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Impact of Glass Ceiling Effect on Women Career Success with the Mediating Role of Work Family Conflict and Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support in Pakistan

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Abstract: Women make up half of the world's population, but they continue to face significant barriers to success including the glass ceiling. It refers to the invisible professional hurdles that women confront in the workplace. Women encounter challenges in practically every field of business today, including positive successes such as promotions and awards, which jeopardize their status and role in the workplace. Although the glass ceiling has piqued the interest of researchers, some authors have noted that theoretical models have made little effort to develop an understanding of the phenomenon and its implications. The main objective of the research was to find out the impact of glass barriers on women's career advancement in academia, as well as to analyze the mediating role of work-family conflict the mediating linkage between the glass ceiling and women's career success and perceived organizational support as moderating to reduce the negativity between conflict and women careers. The data was gathered using an adopted questionnaire with a sample size of 325. The included hypothesis under this research is being tested using sampling criteria. According to the results of the study, all hypotheses were accepted. Theoretical and managerial implications were also discussed along with future recommendations and limitations.

Keywords: Glass-ceiling effect, Women career advancement, Work family conflict and perceived organizational support

Introduction

Increased female labour force participation is crucial for poverty reduction, economic growth, and women empowerment around the world. Over the last 20 years, female labour force participation has climbed to 63.5 percent, which is still below the national average (Kalaitzi et al., 2017). Women have evolved to contribute half of the human capital in a competitive economy (Fathy & Youssif, 2020). Gender parity is nearly impossible to achieve in this competitive market, indeed company's most valuable resource is its personnel, either male or female. Women all over the world are gradually building a global gender-equality movement to achieve equal rights and opportunities based on talent rather than gender discrimination (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Unfortunately, developing countries like Pakistan continue to face similar barriers to women's job advancement. There are numerous factors that impede advancement and higher positions at work, and the glass ceiling is one of them. It's an impenetrable barrier that prevents women from progressing up the academic ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Glass ceiling is a more intangible barrier to career advancement than other internal and external factors (Pothuraju & Alekhya, 2021). Similarly, there are number of societal, organisational, and cultural factors that contribute to these invisible glass barriers, all of which have a negative impact on women's career advancement (Sharma & Kaur, 2019). Women face obstacles in almost every field of life, including academia that is one of the most valuable sectors in any community,

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women in this sector having difficulty achieving top-level positions. These consequences have been discussed extensively in management science literature (Babic & Hansez, 2021), but women's career advancement has received little attention.

Pakistan is currently among the worst countries in terms of gender parity, only ahead of Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan. Pakistan has failed to improve its gender parity score in the last sixteen years, according to the "Global Gender Gap Report 2021" (the gender parity score was 0.553 in 2006 and is 0.556 in 2021). The glass ceiling in women's careers persists at the national and international levels, and it differs by country (Lakmali et al., 2020). Previous empirical evidence showed that women's endeavors are strongly discouraged in Asian countries such as Pakistan (Lathabhavan & Balasubramanian, 2017). Invisible barriers such as gendered leadership construction and cognitive bias, accordingly both position and evaluate women less favorably than men, many women experience difficulties in advancing in their careers. (Hussin et al., 2021).

Many women pursuing a professional career in management face job promotion discrimination (Perales, Pérez-Ledo & Chordà, 2021). Indeed, establishing a fair merit-based promotion system is one of the most common issues that organizations face around the world; despite enormous efforts in this regard, promotion systems in many organizations appear to be skewed. Because of these flaws in the system, women have fewer opportunities to advance in their careers (Eghlidi, F. Karimi, 2019). A number of studies have found that women are less concentrated in universities than men in lower ranks, that more women work in temporary positions, and that they earn less than men with comparable qualifications (Lieberman et al., 2018). It refers to the invisible and insurmountable barrier that prevents women from advancing to upper management, decision-making, or high academic positions, regardless of their achievements and competencies in career advancement (Ozturk & Simsek, 2019). Today, many women balance parenthood and family life with full-time paid job. Although having various roles might benefit both genders' overall well-being, competing obligations can also lead to role conflict and undesirable psychological repercussions. When one role's performance impairs one's capacity to function well in another, there is inter-role conflict. This dispute is known as work-family conflict when it occurs predominantly at home. This is the proportion to which a person is subjected to work-related pressures that are incompatible with family obligations. (Babic, & Hansez, 2021).

Although some researches have shown that the glass ceiling have a negative impact on several concepts, such as employee intention to quit, Stewart et al., (2011) the organization. These barriers and ambiguities in role of women at work-home is increasing day by day. Indeed, rare previous studies Tran, (2014), to the best of our knowledge, has explored the impression of work-to-family conflict (WFC) and glass-ceiling barriers in one's career success. To fill out this gap, this study considered work-family conflict as a mediator in the relationship between glass ceiling effects and career success. Existing research has shown that there is a misconception about women managers that causes their superiors to overlook them as non-potential candidates for top management jobs. Among these views are the incompatibility of the responsibilities of mother, wife, and manager, as well as the fact that becoming a manager necessitates an excessive amount of investment, flexibility, and travel. In keeping with this notion, multiple previous studies have revealed that managers believe that work-life conflict is stronger for women than for males. However, this assumption has consequences because it reduces the organization's perception of women's competency in the workplace, lowering the likelihood of female promotion (Son, Sohn & Chung, 2018).

The conservation of resources theory is one possibility for explaining this connection (COR theory, Hobfoll, 1989, 2011). This idea holds that the prospective or actual loss of resources, which they highly value, poses a threat to both people and groups. People are thus impelled to absorb, acquire, retain, conserve, defend, foster, and expand valuable resources in order to meet anticipated future demands (Hobfoll, 1989). People do, in fact, "use important resources in order to undertake the regulation of the self, their operation of social contacts, and how they organise, behave, and fit in to the wider framework of organisations and culture itself," as stated by Hobfoll (2011, p. 117). It's also feasible that female managers make resources investments in an effort to overcome glass ceiling-related barriers but that these investments prove ineffective. It is unpleasant to spend resources to deal with a scenario when resources are lost because doing so may reduce a person's supply of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Poor physical and/or mental health is a result of this spiral. The perception of WFC rises as a result of these detrimental effects, which include negative emotions, diminished psychological wellbeing, and eventually diminished mental and physical health (Taylor, Huml, & Dixon, 2019). Therefore, based on the above, authors postulate that work-family conflict mediates in the relationship between glass-ceiling effect and women's career advancement in Pakistan academia.

Furthermore, according to the organisational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), employees develop a broad understanding of how much the organisation values their contributions and

cares about their well-being, which is related to perceived organisational support–POS. Employees who perceive organisational support as dispositional increased their level of confidence and interest in their work (N. Kurtessis, 2015). Employees believe support from the business, that someone is there to help them by providing helpful comments or being available to talk about specific workplace issues, which motivates them to push their professional boundaries and maintain their family and work balance (Chenga& Yi, 2018). According to previous study, POS is important in altering organisational links, which is supported by this citation (Cheng et al., 2016; Han et al., 2016).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), on the other hand, demonstrated that positive signals between employees and relationship exchange help them meet their challenging tasks (Dany, 2014). Employees rely on two types of social support that are distinct but related to help them perform well at work and in their careers. The first is work-related support, which is measured by perceived organisational support (POS). We believe that POS can supplement valuable aspects of one's work and family balance and compensate for individuals' lack of other career-related competencies (Hobfoll, 2011). Through POS, individuals can gain competencies and skills, increasing their adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It refers to the extent to which POS addition assists employees in managing job-related challenges, whether female or male, and high (self-esteem), as a result of which women become strong enough to overcome any bias during jobs, increasing their chances of career success (Ocampo et al., 2018). Similarly, employee empowerment in organizations is still a hot topic in management. Despite the fact that there are numerous studies in the current literature focusing on enhancing thriving behaviors, there are still gaps in understanding the nature of these behaviors and identifying how perceived organizational support reduces the negative relationship between work family conflict and career success of women in Pakistan's educational sector.

Employees feel confident in their organisations and make advantage of the support they have in today's competitive environment, which helps them to increase their level of satisfaction and capability to handle disagreements at work, such as work and family conflict (Akgunduz, Alkan, & Gök, 2018). High perceived organisational support lowers the likelihood of a task being incompatible with someone's life, according to numerous studies in the literature (such as Ibrahim et al., 2016). Joo, Hahn & Peterson (2015) revealed that employees will continue to work in their organisations as long as their organisations care about their well-being and assign them essential operational tasks. Employees that receive organisational support become competent of doing duties at work. This study adds to previous research by filling many gaps in the literature on perceived organisational support as a moderating factor in the association between work-family conflict and women's career success.

Literature Review

Glass Ceiling Effect and Women Career Advancement

The term "glass ceiling" became well-known and popularized in 1986. The Working Woman Report," which examined the status of female employees in corporations (Sorkin, 2018). For many years, the glass ceiling has been a hot topic in almost every country. Females and other minorities were found in lower-level positions with low pay and no room for advancement, according to the Labor Force Survey (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The glass ceiling effect hinders women's career advancement. Women in Pakistan, in particular, continue to face invisible barriers to career advancement at the middle and upper levels, and women continue to be underrepresented in top-level positions. The glass ceiling has a significant impact on women's professional development satisfaction and shapes their perceptions of it. A lack of social relationships and social capital will limit women's career success. Career advancement is a dynamic variable and indicator that changes over time; as a result, negative attitudes toward career advancement are common (Masood, Nawab & Shafi, 2021). Career advancement entails climbing the corporate ladder and increasing one's earnings and income.

Women all over the world face insurmountable challenges in achieving top-level positions while meeting all of the requirements associated with unequal professional advancement (Jauhar & Lau, 2018). According to previous research, glass/invisible walls at work jeopardize women's careers, and workplace gender disparities persist. They can no longer obtain executive positions at work (Ngaage et al., 2020). As a result of the preceding discussion, it is expected that the more severe the obstacles, the more likely women will be rejected at the top of the hierarchy. As a result, we devised the following hypothesis.

H1: The glass ceiling effect has a negative impact on women's job advancement in Pakistan's education sector and the state of Azad Kashmir(AJK).

Work-Family Conflict as a Mediator

Work family conflict is characterized as "a type of inter role conflict in which the role pressures of the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some way" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Individuals are often compelled to choose between prioritizing family (work influencing family or WFC) and work (family affecting work or FWC), sacrificing one position in order to achieve self-acceptance with their role in each environment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Women tend to experience higher levels of conflict than men. Due to high level of conflict women become unable to take advancement opportunity and the inability to change employment. There are numerous factors that generate higher level of WFC, some invisible barriers at work also become the cause of work family conflict. Scholars have also identified that women and men are thought to be equal all over the world, but the reality is quite different; previous studies found that women are trapped in the inferior gender. It also reveals employees who already face incompatibility issues at work and are heavily influenced by these intangible barriers and face numerous challenges (Soumya & Sathiyaseelan, 2021). Many organizations are built on employee-to-employee trust. When a person has doubts about himself, the goal is hampered. No objective or solution can be achieved if there is no trust in their abilities, which can lead to negative psychological consequences like stress, WFC and job burnout (R.r& Sathiyaseelan, 2019). Women who frequently face disagreements find themselves in an unbalanced position. In such situations, they tend to think low of themselves and lose faith in their own worth. At workplace glass barriers increase the chances of conflicts in their jobs (Williams, 2017). Hidden barriers and disputes between family and job decrease meeting career goals (Branden, 2021). In fact, recent studies in management science literature showed that disputes between job and family, reduces employees level of esteem that ultimately reduce the chances of career success and gaining a competitive advantage (Hirschi et al., 2018; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Research has supported that employees who have work family conflict badly affected by glass ceiling barriers at that time supervisors perceives that subordinate perform below average and the subordinates ultimately received fewer promotions—a new way of understanding the glass ceiling. Empirical evidence is mounting that the boundaries between work life and family life are now blurred. Conflict in workers family and work life reduce the chances of promotion at workplace (Hoobler, Hu& Wilson, 2010). Conflicts faced by women at work and family unable them to break through invisible barriers and are unconcerned about their professional development and achievement (Lin et al., 2018). The current study hypothesized that work-family conflict faced by women as a mediator between the glass ceiling and career success.

H2. Women's work family conflict mediates between the glass ceiling effect and women's job advancement.

POS as a Moderator

One of the most often used concepts in psychology research is organisational support. The popularity of organisational support is due to its crucial theoretical function as a way to lessen stress and enhance health and wellbeing (Cohen & Liari, 2009). Work-family conflict is one such strain, which happens when obligations to one's job or family make it challenging to meet obligations in a different capacity (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). When employees are unable to deal with issues and barriers that exacerbate their deficiencies, diminish their true personality, their perception of support from organisation is a significant factor in dealing with all (Zu & Yang, 2018). Employees develop a perception of how much their organisation helps them to maintain their values in various aspects such as reward, recognition, and promotion, as well as to meet socioemotional needs (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In literature, perceived organisational support defined as companies taking initiatives to support their employees in exchange for relationships and meeting their needs at work (Cropanzano et al., 2017), and with this support, employees reduce incompatibilities between tasks. A positive relationship between the organisation and its employees fosters a sense of worth in the employees, and they seek out challenges. Previous literature and theories support employees' positive perceptions and support from organisations. Positive links between organisations and their workforce are associated with positive behaviors and attitudes. This study contends that positive organisational support reduce conflict, allowing them to overcome invisible barriers and seize opportunities for career advancement.

Within the work domain, researchers have traditionally distinguished organization-level support, such as supportive organizational perceptions, from support received from specific individuals in the work context, such as supervisors and coworkers. these studies revealed that sources of support significantly linked with work family conflict (French et al., 2018) Thus positive support from organization reduce level of work- family conflict. If a person believes/perceives that he or she is a valuable member of the organisation (Hobfoll et al., 2016) might handle arguments in both domains.

Organizations are regarded as significant, and thus serve as a valuable resource for developing one's self-assessment. Employee psychological well-being is thought to be moderated by perceived organisational support. Previous studies focused on perceived social support with little consideration for POS as a moderating factor. This gap is highlighted in the current study, which considers perceived organisational support as a novel contribution between work-family conflict and career advancement due to glass barriers, particularly in the academic sector. We hypothesized as follows, considering all of the preceding discussion from previous theories and empirical studies.

H3: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and women's career advancement.

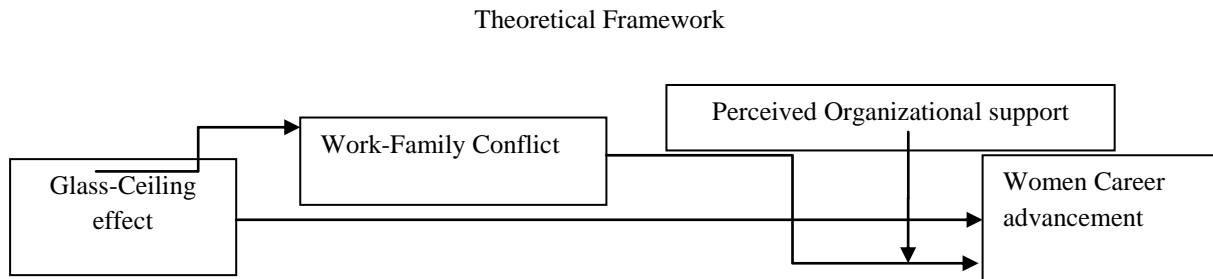


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Methods & Material

The current study used acceptable research methodologies and techniques that were consistent with the research topic to obtain the best results on the given hypothesis. Using quantitative research techniques, the importance of women's career advancement in Pakistan's academic sector, including the state of Azad Kashmir, was investigated. According to Neuman & Kreuger (2003), quantitative research is the most acceptable research technique for identifying difficulties through deductive reasoning, and this study follows suit. Furthermore, the data for this study was gathered through a time lag research method. To avoid reverse causality, data was collected over a three-week period with three-time lags.

Data Collection Procedure

We gathered information from professional women in middle-level positions in Pakistan's educational sector in order to solve the problem and achieve the desired outcome. To achieve better results, consider hiring female employees instead of male employees. The research survey was carried out using a previous researcher's questionnaire. Prior to conducting research, we obtain permission from the head of the relevant institute and an approval letter in order to maintain the ethics of excellent research and to assure them that the responses of each respondent should be kept confidential with an attached cover letter. With these criteria, acquiescence and social desirability biases are less likely (Spector 2006). Furthermore, rather than leaders and executives, female employees are the unit of analysis for data collection.

Academics are taken into account in the current research paper. The self-administered questionnaires are distributed using convenience and purposive sampling methods. A convenience / Purposive non-probability sampling design was used to recruit participants. The goal of these sampling designs is to reduce costs and time while producing better results for the current research study. It may be necessary to obtain information from specific target groups in order to obtain information from those who are most readily or conveniently available. The sampling in this case is limited to certain types of people who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who have it or because they meet certain criteria. As a result, data was collected from female employees about their hidden barriers that harmed their careers, and the best and most appropriate sampling design for the current study was convenience / purposeful. In Pakistan, there are still stereotypes and taboos regarding female workers, which is why we collected unbiased data through this. The first time lag data was collected on demographic variables such as age, gender, qualification, marital status, and tenure on specific organizations, glass ceiling effect, and gender discrimination of women in educational sector from Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and the state of AJ&K, and the same time interval data was assessed for women career advancement. Before distributing the questionnaires, each one was coded individually so that data could be obtained from the same respondents at each time interval after the initial time lag. Because some respondents completed the first

and third time lags, it was preferred to reject half-finished questionnaires rather than half-completed questionnaires, and the authors kept 350 completed questionnaires for statistical analysis.

Measurements:

In this study, each variable of interest was measured using a previously designed scale. When collecting data, women employees were given a medium amount of consideration. The scales were created using a 5-point Likert scale, which is routinely used in social science research. It was separated into two sections, A and B, each dealing with demographics and study variables.

Glass Ceiling Effect

The glass ceiling effect questionnaire is adapted from Luzzo and Mc Whirter's final section (2001) and employs a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagrees to agrees.

Work- Family Conflict

Work-to-family conflict was assessed using the appropriate SWING subscale (Geurts et al., 2005). This nine-item subscale evaluates the negative impact of the professional situation on family life (e.g., "I'm irritable at home because my work is demanding"). People responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale (0: never to 4: always). Cronbach's alpha was 0.87.

Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al. measured the POS scale as an 8-item scale (1986). The scale's alpha reliability was 0.93.

Women Career Advancement

The WAMS instrument addresses attitudes toward women's career advancement. The Turkish version of WAMS is made up of 20 items developed by (Peters, 1974), 10 of which are related to gender stereotypes and the other 5 are related to women's career advancement.

Variables Controlled

Age (1=20-30yrs, 2=31-40yrs, 3=41-50yrs, 4=over50yrs) was one of five control factors in the current study. Gender (1=male, 2=female), education (1=bachelor, 2=Masters, 3=M-phill, 4=PhD), marital status (1=unmarried, 2=married), and tenure (1=1-5yrs, 2=6-10yrs, 3=11-20yrs, 4=over 20 yrs) are all factors to consider.

Findings & Results of the Study

This study primarily collected data and analyzed the results using quantitative research methods and techniques. Does the glass-ceiling effect impede women's job advancement in order to accomplish the study's goal and answer the desired question? Statistical analysis was also used to see if work-family conflict plays a role in the causal relationship between glass barriers and women's advancement. Furthermore, the authors interpret the findings by identifying POS as a moderator in the association between poor WFC and women's professional success. Furthermore, with a sample size of 350, data was obtained for these Pakistani twin cities and the state of Azad Kashmir. Before testing the hypothesis, we evaluated the normality of the data and discovered that it is normally distributed with a bell-shaped curve and meets the normality assumptions. Then, using a reliability test, examine the consistency of the data and all study variables. Alpha values indicate that all observed and latent variables are consistent. Glass ceiling effect had a Cronbach's alpha value of .93 on a 9-item scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, self-esteem had a value of .88 on a 10-item scale, perceived

organizational support had an alpha value of .85 on an 8-item scale, and career advancement had an alpha value of .90 on a 20-item scale.

Authors also examined the validity of selected instruments after assessing the internal consistency of data using a self-administrative questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis has been used to examine the structure and validity of the data factor analysis (CFA). Few items have low loadings and do not load on their own variables during CFA. Progression in your career Due to a shortage of loading on its own factor, three items, Q18, Q14, and Q9, had to be removed. The two items measuring perceived organizational support, Q6 and Q7, were not loaded, which could indicate that they examined different features or that the respondent did not comprehend these things correctly. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI), and comparative fit index have all been used to assess the model's fitness (CFI). The current study included four research variables: one independent, one dependent, one mediator, and one moderating variable.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis results

	ChiSquare	df	CMIN/Df	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
Initial model	3661.787	1665	1.677	0.050	0.912	0.884	0.901
Modified model	3455.554	1660	1.599	0.047	0.881	0.899	0.876

The table above shows several values of the initial model based on criteria such as RMSEA.050, IFI.912, TLI.884, and CFI.901. Although several alterations were made to obtain the goodness of model fit, there were only a few chances to obtain new values. All of the adjusted values satisfy the threshold condition, enhancing the model's validity for hypothesis testing (Hair, Ringle&Sarstedt, 2013). After running the model, the RMSEA =.047, which is less than .05, identified the model's fitness, and the IFI=.881, TLI=.89, and CFI=.8 all met the threshold values that determined the model's fitness for hypothesis testing.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficients (r) between variables have been shown in the given table by considering the Pearson that identified the association between two or more than two variables.

Table 2. Correlation Co-efficient (r)

Sr#	Variables	GCE	WFC	POS	WCA
1	GCE	1			
1	WFC	.259**	1		
3	POS	-.663**	-.344*	1	
4	WCA	-.045*	-.470*	.754**	1

Note: *means $p < 0.05$; **means $p < 0.01$

The above table determined the significant correlation between glass ceiling effect and WFC ($r=.259$, $p < .01$). There was a significant negative correlation between glass ceiling and POS ($r=-.663$, $p < .01$). Current data identified the negative but significant correlation between glass ceiling effect and women career advancement ($r=-.045$, $p < .05$). Work-family conflict and perceived organizational support was negatively as well as significantly correlated with each other ($r=-.344$, $p < .05$) same correlated with women career ($r=-.470$, $r < .01$). Thus, result showed positive and significant correlation between POS and women career advancement ($r=.754$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Glass ceiling effect is negatively related with women career advancement

Table 3. Un-standardized co-efficient for Structural Path

Structural Path	β	S.E	P-Value
GCE → WCA	-.452	.087	.001

*** = $p < .001$, $\beta =$ (Un-standardizedBeta), SE= standard error

The above table exemplified that glass ceiling effect is significantly and positively related with women career advancement ($\beta = -.45$, $p = .001$). The statistical results showed that greater the women employees in public and private academic sector face glass ceiling the less will be their chances of growth in their career thus the hypothesis 1 has been accepted.

Mediation Analysis

H2: Work-family conflict mediates in the relationship between glass-ceiling effect and women career advancement.

Table 2. Regression results for H2

H2	Direct path	B	P-value		
	GCE → WCA	-.452	.001		
	Specific Indirect effect				
	GCE → WFC → WCA	-.314	.023		
	Total Effect			<u>UL</u>	<u>LL</u>
	GCE → WCA	-.839	.000	-.011	-.234

The above mentioned table statistical values of direct effect of glass ceiling on women career advancement with regression coefficient ($B = -.452$ & $P < .05$) which was reduced from total effect due to mediation it means work and family conflict of women mediates and H2 accepted

H3: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between women work/family conflict and women career. The greater the POS the lower negativity between WFC and women career advancement.

Table 3. Correlation results for H3

Structural path	Co-efficient	P-value
WFC → WCA	.39	$P < .001$
POS → WCA	-.33	$P < .001$
Itrm_Term1 (POSX WFC)	.42	$P < .05$

Existing theories and literature examined that high organizational support build and boost the confidence and WFC that they maintain their career, take opportunities, and continue for career growth. The interaction term results ($\beta = .42$, $p = .05$) showed that POS highly positive impact in the relationship between WFC and women careers, as a result H3, is accepted.

Discussion of the Study

This study was conducted in Pakistan's educational sector, with data collected from major cities and the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to determine whether or not these women believe they are in the minority in the educational sector. Education, as we all know, is one of our community's most prestigious fields. Half of community development is accounted for by education and literacy rates. With the passage of time, women's taboos are no longer the pinnacle of our culture. They contribute far more than men, but there are still some invisible barriers in place, such as glass ceilings, in a number of industries that prevent them from obtaining and advancing to top-level positions. The authors develop a theoretical framework using existing HR literature and theoretical support to highlight the negative consequences of these barriers. Following the examination and interpretation of the research hypothesis, some final results that attempted to close the gap were obtained. The findings show that the glass ceiling has a significant negative impact on women's job advancement. The findings back up a previous study by Pothuraju and Alekhya (2021), which discovered that these are intangible barriers to professional advancement that are difficult to overcome.

Furthermore, women continue to hold a small proportion of decision-making positions, and vertical inequality in the workplace is most commonly manifested as glass ceilings. Women face challenges in almost every field, including academia. Unfortunately, the glass ceiling in women's careers continues to exist at both the national and international levels, and it varies by country (Lakmali et al., 2020). All of these other researchers' ideas support the current findings. This study looked at several underlying aspects that previous studies had not fully described, such as the true interlinking mechanism that links glass-ceiling restrictions with low career success chances. Besides which, this study uncovered a number of gaps that serve as a link between the independent

glass ceiling effect and women's professional advancement. As a result of the current study, employees with incompatibilities between work and family life face higher glass ceilings in terms of gender discrimination and job advancement. According to previous research, employees who are a part of glass ceiling occurrences may experience sadness, low self-esteem, low morale, and a lack of drive to perform better in their careers (Soumya & Sathiyaseelan, 2020). Although previous research (Velez et al., 2018) discovered that arguments between tasks employees encounter and inhale glass walls that prevent them from advancing to top-level positions, current statistics are consistent with Rahim et al., (2018) study, which discovered that women's disparate career objectives and glass-effects impede their job success. Numerous studies support our findings that employees with low self-esteem, self-worth, and even low regard at work are more likely to face open discrimination and make little progress in their careers.

As a result, this research paper contributes to the literature by taking into account certain external factors that may reduce the negativity and glass barriers that women face on their path to success. Although several studies on the glass ceiling have been conducted, this aspect is rarely considered as a moderating influence. The relationship between WFC and women's career advancement was found to be moderated by perceived organisational support. The statistical findings supported the hypothesis that employees who perceive more support from their employers will become more confident and strive to take advantage of opportunities at work. When working women feel more supported by their employers, they gain confidence and increase their chances of achieving their desired position (N. Kurtessis, 2015). According to Chenga & Yi, (2018) employees perceive support from the organisation, that someone is there by providing helpful feedback or being available to discuss specific workplace difficulties, which encourages employees to redefine their job boundaries and maintain their level of esteem. The findings also show that POS add-ons help employees, whether female or male, manage job-related obstacles and have low chances of conflicts, because of which women become strong enough to overcome any bias in the workplace, increasing their chances of career success (Ocampo et al., 2018). According to recent findings, increased employee perceptions of organisational support moderate and mitigate the negative relationship between low self-esteem and women's career advancement. As a result, women in academia may benefit as well.

Conclusion

The current research study discussed the factors that reduce the ratio of women's career success. Working women in Pakistan's academic sector have conducted research into why they face challenges and barriers to achieving top-level positions. There have been numerous previous studies in management science about career adaptability and growth, but there has been little focus on factors that prevent employees, particularly women, from reaching top-level positions. Underdeveloped countries face these issues and attempt to manage female workforce participation in organizations. The glass ceiling remains an invisible barrier that has a negative impact on women's career success, as examined in this study. Furthermore, the study supports the notion that women face high level of conflict between job and family life are unable to seize opportunities. The invisible glass ceiling that prevents women from achieving career success is obscured by women's incompatibilities between job and family. In this study, women's WFC acts as a bridge between glass ceilings and job advancement.

As a result, having a bad attitude at work is no longer necessary. There are several things that can help women maintain their conflicts and reduce negativity. According to this study, female workers believe they will receive a positive response from their organization and leaders, so they strive to maintain and reduce these conflicts. Low WFC and perceived organizational support increase the likelihood of job advancement. This study was carried out in academia in order to obtain a better result and understand how much glass barriers reduce the chances of career advancement. With the help of statistical tools, data was collected from middle-level employees, including administrative and non-administrative staff, to understand where and how much they face these challenges. The findings revealed that invisible barriers harm women's careers and prevent them from advancing to top hierarchical positions.

Implications of the Study

The study's findings are important for Pakistani policymakers, organizations, human resource employees, researchers, administrators, academia, and other stakeholders interested in increasing women's career opportunities. To retain employees and maintain productivity, organizations must understand their habits and attitudes. Based on the findings of this study, try to develop new strategic methods for treating women and men

equally. This research assists the company in realizing that treating female employees requires a unique strategy. They, too, deserve to be promoted, and their full potential should not be squandered.

If this issue is resolved, their organizational commitment and job satisfaction will improve, benefiting the company's profitability and growth. Furthermore, a successful career and increased professional advancement increase self-esteem, which leads to happiness. Women who are happier are better able to raise their children to be better, more effective adults and to provide a positive home environment. As a result, such reforms may provide women with greater bargaining power in the commercial and governmental sectors, as well as the ability to work as second-income earners, resulting in family support for a woman's career.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the authors.

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