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ANALYSIS OF DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING GENDER DISPARITIES IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR OF SRI LANKA: EVIDENCE OF GLASS CEILING

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Abstract
The term 'Glass Ceiling' refers to invisible yet impenetrable barriers that prevent women and minorities from climbing to top positions, regardless of their accomplishments. To address the existing gap in this particular field of research, the study highlights the urgent need to prioritize diversity, acknowledge the leadership potential of women, and foster inclusive environments that support women in reaching senior academic roles in the Sri Lankan context. The analysis utilized a web-based structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scale questions to gather data from 290 female academics in Sri Lankan state universities through purposive sampling. The study deployed Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to identify the relationship and magnitude between variables. The analysis revealed significant inverse correlations between Cultural Barriers ($r = -0.108$, $p = 0.000$), Family Barriers ($r = -0.095$, $p = 0.000$), and Perceived Discrimination ($r = -0.266$, $p = 0.000$) with women's career progression, while Organizational Environment ($r = 0.086$, $p = 0.000$) and Motivation and Satisfaction ($r = 0.566$, $p = 0.000$) positively impacted their career progression. Hence the findings of the research strongly suggest reducing the gender-based disparities in leadership roles within academia. The study provides valuable implications to empower women for leadership roles while highlighting the role of the higher education system and relevant authorities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Gender Disparities, Glass Ceiling Effect, Higher Education Sector in Sri Lanka, Women in Leadership, Women's Career Progression

Introduction

Global Context of Gender Disparities in Leadership

The phenomenon of the Glass Ceiling, a term coined in the late 20th century, refers to the unseen yet unbreakable barrier that prevents women and minorities from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements. Globally, this barrier persists across various sectors, including higher education, where it undermines the principle of meritocracy and restricts diversity in leadership. Despite the increasing number of women with higher educational qualifications, their representation in leadership positions, particularly in universities, has not seen a corresponding rise (Abbas, Abbas, & Ashiq, 2021). The persistence of these disparities indicates deep-rooted structural and cultural biases that continue to hinder equity in leadership roles.

Historical Context and Evolution of Sri Lankan Higher Education

In Sri Lanka, the foundation of higher education was laid during the colonial era, with the

establishment of the University of Ceylon in 1942. Initially, these institutions were heavily influenced by British educational models, including their gender dynamics. Over the decades, as the country gained independence and expanded its educational infrastructure, more women began to enroll in higher education (Chandradasa, Rathnayake, 2019). However, the rise in women's academic participation did not proportionally translate into leadership roles. Early on, societal norms and institutional biases predominantly favored male leadership, shaping a long-standing gender disparity in academic administration.

Despite Sri Lanka's commendable general education metrics and gender parity in education at the primary and secondary levels, the higher education sector exhibits a marked disparity in leadership. According to Arasaratnam (2021), statistics indicate while women represent a significant portion of the academic staff in universities, their presence diminishes starkly at higher administrative levels. For instance, a limited number of women are found in roles such as Vice-Chancellors, Deans, or Heads of Departments. This discrepancy is not merely a reflection of individual choices but a complex interplay of societal expectations, workplace cultures, and policy frameworks that collectively hinder women's ascent to top positions.

Problem Statement

Despite the increasing enrollment of female students in Sri Lankan state universities and a commendable commitment to gender equity in higher education, there is a conspicuous underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, reflecting a persistent "Glass Ceiling" effect. While women comprise a substantial proportion of the academic staff in universities, their representation sharply diminishes at higher administrative levels. Among the 17 state universities, there is a marked disparity in leadership roles such as Vice Chancellors, Deans, or Heads of Departments. According to Arasaratnam (2021), the representation of women in university councils is critically low, with the highest being only 17.2% at Ruhuna University. In stark contrast, there is no female representation in the councils of prominent universities such as Peradeniya, Sri Jayewardenepura, and Rajarata. Additionally, within the University Grants Commission (UGC) appointed Council Members, the highest percentage of female representation is 27.3% at Moratuwa University, followed by 21.4% at Colombo, 12.5% at Uva Wellassa, and 12.5% at the newly established Gampaha Wickramarachi University of Indigenous Medicine. These figures underscore the significant underrepresentation of women in the governing bodies of universities in Sri Lanka, highlighting a critical area in need of examination and action (Arasaratnam, 2021).

This disparity is not merely a reflection of individual choices but is indicative of broader structural, organizational, and cultural barriers that limit women's professional advancement. These include but are not limited to societal expectations, workplace cultures, and policy frameworks that collectively contribute to the glass ceiling effect. Therefore, the problem addressed by this study is the persistent and systemic underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within the higher education sector of Sri Lanka, which undermines the principles of gender equity and diversity. The study aims to comprehensively examine these determinants to provide insights into overcoming these barriers and fostering a more inclusive and equitable academic leadership landscape in Sri Lanka.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to comprehensively examine the various factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within Sri Lankan state universities. By identifying and analyzing these determinants, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how the Glass Ceiling manifests in the Sri Lankan higher education sector and offers insights into potential strategies to mitigate these disparities. The findings are expected to contribute to the ongoing global discourse on gender equality in leadership and provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders

committed to fostering a more inclusive and equitable academic environment.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to identify the specific barriers, cultural norms, and organizational practices that limit the advancement of women into leadership positions in academia.

Research Questions

- Which specific socio-cultural, economic, and organizational factors contribute to the glass ceiling effect in the Sri Lankan higher education sector?
- How do female academics in Sri Lanka perceive and experience the glass ceiling in their professional advancement?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses a critical gap in understanding the specific barriers to women's leadership within the Sri Lankan higher education sector. By focusing on the local context while drawing on global literature and theories, the research aims to offer a balanced and in-depth analysis that can inform both local and international strategies for overcoming the Glass Ceiling. Additionally, the study's findings will have implications beyond the academic sector, contributing to broader societal efforts to promote gender equality and empower women.

Review of Literature

The Glass Ceiling Effect and Its Determinants

Since the 1980s, the concept of the glass ceiling has garnered significant attention in academic literature. The glass ceiling effect manifests in both managerial roles and lower positions within working environments and is recognized as a formidable obstacle in organizations (Acker, 2009). This phenomenon represents a severe barrier to women's advancement within organizational hierarchies, particularly in reaching top-tier positions. Despite recent economic developments, the glass ceiling effect persists, creating impediments that obstruct women's career paths. This barrier effectively prevents women from ascending to the higher echelons of organizational systems. Studies by Baerts (2011) and Yamagata (1997) have highlighted various manifestations of the glass ceiling, including sexual and organizational harassment, as well as ethnic and minority discrimination in the workplace. Despite increased awareness and efforts to mitigate its impact, women continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in higher managerial positions. This underrepresentation underscores the systemic nature of the phenomenon.

Several factors contribute to the persistence of the glass ceiling, hindering women's professional development across different economic sectors (Kretschmer, 2013). These obstacles have been extensively examined by researchers worldwide, providing insights into the intricate interplay of determinants leading to the glass ceiling effect. Addressing these issues necessitates a multifaceted approach that tackles gender biases, cultural expectations, and organizational structures, which collectively contribute to the unequal distribution of leadership positions.

The term ‘Glass Ceiling Effect’ refers to the cumulative hurdles that impede women's progression in their professional careers. It represents an invisible yet significant impediment that prevents women from advancing into top management, decision-making roles, or high-level academic positions, regardless of their professional achievements and competencies (Tharenou, Latiner, and Conroy, 1994). Numerous researchers have focused on the obstacles women face in ascending to top management roles. Despite their capabilities, only a small fraction of women achieve higher positions due to various reasons. Terms such as "Glass Ceiling," "Glass Ceiling Syndrome" (Cho et al., 2014), "Glass Ceiling Phenomenon" (Hoobler, Hu, and Wilson, 2010), and "Glass Ceiling Effect" (Cotter et al., 2001) are commonly used to describe these barriers. These terms highlight that, despite possessing similar abilities to their male counterparts, women encounter hidden impediments.

Global attention has shifted towards gender-related issues, examining the struggles and development of women in various aspects of life.

Understanding the impact of the glass ceiling phenomenon on women's career development in Sri Lanka has become a focal point. Research indicates a substantial association between organizational environment, family barriers, workplace discrimination, and women's career development. Notably, organizational characteristics were negatively related to women's career development, while other cultural and individual variables also played significant roles. Even after adjusting for age and performance, these factors remained influential, underscoring their continuous impact (Weerakkody et al., 2023).

As women assume more active roles in various sectors, including higher education, researchers have increasingly focused on the challenges women face within organizational environments. The glass ceiling effect has attracted significant attention in recent years, prompting extensive research across various business fields. A study by Bülbül (2021) systematically evaluated research conducted in Turkey between 2000 and 2019, focusing on perceptions of the glass ceiling effect among women in academia. The review of 168 articles led to the selection of three studies for in-depth analysis based on specific inclusion criteria. The study examined factors influencing perceptions of the glass ceiling effect, assessment techniques used, and potential strategies for breaking down these barriers in academic contexts. The findings indicated that the higher education sector in Turkey has limited awareness of the glass ceiling effect. Key elements affecting this perspective include responsibilities assigned to women at home and work, organizational rules, power dynamics, and other hurdles to career progression. This systematic study highlights the critical nature of the problem, emphasizing the need for further investigation and understanding of the glass ceiling effect in academic contexts where women are overrepresented compared to men. The key findings underscore the importance of addressing the complex interplay of social expectations, organizational dynamics, and individual responsibilities in shaping women's experiences in academic institutions.

Abbas et al. (2021) examined the glass ceiling as a symbolic barrier inhibiting women's advancement to top-tier positions within organizations. The study investigated elements influencing the glass ceiling's impact on women's career development in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It found significant relationships between faculty members' gender and their various designations, shedding light on occupational role inequities. Additionally, the study identified perceived discrimination and male-dominated culture as significant predictors of the glass ceiling effect. Individual, organizational, and societal determinants also contribute to the glass ceiling effect. Social variables include gender inequality and bias, while organizational variables encompass organizational culture and policies. Individual factors such as time management are crucial, especially for women fulfilling roles as wives and mothers. The glass ceiling effect is more prominent at higher organizational levels. It is essential to distinguish the glass ceiling effect from gender inequity or prejudice, which refers to the overrepresentation of women in certain fields. The glass ceiling serves as a severe barrier to women's advancement within organizational hierarchies (Cotter et al., 2001). Furthermore, the study emphasized that this phenomenon is not primarily due to a lack of female talent and representation but rather career obstacles such as gender stereotypes, role conflicts, lack of guidance, and communication network deficits.

Sri Lankan Context of Women in Leadership Roles in the Higher Education Sector

In Sri Lanka, a notable trend has emerged where women outperform men in educational attainment, particularly in higher education. In 2015, 60% of students enrolled in state higher education institutions were female, with a 68.5% gender imbalance among graduates. Exceptions include fields such as engineering (21.5%) and computer science (41.8%) (University Grants Commission, 2015). This highlights the need for continued measures to break down barriers and promote diversity, ensuring women's presence in traditionally male-dominated disciplines and creating a balanced educational landscape in Sri Lanka. The increase in female student enrolment

has paved the way for more women to enter academia, indicating a positive shift in educational dynamics. However, this progress has not yet translated into increased participation of women in significant leadership and administrative positions within academic institutions. Despite the growing number of women pursuing higher education, obstacles to leadership roles persist. Targeted initiatives are required to remove these hurdles, promote gender diversity, and ensure equal opportunities for women to ascend to leadership positions, fostering a more inclusive academic environment (Arasaratnam, 2021).

Women face several impediments compared to men in continuing their academic careers, alongside household duties, presenting considerable hurdles. Caregiving obligations interfere with the time and energy necessary for further academic endeavors. Female academics, particularly those with children, encounter obstacles in obtaining postgraduate qualifications overseas, limiting the pool of female candidates for higher positions. Societal norms also shape women's responsibilities in higher education, perpetuating gender prejudices. Women are often viewed as 'teachers' or service providers rather than potential administrative leaders. This perception affects female academics' confidence in seeking leadership positions and influences social expectations, contributing to the underrepresentation of women in higher academic leadership roles. Addressing these systemic issues requires challenging gender stereotypes and providing robust support mechanisms for caregiver obligations, fostering an environment that nurtures women's leadership potential in academia (Perera, 2017).

Recently, female undergraduates have outperformed male counterparts in seventeen Sri Lankan public universities, indicating a largely equal education system. Between 2009 and 2019, female undergraduates outnumbered males, rising from 56% to 64%. This trend reflects the success of Sri Lanka's non-discriminatory educational policy, which has long promoted gender equity and equality. The policy, dating back to before independence, saw significant progress after 1945 (Gunawardena, 2003). According to the University Grants Commission (2019), a non-discriminatory policy implemented in 1945 offered free elementary, secondary, and higher education for all, regardless of gender. This legal framework has been crucial in supporting sustained growth in female student enrolment, with a significant increase from 10.1% in 1942 to 42.7% in 1965. Continued adherence to these principles is expected to further educational equality and gender parity in the future. The proportion of female professors in Sri Lankan higher education institutions has increased significantly, from 39.6% in 2009 to 48.2% in 2019. However, disparities remain among universities, with the Open University, Colombo, and Uwa Wellassa having the highest percentages, while the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Southeastern University, and the University of Peradeniya have the lowest. The representation of female academics across academic roles shows encouraging trends, with increases from 45.9% in 2009 to 59.3% in 2019. Nonetheless, gender disparities persist at the Senior Lecturer and Professor levels, with increases from 35.7% to 45.5% and 23.2%, respectively. Although female Vice-Chancellors have served at the University of Colombo, the Open University of Sri Lanka, the University of Jaffna, and the University of Kelaniya, overall female participation in governing bodies remains low, highlighting issues at the levels of Deans and Heads of Departments (Arasaratnam, 2021).

Materials and Methods

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted to examine the determinants influencing gender disparities in leadership positions within the higher education sector of Sri Lanka, particularly focusing on evidence of the glass ceiling effect. The research design, including the conceptual framework, operationalization of constructs, target population and sample, data collection method, and data analysis method, is discussed are detail.

Research Design

The study aims to explore the specific barriers and factors contributing to gender disparities in

leadership roles within Sri Lankan universities. A deductive, quantitative research approach is employed, utilizing a web-based, structured questionnaire to collect data. This approach facilitates the examination of predefined hypotheses concerning the relationships between independent variables (cultural barriers, perceived discrimination, family barriers, motivation and satisfaction, organizational environment) and the dependent variable (women's career progression). The study employs an explanatory research design to establish causal associations among these variables and test hypotheses derived from existing theories and literature.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is structured around the independent variables identified as potential determinants of women's career progression. These determinants include cultural barriers, perceived discrimination, family barriers, motivation and satisfaction, and organizational environment. The framework posits that these factors independently and collectively impact the career progression of women in academia, contributing to the glass ceiling effect. The selection of these factors is based on the work of Arasaratnam (2021), which provides a detailed analysis of the barriers faced by women in academia within the Sri Lankan context.

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed to guide the research:

H1: Cultural barriers have a significant negative effect on women's career progression in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka.

H2: Perceived discrimination significantly negatively affects women's career progression in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka.

H3: Family barriers significantly negatively affect women's career progression in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka.

H4: Motivation and satisfaction have a significant positive effect on women's career progression in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka.

H5: The organizational environment has a significant positive effect on women's career progression in the higher education sector of Sri Lanka.

Population and Sample

This study focuses on female academics in Sri Lankan state universities. A purposive sampling method was used to obtain participants who had any form of awareness concerning the glass ceiling phenomenon. These included factors like being in leadership positions in their workplaces or organizations, participating in gender equity activities, or producing literature on gender concerns in their professional practice. The entire sample frame is made up of about 1,200 female academics and administrators employed in Sri Lankan state universities. This population was identified from university directories and professional associations in the specific field (Arasaratnam, 2021).

A purposive sampling technique was employed to obtain a sample size of approximately 290 participants to ensure that the sample population comprised individuals with experience or knowledge about the glass ceiling effect. While the study involved purposive sampling, within each subgroup of participants, a random selection was conducted to increase sample representativeness and reduce selection bias. The sample size of 290 was determined using the Krejcie-Morgan table, which provides sample sizes for given population sizes to ensure statistical validity and reliability. Furthermore, the sample size was deliberately selected to comprise a proportionate number of participants in relation to the entire population under investigation, providing a broad perspective on the glass ceiling phenomenon faced by female academics and administrators.

Data Collection

Primary data will be collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google

Forms. The questionnaire will include sections corresponding to each of the independent variables and the dependent variable, with items designed to capture the nuances of each construct. Participants will be invited via email with follow-up reminders to maximize response rates.

Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the SmartPLS software. This method is chosen for its ability to handle complex models and its suitability for exploratory research in the social sciences. The analysis will involve assessing the measurement model for reliability and validity and the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses. The significance of path coefficients will be evaluated to determine the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Limitations

The study could be constrained by its dependence on self-reported data from participants using a structured questionnaire and a quantitative methodology, which could lead to response bias if individuals give responses that are socially acceptable or don't fully reflect their experiences. In an effort to reduce this, replies were made anonymously, and confidentiality guarantees were given to promote candor. Furthermore, the sample is limited to Sri Lankan state universities, which may not accurately reflect the experiences of women attending other higher education institutions or private universities. Future studies with a wider variety of universities may be conducted to address this. To further strengthen the overall validity of the study, triangulation techniques like focus groups and follow-up interviews might be used to validate and supplement the quantitative results.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section specifies the results generated through conducting the statistical analysis.

Assessment of Reliability

Table 1: Assessment of Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
WCP	0.674	0.713	0.809	0.526
CB	0.816	0.817	0.871	0.576
OE	0.834	0.872	0.892	0.677
PD	0.919	0.926	0.94	0.758
FB	0.809	0.859	0.866	0.572
MS	0.465	0.575	0.739	0.512

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The internal consistency reliability criteria were determined using Cronbach's alpha test, which indicates the lower bound that produces a low reliability score, and Composite Reliability, which represents the upper bound that produces a higher reliability number. The reliability scales for both measurements range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. Acceptable composite reliability ratings are defined as 0.6 to 0.7, whereas high composite reliability ratings range from 0.7 to 0.9. Based on the presented data, it is feasible to state that the variables under consideration are adequately reliable.

Assessment of Convergent Validity

Table 2: Outer loading of the Latent Variables

Path	Cultural Barriers	Family Barriers	Motivation & Satisfaction	Organizational Environment	Perceived Discrimination	Women's Career Progression
CB1	0.772					
CB2	0.766					
CB3	0.894					
CB4	0.744					
FB1		0.762				
FB2		0.722				
FB3		0.691				
FB4		0.876				
FB5		0.691				
MS1			0.640			
MS2			0.816			
MS3			0.926			
MS4			0.840			
OE1				0.784		
OE2				0.921		
OE3				0.818		
OE4				0.924		
OE5				0.914		
PD1					0.880	
PD2					0.784	
PD3					0.908	
PD4					0.548	
PD5					0.684	
WCP1						0.859
WCP2						0.843
WCP3						0.459

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The internal consistency reliability criteria were calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which represents the lower bound or offers a low reliability score, and Composite Reliability, which represents the upper bound or creates a higher reliability number. Both measures' dependability scales range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating that the variables are more trustworthy and reliable. High composite reliability ratings are between 0.7 and 0.9, whereas low composite reliability indicates that the estimated model's internal consistency reliability is low.

Assessment of Discriminant Validity

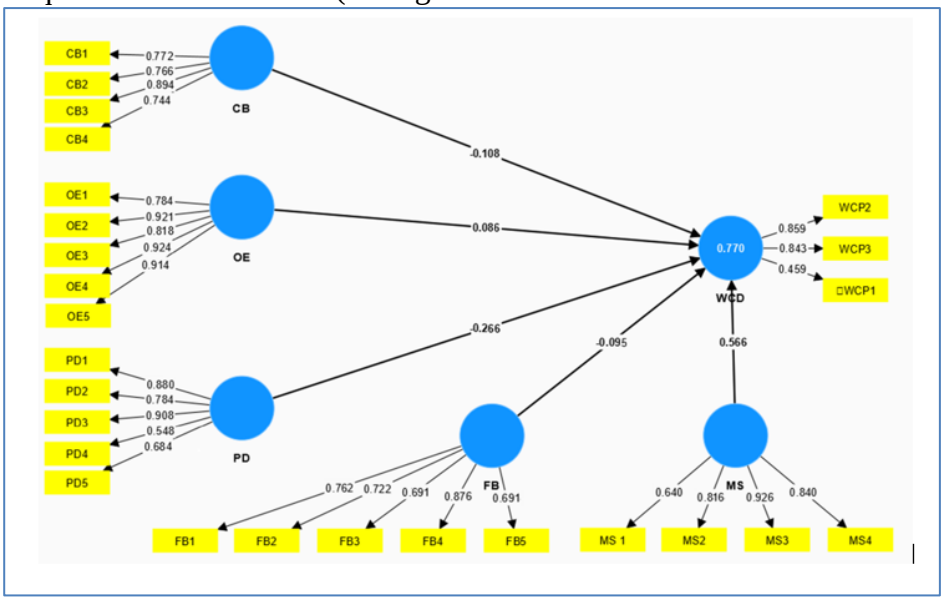
Table 3: Values of Square Root of AVE and Inter-Construct Correlation

	CB	FB	MS	OE	PD	WCP
CB						
FB	0.708					
MS	0.789	0.982				
OE	1.181	1.297	0.81			
PD	0.925	1.109	1.056	1.329		
WCP	0.667	1.108	0.924	1.176	0.999	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Discriminant validity is the degree to which a concept is empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural equation model. There are three techniques to assess reflective construct

discrimination. Cross-loadings compare the factor loadings for each indicator with their own construct and with other constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The Fornell and Larcker criterion compares the square root of AVE (average variance extracted) of each construct with correlations between constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure 1: Relationship between Women's Career Progression and Independent Constructs

Table 4: Goodness of the Fit of the Model

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SUMMER	0.078	0.078
d_ULS	0.81	0.81
d_G	0.287	0.287
Chi-square	469.42	469.42
NFI	0.902	0.902

Source: Field Survey, 2024

According to Table 5, the estimated and saturated models have equal fit indices. The fit indices for both models are as follows: The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.902, the unweighted least squares (d_ULS) d-value is 0.78, the geodesic distance d-value is 0.287, the chi-square value is 459.424, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.078. These fit indices describe the model's goodness of fit and provide pertinent data. In this case, all fit indices for both models are the same, suggesting a similar degree of fit.

Table 5: The Effect of the Independent Variables on Women's Career Progression

Path	Path coefficients	P values	Decision
Women's Career Progression -> Cultural Barriers	-0.108	0.000	Not Supportive
Women's Career Progression -> Organizational Environment	0.086	0.000	Supportive
Women's Career Progression -> Family Barriers	-0.095	0.000	Not Supportive
Women's Career Progression -> Perceived Discrimination	-0.266	0.001	Not Supportive
Women's Career Progression -> Motivation and Satisfaction	0.566	0.000	Supportive

Source: Field Survey, 2024

According to Table 5, there is a substantial inverse correlation between Cultural Barriers and Women's Career Progression (r = -0.108, p =

0.000). Thus, it can be said that cultural barriers have an unfavorable impact on all aspects of Women's Career Progression.

There is a highly significant positive correlation between Women's Career Progression and Organizational Environment (r = 0.086, p = 0.000). As a result, it can be said that the Organizational Environment has a favorable impact on all aspects of Women's Career Progression.

Because the relationship between Family Barriers and Women's Career Progression is statistically significant when all variables are considered at once, Table 5 also shows that Family Barriers have a significant negative relationship with the overall level of Women's Career Progression (r = -0.095, p = 0.000).

According to Table 5, there is a negative and significant correlation between the dependent variable and Perceived Discrimination (r = -0.266, p = 0.000). As a result, it can be said that Perceived Discrimination has an unfavorable impact on all aspects of Women's Career Progression.

Moreover, there is a positive and significant impact on Career Progression for female academics from Motivation and Satisfaction (r = 0.566, p = 0.000). It can be concluded that Motivation and Satisfaction have a favorable impact on Women's Career Progression within academia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research explores gender-based disparities in leadership positions within the higher education sector in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the evidence of the Glass Ceiling effect. Despite significant educational progression, women are still disproportionately underrepresented in senior leadership positions in academia. These obstacles, rooted in cultural norms and organizational biases, prevent women from advancing in their careers. The research used a quantitative methodology to identify the individual, organizational, and socio-cultural factors that determine these disparities. The results of the analysis revealed that Cultural Barriers (r = -0.108, p = 0.000), Family Barriers (r = -0.095, p = 0.000), and Perceived Discrimination (r = -0.266, p = 0.000) have a negative influence on Women's Career Progression, while Organizational Environment (r = 0.086, p = 0.000) and Motivation and Satisfaction (r = 0.566, p = 0.006) have a favorable impact on Women's Career Progression within academia.

The study further highlights that Motivation and Satisfaction have the highest influence on the dependent variable, emphasizing their significance. Based on the derived results, the study suggests focusing on dispelling gender stereotypes, implementing career support systems, and creating an inclusive organizational environment and culture that foster the growth of women leaders. Furthermore, the study suggests future research should focus on the scenario of private universities and conduct cross-analyses to derive more diversified results. The research contributes to the existing debate and radical reforms that encourage diversity as a priority, acknowledge the leadership potential of women academics, and create welcoming and supportive cultures that foster talent and diverse viewpoints for reaching senior positions within academia.

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