

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to find a summary of the findings and discussions provided on women's career advancement among the Malaysian women professional workforce working in the government sector are participating in this study. The primary purpose of this study is to gain better understanding of the factors and the barriers that are influence Malaysian professional workforce women in their career advancement.

The research interviews aimed to capture the stories of five Malaysian women's career advancement working in the government sectors. The analysis of interviews was guided by research questions:

1. What are the factors influencing women career advancement?
2. What are the barriers faced by women career advancement?

Since both of the researcher and participants in this study speak Bahasa Melayu and English language, the interviews were conducted both. In order to avoid issues associated with analyzing and interpreting a translated version of data, the interviews were transcribed and analysed in the original language. First, the interviews were transcribed analysed in the original language. Analytic codes, categories, memos and notes were labelled in the original language. Also, transcription was included information about non-linguistic features such as pauses, interruption, and incomplete sentences, laughter, repetitions, and so on.

Then, after the researcher gained an understanding of the meaning of the data and the analytic themes emerged from the analysis of the original text, these themes were translated into English. Also, the original quotations of women related to key themes were translated into English in order to be used in the presentation of the findings in this chapter. The phase of translation of women's quotes was difficult since it is difficult to translate several cultural metaphors in the transcript. Some female languages were proved more difficult to translate using equivalent terminology. In English or another language, because, in besides the linguistic similarity, cultural equivalence and congruent values must be ensured, and occasionally perfect equivalence does not exist in other languages or cultures.

It is worth mentioning that in qualitative research, the transformation of the spoken word into the written word is an interpretative act. Many writers have demonstrated that there is no definitive translation, truth, or meaning, and that a variety of options are available (Kvale, 1996). For the same narrative, different vocabulary and concepts can be used in the translation. The researcher took every attempt to capture as much detail as possible of the original statement and to select the exact phrases to preserve the meaning of the respondents' comments. The author also presented the socio-economic condition of the respondents from the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: The Socio-Economic Information of the Respondents

| Respondent No. | Level of Education          | Marital status | Number of children | Working experience | Profession                              |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1              | Degree                      | Married        | 2                  | 33 years           | Headmaster                              |
| 2              | Education Degree            | Married        | 3                  | 16 years           | Head Teacher of the Religious Committee |
| 3              | Master                      | Married        | 3                  | 14 years           | Chief Administrative Officer            |
| 4              | Diploma Nursing             | Married        | 3                  | 14 years           | Dimension Nursing Officer               |
| 5              | Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) | Married        | 2                  | 10 years           | University Senior Lecturer              |

## 4.2 Findings

There were five participants in this study. All five participants were full time working mothers. They were all Malaysian professional working women in government sectors in Malaysia. All were married with at least one child. The participants were, therefore, considered homogeneous. To maintain the ethical principle of privacy and confidentiality, the names were kept confidential. They were referred to as Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

#### **4.2.1 Factors Influencing Women Career Advancement**

The first research question aimed to get insights into the factors influencing women career advancement based on their lived experiences. The findings of the study as derived from interviews with the five various positions of Malaysian professional women which working in the government sectors. Based on the thematic analysis, the main themes under individual characteristics influencing the career that emerged encompass (a) Spousal factors, (b) Employers factors, (c) Peers factors and (e) Children factors. First, the main themes grounded in the interviews according to the research questions are presented below.

##### **4.2.1.1 Individual Characteristics Influencing the Career**

As the stories of the five women's career unfolded, it was evident that some individual characteristics played an important role in their career advancement, these are, (a) Spousal factors, (b) Employers factors, (c) Peers factors and (d) Children factors. The influence of each characteristic on the career development of women in this study is presented next.

##### **4.2.1.1.1 Spousal Factors**

###### **4.2.1.1.1.1 Provide physical and mental support as well as helping in household management**

In this study, based on the five responses of the respondents, they all gave a positive reaction that their partner is one of their support systems and also reinforces them in continuing their respective professions.

They also stated that their husbands are very understanding of their careers in helping to provide physical and mental support and also helping in household management. Respondent 1-5 described how they perceived that kind of support from their husbands which are very understanding of their careers in helping to provide physical and mental support as well as helping in household management when they are away or busy with work.

Respondent 1:

*But the important thing is our husband. My husband helps in making assignments, at night we have no time, because during the day we teach at night we study, so I have to make assignments at night, I will stay up at night in doing this. I really appreciate to my husband for always support me from behind, like he helps print the essays. I made all the typewriters, he was the one who helped me print them, he helped me with everything. Not just moral support, not just in terms of household and children, but even in the assignment, he helps print and so on.*

*At night we prepare all their school needs right. In the morning, my husband would send us to school, and then when he returned, my husband would pick us up from school and nursery.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*Alhamdulillah, I am grateful for being blessed with a husband who really understands my work as a teacher. He gives me a lot of support mentally and physically even though we are in different jobs. But in family management, he helps me a lot in terms of managing the children. For example when I was involved with courses, school programs, he was the one who helped me a lot in managing homework and children. Remember again when I wanted and was continuing my studies, at that time I already have a children. He was the one who helped a lot to sacrifice all in taking care of the children, when I was doing a course near Maktab Sultan Mizan, he was the one who re-*

*took me, and visited me there with all the children. He supports whatever I want to do in achieving my career, he wants the best, he wants the best for all.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*When I did my MBA, I didn't work, so I stayed at home because I continued my studies full time. And at that time I had two children. So, at that time my husband was the one who covered everything for the family. Emmm at that time I didn't work, my husband was ready to have a house maid.*

*My husband is supportive, he's flexible, which means he doesn't force us. If we work tired and don't want to cook so we will order it. He is very easy and considering person. Indeed, my husband and I will always communicate if there is anything. If I return home late, I will call him, and he will try to take all the children from school.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*Because we both work shifts together, so for morning chores I will take care of the children, and in the evening my husband will take care of them. But if he has a morning shift, so evening, though I manage the children. That means we take care of the children together. We take turns with these tasks, if I'm the only one, it's hard too.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*For me, the support provided by this couple is the most crucial in terms of physical help cooperation, not only emotional cooperation. The most significant aspect of cooperation is cooperation in household management and kid management. In terms of emotional support, he can't help us by lightening our tasks as lecturers, but he can help us by providing support in lightening the house chores.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.1.1.1.2 Supporting spouses related major decision-making process concerning their career**

Based on the background of the respondents, they consist of various levels of qualification such as Diploma, Degree, Educational Degree, Master and also Doctor of Philosophy level (PhD). Even though they are in different careers and have children of their own, they always support each other in making decisions, especially in the development of their partner's career. All the respondents in this research stated that the factors that influenced them to pursue career advancement is their spouse keep expressing their support in giving them motivation in pursuing their higher education for strengthening their career in future. Plus, pursuing career development enhances their social-psychological well-being by giving them with more self-achievement, independence, and authority, as well as increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Respondent 1 described how she perceived support from their husbands in making the decision to continue their studies to a higher level. She also stated that her husband support her in term of helped in printing her assignment and moral support.

Respondent 1:

*It's okay if you want to continue learning, he said. Because he doesn't want to continue study anymore, and I said, okay, if you give me the opportunity to continue learning, Alhamdulillah. So I continued my studies. He supported me, he was the one who helped me print all the assignment. I made all the typewriters, he was the one who helped me print, he helped me with everything.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Likewise with respondent 2. Where the partner of Respondent 2 gave a positive reaction also in supporting her to continue her studies at the education degree level. Although they have different careers and have children they always support each other in the development of their partner.

Respondent 2:

*Remember when I made a decision to continue my studies and also when the time I was successful in continuing my studies, also that time I already had a child, right, so, he was the one who helped and sacrificed a lot in taking care of the children. At that time I was taking a course near Maktab Sultan Mizan, he was the one who took me back and forth, and visited me there with all the children. He supports whatever he does, he wants the best for me and family.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

For Respondent 3, she stated that her husband also supported her in making the decision to continue her studies to the Master's level. Her husband is very supportive of what is best for his wife. Even decided to hire a maid while his wife was continuing her studies to a higher level.

Respondent 3:

*When I did my MBA, I didn't work and became a housewife because I continued my studies full time, right, and at that time there were 2 children. So, at that time my husband was the one who took care of everything for this family. ummm, I wasn't working at that time, so, my husband was ready to have a maid, because she want to making me easy and do not want burden me at that time. He want me to focus on my studies.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

For Respondent 4, she replied that, after discussing with her husband that she want to upgrade herself in her field as she decided to take a hemodialysis certification course, she stated that her husband also supported what was best for her. Respondent 4 answered,

Respondent 4:

*When I wanted to take the certification course for hemodialysis, I first discussed with my husband whether it was okay or not, because at that time I already had 2 children. So, Alhamdulillah my husband support and gave me the opportunity at the same time to upgrade myself because of this nurse.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5 also get supported from their husband in making their career become true. She stated that in marriage life it is important to have a good communication and also be tolerated to each other. Respondent 5 stated that while she

intends to take the decision to continue her studies to PhD level, her husband is very understanding and supports her decision to continue her studies. Respondent 5 and her husband also started planning the best in their respective careers and also in the management of the children.

Respondent 5:

*Actually, when it's time to do the PhD, my husband already knows before getting married. Because I got married after finishing my master's, right? So he already knows. So from a cooperation point of view, I want to do my thesis on the weekend. There is no place where I will sit in the library. He will help me. Look after the child. I will go out in the morning, come back in the evening. Because on normal days he works. I am doing a PhD full time. Indeed, he is aware and agrees with all this. When we work together, there has to be mutual understanding, we already communicate with each other, right because if anything, it really doesn't matter to me as a woman, whatever decision she wants to make, make sure there's communication, make sure there's discussion.*

*The PhD test journey is a bit different, compared to the Master's, it's easy, I feel like it's nothing too bad, but at some age, some people go up to the PhD, again, there are children who make us feel like it's complex and we don't want to continue until it feels like that. The rain is too heavy you know, we feel like we want to stop, want to be quick and so on, so the support from the partner is also very important, he always reminds us that he gives us time is important, he lightens our tasks from a lot of time we focus on household matters, things. In other words, he also helped to give us time, it looks like we are not negligent. I mean, it looks like we haven't opened a thesis for many days, right? He also reminded and so on.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### 4.2.1.1.2 Employers Factors

Employers play an important role in the development of employee performance. It was evident from some women's stories in this study that the employers support has significantly influenced their career advancement. Based on the respondents' feedback, one of the employer's characteristics is an employer who shows good characteristics and roles towards these working women. All respondents stated that they have good and understanding employers, also a very friendly with their employees. Thus, this shows that the employer-employee relationship for the harmony of an organization is very important especially for women to pursue career advancement.

##### 4.2.1.1.2.1 Characteristics and role of employers towards working women

Women in this study were asked in the interview about their employers' personality towards them. Respondents described that all of them have a good characteristic and role of their employer in their workplace. As can be seen on table 4.2 the characteristic and role of the employers that were stated by all the respondents.

Table 4.2: The Characteristics and Role of Employers towards Working Women

| No | Characteristics and Role of Employers                                                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Concerned                                                                                                                     |
| 2  | Understanding                                                                                                                 |
| 3  | Give support                                                                                                                  |
| 4  | Show a good example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hardworking</li><li>- Punctuality</li><li>- Discipline</li></ul> |

|    |                                                                              |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5  | Provide a flexible duty schedule                                             |
| 6  | Provide facilities:<br>- Emergency leave<br>- Permission to leave the office |
| 7  | Friendly person                                                              |
| 8  | Being generous                                                               |
| 9  | Open minded                                                                  |
| 10 | Fairness                                                                     |

Table 4.2 shows the characteristics of employers expressed by working women. With the presence of these qualities in the employer, then in the management of an organization there is no pressure on the employees in carrying out their work. This attentive and caring attitude is also able to reduce problems faced by working and married women. The following comments are indicative of the views expressed by the participants.

Respondent 1 replied that he has experience with various employers and has experience with many administrators and each of them has a different personality. Although the methods are different, but they are all good administrators. She said the experience of working with her employer was that everyone was understanding and very friendly. The following is a statement from Respondent 1.

Respondent 1:

*Alhamdulillah, it means that we work well and get a good experience because this administrator supports what we do, which means that he doesn't stop us. And there I was also given an opportunity, he gave us an opportunity, means that, what we want to do is the best for the students, he will supports us.*

*There is also an administrator that I met, he is friendly, he is close, he always goes into the teacher's room chat with teachers, while asking the problems and so on, easy to say, he is soo close to us. The third headmaster is very friendly, even though he is friendly but duty is still a duty. He will round the class in the first period, the class is already round. But he is not angry with us, but we will respect him. So, we will feel that the head teacher will not want to enter before us. So we will automatically get ready at 7:45 a.m and be in class. If not, he will enter first. He is the one who teaches the student. When we come in late in 2-3 minutes, see that he has already taught at the class.*

*There is also someone who is really strict, right, but he is strict for the good purpose. Despite the various personalities I have met, he is not the same, but all administrators are good, just all their ways are different. Before I became an administrator, I learned a lot, I saw what it's like to be an administrator, I gained a lot of experience from my experience before.*

*....And all the administrators I tried were happy to deal with matters involving the welfare of the teachers, like if my child is sick even if he has a fever, I will ask and request his permission to enter a bit late, its like 8 o'clock for me to go to the clinic, bring my child.... That's for sure we have to have a solid and logical reason. Otherwise they don't allow us to go on vacation, travel, take mc and so on. If there is a problem, directly see them. No problem. Even as an administrator, I learned a lot from that, people make things easier for us, we make things easier for people too.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2, also made the same statement that she has an employer who is very attentive and understanding enough. She stated that she has an employer who has a firm but good character. Her employer is strict but very understanding if there is a problem from the teachers at his school. Likewise in terms of welfare. As she said,

Respondent 2:

*Alhamdulillah, I have a very strict and kind female employer. Although she is strict, she understands if there is a problem from the teachers. In terms of welfare, leave approval is easy for her to approve teacher leave on the condition that we meet/phone/report first by stating the problem. There is no problem.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

In fact, the employer from Respondent 2 is also a person who encourages the participation of employees and ensures that they always perform at a high level and gives physical and mental encouragement to teachers. As stated by Respondent 2 where she played the role of head of the religious committee at her school. Respondent 2 expressed about her employers,

*As the head of the committee, my employer often sends me to attend educational performance development courses.*

*She is also a very generous person, for example there was a time when she bought the teachers and students. Like, for example, my school was once the champion in reciting al-quran at ppd level, so she celebrated when we all went out to eat, I like it, right. And in terms of workplace facilities here, Alhamdulillah, it is comfortable for teachers who want to teach.*

For Respondent 3, she stated that her employer is someone who also understands and helps her employees and also cares about her employees in completing each task. She explained that,

Respondent 3:

*Alhamdulillah, if it is from the point of completing the work, if we have a problem to solve a work problem, and that work we will have a discussion session together, the*

*employer does have it every month indeed he will conduct a series of discussions discussion set, so if there is any problem or issue we discuss it there.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

The employer of Respondent 3 also takes great care of the welfare of her employees, including matters related to performance development leave and so on. Her employer is also always generous in accepting every point of view from her employees if there is a problem that occurs. As Respondent 3 described her working environment,

Respondent 3:

*In terms of approval for leave, there is no problem, but yes, he has to follow the qualifications or requirements, erm, then from the point of view of performance evaluation, Alhamdulillah, erm, the evaluation is based on our achievements, but if there is dissatisfaction, we can still discuss. If we have something that we are not satisfied with, the employer can accept it if we have our own point of view. Employers are also ready and offer staff development training.*

Therefore, Respondent 4 also expressed her gratitude for having a good leader who understands if there is a family problem. Their leader also takes care of their welfare, provides support and is fair in the division of duties, especially during OT also stated that employers also give flexibility in certain discretionary situations such as emergency leave for example. As we all know, working as a nurse is very busy, but Respondent 4 is grateful by stating that they get equal work from their supervisor, regardless of duties, sending cases and so on. Respondent 4 answered,

Respondent 4:

*The employer is okay, he understands that if our child has a fever, there is a problem with the babysitter, my boss will say no, family first. In terms of asking for time off, he really understands everything.*

*Like us, there is a basic life support course, so our leader will ask if you care who hasn't gone yet. Later we will have in charge and we will send it if no one joins yet. Our leader will make sure that his protégé have completed the 7-day course, if for those who do not have the basic post, he will send it. Another thing is that he is the type to support his staff. It's like in our department, sometimes we don't have enough staff near the ward, but it seems like there will be a parties from other departments who want to pull us to work near their place because they want to cover the insufficient staff, but we have a leader who will backup us all, but he doesn't give we came out to cover the other part. I feel like I'm on the defensive, it's hard for other people to pick us up here.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

For Respondent 5, even though her work as a lecturer is very flexible, when there is any emergency related to children or health, her employer is very understanding of her employees. She stated that there was a time when she suffered from severe allergies during pregnancy, and where she requested an exemption to not attend a seminar she was supposed to go to, her employer was very understanding of her condition and gave her an exemption at that time. In addition, in terms of career performance development support, skill development and knowledge development are also well monitored.

Respondent 5:

*So far I have found an employer that I feel is very understanding. Perhaps one more thing, the nature of the lecturer is quite flexible. So, sometimes we might come in a little late. Or if you don't finish work near the office, you can go home and so on. Sometimes*

*like an unhealthy child. I can request leave with the employer. Can I work from home today? My son is not well. So fine, he said ok. For me so far, I have a very understanding boss. But thank God in the government sector, we have holiday facilities. An example of contagious sick leave for example. We have holiday facilities. For example, if we want to extend holidays and so on, we can also ask people to call our good service, the employer. So whatever, it's actually up to us who have a main employer. But from the point of view of the facilities provided by our large employers in the university, we have those facilities. So he has no issues, no issues like okay, my employer wants to ask why my child is not well, I can't. Meaningless. So far none.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.1.1.3 Peer Factors**

The stories of the women in this study revealed the importance of peers in the career advancement of these women. As can be seen indicated from the stories of all the respondent, they showed their relations with supportive peers give a positive impact in their career. In contrast, all the respondents believes her peers were one of the reasons of her career success.

##### **4.2.1.1.3.1 Supportive work environment**

All respondents described their work environment and relationship with peers as warm and friendly. They also mentioned that the people they worked with, which involves colleagues, staff, clerk and employees at all levels, were very supportive and courteous of one another. They emphasized the necessity of having strong relationships with the people they worked with in order to ensure the smooth activities of the office along with the overall performance of the organization.

Peers are also one of the supports for Respondent 1 in completing her studies at the degree level. Respondent 1 also told that while she was continuing her studies at the degree level, her classmates always gave words of motivation and encouragement when she felt down, they were among the boosters. Even at that time, Respondent 1 said that she was one of the oldest among her other friends. Likewise in her job experience from ordinary teacher to head teacher, Respondent 1 believes that colleagues are a support system that helps her in getting ideas and at the same time helps improve her performance as a teacher. She also stated that her colleagues never hesitate to share knowledge and ideas even working in a male environment. She gained a lot of experience before rising to the position of head teacher. Respondent 1 described her experienced working,

Respondent 1:

*I'm the type who likes to make friends, when we make friends easily, people have no problem helping us, helping us, especially in PDP. If we work alone, we will not get anywhere lonely, we need friends to give us ideas and so on to improve our performance. And we have to, if we want to explore even once, we have to have a friend to ask how you do this and this way, ask how the teacher makes the students listen to the teacher's instructions, be quiet, what the teacher is doing... just follow the teacher's instructions... We have to ask because we see from other teachers, we have to see how our friends teach, we have to share what we see as the best. We ask him to share with us and we also have people who ask us to share too, how do I do is, we give and take. It's like we want to be the best, I mean we want to improve whatever we do, we have to share ideas, we can't be lonely, we won't get anywhere. If my type is okay, I can enter with everyone, no matter what level I can enter. So, be happy.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

She added that one of the strategies that help her become a good leader is to keep people who work for her motivated by spending some time with them through deep inclusion the department. Respondent 1 stated again, as a leader, it is necessary to buy the soul of our employees first, by knowing what they need, what problems they

are going through in this school and so on, then the cooperative relationship can be carried out well. As she stated,

Respondent 1:

*Haaa... we have and must buy his heart which first, that is important, buy the teachers' hearts. That's the reason why I have become administrators now. Even when we were in school, when I was an ordinary teacher, my teachers were easy to understand, if there was any problem, it was easy.*

As for Respondent 2, she also gave a positive answer, where she is also surrounded by colleagues who are very helpful and give mutual support to each other, especially in solving all the problems that arise in their religious committee group. As the head of the committee, Respondent 2 is very grateful to be surrounded by good friends and teams who work together. Above shown how Respondent 2 expressed her feeling surrounded by good peer at her workplace,

Respondent 2:

*At this school, I have friends who are very understanding, they help me a lot to manage the work and manage the program. We are a good group in this religious committee, they all use their knowledge skillfully. Therefore, this motivates everyone to reach their level and be better and work hard. For information, I have a total of 14 committee members. Alhamdulillah. As long as I was this position as KP, of the committee members, I was grateful because I was blessed with a team that was happy and cooperated with each other every time we had a program or a meeting, we would come up with ideas together. My members are always with me when it's hard and when it's good. All problems that arise we will face together. Indeed, these people are my backbone in this religious committee.*

(Respondent 2, 44, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3 replied the same that she has got the support from her team members either physically or mentally. She also stated that the environment of colleagues plays an important role in continuing a person's career. She also state no matter when times are hard or not, her team is always there to understand each other. She added that one of her tips for becoming a strong leader is to excite her employees by spending time with them through thorough inclusion in the department. Every time her department has a new project or task, she will spend time with her colleagues locating and discussing problems that occur. This inclusiveness improved work performance in her department by generating better teamwork and cooperation. This assisted in the smooth operation of the office.

A respondent from Respondent 3 also highlighted the importance of creating highly supportive and cooperative working environment.

Respondent 3:

*Alhamdulillah colleagues, teamwork is really good. Since I joined in 2009, I have been in the same department for almost 14 years. In my department, we work as a team. When someone is having a hard time doing their job, we will offer help and face challenges together. Our priority at work is to provide the best results as a team. So there is no problem dealing with co-workers, it's become a family. Do you want to cry when you're sad? Why do you complain to everyone? It's like brothers and sisters here.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4 reported that she reacted positively happy working in a good and supportive workplace. She expressed how supportive their environment surround by a good peers.

*I'm glad they're knowledgeable. It's been a pleasure working with them. If we don't know something, he will teach us right immediately. When I know how to poke the patient, he will inform us to learn whether this is how it should be done. He will begin*

*by teaching from A to Z. Support from friends is quite crucial in our work environment; if we are lonely, our work will be as well.*

Respondent 4 also had an experience in her old workplace before whereas her peer treat her badly, not only unsupportive but also lacking in good cooperation especially in the team and this makes her become less low confident in herself also no confidence in doing work. Respondent 4 described her working environment slightly different when dealing with friends like this,

*When I first work there, I got a friend who wasn't the best, he was just like you, he was smart on his own, if I asked someone who wanted to teach, he would teach, but if you don't want to, you have to be independent and pretend to be smart. They sometimes lack cooperation, no matter what.*

For to the Respondent 5, she also mentioned that her team members can be cooperate with each other and share knowledge. She added that it is normal if we meet people at any workplace where there are a few of them who do not want to help and there are also those who do not want to share knowledge with us and this types of people will always exist. She said,

Respondent 5:

*So far I have no problem. It means to work with networking or the teams I have. So if you want to say that there are some who don't want to share knowledge, who don't want to help, there are. It means that everywhere there will be people like that. But if you ask me in general, Alhamdulillah. This means that so far my work colleagues, the same colleagues I work with now can all work together. They also provide physical and mental support as well.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

All the respondent stated that they have a good relationship with their colleagues not only women but, male colleagues also in their workplaces environment.

#### 4.2.1.1.4 Children Factors

Most of the respondent stated that their children was the main in their pursuing their career. Children also play an important role as drivers of success for working women. The results of this study show the characteristics of children which is good and independent as in table 4.3 below. They educate each other and foster independence in their children from an early age. The respondents also stated that they and their partners educate them to be independent, including being good at managing their own needs such as washing used dishes and cups, cleaning school clothes and shoes, tidying their own bedrooms and ironing clothes, tidying the house, taking care of siblings and so on. In addition, children can also help clean the house according to their age and ability. Household tasks done together will facilitate and lighten the burden of working women.

Table 4.3: The Characteristics and Role of Children towards Working Women

| No. | Characteristics and roles of children  |
|-----|----------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Independent                            |
| 2.  | Helping mother during outside tasks    |
| 3.  | Help clean the house                   |
| 4.  | Help take care of the younger siblings |
| 5.  | Motivational support                   |

#### 4.2.1.1.4.1 Grown up independency children / helping hands

All of the respondents of the current study were married and had at least one grownup son or daughter. Based through the stories by the respondent they expressed on about their ways in educating their children to be independent person by helping them in taking care of their younger siblings, helped in doing housechores when respondents were away from home. The views expressed are stated below:

Respondent 1:

*Even though my son is at home, I do everything but he can be independent, they are independent. Because I give him the opportunity to do whatever he wants, to join the scouts, what do I give him? There he can be independent. So, I have no problem if I want to leave them if I go to external courses.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*We always give advice and encouragement for them to be more independent in managing their own needs, so that they are not clumsy and able to manage themselves when I am not at home.*

*My eldest son, a boy, is the one who helps me a lot in lightening the housework and taking care of my younger siblings, especially when I have to leave people behind because I am involved in school programs and courses. My son is really independent, happy and I don't worry if I needs to go to any courses, whether near or far.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*So now that my children have grown up, I have seen that my children are all independent, my eldest daughter is like the mother at home, she is the one who cooks, cleans the house, take care of the younger siblings. It's the same as my child of number two is good at tidying everything, what room does she tidy all by herself. And the youngest in 4th grade is still being educated to be independent like his older brother and sister. But it was his father who taught them to be independent. Indeed, my son is independent. They are good at managing their own school clothes since they in 4th grade. You take care of yourself. Alhamdulillah, that's all his father's upbringing, his upbringing. (smile)*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*When the children grow up, we teach them to be independent in making our affairs easier, while I pray a lot to God that God will protect the children at home because we left them alone. Children really understand that parents have to take care of themselves, so I'm here to do the important homework. I'll prepare the food for them. They know that the house is messy, when I come back to the house, I see that they have arranged all tidy house and manage the school stuff by themselves. When I come back, my kids are already sleeping,,, they are grown up and tell mom that she is tired when she massages her feet and washes all the stilts, my children are good at it, clear. As you all know, mothers are tired, right... When the children are grown up, I leave them at home. They really independent, their mother (me) works 7 hours a day and the father is the same, of course the shift is in the morning, in the evening.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*It means that we have to build a routine from a young age. If we don't build a routine for our children, later we will have headaches, later we will have a hard time managing our time. So, when he started school, I started to create and organize a routine for him, we educate him little by little. We can make it based on his age, we have arranged it. Because I'm like my 8-year-old son, I'm no longer dizzy to think, what's on his schedule tomorrow, everything's not there. Indeed, he knows it himself, he goes back to school with his clothes in his body even though he is 8 years old, even if he doesn't, he puts his clothes in the basket, he goes to take a shower, he will take out his books and we don't have to make a fuss anymore.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.1.1.4.2 Children as a motivation in pursue career advancement**

Furthermore, respondents claimed that their children are one of the boosters and motivators for a mother to succeed in both her work and her household. Moreover, working women want to provide a better education for their children. The interview statement is as follows.

Respondent 1:

*I'd want to point out that we are role models for youngsters. When I have any type of event, what he really likes is that these children will support me by saying things like "it's okay mom if it's like this....and hopefully things will be easier for mom today" he is supporting, so we are also sort of enthusiastic to make them the best and better than us...*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*Of course. Children are one of my strengths in pursuing this career. I want to give them the best. There was also a time when I told people to pray because at that time I had to manage a program involving schools and external courses. Yes, what they said, our children can calm our souls and minds as a mother.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*Um, our original intention, whatever it is, is for our family, right. Indirectly, we all want to raise our children, so we believe that what we do is indeed the intention of God, but it is all about managing the trust that God has given us, meaning our children and family.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*Of course, these children are among my reinforcements. I believe that mothers out there have the same view. Sometimes when you come home from work, when you look at this child's face, you can find peace in your soul, all the tiredness from work will take away a little of our burden.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*In fact, these children are also one of the reasons for us to continue our careers. Of course they are also among the boosters for mothers out there.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

In this study it was clear that children are one of women's factors towards their career progression. All of the respondents highly believe that children can be a strengthening factor for women in continuing their careers progression.

#### **4.2.2 Barriers on Women Career Advancement**

The second research question aimed to get insights into the barriers faced by women career advancement based on their lived experiences. Based on the thematic analysis, the main theme that emerged encompass gender discrimination and glass ceiling, work life conflict, childcare support centre, family consideration, excessive work and exhaustion, organization structure, culture and practice and also personal factors.

##### **4.2.2.1 Gender Discrimination**

Majority of the respondents deny the presence of gender discrimination and inequality in access to the implementation of women's welfare, in the division of duties and responsibilities, or in employment, training opportunities and so on. If equal access is provided for women, why is it that women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making and in achieving a top positions? However, there are differences in views from the participants in this study, and this may be due to the normative acceptance style of some working women.

#### 4.2.2.1.1 Division of duties and responsibilities at work

The author included a question on the perception and opinion of the respondents towards the division of duties and responsibilities at work to Respondent 1. Respondent 1 replied that the sentiments about discrimination did not arise if we not have any cooperation at all between workers. She believes by said that this kind of discrimination did not existed in their workplace. All the division of duties and responsibilities at work among teachers was divided equally.

Respondent 1:

*It's normal to feel this way; it's true that this sentiment doesn't arise very often, but it will when we work on our own; there's no group, right? It's as if we're all sitting in one building, people say in one department, and if we don't work together, it'll be like a plague, but if we all work together, both men and women, they don't have that thing, and the sentiment of belittling the strength of women who are women like this and not like this won't arise. But I'm not sure if it's available. If I am in my current position, there is no such thing as a dismissive attitude towards women.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Therefore, as a Headmaster of the school, Respondent 1 mentioned as she become an employers she does not discriminate against her teachers. All teachers are given equal duties in this school, both men and women. She stated that when she had decided to specifically choose female teachers than a male teachers for managing certain task, it is not she bias but because she found and believes that women have a variety of characteristic like a conscientious person to do any task than men teacher, at that time in their organization they had only 11 male teachers, and 41 were female teachers. She emphasized by saying that the scope of work for male and female teachers is given according to their suitability in the school, like football sport and so on. Also, it is the same when she is in a meeting from his experience until she became a head teacher, she

said she always listens to the views or issues raised by her teachers and tries to consider them afterwards. Respondent 1 explained,

Respondent 1:

*In this school there are only 11 male and 41 female teachers. So, there is no sentiment because women can do whatever they are entrusted with according to their needs. It means it's okay because men with 11 people if we want to expect them all at once for emm can't afford it either, because they're only 11 people.*

*Like training students to play sports on the field, that's usually a man's job because it's a male student, but if it's a girl, train a girl student. It's the same, so there is no sentiment that women can't do this. No, no. Because in this school organization, he is equal, so that sentiment does not arise. But if it's in other departments, I don't know, but in this school organization, when there are many girls, he can do it too. So, there is no sentiment that women cannot have a career, because sometimes women are better. I'm sorry if I said, this woman is better because this woman is alert to the current situation, then this woman also cares more haaa... so this man is like if he is in school, in his education if this man he is normal like at home, father She's just looking for money, right, but to see her children learn, that's what mothers do, so it's the same at school, right? The man's way is different, different, but he doesn't care like a female teacher. So, there is no sentiment, I want to say that women can't do this, um, this woman can just do it.*

*It's the same at meetings, because we have to accept and listen to whatever the teacher advises and presents. We, as administrators, must be informed; we may not execute it immediately, but we must study and listen to what is recommended. If the problem is reasonable, we try to think about and develop a solution that is appropriate and corresponds with the teacher's wishes. Because this teacher is occasionally like that. But first, we take what is recommended, conduct a meeting to discuss it, and then give input on whether or not we want to implement that item, haa...so that all of the teachers are satisfied, and we also want the teachers to be comfortable in their jobs.*

*The crucial thing to remember is that we want to buy the teacher's heart, so we must take care of it. We don't have to evaluate what's best for everyone; we just have to do what he says. My administrators were all okay prior to this, and as I stated, they will listen to all proposals or changes offered by these instructors.*

For Respondent 2 offered a different response. She replied that she had an experienced where her employers give her burden in performing her duties. Respondent 2 found that the unequal division of duties occurred because the employer preferred young teachers over veteran teachers in her school. Respondent 2 emphasized the difficulty she sometimes has in handling both tasks efficiently and successfully, as well as feeling guilty when her career requires more of her time. Respondent 2 commented that,

Respondent 2:

*There was a time when I was hold KP's position, but the administrator also appointed me to be a year 6 teacher, despite the fact that the activities of this religious committee are greater than the activities of other committees, so the task as KP is very busy, with many things that need to be managed. I become stressed out when I have two tasks that must be completed at the same time, because both activities require commitment throughout the year. The worst part for me is that it's not fair, especially because there are so many other teachers.*

*And, from my perspective, why did the headmaster want to put me in the position of a 6th year class teacher, and what I can see is that the duties and obligations are given to young instructor's more than senior teachers, which may be why my factor was chosen. This burdens me, you know, and it affects my health because I think too much, and sometimes this tedious work makes me unhappy.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3 views that the division of duties and responsibilities at work is divided equally between men and women. Respondent 3 comments that either in any department, there are more women worker than men. She added this promotion is due to their roles' and characteristic on certain job, as the example mentioned by Respondent 3, if this job is suitable for men then put them for this job. She also expressed that in her organization there are more women worker than a men. That's not because they practicing a bias or discrimination cultural to men but she emphasized that there are more women who apply for jobs in her organization than men. So, that's why more women working here.

Respondent 3:

*So far, Alhamdulillah, it hasn't happened close to here. Men and women are treated equally. Everyone is given equal opportunity and space. So, from a leadership standpoint, it's as if we look at the university administration itself, librarians are also women, advisors are also women, and it's alright if we see gender discrimination happening.*

*In terms of assigning tasks, there is none. Maybe from the point of view of the scope of work, yes, these employees need to be arranged according to the strengths and shortages of staff, the placements that are placed according to what I said, my scheme can be placed anywhere, so from that point of view, the management will see if this place is suitable for work- men's work, put men in it, if it's like this example, HR manages human management, administrative matters of staff service records, these male staff can count on the fingers and many women. Because there are many works that have to be meticulous and detailed, so the work is for women because she is detailed and meticulous, right? What man can sit still for a moment, then creep everywhere, right? Not all, there are. If we see there are male officers but he follows the character of the person himself. The character of that person is the type that likes to do detailed work, haa, but usually men are not details. From the point of setting tasks and placement and scope of tasks.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

For Respondent 4, she different from any respondent above. Interestingly, Respondent 4 have a contradictory views relating to the discrimination where she had experienced in the old department and also in the new department where they are currently working. Respondent 4 described how the difficult times whenever she at the old department which is in a situation where her senior worker are treated unfairly solely due to their new staff there. Since senior worker view a new staff as fully a hard learner in their workplace so, they will be their targeted because of this generalization. They are perceived as less committed and competent at their jobs compared to the other workers. As the author can view here, their senior worker put a gap between their junior level or new staff and put a negative impression or can called it put a “stigmatizing” on them as they are new in the environment. It takes a few months to deal with this kind of situation. Until Respondent 4 decided to try to move to another department. This is explained through her experienced,

*yeah, those of us who don't know what to do with the inccharge, all of this really sucks, I get seniors who are not okay and cry and always have to come back late because I have to adapt to the place, because I just transferred, right. Then in terms of holidays, it's really difficult for newcomers, this time in 2012 I'm always the ones who have to give in. After all, at that time I were pregnant, people like everything had to be rushed to the medical ward, the ward was really busy, we couldn't be late, if we were late we would be back late, he had to be quick, it was like we were stressed because at that time I were pregnant again, I have to do more work, my friends are all seniors and not juniors. All our old people are the new ones, so we're a little slow to do that shit. The one that people are holding is really a slow new boy.*

*At that time, seniors are all people who take a long time. There is a little criticism. So, from that I was determined to study fast, that was in those days but now the sisters are all retired. The new sister is different because people are more open minded.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

On top of that, in the new environment of workplaces which she currently working right now, she positively happy with their surrounding. Respondent 4 described any kind of discrimination either in division of duties and responsibilities, medical or maternity leave and also no discrimination between races Chinese, Indian they are all divided equally by the employer regardless of whether it is male or female. Division of work scope is also given according to the suitability of place, such as stores, the heavy part of the hemodialysis machine is given to men

Respondent 4:

*So, there is no gender discrimination. Men and women work the same way. It means the same, it's not like him more because he's a man. It's like going to a course, everything is the same without discrimination issues. So far near the hospital, there is no more discrimination here. Our personal in charge will share equally. It's like we have U32 and U29, which means that the U32 is a bit of a bummer, he won't want to do the work of U29. Sometimes we help each other when we need help. It's like working at a store, men will do it, not women, right? Another male nurse staff here, there aren't many, only 2 people near my section, hemodialysis. In terms of race, there is no discrimination. It's like there is an Indian staff here, so if he wants to take a holiday, we give him a week off, which means we understand each other, when it's time for us to take a holiday, he takes it on-call.*

Respondent 5 mentioned that as long as she worked in the government sector, there was no longer any form of discrimination experienced by her either in terms of the division of duties and responsibilities or the implementation of welfare towards women. She believes this kind of discrimination still exists in other sectors.

Respondent 5:

*So far, the shared work is suitable for his physique. Suit him to his advantage. And suit his position. It means that there is no discrimination, for example, if the leader wants to hit on a woman, he won't. There is none so far. It means that there is always a rotation of men and women, always there. So far there is no more hearing about it. All are equal. All the same. I never heard it again. I don't know if it's another place.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.2 Glass Ceiling**

Majority of the respondent rejected the presence of glass ceiling concept in their workplace environment. They agreed that women were given equal access to achieve in higher position level same as men.

##### **4.2.2.2.1 Opportunities for advancement and positions in the execution of duties and responsibilities**

According to them, promotions are based on merit and performance, qualification, years of experience on a specific job, as well as their talents and the level of performance that they had produced. Promotions are also subject on the position's availability. Respondent 1 Respondent 5 highly supported this view. The following comments are indicative of the views expressed by the respondents:

Respondent 1:

*Yes, it's even determined. The reason is that anyone can be promoted. Because if you want to hold a position, we will give opportunities to teachers who are interested and qualified, we will give opportunities regardless of whether they are male or female. To apply for the position of head teacher, he is considered qualified because he passed the exam, he passed the intelligence test, he is the one who is qualified. Isn't he the one who deserves it?*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*In terms of promotion, it's equal where we have to join a course like to become a head teacher, right, there is no discrimination all based on the qualifications of each, the opportunity to hold a position like I said earlier, she has no problem, but the administrator can't be her either to make a choice like that, you have to look at the teacher's situation to hold a position.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*I do hold the scope of managing the promotion and performance section with this staff kpi, so it's really okay. It's like there is a portion that says oh we want a man not like that, it's not true. Everything will be evaluated equally, follow the ranking and follow the set criteria.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*If it's like getting promoted, like us, she's on a time-based basis, like when she's 13 years old, she'll go up that grade, or anyone who wants to get promoted, please continue studying, If you want to take an examination for the position, I means to upgrade ypur level position of sister like U32 there is no obstacles.Go ahead.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*From the point of view of promotion, it is the same. If nature is academic, promotion is not seen by gender. It is seen from the we called it KPI-KPI or promotion conditions. If the person has met the conditions for promotion, it doesn't matter if he is a man or indeed he has the right to be promoted or he has the right to ask to be promoted if his academic nature is like that.*

(Respondent 5, 35 University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.3 Work Life Conflict**

The majority of participants responded that they believed the main problem they faced was a work-life balance. Most of the respondent careers consisting of teachers, lecturers, nurses and administrative officers necessitate a significant amount of time committed to work that includes lecturing, teaching and dealing with various people-related issues. This position necessitates a significant amount of time spent on work-related activities, which working mothers find challenging due to family obligations. They generally found it difficult to cope with the stress of work commitments as well as the demands of family responsibilities.

#### 4.2.2.3.1 Family role

According to all the respondent personal experience, each woman has described the intersection between her family and work obligations. The following comments are indicative of the view and expressed by the respondents:

Based on Respondent 1 has provided examples of the conflict between her role in the family and work. She comments, before she assumed the position of head teacher, she spent a lot of time at home. But after holding a higher position, the time spent at home is less than at school.

Respondent 1:

*Because I spent the day at school. I got to work until 5 pm, right, I'm tired when I come back. But as a housewife, I also have to cook and take care of the household, so in those few hours I have to take care of the best*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 1 added she has described her principal life where she dedicates her entire time and mind to her work during the work time, she ignoring all of family issues whenever at work, then after work continuing think about family problems.

Respondent 1:

*'Of course, no one has a life free of problems and worries, but, all praise be to Allah (God), when I come to work, I escape from any problems outside of work. I am fully focused on my work as soon as I enter my office. (Laugh)*

Respondent 2 stated that her family responsibilities and household management fell heavily on her. But when duties as a mother and a career women at the same time, she will give a higher priority for her family than work. Respondent 2 views that the most important role as a mother is to take care of her family. Respondent 2 views that the most important role of a women is to take care of her family. She stated,

Respondent 2:

*There is no denying it, there is a lot of school work and I will bring it back to be completed at home. But for me family still comes first. After taking care of the family and doing the housework, I will continue with the school work that I brought back. As a working woman and at the same time a mother, we should take into account that this role should not affect our family life negatively, to our husbands and also in raising children.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3, believes that it is not easy to balance between family duties and work. Respondent 3 has given priority to the work rather than family and she admitted that when their children were younger, she had less time spent with their children due to the demand of their work but she managed her responsibilities by outsourcing their domestic work to her husband. She said her husband help with most of her hosehold work and also their children. When she reminiscing to past experience when duties and career women overlapped, and not good at balancing due to too much focus on office work. She justified this by saying,

Respondent 3:

*First of all, if I want to say that the work is not finished, I will bring it home. I always bring it home. That experience teaches us that we are not good at balancing career and family. That's the experience that taught me, like I used to live with work, work, work... haa like that so luckily the child is the husband who takes care of everything independently.*

*That's what I said before, I'm really not good at balancing holiday events, I rarely take them, it's like I can't. It's true that I used to get my son an award, why did he, his father always went, I didn't go because of work work work.... So since my child has grown up, when I think back, I feel like I've missed things like that.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Maintaining both family and career was the most difficult task for responders during their career establishment. As for Respondent 4, she agreed that she had nearly lost their minds trying to deal with the circumstance. As Respondent 4 who worked in the Ministry of Health, she mentioned that since recently when she had a baby, she expressed that sometimes she had a fight with her husband because of her work that came home late, especially when there was OT and so on, she had to come in to work late or sometimes leave work due to her commitment at home. This impacted her effectiveness at work because a mother in her situation would find it difficult to meet the required number of working hours. This revealed that when a woman became a mother, her job life was impacted.

Respondent 4:

*It's a little bit of a struggle. In the early days, my husband did not understand my work a bit, we quarreled a lot. When you have a child, the first time it's really difficult, because they have a variety of things. Of course, if they is sick, we will also have to take*

*leave, if possible, I would like to go back to the time when the children were young because there is a lot to think about in terms of the babysitter, having to send them. Another one of my jobs now is that I take it in the evening from 1 pm to 8 pm, so that morning I will take care of the children, in the afternoon my husband will take care of them. When in the medical ward, a lot of people have to return late, that's why I'm happy working at hemodialysis ward. There is also time for children. The hem ward is better than the med ward.*

Respondent 5 also believes it is quite hard in balancing her role as a mother and career women. She stated that she has a flexible work as a lecturer and it is quite hard when at home she need still need to access their work eventhough in weekend sometimes. But she try as much as she can in be a good managing person in balancing both. Respondent 5 noted that time management is crucial in our life. The respondent also stated that she frequently talks with her spouse about any expectations that cause his routine to alter, such as when a new semester starts. It is also critical to plan with your partner, especially in everyday life. She said,

Respondent 5:

*The actual division of time if we want to talk about this balance, actually nothing can be balanced. Nothing can be balanced, really. The important thing is that we give a job or we give to that person or what we do is his right. Okay, example if we sit at work, so we give the right. It means when we are at work, so we focus on work. And when we are at home, so the right is the right that we need to give to family members. But I don't deny, there is indeed eating during holidays. Sometimes even at night I still zoom with master students, PhD students. Sometimes you have to. Due to the time constraints of the normal day, there is no such thing. So sometimes I have to take a little even if not completely. But sometimes I also take a Sunday and an evening to supervise students.*

*But I rarely do, since I finished my PhD, since I started working, I rarely use the time at home to work. Unless the work is very demanding. It means that his deadline is also*

close. So usually I will take some time. But that was after I informed my husband. This means for example, okay this weekend usually my husband and I are always meeting, which means there will be a discussion every day or every week. Usually my husband and I will discuss what our activities are like this week so there are no demands that cause us to have to out or change. A little from the point of view, if it's like after the morning, maybe who wants to send the child, who wants to take the child. So those things actually need to be explained, discussed. One more thing, from a planning point of view. Meaning, before every day we need to have a plan for the next day. Whether it is from a family or career point of view, there must be a plan. This means that schedules, travel schedules, time management, prioritizing work are very important.

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.3.2 Extended work hours**

This study revealed that other than family role, all of the respondent stated that in most of days they had to work extended work hours in order to accomplish their work task and they also had to work during weekends. This automatically affects the lack of time with their children. They also perform other tasks during non working hours, such as marking papers, checking the data and so on. These tasks, indirectly effects to their usual tasks and household commitments, increase their stress and impact their performance.

Respondent 1:

*As long as I was a head teacher, holding the position of head teacher at the school, I had to spend time for the sake of the school. And little time at home,*

*I have to sometimes I don't have time to finish, for example right now I have another course so I have to bring it back to continue at home. There are weekends too. Indeed,*

*I will return to work near home and if there is a little free time I will do it. Because even on the weekend, there are a lot of housework that is delayed on this weekday. But, besides that, I have to take time apart if there is unfinished work that I bring back home.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*I usually finish the work that I bring with me late at night, and at the weekend I also continue to do school work, mark exam papers, make program papers, manage 6<sup>th</sup> year data and so on.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*It's not often, but there are also those times where I have to come back late but not always, sometimes there are meetings that come back late, some go until dusk, and there are also meetings that are moved to the other side of the night. But here we manage the staff who work until the evening unless there is a meeting. Sometimes if it involves management that doesn't have time, it's early in the morning, so he has a plan for the night, that's there.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*If I stay back when it's time to call, it's until the case is over...but not always. 1-8 p.m., why don't you bring it back, I'm afraid it'll be a mess, if you do it tomorrow, it's important to be on time before the date, like where I have a blood label, so before the*

*patient takes blood, we have to prepare a form like that, we know what we're doing before withdrawing the due dates. At my place, the patient washes for 4 hours and then we can relax to do other things like blood labeling haa, do what is right.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*But I don't deny, there is indeed eating during holidays. Sometimes even at night I still zoom with master students, PhD students. Sometimes you have to. Due to the time constraints of the normal day, there is no such thing. So sometimes I have to take a little even if not completely. But sometimes I also take a Sunday and an evening to supervise my students. After that, after that, after the isyak, after the children sleep, what is all that? If I still have energy, I will look and read the student's thesis at that time. Usually I will focus on that night to continue reading the thesis, writing articles and so on, right? Write a little. That's all. But if there is a time where I have to chase the deadline for the gerund proposal, I really have to stay up a bit to catch up with that time for that.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.4 Child-care Support Centre**

This was a common subject amongst many respondent. Child-care support in the sort of on-site daycare was strongly recommended as a suitable way to assist working mothers with their main difficulty is work/family conflict. All of the respondent believes and totally agreed that childcare support centre is one of their barriers in career advancement. Based through their live experienced, the author can described is each of the commented by all the respondent they has its own selection method in choosing either registered or domestic childcare center. The views expressed are stated below:

#### 4.2.2.4.1 Assist in smoothing work matters

Majority of the respondent highly agreed that childcare support centre such as kindergartens, nurseries, registered daycare centers and domestic daycare centers very helpful in launching their affairs especially when there are important things such as meetings, courses and programs that involve them returning home late. Some of the views expressed by the participants are as follows:

Respondent 1:

*When my children were little, I put them near the nursery so, erm, the nursery is really a lot, erm help me because at that time we erm work as teachers only until 2pm, then I go back to school to pick them up. But if I have a meeting or have to go somewhere, I have to extend it until 4-5, right, so he charges a little more than the normal price because I take it late, right? Because I'm a teacher, he takes me until I get back to work at 2 o'clock, so the monthly payment is different, right? But he helped me a lot in this work.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*For me, the role of the childcare center is very important and very helpful in the smoothness of my career management. Because it can help me in taking care of the children when I have a meeting or program on the weekend. If there is no place to take care of the children, I am also stressed about work and children again.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*If not, I will not be calm to put my child here. Imagine if there is no childcare support center, it doesn't matter whether it's nursery or kindergarten, how can I work calmly thinking about the child? Yes, it's a challenge, I've been through where the school van was at that time, I did take care of the children using the school van to drop them off at the babysitter's place, I didn't send them to school and go back, I've been through all that. Until there is no van, the kindergarten will be closed. If the transport van is not there, it will have messed up our business. I have experienced a van where the driver is sick, so the van is not available, it is true that every afternoon I come back in the evening to take care of the children and then return the value, it is stressful to go back and forth. So the role of the childcare support center is not limited to other matters, transportation is also very important. If I don't have any activities, I will be interrupted.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*This childcare center and kindergarten is really very important for working mothers, if there is no such place, it will be a problem if we have to work again and take care of the children again.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*Yes, it is very important. So it's like before I came to work here, I had already planned everything. Because when a woman works, she wants to work calmly, with a calm heart. So, the childcare center really helped a lot in terms of managing my children when I was working.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.4.2 Care center selection**

Other than that, the selection of a registered care center or a domestic nanny is also very important to choose before sending them there. All of the respondents also believes working mothers problems are findings appropriate child-care for children while their work. They said children also one of the factors which determines whether women can work or not because of the problems in leaving and in choosing a suitable child care for their children. Based on the experiences presented by the respondents, they have different views on the selection of childcare places, whether it is paid childcare or domestic childcare centers. Here, the following comments are indicative of views experienced by the respondents:

Respondent 1:

*I first started when my son was still small, I don't think I want to stay at the nursery anymore, because this nursery is mixed with a lot of boys, those who are not the same age, some are 2-3 years old and some are 4-5 years old, right? and my son was still small at that time, about 4-5 months like that, so I don't feel confident about leaving him at the nursery so I took a babysitter at home. Until my son is 10 months old, he can*

*crawl or walk, so at that time I stayed at the nursery. Haha, when he was still little, I was worried because in the nursery he mixed with the big boys, I was afraid of being overlooked, so I left him with the babysitter first, near the house. Where I am looking for neighbors near my house to babysit my child, until he is 10 months old I put him in the nursery. I also choose a nursery that is close to where I work, because it's easy for me to see and monitor. I think the fence from my school is close to my son's nursery.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*In the beginning, it was very difficult to find a babysitter or nursery close to where my husband and I work. But after discussing with my husband, we agreed to send them either to our closest relatives or to a registered kindergarten nearby, close to where we live. We also agreed to jointly manage the children in terms of sending them to school or kindergarten.*

*In terms of my experience, for the selection of this care center for the baby, I am more confident to send it to a close relative to take care of it because at such an age it needs more attention than in a care center which has many children. And Alhamdulillah, my brother is not a full-time housewife, so it's easy for me to ask him to take care of my child. For my child who is 5 or 6 years old, I am more inclined to send him to a registered kindergarten, because when he is registered, his safety and care are guaranteed.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*My experience is that I send them to a kindergarten or a registered babysitter, not to a regular babysitter that people take care of. Because yes, we don't know that person and it's hard to find them, but I've sent them to a babysitter, I have experience sending them to a babysitter that people take care of, but my child can't let her cry, she's not comfortable, I've been through that and I sent my child I am near the kindergarten that is registered. Okay, what are the pros and cons of this registered daycare because it is okay, what we pay them is what they takes care of, so if they has a problem, they has to be responsible for taking care of the leave, but if the nanny is because she is herself, the individual likes her, will said, why do you want to go on vacation? That's her problem sometimes, right? They doesn't follow our time. If it's like the daycare, it goes like if there's a holiday, it's off, if it's a day they'll goes until 5-6 o'clock, right? It's just that sometimes there is existed a problem with the daycare, sometimes they can't be flexible if we come back late, the will charged the OT. Babysitter, can't we deal anymore?*

*But if I really have to look for a nanny. When I had a baby, I often took hard time off. Another thing is that we have to choose a well-established kindergarten @ nursery school, not the one that grows like a mushroom, it's even better if the members know us, we have testimonials from friends, we have to survey first. My experience is that after maternity leave, when I want to go back to work, I will go for a test, send the child first to see if the child is suitable. And of course the next election I will look for one that is close to my house because I don't want any interruption in my work.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*When the children are grown up, I leave them at home. It's not that we don't want to send a babysitter, but the children are getting older, and there are many babysitters at the babysitting place near the house. It's not easy to find a place to wash, one more thing for me, if possible I want to find one close to my workplace, it's easy if there's an emergency, we're happy to take them.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

What a different between all of the respondent is, for Respondents 3 and Respondent 4, they used a paid and a special transportation to manage all her children's trips to school and also her child's daycare. They also stated that transit is very vital and assists them in their work because they do not have to worry about picking up their children from school.

Respondent 5:

*I'm like this, if my child is small, I prefer a babysitter. I prefer a babysitter, not a babysitter. I don't mean a babysitter, it means a babysitter at home. I like the home environment because my kids's still small. But, once my child is 3 years old, I'll start moving him to the kindergarten. Another selection of your task or the selection of a nanny I care a little bit. Usually before I look for a nanny, I usually go to meet her, go to her house, get to know her first, get to know family members and so on. Before I decide to send. I don't have any kind of messages, just okay, okay deal. Do not have this and this. I'm not like other people. I will investigate first, ask first. I will check the including it is they taking care of many kids, smooking places and so on. So, when I see,*

*then I will go to his house to see what the home environment is like and so on, I will decide, after that.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.4.3 High cost**

Based on interviews with all respondents, a Respondent 4 also highlight nowadays, finding a babysitter is quite tough, and the fees are extremely high. As a result, she stated that she could not afford to send all of her children since it was too expensive and beyond her and her husband's resources. Respondent 4 expressed her views on this:

Respondent 4:

*It's not easy to find a place to wash, and the price is too expensive. We have 3 children, so it's 400 each, so I'm beyond my means, so I teach them to be independent.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

#### **4.2.2.5 Family Consideration**

Family consideration in this context refer to support in term of help with childcare, moral motives, encouragements, advice and empowerment. Family considerations is a crucial aspect that enables women to participate in the public arena, enter the labour sector, accept promotions, and advance in their careers. Majority of the respondents rejected of the findings which state family consideration is one of the barrier in their career advancements. In fact, all respondents agreed in stated that their

families is one who have always been supportive and approving of their job choices, including their advancement, and none stated otherwise. All of the respondents of this study were also married and had children. All of them stated that, they received a familial support regarding taking care of their children in the way how their career faced greater difficulties in raising up their children.

As can be seen in this findings, all of career women have obtained the assistance they require in childcare and/or emotional support from their parents in order to advance in their careers, they also obtained help in children care from their parents and her mother-in-law and also they have obtained the help in children care, household activities and the emotional support to their career advancement from their husbands.

#### **4.2.2.5.1 Family support**

Most of the respondents expressed how they relies on the support of her mother and husband, her sibling in taking care of her children when she is at work or need to attend any courses, or programs on weekend. Respondents' parents as well as parent-in-laws alos helped them in babysitting issues when they were away from home for work purpose. As they work in public sectors as well as being titled in high profession, it was quite tough in choosing between works and having a family. By the assistance of their family, they were able to sustain both and even succeed in a lot of occasions.

Respondents 1 until Respondents 5 expressed gratitude to their families and husbands for their impact and contribution to their career advancement and balancing their roles. This family support was critical to their decision to accept job advancements because they recognised that moving up the career ladder meant that their work would demand more of their time. Family support, as well as outsourcing domestic duties, is another factor of their growth and work-life balance. The following comments are indicative of the view and expressed by the respondents.

Respondent 1:

*So, I went to a course a week for how many months, my husband takes care of the house. During the month of fasting, my son happens to be at home, he just sits at home with his son during the holidays. Even my children have understood since I left them since they were little. I still remember I went to a course in Perak when my son was one year old, I lived near my mother's house once, my husband took care of me and people stayed near my mother's house. Also, my mother is a housewife. Because the child is still small, it is difficult to take care of it on your own. Alhamdulillah, my family is all okay, they are very understanding with my work, sometimes I'm busy and I have to come to all the courses, right? Alhamdulillah people are very understanding.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*Alhamdulillah, so far my family is very understanding of my work. Although I had to work on weekends. My husband takes care of all the children at home. Sometimes I also send them to my mother's house. People really like to take care of their grandchildren, there is no problem. My sister also has no problem if I want to send my children there.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*Alhamdulillah. But it has happened before where both my husband and I have a claim, he has to be outstationed, but I have family who stay here nearby. So, it's my mother and father who help take care of them or my sister-in-law because it's easy for her to ask for help, after all, she doesn't have children, so our child is like her child. Either way, if my parents can't, I can ask my sister-in-law to take care of me. I feel lucky and*

*grateful that I don't have any problems when it comes to the affairs of these children. If there is a sudden work matter, I can arrange it again, because everything is available Alhamdulillah.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4 believes that her husband has impeded her work advancement in some way. She sees that work is not necessary thing for a women and family is more important than work. As Respondent 4 work at as a nurse so it became a routine to come home from work late due to OT, needing to send cases and so on. Her husband does not like her work that often comes home late. But after giving a good explanation about her work, and then her husband slowly accept and understand the wishes of his wife who is busy and always comes home late. She added that understanding in the household is important withing our partner, she said. However, she really thanked to her husband and her parents, siblings and also parent-in-law for the influence and contributing factor to her career advancement and as well as balancing her roles. She views her experience by response,

Respondent 4:

*It's a bit of a struggle, but I have family and in-laws who help a lot. In the beginning, my husband didn't understand a little bit about my work, there were a lot of arguments, so after a long time, I explained that I was a busy nurse, and then he understood. Can you please take care of it.... It's the same when there's a course for what, my mother and mother-in-law, God bless you, who help a lot in taking care of these children*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5 said that she and her husband were away from home for work purpose. She said that if she needs to attend a course outside, her husband will take care of the management of their family and children. In addition, the closest nanny is also an option for her to take care of their children if her and her spouse were away from home.

Respondent 5:

*If you want to ask me to involve the family, there is no reason for me to sit far away with the family present. I am with my husband. So if it's just one course, this course is something we can't run away from. I mean us, but so far I can adjust again. There is a half course that... can bring children, the heart. Okay, sometimes when the course he is organized by his heart department, usually he is organized by his cardiac faculty. Usually he has considerations to bring children. Can bring family members. Okay. But there are also courses that we cannot run. I mean, we are, but I'm a course near PD. Take it close. Yes. Every day I sit at PD. The child, the child's husband takes care of. . If it's like a babysitter, there are babysitters. That's normal, my babysitters are the kind that are easy and easy to take care of.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.5.2 Considerations from children**

Besides, all the career women expressed how the acceptance and understanding of their children about their work. They thanked and grateful for having a good child where they helped their mother whenever their mother are busy with work or they were stay away from home for work purpose. The majority of the respondents are married and they had at least one grownup son or daughter, and the youngsters assisted their mothers by taking care for their younger siblings when their mother were away from home. All of the respondents agreed that their children were big support for them and shared responsibilities of the household in their absence.

Respondents 1:

*Alhamdulillah, my children have already understood my duties.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*Yes, Alhamdulillah my son also understands. They understand my work well and I have already explained to them that I will be busy with school activities, sometimes there are programs on weekends, right? If I'm tired after school to cook, my husband is quite understanding, so we just buy food or eat out. But I still prioritize time with my family even when I'm busy, on weekends I'll spend time with my family taking them for walks and so on.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*Alhamdulillah, my children have understood, because I have told them that my work involves human resource matters. The one I told you that I brought with me is all good work, from there my children can see and understand my duties from a young age, they have seen how busy her mother is, she already understands. Even though I'm busy, but this person will ask for anything from me even though I'm busier than his father. People already understand that mom is back at home from work, right, you have to make sure that the sink is clear, because if not she will get scolded \*laughs. Like my eldest son, he really helps a lot, like mom, he is at home, he is smart cook, clean the house, thank goodness there are no problems, even my son-in-law is very petrified when I'm not there to take care of the other siblings*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*Children really understand that parents have to take care of themselves, so I'm here to do the important homework. I'll prepare rice for you. They're know that the house is messy, when I come back to the house, I see that they have arranged the school, when I come back too, they are already sleeping,,, they are grown up and tell mom that she is tired when she massages her feet and washes all the stilts, they are good at it, clear all as you know mom is tired right....*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*All this time, my children understand that his mom is a lecturer. He also found out that sometimes there are people who come home late and can't pick people up, his father has to pick him up, is there an online meeting.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.6 Excessive Work and Exhaustion**

Excessive effort and tiredness were consequences of work-life conflict. All participants expressed themselves being tired, worn down, and had limited or no time to care for their personal well-being. They stated that juggling work and family obligations causes a lot of tension and misunderstanding about their priorities and what needs to be sacrificed.

Respondent 1:

*There is no denying it, once again we hold the position of administrator. It's like when we work a lot, right, it's soo tiring...But sometimes there's a lot of work, we don't do it anymore, it feels like we're burdened when we think and manage. It. I want to teach more, I want to manage teachers again, I want more courses, but so far you have to be good at managing.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*I got two positions as the head of the committee and was assigned to hold the position of a year 6 teacher. For information, these 2 task do require a high commitment throughout the year and at the same time, it causes extreme stress on me and affects my health. I often get sick too, because I have too much work and a lot to think about. The work that I am responsible for makes me depressed, with school work it makes me not in the mood sometimes to do the work.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*It's like being carried away in a dream, thinking that the work is not finished, but I can still think sanely. I just want to say that there are a lot of words because it involves a promotion, check the data that the staff requested for the promotion, all the documents. So all those things, emm, make my work have to be checked again one by one.*

*Another thing is that I have to manage people, I have to entertain all kinds of people, I have to treat all kinds of people here. If they can't get promoted, they'll be angry, but*

*I'll take care of them, whatever. Sometimes I are already stressed with them, then when I want to face my team, I really have to control our emotions.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*Once, I had to cover someone who had an MC, OT was really tired from the morning and then had to cover for other people until the evening. It was stressful, I couldn't stand it, it was late and not on time. Physically tired and mentally tired, it's hard to take time off in the medical ward, now it's easy for the hemo ward.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*For me, that is normal when we are lecturers, so if we are interested in the profession, maybe we will not think that this work is a burden on us. And I don't deny that there is a lot of work and it never ends, when one ends, another comes and I don't know when it will end and his work. So what do we and I have to do, we have to be good at coping with stress because if we don't take care of it, it will affect our health. For me, we should not pursue success so much that we have to sacrifice our family, have to sacrifice our health*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### **4.2.2.7 Organizational Structure, Culture and Practice**

Respondents in this study rejected the notion that in their organization there is no cultural practice where it is necessary to replace the tasks of others outside their work scope regularly, do work outside their work scope and even take over the tasks of

their employer. Respondents stated that these substitute practices do not exist and are not practiced in their organizational structure. The following comments are indicative of the views expressed by the respondents.

Respondent 1:

*No, there is no course that I accepted, I passed with someone else or I had to go to someone else's course.*

*But if you have to replace a teacher who is not present, for example, we usually call it relieved. It doesn't matter the teacher from any subject, we have to relieve the class. It's like now, the BI teacher and MC are sick for a long time, so he's relieved. If we think we are capable of teaching BI, we teach it, otherwise we follow the textbooks and so on so that the class is empty and the study time is not wasted. Relieved is different, but if you want to replace it with a course for that subject, you can't because it is out of jurisdiction.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*Alhamdulillah so far there is nothing like that. Unless there's an emergency right, okay then I have to replace it. It's like she should be in charge of sending students to compete in netball, but because his son is sick, so I'm the one who has to replace her. But it doesn't always happen.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*So far I have not run away from the field, it is still within the scope of my work. The confusion sometimes is that the boss is sometimes too much, right, he makes a mistake when he is close to us and we will say straight away that this person is wrong, haa like that.*

*I was once given the task of saying that the existing scope is already there, right, but this is like an adhoc task, for example, if we want to improve the establishment of a committee, then we have to manage this committee, and this committee involves high-ranking members, lecturers, professors and etc. and they are the outspoken type that we have never worked with but we have to sit together with them. This is my story about my experience which was so challenging because I had to deal with the committee. And in the early days, I was criticized by the chairman of the committee saying he was lazy and he said he couldn't work with me. He said that I did not achieve what he wanted. At that time I felt down because I have never been hit like that. It's as if he said I can't do that kind of work.*

*Haaa, so that has an effect, I'm really down. I feel like I can't do work. I'm so down on myself... It was only the first meeting that I got comments like that. I really cried that time. That's why the scope is under my work, so only I have to do it, I don't want to give it to others. So, that was one of the experiences I faced at that time, but I'm not the type to let go like that, so I continued even though I was criticized, I looked for the cause, what I need to improve. That task is soo challenging. It's like my scope is something that no one has ever made but I got it, I have to think about it. Have to contact other public universities to get input, have to contact the ministry's PSD people. Those are all challenging tasks, things that we don't have to create, things that we have never thought about, we have to think about, I also have to think about making a system. It means a system that doesn't exist but I have to think about what kind, what kind of interface, how to move everything. That's one of the most emotional ones. Criticism is what sometimes makes us surprised and down.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*We have to set up the discharge, usually the clerk's job, the patient files, right, then if you don't have it, we're the ones who have to take care of things like managing the oxygen pump, to feed the patient because you don't have to send the case, we've helped them so far, but it's not always rare... Work culture at the time of the med ward card, it's always normal there. But if you have HD, there are not enough people... it's only the staff who do double work.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*There are also, I mean sometimes there are situations where we do have to top up that person's work, but I don't want to say like the boss is busy telling us to do this person's work. to that level, whereas if we want to take over someone else's work, there will usually be an official letter from the dean, which means there will be a letter saying okay, can the doctor replace this? another job. Like our friend, he has a course or an example like he went to Hajj for example. So we have to take over his duties as a coordinator and so on. Usually there will be an official letter from the dean to instruct us to take over his duties temporarily. But if it's like taking over the employer's tasks, there's no such thing. So far the culture of changing is not here.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

All five respondents expressed their views by saying that replacing other people's work is normal in our work and they also said that they would and had to replace their friend's job if their colleague had an emergency. In addition to that, they also said that it is not easy for someone to replace the other's work of of their colleagues unless they receive instructions and tasks from their employer.

#### 4.2.2.8 Personal Factors

Based on the answers expressed by the respondents, they do not agree that this individual factor is one of the reasons for them to continue their career. In which the average answer from the respondents said that all the shortcomings and weaknesses in themselves are the motivation for them to further strengthen their career to a better level. Weaknesses are not an obstacle for them to work but rather help them to improve all their weaknesses in achieving the desired profession. Here, are the comments expressed by the respondents.

##### 4.2.2.8.1 Determination and Challenge

It was evident from the stories of women in this study that they have strong determination and passion to reach their goals in their work. They claimed that they had to overcome their shortcomings in learning new things, creating work achievements, and facing any difficulties occur in the work. The following comments are indicative of the view and expressed by the respondents:

Respondent 1:

*For reinforcement and so on, we have to learn and always learn, until the end of our lives. As long as we work until the end of our working life. We have to always learn, because the world of education today is not the same as before, the current changes. Now, even with the curriculum, it's different, ESSR and so on, there are revisions and so on, so no matter what, we have to keep learning to strengthen our performance, strengthen our knowledge, so we have to keep learning, that's the only way. Long experience as a guide, and for the future we can't use the old one because it's just experience.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*At the beginning of my career, I faced a situation where I felt insecure to deal with challenging and diverse students' attitudes, some were mischievous, liked to fight and needed to be persuaded and so on. To deal with this kind of situation, because I know that's one of my weaknesses, so I try to find strength by analyzing & finding solutions to solve a problem. In addition to that, as we know, before all the teaching & information was done manually. So, whether I want it or not, I need to learn a lot about all IT skills, especially to be used in my teaching & daily work. It means that I have to adapt myself to the development of current technology.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3:

*Work that we face and challenge again, then we have to face it ourselves, that's what I learned, I will prove that I can do it. That's the experience, the criticism, right? He said my slides weren't beautiful, because my work had never made slides before, just checked the documents. So when the presentation has to be made like a slide, from there I have to criticize, so I learn.*

*I think the experience really taught me to move forward. It also built me to be more confident, our confidence level increased and we can also openly talk to professors of any rank, why do we dare to speak in front, there is indeed a lot of improvement in myself since being involved in these adhoc projects. That experience actually guides us to become a different person and from the environment and experience it also changes us. We as humans can change from one person and from our environment.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

Respondent 4:

*Among other things, we sometimes forget to make an appointment with a patient, to phone a patient, to call an infirmary doctor, and so on. In terms of progress, don't put it off, or ask a friend to remind you, or set a reminder on your phone. In terms of improvement, don't put it off, or ask a friend to remind you, or just set a phone reminder and write it down in the book.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5:

*So if you ask me my weaknesses or my strengths, my weaknesses, I get distracted quickly. I get distracted quickly and I quickly lose focus, not how do I lose focus, it means that if I do that job if I can, I want to do three jobs again. That's what I might say. Maybe people look good but actually things are not good. So in my opinion we have to know what a good attitude is and what a bad attitude is. Quick distraction means it's like doing work, right? So if there's work coming in, I can do it like this as if it's never finished. So how do I overcome him? Usually I will try to to do list. Usually I will have set priority. Set a priority is like, today I have to get this thing done no matter what I want to get this thing done, so normally I will set focus. If I have decided on that day, I want to do that, so I will do less. So when I know the weakness, I will try to put a strategy to reduce the weakness. That's why I know that personal weaknesses and strengths are very important. From an advantage point of view, I work carefully and quickly.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

#### 4.2.2.8.2 Individual Aspiration

Majority of respondents showed high aspiration to seek further progress in their career. Respondent 1 demonstrated high aspiration on their career goals. She told how she was determined to pursue a career from an ordinary teacher to the top level position in their department, as a headmaster. From a young age, she did not stop from wanting to achieve more in achieve her ambition in her career life. She stated that her motivation to work was to educate more successful child of all notion. Respondent 2 also expressed her same aspiration where said the key that motivates her to seek further her progress is when she has successfully produces an excellent students in every field of what they pursue.

Respondent 1:

*My inspiration is that I want to be a successful person as an educator, even if people don't value us, but we ourselves will be satisfied with what we do, that's what is important. We think we want our children to succeed, right, so we do our best. Our inspiration is to see the success of children. We are proud when our students are successful. I met someone who became a doctor, lawyer and so on that inspired me. See the children succeed. Because we feel that we have succeeded so far, right, so we want our students more than us.*

(Respondent 1, 56, Headmaster)

Respondent 2:

*I have been able to see many successes of my students' children who were able to continue their studies and venture into better fields of work. For example, some become teachers, pilots, doctors and so on. They are the ones who make me more inspired to continue my career even more.*

(Respondent 2, 45, Head Teacher of the Religious Committee)

Respondent 3 said that what makes her to in further her career advancement is the main things that she hold is must have interest and desires in that field. Respondent 3 believes that she enjoy her work at HR department. She stated,

Respondent 3:

*I also always apply for all administrative officer positions. That's what I think is the reason for the interest, so when we are interested, we will work hard. If we do work that we are not interested in, we will become weak because we do things that we do not like. That is my inspiration for me to continue my career.*

(Respondent 3, 44, Chief Administrative Officer)

For Respondent 4 expressed her view on what drive and motivates her in enhances her career advancement as a nurse, is as what she replied that her motivation and aspirations was more driven from the support she received from family, good working environment as well as to improve and creating a better life for her family especially her children to live in.

Respondent 4:

*What makes me inspired to continue my career as a nurse is of course the support from my family, my friends as well and what I definitely want to improve and create a better life for his family, especially the children, whether in terms of their studies everyone, I want the best for them.*

(Respondent 4, 36, Dimension Nursing Officer)

Respondent 5 stated that her mother and father were the big inspiration and motivation that pushed her to advance in her profession. Respondent 5 described her father's ambition to pursue a master's degree, but due to family restrictions at the time, she had to put it on hold. So Respondent 5 carried on her father's desires until she successfully completed her PhD level. She replied,

Respondent 5:

*My father can't continue, so we want to buy him something so that he realizes that he can give birth. He can't afford it, but the children can get it, it's okay, that's the way it is. I think that might be one of the influences, the driving force. I want to do that time, I want to do a PhD, I think that is the biggest driving force and the biggest inspiration for me.*

(Respondent 5, 35, University Senior Lecturer)

## **4.3 Discussion**

### **4.3.1 Factors Influencing Women Career Advancement**

The research was constructed with the aim to explore the factors that influencing women career advancement as well as to discover the barriers on they experienced in their career path. As for the barriers, this study looked into two perspectives which is in societal, organizational aspects (situations-centered barriers) and individual factors aspects (person-centred barriers) and from both of this to understand how these two aspects can be a main factors influence women's career advancement.

#### **4.3.1.1 Spouse Factors**

In the context of factors that influence women in their career advancement in relation to the first theme of the study was individual support: spouse, employer, peers and children. Firstly, influence from the spouse factors. The findings found that women working in Malaysia government sectors have showed a great reactions, positivity and believes about their spouse in shaping their career development. The supporting spouses also assisted them in major decision-making process concerning their career. A supportive spouse serves a flexible role in regarding the other partner's job. For example, he accommodates the career expectations of his partner to the utmost of his ability. Moreover, in most of the cases of the current study, respondents stated spouse factor are matter most to them where they not also give supported in managing his wife career but also, helping in managing the household, especially in taking care of the children when her wife were away from home for work purpose. This is supported based on a study done by Hamzah et al., (2014); A'dawiyah Ismail (2011); Rumaya Juhari (2006); & Basri (2009) which states that encouragement from husband is one of the success aspects of a working woman, encompassing the aspect of supporting and developing self-motivation, as well as assisting the wife in carrying out their tasks and roles in the family. Furthermore, the husband helps to manage the household to relieve the wife's burden, supports the wife in terms of increasing self-motivation to continue

the work that constantly tests mental and physical endurance, and creates a harmonious atmosphere in the household. The spousal care is needed to every woman in order to flourish in her work. The role of the spouse has also been considered as a link between work and family reconciliation.

#### **4.3.1.2 Employers Factors**

The findings revealed that work organizational settings within the social and cultural context of the workplace environment had a significantly impacts on women's career advancement. Specifically, the analysis of data showed that employers support, training and the rules of the organization have influenced the career advancement of women in this study. All female respondents agreed that employers support had a major impact on their professional success. The management support they received, particularly at the start of their careers, from their first-line manager and/or upper management in the organization, enabled them to have high work involvement and considerable work achievements. This research has been highlighted by the others researcher through the literature that mention the influence of the supervisor is very important on the commitment of an employee and encouragement from supervisors is one of the important factors influencing employee commitment and may increase their level satisfaction and work performance (Conrad (1985); Hamzah et al., (2014); & Faudziah and Nor Ba'yah (2012).

They have given the women's the opportunity and support to demonstrate and verify their job abilities by assigning them major work responsibilities and projects. They have also assisted them by giving them with the necessary training courses, authority, and facilities for their work, taking care of the welfare of their employees including in terms of physical and mental aspects. This is supported based on a study done by Hamzah et al., (2014) and Hamdan (2009) mentioned, factor that motivates women to work is having an employer who has characteristics such as caring, understanding, giving support, providing a flexible work schedule, showing good examples such as covering the private parts, punctuality at work, maintaining relationships and finally providing facilities such as emergency leave, providing

workplace nurseries or integrated schools, financial assistance and even permission to leave the office. An attitude of consideration and caring can reduce the problems faced by working and married women. Glickman and Gordon (1995) have placed supervision as the backbone of an organization's effectiveness. Effective supervision requires good planning and is carried out continuously to ensure that the teaching goals and objectives carried out by an individual are achieved. This can conclude that good supervision involves the activity of giving guidance, directing and telling what should be done, rather than finding fault.

Through this study have showed the relationship between employer-employee is very important thing especially for women in continuing their career advancement. Therefore, all of the respondents stated that there is no existed any kinds of stereotypes or gender discrimination at the workplace environment. Majority of the respondents agreed that they had no problem related to gender throughout their working experience. They also stated that they were not impermeable from any possible opportunities for expansion or promotion as long as they met the terms and qualifications for the position they were looking for. Based through the stories of respondents, the showed that in their department has implemented the policies in assure women are given equal right in employment in terms of the organisations promote equality and parity in the hiring process, promotion and career advancement, training, and access to top positions for both men and women. This have presented by the Lunn (2007); Nor Ba'yah (2012); & Zeichner (1983) claimed that an increase in the level of satisfaction and work performance will occur if employees are given fair treatment without being differentiated from every aspect. The absence of any elements of discrimination by the organization will allow them to feel satisfied with their respective jobs. Also, employers who act as top management also play an important role in encouraging employee participation and ensuring that they always have high performance. The encouragement and support given should include men and women in an organization in improving quality and better career development and they also directly involved in the evaluation of work performance where this evaluation is based on the commitment shown by employees while performing their duties.

#### **4.3.1.3 Peers Factors**

The findings in this study supported peers has a substantial effect in the career advancement of these women. All respondents described their work environment and relationships with peers as nice and welcoming. They also stated that the people they worked with, including colleagues, staff, and employees at all levels, were very supportive and courteous of one another. This supported by the Hamzah et al., (2014) and Hamdan (2009) which stated among the characteristics of good colleagues is having an attitude of helping, cooperating, advising each other and sharing.

They emphasised the necessity of having strong relationships with the people they worked with in order to ensure the smooth operation of the office and hence the overall performance of the organisation. They mentioned that their circle of friends outside work also had influence on their career advancement. This finding highlighted that the essential of creating a highly supportive and cooperative working atmosphere was emphasized in women career advancement. This research has been verified by other researchers through the literature which mentioned when a woman has an outstanding personality, she is indirectly able to generate the strength to deal with the pressure around her and is able to build good relationships with family, employers, colleagues and the surrounding community (Azizi and Tan Soo Yin, 2007). Then, colleagues, whether male or female, can cooperate with each other in work matters according to the guidelines set by Islam in social relations (al-Qardawi, 1995; Maznah, 2006).

#### **4.3.1.4 Children Factors**

Children support also assist and influence women in their career advancement. This study showed how their children can be independent whenever they were away from home. They believe children is one of the big support behind women in continuing their career. This is further supported by a study conducted by Hamzah et al., (2014) among the purposes of working women is to provide a better education to children. According to him, children become a booster and motivation for a mother to

succeed in career and household. As all the respondent were married and had at least one grown-up children, there is no issues or difficulties to leave them at home. This is supported based on a study done by Rumaya Juhari (2006), which highlight the number of children, gender, age and children's characteristics greatly influence the role of working women to be excellent mothers. Moreover, their children also help them a lot in sharing the responsibilities of the household chores, taking care of the younger siblings in their absence. This is supported by a study carried out by Al-Qardawi (1995; 1999), asserted that the most important job for women is to educate the next generation. Women are responsible for caring for and educating children (al-Buty, 1996; Abu Syuqqah, 2002; 2009). Women are responsible for educating children starting from the womb until they are born into the world (Mohd Hamid and Khaulah, 1994). In fact, in certain situations the atmosphere at home can be an effective and better learning environment than at school especially in the early stages (Makheran Asarona et al., 2013).

#### 4.3.2 Barriers on Women Career Advancement

The first theme of the study relation to the barriers on women career advancement was gender discrimination. Each of the respondent of the current study were believe that issue of the gender discrimination still exist but in their current working is clean from that issues either in divison of duties of work, implementation of welfare towards women, selection process and all are gender neutral which they are divided equally a male and a female. Only two respondent experienced this gender discrimination in her workplace. Based to their stories, on one of the respondent, she stated that she had experienced where her employers give her burden in performing her duties. Respondent 2 found that the unequal division of duties occurred because the employer preferred young teachers over veteran teachers in her school. Respondent 2 emphasized the difficulty that she face everytimes in handling both tasks efficiently and successfully, as well as feeling guilty when her career requires more of her time in doing both work. Another cases of the respondent, is showed how she being treated unfairly solely because of being a new staff members there. They put a gap and stigmatizing and assume her as less competent, hard learner person, not being able to do any works as she new there at the workplace. This study is in line with the study conducted by previous researchers cited that discrimination is defined as a biased decision based on prejudice against a group of individuals caused by race, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability. In general, discrimination can take many forms. Among them are physical attacks, verbal threats, avoidance, and exclusion at work (Mishra et al., (2015); Parkins, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2006). Respondent 4 also stated that it takes a few months to deal with this kind of situation, until she make her best decision to try to move from another department of her workplaces. Hence this, women have to put an effort to show it to people in their organization that they are able to do the work. This situation also results to the undermining and blocking of women's capability in growth their career progression.

The second theme is glass ceiling affects. They also emphasized that they were not exempted from any promotion and advancement opportunities provided that they meet the conditions and requirements to occupy the position they were applying

for. Majority of the respondent acknowledged the qualities needed in promotions and leadership positions are based on qualification, years of experience on certain job, as well as their skills and quality of performance that they had presented. Henceforth, it depends on the availability of the position. Based through the stories of women in this study, they agreed that women were given equal access to promotion as well as training as their male colleagues. This showed there is no glass ceiling practiced in their department. In this glass ceiling issue, the author might argue that the outcomes of this study are not in line with the findings of previous studies such as in the social permanence of the glass ceiling, including gender roles, discrimination, sexual harassment, organizational management and psychological factors, wages distributions or in advancing to reach to the higher positions (Indeed, 2022; Sheila, 2010; & Rahmah Ismail, 2017).

The third theme was work-life conflicts. The analysis of data showed that the family role and support play an important role in the career advancement of women in this study. According to the findings of the research, the majority of women with children in the study believe that their professional role is as important as their family duty. Majority of them believed the main problem they faced was hard in balancing both, family and work. This is supported by a study conducted by Lim, Tan, & Chan, (2013) claimed that working women find it challenging to balance their commitments to their families and careers in order to excel in both. They generally found it difficult to balance the stress of work obligations with the demands of family responsibilities. Literature also showed similar results stating that working women are having difficulty in devoting their time equally in work and family in order to perform well in both roles. This is because they spend more times in house work than men even though the time devoted to work is equal with men. Long working hours take up their whole day, it is a challenge for working women to balance their multiple commitments (Lim et al., 2013 and Amaratunga et al., 2008).

Although some of them believe that advancing in their careers will be difficult for them since they believe they will have to devote more time to work than to their children and husband, and they do not want to be in this situation. There is also a situation, where they are occasionally required to work from home or continuing their work on weekends. Sometimes they prefer not to travel on vacation with their families,

or they are unable to participate in certain family occasions because their jobs need them to be present at particular times. This study findings also revealed that working mother has obstacle in engaging with their time management to balancing their work and family time. This is supported by the previous literature by Rose and Mohd Yusri Mustafa (2018) mentioned among the causes that pushing towards stress is due to less free time for family and self, excessive homework (as mentioned in Bird, 1999), childcare issues, lack of communication with spouse and fatigue (as cited in Glass and Fujimoto, 1994). The analysis also revealed that the majority of women with children in this study have great support from their husband in caring for their children while they are at work, and they believe that this support has benefited them a lot and that they would not have been able to continue in their job without it.

The fourth theme was childcare support system. Each and every respondent of the current study was highly believe that chidcare support system is another barriers for them in continuing their career or not. All of the respondent stated, they had a barriers in finding a good childcare where near at their workplace or their house nowadays. Previous literature also showed similar results stating that working mother had difficulties related to childcare (Moilanen et al., 2016). Finding quality child care while working is an issue for working women, according to Hein and Cassirer (2010). One of the respondents had stated, how she has trained her children to be independence at home because of the higher fees and beyond her and her husband's resources to send them at the childcare. Existing literature showed that in order finding a quality childcare Centre, working women in Malaysia continue to struggle with the cost of high-quality child care (Hein and Cassirer, 2010). It undeniably, findings a childcare is the main obstacle face by many mothers out there.

The fifth theme was family consideration. Majority of the respondent described that they do not have any problems relate to their family consideration. As can be seen in this research, career women had face difficulty times in raising and taking care of their children whenever they are away from home. However, through the analysis showed that most women with children in this study have a strong support from their mothers, mothers-in-law and husband in taking care of their children when they are at work and they believe this support has helped them a lot and without it they might have never been able to continue in their career. Furthermore, by the assistance of their

family they were able to maintain both and even succeed in pursue their career progression.

In this findings relating to the family consideration as one of the barrier to women in their career advancement, the author might argue that the insights of this study are not in line with the findings of previous studies. Nevertheless, as has been mentioned through the study by TalentCorp and ACCA and Abdullah et al., (2008) which highlight the primary reason Malaysian women left the job was to start families because there were few other options available to working mothers for child care. They are also leaving the labour due to increased costs for childcare and maid services, lengthy and rigid work schedules, and a lack of workplace support. Instead, from the current findings claimed that they get consideration from the family well including in understanding of their work. All the respondent point out that they relied on their parents, spouse, and in-laws to look after their children when they had relate to babysitting issues or when they were away from home for work purpose.

Next theme is excessive work exhaustion. Work-life conflict resulted in excessive effort and exhaustion. All participants mentioned they are having a hard times in facing fatigue situation, exhaustion, and a lack of time to care for their own well-being sometimes and also had no much time to spend with their family. They mentioned that managing job and family duties produces a lot of stress and confusion about their priorities and what must be sacrificed. One of the respondent described how she perceived a lot of work when their employers give her two position at the same time. As she said, she experienced high level of exhaustion which can also be mirrored as one of the systems of stress to until it effects to her health. Existing literature conducted by Hasani et al., (2021) showed that working women had admitted that managing their work-related responsibilities and family obligations causes them a lot of stress and confusion about their priorities and what may be abandoned they also reported they feeling extremely exhausted, which can also be a sign of stress, in one way or another. The results of this study showed that working mothers leave behind their spare time and have little to no time to take care of themselves. Another challenge to successfully balancing their job and home environments was time management

The seventh theme was organization structure, culture and practice. Respondents in this study disputed the assumption that there is no cultural practise in

their organisation where it is essential to replace the activities of others outside their work scope on a regular basis, undertake work beyond their job scope, or even take over the tasks of their employer. Instead of that, in organizational structure, culture and practices plays an eminent role in helps improving women career advancement. On the contrary, while the organisational structure has provided employees with access to training and development programmes to help them advance in their careers advancement. According to Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), mentoring has a considerable positive impact on women's job advancement. Having a mentor considerably facilitates women's upward career mobility since it increases their chances of promotions and simultaneously helps them achieve their career aspirations through this support system. Some women's stories have revealed that their organization's structure and work norms influenced their career advancement. Through the findings on organisational structure, culture, and practices, the author might argue that this barrier are certainly uncorrelated with previous studies which claimed that the get a lack of support from organization, having heavily gendered and prejudiced issues in organizational hierarchy structured, organizations do not give women access to resources that could help them perform better at work or lack in access to information about training opportunities and promotions (Colley, (2002); Kochanowski, (2010).

The last theme was personal factors. According to the responses, all of the respondents' flaws and weaknesses are motivation for them to further enhance their career to reach a higher level. Weaknesses do not prevent people from working, but rather help them to better all of their deficits in order to achieve the desired career. Women in this study had a great persistence and passion for achieving their job goals. They indicated that they had to overcome their shortcomings in learning new things, achieving job goals, and dealing with any challenges that arose at work. Moreover, women in this current study also showed a high aspiration to seek further progress in their career goals. Career aspiration could be the factors for women in climbing to the higher level. This can look into Respondent 1, who she willingness to take up a challenging responsibilities and opportunities in holding a huge role in the department. The author discovered in this study that women at different levels of profession expressed different levels of their career aspiration and ambition to achieve further progress in their career path. Furthermore, the author also found and can conclude from the two comments of respondent which their aspiration originally come from home.

Based from their expressed, they received most of their aspirations from their parents. Family was the key to women's aspiration to persevere in the profession despite the hurdles they encountered alongside their career journey. The results of this research relate to the barrier on personal factors were also discovered to be contradictory with the findings of previous research before. The outcome from the previous literature showed that, women have a profound impact on a person's attitude and traits, such lack of confidence and difficulty managing their emotions (Bomuwela and De Alwis (2013); & Hussin et al., (2021). Instead, from the finding based to the answer from the respondent, the author firmly agree as supported with the study conducted by the Krishna et al., (2022) found that 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. Personal factors does not become a barrier to women's in pursuing their career advancement, but rather brings enthusiasm, optimism and inspiration to move forward in a better way in the future.

#### 4.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presented the qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with five Malaysian women working in different government sectors in accordance with the procedures presented in the chapter of methodology. All of the interviews were transcribed and examined in their native language, which is Bahasa Melayu. Then the analytic themes and linked quotations were then translated into English, taking cultural meaning and circumstances into account. The researcher emphasized on the research question of this study assessing the data and presenting the findings. The analysis lead the researcher to identify and gain a comprehensive understanding of a number of factors that influence women career advancement in the government sectors. Through the individual characteristic factors from the finding which consisted four: spouse, employers, peers and children, all of them show a high positivity in supporting the women career path. Moreover, the researcher also discover and develop in depth understanding towards the barriers on women facing to their career advancement. As shown from the findings, the study identified four themes to explain the barriers in this context among working women which is; gender discrimination which it still existed in the workplace, facing obstacles in balancing work and family, finding a suitable and good child care place and also facing an excessive work exhaustion in the workplace.