



**Factors Influencing the Career Success of Women Lecturers in Private Sector  
Higher Educational Institutions in Myanmar**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

HE = Higher Education

IS = International School

COCM = Coaching and Mentoring

GDENP = Gendered Practices

INDS = Individual Supports

HUMC = Human Capital

OBCS = Objective Career Success

SUCS = Subjective Career Success

SPSS = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

HEIs = Higher Education Industries

TPB = Theory of Planned Behavior

HR = Human Resource

## **Abstract**

The study aims to untangle the factors and processes that affect the career success of women lecturers employed at Myanmar's private tertiary educational institutions. It also explores the attributes that women lecturers perceived career success and elucidates the process by which various perceived career success drivers facilitate the path towards success in academic career. The research utilized a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative research designs. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) and Process Macro was applied. The content analysis was used to explore the perception of women lecturer on career success, and the process by which various factors affect their perception of career success.

In the quantitative approach, the findings indicated that except demographic and organisational support, other factors, such as human capital, family support, coaching and gendered practices, positively affect both the subjective and objective career success of women lecturers. In testing the mediation effects, except demographic variable, subjective career success mediates the relationship between various factors, such as human capital, family support, organisational support, coaching and gendered practices, and objective career success, suggesting that critical role played by subjective career success in translating the effects of various drivers to objective career outcome of women lecturers.

In the qualitative approach, participants perceived career success as goal attainment, specific achievement and personal qualities. In addition, findings enumerated. The interview data revealed various roles of the success drivers: personal drivers energize the career success, organisational support bridges the gaps between career motive and career goals, gendered practices and family support serves as hygiene factors towards success trajectory. The study offers implications to the policy makers and practitioners to design effective strategies based on significant drivers and processes to help assist women's career success in the private HEIs.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

According to Aung (2021), Myanmar's higher education sector severely lacks women faculty personnel. Women comprised an extremely small percentage of Myanmar's university professors in 2019 (Teacircleoxford, 2022). Numerous factors, such as gender-based discrimination, restricted access to higher education, and cultural norms, contribute to the scarcity of women in academic positions (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022).

The government of Myanmar is making efforts to improve gender parity in academia. The government initiated the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Programme in 2019 to encourage and support women's participation in higher education, providing scholarships and professional development opportunities (Teacircleoxford, 2022). The program also funds activities that aim to increase the number of women in academia and their retention in such positions. In 2020, the government of Myanmar also unveiled a plan to advance gender parity in the workforce.

Efforts are being made to enhance the percentage of women in academic leadership roles and to expand access to higher education for everyone. Even with these initiatives, much more must be done to advance the careers of women academics at Myanmar's institutions of higher learning (Jamali, Bhutto, Khaskhely & Sethar, 2022). The gender gap in higher education is a severe problem, and more work has to be done to identify its origins and provide effective solutions. This will help establish a norm that encourages women to pursue higher education and professional careers, leading to more women holding prestigious academic positions in Myanmar's universities.

These days, there has also been a shift in perspective of women on ensuring that women are equally represented in school leadership roles and that female students have access to the same resources as their male counterparts (Jamali, Bhutto Khaskhely & Sethar, 2022). Women enrolment and completion of higher education have been research areas that has generated lots of focus over the years (Yusuf, 2021). The realization that it is crucial to provide equally high-quality education to students of both genders given that equal educational opportunities for all people,

regardless of gender, have been a focal point of educational reform efforts, research efforts into the role of gender on achievement outcomes has expanded (Yusuf, 2021). Specifically, women's involvement in the academic sector has emerged as a recent research interest, especially in Asia and Africa. It is, therefore, critically important to focus on women's contributions to education and untangle which factor contributed to career success of women in academia.

## **1.2 Motivation for the study**

Women's increased participation in different job sectors is evident in many sectors of Myanmar's economy (Naing, 2020). However, the research on whether women progress or perceive success in their chosen profession is relatively underrepresented. This is evident, especially for women in developing countries like Myanmar, where cultural assumptions limit their achievements and perception of success. Women's participation in different sectors of the economy is prevalent in modern-day Myanmar's economy. According to Thant & Chang (2021), women's career success factors can vary across professional fields. It is, therefore, vital to explore the factors specific to the education sector, specifically higher education institutions.

According to internal data from Myanmar's Ministry of Education, there are 170 government institutions under 13 different ministries, and 33 institutions are in Yangon and 36 institutions are situated in Mandalay. Myanmar has been implementing its national education laws since 2014, with a 2015 amendment to include civil society organisations. Myanmar's education sector is slowly progressing in drafting the subsector laws for private education to address issues such as university autonomy, forming their own curriculum and quality assurance matters, and teachers' education backgrounds. Aside from Myanmar's fast-changing economic and social environment, private and government universities must reengineer their curriculum for quality assurance and effectively conform to market needs. Furthermore, teaching employees play an essential role in citizenship education. The motivation to conduct this research is based on exploring the existing knowledge gaps by focusing on women's career success in higher education.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

According to Aung (2021), the struggles faced by women professionals continue to go unnoticed in many developing countries. Women in developing economies like Myanmar are under the influence of personal, social, and professional factors that could hinder or compromise the rational career prosperity of women. In Myanmar, while men may dominate other sectors, women professionals seem to be more predominant in the academic sector. However, women lecturers face significant challenges in their career progress due to socio-cultural barriers that impose direct and indirect limits on their achievements (Sein, 2022). The barrier to social support is further synergized with adverse organisational policies that favor male employees to be in leading positions in HEIs.

In recent years, Myanmar academics, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders have attempted to modify the former male-preferred practices in the academic sector (Yusuf, 2021). They made significant investments in vocational departments to strengthen the role of women lecturers in the higher educational institutions in Myanmar. Nonetheless, as a developing country with limited resources, understanding about factors that can promote the career success of women lecturers is essential to avoid wasting resources on costly interventions that are genuinely ineffective for women. Therefore, this study explores the career success drivers, process, and meaning from positivist and interpretative perspectives.

### **1.4 Research Aim**

The involvement of women in the education sector is essential for the successful socio-economic development of a developing country, which requires upgrading human capital. This research aims to examine the intricate factors that shape to the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs through a mixed-methods approach. The study's overarching goal is to explore the factors contributing to career success of female lecturers in Myanmar's private education sector. More specifically, this study aims to ascertain individual and organisational factors that influence women's career success and elucidate how subjective career success mediates the association between career success factors and objective career success.

## 1.5 Research Objectives

The study's objectives are set forth to cover both qualitative and quantitative approaches. As for the quantitative approach, the objectives of the study are:

- To critically assess the extent to which individual and organisational factors impact the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs.
- To critically assess the extent to which subjective career success mediates on the relationship between career success factors and objective career success of women lecturers in private HEIs.
- To explore the career success from the perspective of women lecturers in private HEIs
- To elucidate the mechanism in which individual and organisational factors influence the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs

## 1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions are to be answered in this study:

1. Which individual and organisational-level support factors influence the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?
2. To what extent do women's perceptions of subjective career success mediate the association between career success factors and objective career success of women lecturers in private HEIs??
3. How do women lecturers in private HEIs perceive career success?
4. How do individual and organisational factors shape the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?

## 1.7 Women Professionals in HEIs

Over the years, the global education sector invested heavily in optimizing the knowledge of teachers and mentors (Sein, 2022). Regardless of the gender association, the importance of knowledge is unmatched. Research conducted in the Swedish higher education system emphasized on the training and development of teachers and mentors (Silander & Stigmar, 2019). The research argued that knowledgeable resources on the personnel front are essential to satisfy the learning outcomes of the stakeholders, particularly students. As a response measure, different

training modules are proposed throughout the span to ensure teachers are equipped with adequate knowledge and intellect to train students for the future (Silander & Stigmar, 2019). The findings of this research are supportive while acquiring the first direction. Teachers in HEIs should hold a particular knowledge of the subject area for establishing a beginner position.

Research conducted by Fullwood and Rowley (2017) argued on the aspect of knowledge-sharing culture among teachers. The authors argued that training modules designed for teachers are limited to expanding intellectual aspects. It is essential for institutions, particularly HEIs, to focus more on the skillsets that are important for delivering fundamental roles. The research argued that most mentors cannot fulfill the designated roles, which creates a gap in maintaining the quality of education for the students. The argument is further supported by Shaker and Nathan (2017), who studied the culture of HEI in the United States of America (USA). The authors stated that most HEIs in the USA are inclined to invest in the fundamental skillsets of professors and mentors instead of strengthening the intellectual framework. The findings provided a holistic insight related to the core investments in the skill development of teachers. The authors explain knowledge broadly to persuade audiences, such as HEIs management, while providing women professionals a pathway to a successful career. The definition of knowledge in this study, which emphasizes developing necessary skill sets, is a fundamental strength that captures the attention.

Besides, women in the HEIs represent one of the profound resources, like teachers and mentors. Women are considered the principal assets for the education sectors globally. Research conducted by Macfarlane and Burg (2019) on HEIs in the United Kingdom (UK) argues in favour of training for teachers' progression to leadership positions. The study explored that one-fifth of women represent the British education system. The participating women have substantial intellect and knowledge of various theories and conceptual frameworks that are taught to students subsequently. The study recommends that institutions provide teachers with a platform to implement the knowledge practically and transform into leaders (Macfarlane & Burg, 2019). The research emphasized the importance of knowledge among teachers and the requirement of becoming leaders for the future.

The situation is embraced gradually in the Myanmar education system. HEIs in Myanmar are currently working on the upstream processes for strengthening the overall experiences of women's participation in the education sector. The institutions in Myanmar represent women as

role models. Most institutions are investing in improving women teachers' theoretical and intellectual knowledge, considering it a fundamental skill set for career progression (Mon & Saito, 2017). The authors affirmed a progressive transition for women in the educational sector throughout Myanmar. The findings of the proposed research by Mon and Saito (2017) affirm that women professionals in Myanmar are having a series of opportunities to optimise their knowledge from different perspectives, such as intellect, leadership, and related skillsets, to accomplish a successful career journey. Altogether the findings of this study imply that while potential is there for women to materialise, HEIs need to develop the capacities of women professionals to ensure career success in the longitudinal span of the occupational lifecycle in the educational sector.

### **1.8 Success factors of women in Institutions of higher learning**

Success factors for women in institutions of higher learning have been a subject of discussion for many researchers and authors. According to a study conducted by Al-Shqairat, Al Shra'ah & Abu-Rumman (2020), women's career progress in institutions of higher learning is essential since they are carriers of exceptional capabilities. However, the study indicates that it has taken many years for women to gain the attention of different stakeholders to pave the way for women in various education sectors. The study has also provided evidence of the increased rate of educated women in the past few decades, citing the 8 million enrolments of women in higher education in Iran. Such figures illustrate that the rate of women's involvement in education has been changing, paving the way for women to teach and hold managerial positions in institutions of higher learning (Al-Shqairat, Al Shra'ah & Abu-Rumman, 2020).

According to Ong, Jaumot-Pascual & Ko (2020), having women as academicians is quite a new concept in academia. For example, the author states that becoming a professor is considered the highest rank in the education sector. Having a profound outlook on the past few years, the rate of women going up the academic ladder has been encouraging. Ong, Jaumot-Pascual & Ko (2020) report that the rate of women academicians in developed and developing countries ranges from 10 to 20%. Nzinga (2020), on the other hand, argues that the environmental context might be influential in promoting success in the teaching career among women. The author has focused on analysing gender-affiliated challenges faced by women in teaching and administration. Based on the author's analysis, higher education

institutions are gender-centred organisations. In the long run, they create a socially and culturally centred environment that creates inequality within the academy. Based on the author's articulations, access to equal employment opportunities is a probable factor in either the success or failure of women in higher education (Nzinga, 2020).

Boldureanu et al. (2020) suggest that the unequal distribution of work prospects for women in India is mostly influenced by variables including racial segregation, lack of experience, and motivation to engage in various professional disciplines. Based on such an author's sentiments, the environment provided by various institutions and governance plays a significant role in nurturing the success of women in higher education institutions in both teaching and administration. Valk et al. (2020) based their research on understanding the success factors among women in science and technology. Currently, the situation has changed in India as more women have continuously become interested in the profession in different workplaces and, most importantly, higher education institutions. According to the authors, among the motivating factors for women getting into science and technology is a change in family perspectives on education (Valk et al., 2021). Most parents have changed the narrative that some courses are affiliated with a specific gender. Most have realised the importance of involving female students in technical professions. Such family ties and motivations have led to the successful involvement of women in different spectrums of society.

Globalisation and increased skilled labour have also played an imperative role in enhancing career advancement among women in higher education institutions. Nguti, Osarenkhoe, and Kiraka (2019) support the argument that the involvement of women in the technological sector has been a new phenomenon. Based on their discussions, only 30% of women in Kenya have taken different positions in technical industries such as Information and Technology. However, Nguti, Osarenkhoe, and Kiraka (2019) detailed some of the common success factors contributing to women getting positions in different professions. An important factor is self-efficacy. Women have been able to identify their potential in handling technical matters in men's hands. Most of them can succeed and manage all technical tasks assigned to them. Family ties have also contributed to the increased number of women academicians. Other success factors include self-drive and perceived outcome expectations (Nguti, Osarenkhoe, and Kiraka, 2019). It is possible to relate such success factors to the current situation among private universities in Yangon. Such arguments also present the current case in regions that seek to involve more women in different spectrums of societal development, such as higher education and administration.

According to González-Pérez, Mateos de Cabo & Sáinz (2020), it is essential to overlook the historical perspectives and background information on women's quest to engage in different professions. Among them is understanding the relationship between family ties and work-life. Based on the author's knowledge, organisations had failed to provide a conducive working environment for women, especially the ones seeking to join technical careers such as physicians. In the long run, they become unproductive and lose interest in further studies. Among the arguments presented by the authors is that societal identities have been a long-time barrier to success among women educators. Work-life balance has been the primary challenge faced by women when trying to seek opportunities in different careers and advancing their current employment status (González-Pérez, Mateos de Cabo & Sáinz, 2020). Based on such arguments, contemporary educational institutions have spearheaded women's accommodation in developing women's careers in institutions of higher learning.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020) have taken a profound outlook on some success factors among women educators. Over the past 50 years, the world has experienced an improvement in the number of women getting opportunities in different professions. However, barriers such as gender inequality exist in different places (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). Some of the success factors include the social capital and critical organisation network. Nevertheless, the lack of enough networking among women has been a dominant setback in achieving success in different professions, including education. Overall, career success of women can be attributed to a multitude of socio-cultural factors; more importantly, these factors appear to be context-specific, requiring a need for an integrated framework using a systematic investigation for fuller understanding.

## 1.9 Organisation of the study

This research is organized into five chapters. **Chapter 1** provides an introduction section of the study. **Chapter 2** entails the review of various theoretical and empirical literature on the influencing factors, followed by developing hypotheses and constructing a conceptual framework. **Chapter 3** presents the research method of study, i.e., mixed method, and the design of methodologies in line with each research approach. **Chapter 4** presents findings from the data analysis and discussion based on quantitative and qualitative analysis results. The last section, i.e., **Chapter 5**, draws conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and directions for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

The participation of women in the professional landscape is a challenging course. Despite advancements in work processes and corporate freedom of speech, women continue to face significant barriers in their career paths. This is particularly true in developing countries where gender bias in access to career development still exists (Sen, 2001; Sturm, 2004; Saifuddin, Dyke, and Hossain: 2019). In these countries, women encounter more challenges as compared to men since males are provided more opportunities for professional engagement by organisations (Aliyu et al., 2019). The families' responsibilities are other obstacles faced by women professionals in their career paths (Melamed, 1996). In fact, various personal and organisational factors regulate the process that works against women's advancement in their career pathway. Identification of specific factors that can contribute to women's career success is required.

The objective of this literature review is to conduct a critical evaluation of the factors that can influence the career success of women professionals specific to the higher education sector. Career success has been approached from several different theoretical perspectives in the literature. This section presents several theoretical approaches to illustrate the factors that can be salient in contributing to the success of the careers of women professionals in HEIs in Myanmar. The core objectives of this literature review are to:

- Discuss the various theoretical perspectives that provide critical lenses for evaluating the career success of women.
- Identify and evaluate various career success dimensions.
- **Explore** the role of various social, organisational, and personal factors in supporting both subjective and objective career success of women.
- Evaluate the barriers that inhibit the subjective and objective career success of women.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

To understand professional success for women in Higher Education in Myanmar, it is crucial to base our research on existing theories. The literature study will analyse the complex dynamics influencing women's career paths in this specific field using three main theories: Social Capital Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and Motivation Theory. These theories were chosen for their ability to offer in-depth understanding of how social interactions, individual decision-making, and motivational variables interact and influence women's progress in academic settings. Social Capital Theory provides a perspective on how women use their social networks and organisational support systems to progress career paths. TPB explains how cognitive processes and behavioural goals impact women's activities in academia. Motivation Theory offers a detailed comprehension of the internal and external factors that push women towards achieving job satisfaction in higher education environments. By combining these theoretical approaches, this seeks to enhance understanding of the obstacles and possibilities encountered by women in achieving success in Myanmar's higher education system.

### **2.2.1 Human Capital Theory**

The most common theory specifically addressing career success in the literature is the human capital theory (Becker, 1993). The human capital theory has dominated the management literature of career success since the 1980s (Judge et al., 1995). This theory hypothesizes that everyone differs in the amount and quality of intellectual assets or capital in terms of education, experience, skill, and personal characteristics that they bring to the job. The amount and effectiveness of the human capital one has and expends on the job is the main determinant of career success (Becker, 1993; Judge et al., 1995). The human capital theory proposes that employees make rational choices regarding investments in their own human capital. This theory argues that individuals make rational choices regarding whether or not they want to invest more time, effort, and money in education, training, and experience (Becker, 1993) Their investment in these human capitals influences their work performance and, subsequently, influences the organization rewards. Melamed, (1995) classified human capital into three types: (a) relevant to the job (e.g. education, experience, mental ability); (b) partially relevant depending on the nature of the job (e.g. personality); and (c) not relevant to the job at all (e.g. race, marital status, physical appearance).

The Human Capital Theory is highly relevant to our investigation into career performance among women in Higher Education (HE) in Myanmar. This theory highlights how individuals' education, experience, talents, and personal traits influence their career progression, offering insight into the aspects that impact women's progress in academic settings. Within Myanmar's

higher education environment, Human Capital Theory provides insights into how women's investments in their own human capital impact their career paths, especially considering the varying access to educational opportunities and professional growth. Examining the significance of pertinent and somewhat pertinent human capital elements, as categorized by Melamed (1995), might provide insight into the particular skills and qualities that enhance professional achievement for women in higher education. Studying how individual investments in human capital interact with organizational benefits can help us find ways to improve women's chances for career progression and satisfaction in academia.

### **2.2.2 Social Capital Theory**

The theory focuses on how individuals' social relationships benefit them and their organisations. Thus, social capital entails the interactions that result from a person's position in the workplace and social interactions within a social group. Generally, it describes a person's ability to get social benefits from everyone they interact and engage with. These social interactions influence how workers develop, describe, or transpire careers within organisations. When social resources are combined with network structures, social capital positively influences career success. For example, the common social factors that influence career success include mentorship programs and access to resources and information. Said et al. (2015, p. 815) assert that at the workplace, perceived organisational support, which is one's perception of the contributions made by the organisation to improve their well-being, influences an individual's career success. According to this theory, when women get enough support to develop their careers and work efficiently through mentorship programs, they gain experience and the skills that affect their career success. It implies that mentoring programs yield resources important in the workplace for successful careers.

Besides, attaining more information and having access to assets within the workplace creates a workplace environment that promotes advancing actions that eventually elicit career success.

As discussed above, prior research contributes some useful insights on how and where social capital contributes to female careers in the workplace, research is still lacking on how the social capital provided by other people through organisational support programs such as mentoring contributes to the career success of women in academia, especially in socially embedded contexts like Myanmar. Thus, it is expected that applying Social Capital Theory to this research on women's career success in Higher Education in Myanmar is essential since conventional societal structures and gender norms might impact women's access to resources and opportunities. Studying whether and how women develop and use social connections and how they overcome obstacles and seek assistance to progress in their careers may be highly valuable because this approach can unearth the relevance of social capital that are crucial for promoting women's career success in HE, thereby creating a condition that can foster inclusive environments and enhance gender equity in the education sector.

### **2.2.3 The Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Icek Ajzen (1985) and is a social psychology theory that seeks to explain how people make decisions about their actions. Following this theory, people's actions result from their deliberate decision to act, which is influenced by their expectations of those actions' outcomes. This idea is central to the theory of behavioral intentions. In order to better understand and anticipate human behaviour, the view is used in various contexts, from health-related decision-making to marketing-related studies. The TPB approach is motivated by the concept of purpose. According to the theory, attitudes toward the activity, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control all shape an individual's purpose in acting. An individual's perspective on the consequences of their activities may be inferred from how they evaluate them. This assessment is predicated on assumptions about the outcomes the action is expected to produce. Feelings of peer pressure to engage in an activity exemplify a subjective norm. At the same time, one's perception of their level of behavioural control might indicate how simple or difficult it will be to engage in the behaviour in question.

According to the TPB, one's actions are the outcome of a dynamic between one's outlook, subjective norms, and sense of behavioural agency. In other words, the strength of an individual's attitude, the amount of pressure from the individual's social environment, and the individual's belief in their ability to act all contribute to the strength of the individual's intention to act. In other words, the theory does not assume that all three requirements must coexist for a behavior to occur; it only believes that at least one must be present. Even if a person has a positive attitude toward the activity in issue, they may be coerced to engage in it if it serves some other purpose.

The TPB has been applied in several fields, from health-related decision-making to marketing research and organisational behaviour. In health-related decision-making, for instance, the idea has been used to foretell the likelihood that an individual would take positive actions like giving up tobacco, increasing their physical activity, or adjusting their diet. The TPB method has been utilised in marketing research to learn more about consumer decision-making and the impact of advertising on that decision. The discipline of organisational behaviour has also used the theory to shed light on how employees evaluate their performance on the job and respond to management's directives. The Theory of Planned Behaviour, when considered as a whole, provides a robust framework for elucidating and predicting individual human actions. It's based on the assumption that an individual's actions result from internal and external factors like attitude, norms, and motivations. Intent is grounded on this philosophy. The idea has been used in various contexts, from the health decision-making process to marketing research, where it accurately predicts consumer behaviour.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides a useful structure for studying the decision-making processes that influence women's career paths in Higher Education (HE) in Myanmar. Studying the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control will help us better comprehend the factors that affect women's intentions and behaviours in academics. In Myanmar, societal norms and institutional practices might impact women's views on their skills and possibilities. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) can be used to analyse how these factors affect women's decisions regarding their careers.

## 2.2.4 Motivation Theory

Women's level of motivation affects their career success. According to "Maslow's Theory of Hierarchical Needs," individuals are motivated when all their needs are fulfilled. Everyone's needs start from the "physiological needs necessary for survival, safety needs that entail protection from various dangers, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs" (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020, p. 751). Motivational theory explores the forces that push individuals to work towards a given outcome or goal. Rather than seeing motivation as a given human drive, this study explores research-backed frameworks that examine the salient elements that push people toward their career success. Motivational theories use several approaches that explain the best ideas for motivation in the workplace, either using the factors that encourage or uphold motivated behaviour such as rewards, or individual beliefs that might impact motivation or expectations. These theories explain factors that may facilitate or hinder the success of women in higher education in Myanmar. This paper will utilise Maslow's hierarchy of needs - a theory of human motivation by Abraham Maslow.

Maslow's hierarchy outlines 5 tiers of human needs represented by a pyramid with the basic needs at the bottom and the utmost satisfaction at the peak. The basic needs are psychological needs such as food and shelter, followed by safety needs such as employment and personal security, then love and belonging such as connection to peers, later esteem needs such as status and recognition, and ultimately self-actualisation which indicates attaining full potential in one's career (Ihensekien and Joel, 2023). The pyramid explains that basic needs must be met first, followed by the next level; however, Maslow clarifies that life does not always offer room for a sequential pattern, thus one can move to a pertinent need depending on their state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with some other drives.

Assessing the factors influencing career success for women in higher education in Myanmar, it is best to understand if women have access to the intrinsic and extrinsic conditions that motivate their drive towards academic careers. The hierarchy of needs theory can facilitate a more holistic approach to higher education institution management so that they can assess the basic needs of women in careers and address, based on available knowledge, what women in Myanmar need to thrive (Ihensekien and Joel, 2023). Individuals who seek career success aim at satisfying their self-

actualisation needs, which entail the need for learning, personal development, and challenging, creative, and fun work. Maslow divided the needs into "growth needs" and the "deficiency needs." The growth needs are the highest in the hierarchy, and deficiency needs are the lowest in the hierarchy. From his perspective, failing to meet the deficiency needs leads to unpleasant outcomes. For example, at work, women's self-doubt in accomplishing tasks results from unmet deficiency needs like safety and social needs. Conversely, growth needs lead to happiness and high satisfaction with the roles and responsibilities that one pursues.

On the other hand, in "Herzberg's two-factor Theory," Herzberg divided the needs into motivating and hygiene factors. Poor hygiene factors in the workplace destroy women's motivation and prevent them from achieving their career ambitions (Pakdel et al., 2018, p. 60). Hygiene factors include supervisor quality, policies and rules, co-worker relations, and working conditions. For example, if the workplace lacks policies and rules that protect women from discrimination and gender-based violence at the workplace, women will find the workplace toxic, destroying their motivation. Thus, improving the hygiene factors will decrease job dissatisfaction. Still, their career success is influenced by motivator factors like the type of work itself, responsibility, recognition, and personal achievements. However, in his theory of needs, McClelland asserts that people have three main motivating drivers that do not rely on age or gender. Also, one driver is dominant in everyone's behaviour and depends on every person's life experiences. Motivators include power, affiliation, and achievement. Power is "the need to control other people's and one's own work; affiliation is the need for social acceptance, belonging, and love, while achievement is the need to demonstrate and accomplish one's own competence." Thus, when women with a high need for power are motivated when they hold high positions of authority at work, those with a high need for affiliation become motivated when they are accepted and liked by others in the workplace, leading to career success.

Motivation Theory provides beneficial understanding into the factors that drive or hinder career achievement for women in Higher Education in Myanmar. Studies can analyse women's motivation in academic settings by utilising theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and McClelland's Theory of Needs. It is crucial to comprehend how various motivations such as safety, social support, opportunities for personal growth, intrinsic fulfilment

impact women's perceptions of career outcomes to create specific treatments and support systems. Within Myanmar's higher education environment, women may encounter distinct obstacles and limitations. Motivation Theory offers a detailed structure for comprehending the various routes to achieving career success. This theory will help us understand the motivations behind women's involvement and perseverance in academia, allowing us to create interventions that cater to their unique requirements and goals, therefore promoting a more inclusive and encouraging atmosphere for women in higher education.

### **2.2.5 Feminist theory**

This study mainly observes women academic employees; therefore, feminist theory is one of the dominant background theories of this current study. The feminist theory is an intellectual and philosophical framework to analyse the ways in the experiences and perspectives of women influence social structures, relationships, and individual identities (Hooks, 2000). Bell Hooks examined the intersectionality of race, class, and gender and addressed the diverse experiences of women; additionally she discusses the broad social impacts of feminist theory in areas such as education, work and family emphasising the role in achieving gender justice. The outcomes of feminist theory emphasis overlapping identities and how it has led to more inclusive advocacy (Crenshaw, 1991). Lorber (2010) provides an overview of feminist theories and examines their impact on social policies and practices in areas like work, health, and family. There are a few ways feminist theory has contributed to career success, especially for women. Feminist theory has helped drive policy that prohibits discrimination based on gender, giving women equal access to career advancement opportunities. Feminist theory has promoted policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave, flexible hours, and on-site childcare, helping women manage career and family responsibilities. These policies have enabled more women to sustain and succeed in their careers; feminist theory has encouraged the creation of women-led mentorship programs such as professional network that support and guide women to help them to navigate career challenges and advance professionally. Feminist theory emphasises the importance of diverse representation in leadership positions; it can lead to pursuing leadership roles to more inclusive decision-making in their career success.

In understanding the factors influencing career success for women in private higher education institutions in Myanmar, feminists' perspectives on personal factors that influence successful careers in women are attributable to psychological factors such as individual characteristics, personality, behaviour, and attitude (Mahajan, 2022). Other personal factors include self-esteem issues, availability or lack of motivation and ambition, confidence, assertiveness, and emotional stability. Creativity, assertiveness, confidence, and positive values help women move up the ladder in their careers.

The structural or institutional influence perspective affirms that women will tend to stagnate or be disadvantaged in their careers if the institutions they serve oppress women (Luke, 2020). For example, if women have limited access to resources and power and their numbers are few, it will dictate their position and behaviour towards women in the institution. While the key argument is that men and women have equal capacity to hold any positions or given work, biases in the organisation, discriminatory appointments, men's dominance, biased promotional practices, and lack of policies or legislations to support women could affect women's career success (Kandiko Howson and Lall, 2020). Some of the structural elements that could facilitate women's career success in private higher education systems in Myanmar include good mentoring mechanisms, organisational support, better promotional policies, transparency in appointments, and equality in access to resources and power for the available genders (Cifci, 2020).

The last aspect of feminist theory is the role of cultural factors that affect organisational structure elements and gender factors (Mahajan, 2022). In the context of Myanmar, this study looks at the societal construction of gender, roles therein, expectations, and responsibilities of men and women. The problem is that individuals in society take irrelevant gender-based roles in the workplace, considering the world is already evolving towards equality and kept by individuals who subscribe to old, rigid ways of doing things. Cultural factors give birth to stereotypes about women and their capacity to deliver in certain roles. For example, if a belief is the men are capable of managing top roles in a system, it concludes that the farthest women can go is on subordinate duties. Such beliefs relegate women to being only the best at motherly roles, nurturers, and caregivers. This theory will guide the assessment of the work and societal environment in Myanmar that supports women's career advancements in private higher education institutions.

## **2.3 Empirical review**

Career success can be generally considered in relative terms. Research has broadly classified it into two categories: subjective and objective career success. Objective success can be accounted as attaining a pay rise or promotion; in short, they are observable experiences. On the contrary, subjective career success refers to experiences that can only be felt by the individual and what success means to them, for example, a sense of accomplishment after attaining given goals in the career development process.

## **2.4 Career progression of women in private higher education**

The review of documents researching the studies of factors influencing career success for women in private higher education institutions in Myanmar is limited; however, there are numerous studies worldwide that note some of the factors that facilitate or hinder female academics from reaching their full potential in top-level management in the education sector. Myanmar is a developing nation and is notably transforming its education sector by embracing numerous reforms to make education a tool for improving productivity and quality of life and make it a basic right. The study by Mon and Saito (2018) shows that women in leadership positions in Myanmar have a long way to go to be at par with their male counterparts, who are the majority in leadership positions. However, the few females in leadership positions acknowledge that formal and informal learning, female role models, and religion are their key motivators in shaping their leadership drive (Mon and Saito, 2018). Despite the improvement of women in education careers, they are still under-represented, especially in top leadership (ILO, 2020; The HEAD Foundation, 2022).

According to Win (2018), while reforms have worked to improve the career opportunities and status for women, most of them occupy low-status, part-time, and temporary positions in higher education institutions while those in leadership positions remain proportionally small. Gender equality remains unresolved in Myanmar with high gender bias and discrimination, a lack of training, and the likelihood of women working is 51.6% compared to males at 80.2% of men due to family responsibilities (Win, 2018). Therefore, both males and women have varied challenges as they advance their careers in Myanmar; however, women face high barriers while men utilise their chances to capitalise on available opportunities for career growth. The few successful women have to perform extremely higher than their male counterparts to achieve promotion and higher status in the organisation.

## **2.5 Career Success' Dimensions and Criteria**

Career success is a topic that receives attention among scholars because the success of individuals in a society has far-reaching economic and social impact on his or her life, family, environment, and society. Given its significance, Das and Jha (2023), in their review, recently suggest conducting research on elucidating initiatives that assist the career success of women at various levels, not exclusively for females in leadership positions. Research that focuses how various individual, organisational and societal factors can enhance the career success of women. Despite widespread acceptance of the importance of career success, a universal definition of career success does not exist; scholars have developed different definitions of career success for a person.

One of the most important aspects before defining career success is to provide the meaning of success in a career context. In the present study, in accordance with Judge, Cable, Boudreau, and Bretz (1995)'s definition, career success is referred to as "... the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (p. 486).

In line with this definition, scholars have asserted two main dimensions of career success. For example, Callanan (2003) states that despite career success factors varying across professional fields, career success can be evaluated from both subjective and objective perspectives in any field. Subjective career success is known as intrinsic success or internally defined outcome that comes from individuals' feelings (Judge et al., 1995). On the other hand, objective career success is known as extrinsic success or an internally defined outcome that is usually bestowed by external bodies (Gutteridge, 1973). Considering that both subjective and objective components can be manifested in career success (Melamed, 1995), observing one aspect deems inadequate (Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom, 2005), so both factors need to be considered in the career success research (Uli and Noach, 2008). So, both types of career success are incorporated in the present study.

### **2.5.1 Objective Career Success**

Objective career success takes an external perspective and is defined by observable accomplishments by outsiders. They are mainly extrinsic motivators and rewards that the

individuals receive from different bodies that exist both inside and outside the organisations and professional fields. They can include people inside the organisations such as co-workers, management, employers, mentors (Ibarra, 1993), and other external bodies. These rewards can take forms such as salary, promotions and position (Nicholson, 2000) as well as other attainments specific to disciplines (Kirchmeyer, 2002; Nabi, 1999).

Factors such as monetary benefits, including pay and positions, are generally identified as objective success indicators across studies in many fields. Heslin (2003) asserted that the attainment of this success is based on individual's work experience and exposure. Its attainment plays an imperative role in boosting productivity among employees. For that reason, success factors among women working in the institutions of higher learning can be attributed to the good pay in return for hard work and experience and exposure.

In addition to the general factors such as pay and position, objective career success is defined by discipline-specific attainments. In the academic field, other criteria of career success perceived by lecturers and professors include publication (Kirchmeyer, 2002), education, the size (ranking) of universities (Nabi, 1999), workplace adaptability and flexibility (Harris et al., 1998)

### **2.5.2 Subjective Career Success**

Subjective career success is important for individuals as well as organisations, as it is connected to the psychological well-being of individuals and their motivations and performance levels (Peluchette, 1993). Subjective components entail personal feelings of becoming a successful person. Subjective success comes from the self-appraisal process in which individuals evaluate their own success from their feelings (Van Maanen, 1977). Since they reside in people's minds (Aryee et al., 1994), they are not easily unobservable and so can be easily known by the outsiders without their discourses (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988). They include a range of intrinsic motivators such as achieving competency, perceiving self-pride, receiving recognition, having autonomy and control at work, obtaining work-life balance, and so on (Sturges, 1999).

Genders display different views and feelings on career success. The relative importance of career success varies across gender. Males emphasise more objective achievements, but females value more the subjective feeling of success because females carry the old gender role and lower expectation on objective career success (Powell and Mainiero, 1992).

## **Factors Influencing the Career Success of Women Lecturers in Private Higher Educational Institutions in Myanmar**

An increase in the participation of women in academic institutions has grown in several countries (Rasdi and What, 2005). For instance, Sigh (2002) reported that the rate of women academicians in both developed and developing countries ranges from 10 to 20%. Becoming a professor is considered the highest rank of any academic in the education sector. Thus, success factors for professional women in higher educational institutions have been a subject of discussion for many researchers and authors. According to a study conducted by Shahtalebia, Hossein Yarmohammadian, and Sima Ajamic (2011), the investigation of the success of women in institutions of higher learning is essential since they are carriers of exceptional capabilities.

Just like in other countries, Myanmar presented progress in women's participation in many sectors, following the institutional transition in 2010. The rate of women academics in Myanmar has been increasing. The figures illustrate that the education sector has been subjected to dynamic changes in terms of the rate of women's participation and subsequent pursuit of career success in the education sector. Such evidence is noticeable in private institutions in Yangon. The existing literature indicates the various groups of drivers that can lead to career success of women. The career success of women can be conveniently divided into three main groups: societal, organisational and individual level. (The HEAD Foundation, 2022; AIIA, 2023)

Below are several notable factors that either facilitate or hinder successful careers for women in Myanmar's major institutions that also apply to private higher education institutions. Career advancement is influenced by personal, societal, and organisational factors.

### ***Family-work Friction***

Several studies highlight the influence of family responsibilities as a significant barrier to career advancement for women (Akabayashi et al., 2020). In Myanmar, societal expectations are that women are better in caregiving roles; thus, women have to strain to balance such responsibilities and a demanding career. Some studies show that even without families, people face societal pressure to look after the extended family, thus creating a burden on career needs. The friction between careers and family in Myanmar forces women in the education sector to opt for reduced visibility in academia and take limited roles in leadership, thus limiting chances of promotion. Societal

expectations lead to the formation of gender discrimination and stereotypes (Khan et al., 2024). For example, women are viewed as less competent compared to men, yet the feminist theory acknowledges they have equal capacity to take on responsibilities. Cultural attitudes in Myanmar reinforce these stereotypes, making access to professional networks and leadership. Mon and Saito (2018) note that young academics would do better if their aspirations were reinforced by established women role models and mentors in higher positions in leadership to overcome the male-dominated sector.

### ***Cultural and religious beliefs***

Several studies have highlighted the role of cultural and religious beliefs as a motivator for women in pursuing their career choices (Novitasari et al., 2020). Women in Myanmar face traditional norms that tie them to domestic and caregiving roles, creating a barrier to career progress and success. Religion, on the other hand, exacerbates the problem, as some women view their family responsibilities as ordained by divine beings and thus can't focus on careers at the expense of family. Religion plays a critical role in conservative communities and is intertwined with their daily lives. On the contrary, some women view religion as a tool that has helped them progress in their careers as they feel guided and protected by a divine being to positively impact the community through career advancement in education.

### ***Leadership Training and career development programs***

The availability of leadership training and career development programs is a crucial factor in advancing careers for women in Myanmar. Tailored programs enhance women's knowledge and skills that supplement their career trajectories (Ko, Mhunpiew, and Thaima, 2024). In Myanmar's private education sector, training and leadership programs are limited due to financial constraints, and where available, women face the challenge of capitalising on them due to personal responsibilities and gender bias.

### ***Academic recognition***

A major deterrent to career success in academia is that women have limited research productivity and recognition. However, Squazzoni et al. (2021) report on gender in the study that found that women, on average, publish fewer journals than men, partly due to time constraints linked

to balancing work and family responsibilities. In Myanmar, the constraints may be profound due to societal expectations and culture. Studies stress the importance of institutional support in research activities to support women's output and peer reviewing.

### ***Organisational culture and practices***

Different studies acknowledge that organisational culture plays a crucial role in either supporting or hindering women's success in their careers. In most institutions, policies are not aligned to cater to the needs of female employees, especially not accounting for their maternal roles and balancing careers (Francis & Stulz, 2020; Khan et al., 2024). Myanmar's private higher education sector faces similar challenges, where institutional policies may lack the flexibility to be patient with women as they tend to their numerous social responsibilities. Additionally, most institutions lack clear promotional criteria, which demotivate female academics in their career ambitions (Farla, 2024). The lack of fair and transparent policies creates avenues for widening gender gaps in leadership and career advancement.

### ***Strategies for supporting female career progression.***

The significant strategies to help support women in their careers are to understand their various challenges and address them with utmost faith. Some studies highlight the role of self-concept, intrinsic motivation, and commitment factors as key motivators for women in their career progression (Francis & Stulz, 2020). Women who are motivated and have the necessary support are more likely to manoeuvre through career challenges to attain their goals. Women in careers feel guilty and obligated to cater to their families and thus may put their career progress on hold and reach for higher leadership roles and responsibilities when, say, their children are much older, forgetting they are losing experience by halting their career progress for family. Additionally, some studies show that some women are content with defining successful careers as ones that establish a healthy work-life balance, which seems like a fair trade to some women with limited expectations. Therefore, the level of satisfaction and contentment determines one's career progress and success. Organisational support is also critical. Good organisational practices can significantly impact female career development by promoting gender equality, offering career development programs,

and providing mentorship opportunities (Cifci, 2020). An underlying strategy is to improve networking skills to help female academics associate with the right groups, have access to key resources and information, and have a support system that supports women in private higher education institutions in Myanmar.

## **2.6 Societal Influences on career success of women**

Societal-level factors play an important role in determining women's professional success. Aspects of societal factors include overall culture and social environment, as well as community and civil institutional support. These factors greatly influence the way women perceive their careers, assess their skills, set goals, and pursue career advancement (Weinberg, Treviño, & Cleveland, 2019). The strength of the social network support can ultimately determine whether a woman has the time, knowledge, and willingness to pursue a career and commit to work duties. The following section discusses societal-level factors such as religion, social culture, and social support and the career success of women professionals. While the focus is made on HEIs, research from other spheres is also included because it is assumed that some wider social factors affect all women professionals, irrespective of the sector. The following section reviews the societal-level factors that determine the progression and success of females in different professional fields.

### **2.6.1 Religion**

Religion-related career values are present in individuals from all sorts of religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. It can form social and cultural norms that determine people's access to employment and their career choices. It can affect their perceptions of meaning in life and their attitudes towards work (Duffy, Reid, and Dik, 2010). For example, Rezapour et al. (2016) added that faith and religious beliefs can affect job satisfaction. It can determine employees' work values, career maturity, availability of social support, and a sense of calling, which can determine the future career success of individuals in work settings.

The influence of religion on women is more obvious on women than men because women are generally more religious than men (Alam et al., 2018; Collett and Lizardo, 2009). Religion can affect women professionals in many ways. Several studies have focused on women professionals

and explored the way religion affects their work experiences and careers. For instance, Sarwar and Imran (2019) conducted semi-structured interviews with 27 Pakistani women employed in different sectors, including education. The results revealed that women experienced various barriers because cultural norms were interpreted in their society as religious teachings, which, in turn, affected their access to employment and career advancement. Although Islam is not the dominant religion in Myanmar, and Buddhism is the mainstream religion (Keyes, 2016; Stokke, 2019), these findings are still relevant to the current study because they demonstrate how a pervasive religious norm can create misconceptions and stereotypes about working women and influence the desire and view on success in women's professional life.

A recent study conducted by Sitzmann and Campbell (2020) explored the connection between religion and the wage gap across genders. Their study, which used experimental design and collected field data globally, demonstrated that the wage gap among men and women was higher in religious regions compared to secular societies in that women staff received a lower pay rate than male staff. Similarly, a study by Alam, Amin, and McCormick (2017) showed the influence of religion on women's decision to participate in the labour force in Indonesia, but it did not mention career advancement specifically. Although these studies highlight religion's role in perpetuating gendered stereotypes in workplace practices—such as differential reward systems—they fall short in exploring how such stereotypes influence women's long-term career goals, motivation, and definitions of success. This oversight is particularly relevant in contexts where religion serves as a pervasive cultural force. However, the present study focuses on the Myanmar context, where the majority are Buddhist (90%). So, the heterogeneity in other factors other than religion can impact the career success of women professionals in HEIs in Myanmar. Therefore, while the influence of religion cannot be disregarded, it is critical to consider other socio-economic and institutional variables in shaping women's career outcomes in Myanmar.

### **2.6.2 Societal Culture**

Cultural factors can also have a similar influence on the potential success of women professionals in different job sectors, including education. Culture may define societal perceptions of motherhood and women's duties. The path to career success for women is more of a social process

than for men, whose path is affected by individual factors (Melamed, 1996). In many cultures, there is a belief that “good” mothers should be with their children for as long as possible, at least while they are small (Abel, 2014). Traditional cultures are characterised by the belief that women must fulfil gendered family roles as caretakers (Cho et al., 2020). Such expectations are a barrier to women’s career growth as they cannot compete with men who have no similar family duties (Abel, 2014). In the professional sphere, it means that they should give priority to families and take long maternity leave or reduce their workload considerably when family affairs arise. Professional women may also feel satisfied and take pride in such cultural expectations because research has frequently found that work-life balance is an additional source of job satisfaction for women (Abel, 2014). This finding may indicate that women tend to be more satisfied with their careers simply because they have lower expectations than men (Sultana et al., 2016).

However, cultural norms, values, and expectations vary across countries, and these variations can impact the participation in employment and career success of women. Some cultures provide an atmosphere that is more conducive to women's career success and development. For example, Burke and Richardsen (1996) studied Norwegian culture in contrast to Canadian culture. Norwegian culture provides support and encouragement to women for participating in career development, while Canadian culture, which is male dominated, does not. A strong cultural framework in nations and industries is a primary source of decision-making for women professionals seeking to participate in and advance in their careers (Clevenger and MacGregor, 2019).

Because national cultural values will inform whether women are common in high positions, national culture appears to be more salient in career selection and the success of women in work

settings in developing countries. Certain cultures place barriers to women's participation and gaining success in careers. Johnson's (2014) findings reflect the role of national culture in the participation of women in the academic sector in sub-Saharan Africa, where the role of women in job participation and success is generally limited. The author confirms that only 13% of women participate in the Nigerian and Ghanaian universities collectively. The lack of cultural development and gender discrimination are the core reasons for the limited participation of women professionals in HEIs in these countries. The role of cultural phenomena in limiting the leadership and managerial roles of women was further confirmed by Arifeen (2010) in Pakistan. He stated that the dominance of male culture prevents the career growth and advancements of women professionals in workplaces. Similar findings are reported in subsequent studies conducted by Valk, van Engen, and van der Velde (2014) and Mythili (2019) in India. The two studies pinpoint the role of embedded cultural practices as legitimate actions that shape the type and success of women in prestigious positions in the social hierarchy.

Prior studies collectively suggest that cultural norms and values provide a foundation for women to initiate careers and identify opportunities for success within their chosen professions. However, this generalisation often overlooks the nuanced and context-specific ways culture interacts with professional participation and career advancement. For instance, the career trajectories of women professionals in Myanmar's HEIs may share parallels with those in developing countries such as Pakistan, India, and sub-Saharan African states, where patriarchal norms and systemic barriers frequently hinder women's access to leadership roles and decision-making positions (Kabeer, 2005; Hossain & Tisdell, 2005). While these countries exhibit similar cultural constraints, the socio-political and economic contexts that underpin gender dynamics can vary significantly, complicating attempts to draw universal conclusions from prior research.

Moreover, despite initiatives in emerging economies to promote women's economic contributions, a persistent gap remains in advancing women into professional and decision-making roles. This disconnect suggests that merely increasing women's participation in the workforce is insufficient without addressing deeper structural and cultural barriers (World Economic Forum, 2021; Shahid, 2020). In Myanmar, where cultural practices and government policies often subtly reinforce traditional gender roles, these barriers may manifest differently, particularly in homogenous populations dominated by shared cultural norms.

A critical examination of past research highlights that societal-level factors, such as religion and cultural expectations, are often treated as static influences. This perspective risks oversimplifying their dynamic and evolving roles in shaping women's career outcomes (Connell,

2002). In the Myanmar context, these factors might not actively drive perceptions of career success but instead function as background conditions that subtly shape women's aspirations and opportunities. While such societal variables may provide a comparative framework for understanding differences across regions, the focus of the present study is on homogenous populations, in which common culture may shape the perception of career success, so these societal-level variables are treated as background conditions that can connect to the perceived differences in success across societies rather than drivers that shape the career success in a society. (World Economic Forum, 2021; Shahid, 2020).

### **2.6.3 Social Support**

The only factor that demonstrates interpersonal influence on the career progression of women professionals is social support. Women require social support because the social support, which includes family roles and obligations, can determine their career success. The social support for women professionals can sometimes be shaped by government policies and cultural beliefs in a country (Almarri and Boussabaine, 2017). These variables are linked to societal culture; however, different women receive different social support. Such women professionals lack the self-encouragement to make valuable contributions to the workplace. The family roles in these circumstances affect the professional commitments of an individual.

Social support serves as a significant barrier to career prosperity for women. The research conducted by Sujatha (2008) discusses social support from significant perspectives. The author emphasised the personal accountabilities of women, which intervene in professional deliverables. Myanmar is a predominantly male society, which mitigates the aspect of social support for women professionals to the core. Favourable social support can make a positive contribution to the success of a woman's career and break through the glass ceiling set by social culture. A lack of social support becomes a glass ceiling for women professionals, which influences sustainable progression in the career roadmap. To make rational improvements in their careers, women professionals require both social and organisational support.

In fact, the influence of social support can impact the career success of women academicians in the education sector. The social support of family members, such as partners and

parents, is more critical for women academicians in Turkey than for males for success throughout their career cycle (Özbilgin and Healy, 2004). Since Myanmar is a male-dominated society, the success of women professionals can need social support from the core. Thus, the identification of social support is vital for the career success of women professionals in HEIs who may frequently encounter the dilemma of pursuing sustainable career growth in the future.

**Summary:** Being in a specific local context, women professionals in HEIs in Yangon are subjected to common religion, social values, norms, and expectations. Thus, societal variables are unlikely to produce different implications, and thus they would not be regarded as the factors that affect the career outcomes. Even within subgroups, such as ethnic minorities with different religions or subcultures, the influence of the mainstream social norms appears pervasive. Members of these subgroups often assimilate into the prevailing cultural expectations, limiting the distinctiveness of their experiences in professional settings. Furthermore, the numerical insignificance of such minority groups makes it challenging to detect any statistically meaningful relationship between societal variables and career outcomes.

However, this interpretation risks oversimplifying the role of societal factors by reducing them to mere background conditions for perceptions of career success. While these variables may not directly drive career outcomes in the present study, it is critical to recognise their potential indirect effects on shaping institutional practices, workplace dynamics, and gendered expectations. Dismissing societal variables as inconsequential drivers may overlook the subtle, systemic ways in which they perpetuate barriers or advantages for women professionals in Yangon's HEIs. Therefore, while societal variables may not be treated as primary determinants in this study, their complex interplay with individual and organisational factors warrants a more nuanced analysis.

## **2.7 Organisational Level**

Organisational-level factors encompass organisational support factors, such as policies and practices prevalent in the employing organisations, professional development, such as coaching and mentoring delivered by that organisation, and gender-related practices of those organisations. These practices also make a difference between the success and unsuccessful of a woman's professional career.

### 2.7.1 Organisational Support

Organisational support is a fundamental component that promotes women professionals. It includes different policies and practices that could make the workplace environment a comfortable domain for women professionals. The challenges of career barriers, particularly in the developing countries, indicate a weaker support system deployed by the management. Factors targeted to the elimination of the glass ceiling effect is one of the determining factors for measuring the organisational support in a workplace environment. The workplace environment having a glass ceiling effect could influence the career progression of women professionals by introducing unfavourable policies (Dimovski and Man, 2010; Man, Skerlavaj, and Dimovski, 2009).

One critical organisational support factor is favorable working environment that motivates them to pursue carer progress. As such, Shuck (2013) states the critical role of the Human Resources department in enhancing productivity for both the employees and the institutions they represent. With such Human resources strategies, employees can become satisfied with their working environment and a relationship with their employers. In the long run, women have become successful in the institutions of higher learning with the availability of such working procedures. Surma Erma (2018), in her studies, also confirms such arguments through her research analysis. The author based the research on understanding the dimensions of career advancement among women. The author states that it is solely dependent on organisational policies and favourable treatment towards their employees.

The pivotal role of the working environment was also discussed in a study by Bayona-Sáez, et al. (2009). They conducted a study at a public university in Spain and used a sample of 138 individuals, 60.9% of whom were women from teaching positions, such as part-time teachers, research assistants, professors, etc. Results showed that an agreeable atmosphere and perceived opportunities for promotion positively affected teachers' commitment towards their university. Aspects of a good atmosphere, including administration's ability to prevent conflicts, foster communication, improve the promotion structure, etc. were also identified as important for women's career progress and promotion (Bayona-Sáez, et al., 2009). Similar findings were reported in subsequent studies that the working environment is influential in promoting women to top positions (Johnson, 2014; Surma Erma, (2018). However, these studies exhibit critical limitations.

While they effectively explore environmental factors from the perspective of women educators, their scope remains narrow, focusing predominantly on general observations of institutional conditions. They fail to assess how these factors differentially affect career success based on subjective (e.g., personal satisfaction, perceived achievement) and objective (e.g., promotions, salaries) criteria. Additionally, they do not investigate the relative importance of these factors, leaving an incomplete understanding of which aspects of organisational factors are most influential in shaping women's career trajectories.

In addition to the working environment, studies have noted the different aspects of organisational pillars, such as culture, structure, etc. that are salient to the career success of women. Wagner and Wodak (2006) have taken an in-depth analysis of the success factors among women in different professions. Along with motivations, policies and structures of work designed by the organisation positively or negatively contribute to productivity and success among women in different careers. Based on the author's findings, some of the respondents in the research emphasised the importance of active organisation structures that motivate and nurture women to become more productive. In addition to working environment, studies have noted the different aspects of organisational pillars, such as culture, structure, etc., that are salient to the career success of women. Their findings underline the need for active organisational structures that not only encourage productivity but also nurture women's professional development. However, their analysis primarily reflects the perspectives of respondents, which may introduce biases and limit the generalisability of their conclusions. In addition, merely implementing supportive structures without addressing entrenched cultural biases may fail to create the meaningful change necessary for sustained career advancement among women.

Among organisational practices, organisational policies such as work-life balance support also affect the career continuity and success of women. The relationship between family ties and work-life by Pas et al. (2013) indicated that some organisations had failed to provide a conducive working environment for the women, especially the ones seeking to join technical careers such as physicians. In the long run, these women become unproductive and reduce interest in further studies. Such arguments are supported by sentiments provided by McAndrews and Ha-Brookshire (2013), where the authors have discussed the success factors and challenges for women in academia. They indicated that work-life-balance is a primary challenge faced by these women

when trying to seek opportunities in different careers. In fact, the contemporary educational institutions have spearheaded accommodation of women in developing their teaching and administrative careers in institutions of higher learning. While they credit contemporary educational institutions for adopting more accommodating practices, this perspective assumes uniform implementation, disregarding variations in policy effectiveness and enforcement across organisations in various sectors.

Training and development support is also another salient organisational support factor in women's careers. Silander and Stigmar (2019) argued that knowledgeable resources in front positions are essential to satisfy the learning outcomes of students in the Swedish educational context. Despite this study contributing important insights into the role of training in the education sector, the focus of the study was on the Swedish academic sector, which is a small-scale industry. The small-scale, context-specific industry undermines its applicability to other regions, especially those with less developed institutional frameworks like Myanmar. Moreover, it neglects the critical question of whether the skills and knowledge acquired through training programs arranged by organisations directly contribute to measurable career success for women. This omission highlights a broader gap in the literature regarding the alignment of organisational human resource practices with the career advancement needs of women professionals.

In short, extant literature has provided ample evidence on the significance of identifying and understanding the role of organisational support to women professionals. Myanmar has weak institutions with an absence of rules and regulations that prevent discrimination or affirmative actions. These conditions not only limit the effectiveness of organisational policies but also perpetuate systemic barriers that hinder women's progress in the HEI sector. While some private higher education institutions in Yangon may attempt to address these issues through supportive practices, the broader lack of institutional development suggests significant gaps in practices across organisations, which could in turn influence the ability of women to gain career success in the HEI sector. So, it is imperative to understand whether and how organisational support can effectively promote career success for women in regions with underdeveloped institutional frameworks, such as Myanmar.

## 2.7.2 Coaching and Mentoring

The Organisation's developmental activities can have an impact on the career success of women professionals. The developmental activities offer benefits to women who shoulder the burden of family responsibilities. The developmental activities provided by organisations that can contribute the success of women professionals in organisations include coaching and mentoring. Mentors and co-workers within the same organisations are primary career supporters that contribute to the career success of individuals (Ibarra, 1993). Thus, it becomes vital to understand the role of these factors in the career success of women professionals who are active in different spectrums of societal development.

Research has consistently highlighted the potential role of mentoring in influencing the career success of women professionals across various fields (Burke & McKeen, 1994; Kahle & Schmidt, 2004). A case study by Obers (2014) conducted at one HEI in South Africa revealed the critical importance of mentoring for women professionals. He showed that mentoring can improve self-esteem, enhance research activity, and facilitate career development. However, the assumption that mentoring alone is a key determinant of career advancement deserves closer scrutiny. In their 1994 study, Burke and McKeen found that, while women in managerial and professional roles face limited opportunities compared to their male counterparts, mentoring—when coupled with sponsorship—does have a significant impact on career satisfaction. Subsequent research on women in academic medicine, such as that by Shen et al. (2021), further affirms that mentor programs in universities positively influence both objective and subjective success.

While their findings suggest a positive relationship between mentoring and career outcomes, it is important to consider whether this relationship is universally applicable. Such studies often focus on elite or highly visible sectors in developed countries, potentially overlooking women in less visible or more marginalised professions such as private education in less developed countries like Myanmar. The context between Myanmar and those studies focus on was fundamentally different in terms of economically or culturally; there is a possibility that the success of women lecturers in Yangon might be due to the encouragement and set of teaching platforms by other successful women lecturers. Moreover, these studies tend to prioritise career satisfaction and achievement without interrogating the broader structural barriers that women may face, such as gendered expectations or workplace discrimination.

Despite the importance of coaching and mentoring for the success of women workers being demonstrated in extant research, however, research has pointed to the difficulties of implementing them as an intervention. More specifically, Faniko et al. (2017) found that women in the leadership positions are often reluctant to support their less successful colleagues. This is known as the “Queen Bee-phenomenon,” which occurs when women managers oppose policies supporting women employees’ promotion. One of the possible explanations of this phenomenon is that women who sacrificed much to climb the career ladder may feel that supporting women in junior positions would be unfair (Faniko et al., 2017). Despite the implementation challenge, several researchers have emphasised the role of coaching and mentoring in women’s success. For instance, Cross et al. (2019) contend that effective mentoring facilitates personal and career development, academic craftsmanship, psychosocial support, and job satisfaction; its positive impact on the career success of women in the academic sector is complicated. Considering these challenges, it is clear that mentoring as an intervention requires a more nuanced and integrated approach. Research must move beyond simplistic models of mentoring and develop integrated models that control the effects of other organisational and personal factors.

In short, these studies tend to imply that coaching and mentoring are an intricate phenomena for organisations that need to be handled by providing a supportive atmosphere for both mentors and mentees. However, once implemented, its contribution to facilitating the career success of women could be enormous. When professional mentors are not easily available or expensive, senior teachers and peers can provide alternatives to mentors. These practices can enhance the career motivation and pursuit of career advancement and support the success of women professionals, as they can equip them with skills and experiences to handle the challenges. Thus, mentoring could be one of the success factors of a woman in the education sector who needs emotional, technical, and motivational support from a mentor, as these practices can promote the competency and confidence of mentees (Bilimoria and Piderit, 2007) and can build trustworthiness and mutual understanding between mentors and mentees, which can in turn impact work outcomes and job behaviour (Peltier, 2010). Nonetheless, these benefits cannot be guaranteed. The effectiveness of mentoring programs can be undermined by the very same systemic barriers that women face in their careers, such as gender bias, lack of organisational support, and organisational hierarchies that limit women’s opportunities for success. Additionally, although the context of

Myanmar differs from the studies cited, there is a possibility that the success of women lecturers in Yangon might be due to the coaching and mentoring support of other successful and experienced women lecturers. Thus, these practices are considered as one of the influential drivers that promote the career success of women lecturers in Myanmar, rather than a standalone solution, and must be integrated into a broader, more comprehensive strategy to support women's professional advancement in Myanmar's academic institutions.

### **2.7.3 Gendered Practices**

Organisational justice is one ethical-related factor that influences the job attitude of women (Choi, 2011) and sets a barrier to career success of professional women in work settings (Jamali and Nejati, 2009). The policies could include gender quotas or partial selection of men for managerial positions; even if a woman worked hard and did a good job, policies could include gender quotas or partial selection of men for managerial positions, even if a woman worked hard and did a good job (Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017).

According to the gendered organisation theory, norms and practices based on stereotypes about male and female workers exist in all companies and organisations. These gendered practices may hinder the career development and career motivation of women workers (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). For example, in the earlier study, Traavik and Richardsen (2010) have investigated the direct role of gendered practices in the objective career success of women and found equal work environments promote the objective success of foreign women at a superior human capital. Subsequent studies also noted the role and mechanism of organisational gender-related policies in affecting the career success of women in other professions. In a study by Pas et al. (2014), the role of gender-related policies in organisations was noted, as well as their effects on women employees' career motivation of Dutch women physicians. They found that gendered practices in their organisations mainly are designed to favour women who prioritise one role (an ideal worker or an ideal mother) as opposed to those willing to balance both roles. What this means is that gendered practices may hinder the career success of women seeking work-life balance. Yet, these studies largely focus on women with superior human capital and do not sufficiently address how gendered practices may differently impact women with varying levels of capital or in less supportive environments. The generalisability of these findings to all women in diverse contexts remains unclear, as they do not explore how gendered practices affect women in non-elite or less equitable work environments like the conventional sector, like higher education in Myanmar.

In addition, the nature of gendered practices can affect the women's career motivation and outcomes by providing meaning in communications. For example, Weinberg et al. (2019) showed that gendered practices may also manifest themselves in gender communication. People have specific communication styles that affect their performance and career advancement. For example, the masculine communication style is characterised by confidence, assertion, forcefulness, self-reliance, and individualism was linked to career advancement. Feminine communication, in turn, was characterised by affection, friendliness, kindness, sympathy, and so on, helping women to receive non-hierarchical rewards, such as higher compensation and increased span of control. This framing perpetuates a limited view of women's career trajectories, one that assumes success is predicated on conforming to stereotypical gender roles. Organisations may reward them when they meet these expectations. However, women failing to comply with these expectations may face a risk of losing a chance to advance in their careers. Since their study did not focus on the educational setting, it raises important implications for how gendered expectations around communication impact career outcomes for women in educational settings.

Despite organisations implementing with good intentions, the measures such as ideal-mother arrangements, ideal worker arrangements, positive gender discrimination policies, and new work-culture arrangements can be counterproductive. Rather than empowering women, they may reinforce harmful stereotypes that suggest women are inherently less capable, less motivated, and less knowledgeable than men. These measures often imply that women need special treatment to succeed in the workplace, which can undermine their credibility and perpetuate the very inequalities they are intended to address. For instance, the "ideal-mother" arrangement, which assumes women should prioritise family responsibilities, may inadvertently marginalise women who seek to balance both professional and personal goals, framing them as less committed or capable of career progression.

In addition, the absence of laws that promulgate non-discriminatory practices also provides little information on whether these discriminatory practices exist or whether organisations in the education sector regulate the gendered practices in their organisations. More importantly, whether and to what extent they affect the career success of women in private HEIs remains largely unexplored. This oversight means there is little transparency about whether discriminatory practices are embedded within organisations in the education sector or whether these practices are

being actively addressed. As a result, women in private higher education institutions (HEIs) may face career challenges that are not only structural but also cultural, and institutional norms can favour male employees or perpetuate gender biases in career advancement. So, this study considers these practices as one driver related to organisational factors that may hinder the career success of women in academia.

Summary: The prior research has, however, clouded the above issue by employing heterogeneous samples when assessing the relationship between organisational support factors and career success. Apart from that, many of them concentrated on different aspects of careers rather than directly focusing on career success outcomes. The most probable reason for this approach is the convenience in analysing homogeneous samples or on wider generalization. Even those studies in educational contexts have a focus only on certain aspects of career success, and their context is different from Myanmar. Systematic investigation is needed to ascertain a potential role of organisational factors on career success and progression measured by subjective and objective criteria of women lecturers in HEIs in Yangon. Yet, based on the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses can be tentatively proposed:

## 2.8 Individual Level

Individual-level factors are factors specific to women professionals and include a wide range of factors, such as psychological factors, which include personality, motivation, and emotion; demographic factors like family, marital status, and household size; and so on. Women professionals differ in these characteristics, and these differences determine the success of their careers. This study categorised the personal factors of women into three groups: demographic, human capital, and family support.

### 2.8.1 Demographics

Some of the researchers have analysed background information that has significantly contributed to women's success in different fields of professions. The individual-level factors, such as demographics and some personalities, are widely identified as drivers of career success and advancement. The personal background of professionals, such as gender, age, family background, and the number of children, can influence the career-related pursuits of females.

Gender can affect career success via actual and expected workplace behaviour and outcomes. Women are generally perceived as having less capacity and less commitment to perform duties and, thus, on their career advancement opportunities. Career successes for women are more difficult than for men. A working woman is usually expected to fulfil a dual role as a homemaker and as a worker (Cardozo, 1986). For this reason, women usually encounter a trade-off between work and family responsibilities. Women who are giving more priority to families face slower upward mobility for more time and effort denotation at home (Schwartz, 1989).

A more obvious effect of women's gender on career success is reported in other studies. For example, in a landmark study, Frear, Paustian-Underdahl, Heggstad, and Walker (2019) argue the “unequal attributes” effect, the outcome differences in men and women sharing equal attributes such as family and input to work, on career success. Their results, based on the information provided by alumni from a large university in the southeastern United States, revealed that even at the same level of input, such as working hours, women are found to have more difficulty gaining career success in terms of income and position, suggesting gender differences in career success and inherent disadvantages suffered by women for career success opportunities in work settings. These practices become stereotypes and affect the perception and motivation of women to pursue endeavours for career advancement. If the women professionals perceived they were less

successful for simply being a woman, their motivations and efforts to gain promotions or pay increases or status increases would be adversely affected.

Certain research has reported the importance of education on the career success of women. Among such authors are Hirschy, Bremer, and Castellano (2011). These authors have focused on understanding the impact of education in enhancing career success among students. According to their findings, understanding a student's success in different college occupational programs is paramount in shaping their success in their respective careers. Additionally, the author states that conventional modes of education, which also include policymaking in institutions of higher learning, were the primary factors leading to some of the challenges faced by women seeking career guidance and opportunities in both private and public institutions. The authors stipulate that the strategies implemented were not directly related to seeking equal opportunities and also enhancing expertise, practical skills, and competence that could attract different employers, irrespective of their fields of operation. Such information can apply to the current subject of discussion in trying to understand the success factors that lead to having more women in private higher learning institutions in Yangon. Therefore, from the policy perspective, nurturing them to gain knowledge and expertise during their study periods in college could have been the determinant for their success when they pursue related careers. Alternatively, the educational background they received can be a determinant for the success of women professionals.

Family-related variables, such as family background, family status, and presence or absence of children, affect the career success of women. Women with children must perform more childbearing responsibilities and household work (South and Spitze, 1994). Kirchmeyer (2006) investigated the family roles and career choice and performance of American doctoral graduate women in different career cycles. They reported that the presence of young children, along with another family variable such as the presence of an employed spouse, are associated with their preference on work-life balance and, thereby, on the limited pursuit of career advancement that involved geographic movements. In a study by Valcour and Ladge (2008) on professionals and sales and administrative positions in the United States, the larger number of children is found to inhibit the objective success such as position and income of women professionals. Subsequent studies also confirm the adverse effect of a higher number of children on women's careers, such as careers interruptions (German medical school, Evers and Sieverding, 2014), suggesting that family

responsibilities, such as childcare, can limit women's career mobility and success. Although the context of study is different from Myanmar, these findings can explain career progress of women from HEIs in Myanmar due to commonality in prevalence of traditional gender roles where women are expected to take full responsibilities on tasks such as childbearing and family caring. Having children can have a substantial role in the career advancement of women professionals in HEIs in Yangon.

Women's perception about their age can affect the career success of women as general competence increases with accumulated experience. Career success studies have included age as a control variable to predict the objective and subjective success. But inconsistent findings have been reported. In the earlier study, Simpson and Altman (2000) claimed that women professional managers attain higher positions at younger ages, and the notion of the glass ceiling is fading due to generational specialty. Especially younger women who are born under the IT age, known as Generation X (Conger, 1998), are more reward-orientated and pursue aggressively to achieve goals than other nerations. Although the empirical investigation on this relationship between generation and career success was not determined in their study, it could be that younger women may not stay in a career or in an organisation when they feel they do not see worthy. However, Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden, N. (2012) argued that being young doesn't cause them to feel advantage, as commitment and enthusiasm to work grow when the women progress in their age. Since the relationship between age and career success of women is unclear, the mixed results suggest the need for more nuanced research that accounts for generational differences and contextual factors specific to sectors like higher education.

In sum, the above-mentioned studies suggest that age could be a vital factor that could ensure career prosperity for women. In fact, the career success of women in HEIs in Myanmar probably enhanced as they grew older. Myanmar is a hierarchical society where seniors are placed in respectable positions for their experience, which is a function of age, and is placed in high value in many fields, including in the educational sector. So, the pay level of all professionals usually increases with age. In addition, due to the respect and recognition placed by junior academics, older academics can increase greater career satisfaction. Thus, it is likely that age can positively affect both objective and subjective career success of women professionals in HEIs in Yangon.

## 2.8.2 Human Capital

Career research has shown that career succession and progression are greatly affected by the human capital. In fact, human capital is a more important predictor of career success than the demographic variables (Guo, Xiao, and Yang, 2012). Human capital refers to skills, knowledge, and abilities that are gained as a result of educational, personal, and professional experience needed to gain success in a career (Becker, 1964). It can be acquired by self-initiative or intervention of organisations. Training and development activities inside or outside of the employing organisations can foster the human capital of professionals. In today's fast-changing environment, individual professionals recognise the role of human capital, and those unprepared can run the risks of missing career opportunities.

The role of human capital in mitigating gender disparities in career success has been extensively discussed in the literature, with several studies highlighting its potential to narrow the gender gap. In an earlier study, Melamed (1995) identified the role of human capital, along with other factors, to determine the career success between male and female genders involving managerial and non-managerial positions from the general British workforce, demonstrating that while women face sex discrimination, upgrading their human capital can help reduce these disparities. Similar findings on gender discrimination were reported by Iberia and Chidambaram (1997) and Frederiksen and Kato (2018) using professionals from the IS field in the US and Canada in that women received less career success after controlling for the human capital factors. They argued that the superior human capital possessed by women gave them the capacity not only to overcome the social barrier but also to gain success in one's career path in terms of pay and position.

While these studies suggest that women with superior human capital can achieve some level of success, they also point to the persistent influence of gendered organisational practices, biases, and societal expectations that limit the realisation of this potential. For instance, studies by Terpstra-Tong and Goh (2011) and Lahey (2014) emphasise that women may face subtle forms of discrimination that are not easily accounted for by human capital alone, such as differences in networking opportunities, mentorship, and social capital, which play critical roles in career

advancement. Furthermore, as Kanter (1977) argued, women's under-representation in high-status roles and networks can hinder their access to key decision-makers, further perpetuating gender disparities in career progression.

To summarise, while human capital is recognised as a significant factor in career advancement, particularly in terms of skills, education, and experience, it cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of success for women. However, the findings of previous studies on human capital and gender disparities in career success should be interpreted with caution when applied to the context of women professionals in Myanmar's higher education institutions (HEIs). This is largely because these studies tend to sample populations across various sectors, which may not accurately reflect the unique challenges and realities faced by women in the academic sector of a developing country like Myanmar. The specific social, cultural, and economic conditions in Myanmar—where human capital is often unevenly distributed and access to education and career advancement opportunities can be limited—require a more context-specific approach. In addition, they largely overlook the structural limitations in developing countries like Myanmar, where institutional and societal barriers may negate the advantages that superior human capital might offer. In such contexts, the relationship between human capital and career success may be weaker or more complicated due to factors such as unequal access to education, gender biases in hiring and promotion practices, and a lack of support systems for women to fully leverage their capabilities.

Thus, it is imperative to conduct more targeted research that explores how human capital specifically interacts with other organisational and societal factors in Myanmar's higher education sector. Such research would provide a clearer understanding of whether superior human capital can indeed drive career success for women in Myanmar's HEIs. Without considering the broader context, the generalisability of studies from more developed countries to the Myanmar context remains limited, and further investigation is necessary to identify the true drivers of career success for women lecturers in this specific setting.

### 2.8.3 Family Support

The family support is one factor women decide to get engaged in different professions. There are many studies that analyse the role of family on the subjective career success of women professionals. Lirio et al. (2007) claimed that women's career paths resemble zigzags, compared to the vertical line of male professionals who climb the career ladder with no major interruptions such as childbearing. They added that the success of women heavily depends on their perceptions of motherhood and the state of their marriage. Along similar lines, McAndrews and Ha-Brookshire (2013) argue that women often switch between prioritising their families and their careers, depending on family circumstances. Hwang, Bento, and Arbaugh (2011) partly supported these findings by arguing that women often make compromises early in their careers when they take on family responsibilities. Women who strive for a successful career encounter to pay a social price regarding different family issues (Cardozo, 1986).

Johnson (2014) informed us that family is a critical agent that supports career growth and the trajectory of top women administrators in sub-Saharan Africa. Especially this happens in areas like African countries where women usually have a desire for family support (Kimengsi et al., 2019). In fact, this desire of women is not limited to such regions. Many Asian countries also have traditionally well-defined women roles, which make them stressed and burdened by the balance between work and family. The women need to gain rapport from family for continuation and progression in a career (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat, Chang, Hewapathirana, Horimoto, and Hamzah, 2015). For example, a study by Mythili (2019) in India showed the critical role of family in supporting and developing women professionals. The author stressed that the career development of women starts at an early age. Even adults need their parents' support concerning their career advancement. They still search for parental support and advice as they enter the labour market. They also need emotional support from husbands for success in the educational sector. This is because understanding and caring husbands make it much easier for women to focus on their careers. This dependency on familial support could also reinforce gender stereotypes, where women's career success is framed as contingent on their ability to gain approval from male family members. In such contexts, women's professional ambitions may be subordinated to familial duties, further entrenching gendered expectations (Williams, 2004).

Cultural similarities between India and Myanmar in terms of family priority, which were rooted in the colonial era where males were income earners and women were homemakers, suggest that the findings of this study can relate to Myanmar, meaning that career success of women professionals in Myanmar could be dependent on the emotional and physical support of their family. Women professionals whose families do not receive support or get empowered to pursue careers may have to sacrifice career advancement opportunities. Along these lines, it is argued that career success of women professionals from HEIs in Myanmar depends on the presence of family that empower and support career advancement activities. The women who obtain physical and emotional support from family members such as parents, husbands, children, and siblings can have the physical and mental capacity to pursue career activities. By contrast, women who must give priority over family to their career but also do not receive the necessary emotional and physical support may be unable to pursue upward movement in a chosen career. In conclusion, while family support is undeniably important in the career success of women professionals in Myanmar, it should not be taken for granted, as these false assumptions inadvertently perpetuate gender inequalities and limit women's agency in shaping their career paths. The reliance on family to enable career success of women in Myanmar should be critically examined in empirical study.

**Summary:** Past research on career success regarding individual factors has showed a weakness in at least one of the following ways. First and foremost, some have focused on women in different occupational fields other than the education sector in different countries, which have both similarities and differences to Myanmar (Kimengsi et al., 2019; Mythili, 2019; Simpson and Altman, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2006). In fact, sector differences in important drivers do exist; thus, it is unwise to generalise the role of drivers to the career success of women HEIs in Myanmar. Second, most of them do not include all the related personal factors in a comprehensive model. So, it makes it difficult to detect the relative impact of individual contributions to career success. Third, except for a few studies (Valcour and Ladge, 2008), those prior studies in the educational sector employed career success in limited aspects, considering either objective or subjective dimensions. In addition, they used exploratory design, which limits generalisation to a wider audience. This makes it difficult to comprehend the relative contribution of drivers. Indeed, these limitations stimulate the researcher to investigate the relationship between those individual-level predictors and subjective and objective career success of women professionals in HEIs.

## **2.9 Career Barriers of Women in HEIs in Myanmar**

As in other professional fields, career barriers are one of the adverse factors influencing the continuation and success of women professionals in HEIs. The career barriers are the arguable factors that prevent the progression of women in any sector. Career barriers originate from various conditions for women professionals in HEIs. The career barriers encountered by women professionals from HEI are one of the areas that received attention among researchers. Different social and economic actors create conditions for career barriers of women in HEIs.

Identified barriers to women's participation in research include the absence of gender equity and gender-supportive strategies in many research and academic institutions (Kate and Anitra, 2021). Other barriers include gender bias in the employment process, which implicitly favours men; poor institutional monitoring of women's representation in research and academia; and the lack of institutional strategies to support work-life balance for women researchers (Kate and Anitra, 2021; Kurchenko, Kolomiyets-Ludwig, and Ilnytsky, 2022). Furthermore, women reportedly faced greater delays in completing their doctoral studies and producing a strong publication record, which could be attributed to gender and social norms (Fisher, Nyabaro, Mendum, Osiru, and Telfair, 2020).

Research on career barriers of women professionals in HEIs receives more attention than career success because, particularly in the education sector, the career progression of women is slower as compared to men. Gender inequality, especially in different places of power, exists as a major barrier (Slaughter, 2012). This evidence is provided in a study by Htang (2019), who examines the career barriers of teachers in Myanmar from the motivational view. The author stated that women teachers in Myanmar HEIs are offered minimal motivators in exchange for the services delivered to the institutions. The pay scale followed by other embedded benefits is lower in proportion. Women teachers do not enjoy privileges as compared to men. Instead, the women teachers are provided with common resources to deliver the fundamental roles. HEIs management may have intentionally created the difference in remuneration and benefits. These unfavourable policies seem to weaken the strong motivation for sustainable participation of women professionals in Myanmar's educational sector, creating a problem for a progressive career roadmap.

The deliberate career barriers for women in Myanmar HEIs are further discussed in research conducted by Maber (2016). She explores the career exposure provided to women in HEIs of Myanmar and Thailand. The author stated that most women are employed at the necessary pay scale by the institutions to provide primary services related to teaching and education. On the

contrary, men are provided with more opportunities for cultural and environmental exposures, which contribute directly towards the learning, development, and knowledge. This result implies that the learning opportunities provided to men in the HEI sector are the primary source of achieving immediate success in teaching careers. At the same time, the provision of adequate training and development prospects, such as exposure to relevant academic subjects or disciplines, provided to women is limited, which results in slowing the latter's career progression. Women struggle in reaching a designated position within the HEIs, resulting in an imbalance and irrational distribution of opportunities. The unfair practices of HEIs in Myanmar are observed transparently by the stakeholders towards women's participation and career progressions.

Another group of studies explores the career barriers of women from policies and practices implemented at a higher institutional level. They claim that policies designated by the education system in Myanmar are a source of women career barriers. This is highlighted by research conducted by Zaw et al. (2020). These argued that institutional management in Myanmar creates policies that discriminate against women's participation indirectly, which limits career progression in the future. Their study focused on the glass ceiling effect, which refers to the invisible barrier that limits moderate success for women as compared to men. It was found that women struggle to deliver fundamental duties while complying with the pre-defined policies by the management. Besides, most institutions in Myanmar ensure through policies that women serve a similar role. Meanwhile, men are offered better opportunities to progress towards leadership roles in the institution comparatively (Zaw et al., 2020). Although this result is related to the HEIs from the government sector, which the education department and ministry have direct control over. These practices may have an indirect impact on private HEIs in Myanmar. Arguably, unfair institutional-led policies and practices implemented at higher institutional hierarchy serve as a critical career barrier for women serving in HEIs of Myanmar.

Overall, the above findings, which are mainly based on the public educational sector in Myanmar, tend to suggest the notion that most HEIs in Myanmar fabricate policies that are unfavourable for women. As a result, the gap is capitalised by men, creating irrational gender orientation while distributing leadership positions in the sector. The identified practices in the specified research works affirm the deliberate creation of career barriers that are unfair to women

professionals. While the focus of those studies was based on external factors that serve as barriers, personal factors may also play a key role in their road to career advancement and success. Likewise, their evidence was based on the public education sector; practices can be leaked to private sector organisations within the same country. In fact, while understanding career barriers provides insights to institutional decision-makers on corrective measures, equally important is identifying the drivers that can provide career success. So, this research laid the ground for investigations on drivers of career success from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives on the women lecturers in Myanmar's private HEIs.

## 2.10 Perspectives on Career Success

Research in management has used several theoretical perspectives to illuminate antecedents of career success of individuals. These approaches, not limited to include human capital theory (Becker, 1993), social theories such as social networks, social capital (Seibert et al., 2001), and social influence theory (Todd et al., 2009); social learning theory (Lau and Shaffer, 1999); social cognitive theory; career theories such as career congruence theory, theory of vocational choice (Byrne, Dik, and Chiaburu, 2008), mobility theory (Haines et al., 2014), social cognitive career theory (Ochs and Roessler, 2004), boundaryless career theory (Ng et al., 2005); and organisational theories such as the person-organisational approach (Haines, 2019). Research to date has examined several approaches to look at career success, such as universal, contingency, and configurational approaches. The universal approach to career success is predicated on the notion that some principles, colloquially referred to as “universal truths,” apply to all people, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds or individual circumstances. The approach suggests that anyone can achieve career success by following the so-called “universal truths,” such as setting goals, identifying one’s core values, and putting in the work to achieve the goals. It is the simplest approach to explore simple direct relationships that are yet to be proved due to the newness of the context of study. Regardless of approaches, the perspectives on career success of women are parsimoniously categorised into three groups: namely, individual, organisational, and societal.

*The individual approach* mainly emphasises the role of human capital, cognitive and motivational factors possessed by women as major drivers for career success and progression. The most used approaches involve human capital, career mobility theory, career stage models, and so on. Among them, human capital is the most common theory specifically addressing career success (Becker, 1993). This theory hypothesises that everyone differs in the amount and quality of human assets or capital in terms of education, experience, skill, and personal characteristics that they bring to the job. The amount and effectiveness of the human capital one has and expends on the job is the main determinant of career success.

Becker’s theory proposes that employees make rational choices regarding whether they want to invest more time, effort, and money in education, training, and experience. Their investment in

these human capitals influences their work performance and, subsequently, influences the organisation rewards. Researchers have identified human capital from several components. For example, Melamed (1995) classified human capital into three types: (a) relevant to the job (such as education, experience, and mental ability); (b) partially relevant depending on the nature of the job (such as personality); and (c) not relevant to the job at all (such as race, marital status, and physical appearance). The first definition stresses that human capital involves knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals developed throughout their careers inside or outside of the organisation. Several research studies have demonstrated the role of human capital, such as knowledge, skills, and experience, in both objective and subjective dimensions of career success of women in different contexts (Judge et al., 1995; Aryee et al., 1994; Fang et al., 2009; Dierendonck and Gaast, 2013).

The mobility model by Turner (1960) is another approach in studying career success. This theory rests on the assumption of human capital theory by pinpointing human capital as fundamental conditions that pave a way for one's career success. The theory proposed two systems of upward mobility (i.e., job promotions) in an organisation: contest mobility and sponsored mobility. While the sponsors focused on the selection of suitable individuals for organisations, what is implied in the contest approach is that for upward mobility, people need to compete by devoting time and energy, and thus the investments in human capital should result in increased rewards, salary, and promotion. Within this approach, some look at stable characteristics such as personality, emotion, and motivations to engage in the acquisition of this human capital (such as Ng et al., 2005; Semejin, van der Heijden, and Beuckelaer, 2020).

The third classification of human capital involves the narrow demographic factors such as age and family, which can be assumed as proxies to human capital indicators. Age is suggested as a factor that drives the career success of women (Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden, 2012). However, the role of age does not seem to receive significant attention. In fact, its role in career success is also highlighted in career sage models such as Hall's (1976), who argues that individuals evolve in their careers through a series of steps in relation to age: (a) trial and exploration (until about age 25), (b) growth and establishment (until the 40s), then maintenance, and (c) decline (after the 50s). Each stage is characterised by a set of tasks and roles and is distinct in terms of its associated needs, motivations, attitudes, and behaviours (satisfaction, performance, and involvement).

Previous research proposed that career stages moderate the relationship between predictors and career outcomes (Byrne et al., 2008). Observing prior research, the stages related to age are impossible in this digital generation, especially in academic careers in higher education. The development of stages not only relies on age together with many other factors, thus likely affecting the career success of women professionals in HEIs in Myanmar. Thus, in this study, demographic factors and specific job-related human capital variables that individuals possessed are considered one group of determinants of career success of women professionals in HEIs in Yangon.

*The organisational approach* considers that various organisational factors, such as structure, culture, policies, and practices, especially in relation to HRM, are more important for the career success of individuals. The structural approach explored organisational structural arrangements and their characteristics reflected in other features of organisations, such as the size, in explaining different facets of career success. Sponsored mobility theory proposed by Turner (1960) suggests that an organisation's sponsor-mobility systems should allow only those who have been chosen by the powerful to get upward mobility. Research in this perspective suggests that special attention was given to those who have a high potential and provided sponsoring activities to help them win the competition (Ng et al., 2005; Haines et al., 2014). Several studies also affirm the role of coaching and mentoring to investigate the career success and indicate salient factors for the career success of women (Burke and McKeen, 1994; Obers, 2014). Recent research has focused attention on gendered practices and demonstrated their salient roles in motivation and career progression (Pas et al., 2014; Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). The current study argues that organisational variables such as organisational support, gendered practices, and coaching and mentoring promote the women professionals' career success in the higher educational organisation. The inclusion of organisational variables is important in assessing the career success of women professionals, as the extent of their impact on career success can exceed those of demographic factors (Guo, Xiao, and Yang, 2012).

*The societal approach* focused on the role of social values, norms, customs, and social networks in influencing one's career choice and progression. Religion is one mainly used lens in exploring the perception of their career-related outcomes of women (Alam, Amin, and McCormick, 2017; Sarwar and Imran, 2019); however, social capital is another popular approach in this perspective. Social Capital Theory is defined as investment of resources such as trust, norms,

and networks inherent in social relations with expected returns (Lin, 2001). Some researchers apply social capital theory as a theoretical basis for studying career success (Seibert et al., 2001; Roziah and Ismail, 2013; Nikitkov and Sainty, 2014). Among them, Nikitkov and Sainty study (2014) provides empirical support for the value of social networking as a proxy for the development of social capital, supporting the link between a group of social network profile characteristics and one's career success. Roziah Mohd Rasdi, Thomas N. Garavan, and Maimunah Ismail also demonstrated that social networking is significantly related to career success.

The above theories identify the characteristics of career success from varying approaches. In fact, Uli and Noach (2008) contend that career success is a complicated phenomenon that is affected by a myriad of various factors, such as individual, organisational, and managerial factors. However, as mentioned above, this study is conducted in one cultural context where an individual's behaviour can be influenced by common social values and norms. So, individual and organisational variables can have a more meaningful impact on career success outcomes. The following section proposes the hypotheses that discuss the association between individual and organisational factors and the career success of women lecturers in Myanmar.

## **2.11 Hypotheses Development**

### **2.11.1 The Relationship between Organisational Factors and Career Success**

In this research, organisational factors include organisational support, gendered practices, and coaching and mentoring. They are enabling conditions that can foster career growth and progressions. Without the support of these factors, it would be infeasible for the female to obtain success in academia. Career management practices adopted by organisations are vital for the career success of employees as they facilitate career success through information, relational, and developmental means (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019). Perceived organisational support entails organisational policies and procedures that can reduce ambiguity in carrying out their tasks and practices, such as training to support staff with necessary knowledge and skills and encouraging workers to achieve their career ambitions. Existing literature suggests that organisational support plays a critical role in career outcomes of individuals (Ballout, 2007; Pahi, 2021), including females (Agrawal & Singh, 2021; Chauhan et al., 2022). Organisational support can improve the

career success of women lecturers by allowing them to adjust to dynamic career requirements (Ocampo et al., 2018; Takeuchi et al., 2021) as their career motives increase their self-efficacy (Hamzah et al., 2022) with clear policies and guidelines. Conversely, a lack of enabling conditions weakens their ability and motivation, making women academic staff reduce their interest in career success and inhibit their career progression.

Coaching and mentoring are other pivotal variables that can impact the career success of females. A sizable amount of research has also noted a requirement for mentoring programs to sustain women's advancement and leadership positions (e.g., Kramers et al. 2023). Successful mentoring benefits females in many ways, including career success (Vasquez & Pandya, 2019). Coaching and mentoring encourage women to develop their skills and knowledge in a specific career field. Prior research has also noted the positive association between coaching and mentoring and the career success of women in various professions (Picariello et al., 2021; Banwell et al., 2019; Mcilongo & Strydom, 2021; Shen et al., 2021). These findings are reasonably acceptable in today's work setting, where women become more competent to hold higher positions with the provision of these practices (Shen et al., 2021). Mentoring and coaching can boost the important psychological capital of professional staff by uplifting self-efficacy, morale, and optimism (Hsu et al., 2019). In addition, mentoring can also boost the emotional capital due to feelings of caring and confidence from positive social relationships between mentor and mentee (Crampton and Mishra, 1999; Wallace, 2001). By contrast, women who are not privileged to these arrangements reduce satisfaction, decline confidence, and reduce academic productivity that are important for the objective career success of women lecturers (Cross et al., 2019). Along these lines, it is expected that coaching and mentoring can enhance subjective and objective career success of women academics in Myanmar, as these practices may improve their practical skills, enhance confidence, and strengthen emotional capital to become satisfied and to attain higher pay or occupational status.

Gendered practices, such as gendered stereotypes and biases, still exist in many workplaces since, in some cases, female executives encounter gender discrimination twice that of male counterparts (Beregovskaya et al., 2022). These unfair, discriminatory practices can inhibit the career progression of females despite their ascribed efforts (Ketchiwou & Dzansi, 2023). These practices are prevalent in most societies where mothers with infants are directed to spend more time caring for their children, so these gender biases can reduce the career motivation of women

who want to seek the work-life balance (Pas et al., 2014). These trends indicate that gender discriminatory practices may influence objective career success negatively. Despite this notable wisdom, research examining this link is scant, and those that investigate it are not able to establish the relationship (Ketchiwou & Dzansi, 2023). Gendered practices can result in unhealthy psychological outcomes as they can prevent the achievement of work-life balance and hinder the career development and motivation of women workers (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016). Gender-bias practices weaken their motivation, making women academic staff reduce interest in career success and inhibit their career progression. Previous research indicates that gender-friendly practices can improve women's skills and career progression. By contrast, the unbiased gendered practices can improve intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction of women lecturers, allowing them to be satisfied with their careers and achieve objective success.

### **2.11.2 Relationship between Individual Factors and Career Success**

Research consistently highlights that those women in various professional settings, including those in higher education, often face career challenges based on personal factors, most of which are rooted in gender roles and structural inequalities. The individual factors considered to be impacting the career success of women are identified as demographics involving measures such as being women, family background, family status, human capital, and family support.

Demographics of females is an influencing individual-related factor that affects both subjective and objective career success of females. Perception of being women can exert a negative effect on the subjective and objective career success of women in many ways. Research consistently highlights that women in various professional settings, particularly those in higher education and top organisational positions, often face career challenges rooted in gendered perceptions and structural inequalities. Women in top positions often attribute their career success to personal qualities, such as gender, as they face discriminatory practices in organisations (Beregovskaya et al., 2022). They tend to receive lesser human capital support, along with conflicting work and family demands (Igbaria & Chidambaram, 1997). Rising inequalities in organisations further contribute to the glass ceiling effect, which makes it impossible for women to accumulate skills and knowledge derived from training opportunities in the workplace

(Ammerman and Groysberg, 2021). When women internalise these barriers, such as work-family conflict, lack of mentorship, and the glass ceiling effect, they may tend to suffer lower self-esteem and career dissatisfaction, despite having comparable qualifications and professional experiences to fellow males. The negative career success impact of being women can worsen for females in the educational field that demands substantial time and effort devotion to continuous learning (Virick and McKee-Ryan, 2018). Therefore, the perception of being women can adversely affect the subjective and objective career success of women lecturers.

Beyond family background, family responsibilities can play a pivotal role in shaping career success. Women from various socio-economic backgrounds are perceived to hold certain roles like childcare and household chores. The burden of these responsibilities imposed on women can prevent them from pursuing initiatives that are vital for objective career success (Mayrhofer et al., 2008) because it suppresses available time and energy that women can devote to work, leading to low wages, lack of promotions, and low occupational status. Family background (parental education, parental income) and family status (social status/social class, parental aspirations) also positively affect the career success of women. Ashby and Schoon (2010) found that women from higher socio-economic backgrounds, including parental education, tend to have higher career aspirations, greater access to mentorship, and increased opportunities for skill development. These factors can boost women's self-efficacy necessary to navigate organisational structures and succeed in competitive fields like academia (Kim, 2014). Therefore, to the women lecturers, a favourable family background can foster greater career satisfaction and career progression. By contrast, female lecturers who come from less favourable family backgrounds may find it difficult to obtain career satisfaction and progression, perhaps due to their limited access to resources needed for maturing and developing education, relationships, and socialisation (Pearson & Bieschke, 2001), thereby limiting success in both subjective and objective career success.

The number of children can be a crucial factor that determines the career success of women in academia. Extant research also indicates that academic staff with less children or no child can have certain advantage to achieve greater objective career success such as increased pay, position and promotions due to geographic mobility along their career journey (Greguletz et al., 2019; Valcour and Ladge, 2008). By contrast, the presence of many children can adversely impact the income and career

satisfaction of females due to conflicting responsibilities arising from maintaining dual roles (Valcour & Ladge, 2008). Thus, it is argued that the demographic factor, which is altogether made up of being women, family background conditions and children, can affect both objective and subjective career success of women lecturers.

Human capital is one of the influential factors that determines career success (Becker, 1993). Human capital refers to education level, the level of knowledge and skills accumulated, and related experiences (Adhikary & Shrestha, 2023). In academia, human capital is not just a formal requirement but a sign of wide social connection. Research has consistently shown that higher levels of human capital are positively associated with both subjective and objective career success (Chen, 2011; Monserrat & Simmers, 2020). For female lecturers, the significance of human capital may be even more pronounced than for their male counterparts. According to Kirchmeyer (1998) and Melamed (1996), women's career success is often more closely tied to job-relevant qualifications and merits than that of men. This suggests that women's professional advancement is frequently evaluated through the lens of their human capital. Despite the recognition of the importance of human capital for women, gendered structural inequalities in academic settings may amplify the impact of human capital deficiencies for women more than for men. For example, Ng (2010) suggests that human capital—specifically, experience and cognitive ability—enhances task performance and boosts efficiency, which in turn results in greater career satisfaction and objective success. Furthermore, individuals with superior human capital can gain benefits from being placed in network centrality positions, which allows them to gain information and positive supervisor evaluation (Lin and Haung, 2005). By contrast, evidence suggests that a deficiency in human capital can hinder upward career progression and performance (McGowan et al., 2005). Research by McGowan et al. (2005) highlights that individuals with lower levels of human capital—whether due to insufficient education, lack of experience, or limited opportunities to develop relevant skills—face substantial barriers to career advancement. For women lecturers, this can result in poor performance evaluations, reduced access to promotions, and lower pay. Despite similar qualifications or job performance, women may be disproportionately penalised for gaps in their human capital, especially when compared to their male counterparts, who may benefit from informal networks and gendered assumptions of competence that women often lack (Koch et al., 2017). This issue can be worsened when intersectionality, i.e., combined influences of various

forms of social identity in shaping the discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2019), of weak human capital with gender, age, etc. (Ely et al., e.g., 2011), despite this issue being less pronounced for academia in Myanmar, which is dominated by a female majority. Therefore, the effect of superior human capital displayed by women in obtaining higher career success can be better understood by performing interactional analysis or applying the model that controls several other variables.

Family support is widely recognised as a pivotal factor in career development, particularly for women. The positive influence of support from spouses, parents, and other family members (such as siblings and children) on women's career satisfaction and success is well documented (Ezzedeen et al., 2018). A certain number of studies have suggested that family support positively influences the career success and satisfaction of women (Ezzedeen et al., 2018); however, a similar result does not appear to hold true for males (Powell & Eddleston, 2013). This gender disparity raises questions about underlying cultural and social dynamics that reinforce traditional gender roles, wherein women may be more reliant on external support due to persistent inequities in work-life balance expectations. Family support may enhance the likelihood of obtaining career success for women in multifaceted ways. Family support offers a crucial source of motivational and physical resources that help women set desired goals and strive towards desired career destinations (Gardner, Barrett & Pearson, 2014; Yasmin & Husna, 2020). Spousal support, in particular, contributes to career satisfaction by sharing household responsibilities and encouraging effective job performance (Agrawal & Singh, 2022). On the other hand, insufficient family support can endanger the career success of women via the negative spillover effect it has on work. Women in managerial positions who lack adequate family support often experience reduced job satisfaction and face psychological and physical stress stemming from work-family conflicts (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). When considering women lecturers specifically, insufficient family support can result in declining motivation and productivity, directly impacting their career advancement. This scenario reveals broader systemic issues where traditional expectations and the lack of supportive frameworks perpetuate gender disparities in career success. Along these lines, it is argued that women lecturers who do not receive sufficient family support may hinder their chances of obtaining success in that academic career.

### **2.11.3 The Mediation Effect of Subjective Career Success in Individual and Organisational Drivers and Objective Career Success**

The contribution of subjective career success to objective career success has received lesser attention compared to attention towards career success drivers. Subjective career success can produce a positive effect on objective career outcomes in females. However, studies reported mixed findings on this focal link. While some studies have found that subjective success precedes objective success, others have indicated that objective success is a precondition for subjective success. Extrinsic factors motivate women more than men (Cho et al., 2020, p. 4). External indicators of career advancements like promotions, salary, and position are closely related to career satisfaction. Promotions allow individuals to access higher job roles and responsibilities in the workplace. Promotions are directly related to position and salary, and these factors give greater satisfaction to women. When women cannot access promotions, they become less satisfied in their careers. Therefore, individuals' level of career satisfaction increases as they achieve extrinsic rewards.

Other research on career success suggests more intricate findings (Crisan, 2021). Crisan notes that "individuals who do not attain extrinsic motivations like promotions have lower subjective and objective career success" (p. 99). The results imply that objective career success is directly related to subjective career success and other success in the objective sense.

While the interactive and complex relationship between subjective and objective career success is well noted, career research suggests the greater salient role of subjective success on objective career achievement. For example, Abele and Spurk (2009) argue that subjective career success can be a stronger antecedent to objective career success than objective success has on subjective success. Therefore, the mediation role of subjective career success on the relationship between individual and organisational-related factors and objective career success is investigated in the present study.

In fact, certain research advocated the notion that subjective success is vital for subsequent objective success (Walsh et al., 2018, p.203). This is because happy individuals receive more commendations and acknowledgements from their supervisors, which directly and positively affect their earnings. This suggests that intrinsic motivators such as satisfaction can significantly

affect objective career success. Also, satisfied individuals have access to social support from supervisors and colleagues. Inner satisfaction in happy people can allow them to mobilise their social skills to build effective relationships in the workplace and can obtain objective success in their careers, such as promotion and pay, from their superior social skills. These results tend to imply that objective career success of women lecturers tends to be promoted by the perceptions of attainment of subjective success in their careers.

## 2.12 Summary Hypotheses

The overall aim of this research was to examine the differential factors related to objective and subjective career success from individual and organisational approaches. The individual and organisational variables identified appear to be relatively generic and have been examined in different countries and job settings, such as academic, managerial, and heterogeneous populations. The present research seeks to extend existing knowledge of career success in three ways.

First, career success is conceptualised to include a variety of objective measures such as pay, benefits, and position, as well as the most common measure of subjective career success, such as career satisfaction. Second, these objective and subjective career success measures are evaluated by individual and organisational factors that include a variety of possible demographic factors, organisational supports, gendered practices, and mentors. Previous research has tended to focus on only one or two HR or organisational practices, usually mentoring (such as Aryee et al., 1996; Dreher and Ash, 1990). Third, this research examines not only the differential predictors across objective and subjective career success but also the direction of relationships (i.e., for ambition) suggested in the available literature. The following hypothesis is generated for this study.

The higher subjective career success will be experienced by women lecturers who perceived that they are higher in demographic (family background, family status, more children), higher in human capital, and have greater family support. The detailed justifications are discussed in the preceding section.

H1a Demographic is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H1b Human capital is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H1c Family support is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

The higher subjective career success will be experienced by women lecturers who perceived that their schools provide them with higher organisational support, their schools offer them higher developmental coaching and mentoring opportunities and their school adopt greater gendered practice.

H2a Organisational support is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H2b Coaching and mentoring is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H2c Gendered practice is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

The higher objective career success will be experienced by women lecturers who perceived that they are higher in demographic (family background, family status, more children), higher human capital and greater family support.

H3a Demographic is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H3b Human capital is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H3c Family support is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

The higher objective career success will be experienced by women lecturers who perceived that their schools provide them with higher organisational support, their schools offer them higher developmental coaching and mentoring opportunities and. their school adopt greater gendered practice. The detail justifications are discussed in the preceding section.

H4a Organisational support is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H4b Coaching and mentoring is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H4c Gendered practice is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

In addition, this study suggests that subjective career success acts as a mediator in the relationship between drivers and objective career success.

H5a Subjective career success mediates the relationship between demographic variable and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H5b Subjective career success mediates the relationship between human capital and objective career success.

H5c Subjective career success mediates the relationship between family support and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H6a Subjective career success mediates the relationship between organisational support and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H6b Subjective career success mediates the relationship between coaching and mentoring and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

H6c Subjective career success mediates the relationship between gendered practices and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.

## 2.13 Conceptual Framework of The Current Study

The researcher focuses on the organisational, individual and career success of women lecturers who are working in private educational institutions. The proposed relationships among these variables are illustrated in Figure (2.1).

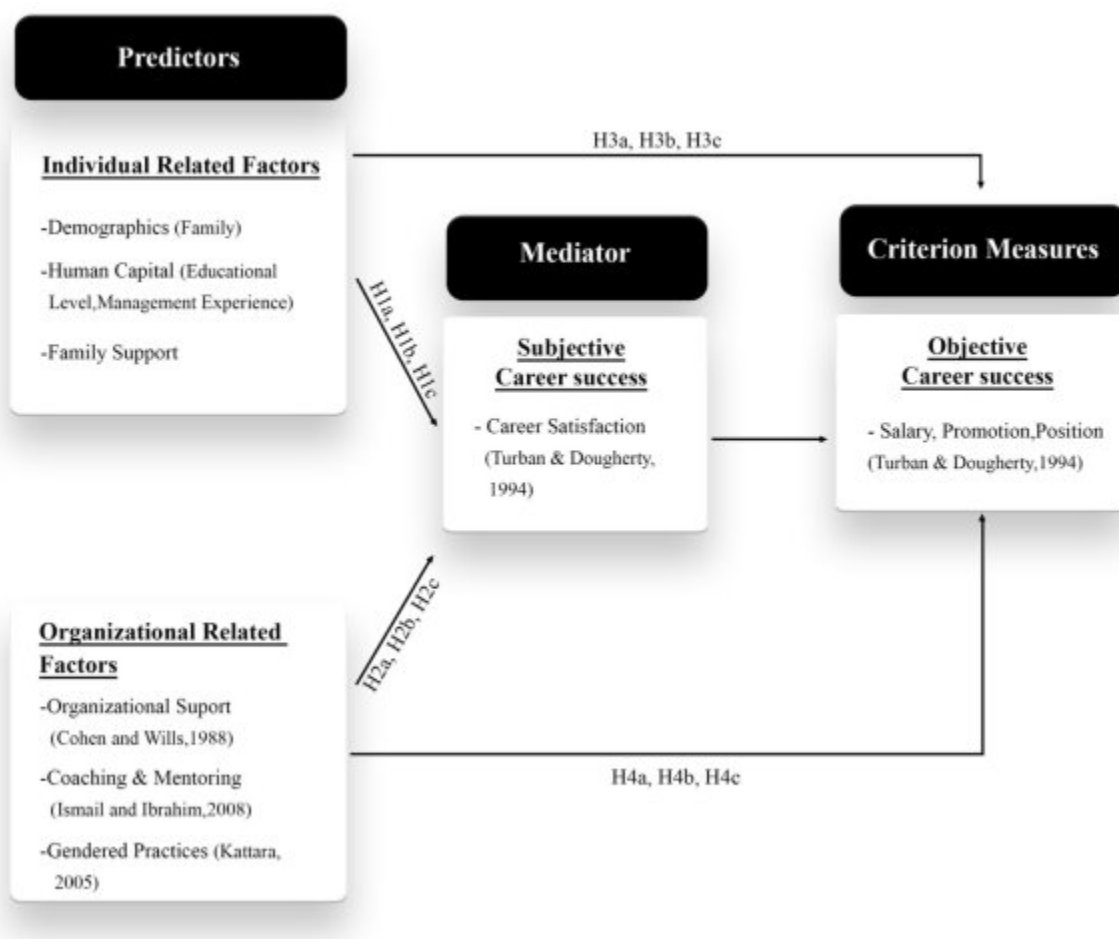


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework of the current study

Based on the literature review, the research framework is constructed to depict the postulations developed for quantitative analysis. The conceptual framework entails the predictors, mediator, and criterion. The predictors are organisational factors and individual factors. The organisational factors include gendered practices, coaching and mentoring, and organisational support. Individual factors include family support, human capital (experience, educational level),

and social demographics. The mediators are objective career success, including position, promotion, and salary. On the other hand, the criterion measures include the subjective career success factor, career satisfaction.

## **2.14 Career Success's Meaning and Drivers in Context: Interpretive**

### **Approach**

Existing research has revealed that even within the educational field, perception of career success differs across countries. While individuals from some contexts focus more on objective, visible achievements, others from a different context hold a varying view. In fact, academics differ in their views on success criteria. For example, Nabi (1999) studied the perceptions of objective success of male and female academics, i.e., professors, from universities in the UK. He indicated that academicians viewed objective career success in terms of level of education and the size (ranking) of universities. Another notable study by Harris et al. (1998) employing male and female academicians from universities in Australia proposed another interesting insight. They found that academicians in universities in Australia viewed career success from both observable and unobservable aspects. They remarked on career success as their sensitivity to work and survive in a working environment, namely, the ability to demonstrate political sense and work long working hours. These available studies provide subtle insights and unique implications that the perception of career success of academics is found to vary across the countries even though they shared the high academic status. In particular, perceptions of career success of academics from Myanmar can be different from their academics due to lower socio-economic status, which makes it difficult to generalise to academics from Myanmar without empirical investigation.

In addition, these studies have focused on exploring academics involving both men and women. In fact, the meaning of career success differs across genders, in which males emphasise more on objective achievement as success, but the same notion is not true for women (Kim, 2004; Jung and Takeuchi, 2016; Sturges, 1999). Expectations about family roles and responsibilities towards males and women are different in many societies (Mayrhofer et al., 2008), including Myanmar. In Myanmar, males and females are expected to perform different roles, with women being more defined with fulfilling family responsibilities than males. These meanings and definitions can shape the women's perceptions of which factors they view as success. Thus, it is essential to explore the meaning of career success from the perspective of women academics.

Furthermore, perception of career success is not static but dynamic as they make adjustments to the perceptions as their life progresses to reflect the realistic situations (White, 1995; Pachulicz et al., 2008). Obviously, success is not taken for granted by all individual professionals, nor do these factors occur in a vacuum. The differences in whether women lecturers can be endowed with success criteria being valued by their own environment depend on the presence or absence of attributes that provide support to the career success of those academicians. Thus, it is essential to explore how they view career success factors in relation to career success outcomes.

## **2.15 Conclusion**

Career success for women professionals in Myanmar's education industry is a challenging process due to the influence of personal, societal, and professional factors. The literature review suggests that various levels of drivers and inhibitors can affect the career success of women in various ways. Despite these challenges, recent efforts by Myanmar academic and regulatory authorities to transform male-preferred practices in the academic sectors and investments in vocational departments and other prospects aim to strengthen the role of women professionals in Myanmar's academic sector.

## **2.16 Chapter Summary**

Literature review presents that the research literature and related studies on the influencing factors on career success. These factors suggest the conceptual framework and related theories are presented as a series of prior research. The development of hypotheses is postulated to test the influencing factors of women professionals' career success in the higher educational institutions in Myanmar. The following chapter 3 is to present the research methodology.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the present study. It initiates with a discussion of the research paradigm chosen for the study, i.e., mixed method that is the combined use of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This discussion is followed by the research design of each research approach, covering the topics such as sample, and respondents, research instruments, pilot test, the analytical procedures to answer the research questions and objectives set out in the Chapter1.

### 3.1 Research Paradigm

This study uses a mixed method employing both positivist and interpretive approach. Interpretivism recognizes that people's subjective experiences are multiple and socially constructed (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2004). Ontologically, it postulates that these experiences are valid and worth exploring because they reflect the complexity of reality. Epistemologically, interpretivism claims that reality is best understood by exploring how others perceive it (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2004). This contrasts with positivism, which claims that reality is objective and single and that it is better explored through scientific inquiry.

Positivism is mainly conducted by natural science and the scientific methods that are still widely used in today social science research. This research philosophy is mainly used in much research to refute the existing bodies of knowledge. The existing theories that are used in this study are ma (Judge, et. al., 1995), social capital theory (Seibert, et. al, 2001).

The interpretative research paradigm is suitable for the current study because it allowed examining the meaning that women educators in higher education institutions Myanmar attribute to their career success and its divers and processes. In other words, interpretivism allowed giving voice to objects of research and seeing reality through their perspective. Interpretivist research is often criticized for subjectivity and inability to establish the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables (Ling & Ling, 2019). Interpretivism is based on believe that social reality is not objective but highly subjective because of shaping perceptions and it focuses on exploring the complexity of social phenomena with wide range of gaining interpretive understanding (Saunders

et al., 2009). However, the given study sought to generate knowledge that would be contextual and individual, so it was important to select the research paradigm that would study the phenomenon from the inside (Croucher, 2015).

### **3.2 Research Strategy**

Research strategy is an inseparable part of research methodology, which helps organise and structure the research, delineate the boundaries, and maintain control over the research processes (Mcgrath and Coles, 2013).

Since the chosen methodology of present research is a mixed method, it uses both types of strategies in quantitative and qualitative. For quantitative research, the survey research strategy is used to support research questions. This data will be useful in identifying variables to be measured and estimating the required research problems (Glasow, 2005). This survey approach helps to identify the impact of career success factors on women lecturers in Higher Education from the perspective of organisational and individual-level drivers.

In this approach, the survey research strategy is used to answer research questions. The selected strategy helps identify factors influencing the career success of women professionals in the higher education sector in Myanmar. This widely used method allows access to a significantly high number of participants, while the availability of online survey platforms enables the fast and cheap distribution of surveys. As stressed by Walston et al. (2017), surveys can be particularly important in education research because they can provide quantitative descriptions of the phenomena, issues, behaviours, and attitudes of participants, including teachers. Accurate data from a large, methodologically rigorous survey can be instrumental in promoting effective policy- and organisational-level decisions (Walston et al., 2020). Brewer (2009) confirmed the usefulness of a survey in education research and added that a comprehensive survey instrument is a key to successful survey utilisation.

For qualitative research strategy, the interview method is mainly used for understanding the perception of career success and the process by which different success drivers contribute to career success. It allows capturing the depth of meaning that participants themselves attribute to the studied issues and phenomena. From the interpretive perspective, there are no benefits in working with large samples dictated by the quantitative research method since they do not allow collecting

detailed and rich data (Klenke, 2008). In this study, the author's intention is to understand how women educators in Myanmar perceive factors that influence their career success in higher education institutions. Therefore, a qualitative research design that helps to focus on experiences of a limited number of participants and generating detailed contextual information was selected as the most appropriate. The following table 3.1 provides an overview of the interpretivist research behaviours and values.

**Table 3. 1: An interpretivist research, Bristow (2015)**

Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Typical Methods
Managing and organizing are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flux of processes, experiences, practices</li> <li>• Complex, rich</li> <li>• Socially constructed through culture and language</li> <li>• Multiple meanings, interpretations, realities</li> </ul>	Make meaning through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations</li> <li>• New understandings and worldviews</li> </ul>	Value-bound research of what is researched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers are part</li> <li>• Subjectivity and empathy</li> <li>• Researcher interpretations key to contribution</li> </ul>	Qualitative methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small samples</li> <li>• In-depth investigations</li> <li>• interpretations</li> </ul>

However, while this interpretive study acknowledges the priority of first-person subjective experience and contextualisation, the researcher wanted to increase the objectivity and reliability

of findings. Interviews with a limited group of participants will help the researcher to capture the complexity of their beliefs and perceptions regarding the issue in question and look at the broader cultural and social setting that affects them (Murchison, 2010). In this way, the breadth and depth of surveys and interviews allow the researcher to explore the problem of women educators' career advancement from different perspectives and draw meaningful and reliable conclusions.

### 3.2.1 Research Design

According to Labaree (2009) and Saunders et al. (2009), research design helps in outlining plans, strategy, and structure for research. Through this plan, researchers will know how the research is carried out by using what methodology and techniques for achieving research objectives. They can be divided into three categories: explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive research (Labaree, 2009); however, they are used in conjunction in many studies.

The study is also characterised by the combined use of those various approaches. Causality (explanatory) research is for analysing the cause and effect. The main purpose of using this approach is to explain links between variables that concern the research problem (Wyk, n.d.). In addition, as a mixed-method approach, this study took an explanatory and exploratory research design. For an explanatory approach, this research aims to shed light on the factors that contribute to the career success of women professionals. It enables the identification of the factors that drive the career success of women from both objective and subjective success. For exploratory design, the interpretative (case study) approach is selected to unpack the opportunities for new understanding of their perception of career success and how those career success drivers promote the career success of women lecturers from HEIs in Yangon.

### 3.2.2 Methods for Data Collection

This research employs both quantitative and qualitative data. *Quantitative data* are collected in line with the positivist approach that aims to understand the relationship between proposed variables (hypotheses) tested in a conceptual model. In accordance with this approach, this study is mainly based on objective measurements and numerical, statistical analysis with data collected by using a questionnaire and using pre-existing statistical data (Saunders et al., 2009). This method is used for analysing the impact between two variables on career success indicators. Employing a larger sample size sample (Collis and Hussey, 2014), this approach relies on inferential statistics for testing hypotheses.

As for the interpretative approach that aims to explore the research questions, the in-depth interview method is used to collect qualitative data from the women lecturers from HEIs in Yangon. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), qualitative research methods are characterised by their aims, which relate to understanding some aspects of social life and generating words rather than numbers. It is mainly used for describing factors such as emotions, suggestions and behaviour by answering questions with why and how and is useful for developing solutions (Thurow, 2015). Also, it is unstructured exploratory research to answer

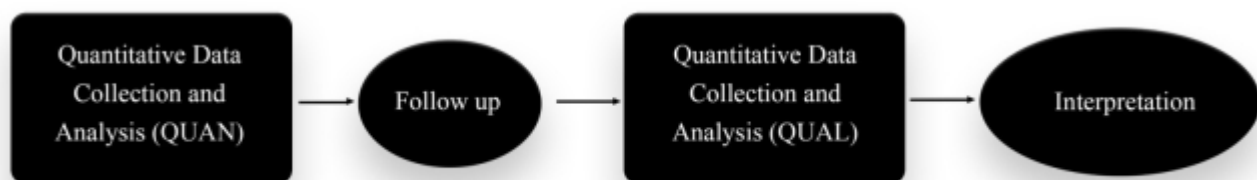
‘how’ or ‘why’ questions and is used for explanatory purposes. Therefore, researchers choose this method for analysing respondents’ thoughts and perceptions in an interview (Devault, 2016).

### 3.2.3 Time Horizon

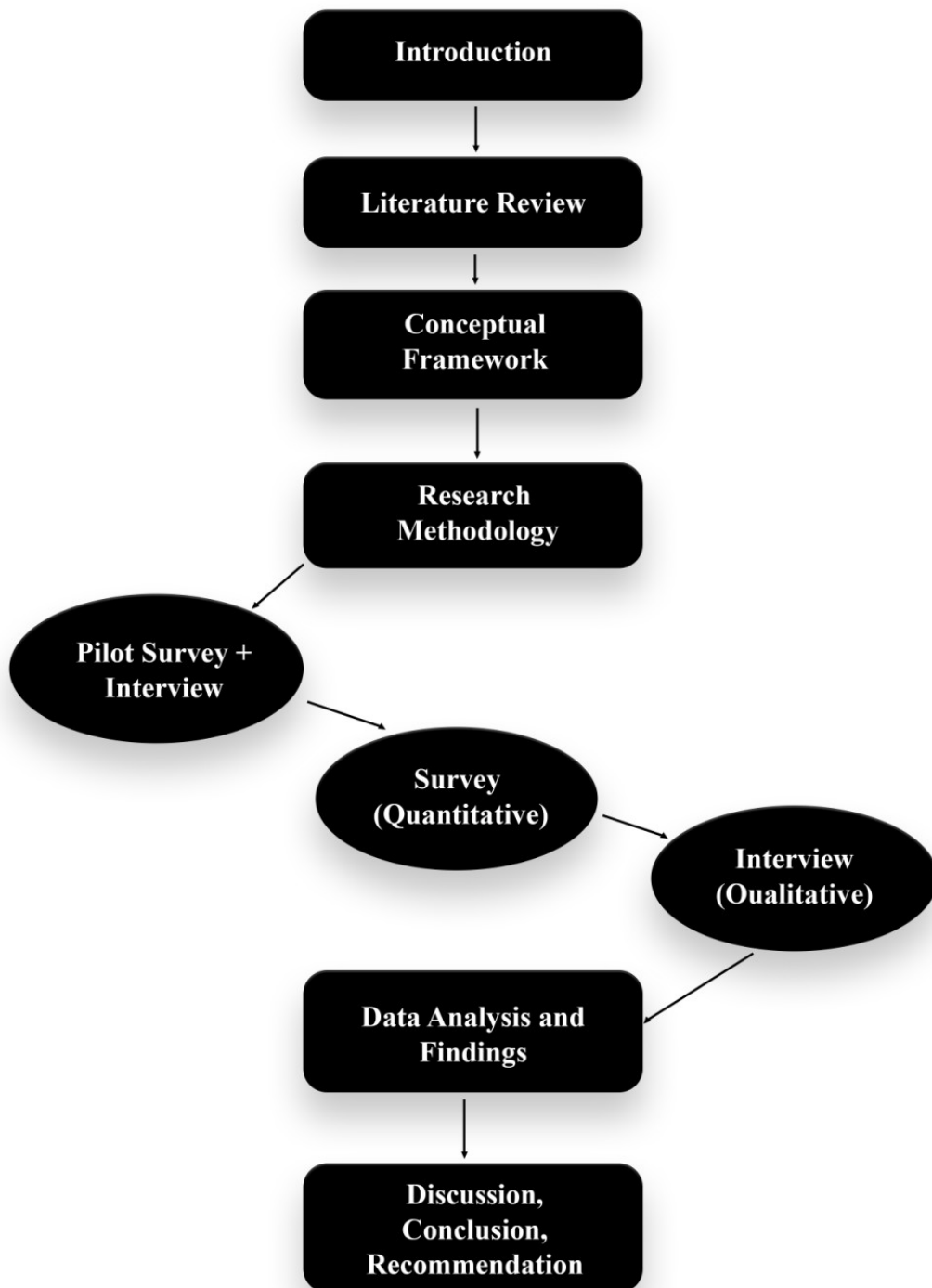
The fourth step is identifying the target time. There are two types of time horizons: longitudinal, which means that data is collected from the same subjects at multiple time points, allowing the data for comparison over time; however, cross-sectional data refers to data collected at a single point in time or over a relatively short period and focuses on variation across different individuals. Group or entities at the same moment (Saunders et al., 2009). For this current research, the time horizon is cross-sectional data collection, and this data are to be analysed for achieving the research objectives.

## 3.3 Research Design

Mixed-method research design was used in this current study to collect and analyse the data (Koro- Ljungberg, 2015). Among the different mix method designs, the researcher will use explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which starts with quantitative method followed by qualitative approach.



*Figure 3.1: Exploratory Sequential Mixed methods Research design*



*Figure 3. 2: Research Framework of the study*

### **3.3.1 Contextual Background of Myanmar, Yangon as the Case Study**

Myanmar, mainly Yangon, was utilised as the case study to explore factors affecting the career advancement of women lecturers in private higher education institutions. Myanmar's environment in the area of higher education has changed over the years, owing to political, social and economic transformation (Esson and Wang, 2018). Yangon is the largest city in Myanmar and a primary educational centre. Many private institutions have several government HEIs (Lall, 2021). Although governmental institutions have been participating in the education sector for many decades, private HEIs have been privileged recently. The critical difference between these institutions is the sources of funds, how they are run and the level of autonomy they afford their faculty (Brown and Hung, 2022). The public HEIs obtain their funds from the state, whereas private institutions rely on tuition fees to fund their operations. Additionally, private HEIs utilise flexible models to achieve operational efficiency (Ko, 2019). On the other hand, public HEI operations are based on rigid practices guided by national standards (Chao, 2023). Regarding autonomy, private institutions are more flexible than public institutions due to their central decision-making systems.

As the industry underwent expansions, the private HEIs attracted an increasing number of female faculty members. This trend is unsurprising and reflects the broader characteristics of Myanmar's education sector, which is predominantly female-staffed (Central Statistical Organization, 2020). The high representation of females in higher education is attributed to socio-cultural and economic factors. In Myanmar, education has been considered more feminine and more appropriate for women than practicing other occupations in law or medicine (Than, 2014). Furthermore, according to Myanmar culture, teachers hold a prestigious status as one of the Five Gems—alongside Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, and Parents—thereby making teaching an esteemed and attractive career choice (Mon and Saito, 2018). Consequently, many women pursue higher education, with private HEIs emerging as a primary employment sector for educated women (Lall, 2023).

Private HEIs are more likely to attract female faculty members because, compared to public institutions, they offer better employment policies and chances for career progression. It is also important to note that the Myanmar education sector, of which the lecturers are part, mainly comprises female personnel. Gender imbalance could result from the following socio-cultural and economic factors. Education has been considered more feminine and appropriate for

women to teach than to practice law or medicine. Teachers have always been accorded respectable status, thus making teaching an appealing occupation that provides the needed work-life balance (Mon and Saito, 2018). Moreover, other opportunities in the field of employment are scarce in Myanmar, and the rate of literacy is low. As a result, higher education has become women's main area of work (Lall, 2023). This sector is completely dominated by women, which adds more value in the context of analysing and researching gender roles, drivers of women employees' career success and organisational influence on women's career development in Myanmar. This case-based approach enables an understanding of these distinct factors in the context of Myanmar that can be used to enhance the existing literature on gender and career attainment in higher education.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis**

In line with the method chosen, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the present study.

*Quantitative data* are obtained by survey method. Surveys allow obtaining standardised data from a larger sample and presenting generalisable findings (Axinn and Pearce, 2006). Surveys are based on questions formulated in accordance with specifically stated hypotheses or research questions (Scott and Morrison, 2007). They are standardised, which means that the content of questions, their wording, and their sequence are identical for every participant. Surveys are praised for allowing for minimum contamination of data, as the researcher has a relatively passive role in data collection and analysis. In this way, surveys are preferable in terms of the validity and reliability of data (Scott and Morrison, 2007). However, since this study balanced this limitation with the help of in-depth interviews, it did not affect the quality of overall results.

*Qualitative data* are collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews are a comfortable, natural, and socially acceptable way of data collection, which can generate rich data (Deters, 2011). Interviews are a preferred method of data collection in student papers because they do not require specialised training as compared to quantitative data collection. The benefits of a semi-structured interview include flexibility, ease of use, and the ability to collect rich, detailed

data (Lodigo, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are believed to be superior to inflexible and carefully controlled structured interviews that offer little freedom to participants to express their ideas. At the same time, they are better than unstructured interviews that are often too broad and generate heterogeneous and difficult-to-analyse data (Deters, 2011). Researchers using semi-structured interviews can ask additional questions that are appropriate to the conversation and sensitive to the unfolding discourse (Hartas, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are suitable for interpretative and exploratory purposes, which is another reason why this data collection method is used in this study (Magaldi and Berler, 2018). Since the researcher aims to explore and interpret the experiences and perceptions of women educators in Myanmar, semi-structured interviews are a perfect tool for eliciting responses and gaining a better understanding of the problem through participants' lenses. However, despite their numerous benefits, semi-structured interviews are associated with some limitations and challenges that need to be acknowledged. For example, this data collection method is criticised for limited reliability and standardisation, which exist due to unavoidable information variance (Hensen, 2011). However, this limitation should not discourage researchers from using semi-structured interviews because variance is inseparable from individual experiences that are the focus of interpretive research. The researcher's active involvement in the process may be seen as another potential limitation of semi-structured interviews. Indeed, researchers may affect the data collection process by asking questions, encouraging participants, guiding the direction of a conversation, etc. Therefore, it is important to follow the interview protocol and minimise the expression of personal beliefs to reduce bias. Galletta (2013) recommended engaging in researcher reflexivity to identify and eliminate potential interference.

### **The Piloting Stage**

#### **Understanding the Pilot Study**

A pilot study is an inseparable part of the research process, which allows preparing well for the data collection. A pilot study seeks to test the instrument using a small sample. In this way, the researchers learn whether the instrument is relevant and whether questions are easily understood and do not cause misunderstanding or confusion (Seidman, 2015). Piloting also helps determine questions that could be removed or added to gain as detailed and rich data as possible. In addition, pilot studies are valuable in terms of the researcher's self-reflection as they

allow assessing the researcher's involvement, adjusting data collection strategies, and so on. After conducting a pilot study, the researcher can evaluate their experience, discuss the remaining issues with their supervisors, and revise the research approach if necessary (Seidman, 2015).

### **Pilot Surveys and Interviews**

In this research, a pilot study was conducted to test the survey and interview protocol and assess its overall relevance for answering the research questions. The sample for the pilot interview included three participants. The researcher sought to observe pilot respondents and see how they react to the questions. After the interview, the researcher also collected interviewees' feedback to understand whether they understood all questions well, whether they felt comfortable during the interview, and so on (Newman, McNeil and MacNeil, 1998). This valuable information was then used to adjust the interview in the main study. Another goal of the given pilot study was to test the instrument and see whether it contains all questions needed to collect the required body of data. It was expected that the pilot study would also reveal points of misunderstanding or confusion due to inadequate wording or the choice of words in the interview. Finally, the pilot study was necessary for assessing the researcher's interviewing skills and adjusting the interview process to reduce bias.

#### **Pilot study data analysis**

Analysis of the pilot study differs from that of the main study. Although the researcher scanned the obtained findings for meaningful themes and patterns, the focus was made on the technical aspects of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. In particular, the researcher kept a journal with notes on the flow of interviews, the relevance of prompts, specific challenges faced by both participants and interviewees, and so on. In other words, the researcher assessed whether the design, instrumentation, and data analysis are practicable and feasible. Analysis of preliminary themes was also conducted to assess the effectiveness of the instrument and ensure that it helps generate the required body of data.

### 3.4 Quantitative Design (1st Phrase of study)

#### 3.4.1 : Sample and respondents

There are two types of HEIs in Myanmar under the Ministry of Education, those that belong to the public sector and those to private sector. Public HEIs that include universities and colleges located throughout Myanmar are governed by the department of higher education under the ministry of education and so those institutions operate by following the rules and regulations, including appointments, pay, promotion and transfer, set by the central government bodies. They are divided into full scale universities and colleges. They operate as a full-scale university on both teaching and research.

Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are the granting of academic and financial autonomy and a clearer definition of the differences between higher education and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). According to DICA, there are about 30 HEIs in Yangon, and their list was obtained. Among them, 6 Higher Education Institutions were randomly chosen for a survey, by using a random generator. The selected private HEIs showed more than 50 academic staff and at least five years in operation. The detailed characteristics of selected HEIs are presented in Table

3.2. During that time, observed data reached out to the school administration from 6 institutions. Upon approval of the survey, the data collection proceeded to perform it. Nevertheless, because of the political uncertainty in Myanmar, numerous schools were hesitant to authorize research. Four out of the six Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) contacted agreed to take part in the poll, while two rejected it citing worries about the safety and security of their workers and potential disruption due to the political situation.

Prior contact was made with those schools and requested to the respective Principals for their staff participations in the survey.

**Table 3. 2: Profile of the selected HEIs**

Name	No of	No	Year of establ	of Availa ble course	Con di
------	-------	----	----------------	----------------------	--------

e	aca dem ic staf f	o f o t h e r s t a f f	ishme nt	s	ti on
H E I 1	97	4 0	2007	Engine ering,	Pa rti ci pa te d
H E I 2	118	5 8	2004	Engine ering, Comp uter Scienc e, Busine ss	Pa rti ci pa te d
H E I 3	89	3 3	2010	Busine ss	Pa rti ci pa te d
H E I 4	97	4 9	2010	Engine ering, ICT	Pa rti ci pa te d
H E	75	2 8	2017	Busine ss, ICT	

I 5					
H E I 6	28	1 7	2015	Busine ss, ICT	

**Respondents:** This study chose women academics to collect data from these institutions because of the presence of three job demand components: teaching, research, and professional services. The lecturers from these institutions could be categorised as full-time and part-time. At first, the research planned to cover the staff from both Public (Government) institutions and Private institutions. But due to instability of socio-economic and political factors in 2021, the study did not include lecturers from government sector HEIs.

After the military coup happened on February 1, 2022, many university staff opposed Myanmar's ruling junta. More than 11,000 academics have been suspended in protest of military rule (Fishbain, Emily; Lusan, Nu Nu, 2021). Consequently, the research only covered those from the private sector. In fact, the career success and advancement of women at private universities might be significantly different due to factors such as organisational support (from their institutions), career development opportunities, financial stability, and individual support such as family support towards their career success. Other aspects that public universities must confront are considerable bureaucratic and regulatory costs and obligations to the public as compared to their counterparts in private universities (Triantafillou, 2004).

Due to the above consideration, the data collection was commenced; there were about 400 women academics in four selected HEIs. Tutors were excluded who were on study and sabbatical leave from the sampling frame, and the exclusion was deemed necessary to ensure the integrity and representativeness of the sample, as individuals on study or sabbatical leave may not be actively engaged in the daily academic activities and may therefore provide different perspectives or experiences compared to those who are actively teaching or involved in institutional activities.

Furthermore, it is worth noting to include the absent academic staffs during the survey period, a considerable number of teachers returned to their hometowns due to the prevailing political situation in Myanmar. Many schools transitioned to online learning, and as a result, some academic staff members may have been temporarily absent from their usual duties. Thus, the

decision to exclude tutors on study and sabbatical leave was made to maintain consistency and accuracy in our sample representation. After the exclusion of these individuals, about 230 women professionals were available for the survey. Researchers have sent out the emails to the potential 230 respondents from selected HEIs to notify about the survey in advance. The survey was conducted using a paper and pencil method. Questionnaires were distributed to the Administration department of the six HEIs to reach out to 230 academics. A consent letter that mentioned their rights to participate or not in the survey and participant information sheet that explained the major purpose of the study were attached together with questionnaires.

The questionnaire contained forty-six items that measured the variables based on the model of the study. The survey was administered in English because all academics could answer the questions in this language. The academic staff are bilingual in their teaching, and the English language textbooks are the common materials. The students are also provided English language materials (ppt, assignment, exams). The first stage of data collection started in April 2022. Out of 230, 210 of the questionnaires returned, at a response rate of 91%. After deleting nineteen respondents with missing data, i.e., the number of items that were not answered by the respondents, the total sample available for the analysis was 191.

### 3.4.2 Survey instrument

The questionnaire comprised fifty questions measuring eight constructs derived from the theoretical model of the study (see Figure 2.1) and five demographic variables. All the constructs were assessed using preexisting measures from the literature and one construct. Demographic variables were measured with a ratio scale, which asked respondents to choose one category which is suited to them. Each construct in the questionnaire was measured using five-point Likert scales, with anchors being (1) strongly disagree or never to (5) strongly agree. To derive a scale-score for each person on each variable, the mean score of all items was calculated. Table 4.3 presents a summary of the measures that were used in this study.

**Table 3. 3: variables, source of the scales and number of items**

Variables	Sources	N
		o

		of items
Socio-demographic	Constructed by researcher	5
Organisational supports	(Cohen and Wills, 1988)	6
Coaching and mentoring	(Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008)	4
Gendered practices	(Kattara, 2005)	6
Demographic factors	Rizzo et al.'s (1970)	4
Human capital	Constructed by researcher	5
Individual supports	(Kirchmeyer, 1998; Tharenou et al., 1994; Cannings, 1991; Gattiker and Larwood, 1990)	6
Objective career success	(Turban & Dougherty, 1994)	9
Subjective career success	(Turban & Dougherty, 1994)	4

### Personal profile

The first part of the questionnaire contained five questions relating to the personal background of the respondents: age, education, type of private school, work experience. Five categories for age: between 20 and 30, between 31 and 40, between 41 and 50 between 51 and 60 and above 60. Education was divided into four categories according to the highest qualification possessed by respondent: 1. Diploma 2. Bachelor's degree 3. Master's degree and 4. Doctor of Business Administration/ Ph.D. Type of educational organisation is divided into five categories: 1. Private high school 2. Private Vocational Training 3. Private College 4. Private university College and 5. Private University. Work experience was divided into six categories: 1. Less than one year, 2. 1 to 3 years, 3. 4 to 5 years, 4. 6 to 7 years, 5. 8 to 9 years and 7. More than 9 years.

The following are the measurement of dependent (organisational and individual factors), mediator (Subjective career success) and independent (objective career success) variables. All of them are measured in five point-Likert Scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

#### Organisational support

Organisational support is one organisational-related factor in the present study. This study used six items for organisational support variable from (Cohen and Wills, 1988). The scale is intended to measure the extent to which employees perceive that the organisation offers good working environment to enhance their contributions to it. The items were as follows:

The working environment and conditions are safe and healthy.

Our organisation allows me to manage my duties and responsibilities myself. (autonomy)

Our organisation provides sufficient teaching facilities to staff.

My job is secure working in this organisation.

Effective training programmes are provided regularly.

Promotion regulations are clearly stated.

The women professionals were asked to indicate their agreement with each item on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

#### **Coaching and Mentoring**

Coaching and mentoring are another organisational-related factors in the present study. A mentor was defined as a more experienced or higher ranking, influential women professional, including seniors and peers, who is committed to facilitating the career of a less experienced person by providing support, guidance, friendship, and sponsorship. Coaching and mentoring scale was measured by (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008) four-item scale. The scale was intended to measure the perception of whether the organisation provides the coaching and mentoring activities to ensure academic professionals' confidence in their skills and feeling of support and recognition on their contribution to organisations. Four items were as follows:

1. Our organisation encourages coaching and mentoring among the staff.
2. Our organisation has regular well-being check among the staff.
3. Career-related mentoring is given to the employees.

4. Senior staff share their knowledge to the junior staff.

The women professionals were asked to indicate their agreement with each item on a five- point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

### **Gendered practices**

Gendered practices is another organisational-related factor in the present study. Kattara, (2005) six-item scale was used to measure gendered practices. The scale measured the level of academics' perception of practices include gender equality, gender discrimination, recognition, empowerment, equality workload, fairness in benefits. Items were as follows:

1. There is no gender discrimination in our organisation.
2. Women are recognised for their successes.
3. The organisation empowers women to set ambitious goals.
4. There is gender equality at my workplace.
5. There is equal workload among men and women in our organisation.

6. There are benefits for women such as maternity leave. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with each item on a five-point scale ranging from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **Demographic**

Gender practices are an individual-related factors in the present study. Demographic factors were measured by Rizzo et al. (1970) four-item scale. The scale was intended to measure the perception of whether demographic factors such as gender, age, education, and number of children affect the work outcome and career success. For the first item, i.e., the type of gender, which is their perception about gender role, can affect their career success because women may perceive themselves as having more limited opportunities than men. This is because in Myanmar culture, males are the “bread winners” and female roles are usually perceived as home maker and supporting roles to males. The perception of female to less flexibility in job roles mean that males are given higher career opportunities than female by many employers. Age may inform that women lecturer of any age, both young or old, may perceive their current age as having favourable or unfavourable for their career success. Education background may mean that their current level of education, either master or Ph. D is affecting their career success, either positively or negatively. Likewise, academic lecturer may assume that those who may be married or unmarried, but who have no child, are at better position to gain career success from higher contributions to organisation due to their little child raising responsibility than those who have children. Apart from item no. 4, for most items, the academics who show higher rating to these items may perceive their status quo as desirable or imperfections, depending on whether their subjectivity on success. These measures in aggregate level may reflect that their perception about current personal status is a major hinderance or enabler to achieving success in their academia. Four items were as follows:

1. My gender affects my career success.
2. My age affects my career success.
3. My educational background affects my career success.
4. Staff who do not have children can contribute more to the organisation.

The ratings provided ranged from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **Human capital**

Human capital is another individual-related factor in the present study. A five-item scale for human capital was used from the Maslach Burnout Indicator- General Survey (MBI-GS) (Schaufeli et al., 1996) to measure perception of respondents about learning obtained from training and internal knowledge sharing on career success.

The items were:

1. Learning experiences in a number of schooling years and is related to my career success.
2. Achievement of higher quality education enhances my career success.
2. On the job training, formal and informal learning helps my career success.
3. Knowledge sharing and contribution to social capital investment is one of my career successes.
4. Skills and competency that acquired through learning and experience gives not only economic benefits but also my career success.

Responses were given on a five-point rating scale ranging from “1 = Strongly disagree”, and “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **Family support**

Family support is another individual-related factor in the present study. This study used a six -item scale to measure perceived social support (family). The scale was adopted by Gattiker and Larwood, 1990 and later modified by several researchers (Kirchmeyer, 1998; Tharenou et al., 1994; Cannings, 1991). Women professionals were asked their perception about the contribution of family to status and career advancement activities. The questions were:

1. My family encourage my future career success.
2. My family recognises my work commitments.
3. I do not feel pressured to quit because of my family.
4. I think that family empowers me at my work.
5. Family is the main reason why I want to progress in my career.
6. My family respects and appreciates my career choices and successes.

Responses were on five-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **Objective career success**

Objective career success is dependent variable in the present study. Seven-item scale developed by Turban & Dougherty (1994) was used to measure objective career success. Since the direct measures of career success factors regarding the amount of pay are unlikely to accurately obtain from respondents of the present study because of low trust between each other. So, the respondents’ perceptions of objectives success in pay, benefits, status received from organisation as proxy.

The respondents were asked whether they thought about leaving their job, planned to look for a new job over the next twelve months or would actively search for a new job outside the university. The items were as follows:

1. My salary accurately reflects the level of my position.
2. I can expect salary increases based on my experience/ performance.
3. I can receive a bonus from my organisation.
4. I am satisfied with the benefits given to me.
5. I can expect promotion based on my experience/ performance.
6. My knowledge and competence level correspond to my position.
7. I have been rewarded by my organisation for my contribution.

Responses were on five-point Likert scale ranging from “1 Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **Subjective career success**

Subjective career success is mediator variable in the present study. Turban & Dougherty, (1994) ’s career satisfaction was applied as subjective career success to measure academics’ positive feelings on their career. The career satisfaction scale is a widely used measure and is shown consistent internal reliabilities in a number of studies (Guo, W., ang, L. & Wang, N. , 2019; Cheramie, R. , 2013; Byrne, Dik, & Chiaburu , 2008); Ng et al. ,2005). The items were as follows:

1. I am happy working for my current organisation
2. I am happy with my status.
3. I have gained new experiences and skills
4. I feel empowered and satisfied working in my current organisation.

The six response categories ranged from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”.

### **3.5 Qualitative Design (2nd Phase of the study)**

Purposive sampling was used to obtain the required sample for the interview. This sampling technique allows collecting a homogeneous sample and choosing the most suitable participants meeting the inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling is believed to be a very simple and convenient way of obtaining data (Fonseca-Becker & Boore, 2008). Although purposive sampling does not allow for the generalization of findings due to its small size, it is perfect for collecting the rich, detailed, and relevant data from a population of interest (Bryman, 2016). The sample for in- depth interviews included five women educators working in a higher education institution in Myanmar. To approach these women, the researcher first contacted the administration of the selected educational institution to gain permission. Potential participants were then contacted via e-mail and asked to participate.

To calculate the required sample for the survey, the researcher studied the population first. It was challenging to calculate the approximate number of women educators in HEIs in Myanmar, as no recent statistics on this matter is available. According to 2012 statistics, there were 10,960 academic staff in the country, of which 82.6% were women (Chao, 2018). It means that the approximate number of women educators was 9,052.

#### **3.5.1 Participants’ profile**

**Table 3. 4: Participants' profile**

<i>Candidates</i>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No: of family members</b>	<b>Work-experience</b>
<i>A</i>	Women	35	Married	5	11 years
<i>B</i>	Women	42	Single	3	15 years
<i>C</i>	Women	48	Married	4	20 years
<i>D</i>	Women	27	Single	5	7 years
<i>E</i>	Women	32	Single	4	7 years

Respondents to the quantitative questionnaires were asked to identify if they would be interested in undertaking further qualitative research via face-to-face interviews. From these respondents 7 women lectures showed interest in being part of the interviews. However, after identifying dates to be 2 due to unforeseen circumstances they were unable to attend. The responses of the 5 participants in the interview were used to discuss in greater depth the opinions and attitudes towards their career success based on experience with the institutions.

### **3.5.2 Interview Questions for Qualitative study**

Interviewing is arguably viewed as one of the most research methods, especially for complex and sensitive issues. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage that the researcher can probe for deeper answers, ask for elaboration and examples, discover new ideas, and modify questions as time goes on.

The interview guide is attached as Appendix 3. The questionnaire included four parts. The first part was developed to gather the participants' background and socio-demographic variables including age, gender, educational level, family member and relationship status.

The second part covered aspects of career success. Sub-questions were designed and modified from the literature, such as the measurement of career success with salary, position, and how satisfied with the career, financial stability and achieve in your career.

The third part covered the organisational support towards career success and exploring career development opportunities and gender equally supported from the organisation.

The final part covered the individual support and family support towards career success. All sub questions supported a full response to the main questions and provided detailed information for the study. Furthermore, a pilot study was carried out by a group discussion with three academics (the researcher's classmates). They gathered with the problem identification and interview questions revision. The pilot study was an effective way to discover possible problems and increase the validity and reliability of this element of the data collection. In the final stage, interview questions were reviewed and revised by the researcher's supervisors.

### **3.6 Data Analysis for Quantitative and Qualitative**

This is the most important and last step of the research onion because this systematically collected and proper analysis of this data will fulfil research questions (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two types of data collected for systematic analysis: primary data and secondary data (Drroopesh, 2013). This research used primary data that was collected with interviews and structured questionnaires. Secondary data means analysing information through books, newspapers, the internet, articles, and reports, and it is not collected directly from respondents. (Drroopesh, 2013). For this research, secondary data was used for writing a literature review and reading related reports for analysing other researchers' purposes and findings.

The researcher collected both textual (qualitative) and numerical (quantitative) data that were subsequently analysed using thematic analysis and the multiple regression method.

For quantitative data analysis, which aims to investigate the important drivers of career success from the individual and organisational perspectives, SPSS software was used. This tool is useful for testing the hypothesis on how the drivers explain career success as well as information about mean and correlational values. Multiple linear regression is employed to test the proposed hypothesis as it can determine whether the proposed relationships between variables are significant. This particular use of regression can enable us to shed light on whether the proposed variables presented in the conceptual model are variables that are related to the career success of women professionals. Before testing the hypothesis, assumptions regarding linear regression were tested: linearity, multicollinearity, constant residuals, normality, and outliers. The information is provided in the appendix. In addition, Process Macro, developed by Hayes, was used to explore how subjective career success mediates the relationship between drivers and objective career success.

For the qualitative part, thematic analysis is informed by the idea that the analysis of raw data

should rely on their integration and interpretation. This type of data analysis is a comprehensive way of organising a large body of collected information according to themes. Thus, a researcher gains an opportunity to make sense of a large body of data, find meaningful patterns, and use these patterns to answer the research questions. Thematic analysis involves locating meaning in the raw data and structuring it in a way that shows the logical connection and sense in issues and phenomena in question (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey, 2012).

Coding is an inseparable part of thematic analysis, which is used in this study to help the researcher analyse the interview data effectively and not miss any important details. Codes are small and analytically meaningful bits of information (e.g., words, phrases) that can be grouped into categories. Coding can be deductive, which means that codes are established in advance based on the available literature. This study applied inductive coding, that is, the development of codes from the qualitative data itself (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe, 2010). Since the number of participants is manageable, codes were assigned manually, using backward and forward approaches. This approach is optimal in the given case because it helps explore information that may be new and unexpected. Codes can be identified in two steps. First, the researcher generates broad and descriptive codes. Second, codes of a more analytical and thematic nature are formulated. Interpretation of codes begins when clear patterns, concepts, and associations emerge and offer an opportunity to provide meaningful explanations (Miller, Strang, and Miller, 2010).

### **3.7 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Mixed method**

Since this mixed-methods study involves qualitative research, it is important to consider quality criteria for qualitative research. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. As defined by Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility refers to confidence that research findings reveal the truth. Credible findings contain plausible information drawn from the participants' responses and interpreted with no omissions or adjustments. Triangulation is one of the methods to increase credibility, and it is used in the given paper based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

Furthermore, transferability is the degree to which the findings can be generalised to other settings (Nowell, et al., 2017). Thick descriptions are the main strategy to increase transferability. In this study, the researcher uses thick descriptions by dwelling on not just the participants' experiences, but their context as well. In this way, the researcher intends to make them meaningful to those who seek to transfer the findings to other sites (Nowell, et al., 2017).

Next, the dependability of the findings was also considered by ensuring that they are logical, traceable, and thoroughly documented (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Dependability is achieved through an audit trail, which is a detailed description of the research steps taken at every stage of the process (Nowell, et al., 2017). The researcher also dwelled on the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices to support confirmability, which is closely related to the above three. Confirmability aspect should be considered to ensure that readers understand how and why the researcher made decisions (Nowell, et al., 2017).

Finally, reflexivity is an essential aspect of the trustworthiness of qualitative research. In this study, the researcher examined their conceptual framework, explicit and implicit assumptions, values and preconceptions from the perspective of their potential effect on the study. According to Nowell, et al. (2017), a reflexive journal is the best way to ensure adequate reflexivity during the qualitative research process, so it was used in the given study. Moon, et al. (2016) added that reflexivity can reduce bias and increase the transparency of the research process. It does not necessarily demonstrate the elimination of bias, but rather helps explain how the researcher's position manifests in the findings.

### **3.8 Challenges Faced During Fieldwork**

The researcher faced several challenges during fieldwork. These issues were attributed to the political crisis in Myanmar, the COVID-19 pandemic, and ethical concerns (Htut, Lall, and Kandiko Howson, 2022; Lwin, Lane, and Slater, 2021). The fieldwork was carried out at a time when Myanmar was experiencing political instability. The Civil Disobedience Movement, protesting against the military coup d'état, affected normal university functioning (Galloway, 2023). This event created political unrest in the designated country, compromising the normal operations of many institutions and businesses, including public universities across Myanmar. As a result, many lecturers decided to stay at home rather than attend their

universities. This was perceived as a form of protest and safety amidst the ongoing political issues.

Additionally, the government of Myanmar imposed strict restrictions to control the public outcry and further chaos (Hong and Kim, 2019). For instance, the government authorises banning gatherings of more than five people nationwide. Potentially, all these factors complicated the data collection process. The researcher was forced to visit and collect data from individual universities, which was not only time-consuming but also expensive.

Environment barriers were also identified as other issues that impede field research. The second wave of COVID-19 led to awareness in terms of health and safety (Daw and Hlaing, 2021). People felt a rising mortality rate was dangerous, increasing fear (Marnn et al. 2021). This made it hard to get people to participate in the study due to fear of infection. Some lecturers had gone back to their hometowns for security reasons, which reduced the pool of potential participants.

Ethical challenges also emerged as substantial obstacles during the data collection process. Due to political unrest in Myanmar, safety concerns forced many lecturers to return to their hometowns (Thang, 2022). These tutors remained hesitant to be involved in any formal research. They perceived the research as a threat that could expose them to unwanted attention from the authorities. Similarly, the ongoing unrest emotionally drained some of the lecturers. This compromised their willingness to engage in the survey and interviews. Thus, these ethical issues cannot be overlooked as they require careful attention. This involved upholding the participants' autonomy and safety throughout the fieldwork process. Potentially, this limited the scope of the research and the convenience of accessing the participants.

### **3.9 Positionality as a Researcher**

The researcher served as an outsider during the research process. This implies that the researcher was not part of Myanmar's higher education system or its political and social dynamics or affiliated with the institutions involved in the study. This role enhanced the objectivity of the study as it promoted the researcher's independence (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

However, occupying the outsider position, the researcher was subjected to several biases. The first subjectivity came from the absence of cultural and linguistic studies. This bias is probably the most important one because it prevented the researcher from being aware of the local

contexts used in the study. Some imposed communication dynamics could hardly be deciphered appropriately to mean a given behaviour, etiquette or any specific linguistic nuances (Adelson, 2019). As a result, this could have led to participants being understood in less than a proper manner or being investigated partially. The variation of the cultural norms also posed a threat in that bias could easily creep into the process. This could probably have threatened the quality of the relational aspect between the researcher and the participants. In other words, participants may well have regarded the researcher from a distance as they cannot relate to their existence in the world. There is consensus in most of the studies to indicate that participants' central tendency is to conceal information or respond deceptively in a manner that is expected of them by the researcher. By so doing, this may have skewed the study outcomes and skew the study's validity. The researcher's standpoint, perspective, paradigm and academic experience also introduced bias. These influenced the study's theories, scope and methodologies (Karagiozis, 2018). Perhaps these frameworks influenced the interpretation of the results of this study without their realisation. In the same way, the participant's level of disclosure was also affected due to political unrest and other concerns regarding subjects like higher education in Myanmar. It might have taken participants a bit longer to respond due to the feeling that they may not be safe or may not trust an outsider so easily, as is the case with the researcher. This implies that the outsider, more so the researcher, was seen as an intrusion.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Every research project involving human participants, including this one, should meet the strict ethical requirements. To begin with, the researcher complies with procedural ethics by obtaining Research Ethics Committee approval to conduct the study. Then, the following aspects of ethics in practice are considered: informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy.

Researchers collecting data from people are expected to ensure that these participants consciously accept their role and have been informed beforehand about the research, its present and future implications, their role and contribution, etc. (Ferreira and Serpa, 2018). Therefore, the researcher obtained written informed consent from all participants. At the same time, participants were provided with a participant information sheet, which specified the probable length of the study, description of expected benefits and significance of the study, an indication

of voluntary participation, withdrawal conditions, steps taken to preserve the confidentiality of information, data storage procedures, and so on. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time during the data collection process.

Anonymity and confidentiality were also protected in this study. All responses were anonymised by using codes instead of names (e.g., Participant A, Participant B, etc.). All details that could potentially reveal participants' identities and cause harm were also removed. The researcher did not collect or reveal sensitive personal data to protect participants and make them feel more comfortable. Since some questions concerned the challenges faced by women educators, anonymity allowed them to be as honest in their responses as possible and not be afraid of criticising their leaders.

Furthermore, confidentiality implies increased attention to the storage of participant data (Ferreira and Serpa, 2018). When the researcher promises to provide confidentiality and anonymity, they should ensure that data will be stored securely and that no third parties will have access to the files. The researcher stored all data in an encrypted format on a password-protected personal computer and deleted all personal data after the study's completion. Moreover, participants were informed that they could withdraw their data any time before the data analysis process. This allowed ensuring that patients could change their minds after data collection and prohibit publishing their responses.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This paper explores the career success factors of women in higher education institutions. This chapter focuses on data analysis that involves a two-stage approach. The first stage uses SPSS software to conduct regression analysis of the data collected using questionnaire surveys of 191 women lecturers. The second part stage focuses on the statistical results alongside the findings from the content analysis of the face-to-face interviews. This chapter is divided into various sections: data analysis procedure, quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis, and overall findings and conclusions.

### **4.1 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis process for the quantitative data began with data collection through questionnaires. The researcher distributed 230 questionnaires to women lecturers' participants across four higher education institutions, and only 210 were returned. Those not returned were due to participants taking the questionnaire away to complete but then not returning them. The survey received a high response rate of 91%, far higher than the standard response rate of 50% for management studies (Baruch and Holtom, 2008). However, after further analysis of the questionnaires, only 191 were fully completed and subsequently analysed in this study, resulting in a positive response rate of 83%. After data collection, the next step was to analyse the collected data and present the results via SPSS. Descriptive analysis was used to summarise the data in tables and examine the key characteristics defined by the participants.

### **4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

The data analysis was carried out by using SPSS 20.0 software. The tests of direct effects hypotheses were conducted using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) method, and the mediation effects hypotheses were tested by adopting Process macro (Hayes, 2013).

### 4.2.1 Data preparation

Before assessing variables and measurement items, the conformity to multivariate assumptions was inspected. The outliers were assessed for dependent, independent, and mediator variables. Outliers are observations whose values are extremely distinct from the rest. Their elimination can improve the accuracy of estimates (Osborne and Overbay, 2004). Employing Mahalanobis Distance ( $D^2$ ) (Mahalanobis, 1936), the results indicated that none of the cases was at a 5% level of significance (Judd and McClelland, 1989). Therefore, it is concluded that data was not affected by outlying cases.

The distribution of the data was evaluated by Kolmogorov-Smirnov skewness and kurtosis measures. The normality assumption is met when measurement items fall within the acceptable interval scale of +1 and -1 (Hair, Babin, and Anderson, 2010). The results indicated that the data did not violate the normality assumption (**Table 1 in the Appendix**). Hence, the study progressed to evaluating measurement items and hypothesis testing.

### 4.2.2 Reliability of Measurement Constructs

The internal consistency approach to assessing reliability, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ), was used for the present study (Blumberg et al., 2014), as this is the most commonly used method in management research. The insufficient level of intra-variable consistency of variables can harm the validity of their measures and test results accuracy. The Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value can range from 0 to 1. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) advocate that a value greater than 0.7 indicates an acceptable rule of thumb. A value greater than 0.8 or 0.9 indicates satisfactory reliability (Downing, 2004). As indicated in **Table 4.1**, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of almost all the measurement constructs showed satisfaction with each value greater than 0.8. However, the value for human capital indicates 0.687. This value is acceptable because Mohamad et al. (2015) contend that a reliability value between 0.67 and 0.8 can be considered fair. The reliability values for measurement constructs are presented in **Table 4.1**.

**Table 4. 1: Reliability of measurement constructs**

Constructs	Number of items	Reliability (Cronbach $\alpha$ )
Demographic	4	.951
Human Capital	5	.687
Family Support	6	.917
Organisational Support	6	.918
Coaching & Mentoring	4	.824
Gendered Practices	6	.919
Subjective career success	4	.864
Objective career success	7	.925

Source: Survey data (2021).

### 4.2.3 Descriptive Statistics

**Table 4.2** presents the studied variables' means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation. As indicated, of all the variables, subjective career success indicates the highest mean value at 4.141, followed by objective career success at 3.964. Except for the demographic variable, the other individual and organisational factors were positively and highly correlated with subjective and objective career success. Subjective career success was highly related to objective career success. For most variables, multi-item measures were to overcome reliability and validity issues (Sarstedt and Wilczynski, 2009).

**Table 4. 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables**

	Correlations												
	Mean	SD	Age	Edu level	Work exp	Demo	Human Cap	Family Support	Org Support	Coaching and Mentoring	Gendered Prac	SCS	OCS
Age	3.125	.412	1										
Edu level	3.380	.783	.804**	1									
Work exp	4.563	.371	.839**	.906**	1								
Demo	3.703	.896	-0.033	-0.043	.060	1							
Human Cap	3.625	.584	.545**	.444**	.563**	.777**	1						
Family Support	3.969	0.631	.650**	.485**	.601**	.145*	.559**	1					
Org Support	3.948	0.645	.583**	.490**	.580**	0.024	.408**	.686**	1				

Coaching and Mentoring	3.875	0.788	.678**	.510**	.545**	-.147*	.294**	.524**	.614**	1			
Gendered Prac	3.843	.712	.466**	.325**	.314**	.193**	.465**	.788**	.754**	.508**	1		
SCS	4.141	.574	.559**	.364**	.497**	-0.086	.374**	.662**	.725**	.673**	.632**	1	
OCS	3.964**	.615**	.584**	.472**	.524**	-0.052	.422**	.833**	.700**	.616**	.757**	.898**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Common Method Variance

This study collected data from a single source. Consequently, common method variance (CMV) could potentially affect the data. So, an ex-post statistical procedure was performed to evaluate method bias. The effect of common method variance was tackled using the Harman one-factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff, 2012). The result revealed no emergence of a single factor, with the first factor accounting for 27% of the total variance. Thus, it is concluded that common method bias is not a potential concern that would inflate the study's findings.

#### 4.2.4 Findings - Testing of Direct Effects

In line with the research objectives, the direct effects of career success drivers in terms of individual and organisational factors on subjective and objective career success were evaluated using regression analysis. Different regression models were run, and results recorded in **Table 3**. As the table indicates, the control variables, such as age and working experience, are significantly related to subjective career success. However, the effect of education on subjective career success is negatively significant.

Concerning Hypothesis 1, it is proposed that individual factors such as demographic, human capital and family support are positively related to subjective career success. The table in model 2 indicates that all three variables show a significant effect on subjective career success but the effect of demographic on subjective career success is negative in both model 2 ( $B = -0.797, p < .01$ ) and model 3 ( $B = -0.771, p < .01$ ). These results suggest that the perception of career success declines women teacher's perception on the importance of demographic increases. These results fail to receive support for hypothesis 1a. However, it is shown that human capital ( $B = 1.344, p < .01$ ) and family support ( $B = 0.303, p < .01$ ) are positively and significantly related to subjective career success in model 3, thus receiving support for hypothesis 1b and hypothesis 1c.

In Hypothesis 2, it is proposed that organisational factors such as organisational support, coaching and mentoring and gendered practices are positively related to subjective career success. The table in model 3 indicates that except organisational support ( $B = 0.087, p > .05$ ), the other two variables significantly affect coaching and mentoring ( $B = 0.185, p < .01$ ) and gendered

practices ( $B = 0.371$ ,  $p < .01$ ) on subjective career success are positive. These results fail to receive support for hypothesis 2a. However, hypothesis 2b and hypothesis 2c are supported.

As indicated in the table, among three control variables, age is negatively and significantly related to objective career success in model 3. Working experience is significantly and negatively related to objective career success. However, the effects of education and working experience on objective career success are nonsignificant.

Concerning individual factors, both model 2 and model 3 indicate that demographic variable negatively affects objective career success ( $B = -0.735$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 2 and  $B = 0.733$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 3). Thus, hypothesis 3a is rejected. However, human capital ( $B = 1.254$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 2 and  $B = 1.216$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 3) and family supports ( $B = 0.694$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 2 and  $B = 0.390$ ,  $p < .01$  in model 3) are positively and significantly related to objective career success. These results provide support for hypotheses 3b and 3c.

In Hypothesis 2, it is proposed that organisational factors such as organisational support, coaching and mentoring and gendered practices are positively related to objective career success. The table in model 3 indicates that except organisational support ( $B = -0.023$ ,  $p > .05$ ), the other two variables significantly affect objective career success. These results fail to receive support for hypothesis 4a. The effects of coaching and mentoring ( $B = 0.122$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and gendered practices ( $B = 0.280$ ,  $p < .01$ ) on objective career success are positive and significant. Therefore, hypothesis 4b and hypothesis 4c are supported.

**Table 4. 3: Regression Results for Direct effects of career success drivers on Subjective and Objective Career Success**

Variables	SCS as the dependent variable			OCS as the dependent variable		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Constant</b>	3.847**	2.034**	1.668**	3.182**	0.099	-0.010
<b>Controls</b>						
Age	0.232**	-0.121**	-0.209**	0.221**	-0.211**	-0.273**
Education Level	-0.458**	-0.349**	-0.521**	-0.107	0.155*	0.018
Work exp	0.244**	0.119*	0.289**	0.100	-0.126**	0.013
<b>Individual factors</b>						
Demographic		-0.797**	-0.771**		-0.735**	-0.733**
Human Capital		1.344**	1.265**		1.254**	1.216**
Family Support		0.303**	0.163*		0.694**	0.390**

<b>Organisational factors</b>						
Organisational Support			0.087			-0.023
Coaching and Mentoring			0.185**			0.122**
Gendered Practices			0.371**			0.280**
$\Delta R^2$	0.383	0.640	0.795	0.348	0.814	0.862
$R^2$	0.383	0.640	0.795	0.348	0.814	0.862
$\Delta F$	38.891**	54.889**	78.310**	33.448**	135.316**	126.761**
F	38.891**	54.889**	78.310**	33.448**	135.316**	126.761**

Note. N=192; SCS=subjective career success; OCS=objective career success; Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the table.; \*\* is significant at the 0.01 level; \* is significant at the 0.05 level.

#### 4.2.5 Findings - Testing of Mediation Effects

Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro was used to test mediation effects (Hypothesis 5a, 5b & 5c and Hypothesis 6a, 6b & 6c) The mediation effects are expected because subjective career success, a mediator variable, should serve as an intervening variable that transmits the effects of career success drivers to objective career success. The nonparametric 5000 Bootstrapping was applied for reliable results. The results indicated that the indirect effect of subjective career success between demographic variable and objective career success (effect size = -0.053,  $t = -0.818$ ,  $p > .05$ ) was insignificant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [-0.133, 0.067] containing zero. Taken together, these results fail to support Hypotheses 5a. However, the indirect effect of subjective career success between the human capital variable and objective career success (effect size = 0.338,  $t = 4.225$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [0.179, 0.451] not containing zero. Taken together, these results support Hypotheses 5b. Likewise, the indirect effect of subjective career success between the family support variable and objective career success (effect size = 0.334,  $t = 12.92$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [0.334, 0.476] not containing zero. Taken together, these results fail to reject Hypotheses 5c.

Additionally, the mediation effects of subjective career success on the relationship between organisational factors and objective career success was tested. The results indicated that the indirect effect of subjective career success between the organisational support variable and objective career success (effect size = 0.568,  $t = 10.923$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [0.476, 0.678] not containing zero, thereby accepting Hypotheses 6a. Likewise, the indirect effect of subjective career success between the coaching and mentoring variable and objective career success (effect size = 0.464,  $t = 16$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [0.406, 0.521] not containing zero, thereby accepting Hypotheses 6b. Again, the indirect effect of subjective career success between gendered practices and objective career success (effect size = 0.381,  $t = 9.525$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significant, with a bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of [0.312, 0.466] not containing zero, thereby accepting Hypotheses 6c.

**Table 4. 4: Results for Mediation effects of subjective career success between Individual and Organisational factors and Objective career success**

Relationship	Total	Direct	Indirect	Confidence interval		t-statistics	Mediation
				Lower bound	Upper bound		
<b>Individual factors</b>							
Demographic->SCS->OCS	-0.036	0.018	-0.053	-0.133	0.067	-0.818	No
Human capital->SCS->OCS	0.445	0.106	0.338	0.179	0.451	4.225	Yes
Family support->SCS->OCS	0.811	0.414	0.397	0.334	0.476	12.92	Yes
<b>Organisational factors</b>							
Organisational support->SCS->OCS	0.688	0.099	0.568	0.476	0.678	10.923	Yes
Coaching and mentoring->SCS->OCS	0.481	0.017	0.464	0.406	0.521	16	Yes
Gendered practices->SCS->OCS	0.654	0.273	0.381	0.312	0.466	9.525	Yes

**Table 4. 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

A summary of findings of the first phase of this study is presented below.

	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Accept or reject</b>
H1a	Demographic is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Reject
H1b	Human capital is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H1c	Family support is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H2a	Organisational support is positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Reject
H2b	Coaching and mentoring are positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H2c	Gendered practices are positively associated with subjective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H3a	Demographic is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Reject
H3b	Human capital is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H3c	Family support is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H4a	Organisational support is positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Reject
H4b	Coaching and mentoring are positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H4c	Gendered practices are positively associated with objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H5a	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between demographic variables and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Reject

H5b	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between human capital and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H5c	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between family support and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H6a	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between organisational support and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H6b	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between coaching and mentoring and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept
H6c	Subjective career success mediates the relationship between gendered practices and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs.	Accept

#### 4.2.6 Summary of Quantitative Findings

The following section pinpoints the summary of key points that emanated from the quantitative study, which was conducted as the study's first phase. First, the results of direct effect models suggest that many individual-related factors, such as human capital and family support, indicate statistically significant relationships with women lecturers' subjective and objective career success in HEIs. However, the relationship between demographics and career success, either subjective or objective, is insignificant. The possible implications of these findings are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Second, the results suggest that the organisational-related factors, such as coaching and mentoring and gendered practices, indicated statistically significant relationships with both subjective and objective career success of women lecturers in HEIs. However, a similar relationship is not found between organisational support and both types of career success. Alternatively, the relationship between organisational support and career success, both subjective

and objective, is insignificant. The possible implications for significant and insignificant findings are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Finally, the results of mediation effect models suggest the significant mediation effects of subjective career success between many of the individual and organisational drivers and objective career success. Put differently, subjective career success indicates significant mediation effects between factors, such as human capital and family support, and objective career success. It also showed the mediation effects between all organisational factors, such as organisational support, coaching and mentoring, gendered practices, and objective career success. However, the significant mediation effect of subjective career success is not detected for the relationships between demographic and objective career success. The possible implications of these findings are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

### **4.3 Qualitative Analysis**

This session uses content analysis procedures to analyse the semi-structured interview transcripts undertaken as part of the qualitative research for this project. Data from the interviews were transcribed throughout the interview period and for two months afterward. After post-interview transcription, individual interview documents were returned to each interview respondent. These were hand-delivered in person to ensure confidentiality. Interview respondents were allowed to review their statements and return any comments relating to misrepresenting their views. This was completed approximately three months after the interviewing phases and during the very early stages of coding. No comments were received requiring the raw data to be altered. Therefore, the data was assumed valid to proceed to content analysis.

According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017), content analysis is a research methodology utilized to make sense of content of messages whether audio data, symbols, images, or texts. It is a widely applied technique in qualitative research (Zikmund et al., 2013; Drisko & Maschi, 2016). This type of research methodology is mainly used to analyze qualitative data (Elo et al., 2014). This part of this study concerns with the nature of career success drivers that female perceived and the ways these factors contribute to career success. The results are presented thematically. The thematic results relate to the key themes of this research and are developed based on the interview questions designed per the conceptual framework identified in Chapter 2. The

research themes are identified based on research questions: Q 3 (women's perception of career success) and Q 4 (the mechanism that various factors drive career success). Discussion and interpretation of the thematic results were undertaken based on the gaps identified in the literature review, and the qualitative findings from this research are presented.

Thematic analysis contains the use of specific steps. To obtain a holistic sense of the substance and the spirit of each participant's career story, each transcript was read in detail while concurrently listening to the audiotape. In particular, listening to the audio provided an overall sense of the effect of each conversation. During the initial reading of the transcripts, notes were taken regarding individual career patterns, career motives, and the factors that shape women's career success in the academic sector. The themes that emerged in these initial readings helped provide future directions for organizing a framework for approaching a deeper level of data reduction and analysis. This allowed for understanding each interview before reducing it to discrete segments for analysis in the second phase. The third phase contains the identification of the themes. Textual analysis was performed to systematically analyse the content and identify the relevant themes (Zikmund et al., 2013). This study used a manual method to identify themes and codes (Williams, & Moser, 2019). The final phase, which is mainly applied for Q4, contains to find out theorizing how the different divers promote career success of female lecturers. These identification of the themes offers valuable insights into understanding the perceived factors influencing the career success of women of women lecturers in the private education sector in Myanmar.

#### **4.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis Results**

This qualitative part of the study explored women lecturers' perceptions of career success to identify the nature of individual and organisational factors and how they influence the career success of women lecturers in private higher education institutions (HEIs). The thematic analysis identified themes and sub-themes that could help address the two research questions. The following summarizes the themes and sub-themes that emerge from the analysis.

##### ***RQ 1: How do women lecturers from HEIs perceive career success?***

Concerning the first research question on how women lecturers from HEIs perceive career success, the analysis identified three themes: goal attainment, specific goal achievements, and

personal qualities. The sub-themes identified in the analysis explain how women lecturers perceive career success.

### **Career Success**

The first theme that appeared from the thematic analysis is **goal achievements**. For example, Participant C said, *"If I have to talk about success for myself, I might say success is being able to do what I want to do and reaching the target as I wish."* Likewise, participant B stated that *'Ambitious women often have many desires they want to reach. So, I define success as being able to reach every level of my goal.'* However, some participants even further mentioned the amount of physical and mental effort in achieving their career goals. According to them, goal attainment with lesser effort is assumed as success. This was highlighted by Participant A in terms of *'If you get what you want without having to put yourself through much trouble and without stressing it out, then you are considered successful.'*

The second theme from the analysis was **specific achievement**, which can fulfil their *unmet desire* or which they had *received recently*. Participants' identification of achievement can be taken into two forms, i.e., those related to higher education and/or those of a higher status in organisational hierarchy, despite some meant to achieve both successes. In this regard, some participants identified their career success in terms of achievements of academic and work-related goals that they desire to achieve, such as completing of Ph.D. (Participant A). For example, Participant A mentioned, *"When I got an in-service Ph.D., I consider that time would be the most successful moment."* Other participants concurred with the attainment of dual academic and work-related goals that they have received in the past, such as pay and promotion. Participant C discoursed, *'After the end of Covid, my salary increased, and I was promoted. According to the position, I became the head who controls the program. Therefore, if I think about career success, I would like to highlight these moments'* Participant E raised a similar notion when they said, *"When I took my MBA, I was one of the youngest in my class. And later, when I returned to work, I was able to fulfil my responsibilities at work and did my best without being late for my master's degree. So, I consider this a success in my career and academics."* Surprisingly, some participants identified career success as an accomplishment outside the employing organisation. For example, according to Participant B, who regarded the success in terms of new business commencement,

*“My private centre was opened in Hledan township, Yangon city. I was able to do what I wanted to be in the year I wanted to be. So, I think it was the moment I believe was the most successful one”.*

Only a few identified career successes in terms of intrinsic satisfaction that she gained from accomplishing a challenging task. *‘And when I've been working there for about 8 months, the CEO of the college where I'm working at that time started an MBA batch. So, he encouraged me to take part in it from the beginning of drawing the program to the opening of the marketing class. At that time, I felt that I was successful as I challenged myself to do something that I didn't want to do the most, and I succeeded, and it was a moment that I was proud of’.* Likewise, some people relate the achievement of work-related career goals with other aspects of social life. They highlighted the interdependencies between those two because attainment in work-related areas can be transferred to success in other areas. This intricate relationship was pointed out by Participant E. *“Whether it's personal work or company work, if the income and position are in a reasonable position, if you can support your family members without difficulty, and if you are happy, this can be considered a success.”* Participant C identified mental well-being that they can drive from the balance between work and family by stating, *"For me, success is measured by having a balance in everything."*

In addition to achievement, participants consider career success in terms of *personal qualities*. They identified career success in terms of special qualities that they possess. They stated that certain mental qualities such as knowledge (education) and patience reflect career success. For example, Participant B mentioned, *"The main thing is the academic background and education background. After that, I think patience is also important."* Others identified career success with certain effects and emotions. For example, some participants consider success a moment when they feel inner peace and personal freedom. Participant B said, *“Because the centers were closed due to the Covid pandemic, when I switched to freelance, I focused on teaching only. I was happy and peaceful at that time.”* They also perceived career success as having a supportive background (social) (Participant B).

***RQ2: How do individual and organisational factors that they perceive shape the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?***

The analysis discovered three themes: *energizers, bridging factors, and hygiene factors* of career success.

### **Theme (1) Energizing career success: personal drivers**

Energizers are the factors that keep the participants interested in pursuing career success. They are also related to motivators and personality traits that drive the participants to focus their attention and effort toward activities that can lead to career success. This category includes several intrinsic motivators: passion for teaching and job satisfaction. Participant B noted, *"I found out that what I really enjoy doing is teaching."* She further stated that she found happiness in teaching and that no other activities could get her a similar feeling. She said, *"When I worked abroad, those jobs were not related to teaching. It was only when I returned to Myanmar, and I focused more on my teaching career. This is because it is my real passion as well"*. Despite job satisfaction being discussed as an indicator of career success, participants here also mentioned that job satisfaction can lead to career success. Participant C explained, *"Job satisfaction is the only way to truly be happy. When you work happily, you can be productive in your work progress and career success."* In terms of extrinsic motivators, salary increments and promotions, and recognition from peers were cited as motivators of career success, as evidenced by Participant C, who claimed, *"After the end of Covid, my salary was increased, and I was promoted..."* Participant A mentioned that *"I felt that my performance and appreciation by others could affect their career progress, and the more they were appreciated, the more they worked harder, which resultantly influenced their job satisfaction and success."* Another participant noted that recognition and rewards for excellence from the institution inspire her to pursue success. She claimed, *"I like receiving small gifts during special days and getting donations for personal support. I am totally satisfied and feel like the organisation is contributing to my career success by supporting their employees"* (Participant E).

### **Theme (2) Bridging factors for career success: Organisational Support**

The themes for organisational support pertain to the *various types of support* they receive. These are mentioned as the steppingstones by which women can get advancement in the career ladder. Providing those conditions by organisations is assumed to be a critical success factor for their career success and progression. The respondents highlighted several assistance and opportunities provided by their organisations. The forms of vital support include learning *material assistance* such as books, tickets, and *developmental opportunities* with external coaches, mentoring support of colleagues/peers from the same organisation, study tours to foreign countries, and presentations at international conferences. Regarding material support, for example, Participant D said that *"The organisation supports what is needed, like resources, books, and other*

*necessary things. It is very convenient for all staff and other people as well".* For the knowledge support, Participant B raised, *"The HR team leader and Master U Aung Tun Thet helped me a lot. They gave tips and supported me about how to do marketing and how to make a private center successful."* Most participants also claimed that organisations provide various opportunities within their capacity to enhance their career progress. For example, Participant A claimed that organisations provide *"All the opportunities within the framework of what they can do, for example, career enhancement."* Likewise, Participant D stated, *" Yes, I do. I have the opportunity to learn what I need for my career, and they support me as much as possible."* Another participant noted that recognition and rewards for excellence from the institution inspire her to pursue success. She claimed, *"I like receiving small gifts during special days and getting donations for personal support. I am totally satisfied and feel like the organisation is contributing to my career success by supporting their employees"* (Participant E).

### **Theme (3) Hygiene factors for career success: Gendered practices and family Factors**

The third theme from data analysis is the hygiene factors for career success. Hygiene factors can block the path to the career success of women if they are present. The elimination of these factors is needed in the first place to proceed to the pursuit of other essential criteria for career success. The analysis revealed that several gendered practices and family responsibilities are the constraints that need to be eliminated to succeed in a women career. Women lecturers expressed the need for family support, especially when they have children, to help balance their careers, educational pursuits, and family life. One participant described her career progression experience during the three months after giving birth to her first child owing to family support (Participants A and C). Participant A concurred that *I think family support is important to support your pursuit of a career in higher education. I had my career progression during 3 months after the birth of my first child. I had passed the master's exam because I had studied all the time. When I was focusing on my studies, my parents took care of my child, so I was able to continue without worrying."* Some participants stated that having no gender discrimination and equal rights for women in their organisation was important in managing their work without worrying (Participants A and E). Participant E highlighted the importance of no gender discrimination by stating, *"No gender discrimination and giving women equal rights are the important factors in my organisation. In that way, I can manage my work without worrying."*

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the thematic analysis revealed that the perception of career success among women lecturers from private HEIs varies. Regarding women lecturers' perception of career success, that is the research question, their themes emerged, such as generic goal attainment, specific achievements, and personal attributes. Concerning research question two, three themes emerged: energizers, bridging factors, and hygiene factors. Energizers include intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that drive the lecturers toward pursuing career success. Bridging factors relate to various material and knowledge support activities for their career development and learning opportunities. Hygiene factors are those disturbances that can block the path to the pursuit of career success. They include the factors such as childcare responsibilities, lack of family support, and unfair organisational policies for men and women.

## **4.4: Overall Findings and Conclusions**

### **4.4.1: Organisation Support Factors**

The qualitative results are consistent with the quantitative statistics analysis measuring the mean agreement level value on organisation support factors (**Table 4.6**). In the quantitative analysis, all the variables are measured with 5 points Likert scales, all the measures of organisation support factors indicate that the agreement level of quantitative analysis shows the lowest agreement level is 3.81 mean value and the highest mean value is 4; therefore, all organisation support factors are highly agreed (mean value above 3.5) by the women academic staff at the higher level of education organisations. However, their perception of career success has particularly highlighted achieving a Ph.D. degree, and organisation support should focus is enhancing background education to continue studying Ph.D.

**Table 4. 6: Organisational support factors agreement level**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Environment, Conditions	3.8125	.80979
Duties and Responsibilities	3.8698	.78515
Sufficient Teaching Facilities	4.0677	.74539
Job is secure	3.9375	.66020
Effective Training Program	4.0000	.70896
Promotion Regulation	4.0000	.86829

The qualitative data from interviews complement the quantitative findings from the survey regarding organisational support factors. These qualitative results offer deeper insights into the perceptions of women academic staff on organisational support factors. Although quantitative data illustrated high levels of agreement on organisational factors such as work environment, secure job conditions, and effective training with the mean values ranging from 3.81 to 4.00, insights from interviews provided in-depth findings on excelling in advanced education with a focus on Ph.D. programs. Qualitative results created the need for HEIs in Myanmar to offer organisational support to encourage further education among female academic staff. The alignment between qualitative and quantitative results demonstrates that academic staff expect organisations to go beyond existing support systems to offer targeted educational opportunities. There is no argument that qualitative data enhanced the quantitative results by uncovering the role of educational advancement within organisational support. This revelation indicated that facilitating higher-level degrees for sustained career growth should be a key priority for HEIs in Myanmar.

#### **4.4.2: COCM Coaching and Mentoring Agreement level**

In the quantitative results, coaching and mentoring are other organisational supports. In Table 4.7, four items of questions measure the agreement level of coaching and mentoring, and

the main value of career-related coaching is 3.56, and the highest agreement level was encouraging coaching and mentoring (mean value is 4.13). Therefore, all organisation support of coaching and mentoring supports functions such as encouragement, regular well-being check, career-related mentoring, and sharing knowledge in their organisation are highly agreed by the respondents from the survey method.

**Table 4. 7: COCM Coaching and Mentoring Agreement level**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Encourages coaching and mentoring	4.1250	.78267
Regular well-being check	3.8750	.85920
Career-related mentoring	3.5625	1.32485
Share their knowledge	3.9375	.82896

Sources: Survey data

The qualitative data supports quantitative insights on the results derived from the analysis of coaching and mentoring. The mean values between 3.56 and 4.13 inferred that most respondents confirmed their organisations promote this practice. During the interviews, the staff revealed how often feedback as well as career-related advice from the mentors enhanced morale and productivity at the workplace. Although the constitutive quantitative data mirror the overall consensus of the respondents, the qualitative data further corroborates as well as underlines the actual and perceiving welfare improvement and perceived emotional support through corporate gifts with the applicants/candidates. This connection helps support the claim that the perceived value of coaching and mentoring programs is not in program structure alone but in the interpersonal relationships they build. Hence, interviews enrich the quantity of the results through presenting the human angle of the interactions, which builds up well-being and career progress in general.

#### 4.4.3: GDENP Gendered Practices Agreement level

Quantitative data results also indicated no gender discrimination among the academic staff in their organisations. **Table 4.8** shows that mean values are greater than 3.5 for all measurement items. Therefore, all items are highly agreed upon by many respondents from the collected sample: no gender discrimination, women are recognized, empowered women, gender equality, equal workload, and benefits for women are given. However, an average score may mean that few may experience unfavorably. In the qualitative interview method, the interviewees also mentioned the maternity leave for enough time duration for breastfeeding as six months maternity leave for women academic staff when they deliver the baby.

The interview answer expressed by the interviewees; all mention no gender discrimination in their current organisations. It also aligned with the findings from quantitative data analysis (gendered practices agreement level in Table 4.8). Gendered practices by the organisations are being measured with 6 measurement attributes in quantitative analysis, and the mean value of each measure represents the level of agreement. All mean values are greater than 3.5, which indicates all agreement levels are higher or all respondents agree that there is no gender discrimination, the organisation recognizes women, women are given empowerment together with men, there is equal workload among men and women and benefits for the women (e.g., maternity leave). In the interview (Qualitative method), the interviewees also express that they can have women benefit. However, they need a more secure timeline (six months) when they have breastfeeding. Therefore, the qualitative method is also important to discover the real situation.

**Table 4. 8: GDENP Gendered Practices agreement level**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
No gender discrimination	3.6875	.91883
Women are recognized	3.7500	.90374
Empowers women	3.9375	.90157
Gender equality	3.8698	.79179
Equal Work- Load	3.8698	.86146
Benefits for Women	3.9427	.65670

Sources: Survey data

Gendered practices and gender balance concluded were qualitatively confirmed, and the results were in parallel with the quantitative analysis that illuminated relatively high level of agreement with mean values above 3.5. This supported statement that there was no gender discrimination, and women were respected and empowered. The quantitative results indicated a majority of the participants had a positive orientation toward gender equality and support. Complementary, qualitative results from interviews offered detailed examples of these values, including access to extended maternity leave, which many female participants found especially valuable for achieving a proper work-life balance. However, few of the respondents mentioned they require even more guarantee in maternity policies. Therefore, the qualitative findings complement the points derived from the quantitative study. They indicated that although there are general policies on gender equity, there is still more work to be done to provide gender support for women at the workplace with focus on family-related issues. The results of organisational enablers assessment combined with the results of barriers stage and needs assessment suggest that the organisational culture is mostly good and there are some aspects to be developed to better address the women's needs.

#### 4.4.4: INDS Individual Supports agreement level

Based on the qualitative method evaluating individual support (**Table 4.9**), the interviewees express the importance of family support, and all have family support. Even single women have encouragement or support from their parents or siblings. In the quantitative analysis results, the individual support agreement level presents that the individual support measures are greater than 3.5. This can be interpreted as the higher agreement level on individual support from their families, and family support is very important for them. This finding indicates the Myanmar culture of family-attached culture in society.

**Table 4. 9: INDS Individual supports agreement level**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family encourage	3.7500	.75196
Family recognizes	3.7500	.83132
do not feel pressured	3.9375	.66020
family empowers	4.0625	.66020
Family is the main reason	4.2500	.66317
Family respects	4.0625	.90157

Sources: Survey data (2021)

The combined quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates strong family support for the women academic staff. Quantitative agreement levels on individual support factors all above 3.5. This was further enriched by qualitative insights from interviews which explained the cultural context with a focus Myanmar's family-centric societal values. According to these insights, single women are encouraged by their parents and siblings to pursue academic careers. This cultural dimension aligned with the quantitative data which illustrated high levels of agreement on family support with mean values between 3.75 and 4.25. Therefore, the results based on the qualitative data enhance the understanding of the part that the family support plays for an academic career success, prove cultural value of this type of the support and demonstrate the importance of the personal networks for the career advancement in this particular context.

#### **4.4.5: HUMC Human Capital Agreement level**

Due to the suggestions from the interviewees, career success depends on their passion for their career, their feeling about currently working in organisations that are more profit-oriented rather than quality-oriented, no gender discrimination at work; however, there is some gender discrimination in culture. They have financial stability and would like to support their families as well.

Quantitative analysis regarding the human capital agreement level can be interpreted as their agreement level of human capital: the achievement in their career is not higher as the mean value is just 3,5 for both achievement and formal and informal relationships in their current organisations.

**Table 4. 10: HUMC Human Capital Agreement level**

Measures	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning Exp:	3.5625	.61077
Achievement:	3.5000	1.00261
Formal andand Informal	3.5000	1.06343
Knowledge sharing	3.8750	.85920
Skills and competency	3.6875	.77002

**Sources: Survey data**

The qualitative interviews underpin the quantitative results on human capital and suggest that the levels of career achievement and learning experiences were moderate with mean values close to 3.5. Based on the qualitative results, participants expressed their success at their work places as to-do by passion and family influence. However, they also complained that their organisations were profit oriented as opposed to being quality improvement oriented. Overall this qualitative input shows that there is a perceived misfit between the objectives of academic staff and the goals of the organisation. The quantitative analysis also showed somewhat conflicting results for skills and knowledge sharing, while the qualitative results raise questions about incorporating human capital development in a quality manner at the organisation. This implies that although human capital development is acknowledged, there could be limitations to actual development owing to organisational structures.

#### **4.4.6: OBCS Objective Career Success Agreement Level**

In the qualitative analysis, the interviewees expressed that they have career success. The findings are consistent with the quantitative measures of objective career success agreement level (Table 4.11) and subjective career success agreement level (Table 4.12). In quantitative analysis, the agreement levels on objective measures are higher because mean values are from 3.81 to 4. These results show a higher level of agreement on their career success regarding the objective career success. From Table 4.12, the measures of agreement level on subjective career success indicate that there are also higher agreement levels of career success as mean values are above 4 and very highly agree on their career success subjectively in their current organisation.

**Table 4. 11: OBCS Objective career success agreement level**

Measures	Mean	Std. Deviation
OCS - Salary reflect	3.8750	.78267
OCS - Expect Salary increases	4.0000	.79264
OCS - Receive Bonus	4.0000	.79264
OCS - Satisfied with benefits	4.0000	.61397
OCS - Expect promotion	4.0000	.61397
OCS - Knowledge and Competence	3.8125	.72808
OCS - Reward	4.0625	.82896

Sources: Survey data

The qualitative interviews complement the quantitative measurement of objective career success as highly in agreement with mean values range from 3.81 to 4.06. This implies that women are reasonably satisfied with their career advancement in terms of salary, promotion, and bonuses. These findings are further supported by the qualitative data which in the form of interview shares people experiences of career mobility is noting that participants have reported having attained quantitative improvements including increased remunerations and promotions. The added qualitative aspects help supplement the quantitative data by reminding the participants that these concrete metrics play a part in attaining their perceived feeling of accomplishment. Subsequently, both quantitative and qualitative results affirm that objective career success sharper corresponds to financial and promotional accomplishments.

#### 4.4.7: SUCS Subjective Career Success Agreement level

**Table 4. 12: SUCS Subjective career success agreement level**

Measures	Mean	Std. Deviation
SCS Happy with org	4.1250	.60105
SCS happy with the status	4.0625	.66020
SCS Gained new exp	4.1875	.72808
SCS empowered	4.1875	.72808

Sources: Survey data (2021)

In a broader significance, qualitative information adds much more rich and comprehensive sense of the subjectively perceived career success to the results derived from the agreement levels with mean values greater than 4. This suggested that the interviewees were highly satisfied with the job roles and personal accomplishments. Respondents referred to perceiving increased personal accomplishment and satisfaction. These qualitative measures show that employees' notion of success is not confined to promotions and salary as known in mainstream organisational theory. The qualitative results therefore complement the quantitative outcomes by explaining the excited affects added to professional accomplishments and the psychological satisfaction which implies that subjective success goes beyond the objective to also being a source of power, confidence, and happiness. The findings from the quantitative analysis are consistent with the qualitative analysis findings. The findings from quantitative analysis achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. The discussion will be in the following Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.0 Introduction

Research on career success drivers of women, their perception upon it, and their underlying process to success of women in a chosen career is considerably underrepresented. This is particularly the case for women in developing countries such as Myanmar, in which socio-cultural assumptions limit their success. In the contemporary world, the increased participation in various job sectors by women has become quite evident across Myanmar's economy, contributing in a wide range of professional fields, including education and healthcare.

In Myanmar, while most sectors are dominated by men, the education sector is mainly dominated by women. Regrettably, their struggle remains unnoticeable; in recent years, there has been growing concern regarding the under-representation of women in leadership positions within academic institutions. Despite significant efforts made towards promoting gender equity in higher education, women still face various obstacles that hinder their career advancement. Women lecturers in private higher education institutions (HEIs) are no exception to this phenomenon. Even with qualifications, they often encounter personal issues such as family responsibilities and organisational barriers such as gendered biases and discrimination, lack of mentorship and networking opportunities, and limited organisational support.

Recently, Myanmar academic regulatory authorities and involved stakeholders have made massive efforts to transform the education sector by strengthening the role of women lecturers in higher educational institutions in the country. Nonetheless, women lecturers in Myanmar continue to experience great challenges for their career progress due to socio-economic barriers that impose direct and indirect limits on their accomplishments. However, as a developing country with limited resources, understanding the factors that can promote the career success of women lecturers is important to prevent wastage of resources on costly interventions and to formulate effective tailor-made interventions for women. Thus, this study explored the career success drivers, process, and meaning of women lecturers from positivist and interpretative perspectives.

## **5.1 Discussion of research questions and prepositions**

### **5.1.1 Research Question 1**

*Which individual and organisational level support factors (organisational support, gendered practices, coaching and mentoring programs) influence the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?*

#### ***5.1.1.1 The effects of individual factors on subjective career success***

The demographic characteristics of women academic staff did not reveal their positive effect on their career success. This implies that the demographic characteristics manifested in women academic staff cannot enhance the intrinsic career success and satisfaction they prefer. In fact, after controlling for other factors, the demographic variable for women academic staff indicated a negative and significant effect on their career success. Subjective career success tends to decline with the possession of specific demographic characteristics, such as being women, being married, and having children. These characteristics altogether are negatively associated with the subjective career success of women lecturers because married women can experience stress arising from multiple roles, such as being a mother and faculty member with significant job responsibilities, and then reduce their subjective evaluation of success in their academic career.

This result is somewhat consistent with past research, which has reported a positive and significant impact of being women and having children on the subjective career success of women in male-dominated white-collar occupations such as executives and managers (Judge et al., 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998). In these studies, women lacking children reportedly perceived lesser career satisfaction due to lacking human capital and spousal support (Schneer, 2002). One possible explanation for the negative is that demographics and personal career success could be attributed to a lack of intrinsic values placed by them rather than a lack of qualities related to demographic characteristics.

These findings are also consistent with prior research, which found that demographic factors such as gender, family size, and marital status are negatively associated with the subjective career success of white-collar women, including those in managerial positions (Peluchette, 1993; Valcour & Ladge, 2008).

The aggregate level of demographic variables which is a combination of gender perception, age, and children, is found to be negatively associated with the subjective career success of women managers. This interpretation should be cautious as it opens avenues for interesting questions regarding whether women lecturers are pleased and content with their status quo along these indicators. Interestingly, the findings on negative relationships may imply that women feel dissatisfied with or uncontented on their status quo, in terms of their existing marital or educational status or age etc., and may assume hindrance to career success, which they intend to achieve. In Myanmar, women lecturers with more than one child usually need more time, energy, and engagement to raise them. A higher need for devotion to their children may mean that they may be left with lesser physical and mental resources to focus their attention on and pursue career development activities in academia, and consequently, they may feel left satisfied with their career status. They may assume that family is detracting from their success, and they could have to forgo marriage or family for a teaching career that requires continuous learning. The significant negative effect in the present study may simply imply that their existing status on the above-mentioned indicators is a major hindrance that is affecting their pursuit and attainment of personal satisfaction on their current career point.

Human capital explains a positive and significant effect on the subjective career success of women academic staff. It implies that women staff who invested in accumulated skills, knowledge, and experience, and displayed competency in teaching-related activities, are substantially achieving personal career success. Indeed, these positive and significant findings are not surprising given that numerous prior studies have found that it positively impacts the personal career success of other white-collar workers (Kirchmeyer, 1998). However, few empirical works have revealed the lesser significant role of human capital on subjective career success than objective career success (Aryee et al., 1994). However, in the educational field where knowledge, skills, and qualifications are highly valued, and these achievements are not widely distributed across all

individual teaching staff, the women academics equipped with more substantial human capital seems to feel personally more satisfied, respected, and accomplished in their surrounding environment. The overall importance of human capital on subjective success suggest how capable academic staff may perceive themselves as more intrinsically successful in their academic careers.

The family context has also been considered an explanatory factor for women's career success. Men and women do not face the same family constraints, and this diversion appears to have a unique implication for the career success of each group (Tharenou, 2008). This study, therefore, analysed the impact of family support on the subjective career success of women lecturers. Results suggest family support positively and significantly influences women lecturers' career success. These findings are similar to those of other researchers (Ezzedeen et al., 2018) who claim that family support influences women professionals' career satisfaction in various contexts where women are expected and valued more to fully perform their specific gender roles rather than success in careers. By sharing household responsibilities and encouraging their wives to perform their teaching smoothly (Agrawal & Singh, 2022), families including spousal support, may increase the feeling of satisfaction of women lecturers in Myanmar.

#### ***5.1.1.2 The effects of organisational factors on subjective career success***

Coaching and mentoring are always considered subjective career success drivers, particularly in the case of women professionals who are considered weaker and busier individuals. Hence, they need external support and guidance to direct them toward the path of a career ladder. However, being unable to access mentoring can hinder their career success. In the same way, the present study's findings align with earlier research, which states that mentoring promotes the intrinsic career success of women professionals in various settings (Chauhan et al., 2022; Jyoti & Sharma, 2015; Kirchmeyer, 1998). Mentoring may have a role in career satisfaction (Stamm & Buddeberg-Fischer, 2011). When taken together in the present study, all intrinsic career success indicators indicated that the women academics in higher education institutions who receive sufficient coaching and mentoring could enjoy more tremendous subjective career success than those who do not receive the same support.

As an organisational variable, organisational support is evaluated to determine whether it significantly affects the subjective career success of women lecturers. Based on the results, it is concluded that organisational support does not significantly affect women lecturers' career success. It suggests that the increased allocation of organisational resources is unlikely to benefit women lecturers in terms of tremendous intrinsic success. This finding differs from other studies that report a significant positive effect (Chauhan et al., 2022; Erdogan et al., 2004; Lee & Lee, 2019). Organisations can play a significant role by providing opportunities and support to women's intrinsic career satisfaction by increasing the meaningfulness of the work (Lee & Lee, 2019b), as they must overcome more cultural and gender-related barriers than their male counterparts. However, this insignificant effect of organisational support is a warning signal to consider whether organisational support is in critical need for women lecturers to improve their intrinsic success. One probable reason could be that most organisational support measures are working conditions and organisational policies, which are hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1959) that may not promote intrinsic satisfaction (Amzat et al., 2017) in women. In this regard, private higher educational institutions in Myanmar need to explore organisational support programs tailored to women lecturers' intrinsic needs.

Gendered biases and gender stereotypes in some disciplines are detrimental to the subjective well-being of women working in organisations. To promote workplace equality, some organisations adopt gendered practices. Sex-based discrimination is common in Asian contexts, creating barriers to women's professional success (Rowley et al., 2016). The results indicated a significant positive effect of gendered practices on the subjective career success of women lecturers. Very few studies have investigated the direct role of gendered practices in the personal career success of women, even though the absence of their adoption in organisations would impose unnecessary psychological burdens on women professionals. It has been shown that perceived workplace gender bias can produce harmful psychological impacts on women in higher education, such as depression and anxiety (Lekchiri et al., 2019). Thus, the present study's findings suggest that adopting gendered practices promotes women lecturers' personal career success.

### ***5.1.1.3 The effects of individual factors on objective career success***

Of the human capital variables, like their relationship to personal success, the demographic was negatively and significantly related to objective career success. The study's findings align with a few prior studies, which suggest the inverse relationship between some demographic factors and the objective career success of women in white-collar professions. For example, managerial women with no children receive lesser pay due to the absence of potential human capital support naturally provided by emotional bonds with children (Schneer, 2002). Those perceived increased family responsibilities adversely affect achieving objective success (Mayrhofer et al., 2008).

However, the present study's findings contradict a few past research studies that showed no significant relationship between financial success and the family background of women. Women's financial success in a career is unrelated to their family background, such as parental education (de et al., 2006); thus, the socio-demographic background is seemingly unimportant to the extrinsic career success of women lecturers in this study.

Nonetheless, the finding on significant adverse effects is intriguing. The results may imply that women lecturers may perceive that their current status on those demographic factors, such as being women, current age, education, and responsibility, taken together, can be detrimental to the attainment of objective success in pay raise and promotion. In fact, some previous studies reported that the perception of being women negatively affects higher salary attainment and progression because women tend to perceive gender bias and discrimination in pay promotional opportunities (Chênevert & Tremblay Montréal, 1998; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Meara et al., 2020). Likewise, Greguletz et al. (2019) and Valcour & Ladge (2008) demonstrate that the presence of children detracts from the objective career success of women due to the availability of less time for career progression. One possible explanation for the negative coefficient in the present study is that women lecturers or married lecturers may not have enough time or energy to meet the high commitment standards of a career that requires constant learning about evolving knowledge in the fields. This can limit their pursuit of promotional opportunities because women's dissatisfaction with existing status can cause experience tension and frustration due to conflicts between work and family responsibilities. Just like it's critical to personal success, human capital explains a positive and significant effect on the objective career success of women academic staff. It implies that women staff who developed and invested in skills, knowledge, and experience and displayed

competency in teaching-related activities were likelier to achieve increased pay, promotion, and other tangible rewards. These positive and significant results are unsurprising because numerous prior studies also reported their positive effects on the objective career success of other white-collar workers, such as executives (Judge et al., 1995). Like personal career success, in the educational field where knowledge, skills, and qualifications are highly valued, and these achievements are not equally distributed across all individual teaching staff, women academics equipped with more substantial human capital are valued higher by academic institutions. The staff with higher human capital can exhibit higher work performance.

Consequently, they seem to receive a higher pay premium and more accessible access to positions with higher responsibilities than their peers with lower attainment in human capital (Melamed, 1995). This also pointed out that investment in human capital using a higher quantity of educational attainment, regardless of their quality, can make a difference in the financial success of women lecturers because human capital, such as educational attainment, can deliver a higher cognitive ability to perform core job activities and obtain visible achievements in women staff as a result (Ng & Feldman, 2010). The overall importance of human capital on objective success suggests that more capable academic staff perceive and obtain more extrinsic success in their academic careers through pay, promotion, position, and so on. So, systematic procedures should be devised for its implementation.

Family support has also been considered an explanatory factor for women's career success because, through roles and responsibilities, families exert a significant constraint on the extrinsic success of women in a given career. The granting of promotions and financial rewards is not solely based on actual achievements but also signals of ability, future contributions, and involvement (Mayrhofer et al., 2008). The role of family support in women's entrepreneurial success is acknowledged and researched (Welsh et al., 2021). However, the research does not present its role in the career success context. Except for a few recent studies that untangle the role of family support in promoting the personal career success of women working in the I.T. sector in India (Agrawal & Singh, 2022), its role in extrinsic success is surprisingly under-represented in career success research. This study found family support's positive impact on women lecturers' objective career success. Family members such as parents, spouses, and children may offer psychological and moral resources such as recognition, respect, encouragement, and empowerment to women

lecturers, which can promote the energy and commitment needed to overcome obstacles and obtain objective success in their teaching careers.

#### ***5.1.1.4 The effects of Organisational factors on objective career success***

Organisational support is evaluated to determine whether it significantly affects the objective career success of women lecturers. Based on the results, though the sign of the coefficient is still positive, organisational support does not reveal a significant effect on the objective career success of women lecturers. The study's findings indicate a significant departure from those of other studies that demonstrate a positive and significant effect, such as Dose et al. (2019), which contained a majority of women psychologists. The insignificant effect of organisational support suggests that the support programs provided by organisations, such as training and working policies, are unlikely to offer benefits to women lecturers in pay, position, and promotion. Even though organisational support, such as training sponsored by organisations, are task-related needs that can improve the marketability of members elsewhere, organisations may not intend to give promotions and salary increases (Wayne, 1999). In addition, the tentative reason for this insignificant effect can be interpreted considering the context. The survey was conducted during COVID-19 when most private schools required the staff to work from home. Economic disruption also occurred for most businesses, especially tourism and other services, where some staff were made redundant and salaries were reduced. As a result, there has been a decline in enrolment in private schools. Schools reduced the salaries of teaching staff and offered fewer promotional opportunities. Despite ongoing organisational support, these measures cannot promote objective success criteria such as pay, position, and promotion. Relatedly, another probable explanation would be the inability of women staff to take on extra work for an increase in pay or promotion. Women may face increasing the extra burden of childcare and other family responsibilities due to the unavailability of other services during the pandemic (Power, 2020). Another empirical study is required to confirm whether organisational support practices can still play a lesser role in promoting the objective career success of women lecturers, especially after the usual business is resumed in private schools.

Coaching and mentoring are the most critical factors influencing women's career outcomes. In line with this consensus, the results indicated a significant positive effect of coaching and mentoring on the objective career success of women lecturers. This result confirms the findings of

prior studies that suggest the positive association between mentoring and objective career success in white-collar professionals, involving both male and female samples of doctors (Stamm & Buddeberg-Fischer, 2011) and mentoring and career advancement of Portuguese women employed in the public sector in Portugal (Mcilongo and Strydom, 2021). Career support in the form of coaching and mentoring from the development program contributes to explaining the objective career success of women lecturers from private institutions in Myanmar beyond intrinsic career success. However, this result is diverted from other studies that reveal the insignificant effect of mentoring on objective career success, such as promotion, but significant on salary.

Despite the unsurprising significance of coaching and mentoring on objective success, its role, as opposed to another seemingly important organisational-related factor such as organisational support, which did not contribute significantly to career success, is intriguing. Questions have been raised as to which forms of support are essential for the career advancement of women lecturers—drawing on the distinction between organisational support, mainly policies, and work characteristics attributes. Developmental coaching and mentoring: This study suggests that coaching and mentoring seem more fruitful to the objective career success of women lecturers than organisational policies and working conditions, which might be more relevant to another work-related outcome, such as the intention to stay at work. Gendered biases and gender stereotypes in some disciplines are detrimental to the success of women's careers in that discipline. These gender practices aim to mitigate gender barriers. As a result, women tend to show deviation from other women to prove themselves compatible with the norms and expectations of a discipline (Rhoton, 2011). Thus, some organisations adopt unbiased gendered practices that attempt to equate the roles of men and women to show their commitment to workplace equality. The present study indicated a significant positive effect of gendered practices on the objective career success of women lecturers. Very few studies have investigated the direct role of gendered practices in the objective career success of women, despite empirical studies noting the role of an equal work environment in promoting the objective success of foreign women at a superior human capital (Traavik & Richardson, 2010). Equal and unbiased gendered practices adopted by organisations contribute as much to variations in the objective career success of women lecturers from private institutions in Myanmar as they do to intrinsic career success. Therefore, adopting gender practices in higher education institutions can benefit the objective success of women lecturers beyond the benefits of superior human capital delivered to their respective organisations.

## 5.1.2 Research Question 2

To what extent do women's perceptions of subjective career success mediate the association between career success factors and objective career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?

### 5.1.2.1: The mediating effects of subjective career success

A primary/major objective of this study was to examine the mediating roles of subjective career success in the relationships between individual and organisational-related variables and objective career success. The results of the mediation analysis provided support for the majority of the proposed hypotheses. Except for the demographic variable, other variables such as human and social capital factors (human capital and family support) and organisational factors (organisational support, coaching, and mentoring, and gendered practices) enhance subjective career success, which in turn promotes the objective career success of women lecturers, as manifested in higher salaries, promotions, and positions.

Prior studies have examined the mediating role of subjective career success on the relationship between various organisational factors and job-related outcomes, such as between other work-family factors and job outcomes (Koekemoer et al., 2021) and between career management behaviour and organisational commitment (Moon & Choi, 2017), using a heterogeneous sample in a manufacturing context. Here, the present study's findings suggest that subjective career success should be considered when examining the effects of various individual factors on objective career success. Further, it is found that intrinsic career success is a significant link in the relationships between human capital investments made by women lecturers and objective measures of career success like salary, positions, and promotions. Likewise, it is found that intrinsic career success is an intervening mechanism that transmits the positive effects of family support to extrinsic career success. Similarly, the perception of personal success serves a mediatory role in transmitting the effects of organisational H.R. practices such as coaching and mentoring on extrinsic career success. Organisational gender equality practices and women support practices can also enhance the perception of extrinsic success by increasing perceived subjective career success.

In career research, personal career success has been frequently presented as a positive correlation between objective and subjective career success (Judge et al., 1995; Martins et al., 2017). and individual and organisational-related factors as contributors to objective success (Ng & Feldman, 2010), not many research efforts have directly examined the interventionist role of subjective career success. Some past research has presented the various effects objective career success can have on personal career success. For example, using a heterogeneous sample, research has indicated that objective career success received in the past in promotion, pay increase, and

Mobility can promote personal career success in the current period (Stumpf & Tymon, 2012)—objective success detracts from people's life satisfaction (Abele et al., 2016). However, Abele & Spurk (2009) argue that subjective career success has a more substantial effect on objective than personal success. Therefore, using a homogeneous sample containing women lecturers in an educational context while treating personal success as a potential mediator, the empirical evidence presented in this study suggests that subjective career success has a mediation effect, which ultimately contributes to the objective career success of women lecturers. To date, literature on career success has largely considered subjective and objective career success independently. In addition, considering both aspects of career success factors, this study can illuminate the role of these two successes in significant individual and organisational drivers in a homogenous sample of women lecturers. For instance, research on mentoring has focused on how these factors directly influence objective and subjective career success (Chauhan et al., 2022) involving both genders. Instead of focusing on direct effects, this study illustrates that investigating the mediating processes of personal success is one of the most effective ways to help educational researchers explain why intrinsic success matters to objective career success, not only that individual and organisational factors matter to personal career success.

In addition, most research does not consider human and social capital, such as family support, in the same model nor various organisational factors in the same model. Differentiate among sources of individual capital and organisational support methods in the same model. This study can illuminate which factors contribute more to individual career success in which terms. For example, by differentiating between human capital and social capital, such as family support, this study can argue that both are essential for the career success of women lecturers. Still, the role of human capital is more critical than social capital as family support because, to achieve success,

an individual's abilities, such as human capital, may take precedence before family support. Likewise, compared to most organisational working conditions and policies, organisations need to prioritize support for gendered practices that eliminate gender bias and consider the specific needs of the women gender. Further, investing in the latter types of organisational support almost necessarily means reducing investment in the former types, whose existence may be more vital for eliminating dissatisfaction.

In summary, this study provides evidence of various career success drivers' differential effects on women higher education staff. The nature of these effects was shown to vary by the specific determinant. A key finding in the present study is that the effects of most individual and organisational factors on objective indicators of career success for women lecturers are not only direct but also mediated by subjective career success. Regarding the conceptual model in Figure 1, only demographic and organisational determinants received no support. While most of the mediation hypotheses are supported, the mediation effect of personal success between demographic and objective success receives no empirical support. Since career success is once again less well explained for women in academic contexts than in other managerial positions in other countries, research examining the additional determinants in the former area seems deserving. Also, future research, preferably with longitudinal designs, should explore the differential effects of other determinant categories, such as job and organisational ones, by comparing samples from different occupational fields. In addition, research on well-educated, reasoned women academics in different career stages is scant despite criteria of career success can differ across career stages such as early, mid and late. So, it would be worthwhile for future research to examine career success of women academics by taking into account different career stages.

### **5.1.3 Research Question 3**

*How do women lecturers from HEIs perceive career success?*

Since the 1980s, career success has become a more popular research topic (Ishak, 2015). The research is becoming more complex because a career concept is not a single disciplinary approach or a theoretical underpinning. In particular, gender specific perception on career success

is a challenging one. The perception of what career success really means is subjected to social cultural context and professional fields, in which individuals are embedded in. The first qualitative aspect of this research explored how women in higher education sector perceive career success.

#### **5.1.3.1 Theme 1: Goal Attainment**

Setting and achieving career goals is another indicator of career success for women. Based on the challenges they face at workplaces, setting attainable goals helps identify potential barriers, allows for fair pay negotiations, develops a support system, and seeks out training and development opportunities (Castrillon, 2022). Like general people, women lecturers tend to set a variety of goals based on their desires and dreams. The goals can be financially related or non- financial, higher status or new employment. The desire to fulfil the goals directs them towards certain types of behaviour that can help goal attainment. When goals such as family life which are not directly related to women career are attained, women lecturer may feel their career is headed in the right direction. This notion implies that perceived success in one area can produce positive emotional impact on other aspects of their life, including their career.

#### **5.1.3.2 Theme 2: Specific Goal Achievements**

Even though the perception of career success among women lecturers from private HEIs varies based on individual and organisational factors, results suggest that the women lecturers equate career success to the various accomplishments that are important in their professional field, including completing an in-service Ph.D., opening a private centre, becoming the head of a program/leadership roles, and completing an MBA. This result is similar to findings conducted in academics in the UK in which the respondents identified career success with the number of publications (Schillereff et al., 2023). Here in this context, when most lecturers interviewed are still in their early careers and their professional qualities have yet to be accomplished, they assume accomplishments such as completion of PhD or MBA criteria for career success. However, when once those qualifications are completed or these are unattainable at the moment, they may identify the success with a higher status in the organisation, such as program leader, the head of program, etc. From the motivational point of view, status, pay, and position are powerful extrinsic motivators that drive people towards achieving them. However, according to the findings in the present study, for women lecturers, the attainment of these extrinsic motivators extends towards feelings of success

beyond satisfaction and pride in the career. In addition, the women lecturers considered intrinsic satisfaction on the specific accomplishment of a challenging assigned task.

### **5.1.3.3 Theme 3: Personal Qualities**

Women lecturers perceive the possession of certain personal qualities as criteria for success. In this regard, most of them maintain that educational accomplishment is considered as a key indicator of career success. This is because when women attain higher education, they can acquire the necessary skills and credentials to advance in various fields. Higher education leads to career success for women by increasing their earning potential, creating an expanded network, and improving job prospects (World Economic Forum, 2015). Not only it can lead to career success, the present study indicated that women can feel success by having higher qualifications. Their confidence is boosted, and their leadership skills are developed. To use personal efforts for career success, women must create and build meaningful relationships, develop a growth mentality by persisting through difficulties, build a personal brand, and improve their skills (World Bank, 2020). In addition to academic qualities, women lecturers also regard positive feelings such as inner peace, happiness, and sense of freedom as indicators of career success. Research has indicated that the positive emotional state arising from perceived pleasurable job context can promote the positive employee attitude and facilitate their career development (Saari & Judge, 1994). Inner peace and happiness while working are vital success indicators for women lecturers because the job that give feeling of positive emotions when the work is carried out can promote greater job satisfaction (Fisher, 2000).

### **5.1.4 Research Question 4**

*How do individual and organisational factors that they perceive shape the career success of women lecturers in private HEIs?*

According to Jarboe (2019), women's leadership in higher education is an important topic of discussion, as it highlights the unique challenges women face in academic leadership roles and the potential benefits of gender diversity in leadership. In recent years, the issue of women's career success in private HEIs has become a topic of great concern. Although women comprise most

college and university employees, they hold fewer than 30% of leadership positions (Jarboe, 2019). This raises questions about the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership and the effects of these factors on their career success.

#### **5.1.4.1 Theme 4: Energizing career success factors: personal drivers**

Energizing factors are the drivers that keep the participants' interest in the pursuit of career success. Energizers drive the participants to focus their attention and effort towards doing activities that can lead to career success. Motivational and personality factors fall into this category. Regarding motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are identified. Several intrinsic motivators included in this category are enjoyment, passion for teaching and happiness. In fact, an intrinsic need is one of the motivators for career success. Intrinsic motivation is the inherent drive and desire to carry out an action or task for its own sake rather than for outside incentives or rewards Deckers, L. (2022). Intrinsic motivation can be a powerful motivator for career success, leading to higher engagement, job satisfaction, and performance (Falk, 2023). When intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to pursue their interests and passions, take on challenging projects, and persist in the face of obstacles. So, women lecturers assume that these psychological drivers stimulate them put more efforts and attention for gaining subsequent success in their career.

In terms of extrinsic motivator, salary increments and promotions and recognition from peers were cited as motivators of career success. These intrinsic motivators are imperative for women lecturers for maintaining sizable effort and energy level towards achieving them because their attainments can lead to higher financial and social status in their work and social environment. Another critical personal quality is personality related factors such as confidence and assertiveness. Confident and assertive women may be more likely to negotiate for promotions and better compensation. However, studies have shown that women are less likely to negotiate for better salaries and benefits than men, even with the same qualifications and experience (Bowles et al., 2007). This lack of assertiveness can limit their career advancement and success.

#### **5.1.4.2 Theme 5: Bridging Factors of Career Success: Org Support & Development**

Bridging factors are the drivers that can support the career success of women lecturers in terms of upgrading the skills and competencies of women lecturers. They are various kinds of support women lectures expected to receive from their employing organisations. This provision of

these factors can enhance the participants' skills and competencies and narrow the gaps to reaching their higher career aims. However, when the women lecturers cannot gain access to these support factors, the career advancement is unlikely to obtain as these involve important experiences which cannot be sought outside of the organisation. As a steppingstone, Bridgers enable the women lectures to possess key skills and competencies that are vital for success in their career. These factors include the various types of support that are or need to be provided by their schools. The support can be forms of learning support materials and provision of developmental activities. Material supports for learning such as textbooks, tickets for study tours and conferences and other materials are essential factors for women lecturers in educational fields. Likewise, study tours and attending conferences are also important for upgrading existing knowledge because the emergence of knowledge are dynamic in many fields, and seminars and conferences are the important modes in which new knowledge is released to the public and private individuals regularly (Hicks, 1995). Success in an educational career needs continuous learning because knowledge is an essential part of teachers' success along with attitude and behaviour (Bouteille, & Evans, 2021). Teachers may perceive this support are vital for career success because improving their learning quality can boost students' achievements (Gess-Newsome, et al., 2019). Women with advanced degrees have more opportunities for career advancement in academia. Higher education also reflects higher professional skills and knowledge, making women more competitive in the job market and improving their career prospects (NCES, 2017). Research has shown that women with doctoral degrees are more likely to hold academic positions and have higher salaries than those with only a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the support of developmental activities for career success of women in academia includes provisions of coaches and mentors (Zacher, et al., 2019; Farkas, et al., 2019). However, the ways they promote the career success of women lecturers is through access to pragmatic knowledge rather than uplifting psychological aspects, as discussed in prior study (e.g, Cross, et al., 2019). The coach and mentors share women lecturers with personalised tips and guidance which are not available in public. By offering useful advice, women lectures considers that mentoring and coaching activities arranged by organisations as essential bridging mechanisms towards success in their existing career. The findings indicated that the career success of women lecturers from private HEIs in Myanmar hinges on the capacity of the organisations to provide them with learning mediums and developmental opportunities. Overall, women lecturers will be successful when the organisational policies are designed and implemented in a manner not only to attract the highly qualified ones but also to prepare and supports the existing ones with necessary supports and arrangements.

#### **5.1.4.3 Theme 6: Hygiene Factors of Career Success (Gendered practices + Family Support)**

The theme derived from data analysis is the hygiene factors for career success. Hygiene factors are the factors that can block on the path to career success of women if they are present. The elimination of these factors is needed in the first place to proceed to pursuit of other essential criteria for career success. The analysis revealed that several of gendered practices and family responsibilities as the constraints that are needed to be eliminated to get successful in a women career. Women lecturers expressed the need for family support, especially when they have children, to help balance their career and educational pursuits and family life. One of the most important factors that women lecturers perceive the barriers to their career success is the gender bias and discrimination in organisations. This could be that women face bias and discrimination in the workplace and traditionally viewed sex as disadvantage for career opportunities (Davidson & Cooper, 1984). The presence of gender discrimination may act as practical barriers to gain access to aspiring women to get to higher level positions (Heilman & Parks-Stamm 2007; Heilman, M.E., 2012), but they also seem to impose psychological burden by raising stress and worrisome, which occurrence can reduce the well-being (Ng & Feldman, 2014), and thus these practices may reduce the capacity to pursue career advancement opportunities. Research has also shown that women are less likely to be offered leadership positions than men, even when they have similar qualifications and experience. Women may also be paid less than men for the same job, which can impact their career advancement and success. To address this issue, private HEIs can take steps to promote gender equality and diversity in the workplace (Casad et al., 2020; Jarboe, 2019). This can include implementing policies and practices that support equal pay for equal work, providing professional development opportunities and mentoring programs for women, and promoting work-life balance to support the needs of working parents and caregivers. The findings indicated that the career success of women lecturers from private HEIs in Myanmar hinges on the presence of fairness and gender unbiased practices in their organisations and absence of family disturbances. Overall, women lecturers will be successful when the organisational policies are designed and implemented in a manner that can eliminate gender biases and when their families provide them with physical and emotional supports so that they can devote sufficient time and energy for career advancement.

### 5.1.5 Contribution to Theory and Society

Career success has become an increasingly significant area of research, garnering substantial scholarly attention in recent years. However, existing literature indicates that current approaches are inadequate, emphasizing the need for more robust theoretical and methodological frameworks (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). To address this gap, the present study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the key drivers and underlying mechanisms shaping the career success of female lecturers in Myanmar. Through this approach, the study makes several important contributions to both theory and practice.

In terms of theoretical contribution, first and foremost, the findings of this study advance the knowledge that exists within the **human capital theory** by extending its application to female career success in academia. Human Capital Theory posits that people make logical choices on investing in education and skills to improve their employment possibilities since employment success is defined by educational, training, and experience investments (Becker, 1993). Investment in physical and mental human capital are a salient factor for socio-economic-being of individuals and societies (Galama & van Kippersluis, 2022). However, the accumulation of human capital necessitates the availability of resources that individuals must intentionally allocate (Deming, 2022). In the field of higher education, obtaining postgraduate degrees and engaging in continuous professional development are essential prerequisites for career success (Judge et al., 1995). Recent advancements in Human Capital Theory also emphasize the significance of informal learning, social engagement, and leisure activities in fostering human capital accumulation (Tian & Tóth, 2024).

Nevertheless, not all investments in human capital yield the intended outcomes. Women in academia frequently encounter structural barriers that require them to attain higher degrees and accumulate greater research experience to achieve professional advancement comparable to their male counterparts (Boudarbat, Lemieux, & Riddell, 2010). Research suggests that women often need more academic qualifications and research output to reach leadership positions, underscoring the necessity of continuous human capital accumulation for sustained career progression (Boudarbat, Lemieux, & Riddell, 2010). However, the effectiveness of these investments is contingent on organizational systems that recognize and reward job experience and academic credentials (Gillies, 2017).

The findings current study confirms this perspective, indicating that career success of female lectures in academic- where academic credentials are highly valued- primarily stems from their proactive investment in acquiring advanced degrees. Women who have accumulated

substantial human capital report a sense of achievement and perceive themselves as successful in their professional careers. Furthermore, the study offers a novel insight, highlighting that self-initiated efforts for human capital accumulation may not be sufficient. For individuals who are unwilling or unable to invest in their own professional development, academic institutions could implement organizational initiatives such as seminars, conferences, networking events, and workshops. These institutional efforts would facilitate human capital accumulation by providing broader exposure to social networks and professional development opportunities.

Additionally, this study contributes to the growing body of research on **Social Capital Theory** by empirically examining its role in female career success in academia. Social Capital Theory emphasizes that social support systems (e.g., family, friends) and professional networks provide crucial resources for career advancement (Putnam, 2000). Social capital has been identified as a critical tool for professional advancement, particularly for women in patriarchal societies, as it helps bridge the gap that limits their access to leadership positions (Imhanrenialena et al., 2022). The exclusive advantages offered by social connections enables employed females to gain access to career opportunities and overcome systemic barriers (Demirkiran & Gençer, 2017). The support received from family and friends fosters a sense of fulfillment and pride among female lecturers. Prior studies highlight the strong positive association between social capital and both subjective and objective career success by offering access to information, career sponsorship, and emotional and physical support (Seibert et al., 2001; Zhou et al., 2015).

The findings of this study confirm the pivotal role of social capital in female career success by demonstrating that structured social capital, i.e. mentoring and coaching, enhances career mobility, professional development, and career stability of females (Choi, 2019). Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of social capital that is accumulated through professional networks in accelerating career growth, illustrating how social connections with experienced colleagues can open pathways to lucrative career opportunities. In addition to the benefits of professional networks, the findings highlight the critical role of family-based social capital in enhancing career satisfaction and advancement for female lecturers. Emotional and practical support from family members significantly reduces professional stress and alleviates work-family conflicts, thereby enabling women to thrive in their academic careers (Coleman, 1988). This is particularly relevant in contexts like Myanmar, where deeply ingrained gender stereotypes can pose additional barriers to women's career progression. Family support, whether through shared household responsibilities or emotional encouragement, provides women with a vital source of emotional capital. This not only strengthens their confidence but also fosters a greater sense of career fulfillment. Alternatively, these findings underscore family spill-over effect on career that

suggest that family support and career success are intertwined- when female lecturers receive consistent familial support, they are better positioned to overcome obstacles, pursue professional aspirations, and sustain long-term career success. Especially in societies like Myanmar where social culture defines more value on males than females, supportive work and family environment can infuse females with needed aspiration and capacities for gaining success in academic career.

Moreover, this study confers certain contributions to motivation theory. Especially, the findings from qualitative data analysis advance the career success research using motivational theories. Motivation theory maintains that people are driven by inner needs and the desire to fulfill unmet needs guides human behavior (Herzberg, 1959; Robbins, 2009). While prior research indicates the role of certain motivational drivers, such as needs for socio-economic improvement, hobbies and interests, the desire to fulfil parents' desire, that influence the females' academics career success (Raburu, 2015). While the prior research is insightful for understanding underlying drivers of women's career success, they cannot provide fuller implications about how success is initiated and interpreted. The findings of the present study extend this notion by elucidating that that female's perception of success is more complicated than it thought, career success in women stems from their strong internal motivation. They interpret career success in terms of subjective judgment about their extrinsic and intrinsic needs' satisfaction-the attainment of elevated position and small gifts and accomplishment of challenging job tasks within their professional environment. They feel success with these factors due to social culture of Myanmar where household responsibilities are placed on shoulders of women. Despite of the limited resources to set aside for career aspirations, women lecturers are motivated towards intrinsic factors, such as self-growth, intellectual fulfilment, and professional recognition, and attainment of these needs are interpreted as career success.

Again, quantitative findings indicate that, being social individuals, the women tend to regard emotional and social needs via developmental activities as strong motivators and, thus, perceived drivers for career success, While organizational supports, such as organizational policies, job security, and training, may be assumed as hygiene factors that females are not directed towards needs satisfying and thus career success drivers despite their absence making it difficult to maintain job positions and stay in an organization. While caution should be exercised when considering males due to gender differences in perceived needs for various supports, being female, who needs social support than male counterparts, coaching and mentoring can fulfil their desire to affiliation, care and love needs. This finding offers insights into areas intersecting motivational views (Herzberg, 1959; Robbins, 2009) and gender differences in the importance of socialization (Olson & Shultz, 1994).

While the contributions of the present study align well within theoretical discussion such as social capital, human capital and motivation theories, it also offers a nuanced theoretical contribution to the **feminist theories** (Acker, 1990; Butler, 1990; hooks, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989). The findings from interview commentary enrich this perspective by illustrating how traditional gender roles impose disproportionate burdens on women, influencing their ability to pursue career opportunities. Specifically, the study reveals that a woman's career progression is often contingent on whether she has the necessary slack resources to prioritize professional ambitions over household and caregiving responsibilities. This insight underscores the critical role of both family and institutional support in enabling women to navigate and reconcile career advancement with domestic obligations. By highlighting these structural constraints and support mechanisms, this study contributes to feminist discourse by reinforcing the argument that systemic changes—both within households and organizations—are essential for fostering gender-equitable career progression.

Finally, the current study advances career success research by expanding the horizon of **methodological paradigms**, which most career success research has overlooked. Extant career success research has provided the relevance of various theoretical perspectives using either qualitative or quantitative approaches. However, to my knowledge, not many of their studies have comprehensively investigated career success using a mixed method. While either of these approaches is valid and worthwhile, one perspective alone is inadequate for understanding the subtle nuance of the career success process (Clark & Plano Clark, 2019). Thus, by utilizing a pluralist paradigm, i.e., mixed method, the current investigation results provide the relevance of integrating both perspectives, along with various theoretical aspects, in career success research.

More specifically, this study advances research on female career success by offering a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which career success drivers contribute to women's academic advancement, using a **qualitative approach**. This contribution is particularly significant given the extensive body of research that identifies career success drivers through various theoretical lenses, such as human capital and social capital, mainly using quantitative approach (e.g., Choi & Nae, 2022). However, existing studies primarily focus on identifying these factors rather than examining the specific mechanisms through which they translate into career success for female lecturers.

By employing a qualitative approach, this study highlights the critical role of psychological and organizational drivers—such as opportunity recognition, goal attainment, and achievement orientation—in motivating female lecturers to pursue career-enhancing opportunities. More importantly, it identifies key mechanisms, including bridging, filling, and stimulating, that

facilitate the conversion of these drivers into both subjective and objective career success outcomes. These findings underscore the complex and dynamic nature of career success for women in academia, emphasizing that beyond simply possessing career success drivers, the pathways through which they are activated and sustained are equally crucial. Understanding these mechanisms provides valuable insights for both researchers and institutions seeking to foster gender equity and enhance professional development opportunities for women in higher education.

### **5.1.6 Implication for Practice**

#### **Human Resource Strategy**

It is recommended that private institutions operating in Myanmar implement comprehensive diversity and inclusion policies that address gender biases in a specific manner. By doing this, an environment that promotes inclusivity will have a dual impact: it will improve the overall productivity and creativity of the workforce while also enhancing the well-being of female lecturers. HR departments should actively promote mentoring and coaching programs as, both in terms of subjective and objective measures, these programs have been found to significantly improve the career success of women. By means of the cultivation of supportive relationships and mentoring, these programs could help to improve the agency and performance of female academic staff members. For work-life balance, family-related stressors have on both subjective and objective career achievement, human resources strategies ought to incorporate work-life balance initiatives. The implementation of flexible schedules, family-friendly policies, and supportive measures has the potential to positively impact the work-life balance of female lecturers.

#### **Approach of Promotion**

Promotional tools and strategies should give top priority to highlighting a company's commitment to helping female speakers. This can include stressing certain policies, tools, and programs meant to help their professional development, thereby improving their public impression. By aggressively supporting a varied and gender-inclusive image in Myanmar society, private organisations may increase their skills and show their commitment to gender justice.

#### **Career Development Opportunities**

Highlighting a company's dedication to supporting female speakers should take front stage in promotional tools and initiatives. This can involve promoting particular policies, resources, and initiatives aimed to support their professional development, therefore enhancing their public impression. Private institutions and universities could boost their abilities and demonstrate their dedication to gender justice by actively promoting a varied and gender-inclusive picture in Myanmar society.

#### **Building Networking possibilities**

Career advancement possibilities should involve activities that facilitate networking, mentorship, and critical feedback to women lecturers. Promoting the participation of women in professional networks and mentorship relationships can improve a nurturing community and enhance their sustained achievement in their career.

Human resources departments should ensure that inclusive and free of gender prejudices their hiring practices are. Promoting women's career trajectories right from the start by means of gender equality in the hiring process can help to influence them. Private universities should incorporate these consequences into their HR strategy, therefore encouraging a more favourable atmosphere for women academics in Myanmar, and so supporting career development opportunities. These steps not only meet internationally accepted criteria but also question the unique challenges and cultural limitations present in the private Higher Education Institutions of Myanmar.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

When considering the generalisability of the findings, certain limitations should be noted. First, the questionnaires were completed by women professionals working as academicians in private educational institutions in Myanmar. While the chosen research design confers particular merits of specific sectors and occupational categories, like women academics in the education industry, it is uncertain about the generalisability of these findings to women professionals in other sectors or other occupations, such as managerial women working in financial sector or doctors or nurses working in the private or public health sector. Further study should expand the model by testing in other occupational contexts to broaden the understanding of the peculiarities of success drivers underpinning the women's career. The second limitation is that the specific male-dominated cultural context of the study, i.e., Myanmar, precludes its generation from women academics in other cultural contexts.

The third limitation is the design of the study, which is cross-sectional. Research on career success noted that the perception of career success is dynamic that is altered with individuals' life courses (Hupkens, Akkermans, Solinger, & Khapova, 2021). The snap-shot cross-sectional analysis cannot genuinely capture how the perception of career success drivers can change over time. Future longitudinal studies are ideally needed to provide evidence for the stability of career success drivers over time or through changing life courses. This is because most of the sample are middle-aged and may consider that the support of family and organisational developmental programs is needed for career progress. As in a society taught to value and respect senior people, women academics may feel less need for mentoring and coaching support when they progress their age. Even if their respective organisation provides such support with genuine intent, they may feel

disregard for their experience and qualification, and they may think that such support is harming their value and identity. Therefore, future researchers should attempt to select the longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of drivers on career success. Finally, despite attempting to construct a comprehensive model of drivers of career success in this study, the model developed in this study is far from complete. Career success research highlights personality's salient role (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Thus, it would be worthwhile to include various personality traits such as proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) or Big five (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992) to investigate whether the variables used in this study can explain the career success of women academics above and beyond the personality factors.

Several other limitations should also be considered when considering the generalizability of the findings presented in this study. These limitations include the sample size, the specific occupational category of the participants, and the study's cross-sectional nature. One of the significant limitations of this study is that the sample size was relatively small. The study was conducted among women academics working in Myanmar's private educational institutions. Although the chosen research design provides certain benefits for investigating the career success drivers of women academics in the education industry, the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or occupations is uncertain. For instance, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to managerial women working in the financial sector or to doctors and nurses working in private or public health sectors.

The fourth limitation of this study pertains to inability to apply feminist theoretical lens in a comprehensive manner since the main theoretical foci of this study rest on the theories of human capital, motivation theories and social capital theories underpinning the postulation of the focal hypotheses. The findings of this study based on major these aforementioned theories, in fact, partially reflect the theoretical discussion under feminist lenses, especially the role of societal and workplace structures in shaping gender roles and expectations (Eagly & Wood, 2012). It means that social and work environment in which individual female embedded defines the expectations towards female roles. The favourable surrounding environment fosters impetus for female to pursue diverse career advancement opportunities while unfavourable surrounding environment-emphasising traditional on gender roles- fail to offer the fertile ground in which females career progress can be flourished. Alternatively, while the study acknowledges that supportive environments promote women's career advancements and unsupportive environments emphasizing traditional gender roles hinder their progress, it does not thoroughly examine these phenomena through a feminist theoretical framework. As a result, the findings may lack the contextual depth necessary to fully understand the interplay between gender, societal expectations,

and career success. So, future studies can build on this idea to develop a fresh perspective how a female career success, including in academia, is attributed to gender perceptions actors in her work and social environment in addition to her own physical, mental and intellectual capacities, by triangulating data from multiple actors within the social and professional ecosystems surrounding females.

Finally, despite attempting to construct a comprehensive model of drivers of career success in this study, the model developed is far from complete. Career success research highlights personality's salient role (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Thus, it would be worthwhile to include various personality traits, such as proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993) or Big Five (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992), to investigate whether the variables used in this study can explain the career success of women academics above and beyond the personality factors. Furthermore, other contextual factors, such as organisational culture, family support, and societal expectations, should be considered in future research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the career success of women academics.

### **5.3 Potential Further Research**

This study noted that subjective career success was reduced with certain demographic characteristics, including being women, married, and having a family. More research is required to determine whether these factors are correlated and whether they affect each other in determining the subjective career success of women. However, the current study revealed that organisational support does not significantly affect women lecturers' subjective career success. As indicated by this study, these findings contradict the prior research. Therefore, future research is needed to confirm this scenario. In addition, another future study is needed to confirm whether organisational support practices impact the objective career success of women. Also, the current study noted that the attainment of goals, a work-life balance and being happy, education, personal efforts, social factors, and performance as major indicators of career success. Future research is needed to determine whether there are correlations between these factors determine whether they affect each other.

#### **5.3.1 Factors that Contribute to Professional Success**

The study showed that women in Myanmar were more likely to succeed professionally if

they had supportive mentors, organisational support and family support. However, exploring what other factors contribute to professional success in different contexts would be interesting. For example, researchers might investigate the impact of educational background, personal characteristics (such as grit, resilience, and self-efficacy), and access to resources and opportunities on career success. The researchers may also consider exploring the role of networking and social capital on professional success. For instance, studying the impact of professional networks, both within and outside the organisation, on career advancement could be a valuable avenue of research. Researchers could also investigate how social capital, such as membership in professional associations or community organisations, can contribute to professional success.

### **5.3.2 Cultural Influence on Professional Success**

The study acknowledged the impact of cultural values and norms on professional success for women in Myanmar. However, exploring how culture impacts women's professional success in different cultural contexts is crucial. Researchers might investigate the impact of cultural beliefs and attitudes towards women in the workplace and how these impact women's opportunities for career advancement. Moreover, researchers could investigate how cultural expectations around gender roles and family responsibilities impact women's career goals and aspirations. Furthermore, researchers could explore how cultural factors, such as communication styles and power distance, influence women's opportunities for leadership positions. For instance, in some cultures, a direct communication style is highly valued, while indirect communication is preferred in others. Exploring the impact of these cultural differences on women's leadership opportunities could be valuable.

### **5.3.3 The Role of Organisational Culture**

The organisation's culture significantly influences women's chances of climbing the corporate ladder. Women's professional advancement may be affected by factors such as the frequency of sexism and discrimination, the accessibility of alternative work schedules, and the organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Further investigation is required into how the workplace atmosphere affects women's professional advancement. Researchers may use various techniques, such as surveys, interviews, and content analysis of existing data about women in the workplace. Researchers would better understand what makes an organisation's culture welcoming and inclusive and might develop methods for fostering such an environment.

### **5.3.4 Gender and Other Identities' Intersectionality**

Intersectionality refers to the idea that power and oppression are not experienced in a vacuum but results from complex interactions between factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic background. Women's professional advancement studies of the future may wish to investigate how intersecting identities manifest in the workplace. For instance, women's experiences of discrimination and obstacles to job progression may differ based on factors such as colour or ethnicity, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability, all of which might be investigated in future studies. By examining the intersectionality of different identities in the workplace, researchers could gain a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of diverse groups of women and identify strategies for promoting more significant equity and inclusion.

### **5.3.5 Contrasts with other countries**

While the present study focused on women in academia in Myanmar, women in other countries and cultures may have different experiences with achieving professional success. International comparative research on the factors that contribute to women's professional success in different nations could provide valuable insights into the cultural characteristics that either help or hinder women's professional advancement. Such research might reveal essential differences in the strategies and resources that effectively support women's careers across different cultures and provide insights into the transferability of findings to other cultural settings.

### **5.3.6 Importance of Masculinity**

Male and women participants' career outcomes were shown to be impacted by gender stereotypes and role expectations. What gendered expectations of masculinity impact men's and women's professional success would be an intriguing topic for further study. Men's adherence to conventional masculine standards may impact their desire to mentor or encourage women coworkers, while women's impressions of male-dominated sectors may influence their professional goals. Researchers can learn more about how gender norms and expectations affect the workplace by investigating the significance of masculinity in achieving professional success.

## **5.4 Conclusions and Contributions**

In Myanmar, the education segment is primarily dominated by women. Disappointingly, their efforts remain unnoticeable, thereby affecting them significantly. Therefore, women lecturers in Myanmar are experiencing huge issues in their career progress due to socio-economic barriers that impose direct and indirect limits. Nevertheless, as a developing country with limited resources, understanding the factors that can promote the career success of women lecturers is essential to create effective interventions to mitigate these challenges and barriers. Thus, the current study aimed to offer theoretical implications and managerial implications to practitioners for continued career success. It also sought to offer recommendations to women lecturers who wish to advance their careers in private HEIs.

Through this research, the researcher aimed to understand better the personal and institutional aspects that contribute to the professional success of women professors in private HEIs combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative analysis offers the following interesting insights.

Firstly, this study contributes to understanding on divers of both subjective and objective career success in women employing in education sector using an integrated framework that consider various individual and organisational factors. Regarding the effects of individual factors on subjective career success, this study noted that subjective career success declined with certain demographic characteristics, including being women, being married, and having a family. These characteristics were negatively linked to the subjective career success of women lecturers since married women with family experience stress due to multiple roles, such as being a mother and faculty members with significant job responsibilities. Regarding organisational factors, the study has observed that women lecturers in higher education institutions who receive adequate coaching and mentoring enjoy increased subjective career success than those who do not receive such support. However, the current study revealed that organisational support in terms of polices does not significantly affect women lecturers' subjective career success. It proposed that the increased allocation of organisational resources is unlikely to benefit women lecturers when it comes to increased intrinsic success. Gendered biases and gender stereotypes harm women's subjective well-being in education. This study noted a significant positive effect of equal gendered practices on the subjective career success of women lecturers, where perceived workplace gender bias can produce harmful psychological impacts on women in higher education, such as depression and anxiety.

Secondly, the salient impacts of these factors on women lecturers' objective career success do not different much from subjective career. Children were noted to detract from the objective

career success of women due to the availability of less time for career development. Many interpersonal and organisational level support elements were shown to play a substantial influence in promoting academic career success for women. The research discovered that women's objective professional success was linked to organisational assistance, such as support for work- life balance, flexibility, and training and development programs. This underlines the need to provide a welcoming and safe workplace that respects its employees' unique talents and perspectives. Additionally, this research discovers that coaching and mentoring programs boosted women's professional achievements. Networking opportunities, mentorship, and constructive criticism are just a few of how these private educational providers may help women lecturers succeed professionally. It demonstrates that these initiatives are effective in fostering gender parity and advancing women in the academic sphere, and it can be urged that more institutions to fund them.

The study also shows that comprehending the relationship between one's success and professional success depends significantly on how one thinks about one's professional achievements, in qualitative analysis. First, the qualitative research approach employed in this study has presented noble insights attached to the multifaceted influences that determine the personal and professional women's career trajectories in the academic realm. The degree of one's personal career success may be primarily determined by how satisfied and fulfilled one feels about their professional accomplishments. Some of their perceived factors are unique which are different from those factors above. As it is discovered that women who perceived themselves to be successful in their employment were more likely to attain objective career success, these results underline the need for firms to consider individual perceptions when influencing career outcomes. Qualitatively, the attainment of goals, a work-life balance and being happy, education, personal efforts, social factors, and performance are major indicators of career success. Intrinsic motivation is one of the motivators for participants' career success. Other identified motivators included job satisfaction, salary increments, and promotions. On the other hand, women lecturers perceived organisational support, such as career development opportunities, extrinsic motivators, such as gifts, and personal motivators as positive drivers of career success. It also suggested that strong academic backgrounds, family support, and personal characteristics are essential to women's career success.

Second, it is interesting to note that the perception of career success of women is based on achievements in certain areas that they assume as desirable and personal qualities. They also pointed out various ways in which organisations can or are contributing to their career success by applying certain success drivers. various ways in which various groups of drivers affect the career success of women. They also recognized that certain types of personal factors impose as salient conditions that serve as engine for their success, and other factors, especially organisational

support mechanism, are assumed as precondition that their organisations need to be in placed to ensure the success of women lecturers. Consequently, organisations may help cultivate these mechanisms by offering opportunities, highlighting the value of initiatives in driving women success in their academic career.

In conclusion, this research is presented as a pivotal point of insight to explore the complex determinants that underpin the progression of women in the private Higher Education Institutions. The research findings offer a concrete road map for the roles of institutions in promoting gender equity and facilitating women's advancement in academia by emphasizing the significance of organisational support, coaching, mentoring programs, subjective career success, personal agency, and addressing gendered biases and discrimination. By implementing these policies, companies may create a more welcoming and equal workplace that encourages the development of all employees. Thus, this research offers to design the effective HR strategies to help achieve the career success of women in private education sector.

## Appendix (A)

Table (1) Skewness and Kurtosis for SCS and OCS

		Descriptives	Statistic	Std. Error
Objective Career Success	Mean		3.9643	0.04439
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.8767	
		Upper Bound	4.0518	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.9524	
	Median		3.9286	
	Variance		0.378	
	Std. Deviation		0.61502	
	Minimum		3.14	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		1.86	
	Interquartile Range		1.11	
	Skewness		0.316	0.175
	Kurtosis		-1.343	0.349
Subjective Career Success	Mean		4.1406	0.04143
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.0589	
		Upper Bound	4.2223	
	5% Trimmed Mean		4.1285	
	Median		4.0000	
	Variance		0.330	

Std. Deviation	0.57411	
Minimum	3.50	
Maximum	5.00	
Range	1.50	
Interquartile Range	1.19	
Skewness	0.391	0.175
Kurtosis	-1.452	0.349

Figure 4.1: The mediation effects of SCS between Demographics and OCS

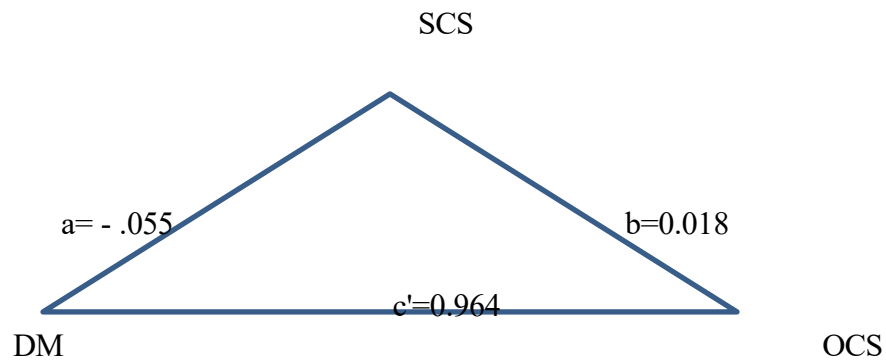


Figure 4.2: The mediation effects of SCS between Human capital (HM) and OCS

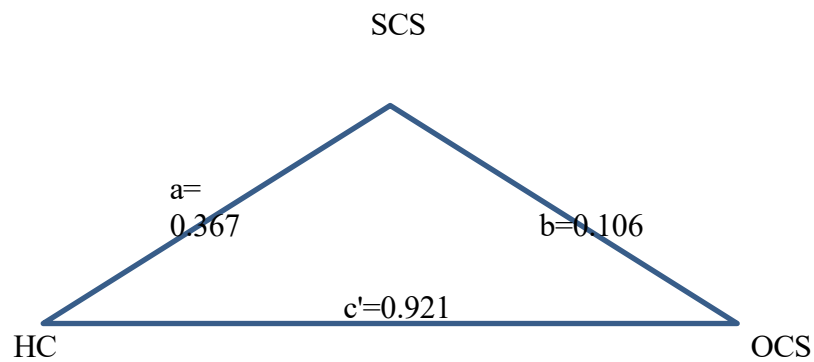


Figure 4.3: The mediation effects of SCS between Family Support (FS) and OCS

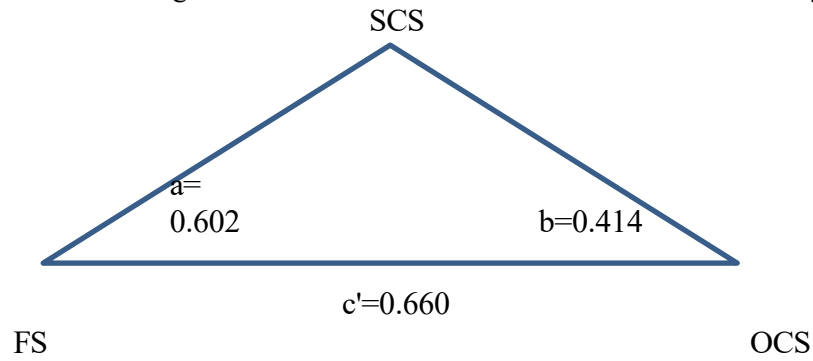


Figure 4.4: The mediation effects of SCS between OS (organisational support) and OCS

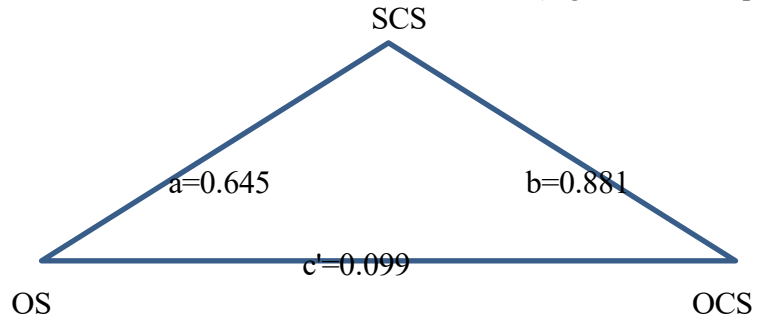


Figure 4.5: The mediation effects of SCS between Coaching and mentoring (CM) and OCS

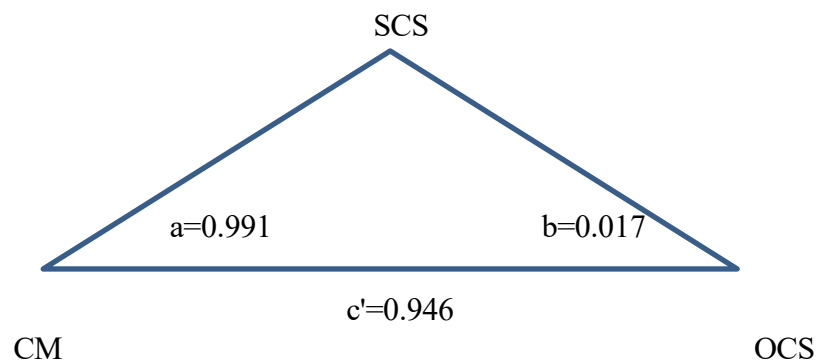


Figure 4.6: The mediation effects of SCS between Gendered practices (GP) and OCS

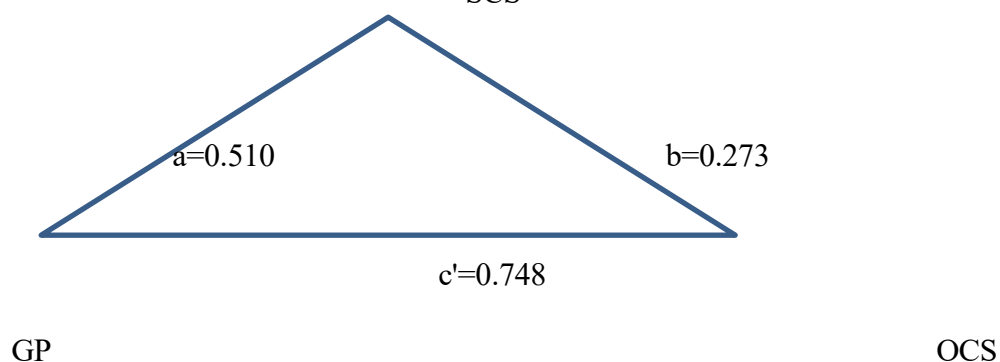


Table 2: Themes and illustrative codes

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Illustrative quotes</b>
Q1: How do women lecturers from HEIs perceive career success	Perception of Career Success	<b>Goal attainment</b>	A	'If you get what you want without having to put yourself through much trouble and without stressing out, then you are considered successful.'
			B	"Ambitious women often have many desires they want to reach. So, I define success as being able to reach every level of my goal."
			C	"If I have to talk about success for myself, I might say success is being able to do what I

				want to do and reaching the target as I wish."
		<b>Specific Achievements</b>	A	"In my department, as the youngest one, when I got an in-service PhD, I consider that time the most successful moment."
	B		"My private center was opened in Hledan, Yangon city. I was able to do what I wanted to be in the year I wanted to be. So, I think it was the moment I believe was the most successful one. Even though it is not a really big business, I got the reasonable income and all expenses that I invested before." "Within three years, my center was very successful."	
	C		" After the end of Covid, my salary was increased, and I was promoted. According to the position, I became the head who controls the program. Therefore,	

				if I think about career success, I would like to highlight these moments.
			D	<p>“The CEO of the college where I'm working at that time started an MBA batch. So, he encouraged me to take part in it from the beginning of drawing the program to the opening of the marketing class. At that time, I felt that I was successful as I challenged myself to do something that I didn't want to do the most, and I succeeded, and it was a moment that I was proud of. “</p>
			E	<p>“When I took my MBA, I was one of the youngest in my class. And later, when I returned to work, I was able to fulfill my responsibilities at work and did my best without being late for my</p>

				Master's degree. So, I consider this a success in my career and academics.”
		<b>Personal qualities</b>	A	'I supposed academic background and social background. In addition to educational background, if the community is wide, you can be more advanced in your career for sure. So, I think those two are really important.'
			B	"The main thing is the academic background and education background. After that, I think patience is also important."
				C
Q2: Factors influencing career	Personal factors	<b>Energizers of career success</b>	A	I felt that my performance and appreciation by others could affect their career

success for women in private HEIs				progress, and the more they were appreciated, the more they worked harder, which resultantly influenced their job satisfaction and success.
			B	"When I worked abroad, those jobs were not related to teaching. It was only when I returned to Myanmar, and I focused more on my teaching career. This is because it is my real passion as well."
			C	"Job satisfaction is the only way to truly be happy. When you work happily, you can be productive in your work progress <i>and career success</i> ."
			C	"After the end of Covid, my salary was increased, and I was promoted. I felt that I can get further success from them.
			E	"I like receiving small gifts during special days and getting donations

				for personal support. I am totally satisfied and feel like the organisation is contributing to my career success by supporting their employees.”
	Organisational Support and Development (OSandandD)	<b>Bridging factors for career success</b>	A	<p>'I think the organisation is contributing to career success. It provides all the opportunities within the framework of what they can do, for example, career enhancement.'</p> <p>'The workplace that I am currently working for organizes study tours to foreign countries for career development. They organize presentations at international forums too.'</p> <p>'One of the important factors is getting Maternity leave for six months.'</p>
			B	"The HR team leader and Master U Aung Tun Thet helped me a lot.

				<p>They gave tips and supported me about how to do marketing and how to make a private center successful."</p> <p>"Even famous teachers helped me."</p>
			D	<p>"The organisation supports what is needed, like resources, books, and other necessary things. It is very convenient for every staff and other people as well."</p> <p>"Yes, I do. I have the opportunity to learn what I need for my career, and they support me as much as possible."</p>
			E	<p>"I surely get a lot of organisational support at my current workplace."</p>
	Gender and Family support	<b>Hygiene factors for career success</b>	C	<p>"My family supports me ... physically... and also mentally... eagerly concerning with thinking about what degree to take next."</p>

			A	<p>I think family support is important to support your pursuit of a career in higher education.”</p> <p>“I had my career progression during 3 months after the birth of my first child. I had passed the master's exam because I had studied all the time.</p> <p>When I was focusing on my studies, my parents took care of my child, so I was able to continue without worrying.”“</p>
			C	<p>“It is impossible to succeed in the workplace without loved ones and those who can understand me.”</p> <p>“Success normally depends on the family that supports and the organisation you work and you.”</p>
			E	<p>“No gender discrimination and giving women equal rights are the important factors in my</p>

				organisation. In that way, I can manage my work without worrying.”
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## Appendix (B)

Survey Questions Form (Online Survey Form to be used)

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is a part of an academic research study into the influencing factors on career success of women academic professionals at the Higher Educational Institutions. The main objective of this study is to find out the factors which support women academic professionals in their career success. You are requested to participate in this survey. This study is being conducted by Khin Sandar Maw, DBA student at the University of Northampton and work as a Managing Director of Executive Garden Institute. Thank you for taking time to participate in answering the questionnaire. Please note that all your responses will be kept completely confidential and private; moreover, your participation is completely voluntary. Your name and personal information will not be known by the researcher unless you choose to include this information.

To participate, please click —Next to indicate your consent (i.e., willingness to participate). It will take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the entire survey. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me via email at [khin.maw15@my.northampton.ac.uk](mailto:khin.maw15@my.northampton.ac.uk)

Age

20 years – 30 years

31 – 40 years

41 – 50 years

51 – 60 years

Above 61

What is the highest level of education you completed?

Diploma

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctor of Business Administration/ Ph.D.

Please indicate the type of education organisation you are currently employed in:

Private high school

Private Vocational Training

Private College

Private University College

Private University

5. How many years of work experience in education sector do you have?

Less than one year

1 year – 3 years

4 years – 5 years

6 years – 7 years

8 years – 9 years

More than 9 years

Please read the following statements and indicate the likelihood of your organisation engaging in each of the **organisational factors** that you have faced as an academic professional in the organisation where you are currently working. (Please choose only one block for each question by clicking in the block).

Organisational factors include organisational supports, coaching and mentoring and gendered practices.

Organisational Supports

Organizational Support factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. The working environment and conditions are safe and healthy					
7. Our organisation allows me to manage my duties and responsibilities myself. (autonomy)					
8. Our organisation provides sufficient teaching facilities to staff					
9. My job is secure					

working in this organisation					
10. Effective training programmes are provided regularly					
11. Promotion regulations are clearly stated					

Coaching and Mentoring

<b>Coaching and Mentoring</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
12. Our organisation encourages coaching and mentoring among the staff					
13. Our organisation has regular well-being check among the staff					
14. Career-related mentoring is given to the employees					

15. Senior staff share their knowledge to the junior staff					
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Gendered Practices

<b>Gendered Practices</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
16. There is no gender discrimination in our organisation					
17. Women are recognised for their successes					
18. The organisation empowers women to set ambitious goals					
19. There is gender equality at my workplace					
20. There is equal workload among men and women in our organisation					
21. There are benefits for women such as maternity leave					

Please read the following statements and indicate the likelihood of your firm engaging in each of the ***individual factors*** that you have faced as an academic professional in your organisation where you are currently working. (Please choose only one block for each question by clicking in the block).

**Individual factor includes demographics and human capital and individual supports.**

#### Demographic Factors

Demographic Factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. My gender affects my career success					
23. My age affects my career success					
24. My educational background affects my career success					
25. Staff who do not have children can contribute more to the organisation					

#### Human Capital

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. Learning experiences in a number of schooling years and					

is related to my career success					
27. Achievement of higher quality education enhances my career success					
28. On the job training, formal and informal learning helps my career success					
29. Knowledge sharing and contribution to social capital investment is one of my career successes					
30. Skills and competency that acquired through learning and experience gives not only economic benefits but also my career success					

Individual Supports

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
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31. My family encourage my future career success					
32. My family recognises my work commitments					
33. I do not feel pressured to quit because of my family					
34. I think that family empowers me at my work					
35. Family is the main reason why I want to progress in my career					
36. My family respects and appreciates my career choices and successes					

Please read the following statements and indicate the likelihood of your firm engaging in each of the **“Career Success Variable”** that you have faced as an academic professional in your organisation where you are currently working. (Please choose only one block for each question by clicking in the block).

**Objective career success** refers to the external categories in a profession, which are defined by society, one’s peers or culture, and illustrates the typical steps towards success.

**Subjective career success** reflects an individual’s perception of career experience, which is influenced by a person’s own preferences for development, needs and values.

## Objective Career Success (salary, promotion, position)

<b>Objective Career Success</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
37. My salary accurately reflect the level of my position					
38. I can expect salary increases based on my experience/ performance					
39. I can receive bonus from my organisation					
40. I am satisfied with the benefits given to me					
41. I can expect promotion based on my experience/ performance					
44. My knowledge and competence level correspond to my position					
45. I have been rewarded by my organisation for my contribution					

## Subjective Career Success (career satisfaction)

<b>Subjective Career Success</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
46. I am happy working for my current organisation					
47. I am happy with my status.					
48. I have gained new					

experiences and skills					
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49. I feel empowered and satisfied working in my current organisation					
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50. Thank you for participating in the survey. Please enter any comments that you may have about the survey below.

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--- End of Survey---

## Appendix (C)

Candidate A

**Interview Date – 1st August 2022**

**Interview Venue – Akhayar Tea House**

**Interview Time – 5:00PM**

Can you tell me about yourself? (Gender, Age, marital status, number of family members)

My name is XXX. I am 35 years old. There are five family members including me.

I am a housewife . I received my MBBS degree in 2010 and my Doctorate degree in 2020.

How long have you been working in teaching career and in your current institution? (Probing Q: working experience both inside and outside the organization for teaching career and experience elsewhere)

I have been a freelancer for 20 years. I have attended medical university for a total of 11 years. Career Success  
What does success mean for you?

Well , I think that each one's criteria for that will be different . If you get what you want without having to put yourself through much trouble and without stressing out, then you are considered successful.

Can you think of a time when you felt very successful in your career? What led you to feel successful (e.g., Salary)? What was your role (e.g., Position)? What were you doing? Take a moment and describe it in detail.

There was a time when I thought I was the most successful. In my department, as the youngest one, when I got an in-service PHD , I consider that time as the most successful moment . At that time, I could consider getting an in-service PHD as one of my success. And now, I am satisfied in terms of salary and position as well.

How satisfied are you with your career in terms of financial stability? (Probe: what are the reasons that you are/are not satisfied?)

In terms of financial stability, I am generally satisfied at the moment. I am satisfied because I think that I got back as much as I put in.

What kind of success do you prefer to achieve in your career? (Probe: In comparison to objective factors, how important are the objective success factors for you?)

At school, students had to go with which teacher depending on the seat number. After dividing the students into groups, children in other groups requested me to teach them with me only. It means that students like to study with me more. I think they want me because my teaching is effective somehow. Being loved by students and being effective in teaching can be defined as my success.

What factors do you think are important for success of your career? (Probing Q: Are they factors relating to your personal or are they factors that come from outside?)

I supposed academic background and social background. In addition to educational background , if the community is wide, you can be more advanced in your career for sure . So, I think those two are really important.

#### Organizational

How do you assess the level of organizational support at your workplace? (Probes: What kind of support you have received? How often?) Are you satisfied with it? (Probes: Why? Why not?) Are they contributing to your career success? (Probes: How?)

I think the organization is contributing to career success. It provides all the opportunities within the framework of what they can do for example: career enhancement. So, I feel that if I put in the effort, I'll get as many opportunities as I can.

Do you have career development opportunities? Could you share your experience? (Probe: If yes - what are they? How can these opportunities contribute to your career success? What kind of career development opportunities would you expect from your organization)

The workplace that I am currently working for organizes study tours to foreign countries for career development. They organize presentations at international forums too. I think it gives you a lot of chances to train your career development. I have the opportunity to go to such places, so I get to know what kind of things are done in other countries.

From your point of view, what are the organizational supports existing in your institution; and what needs to be developed? Why?

Sometimes, some staff can do some tasks quickly but there are moments when they have to do them step by step. Because of this, there are often delays in completion. If the employers and employees focus on this point and prepare beforehand, it will be convenient personally and professionally.

In your opinion, what are the important factors from your organization to support the career success of women in HEIS? And why?

One of the important factors is getting Maternity leave for six months. By getting that, I think it is enough to take care of my child. It's a cover for breastfeeding. And then we're allowed to enjoy emergency earned leave as well. These things can surely support the career success of women in HEIS.

Do you think the careers of men and women are equally supported in your current organisation? (Probes: If so, what are the practices? How do they affect career success of women in your organisation?)

There is no gender discrimination. As it is related with teaching, the ratio of girls is higher than the ratio of boys. We must take care of other people's children as well because girls already have a motherly spirit. So, I think they are better at raising young people.

Do you think that your gender, age, experience, education, and/or other personal characteristics affect your career? (If so, how?)

Yes, sometimes. But mostly my performance and appreciation by others can affect my career . The more they appreciate my performance, the more I can work harder. Since I have to put in more effort, I think it affects my satisfaction as well.

Do you think your family support your career progression? Can you please give me an example of family support? (Probes: Who are the important supporters? How do they support your career?)

Yes, I had my career progression during 3 months after the birth of my first child . I had passed the master's exam because I had studied all the time. When I was focusing on my studies, my parents took care of my child, so I was able to continue without worrying.

Do you think your family support your pursuit of a career in higher education? (Probes: How does your family influence your career in higher education?)

When I was with my husband, he supported me all the way especially when I attended the Postgraduate diploma. When I graduated, my mother and sisters supported me as well .. like helping in child raising etc. They didn't criticize me for anything. So, I could just do what I have to do without thinking about anything. I think family support is important for the education pathway. Among some of my friends, they had a baby so that they couldn't continue their career anymore. So, overall , I think family support is important to support your pursuit of a career in higher education.

Closure

Anything to add or suggestion?

As women have to work as well, their work life balance is important. Even if you do a lot of work, it shouldn't be too much at all. I think that if you stick to it and do what you want, you can get what you want in the end. So, those two things are really important. In the past, according to tradition, women stayed at home and men went out to work. Now that, the 21st century has arrived. Women must come forward for sure. A single man earning couldn't be enough anymore. It will be enough in the past, maybe when there was a monogamy system. Now we can't predict anything by default. For example, if I have my own income then, I will be able to continue to stand on my own. If a girl is not a career woman and stays at home, it will be difficult for her to move forward for her family. She will become a burden for her family. For that reason, every girl should study and work in order to be respected by those around her. I would like to suggest about that to everyone. Thanks.

Candidate B

**Interview Date – 18th August 2022**

**Interview Venue – Candidate House Interview**

**Time – 5:00PM**

Can you tell me about yourself? (Gender, Age, marital status, number of family members) Yes, I am 42 years old. I am not married and I am single. There are only three of us in my family . They are my father, my brother and me . My mother is passed away . I have been teaching for about 15 years since I finished school. When I worked abroad, those jobs were not related to teaching. It was only when I returned to Myanmar and I focused more on my teaching career. This is because it is my real passion as well .

How long have you been working in teaching career and in your current institution? (Probing Q: working experience both inside and outside the organisation for teaching career and experience elsewhere)

At the current institution, it will be a year since I worked. Also, I've been teaching as a freelancer for 6 years. I taught IGCSE , Bachelor of business and IT programs, etc. As I have completed degrees in business and IT, I can teach these subjects as well . I have been teaching Diploma classes for over six years too.

Career Success

What does success mean for you?

I think success means doing the work that you really want to do. Well , it's hard to define success in details. As you know that people's wishes are always changing. Ambitious women often have many desires they want to reach . So, I define success as being able to reach every level of my goal.

Can you think of a time when you felt very successful in your career? What led you to feel successful (e.g., Salary)? What was your role (e.g., Position)? What were you doing? Take a moment and describe it in detail.

Yes. When I was 19 years old, I worked at KMD institute. At that time, I had a dream that if I reached a certain age, I would be able to have my own private center. I was able to reach that dream at the age of thirty. My private center was opened in Helden, Yangon city . And also, I have taught computer classes as well. I hired English teacher and also I have taught business

diploma program. I was able to do what I wanted to be in the year I wanted to be. So, I think it was the moment that I believe as the most successful one. In my own private center, I am the highest position. At that time, human resource diplomas and business diplomas were in high demand, so within three years, my center was very successful. The income was very good to a certain extent. It's not a big business, but I think I'm successful because I could do on my own as much as I can. Even though it is not a really big business, I got the reasonable income and all expenses that I invested before. At that time, HR courses are in high demand, so the HR team leader and Master U Aung Tun Thet helped me a lot. They gave tips and supported me about how to do marketing and how to make a private center successful. I was very happy as my community network was very wide and even famous teachers helped me. I organized a lot of seminars that I wish to do. I ran that center for 7 or 8 years.

After 5 years at the center, I no longer felt comfortable working both as the center management and teaching at the same time. I felt that I needed something more. I asked myself questions like whether I really want to be a self-employed person or not. If I'm sure I really want to be, I wonder why I'm not happy when I'm busy. When it comes to finance and administration, I tend to get bored if I do it for a long time. So I was depressed and a bit frustrated. I had to meet with psychologists as well. One of my teacher told me that it is not really your passion. He took personality test and analyze my case from his perspective. So, finally, I found out that what I really enjoy doing is teaching. Because the centers were closed due to the Covid pandemic, when I switched to freelance, I focused on teaching only. I was happy and peaceful at that time. My friends criticized me for focusing more on teaching instead of being a business owner. The title of business owner seems to be impressive but if it is not your passion, you cannot be happy at all. How successful a woman's career depends on her own desire. Some people measure success based on job position and money. In reality, if you're not happy with what you're doing, money and positions can't comfort you. If I say like this, everyone will not believe me. As long as you are doing a job that doesn't match your personality, you can easily get bored. Teaching career is not as financially stable as private center business, but I am happy. So, If I put all of these together, I think that the values for success and how you felt upon them are different from each other.

How satisfied are you with your career in terms of financial stability? (Probe: what are the reasons that you are/are not satisfied?)

As an Individual, financial stability is ok for me because I have no family members in need to support back. I know that for the people who have to support the family back will not be ok to reach financial stability easily. Well, in the past, I used to work as an assistant to a business consultant to gain more experience in teaching. Some of my friends told me that you should work as a consultant. But I didn't do it because I wasn't a real fan of it. You know that, for

some people, though they are good at teaching, they are not really good at doing marketing. As they are not representative, so it is not ok to deal with the clients. So, they cannot earn much money. My teacher helped me to learn more about how to promote this. So, though my income will be a little but I can say that I am financially stable because I don't have many things to spend.

What kind of success do you prefer to achieve in your career? (Probe: In comparison to objective factors, how important are the objective success factors for you?)

Well, it is not related with salary and position only. In my opinion, success means being the highest educated person. For example, I only have got just one master degree so I want to get doctorate degree as well. So reaching my highest degree as a doctorate is the success that I would like to achieve. I might say nothing else but my education goal is the main one. I'd rather have the highest degree than have the highest position. And also, I might say that success is based on my students good reflections, responses based on my efforts and kindness to them.

What factors do you think are important for success of your career? (Probing Q: Are they factors relating to your personal or are they factors that come from outside?)

One thing for sure is that it doesn't come from outside. I don't like being influenced by others. I don't like doing thing when they told me to do. I do it only if I am interested in. I just do what I love. I always focus too much on the field of education. Sometimes my mother asked me when I am going to finish my education process. My grandmother urged me to do business with her shops that she owned. But I didn't accept that. My assumption is that no matter how rich you are, if you focus mainly on selling and doing business, you tend to become a seller that wants only money. I don't want that to happen. So, I don't pay much attention to the business side. I only pay attention to the education side. So, sometimes, my family members teased me that you are the most educated but the humblest one. But I am ok as long as it is my real passion. In summary, it is only related to your personal fundamental.

### Organisational

How do you assess the level of organisational support at your workplace? (Probes: What kind of support you have received? How often?) Are you satisfied with it? (Probes: Why? Why not?) Are they contributing to your career success? (Probes: How?)

The organization I am currently working for focuses more on education and teaching. As a private school, we provide necessary support to teachers. Technical, administrative and refreshments are also included. I really like giving and receiving seasonal gifts for example: Takecare Box, Welcome Back to School gift yeah ... it's a small gift but it's a lot to me. It's like a family warmth and I do love it.

Do you have career development opportunities? Could you share your experience? (Probe: If yes - what are they? How can these opportunities contribute to your career success? What kind of career development opportunities would you expect from your organization)

If you try hard, you can have career opportunities and better environment in an industry. The organization currently I am working is an international school and is connected with foreign programs. So it is convenient if you want to join a program yourself. Though you still need to be strong in English, you can always polish your English skills by taking IELTS classes there. As we are connected with the Overseas organization, if there are trips organized by Overseas, we can have the opportunity for ourselves. It makes everything convenient to do educational programs by connecting with other universities. I believe there will be career development opportunities more and more in the future.

From your point of view, what are the organizational supports existing in your institution; and what needs to be developed? Why?

According to the current situation, the facilities there are quite convenient. But sometimes there are technical problems. I won't go into words about the bad internet because it's happening all over the country. I think parents-teacher meetings need to be done more carefully when evaluating their evaluation in the part of supporting students. After observing their evaluation, we can see small areas of ineffectiveness in the rework section. So, parents, teacher and students need to agree and try to reach the grades they want as close as possible. If you don't do that, there may be misunderstandings with each other. As parents, they may think that they don't care about their children. Parents' general grading of their children must be in parent-teacher meetings by telling and discussing openly. In that way, we can get to where we need to be. I think it can be convenient only if there is three-way satisfaction.

In your opinion, what are the important factors from your organization to support the career success of women in HEIS? And why?

As I just said, I'm single and a bit manly though I am a girl , it's hard to talk about these things for me. However, if I have to answer on behalf of others, I would like to say this. If a person works, there will be psychological needs. Psychological needs of educated women working in education are worse than others. Sometimes they want so much that it is difficult for them to identify what exactly they want.

As I just said, what they value is not money and the position. It is difficult for the organization to satisfy them. Sometimes, when they come to study, you will find that their life situation is already in a situation where everything is already complete. It is more difficult to satisfy someone who is already fulfilled. Therefore, regarding the psychological needs, the thing to fill is to create the environment they want. We should create small situations that they like. For example, they like a relaxed environment and an environment of mutual respect, etc. They like not to touch professional boundaries. So, supports that fill psychological needs are better than other factors. In the case of covid, which has been done before in this school, they gave small gifts like the mask and encouraging messages. It's a very good kind of support. Their value is just that because it shows that you care. If they are very upset because they have children, when they come to work here, if the confusion disappears and they feel calm, they will be happy to work here. That's all I want to say.

Do you think the careers of men and women are equally supported in your current organisation? (Probes: If so, what are the practices? How do they affect career success of women in your organisation?)

Yes. In the current organization, there is no such discrimination. They provide equal support and I am equally treated. They invite the teachers to meet the needs of the school, and the school fulfils the needs of the teachers in return. Sometimes, they select teachers because of a certain program. It is very fair in selecting. The factors that have been selected are the factors that should be. So, in summary, men and women are equally supported in my current organization.

Individual

Do you think that your gender, age, experience, education, and/or other personal characteristics affect your career? (If so, how?)

Yes. There are many influences. For me, this is a dream job. I have to do what I love. With that kind of professional, I can earn money as well. Also, I have expertise in that subject. When these three meet, you can say that this is really your dream job. That's why, this time is the happiest.

Do you think your family support your career progression? Can you please give me an example of family support? (Probes: Who are the important supporters? How do they support your career?)

I must say that my family has given a lot of support. As for my father, he has provided the necessary funds to open a private centre. This is his support that he can do. Also, the path I want to take is different from what they know. It's different, but they didn't bother me anything. Allowing me to sit and do whatever I want can be called their kind of support to me. There are no requests or expectations in return. My brother helped me as well because he was there when I was studying like this. If not, I'll be in trouble. I didn't even have time to pick my own rice because the classes are one after the other. That's why, He prepared for my meals and housework. My brother helped me with finance and management. So, in general, my father and brother are my important supporters.

Do you think your family support your pursuit of a career in higher education? (Probes: How does your family influence your career in higher education?)

Yes. They support me very well but there is absolutely no such influence on me to do what I want.

Closure

Anything to add or suggestion?

First of all, when I answered these interview questions, I answered them as I usually do, so please bear with me if there are any mistakes. The other thing I would like to add is that if a woman enters this field of education, I think there will be many things that she will have to sacrifice and give up. For example, as I can't spend a lot of time with my family and friends, they might resent me. I think I have to accept that my friends will leave me because they don't want me. If education is too business oriented, it will not be good because education is quality service. Education is not just about getting money and giving something back in general to the customer. To teach means to teach a student, from the beginning of the semester to the end of the entire semester, it is like giving quality service and providing long term support. For that,

it is necessary to be educated and to be truly dedicated. More than anything else, you need to be really obsessed with your passion. Also, ethics is very important in the education industry. Since I am a teacher, every word I say is important. Some of them have made some mistakes in their words. In that case, these are the problems that students might have at a certain time. Be very careful because it will cause embarrassment. If you have to teach adults, it will be another form of difficulty because they don't want to change much in terms of learning, it is sometimes difficult to make them flexible as they are conservative and obstinate. So, I would like to say to anyone that you need to take responsibility for your actions and words. I want to say that you need to be enthusiastic about both personality and your performance. All of these can be said to gain a career success. Thanks.

Candidate C

Interview Date – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022 Interview Venue – Fuji Coffee Houser Interview Time – 3:00PM

Can you tell me about yourself? (Gender, Age, marital status, number of family members)

I am 48 years old. I am married and have two children. I have a total of four family members. I am currently working as a teacher.

How long have you been working in teaching career and in your current institution? (Probing Q: working experience both inside and outside the organization for teaching career and experience elsewhere)

I have been teaching for 20 years. I have been working at the current school for 8 years. Previously, I worked as a lecturer at a government university. After resigning, I am currently working as a program head at a private school. I am responsible for academic management and teaching. I am working in a full time position.

Career Success

1. What does success mean for you?

Everyone has different definition of success. Some measure success with money. They define success by how much money you can make. They compare themselves with others. They decide who can make more money. Some people measure success by looking at their position like assistant teacher, teacher, lead teacher, etc. The higher the position, the more successful they are. This is how people normally define success.

For me, success is measured by having a balance in everything. I normally work hard at work. I help my colleagues and each other if I can. We have mutual respect for each other. There are difficulties and problems that we face every day at work. I can solve them best. Teaching and handling students is also an important factor. So, I define success as being able to deal with all kinds of situations without any difficulties. This is the definition of success in the workplace. In the 21st century, success is measured by popularity like “How well can someone contribute to society?” and “How important you are in society?” There are people who are popular in every different industry. We can see that people are measuring success like how someone’s words and the opinions can spread among the public and how much influence he can have on people.

Can you think of a time when you felt very successful in your career? What led you to feel successful (e.g., Salary)? What was your role (e.g., Position)? What were you doing? Take a moment and describe it in detail.

Well, a year ago I think , there are a lot of Covid patients in Myanmar and it is the time of the third wave pandemic . There was some time to switch from in class to online process. That time was really related with change management for me. When everything turned upside down, I told the students not to be discouraged. I had to encourage my staff and coworkers to cheer up. I also had a few salary deductions. I only got 70 percent of the salary amount. At that time, I worked hard for the organization. I had to try a lot. When the schools reopened after Covid, I made sure to do both teaching and consultation so that the students could gain mental strength and study calmly. After the end of Covid, my salary was increased and I was promoted. According to the position, I became the head who controls the program. Therefore, if I think about career success, I would like to highlight these moments. I prefer to succeed when I'm struggling in life rather than when I'm comfortable in life. I would like to say that these moments are my career success because it was an unforgettable moment for me that I struggled with so much.

How satisfied are you with your career in terms of financial stability? (Probe: what are the reasons that you are/are not satisfied?)

In our organization, if it is a full-time position, the employee has to sign an employee contract. Because of that, I don't need to worry about losing job immediately or work stoppages. I've been working for more than 8 years, so it's convenient for me to work. I am still worried about invisible external factors such as politics, economy and diseases, etc. Apart from those factors, I would like to say that I am financially stable.

What kind of success do you prefer to achieve in your career? (Probe: In comparison to objective factors, how important are the objective success factors for you?)

I prefer to have job satisfactions. I think those are important. Job satisfaction is the only way to truly be happy. When you work happily, you can be productive in your work progress. I think I can be successful if I enjoy the career I have chosen. I believe that you will be successful in your work if you enjoy your work, but not just for fun. When you do a job you don't like, the workplace becomes boring, and you will feel upset. I think career success is related to job satisfaction for sure. Another thing is related with financial matter. No matter how much you love your job, if you don't get the expected salary, I don't think you can be successful in the workplace. You should get the position you deserve at the right time. So I think job satisfaction, position, and salary will be important for career success. Family support from behind is important as well.

5. What factors do you think are important for success of your career? (Probing Q: Are they factors relating to your personal or are they factors that come from outside?)

Like I said earlier, it is necessary to compromise with colleagues who do the same work. In my workplace, we work an average of 8 hours. There are 24 hours in a day, so if you sleep for 8 hours, you have to spend 8 hours with your family. But in those 8 hours, going to work and traffic duration are still there. I think that I will be successful in my career only if I am comfortable with people who work in the same business. In my school, it has many opportunities, contribution, annual review and privileges, etc. I think another important factor for business success is family. To be successful, mutual understanding and physical support are really necessary especially when the pregnant women give birth. In addition to taking care of the children, when the spouse has to work, family support is very important. That's why I think both personal factors and outside factors are related.

### Organizational

How do you assess the level of organizational support at your workplace? (Probes: What kind of support you have received? How often?) Are you satisfied with it? (Probes: Why? Why not?) Are they contributing to your career success? (Probes: How?)

For some syllabuses, my organization give supports like bringing more teaching resources and using up to date textbooks. Because of this support, I could teach in accordance with the times without being late in teaching. They gave me 13<sup>th</sup> month bonus for every fiscal year. This is great for employees, and I am very satisfied with this.

Do you have career development opportunities? Could you share your experience? (Probe: If yes - what are they? How can these opportunities contribute to your career success? What kind of career development opportunities would you expect from your organization)

Yes, I do. I have career development opportunities. During the extreme period of Covid, I was able to perform at my best, so my position and salary were increased. We, Humans, live by hope, so I hope that there will be better opportunities in the future as well .

From your point of view, what are the organizational supports existing in your institution; and what needs to be developed? Why?

It seems perfect for me. I don't have any suggestions for that right now.

In your opinion, what are the important factors from your organization to support the career success of women in HEIS? And why?

According to Myanmar culture, whether it is private or public, the number of women teachers are more than the number of male teachers. And also, women have more family cases and other cases than men. If the organization could understand these facts and give more support, it will be better.

Do you think the careers of men and women are equally supported in your current organisation? (Probes: If so, what are the practices? How do they affect career success of women in your organisation?)

There is no discrimination and I have got equal treatment. Because of that, I am happier because there is no discrimination at work.

Do you think that your gender, age, experience, education, and/or other personal characteristics affect your career? (If so, how?)

In addition to educational background, I believe that other characteristics such as problem solving and negotiation will help us to succeed in the workplace.

Do you think your family support your career progression? Can you please give me an example of family support? (Probes: Who are the important supporters? How do they support your career?)

It is impossible to succeed in the workplace without loved ones and those who can understand me. My husband shares the responsibilities of marriage equally with me from preparing the children to go to school to helping with cooking. I wouldn't have become this far without their help.

Do you think your family support your pursuit of a career in higher education? (Probes: How does your family influence your career in higher education?)

My family supports me ... physically... and also mentally... eagerly concerning with thinking about what degree to take next, whether I should read the papers in abroad or not and travel plans , etc. So, as a teacher, I'm not tired and I'm allowed to work fully with the children I love.

Closure

Anything to add or suggestion?

Thinking yourself as man and woman are actually just pronouns. We are the same. Success normally depends on the family that supports and the organization you work and you. There are still places in our culture where women are not treated equally. That's why, I want more girls to have equal opportunities and better job opportunities. Thank you.

Can you tell me about yourself? (Gender, Age, marital status, number of family members)

Yes. My name is Mya Myintzu Tint. I am 27 years old. I am Single. I have a total of 5 family members. They are my mother, my father, my brother, my sister and me .

How long have you been working in teaching career and in your current institution? (Probing Q: working experience both inside and outside the organization for teaching career and experience elsewhere)

I have been working in this kind of career field for about 7 years. Since I started university, I have been teaching as a guide to the juniors and also as a tutor. After finishing school, when I

entered another industry, I continued to work as a freelancer. I have been working at the current institution, \*\*\*, for about two years now.

## Career Success

What does success mean for you?

If I have to talk about success for myself, I might say success is being able to do what I want to do and reaching the target as I wish. If I could have the opportunity to get the degrees that I want and being able to follow the career path that I want is my success.

Can you think of a time when you felt very successful in your career? What led you to feel successful (e.g., Salary)? What was your role (e.g., Position)? What were you doing? Take a moment and describe it in detail.

Yes, I have . When I started working at another college when I graduated, I was teaching and only giving advice for the program. And when I've been working there for about 8 months, the CEO of the college where I'm working at that time started an MBA batch. So, he encouraged me to take part in it from the beginning of drawing the program to the opening of the marketing class. To tell you the truth, I am the type of person who is very afraid to go to the marketing side. I , myself , am a stubborn and contrarian person, so I took the view that marketing is not for me. I removed that fear and decided to do it. The batch I did was able to open the class in full when the class opened. At that time, I felt that I was successful as I challenged myself to do something that I didn't want to do the most, and I succeeded, and it was a moment that I was proud of.

How satisfied are you with your career in terms of financial stability? (Probe: what are the reasons that you are/are not satisfied?)

Currently, I'm not too focused on the financial aspect, but, I have the opportunity to do what I want to do in the industry that I want to do, so I believe that the financial aspect is not important. What I am not satisfied is that not being able to support my parents more than now . Anyway , I try my best to support them , so I'm not too upset.

What kind of success do you prefer to achieve in your career? (Probe: In comparison to objective factors, how important are the objective success factors for you?)

I might say my success for my career is the time my students succeed in their life . I prefer that kind of success. Rather than having too many students, I just want to make every student succeeds.

What factors do you think are important for success of your career? (Probing Q: Are they factors relating to your personal or are they factors that come from outside?)

The main thing is academic background and education background. After that, I think patience is also important.

Organizational

How do you assess the level of organizational support at your workplace? (Probes: What kind of support you have received? How often?) Are you satisfied with it? (Probes: Why? Why not?) Are they contributing to your career success? (Probes: How?)

The organization supports what is needed like resources, books, and other necessary things. It is very convenient for every staff and other people as well.

Do you have career development opportunities? Could you share your experience? (Probe: If yes - what are they? How can these opportunities contribute to your career success? What kind of career development opportunities would you expect from your organization)

Yes, I do . I have the opportunity to learn what I need for my career and they support as much as possible.

From your point of view, what are the organizational supports existing in your institution; and what needs to be developed? Why?

I have no suggestion for that yet .

In your opinion, what are the important factors from your organization to support the career success of women in HEIS? And why?

In this career, the number of women is more than the number of men. Women have more responsibilities than men, for example , being pregnant , etc . I want them to understand and support women more.

Do you think the careers of men and women are equally supported in your current organisation? (Probes: If so, what are the practices? How do they affect career success of women in your organisation?)

There is absolutely no gender discrimination in this organization. The organization supports everyone equally.

Do you think that your gender, age, experience, education, and/or other personal characteristics affect your career? (If so, how?)

If you have the experience and education that matches the work you are doing, you will be able to do the job with confidence and improve your performance.

Do you think your family support your career progression? Can you please give me an example of family support? (Probes: Who are the important supporters? How do they support your career?)

My family is very supportive especially my mother. The main push to work in this industry is because of my mother.

Do you think your family support your pursuit of a career in higher education? (Probes: How does your family influence your career in higher education?)

While doing this career, if I want to continue taking courses that I think are necessary for me, they always think about what I need to do and support me without having to say twice. I don't have to worry even the single thing like doing house chores.

Closure

Anything to add or suggestion?

In this career, I think everything is important. Having good personalities is one of the facts to consider. It is necessary not only to be professional but also to have ethics. It's not enough to be just smart. Speaking of being professional, some of them bring their habits and manners at home into their careers and other activities may become uncomfortable for their coworkers. Your career is not a career that belongs to you alone. So, being professional is very important

.

Candidate E

Can you tell me about yourself? (Gender, Age, marital status, number of family members)

My name is \*\*\*. I am women and 32 years old. There are 4 family members including me. And I am single. I am currently working as a program coordinator in current institution.

How long have you been working in teaching career and in your current institution? (Probing Q: working experience both inside and outside the organization for teaching career and experience elsewhere)

I have been working in this career for about 7 years. I worked as a part-time teaching guide at a private high school for over two years while I was still studying for a bachelor's degree. And now, I have been working at the current organization for more than three year.

Career Success

What does success mean for you?

Whether it's a personal work or a company work, if the income and position are in a reasonable position, if you can support your family members without difficulty, and if you are happy, this can be considered as a success.

Can you think of a time when you felt very successful in your career? What led you to feel successful (e.g., Salary)? What was your role (e.g., Position)? What were you doing? Take a moment and describe it in detail.

When I took my MBA, I was one of the youngest in my class. And later, when I returned to work, I was able to fulfill my responsibilities at work and did my best without being late for my Master's degree. So, I consider this to be a success in both my career and academics.

How satisfied are you with your career in terms of financial stability? (Probe: what are the reasons that you are/are not satisfied?)

In terms of financial stability, as I am not supporting the family alone now, I don't need to worry much about it. I am satisfied with the current situation because I can get direct benefits at work according to my efforts and performance.

What kind of success do you prefer to achieve in your career? (Probe: In comparison to objective factors, how important are the objective success factors for you?)

Better income, position, learning from experience and reaching a better position in the future are the kind of success I prefer to achieve in my career.

What factors do you think are important for success of your career? (Probing Q: Are they factors relating to your personal or are they factors that come from outside?)

I think the factors of education, social, my own efforts and performances are directly proportional to my success.

Organizational

How do you assess the level of organizational support at your workplace? (Probes: What kind of support you have received? How often?) Are you satisfied with it? (Probes: Why? Why not?) Are they contributing to your career success? (Probes: How?)

I surely get a lot of organizational support at my current workplace. I like receiving small gifts during special days and getting donations for personal support. I am totally satisfied it and I feels like the organization is contributing to my career success by supporting their employees (for example: make mental fitness as a priority in our difficult time (covid pandemic and political crisis in Myanmar).

Do you have career development opportunities? Could you share your experience? (Probe: If yes - what are they? How can these opportunities contribute to your career success? What kind of career development opportunities would you expect from your organization)

The work that I am currently doing has a lot of tasks. Since the organization has a few employees, I have to know all the processes at work. I have to learn a lot for my career development. And the organization's growth is rapidly increasing during the difficult time in our country. So I can expect a lot of career development from my organization.

From your point of view, what are the organizational supports existing in your institution; and what needs to be developed? Why?

I think it would be much better if the discussion about underage high schoolers, the rules for them and the teaching approaches , etc , could be more strict. You know... in every area, quality and quantity is always argument. From my opinion, our organization needs to restrict some quality issues to get more education trust.

In your opinion, what are the important factors from your organization to support the career success of women in HEIS? And why?

No gender discrimination and giving women equal rights are the important factors from my organization. In that way, I can manage my work without worrying.

Do you think the careers of men and women are equally supported in your current organisation? (Probes: If so, what are the practices? How do they affect career success of women in your organisation?)

Yes . Zero tolerance for gender discrimination and religion also.

Do you think that your gender, age, experience, education, and/or other personal characteristics affect your career? (If so, how?)

Yes. Since I work in the education industry, my education background has a lot of impact on my career And since I have to deal with a lot of people, personal characteristics are important as well. I think without having strong academic background will directly impact on your career especially in the education industry.

Do you think your family support your career progression? Can you please give me an example of family support? (Probes: Who are the important supporters? How do they support your career?)

My family members are not very involved in my work. Whether it's for work or for education, they do everything they can to support me.

Do you think your family support your pursuit of a career in higher education? (Probes: How does your family influence your career in higher education?)

Yes. When it comes to education, my family at home already provided financial support from beginning to end. And also what I'm doing here now has a lot to do with the degree I took, so it's really supportive for me.

Closure

Anything to add or suggestion?

Women can surely do a lot and make great decisions like others. I hope that if traditional ideas are not a hindrance, we can show more and be free to do so. If that is not the case anymore, I think that women will be in a better position both in career and in personal life. Another suggestion for women is that even if you get married, you should make your own income as a mother. Where you start isn't important. Where you end up is important.

Appendix (D)

Appendix: Sample Email for Prior Contact with School Management Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Dear Principal,

I trust this email reaches you in good health. I am Khin Sandar Maw, a doctoral candidate at the University of Northampton. I am researching the factors that affect the career success of female lecturers in private higher education institutions in Myanmar. The study aims to analyze how different individual and organisational factors influence career success and assess the role of subjective career success as a mediator.

I am contacting you to seek your authorization and assistance in carrying out a survey with the academic faculty of School A. The survey will focus on the elements that contribute to the career success of female academic professionals. The research project will adhere to ethical rules to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

The information obtained from your academic staff will greatly enhance our comprehension of the career success of female instructors in the private sector. I guarantee that the data gathered will only be utilized for study and will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality. All shared information will be anonymised, ensuring that participants cannot be identified in any published reports or presentations.

I want your clearance for the survey to be conducted with your academic staff members. If you need more information or have any issues, feel free to call me at +959444465615.

Thank you for taking our request into consideration. We truly appreciate your cooperation and support.

Best regards,

Khin Sandar Maw DBA candidate

The University of Northampton, located in the United Kingdom.

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