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Abstract Book

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**Career disruptions of women from the perspective of male counterparts:
an explorative investigation in Sri Lanka**

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Patterns of women's lower career advancement all over the world are explained by various factors, sometimes internal factors such as dual role commitments of female workers and sometimes external factors such as discrimination. Despite some positive changes, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions, even though the jobs are female-dominated fields like nursing and teaching. Indeed, several researchers found that there are significant women who make fewer sacrifices for succeeding in their careers than men and men work full time and more overtime than women. Past research widely acknowledged the reasons why women underrepresentation in their careers. However, none of the studies was conducted from the perspective of men. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the career disruptions of women from the perspective of their male counterparts. The information for the present study is derived from semi-structured, in-depth interviews carried out with 15 male employees who are the colleagues of female employees in middle-level Management in Sri Lankan organizations. The purposive sampling technique through the purposeful method was used and participants were selected for data collection as it is a widely used technique in qualitative research to find a suitable person to gather the information. Finally, we analyzed transcripts

and applied coding techniques (inductive coding). Themes were derived from the narrative statements and key aspects from the interviews. The study reveals that male-dominating culture, dual role burdens, cultural beliefs, Lack of role models, biological aspects, life choices, potential threats, and fear, Lack of relationship making, lack of information about careers. The study ensures the factors that were previously exposed by female employees are different from the factors revealed by male counterparts as was mentioned in the previous research. Addressing these issues from the perspective of men will have an impact on managing gender with fairness. Further, this study also suggested that some women's issues should be addressed by male staff to make the work environment gender balance.

Keywords: Life choices, potential threats, Women underrepresentation, male counterparts, Sri Lanka

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