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IMPACT OF GLASS CEILING ON FEMALE CAREER ADVANCEMENT; MODERATING ROLE OF FEMALE CAREER ASPIRATIONS: A STUDY ON HOTEL INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Studies consistently indicate that there's a high level of inequality in levels of gender diversity at top management positions despite the factor of a global increase of female workforce participation. Women, by far, are the minority in top leadership positions within the private and public sectors (HVS, 2014). In recent years' women and gender issues turn in to a major area of concern in a Sri Lankan context (Bombuwela & De Alwis 2013). Considering the above background, this study attempts to identify the type of relationship between Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement in the context of Sri Lankan hotel industry. Secondly, to determine the factors which adversely affect Female Career Advancement among the female executive employees working in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka. Finally, it is expected to recognize the moderating impact of Female Career Aspirations on the existing relationship between the Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement. To fulfil the study objectives, a quantitative research framework was applied and Snow Ball Sampling was used. Total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among junior executive and above executive category female employees, working in 3 to 5 star class hotels in Colombo district of Sri Lanka. Finally, 104 completed questionnaires were used for the purpose of data analysis. Smart PLS 3 and SPSS 21 version was employed to analyze the collected survey data. The findings of the study indicate that there is a strong negative (-0.552) relationship between Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka. Further, it was identified that Organizational Barriers are the most negatively (-0.566) affecting factor for Female Career Advancement.

Moreover, it was observed that both Personal Barriers and Government Barriers Government Barriers have the least impacts on Female Career Advancement, which was reported as (0.416) and (0.295) respectively. However, SmartPLS output revealed that there is no significant moderating effect from Female Career Aspirations to the existing relationship between Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement and in turn the second hypothesis - Female Career Aspirations moderates the existing relationship between Glass Ceiling and Female Career Aspirations was rejected. According to the empirical findings of the study, it is strongly recommended for organizations to develop mechanisms to address gender imbalances and promote faire discrimination and equality at all times in terms of hiring, promotion and on Human Resource Management related activities. Further, ensuring family-friendly work policies and the government involvement in updating antidiscrimination regulations are some of the key aspects which support to prevent Glass Ceiling issues from the organizational environment. The results of this study would be beneficial for the stakeholders of hospitality industry, academics and the policy makers in order to have a better understanding to solve Glass Ceiling related issues and to achieve organizational success.

1. Introduction

Glass ceiling is a contemporary HRM aspect that came into consideration of HRM professionals few decades ago. Barriers that prevent women from reaching senior management positions in the corporate ladder have often been described by the metaphor “glass ceiling”. (Morrison et al. 1987, cited in Bombuwela et al. 2013). Recently, many scholars found that there is an increase of professionally educated women entering the paid labor force since the 1970s and demanding greater equality in the work place. (Man et al. 2009; Jayatilake et al. 2013). Contemporary women show interest on continuing learning and development while reaching higher education and invest in training and development as it is beneficial for them to acquire required knowledge, skills etc to aspire to advance their career (ILO, 2004). As a result, the proportion of women in lower and mid-level management positions has increased dramatically. However, previous studies found that a proportion of women reaching top management positions and climbing up the corporate ladder has remained relatively small (ILO, cited in Man et al. 2009; Dreher 2003; Kiaye and Singh 2013). According to the (HVS, 2014) report this phenomenon is common in both public and private sector organizations. Above scenario was evident by the Catalyst report (2013) findings. According to the data revealed in the report, it was found that in year 2011 twenty of the fortune 500 chief executive officers, women occupied only 14% of c-level positions at these companies and the thirteen hospitality related companies on the Fortune 500 list and gloomily no woman has held a CEO title in 2012 (HVS, 2014). Thus, studies proposed that obstacles that lead to the under- representation of women in leadership and upper management positions are directly relevant to the phenomenon of Glass Ceiling (Smith et al. 2012; Afza and Newaz 2008; Pai and Vaidya 2009; Kiaye and Singh 2013). Based on the above information, this study attempts to identify the impact of glass ceiling and on female career advancement along with the moderating role of female career aspiration.

Tourism, hospitality and its subsidiaries are internationally recognized as one of the world’s fastest growing economic industries. In particular, Hotels, Catering and Tourism (HCT) is a large and fast-growing service sector (ILO, 2010), with an average female participation of 55.5% at global level and up to 70% at regional level (ILO; 2016; Baum, 2013). However, the hospitality business industry is characterized as a diverse work culture, due to its irregular work hours and the work burden (Ng & Pine, 2003; Zhong, 2006; Kumar, 2014). Therefore, hospitality business industry service organizations are encouraged by the literature to consider employee performance and related issues as a means to gain competitive advantage (Gronroos, 1996, 1997, 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). In Sri Lanka tourism and hospitality industry ranked as the third largest export earner in economy, after remittances and textiles and garments (SLTDA 2016). Further, during the past five years, growth in visitor numbers has been unprecedented, averaging more than 22% year on year growth. Moreover, according to the SLTDA, ImaCS Analysis 2011 report, approximately 61 percent of those employed in the tourism industry are in the accommodation and catering sectors. Despite the significant growth of tourism, there is very little comparative information on the status of women representation in tourism industry. During World Tourism Day 2007, “Tourism Opens Doors for Women”, UNWTO identified the significant opportunities that tourism can provide for women’s advancement (Frangiali, 2008). In Singapore, Li and Leung (2001) found that only two females out of 77 made it to the general manager position in the hotel sector. Most female managers in the lodging industry worked in positions (e.g., sales, housekeeping) that are less likely to lead to the general manager position, or they have fewer opportunities to be promoted to senior management positions (Garavan, et al., 2006; Nebel, Lee, & Vidakovic, 1995; Parker & Fageson, 1994; Riley, 1990; Woods & Viehland, 2000). Women frequently carry out the most undesirable

and lowest status work in hospitality (Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Korczynski, 2002). Hence, this study was developed as an empirical study with special reference to hotel industry in Sri Lanka.

A current study particularly drawn attention to female employees work in star classified hotels in Colombo district of Sri Lanka because, Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey (LFS) report 2016 mentioned that over the past years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 Sri Lanka witnessed an increase of female work force participation from 32.9% up to 35.9%. Further, the same report highlighted Colombo city at the top for lowest unemployment rates by gender while claiming 2.9% female workforce participation in service industry. According to the report data services sector ranked at the top with 46.5% with the share of the total tourism services (as a service –sub sector) accounted for 4.9%. Based on the above, a back ground study was conducted with special focus to hotel industry in Colombo Sri Lanka. Glass ceiling related much work across the world indicate that women are not significantly appeared in the senior level management positions. According to Agurins and Adams (1998) indicate that in USA, women fill less than 5 percent of top management positions. David(1996) indicates that in UK, the figure is estimated to be less than 4 percent and according to Uren (1999), in Australia the figure is approximately 3 percent. As cited by (Senden&Visser, 2014), today's women make up-to 63% of total workforce in European Union and yet their participation in managerial positions in business sector is far below and their progress towards managerial career is still very slow.

Even in Sri Lankan context, it has revealed that recent years' women and gender issues turn in to a major area of concern (Bombuwela et al 2013). As per the Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Planning (2014), women represent more than half of the Sri Lankan population but the labor force participation rate is comparatively less than the men. And their employment in managers, senior officials and legislators was less than the male employees (Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics 2013).

The World Bank (March, 2018) notes that in Sri Lanka, the questions that remain include not merely how to make the workplace more inviting to women but also increase the number of women in employment. Moreover, according to the global report on women in tourism 2010 highlights that women are not as well represented at the professional level in the hotel and restaurant sector as men, considering the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa they are performing well in getting women into tourism and other related business leadership positions. In addition, according to the Travel and Tourism, ICRA Lanka and ICRA Managing Consultancy Services, report September 2011, currently women account for less than 10% of those employed by the tourism sector. Men are the majority among hotel managers' top executives, and higher levels of professional workers whilst women are still concentrated in the lower categories of managerial positions and operations. Thus, a current study expands its scope to female career aspirations and it is expected to explore the moderating role of female career aspirations on the existing relationship between glass ceiling and female career advancement. Since some scholars have found that career aspiration is a major driving force in women's career development, continued attention to women's career aspirations and career development is necessary to explain their occupational paths (Schon, 2001). As the previous literature suggest that generally, women tend to have lower career aspirations to top management positions as compared to men (Melamed, 1995). Since research has not focused on understanding gender differences in senior management aspirations, which is especially unfortunate because managerial aspirations are thought to influence subsequent managerial advancement (Goffee and Scase, 1992; Judge et al., 1995; Tremblay and Roger, 1993). It is important to understand gender differences in senior management aspirations despite the delayering of organizations in recent years that has produced fewer opportunities for hierarchical advancement (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006). According to (Khallad, 2000; Watson et al., 2002) career aspirations are influenced by factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, race, parents' occupation and education level, and parental expectations. Researchers examine such factors to determine their role in career

behavior and how they affect individuals' career decisions (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Rojewski & Yang, 1997). Moreover, gaining more insight into career aspirations and career interests may also be useful in expanding career options available to young women (Rainey & Borders 1997).

Since the glass ceiling issues have been widely studied in the Western context (Chi & Kleiner, 1999; Ezzedeen, 2015; Jackson, 2001; Pompper, 2011; Tracey, 2006) findings of this study would be beneficial in order to explore the same phenomena in Sri Lankan (Asian) context where people have different cultural values (Chao, 2011). Since limited studies have been conducted with special focus on impacts of glass ceiling on female career advancement in the Sri Lankan context (Bombuwela et al 2013, Jayawardane et al 2015, Osituyo et al 2018) findings of this study would be beneficial for the industry stakeholders and scholars to have a better understanding as this study additionally explore the moderating role of female career aspiration aspects on the glass ceiling and female career advancement. According to Burke (2002), there is a need to document efforts by organizations to develop women managers and professionals, and more knowledge about factors that positively influence the advancement of women in organizations is needed because research has mostly focused on barriers. Brownell (1994); Ng and Pine (2003) found that both educators and industry leaders take the responsibility for preparing women for success. Above facts and figures suggest that still there is an existing untapped female talent pool since women's place in hotels is generally not an enviable one (Mooney, 2009) scholarly interest should be drawn to engage in researches focusing on finding solutions for gender equality and equity across the global workforce. Stated contextual and theoretical knowledge deficiency of various effects of glass ceiling on female career advancement and the role of female career aspirations suggest the importance of searching solutions to reduce glass ceiling issues in the work environment as they are potential barriers for female career advancements. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to determine the impacts of glass ceiling on female career advancement while analyzing the moderating role of female career aspirations among the relationship between glass ceiling and female career advancement. Current study aims to fulfil the following objectives. To identify the type of relationship between glass ceiling and female career advancement in the Sri Lankan hotel industry and to determine the impact of glass ceiling on female career advancement in the Sri Lankan hotel industry and finally to explore the moderating role of career aspirations between the existing relationship of glass ceilings and female career advancement: such that where female employees have high career aspiration, glass ceiling have a weak negative relationship on female career advancement in the Sri Lankan Hotel Industry. Findings of the study would be largely benefited to the tourism and hospitality business industry stakeholders, HR Managers and policy makers and scholars to upgrade their knowledge in this field.

2. Review of Literature

Issues on gender equality had been widely researched in the past and the findings showed that women in general have not made progression to a more substantial career position (Brownell, 1994).

The glass ceiling is a term which symbolizes a variety of barriers faced by women and by minorities as they seek to improve their employment status. The term "Glass ceiling" was first coined in 1986 issue of *The Wall Street Journal* on corporate women by Hymowitz and Schellhardt. The glass ceiling is a concept that most frequently refers to barriers faced by women who attempt to attain senior positions at organizations. In 1991, as part of the Civil Rights Act, a Glass Ceiling Commission in USA was appointed by the executive branch was established to discover blockages and broaden career possibilities and progression options for women and minorities (The Glass Ceiling Commission, 2003). And they have defined the term Glass Ceiling as follows. "Invisible, artificial barriers that prevent qualified individuals from advancing within their organization and reaching full potential" (2003). Further, in 1995, the U.S. Federal Glass

Ceiling Commission (FGCC) identified three glass ceiling barriers to the career advancement of women as follows. Internal Business Structural Barriers, Societal Barriers and Governmental Barriers.

After reviewing some previous studies, it is visible that glass ceiling phenomenon aspects differ according to the western and eastern countries. For example, Storvik & Schone (2008) study indicated that there are no organizational barriers in Norway's state bureaucracy that prevent women to arrive managerial positions, and female managers do not find any difficulty in combining both of work and family. On the other hand, an investigation into the relative under representation of women in senior management positions in UK travel and tourism showed that the majority of respondents cited career breaks for child birth, child care and the pressures of combining work with family and personal commitments as the key issues. A Malaysian study showed that women middle managers face a glass ceiling in their working environment which inhibits the promotion of female managers and entails a barrier to the career development opportunities for women and entails that women do not have enough organizational support, such as: networking, mentoring and family friendly initiatives (Al-Manasra, 2013). Looking in to the above facts, it is clear that impacts of glass ceiling and female career advancement are vary upon the country, culture and the workplace. However, a current study adopts Mooney (2007) definition on glass ceiling. Mooney defined the term Glass Ceiling as a metaphor which is apparently impassable fence that stops female's progression in organizational hierarchy. Further current study considers five barriers women face that prevent them from obtaining upper-level positions. These include internal business structural barriers, societal barriers, governmental barriers, situational barriers, and personal barriers. (As cited in Clevenger and Singh (2013); and Kiaye and Singh (2013)). Accordingly, Internal Business Structural Barriers refer to attitudes and conditions of business as a whole (Payne, 2005). Societal Barriers implies that individuals are perceived by social roles, expectations from society, gender-based stereotyping, and discrimination attitudes. Governmental Barriers refers to the government embraces concepts of equal opportunities for all, sexual and other harassments and violation free society for women and minorities. Personal and Situational (Organizational) barriers, referred as the individual capabilities and leadership traits that motivates them to reach for an upper level managerial position Clevenger and Singh (2013); and Kiaye and Singh (2013).

2.1. Female Career Advancement

Last two decades period, there has been a growing interest in the study of women and how their careers have progressed relative to men especially in managerial roles (Davidson and Burke, 2004; Rowley and Yukongdi, 2009). According to Ngirwa (2005), Career advancement refers to a pattern of systematic progression in a given occupation sometimes knows as career ladder or career path. Moreover, the term career encompasses of all the different jobs people hold throughout their lives and different organizations where they are rendering their services. Gareth, (2000) explained that career is important to most people for at least two reasons. First, a career is the means to support oneself and one's loved ones, providing necessities and opportunities to pursue outside interest. Second a career can be a source of personal fulfilment, in other words career is a sum of total of work-related experiences throughout a person's life. Nevertheless, a current study adopted Naidoo (2004) definition on female career advancement. He defines the term career advancement as follows. "Career advancement is often defined in terms of promotion within managerial ranks, the highest level of management". Moreover, to measure the career advancement of females a questionnaire was adopted from previous literature works on factors affecting women's career advancement (Brownell, 1994; Weber, 1998; Ng & Pine, 2002; Zhong, 2006).

Previous studies indicated the existence of a glass ceiling in organizations and presented glass ceiling is negatively affecting the accomplishments of women's career advancing and therefore it

should be removed. Numerous scientific studies have done in western context to explore the above phenomenon (Higgins & Kram, 2001, Oakley, 2000, Rapoport et al., 2002). However, since there is no sufficient information with regard to Glass ceiling in the context of Sri Lankan hotel industry current study formulates the following hypothesis:

H¹: *There is a significantly negative relationship between the glass ceiling and female career advancement in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka.*

2.2. Female Career Aspirations

Teung, iConoley, and Scheel (1994) suggested that the “social and cultural changes occurring the past two decades have gradually and successfully resulted in some changes in women’s attitudes about careers” (p. 302). It appears from the literature that the increased similarity in the career aspirations of girls and boys is attributable to girls becoming more interested in male dominated occupations, rather than vice versa. For example, Leung, Conoley, and Scheel (1994), who retrospectively examined the career aspirations of high school juniors and seniors, found that, although the boys in their study were more likely to have considered only traditionally masculine occupations, girls had considered both feminine and masculine career options. Furthermore, many researchers have noted that limited exposure to women in non-traditional careers may limit the occupational aspirations of women who have the potential to pursue education leading to a prestigious career, but may not perceive it due to various factors (Kerr, 1995). Previous research with high school girls (Fleming & Hollinger, 1979) and with unselected high school and college students (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) has shown significant positive correlations between educational and occupational aspirations and both students’ self-perceptions of instrumental traits (stereotypically male characteristics such as assertiveness, confidence, and independence) and achievement motivation. Expressive traits (stereotypically female characteristic such as kindness, gentleness, and understanding) and attitudes toward the rights and roles of women have shown weaker relationships with career aspirations (e.g., Raffaele Mendez, 2000; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). No previous studies, however, have examined these relationships for early adolescent males and females. Literature revealed that another additional factor may help explain the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions, namely that positions in senior management hold less interest for women than men (Powell, 1999; Powell and Mainiero, 1992). That is, women may be less likely than men to aspire to senior management positions and consequently less likely to enter contest mobility tournaments leading toward senior management careers (Hurley and Sonnenfeld, 1998; Miller et al., 2005). Research has not focused on understanding gender differences in senior management aspirations, which is especially unfortunate because managerial aspirations are thought to influence subsequent managerial advancement (Goffee and Scase, 1992; Judge et al., 1995; Tremblay and Roger, 1993). Hence, this study recognized that it is important to examine the role of female career aspirations because research suggests that organizations with women in top management positions have positive financial (Catalyst, 2004) and ethical (Bell et al., 2002) outcomes, it is possible that women’s continued underrepresentation in senior management may have negative consequences for organization home involvement explain why women hold weaker desired aspirations than men. Congruence represents the degree of fit between an individual and a work environment in which the person currently resides or anticipates entering (Holland, 1985). Women may perceive unfavorable career prospects because of limited opportunity structures (Powell and Mainiero, 1992; Tharenou et al., 1994), their relative absence in line positions necessary for advancement (Catalyst, 2004; Powell et al., 2002) and other forms of gender discrimination on the part of organizations (Bell et al., 2002; Konrad and Cannings, 1997). Possibly because employees who perceive minimal promotion opportunities avoid the frustration of trying to achieve an unattainable goal (Markham et al., 1987). Present study adopts O’Brien definition on career aspirations. He defines the term career aspirations as the degree to which women aspire to educational and leadership aspirations; Gray

& O'Brien 996. Since the initial Career Aspirations Scale (CAS) measure did not capture women's aspiration to achieve recognition in their careers, researchers revised the scale, while adding additional items, and evaluated the factor structure of the new measure (Gregor & O'Brien, in press). Therefore, a present study employed Career Aspiration Scale Revised (CASR) introduced in 2007 along with the findings of American women supported a three-factor model with scales assessing leadership, educational, and achievement aspirations (Gregor & O'Brien, in press). The leadership aspirations subscale measures the degree to which women aspire to a leadership position within their career and the educational aspirations subscale refers to the degree to which women aspire to continue education or training within their career and the achievement aspirations subscale measures the degree to which women aspire to significant achievements and recognition within their career. The present study consider the female career aspirations as the moderating variable of the study and it attempts to examine the moderating role of female career aspirations between the relationship among glass ceiling and female career advancement. This may be useful to explain the female career aspirations role towards achieving a senior management hierarchical advancement (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006). Since research consistently has found that women report lower career aspirations when compared to males; understanding the gender differences in senior management aspirations would be helpful for hierarchical advancement (Hay and Hodgkinson, 2006). Considering the above facts, the researcher hypothesis the following moderating relationship.

H²: Female career aspirations moderates the relationship between glass ceiling and female career advancement; such that when female employees have high career aspirations, the glass ceiling has a weak negative relationship on female career advancement in hotel industry in Sri Lanka.

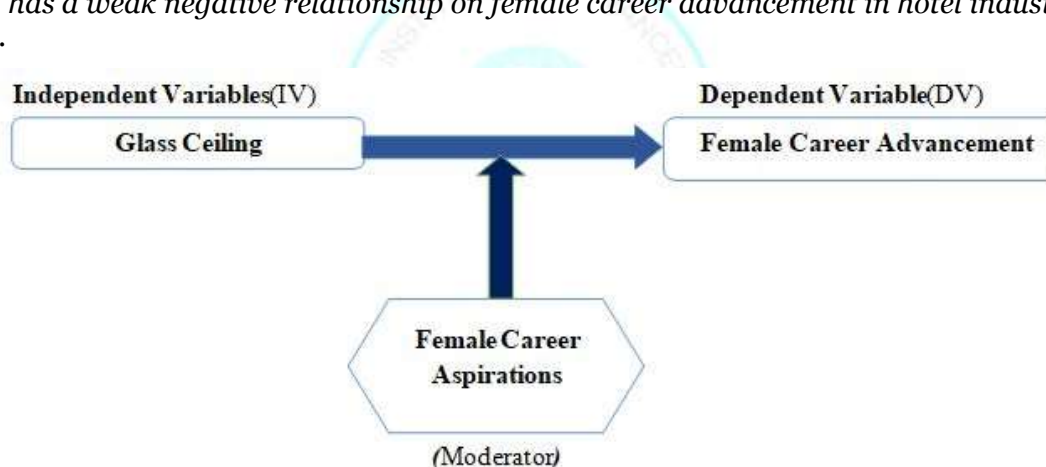


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Created by the author

3. Methodology

To fulfil the study objectives, a quantitative research framework was applied and Snow Ball Sampling was used. Primary data were collected by using questionnaires survey method. The questionnaire was divided in to three main sections with closed ended questions. The first part contained of 6 demographic factors related questions and it was used to describe the sample profile. The second section of the questionnaire contained questions to measure the independent variable the glass ceiling. To measure the key indicators of glass ceiling researcher adapted Clevenger and Singh (2013); and Kiaye and Singh (2013) questionnaire. All questions of this section scaled from strongly disagree to strongly agree on 5 point likert scale. To measure the problem variable key indicators of female career advancement researcher adapted questionnaire developed by Brownell, 1994; Weber, 1998; Ng & Pine, 2002; Zhong, 2006. All

questions of this section scaled from strongly disagree to strongly agree on 5point likert scale. Finally, the moderating effect was measured through Aspiration Scale Revised (CASR 2013) adapted from Gregor &O'Brien 2013. All questions of this section scaled from not all true for me to very true of me on 5point likert scale. Total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among junior executive and above executive category female employees, working in 3 to 5 star classified hotels in Colombo district of Sri Lanka. However, 104 questionnaires were successfully completed and used for data analysis. Smart PLS3 and SPSS21 software employed to analyze survey data. In addition, current study conducted a pre-test while taking 35 respondents, 1/3 from the original sample population to evaluate the reliability and validity of the study. After the pre-test some modifications were done for certain questions to avoid any misunderstandings, mis-interpretations etc.

4. Results and Discussion

The current study received 104 complete questionnaires out of the 120 and the survey response rate was (86.6%). According to the survey findings majority of the respondents were (57.6%) between 31-40 years of age and their highest educational attainment (73.0%) was Diploma level. According to the marital status majority (53.8%) were married respondents. And number of families with two children was the highest with (47.11%) amount. Interestingly, according to the current job title of the respondents' majority were belonged to (64.6%) Supervisor/Executive grades while (28.8%) were Junior Executives and (3.8%) represent the senior executive category and only (2.8%) represent the head of the department category. The final section of the demographic details focused on respondents' years of experience in the labor market. Accordingly, majority (69.8%) were belonged to more than 5 years of service. Demographic details conclude that majority of the females working in the Colombo hotels are having fair educational and professional level knowledge with more years of service experience yet their career advancement to senior executive level is very less.

4.1. Results of the Reliability and Validity Tests

Alpha values of the three main variables are as follows. The dependent variable Female Career Advancement recorded (.661) and the independent variable -Glass Ceiling recorded (.656) finally the moderating variable recorded (.771) while confirming the reliability and the validity of the instruments use in the current study.

4.2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

The first objective of the study was to find of what type of relationship is existing between glass ceiling and female career advancement. Therefore, correlation analysis has been conducted to examine the direct relationship among the considered variables. Findings suggest that there is strong negative relationship between the glass ceiling and female career advancement. Further, findings are consistent with the previous literature (Naff 1994;Baldwin 1996; C Kiaye& Singh 2013; Cotter et al. 2001) as they found that women take longer to be promoted and advanced their career due to the existence of glass ceilings, as it prevent the access to certain higher level positions almost entirely.

Table 1. 1 Correlation Analysis – Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement

		GC_Total	FCAD_Total
Glass Ceiling - Total	Pearson Correlation	1	-.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	104	104
Female Career Advancement - Total	Pearson Correlation	-.514**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	104	104
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Calculated by author based on survey data

Note: GC- Glass Ceiling, FCAD-Female Career Advancement

To test the first hypothesis of the study SMARTPLS advanced analysis software was employed. According to the results, it shows that there is ‘significantly negative correlation’ (-0.552) between the glass ceiling and female career advancement. Among the glass ceiling barriers, the Situational barriers category ranked as the top contributors (0.566) for the glass ceiling issue. The second highest source for the glass ceiling is represented by the personal barriers with 0.416 value and according to the findings the least value for glass ceiling issue was record from government barriers with 0.295 value. Accordingly, first hypothesis of the study *H¹: There is a significantly negative relationship between the glass ceiling and female career advancement in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka was accepted. Detailed illustration of the statistical report is shown in the below table.*

Table 1.2 Path Coefficient: Glass Ceiling and Female Career Advancement

	Female Career Advancement	Glass Ceiling	Government Barriers	Personal Barriers	Situational Barriers
Female Career Advancement					
Glass Ceiling	-0.552				
Government Barriers		0.295			
Personal Barriers		0.416			
Situational Barriers		0.566			

Source: Calculated by author based on survey data

The final objective of the study was to find out the moderating role of the female career aspirations, between the existing relationship among glass ceiling and female career advancement.

H²: Female career aspirations moderates the relationship between glass ceiling and female career advancement

Findings suggest that there is no any significant moderating effect from the Female Career Aspirations. And it was found that third variable (female career aspirations) is having (-0.163) moderating effect to the existing relationship between glass ceiling and female career aspirations. Since the researcher found that moderating effect is not significantly moderate the }= relationship between the glass ceiling and female career advancement, final hypothesis was

rejected by the findings of the current study. In contrast researcher used PLS full model to explain all possible direct relationships along with the moderating effects among the variables in the below figure.

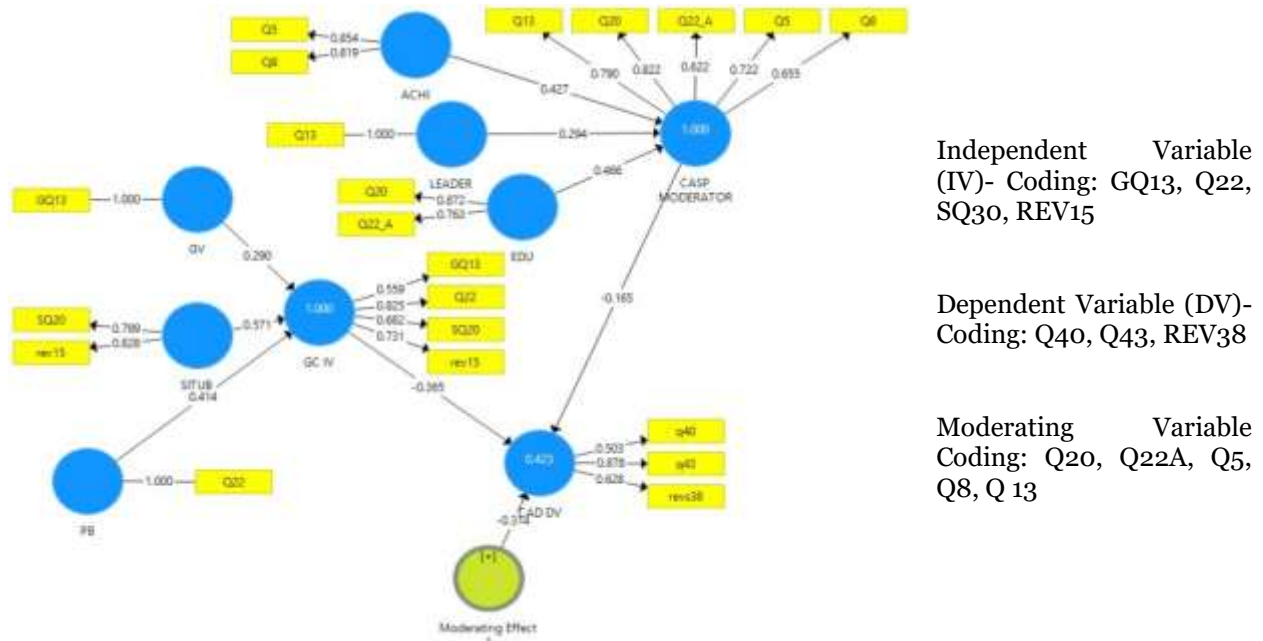


Figure 1.2 The (PLS) full model of the study
Source: Calculated by author based on survey data

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is evident that the glass ceiling has been a global phenomenon. Sri Lanka is not exempted from it. Since the results indicate that glass ceiling is having a very strong negative relationship with the female career advancement, it is recommended to minimize the highly negatively affecting factors from the workplace. As per the current findings, situational barriers and personal barriers are highly negatively impacting on female career advancement in Sri Lankan hotel industry. Based on the findings, it is recommended to eliminate unfair performance evaluation systems in the organization and to minimize the prevailing male dominated sub culture in the hotel organizations. Further, it is recommended for hotel organizations to develop mechanisms to address gender imbalances and promote fairness through equity and equality at all times in terms of hiring, training, pay, promotion and so on. Some of the best strategies to achieve these are through favorable quota systems, which enables allocating a certain number of positions to women, ensuring equal representation of women in management and leadership positions, and developing policies which guarantee equal treatment for both women and men while ensuring equivalent opportunities for all by including opportunities for career advancement, joining professional associations, networking or going on special assignments.

Similarly, elimination of personal barriers through ensuring family-friendly policies and flexi-working hours, enabling virtual office climate when and where possible are some of the prominent strategies to decrease the personal job-related barriers. Specially establishing support mechanisms or structures that are clear and helpful to all employees such as coaching, mentorship programs and counselling to assist employees who experience difficulties in dealing with work and family pressures, financial matters, personal issues, and so on.

Together with the rising number of females in the society and as well as in the workforce, it is high time for the government to involve in eradicating this glass ceiling issues while enabling

law and appropriate policy procedure. The government especially needs to develop public policies in order to boost women's talent. As the female population continues to increase compared to male birth rates, there is a dire need of government intervention to prevent glass ceiling through employee acts while encouraging female representation in selection boards and other key managerial level positions. Moreover since Sri Lankan government is favorably looking forward to tourism and economic gains for national economic development; implementation of new policy procedures on gender equity, equality and implementing new rules or amending the acts as such as labor law, industrial dispute acts etc; as per the needs of the society are some of the critical contributions towards empowering women towards career success.

Further, it is recommended for all Human Resources Department to take proactive action to break the glass ceiling phenomenon and to support for women in career development by ensuring gender-harassment-free culture, so that females would be able to get more opportunities to aspire higher level managerial positions while advancing their career.



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