

Women's Career Advancement in Nepalese Organization

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Abstract

This study examines the determinants of glass ceiling and other factors on women's career advancement in Nepalese organization. Women's career advancement is selected as the dependent variable. Similarly, glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier are selected as the independent variables. This study is based on primary data with 121 observations. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of different factors on women's career advancement in the Nepalese organization.

The study showed that glass ceiling has a negative impact on women's career advancement. It means that increase in glass ceiling leads to decrease in women's career advancement. Similarly, mentoring has a positive impact on women's career advancement. It indicates that increase in mentoring leads to increase in women's career advancement. Moreover, the result also revealed that networking has a positive impact on women's career advancement. It means that increase in networking leads to increase in women's career advancement. Likewise, organizational structure has a positive impact on women's career advancement. It shows that increase in organizational structure leads to increase in women's career advancement. Similarly, family barrier has a negative impact on women's career advancement. It shows that higher the family barrier, lower would be the women's career advancement.

Keywords: glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure, family barrier.

1. Introduction

The terms glass ceiling and bamboo ceiling are used in the U.S. to describe the barriers that employees face in their career advancement due to their different name, physical appearance, and cultural values (Lu *et al.*, 2020). According to Weyer (2007), the glass ceiling represents the unnatural, invisible, and transparent barriers that prevent women and minorities to climb up the corporate ladder to senior management of the organization. Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool it is an effective way of helping people to progress in their careers (Hansman, 2002). Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own

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learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be (Tharenou, 2005). Scandura (1992) stated that glass ceiling refers to invisible barriers to professional advancement for women. London and Stump (1983) defined career development as the activities individuals participate in to improve themselves relative to their current or planned work roles.

Career development as the interventions and practices that are used to enhance person's career development or enable that person to make more effective career decision (Herr, 2001). In most organizations, evaluation and consideration of women's inequality in the context of career development often take place within the scope of strategically and policy tasks of human resources (Cornelius and Skinner, 2005). According to Maskell-Pretz and Hopkins (1997), the word glass ceiling refers to barriers within a hierarchy that prevent women from obtaining upper-level positions. Whiting and De Janasz (2004) defined that networking is the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to create a system of information, contact, and support and altogether this is thought to be crucial for career and personal success. Similarly, Herr (2001) defined career development as the interventions and practices that are used to enhance person's career development or enable that person to make more effective career decision. Likewise, London and Stump (1983) defined career development as the activities individuals participate in to improve themselves relative to their current or planned work roles. According to Super *et al.* (1996), the four stages of career development namely: exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline which are not determined by age but by an individual's circumstances and perceptions.

Afza and Newaz (2008) stated that over the past few years' women participation in the workforce has significantly increased. Schneider *et al.* (1997) advocated that the workplace has been male dominated for a long time. Iverson *et al.* (2000) examined that any working women choose jobs that allow them the flexibility to manage their household duties and do not require them to put their career above family. Adams *et al.* (2007) identified a number of factors that function as barriers to women's career advancement. Similarly, Baruch and Leeming *et al.* (2001) identified factors that serve as facilitators of women's career advancement. Afande (2015) revealed a considerable understanding of the qualities that are part of work environments that are supportive of the career aspirations of women (and men). O'Neil *et al.* (2005) highlighted the importance of individual factors (e.g. education, work

experiences, personality), social factors (e.g. support and encouragement) and organizational factors (e.g. organizational level) in women's advancement. Bain and Cummings (2000) stated that in the case of women in management the struggle to them seems just out of reach. There is a certain theory called the glass ceiling. Davidovich (1994) stated that it has become routine to deny qualified females top level jobs, merited by their performance and he goes on to say that Glass Ceiling barriers towards women are nothing but form of sex discrimination which is in violation of the law. According to Morrison *et al.* (1987), top management support was found to be among the factors that contributed to women's career success. The primary responsibility for creating a supportive environment rests on organizations (Schmidt and Duenas, 2002). Morrison *et al.* (1987) stated that the system needs to include an assessment structure for tracking achievement that measures how well women are advancing through the ladder in order to assess progress within the organization. The study on women manager expatriates revealed that an organizational support system contributes to their job satisfaction (Culpan and Wright, 2002).

Fox and Schmidt (2002) stated that having large networks both inside and outside an organization is agreed to enhance a manager's job performance and career. Similarly, Whiting and De Janasz (2004) stated that networking is the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to create a system of information. Evidence exists in most organizations that they often mirror society's ideas about which groups of workers are appropriate for certain jobs (Xu & Leffler, 1992). Stereotyped thinking still determines corporate practice towards women and it will take time for this to change (Clutterbuck & Devine, 1987). It is believed that change will occur when the organization attempts to transform its culture (Clutterbuck & Devine, 1987). Organizations are definitely gendered. Men make rules, like other dominant groups, that will preserve their privileges (Reskin, 1999). Top executive ranks are still predominantly male because the conventions of most power cultures also tend to be male-oriented (Savage, 2002).

According to Kimmel *et al.* (2001), women could not have it all because men did; men had the fulfilling careers as well as a loving family to which they could come home to. Similarly, Alkadry (2008) stated career development as the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the career for any given individual over life span. Super *et al.* (1953) stated that women's careers and career motivations have been considered fundamentally different from those

of men. Organizations initiatives were more likely to be successful if CEOs recognized the need for initiatives and implemented strategies for advancing women (Meldahl, 2000). Such a system would monitor pay, promotion opportunities, and inclusion in decision-making, respect, and credibility. It would measure performance and promotion of women, identify assumptions, and assess employees' needs, career goals, and potential discrimination factors (Mattis, 1995).

In today's competitive market, successful businesses regardless of size need employees who have the necessary knowledge and skills to make an effective contribution as drivers towards achieving a competitive edge (Armstrong, 2001). Insch *et al.* (2008) concluded that despite the glass ceiling being invisible; it was able to be a barrier to prevent women from ascending to the highest positions in any organizational hierarchy. Whiting and De Janasz (2004) studied that a networking is the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to create a system of information, contact, and support and altogether this is thought to be crucial for career and personal success.

In the context of Nepal, Sangraula and Pathak (2002) agreed the career of Nepalese women is very much thwarted by the embedded cultural norms of family and societal institution. Similarly, Adhikary (2016) revealed that societal-related barrier was most prominent within which marriage during prime of career significantly hampered the career development of Nepali women employees. Acharya (1994) stated that traditionally in Nepalese society, caste and clan, family alliances are the predominant factors in social interaction and these factors influence women's status in different ways. Thus, the changes in socio-economic factors in Nepal are gradually leading to the changes in the lives and status of Nepalese women. Acharya (1994) found that in Nepal, as in most of the other developing countries, there is large disparity in literacy rate between male and female.

Acharya (1994) concluded that women have been treated as the second citizen and have less power and privilege compared to their male counterparts in the society. Maharjan (2020) revealed that both socio-cultural and organizational factors have negative impact on women career development. The study also showed that socio-cultural factor and organizational factor are major obstacles in career development of female school teachers in Nepal. Likewise, Rana (2007) studied women's perception of glass ceiling in the private organization, Pokhara. The study concluded that the factors of self-

motivation, family support, opportunities, and equality can advance women's careers.

The above discussion reveals that the empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies concerning the factors affecting women's career advancement. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the factors affecting women's career advancement in the context of Nepalese organization. Specifically, it examines the impact of glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier on women's career advancement in the context of Nepalese organization.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 121 respondents through questionnaire. The respondents' views were collected on glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier and women's career advancement. The study used descriptive and casual comparative research design.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that the e-pharmacy depends on consumer buying behavior. The dependent variables selected for the study is consumer buying behavior. Similarly, the selected independent variables are glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$W = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GC + \beta_2 MO + \beta_3 NE + \beta_4 OS + \beta_5 FB + \varepsilon$$

Where,

ε_{it} is the error term.

β_0 is constant and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ and β_5 are the beta coefficients of the explanatory

variables to be estimated.

W = Women career advancement

GC= Glass ceiling

MO = Mentoring

NE = Networking

OS = Organizational structure

FB = Family barriers

Glass ceiling was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The glass ceiling is a real barrier to women’s career advancement”, “The glass ceiling affects my workplace”, “Women leaders are generally more preferred in work” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.709$).

Mentoring was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Mentoring can help women overcome the challenges they face in their career advancement”, “Mentoring is an effective tool to help women advance in their career” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.701$).

Networking was measured using a 4-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items includes “Workplaces should implement changes in organizational structure and culture to promote equal career opportunities for women”, “Networking can be an effective tool to help women advance in their career” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.834$).

Organizational structure was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items

includes “Organizational structure and culture can be a barrier to women’s career advancement”, “Organization’s culture foster the advancement of women in their career” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.797$).

Family barrier was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Family responsibilities can be a barrier to women’s career advancement”, “Societal stereotypes regarding women can hide their career advancement” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.750$).

Women career advancement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Women face barriers to career advancement that men do not face”, “Employers should provide equal pay for women and men in the same job” and so on. The reliability of the feature was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.902$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with hypothesis formulation.

Glass ceiling

Cotter *et al.* (2001) found that artificial barrier has negative impact on the career advancement of women and minorities. Similarly, Insch *et al.* (2008) concluded that, despite the glass ceiling being invisible; it was able to be a barrier to prevent women from ascending to the highest positions in any organizational hierarchy. In addition, Auster (1993) pointed that the GC is not one ceiling or wall in one spot, but rather many varied and pervasive forms of gender bias that occur frequently in both overt and covert ways. The GC is also very visible to those whose careers have been affected by it. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a negative relationship between glass ceiling and women career advancement.

Mentoring

According to Hansen (2008), women do not move up into strategic roles

because they are not sponsored into them. Ibarra *et al.* (2010) found that while women and men had similar rates of mentorship, having a mentor in 2008 predicted getting promoted by 2010 - but only for men. Laff (2006) pointed that there tends to be few executive women because many women are unable to find a female mentor thus, they are inhibited in the workplace because of their limited access to capable mentors. Many people prefer to have mentors of the same gender because they tend to understand the challenges most commonly faced. Male mentors tend to be resistant to mentor a woman because they perceive women as more emotional, not as skilled at problem-solving, and because of the risk of workplace sexual harassment issues (Hansen, 2008). Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between mentorship and women career advancement.

Networking

According to characteristics of social networks are important to both men's and women's advancement to higher hierarchical levels (Metz and Tharenou, 2001). However, specific elements of social networks may relate differentially to career success of men and women. Similarly, Miller *et al.* (2001) showed that societal expectations of gender appropriateness may emphasize that women are expected to display communal (nurturing, interpersonally sensitive and that men are expected to display argentic (independent, assertive and ambitious qualities and behavior. Friedman *et al.* (1998) found that participation in formal networks can be expected to provide its members with added information, mentoring, and political support and this will be positively related to career satisfaction and career progression. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relation between networking and women career advancement.

Organizational structure

According to Ballout (2007), suggested that person-environment fit and organizational support are positively correlated to career success. However, Edwards *et al.* (1996) organizational restructuring in response to a rapidly changing business environment, has profound and often negative consequences for women managers. According to Simpson (1998), organizational restructuring leads to increased workloads and the pressure of

long working hours which significantly impact women working career and lead the organization to male dominated one. The aspects of the organizational culture typically with women are related to women’s progress. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive impact of organizational structure on women career advancement.

Family barriers

Mooney and Agrawal (2008) stated that the main concerns in the women’s perspective were the duration or working time that is required longer than they expected in addition to the organization anticipating its managers to be flexible to the needs of the business. When demands of the job increasingly encroach into family life, women experience conflict which affects their career outcomes (Voydanoff, 2005). Likewise, Lopez *et al.* (2005) stated that work-life balance is very difficult for women with young children especially when they try to balance their role as the primary caregiver with additional responsibility in the organization. Similarly, the study also determined that working women with rigid schedules report more family difficulties than working women with flexible schedules (Ralston, 1990). According to Broadbridge (2008), where family demands are concerned, ambitious women seldom rely on organizational support for fear of reinforcing the communal stereotype. Based on it, the study develops following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a negative relation between the family barriers and women career advancement.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients along with means and standard deviations have been computed, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall’s Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 121 observations. The dependent variable is W

(Women’s career advancement). The independent variables are GC (glass ceiling), MO (monitoring), NE (networking), OS (organizational structure) and FB (family barrier).

Variable	Mean	SD	GC	MO	NE	OS	FB	WCA
GC	4.249	0.476	1					
ME	4.494	0.427	0.236*	1				
NW	4.510	0.406	0.185*	0.573**	1			
OS	4.500	0.509	0.254*	0.500**	0.558**	1		
FB	4.469	0.526	0.243*	0.488**	0.477**	0.568**	1	
WCA	4.590	0.458	0.239*	0.496**	0.471**	0.575**	0.580**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables for Nepalese organizations. The correlation matrix shows that glass ceiling is negatively correlated to women’s career advancement. It implies that higher level of glass ceiling leads to decrease in women’s career advancement. The result also reveals that mentoring is positively correlated to women’s career advancement. It implies that better mentoring leads to increase in women’s career advancement. Likewise, networking has a positive relationship with women’s career advancement. It means that better networking leads to increase in women’s career advancement. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between organizational structure and women’s career advancement. It indicates that better organizational structure leads to better women’s career advancement. Further, this study shows that there is a negative relationship between family barrier and women’s career advancement. It means that a flexible family barrier leads to decrease in women’s career advancement.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier on women’s career advancement in Nepalese organization.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of glass ceiling, mentoring, networking, organizational structure and family barrier on women’s career advancement

The results are based on 121 observations using linear regression model. The model $W = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GC + \beta_2 MO + \beta_3 NE + \beta_4 OS + \beta_5 FB + \varepsilon$, where the dependent variable is W (Women's career advancement). The independent variables are GC (Glass ceiling), MO (Mentoring), NE (Networking), OS (Organizational structure) and FB(Family barrier).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar2	SEE	F-value
		GC	ME	NW	OS	FB			
1	2.539 (7.783)**	0.483 (6.328)**					0.245	0.398	40.044
2	1.738 (4.851)**		0.635 (7.994)**				0.344	0.371	63.906
3	1.637 (4.284)**			0.655 (7.757)**			0.330	0.375	60.176
4	1.983 (6.936)**				0.579 (9.180)**		0.410	0.352	84.263
5	1.703 (7.054)**					0.646 (12.041)**	0.545	0.309	144.988
6	1.494 (4.081)**	0.213 (2.396)*	0.488 (4.930)**				0.369	0.364	36.097
7	1.265 (3.301)**		0.385 (3.344)**	0.354 (2.942)**			0.383	0.360	38.255
8	1.325 (3.759)**			0.308 (3.006)**	0.417 (5.110)**		0.447	0.3412	49.496
9	1.207 (4.694)**				0.271 (4.103)**	0.484 (7.557)**	0.599	0.206	90.555
10	1.410 (4.197)**		0.302 (3.002)**		0.405 (4.844)**		0.447	0.341	49.473
11	1.382 (4.961)**	0.151 (2.201)*				0.575 (9.269)**	0.560	0.345	77.260

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at 1 percent and 5 percent level respectively.
- iii. Women's career advancement is dependent variable.

The regression results show that the beta coefficients for glass ceiling are negative with women's career advancement. It indicates that glass ceiling has a negative impact on women's career advancement. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Rahim *et al.*, 2016). Likewise, the beta coefficients for mentoring are positive with women's career advancement. It indicates that mentoring has a positive impact on women's career advancement. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Hansen (2008). In addition, the beta coefficients for networking are positive with women's career advancement. It indicates that networking has a positive impact on women's career advancement. This result is consistent with the findings of (Metz and Tharenou, 2001). Further, the beta coefficients for organizational structure are positively related with women's career advancement. It indicates that organizational structure has positive impact on women's career advancement. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Edwards *et al.*, 1996). In

addition, the beta coefficients for family barrier are positive with women's career advancement. It indicates that family barrier has a positive impact on women's career advancement. This finding is similar to the findings of (Mooney and Ryan, 2008).

4. Summary and conclusion

Career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the career for any given individual over life span. It has been defined as the activities individuals participate in to improve themselves relative to their current or planned work roles. The interventions and practices that are used to enhance person's career development or enable that person to make more effective career decision.

This study attempts to examine the determinants of women's career advancement in Nepalese organization. The study is based on primary data with 121 observations.

The study showed that, mentoring, networking, organizational structure have positive impact on women's career advancement in Nepalese organization. The study concluded that mentoring towards the career advancement leads to higher level of women's career advancement. The study also concluded that networking is the most influencing factor that explains the changes in the level of women's career advancement in Nepalese organization.

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