Gender Inequality Affecting Women's Career Progression in Malaysia

Krishna Moorthy
Xiamen University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Nik Mohamad Zaki Nik Salleh
Xiamen University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Loh Chun T'ing
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kampar Campus, Perak State, Malaysia

Lai Pui Ling

Diong Min Yeng

See next page for additional authors

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By Krishna Moorthy[1], Nik Mohamad Zaki Nik Salleh[2], Loh Chun T'ing[3], Lai Pui Ling[4], Diong Min Yeng[5], Lau Jia Ning[6], Lee Jer Sin[7], Lee Pui Mun[8]

Abstract

The objective of this research is to assess whether gender inequality affects women's career progression in Malaysia. The study examines the relationship between patriarchy, gender stereotypes, organisational cultural factors, family factors, and individual factors with women's career progression. The study has adopted the Glass Ceiling Theory and feminist theory. A total of 250 questionnaires were collected from women employees working in Malaysia. The study revealed that patriarchy, organisational cultural factors, and family factors had a significant relationship with women's career progression while gender stereotypes and individual factors had no significant relationship with women's career progression. The findings of this study contribute to women's empowerment in society, and for companies and the Government of Malaysia to have a better understanding of the factors involved in women's career progression in Malaysia. This study contributes to the Glass Ceiling Theory and feminist thought by determining the relationship of these theories with regard to women's career progression in Malaysia.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Patriarchy, Gender Stereotypes, Organisational Cultural Factors, Family Factors, Individual Factors, Women's Career Progression

[1] Assistant Professor, School of Economics and Management, Xiamen University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: krishna.manicka@xmu.edu.my.

[2] Senior Lecturer, School of Economics and Management, Xiamen University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: nikzaki@xmu.edu.my.

[3] Lecturer, Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kampar Campus, Perak State, Malaysia. Email ctloh@utar.edu.my.

[4] Research Scholar. Email: eliselai.1314@1utar.my.

[5] Research Scholar Email: myeng.2169@gmail.com.

[6] Research Scholar. Email: j.ninglau@gmail.com.

[7] Research Scholar Email: jessyleejs@hotmail.com.

[8] Research Scholar Email: puimun927@gmail.com

Research Scholars 4 to 8 from Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kampar Campus, Perak State, Malaysia.

Introduction

The World Economic Forum has introduced the Global Gender Gap Index as an instrument or framework, which analyses and compares gender disparities globally (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2017). Malaysia ranks 104th within the countries in East Asia and the Pacific. Although the percentage of enrollment of women in educational institutions is higher than men, the percentage of women in roles such as legislators, senior officials and managers is lower than men (WEF, 2017). The role and status of Malaysian women has changed since independence, and women have engaged in many key fields such as health and education (Ministry of Women and Family Development, 2003). Malaysian women's participation rate has increased from 46.8% in 2010 to 54.1% in 2015 (Khan, 2017). Since Malaysian women make up half of the total population, they are a vital part of the labor force in order to develop the nation (Zarina & Zuraida, 2016). Gregor and O'Brien (2016) have stated that women remain underrepresented in management positions, even in fields which have been historically dominated by women, such as the "feminine" professions of nursing and childcare. Encouraging women to start their own business is vital because they are able to combine family responsibilities and income generation (Franck, 2012). Organisational leadership plays a key role in shaping the workspace. The collectively held beliefs, assumptions and values which constitute the culture of an organisation are mostly influenced by its leadership (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2020).

Problem Statement and Research Gap

Due to discriminatory organisational culture, women are still treated unequally in the workplace, despite having the same qualifications as men (Nathesan, 2017). Women have reported that they feel undervalued compared to their male counterparts due to long-standing stereotypes ("Report: Lack of Women", 2017) and unfair sexist attitudes prevalent in society (Yeoh, 2017). Also, there remain barriers in the workplace that continue to hinder women's progress. It is thus crucial step to develop new ways of thinking to reduce gender biases and discrimination (Shiang & Ngo, 2020). The influence of discriminatory organisational culture and stereotypes impact women's career progression directly (Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013).

Azmi's et al. (2014) Glass Ceiling Theory identifies those factors that impede women's career progression in the workplace. Bombuwela and Chamaru (2013) found that there is a positive relationship between Glass Ceiling variables and women's career progression particularly for executive level female employees working in private sector organisations. The majority of studies examining how gender inequality affects women's career progression do not include Malaysia. Studies of gender inequality in Malaysian have focused on specified sectors. For example, Abdullah, Shamsuddin, Wahab, Hamid and Azizan (2018), have researched women's participation in engineering professions; Sharif (2015) examined women in legal professions; Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) studied women's career progression in an oil company in Malaysia; Lim, Tan and Chan (2013) researched women's career advancement in manufacturing companies; and Ahmad-Zaluki (2012) have studied gender composition in boards of directors. Moreover, these studies either got the support of only one theory or were based on the analysis of secondary data. This study advances knowledge of women's career progression in Malaysia by focusing on eight sectors in Malaysia, framing the research through the lens of the Glass Ceiling and patriarchy.

Theoretical Model

Although there are many feminist theories that have emerged worldwide, according to hooks (2000), all forms of feminism are part of the movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. However, even though feminism has informed studies across all

disciplines, including entrepreneurship (Teoh & Chong, 2014; Petterssons, Ahl, Berglund, & Tillmar, 2017), sports (Simmons, 2011), and tourism (Pritchard, 2014), women still face fewer opportunities for participation in these arenas. Women continue to face inequality across all domains of society (Ashley, 2018). In order to understand the nature of gender inequality in women's career advancement in Malaysia, this study examines two themes prevalent in feminist theories. First, we examine patriarchy as the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general (French, 1985). While there are many patriarchies, their impact is to position women as a class as less powerful than men as a class across all hierarchies within society (Him & Hosgor, 2011). The second variable is gender stereotypes, defined as a shared set of beliefs about the purported qualities of women and men. Men are generally perceived to be physically and emotionally strong and aggressive, whereas women are perceived as physically and emotionally weak and passive (Kaushik, Sharma, & Kaushik, 2014).

The Glass Ceiling Theory (GCT) founded by Loden in 1978 discusses women's aspirations ("100 women: Why I", 2017). The glass ceiling refers to invisible barriers that affect women's career progression (Carnes, Morrissey, & Geller, 2008). The GCT had also been used in various areas of study such as manufacturing (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013), construction (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013), and healthcare (Carnes et al., 2008). These studies indicated that the glass ceiling impedes women from developing their careers. In the glass ceiling framework, discrimination increases as one moves up the hierarchy, depending on the intersection of discriminatory variables, such as gender and gender and race combined (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001). This study adopts three variables from GCT that impede women's career progression: 1) family factors, 2) organisational cultural factors, and 3) individual factors (Bombuwela & Chamaru, 2013). The first variable, the family factor, refers to activities relating to division of labor in childrearing activities, and the labor involved in providing goods and support services for the family. Subramaniam and Arumugam (2013) mentioned that family factors such as childcare and housekeeping create conflicts for women's career progression because the burden of this work falls on them in patriarchal societies. The second variable, organisational culture, refers to a system of shared beliefs, values, and practices of members to produce behavioral norms regarding the working environments of the organisation (Harvey & Brown, 1996). It becomes an obstacle because of unsupportive corporate climates, biased recruitment practices, and lack of opportunities in training and education for women, which hinders their progress into managerial positions. The third variable is individual factors. Women themselves become an obstacle for their career progression due to internalized oppression exhibited through fear of taking leadership responsibilities, inability to devote necessary time because of competing societal demands regarding family and childcare responsibilities (Madhulata, 2016). All of these individual factors influence their career progression.[9]

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[9] It should be noted that these "individual factors" are rooted in cultural and societal values and practices. In heterosexual relationships in patriarchal societies, in which boys are socialized to believe that domestic labor is "feminine" and where their own career paths are weighted more heavily, the burden of domestic labor both within the household and extended family falls on women. Until alternatives emerge such as men taking on more domestic responsibilities, boys socialized to recognize that these are not exclusively the domain of women, and workplaces offering support services, women will either take on the stressful double burdens of productive and reproductive labor or fall short in the workplace. It is imperative not to blame women for patriarchal arrangements and attitudes so as not to adopt a "blame the victim" mentality, impeding policy initiatives and necessary cultural change across all patriarchal societies.

Patriarchy and Women's Career Progression

As noted above, patriarchy refers to a society in which men dominate and maintain their dominance through the use of violence, both physical and psychological, as well as multiple forms of exclusion of women from decision-making positions (hooks, 2004). The word 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the *'patriarch'*, and originally it was used to describe a specific type of 'male-dominated family' – the large household of the *patriarch,* which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the rule of this dominant male (Sultana, 2011). Within patriarchal societies gender discrimination is an obstacle to women's advancement in positions of decision-making and earning power (Dahal, 2013). Women's advancement is a threat to the patriarchal order (Habibov, Barrett, & Chernyak, 2017). Moreover, patriarchal and hegemonic cogitation impact women residing in rural areas significantly, slowing career advancement (Ni Fhlatharta & Farrell, 2017). Research by Raja (2016) revealed that 65.5 percent of participants faced barriers to their career progression as a result of the patriarchal system. Men were expected to provide for the family financially and they perceived themselves as natural leaders, not women. Elaine and Karubi's study (2018) in Malaysia established that a patriarchal environment, especially one with the classic model of 'breadwinner father, housewife mother' pressures women to bear more household responsibilities, with women in urban areas maintaining reproductive roles, while rural women held both productive and reproductive roles within their family, but nonetheless were not paid monetarily for either (Ariffin, 1992). In Elaine and Karubi's study (2018) respondents associated patriarchal values in Malaysian families with three factors—society's norms, religion; tradition and culture, all transmitted through socialization. They believed that men should not participate in household chores.

As a result of these factors and conditions, the current study investigated the following hypothesis: *H₁: Patriarchy is significantly related to women's career progression.*

Gender Stereotypes and Women's Career Progression

Gender stereotypes refer to a set of preconceived notions about the role of men and women (Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013) generally associated with biological determinism, such that social roles flow from biology. Because those who hold gender stereotypes assume their immutability, they have always been a significant barrier to women's career progression in organisations (Subramaniam & Arumugam, 2013; Heilman, 2012; Kaushik, Sharma, & Kaushik, 2014). Gender stereotypes are therefore a fundamental variable to analyze biased evaluative judgments and discriminatory treatment of women in work environments, which delay women's professional advancement (Heilman, 2012). According to Jonsen et al., (2010) culture is the main cause of slow growth in women's high-level management positions. This is due to the stereotypes and perceptions that women are not suited for the positions compared to men. This stereotyping creates barriers for women and causes gender segregation. Gender-role stereotypes and attitudes towards women's career selection also influences women's own career choices, leading many to choose teaching over management positions, as is the case in Pakistan. Women felt less comfortable with management positions due to pervasive stereotypes (Raja, 2016). Ginige (2007) identified several barriers to women's career advancement, most notably, gender stereotypes. Such stereotypes associate managerial positions with assumed masculine characteristics, an obstacle for women who display assumed feminine characteristics. In the construction industry, for example, one of the highest male dominated industries, gender stereotypes are pervasive, such as the belief that gender diversification leads to declining firm performance (Lim et al., 2019). Thus, we propose our second hypothesis: *H₂: Gender stereotypes are significantly related to women's career progression.*

Family Factors and Women's Career Progression

Family factors refer to a person's responsibility to care for or support the family (Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland [ADCQ], 2013). The demands of family reduce women's personal resources of time, energy, and commitment available for work (Kirchmeyer, 2006). A number of studies globally underscore this reality: Wang and Cho (2013) found out that the conflict between family and work is the main obstacle women face in their career development in China. Irish women express that having children lead them to sacrifice their careers (Cross, 2010). In the US, women are leaving companies at a higher rate than men due to difficulties in balancing work and family (McKinsey & Company Organisation, 2015). Njiru's study (2013) concludes that the difficulty of balancing work and family life of women also results in a higher degree of stress, among other things. Similarly, in a study concerning Malaysia, Hui (2014) determined that women's education level, society's culture and family work-life balance factors affect Malaysian women's capacity to advance in their careers (Hui, 2014). Hence, we propose the following third hypothesis: *H₃: Family factors are significantly related to women's career progression.*

Organisational Culture and Women's Career Progression

Organisational culture is defined as a set of beliefs, values, and norms that affect the behavior of others as well as of self within an organisation (Lewis, Goodman, Fandt, & Michlitsch, 2016). According to YekinniOjo, Busayo and Charles (2017), women's career development is affected by some organisational cultures. Furthermore, an organisational culture that involves more women in training and development activities positively affects women's career progression (Afande, 2015). Kadiresan et al., (2015), found that the factors that affect the segregation of gender in the workplace in Malaysia include cultural and religious beliefs, the nature of occupations, and salary. Stamarski and Hing (2015) found that institutional discrimination in organisational structures, processes, and practices play a pre-eminent role in socializing organisational decision-makers' levels of both hostile and benevolent sexism. They also found that cultural environments are likely to remain problematic for women unless they explicitly value their contributions. Such changes require a radical shift in middle management attitudes, a departure from current organisational human resource management systems, and a wider acceptance of the need for cultural change within multiple industries (Dona, Amaratunga & Haigh, 2006). We therefore propose the fourth hypothesis: *H₄: Organisational culture factors are significantly related to women's career progression.*

Individual Factors and Women's Career Progression

Individual factors such as education, self-perception, self-efficacy, and motivation also affects women's career progression. YekinniOjo, Busayo, and Charles (2017) found that women must take more risks and believe in their skills to develop their careers. Fernando, Amaratunga, and Haigh (2014) found out that the ability to work with people, leadership, integrity or honesty, dedication and adaptability positively influence women's career success. Shin and Bang (2013) stated that women's lack of confidence to succeed affects their career prospects, because they are likely to blame themselves when they fail. Some internal factors noted by Astin (1984) include: age, sex, race, personality traits, academic achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, and motivation. The majority of respondents in Afande (2015) study either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that individual factors such as age, gender issues, individual's skills, tenure, hard work, reputation, and performance affect women's career advancement; and women's lack of self-confidence and their tendency to be more self-critical than men hinder their career advancement in the banking sector in Kenya. Kang and Kaur's study of the financial sector in India (2020) revealed the significant influence of occupational self-efficacy, proactive personality, work role salience, and gender role attitude as cognitive

factors in explaining the aspirations of working women for career advancement. Women's lack of confidence is commonly regarded as a key reason why women lag behind men's career outcomes (Risse, 2020). In addition to the external barriers erected by society, women are hindered by barriers that exist within themselves, shaped by patriarchal contexts (Sandberg, 2013). It is important to stress that these factors are not fixed categories but change over time as skills, experience and relations a woman creates in an organisation change (Andric, 2015). We propose, from the above discussion, the fifth and final hypothesis: *H5: Individual factors are significantly related to women's career progression.*

Proposed Research Model

The proposed research model is represented in Figure 1 below.
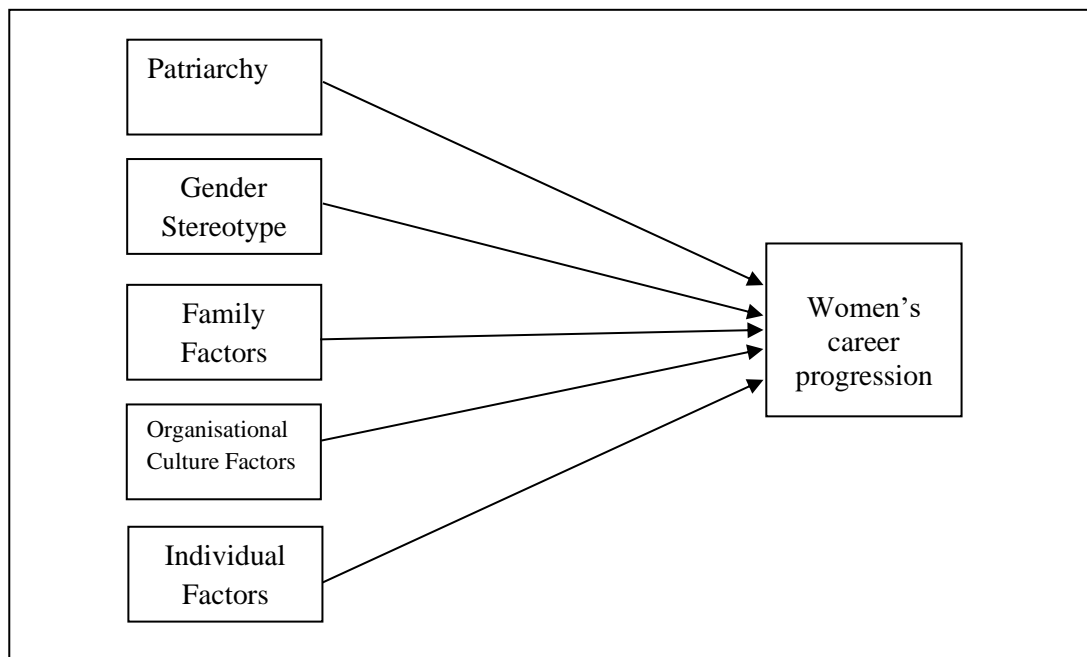
Source: Wollstonecraft, 1975 & Bombuwela and Chamaru, 2013

Research Methodology

The quantitative research method examines the impact of gender inequality on women's career progression. This research is a cross-sectional study as this study has taken place at a specific period of time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Survey method was used to obtain perspectives of Malaysian working women. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected by using questionnaires (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The researchers collected primary data by self-administered, face-to-face questionnaires during April and May 2018. We used a closed-ended question method to collect the data measured by a 5-point Likert scale.

Pre-test and Pilot Test

Pre-tests were carried out with three university professors to ensure that the survey questionnaires are reliable (Saunders et al., 2009). Waweru and Omwenga (2015) stated that the number of pilot test questionnaires should be 10% of the actual number of survey

questionnaires; hence, 25 survey questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents in the Perak State.

Table 1:   Reliability for Pilot Test

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha
Patriarchy (P)	0.712256
Gender Stereotype (GS)	0.847160
Family Factors (FF)	0.908012
Organisational Culture Factors (OCF)	0.812353
Individual Factors (IF)	0.731992
Women's career progression (WCP)	0.895707

From Table 1, family factors (FF) and patriarchy (P) have the highest and lowest alpha coefficient of 0.908012 and 0.712256. It could be concluded that all items are acceptable since the alpha values are above 0.70 (Christmann & Van, 2006) for all the variables.

Target Population
Malaysian working women are the target population of this study as it examines barriers that they have faced in climbing to top managerial positions. The target respondents were selected from different industries because women from different industries like banking and finance, health care, education, advertising and marketing, manufacturing, accounting and auditing and retail service may encounter different types of inequality like unequal pay, unfair promotions, bullying, sexual harassment etc.

Data collection was carried out from May 2018 to June 2018 by distribution of the questionnaires to the women participants, face-to-face in government and private offices and shopping malls in the three participating States of Malaysia.

Sample Size
 Thirty-two items were used in the questionnaire; hence, in order to fulfil the item-to-response ratio of 4:10 as suggested by Hinkin (1995) in his sample framework, 128–320 respondents are needed for data collection. Therefore, 250 sets of samples collected for this study are considered sufficient. Moreover, it also fulfilled the first rule of an independent variable: 10 samples (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Sampling Technique
A quota sampling technique was used. Elder (2009) stated that quota sampling ensures that specified numbers are obtained from each specified population subgroup without random selection. Three States of Malaysia, Selangor, Johor and Perak with the highest population of women were selected for sampling purposes. The quota was set as 150 sets of questionnaires for Selangor, 60 sets for Johor and 40 sets for Perak based on the population of women in these three States.

Sampling Frame
The sampling frame is not available for the working women in Malaysia. The size of the target population was unknown, and the sampling frame was difficult to establish, thus a non-probability sampling technique was employed (Choong, Keh, Tan, Lim, & Tho, 2013).

Sampling Location
Due to the higher female population in the States of Selangor (33.87%), Johor (13.98%) and Perak (9.13%), the researchers have set a quota for the number of surveys to be conducted

in these three States of Malaysia based on the female population in these three States as per the Malaysian Department of Statistics (2016). A total of 250 questionnaires were collected, 150 sets from Selangor, 60 sets from Johor and 40 sets from Perak.

Variables and Measurement

The questions were adopted with minor amendments from the previous studies of Yousaf and Schmiede (2017); Kirai and Mukulu (2012); Tlaiss and Kauser (2010); Subramaniam, Tanusia and Akeel (2013); Adhikary (2016) and Smith, Crittenden and Caputi (2012). A five points Likert scale was coded from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5) respectively (Willits, Theodori & Luloff, 2016), and applied in Sections B and C of the survey questionnaire. Nominal and ordinal scale measurements were used for demographic profile of the target respondents.

Results

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 20 years old	17	6.8
	20 to 30 years old	60	24
	31 to 40 years old	30	12
	41 to 50 years	72	28.8
	Above 50 years	71	28.4
Race	Chinese	176	70.4
	Indian	32	12.8
	Malay	42	16.8
Marital Status	Single	65	26.0
	Married	179	71.6
	Divorced	6	2.4
State	Perak	40	16.0
	Johor	60	24.0
	Selangor	150	60.0
No. of Children	None	80	32.0
	1 to 2	134	53.6
	3 to 4	28	11.2
	5 and above	8	3.2
Level of Education	High School	39	15.6
	Diploma	62	24.8
	Degree	132	52.8
	Master and above	17	6.8
Service Length	1 to 5 years	48	19.2
	6 to 10 years	39	15.6
	11 to 15 years	33	13.2
	16 to 20years	55	22.0

	Above 20 years	75	30.0
Industry	Banking and Finance	38	15.2
	Health Care	41	16.4
	Education	27	10.8
	Advertising and marketing	39	15.6
	Manufacturing	26	10.4
	Accounting and Audit	24	9.6
	Retail Service	45	18.0
	Others	10	4.0

The demographic profiles of the 250 respondents are presented in Table 2. Chinese constituted the largest proportion of respondents in this study. Most of them are married which comprised of 179 (71.6%) respondents. Besides that, most of the respondents were from Selangor which comprised 150 (60.0%) respondents. Eighty (32.0%) of the respondents did not have children and 132 (52.8%) are Bachelors' degree holders. The majority of the respondents served their companies for more than 10 years (65.2%).

Central Tendencies Measurements

Table 3: Central Tendencies Measurements

Variable/Item		Mean	Standard Division
Patriarchy			
P1	Male hierarchies are more likely to promote men for managerial positions than women.	3.7640	1.1355
P2	Men are promoted faster than women.	3.5280	1.1552
P3	Women are underrepresented due to patriarchal system.	3.5040	1.1728
P4	Women do not fit the image of the (masculine) leader as men perceived women as weaker sex.	3.3120	1.3438
P5	Women may be competent but not likeable as Head due to the patriarchal system.	3.4360	1.3133
Gender Stereotype			
GS1	I think I have been unfairly judged because of my gender.	3.5240	1.2262
GS2	I feel that I was discriminated against in promotions because of my gender.	3.4000	1.1407
GS3	Colleagues of the opposite gender seem to be uncomfortable working with me because of my gender.	3.2040	1.2841
GS4	Superiors of the opposite gender seem to be uncomfortable working with me because of my gender**.**	3.3280	1.2533

GS5	Subordinates of the opposite gender seem to be uncomfortable working with me because of my gender.	3.1920	1.2203
Family Factors			
FF1	Marriage, commitment, bringing up children and taking care of old parents act as impediment to woman career progression.	3.7800	1.1972
FF2	Maintaining balance between managing family affairs and job responsibilities is a difficult task.	3.8720	1.1299
FF3	A woman's commitment to her family life, her children or her parents is a barrier for her career advancement.	3.6480	1.1737
FF4	At first a woman should be a considerate mother and wife than a successful manager.	3.5440	1.2024
FF5	If a woman does not enjoy her husband's assistance in housework, she will not be able to accept a managerial position.	3.4320	1.3070
Organisational Culture Factors			
OCF1	Inhospitable organisational culture acts as a barrier to women's career progression.	3.7160	1.1527
OCF2	Organisations lack policies to support women's career progression.	3.6160	1.1142
OCF3	Promotion to the management position is not based on performance.	3.5120	1.2300
OCF4	Lack of understanding among employers of the value of gender diversity at senior levels impedes women career progress.	3.8640	1.0401
OCF5	I think women receive more unfair judgment regarding their work performance compared to men.	3.7160	1.1209
Individual Factors			
IF1	Women lack education required for holding leadership positions.	3.0600	1.2708
IF2	Women are unwilling to participate in parties/business meetings after office hours.	3.2280	1.2515
IF3	Women commonly reject career advancement as they lack professional confidence and have low self-esteem.	3.1600	1.2950
IF4	Women reject the need to work incredibly long hours.	3.4320	1.2245
IF5	Women prefer a balanced life more than gaining highly paid careers.	3.5560	1.1749
Women's career progression			
WCP1	As a woman, I think I must be more accomplished and "pushy" to be	3.8400	1.0444

	promoted.		
WCP2	Negative perceptions and stereotypes about women's commitment to work constitute barriers to women's advancement.	3.8280	1.0367
WCP3	Negative perceptions and stereotypes about women's professional capabilities constitute barriers to women's advancement.	3.8880	1.0583
WCP4	Women who progress demonstrate competency on the job producing high quality work.	3.9080	0.9671
WCP5	Women who progress are given opportunities and support from the company.	3.9480	1.0106
WCP6	Women's management and leadership skills help them to be successful leaders.	3.9840	1.0100
WCP7	The support of a mentor greatly increases the success of a woman in organisations.	3.9960	1.0773

Referring to Table 3, WCP4 achieved the lowest standard deviation of 0.9671 whereas P4 achieved the highest standard deviation of 1.3438. It illustrates that the standard deviation values for all the constructs are more than 0.9671 but less than 1.3438 and most of them are more than 1.0000. The minimal difference between the highest and lowest standard deviations represents the identical opinion between the respondents. It can also be seen that the mean values of all items are above 3. This means that the target respondents had a "Neutral" opinion on most of the survey questions and many have "Agreed" with the survey questions.

Testing the Assumptions of Multivariate Analysis
Normality Test
The normality of the data was tested for examining the normal distribution of independent variables and the dependent variable by conducting Kurtosis and Skewness tests. Most statistical tests rest upon the assumption of normality. Deviations from normality, called non-normality, render those statistical tests inaccurate, so it is important to know that the data are normal or non-normal. Tests that rely upon the assumption or normality are called parametric tests.

Table 4: Final Results of Normality Test

Constructs	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis
Patriarchy (P)	P1	-0.6701851	-0.4580138
	P2	-0.6280433	-0.4959452
	P3	-0.4463576	-0.6914553
	P4	-0.3844908	-1.1383845
	P5	-0.3958262	-1.0722775
Gender Stereotype (GS)	GS1	-0.4643902	-0.7674952
	GS2	-0.4713182	-0.6187163
	GS3	-0.1116689	-1.1396505
	GS4	-0.23377	-1.0958202
	GS5	-0.1990479	-1.0433684
Family Factors (FF)	FF1	-0.8134208	-0.2783289

	FF2	-1.0086089	0.35227742
	FF3	-0.6681743	-0.4277645
	FF4	-0.5304524	-0.665987
	FF5	-0.5030207	-0.9070435
Organisational Culture Factors (OCF)	OCF1	-0.6645629	-0.2966318
	OCF2	-0.5493804	-0.5202612
	OCF3	-0.5178696	-0.7548893
	OCF4	-0.8471832	0.4081257
	OCF5	-0.8013233	-0.0148639
Individual Factors (IF)	IF1	0.13527214	-1.2098566
	IF2	-0.1667235	-1.1946614
	IF3	-0.054936	-1.1839467
	IF4	-0.3043213	-1.0532958
	IF5	-0.562376	-0.6601809
Women's career progression (WCP)	WCP1	-0.8053202	0.22456575
	WCP2	-0.8925975	0.46226692
	WCP3	-0.8811212	0.35314445
	WCP4	-0.9960148	0.9012609
	WCP5	-0.9541832	0.54533241
	WCP6	-1.0527578	0.74695761
	WCP7	-1.1576178	0.90710327

From Table 4, it can be seen that skewness values of items range between -1.1576 and 0.1353, whilst kurtosis values range between -1.2099 and 0.9071. As coefficients of skewness and kurtosis are within ±3, all the data are considered to be normally distributed (Kline, 2011).

Reliability Test

Table 5: Reliability for Final Test

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Patriarchy (P)	5	0.887861
Gender Stereotype (GS)	5	0.906248
Family Factors (FF)	5	0.871685
Organisational Culture Factors (OCF)	5	0.846224
Individual Factors (IF)	5	0.858857
Women's career progression (WCP)	7	0.898863

Table 5 depicts that the alpha for all the constructs is more than 0.70; hence the variables are considered as acceptable (Sekaran & Bougie 2013).

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variable	P	GS	FF	OCF	IF	WCP
WCP	0.59161	0.45595	0.56322	0.55358	0.43264	1.0000
	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	

Table 6 indicates that every independent variable displays moderate correlation with dependent variable arraying from 0.43264 to 0.59161. The result reveals that patriarchy had influenced their career positively, which it supported by r = 0.59161, family factors with r =

0.56322, organisational culture factors with r = 0.55358, gender stereotypes with r = 0.45595 and individual factors with r = 0.43264. The significance values are <.0001 (p < 0.01), thus there is a positive and a moderate relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Multicollinearity

Table 7: Partial Correlation

Variable	P	GS	FF	OCF	IF
P	1.00000				
GS	0.66293 <.0001	1.00000			
FF	0.72314 <.0001	0.63697 <.0001	1.00000		
OCF	0.70224 <.0001	0.68132 <.0001	0.71854 <.0001	1.00000	
IF	0.55834 <.0001	0.54624 <.0001	0.59402 <.0001	0.53707 <.0001	1.00000

Referring to the results shown above in Table 7, the correlation matrix for all the independent variables ranges from 0.53707 to 0.72314. The strongest correlation exists between family factors and patriarchy, while the weakest correlation is found between individual factors and organisational culture factors with r = 0.72314 and 0.53707 respectively. The variables are significantly correlated as p-value is less than 0.05. Multicollinearity problem does not exist since the correlation values between the independent variables are below 0.90 according to Hair et al. (2010).

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) Analysis

Multiple regression is used in this study to examine the relationship between several independent variables and a dependent variable. There are two main advantages to analyzing data using a multiple regression model. The first is the ability to determine the relative influence of one or more predictor variables to the criterion value. The second advantage is the ability to identify outliers or anomalies.

Table 8: MLR Model Analysis

Root MSE	0.88549	**R-Square**	0.4060
Dependent Mean	5.47840	**Adj R-Sq**	0.3938
Coeff Var	16.16331		

Referring to Table 8 above, the R-square value is 0.4060. This means that 40.60% of the variation in women's career progression can be explained by all the five predictors, patriarchy, gender stereotype, family factors, organisational culture factors and individual factors. However, the remaining 0.594 (1.000 – 0.4060) of the variation in women's career progression is explained by other factors.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Model	5	130.74445	26.14889	33.35	<.0001

Error	244	191.31891	0.78409		
Corrected Total	249	322.06336			

F-value in this result as per Table 9 is valued at 33.35 with p-value of <.0001 which is below 0.05. The dependent variable (women's career progression) has a significant relationship with at least one of the five independent variables. Therefore, this proved that the research model is fit for the purpose of this study.

Table 10: MLR Coefficient

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Pr > |t|	Standardized Estimate	Tolerance	Variance Inflation	Hypothesis Testing
Intercept	2.45895	<.0001	0	.	0	.
P_AVG	0.34480	0.0002	0.30913	0.37393	2.67431	Supported
GS_AVG	-0.03496	0.6651	-0.03214	0.44298	2.25791	Not Supported
FF_AVG	0.21373	0.0265	0.18386	0.35885	2.78670	Supported
OCF_AVG	0.24352	0.0193	0.19092	0.37039	2.69984	Supported
IF_AVG	0.07529	0.3084	0.06584	0.58498	1.70945	Not Supported

Table 10 illustrates the significance of the relationship between the multiple independent variables with the dependent variable. The hypotheses for three independent variables which are patriarchy, family factor and organisational culture factors, are supported where their p-values are lower than 0.05; but contrarily, hypotheses for the other two independent variables, gender stereotypes and individual factors, are not supported as their p-values of 0.6651 and 0.3084 are above 0.05 respectively.

Hence, the multiple linear equation is as follows:
WCP = 2.45895 + 0.34480 (P) - 0.03496 (GS) + 0.21373 (FF) + 0.24352 (OCF) + 0.07529 (IF)

Discussion of Major Findings

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is considered as a factor which affects women's career progression. This result is supported by the studies of Ni Fhlatharta and Farrell (2017); Dahal (2013); and Habibov, Barrett and Chernyak (2017). These studies have recognised that patriarchal systems

cause women to be underrepresented and it obstructs women's career progression. In a patriarchal society, men are inherently dominating. Their perceptions of women do not fit the image of a leader and this leads to women being underrepresented. The study by Ni Fhlatharta and Farrell (2017) concluded that patriarchal and hegemonic cogitation impact women residing in rural areas significantly; this study concludes that women living in urban areas are also affected by patriarchy in their career progression. The findings of Samuel's study et al., (2020) also show that many barriers at the workplace still exist. Explicit barriers such as the glass ceiling and lack of mentoring are still hindering women from progressing in their workplaces.

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes showed a negative and insignificant relationship on women's career progression. This shows that women employees do not perceive that gender stereotypes exist in their workplace and thus, it is not considered as a factor that would affect women's career progression. This is because of the awareness of equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination policies that have been implemented by the Malaysian Government. This result contradicts the results of the earlier studies by Hira, Muhammad Ashar and Rana Ahsan (2017), Schein (2007) and Kaushik et al. (2014). However, our results are compatible with the studies by Sczesny and Kuhnen (2004) and Samuel et al., (2020).

Family Factors

Family factors are barriers to women's career progression. This result aligns with the finding of prior studies of YekinniOjo et al. (2017); Kirchmeyer (2006); and Valimaki, Lamsa and Hiillos (2009), in which family member roles impede women's capacity to achieve their career progression. This study aligns with Ismail and Ibrahim's study (2008) which concluded that family structure and women's commitment to the family are the most significant barriers as perceived by women executives. Numerous studies conducted in Western countries have also emphasized the impact of family related factors affecting the career progression of women (Powell et al., 2002; Powell, 2000; Chui and Ng, 1999). The majority of women struggle with work-life balance. While flexibility of working hours is important for married women, deeper societal changes are necessary. We outline these in the Recommendations section below.

Organisational Culture Factors

Our findings prove that organisational culture acts as a significant impediment to women's career advancement. This result is compatible with the results of Bombuwela and Chamaru (2013), YekinniOjo et al. (2017) and Wickramaratne (2013). Some organisations allocate jobs based on gender, where men are assigned decision-making departments while women are assigned to supporting departments, which invariably affects women's career progression.

Individual factors

There is an insignificant relationship between individual factors and women's career progression. The evidence shows that individual factors are not major factors towards women's career progression. This result is compatible with Adhikary's research (2016), but it contradicts prior findings of Fernando et al. (2014) and YekinniOjo et al. (2017). Afande (2015) in his study of the banking industry in Kenya also concluded that individual factors such as age, individual skills, tenure, hard work, reputation, and performance, affect the career progression of women. The result is not supported due to the fact that most of the organisations do not emphasize the employee's education level and working hours but emphasize employee's experience and working efficiency.

Implications of the Research
Theoretical Implications

During 2008, one study was conducted in Malaysia on barriers to career progression faced by women in an oil company by Ismail and Ibrahim (2008). As noted, there are not many studies conducted in Malaysia on women's career advancement across multiple industries. This study has considered the perception of working women addressing a wide spectrum of industries including banking and finance, health care, education, advertising and marketing, manufacturing, accounting and auditing, and retail service. Patriarchy, family factors and organisational culture factors are the main factors that affect the career progression of Malaysian women. Therefore, this research is useful to the researchers and academicians in obtaining a comprehensive overview of Malaysian women's career progression. In this research, we have combined GCT and FT to determine the relationship with women's career progression. In addition, this study contributes to society by examining the factors that affect women's career development. Thus, this effort can be useful for future researchers and policymakers.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The research findings offer women, society, companies, and the Government a better understanding of the factors that affect women's career progression in Malaysia. Furthermore, it offers insights into the impediments Malaysian society faces in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We recommend the following:

- Companies should create more encouraging and supportive workplaces for women in order to enhance their participation.
- The Government should reform policies that will boost women's participation in the workplace to achieve the SDGs.
- Malaysian organisations should offer more opportunities for women to encourage upward mobility in management positions. If women are given equal opportunities as men, surely, they will prove themselves to be equally capable and successful.
- Marriage and childcare act as impediments to Malaysian women's career progression. Maintaining the balance between managing family affairs and job responsibilities is a difficult task for most Malaysian women. Thus, *family members should be more supportive of women by sharing their burden and encouraging them to pursue their career*.
- Organisations should provide some benefits such as daycare centers for families in order to make sure that they can work without stress and offer flexible work times so that employees can manage their own timetables.
- Malaysian organisations should examine their organisation's informal culture and traditions that work against women.
- Organisations should promote equal career enhancement opportunities to their employees and make fair decisions in promoting their employees.
- Women should be given the same rights within an organisation. The findings revealed that women commonly reject career advancement as they lack professional confidence and have low self-esteem. Thus, women need support to build self-confidence, believe in their abilities, capabilities, and talent, which will help them to excel in their jobs.

All the above-mentioned measures would collectively help to improve the 2019 Malaysia Gender Gap Index of 55.65% in the Labour Force participation category.

Malaysia has already taken steps to address sources of gender inequality. The United Nations has listed Malaysia as a leader in encouraging women to participate in science, and half of all researchers in Malaysia are women. Also, in 2015, the government mandated that women should comprise at least 30% of the boards of large corporations by 2020, making it the only country in ASEAN with such a directive.

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