheme in a good way. This encounter all practice of favouritism. Generally, people think through that female worry with the stuff which are not grave and reduce affinity to sensitive answers rather than views. Generally females help men and are not good in the decision making. So according to the Feminist Liberal Theory, there is a high requirement for gender equality in financial, political and societal development (Korda, 1974). According to the theory of "Reproduction of labour", that females are adopted to the traditional roles, may expect the irregular and smaller patterns. They have fewer ambitions when compared with a male colleague. So it is the main reason that only a few females are upgraded their career to managerial level. This reflects organizational discrimination practices. They are discrimination when appointing, upgrading and other enlargement stages. Selection and development will depend on socialization. According to the pipeline theory, there is a women shortage in the pipeline. This means there is no sufficient qualified females are available to grand top executive positions. According to Mariani (2008), male and female do not come to the pipeline in the equal root. Opportunities

that males can get is higher than the females' chances.

Empirical Literature Review

The glass ceiling concept begins to present in 1986, through the journal called Wall Street Journal and after that this concept was very quickly incorporated (Jackson, J.F.L. & O'Callaghan, E.M, 2009). Glass ceiling is a figure of speech which tells the unseen, unpredictable and artificial barriers which stop female or people of colours from progressing the corporate path to higher positions (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). It reflects the social and economic gender imbalance (Wirth, 2001). Glass Ceiling index " Glazenplafind – index " which can measure the thickness of glass ceiling was created by De Olde and Slinkman (De Olde, C. & Slinkman, E., 1999). This can measure the potential for upper functional level. Here the Glass ceiling = 100 x (b – a)/b, a stand for upper functional level and b stand for the lower level of the functionality. If the final result is too high, thicker the glass ceiling.

According to Anderson (2007) profession development is a permanent behavioural process and impact individually which hints to select the profession, formation of career design, decision-making pattern, character combination, self and career uniqueness (Anderson, 2007). Watts (2004) also stated that career development as a constant process of movement through every day learning and working (Watts, 2004). Another study by Adekola (2011) also said that career development as a lifetime process that consists of approaches or behaviour that take place in a person's work-life to complete career goals (Adekola, 2011).

According to John (2013), in general women are less self-confident which indicate the minimum risk-taking and very careful in career picks. Furthermore, the author pointed out that they must educate to show themself unquestionably and recognise that their qualities are similar to male partners. The author too noticed women have minimum desired and ambitions (Johns, 2013). Williams and Cuddly (2012), stated that in the event if the women bearing a child, will reduce their chances by 79 per cent and she is fifty per cent as likely to be advanced as an infertile woman (Williams, J.C. & Cuddy, A.J.C., 2012). Furthermore, the income level of the person who is having children is 2 to 11 per cent less than women without children (Kmec, 2011).

Wilson in 2013, focused out there is a high possibility to give up the job due to some family matters. Anyway, it shows that women turnover rate is highly affected due to the dissatisfaction of the openings for progression, not due to family responsibilities (Wilson, 2013).

Gender Stereotype is generally backing the out-dated sex roles, and linked to the surrounding culture (Wood, 2008). Abdallah & Kartin, 2010 highlighted that stereotype states the suitability of various professions for male and females. Women are measured as caretakers, homemakers and maintenance of relationships, whereas males are breadwinners and leaders (Abdallah, M.,&Kartin, O.M., 2010).

Methodology and Experimental Design

This section articulates the study philosophy underpinning the research as well as the techniques and strategies applied.

A.Methodology

I) Research design: This is a scientific study which includes answering the research questions, which includes planning and execution. The researchers used mixed research design consisted with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. To measure the relationship and impact of

variables, quantitative method was used. Furthermore, a structured questionnaire was used for this investigation. Qualitative data enlarges the fruitfulness of the mathematical data while fulfilling the objectives of, to investigate the key factors distressing on women carrier advancement and to find out the strategies to overcome those factors. The study population in this regard comprised all female workers in middle management category attached to the construction industry in Sri Lanka. The size of the population had to be estimated since there is an unavailability of published data about the total numbers of middle-level female employees attached to the construction industry. The study focused on the major six construction companies in Sri Lanka. The six chosen companies are the biggest and most inspiring companies in the industry and it is a realistic illustration of the whole construction industry. Hence the projected population of middle-level female employees in the construction industry is 60. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews based on six major private construction companies. As recommended by previous researchers, if the estimated population for the study is known and limited, all elements in the population could be used for the study (*Krejcie and Morgan, 197).* Thus, a sample of 52 middle-level females who are working in the construction industry were selected for the questionnaire to be given *(Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)*. Based on the research objectives and hypothses developed, a conceptual model was constructed (Figure 1). Accordingly, a structured questionnaire was developed to collect the data for its main variables. A purposive sample of 05 women managers representing higher level management category of those companies were choosen. For them, the researchers developed a comprehensive interview guide in order to get their in-depth opinion on remaining objectives of the study.

II) Measurements: The structured questionnaire consists of two main sections. Section 1 of the questionnaire gathered respondents' background information such as marital status, age, level of education. Section 2 consisst of four parts. Part 1 consists of eight opinions on personal/individual characteristics that hinder the career advancement of women (e.g. hesitate to take up promotion opportunities, unable to gain credibility from others, do not have enough professional qualifications, no clear idea on future career goals etc.). Part 2 of the questionnaire asked the opinion on eight obstacles on family responsibilities that hinder career advancement. (e.g. difficult to balance the family affairs and job responsibilities, guilty of not spending enough time with family, breaks in employment due to maternity leave etc.). Part 3 comprised questions on gender stereotype which asked respondents theirs on eight items which hinder career advancement. (e.g. organization does not promote to higher positions because of a woman, man has higher chance to get promotion, appraisal and incentive systems favour men, perception of that women should not be headed over men etc.). All the items in Part 1, 2 and 3 in Section 2 are based on Nchabira's (2013) and Lun *et al.'s* (2012) developed measurements. Measuring items for the factors which contribute to the career advancement of women were adopted from Afza, *et al.'s* (2008). Factor 1: "how the appearance of a woman contributes the career advancement?" was measured by four items (e.g being a single omen rather than married, being physically attractive spending more time in the workplace, being younger than older women). Factor 2: "how the attitude towards organization

contributes the career advancement?" was measured by using three items (e.g being cooperative and non-threatening towards others, express the interest in high stake, challenging and visible assignments, having higher education and membership in professional organizations). Factor 3: "how the career-focused contributes the career advancement?" was measured by using 4 items (e.g willingness to take the business risks, being entrepreneurial and taking initiatives, having the right connections with top management and decision-makers, having specialized training and a variety of work experiences). Factor 4: "how the family support contributes the career advancement?" was measure by using two items (e.g having a supportive husband or family members, balancing work home demand more effectively). All the variables considered in the study were measured by five-point Likert Scale which ranges from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The questionnaire was in English medium and the web-based questionnaire was directed to the middle-level female employees in the selected 6 companies. There was no need of translating the questionnaire as the respondents were professionals and were able to understand the English Language sufficiently. In addition, an interview guide was prepared with semi-structured and open-ended questions. Five interviews were conducted on one to one basis among the researcher and a single participant, so the interviewee was able to answer the topic freely.

III) Data Analysis: quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software version 20.0 at 0.05 alpha levels. Both descriptive as well as the inferential statistical analysis methods such as correlation and multiple regression were adopted. To test reliability and validity, factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha (upper 0.70) for the internal consistency were done. In terms of construct validity, the cutoff for item loading on factor was 0.50. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to measure the internal consistency of the measurements (Sekaran, 2003). According to the values reflected in past research and the newly found values in the study are almost identical as of *Table 1.* Hence the selected reliability of these factors were acceptable.

Table 5: Comparison of Cronbach's alpha values

Dimension	Cronbach's alpha Value Source : (Nchabira, 2013)	Cronbach's alpha Value Source : (Keenawinna, 2015)	Cronbach's alpha Value (researchers developed values)
Individual Factors	0.818		0.762
Family Responsibilities	0.782	0.779	0.845
Gender Stereotype	0.763	0.816	0.817
Women Career Development		0.713	

Source: Developed for Research purpose

B. Experimental Design

Previous research in organizational studies indicated considerable factors which determine women career development. However, in this study, researchers mainly focused on major significant factors such as individual factors, family responsibilities and gender stereotype. A conceptual model has been developed after reviewing empirical studies on how these factors predict women career development. Figure

1 shows the conceptual model with main independent and dependent variables.

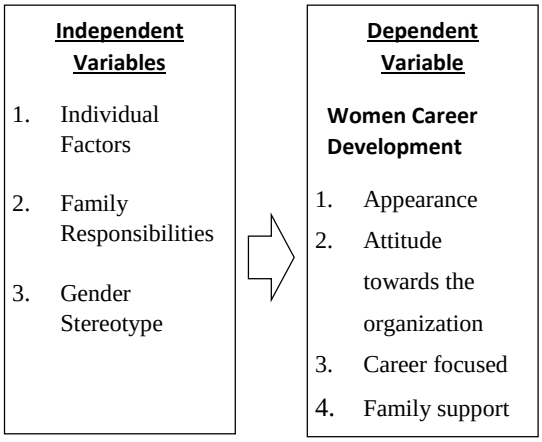

Figure 2: Conceptual Model
Source: Developed for Research purpose

I) Individual factors and Women Career Development: According to John (2013), women are less self-confident which indicate the minimum risk-taking and very careful in career picks. She has pointed out that they must educate to show themself unquestionably and recognise that their qualities are similar to male partners. She too noticed women have minimum desired and ambitions (Johns, 2013). Williams and Cuddly, 2012 stated that in the event if the women bearing a child, will reduce their chances by 79 per cent and she is fifty per cent as likely to be advanced as an infertile woman (Williams, J.C. & Cuddy, A.J.C., 2012). Furthermore, the income level of the person who is having children is 2 to 11 per cent less than women without children (Kmec, 2011). Because of the responsibilities that women have at home and the pressure of work, their stress level has increased and it has a high impact of the success (Schneer, J.A. & Reitman, F., 2002). Thus, researchers propose:

H1. There is a significant relationship between individual factors and women career development in construction industry.

II) Family Responsibilities and Women Career Development: Career development of females is connected with family responsibilities, which may reduce the openings for the career plan (Wolfinger et al., 2008). The study observed that widespread of family responsibilities, structure, and work-family conflicts, the number of children are the significant factors for the development (Cross, 2009). Wilson in 2013, focused out there is a high possibility to give up the job due to some family matters. Anyway it shows that women turnover rate is highly affected due to the dissatisfaction of the openings for progression, not due to the family responsibilities (Wilson, 2013). Thus, researchers posit:

H2. There is a significant relationship between family responsibilities and women career development in construction industry.

III) Gender Steretype and Women Career Development: Gender stereotype is normally backing the out-dated sex roles, and linked to the surrounding culture (Wood, 2008). Abdallah & Kartin, 2010 highlighted that stereotype states the suitability of various professions for male and females. Women are measured as caretakers, homemakers and maintenance of relationships, whereas males are breadwinners and leaders (Abdallah, M.,&Kartin, O.M., 2010). Gender stereotype generalizes to apply a critical impact in key ranges of career advancement of women. The stereotype is detailed to be instrumental in looming the section of ladies into management level when managerial roles are seen as more suitable for men focusing “think manager think male” (Lyness, K., &Heiman, M., 2006). Thus, researchers propose:

H3. There is a significant relationship between gender stereotype and women career development in construction industry.

Results

All questionnaires were reviewed and found 100 percent response rate as a result researchers obtained 52 valid responses. According to the data recorded in *Table 2* for Kolmogorov – Smirnov (K-S test) and Shapiro Wilk statistics significance levels for all four variables are above the threshold of 0.05 level. Thus, it was considered as all the factors are normally distributed.

Table 2: Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Individual Factors	.120	53	.055	.976	53	.358
Family Responsibilities	.087	53	.200*	.980	53	.520
Gender Stereotype	.099	53	.200*	.987	53	.830
WCD	.089	53	.200*	.870	53	.050

Source: Developed for research purpose

To investigate the appropriateness of the measurements researcher used the Kaiser – Meyer Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy. Values which are closer to 1, are useful and the KMO values which are less than 0.50 are not significant (Tabachnick, B. G., Fidell, L. S., & Osterlind, S. J., 2001). As presented in *Table 3* all the KMO are above the acceptable level.

Table 3: KMO Test results

Variable	KMO
Individual Factors	0.65
Family Responsibilities	0.82
Gender Stereotype	0.75
Women Career Development	0.73

Source: Developed for research purpose

When the employees' statistic characteristics and individual highlights are examined, it is seen that majority (52.8%) of the middle management level females are in the mid category while 18.9% are in the top category. This 18.9% of employees are the people whose next stage will be the senior managerial level. The researchers found that most of the employees are married which contribute 77.4%, while 22.6 % are single. Study reveals that 54.7% of females have children under 18 years and 45.3% are without children. This may generally be credited to the truth that numerous women these days delay in setting down the career progress. The findings show that 3.8% of women employees in the industry have a doctoral degree or above, 24.5% of the people had a Masters degree while 28.3% had a diploma. Here the percentage of the Bachelor degree is the dominant group in the Education category (43.4%). Findings show that women in the middle management level are highly educated and qualified, as more than 70% are attained a bachelor's degree and above.

Table 4: Mesurement Model

Variables	Dimension	Item	Loading Factor	Average Variance	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent Variables						
Individual Factors		IF1 IF2 IF3 IF4 IF5 IF6 IF7 IF8	0.477 0.749 0.638 0.802 0.561 0.876 0.776 0.868	0.534	0.936	0.762
Family Responsibilities		FR1 FR2 FR3 FR4 FR5 FR6 FR7 FR8	0.560 0.751 0.517 0.736 0.892 0.560 0.876 0.649	0.498	0.926	0.845
Gender Stereotype		GS1 GS2 GS3 GS4 GS5 GS6 GS7 GS8	0.582 0.761 0.700 0.824 0.740 0.804 0.857 0.598	0.547	0.942	0.817
Dependent Variable						
Women Career Development	Appearance	WAP1 WAP2 WAP3 WAP4	0.814 0.738 0.648 0.799	0.558	0.965	0.749
	Attitude	WAT1 WAT2 WAT3	0.565 0.689 0.717			0.642
	Career Focus	WCF1 WCF2 WCF3 WCF4	0.793 0.700 0.783 0.742			0.854
	Family Support	WFS1 WFS2	0.830 0.844			0.744

The respondents were inquired to demonstrate the time period with their particular company and also to indicate the period in the current position. The sample description revealed that most of the respondents (52.8%) were held in the least tenure of practice in the same company that was up to 5 years. The next level of 39.6% of respondents stated their job experience in the company from 6 to 10

years. Besides that, 7.6% had 11 to 15 years of history in the relevant company. Apart from that findings showed that majority of the respondent, 29 out of 53 (54.7%) are worked in their current position for the period of 1 to 3 years. In addition, 32.1% are performing in the same position for 4 to 6 years while 9.4% are in 7 to 9 years of range. Moreover, 2 respondent did not change their position for the period exceeding 10 years.

Prior to testing the hypotheses the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity were tested. *Table 4* depicts that all the Cronbach's alpha values for variables excluding "Attitude variable" are above the accepted threshold of 0.7 (Hair, J.F. Jr, Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C., 1998). So the internal consistency of factors is at an acceptable level. Similarly, all the loadings were higher than the normal threshold level of 0.45 (Comrey, A. L., & Lee, H. B, 1992). Here the average variance extracted (AVE), which reflect the total amount of variance in the indicators accounted were in the range of between 0.498 and 0.549. Notably not every Average Variance Extracted was exceeded the recommended level of 0.5 (Hair, J.F. Jr, Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C., 1998). Similarly, the composite reliability (CR) were also exceeded the recommended level of 0.7 (Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W.C., 1998).

Each variable had a greater square root of AVE compared to the correlation within and with other variables. *Table 5* shows that all the variables have met the criteria of discriminant validity (Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F., 1981)

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

Variable	1	2	3	4
IV - Individual Factors	**0.731**			
IV - Family Responsibilities	.510**	**0.706**		
IV - Gender Stereotype	0.249176	0.057011	**0.739**	
DV - Women Career Development	.399**	0.097278	.409**	**0.747**

Source: Developed for research purpose
Note: Values in the bold face represent the square root of the average variance extracted

Table 6: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3
1. Individual Factors	2.5354	.57092			
2. Family Responsibilities	2.9458	.73768	.510**		
3. Gender Stereotype	2.9198	.74481	.249	.057	
4. Women Career Developmnt	3.9194	.39642	.399**	.097	.409**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)
Source: Developed for research purpose

As presented in *Table 6*, there is a moderate positive relationship exists in between individual factors and the women career development ($r=0.399^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Also it was noted that the relationship among gender stereotype and women career development has a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.409^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, there is a very weak positive association between family responsibilities and women career development ($r=0.097$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 7 Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Beta	Std. Error of the Estimate	T- Value	Sig.	Decision
H1	.399	.36713	3.103	.003	**Accepted**
H2	.097	.39839	.698	.488	**Rejected**
H3	.409	.36528	3.201	.002	**Accepted**

Source: Developed for research purpose

Table 7 reports the results of regression analyses on women career development. The multiple regression coefficient of all the independent variables with the dependent variable was 0.520 (R value) in this study. However, the R square value is only 0.27 which means only 27% is explained by the variance of the glass ceiling factors (all independent variables in the model). Hence it can be said that other barriers have 73% effect on women career development. However, the overall model was significant with sig. 0.001 (F value = 6.054 , $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, regression analyses in the overall model show that only two predictors were statistically significant at $p< 0.05$. They are, Individual factors and gender stereotype which show statistically significant results of .003 and .002 respectively. Whereas the family responsibilities (P-value is 0.433) are not significantly affect career development. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient (Beta) values for the individual factor and gender stereotype are 0.376 and 0.322 respectively which indicate theses two factors nearly have an equal effect on women career development while family responsibilities has a negative and weak impact (Beta = -0.113) on career development.

As shown in *Table 7*, regression results for the effect on WCD by the individual factors (Beta = 0.399, $p < 0.01$) shows there is a significant impact of individual factors on WCD. Thus, Hypothesis one (*H1)* can be accepted. Hypothesis two *(H2)* suggests that there is a significant relationship between family responsibilities and women career development in the construction industry. However, regression results for the effect on WCD by the family responsibilities illustrates -0.97 of standardized Beta value at a significant level of 0.488. Thus, the results indicates that there is no significant relationship between family responsibilities and WCD. Finally, it is observed that there is a significant relationship between gender stereotype and women career development. Its Beta value is 0.409 ($p< 0.01$), which leads to accept the Hypothesis three *(H3).* Through the interviews with the decision-makers of the companies, some major reasons were revealed and they were identified as main themes which show obstructions for women career upward. According to the results of Thematic analysis, main themes included "Organizational culture, Social Cultural factors, and Environmental factors" of career obstructions.

Respondent 1 : Organizational Culture

"Structure and the culture of our organization do not favour the expanded commitment and contribution from females, as enrolments, promotional and the salary increment policies is in favour of men over women."

Respondent 2 : Social Cultural factors

" I experience a few challenges which have influenced my advance in work such as the perception of the society towards ladies, in spite of working hard, women are not qualifies always. Men are way better than them, lack of giving training facilities, workshops, and the participation of overseas conferences"

Respondent 1 : Environmental factors

"Here the construction sector is a male dominated industry, so there is no many female partners or the leaders to empower women to reach higher level of management."

Organizational leaders' believe that women's quality of work is not up to the required level due to the lack of efficiency, high rate of leave-taking, minimum interest on development and poor understanding of the instructions. Under social-cultural factors, gender stereotype is one of the foremost critical impediments to women get to authority positions. The interviewees highlighted that there are some individual characteristics such as persistence and commitment which considered as more important to overcome career development. Furthermore, organizational context and culture plays an important role to break the glass ceiling effect which is different from organization to organization.

Respondent 2 : Personal Characteristics

"I do not want to sit back and wait, I'm quite hunger for my own success so I always try to push myself out of the box "

Respondent 3 : Personal Characteristics

"I learned what I needed to learn and developed the required skills to suit the senior managerial level. I didn't want to rush in the position. It took me long period to come to this level "

Respondent 1 : Organizational Context

"Company can combined women and men qualities to gain more to the company. While incorporating the family friendly policies."

Discussion and Conclusion

The study aimed to gain a good understanding of the female under-representation of top management position and the disinclination of women to grasp the top managerial positions in the Sri Lankan construction industry. The research questions underpinning this study were, what are the key glass ceiling factors which hinder the women career advancement, how Individual factors, Family responsibilities and Gender Stereotype impact the career advancement of middle management female employee in the construction industry, and how to overcome those factors that hinder the women career advancement? Previous studies found various factors affecting on women career development in construction field globally but comparatively less attention has been given to the Sri Lankan context. Thus, this study fills the research gap in the literature of women career development in the construction industry, Sri Lanka. The study concluded that a number of females in the construction industry are comparatively low as the industry is male-dominated. Women under-representation in the managerial category in all classes could result in limiting the entrance to the industry. In addition, the absence of role models is another factor which hinders the moral. Results show that a significant number of factors which influence women career progression including attitudes, gender stereotype, rewards promotions, lack of training, work-family balance, geographical factors and lack of confidence. The most common point that every respondent highlighted was the organizational culture. To overcome this matter the management can incorporate proper policy decisions. Secondly cultural beliefs such as negative perception and negative attitudes towards the female leaders. Thirdly some external environmental factors related to the industry may affect the female to leave the industry. According to the findings in quantitative analysis, there was a significant positive impact of individual factors on women career development, and

also between gender stereotype and women career development. Apart from that, it was noted that there is no significant impact of family responsibilities on women career development. Furthermore, to overcome the identified glass ceiling factors, there are some strategies to develop in both at organizational level as well as by individuals themselves. More professional training development programs should be provided to middle-level female managers and also the company can assign some family-friendly supportive working environment, networking and some mentoring program to the female employees. Dedication and passion for success would help female employees to overcome those barriers by themselves.

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