Socio-cultural, organizational factor and career development of female employees: A study on school teachers[1]

Sarita Maharjan

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of socio-cultural and organizational factors affecting the career development of female employees. With judgmental/ purposive sampling technique, only 142 respondents have been selected out of 150 questionnaires distributed to female school teachers. This study has tested reliability of questionnaires by using Cronbach alpha. Using multiple regression analysis, it has been found that both socio-cultural and organizational factors have negative impact on women career development. Hence, a conclusion can be drawn out of the study that there are negative impacts of socio-cultural and organizational factors on women career development. Considering the outcomes, it can be claimed that the study could be useful for school management, trainers, and human resource developers to assist the career development of female school teachers.

Key words:

Organizational factor; Socio-cultural factor; Women career development

Introduction

In the past few decades, women have reached soaring levels of education in many parts of the world and their proportion contains around 40 percent of workers worldwide (ILO, 2002). Studies have shown that women have higher rates of enrolment in schools and universities and govern certain economic sectors such as education and nursing fields in many countries. This phenomenon however, has not been paralleled by equal access to work opportunities at higher levels of

organizations. There is a persistent world trend affecting female managers where their career development plateaus at middle management positions (Wentling, 2003). Several barriers have been noticed in the career development of women in different countries. The invisible barriers continue to prevent women from moving up to a higher position in organizations (Adair, 1999; Baxter & Wright, 2000; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Kottis (1996) shows that in spite of the continuous growth in the number of women in business schools, only a small percentage of women are found in managerial positions. World Development Report (WDR) of 2012 shows that women and girls have made tremendous improvements in terms of development in general, and with a specific reference to educational enrolment, labour participation and life expectancy. However, there is still a persistence of deep-seated gender inequalities in some domains such as economic opportunities, participation in decision-making and leadership representation, especially within the developing countries (The World Bank, 2011).

Theorists such as Super (1957) and Schein (1971) assume that a career is a life–long, uninterrupted experience of work, which can be divided into neat stages of development, starting with initial ideas about working and ending with retirement. However, the patterns of women's career development are frequently affected by family as well as workplace commitments and responsibilities, unlike those of men. Women can be prevented from progressing in their careers in parity with men by the cultural environments they encounter (Chi-Chang, 1992; David & cooper, 1992). Furthermore, women have reported greater barriers than men and greater difficulties in getting career development opportunities for them (Armstrong, 2003).

Powel and Mainiero (1992) claimed that women have two overriding concerns in their lives, for their career and for others (e.g. family and friends). Their model therefore incorporates the influence of personal, organizational and societal factors to describe the balance between work and non-work aspects of life which most women strive to achieve. Larwood and Gutek (1987) concluded that any theory of women's career development must take account of five factors such as: (1) Career preparation, or how women are brought up to view the idea of a career and whether they believe they will have one or not, (2) Availability of opportunities should be taken into consideration, and whether they are limited for women, compared with men, (3)

Marriage, viewed as neutral for men but harmful to the career of women, (4) Similarly, pregnancy and having children inevitably cause women to take some kind of career break, and (5) Timing and age, as career breaks and family relocations often mean that women's careers do not follow the same chronological patterns as those of men. According to Judge et al. (1995), Seibert et al. (2001), Heslin (2003), Ng et al. (2005) and Breland et al., (2007), career development is described as the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or personal and professional achievements one has gathered from their working experience. Similarly, career development has been defined by Arthur et al. (2005) as "an outcome of a person's career experiences … the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time."

As far as religion is concerned, the attitude towards women varies from state to state with the same religion. Even people with the similar religious practices treat women in different way, due to influence of cultural values. This is natural, that people belonging to different beliefs behave differently. Such rigid socio-cultural beliefs often influence people to stick to those thoughts and be stereotyped in their dealings (Post and Byron, 2015). This perspective sees individuals as defining their growth throughout their life of work, rather than moving along pre-determined career paths (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

Population Census (2011) shows that 51.5 percent of the total population are female in Nepal (CBS, 2019). This census indicates female population is more than male. This data shows that the role of female employment is very crucial. A survey 2017/2018 shows that employment to population ratio of male is 48.3 percent whereas female are only 22.9 percent (CBS, 2019). Based on this statistics, a question can be raised why employment rate of female is relatively lower despite bigger size of female population. So, this study aims at identifying the barriers of women folks in their career development.

In the context of Nepal, this study attempts to analyze the impact of some invisible barrier of women and their career development. The study of Nepali female school teachers' barriers in their career development has not yet been found in the previous studies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationships of career development of female school teachers with socio-cultural factor and organizational factors. Thereby, the study would evaluate the impact of socio-cultural and

organizational factor on women career development. Hence, in this study, women career development refers to career advancement of female school teachers in Nepal.

Literature review

Women career development

Greenhaus, et al. (2000) have defined women career development as an ongoing process by which individuals' progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes and tasks. Career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to influence the career of any given individual over the life span.

Career development is a "continuous life-long process of developmental experiences that focuses on seeking, obtaining and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternatives, life styles and role options". Career development involves concerted efforts directed towards assessing a workers' potentials identifying likely career paths for that employee and designing and implementing "various forms of training and experience to prepare that person for more advanced job" (Agba & Ushie, 2010).

The concept of women career development serves a vital presence in the field of management. In a male dominated country like Nepal, majority of women consider that their husbands do not share household chores and do not even support them in taking care of their kids. Owing to these burdens, they become tired and stressed that ultimately affect their career and at the same time cause erosion in their efficiency to cope with the problems (Schneer & Reitman, 2002).Women at managerial positions are often found to be grappling with problems like poor support from their partners/husbands which can cause problem in career succession. In this study, it is specifically examined the career experiences of women (Shabbir, Shakeel & Zubair, 2017).

Socio-cultural factor

The socialization of a girl child in many societies is to blame for perceived inabilities on the part of women (Kirai, 2014). The life of passage of women are sacramental, celebrated or even acknowledged illustrative of the position ascribed to women, right from the birth of the girl child, in comparison to the boys. Female employees can perceive their professional dreams only after fulfilling their culturally accepted roles,

an expectation nearly impossible considering at what age this should be happening. Some women who practice in a positive, antagonistic, self-governing style are taken in different way and often blamed for going out of track. In this way, socio-cultural factor is one of the invisible barriers of women's career development.

Organizational factor

Organization culture is a system of shared meanings, values, beliefs, practices, group norms of the members to produce behavioral norms with regard to the working conditions of the organization (Harvey & Brown, 1997). Organizational structure impedes women's entry to and advancement in the workplace. The structure includes job recruitment, job assignment, mentoring, retention and training, promotion and reward systems (Cooper, 2001). This indicates the organizational factor is also another important barrier in women career development.

Many authors have shown that the existence and persistence of stereotypical socio-cultural factor explain the poor representation of women in senior management roles (Curry, 2000; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Embry, Padget & Caldwell, 2008; Shah, 2009). Likely, Stanley (2008) found that organizational structure and culture increased barriers to female advancement up the career ladder. Masculine organizational culture is a barrier to female advancement (White, 2003). But Victor and Shamila (2018) found that cultural factor had a negative significant impact on women career development whereas organizational factor was not significant. Regarding to the above literature review, this study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1

There is a negative significant impact of socio-cultural factor on women's career development.

Hypothesis 2

There is a negative significant impact of organizational factor on women's career development.

Research methodology

The research design of this study is causal comparative research design. The design has been used in this study to analyze the impact of socio-cultural and organizational factor on woman career development. Purposive sampling technique has been used to achieve the objectives of the study. The population for the study consists of school

female teachers in Kathmandu valley. Only 142 respondents (i.e. 71%) were selected and usable, out of 180 questionnaires distributed to school female teachers in Kathmandu valley. Opinions of the respondents were collected through Five Point Likert Scale, where 1 for "strongly disagree", 2 for "disagree", 3 for "fairly agree", 4 for "agree" and 5 for "strongly agree". This supported in revealing whether a particular variable was observed as a barrier to women career development. The reliability of questionnaire is tested by using Cronbach alpha. Correlation analysis has been employed to test the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. In multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity problem should not arise. So, tolerance and VIF has been used to identify the multicollinearity problem between independent variables. Lastly, multiple regression analysis has been adopted to identify the impact of socio-cultural factor and organizational factor on women career development.

*Figure 1***:** Research framework
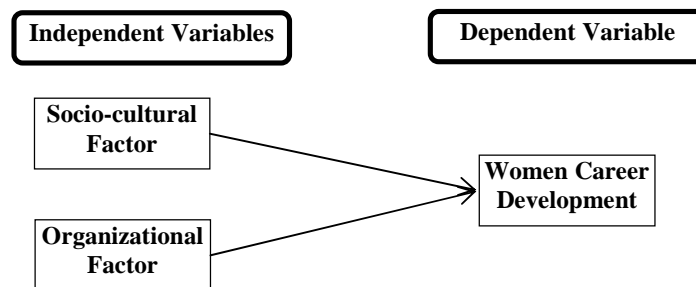
The study has identified socio-cultural factor and organizational factor as the independent variables and women's career development as dependent one.

Regression Model: WCD = $r + s_B SF + s_C OF + U$ …(1)
Where,

WCD = Women Career development
SF = Socio-cultural Factor; OF = Organization Factor
$r1$= constant; $s_B l$*and*$ls_C l$= coefficients of variables; U = Error term

Respondents' profile

Table 1 below shows that 142 respondents distributed by age group, academic qualification, family status, marital status, children, organization type, and job

category. Percentage distributions of respondents of all categories are also shown in the table. In the age group, the highest percentage of respondents (59.9%) lies in the age group between 30 years to 50 years whereas the lowest percentage of respondents (4.9%) lies between 50 years and above. Similarly, in the academic qualification, the highest percentage of respondents (49.3%) is selected from bachelor degree. The percentage of respondents from nuclear family is the highest (53.5%). From the marital status, married respondents are selected as the highest (74.6%). The respondents having children are selected as 73.9 percent. The most of the respondents are selected from private organizations (75.4%). Moreover, full time teachers are collected mostly (97.2%).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

Group	Categories	No. of respondents	Percent
Age group	Below30	50	35.2
	30-50	85	59.9
	50& above	7	4.9
Academic qualifications	Under Bachelor	42	29.6
	Bachelor	70	49.3
	Master & above	30	21.1
Family status	Nuclear Family	76	53.5
	Joint Family	66	46.5
Marital status	Single	32	22.5
	Married	106	74.6
	Divorced	4	2.8
Having children	No child	37	26.1
	Having children	105	73.9
Organization type	Public (Govt.)	35	24.6
	Private	107	75.4
Job category	Part Time	4	2.8
	Full Time	138	97.2

Source: Survey, 2019

Result and discussion
In this segment, data are studied on the basis of responses. Respondents' response rate, reliability test of questionnaire, correlation analysis, muticollinearity test and multiple regression analysis have been used to analyze the data.

Response rate

Table 2 shows the response rate. The response rate of organizational factor is 98.45%. The response rate of socio-cultural factor is 98.17% and the response rate of women career development is 99.18%. The missing percent of organizational factor, socio-cultural factor and women career development are 1.55, 1.83 and 0.82 respectively. These response rates of variables appear sufficient for the analysis.

Table 2: Response rate

Variables	Respondents	Questions	Respondent-question	Missing	Missing (%)	Response rate (%)
Organizational factor	142	10	1420	22	1.55	98.45
Socio-cultural factor	142	5	710	13	1.83	98.17
Women career development	142	12	1704	14	0.82	99.18

Source: Survey, 2019

Reliability test

In table 3, Cronbach alpha is used to test the reliability of organizational factor, socio-cultural factor and women career development of female school teachers with five, ten and twelve scale items each respectively. Values of Cronbach alpha of each variable are 0.736, 0.802 and 0.824 respectively. According to George and Mallery (2009), the value of Cronbach alpha should be more than 0.7 for the reliability of the questionnaire. Since, the value of Cronbach alpha is greater than 0.7, all the questionnaires of the particular variables used for the data analysis are reliable.

Table 3: Reliability test using Cronbach alpha

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach alpha (Г)	George &Mallery decision	
Socio-cultural Factor	5	0.736	a > 0.7	Acceptable
Organizational Factor	10	0.802	a > 0.8	Good
Women Career Development	12	0.824	a > 0.8	Good

Source: Author's calculation from survey, 2019

Relationship of variables

Table 4 shows the relationship of women career development with socio-cultural factor and organizational factor. The correlation coefficient of socio-cultural factor is

-0.605 and corresponding p-value is 0.000, which is significant at 1 percent level. The correlation coefficient of organizational factor is -0.577 and corresponding p-value is 0.000, which is also significant at 1 percent level. The correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant negative relationship with organizational factor and socio-cultural factor. Since, tolerance is greater than 0.1 and VIF is less than 10%. So, there is no multi-collinearity problem in the model.

Table 4: Correlation and multicollinearity test

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	p-value	Collinearity statistics	
			Tolerance	VIF
Socio-cultural factor	-0.605*	0.000	0.694	1.441
Organizational factor	-0.577*	0.000	0.694	1.441
Dependent variable: Women career development				

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

Source: Author's calculation from Survey, 2019

Impact of socio-cultural and organizational factor on women career development

Regression analysis is employed to test the impact of socio-cultural factor and organizational factor on women career development. From Table 5, corresponding p-value of F-statistic is 0.000, which is significant at 1 percent level. Therefore, the model is fit. R^2 value is 0.439 i.e., 43.9 percent, this means that 43.9 percent variation in women career development is explained by variation in socio-cultural factor and organizational factor. Corresponding p-values of both socio-cultural factor and organizational factors are 0.000 (i.e., 0.000 <0.01) each which are significant at one percent level. Similarly, the sign of coefficients of both variables are negative. This indicates that both hypotheses (1 and 2) are accepted. It means that there are negative significant impact of socio-cultural factor and organizational factor on women career development other things remaining same.

The regression analysis also shows that change in 1 percent each of socio-cultural factor and organizational factors leads to 0.336 percent and 0.331 percent negatively change in female school teachers' career development respectively.

Table 5: Regression analysis

WCD =	4.863	- 0.336 SF	- 0.331OF	+ U	…(1)
Se	(0.203)	(0.061)	(0.078)		
p-value	{0.000}	{0.000}	{0.000}		
F: 53.921 (p = 0.000)			R^2: 0.439 or 43.9%		

Source: Author's calculation from survey, 2019

Here,

WCD- Women Career Development

SF- Socio-Cultural Factor and

OF-Organizational Factor

Discussion

As per the hypothesis, the result reported that socio-cultural factor has negative significant impact on the women's career development. This finding is similar with the study of Curry (2000), Cubillo and Brown(2003) Embry, Padgetand Caldwell (2008), Shah (2009), stanley, and Victor and Shamila (2018).Similarly, it has also been resulted that organizational factor has a negative significant impact on women career development. This result is found similar with Stanley (2008) and White (2003). But it did not support the study of Victor and Shamila (2018) which shows that organizational factor is not significant.

Conclusion and implication

The sample size was taken from female school teachers in Nepal. Therefore, from the result of the study, it can be concluded that socio-cultural factor and organizational factor are major obstacles in career development of female school teachers in Nepal. This result shows that socio-cultural factor and organizational factor are essential factors for the career development of women. A determined work of the organizations, women employees, their families, and the wider society are crucial for career development of women.

As long as the inherent conservative attitude prevails, women employees will continue to face the challenges in their career success. Women should be encouraged to change their beliefs, tradition, and stereotyped culture, but they should be supported in social interactions and encouragement the career advancement. Similarly, organizational policy, organizational structure, organizational culture, and

perception of the organization are also important factor for the career development of women. Beside this, job recruitment, job assignment, and mentoring, retention and training, promotion and reward systems also helps to develop the career of women.

This study has some implications on female school teachers' career development. This study could be beneficial for school management, instructors, mentors, trainers, and human resource developers to assist the female career development. Women should be more career–focused rather than job focused. They should learn how to have systematic, critical thinking and to make use of the role models in the work environment. Focused training should be provided to women. This should include confidence-building and assertiveness training as well as the provision of management skills, to accelerate upward managerial mobility and career life planning skills. Equal opportunities should be given during training. Concerned authorities should not discriminate any women employees when assigning responsibilities.

It is important for organizations to have objective-based HR policies in which recruitment, training and development, performance appraisals, and promotions are ascertained. Other strategies include developing training programmes which aim at changing attitudes and creating an enabling environment for women empowerment.

Limitations

This study has taken only two independent variables SCF and OF to analyze their impact on women career development. The sample has been taken from the schools in different parts of the Kathmandu valley. Therefore, the study results cannot be generalized in the case of women employees in other organization. So far as the analytical tools are concerned they are confined to correlation and regression analysis which are used to examine the impact of SCF and OF on WCD.

References

Agba, U., & Shie, E.M. (2010). Career development and employee commitment in industrial organizations in Calabar, Nigeria. *American Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research,1*(2), 105-114.

Armstrong, M. (2003). A handbook of human resource management practice. London: Kogan Page Publisher.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).(2019). *Statistical pocket book of Nepal, 2018*. Kathmandu: Author.

Cooper, J. J. (2001). Women middle managers' perception of the glass ceiling. *Women in Management Review, 16*(1), 30-41.

Cubillo, L., & Brown, M. (2003). Women into educational leadership and management: International difference. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *41*(3), 278-291.

Curry, B. K. (2000). *Women in power: Pathways to leadership in education*. New York: Teacher College Press.

Embry, A., Padget, M.Y., & Caldwell, C. B. (2008).*Can leaders step outside of the gender box? An examination of leadership and gender role stereotypes. Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies,15* (1), 30-45.

Greenhaus, J. H., Callahan, G. A., & Godschalk, V. M. (2000). *Career management* (3rd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press/Harcourt College Publishers.

Harvey, D. E., & Brown, D. R. (1997). *An experiential approach to organizational development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

ILO.(2002). *Breaking through the glass ceiling, women in management summary*. International labor organization.

Isani, U.A.G., &Virk, M. L. (2003). *Higher education in Pakistan: A historical futuristic perspective*. Islamabad. Pakistan: Roohani Art Press.

Kirai, N.(2014). Barriers to women career progression in Kenya's civil service, (Doctoral dissertation).

Kramarae, P.M., Cheris & Dale, S. (2000). *Routledge international encyclopedia of women, 2*. New York: Routledge.

Lawood, L., & Gutek, B.A. (1987). *Working towards women career development, California*, Sage publishing.

McClelland, J., & Evans, A. (1992). *The education of women*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

Post, C., & Byron, K. (2015). Women on boards and firm financial performance: A meta-analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58.1546-1571.

Powell, G.N., & Mainierio, L.A. (1992). Cross-currents in the river of time: conceptualizing the complexities of women's careers. *Journal of Management, 18*(2), 215-237.

Schein, E.H. (1971). The individual, the organization and the career: A conceptual scheme. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 7.*401-426.

Schneer, J. A., & Reitman, F. (2002). Managerial life without a wife: Family structure and managerial career success. *Journal of Business Ethics, 37*(1), 25-38.

Shabbir, H., Shakeel, M. A., &Zubair, R. A. (2017). Gender stereotype, glass ceiling and women's career advancement: An empirical study in service sector of Pakistan. *City University Research Journal*, Special Issue, 236-246.

Shah, S.(2009). Educational leadership: An Islamic perspective. In F. W. English(Ed.), *Educational leadership and administration* (pp. 76-100). London: Sage Publications.

Shaukat, S., & Pell, A.W. (2017). The impact of social cultural factors on females passing through higher education in Pakistan. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*,*71*, 193-214.

Sonnenfeld, J., & Kotter, J.P. (1982). The maturation of career theory. *Human Relations, 35*(1), 19-46.

Sperandio, J.,& Kagoda, M.A. (2010). Leadership for adolescent girls: The role of secondary schools in Uganda. *Gender and Development, 14*(4), 391-410.

Stanley, D. (2008). Male and female nursing applicants' attitudes and expectations towards their future careers in nursing.*Journal of Research in Nursing, 13*(6), 540-541. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1744987107085532.

Super, D.J. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. New York: Harper and Row

The World Bank (2011). *Word development report of 2012: Gender equality and development*. Washington DC: World Bank.

Victor, L. D., & Shamila, F. A. (2018). The impact of glass ceiling on career development of executive level female employees in financial sector in Kandy district. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports, 2*(4), 1-11.

Wentling, R. M. (2003). The career development and aspiration of women in middle management revisited. *Women Management, 18*(6), 331-324.

White, K. (2003). Women and leadership in higher education in Australia. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 9(1), 45-60. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1022218403113.