

**FACTORS INFLUENCING GLASS CEILING PERCEPTION IN EARLY-
CAREER EMPLOYEES OF KATHMANDU VALLEY**

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RECOMMENDATION

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the SOMTU, Tribhuvan University, a Graduate Research Project (GRP) report submitted by Pratihtha Acharya entitled “Factors Influencing Glass Ceiling Perception in Early-career Employees of Kathmandu Valley” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration of Tribhuvan University.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENCITY

I, Pratihtha Acharya, declare that this GRP is my own original work and that it has fully and specifically acknowledged wherever adapted from other sources. I also understand that if at any time it is shown that I have significantly misinterpreted material presented to SOMTU, any credit awarded to me on the basis of that material may be revoked.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIN:	Avoidance of Informal Networks
MD:	Mentoring Deficiency
OC:	Organizational Culture
OP:	Organizational Policies
OS:	Occupational Segregation
PPP:	Personal Preference Perception
SOMTU:	School of Management, Tribhuvan University
SPSS:	Special Packages for the Social Sciences
ST:	Stereotyping
UMR:	Undertaking Multiple Roles
VIF:	Variance Inflation Factor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study identifies the factors affecting glass ceiling perception of early-career employees in Kathmandu valley and pinpoints one major factor that have the greatest impact on glass ceiling perception. For this purpose, three major factors (i.e. Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Social Factors) were examined and it was found that social factors had greatest impact on the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees of Kathmandu valley. Even though, the employees in the early phase of their career perceived glass ceiling mostly through the organizational factors however social factors had highest impact on development of gender-based discrimination which is clearly reflected in the organizational culture, policies and procedures.

In general, the early-career employees of Kathmandu valley do not perceive glass ceiling barriers inside their organizations; however the level of perception varies according to their gender and employment sector. The female employees and employees working in private sector have comparatively higher degree of glass ceiling perception when compared to their counterparts.

The research design used in the study is descriptive and explanatory. The data was quantitative in nature and convenience sampling was used to collect the data from 272 respondents using online questionnaire developed through Google Forms. The questionnaire employed in this study was adopted from the study of (Karaca, 2007). The collected data were organized and analyzed through Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Descriptive as well as inferential analyses were carried out to meet the objectives of the study. Frequencies, percentage analysis, mean, standard deviations, correlation and multiple regression were done to meet the objectives of the study.

Thus, the study identifies social factor as a major contributor to the development of glass ceiling barriers which in case of this study is perceived more strongly in organizational environment. So, Nepalese organizations should develop more gender-inclusive policies and practices to minimize the existence of glass ceiling phenomenon in coming future.

Keywords: *Glass Ceiling, Early-career Employees*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of the glass ceiling is a well-studied topic that is taught to students in most of the universities in recent times (Ström & Burvall, 2018). It implies that there is an invisible ceiling which keeps women and minorities from accessing top level positions (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Both men and women face barriers in their career advancement in the workplace but if a barrier keeps employees from advancing further in their career ladder solely on the basis of gender and race then it is defined as glass ceiling (Foley, 1998).

The expression ‘glass ceiling’ appeared for the first time in 1986 in the Wall Street Journal. The idea behind it was that the expression "glass ceiling" displayed a transparent barrier that was not visible from below when women started their career but it eventually blocked women from climbing the career ladder (Hindle, 2008). Nowadays it is one of the common metaphor used for analyzing the inequality between men and women in the workplace .The general-case glass ceiling hypothesis states that not only is it more difficult for women to be promoted up in higher levels of authoritative hierarchies within workplaces but the obstacles that women face relative to men increases significantly as they move up the hierarchy (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013).

The number of women pursuing professional careers has increased since the nineties (Fangenson, 1993). This has resulted in the significant rise in the level of economic activity among women and has rooted a number of developments which include the changing role of women in society, the service industries expansion, and the increase in part-time employment (Davidson & Cooper, 1992).

According to Nepal Labour Force survey 2017/2018, the total participation rate out of the entire labour force of 20.74 million is 38.5 percent, out of which 53.8 percent are male and females occupy only 23.6 percent. (i.e. the participation rate shows the number of individuals who have completed their study and is ready for full time job.) This survey also revealed the discrepancy that still prevails in the wages of male and female employees in Nepali labour market. A male earns an average wage of Rs. 17,809 per month while a

female earns only Rs.13, 630 per month on an average. This shows that a male worker earns Rs. 4,179 per month (30 percent) more than a female worker in Nepal.

Although the number of women pursuing managerial and professional careers has increased around the world, female managers are concentrated in lower management levels and hold positions with less authority than men (Powell & Graves, 2003). Nepal faces the similar situation. In Nepal women's participation in high-level job is very low. Males account for 86.8 percent of managerial jobs while females account for only rest of the 13.2 percent (NLFS-III, 2019).

In an analysis of women in low-paying jobs, Harland & Berheide (1994) revealed that women have a slim to zero likelihood of advancing high enough to encounter the glass ceiling; rather, they are trapped by what Harland and Berheide termed the “sticky floor”—low-wage low-mobility jobs (Nobel, 1992).

Despite their high level of education, as well as social and political participation, women still confront traditional, deeply rooted prejudices. How is it possible that women, who have, on average, the same level of education as men, are not able to reach the highest echelons in the corporate hierarchy? The three main barriers that are mentioned in the literature that prevent women from achieving higher positions are structural and organizational, cultural, and individual barriers (Eagly, 2007; Jakobsh, 2004 ; Johns, 2013; Oakley, 2000).

The glass ceiling effect, the barriers that stop women from advancing to the top positions in their organizations (Al-Manasra, 2013), is a form of gender discrimination (Bell, McLaughlin, & Sequeira, 2002). It is associated with human resources, one of the most important resources that is responsible for bringing competitive advantage to organizations. Today's workforce is unique because the integration of women and minorities has made the workforce so diverse. Despite of the remarkable participation of women in the workforce, women's right of entry into diverse managerial positions remains restricted all over the world (Oakley, 2000; Adams, Gupta, Houghton, & Leeth, 2007; Weyer, 2007).Despite professional eligibilities and ample opportunities, female employees are not aptly represented in the higher corridors of organizational power.

Daily & Dalton (2003) consider that increasing female participation in higher levels of management is a business imperative. One of the reasons is that in a complex business environment, firms must make use of all available resources to compete effectively. And

since women represent half of the workforce, it is not efficient to lose the expertise, skills, knowledge, and background of a capable employee just because she is a woman. Not only women are as capable as men in executive positions, their inclusion in the executive suite contributes to the goodwill of the company (Adler, 2001).

In recent years, it has been suggested that the glass ceiling barriers have decreased. This is based on the fact that more women reach senior management positions today than in the past. However, there is still a male dominance in the higher ranks of the organization and a majority of women among those high ranking officials who aim to reach the top do believe that the glass ceiling is a remaining obstacle (Cooper Jackson, 2001; Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Snowdon, 2011). Additionally, studies have shown that men are less inclined than women to believe in gender-based barriers in career advancement (Rishani, Mallah, Houssami, & Ismail, 2015). Furthermore, aspects like differences in culture, education and government policies can influence the perception of gender differences in workplace. (Dimovski, Skerlavaj, & Man , 2010).

A survey conducted in 2015 with 1500 college students clearly exhibited the difference between how male and female students perceive their chances for certain jobs, and their salary-prospects right after graduation. The result revealed that women have less confidence in their career paths (PR Newswire, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In 2018, there were approximately 1.07 females for every one male enrolled in tertiary education in Nepal which is significant increase from 1990, where there were approximately 0.31 females for every one male student (UNESCO, 2018). According to World Bank, tertiary education refers to all post-secondary education, including both public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. This means more and more women are gaining higher level education in Nepal. This indicates future workforce will comprise of more female employees than male ones. As a result a larger proportion of workforce will perceive the existence of invisible barriers hampering their career growth, otherwise known as glass ceiling.

Although women are now graduating in higher numbers than men from educational institutions (Fagenson & Jackson, 1994) and more women are entering the paid workforce (Hind & Baruch, 1997) and taking up managerial roles, there is still poor representation of women at senior management levels and we can owe this continuity to the "glass ceiling".

Several researches have been done on glass ceiling around the globe but very few are done in the context of Nepal. Most of the researches on this topic are done from the view of women executives or they are limited to a particular industry. Amudha, Cresenta Shakila Motha, Selvabaskar, Alamelu, & Surulivel (2016) concluded that the women in the corporate are drained because of the existing corporate cultures and missed prospects to find successful careers. Ultimately, they decide to eschew the organization. It is based on the research on women employees of IT companies of Chennai. According to a qualitative study conducted by Sahtalebia & Yarmohammadianb (2012) on top-ranking women of a Iranian university, female managers face various barriers in their path of success which can be broadly classified under three components: organizational elements, social elements and individual elements.

In Nepal similar type of researches are done on the context of glass ceiling. Lama (2019) has studied the effect of glass ceiling on women's career development exhibiting societal barrier as most influencing factor of women's success. The major hindrance in women's career path is the difficulty in maintaining family and job responsibilities; and lack of family support restricts women from accepting higher post. Similar study done by Rana (2007) shows a different view of women regarding the existence of glass ceiling. This study showed that women do not perceive glass ceiling in the organizations to a greater extent and they perceive male employees show a positive behaviour towards their fellow female colleagues.

Research on glass ceiling has not been done as extensively in Nepal as compared to different part of the world. Most of the researches done on this topic are done from rather similar angle and perspective in almost every country. There are a very few researches that are done from the perspective business students or recent graduates. No research work has been found of any kind that shows the glass ceiling perception solely from view of early-career employees who have recently entered into job market in Nepal. Therefore, it is safe to assume that most of the existing research regarding the glass ceiling is carried on mid-career or late-career employees and the results are the reflection of their struggle and perceptions.

So, with the aim to fill this gap the researcher thus attempts to find out how early-career employees perceive the existence of glass ceiling and what factors influence this perception. The researcher is motivated to carry out the research to understand the factors influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

- i. What are the major factors responsible for influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees?
- ii. Do early-career employees show difference in glass ceiling perception based on their socio-demographic characteristics?
- iii. Which factor of gender- based barriers has the greatest impact on glass ceiling perception?

1.4 Objectives

The major objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing the glass ceiling perception in early-career employees of Kathmandu valley.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. To identify the factors that are responsible for influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees.
- ii. To identify one of the major factor of gender-based barriers which has greatest impact glass ceiling perception of early-career employees.

1.5 Scope and Significance of the Study

Although there are legal provisions in developed countries to ensure gender equality and the development of university education has increased women's chances of landing outdoor jobs, however women are still suffering from multi- faceted discriminations in occupying high ranking positions (Ledwith & Manfredi, 2000) and these discriminations can be commonly labeled as glass ceiling. The existence of glass ceiling creates many problems in terms of career advancement of female employees. First of all, women's enthusiasm and efforts to reach the higher levels could be decreased when they think the opportunities to reach higher levels are limited due to their gender. This could have a serious impact on organizational commitment and loyalty of female employees.

Today the number of female students is increasing rapidly in different universities of Nepal and more female workers will represent the organizational workforce in near future. This is the result of change in socio-cultural values resulting from the rapid globalization. The

female today is more empowered and the male more supportive of female advancement. So the majority of beliefs and experiences regarding the existence of glass ceiling may have changed with the time and the younger generation may view glass ceiling differently.

The view of recent graduate who is in the early phase of his/her career may differ from the high level senior executives in this matter. But glass ceiling has rarely been pictured through the eyes of university students or early-career employees in global context while Nepal faces a serious scarcity in the research related to glass ceiling. So, this research aims to fulfill the existing gap in the literature and provide a fresh angle to analyze the existence of glass ceiling. Thus, this research possesses significant importance in finding out the perception of early-career employees regarding the glass ceiling.

1.6 Hypotheses

After the review of various literatures, the following hypotheses are prepared:

Hypothesis 1: There is significant impact of individual factors in glass ceiling perception.

Individual factors are women's multiple roles at social life and their own self perceptions. The higher level of responsibilities assumed by a woman arising from their simultaneous multiple roles as a mother, wife and an employee and the stereotypically perceived notion of individual preference of family over work are the major obstacles hindering the upward mobility of women (Karaca, 2007).

Hypothesis 2: There is significant impact of organizational factors in glass ceiling perception.

The existing culture of the organizations and its effective policies along with the office politics, lack of mentor, advisor, supporter and guide and the limited ability of female employees to participate and maintain unofficial communication networks based on informal relationships with fellow workers and colleagues of opposite gender are the obstacles stemming from organizational factors which nourishes the glass ceiling phenomenon inside the organization (Ozturk, 2011; Karaca, 2007).

Hypothesis 3: There is significant impact of social factors in glass ceiling perception.

The social factors arising from assumptions, prejudgments, and assessments of male-dominated patriarchal society are supposed to be one of the major factors contributing to glass ceiling perception (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010; Boone, Veller, Nikolaeva, Keith, & Houran, 2013; Karaca, 2007).

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are factors that may or will affect the study, but is not under the control of the researcher; a delimitation differs, principally, in that it is controlled by the researcher (Mauch & Park, 2003).

Delimitations are set by the researcher to define the boundaries of the study. This study is delimited by selecting only those employees who were:

- a) in the early phase of their career (less than five years in their first job),
- b) employed in private sector, and
- c) located in Kathmandu Valley.

Whereas the limitations of the study are:

- a) Convenience sampling method was used to carry out the research.
- b) Since the data is collected only from the early-career employees, the findings cannot be generalized to show the glass ceiling perception of mid-career or late-career employees nor can it be interpreted as the overall perception of private sector employees regarding the glass ceiling.

1.8 Outline of the Study

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter I includes the introduction of the research topic and the problem statement. It also provides purpose of the study, research questions, objectives, and hypotheses, definition of terms, limitations and outline of the research. Chapter II provides a review of the existing literature and conceptualizes a theoretical framework based on the literature review.

Chapter III provides the insight of research methods used to carry out this study. It discusses the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, sources and methods of data collection and data analysis method. Research data and findings are presented in Chapters IV and V. The collected data is statistically analyzed and interpreted in Chapter IV.

And finally the research is concluded in Chapter V. The results obtained in Chapter IV are discussed to draw out the conclusion in the last chapter. The implications and opportunities for future research are also included in Chapter V. In this way this whole research is organized according to the structure and guidelines provided by Tribhuvan University School of Management (SOMTU).

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

Glass Ceiling refers to transparent but real barriers which are based on discriminatory attitudes resulting from either individual bias or organizational bias. This type of discriminatory attitudes impede qualified individuals including (but not limited to) women, racial and ethnic minorities, and disabled persons from advancing into management positions of the organization (Gibelman, 2000). Though it is believed to be an unofficial, invisible barrier but it becomes real hindrance to somebody whose advancement into upper level management positions is blocked just because of discrimination which is solely based on the person's gender, age, race, ethnicity or sexual preference (Benschop & Brouns, 2009).

Any gender based barrier or discrimination cannot be simply labelled as glass ceiling barriers. Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman (2001) has specifically defined four distinctive characteristics of glass ceiling which are:

- ✓ A gender or racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employee.
- ✓ A gender or racial difference that is greater at higher levels of an outcome than at lower levels of an outcome.
- ✓ A gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels.
- ✓ A gender or racial inequality that increases over the course of a career.

So, usually this type of discrimination is not very apparent, since it is unwritten and off the record policy followed in the organization (Aranha, Aquinas, & Saldanha, 2019). Klenke (1996) reports that gender discrimination still prevails inside organization but the nature of discrimination against women has changed from "overt" to more "subtle."

"Women constitute half the world's population, perform two-thirds of the world's work, but receive only one tenth of its income and own less than one-hundredth of its property" (United Nations, 1992). Two decades have passed since then, and despite of having good

scholastics, plethora of knowledge, quality and efficiency, women still are very poorly represented in highest ranking positions and boardrooms. The phenomenon of glass ceiling still exists in this 21st century where globalization and technological advancement has brought about 360 degree change in each and every aspect of life (Jain, 2010).

Every year organizations publish their balance sheets disclosing their financial health to motivate shareholders as per financial considerations but the invisible balance sheet of human resources has remained unbalanced from the decades if we view from the gendered perspective. This is discouraging to our social transformation and limiting the opportunities of women inside it. (Nandy, Bhaskar, & Ghosh, 2001).

Taken literally, the metaphor of the “glass ceiling” implies the existence of a persistent barrier that blocks the vertical mobility of women towards upper levels in the organizational hierarchy. Below this barrier, women are able to get promoted; beyond this barrier, they are not (Baxter & Wright, 2000). Glass ceiling keeps women from rising towards advancement simply because they are women not because they lack the ability to handle jobs at higher levels (Morrison, White, & Von-Velsor , 1987). Therefore, Hurley & Choudhary (2016) believe that female CEO’s are exceptions rather than the rule.

So, in conclusion, the concept of glass ceiling expresses only the women’s inability to rise, but not an individual inability to rise (Mayaturk, 2006) and covers inequality in income distribution, implementation, supervision and using initiative along with promotion or advancement in the hierarchy (Ozturk, 2011).

According to Oakley (2000) there are two categories of causes that are able to explain the scarcity of women in senior management positions. One of them is the barrier created by corporate practices which is often related to the organization’s preference of males in recruitment, retention, and promotion over females, especially in jobs that lead the employees towards being a future senior manager. The second category is behavioral and cultural causes which revolve around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power and preferred leadership styles.

Table 2.1:

Proposed Glass Ceiling Barriers in Literature.

Glass Ceiling Barriers	Research Methodology	Country	Source
i. Societal barriers ii. Internal structural barriers iii. Government barriers.		USA	(Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995)
i. Perception and stereotyping ii. Work-family conflict iii. Old boy network iv. Valuing women and tokenism v. Management style vi. Career development opportunity	Sampled Gender: Female Career Level: Middle level	USA	(Jackson, 2001)
i. Management perception ii. Work environment iii. Work life conflict iv. Sexual harassment v. Organizational policy	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Bank, Telecom, Insurance, Pharmaceuticals, Media, NGO, Textile and University Career Level: All levels	Bangladesh	(Afza & Newaz, 2008)
i. Individual level restraints ii. Organizational level restraints iii. Societal level restraints	Sampled Gender: Female Career Level: Executive level	India	(Nigam, 2008)
i. Individual barriers ii. Societal barriers iii. Organization related barriers	Sampled Gender: Female Career Level: All levels	India	(Maheshwari, 2012)
i. Individual elements ii. Societal elements iii. Organization elements	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Education Sector (university) Career Level: Highest level	Iran	(Sahtalebia & Yarmohammadian, 2012)

i. Individual factors ii. Family factors iii. Organizational factors iv. Cultural factors	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Private sector Career Level: Executive level	Sri Lanka	(Bombuwela & De Alwis , 2013)
i. Organizational practices ii. Existence of male culture iii. Family and social commitments	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Both public and private sector Career Level: Middle level managers	Jordan	(Al-Manasra, 2013)
i. Personal compromises ii. Career encouragers iii. Corporate culture	Sampled Gender: Female Career Level: Middle level managers (women executives)	Turkey and France(Cross-country comparison)	(Akpinar-Sposito, 2013)
i. Gender roles and work and family conflict ii. Gender Stereotypes iii. Gendered organizational culture	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Government sector Career Level: Lower and middle	South Korea	(Choi & Park, 2014)
i. Individual related barriers ii. Organization related barriers iii. Societal related barriers	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Banking and finance, Academics, I/NGO, Developmental, Service, and Semi-government Career Level: Lower, middle and upper level	Nepal	(Regmi Adhikary, 2016)
i. The role of the government ii. Organizational barriers iii. The influence of the society iv. The contributions made by women themselves	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Formal sector Career Level: Upper level	Ghana	(Aidoo & Achira, 2016)

i. Internal business structural barriers ii. Societal barriers iii. Governmental barriers iv. Situational barriers v. Personal barriers	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Tourism and hospitality. Career Level: Lower, middle and upper level	Jordan (Aqaba)	(Bazazo, 2017)
i. Individual factors ii. Societal factors iii. Organization related factors iv. Family factors v. Gender related issues	Sampled Gender: Both male and female Sector: Service sector Career Level: All level	India (Bangalore)	(Aranha, Aquinas, & Saldanha, 2019)
i. Work-Life Balance ii. Family responsibilities iii. Lack of Mentoring	Sampled Gender: Female Sector: Banking sector Career Level: Lower and middle level	Malaysia	(Abidin, Mohamed, Rosec, Shimid, & Raimee, 2019)

Hence, the review of existing literature throughout the world has roughly identified three major barriers or obstacles or factors resulting in the perception of glass ceiling. These factors can be identified as: Individual factors, Organizational Factors and Societal factors (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010; Boone, Veller, Nikolaeva, Keith, & Houran, 2013; Karaca, 2007; Azeez & R G, 2018; Saddique, 2018; Öge, Karasoy, & Kara, 2014; Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan, 2018; Lama, 2019).

2.1.1 Individual Factors as Glass Ceiling Barrier

Similarly, Tosunoğlu (2015) states that woman's multiple roles at social life and their own self perceptions are the individual barriers to women's career progression. Furthermore, women's ability to work, willingness to do the assigned job, self-perception about themselves and work-life balance also possess major hindrance in their career development (Azeez & R G, 2018).

Individual factors like: assuming multiple roles and level of responsibilities of being a mother, wife and an employee; women's individual preference of not improving themselves, not taking challenges in their career and not preferring promotion to fulfill

maternal and family responsibilities; and her individual perceptions showing lack of confidence and indecisiveness are major constraints arising from the individual level which promote the existence and perception of glass ceiling (Karaca, 2007; Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan, 2018).

Undertaking Multiple Roles

In this era of globalization, although working women are able to get same professional working environment as their male counterparts but in return they are also exposed to the pressures arising from the multiple role demands and conflicting expectations. There is no doubt that increasing employment opportunities has made women economically independent and provided them good social status but it has also made them to juggle between two main domains of life i.e. work and family because no matter how high women rise in their professional fields, the traditional roles and responsibilities of women as a “nurturer” and “care giver” still remain the same (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Additionally, working women of today have this incredible pressure to develop a career as vibrant as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in their personal life. That’s why married working women find it very hard to balance their work and personal life irrespective of the sector they are into, their age group, number of children and their spouse’s profession (Delina & Raya, 2013).

Working women continuously have to face tradeoff between work domain and family life domain (Muhammad, Zainab , & Jalil , 2011). That’s the reason women perform really well till mid-management. But as the time they enter childbearing and rearing stage women do not pursue career progression more seriously. The hectic double-shift role of being a mother and employee tends to take a heavy toll on some women as they are forced to choose between being a full time mother or handle the pressures of being a working mother (Giannett, 2012).

A study by Roopnarine, Talukder, Jain, Joshi, & Srivastav (1992) revealed that irrespective of their working status, women’s employment did not increase husbands' participation in children’s upbringing; child-care still remained women's primary responsibility. In most of the cases, husbands refused to modify their own careers for family reasons. So, women have to take harsh and life changing decision of leaving their careers or taking career breaks to carter the need of family. This is the finding of a detailed interview of 54 women who left their high profile career to focus on family life (Stone, 2007).

Furthermore, several researchers have found that women are more likely to leave their professions due to family obligations popularly known as walls, such as marriage wall, pregnancy wall, children's (Ginn, et al., 1996) or parents' needs wall or to relocate due to husband's job wall (Crosby, Williams, & Biernat, 2004; Stone, 2007).

Catalyst's study in 2004, "corporate leadership: same workplace, different realities" shows that women executives with children at home desire to be CEO even more than men (55% against 46%). But the stereotypical perception of patriarchal society toward women being secondary earners places women's career under secondary importance. According to Kirel, Kocabaş, & Özdemir (2010) women are first seen as spouses and mothers; their work-life is seen as a secondary part. As a result many high achieving women entrepreneurs are found to have ended their unhappy marriages (Goward, 2001).

Thus, in comparison to men women anticipated and perceived gender discrimination and the work-family conflict to be barriers for their career as the dual role of women cause tension and conflict and limit their opportunities of advancement (Cochran, Hauschild, Elder, Neumayer, Brasel, & Crandall, 2013).

Personal Preference Perception

According to Williams & Cooper (2004), from the very beginning it has been put into the heads of women that they are to grow up, marry, bear children and raise them. They are also allowed to think about their own development but not at the cost of family. So, men and women have different orientation towards work. Hakim (2006) argued that men and women have different orientations towards work because each has different life goals, level of competitiveness and they give varying degree of importance towards their family and careers.

Based on human capital theory, Polachek (1981) stated that women are creating gender-specific labor market through their own self-selection i.e. preference of certain jobs to others. Generally women choose those jobs that can be combined with family responsibilities like: jobs with part-time work option, easy employment breaks and low risk of getting obsolete. This is because while men focus on external criteria of job, such as status and material success, women focus on internal criteria, such as personal recognition, accomplishment, and achieving balance in their lives (Sturges, 1999).

The consequence of this personal preference is that with their marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, the dropout rates of women get increased. Since, childcare and housework still

remain the primary responsibility of women irrespective of her income, educational level or employment; it places a great burden on women's professional life and restricts her choices in terms of better job opportunities (Vittal, 2003).

Another perception regarding individual choice of females is that they tend to stick to one geographical location. It is also true to some extent because in general, women are mostly "followers" of their spouse (Pochic & Guillaume, 2009). According to Laufer (2000), it is also true that many women managers choose not to relocate, if asked to, because of their family reasons (especially because of her children's education and social security system). And because of increasing dual career households, women have a hard time convincing their husbands to accompany them into different locations as a result most of the women have to interrupt their career to follow their husband.

Thus, male employees receive more outside offers and relatively higher payment because of their flexible mobility options. Since, travelling is one of the major requirements for advancement in many corporations it could become a real barrier for any women who would like to become an executive (Laufer, 2004). In addition to this, women often do not see their own personal skills and talent sufficient for those kinds of executive roles. And even if they possess enough self-confidence, the risk of bringing political conflicts, controversies and ambition into their family lives withholds the desire of many women to climb to the top echelons (Akpınar-Sposito, 2013).

Furthermore, it is not easy for women to re-enter the workforce after taking career breaks. Not all employers show positive attitudes towards this type of breaks. This makes it difficult for women to resume their careers and climb upward in career trajectory (Kronos, 2013). A similar study done by Bihagen & Ohls (2006) shows that women with small children face the largest gender-based penalty in their careers in Sweden.

But Laufer (2004) argues that women themselves create a self-imposed glass ceiling because of their "different needs" but artificially it seems as if the glass ceiling blocks their career. Consequently, organizations often explain the absence of women in senior positions as their own individual preference towards family matters. However, this perspective is not able to picture the whole reality as the individual preferences of women are viewed from the lens of patriarchal society.

Although women as a whole may place less emphasis on career success than men, but there are a considerable number of women who strive for top management positions but

are unable to attain them because of the existence of glass ceiling (Akpınar-Sposito, 2013). Generally, women who believe in existence of glass ceiling barriers are less likely to apply for open positions at top management than equally qualified men. Automatically, this leads to a promotion of fewer female applicants resulting in the scarcity of females at the very top levels (Johns, 2013).

2.1.2 Organizational Factors as Glass Ceiling Barrier

Organizational factors like: organization's existing culture, policies and perception of the management towards the advancement of the women in higher roles, lack of mentor, advisor, supporter and guide, and inability of women to participate in unofficial communication networks are the obstacles stemming from inside the organization itself which strengthens the perception of glass ceiling inside the organizational setting (Ozturk, 2011; Karaca, 2007; Tosunoğlu, 2015; Azeez & R G, 2018; Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan, 2018).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a very elusive concept because it can be analyzed using the variety of perspectives academically. According to Robbins & Coulter (2003) corporate culture refers to the values, beliefs, and norms shared by organizational members. It governs how employees behave with each other and outsiders.

The existing management style and organizational structure may create obstacles in the advancement of female employees because inside a male-dominated organization, a man may not be happy to see a woman in managerial steps and he may not find it appropriate to take orders from the woman manager. Thus, there is an invisible barrier obstructing the career advancement of female employees which is deeply embedded inside the organizational culture (Yörük, 2019).

The presence of masculine culture is resulting in the establishment of organizations based on the beliefs and rules adopted by men themselves. As a result, some kind of hidden prejudices make their way into organization's policies and practices (Isik, 2009). Thus, the glass ceiling is easily reflected in this type of corporate culture, corporate practices, and corporate climate. Cultural biases, gender stereotypes, and attitudes against women when coupled with their not being viewed as primary income-earners, act as the major obstacles to women's advancement (Dimovski, Skerlavaj, & Man, 2010).

In a report prepared by Global Human Capital Gender Advisory Council (2008), it is shown that that even though equal number of men and women enter the workforce, a lot of women get lost in pipeline. The answer lies in the discriminatory attitudes, biases and prejudices of their male colleagues resulting from male chauvinistic organizational culture. Most female managers terminate their job voluntarily once they reach top management because the absence of acceptance and collegueship brings the feeling of isolation and discouragement in senior women managers (Morrison, White, & Von-Velsor , 1987). But it is not necessary that this jealousy, biasness and prejudices come only from male colleagues.

While the obstacles imposed by men are discussed frequently in different literatures, the obstacles imposed by women are rarely mentioned. A female manager trying to climb up the career ladder or maintain her power makes her behavior more “masculine” to gain access into old boy’s club. While her young female colleagues, who are struggling to rise to the upper institutional position, perceive her as a threat in their career advancement. This is called as “queen bee syndrome” (Öğüt, 2006; Inel, Garayev , & Bakay, 2014).

While men enjoy a sense of “camaraderie”, women are willing to “rip each other down” to compete for limited opportunities available in the organization (Ezzedeen, Budworth, & Baker, 2015). This culture of jealousy and unsupportiveness towards aspiring female employee from both of her male and female colleagues is one of the major reasons of formation of glass ceiling inside the organization.

Interestingly, Burke, Koyuncu, & Fiksenbaum (2008) found that more educated a women is higher is her perception of organizational biasness. This is because even if a women possess necessary qualifications, competence and have sufficient enthusiasm to climb the career ladder, there are very few lucky women who are able to attain the same status as their male counterparts (Eagly & Linda, 2007). Even if women are able to achieve a powerful position they generally do not possess as much structural power as their male counterparts. There is a higher probability that she has been given a prestigious position as a token only because she is a woman, in order to pomp organization’s seriousness regarding gender discrimination (Gheaus, 2015).

A report published from ILO in 2002 reveals that there is a lack of clear job descriptions and formal recruitment system for senior level jobs. As a result higher level of gendered biasness (glass ceiling) is perceived while selecting or promoting the candidate for upper level jobs. To be more precise contemporary human resource (HR) practices still have

profound gendered aspects. There deficiency of mentoring, initial placement in dead-end jobs, different standards for performance evaluation for women and men, and little or no access to informal networks of communication are nurturing corporate climate barriers in career progression of women (Johns, 2013).

Additionally, women are rarely assigned with challenging tasks but when women do take on challenging tasks, there is a very fair chance that these tasks will be seen as less challenging. As a result, women often do not receive enough recognition and appreciation despite of their hard work and noteworthy achievements (Fletcher, 1998).

So, researchers suggest that if organizations are interested in retaining talented women and minorities, a change in organizational culture is must because male-dominated perspectives in organizations are incompatible with the advancement of women to upper management levels. In addition to this, the opportunities of encompass sponsorship, mentorship, networking, succession planning, and directorships should be made equally accessible for every employee in the organization (Bazazo, 2017).

Organizational Policies

Organizational policy is what a company says it will do, through written procedures, and executive's public statements but organizational culture is what a company actually encourages its employees to do, either through formal and informal incentives or through subtle messages (Leppik, 2014).

As observed by Adler (1993), corporate organizations have structure and policies that highly support male socialization portraying that primarily they are created by men and are still under male-domination. As per the research of Mathur-Helem (2006) in major retail banks of South Africa, it is found that the existence of glass ceiling is not a myth. It is a real problem which is nurtured by the organizational culture, policies and strategies besides women's own inadequacies.

The differences in attitudes towards women's employment frequently begin at the top positions because males believe that they perform better than women in top positions. As a result, organizational practices and policies will be highly affected if the decision maker at the top holds a male culture (Al-Manasra, 2013). A suitable example for this is the hesitation of multi-national companies to send female managers on international assignment. On a survey, almost three-quarters of human resource managers from different MNCs believed that women managers would not be able to succeed on expatriate

assignments. However, female expatriates feel that being a woman made them highly visible in comparison to males. Both foreign and local clients were curious about them, wanted to meet them, and remembered them after the first encounter (Hutchings, Dawn, & Cooper, 2010).

Another example of biased organizational policy is employers' occasional hesitation to promote women because they are afraid that women will choose their families over their careers. Employers perceive that if organization is unable to offer work/life programs supporting outside work commitments for senior-level positions, perhaps, women could choose to work fewer hours than men as a possible solution so that they can spend more time with their families (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013).

Organization's discriminatory practices in recruitment, selection, and promotions are the most significant barriers in career advancement of women along with other obstacles such as: absence of sound human resource policies and lack of mentors as well as networking practices (Kirai & Elegwa , 2012) but when organizations identify and develop high-potential employees, provide high visibility assignments to employees of both gender and provide additional social support, and mentoring programs to female employees then both male and employees are able to achieve progression in their career ladders. Furthermore, female employees working in this type of organizations attribute their success to the efforts of their organizations (Burke & Nelson, 2002; Hossain, 2007)

There is no doubt that organizational policies limits and restrains the career advancement of women because when the plans and policies become gender-biased, then career progression of women becomes very difficult. But when organizational policies are gender-neutral (i.e. objective and non-discriminatory HR policies regarding recruitment, training and development, performance appraisals, and promotions), then there is vertical mobility of women as they rise through corporate ladder more easily (Eagly & Linda, 2007).

Similarly, in some developing countries like Bangladesh, India and even in Nepal, the government has taken initiatives to promote female employment in government sector, by providing quota reservation for women (Hossain, 2007). Thus, favorable legislative policies when harmonized with diversity- friendly and gender-neutral organizational policies and practices can do wonders in the economic and social advancement of women in our society.

Mentoring Deficiency

In addition to biased organizational culture, practices and policies, lack of sufficient exposure, guidance, training and experience hinders the ambition and desire of women to reach top positions (Sonnert & Holton, 1996). So, various forms of organizational support have been identified in the literature, including networking, mentoring, and family-friendly initiatives that can be done from the side of organization. Mentoring relationships holds potentially high value in women's career advancement because it boosts emotional support, confidence and career satisfaction in women (Ragins & Cotton, 1996).

According to Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis (1998), in order to be successful, women, more than men, need help from above, need to be easy to work with, and to be able to adapt. So, a mentor, who understands the organization's written and unwritten rules, is able to provide proper guidance on achieving advancement in hierarchical ladder (Tiron Tudor & Faragalla , 2019). And, since there is lack of career development encouragers in both corporate and personal life of women; having a supportive supervisor and/or mentor increases the likelihood of being appointed to critical roles and important assignments, while having important contacts positively influences the temporary promotions of employees (Islam & Jantan, 2017; Choi, 2018).

Hema Hattangady, Vice Chairman and CEO of Schneider Electric Conzerv India says, "Once you have a mentor who backs you, you have the confidence to move forward." She cannot be more correct. The mentoring relationship is valuable at every point in a career because mentors provide sincere and honest feedback to the mentee as and when required. This helps mentee to overcome the hurdles of professional life (Business Today, 2011).

In addition to that, several researches has demonstrated that demographic similarities and dissimilarities affect the relationships between supervisors and subordinates i.e. supervisors are more likely to support those support those employees who are of same gender and advocate for their success (Bradbury & Kellough, 2008). So, working with same gender mangers can help in the development of employees' social capital.

The study of Keating (2002) also supports this argument. It is seen that having a women mentor may help female employees to obtain the skills they need to succeed in their respective fields mostly because individuals are more likely to base their career expectations on the information received from people of same gender (Heckert, et al., 2002).

But the scarcity of females in top management positions from several decades has led to unavailability of same-sex mentoring for females. Additionally, these very few women at top ranking positions in male-dominated organizations are often ignored, kept under strict radar and pressured to conform to the norms set by the male majorities. Thus, their powerless presence inside the organization is not able to motivate and invite more women to the senior managerial positions of the organization (Guy, 1993). This has resulted in scarcity female role models. And consequently female employees are facing difficulty in getting feedback and receiving acceptance and support for their career development (Morrison, White, & Von-Velsor, 1987).

However, the argument that if women have more female mentors then they will be pulled up in the career ladder more easily may not hold true sometimes. Instead, some women exhibit the queen bee syndrome by perceiving senior women executives to be mean, competitive, and biased towards their female subordinates and some women executive may also see their younger colleagues of same gender as a possible threat to their position (Cooper, 1997).

Furthermore, due to the societal and cultural barriers, very few men are coming forward as a mentor to the women employees because greater the power disparity and deeper the ally between a male mentor and female mentee, there is more intense speculation and gossip regarding the professionalism of their relation. This type of corporate culture not only undermines the illicitness of a women's achievement (i.e. promotion) but it also significantly increases the risk of sexual harassment suit or even dismissal, if a man is found spending too much time with a junior female. To be precise, sponsorship and mentorship between opposite gender can be very easily misconstrued as sexual interest so highly qualified men and women avoid it as much as possible (Ann, Peraino, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2010).

To be precise, women lack role models, more precisely female role models, whose footsteps they can follow to achieve success in their fields. Unfortunately they are only left with male role models, and if they try to replicate their behavior, it is not considered acceptable coming from a women instead of a man (Lupu, 2012). So, because of lack of experienced female mentors to guide women through a politically-driven succession planning process, women may get lost inside office politics and feel unprepared to apply for senior level positions.

So, the major problem is that women lack enthusiasm to actively seek a mentor and the unavailability of right mentor at different stages of their career is limiting the success of today's women because along with a higher level of self-confidence, persistence, emotional quotient women also require timely advice of the mentors in every stage of their career (Aranha, Aquinas, & Saldanha, 2019). So, organizations should use strategies like: reverse mentoring and the buddy system as suggested by Stuckey (2015) to retain women in leadership roles.

Thus, there will be more female leaders to aspire the future generation of women. And as pipeline perspective suggests, more women in middle management will push more women into the executive ranks and "it is only a matter of time" before equality prevails (Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2006).

Avoidance of Informal Networks

Female managers are equally ambitious as male managers. So, Al-Manasra (2013) explained the fewer career progression opportunities for women at work compared to men as a result anticipated discrimination from the existence of informal male networks and unfavorable organizational policies, rather than lack of the ambition or self-confidence in the woman herself.

Generally organizations often favor men for promotion because of their access to mentoring and informal networks. These informal networks are highly beneficial for upward mobility, information exchange, career planning and strategizing, professional support and encouragement, and increased visibility but unfortunately females are excluded from accessing these networks. And since, female managers are less involved in networking relationships compared to male managers; there is a serious underrepresentation of women in managerial positions (Klenke, 1996; Yörük, 2019).

And another reason is that in the business world, where almost 90 percent of the management staff is comprised of male employees, it is not always possible for female employees to enter inside male-dominated informal networks because this communication channel is differentiated on the basis of gender and there is greater sense of homo-sociality in men (Yörük, 2019; Bird, 1996).

According to Giannett (2012) women feel the reality of glass ceiling most when they are going up the pyramid in their career. As they move up the career ladder women encounter the difficulty of gaining entry to the ubiquitous men's club. Thus, they feel left out as they

reach the higher positions. And a major reason behind this is that in most of the organizations, male-led informal networks still exist which are almost exclusive to males (Klenke, 1996).

To those who seek career success Kanter (1997) has advised to engage in networking activities but according to Cooper (2001) not only women are excluded from informal networks, but also from important decision making meetings. Women are generally given lower level projects with less visibility and their ideas are often ignored inside the organization, creating the “invisible-woman syndrome. Also, women are unable to associate themselves inside the male-dominated social networks. Ultimately their poor social network and weak informal interpersonal relationships limit their possibilities of career progress to powerful positions where they can exercise greater authority and autonomy (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001; Taylor, 2010).

2.1.3 Societal Factors as Glass Ceiling Barrier

The assumptions, prejudgments, and assessments against women arising from our social beliefs, traditions and stereotypes are the result of the patriarchal structure of our society and they are negatively influencing the career choice, advancement and occupational success of females from the very beginning (Tosunoğlu, 2015; Azeez & R G, 2018; Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan, 2018). Professional distinction/segregation and gender based stereotypes arising from social factors are the one of the important contributors towards existence and continuance of glass ceiling barriers in this 21st century (Taskın & Cetin, 2012).

Occupational Segregation

The study on women employees of Bangladesh conducted by Nazmul, Islam, & Alam (2016) discovered a significant relationship between gender stereotypes and career aspiration of women. Educated females still face limitations on what they can aspire to be in the future; irrespective of their talents, capacities and qualities because of socio-cultural factors and belief system (Khan , 2001).

According to Akpınar-Sposito (2013), occupational segregation in job is the result of our cultural and social attitudes towards what constitutes “male” or “female” jobs. The extent of this problem varies from country to country and from job to job. In third world countries like Bangladesh, workplace is still presumed to be male’s domain and women are considered as the “secondary earners” without or with limited decision-making power but

with the whole responsibility of childcare and domestic chores (Nazmul, Islam, & Alam, 2016).

Similarly Nazmul, Islam, & Alam (2016) revealed that most males feel that domestic work like cooking, washing clothes and looking after the children is not their job, it is below their dignity to perform those activities. Thus, educated females are imprisoned within restricted spaces, where they are mainly concentrated in feminized professions like teaching (horizontal occupational segregation) and limited to lower job categories than males (vertical occupational segregation).

This phenomenon of occupational segregation resulting from social cultural values and tradition is not only the problem of countries like Bangladesh rather it is a very common problem of almost every country of the world. According to Yörük (2019) children are raised on the basis of gender throughout the world. People raise their sons to be more active and enterprising so that they can be well prepared for the outside environment, and raise the girls to be calmer, more moderate and obedient helper of household.

While some children choose their career aspiration based on their interests, others are forced to adjust their personal goals to as per their parents' expectations. This unwanted interference of parents in their children's career goals is not only creating unnecessary pressure in children's life but in some cases women are compelled to second guess their future dreams and aspirations (Ezzedeen, Budworth, & Baker, 2015).

The economic and social contribution of women is often undermined in patriarchal society, and their employment opportunities are limited to few sectors of the economy. According to Carter, Welbourne, & Prime (2009) patriarchal society perceives women to be more effective in caretaking behaviors, while men are supposed to be more efficient at action oriented "take-charge" behaviors. This phenomenon of gender segregation is not only limiting female's advancement in male-dominated sectors but it is also limiting the women's occupancy towards the bottom of organizational hierarchy, even in female-dominated areas (Dimovski, Skerlavaj, & Man, 2010).

A rather interesting research reveals that women are neurologically competent to look at problems more holistically and by nature they have a lot of anxiety. In this 21st century, ability to handle anxiety and having a holistic view of the problems is highly desirable in a manager. But despite of having these advantages over men, the social, cultural and family

wiring around women restrains them from being present in positions where they can exercise leadership (Aranha, Aquinas, & Saldanha, 2019).

Even though today's women can receive same educational degree as men and acquire similar skills, abilities and knowledge but this does not ensure that they will be able to get real opportunities to realize them professionally (Lavanya & Rajashankari, 2016). The reason behind this is that very few women aspire to be executives and they receive necessary family support for pursuing their dreams. Others dare to follow executive aspirations at the expense of family; while some are forced to sacrifice their careers in name of family and remaining few aims for career-family balance.

Thus, the traditional thinking of male-dominated society, parents' preference of profession and lack of same-sex role models are acting as barriers in occupational choice and career aspirations of women resulting occupational segregation (both horizontal and vertical) of women in a few selective sectors and levels.

Stereotypes

A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by them (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014). This is similar to the concept of Sex role orientation (gender role orientation).

Fortin (2005) defines gender role orientation as the beliefs that individuals hold regarding the proper roles for men and women both at work and at home. Under traditional conceptions of gender roles, women are highly expected to fulfill the family or private role whereas men are expected to fulfill the work or public role (Eagly, 1987)

Stereotypically women are associated with characteristics such as being more interpersonally sensitive, gentle, nurturing, and sympathetic, while men are considered to be more assertive, controlling and dominant. In addition to this, it is believed that women become temperamental very easily and lack motivation to do their jobs properly (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

As a consequence, when applying for top positions, women are assessed more strictly than men. Women are often denied promotions because it is perceived that they have tendency to put their family above their work commitment and a higher standard of performance is expected of them to prove their credentials and commitment towards the organization.

While men have the luxury of committing mistakes, women are penalized for the smallest of errors (Tennant & Tennant , 2008).

Even if women are able to enter into a profession that is traditionally reserved for men, they are continuously discriminated and face multi-faced barriers while working their way up in the career ladder (Reza & Mehran, 2009). While there is absolutely no doubt that women are equally formidable performers as their male colleagues but the presence of stereotypes like: women are generally not reliable, they have health issues and are vulnerable to sickness causing frequent absenteeism have severely hampered the advancement opportunities of women (Zafarullah, 2000; Dale Carnegie, 2014-15).

According to Klenke (1996), both men and women desire the characteristics like aggressiveness, objective thinking, dominance, competition, and decisiveness in a leader but interestingly when women display these traits, they receive negative evaluations in contrast to men. Women are in great dilemma because neither they can portray masculine qualities nor they can use feminine traits as a leader, manager or a senior executive. If they adopt a “feminine” managerial style, they have to face the risk of being viewed as ineffective leader, but if they adopt a “masculine” style then they are criticized for not being feminine enough (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998).

Furthermore, women are expected to be tough but not display “macho “characteristics; they are expected to take responsibility yet be obedient in following orders and they are expected to be ambitious yet not to expect equal treatment (Morrison, White, & Von-Velsor , 1987). So, one of the biggest challenges women face is how to be “tough” in a male-dominated industry without being “difficult” because under similar circumstances when women were criticized for being “pushy”, men were lauded as “leaders” (Jackson, 2001).. Thus, often women in higher-ranking positions complain of feeling socially isolated (Omotayo, Oladele, & Adenike, 2012).

Lyness & Thompson (2000) found that women face greater barriers than men to climb corporate ladder and they need different strategies to succeed. In order to be a successful executive, women have to overcome isolation, sex-stereotyping and performance pressures. And this feeling of social isolation can negatively affect the woman’s view towards her career hampering the desire to advance further, professionally (Omotayo, Oladele, & Adenike, 2012).

In such case, Stuckey (2015) suggests using the strategy called career mapping to keep the women into leadership positions in which development plans, promotions, and network opportunities are given equally to both men and women who having similar capabilities. This ensures gender diversity in top management. Since there is a positive relation between gender diversity in top management and financial performance, companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams enjoy a better financial performance. The study conducted by Catalyst among 353 companies shows that companies with higher representation of women attained 35 percent higher ROE and 34 percent higher TRS than companies with the lowest representation of women (Catalyst, 2011).

According to Nigam (2008) although women's sincerity and hard work has gained remarkable acknowledgement nowadays, but they are still earning lower remunerations in comparison to their male colleagues. The stereotyped idea that women may not be appropriate for the senior positions not only hampers the working life of women and their careers but it has a very negative impact on future generations (especially female population). As a result, younger generation of girls does not have enough female role models to follow as the success stories of these highly capable women executives are rarely celebrated and rejoiced in our male-dominated society (Karaca, 2007).

But with the increasing educational, economic and social advancement and changing mindset of generation-Y, the traditional role of women and their self-perception have changed to a greater extent (Stedham & Yamamura, 2004). Nowadays, women with higher education have shown greater desire for independence and greater eagerness to undertake managerial role and if necessary they are ready to sacrifice their home front to make their career successful (Budhwar, Saini , & Bhatnagar , 2005). Additionally the emergence of "metro-sexual men", men who share the responsibility of the family might help women to be an actively involved in workforce more than ever (Vittal, 2003).

Along with change in individual and socio-cultural factors, Payalchanania (2012) thinks that organizations have realized the importance of women employees nowadays and are offering special privilege packages to encourage women's entrance into the workforce. Organizations are also trying to offer a pro-diversity and impartial working environment to female employees in order to enable them to meet the gender-specific challenges. Organizations at present are proactively providing flexi-time options, pregnancy-friendly

work conditions, maternity leave, child support, and pick up/drop for women working in night shifts, protection against harassment and so on to motivate female employees.

Both domestically and globally, women represent a major source of untapped talent because barriers to women's advancement continue to exist in the form of cultural norms, stereotypes, and employer policies and practices no matter where you go. And if women employees feel that they are being discriminated by their organization or their male colleagues during promotion or they feel less secure in their job they would like to switch to better jobs (Nazmul, Islam, & Alam, 2016; Akpinar-Sposito, 2013).

So, this research attempts to see the reality of gender discrimination through the eyes of early-career employees by measuring their glass ceiling perception because when Jabbar & Imran (2013) analyzed the perception of glass ceiling through difference in demographic profile; the result showed that the perception varies according to the variation in demographic profile.

Another reason behind the selection of early-career employees as study population of this research is that given evidence of a correlation between college major and occupational choice (Sax & Bryant, 2006), analyzing the responses of early-career employees of different sectors is a way of accessing the fresh perspective of glass-ceiling in recent times. And if we generalize the study of Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron (2011), practically, if an early-career employee perceives gendered biasness, then there is existence of glass ceiling.

Since, career planning starts at very early age and the expectation of making progress and rising upwards continues until retirement, female employees who work in a highly male-dominated environment show decreased organizational commitment and increased turnover intentions (Korabik & Rosin, 1991). In addition to this, women's enthusiasm and effort to reach at higher echelons could be decreased if they perceive that their opportunities of advancement are limited because of gender biasness and this would seriously hamper the sex-ratio at management levels (Dreher, 2003).

Furthermore, if early-career female employees continue to expect lower salary and delayed promotion than their male counterparts, then we might expect that wage gap and gender based discrimination continue to exist in the form of glass ceiling till the foreseeable future, even if larger number of women enter in male-dominated fields (Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011).

This modern society is often characterized as highly democratic, humanistic and advanced and compared to past generations, young women of modern-day have been found to be more agentic and full of self-esteem. This new generation believes that gender based discrimination has reduced due to social progress, legislative gender equality measures, and success stories of high-profile females (Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011). So, this study attempts to explore if employees who are in the early phase of their career perceive the existence glass ceiling in their respective organizations and through which factor(individual, organizational or social), taken from the review of existing literature, glass ceiling is more reflected in Nepalese context.

2.2 Research Gap

Numerous studies have been done throughout the globe regarding the issue of glass ceiling but in Nepal only handful of researchers have tried to grasp the reality of glass ceiling phenomenon such as: (Lama, 2019), (Regmi Adhikary, 2016) and (Rana, 2007). In addition to that the issue of glass ceiling has not been viewed from the eyes of early-career employees so far; although few of the researchers have included the perspective business students (Maithani, Misra, Potnis, & Bhuwania, 2012; Ezzedein, Budworth, & Baker, 2015) and recent graduates (Sax & Bryant, 2006; Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011). Majority of these existing researches used only female employees as sample population i.e. (Jackson, 2001; Afza & Newaz, 2008; Nigam, 2008; Maheshwari, 2012; Sahtalebia & Yarmohammadian, 2012; Bombuwela & De Alwis , 2013; Al-Manasra, 2013; Akpinar-Sposito, 2013; Choi & Park, 2014; Regmi Adhikary, 2016; Aidoo & Achira, 2016; Bazazo, 2017; Abidin, Mohamed, Rosec, Shimid, & Raimee, 2019) and are based on either the perception of middle level managers (Jackson, 2001; Al-Manasra, 2013; Akpinar-Sposito, 2013; Choi & Park, 2014; Abidin, Mohamed, Rosec, Shimid, & Raimee, 2019) or executive level female employees (Nigam, 2008; Bombuwela & De Alwis , 2013; Aidoo & Achira, 2016).

So, there is a lack of fresh perspective and a rather gender-inclusive approach in the glass ceiling literature and this study attempts to fulfill the existing gap in the literature of glass ceiling both globally and nationally. Furthermore, this study attempts to motivate future researchers to address the glass ceiling phenomenon from different viewpoints rather than sticking to the traditional approach of assessing the situation of glass ceiling.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees of Kathmandu valley. The figure below shows the theoretical framework that has been developed for this study which is similar to the conceptualization of Karaca (2007) and Sever (2016). The researcher attempts to use the same approach.

The glass ceiling can result from the individual circumstances of women as well as from the perceptions and attitudes of males both in organization and society (Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan, 2018). So, the independent variables are the glass ceiling barriers which influences the glass ceiling perception in employees which are divided into three major variables: Individual, organizational and social factors. These three main factors have eight sub-dimensions (Karaca, 2007) . Glass ceiling perception is the dependent variable in this research.

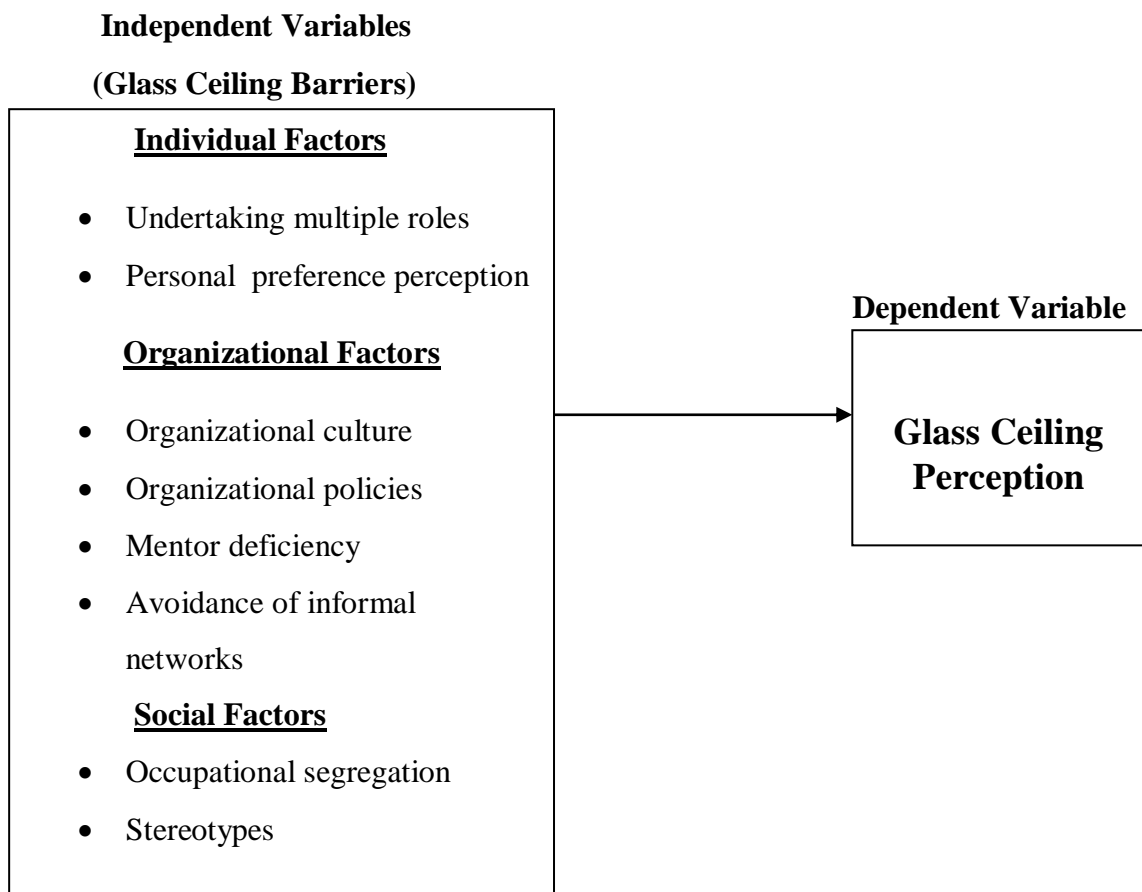


Figure 2.2: Theoretical Framework

2.4 Definition of Terms

Glass Ceiling Perception: Glass ceiling perception is defined as the thoughts a person or group has about the glass ceiling phenomenon (Ström & Burvall, 2018).

Early-career employees: The early-career employees can be defined as individuals in the workforce who are five years or less from completion of their highest degree or under the age of thirty five (Zaharee, Lipkie, Mehlman, & Neylon, 2018).

Individual Factors: Individual factors are defined as the obstacles arising from women's multiple roles at social life and their own self perceptions (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010).

Undertaking Multiple Roles: Undertaking multiple role refers to the struggle of caring for the home and children while progressing in their professional career (Sever, 2016).

Personal Preference Perceptions: Personal preference perception is defined as the perception of individual while choosing between family and career. While prioritizing between work life and family life, it is generally expected from the woman to push her work life to the second plan (Yörük, 2019).

Organizational Factors: Organizational factors are defined as the obstacles arising from organization's culture and policies, difficulties to find mentors within organization, and not being able to get involved in informal networks which would otherwise create an opportunity for employee to progress in their career (Boone, Veller, Nikolaeva, Keith, & Houran, 2013).

Organizational Culture: Organizational culture is defined as the collective values, norms, beliefs, assumptions and principles of members of the organization which is reflected in organization's vision, symbols, language and management system (Karaca, 2007; Sever, 2016).

Organizational Policies: Organizational policy is defined as the formal document describing the organization's position on a particular aspect of compliance with regulations, standards, and guidelines (Afza & Newaz, 2008).

Mentor Deficiency: Mentoring can be described as seeking help from someone to reach out knowledge while mentoring deficiency is defined as the lack of enough female managers that can be role models for early-career female employees (Öge, Karasoy, & Kara, 2014; Sever, 2016).

Avoidance of Informal Networks: Avoidance of informal networks is defined as the hesitation or refusal to participate in social events at workplace which limits the access to different informal social networks inside the organization (Sever, 2016) .

Social Factors: Social factors are defined as the assumptions, prejudgments, and assessments against women prevailing in our society (Karaca, 2007).

Occupational Segregation: Occupational segregation is defined as the distribution of people across and within jobs and tasks, based on the gender differences (Sever, 2016).

Stereotypes: Stereotypes is defined as the prejudices, biasness and perceptions regarding the behaviors of both men and women in the society (Sever, 2016).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter comprises of research design, population and sample size, methods and sources of data collection, method of data analysis and reliability and validity of data instruments. Furthermore, it presents the methodologies and theories used for carrying out this research.

3.1 Research Design

In order to conduct this research study, quantitative approach towards descriptive and explanatory causal research design was used for empirically speculating the research objective. The data collection was done using self-administered questionnaire and the information provided by respondent was analyzed using statistical tools.

3.2 Population and Sample

The research was conducted within Kathmandu valley and the population for the proposed study included all the employees in the workforce who are five years or less from completion of their highest degree or under the age of 35. Since, the population of the early-career employees inside Kathmandu valley was unknown, Cochran's 1977 formula was used to determine the sample size for unknown population using following formula:

$$n = \frac{pqz^2}{\epsilon^2} \dots\dots\dots (3.1)$$

Where, n= sample size

p = Population proportion with given characteristics

q = Population proportion without given characteristics

z = Standard normal deviation at the required confidence level

ε= Error margin

For the unknown population it is recommended the value of p and q shall be set at 50%. By considering the confidence level of 95 %, with z value = 1.96 and sampling error ε=5%.

$$n = \frac{50*50*(1.96)^2}{\epsilon^2} = 384 \dots\dots\dots (3.2)$$

So, the optimal sample size for this study is 384 early-career employees working inside Kathmandu valley.

3.3 Nature and Sources of data

Both the primary and secondary data were used for this research study.

Primary Source: Primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire which was distributed to the early-career employees of Kathmandu valley. The questionnaire was prepared using inbuilt tools in Google form. The questionnaire was distributed using online platforms. The responses collected were validated and then entered in the excel sheet and then imported in SPSS. All the questions in questionnaire were marked as compulsory.

Secondary Source: Secondary data was collected through different journal articles, research papers, books, published research report and different online sites.

3.4 Instrumentation

The study was based on survey method which used structured questionnaire to collect data from the early-career employees. A draft research questionnaire was distributed to 40 respondents as a part of pilot study. This pilot study was done in order to test the reliability and validity of the study.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. In the first part, the questions on respondents demographic profile was asked such as age, gender, educational qualification, marital status and occupational sector, monthly salary, promotion expectation and familiarity with the term "glass ceiling". The second part comprised of questions to measure the independent variable i.e. Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Social Factors. These three independent variables were divided into eight sub-variables. Both Individual Factors and Social Factors comprised of two sub-variables: Undertaking Multiple Roles and Personal Preference Perception; and Occupational Segregation and Stereotyping respectively whereas Organizational factors had four sub-variables namely; Organizational Culture, Organizational Policies, Mentoring Deficiency and Avoidance of Informal Networks.

The second part contained only likert scale questions for measuring the independent variables. A five-point likert scale was used where 1 stands for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for neutral, 4 for disagree and 5 stands for strongly disagree. Since most of the likert scale questions were negative, few of the positive questions were reversed to maintain

uniformity while carrying out the data analysis. Thus, higher mean value of higher scale questionnaire indicated lower perception of independent and dependent variables.

Similarly, the questionnaire in the third part comprised of only one question to find out the reaction of these early-career employees towards the discriminatory practices inside their organization. The only one Yes/No question asked the respondents if they would continue to work in their current organization if the chances of their promotion could be affected by their gender, race, ethnicity or religion.

3.5 Data Analysis Tool

In order to analyze the data, first of all the responses were coded and entered into the SPSS statistics version 26. Then, SPSS and Microsoft Excel were used to organize, manage, analyze and interpret the data. The study used the following methods of data analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics consisted of frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation to describe the characteristics of the data. Frequency and percentage were used for questions assessing the demographic profile of respondents as well as job related questions like monthly salary job sector, professional experience and familiarity with the term "glass ceiling". All the dependent and independent variables were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The overall perception of respondents regarding the barriers created by individual, organizational and social factors along with their glass ceiling perception was measured using the mean value of likert scale where a value higher than 3 indicates lower perception of gender-based biasness and standard deviation showed the variance in perception of the respondents regarding that variable.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between variables which indicated how or to what extent variables were associated with each other. The relationship between factors influencing glass ceiling perception and the actual perception of glass ceiling of the respondents inside their current organization was determined by correlation analysis.

The scale model suggested by Davies (1971) used to describe the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, are as shown below:

0.7 and above – very strong relationship,

0.50 to 0.69 – strong relationship,

0.30 to 0.49 – moderate relationship,

0.10 to 0.29 – low relationships and

0.01 to 0.09 – very low relationship

Regression Analysis

The Multiple Regression Model was used to identify dominant factor among the three factors influencing glass ceiling perception of early-career employees that had closest relation with glass ceiling perception. Multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2), adjusted R^2 , and the standard error of the estimate was calculated through SPSS.

A regression analysis was undertaken to estimate the strength of independent and dependent variable. The regression equation between independent variables (individual factors, organizational factors and social factors) and dependent variable (glass ceiling perception) was represented as following:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + e$$

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + e$$

Where,

Y = Glass Ceiling Perception;

B_0 = Constant;

B_1 , B_2 & B_3 = the coefficient of the variables;

X_1 = Individual Factors;

X_2 = Organizational Factors;

X_3 = Social Factors;

e = the error or the difference between the predicted and the observed value of Y.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

A pilot survey was conducted to find out the reliability of the variables of the questionnaire of this research. The questionnaire was pretested based on the responses of 40 respondents and after calculating the Cronbach's alpha the questionnaire was further distributed to collect the required responses. The pilot survey of 40 respondents showed the following value of the Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3.2:

Reliability Test of Variables

Variables	Number of positive items	Cronbach's alpha	Number of negative items	Cronbach's alpha
Individual Factors	4	0.755	7	0.725
Organizational Factors	7	0.736	10	0.703
Social Factors	-	-	10	0.811
Glass ceiling perception			6	0.812

Cronbach's alpha values of 0.7 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency. So, based on the values shown in the above table, the homogeneity of both positive and negative items of different dependent and independent variables can be confirmed and it indicates that the data collected is reliable and valid.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter aims to extract as much information as possible through the analysis of data and its interpretation to obtain results of the study. The primary data collected from questionnaire method are analyzed and presented in tabular form through the use of instruments as explained in methodology section of the study.

In this chapter, the data processed through various tools and techniques of SPSS is analyzed to get the final results. It includes the demographic profile of respondents, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and their interpretations followed by central tendency measurement of dependent and independent variables and lastly inferential analysis which includes correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis.

This analysis is solely focused to measure the factors affecting glass ceiling perception of early-career employees of Kathmandu valley and fulfill other specific objectives hereby answering the different research questions set for conducting the research. It further intends to answer the research questions, fulfill the objectives and test the hypotheses.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of respondents provides the information about 272 respondents on the basis of their gender, age, gender, marital status and their highest education along with job related factors like sector of employment, monthly salary, professional experience, promotion expectation. Similarly their familiarity with the term "Glass Ceiling" is also shown in this profile.

The profile of the respondents collected from structured questionnaire has been summarized and tabulated in table 4.1.

Table 4.1:

Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	177	65.1%
	Male	95	34.9%

Age	20-25	166	61.0%
	25-30	97	35.7%
	30-35	9	3.3%
Highest Education	High School	9	3.3%
	Undergraduate	78	28.7%
	Graduate	185	68.0%
Marital Status	Single	219	80.5%
	Married	53	19.5%
Sector	Private Sector	205	75.4%
	Government Sector	67	24.6%
Monthly Salary	Below 15,000	29	10.7%
	15,000-25,000	98	36.0%
	25,000-35,000	84	30.9%
	Above 35,000	61	22.4%
Professional Experience	Less than 1 year	137	50.4%
	1-3 years	106	38.9%
	3-5 years	29	10.7%
Promotion Expectation	Yes	188	69.1%
	No	29	10.7%
	Not Sure	55	20.2%
Are you familiar with the term "Glass Ceiling?"	Yes	140	51.5%
	No	132	48.5%

Out of 272 respondents, 65.1% were female and the remaining 34.9% were male i.e. 177 females and 95 males. Among these respondents, 61.0% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20-25 years, 35.7% of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-30 years and remaining 3.3% belong to the age group of 30-35 years. Hence, majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 20-25 years (i.e. 166) followed by 30-35 years (i.e. 97) and the age group of 30-35 years had the least number of respondents (i.e. 9). This means that the research was able to get rather fresh perspective of glass ceiling in Nepalese organization since most of the respondents were below the age of 30 years.

68.0% of the respondents had the educational qualification of master's level while 28.7% had education qualification of bachelor's level and only 3.3% had educational qualification of intermediate level (+2) as their highest degree. So, it is apparent that the respondents had a sound educational background as the maximum numbers of respondents are university graduates. Out of the total respondents, 80.5% were single whereas only 19.5% of them were married. Similarly, most of these respondents had started their career in private sector (i.e. 75.4%) and only 24.6% of the respondents worked in government sector. This means less than one fourth of total respondents are government job holders.

Most of the respondents of this research have recently started their career in different sectors of the economy. Half of the respondents (50.4%) had professional experience of less than 1 year. 38.9% of the respondents had a job experience of 1-3 years whereas only 10.7% of them have been in the job market for 3-5 years. The monthly salary of these respondents is concentrated in three of the salary ranges (i.e. 15,000-25,000; 25,000-35,000; Above 35,000) and only one tenth of the total respondents are receiving salary below Rs. 15,000 per month. Currently, 10.7% of the respondents are receiving monthly salary below Rs. 15,000 and 36.0% of them are receiving monthly salary in range of Rs. 15,000-25,000. Similarly the current salary of 30.9% of the respondents ranges between Rs. 25,000-35,000 while 22.4% of them receive a monthly salary above Rs. 35,000.

Out of the total respondents, 69.1% have promotion expectations in their current job, 10.7% do not have any such expectations whereas 20.2% of them are not sure whether they would get promoted from their current position or not. Similarly, 51.5% of the respondents were familiar with the term of "Glass Ceiling" but a rather significant number of respondents (48.5%) had even heard the term "Glass Ceiling" which shows that glass ceiling is still a very new concept in Nepal.

4.2 Sector-wise Variation in Salary Ranges of Respondents

The monthly salary of the respondents varied according to the sector they worked in as shown in figure 4.1.

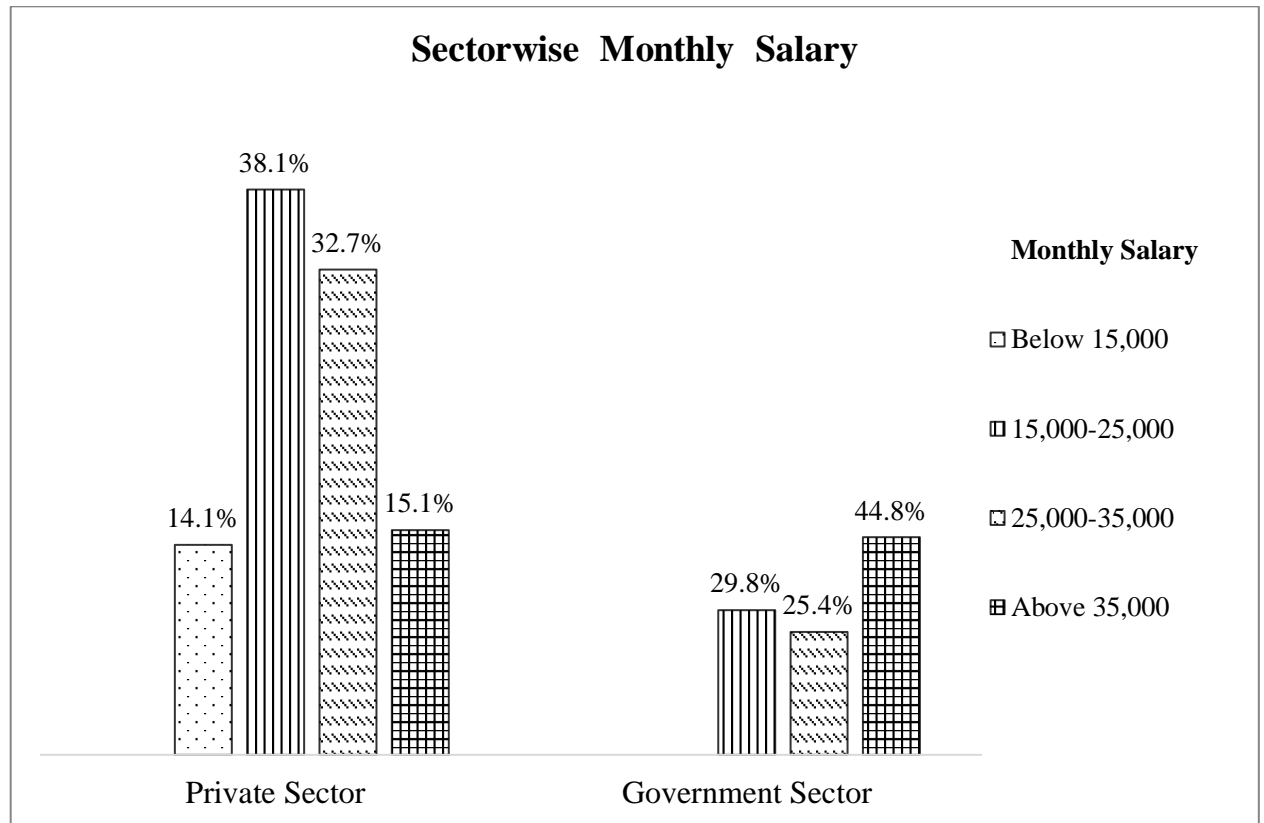


Figure 4.1: Sector-wise Variation in Salary Ranges of Respondents

Majority of respondents working in private sector organizations receive salary between Rs.15,000 -25,000 (i.e.38.1%) and Rs. 25,000-35,000 (i.e.32.7%) Additionally, almost similar numbers of respondents receive the lowest and highest salary range mentioned in the questionnaire. While 14.1% of respondents working in private sector receive monthly salary below Rs. 15,000, 15.1% percent of them belong to the highest paying category by receiving a monthly salary above Rs.35,000.

In contrast to private sector employees, none of the employees working in government sector organizations receive salary below Rs. 15,000 and maximum respondents (i.e. 44.8%) receive monthly salary above Rs. 35,000. While 29.8% of respondents receive monthly salary between Rs. 15,000-25,000; 25.4% of respondents receive monthly salary in the range of Rs. 25,000-35,000. Thus, it can be concluded that employees working in government sector receive comparatively higher salary than employees working in private sector.

4.3 Education-wise Variation in Salary Ranges of Respondents

Monthly salary of the respondents varied according to the highest educational qualification as shown in figure 4.2. Most of the respondents who have educational qualification of intermediate level (+2) receive comparatively lower monthly salary in comparison to undergraduates and graduates. While most of the graduates receive monthly salary ranging from Rs. 15,000-25000 and Rs.25,000-35,000 (i.e. 33%), majority of undergraduates receive monthly salary in range of Rs. 15,000-25000 whereas most of the respondents with educational qualification of intermediate level (+2) receive salary either below Rs. 15,000 or in range of Rs. 15,000-25,000 (i.e. 33.3%). Only 1 out of 9 respondents with high school degree is able to receive salary above Rs. 35,000 while 30.8% of the graduated respondents receive salary above Rs. 35,000. This shows that higher the educational qualification higher is the salary.

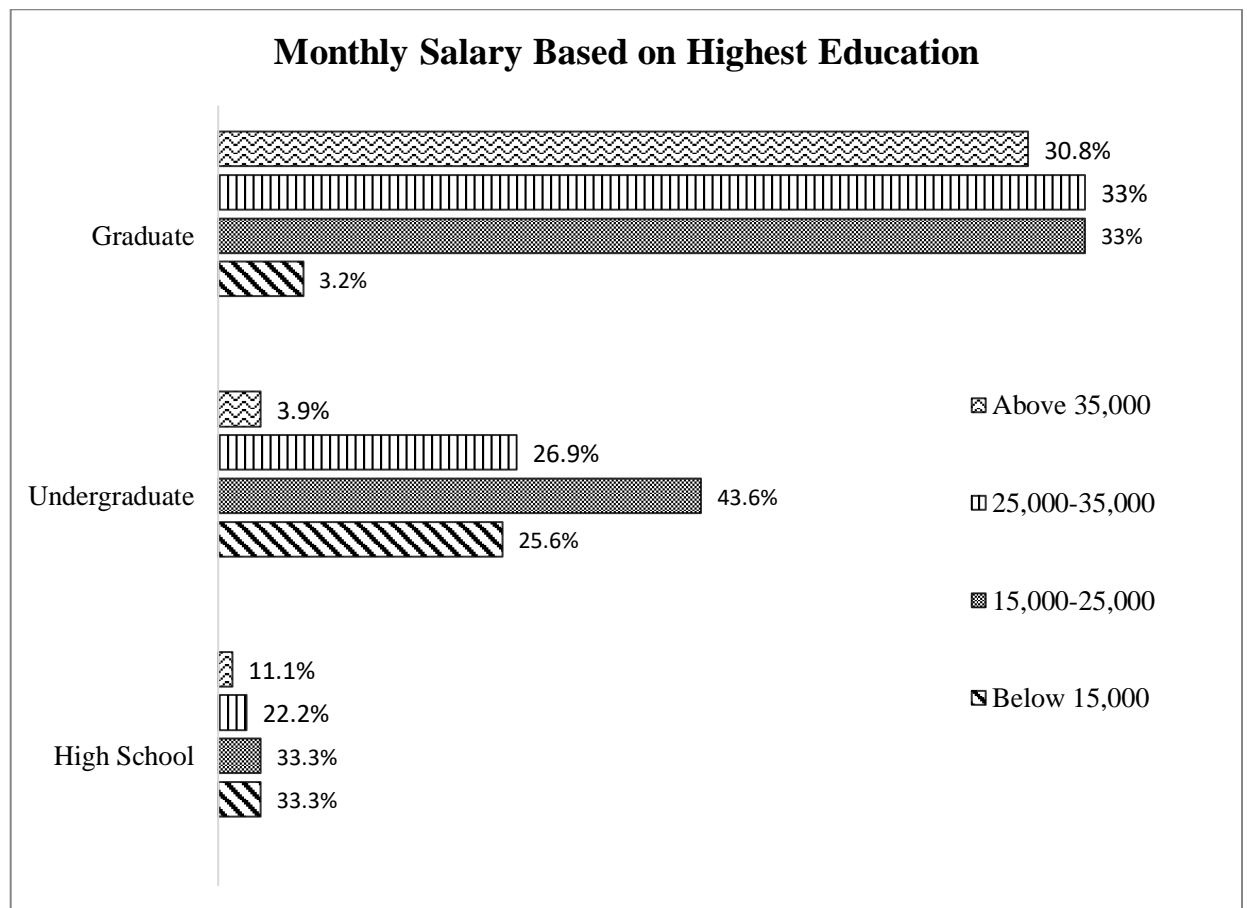


Figure 4.2: Variation in Salary Ranges of Respondents according to their Highest Educational Qualification.

4.4 Central Tendency Measurement of Constructs

4.4.1 Central Tendency Measurement of Independent Variables

For the measurement of central tendency of independent variables i.e. individual factors, organizational factors and societal factors; mean and standard deviation was used. Table 4.2 summarizes the central tendency of the independent variables.

Table 4.2:

Central Tendency Measurement of Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Sub-variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Individual Factors	Undertaking Multiple Roles	3.79	0.7184
	Personal Preference Perception	3.43	0.52847
	Organizational Culture	3.21	0.67783
Organizational Factors	Organizational Policies	3.33	0.61019
	Mentoring Deficiency	3.87	0.48043
	Avoidance of Informal Networks	2.90	0.60606
Social Factors	Occupational Segregation	2.83	0.74977
	Stereotyping	4.10	0.83064

Note: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

4.4.1.1 Undertaking Multiple Roles

Especially in today's time women are more actively involved in income generating activities. This creates difficulties for women as their traditional role of a care-taker still remains unchanged whereas they have actively to fulfill the role of a responsible employee in professional arena. Thus, the obligation to undertake multiple roles in their life creates hindrance in the career advancement of women.

The perception of respondents on multiple roles of women was measured by five indicators: " The place of the woman is to be with her husband and be a good mother",

Working life prevents a woman from being a good mother and wife", " Getting married and having children negatively affects the performance of women at work", Having children now or in the future thought limits women's career goals" and " Equal responsibility sharing is necessary in every housework".

The mean value for undertaking multiple roles is 3.79 whereas the standard deviation is 0.7184. The mean value of 3.79 indicates that the respondents did not agree that undertaking multiple roles block the career advancement of women and affect the perception of glass ceiling. The standard deviation of 0.7184 indicates that the respondents had divergent views regarding the multiple roles of women. While some respondents agreed undertaking multiple roles hindered the career advancement of women, others did not believe it.

4.4.1.2 Personal Preference Perception

Personal preference perception has direct relation with undertaking of multiple roles by women. Since women continuously have to juggle between work and family, sometimes they are forced to choose between two and prioritize one of them. Personal preference perception related agreement was measured using six indicators: "Men and women have different orientations towards work. Men and women have different orientations towards work", " While choosing between work and family, women give priority to their family", " Women achieve career goals that they have a specific plan for. Women achieve career goals that they have a specific plan for", " Women have objective opinion and are ready to take initiatives. They have the ability to become a successful manager. Women have objective opinion and are ready to take initiatives. They have the ability to become a successful manager" and "Confident women can easily overcome the difficulties of being a top manager. Confident women can easily overcome the difficulties of being a top manager".

The mean value of personal preference perception is 3.43 and the standard deviation is 0.52847. The mean value of 3.43 indicates that the respondents have a somewhat neutral to negative perception regarding the personal preference of women and the standard deviation value of 0.52 indicates that the respondents have somehow concentrated opinions on this matter. It is the second lowest among all the factors. While some of the respondents have positive view regarding the personal preference perception of women and most of them agree that women do not prioritize family over their career.

4.4.1.3 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture depends upon the organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits. The management style and structure of the organization are highly influenced by organization culture. An organization with masculine culture may not be supportive of advancement of female employees and may be indirectly supporting the gender based discrimination inside the workplace.

The attitude of respondents towards the existing organizational culture was measured using five indicators: " In the institution, business life is governed by the rules of men", " When women are promoted to higher positions, they are reluctant to come", " More opportunities are provided to males to reach senior positions in management", " Women are discriminated in issues such as salary, bonus, status etc." and " When staff needs to be removed (during crisis) women must be fired first".

The mean value of organizational culture is 3.21 and the standard deviation is 0.67783. The mean value of 3.21 indicates that the respondents have a positive attitude towards the current organizational culture of Nepal. The standard deviation value of 0.67783 indicates that the respondents had averagely dispersed opinions on this matter. While some of the respondents have a very positive view regarding the existing organizational culture and some of them are highly unsatisfied with the culture of their workplace.

4.4.1.4 Organizational Policies

Organizational policies are associated with the decisions of the senior managers of the organization and its organizational culture. In order to achieve the organizational goals; in some instances, human resources related managerial decision could be based on gender of employees. The perception of respondents towards organizational policies was measured using four indicators: "Unbiased performance appraisal for women and men in the institution valuation policies are available. Unbiased performance appraisal for women and men in the institution valuation policies are available", " Both women and men in the same position are paid equal wages", " It is commonly seen that women are in lower positions than their abilities allows them to be at. It is commonly seen that women are in lower positions than their abilities allows them to be at" and " Women are adequately involved in key tasks effective in reaching senior management levels".

The mean value of organizational policies is 3.33 and the standard deviation is 0.61019. The mean value of 3.33 indicated that the respondents had a relatively positive attitude

towards the currently existing organizational policies of their workplace. The standard deviation value of 0.61019 indicates that the respondents have mildly dispersed opinions towards currently effective policies in their organizations. While some of the respondents gave a positive review of the existing organizational policies and some of them are highly unsatisfied with the gender-biased organizational policies.

4.4.1.5 Mentoring Deficiency

Mentoring can be referred as providing suggestions, knowledge and expertise to a fellow subordinate or a junior person. When an employee wants to reach out to someone to seek help regarding the professional life, then organization should be able to provide a mentor to help him/her. Mentoring relationship is important in each and every step of career because a mentor is able to help the mentee to successfully navigate through office politics and even prepare the mentee for higher positions. But generally it is seen that female employees are unable to find a mentor to guide them due to several reason in comparison to male ones.

The perception of respondents towards the deficiency of mentors inside the organization was measured using five indicators: "Possibilities of progress and development in their work are very important for women", " Women benefit sufficiently from the mentoring relationship in the institution", " When trainings are provided to employees for enabling them attend managerial positions, female employees take equal advantage of this opportunity as male ones. When trainings are provided to employees for enabling them attend managerial positions, female employees take equal advantage of this opportunity as male ones", " There is no female manager who can act as role model for sufficient number of women" and " When women become senior executives they have the fear of being alone".

The mean value of mentoring deficiency is 3.87 and the standard deviation is 0.48043. The mean value of 3.87 indicated that the respondents do not perceive that there is deficiency of a suitable mentor for female employees in Nepalese organization and the standard deviation of 0.48043 indicates that majority of the respondents have similar type of belief. In fact this variable has a lowest value of standard deviation among all factors which showed that responses are fairly concentrated.

4.4.1.6 Avoidance of Informal Networks

If any person refuses or avoids participation in the social events at the workplace, then this type of situation can be explained by avoidance of informal networks. When compared to men, women are less likely to take coffee breaks, participate in tieless meetings or social meetings that are not work related. This results in fewer informal connection and poor social network of women in their professional field. Therefore, avoidance of social events is believed to be an important factor of the glass ceiling effect.

The perceived notion regarding the avoidance of informal networks was measured using three indicators: "Women can communicate with male colleagues and superiors easily", "Men are often able to maintain unofficial external relations with their influence which act in favor of their own kind" and " Women have difficulty entering into male-dominant communication networks." The mean value of avoidance of informal network is 2.91 and the standard deviation is 0.60606. The mean value of 2.90 indicates that the majority of the respondents believe that women avoid informal social networks of the organizations. The standard deviation value of 0.60606 indicates that the respondents have averagely concentrated opinions towards women's' lower involvement in informal social networks. While some of the respondents perceived that female employees can easily maintain informal relationships with their male colleagues, other argued that men reap higher benefit from the exclusive entry in "Boy's Club".

4.4.1.7 Occupational Segregation

If people are distributed across and within the job and tasks on the basis of gender differences then it results in occupational segregation. According to the social perception prevailing in patriarchal society, men and women have varied capabilities to execute different profession and this highly affects the glass ceiling perception of people. The attitude of respondents towards segregation of male and female in different jobs are measured using four indicators: "Families can lead their daughters to the profession that they think are for women. Families can lead their daughters to the profession that they think are for women", " Distribution of duties differs for men and women within the organization", " Women are not as dependent on their careers as men" and " While evaluating the career options women tend to stick to particular sectors".

The mean value of occupational segregation is 2.83 and the standard deviation is 0.74977. The mean value of 2.83 indicates that the respondents show agreement towards the existence of occupational segregation in our society. Similarly, the standard deviation

value of 0.74977 indicates that the respondents have moderately dispersed opinions towards segregation of occupation based on gender differences. While some of them strongly agreed that men and women are suitable for different type of jobs, others strongly disagreed that occupational segregation actually exists in today's era.

4.4.1.8 Stereotyping

Generally stereotypes are fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people that do not have any valid explanation or logical reason. Stereotypes are one of the major factors responsible for the perception of glass ceiling. In our society females are generally stereotyped as weak and emotional human beings. As a result the capability of women to become a successful manager is seriously undermined; hence the glass ceiling phenomenon.

The perception of respondents regarding the common stereotypes of our society was measured using six indicators: " The position in senior management is more suitable for men as compared to women", " Women managers cannot make fast and logical decisions", " Women cannot resist the difficulties of the business world as much as men", " The abilities of women are limited to become senior executives", " Since women are more emotional than men they cannot be successful in senior management" and " Women should not be appointed as senior managers".

The mean value and standard deviation of stereotyping are 4.11 and 0.83064 respectively. The mean value of 4.11 indicates that majority of the respondents disagree that there is no place for stereotyped ideas in the current job market but the standard deviation of 0.83064 indicates that there is maximum variation in the responses of the respondents among all other factors. The perception of all respondents regarding the reality of stereotyping highly differs from one respondent to another.

Thus, among all these sub-variables occupational segregation and avoidance of informal networks are the major factor affecting the glass ceiling perception of these respondents who were in the early phase of their career because both of these variables have mean values below 3(i.e. Occupational segregation=2.83 and Avoidance of informal networks=2.90)

4.4.2 Factors affecting Glass Ceiling Perception

To summarize the effect of independent variables in glass ceiling perception of early-career employees the measurement of central tendency was done using mean and standard deviation in the table 4.3.

Table 4.3:

Factors Affecting Glass Ceiling Perception of Early-career Employees

Independent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Individual Factors	3.61	0.49531
Organizational Factors	3.32	0.37914
Social Factors	3.47	0.64977

Note: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

The respondents do not perceive any independent variables as major contributors of development of glass ceiling perception in early career employees as all of the mean values are above 3. This means that neither individual factors nor organizational factors or social factors affect the glass ceiling perception of these early career employees. But if we have to rank these variables despite of the positive result; organizational factor is the major factor influencing is the glass ceiling perception of respondents followed by social factors making individual factor least responsible for glass ceiling perception of employees.

4.4.3 Central Tendency Measurement of Dependent Variables

The measurement of central tendency of dependent variables i.e. glass ceiling perception was done by using mean and standard deviation. Table 4.4 summarizes the central tendency of the dependent variable.

Table 4.4:

Central Tendency Measurement of Dependent Variable

Dependent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Glass Ceiling Perception	3.36	0.74601

Note: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Glass ceiling perception is the perception of gender based discrimination in hiring, distribution of authority, promotion and several other HR related activities inside the organization. The mean value of 3.36 indicates that the respondents do not perceived and gender based discrimination on an average but the standard deviation of 0.74601 indicates that the responses are moderately dispersed. Although some of the respondents agreed to have perceived the gender based discrimination in workplace (Minimum value= 1.33), some showed serious disagreement towards such behavior in their organization (Maximum value=5).

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis was used to investigate whether the hypotheses formed at the beginning of the study were true and then drew conclusion based on the statistics. In this research, the inferential analyses used are correlation analysis and linear regression analysis.

4.5.1 Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variables

Table 4.5:

Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	Pearson Correlation(r)
Individual Factors	.395**
Organizational Factors	.340**
Social Factors	.480**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 4.5 shows there is positive correlation between all three independent variables (i.e. Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Social Factors) and dependent variable i.e. Glass Ceiling Perception. Among all three independent variables social factors has highest value of Pearson correlation ($r = 0.480$) and organizational factors has the least value ($r = 0.340$). This implies that social factors has the highest positive relationship with glass ceiling perception and organizational factors has least positive relationship with the glass ceiling perception whereas among all other factors individual factors has moderate relationship with glass ceiling perception.

Whenever influence of social factors increases by one unit the glass ceiling perception increases by 0.480 whereas every unit increase in organizational factors glass ceiling

perception, glass ceiling perception increases by 0.340. Thus, social factors are more responsible for development of glass ceiling perception in comparison to individual and organizational factors.

4.5.2 Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression model was used in this study. The regression analysis is divided into three sections, viz., Model summary, ANOVA and Coefficients.

The model summary section shows the R-squared (R-squared is the coefficient of determination) and adjusted R-squared which are important for determining the variance in dependent variables caused or explained by the independent variable.

The ANOVA section determines whether or not to reject the null hypothesis. Null hypothesis infers that the model has no explanatory power or simply put, none of the independent variables predict the dependent variable. If the F-test is >0 and the p-value is <0.05 (p-value is in the Sig column), then the null hypothesis is rejected inferring that the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Under the coefficient section, unstandardized coefficients (B-value) determine the strength and the direction of the influence (positive or negative) by independent variables on the dependent variable. The t-value and p-value (Sig) determine the probability of the individual (B) coefficient occurring by chance.

Table 4.6:

Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.551 ^a	0.303	0.296	0.62610

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual Factors, Organizational Factors, Social Factors

The model summary presented on the table above presents the value of Coefficient of determination (R squared) as 0.303 or 30.3%. It indicates that 30.3% variation in dependent variable i.e. glass ceiling perception is explained by the independent variables i.e. individual factors, organizational factors and social factors. Furthermore, it also

indicates that the remaining 69.7% is explained by other factor(s) not included in the model.

Table 4.7:

ANOVA table of Multiple Regression Analysis

ANOVA^a					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.765	3	15.255	38.916	.000 ^b
Residual	105.056	268	0.392		
Total	150.821	271			

a. Dependent Variable: Glass Ceiling Perception

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individual Factors, Organizational Factors, Social Factors

The ANOVA table shows that the f value is 38.916 i.e. $F(3,268) = 38.916$ and the p-value as $p < 0.05$ ($p\text{-value} < \alpha$). This implies that the overall regression model is a good fit and statistically significant.

Table 4.8:

Regression Coefficients

	Coefficients^a				
	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>			<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	-.444	.415		-1.070	.286
Individual Factors	.344	.088	.228	3.900	.000
Organizational Factors	.418	.107	.212	3.889	.000
Social Factors	.338	.071	.294	4.740	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Glass Ceiling Perception

Here, B represents coefficient of the independent variables and sig. represent the statistical significant level of the model in the data presented in table 4.8.

The regression equation is therefore

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + e$$

$$\text{i.e. } Y = -0.444 + 0.344 X_1 + 0.418 X_2 + 0.338X_3 + e$$

Where Y = Glass Ceiling Perception;

B₀ = Constant;

B₁, B₂ & B₃ = the coefficient of the variables;

X₁ = Individual Factors;

X₂ = Organizational Factors;

X₃ = Social Factors;

e = the error or the difference between the predicted and the observed value of Y.

There are in total three significant factors in the coefficient test. Here, Individual Factors (Beta value = 0.228, t-value = 3.900 and p-value<0.05) has a positive and statistically significant relationship with glass ceiling perception. Organizational Factors (Beta value = 0.212, t-value = 3.889 and p-value<0.05) also has a significant relationship with glass ceiling perception. Finally, Social Factors (Beta value = 0.294, t-value = 4.740 and p-value<0.05) too has a significant relationship with glass ceiling perception.

The unstandardized coefficient determines the strength and direction of influence glass ceiling barriers have perception of glass ceiling. When there is a unit change in the variable called individual factors there is a 0.344 unit change in glass ceiling perception. Likewise, a unit change in variable called organizational factors changes the dependent variable; glass ceiling perception by 0.418 units. Similarly every unit change in Social Factors changes glass ceiling perception by 0.338 units.

Therefore, the more change occurs in the organizational factor dimension, it will have more positive change in the glass ceiling perception of the early-career employees. The same condition applies for the other two variables as well. If we look at the dominant factor, Social factor has the greatest t-value which is 4.740 and the beta coefficient of 0.294. Thus, Social Factors has the dominant effect in development of glass ceiling

perception among the early-career employees.

Table 4.9:

Summary Table

	Relationship	Alpha	Sig (p-value)	VIF
Individual Factors	Sig.	0.05	0.00	1.317
Organizational Factors	Sig.	0.05	0.00	1.146
Social Factors	Sig.	0.05	0.00	1.483

Since the VIF of all the constant is <5 , we can conclude that there is no multi-co linearity. Multi-co linearity is a condition whereby there is existence of very high inter-correlations among the independent variables.

4.6 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypotheses of the study listed in chapter I are listed below:

Table 4.10:

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	<i>There is significant impact of individual factors in glass ceiling perception.</i>	Supported
H2	<i>There is significant impact of organizational factors in glass ceiling perception.</i>	Supported
H3	<i>There is significant impact of social factors in glass ceiling perception.</i>	Supported

4.7 Comparative Analysis

4.7.1 Gender-based Comparison of Independent Variables

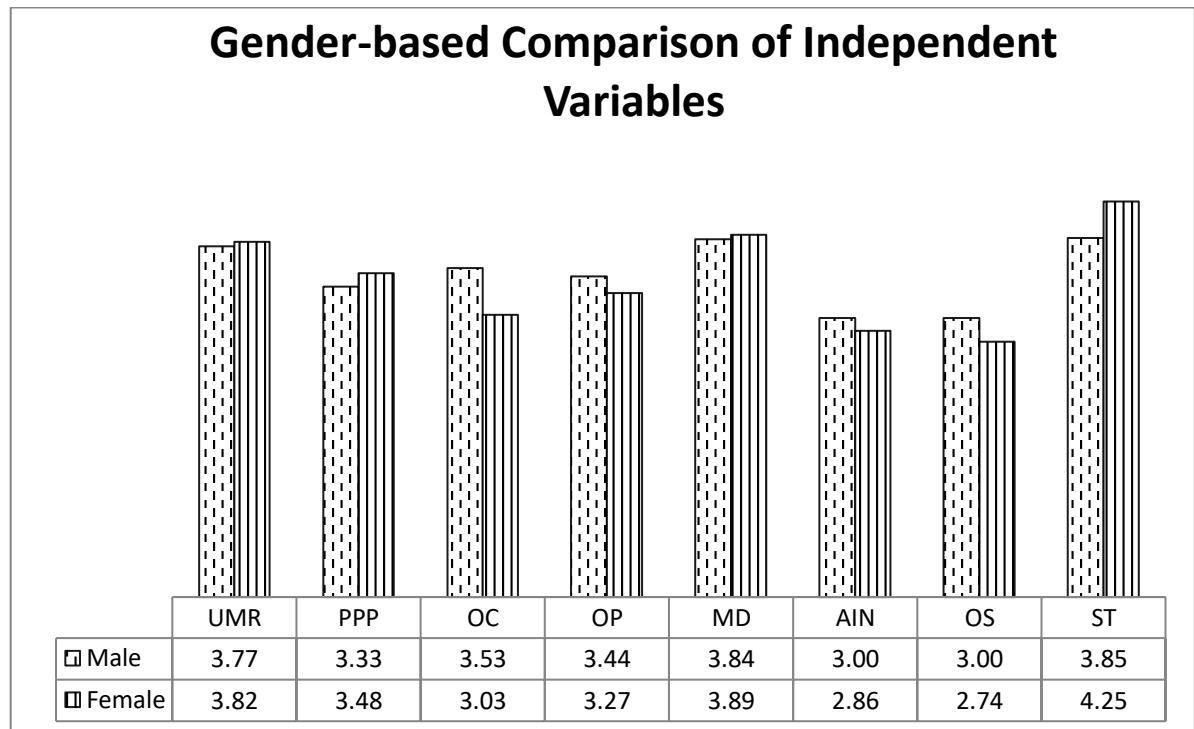


Figure 4.3: Gender-based Comparison of Independent Variables

In the above figure 4.3, the average value of level of agreement and disagreement is compared on the basis of gender; where 1 represents Strongly Agree and 5 represents Strongly Disagree on the likert scale. The average value received from female respondents is shown on the left side of the bar diagram whereas the right side shows the level of agreement of male respondents.

Female respondents have higher level of disagreement on four of the independent variables namely: Undertaking Multiple Roles (UMR), Personal Preference Perception (PPP), Mentoring Deficiency (MD) and Stereotyping (ST) in comparison to male respondents if we compare the mean value of likert scale questions. Whereas male respondents showed higher level of disagreement on other four variables i.e. Organizational Culture(OC), Organizational Policies(OP), Avoidance of Informal Networks(AIN) and Occupational Segregation(OS) in comparison to their female counterparts.

Males are comparatively biased towards woman's multiple role taking and her possible individual preference; they also showed lower disagreement towards women being free from stereotypical behaviors in our society. However, females showed slightly higher

agreement towards unsupportive organizational culture and policies, exclusive entrance of male employees in Old Boy's Club and possible occupational segregation resulting from it.

In addition to this, among all sub-variables both male and female employees showed higher agreement towards gender-biased informal social networks and avoidance of such networks by female employees inside the organization and segregation of male and female employees in different sector of the economy. And early-career employees of both gender showed highest disagreement towards stereotyped ideas regarding female employees.

4.7.2 Categorical Perception of Glass Ceiling

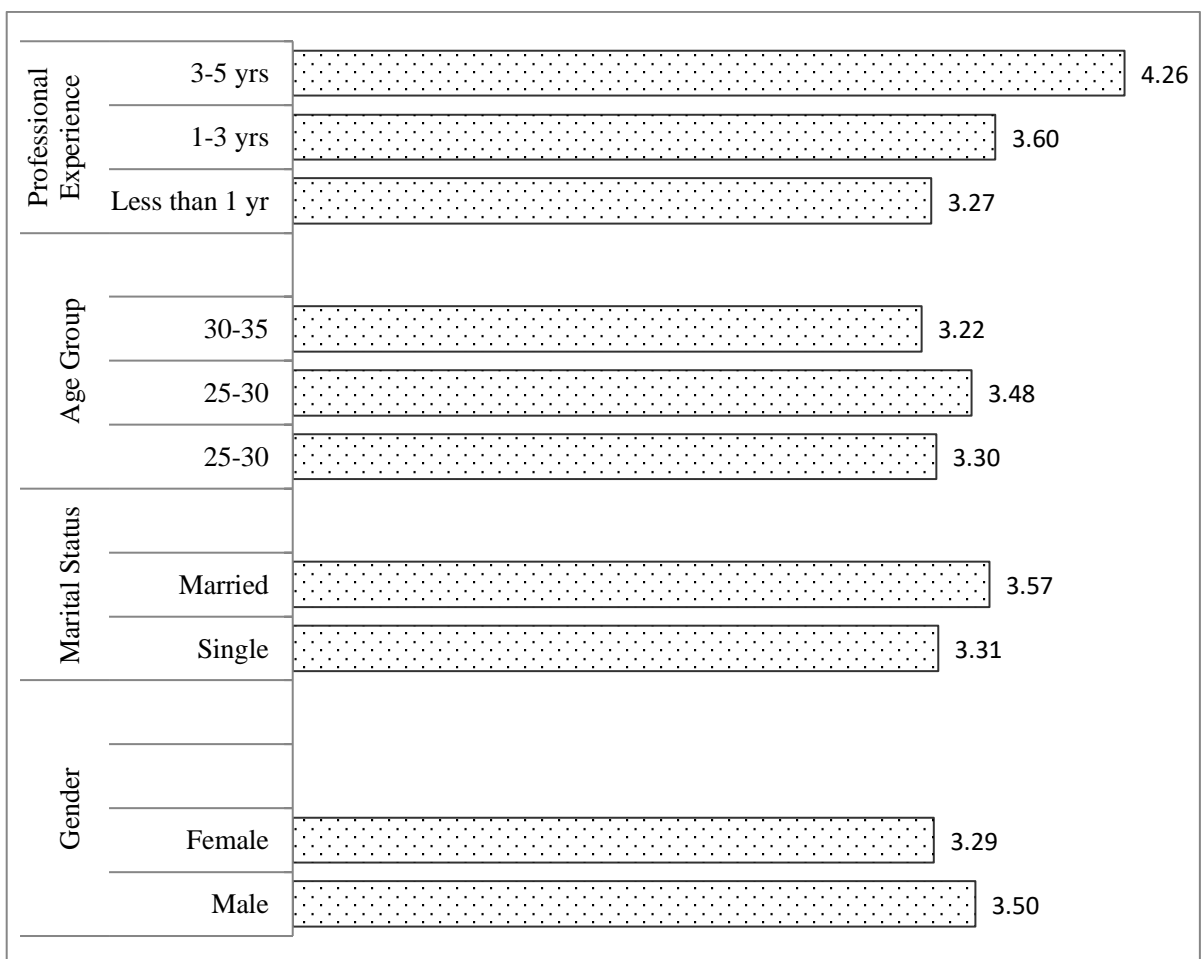


Figure 4.4: Categorical Perception of Glass Ceiling

In the above figure 4.4, the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees is measured according to different categories of socio-demographic profile based on the average value obtained on likert scale questions related to glass ceiling perception. The categorical differences are based on gender, marital status, age group and professional experience of the respondents.

The female employees perceived glass ceiling more in comparison to the male employees as the mean value of glass ceiling perception of female respondent's is 3.29 whereas male respondent's mean value is 3.50. However, single employees' perception is slightly higher than the glass ceiling perception of married employees according to the above bar diagram where mean value of single respondents is 3.31 but the married respondents have an average of 3.57.

If we look at figure 4.4, the age group which showed the strongest perception of glass ceiling is between 30-35 years which is the highest age group of the early-career employees. But the perception of glass ceiling does not become strong with increasing age. The age group of 25-30 years showed the highest mean value of glass ceiling perception. This means that the age group of 25-30 years has lowest perception of glass ceiling in their organization because higher the mean value of the variables lower is the glass ceiling perception of employees. The lowest age group of this category (20-25 years) has the average glass ceiling perception with mean value of 3.30.

Although most of the literature claims that glass ceiling becomes stronger when employees want to reach the highest echelons of the organizations after several years of professional experience, the survey show that the perception of glass ceiling gradually fades with increment in professional experience. Interestingly, the employees with 3-5 years of professional experience show weakest perception of glass ceiling with average value of 4.26. Early-career employees with 1-3 years of experience showed moderate level of glass ceiling perception as their mean value of glass ceiling perception is 3.60 and the employees who have just started their career felt the glass ceiling most strongly with an average value of 3.27.

4.7.3 Sector wise Comparison of Dependent and Independent Variables

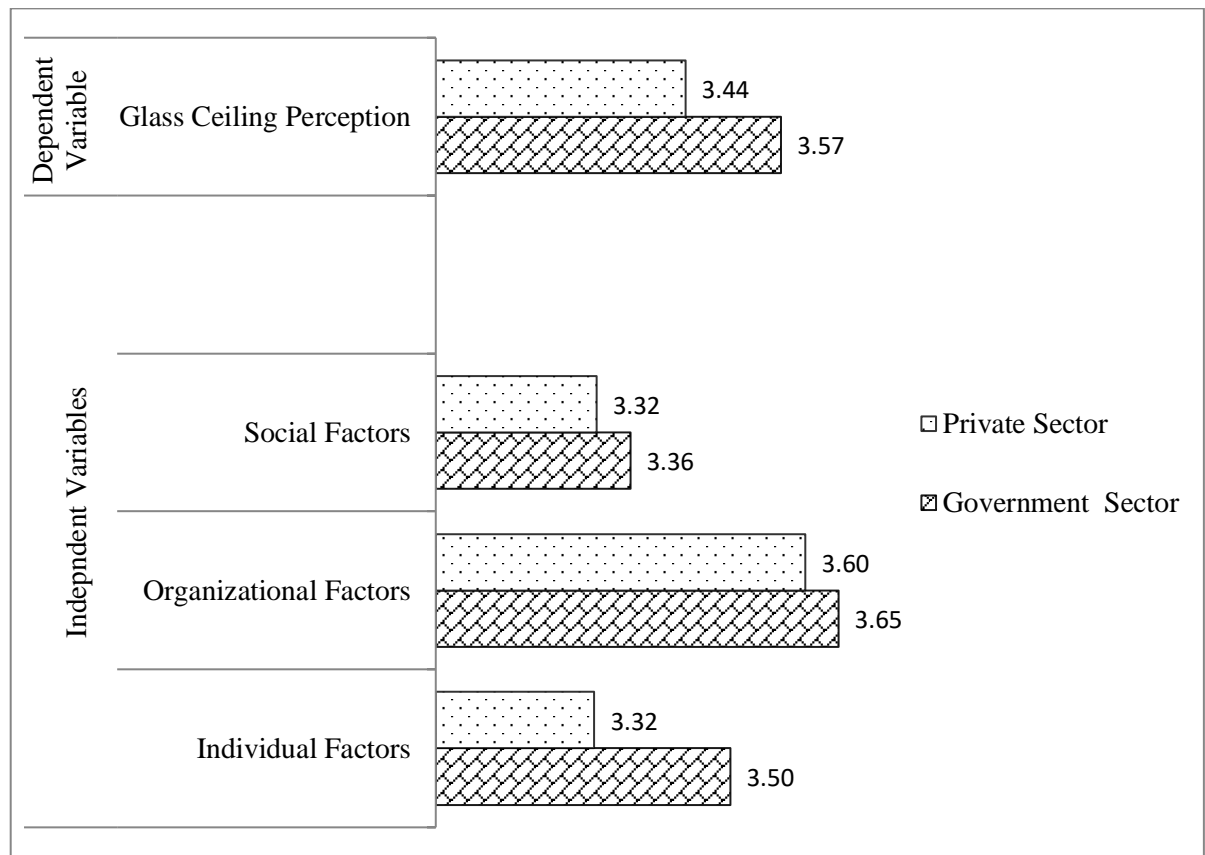


Figure 4.5: Sector wise Comparison of Dependent and Independent Variables

As shown in the figure 4.5, employees of private sector perceive glass ceiling more strongly than those working in government sector. Additionally, private sector employees show greater agreement to all individual, organizational and social factors being reason for existence of glass ceiling in Nepalese organizations when compared to their colleagues working in government sector.

The average value of agreement towards the hindrance placed by individual factors in career advancement of women recorded from private sector and government sector employees are 3.32 and 3.50 respectively. Similarly, the mean value for agreement of organizational factors as obstacle for women's career advancement is 3.60 and 3.65 for private employees and government employees respectively. The mean value of likert scale for social factors as a possible glass ceiling barrier of private sector employees and government sector employees is 3.32 and 3.36 respectively.

The mean value of glass ceiling perception also follows the similar pattern; the employees of private sector have lower mean value of 3.44 for glass ceiling perception whereas the

employees of government sector have comparatively higher mean value of 3.57 resulting in the weaker perception of glass ceiling in comparison to private sector employees.

4.8 Major Findings

After conducting all the analysis from the collected data there are some major findings of the study. These findings are based upon descriptive as well as inferential analysis of the data. In the descriptive analysis, frequency, percentage, mean, SD were calculated. In the inferential analysis correlation and regression analysis was done. The major findings of the study are as following:

- i.** Majority of the respondents were female (65.1%) and only 34.9% of the respondents were male whereas 80.5% of the respondents were single and 19.5% of them are married.
- ii.** Most of the early-career employees belonged to the age-group of 20-25 year (61.0%) and only 9 out of 272 respondents were between the age group of 30-35 year. The age group of 25-30 comprised of only 35.7% of the respondents. While in terms of educational qualification 68% of the early-career employees were graduates followed by undergraduates (28.7%) and very few respondents (3.3%) had started their career after clearing only intermediate level or high school.
- iii.** Out of the total respondents, 75.4% worked in private sector whereas 24.6% worked in government sector.
- iv.** Among these early-career employees only 10.7% of had monthly salary below Rs. 15,000 and the rest of the sampled population is distributed in three other salary ranges i.e. 15,000-25,000, 25,000-35,000, Above 35,000. Maximum number of employees (36%) earned between Rs. 15,000-25,000 per month followed by 30.9% of the employees who earned Rs. 25,000-35,000 per month and rest of the 22.4% earned monthly salary above Rs.35,000. The salary range of the early-career employees differed according to their educational qualification and the sector they work in.
- v.** In comparison to private sector employees, government sector employees earned comparatively more salary. None of the government employee earned salary below Rs.15, 000 whereas 44.4% of the employees working in government sector earned monthly salary above Rs. 35,000. The salary range also fluctuated highly

according to the educational qualification of the respondents. While the graduates mostly received salary above Rs. 25,000, respondents who have only passed high school mostly received salary below Rs.25, 000.

- vi. 50.4% of the early-career employees have just started their career with professional experience of less than 1 year. 38.9% of the respondents had professional experience of 1-3 years whereas only 10.7% of them had professional experience between 3-5 years.
- vii. 188 out of 272 respondents were expecting promotion in near future while remaining of them either did not have any promotion expectation or they were not sure whether they will get promoted or not.
- viii. Almost half of the respondents were not familiar with the term called "glass ceiling" while the other half was well aware regarding the concept of glass ceiling.
- ix. Among the eight sub-variables of three major independent variables (i.e. Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Social Factors), occupational segregation had lowest mean value (2.83) and stereotyping had highest mean value (4.10). This means that occupational segregation was strongly perceived by the respondents whereas stereotyping was perceived least degree in comparison to other sub-variables. And out of three major independent variables organizational factor had the major effect on glass ceiling perception of respondents and individual factors has the least effect of all.
- x. All of the three major independent variables were positively correlated with the dependent variable called glass ceiling and each and every one of the variables had a positive and statistically significant relationship with glass ceiling perception.
- xi. All of the three hypotheses i.e. **H1** (There is significant impact of individual factors in glass ceiling perception), **H2** (There is significant impact of organizational factors in glass ceiling perception) and **H3** (There is significant impact of social factors in glass ceiling perception) were supported from the calculation of p-value since all of them have p value less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

- xii.** Social Factors had the dominant effect in development of glass ceiling perception among the early-career employees because it had greatest t-value which is 4.740 and the beta coefficient of 0.294.
- xiii.** Majority of the early-career employees disagreed towards the differential treatment based on the gender, race or ethnicity of employees in their organizations. But if we categorize the respondents according to their socio-demographic profile female employees perceived glass ceiling more in comparison to the male employees whereas the age group of 25-30 years had lowest perception of glass ceiling in their organizations in comparison to respondents of other two age groups.
- xiv.** Additionally, private sector employees perceived glass ceiling more strongly than government employees but surprisingly, the perception of glass ceiling decreased with increase in professional experience of employees.
- xv.** Most of the early career employees said that they would leave their organizations if they perceived that their career advancement opportunities may be affected by their gender, race, ethicality or religion.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion

The main objective of the study was to identify the factors influencing the glass ceiling perception in early-career employees of Kathmandu valley and specifically the research aimed to identify that one major factor which has the greatest impact on formation of glass ceiling perception in these early-career employees. Additionally, this research also made an effort to find out whether early-career employees showed any differences in glass ceiling perception based on their socio-demographic characteristics or not.

The perception of glass ceiling is stronger when there is discrimination between employees in the workplace solely because of their gender, race, ethnicity or religion and it has nothing to do with skills, capabilities or experience of employees. The results showed that the early-career employees working inside Kathmandu valley had very low perception of glass ceiling as most of the respondents disagreed towards receiving differential treatment inside their workplace. But if we compare the glass ceiling perception of these employees based on their socio-demographic characteristics, the degree of strength varied moderately.

The female employees and private sector employees perceived glass ceiling more strongly when compared to their male counterparts and their fellow colleagues working in government sector. This finding is in harmony with the findings of Sever (2016) and Jahangirov, Ari, Jahangirov, & Tosunoglu (2015), which revealed that women confront glass ceiling more than men. Furthermore, single employees perceived glass ceiling in relatively higher degree than their married peers which does not match with the findings of previous literature. According to Sever (2016), married ones feel the effect of glass ceiling syndrome more severe than singles but Yildiz, Yildiz, & Arslan (2018) concluded that single people have more feminist perspective than married people may be that's why the single respondents perceived relatively more inequalities inside their workplace in this research than their fellow married employees.

Similarly, if we compare the intensity of glass ceiling on the basis of employment sector, private sector employees expressed comparatively higher degree of glass ceiling perception than government sector employees. This finding is similar to the result of research carried out by Sever (2016). Inside Kathmandu valley, private sector employees had lower average

salary range than that of civil servants where none of the civil servants had salary below Rs. 15,000 per month irrespective of their educational qualification but most of the high school level employees, 25.6% of undergraduates and even 3.2% of the graduates had a monthly salary below Rs.15,000.

In government sector employees are hired very fairly and upto a certain level they are easily promoted irrespective of their gender, race ethnicity or religion. Even Government of Nepal has implemented quota system to include women, indigenous nationalities, dalits, madhesis and disabled people. So, the early-career civil servants may not be able to perceive the existence of glass ceiling which is mostly prominent in highest level of the organizations. However in private sector, the hiring system is not as fair as in civil service and in the concept of inclusivity is not well practiced in private sector. Hence, lower salaries, higher possibilities of nepotism and favoritism in hiring and firing and also lower adoption of inclusivity could be the reason behind higher perception of glass ceiling in employees of private sector.

Hypotheses indicate that there is significant impact of individual, organizational and social factors on glass ceiling perception of early-career employees. The data analysis had supported all of the three hypotheses H1, H2 and H3. The concluded results are also supported by other researchers;

- In case of **H1** (Azeez & R G, 2018; Lama, 2019; Bombuwela & De Alwis , 2013; Aidoo & Achira, 2016; Choi & Park, 2014; Rathore, 2017),
- In case of **H2** (Azeez & R G, 2018; Tiwari, Mathur, & Awasthi, 2019; Lama, 2019; Saddique, 2018; Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Aidoo & Achira, 2016; Choi & Park, 2014; Rathore, 2017)
- In case of **H3** (Azeez & R G, 2018; Lama, 2019; Bombuwela & De Alwis, 2013; Aidoo & Achira, 2016; Choi & Park, 2014; Rathore, 2017).

Women considered that the culture of the organization and its internal policies are generally not supportive to positive attitudes towards women such as promotion, selection and socialization and segregation of jobs for male and female are responsible for development of glass ceiling barriers in their career paths. Whereas men believed that the habit of undertaking multiple roles at once, personal preference of women themselves, deficiency of sufficient mentors are creating obstacles in career advancement of women as male respondents have higher degree of agreement towards stereotyped image of women labeling them as emotional, illogical and possessing lower ability to handle stress and

pressure of business world. So, the explanation for women have fewer opportunities comparing with men for the career progress at work, are anticipated differently by male and female employees of Kathmandu valley.

But if the impact of major independent variables is ranked on the basis of their effect on glass ceiling perception of these early-career employees, among all other variables it is found that social factor is highly responsible for the development of glass ceiling perception. This finding is consistent with Azeez & R G (2018), Regmi Adhikary (2016) and Lama (2019). Thus, social factor is the most prominent factor followed by individual factor and organizational factor for influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees.

5.2 Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to identify the factors influencing the glass ceiling perception of early-career employees and identify one major factor that has greatest impact on glass ceiling perception on early-career employees. For this purpose several existing literature, theories and research papers were reviewed and three major factors were hypothesized to be the possible causes of glass ceiling perception for this study.

The issue of glass ceiling is not well researched in Nepal and being a patriarchal society, the primary role of females in Nepalese society is still perceived to be wife and a mother. However, the modern generation is supposed to be more liberal and supportive towards women empowerment. So, the idea of this study was generated to minimize the existing gap in the literature of glass ceiling and to present the reality of the gender-biasness in modern day scenario from the lens of youngest employees of the current workforce of Nepal.

On the basis of the objectives of the study following conclusion can be drawn from the summary of major findings. All individual factors, organizational factors and social factors have significant impact on glass ceiling perception of early-career employees and among them social factor has greatest impact of all. The social factors are liable for shaping the gender-biased organizational policies and culture which promote glass ceiling phenomenon that hinders the career advancement of female employees solely because of they are women.

In case of Nepal, the younger generation (people below 35 years) does not perceive the existence of glass ceiling. Most of the early-career employees working inside Kathmandu

valley showed disagreement towards discriminatory behavior based on gender or any other criteria. Additionally, there is higher level of intolerance towards discriminatory organizational policies and practices among the early-career employees. But if we compare the degree of glass ceiling perception female employees and employees working in private sector perceived the existence of glass ceiling more strongly in comparison to their counterparts and this perception gradually diminishes with increase in professional experience.

However, this research only included the perception of those employees who have five years or less experience in the job market after completing their highest degree (either high school, undergraduate or graduate degree) or those who are under the age of 35 years irrespective of their gender. The reason behind choosing this sample was to capture the fresh perspective regarding the existence of glass ceiling and along with it to explore if male employees also equally perceive subtle yet covert gender-based biasness in Nepalese organizations.

Thus, it can be concluded that despite of having significant impact in glass ceiling perception in general; all individual, organizational and social factors do not equally influence glass ceiling perception. Social factors are found to have comparatively higher influence in shaping the perception of early-career employees because with changing social norms, traditional, stereotypical and restrictive gender based roles have begun to change and women are getting more opportunities to prove themselves in professional field. So, lower the perception of occupational segregation and stereotyping towards female, lower is the perception of glass ceiling and higher is the chance of career advancement for people of all gender, race, ethnicity and religion.

The lower perception of glass ceiling among early career employees can be the result of lower experience in higher level posts because glass ceiling becomes more apparent as you move towards higher executive levels. With maximum five years of work experience in the corporate field one may not be able to understand the politics and power play that happen in higher levels of the organizations. And since most of the employees have just begun their career; their sheer sense of optimism and lower involvement in decision making may be preventing them to decode the hidden glass ceiling inside the organization. Beside these respondents belong to the highly educated population of Nepal who are working in the capital city of Nepal. There lower perception of glass ceiling does not necessarily mean that glass ceiling do not exist in all of the Nepalese organization.

5.3 Implications

The major significance of this study is the contribution to the existing literature of glass ceiling because there is scarcity of literature related to glass ceiling in case of Nepal. In fact this research will be the first of its kind to measure the perception of glass ceiling from the view point of early-career employees of both genders in Nepal.

It has been an established fact that social factors are highly influential in developing the glass ceiling perception in employees. Previously most of the researcher tried to reveal the reality of glass ceiling from the experiences of executive women themselves but none of the researchers used early-career employees as the sample population. Those executive women were already at the peak of their career and there was a very lower chance of employee turnover after reaching at the highest echelons of the organizations. But these early-career employees have just begun their career and are still exploring their career options. And if these fresh graduates or undergraduates perceive discriminatory behavior at their workplace it means that glass ceiling exists inside the organization. And there is very high probability that they will look for better option somewhere else because 83.8% of the employees revealed that they would not continue to work in their current organization if they perceived that their career advancement opportunities will be limited because of their gender, race, ethnicity or religion.

This means two things for the organizations: First the organization will not be able to make optimum utilization of its human resources if promotion decisions are solely based on criteria other than experience, capabilities and qualification of employees. And second because of this glass ceiling phenomenon there will be high employee turnover because when talent and abilities of employees are not respected inside the organizations then dissatisfaction among the employee increases lowering the motivation to stay and work for the organization

Managerial Implications

The phenomenon of glass ceiling is not well known issue in Nepal as almost half the early-career employees haven't even heard the term called "glass ceiling" and most of these employees are undergraduates and graduates. Therefore, it would not be wrong to conclude that glass ceiling phenomenon is new concept in Nepal. So, it is not surprising to find that there are no specific policies dedicated to minimize the existence of glass ceiling in Nepalese organizations.

Even though the early-career employees show weaker perception of glass ceiling today but as more and more women are entering in the job market, very soon "glass ceiling" is going to be the next big issue in Nepalese organization. So, organizations need to prepare themselves and their managers to be more sensitive towards gender related issues and gender-based discrimination. Human resource managers need to formulate gender inclusive HR policies to select, promote and retain employees in the organizations.

Implications for future research

This research is one of the few researches conducted in the topic of glass ceiling in Nepal. The findings of this study are consistent with most of the available literatures but the finding revealed that the early-career employees working inside the Kathmandu valley have very low perception of glass ceiling phenomenon. Hence, there are multiple angles from which the researches can be conducted in future as future researchers can compare their findings with this research to contribute in the existing literature of glass ceiling. The implications of this research for the upcoming future researches are:

- The study only focused on the respondents of Kathmandu valley. The glass ceiling perception of employees outside the Kathmandu valley can be studied to get better insights in future study.
- Only early-career employees were taken as sample population in this research so in the future similar type of researches can be done by taking only pre-career employees or mid-career employees or late-career employees and results can be compared to find out the differences in perception of glass ceiling according to the stage of their career.
- Similarly, same research can be conducted after 10 years using longitudinal approach to find out if the glass ceiling perception of these employees change when they reach in the middle stage of their career.
- The research only took limited independent factors to explore their effect on glass ceiling perception. However, there are multiple other factors influencing glass ceiling perception if we look at the global literature. So, future study can be conducted using multiple other variables to study their influence on glass ceiling perception of employees.
- The study doesn't view the moderation effect that gender or job sector or age group or educational qualification can play in influencing the glass ceiling

perception .So future researchers can incorporate the moderation effect and widen the scope of it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Factors Influencing Glass Ceiling Perception in Early-career Employees of Kathmandu Valley

Dear all,

I am Pratishta Acharya, currently pursuing MBA degree at School of Management Tribhuvan University (SOMTU). I am conducting Graduate Research Project (GRP) on "Factors influencing glass ceiling perception in early career employees of Kathmandu Valley". I hereby request you to give few minutes to fill in this questionnaire. I assure you that the information provided will be kept confidential and used only for academic purpose.

Thank You!!

1) Gender

Male

Female

2) Age

20-25

25-30

30-35

3) Highest Education

High School

Undergraduate

Graduate

4) Marital Status

Single

Married

5) Sector

Government sector

Private sector

6) Monthly Salary

Below 15,000

15,000-25,000

25,000-35,000

Above 35,000

7) Professional experience

Less than 1 year

1-3 years

3-5 years

8) Are you expecting promotion in near future?

Yes

No

Not sure

9) Are you familiar with the term "GLASS CEILING"?

Yes

No

10. How well do you agree with the following statements related to individual factors related to glass ceiling barriers? Answer according to your degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the statements.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<u>Undertaking Multiple Roles</u>					
The place of the woman is to be with her husband and be a good mother.					
Working life prevents a woman from being a good mother and wife.					
Getting married and having children negatively affects the performance of women at work.					

Having children now or in the future thought limits women's career goals.					
Equal responsibility sharing is necessary in every housework.					
<u>Personal Preference Perception</u>					
Men and women have different orientations towards work.					
While choosing between work and family, women give priority to their family.					
Women do not want to go on long hours, long distance or they do not favor travel between countries.					
Women achieve career goals that they have a specific plan for.					
Women have objective opinion and are ready to take initiatives. They have the ability to become a successful manager.					
Confident women can easily overcome the difficulties of being a top manager.					

11. How well do you agree with the following statements related to organizational factors related to glass ceiling barrier? Answer according to your degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the statement.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<u>Organizational Culture</u>					
In the institution, business life is governed by the rules of men.					
When women are promoted to higher positions, they are reluctant to come.					
More opportunities are provided to males to reach senior positions in management.					
Women are discriminated in issues such as salary, bonus, status etc.					
When staff needs to be removed (during crisis) women must be fired first.					
<u>Organizational Policies</u>					
Unbiased performance appraisal for women and men in the institution valuation policies are available.					
Both women and men in the same position are paid equal wages.					
It is commonly seen that women are in lower positions					

than their abilities allows them to be at.					
Women are adequately involved in key tasks effective in reaching senior management levels.					
<u>Mentoring Deficiency</u>					
Possibilities of progress and development in their work are very important for women.					
Women benefit sufficiently from the mentoring relationship in the institution.					
When trainings are provided to employees for enabling them attend managerial positions, female employees take equal advantage of this opportunity as male ones.					
There is no female manager who can act as role model for sufficient number of women.					
When women become senior executives they have the fear of being alone.					
<u>Avoidance of informal networks</u>					
Women can communicate with male colleagues and superiors easily.					
Men are often able to maintain unofficial external relations with their influence					

which act in favor of their own kind.					
Women have difficulty entering into male-dominant communication networks.					

12. How well do you agree with the following statements related to social factors related to glass ceiling barrier? Answer according to your degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the statement.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<u>Occupational Segregation</u>					
Families can lead their daughters to the profession that they think are for women.					
Distribution of duties differs for men and women within the organization.					
Women are not as dependent on their careers as men.					
While evaluating the career options women tend to stick to particular sectors.					
<u>Stereotyping</u>					
The position in senior management is more suitable for men as compared to women.					
Women managers cannot make fast and logical decisions.					

Women cannot resist the difficulties of the business world as much as men.					
The abilities of women are limited to become senior executives.					
Since women are more emotional than men they cannot be successful in senior management.					
Women should not be appointed as senior managers.					

13. How well do you agree with the following statements related to glass ceiling perception? Answer according to your degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the statement.

In my current organization.....

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am treated differently because of my gender, age, ethnicity or religion.					
I experience difficulties pursuing my desire to have children.					
I have difficulty getting time off to attend my family matters.					
I am struggling to maintain work-life balance.					
I lack sufficient role models and mentors.					

I may have a harder time getting promoted than people of opposite sex.					
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14. At last, suppose if you feel that your career advancement opportunities in your current organization may be affected by your gender, age, ethnicity or religion; would you continue to work in that institution?

Yes

No