

**A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF GLASS CEILING FACTORS ON WOMEN CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT AT INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CONSORTIUM (PVT.) LIMITED**

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**Abstract**

The Constitution of Sri Lanka reckons that women are equal citizens entitled to all the privileges that men can avail themselves of. Nonetheless, constitutional guarantees, women in the workplace have not been provided with equal opportunities to achieve leadership positions and this problem is severe in the construction industry. The lack of women career development in construction industry has been a concern for many years. Therefore, the researcher investigated impact of glass ceiling factors in the form of cultural factors, work-life conflict and organizational factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited. This study was conducted based on positivistic research paradigm and quantitative research methodology. A self-administered questionnaire was prepared using validated and reliable scales. A census study was conducted and data were collected from 102 female employees in the company. A multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesized model. Findings of the study revealed that only work-life conflict and organizational factors significantly impact on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited. Moreover, it was found that work-life conflict is the highest impacting factor. However, cultural factors do not have an impact on women career development at the selected context. Hence, management of the company should be more concerned on improving women friendly work-life policies and should ensure fair treatment of the female employees at the workplace. The findings of this research will be helpful for managers to identify the invisible barriers that hinder the career development of women and will make a novel contribution to the construction industry of Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Cultural factors, Glass ceiling factors, Organizational factors, Women career development, Work-life conflict

**Introduction**

According to Super (1976) a career is the sequence of major roles held by a person throughout his pre-occupational, occupational and post-occupational life and includes work related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with complementary vocational, familial and civil roles (as cited in Smart & Peterson, 1997). Career development can be referred as an ongoing series of stages characterized by unique concerns, themes, and tasks (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Effective career development is important not only for the individuals but also for the organizations (Panorama, 2008). Since then only the organization will achieve its desired career objectives. Women Career Development is focusing on the career development of women. Matters regarding women employment have become a major concern all over the world. Comparative to the past few years, women participation in the labor force has slightly increased in Sri Lanka. But, representation of

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females in the top levels of the hierarchy in most organizations is still at a lower level (Department of Census and Statistics, 2016).

Even though half of the world population consists with women, in no country, do women represent even close to half of the corporate managers. Therefore, it is commonly believed that women have less career development than men (Adler, Dafna, & Israeli, 1995). Studies specify that today's successful organizations are team-oriented, agile, flexible, flatter and holistic in their vision and strategy (Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller, 2003). As a result, organizational leaders need to be non-coercive, comprehensive thinkers, individuals who are skilled at building work relationships and fostering collaborative teams. These are the traits and behaviors most frequently associated with women's management style (Birute & Lewin, 2003).

### **Problem Statement**

International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Ltd (ICC Constructions) is a leading Sri Lankan General Contractor with multi sector capability and has seven main divisions. It has 686 staff as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 except the contractors and sub-contractors who have been hired to work in different projects among those, 88% are male while only 12% being female (International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited, Annual report, 2017).

The researcher is interested in finding out women career development of the company because, Property Development and Construction Sector has been identified as one of the booming industries in Sri Lanka (Mathew, Srirangan, Baddage, Lokugamage, & Weerasinghe, 2016). As a prestigious company which has expanded into various sectors, having a good women career development is necessary.

Therefore, the researcher attempts to find out the level of women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Ltd. According to researcher's observations, in the events such as meetings where it needs to take important business decisions, when sending employees for award ceremonies, or other functions, almost all the time, men were sent representing the company. Representation of women at major events of the organization was at a lower level and it was also found that only 13% of women representation is there in managerial level of the company. Therefore, problem statement of this study is,

### **"Why there is low women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited?"**

The researcher, after referring literature has identified three factors which create glass ceiling and reduce the career development of women. Therefore the researcher aims to identify the Impact of glass ceiling factors in this context.

### **Research Objectives**

- I.To determine whether there is an impact of cultural factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.
- II.To determine whether there is an impact of organizational factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.
- III.To determine whether there is an impact of work-life conflict on women career development at international Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

### **Literature review**

#### *An overview of women career development*

It is said that career experiences and advancement of women is different from those of men where most studies have found that men advance faster with a greater compensation (Cohen & Gutek, 1991; Schmeer & Reitman, 1995 as cited in Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Further, according to Jackson (2001),

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women are less frequently offered rotational job assignments to revenue producing areas of the business, decreasing their chances for promotions to the top slots of the organization.

Men in some firms are open to women leadership and embrace it while in some other places men do not embrace it cause women not to voice their opinions although they could be sitting at the table (Brosnan, 2017). Unlike men, women have to choose between family and the career. They also support their husbands, or their sons to become great leaders or to hold top positions in a company by performing major parts of family responsibilities just to see their husbands or sons succeed in their careers. But if woman tries to become a leader, or to promote to a top position, the same support would not be expected from their husbands (Njiru, 2013).

According to Philips and Imhoff (1997) ideas about what occupational roles are suitable for women and men are formed early and are apparent in children's stories, activities, and attributions (e.g. Trepanier-Street et al., 1990, Weisner & Wilson-Mitchell, 1990). Women's choices about work continue to be intimately connected to their family lives (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The study of career orientation has allowed the investigation of multiple role issues and the way that family expectations affect women's career aspirations and achievements (Bets & Fitzgerald, 1993 as cited in Philips & Imhoff, 1997).

Several studies have shown that both males and females are similar in terms of the most characteristics required to be in an effective managerial position, many women have experienced difficulty in attaining acceptance into responsible decision making positions (Cannon & Wankel, 1979 as cited in Njiru, 2013). Njiru (2013) has identified gender inequality, chauvinism and sexual harassment, organizational structure, the glass ceiling effect and discrimination at the workplace as factors affecting to reduce the career development of women. Gender inequality is particularly prominent in the professions today, where women are concentrated in those occupations which are relatively low in the professional hierarchy (Turner, 1986 as cited in Njiru, 2013).

*An overview of glass ceiling factors*

Afza and Newaz (2008) stated that glass ceiling refers to invisible barriers that impede the career advancement of women. Further it has been mentioned, that it is a situation where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is halted at a particular level due to some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism. However, Federal Glass Ceiling Commission in USA has reported that increasing number of corporate leaders have recognized that, the glass ceiling is bad for business (Jackson, 2001).

Women are the most visible victims of the real glass ceiling due to the deeply ingrained attitudes at the lower levels. They have to be better than the equivalent male colleague to win in the promotion handicap stakes. It's tough to make it to the top, usually requiring higher levels of merit, in order to achieve senior executive status (Savage, 2002 as cited in Njiru, 2013).

Investigations suggest beliefs and attitudes held by organizational members and contextual aspects of the organizations keep women from moving up the career ladder. Theories such as Scarcity theory, Identity theory and Gender role ideology have shed light to further understand the glass ceiling factors that, the researcher has identified. Scarcity theory has been used to explain the inputs to the work-life interface. It has been stated that people with greater number of roles are more likely to deplete their resources, resulting in role overload or role conflict. Active participation in non-work domains such as family, community and recreation has been viewed historically as reducing the time available for work, as well as individuals' feelings of commitment to their jobs (Goode, 1960 as cited in Shaffer, Joplin, & Hsu, 2011).

Identity theory states that role identities are based on the different social structural positions individuals hold such as spouse, worker and parent. A role is the set of expectations tied to a social position that guide people's attitudes and behaviors. For example, a general expectation of a mother is that she be nurturing (Burke & Stets, 2009). Gender role ideology is defined as an individual's attitudes to how the roles of women and men should be shaped by sex (Harris & Firestone, 1998 as

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cited in Somech & Sahavi, 2016). Further, it falls into three types called traditional, transitional, and egalitarian and the first one has reflected the expected differences in roles for men and women. For example, men should be responsible for livelihood, therefore are more likely to be assigned work-related roles; women should be responsible for the family, therefore are more likely to be assigned domestic roles (Somech & Sahavi, 2016). These two theories shed light to the cultural factors comes under glass ceiling factors. By thoroughly studying these theories it could be understood that how the career development of women gets slower with the impact of Cultural Factors. Hence, the beliefs that comes from culture has strictly defined the role of women in the society and have always expected such behavior even at the workplace which in turn keep women from climbing up the career ladder.

Organizational culture is a popular concept with variety of meanings. According to Schein (1985) it is a pattern of basic assumptions developed as a group or organization learns to cope with its environment. When an organization consists with more women than men or vice versa, in influential positions, the culture tends to adapt the features or the attributes that favor the dominant gender. Also in most male - led organizations, the good old boy network still exists and women have been largely excluded from such networks (Jackson, 2001).

According to Nandy, Baskar, and Ghosh (2014) having the stereotyped and rigid belief, male employees cannot accept women for their upward mobility of the organization and try to create barriers in any form such as women are excluded from informal organizational network and stressed them throughout the day. Hence, females believe that organizational culture does not support their career development. Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) have also stated that cultural factors such as organization beliefs, management perception, and stereotype traditions have significant impact on women career development.

A common perception is that men are viewed as the leaders in organizations while women are viewed as followers. Women in male dominant organizations refuse to see themselves as leaders. The reason has been identified as having not enough female representation in key executive positions to strengthen the female leadership (Jackson, 2001). Further, women are considered as passive, unassuming, feminine, submissive, and dependent and they are less capable physically, mentally and emotionally in certain challenges (Afsa & Newas, 2008). Many Human Resource managers believe that women managers are less initiative and less willing to take risks (Russel & Burgess, 1998). Male managers and administrators viewed women negatively and believed they were more suited for clerical work also many believed that they were less career committed due to their greater family responsibilities (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1973).

Further, family factors such as child rearing, elder care responsibilities keep women from actively working with male decision makers. Moreover, many organizations tend to implement a male-oriented management style where women managers are considered as bossy and hard to deal with. Leadership characteristics such as aggressiveness, dominance, competition and decisiveness found in men are considered positively whereas the same traits in women are considered as negative. To achieve equal status, the requirement level for women to achieve in the workplace, is set at a much higher standard, they are required to work harder, be more qualified, more ambitious and competent than their male counterparts (Bryce, 1989). In early theoretical development, Super (1957) proposed nothing that homemaking and childcare were central organizing elements in women's lives. According to Super (1957) role played by family concerns in shaping most women's lives remained major key to understanding women's career development.

## **Hypothesis**

### *Cultural Factors and Women Career Development*

Culturally, society believed a woman's place was in her home, caring for her husband and children, as opposed to the workplace (Njiru, 2013). At various times throughout history, working women were viewed as immoral and unfeminine objects of pity. Some cultural critics accused working women of being negligent mothers. Women are expected to perform duties as wife and mother, in addition to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Because women's work and family demands were

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simultaneous, these demands had a significant impact on women's careers (Valdes, & Gutek, 1987 as cite in Njiru, 2013). Despite their increasing numbers, women have tended to enter the workforce in lower status, low-paying traditionally female careers, including administrative support, sales, service, nursing, teaching, social work, and clerical jobs, reflected society's persistent attitudes regarding stereotypical occupational roles for males and females (Watson, Quatman, & Elder, 2002). According to the findings of several research studies, it has been found that there is an impact of Cultural Factors on Women Career Development (Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Njiru, 2013). Identity theory and Gender role ideology sheds light on the impact of Cultural Factors on Women Career Development. Therefore, the researcher has developed a hypothesis as follows.

H<sub>1A</sub>: There is an impact of cultural factors on women career development in International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

*Organizational Factors and Women Career Development*

Class, on the one hand, affects a worker's hierarchical position, whereas gender affects the segregation of occupations within the class based hierarchy. Patriarchy is not simply a hierarchical organization, but hierarchy in which particular people fill particular places (Hartmann, 1979 as cited in Njiru, 2013). The research has shown that numerous organizational barriers like training opportunities, career development, promotion and financial benefits can have a negative impact on career development for women irrespective of her personal traits (Oaekly, 2000). According to the findings of Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) it was revealed that organizational factors have a significant impact on women career development. Therefore, the researcher has developed a hypothesis as follows.

H<sub>1B</sub>: There is an impact of organizational factors on women career development in International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

*Work-life Conflict and Women Career Development*

On impacts of balancing work and family responsibility on women's working lives, the literature indicated that work and family responsibility may impact more on mental health on women as compared to men. There are a number of times contradictory demands made by the worlds of work and family life lead to dissatisfactions that have an impact on the various spheres of an individual's life (Njiru, 2013). In the light of Scarcity theory, it has been realized that conflicting demands of work and life have created a great impact on women career development. Most of the past research findings have also revealed that work-life conflict has an impact towards women career development (Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Njiru, 2013; Saadin, Ramli, Johari & Harin, 2016). Therefore, the researcher has developed a hypothesis as follows.

H<sub>1C</sub>: There is an impact of work-life conflict on women career development in International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

**Definitions and measures**

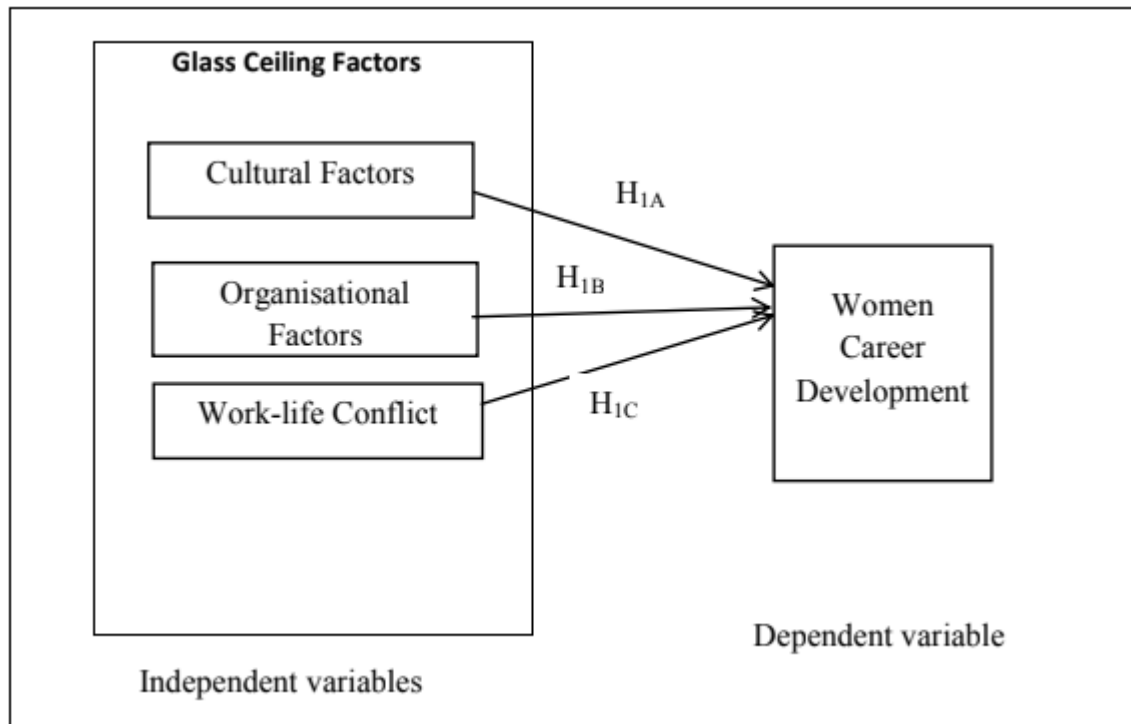
Existing literature reveals that among several other factors that impede the career development of women, glass ceiling factors play a major role (Jackson, 2001; Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Afsa & Newas, 2008). Cultural factors - This refers to the extent to which the beliefs, traditions, influence the employee development (Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013). Organizational factors - The extent to which barriers that coming from organisational structure and practices influence the employee development (Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013). Work-life conflict - this refers to incompatible pressures arising simultaneously from the intersection of work and family roles (Greenhouse, & Beutell, 1985).

Literature on glass ceiling suggests culture as a huge contributor for creating a glass ceiling. Jackson (2001) has identified management perception and work environment or climate as sub categories of the culture. Further, Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013), has also categorized management perception under broader category of culture and organizational policy as a sub category of organizational factors. Most researchers have not considered sexual harassment as a major contributor of creating a

glass ceiling (Afsa & Newaz, 2008; Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Edirisighe & Thalgaspitiya, 2016; Jackson, 2001). Therefore, the researcher have identified cultural factors, work-life conflict and organizational factors as glass ceiling factors based on the study of Afza and Newaz (2008). Among the scales that measure glass ceiling factors such as the scales that were developed by Afza and Newaz (2008) and Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) most of the past researchers have used the scale developed by Afza and Newaz (2008). And the scales developed later have based on this scale.

Most researches so far have been done in the countries of western civilization and it would be important if future research were conducted in countries with different cultural patterns (Andric, 2015). Keenavinna and Sajeevanie (2015) have suggested finding out the impact of glass ceiling factors on career development of women in other economic sectors in Sri Lanka. Researches that have done on the current topic is rare in the construction sector of Sri Lanka although several studies have done based on other sectors. This study can considered as a study done in the Asian cultural background and also based on the Construction Sector in Sri Lanka, thereby filling a gap in literature.

**Conceptualization & Conceptual framework**



Independent variables Dependent variable

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework  
Source: (Developed by the researcher after referring literature)

**Methodology**

International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited (ICC) is a leading Sri Lankan General Contractor with multi sector capability. With 38 years of experience in the construction field, it has widened today into seven main divisions. ICC has 686 staff as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and only 82 of them are females. For the current study, the researcher used census method and collected data using a self-administered questionnaires. After obtaining the permission from necessary authorities, the researcher distributed questionnaires among 102 female employees of the company ranging from the trainees and above.



**Correlation analysis**

Correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of association or relationship between two variables (Field, 2009). The correlation results obtained for the variables in the present study are summarized in Table 1.1.

Dependent Variable		Independent Variables		
		Cultural Factors	Work-life Conflict	Organizational Factors
Women Career Development	Pearson Correlation	-0.078	-0.147	0.075
	P value	0.434	0.000	0.000

Table 1.1: Correlation Analysis

Source: (Census data, 2018)

As per the Table 1.1, P values of the work-life conflict (0.000) and organizational factors (0.000) are less than the critical P value 0.05. Therefore, under 95% confidence level, there are enough evidence to reject H<sub>0</sub> (H<sub>0</sub>- work-life conflict and organizational factors are not correlated with women career development). On the other hand, P value of the cultural factors (0.434) is higher than the critical value 0.05. Therefore, under 95% confidence level, there are not enough evidence to reject H<sub>0</sub> (H<sub>0</sub>- cultural factors are not correlated with women career development). Hence it can be concluded that only two factors are correlated with women career development such as work-life conflict negatively correlated with women career development while organizational factors are positively correlated.

**Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis is a way of predicting an outcome variable from one predictor variable (simple regression) or several predictor variables (multiple regression) (Field, 2009). Output of the regression analysis is shown in Table 1.2.

As illustrated in Table 1.2, the regression output, in the first model, it includes all the independent variables and the second model includes only two independent variables. As per the output in model one, under 95% confidence since the P value of the cultural factors (0.289) is higher than the critical point 0.05, there are not enough evidence to reject H<sub>0</sub> (H<sub>0</sub>- there is not an impact of cultural factors on women career development). Since one variable got insignificant in model one, the researcher used model two for the rest of the analysis.

In the second model, the insignificant variable, cultural factors have been eliminated. P value of the work-life conflict (0.009) is less than the critical P value. Therefore, there are enough evidence to reject H<sub>0</sub> (H<sub>0</sub>- there is not an impact of work-life conflict on women career development). Further, the regression coefficient (-0.243) shows a negative value, indicating that there is a negative impact of work-life conflict on women career development.

Table 1.2: Regression Coefficients

Model	Variable	Regression	P value	95% Confidence interval
				Lower

		Coefficient	Upper bound	
				bound
<b>1</b>	Constant	3.168	0.000	2.363 3.973
	Cultural Factors	-0.123	0.289	-0.351 0.105
	Work-life Conflict	-0.226	0.016	-0.409 -0.043
	Organizational Factors	0.227	0.012	0.052 0.402
<b>2</b>	Constant	2.906	0.000	2.266 3.547
	Work-life Conflict	-0.243	0.009	-0.423 -0.063
	Organizational Factors	0.191	0.021	0.029 0.353

Source: (Census data, 2018)

Also, zero value of organizational factors does not lie in between upper and lower boundaries confident intervals (0.029 - 0.353) of organizational factors. Therefore, there are enough evidence to reject  $H_0$  ( $H_0$ - there is not an impact of organizational factors on women career development). Since the coefficient of organizational factors (0.191) is a positive value it can be stated that there is a positive impact on women career development

### Results of the Hypotheses Testing

H1A: There is an impact of cultural factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

Since, the P value of the cultural factors (0.289) is higher than the critical value 0.05, there are no enough evidence to reject  $H_0A$  (There is not an impact of cultural factors on women career development). Therefore, it can be concluded under 95% confidence that, there is not an impact of cultural factors on women career development according to this context.

H1B: There is an impact of organizational factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

Since, P value of the organizational factors (0.021) is less than the critical point 0.05, there are enough evidence to reject  $H_0B$  (There is not an impact of organizational factors on women career development). Therefore, it can be concluded under 95% confidence that, there is an impact of organizational factors on women career development.

H1C: There is an impact of work-life conflict on women career development in International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited.

Since, the P value of work-life conflict (0.009) is less than the critical point 0.05, there are enough evidence to reject  $H_0C$  (There is not an impact of work-life conflict on women career development). Therefore, it can be concluded with 95% confidence that, there is an impact of work-life conflict on women career development



**Developing the fitted regression model**

$$E\left(\frac{Y}{x_1, x_2}\right) = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 X_1 + \hat{\beta}_2 X_2 + \varepsilon_i \quad (4.1)$$

$Y_i$  = Women career development

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = Regression Coefficients

$X_1$  = Organizational factors

$X_2$  = Work-life conflict

$\varepsilon_i$  = Random Error term

According to the regression output, the final model is,

$$a)(\text{Women career development/Work-life conflict, Organizational factors}) = 2.906 + 0.191 \text{ Organizational factors} - 0.243 \text{ Work-life conflict} \quad (4.2)$$

According to equation (4.2) constant ( $\beta_0$ ) was 2.906 which implied that while organizational factors and work-life conflict remain zero (constant), the average level of women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited is 2.906.

Moreover, the regression coefficient of 0.191 indicates that, the expected level of women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited can be increased by 0.191 units as a result of unit change in organizational factors when there is no change in the other factor. Further, regression coefficient of -0.243 indicates that, the average reduction of women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited is 0.243 when work-life conflict is increased by only one unit while the other factor is kept constant.

**Goodness of fit of the model**

In multiple regression goodness of fit is tested by the adjusted R squared value (Saunders et al., 2009). Table 1.3 shows the output of goodness of fit test. Table 1.3: Coefficient of Determination

Model	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
2	0.540

Source: (Census data, 2018)

As per Table 1.3, it can be stated that 54% of the variation of women career development can be explained by the fitted regression model. The remaining 46% could be due to the effect of extraneous factors.

**Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

The ANOVA explains whether the model, overall, results in a significantly good degree of prediction of the outcome variable. However, the ANOVA does not explain about the individual contribution of variables in the model (Field, 2009). Table 1.4 shows the results of the ANOVA test. Table 1.4: Analysis of Variance

<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>2</b>	Regression	8.191	2	4.096	3.886	.024 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	104.327	99	1.054		
	Total	112.518	101			

Source: (Census data, 2018)

As per Table 1.4, two hypothesis ( $H_0$ : Fitted model is not significant,  $H_1$ : Fitted model is significant) can be developed to test the significance of the model. Since, P value of the second model is 0.024 (Refer Appendix I), which is less than the critical point 0.05, at 95% confidence level  $H_0$  is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that, the model is significant.

**Discussion**

The present study was conducted to investigate the impact of the glass ceiling factors on women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited. It was revealed through the findings that only work-life conflict and organizational factors have an impact on women career development. Although the researcher argued that cultural factors also impact on women career development, it was found that, there was no impact from cultural factors in the selected context. Considering work-life conflict as a predictor of women career development, the present study found that employees who had high level of work-life conflict reported low level of women career development ( $r = -0.243$ ) and it was significant with P value of 0.000. When considering the past literature, Keenawinna and Sajeewanie (2015) have also found that work-life conflict has a negative impact on women career development with a  $\beta$  value of -0.014 ( $P < 0.05$ ). Also the findings of Afza and Newaz (2008) revealed that work-life conflict is a significant factor for creating glass ceiling thereby, reducing the career development of women. It has also been identified that factors such as workload, role ambiguity, relationships, hours of work, responsibilities, number of children, and difficulties in marital relationships which contributes to create work-life conflict, also have a negative impact towards women career development (Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). Also according to the details found by the researcher, it could be observed that 67%, which is more than half of the female employees are married and it can be argued that they are facing with the issue of work-life conflict. Therefore, the findings of the current research agree with the past literature.

Organizational policies are critical for achieving gender equity in the workplace and to contributing to women's advancement (Shapiro & Olgiati, 2002). In the current, study organizational factors showed a positive impact towards women career development. According to Catalyst (2003) women need to employ a number of strategies in order to get ahead with their careers such as exceeding performance expectations, successfully managing others, developing a style which the male employees are comfortable with, having a good expertise in a recognized area, and taking on difficult assignments (as cited in Posholi, 2012). Construction industry is traditionally considered a male

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dominated industry (Amarathunga, Haigh, Elvitigala, & Shanmugam, 2009). A male-dominated environment and practices required women to imitate male traits in order to develop their careers (Schreiber, 1998 as cited in Posholi, 2012). According to Kottke and Agars (2006), whether or not policies and practices are successful depends on how they are perceived by an organization's members (as cited in Njiru, 2013). Therefore, in the current context, when barriers in the form of organizational policies and work environment are increased, and women feel pressured, they try to get adjust accordingly by altering their behavior and following male traits. In fact, they perceived those barriers positively. On the other hand, it can be stated that when female employees gain the support they required to follow the existing policies of the organization, they will not take them as barriers. They find that employees are more likely to use available practices if they work with powerful supervisors and colleagues, who can buffer them from perceived negative effects on their careers (Njiru, 2013). As such when the organizational factors increases it causes the women career development to increase indirectly. Therefore, the positive relationship that was found in the present context can be proven.

In contrast, it was found that cultural factors have no impact on women career development in the present context. This finding goes against to most of the findings of the past researches. However, in the study of Jackson (2001) it was found that the women had positive organizational experience with cultural factors such as perception and stereotyping. It was suggested that men in their organization respect women, hold favourable perceptions of them as potential leaders, do not engage in stereotypical beliefs about women in the work place and treated them with respect. Therefore, the researcher also believes that it is the same situation in the current context and that was why the study revealed that there is no impact on cultural factors on women career development in the current context.

### **Implications of the research**

#### **Theoretical implications**

Among the factors identified by the researcher as Glass Ceiling Factors, Work-life Conflict showed a negative impact towards Women Career Development in the light of Scarcity theory. The researcher could also be able to prove the validity of the above theory in the current context. Apart from that, organizational factors showed an impact towards women career development proving the hypothesis established by the researcher is true. Further, it showed a positive impact in the current context. However, the researcher was able to support the findings of the current study by the studies of Kottke and Agars (2006) and Posholi (2012) which states that policies of an organization will act as barriers only if the women perceived them as barriers and if women need to develop their career in a male dominant environment they require to and will automatically imitate the male traits.

#### **Practical implications**

Findings of the study revealed that there is an impact of work-life conflict on women career development in International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited. Further, it showed a negative impact. It indicates that it is difficult for female employees to balance the demands arising from work life and family life. The survey revealed that most of the female employees in the company are married and according to the age distribution most of those married employees may having kids. Therefore, lack of time for their children may create significant stress in them.

Working with such stress in their mind due to work-life conflict will lower their effectiveness and will have an adverse impact towards the overall performance of the company. Therefore, company need to address such issues of the female employees to gain their best for the company. The company should introduce family friendly policies in the form of maternity leave, career breaks with the right to return to the job, flexible job arrangements, day care facilities for small kids and should make sure that they are actually been followed inside the organization. This way, they won't be stressing much on their family matters.

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Organizational factors showed a positive impact on women career development in the present context. It indicates that, according to the nature of the industry women in the company have adjusted to follow the traits of men because they believe that it is the only way to have a good progress in their career. Therefore, even though there is a rigorous performance appraisal system or policies in place they will try to work harder as their male counterparts to achieve their desired career progress. However, company should pay attention to this as this might adversely impact on the health of female employees within the organization which will create issues in the long run.

For inclusive growth of a nation, equal gender participation in the workforce is an imminent requirement. Organizations should encourage participation of women, as they possess certain competencies such as professional, social, and personal defining their talent. These competencies are beneficial for organizational performance (Sahoo & Lenka, 2016). Therefore, company have to make sure fair treatment of women is in place by introducing new policies, appraisal systems and incentive systems, having special concern towards matters of female employees.

#### **Directions for future researchers**

In this study the researcher examined only the glass ceiling factors which impact on women career development. But there are some other factors also suggested within the literature such as existence of government policies, support from top management, and an organizational support system, mentoring and networking opportunities, education, training, and development opportunities. It is better to investigate other factors which have an impact on women career development. Also, the researcher suggests generalizing the developed model to other companies in the Construction Sector.

The findings of this research demonstrate that cultural factors did not impact on women career development in the current context. Future researchers can check whether this factor gets insignificant in the other contexts as well.

The researcher used only a questionnaire to gather data. It will be better if a mixed method is used because the researcher feels that using a questionnaire limited obtaining detailed information from the employees which may have fully obtained if a mix method is used. That way the researcher will be able to gather more new information. It can also be suggested to do this as a qualitative study according to longitudinal method. Therefore, the researcher can fully capture the problem that may have changed due to cross sectional data collection.

#### **Conclusion**

Results of the preliminary survey encouraged the researcher to find out why there is low women career development at International Construction Consortium (Pvt.) Limited. Therefore, after reviewing the literature, the present study was carried out to examine the impact of cultural factors, organizational factors, and work-life conflict, on women career development. According to the findings of the study it was revealed that there is an impact of work-life conflict and organizational factors on women career development while there is no impact of cultural factors on women career development. Further, the researcher found a significant negative impact of work-life conflict on women career development. It indicates that if a female employee suffers from a high degree of work-life conflict, it will lower their career development. Apart from that, it was found that there is a positive impact of organizational factors on women career development.

Considering the above findings of the research, the company can ask for individual female employees' career plans and align them with the career development plans of the company. That way companies can ensure that female employees are enjoying a better career development that is up to their expectations which in turn will make them burden free allowing their hundred percent contribution for an increased performance of the company. Future researchers should also come up with the studies that investigate factors that promote career development of women in the construction sector of Sri Lanka. It is said that the glass ceiling hinders not only individuals, but also society as a whole. It cuts out pool of potential corporate leaders by excluding half of population. It ultimately withdraws a set of new leaders, new sources of creativity. In order to compete successfully in today's global

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economy, one has to unleash the fullest potential of the workforce and especially women hence the time has come to dismantle the glass ceiling.

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