Barriers Faced by Women in their Career Advancement in Yerevan, Armenia

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to study the barriers encountered by women in their career advancement in Yerevan, Armenia. The target population is female employees holding managerial and advanced positions in Yerevan, Armenia. The three barriers examined are the glass-ceiling effect, work-life conflict, and organizational culture. In this quantitative study, a survey method is used to collect numerical data from 102 respondents. The findings revealed that the glass-ceiling effect had a significant impact on women's career advancement in Armenia. However, the effect of work-life conflict and organizational culture deviated from the results of past studies. There are several practical implications of this study. Organizations ought to focus on the effect of glass-ceiling, which is still prevalent and take measures to overcome the biases against career growth. This study is the first study of its kind in Armenia with the contribution of understanding the possible barriers faced by women in Yerevan, Armenia.

Keywords: Glass-ceiling, Career, Career advancement, Work-life conflict, Organizational culture

Introduction

Armenia is a landlocked country in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia and shares its borders with Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north, and Azerbaijan to the east (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020). Overall population Armenia is 2.973 million, and the majority of citizens are Christians. The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of Armenia was USD20.4 billion in 2018. The GDP per capita in 2017 was USD 9,500. Women represent up to 52 % of the populace of Armenia (The World Bank, 2019). The total of the labor force is 1.7 million, which 46% is engaged in the services sector. The number of jobless rate of 19% is considered high back in 2017. However, the percentage of women workers out of the total labor force between ages 15-24 was unemployed in 2016, with an estimated 45 percent. In tertiary education, there were more females compared to males in 2018. Among females, around 63 percent attended tertiary education in 2018 compared to 47 percent of males (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). From the global perspective, women labor/entrepreneurship participation is low at 50 percent of more than 15-year-old female population (Sanchez, 2016). The report by (Grant Thornton, 2018) reported that about 75% of businesses globally have at least one female representative

in the senior team. However, the females comprised only 24% of the senior positions. Another report stated that in 2019, 29% of women held positions in senior managerial roles around the world (Grant Thornton, 2019). Also, 15 percent of women were in the role of CEO or managing director. Although women today make up more than 50 percent of the world's higher education graduates, only 25% of women are in managerial positions (Grant, Thornton, 2019). This indicates that the number of women in senior positions falls short of ensuring long-term gender parity. The participation of Armenian women in high positions in organizations is considered low nowadays. Such a low result is due to the pejorative stereotypes on women's role in a society that discourages women from taking active roles. A report by Grant Thornton revealed that although a higher number of women in Armenia are moving to leadership roles, but the gender balance is still elusive. The Grant Thornton Report (2018) stated that the number of senior leadership roles held by women in Armenia moved is 32%. However, as stated in the report, 17% of the organizations were surveyed had no females holding high positions or in senior roles.

Several barriers have been cited as barriers to the career advancement of women. The report by Grant Thornton (2019) reported that 26 percent of women stated that networking was a barrier to their career advancement. One of the main reasons commonly cited for the low participation in leadership is the glass-ceiling effect (Sanchez, 2016). McKinsey's report stated that the "glass ceiling" prevents women from advancing their careers and moving into leadership positions (Huang et al., 2019). Stereotyping and the biasness are other powerful barriers women face in organizations (Hill et al., 2016). The social norms and gender stereotypes create a glass ceiling for women. The organization culture can also be a barrier for employees to feel as if they do not have an equal opportunity to advance (Huang et al., 2019). Gender stereotyping can affect women, and they tend to retain their stereotypical views (Crites et al., 2015). Stereotypes and biasness can affect women's self-confidence and how they see themselves (Schuh et al., 2014). Some organizations are biased against appointing women as managers and leaders (Eagly and Karau 2002). This can lead to lower self-confidence. One of the reasons for the low self-confidence is that women rarely see other women holding high positions in organizations (Beaman and others 2012). Preference for family and work-life balance is another factor that sometimes inhibits career growth. Some women resign from high positions to devote themselves to their families and children (Bertrand, Goldin, and Katz, 2010). A study by Crompton and Lyonette (2011) revealed that gender discrimination is an ongoing issue, but the main barrier to career growth was that women still prefer domestic responsibilities and caring for children. Studies have shown that women face the challenge of balancing career growth and family responsibilities (Sandberg, 2013). Despite the presence of various difficulties faced by women, there is a dearth of research that empirically examined the barriers faced by women in Armenia in their career advancement.

This study will focus on the glass ceiling effect, work-life conflict, and organization culture on women's career advancement in Armenia. Past research has not empirically tested the role of the glass ceiling, work-life conflict, and organization culture as barriers to women's career advancement in Armenia. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge by empirically testing the obstacles indeed hamper women from moving into senior management positions in Armenia. The results will assist employers and policymakers on what can be done at the organizational, societal, and individual level to develop possible policies to support women's advancement into leadership positions.

Literature Review
Career Advancement
The definition of career and career development or advancement is understood differently by

scholars. Super (1980) stated that career is the principal positions held by an individual throughout his or her pre-occupational, occupational, and post occupational phase of his or her life. Super (1980) defined career as the combination and sequence of roles held by an individual in his or her life. Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989) defined career as the sequence of an individual's work experiences over a specific time period. The prominent terms used in most definitions of career are work and time. The concept of career development or advancement been defined differently. Brown and Brooks (1996) defined career development as a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choose, and continue making choices from among the various occupations available. Patton and McMahon (2014) definition of career development includes the four key elements, namely the person's individual, environment, interaction, and change. The dominant theory applicable to women's career development is Hackett and Betz's self-efficacy approach to women's career development. Based on this theory, gender socialization influences cognitive processes that encompass self-efficacy and expectations. Cognitive processes influence career decision making. Hackett and Betz (1981) stated that low expectations of self-efficacy in women concerning career growth are significant sources of gender differences in career choice. Another theory is the social cognitive career theory that is valuable to understanding the complex interrelationships of influences on career development (Betz and Hackett, 2006).

Several hindrances have been identified as barriers faced by women in their career advancement. The "glass-ceiling" has often been cited as one of the invisible barriers that women encounter in their career growth (Kuruppuarachchi, and Surangi, 2020; Islam and Jantan, 2017). Wirth (2004) explained the 'glass-ceiling' phenomenon is an invisible barrier that is shaped by individuals' attitudes and biases, which impede women's progress in their careers. Closely related to the 'glass-ceiling effect' are individual barriers that affect women's career growth (Bombuwela and De Alwis, 2013). One of the individual factors is the lack of self-confidence among women that affect their career advancement (Worrall et al., 2010). Women are generally risk- opposed and lack confidence, which may be due to their career preferences (Kuruppuarachchi, and Surangi, 2020). Organizational practices include organizational culture and structure are another impediment to women's career growth (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2010). Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) added that organizations are generally male-oriented, and not much care is placed on women's requirements (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008). Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) and Kuruppuarachchi, and Surangi (2020) further added that another significant barrier was that women place higher responsibility to their family. The focus on family is related to work-life balance and the conflict between family responsibilities and job roles. Work-life conflict is one of the biggest challenges women face in managing their job demands and responsibilities to their families (Guendouzi, 2006; Shelton, 2006). The Preference theory can be used to explain women's choices between work and family responsibilities (Hakim, 2000). According to the theory, women classified as 'adaptive' are very diverse, and they balance their work and family commitments. This category of women wants to work, but they are not fully committed to their careers.

Relationship between Glass-ceiling effect and Career Advancement
The 'glass ceiling' concept has been referred to as an invisible barrier or invisible higher limit in organizations (Kuruppuarachchi and Surangi, 2020). The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) referred to glass-ceiling as an unreal barrier that inhibits women's career growth. In organizations, the glass-ceiling exists as an invisible higher limit, and above this limit, it is difficult for women to reach higher leadership positions (Kuruppuarachchi and Surangi, 2020). It has been referred to as 'glass-ceiling' because it is not a visible barrier, and it reflects job inequality or discrimination, which is difficult to explain (Cotter et al., 2001). As stated by the

Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), there are three classes of difficulties for women: societal barriers, internal structural barriers, and government barriers. In business organizations, the second category is more applicable to the career growth of women. Such barriers encompass the corporate climates and the absence of outreach efforts on behalf of women who are aspiring to reach top management positions. Therefore, the 'glass-ceiling' refers to inequalities and discrimination, and according to Wright, Baxter, and Birkelund (1995), the discrimination is more excellent at higher-level positions compared to the lower-levels. In other words, the higher leadership positions are held by males because women find themselves hindered from top leadership positions by the 'invisible' glass (Bruckmüller et al., 2014). However, a glass-ceiling phenomenon is a controversial subject. Powell and Butterfield argued that the glass-ceiling could exist at any level in the organization. Bruckmuller et al. (2014) further additionally stated other than the "glass-ceiling" effect; there are other obstacles women encounter in moving to top leadership positions. Bruckmuller et al. (2014) introduced a glass cliff phenomenon that states the women have lower opportunity to get leadership positions, and the positions that they get are more precarious, risky, and linked to high-stress levels.

Past research has examined the relationship between the existence of a 'glass-ceiling' phenomenon and career advancement of women (Akpinar, 2013; Bombuwela, and De Alwis, 2013). According to a study by Akpinar (2013), very few women moved beyond such conflict into higher management positions. Noronha and Aithal (2016), also acknowledged the invisible barrier that impeded their advancement. Noronha and Aithal (2016) explained the glass-ceiling acts as a barrier for women to develop and optimize their capabilities. Glass and Cook (2016) further added to women who reach leadership positions often lack support or authority to achieve their goals. A study of glass-ceiling effect on women's career development was found individual factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors had a significant impact on their career growth (Bombuwela, and De Alwis, 2013, Lathabhavan, and Balasubramanian, 2017). The study by Lathabhavan and Balasubramanian (2017) pointed out the existence of glass-ceiling due to social, cultural, and religious hindrances prevented possibilities of career growth for women with many differences between countries. For instance, in South East Asia and Central Asia, the study concluded that glass-ceiling was attributed to organizational and cultural barriers (Lathabhavan and Balasubramanian, 2017). Adams and Fung (2012) examined the existence of gender differences in the glass-ceiling phenomena. The study found that female leaders were less power-oriented than men. Besides, they were more benevolent and universally concerned. Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden (2012) examined the relationship between the glass-ceiling phenomena and five determinants of career success, namely career satisfaction, happiness, psychological wellbeing, physical health, and work engagement. The study found only four dimensions of the glass-ceiling phenomena, namely resilience, denial, resignation, and acceptance, were the antecedents for career success among women. Based on the literature review, it is posited that:

H1: Glass-ceiling effect has an inverse relationship with career advancement for women in Armenia.

Relationship between Work-life Conflict and Career Advancement

Work-life balance and conflict have gained prominence in today's work environment, and several definitions exist on what precisely work-life balance is. From the individual's commitments perspective, work-life balance refers to an employee's capability to meet and balance their work-related commitments with family and other non-work responsibilities (Delecta, 2011). From this conflict perspective, Clutterbuck (2003) referred to work-life balance as a situation where an employee manages real or potential conflict between different

demands on his or her time and energy. Similarly, from the role conflict perspective, Greenhaus (2003) defined work–life balance as a state in which the employee is equally committed and satisfied with his or her work commitments and family role. This indicates minimizing role conflict through balancing work-related roles and family-related roles. From the perspective of priorities and time allocation, McLean and Lindorff (2000), referred to work-life balance as a situation in which an employee allocates time to both work and family based on priorities and demands that meet his or her needs. Therefore, the work and family balance refers to the relationship between work and non-work-related roles of employees. The definitions further point towards three components of work-life: namely, work, family, and private. The conflict exists because women need to juggle their roles to balance between work related and family roles.

Scholars and researchers have looked at the role conflict that women encounter in balancing their work and family commitments (Tajlili, 2014; Schueller-Weidekamm, and Kautzky-Willer, 2012). Schueller-Weidekamm, and Kautzky-Willer (2012), pointed out that work-life conflict is the most crucial barrier towards leadership roles. The conflict arises because the women's family role was time-consuming and require a lot of energy. Work commitments also require high energy levels. Tajlili (2014), also pointed out that work-life balance is one of the main problems' women face because the work-related demands conflict with their family responsibilities. Schueller-Weidekamm and Kautzky-Willer (2012) explained that the conflict between work and family causes stress and burnout. Subsequently affects both family and work-life, which results in additional problems. Therefore, women may have less energy for work related tasks compared to their male counterparts. A study by Mani (2013) acknowledges that women gave first preference to their family, which led to a role conflict between work-life and family responsibility. The work-life conflict was also pointed out by Shiva (2013). According to Shiva (2013), the work-life balance issue has adverse consequences on their career advancement. Inamdar and Nagendra (2017) supported the notion that conflict between work and life creates a setback in women's career advancement. Vijayalakshmi and Navaneetha (2013) agreed that although women are showing more passion for education and cannot balance personal life and professional life. Based on the literature review is posited that:

H2: Work-life conflict has an inverse relationship with the career advancement for women in Armenia.

Relationship between Organizational Culture and Career Advancement

Organizational culture refers to a system of shared values, beliefs, and traditions that affect how members of an organization behave. Several authors and scholars have defined organizational culture and its dimensions. Driskill (2018) stated that an organizational culture involves the different ways of doing things or behaving in an organization. These behaviors are represented by the elements of culture that encompasses history, norms, and values of a group of people. Hofstede (2000) stated that organizational culture differentiates the members of one organization from other people. However, as stated by Hofstede (2000), an organization may not have its own culture because the organizational culture is overshadowed by national or professional culture. Dennison and Mishra (1995) outlined the four traits of organizational cultures: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. The four traits were predictors of the overall organization effectiveness that encompasses performance and employee satisfaction. Schein (1990) identified three levels of organizational culture, namely, artifacts, behaviors, values, and assumptions. His model can be used to explain why employees behave differently in organizations. The organization culture creates a feeling of identity and commitment among the organization members and further supports creativity and innovation (Martins and Martins, 2002). The factors in the model introduced by Martins and Martins

(2002) encompasses trust relationship, working environment, management support, and customer orientation. In this study, it can be summed up that organizational culture encompasses values, beliefs, and assumptions of organization members that can influence women's career growth.

The organizational culture and cultural preferences can be potential predictors of the career growth of women (Wentling, 2009; Van Vianen and Fischer, 2009). Several industries are male-dominated, and this affects the career growth of women. Wentling (2009) stated that the workplace culture in the IT industry is mainly male-dominated and competitive. Similarly, Elvitigalage et al. (2006) stated that the cultural environment in the construction industry impedes women's career growth. On the contrary, a study by Chandra and Loosemore (2004) revealed that there was a high level of self-esteem among women in the construction industry. Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) also pointed out the career progression of women affected by the organizational culture. Studies also indicate that males are expected to be more inclined towards masculine cultures compared to women. Such preferences can be a determinant of the career growth of women. In this aspect, a study by Van Vianen and Fischer (2002) revealed the women are less masculine and less ambitious than men, and these cultural preferences affect their career advancement. Similarly, another study by North-Samardzic and Taksa (2011) showed the organizational cultures places pressures on women to comply with the masculine cultures. However, the cultural preferences of only women non-managerial positions were predictive of their career growth (Van Vianen and Fischer, 2002). The culture preferences were not predictive of the ambition of non-managerial employees. Therefore, supportive practices and work environment can contribute to women's career growth (e.g., Araki et al., 2017). A study by Araki et al. (2017) pointed out that organizational cultures that support women's participation can influence their career growth. Based on the literature review is posited that:

H3: There is a relationship between organizational culture and career advancement for women in Armenia.

Methodology and Research Design
Research Design
This study's research design provided the outline for data collection, measurement, and analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). For this study, a positivist philosophy was adopted. Based on this approach, this study examined the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, namely, career advancement (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). A deductive approach was appropriate as this study was based on theory, and the causal relationship between the variables was examined. The aim of data collection for a cross-sectional survey was conducted using self-administered questionnaires. The survey strategy for data collection was used because it is usually linked with a deductive research approach and allows a large quantity of data to be collected (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), perceptions, behavior, and attitudes can be measured using questionnaires. The SPSS tool was used for data evaluation.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size
According to Fink (2003), the study population comprises qualified or eligible individuals to be included in this study to provide the data. In this study, the target population were women employees in executive and managerial levels in Yerevan, Armenia. Data was collected from a sample of the population. The sample size is the number of individuals or units from whom the data must be collected for reliable findings (Fink, 2003). According to Roscoe (1975), the appropriate sample size that is larger than 30 and less than 500 will be appropriate for most research. The sample size was computed according to the formula by Tabachnick and Fidell

(2013). Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) defined the sample size as '50+8m' ('m' is the number of variables). According to this formula, the sample size must be at least 82 respondents. The target sample size for this study was 102 respondents. Data collection was based on non-probability sampling, as this method allows data collection from respondents who are willing to participate (Saunders et al., 2016). Convenience or haphazard sampling was used to collect data from eligible respondents.

Instrumentation

For this study, self-completed questionnaires were used. The distribution was through the direct deliver and collect method, where the questionnaires were given to the eligible respondents. All the questions were closed-ended, and for attitude-based questions, a five-point Likert scale was used for the respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each question. The first part of the questionnaire was meant to collect the demographic profile of the respondents. The sources of questions were from prior studies published in journals. The questions on career advancement were adapted from study by Subramaniam et al. (2013). The questions on organization culture were adapted from studies by Pillay (2005), Sepehri et al. (2010). The questions on work-life conflict were adapted from Subramaniam et al. (2014). The questions on the glass-ceiling effect were adapted from past studies by Pillay (2005) and Sepehri et al. (2010).

Data Collection

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed by hand to the qualified respondents. The response rate was very good. A total of 112 questionnaires were received. A total of 11 questionnaires were removed due to missing data and omissions. Ethical considerations were strictly observed. The confidentiality and privacy of the respondents were maintained. The respondents participated voluntarily and were assured that there would be no harm arising from their participation.

Data Analysis

All the questionnaires were checked for completeness. Missing data was checked and managed (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The next step was data coding, followed by data editing. Thereafter, data was transferred into the SPSS data file. The SPSS software was used to do descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, validity analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. The descriptive analysis explained the profile and characteristics of the respondents. The reliability and validity analysis were done to establish the goodness of the data. The multiple regression results explained the relationships between the constructs.

Results

Demographic Profiles of Respondents

All the respondents in this study were females from Yerevan, Armenia. Based on the age profile of the respondents, the majority of them were in the 24-34 years age profile (49%). Those from the 35 to 44 years group made up 23% of the respondents. The respondents from the 45 to 54 years age group were 24% of the total respondents. The remaining respondents were aged 55yars and above. Most of the respondents had a working experience of 1 to 5 years (41%). Another 23% had less than one year of working experience. Around 24% had 5-10 years of working experience. The rest had working experience of more than ten years. Most of the respondents were married (48%). The rest were single or did not want to reveal their marital status. Based on the level of education, most of the respondents highly educated. Only 10% had a diploma or lower qualification. The rest had a bachelor's or master's degrees.

Reliability Test

The internal consistency of the data was measured based on the Cronbach alpha value. The Cronbach alpha values are between 0 to 1. The cut-off point for Cronbach's alpha value is 0.7 an above. However, Cronbach's alpha values of 0.6 and above are acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). In this study, the value of the Cronbach value was above 0.6. Therefore, consistency or reliability data was established.

Table1: Reliability Testing

Variable	Cronbach Alpha value
Organization culture	0.723
Glass ceiling	0.776
Work-life conflict	0.620
Career advancement	0.601

Table 2: Kurtosis and Skewness

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Organization Culture	3.1757	.90660	.046	.240	-.472	.476
Glass Ceiling	3.8540	.90917	-.770	.240	.181	.476
Work-life Conflict	3.3985	.88683	-.508	.240	-.007	.476
Career Advancement	2.2921	.72549	1.129	.240	2.721	.476

Normality Test

In this study, skewness and kurtosis measures were used to assess the normality of data distribution. The skewness value indicated the symmetry of data distribution, and kurtosis value indicated the 'peakedness' of data distribution. According to George and Mallery (2010), the cut-off point for acceptable values for skewness and kurtosis are between -2 and +2. The skewness and kurtosis values shown in the table are all between the range of -2 and =2. Therefore, the normality of data distribution is established. The standard deviation of each variable is lower than one. This further supports the normality of data distribution.

Validity Testing

To check validity, an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken. To test the sampling adequacy for each variable in this study, the Kaiser-Mayer-Olikin (KMO) test was used (Field, 2009). As a rule of thumb, the KMO values must be above 0.5 (Field, 2009). The KMO values in this study were not below 0.5 and indicate there is no presence of large partial correlations. The KMO value for this study was 0.771, and this indicates the sampling is acceptable (Hutcheson and Sofroniou, 1999). The strength of relationships among variables is reflected through the Barlett's Test (Barlett, 1954). The value of Chi-square in this study is 700.511, with 120 degrees of freedom and the significance level is 0.000. This indicates that the correlation matrix is different. The value of communalities was examined, and it was found that all the values were above 0.6. As stated by Kline (1994), a high communality explains that a larger amount of the variance in the variable has been extracted by the factor solution.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.771
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	700.511
	df	120
	Sig.	.000

Pearson Correlation Test

The Pearson Bivariate correlation test values indicate the strength of the relationship between the variables in this study. Correlation values that were closer to 1 indicted stronger relationships among the variables (Pallant, 2010). In this study, all the correlations between the predictors and the dependent variable were negative and significant. The glass-ceiling effect had the strongest correlation to career growth among women.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

		Org. Culture	Glass-Ceiling	Work-life	Career Adv
Organization Culture	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Glass Ceiling	Pearson Correlation	.483**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Work life Conflict	Pearson Correlation	.532**	.607**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Career Adv	Pearson Correlation	-.412**	-.463**	-.455**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

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

Multiple Regression Test and Model Fit Summary

The R-value of .534 shows an acceptable level of prediction. In the model fit summary, the R^2 is .285, and the adjusted R^2 = .263 (Field, 2009). Therefore, the three predictors in this study explain 28.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. The F-value is 12.871, and the F-test is significant (0.000). Therefore, the model fit summary shows a good model fit.

Table 5: Model Fit Summary

Multiple R	.534
Coefficient of Determination (R Square)	.285
Adjusted R square	.263
F Value	12.871
Sig	.000
Durbin Watson	2.022

The values of VIF and Tolerance were examined to check the existence of multicollinearity. As stated by Hair et al. (2010), the value of 'VIF' should not exceed ten, and the value of 'Tolerance' must be 0.10 or lower. This study showed that the value of 'Tolerance' was below 1, and the value of 'VIF was below 2. This indicates that the independent variables are not highly correlated, and the data is free of multicollinearity.

Table 6: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.097	.298		13.747	.000		
Org Culture	-.145	.084	-.182	-1.741	.085	.677	1.478
Glass Ceiling	-.200	.089	-.250	-2.251	.027	.596	1.679
Work life Conflict	-.169	.094	-.206	-1.792	.076	.558	1.794

a. Dependent Variable: Career Advancement

The standardized Beta value of each variable is the standardized coefficient that is obtained by including all the independent variables and one dependent variable in the multiple regression test (Pallant, 2010). All the Beta values in this study are negative, and this reflects an inverse relationship. Only the glass ceiling effect had a t-value greater than 1.96 and a significant p-value (p<0.05). Therefore, only Hypothesis H1 that is the relationship between glass ceiling effect and career advancement of women is accepted. The other two hypothesis were rejected because the t-value is lower than 1.96 and the p-value is higher than 0.05

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations
The first hypothesis was to empirically test the effect of glass-ceiling on women's career advancement in Yerevan, Armenia. The results showed that there is an inverse relationship between the glass-ceiling effect and career advancement of women (B= -250; p<0.05). This means that the higher presence of glass-ceiling effect in organizations in Armenia affects the career advancement of women. This study's results are also consistent with past findings (Bobmuwela and De Alwis, 2013; Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden, 2012). Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) found that individual factors, organizational factors, and cultural factors had a significant impact on career advancement. Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden found that resilience, denial, resignation, and acceptance were antecedents for women's career success. The findings are an indication of the existence of inequalities and discrimination towards women employees in Armenia. It further indicates that there are invisible or unacknowledged barriers that hinder women from reaching top leadership positions in Armenia. McKinsey's report also highlighted that the glass ceiling effect is the most significant barrier faced at an early phase of their career (Huang et al., 2019). The findings further point out that women in Armenia may be stuck in the entry-level, and very few of them actually move into leadership positions. The findings are also consistent with the finding highlighted in the Grant Thornton (2018) report. According to the report, the gender balance in Armenia is still elusive, and women hold only 32% of leadership roles. Therefore, as recommended by Mc Kinsey, organizations need to focus on the 'broken rung' to achieve parity and close the gender gap (Huang et al., 2019).

The second hypothesis was to empirically test the effect of work-life conflict on the career advancement of women in Yerevan, Armenia. The results showed an inverse relationship between work-life conflict and women's career advancement, but the impact was not significant (B= -206; p>0.05). The results deviated from past studies that pointed out the impact of work-life conflict on women's career advancement (Schueller-Weidekamm, and Kautzky-Willer, 2012; Tajlili, 2014). A study by Schueller-Weidekamm, and Kautzky-Willer (2012) and Tajlili, (2014), pointed out that work-life conflict was the most crucial barrier towards leadership roles. Women are expected to handle family responsibilities, and the conflict arose because the family role was time-consuming and required a lot of energy. Therefore, according to past studies, work-life balance is one of the main problems' women face because the work-related demands conflict with their family responsibilities. There can be several reasons for the deviation of the

results of this study. Firstly, this may be due to the existing traditional culture where women care for family and children. Therefore, there may be less focus on work-life balance, and women accept their role. The second reason may be due to changes in the responsibilities of women professionals. Women professionals tend to place more emphasis on work-related responsibilities and their professional lives. This is supported by a study by White and Rogers (2000) that pointed out that families are dual-income households, and they place a higher emphasis on their professional lives.

The third hypothesis was to empirically test the effect of organizational culture on the career advancement of women in Yerevan, Armenia. The results showed an inverse relationship between the organizational culture and career advancement of women, but the impact was not significant (B= -182; p>0.05). The results deviated from past studies that pointed out the impact of organizational culture on women's career advancement. Past studies by Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) and Wentling (2009) pointed out that workplace culture affects women's career progression. Organizational cultures that are dominated by men or cultures that are inclined towards masculinity affect women's career advancement (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2010). One possible reason is the presence of high self-confidence or self-efficacy among women. A study by Chandra and Loosemore (2004) showed a high level of self-esteem among women, which may not affect their career advancement. Based on a study done by Yegyan (2018), the Armenian culture is more individualistic. This means that Armenians value themselves and balance their work and personal life. The study by Yegyan (2018) also found that Armenia has a moderate score on masculinity. This shows that Armenians have traits of feminism. Therefore, Armenia is not strongly dominated by men. This points towards equality in the workplace.

From a theoretical perspective, there are several contributions to this research. This research added further knowledge to the existing body of knowledge. This study further added to the existing literature through a detailed examination of the role of glass-ceiling effect, work-life conflict, and organizational culture on women's career advancement. A notable aspect was the significant influence of the glass-ceiling effect on the career advancement of women. However, in contrast to existing beliefs, this study added a new dimension by finding that work-life conflict and organizational culture did not show a significant impact on the career advancement of women in Armenia. This finding provided more insights to academicians and researchers. This is also one of the first studies that empirically tested the relationship between the glass-ceiling effect, work-life conflict, and organizational culture towards the career advancement of women in Armenia. Although some of the results deviated from past studies, this study will fill up the gap in the literature on the barriers faced by women towards career advancement.

There are practical implications of this study on policymakers and women. This study supported the current phenomena where women are facing barriers towards their career advancement. Policymakers and organizations need to focus on the real problem identified in this study that is the glass ceiling effect. As highlighted in the McKinsey report, the glass-ceiling is the most significant barrier that affects the career advancement of women that women face much earlier in their careers. Therefore, to achieve parity, employers need to understand this problem and take measures to fix the "broken rung" (Huang et al., 2019).

In the workplace, discriminatory practices need to be eliminated, and women should be given equal opportunities as men to compete and advance in their careers. In other words, fairness should be exercised by organizations. As recommended in the report by McKinsey, organizations need to develop and implement a culture that reduces discrimination, provides opportunities and fairness, and focuses on the "broken rung" to overcome the gender gaps (Huang et al., 2019). To create opportunities for fairness, organizations need to understand the glass-ceiling effect and the unconscious biases that exist. This encompasses manager support,

unbiased performance management practices, and unbiased promotion practices.

There were limitations noted in this research. Firstly, there were only three predictors in this study. There are other predictors such as 'queen bee syndrome", organizational support, and government legislation that was not included in this study. Future studies should consider other variables to do a more comprehensive study. Secondly, data was collected from female respondents in Yerevan, Armenia. To achieve the generalization of results, future research should be more extensive and cover other cities. A self-reporting questionnaire was used, and the correctness of the data depends on the respondents' honesty. It is recommended that future research should obtain more in-depth information. This is possible through an explanatory sequential mixed-method study. The quantitative phase of the mixed method can provide more in-depth information to integrate and support the findings during the quantitative phase of the study. Lastly, this study did not look at the influence of demographic variables. Future studies should consider demographic variables such as age and marital status. For instance, age can be tested as a moderator in future studies. It is recommended that future studies collect data from male and female employees to get a broader perspective of the phenomena relating to the career advancement of women.

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