

THE EFFECTS OF WORK-LIFE CONFLICT, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, MENTORING, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON FEMALE CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Rahimah Mohamed Yunos^{*1}, Syahrul Ahmar Ahmad², Fatimah Hashim³,
Siti Masnah Saringat⁴, Noreen Noor Abd Aziz⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Cawangan Johor Malaysia

⁵Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Cawangan Johor Malaysia

*Corresponding email: rahim221@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

The 2021 Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance highlights a recommended corporate governance practice for publicly listed companies, which entails having a minimum of 30% women directors on their board. However, the present scenario indicates an insufficiency in women's representation in senior management roles, even though women outnumber male graduates from educational institutions. This study aims to investigate the factors that impact the career progression of female employees, specifically work-life conflict, organizational commitment, mentoring support, and organizational culture. A total of 106 UiTM alumni responded to our online survey, which was randomly distributed. Using an OLS regression model, we discovered that all factors, except work-life conflict, affect female career advancement. Organizational commitment emerges as the most influential factor shaping female career development, while a negative organizational culture significantly hampers the progress of women in their careers. Our results can offer insight to universities, employers, and policymakers on the factors that hinder women from reaching leadership positions. Our findings suggest that universities may want to develop suitable training or curriculum to enhance the soft skills of female students, and organizations need to improve their policies and implement improved mechanisms that encourage women's active participation in organizations.

Keywords: female career, work-life conflict, organizational commitment, mentoring, organizational culture

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian government has taken various steps to promote the participation of women in the workforce, particularly in leadership roles. These efforts include initiatives in the 11th and 12th Malaysian Plans, as well as the inclusion of women's significant role in the labor force in Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance (MCCG) 2021 now requires all listed companies to have a minimum of 30% women on their boards, and there is a focus on promoting gender diversity policies that support women's participation at senior management levels, beyond the board room. As of July 1, 2023, based on the Corporate Governance Monitoring Report released by the Securities Commission Malaysia (SCM) in 2022, the leading 100 listed companies in Malaysia have attained a

representation of 30% women on their boards. However, the overall percentage of women directors on the boards of all listed Malaysian companies remains below 30%. This necessitates the addition of 362 more women to board positions. The demographic information from the leading 100 listed companies reveals that men constitute a majority, holding 77% of the senior management positions, while women's representation as CEOs is notably minimal, comprising just 2%.

This raises questions about the quality of graduates produced by universities, as female graduates outnumber male graduates (Azuar, 2022) but do not appear to be landing in top managerial positions. More data is needed to understand the reasons behind this shortfall and to address the issue of gender diversity in the workplace. To explore the limited involvement of women in upper management roles, we analyzed four factors that could hinder the career progression of female graduates, namely work-life conflict (WLC), organizational commitment (OC), mentoring support (MS), and organizational culture (C). The research outcomes may provide actionable insights for universities to enhance female graduates' preparation, for employers to foster an inclusive workplace, and for governments to implement policies that support gender diversity in leadership roles. Collectively, these efforts can contribute to a more equitable and balanced representation of women in top management positions.

The rest of the paper continues as follows. The following section briefly discusses the relationship between female career advancement with four factors: work-life conflict, organizational commitment, mentoring support, and organizational culture. Section 3 provides details of the data measurement and explains our research methods. Details of our descriptive statistics and empirical results are in Section 4, and Section 5 concludes.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theories

Two theories that are relevant to women in leadership: the implicit leadership theory and the role congruent theory. The implicit leadership theory developed by Lord et al. (2020), explains that people have preconceived notions about the characteristics and qualities of a leader. This mental representation of a leader is like stereotypes and influences how people expect a leader to behave. Although everyone has different perceptions, they commonly agree that a leader who is in control, determined, and influential possesses the necessary task skills and characteristics, which are closely associated with men. This theory suggests that the perception of a leader impacts the evaluation of the leaders and the amount of effort people are willing to support them. Therefore, the impact of women in leadership is critical, as this theory explains how roles are assumed and how to act in the workplace. However, this theory varies across distinct cultural backgrounds, as a characteristic of an effective leader may be valid in one culture but perceived differently in another culture. The role congruity theory explains how incongruity between female gender roles and leadership roles results in two types of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender roles are categorized as communal and agentic attributes under the social role theory developed by Eagly (1987). Communal attributes relate to caring for others, such as being helpful, kind, sympathetic, affectionate, sensitive, and gentle. These traits are strongly associated with women. In contrast, agentic attributes, such as being aggressive, dominant, forceful, independent, self-confident, and self-sufficient, are strongly associated with men and are perceived as important traits for leaders. Many societies historically associated leadership qualities with stereotypically masculine attributes, such as assertiveness and dominance. As a result, there might be a bias in favor of men when considering candidates for top leadership roles, since these roles are seen as requiring qualities traditionally associated with masculinity. This bias can lead to the underrepresentation of women in such positions, despite their qualifications and capabilities.

The role congruity theory explains how social perceptions of gender roles impact whether women are allowed to hold leadership positions. However, when women do occupy leadership positions and display agentic attributes, people view it as a violation of social roles. The warmth-competence theory by Dupree and Fiske (2017) further explains the negative perception of women with dominant leadership styles. People form impressions of others based on two dimensions: warmth (likeability and trustworthiness) and competency (respect and efficiency). Women who exhibit dominant leadership styles are seen as competent but not warm because their behavior contradicts communal attributes typically associated with women. Therefore, female leaders should exhibit narrow agentic attributes to direct people's perceptions toward the warmth dimension. The Role Congruent Theory suggests that individuals are more likely to be accepted and successful in roles that align with societal expectations of their gender. In the context of leadership, if the perception persists that leadership roles are traditionally occupied by men, women might encounter barriers when pursuing top management positions. This is because these roles might be seen as incongruent with traditional gender roles and expectations. As a result, women might be less likely to be considered for or actively seek out these positions, contributing to the lack of representation at the top management level.

2.2 Female career advancement

Female career advancement refers to the advancement and development of women's careers within an organization or industry. It entails women moving up the career ladder, gaining promotions, and assuming leadership roles, as well as acquiring the skills and knowledge required for career advancement. Female career advancement is critical to promoting gender diversity and achieving gender equality in the workplace. Women continue to encounter unique obstacles when it comes to breaking into the male-dominated realm of leadership. Despite outnumbering men in terms of graduates, women's involvement in decision-making positions remains low (Saadin et al., 2016).

The goal of having 30% female representation on boards of directors has yet to be achieved, revealing the persistence of the gender gap in the workplace (Ang, 2018). The issue is particularly acute in middle management and at the board level, where female participation is even lower (Chin, 2021). Women's limited participation in the labor force also hinders their development as leaders, with male participation exceeding female participation by 40% (NST, 2019). Moreover, women are more likely to choose low-paying careers and work in jobs that do not align with their qualifications (Gu, 2018; Malay Mail, 2020). Although women's participation rate in the 25-34 age group is high at 75.1%, it drops to 57% in the 45-54 age group, indicating the challenges women face as they juggle multiple roles in their careers, family, and home responsibilities (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). Women's opportunities for growth in a male-dominated workplace are further limited by gender discrimination (Victor & Shamila, 2018). These challenges are compounded by the impact of family and caregiving responsibilities on women's career advancement, as well as their underrepresentation and token status at higher organizational levels (O'neil et al., 2015). In this study, we examined whether work-life conflict, organizational commitment, mentoring support, and organizational culture affect female career advancement.

2.2.1 Work life conflict and female career advancement

Work-life conflict, also known as work-life imbalance or work-life interference, refers to a situation in which the demands and responsibilities of an individual's work or career negatively impact their ability to effectively manage and engage in their personal and family life (Schieman et al., 2021). Katz and Kahn's (2015) role theory proposes that individuals have various roles in their work and personal lives, with work roles being necessary for earning a

wage and living roles being related to family life, such as partnering, parenting, and personal activities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). When household responsibilities interfere with work roles, work-life conflict arises, which is a common occurrence for working women who carry more domestic duties than men and spend more time caring for children (Arham et al., 2019; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). With the added burden of homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic, working mothers face the difficult task of balancing work and family life (Spagnoli et al., 2020). As a result, many women opt to work part-time or commit to flexible hours for lower wages and closer proximity to home, which hinders their opportunities for promotion, particularly when the primary reason for working is economic necessity rather than career ambition (Vaghefi, 2018). Furthermore, the responsibility of child-rearing and the lack of affordable childcare make it challenging for women to pursue leadership roles (Bardekjian et al., 2019). Pregnancy is another obstacle faced by career women, and the guilt of working beyond normal hours, especially with children, leads many to leave their demanding jobs which ultimately hampers their professional advancement (Al-Asfour et al., 2017; Arslaner & Boylu, 2017; Harniyati et al., 2021; Toffoletti & Starr, 2016). Huo et al. (2023) demonstrated that the interaction between work-role overload and employees' trait emotional stability played a role in influencing their experience of work-life conflict. This, in turn, had consequences on career advancement. We proposed that,

Hypothesis 1: Work-life conflict has a negative effect on female career advancement.

2.2.2 Organizational commitment and female career advancement

Organizational commitment (OC) is the emotional connection, loyalty, and dedication employees have toward their organization. It reflects their identification with the organization's values and goals, and their willingness to contribute their best efforts to its success. This commitment can take different forms, including emotional attachment, perceived costs of leaving, and a sense of moral obligation to stay (Loan, 2020). Commitment is a binding force that compels an individual to pursue a particular course of action. As employees' emotions are satisfied, they become driven to fulfill their responsibilities. Consequently, an employee's performance is profoundly influenced by their motivation levels, making it prudent for organizations to sustain these levels of motivation within their workforce (Munir et al., 2021).

Within an organizational context, OC is the degree to which employees identify with and actively participate in achieving an organization's goals and values (Mowday et al., 1979). Allen and Meyer (1990) further developed the concept of organizational commitment into three dimensions: affective attachment (affective commitment), perceived costs (continuance commitment), and obligation (normative commitment). Affective commitment is an emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuance commitment is based on the costs associated with leaving the organization, and normative commitment refers to an employee's sense of obligation to remain in the organization. Although each employee in an organization is expected to experience all three types of commitment simultaneously, the degree of each commitment may vary. Affective organizational commitment is the most studied among the three dimensions of organizational commitment. Researchers have found that job satisfaction has a positive impact on affective organizational commitment (Chordiya et al., 2017) and that there are differences in organizational commitment and career commitment between male and female employees (Ayodele et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that a high level of affective commitment reduces the tendency to leave an organization and that employees with a strong sense of affective commitment are more likely to stay in the organization because of the potential for career advancement (Bell & Sheridan, 2020; Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). Liu et al. (2020) found that female employees within the hospitality sector who had higher organizational commitment are associated with higher career advancement.

The style of leadership, along with training and development initiatives driven by employee engagement, had a substantial impact on enhancing employee productivity (Rozanna & Adriansyah, 2023). Therefore, organizations should provide suitable training programs to increase employees' attachment to the organization, which will lead to better employee retention and attract talented employees to progress their careers within the organization. We posit that,

Hypothesis 2: Organizational commitment has a positive effect on female career advancement.

2.2.3 Mentoring support and female career advancement

Mentoring is interweaving a personal-professional rapport into an educational journey, embedding it within the organizational, cultural, and worldwide framework, and incorporating it as a strategic approach for systemic reform that enhances human potential (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Mentoring is commonly used as a managerial approach to convey the principles and culture of an organization, manage stress, encourage employee engagement, and decrease employee turnover (Chang & Busser, 2017; Eissner & Gannon, 2018; S. S. Kim et al., 2015; Uen et al., 2018). Through mentoring, chronic issues such as motivation, commitment, and retention can be addressed, resulting in improved outcomes (Sharples & Marcon-Clarke, 2019). Specifically designed mentoring programs for women can help promote their career progress (Dashper, 2018). However, such programs can also be viewed as paradoxical because they acknowledge the underachievement of women in comparison to male employees but attribute it to individual women's shortcomings rather than gendered organizational structures, practices, and norms. As a result, formal women's mentorship programs may both challenge and promote gender inequality (Dashper, 2019). In formal mentoring programs, career-specific support is significantly related to career goals rather than other functions such as psychosocial support and role modeling. Female managers, whose personal identities are closely tied to their families, are given psychosocial support to improve their work-family relations. Female managers place more value on the interpersonal aspect of mentoring relationships since their family identities are more important to them than their corporate work. The benefits of mentoring for female managers are not strongly linked to achieving greater career goals, but rather to relational support and emotional empathy (Kim, 2017). Nevertheless, formal mentoring programs can have a positive impact on women's retention, professional development, and leadership opportunities, particularly in male-dominated industries like IT (Cho et al., 2019; O'Meara et al., 2019).

Mentoring can provide women with a support network, eliminate information gaps, and offer role models (Buckles, 2019), which can lead to personal and professional growth, improved job productivity, and job satisfaction. Successful mentorship can help women increase their confidence, establish objectives, and broaden their network, leading to career advancement and improved working performance (Dashper, 2018). French et al. (2021) and Mcilongo and Strydom (2021) revealed a positive correlation between mentorship and career advancement. Additionally, a deeper analysis unveiled that female employees receive comparatively less engagement from male managers in contrast to female managers. Despite this, it was observed that the gender of the mentor does not have a direct influence on career progression.

Hypothesis 3: Mentoring support has a positive effect on female career advancement.

2.2.4 Organizational culture and female career advancement

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that shape the collective identity and character of a particular organization. It encompasses the unwritten rules, social dynamics, and overall atmosphere that influence how

employees interact, make decisions, and perform their work within the organization. Organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping the organization's values, goals, and the way it conducts business. It can be influenced by the organization's history, leadership style, industry, and the people who work within it (Morcos, 2018). Among many factors, commitment from upper management, support systems within the organization, training and growth opportunities, and the prevailing organizational culture all play a role in facilitating the progress of women in their careers (Asumadu & Owusu, 2022).

An unfavorable organizational culture can manifest through various factors like lack of diversity and inclusivity, discrimination, harassment, and unfair treatment of employees. Iradukunda et al. (2021) in a study focusing on female employees in the mining industry, identified that gender bias and instances of sexual harassment impede the career advancement and workplace safety of women. Consequently, these challenges have repercussions on the overall sustainable development of this industry. Negative organizational culture can have adverse effects on female employees, such as reduced job satisfaction, lower commitment to the organization, and increased likelihood of leaving the company (Suvaci, 2018; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010). Moreover, such factors can directly hinder the career development of women by restricting their access to advancement opportunities, mentorship and networking, and exposure to key decision-makers in the organization. Research has demonstrated that an unfavorable organizational culture can significantly impede the career growth of women (WIC, 2019), who already confront significant obstacles in the workplace due to gender bias and stereotypes. Kholis (2017) conducted a study on female academicians and discovered that they encounter barriers to career advancement due to discrimination and a masculine culture prevalent in universities.

Gender gap presence in professional career advancement is not due to differences in performance (Filandri & Pasqua, 2019) and African American women face difficulties in reaching the C-suite because of negative stereotypes and the intersectionality of sexism and racial discrimination (Munson, 2018). In the case when the superior is a woman, gender discrimination is lesser, and female employees get more flexibility in their work schedule to promote better work-life balance (Lucifora & Vigani, 2022). We proposed that,

Hypothesis 4: Organizational culture has a negative effect on female career advancement.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample and data collection

The study's population consists of female graduates from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM). The alumni register of each UiTM campus serves as the population frame, and a simple random sampling approach, meaning that each accounting alumni has an equal chance of being selected for this study. Questionnaires were distributed online via WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Participants included working UiTM alumnae. This study had a total of 106 respondents.

3.2 Data measurement

The survey included a question on career advancement (CA) 7 items, work-life conflict (WLC) 10 items, organizational commitment (OC) 10 items, mentoring (MR) 15 items, and organizational culture (C) 8 items. CA scale was adapted from Jawahar and Hemmasi (2006), the WLC, OC, and C scales were adapted from Afza and Newaz (2008) and Lyness and Thompson (1997), and the MR scale was adapted from Dreher and Ash (1990). The survey questions utilized a five-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree,

and 5-strongly agree) for each statement. This assessment has significantly impacted the creation of research questionnaires (Sangthong, 2020). Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about working in their present organization. A higher score (strongly agree) on the CA indicates a higher degree of potential for career advancement. The summed total of CA responses was calculated and used as a score for career advancement. A higher score (strongly agree) on the WLC, OC, MR, and C indicates a higher degree of work-life conflict, a higher degree of organizational commitment, great monitoring, and a higher level of negative organizational culture towards female employees. The summed total responses were used to measure the variables of interest.

3.3 Data Analysis

Reliability statistic on the variables is highly based on Cronbach's Alpha; 0.896 for career advancement (CA), 0.884 for work-life conflict, 0.922 for mentoring (MR), and 0.917 for organizational culture (C), except for low value at 0.651 for organizational commitment (OC). Cronbach's Alpha less than 0.8 has low internal consistency and needs to consider removing items with low item-total correlation. OC was initially assessed based on 10 items, but 2 items were removed: "I could just as well be working for a different organization if the type of work were similar" and "It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization". These items have negative values in the Inter-Item Correlation Matrix. Removing them has increased the value of Cronbach's Alpha from 0.651 to 0.818. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses using SPSS Statistics 29.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

An analysis of the data shows that a majority of the 106 respondents were married without dependent children, with over 45% falling in the age range of 26 to 35 years. Additionally, the educational qualifications of the respondents varied, with over 60% holding a bachelor's degree and smaller percentages holding higher qualifications such as a master's degree, diploma, or postgraduate degree. Most of the respondents were found to be in middle (40%) or senior (45%) level positions, with only 15% at a junior level. The analysis also revealed that most of the respondents had worked in either private or public sectors for a period exceeding four years, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' profile

Demographic indicator	N	%
Age (n= 106)		
20-25 years old	8	7.5
26-30 years old	30	28.3
31-35 years old	19	17.9
36-40 years old	17	16.0
41-45 years old	10	9.4
46-50 years old	15	14.2
>50 years old	7	6.6
Marital status (n= 106)		
Single	41	38.7
Married	62	58.5
Divorced	3	2.8
Education level (n= 106)		
Professional	2	1.9
Doctorate	5	4.7
Master	19	17.9
Degree	72	67.9
Diploma	8	7.5

Experience (n= 106)		
6m - 1y	7	6.6
1-3y	12	11.3
4-6y	26	24.5
7-10y	14	13.2
>10y	47	44.3
Position level (n= 106)		
Junior	16	15.1
Middle	42	39.6
Senior	48	45.3
Type of companies (n= 106)		
Government	33	31.1
Listed companies	19	17.9
Private companies	52	49.1
Self-employed	2	1.9

Referring to Table 2, the mean score of 4.01 for CA shows that most participants agree that women get support from the organization they currently work at to enhance their careers. The higher the WLF score, the more conflict there is between work and personal life. The mean value of 2.80 for WLC indicates that most participants feel that there had little conflict between the two. The mean value of 3.65 and 3.88 for OC and MR indicates that most participants are less than agreeable about their commitment to the organization and receiving mentorship in their careers.

Table 2. Mean value of variables

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation
Career advancement (CA)	4.01	0.81
Work life conflict (WLC)	2.80	0.78
Organizational commitment (OC)	3.65	0.62
Mentoring (MR)	3.88	0.53
Organizational culture (C)	2.60	0.85

The mean value of each item instrument is presented in Table 3. The mean value for all items assessing career advancement suggests that they do not experience issues that may hinder their career development. The response also suggests they are not being discriminated against in terms of getting opportunities to develop their career. Nevertheless, the mean scores between scale 3 (neutral) and 4 (agree) indicate that they do not strongly feel they get to advance to managerial positions. Of the 10 items measuring work-life conflict, the highest mean score of 3.2 indicates a neutral perception about personal life being negatively affected due to tiredness at work. It suggests that they are unconcerned about being tired from work and are unable to do things they enjoy. The lowest mean score for WLC is 2.44 indicating that they have no difficulty carrying out personal roles as a spouse or parent while working and a mean of 2.64, that their work schedule does not conflict with their family life. Of the eight items measuring organizational commitment, only 1 item has a mean of 4 that the respondents agree to put effort to succeed in the organization. Scores ranging from 3 (neutral) to 4 (agree) for the remaining items indicate an opportunity for the organization to proactively foster greater commitment. The mean value for mentoring indicates that respondents are more likely to choose between neutral and agree when evaluating whether or not they receive mentoring at work. They are given challenging tasks and opportunities to learn new skills, according to the highest score of 4.16. The lowest score of 3.55 indicates that most participants are between neutral and agree that their superior assists greatly in guiding their career interests. The respondents also agree that they are encouraged to put growth in their careers with assignments given, building networking, and sharing of experience. All items measuring organizational culture have low mean scores (less than neutral) indicating that they are less likely to agree culture in the organization discriminates against female employees. The highest

mean score is 2.97 indicating that women need to be more accomplished compared to men, to get promoted.

Table 3. Mean value of instruments

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation
Career advancement		
1. Sufficient opportunities exist in my organization for women to advance into senior management positions.	3.95	1.072
2. In my organization, there are equal career development opportunities for men and women.	4.12	0.953
3. According to the way my organization operates, a woman can become a senior manager in the future.	4.32	0.981
4. Women and men are respected equally in my organization	4.25	0.934
5. In my organization, the number of women penetrating the hierarchy and achieving senior positions is steadily increasing.	3.97	1.028
6. In my organization, women are primarily encouraged to apply to managerial roles.	3.92	0.987
7. The men network in my organization limits women's opportunities for promotion to the senior position (reverse)	3.56	1.196
Work-life conflict		
1. While working at my current workplace, I have taken a huge amount of time off for childbearing, child-raising, parental care or similar family responsibilities.	2.87	1.079
2. Staying longer than the regular office time is highly appreciated by my family members.	2.44	1.061
3. My work schedule often conflicts with my family life.	2.64	1.097
4. After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I like to do.	3.20	1.133
5. On the job, I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests.	3.10	1.137
6. My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work while I am home.	2.68	1.074
7. Because my work is demanding, at times I am irritable at home.	2.87	1.180
8. The nature of my job makes it difficult to be relaxed all the time at home.	2.75	1.161
9. My work takes up time that I like to spend with my family.	2.83	1.100
10. My job makes it difficult to be the kind of spouse or parent I like to be.	2.63	1.132
Organizational commitment		
1. I am willing to put in much effort to help this organization be successful	4.01	0.799
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for	3.81	0.841
3. I would accept almost any type of job assignment to keep working for this organization	3.58	1.004
4. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	3.74	0.854
5. This organization inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance	3.75	0.914
6. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for	3.91	0.931
7. There is not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely	3.12	1.030
8. It is difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to employees	3.25	1.085
Mentoring		
1. I am given or recommended for challenging assignments that present opportunities to learn new skills.	4.16	0.678
2. I am given or recommended for assignments that require personal contact with managers in different parts of the company.	3.98	.756

3. I am given or recommended for assignments that increase my contact with higher-level managers.	3.94	.871
4. I am given or recommended for assignments that help me meet new colleagues.	4.09	.697
5. I am assisted to finish assignments/tasks or meet deadlines that otherwise would have been difficult to complete.	3.91	.799
6. My colleagues/superiors went out of their way to promote my career interests.	3.55	.852
7. My colleagues/superiors conveyed feelings of respect to me as an individual.	3.91	.737
8. My colleagues/superiors conveyed empathy for the concerns and feelings that I have discussed with them.	3.88	.739
9. I am encouraged to talk openly about anxiety and fears that detract me from my work.	3.60	.933
10. My colleagues/superiors shared personal experiences as an alternative perspective on my problems.	3.92	.719
11. My colleagues/superiors shared the history of their careers with me.	4.00	.690
12. I am encouraged to prepare for advancement.	4.07	.680
13. I am encouraged to try new ways of behaving on the job.	4.05	.709
14. I have served as a role model.	3.54	.853
15. My colleagues/superiors displayed attitudes and values similar to mine.	3.64	.830
Organizational culture		
1. I think women receive more unfair judgment regarding their work performance compared to men.	2.48	1.053
2. I think I have been unfairly judged because of my gender.	2.19	.947
3. Negative perceptions and stereotypes about women's professional capabilities constitute barriers to women's advancement.	2.83	1.191
4. I think working life is characterized by negative attitudes toward women	2.41	.993
5. Men fail to pay attention to what women say at meetings	2.42	1.032
6. I feel that I have to be extra well prepared to talk professionally to men to make them pay attention to what I say.	2.95	1.124
7. I think women have to be more accomplished in their work compared to men in order to be promoted	2.97	1.150
8. As a woman, I think I must be more accomplished and "pushy" to be promoted	2.58	1.077

4.2 Multiple Regression Analyses

We performed standard multiple regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationship among the variables. Table 4 presents the standardized regression coefficients (beta weight, b), t-value, and the coefficient of determination (R^2).

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis for female career advancement

DV= Career advancement		
Independent variable	Beta	t-value
Work-life conflict	0.007	0.084
Organizational commitment	0.330***	2.992
Mentoring	0.186*	1.807
Organizational culture	-0.287***	-3.280
Adjusted R square = 0.335, F = 14.2***		

***p<.01, **p<.05

According to the findings, organizational commitment was found to have the greatest impact on the advancement of women in their careers, as indicated by its highest beta value. On the other hand, work-life conflict does not influence female career progression, implying that personal commitments are less of a hindrance to their career growth. Our result does not

support previous evidence (Arslaner & Boylu, 2017; Harniyati et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2013; Matot et al., 2020; Toffoletti & Starr, 2016; Vaghefi, 2018) that work-life conflict contributes to slow career progression among female, and hence reject hypothesis 1. The outcomes imply that while the struggles of juggling work and personal life do not hinder women's career advancement, this situation could stem from the essential influence of their dedication to the organization they are employed by on their career development.

We found that organizational commitment and culture have a significant influence on the career development of women at a 1% significance level, while mentoring has a significant influence at a 10% significance level. Our findings support hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. Consistent with previous studies (Cho et al., 2019; Dashper, 2018; Perumal & Dastane, 2017; Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018), we identified that greater commitment to the organization and receiving more mentoring support are positively associated with better career advancement for female employees, whereas experiencing a negative organizational culture towards female employees is linked with poorer career development. Our results are consistent with WIC (2019) that organizational culture is a significant factor in women's career development as compared to work-life conflict.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether women's career advancement is associated with work-life conflict, organizational commitment, mentoring, and organizational culture. Our findings suggest that women's commitments, such as being a mother or a wife, do not necessarily hinder their success in their careers. Even though they may have busy personal lives and give priority to their families, it does not indicate that they are less interested in career advancement and success at work. Women are gifted with the ability to multitask and know how to stay focused on their work. Despite this, organizations need to take steps to ensure that female employees can give their full commitment to the organization, as our study found that commitment is the strongest factor in determining career advancement. Various measures can be taken, including creating cultural diversity through policies that promote diversity in recruitment, giving equal opportunities to female employees for job assignments and leadership roles, supporting their work-life balance through flexible working arrangements, and offering professional development through training and educational programs. Organizations need to prioritize creating a positive and inclusive culture that supports the career development of all employees, regardless of their gender. Addressing any instances of discrimination or harassment promptly and effectively is also crucial for promoting diversity within the organization.

6.0 SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can delve into the influence of leadership and management practices on women's career advancement in the workplace by examining the behaviors, attitudes, and decision-making processes of managers and leaders. This investigation can also explore the impact of gender diversity in leadership positions on women's career prospects and the overall organizational climate. Additionally, studying performance evaluation and feedback processes can provide valuable insights into how they affect female career advancement, including identifying and addressing potential biases and stereotypes. This research can further assess the effectiveness of performance management systems in promoting gender equity and recognizing the potential of female employees.

CO-AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author1 conceived the research idea, designed the questionnaires, and overlooked the writeup of the whole article.

Author 2 contributed to the experimental design, data analysis, and interpretation of results. Author3 searched articles and did the data entry. Author4 provided feedback on the research design. Author5 carried out the fieldwork. They also contributed to the writing and revision of the manuscript.

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