

Impact of Stereotype Threat on Workplace Wellbeing: A Study on Women Executive Staff of State Universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Research based on Contemporary management theories reveals that stereotype threat is a significant obstacle in establishing an inclusive organizational work environment. The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing of a selected population. The selected population was women executives, employed in 17 state universities of Sri Lanka. The sample size was 190. Sampling technique was stratified random sampling. Data were collected through an online survey. Data analysis was done using SPSS software. Results showed that, there was a statistically significant, moderate negative correlation between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing $r(98) = -0.350$, $p < 0.05$. Moderation effect of gender identification and mediation effect of identity separation on the relationships between stereotype and workplace wellbeing was non-significant. The conclusion was that there is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing of the population.

Keywords: *Gender Identification, Gender Stereotyping, Identity Separation, Stereotype Threat, Workplace Wellbeing*

Introduction

The management theories have evolved from classical management to modern management theories over the past years. Along with this evolution, more research studies have been focused on complex employee views. They try to interpret the behaviors of employees with different aspirations, perspectives, potentials and needs (Kitana, 2016) and their impact on the overall organizational performance. Moreover, research reveals that inclusive work environments result in innovation, team effectiveness, corporate performance and attract more capable workforce to the organization (Van Laar et al., 2019). The inclusive working environment ensures that all the employees are treated equally and fairly despite their gender, ethnicity, and religion or based on any other criteria. However, organizations face numerous challenges in creating an inclusive working environment for their employees, aiming for higher organizational effectiveness. It has been identified that the stereotype threat is one of the significant obstacles in establishing social equality and an inclusive work environment in organizations. By definition stereotypes are beliefs about another group according to the factors such as personality traits, attributions, or behavioral descriptions (Brewer & Kramer, 1985). According to the research findings of Steele and Aronson (1995), stereotype threat is a form of self-evaluative anxiety or a fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one's group through one's behavior. Theories related

to stereotype threat have been developed over the years, and most of them are focused on describing the stereotypes related to gender and minority groups. Recent studies focus more on the stereotype threat at the workplace and its possible implications on organizational and individual performance. Many studies have confirmed that stereotype threat affect negatively for the well-being, motivation, retention and performance of the employees and on the overall organizational effectiveness (Van Laar et al., 2019 and Casad & Bryant, 2016). Moreover, research reveal that stereotype threat has a great impact on the career progression of women in male dominant fields such as finance and management (von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & McFarlane, 2015). Comparatively, in Sri Lanka, studies on stereotype threat are focusing mainly on post-war ethnic stereotypes and gender stereotypes.

Introduction to the State University System of Sri Lanka

The modern university education was introduced to Sri Lanka when the Ceylon University College affiliated to the University of London was established in 1921. The University of Ceylon was established on 1 July 1942 by the Ceylon University Ordinance No.20 of 1942 as unitary, residential and autonomous entity. University of Ceylon became the University of Sri Lanka by the University of Ceylon Act No. 1 of

1972 with a more centralized administration and more direct government control. Septate universities with independent identities were created by the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978.

However, the state universities of Sri Lanka are under the purview of the University Grants Commission and currently there are 17 universities, 2 campuses and 20 institutes under its regulation. Mainly, there are two types of employees at the state universities, namely employees who are engaged in academic activities and the employees who are engaged in other activities which support the smooth functioning of the academic activities. In state universities, non-academic administrative staff portrait an important role in university administration and in managing the resources at the universities. According the Statistics of University Grants Commission in 2021, there is a total population of 579 permanent administrative staff who are employed in universities and affiliated institutes and 366 of them are female. Even though 63.21% of the administrative staff at the state university system are female, only 17.94% of female executives have succeeded to their highest achievable position in their career in state university system. Further, research reveal that the turnover as well as the intention to leave the job is high among the executive staff of the universities (Kothalawala & Samarakoon, 2018). Thus, this study has a special emphasis on the women executives in the state university sector.

Many studies on stereotype threat at the work place has investigated the stereotype threat related to women and ethnic minorities (Van Laar et al., 2019). In Sri Lanka, several studies on gender stereotyping at work (Fernando, 2012). stereotyping related to ethnic minorities Ariyaratne & Karunanayake, 2013) have been conducted on corporate sector organizations. However, the studies on stereotype threat and its negative effect on workplace of the women executives are lower, specially focusing the public sector institutes. Thus, this study has focused on the aforesaid empirical gap in the prevailing research related to stereotype threat and its negative impact on the women executives in the field of management/administration in the selected Sri Lankan public sector organization.

Even though the research reveals that there is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing of women in the field of management/administration, affirmative action policies to mitigate stereotype threat at work is almost

nonexistent. Therefore, this research study also aimed to identify potential affirmative action policies to mitigate the impact of stereotype threat in State Universities in Sri Lanka to boost the organizational effectiveness.

Research objectives were to identify whether there is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka, to identify whether there is a significant mediating effect of Identity Separation on the relation between the stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka and to identify whether there is a significant moderating effect of Gender identification on the relation between the stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing among the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

What is a Stereotype?

The term stereotype has been initially introduced by Walter Lippmann in 1922, and accordingly, stereotypes are the descriptions of the characteristics/traits of a specific social group. Since then, researchers have given different definitions about the stereotypes such as, a set of beliefs about the members of a specific social group (Smith & Bond, 1994), observations of a true relationship between the group membership and the traits (Doise, Spini & Clémence, 1999), theories which describe personality traits and behavior patterns (Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron, 1994) and as standardized, established and predefined images (Gavreliuc, 2006). In defining the stereotypes, generality levels and analysis level or individual, micro group or macro group level are used.

There are several theories which explain how a stereotype is created. Among such theories, the psychodynamic model / the authoritarian personality (Adorno, 1950), the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), the realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, 1966) and the cognitive theories are most prominent.

Stereotype threat theory helps to recognize intergroup differences in socioeconomic outcomes (Spencer, Logel, & Davies, 2016; Steele, 1997). It describes the situational struggle individuals face being at the risk of confirming a negative stereotype about their social group (Steele, 1997; Gajdos et al., 2019). This theory originated with Steele and Aronson's (1995) research on the comparative performance of African

Americans and Caucasians on verbal ability tests. According to the stereotype threat theory research, the threat occurs when a negative stereotype occurs about one's group (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002).

Research also suggest that confirmation of a stereotype is stronger when the mark out characteristics appear later in one's life while group identification is more vital for characteristics that prevail from early childhood (Shapiro, 2011). The indications about the social identity associated with stereotype threat can develop in many forms (Stone & McWhinnie, 2008). Curiously, indirect indications are most effective in creating stereotype threats for women, while racial minorities are mostly affected by obvious indications (Nguyen & Ryan, 2008).

In response to the activation of negative stereotypes, individuals may exhibit adaptation or reactance (Javadian & Zoogah, 2014). Some studies propose that members of negatively stereotyped groups attempt to contradict the limitations imposed by the unfavorable stereotypes as a way of self-protection against perceived threats (Brehm, 1966; Miron & Brehm, 2006). The Stereotype Threat theory offers insight into the mediating mechanisms that explain the occurrence and impact of stereotype threat (Pennington, Heim, Levy, & Larkin, 2016). Stereotype threat induces anxiety (Osborne, 2001), discomfort, and nervousness (Bosson, Haymovitz, & Pinel, 2004), leading to negative emotions (Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008). These affective/emotional mediators contribute to the intensification of negative thoughts (Cadinu, Maas, Rosabianca & Kiesner, 2005), reduced working memory capacity (Beilock, Rydell & McConnell, 2007), increased mental workload (Croizet et al., 2004), and reduced cognitive control (Inzlicht, McKay & Aronson, 2006).

Furthermore, the impact of stereotype threat is moderated by situational incidents and individual factors. Individual factors such as group identification (Schmader, 2002), stereotype confirmation (Schmader, Johns, & Barquissau, 2004), task domain identification (Steinberg, Okun, & Aiken, 2012), and proactive personality (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007) have been identified as moderators of stereotype threat effects. Experiencing stereotype threat can produce fear of confirming the stereotype, resulting in stress, anxiety, and underperformance (Jamieson & Harkins, 2007).

Identity Separation

According to the literature on stereotype threat, identity separation is a dominant aspect observed in workplaces affected by stereotype threat (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Women often disengage their feminine identity from their work identity, perceiving that their job requires characteristics that significantly differ from feminine identity (Markus & Wurf, 1987). In male-dominated fields, women commonly believe that certain aspects of themselves need to be separated from their work self in order to succeed (Markus & Wurf, 1987). This separation of work and feminine identities is observed among women leaders who experience stereotyping in the workplace (Von Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011). The studies further reveal that women leaders tend to separate their work and feminine identities even when their feminine identities could contribute positively to their work performance (Von Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011).

Social role theory explains the challenges women face in balancing their feminine and work identities (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). According to this theory, women are expected to fulfill socially expected nurturing and facilitative behaviors, while men are expected to engage in assertive and dominant behaviors (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). These contrasting role expectations also exist in the work culture, where professional skills are often prescribed by gender roles (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). Gutek and Morasch (1982) found that female and male employees in the same position within an organization were expected to exhibit different behaviors based on gender. Consequently, women in male-dominated fields may experience a conflict between societal demands for their gender role and the work environment's demands for qualities associated with their work identity, which are often masculine (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). Thus, women who continuously face stereotyping tend to separate their feminine identity from their work identity (Von Hippel et al., 2015).

Furthermore, women who encounter stereotype threats at work are reluctant to simultaneously use both their feminine identity and work identity, while those who have not been stereotyped integrate both identities and their related traits (Von Hippel et al., 2015).

However, research suggests that identity separation can be psychologically advantageous for women in

establishing themselves as skilled workers within an organization (Von Hippel et al., 2015). Conversely, suppressing one's true identity while enacting another identity may result in mental health costs (Settles, 2004; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002). Apart from the potential mental health costs, identity separation may lead to negative job attitudes, poorer well-being at work, and ultimately contribute to low retention of women in male-dominated fields (Von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011; Von Hippel et al., 2015). Von Hippel et al. (2015) suggest that reducing the need for women working in male-dominated fields to switch between dual roles may help mitigate these negative consequences and increase their likelihood of recommending their field to other women.

Identity separation acts as a mediator in the context of stereotype threat, influencing the relationship between individuals' multiple identities and their susceptibility to stereotype threat. This occurs because individuals may interpret stereotype-relevant situations as threats to their specific identity (Plaut, 2002).

Gender Identification

Gender identification is a complex concept that refers to an individual's internal sense of their own gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. It includes a complex relationship of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors that contribute to an individual's understanding and expression of their gender. According to a study by Bockting, Miner, Swinburne Romine, Hamilton, and Coleman (2013), gender identity is a deeply in-built and subjective experience that can be categorized along a spectrum, including but not limited to male, female, and non-binary identities. It is important to recognize that gender identification is distinct from biological sex and involves a range of diverse experiences and expressions (American Psychological Association, 2021). Research has shown that gender identity is a deeply personal aspect of one's identity and is influenced by various factors, including societal norms, cultural expectations, and individual self-perception (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2001). Understanding and respecting an individual's self-identified gender is essential for promoting inclusivity and supporting the mental well-being of transgender and gender-diverse individuals (Grant et al., 2011).

From a study conducted by Logel, Walton, Spencer, Iserman, von Hippel, and Bell (2009), it was found that when women were exposed to indications that

activated gender stereotypes about their intellectual abilities, they were less likely to identify with and pursue careers in science and engineering. This suggests that stereotype threat can influence an individual's gender identification by shaping their perception of their abilities and potential career choices. Moreover, a study by Steele and Aronson (1995) demonstrated that stereotype threat can weaken women's performance on math tests, further highlighting the detrimental impact of stereotype threat on gender-related outcomes.

Further, studies show that stereotype threat can significantly impact transgender and gender-diverse individuals. Some findings also suggest that stereotype threat can sustain gender-related stereotypes and negatively influence the self-perception and performance of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms. Many studies show that gender identification serves as a significant moderator in the context of stereotype threat, influencing individuals' susceptibility to stereotype threat and its effects (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). For example, women who strongly identify with their gender may be more vulnerable to the negative impact of gender-related stereotypes in academic settings, leading to decreased performance (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). On the other hand, individuals who have a more fluid or nontraditional gender identification may be less susceptible to stereotype threat due to their ability to distance themselves from societal expectations and stereotypes (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000). Conversely, individuals with a weaker identification with their gender may be less vulnerable to stereotype threat and exhibit greater resilience (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008).

Women's Wellbeing at Work

According to the International Labour Organization, workplace wellbeing is ensuring the safety, health and satisfaction of the employees in all aspects of work life including the physical environment and mental space of the workers. At early stages of the industrial revolution, organizations mostly focused on ensuring the physical safety and wellbeing of their employees. However, with time, organizations started paying attention to the mental wellbeing of the employees as it was identified that mental wellbeing is much more important in high efficiency and effectiveness in organizational context. Thus the research on the mental wellbeing of the employees at their organizations has become an emerging topic.

Affective wellbeing is simply, the frequency and intensity of emotions and mood. The major measures of job related affective wellbeing are satisfaction, alienation from work, job attachment, job tension, depression, burnout, involvement and job morale (Cook, Hepworth, Wall & Warr, 1981).

Warr (1987) has suggested three main aspects in measuring affective wellbeing at work form both male and female workers namely; (1) displeased-pleased, (2) anxious-contented, and (3) depressed-enthusiastic. Von Hippel et al. (2015) have found that the women who are experiencing stereotyping threat at their work places experience poor workplace wellbeing in contrast to those who do not experience any stereotyping at work.

In the workplace, stereotype threat can have a significant impact on employees' overall wellbeing. When individuals are aware of negative stereotypes associated with their gender, race, or other characteristics, they may experience heightened anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of failure, all of which can negatively affect their performance and overall wellbeing (Steele, 1997; Schmader et al., 2008). Moreover, stereotype threat has been found to negatively affect task performance, cognitive functioning, leading to impaired decision-making and reduced productivity (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, Steele & Brown, 1999; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). Furthermore, stereotype threat has been linked to increased stress levels, reduced engagement, and lower job retention rates, as employees may feel marginalized or excluded due to the threat of being judged based on stereotypes (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000). These detrimental effects not only have implications for individuals but also for organizations, as they can contribute to decreased morale, increased turnover, and diminished overall workplace climate (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). Consequently, addressing stereotype threat in the workplace is crucial for promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters the wellbeing of all employees.

Research on Stereotype Threat in Sri Lankan Context

The research conducted in Sri Lanka has provided valuable insights into the nature and implications of stereotypes across different contexts. Perera and Gunawardena (2017) investigated ethnic stereotypes among Sinhala and Tamil undergraduates and found that negative stereotypes were prevalent in both

groups, resulting increased intergroup bias and decreased intergroup trust.

Moreover, Perera and Perera (2019) in a similar study demonstrated that ethnic stereotypes exerted a significant influence on intergroup attitudes, leading to negative perceptions and increased intergroup bias. Another study by Jayawickreme and Jayawickreme (2019) investigated the impact of stereotype threat on the academic performance of Sri Lankan students. The findings revealed that when students were exposed to negative stereotypes about their ethnic group's intellectual abilities, their academic performance was adversely affected.

Most research on ethnic stereotyping highlight the importance of actively addressing and challenging ethnic stereotypes to promote positive intergroup relations and social cohesion in Sri Lanka. Moving beyond ethnic stereotypes, research on stereotype threat in Sri Lanka has provided valuable insights into its effects across various domains. De Silva and Samarasinghe (2020) focused on gender stereotypes in the corporate sector, highlighting the impact of gendered expectations and biases on women's career advancement. The research revealed that gender stereotypes and biases significantly hindered women's opportunities for leadership positions and career progression. These findings underscore the necessity of implementing interventions and policies that challenge and counteract gender stereotypes, thereby promoting a more equitable and inclusive work environment in Sri Lanka (Herath & Kumara, 2017).

Additionally, Kothalawala and Samarakoon (2018) examined the relationship between stereotype threat and job satisfaction among financial and internal audit executive staff in public universities in Sri Lanka. Their research highlighted the influence of stereotype threat on job satisfaction and employees' intention to leave. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of stereotype threat in the Sri Lankan context and emphasizes the importance of further investigations in this area.

Conceptual Framework

According to previous studies, there is evidence to suggest that stereotype threat has a negative impact on workplace well-being of female employees (Ellemers, 2018; Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000). Additionally, research indicates that identity separation can act as a mediator in the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace well-being (Gonzalez & Blanton,

2015; Schmader, Major, & Gramzow, 2001). These studies highlight the role of identity separation in influencing the impact of stereotype threat on various outcomes in the workplace. Furthermore, gender identification has been identified as a moderator in the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace well-being (Davies et al., 2002; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). Understanding the mediating role of identity separation and the moderating role of gender identification provides insights into the complex dynamics of stereotype threat and its effects on individuals in the workplace.

Thus, based on the empirical evidences, the following hypotheses were formulated to investigate the impact of stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector in Sri Lanka.

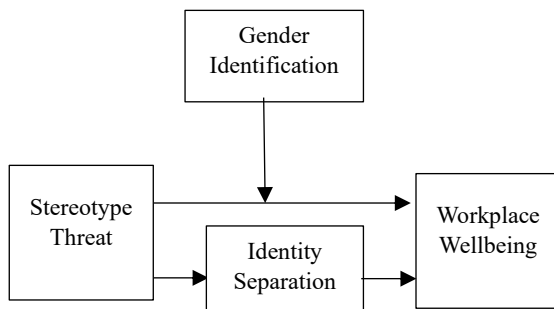


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant mediating effect of Identity Separation on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant moderating effect of Gender identification on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work among the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka.

Introduction to Variables

Stereotype Threat:

The independent variable of the study was stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers to the psychological experience of individuals from stereotyped groups feeling at risk of confirming negative stereotypes

about their social group. It was measured by 4 indicators namely women's social comparisons with men, women's social comparisons with other women, self-targeted stereotype threat and group targeted stereotype threat. As the measuring method 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used for 10 question items which were used by von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & McFarlane in 2015, von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes in 2011 and Steele & Aronson in 1995. In order to measure women's social comparisons with men and women's social comparisons with other women, 4 and 2 question items were used respectively. In order to measure the indicators self-targeted stereotype threat and group targeted stereotype threat, 6 question items were used.

Workplace Wellbeing

There was one dependent variable used for this study namely, workplace wellbeing. Workplace well-being encompasses the overall state of individuals' physical, mental, and emotional health in the work environment, including factors such as job satisfaction, engagement, and positive affect (Warr, 2007). The variable workplace wellbeing was measured using Work mental health and well-being scale which has been used by (vonHippel, Sekaquaptewa & McFarlane, 2015 and Warr, 1990). Work mental health and well-being scale consisted of 12 question items and as the measuring method 5 point Likert scale ranging from all of the time to never was used.

Identity Separation

Identity separation refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their various social identities as distinct and separate from each other (Cross, 1991). Gender identification refers to the extent to which individuals identify with and experience a sense of belonging to a particular gender category, such as male or female (Hoffarth & Hodson, 2021).

The variable, identity separation was measured using Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 1 which has been used by von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa & McFarlane in 2015, von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes in 2011 and Benet-Martínez & Haritatos in 2005 for their research studies. Moreover, this scale consisted of 2 question items and the as the measuring method, 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used.

Gender Identification

The variable , gender identification was measured using Identification of being a woman which has been used by Henry, Arrow, and Carini's in 1999 for their research studies. Moreover, this scale consisted of 12 question items and the as the measuring method, 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used.

Table 1 Operationalization of Variables

Concept/ Variable	Measuring Indicators	Measuring Method	Number of Question Items
Stereotype threat	Women's social comparison s with men and other women Self-targeted stereotype threat and group-targeted stereotype threat	Likert scale with 5-point which range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree)	10-item scale
Wellbeing at work	Work mental health and well-being scale	Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (all of the time) to 5 (never)	12-item scale
Identity separation	Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 1	Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	2-item scale
Gender Identification	Identification of being a woman	Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	12-item scale

Methodology

The main aim of the study was to investigate the impact of the stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university system of Sri Lanka. The research paradigm related to the study was the emancipatory research paradigm. This research study aimed basically to explore the impact of stereotype threat on the women executives' work place wellbeing. Thus, the outcome of this research would benefit the women executives in the university system and will help in creating a conducive working environment for them. In this research study, multiple realities were recognized and the study emphasized the influence of gender values that exist in the state university sector in constructing the above multiple realities. In terms of epistemology, this research was interactive research. In this study, both inductive approach and deductive approach were used since, prevailing theories were used to build the hypotheses while the specific research outcomes were generalized to create a theory. Moreover, since a mix of both strategies was used in this study, pluralist approach was used.

Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used for this study was an online survey questionnaire which was opted based on the convenience and time restrictions. Furthermore, the survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data and formulated by including the questions extracted from previous empirical research related to the topic. The questionnaire initially consisted of 69 closed ended questions which was later reduced up to 48 based on the results of the pilot survey. The questions were included in both English and Sinhala Language to make them more understandable. The participants were allowed to select their answer out of multiple choices. Furthermore, at the beginning of the online survey questionnaire, a brief introduction was given about the researcher, the purpose of the research and disclaimer of maintaining the confidentiality of the data collected. The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections and a brief introduction to each section was provided. The initial section consisted of 7 questions which was aimed to collect general information from the participants such as age, designation, current working place, service period and qualifications. Based on the results of the pilot survey, the survey questionnaire was restructured. After restructuring, Section 1 ;Identity Separation included 6 items and measuring

method was the Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The section 2 of the questionnaire consisted of 9 items scale to collect data related to Stereotype Threat and the measuring method was the Likert scale with 5-point which range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree). Further, measuring indicators of Stereotype Threat were Women's social comparisons with men and other women and Self- targeted stereotype threat and group-targeted stereotype threat. The section 3 of the questionnaire consisted of 7 items scale to collect data related to Workplace Wellbeing and the measuring method was the Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (All of the time) to 5 (Never). The work mental wellbeing and the wellbeing scale were the measuring indicators of the above section. Section 4 : Gender Identification included 7 items to collect data related to Gender Identification and the measuring method was the Likert scale with 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The survey questionnaire which was used in this study was formulated using Google Forms and was circulated among the participants via email and social media, eg: WhatsApp mobile application.

Population and Sample

The focused population for the study was nonacademic women administrative/executive staff members who are currently employed in the state universities of Sri Lanka. In this study, 17 universities which are under the purview of the University Grants Commission were considered for the population. According to the annual statistics of University Grants Commission for the year 2021, the total number of female administrative staff is 366, thus the population size was also considered as 366. In order to select the sample initially sampling frame was determined using the information available at the official websites of each university.

Sample was created using stratified convenience sampling method and there were 3 strata based on the job roles as follows;

- Women executives who are engaged in administration - Registrar/Deputy Registrar/Senior Assistant Registrar/Assistant Registrar
- Women executives who are engaged in

Finance - Bursar/Deputy Bursar/Senior Assistant Bursar/ Assistant Bursar

- Women executives who are engaged in Internal Auditing - Internal Auditor/Deputy Internal Auditor/Senior Assistant Internal Auditor/ Assistant Internal Auditor

The questionnaire was circulated among convenient group of women executive staff representing each strata whose contact details were available. The respondents to the questionnaire from the above strata were considered as the sample of the study.

Pilot Survey

Prior to the commencement of data collection process, a pilot survey was conducted in order to validate the research questionnaire and the sample size used was 12. Based on the results of the reliability and construct validity tests the total number of items in the questionnaire was reduced up to 48.

Data Collection

After the restructuring of the questionnaire, the data collection process was commenced. In order to collect data email, and social media networks such as Whatsapp, Messenger and Facebook were used. The survey questionnaire was circulated among the participants as a Google Form and the data were collected automatically to a Google sheet. As a precaution to prevent the missing data, compulsory answer option was used. The questionnaire was opened for the respondents for 90 days and it was circulated among 190 participants.

Data Analysis

At the end of the allocated time period for data collection, 112 responses were received. The response rate of the research study was 59.25%.

The data analysis was done using the SPSS software. The missing data was replaced by the series mean method. Then the reverse coding was done to Q1,Q4,Q5,Q8,Q10 and Q11 of Section 6: Gender Identification based on the literature. Data cleansing was done to identify outliers using Box Plot and Stem and Leaf Diagrams.

Validity and the Reliability of Data

In this study construct validity was evaluated through convergent and discriminant validity. Factor Loading and Average Variance Extractor (AVE) were used to evaluate the convergent validity. The discriminant validity was tested by comparing the square root of AVE value for any construct/variable with correlation estimate between the considered construct/variable and other construct/variable. The internal consistency measurement instrument used in the study was Cronbach's Alpha. Further, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test Construct Reliability (CR) which shows whether all the measures represent same construct/variable.

In this study, the descriptive statistics; mean, median, mode and standard deviation of the general information and each variable were analyzed. In order to produce the inferential statistics, parametric statistical techniques such as correlation and regression were used. Initially the parametric assumptions, normality, linearity, independence of observations, homoscedasticity, no multicollinearity and normal distribution of values of residuals were tested.

In this study Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to find the strength and direction of a linear relationship/association between two continuous variables. The ordinal data generated from Likert scale data was treated as continuous data for analytical purposes based on several assumptions; Two variables are measured on a continuous scale, two continuous variables should be paired, no significant outliers, presence of bivariate normality and Linear relationship between two continuous variables. The strength and direction of the relationships were assessed using the value of the correlation coefficient. In this study assumptions were made to perform the multiple linear regression; the dependent variable and the independent variables are continuous, no significant outliers, normality, independent observations, linear relationships between dependent and independent variables, homoscedasticity of residuals, no multicollinearity and residuals are normally distributed. The R value, p-value and unstandardized coefficients were used to interpret the results of multiple linear regression.

In this study, continuous moderating effect of the variable : Gender Identification was tested using the process method introduced by Hayes in 2012. Further, bootstrapping was used in validating the multivariate

model by drawing a large number of sub samples and estimating models for each subsample. The same method was used to analyze the mediating effect of the variable; Identity Separation.

Findings and Discussion

In this study factors such as age, current working place, designation and service period were analyzed under sample demographics.

According to the demographic statistics of the sample, the majority, 65% of participants were between 31-40 years old and lowest number of participants of 4% were between 51-60 years. The sample consisted of 19% of participants of the age between 41-50 years and 12% of participants of the age between 20-30.

Moreover, 60% of the respondents of the online survey belonged to the category of Assistant Registrar, and total of 74% of the respondents represented the administrative category. 21% of the sample were representing the financial category while 5% of the respondents were from the internal audit section. The sample demographics showed that majority of the sample have completed a service period of 3-6 years which is the highest of 51%. Further, the number of respondents with the lowest and highest service periods of less than 3 years and more than 18 years are 8% for both.

Table 2: Summary of Demographic Data

Summary of Demographic Data						
Distribution of participants based on age	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60		
	12%	64%	19%	5%		
Distribution of participants based on the job category	Administration		Financial	Internal Audit		
	74%		21%	5%		
Distribution of participants based on the service period	Less than 3 years	3-6	7-10	11-14	15-18	>18
	8%	51%	22%	9%	5%	5%

Further, sample statistics were analyzed based on the current working place of the participants. Accordingly, the highest of 17% of participants have participated to the online survey from University of Peradeniya. Further, lowest 1% of participants have responded from Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

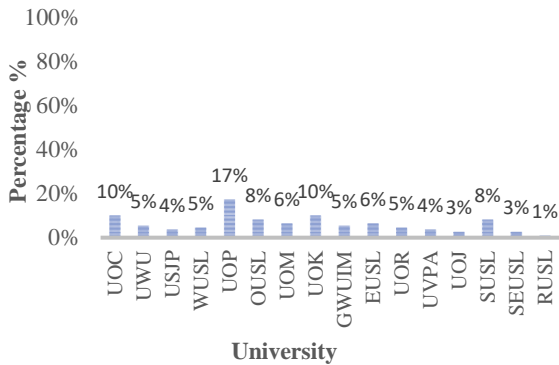


Figure 2: Distribution of Participants based on the University

Majority of the participants strongly disagreed to the statements which state that they compare themselves to men and other women at workplace when considering the career progression and development opportunities in the organization. Further, the average response for the statements, “When you think about your career progression in the organization, how much do you compare yourself to men in the organization”(Item 1), “When you think about your development opportunities in the organization, how much do you compare yourself to men in the organization”(Item 2), “I am conflicted between the feminine way and work ways of doing things” (Item 5) and “I feel I am continuously switching between my usual feminine-self and my work-self” (Item 6) was the 2nd response which is “A little”. Moreover, for item number 3 and 4 which state that “When you think about your career progression in the organization, how much do you compare yourself to other women in the organization” (Item 3) and “When you think about your development opportunities in the organization, how much do you compare yourself to other women in the organization” (Item 4) have also shown an average of response 2 which is “A little”. Furthermore, the response of most of the participants (mode) to all the items in the section 1: Identity Separation was “Not at all”.

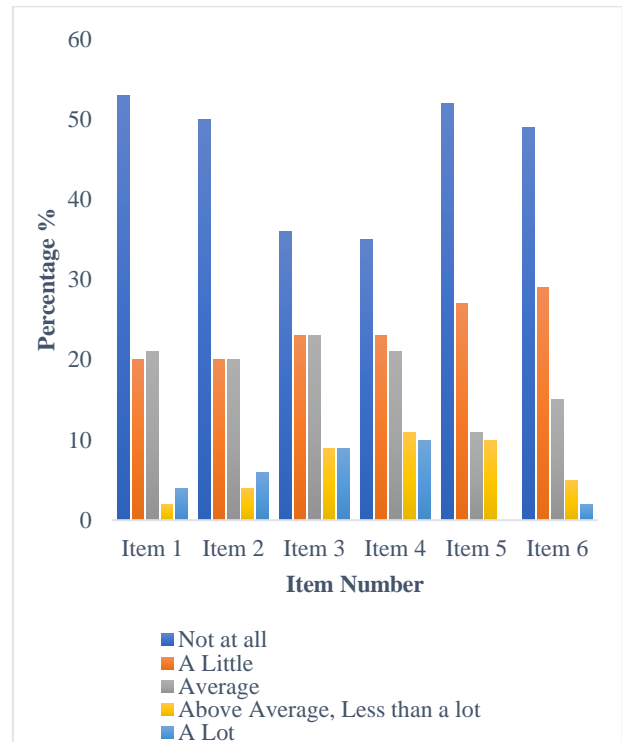
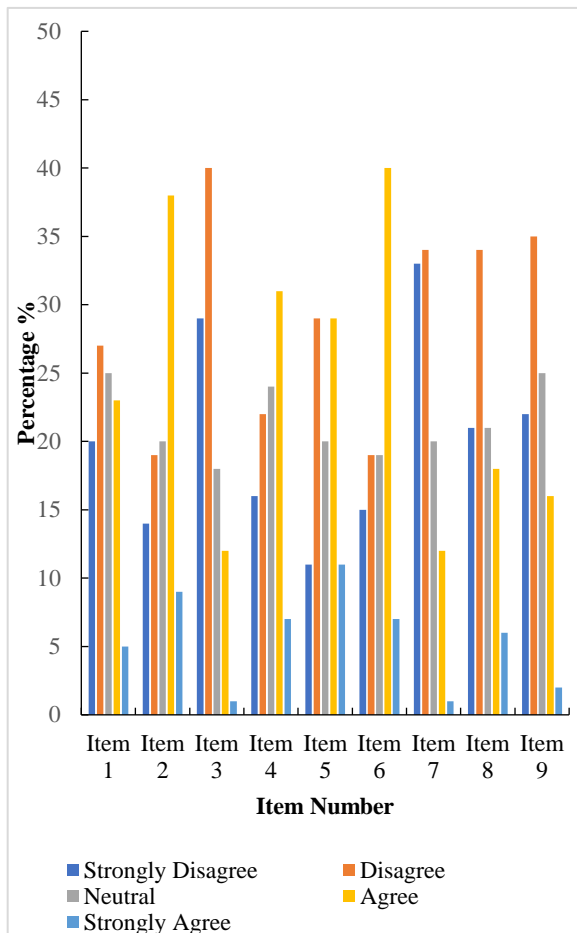


Figure 3: Response of the Participants for Section 1: Identity Separation

In the section 2, the variable stereotype threat was evaluated. 27%,40%,29%,34%,34% and 35% of the sample has disagreed to the statements which stated that “Some of my male colleagues believe I have less ability because I’m a woman”(Item 1), “Some of my male colleagues believe I’m not as committed to my career because I’m a woman”(Item 3), “Some of my male colleagues believe I’m limited in my career because I’m a woman”(Item 5), “Sometimes I worry that my behavior at work will cause my male colleagues to think that stereotypes about women apply to me”(Item 7), “Sometimes I worry that if I make a mistake at work, my male colleagues will think that I’m not suitable for this type of job because I’m a woman”(Item 8) and “Sometimes I worry that if I make a mistake at work my male colleagues will

think that women are not suitable for this type of



job”(Item 9) respectively.

Further 38% ,31% and 40% of the sample has agreed to the statements which stated “Some of my male colleagues believe women have less ability than men” (item 2),”Some of my male colleagues believe women are not as committed to their careers as men”(Item 4) and “Some of my male colleagues believe women are limited in their careers”(Item 6) respectively. For item no 1,2,4,5,6, and 8, the mean of the responses was 3 which is “Neutral”, while for item no 3,7, and 9 the mean response was 2 which is “Disagree”. The mode for the item 1,3,5,7,8 and 9 were 2 which is “Disagree” while it is “Agree” for item no 2,4 and 6.

Approximately, 40% of the sample has responded with the 3rd response which is “Sometimes” for all the 7 items related to workplace wellbeing which stated “Thinking of the past, how much of the time has your job made you feel Tense (item 1), Uneasy (item 2), Worried(item 3), Calm(item 4), Depressed(item 5), Moody(item 6) and Gloomy(item 7)”.The mean of the

Figure 4: Response of the Participants for Section 2: Stereotype Threat

items 1,2,3,4,5 and 6 is 3 which is “Sometimes” while it is 4 for the item no 7 which is “rarely”. Further, the mode of the responses for all the items was 3 or “sometimes”

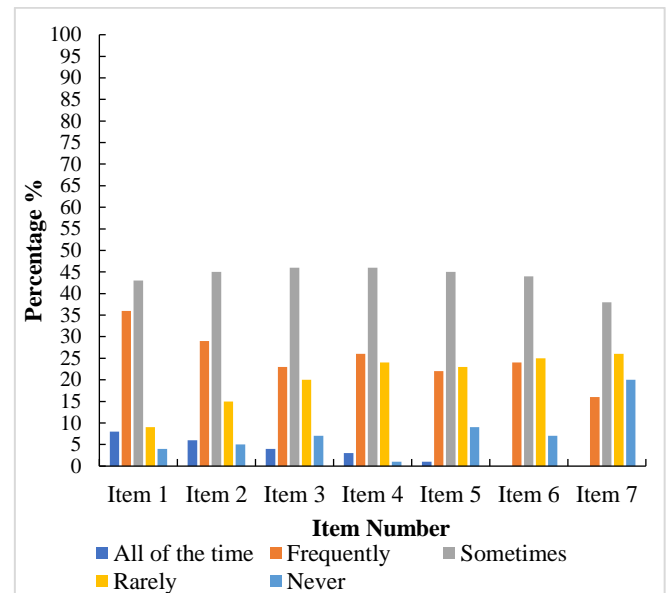


Figure 5: Response of the Participants for Section 3: Workplace Wellbeing

The majority of the sample has agreed to the statements ,“I enjoy interacting with other women at my work place”(item 1), “All women need to contribute to achieve the women’s goals”(item 3), “Women accomplish things that woman could not achieve”(item 4), “Women do not need to cooperate with other women to complete tasks at work” (item 5), “I think of being a woman as part of who I am”(item 6), “I don’t think being a woman as part of who I am”(item 7) of section 4.

But 52% of the sample has shown a neutral response to the statement , “I don’t like many of the women at my work place”(item 2).The mean for the responses of all the items is 4 which is “Agree”.

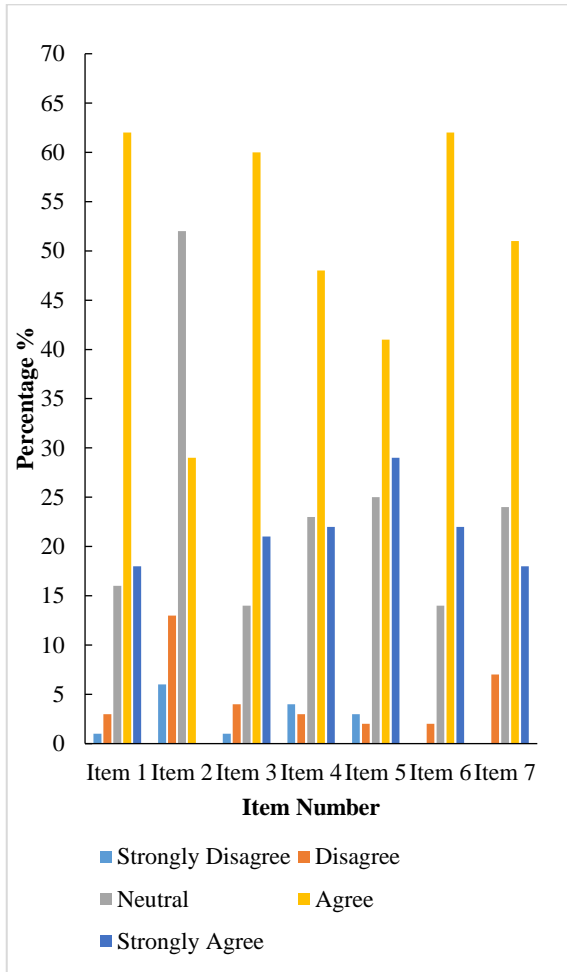


Figure 6: Response of the Participants for Section 4: Gender Identification

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was tested. The results showed that the questionnaire was reliable and validated. The variables showed acceptable results in tests for parametric assumptions, normality, linearity, independence of observations, homoscedasticity, no multicollinearity and normal distribution of values of residuals.

Thus the sample was considered as a normal distribution and the relationships between the workplace wellbeing with all the independent variables were considered linear.

Table 3 : Analysis for Validity and Reliability

Variable	Item	Factor Loading (>= 0.5)	Cronbach's Alpha (>=0.7)	CR (>= 0.7)	AVE (>= 0.5)
Identity Separation	1	0.84	0.815	0.55	0.859
	2	0.87			
	3	0.93			
	4	0.93			
	5	0.25			
	6	0.24			
Stereotype Threat	1	0.85	0.908	0.58	0.925
	2	0.87			
	3	0.55			
	4	0.80			
	5	0.87			
	6	0.84			
	7	0.40			
	8	0.82			
	9	0.77			
Workplace Wellbeing	1	0.88	0.814	0.90	0.685
	2	0.88			
	3	0.87			
	4	-0.64			
	5	0.85			
	6	0.84			
	7	0.82			
Gender Identification	1	0.71	0.742	0.82	0.398
	2	0.55			
	3	0.63			
	4	0.68			
	5	0.65			
	6	0.61			
	7	0.58			
	8	0.67			
	9	0.63			
	10	0.64			
	11	0.70			
	12	0.54			
	13	0.66			
	14	0.73			
	15	0.57			
	16	0.68			
	17	0.56			

In this study in order to assess whether there is any relationship between the variables, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was performed. Further, it was

assumed that variables were measured on a continuous scale as the Likert scale data were converted to numerical values, continuous variables were paired, no significant outliers, sample showed bivariate normality and as there is a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables. The correlations were computed among 4 variables. According to the results there was a statistically significant, moderate negative correlation between the stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector in Sri Lanka and, $r(98) = -0.350$, $p < 0.05$. Moreover, the results showed that there was a statistically significant, moderate positive correlation between the stereotype threat and identity separation of the women executives in the state university sector in Sri Lanka and, $r(98) = 0.206$, $p < 0.05$. Further, the correlation between the identity separation and workplace wellbeing and gender identification were not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4: Output of Correlation Analysis

		IS	ST	W	GI
				W	
Identity Separation (IS)	Pearson	1	.206	-	-
	Correlation		*	.162	.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040	.107	.956
	N	100	100	100	100
Stereotype Threat (ST)	Pearson	.206*	1	-	-
	Correlation			.350	.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.000	.120	
	N	100	100	100	100
Workplace Wellbeing (WW)	Pearson	-.162	-	1	-
	Correlation		.350	**	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.107	.000	.988	
	N	100	100	100	100
Gender Identification (GI)	Pearson	-.006	-	-	1
	Correlation		.156	.002	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.956	.120	.988	
	N	100	100	100	100

The regression was performed for dependent variable, workplace wellbeing. Further, it was assumed that variables were measured on a continuous scale as the Likert scale data were converted to numerical values, there are 3 independent variables, no significant outliers, sample showed normality, there is an

independence of observations, Homoscedasticity of residuals, multicollinearity Errors (residuals) are approximately normally distributed and that there is a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table 5: Regression Results for the Workplace Wellbeing with the Independent Variables

CA	B	95% CI for B		p	SEB	β	R2	$\Delta R2$
		LL	UL					
Model							0.134	0.107
Constant	4.108	2.992	5.223	0.000	0.562			
IS	-	-	0.075	0.344	0.073	-0.092		
	0.069	0.214						
ST	-	-	-	0.001	0.070	-0.340		
	0.242	0.382	0.103					
GI	-	-	0.185	0.567	0.131	-0.055		
	0.075	0.335						

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Identification, Identity Separation, Stereotype Threat
 a. Dependent Variable: Workplace Wellbeing

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.181	3	1.727	4.952	.003 ^b
Residual	33.476	96	.349		
Total	38.656	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Workplace wellbeing

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Identification, Identity Separation, Stereotype Threat

A multiple regression was conducted to predict the variance in variable workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university system with the variables gender identification, identity separation and stereotype threat. The multiple regression models statistically significantly predicted the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka, $F(3, 96) = 4.952$, $p < 0.05$, $R2 = 0.134$. The variables gender identification and identity separation were not statistically significant, stereotype threat was added statistically significantly to the prediction, $p < 0.05$.

Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in the Table 5 above.

Table 6: Output of Mediation and Moderation Analysis

Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.3683	.1356	.3517	3.7265	4.0000	95.0000	.0073
Model							
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	3.1930	.1621	19.6942	.0000	2.8711	3.5149	
ST	-.2506	.0731	-3.4284	.0009	-.3958	-.1055	
IS	-.0736	.0738	-.9967	.3214	-.2202	.0730	
GI	-.0778	.1316	-.5915	.5556	-.3390	.1834	
Int_1	.0717	.1708	.4198	.6756	-.2673	.4107	
Product terms key:							
Int_1	:	ST	x	GI			
Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):							
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p		
X*W	.0016	.1763	1.0000	95.0000	.6756		

Focal predict:	ST	(X)					
Mod var:	GI	(W)					

Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected and the following alternative hypothesis was accepted,

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka

Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in the Table 5 above. The fitted regression model was Workplace wellbeing=4.108-0.242*Stereotype threat.

Further, R²= 13.4% and it shows that 13.4% of variance in the workplace wellbeing could be predicted from the variables stereotype threat, identity separation and gender identification.

The moderation effect was tested by the process macro by Hayes in 2012. In performing the moderator effect test, it was assumed that the dependent and independent variables were measured on a continuous scale, the dependent variable, the independent and moderator variables should have a linear relationship, no multicollinearity, no significant outliers, and the distribution of the variables was approximately normal.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant moderating effect of Gender identification on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work among the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka

To test the hypothesis that the Gender identification moderates the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing, Hayes process macro was utilized. The results reveals that the interaction between the stereotype threat and the gender identification is not significant, $b = 0.0717$, 95% CI [-0.2673, 0.4107], $t = 0.4198$, $p > .05$, indicating that the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing is not moderated by gender identification.

The mediation effect was tested by the process macro by Hayes in 2012. In performing the mediating effect test, it was assumed that the dependent and independent variables were measured on a continuous scale, the dependent variable, the independent and moderator variables should have a linear relationship, no multicollinearity, no significant outliers, and the distribution of the variables was approximately normal.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant mediating effect of Identity Separation on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka

The study assessed the mediating role of identity separation on the relationship between Stereotype threat and Workplace wellbeing. The results revealed that there is no significant indirect effect of Stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing through identity separation ($b=-0.0144$, $p > 0.05$), accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the hypothesis 3. Furthermore, the direct effect of Stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing in presence of the mediator was found significant ($b = -0.2506$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, identity separation has no mediating effect on the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing of women executive in state university sector of Sri Lanka. The fitted regression model for Workplace wellbeing is;

Workplace wellbeing =3.1930-0.2506*Stereotype threat

Further, R²= 13.56% and it shows that 13.56% of variance in the job satisfaction of the women executives in the state university system could be predicted from the variable stereotype threat.

Discussion

Years and years of research on stereotype threat reveal that it has severe impact to the organizational development and the self-development of the

employees. According to Javadian & Zoogah in 2014, beginning of a negative stereotype could either result acceptance or reactance to the stereotype. Further research findings state that stereotype threat generates anxiety (Osborne, 2001), results in distress and nervousness (Bosson, Haymovitz & Pinel, 2004), and creates negative emotions (Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008), reduces working memory (Beilock, Rydell, & McConnell, 2007), increases mental workload (Croizet et al., 2004), and reduces control capacity (Inzlicht, McKay, & Aronson, 2006). Thus, stereotype threat has become a popular concern among the organizations which aim to enhance their organizational effectiveness. The mental and physical wellbeing of the employees has also become a top priority among the organizations over the years as it severely impacts in maintaining high efficiency and effectiveness in organizational context. Thus, one of the aims of this study was to investigate the impact of stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing, with a special emphasis on the women executives of the state university sector in Sri Lanka.

According to results findings, the workplace wellbeing showed a statistically significant, moderate negative correlation with the stereotype threat $r(98) = -0.350$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis; Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka was accepted. According to the literature, it has been revealed that well-being at work has diminished when the women experienced stereotype threat in their work environment (von Hippel, 2015).

Further, Combs & Milosevic in their study in 2016, states that work disengagement is one of the most prominent buffers used by minority women to shield themselves from daily discrimination in United States. Some studies reveal that experience of stereotype threat was linked with poorer psychological well-being and the psychological well-being has been linked to mortality (Collins, Gleib, & Goldman, 2009).

The research findings also reveal that the interaction between the stereotype threat and the gender identification is not significant $b = 0.0717$, 95% CI $[-0.2673, 0.4107]$, $t = 0.4198$, $p > .05$, indicating that the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing is not moderated by gender identification. Therefore, the null hypothesis was

accepted and the alternative hypothesis; Hypothesis 5: There is a significant moderating effect of Gender identification on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work among the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka was rejected. Further, the relationship between the workplace wellbeing and the gender identification was also not significant.

In the previous studies, it has been identified that situational incidents and individual factors moderate stereotype threat. Individual factors such as identification with the group (Schmader, 2002), confirmation of stereotypes (Schmader, Johns, & Barquissau, 2004), identification with the task domain (Steinberg, Okun & Aiken, 2012), and proactive personality (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007) are known to moderate the effects of stereotype threat. Further, according to von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa & McFarlane (2015), the gender identification was considered as a potential moderator of the effect of stereotype threat on the outcome variables. According to the finding of Wilks & Neto (2012) age seems to matter more than gender in the workplace when considering the job-related affective/emotional well-being and the lower wellbeing was not attributable to gender.

Further, some studies suggest that the negative relation between gender identity centrality and well-being could be due to women's perception of their gender as disadvantaged (Zitelny, Dror, Altman & Bar-Anan, 2022) and that feelings of belongingness and bond with in group members and feeling positively toward group membership contribute positively to psychological well-being, among advantaged and disadvantaged groups alike (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Thus, the non-significant moderating effect of gender identification on the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing and the non-significant relationship between the gender identification and workplace wellbeing suggest that there might be other factors which act as moderators or the non-perception of gender as disadvantaged and the feeling of belongingness and bond with the in group members have made the effect of gender identification non-significant in the selected context.

The results also revealed that there is no significant indirect effect of Stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing through identity separation ($b = -0.0144$, $p > 0.05$), accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the Hypothesis 3: There is a significant mediating effect

of Identity Separation on the relation between the stereotype threat and wellbeing at work of the women executives in the state university sector of Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, the direct effect of Stereotype threat on workplace wellbeing in presence of the mediator was found significant ($b = -0.2506$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, identity separation has no mediating effect on the relationship between stereotype threat and workplace wellbeing of women executive in state university sector of Sri Lanka. Further, no significant relationship was found between the workplace wellbeing and the identity separation in this study.

Previous studies showed that diminished wellbeing at work was resulted due to stereotype threat and the relationship between wellbeing at work and stereotype threat was mediated by identity separation (von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa & McFarlane, 2015). Kahn (1990) stated that work engagement means employees engage and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances which means that people are combined with their work, there is no separation between personal selves and the work selves. According to Abun et al., 2020 there is a positive correlation between the workplace wellbeing and the work engagement. Thus, it could be suggested that, there is no relationship between the identity separation and workplace wellbeing and the mediating effect of identity separation on the relationship between the workplace wellbeing and stereotype threat is not significant as there is a possible high work engagement among the women executives in the university sector in Sri Lanka resulting reduced identity separation among them.

According to the study results, the fitted regression model for Workplace wellbeing is; $\text{Workplace wellbeing} = 3.1930 - 0.2506 * \text{Stereotype threat}$. Further, $R^2 = 13.56\%$. It shows that 13.56% of variance in the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university system could be predicted from the variable stereotype threat. Ozili (2022), stated that low R-square in social science empirical research is acceptable as the objective of most social science research is to assess whether specific predictors or explanatory variables have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Thus, a low R-square of at least

0.1 (or 10 percent) is acceptable on the condition that some of the predictors or explanatory variables are statistically significant (Ozili, 2022). Therefore, the suggested model could be concerned as accepted.

Conclusion

According to the study results, it could be concluded that there is a significant negative impact of stereotype threat on the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state universities in Sri Lanka. However, there is no significant mediating effect of identity separation and moderating effect of gender identification on the relationship between stereotype threat and the workplace wellbeing of the women executives in the state university sector in Sri Lanka.

Limitations

In conducting this research, only quantitative data is collected via an online survey. However, usage of qualitative data via structured or semi structured interviews would aid to arrive at more accurate results and conclusions as the results and conclusions which could be derived only from quantitative results are limited and less comprehensive. Moreover, in using online survey method as the research instrument would result the most common constrains in online surveys such as survey fatigue, sampling issues and survey frauds. When considering the scope of this research it is narrow and more specific to a particular group in a much specific sector which would limit the possibility of generalizing the results and conclusions derived at the end of the research.

Recommendation for further Studies

This study could be used as a repeated study for another population and the results of the two studies could be compared in order to describe and interpret the results more successfully. Further, qualitative data could be used to interpret and empower the findings of the quantitative results. Further, the study could be expanded to research about the available affirmative action policies to mitigate the negative impact of stereotype threat and to suggest more successful policies to higher authorities based on the study results.

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