

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter contains interviewing data and the data collected by the questionnaire used for this study. The interviewing results with each representative of the female white-collar workers of Maersk Line (Thailand) Ltd., DAMCO (Thailand) Ltd., HMC Polymers Co., Ltd. and Bangkok Synthetics Co., Ltd. were reported on two pages.

The questionnaire was distributed to 100 female white-collar workers (twenty-five per company), and all of them were returned completed. Therefore, the response rate was 100 per cent. Following statistical analysis, an explanation and interpretation of the data are provided in the following sections:

- 4.1 Interviewing results
- 4.2 Demographic information of the respondents
- 4.3 An overview of the three factors towards women's career advancement
- 4.4 Results of the factors towards women's career advancement in local petrochemical companies
- 4.5 Results of the factors towards women's career advancement in foreign transportation companies

4.1 INTERVIEWING RESULTS

An interview was conducted with a representative of two local petrochemical companies and two foreign transportation companies, totalling 4 persons. These interviewees represent women at different levels i.e. staff, supervisor, manager and director. All of the interviewees have different backgrounds from administration, hospitality service, finance and accounting. Two of the interviewees are married with children and the other two are single. An MP3 recorder was used for recording purpose and each interview took approx 30 minutes.

In general, single and married women had different opinions about the barriers for their career advancement. Women at staff and director levels, who were single, believed that an opportunity for their career advancement depends largely on

themselves at 80% while the remaining 20% was the support from their bosses and the people they work with i.e. other senior managers who are not their direct bosses. Married women at middle management level were obviously more family-oriented; they disregarded talking about their own or the support they may require from their superiors. They were not so enthusiastic about career advancement or promotion. However, if they were offered better opportunities with another organization, the first thing they would consider is whether or not that job affects her family schedule and planning. They usually spend at least 3 hours each weekday and the entire weekend with their children. In the event that the new jobs or new positions require that they have to work hard and stay longer hours, they would not consider them regardless of the compensation they will receive. They prefer to carry on with their current jobs in which they can have a balance between work, life and family. One of the interviewees, who was married, mentioned that her career path is going a bit slow compared to her friends of the same age and background. On the contrary, she has no endeavour to climb up the corporate ladder. She is happy with her current job since she can balance between work and family well. Therefore, this could be one of the reasons reflecting a few proportions of women at top management level as women decide to discontinue their career path and those who managed to appear on the top layer of the organization are often unmarried. One of the interviewees who assumes management position in an international transportation company is also single. It can be observed that women have to trade off between work and family.

Regardless of their marital status, women still believe that men have better opportunities in their career. Apart from personal qualifications, one of the main factors contributing to men's career advancement is social networking. They agree that men have an advantage over women in terms of social networking since men do not have domestic responsibilities. Given that the majority of senior and top management are men, it is easier for them to socialize and get-together after office hours or even on weekends. Women are at a disadvantage considering their domestic responsibilities, child rearing and culture bound. In Thai society, it is inappropriate for women to hang out with men other than what is required by their jobs. Women therefore protect themselves and their image by limiting social integration with their male counterparts.

Half of the interviewees believe that men receive more credibility than women when it comes to their career and they prefer male bosses to female bosses, while the other half of the interviewees who are at middle management levels do not have gender preferences for their boss. They believe that both men and women can be equally good in terms of leadership skills and competency. All of the interviewees agree that men are more decisive and assertive when it comes to challenging circumstances. However, both men and women have their strengths and weaknesses; women are better than men in terms of communication and human relations. One of the interviewees who works in a foreign transportation company mentioned that gender does not count when it comes to promotion, but it is the nationality that counts. As she has observed, all top management positions fall under the nationality of the owner.

All of the interviewees admitted that they thought of quitting their jobs at least once. The reasons are various; pressure at work, boredom, fussy boss, compensation. More than half of the interviewees thought of having their own business but they were reluctant to take the steps because they are uncertain about financial security. They are not confident that they have enough financial stability to establish a business of their own, but it is something they are passionate about.

Based on the three factors suggested by the researcher, the interviewees were asked to rate each factor they found as barriers for women's career advancement. It is evident that half of the interviewees who are married weighed 50% on domestic responsibility and 25% on social influence and personal aspiration. Half of the interviewees viewed it differently, they weighed social influence at 40%, domestic responsibility and personal aspiration at 30% each. Therefore, the phenomenon of the glass ceiling is quite different in single and married women's opinions. Domestic responsibility is the main obstacle for married women while social influence is what unmarried women are most concerned about.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic information of female white-collar workers who completed the questionnaire is listed in Table 3.

Table 1. *Demographic Information*

Category	Frequency	Per cent
Age:		
20-24 years	19	19.0
25-29 years	27	27.0
30-34 years	22	22.0
35-39 years	22	22.0
40-44 years	8	8.0
45-49 years	8	8.0
50 years and above	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0
Marital Status:		
Single	65	65.0
Married	34	34.0
Divorced / Widow	1	1.0
Separated	-	-
Total	100	100.0
Education:		
Vocational diploma	6	6.0
Bachelor's degree	74	74.0
Master's degree	20	20.0
Above master's degree	-	-
Total	100	100.0

(Table continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Category	Frequency	Per cent
Current Position:		
Staff level	58	58.0
Supervisory level	21	21.0
Manager level	4	4.0
Unidentified	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0

TABLE 1. reveals that the majority of the respondents (27.0 percent) were between 25 to 29 years; the respondents who were 30 to 34 years and 35 to 39 years old were at 22.0 percent each and the smallest group were aged 50 years and above at only 2.0 percent. Most of the respondents (65.0 percent) were single. From the total respondents, 74.0 percent obtained bachelor's degree and none had above master degree level. When asked to identify their current position, over half 58.0 per cent of the respondents were at staff level, 21.0 percent were at supervisory level, only 4.0 percent were at manager level, whereas 17 percent did not identify their positions.

4.3 AN OVERVIEW OF FACTORS AGAINST WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT

4.2.1 Response to the Statements

This section will focus on '*social influence*' factors as one of the barriers for women's career advancement. From the analyzed data, the responses to the statements in the questionnaire are shown in TABLE 2.

Table 2. *Response to ‘Social Influence’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

Statement	Mean	Results
People in society or in your organization think that men can be better leaders than women	2.35	Disagree
People in society or in your organization think that male-dominant work is suitable for men only	2.84	Uncertain
People in society or in your organization think that male managers usually receive more respect than female managers	1.90	Disagree
People in society or in your organization think that male subordinates often feel uneasy or uncomfortable with female managers	2.23	Disagree
People in society or in your organization think that female managers have a tendency to become emotional or expressive more than male managers	2.91	Uncertain
People in society or in your organization think that men possess managerial skills more than women	2.07	Disagree
Men have a better opportunity for career advancement through social networking	2.22	Disagree
Men usually are more devoted to their work more than women	1.31	Strongly disagree
Men are more decisive and they usually make good decisions	1.85	Disagree
Unequal work opportunity between men and women exists	2.59	Uncertain
Total Mean	1.94	

The result in TABLE 2. reveals that female white-collar workers in petrochemical and transportation industries disagreed that social influence is a barrier for women’s career advancement. They especially strongly disagreed that men are more devoted to work than women.

Table 3. *Response to ‘Domestic Responsibility’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

Statement	Mean	Results
Women have to take care of children, so they have less time to be fully committed to their work	2.84	Uncertain
○ Drive the children to school, meet teachers and attend school activities	2.85	Uncertain
○ Take the children to hospital and take care of them when they are sick	2.87	Uncertain
○ Take the children to training center for skill development	2.57	Uncertain
○ Spend time for caring, teaching and training	2.79	Uncertain
Women have to take care of housework, so they have less time to be fully committed to their work	2.49	Disagree
○ Cook for the entire family	2.44	Disagree
○ Do the housework	2.48	Disagree
○ Wash clothes for the entire family	2.40	Disagree
Women have to take care of elders, so they have less time to be fully committed to their work	2.25	Disagree
Total Mean	2.22	

From TABLE 3. female white-collar workers in both petrochemical and transportation industries equally disagreed as well being uncertain about domestic responsibility as a barrier for women’s career advancement.

Table 4. *Response to ‘Personal Aspiration’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement.*

Statement	Mean	Results
Women quit their job in the middle of their career to spend more time with family and kids	2.64	Uncertain
Women quit their job when the jobs are too stressful	2.58	Uncertain
Women quit their jobs if they feel that they are not happy with it	2.56	Uncertain
Women sometimes are not so committed because they may have other interests	2.19	Disagree
Women quit their jobs to pursue their dream of becoming business owners	2.85	Uncertain
Women quit their jobs to devote themselves to charity or religious activities	1.90	Disagree
Women quit their jobs to find new ones that allow them more freedom	2.62	Uncertain
Women do not measure career achievement as life achievement	3.32	Uncertain
Women believe that happiness is more important than career achievement	3.32	Uncertain
Women choose to take the job they like rather than difficult or stressful jobs that offer high compensation	2.83	Uncertain

From TABLE 4. female white-collar workers in both petrochemical and transportation industries were mostly uncertain if personal aspiration is a barrier for women’s career advancement.

4.4 RESULT OF FACTORS AGAINST WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN LOCAL PETROCHEMICAL COMPANIES

Table 5. *Response to 'Social Influence' as one of the barriers for women's career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	22	44.0	44.0	44.0
Disagree	21	42.0	42.0	86.0
Uncertain	7	14.0	14.0	100.00
Agree	-	-	-	
Strongly Agree	-	-	-	
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 5. shows that the combined level of disagreement and strong disagreement were more than eighty per cent.

Table 6. *Response to 'Domestic Responsibility as one of the barriers for women's career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
Disagree	9	18.0	18.0	40.0
Uncertain	15	30.0	30.0	70.0
Agree	14	28.0	28.0	98.0
Strongly Agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6. indicates that 30 per cent of female white-collar workers agreed, whereas another 30 per cent were uncertain and 40 per cent disagreed that this factor is a barrier for their career advancement. The level of strong disagreement was only 22.0 per cent or only one-fourth.

Table 7. *Response to ‘Personal Aspiration’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Disagree	20	40.0	40.0	54.0
Uncertain	21	42.0	42.0	96.0
Agree	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Strongly Agree	-	-	-	
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7. indicates that 42 per cent of female white-collar workers were uncertain if this factor is a barrier, whereas 54 per cent both disagreed and strongly disagreed. Only 4 per cent agreed that it is a barrier.

4.5 RESULT OF FACTORS AGAINST WOMEN’S CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN FOREIGN TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES

Table 8. *Response to ‘Social Influence’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	17	34.0	34.0	34.0
Disagree	26	52.0	52.0	86.0
Uncertain	7	14.0	14.0	100.00
Agree	-	-	-	
Strongly Agree	-	-	-	
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

It is represented in TABLE 8. that a majority of female-white collar workers (52.0 per cent) disagreed that this factor is a barrier for their career advancement, while 14 per cent were uncertain.

Table 9. *Response to ‘Domestic Responsibility’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	17	34.0	34.0	34.0
Disagree	16	32.0	32.0	66.0
Uncertain	16	32.0	32.0	98.0
Agree	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Strongly Agree	-	-	-	
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

From TABLE 9. the combined level of strongly disagree and disagree were more than half (66.0 per cent), whereas 32 per cent were uncertain and only 2 per cent agreed.

Table 10. *Response to ‘Personal Aspiration’ as one of the barriers for women’s career advancement*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
Disagree	28	56.0	56.0	74.0
Uncertain	13	26.0	26.0	100.00
Agree	-	-	-	
Strongly Agree	-	-	-	
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 10. concluded that 56 per cent of female white-collar workers disagreed with the statements, whereas 26 per cent were uncertain.

The findings of the study will be summarized and discussed in the next chapter.