GENDER DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN WORKING LIFE, AND GLASS CEILING

Çalışma Hayatında Kadına Yönelik Cinsiyet Ayrımcılığı ve Cam Tavan

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ABSTRACT

By the learned codes that have been established by the society since past regarding the point of view towards women, women have undertaken some familial duties, or have assumed all the responsibilities of the family. In addition, the reflection of gender discrimination in the work environment has caused women to be stereotyped about their profession. Female managers think that they will get hurt, and will not be respected when they act in a feminine way, and this way of thinking causes women in senior management positions to exhibit masculine behaviors. For these and similar reasons, women face many barriers in reaching to senior management positions. All the obstacles, that prevent women from showing progress, and from being promoted to senior management levels, regardless of their success and merit, and which are not clearly visible or expressed, are known as "glass ceilings". The reason why women encounter glass ceilings in their working life stems out of the male-dominated social understanding in social, political and economic aspects.

In this study, which is conducted by literature review, the factors that prevent women from promoting to senior management positions are discussed from the points of personal concessions given by women, career encouraging elements, the culture of the organization, social factors and behavioral errors. In addition, it has been tried to explain the glass ceiling concept.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling Syndrome, Gender Discrimination, Woman in Management, Organizational Culture

JEL CODE: J16, I24, E24, J24.

ÖZET

Kadınlar küçük yaşlardan itibaren toplum tarafından kadına yönelik bakış açısına bağlı olarak yerleşen öğrenilmiş kodlar ile bir takım aile görevleri yüklenmiş ya da aile konusundaki tüm sorumlulukları üslenmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra toplumdaki cinsiyet ayrımcılığının iş ortamına yansıması kadınların meslekleri hakkında kalıplaşmış önyargılar edinmelerine sebep olmuştur. Kadın yöneticiler kadınsı davranışlar gösterdiklerinde zarar göreceklerini ve kendilerine saygı duyulmayacağını düşünmekte bu düşünce biçimi de üst düzey yönetici pozisyonlarındaki kadınların maskülen davranışlar sergilemesine neden olmaktadır. Bu ve benzeri nedenler sebebiyle kadınlar, üst düzey yönetici pozisyonlarına gelme noktasında birçok engel ile karşılaşmaktadır. Kadınların başarı ve liyakatlerine bakılmaksızın ilerlemesini ve üst yönetim kademelerine yükselmesini engelleyen ve açıkça görülmeyip ifade edilemeyen engellerin tamamı "cam tavan" olarak bilinmektedir. Kadının çalışma hayatında yerinin cam tavanlar olmasının sebebi ise toplumsal, siyasi ve ekonomik yönden erkek egemen toplumsal anlayıştan kaynaklanmaktadır.

Literatür taraması yapılarak gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmada kadınların üst düzey yönetici pozisyonlarına yükselmelerine engel olan etkenler, kadınlar tarafından verilen kişisel ödünler, kariyer cesaretlendirici unsurlar, içinde bulunulan örgütün kültürü, sosyal faktörler ve davranışsal hatalar olarak ele alınmış ve "cam tavan" kavramı açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cam Tavan Sendromu, Cinsiyet Ayrımcılığı, Yönetimde Kadın, Örgüt Kültürü

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, significant progress has been made in achieving equality between women and men. Women's participation in the workforce has increased globally, and women have started to actively involve in working life. By the socio-economic developments experienced, women began to perform the professions that were previously being attributed to men, and they began to undertake leadership positions (Wirth, 2001). However, this increase in the number of women participating in working life has not increased at the same rate in the career progression of women. Although women make up half of the population in the world, women could not take the same place as men in senior management positions (Powell, 1999). The differentiation of professions according to gender has caused women to be pushed in the background in the business world, and not to take place in senior management levels.

The fact that the women are psychologically being torn between their family and their career due to the traditional role attributed to the female gender is making it difficult for them to advance in their career. And the fact that the position of women in the society has been determined as wife and mother is causing the women to be unable to take managerial position due to their own choice, or social pressure. In addition, as the women are being oppressed by the society, they do not consider themselves competent in managerial positions due to lack of self-confidence, and this is one of the most important reasons of why they are unable to undertake such positions (Riger & Galligan, 1980).

"Glass Ceiling", which is a concept related to the deprivation from the opportunities of being promoted to senior management positions in business life, appears before women in many areas such as the public sector, political life, education and academic communities. The aforementioned phenomenon is also observed not only at the top of the organizational pyramid, but also at other managerial levels.

In addition to preventing women from rising hierarchically in their organizations, the glass ceiling includes many malpractices such as gender-based remuneration, deprivation of education and development, and deprivation of communication channels dominated by men (Valcour, 2012). There are many different factors that bring about the glass ceiling. These include social prejudices, professional gender discrimination, and organizational culture.

2. SOCIAL GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender-based inequality is defined by mainstream, or neoclassical economic theorists as "the situation in which individuals with equal productivity are exposed to unequal behavior in the labor market". Uneven behavior is based on observable factors such as race, ethnicity, or gender. In this definition, what is meant by "unequal" behavior is that individuals with equal human capital, business practicum and productivity receive different wages (Wirth, 2001). Gender is a concept that expresses the socially created and learned behaviors and expectations for men and women. It expresses the social expectations regarding which behaviors and activities are appropriate for women and men, and what rights, resources and power both genders have or should have (Reskin & Padavic, 1994). In summary, gender refers to the socially determined roles and responsibilities of men and women, and is a concept related to how society expects us to behave rather than biological differences (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989).

By the Industrial Revolution, women have begun to contribute to the family budget through domestic production, and to make money by selling their labor in order to undertake different social roles, and in order to change their social environment. But in most societies, men still have more responsibility for meeting the family's financial needs, while women have responsibility for family's care. Women, who take full responsibility for the family's care, endeavor for maintaining the balance between their business lives and families (Wirth, 2001). Sometimes the women, who have difficulties in maintaining the referred balance, face a double-sided pressure or conflict. For this reason, women, who do not act under masculine rules and roles, determined by the society, are either being forced to obey the rules, or being excluded from the society (Omar & Davidson, 2001).

The patriarchal social structure, which has been present in almost all the societies, imposes different roles, responsibilities and rights on men and women (Belghiti et al. 2008). As in many countries of the world, the most important duty imposed on women by the society is motherhood and wifehood in our country (Cinamon & Rich, 2005). Because of this role in patriarchal societies, women benefit less from education and work opportunities, their career choice opportunities are limited, and they are unable to have equal

rights and conditions with men in working life (Laufer, 2004). In addition to these, the feminine management style of female employees is criticized by male employees.

3. GLASS CEILING SYNDROME

Legislation and laws promoting gender equality in senior management positions have been adopted in many developed countries. The reason of such regulations is the extremely low percentage of female executives in senior management positions in both public and private sectors. However, all these regulations could not prevent women from being exposed to invisible barriers that are not clearly expressed in the organizations they work (Bagues & Berta, 2007). In management literature, glass ceiling refers to a particular type of gender or racial inequality that can be distinguished from other types of inequality. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) defines glass ceiling as "an invisible but insurmountable obstacle that prevents minorities and women from climbing the institutional ladder no matter what their qualities or achievements are." According to this definition, the glass ceiling reflects a job inequality that cannot be explained by an individual's past "qualifications or achievements" (Cotter et al. 2001).

The concept of "Glass Ceiling" has emerged in the field of social sciences in the recent 20 years (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). The first reference to "Glass Ceiling" in the printed literature was made by Gay Bryant (1984) in the magazine Working Woman, referring to the middle level management where women were getting stuck (Falk & Grizart, 2005; as cited in Goldstein, 2014). In the referred magazine, it was expressed as "Women have reached a certain point - we call your big sister glass ceiling. They are at the top of middle management, and they get stuck there." Immediately thereafter, in the Wall Street Journal's edition of March 24, 1986, this term was introduced into the literature with an article written by Hymowitz and Schellhardt (Boyd, 2008). In the article, the glass ceiling metaphor was defined as "The barriers that are just below the top management in the organizational hierarchy, and which prevent or restrict the rise of women to this level" (Dreher, 2003). "Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America?" "Why do women occupy less senior positions in an organization or company than their male counterparts, and why do women face stricter requirements for promotion?" Glass ceiling has started to attract great attention with such questions (Draulans, 2003). Researchers defined the concept of glass ceiling as women are being included in organizations, but cannot show progress in institutional hierarchy as much as men. In other words, although women are close enough to upper positions, they can rarely reach these positions (Maume, 2004).

The concept came to the fore in the US Congress in 1991, and the same year Martin (Minister of Labor) published the Glass Ceiling Report, which confirmed the existence of invisible artificial barriers preventing women and minorities from advancing to higher-level management positions. The report in question revealed that although women accounted for nearly half of the total workforce, and more than half had master's degree, almost all of the top managers were men and the earnings of female managers were very low compared to male managers (Boyd, 2008).

The published report is important in terms of the institutional approach it brings to the concept, and includes minorities as well as women. Glass Ceiling defines a corporate world in which women's access to senior management levels is blocked by corporate traditions and prejudices. The metaphor of "glass" refers to the invisible barrier that prevents women and minorities from rising above a certain level (Jackson, 2001). In other words, the glass ceiling is an invisible barrier where women can see top management positions, but cannot reach them (Purcell et al. 2010). The existence of the glass ceiling in the workplace, politics or education is essentially a reflection of social and economic gender inequality (Wirth, 2001).

4. FACTORS THAT CAUSE GLASS CEILING SYNDROME

The rate of women participating in the workforce has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of female management positions. However, women are still underrepresented worldwide, especially for senior management positions (Annelies et al. 2002). While women leaders have positive contributions to organizations, they are significantly underrepresented in corporate leadership positions (Glass & Cook, 2015). This situation appears as a glass ceiling in the literature, and is expressed as a very thin and transparent but real obstacle that prevents qualified women from advancing to senior management positions (Hu, Su Yun, 2008). "Ceiling" is an obstacle that prevents upwards movement, "Glass" reflects the invisibility of the obstacle (Jauhar & Lau, 2018).

The elements that make up a glass ceiling for women have different dimensions. Institutional practices, organizational culture, personal compromises, career encouragement, social factors, and behavioral problems can be listed as such dimensions that prevent women from reaching the top (Barragan & Mills, 2011).

4.1. Personal Compromises

Historical and cultural aspects of society have an effect on individuals' sense of self and perception of equal opportunities. Family, on the other hand, is a very important institution for the society, and especially for women (Barragan & Mills, 2011). For this reason, women make great effort to carry out the responsibilities required both by their work and family life, and it is an opinion that having a family for women is an important turning point that affects career progression (Anafarta et al. 2008: Higgins et al.1992). In particular, work-family conflict is a major obstacle to women's efforts for rising to senior management positions (Kargwell, S. 2008). Women are being exposed to pressure due to themselves and the society in terms of the time that they need to devote for their work and family (Yang et al., 2000).

Moreover, the family is deemed as one of the barriers to the advancement of women's career, because women are responsible for the care of children and housework which restricts their capacity to pursue a career path (Jauhar & Lau, 2018). In addition, women are aware of the fact that having children will change family dynamics, and prevent them from reaching top management positions, so some women make compromise by choosing to slow down their careers while parenting (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). With these concessions, as the time spent at the workplace becomes shorter, working with low wages, interruption of social rights, and as a result of all these, the cease of career progression negatively affects the place of women in the business world (İsmail & İbrahim, 2008). In a study conducted in Mexico, it was found out that the informal and part-time employment of women in low productivity sectors caused lower income from work and interruption of their social rights (Henry & Fraga, 2019).

In a study conducted on women pursuing academic careers in an Oncology Clinic in England, it was revealed that women think that the cost of academic life is high, and that they do not prefer it due to reasons such as childcare, travel, time pressure, publication conditions etc. (Finn, 2017).

By the study of Özenç (2019) performed with 304 female employees working in the aviation and security business lines, it was revealed that the participants' responsibilities for their families did not have a negative effect on their business life, and did not prevent them from being promoted to an executive position, and being a mother, wife, or employee did not cause pressure and role conflicts for them.

4.2. Behavioral Errors

Is it possible for women to have senior management positions without losing their feminine attitude, and feminine style of speaking?

The answer to this question was given by numerous recent studies on organizational behavior. The literature shows that there is little personality or behavioral difference between male and female managers. It was found out that as women move up the organizational hierarchy, it becomes so important for them to identify themselves with the male managerial success model, and that they even reject a few valuable feminine managerial characteristics (Grant, 1988).

This is because women are constantly worried about that they will not be taken seriously, heard, or move up the career ladder unless they suppress their gender and exhibit masculine behavior. For this reason, women make behavioral mistakes thinking that they need to act in a masculine way in order to be accepted as good managers (Lindsay and Pasquali, 1993).

4.3. Organizational Culture

Most studies on glass ceilings indicate that organizational culture is the primary obstacle to women's career development (Vianen et al. 2002). The masculine organizational culture prevents women from advancing to higher positions (Choi and Park, 2014). Because the shaping of organizational culture mainly by men contributes to the inequality between women and men, and also constitutes one of the basic elements of the glass ceiling (Bajdo and Dickson, 2001; Vianen et al. 2002).

In the study conducted by Afza and Newaz (2008), five factors, responsible for the glass ceiling effects that limit women's career opportunities and career progression at a certain stage, were examined. Considering

the results of the study, it was found that organizational culture and management perception are the most important determinants of the glass ceiling.

In organizations where the masculine organizational culture is dominant, the further women climb the ladder of the organization, the higher the risk of encountering more obstacles (Lathabhavan & Balasubramanian, 2017). However, in the masculine organizational culture, male managers generally think that their female subordinates perform poorly, and that their performance are lower (Sahoo and Lenka, 2016).

The inequality between men and women in masculine organizations also manifests itself in different ways. For instance, a female manager may lose her right of being promoted in the face of a male colleague having less experience, and a talented female manager may encounter a reduced rank after maternity leave (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000). In organizations, men have informal business relationships called "old-boy networks", and it has been revealed that women have difficulty in involving in these communication environments dominated by men (Baumgartner and Schneider, 2010). In masculine organizations, women have to prove their abilities, and outperform men in order to reach the same levels as men (Gorman, 2006).

4.4. Career Encouragers

Mentors are high-level, experienced, knowledgeable, and senior employees who often provide support, and who help employees in moving up the career ladder (Raabe and Beehr, 2003).

Although the mentoring relationship is important for male employees, it is deemed more necessary especially for female managers, because female managers who get mentor support can overcome the individual and organizational barriers more easily (Cross and Linehan, 2006). Due to the scarcity of women working in senior executive positions, junior female employees cannot benefit from professional guidance. When these female employees are deprived of a talented mentor, they may feel worthless, and develop intentions for resignment (Sahoo and Lenka, 2016).

In addition, women, who can get support from their relatives to cope with the difficulties in their career journeys, are better motivated in achieving success in their current career. Strong relationships and solidarity among family members implies greater opportunities for women having children on the path to career development. In a study conducted, it was revealed that women, who get support from their families and spouses, find significant opportunities in their career steps (Akpınar-Sposito, 2013).

4.5. Social Factors

Social roles and social factors play an important role in preventing women from advancing in the career ladder (Kiaye and Singh, 2013). Cultural prejudices, that perceive women as suitable for certain roles, are deeply rooted in society. The first of these cultural prejudices is that men are leaders, and women are followers who support them. Another is that women are suitable for care services, housekeeping, secretary and similar professions. Such stereotypes leave indelible marks on people's mentality (Sahoo and Lenka, 2016).

Social attitudes and gender inequality in education and training have greatly contributed to occupational discrimination, and therefore men and women have had to turn to different jobs and professions. This circumstance is called "horizontal separation". Even in Finland, which is one of the countries that provides significant social support for gender equality, only 20% of women work in professions where there is a balanced male and female ratio (Carnavale and Stone, 1994).

In a study conducted by the International Labor Organization, it was noted that occupations dominated by men are seven times more than occupations dominated by women (Wirth, 2001). In the United States, only 6.6% of women was working full-time in male-dominated professions in 2017 (Hegewisch and Williams, 2018).

Compared to men, women are claimed to lack qualities such as ambition and confidence, as well as skills such as assertiveness and influence, and it is also said that women do not have the necessary experience or training for being able to lead (Singh and Terjesen, 2008). There are stereotypes regarding that women do not have enough enthusiasm for being successful in the business world, and that they are not suitable for senior management positions, because they are very emotional and do not show aggression (Omran et al.2015). However, in addition to the fact that women have higher academic qualifications than men on

average, women's abilities and behaviors, socialization skills and attitudes do not in any way make women inadequate in undertaking leadership positions (Kiaye and Singh, 2013).

4.6. Barriers Imposed by Male Managers

The most important obstacle imposed by male managers is the prejudices regarding that women cannot be successful in senior management. It is thought that women will not be sufficient in terms of personality and determination in management levels. Another obstacle is that male managers have difficulty in communicating with women, and that men want to hold the power in their own hands (Schneer and Reithman, 2002).

4.7. Barriers Imposed by Female Managers

The idea of female managers for being the only woman in their current position causes them not to want their fellows to come to senior management positions. Therefore, career competition occurring among women leads to jealousy and envy (Johns, 2013).

5. STRATEGIES FOR BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING SYNDROME

The most important way for women in overcoming the glass ceiling obstacle, that they are being exposed to due to domestic responsibility, social prejudices, lack of equality of opportunity, sexual stereotypes and similar reasons, is having self-confidence. Although a social and organizational effort is required for breaking the glass ceiling, one must first develop self-confidence in order to deal with this problem. Because as the individual's self-confidence increases, the perspective of the people around her and of the institution she works for will begin to change. In a study conducted in USA, the strategies that women should adopt for breaking the glass ceiling syndrome were determined as follows (Knutson & Schmidgall, 1999):

Strategy of Getting University Education and Occupational Education: University education, and occupational education are important factors for a person's progress in her/his professional career. In terms of women, in order to overcome the glass ceiling, first they need to get a good education, and prove that they deserve top positions (Lewis and Fagenson, 1995: 50-53).

Strategy of Participating in Career Development Programs: Practices such as providing vocational training for female employees, and assigning special responsibilities are some of the career development programs. These programs facilitate the transition and adaptation of women to the management stage.

Strategy of Getting Help from the Mentor: The basis of the strategy of getting help from the mentor is to benefit from their experiences within the framework of the master-apprentice relationship. The essence of this process is the master's training and guidance. Some of the characteristics of the mentor relationship include behaviors such as being active, aiming to help, involving in teaching and learning, and guiding sincerely.
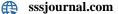
Family-Friendly and Flexible Workplace Model: Measures (flexible working hours, childcare support practices etc.) for ensuring women with high management skills in organizations benefit from these facilities and break the glass ceiling should be developed.

Strategy of Developing Social Relations: Developing social relations within the company or within the business life facilitates the adaptation of women to the business world dominated by men. Thanks to these developing relationships, women are able to advance their careers more easily by becoming aware of accepted behavior and styles (Davidson and Burke, 1994).

For public employees, the state should initiate necessary practices for matters such as childcare, pregnancy and elderly care. In addition, private companies also need to establish regulations that will provide convenience for women, especially regarding flexible working hours (Knutson and Raymond, 1999: 64-75).

To sum up; in terms of personnel rights and responsibilities, governments should regulate legal structures and mechanisms for eliminating gender discrimination, implement equal labor laws, and determine appropriate plans and programs for businesses and institutions. Organizations should demonstrate equal opportunities and approaches for women in issues such as recruitment and promotion, and should provide

consultancy for enabling women to develop and advance their professional skills (Fagenson and Horowitz, 1985).

6. RESULT

Nowadays, with the increasing importance of human capital, organizations need to make positive discrimination for women in order to benefit from the talents of female employees, and create an environment in which women can balance their family and business lives. The inability of women in taking up top management positions is one of the serious obstacles for the development of countries. Because the presence of women in management positions increases productivity through the increase of creativity and innovation, and improves the corporate-country image. In addition, women are in a different position in business life by their strong hunches, developed feelings of empathy, easy communication skills, and proneness to compromise and patience. While these characteristics of women can provide great advantages in the business world, unfortunately, this opportunity is not being given to many women in the whole world.

The most important way for women to overcome the glass ceiling obstacle, that they are exposed to due to domestic responsibility, social prejudices, lack of equality of opportunity, sexual stereotypes and so on, is having self-confidence. Although a social and organizational effort is required for breaking the glass ceiling, one must first develop self-confidence for dealing with this problem. Because as the individual's self-confidence increases, the perspective of the people around her, and of the institution she works for will begin to change.

Even if women and men have the same human capital traits, it seems difficult for women to enjoy vertical mobility in power hierarchies, and the benefits of social capital unless the barriers that make up the glass ceiling are removed. By globalization, it is important to include women in the administration in order to democratize the countries more, in order to achieve a sustainable development, and in order to create an organization that respects human rights and that can well use the added value of differences (Fagenson, 1990).

The understanding of gender continues to be a major obstacle in terms of women's participation in the workforce in the world. Therefore, for the employment of women, education should be provided for women and especially for girls, and policies should be strengthened. In addition, internationally accepted laws on gender equality must be practiced. States and governments need to take the necessary initiatives, and make the necessary changes in laws, and they need to increase the rate of women working at management levels, and create sustainable policies to overcome negative perspectives regarding women (Parsons and Associates, 1989).

It is important to express that the glass ceiling syndrome is being perceived as a problem not only at an enterprise or institutional level, but also at a social level. Unless all stakeholders act jointly, and political action is taken, it seems that it is impossible to take an important step. Gender discrimination is not just the concern of the discriminated group, it should be addressed as a problem of the whole society.

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