



Kilidi Kırmak

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

**For a business world that
stands against any kind of
discrimination, negative or
positive...**



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Preface



We now live in a society where women's social, political and economic roles are being redefined. Both in Turkey and other parts of the world we now see more women than ever taking more active roles in business life and being promoted to decision-maker positions. There are now more women on executive boards. The higher the number of women who break the glass ceiling, the higher the female presence is on executive boards. It is safe to call it a revolution of the mind but...

What does it cost for women to break the glass ceiling and write the board's playbook? This research explains how female managers 'succeed' in overcoming the 'myths' they are made to face and the barriers and obstacles which come their way or are put there intentionally. It especially contains a vivid and earnest account of the many struggles and hardships faced by Turkish female employees when they are promoted to managerial positions. To put it briefly, female managers have to deal with many social prejudices in the 'male world of business'. Obstacles arising when women are promoted to managerial roles may destroy their motivation or such obstacles mean women find themselves having to show more effort to keep their positions.

A proud promoter of a company culture based on gender equality, KPMG is delighted to present this report which contains valuable insights into demystifying the 'myths' that surround women and workplace success through highlighting gender issues, making appropriate diagnoses and offering solutions and, most importantly, championing the same open-minded mindset towards women that the company itself employs.

The research aims to go beyond the oft-repeated platitudes trotted out in the context of gender equality by offering a wider perspective on the issue. All research data is supported numerically. The interviews we held with male and female C-level executives of large companies in Turkey shed light on how things work on company management boards.

For this reason, we have given special emphasis to the open discussion of reasons contributing to the success of female managers. We believe that the stories of these female managers who have been able to break the glass ceiling will inspire other female workers. Highlighting the support provided to them as well as the hurdles that are put in their way will go a long way towards getting rid of the social stereotypes that exist in the business world.

The report shows that women have to change both their own points of view and that of society as a whole to be able to get promoted to managerial positions. While legal regulations that make it easier for women to survive in the business world are inadequate, existing laws are not fully implemented. Because the real problem lies within the mentality rather than the laws...

In short, a change of mentality is needed to break the ceiling. We caught glimpses of such change during the journey we undertook to prepare this research.

We wish to thank Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği, their President Hande Yaşargil and Deputy President Burçak Güven, as well as other valuable company managers for their contributions to this research project.

We hope this research will be part of the change in itself.

Murat Alsan
Chairman, KPMG Turkey

Introduction



During the various stages involved in the 'Cracking the code' research conducted across KPMG's global network, we have had the chance to discuss what Turkish women trying to claw their way up the company ranks go through. We have seen that the obstacles which come their way or are put there intentionally have not changed over 30 years and that problems still exist in different guises. Thirty years means an entire generation! While conducting the Turkish side of the research, our aim was that the next generation would not be left having to question women's maternity rights, children's nursery problems, or the unfairness in salaries between genders for another 30 years. As a company with a proud track record of a progressive and enlightened attitude towards gender equality, as exemplified by its open-minded mentality and workplace practices aimed at providing an environment where women are treated in their own right and not given any negative or positive treatment, our wish is that KPMG's example will become more widespread in the world of business.

Let's look at the figures in Turkey upon which the research rests. According to recent data released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the employment rate of women aged 15 and over in 2015 was 27.5%, while that of men was 65%... When compared with Europe, we see the highest rate of female employment in Sweden with 74%, while the lowest rate is in Greece with 42.5%. On the other hand, the average female employment rate of the EU states is 60.4%. The male employment rate in Europe is 70.8%. According to the results of the household labor survey, the male labor force participation rate is 71.6%, while that of women is 31.5%. As the educational level of women increases, so does their participation in the labor force. While the labor force participation rate of female high school graduates is 32.7%, that of women with a university degree lies at 71.6%.

Another piece of data we need to look at is The Global Gender Gap Report Index, published annually by the World Economic Forum. In the 2016 report, Turkey ranks 130th among other 144 countries. The report emphasizes that Turkey is making progress on gender inequality in estimated income and the availability of professional and technical work for women. However, the report also reveals the widening payment gap between men and women. Moreover, when the period of time spent in unpaid work is taken into consideration, Turkey ranks first in gender inequality. In this category, Turkey is followed by Mexico, India, Portugal and Italy.

According to ILO data, the Turkish economy provided jobs for 2,160,000 women with an increase of 77% in regular paying jobs between 2007 and 2015. Even though Turkey has experienced a significant increase in female employment rates, it is difficult to say that the same has been achieved with middle and upper level female managers. While 18% of working women in 2007 were middle and top level managers, the same figure dropped to 14% in 2015.

The decline is accounted for by women assuming both work and household responsibilities against a backdrop of increasing female employment. In other words, women who cannot get adequate support for their household responsibilities during their career journeys simply continue in the same positions, rather than setting their sights on higher roles.

We hope this research, which gives us the message in summary that we urgently need to destroy glass ceilings of the mind, will lead the way in bringing down the obstacles that hold women back in the world of business.

Nesrin Tuncer

KPMG Turkey
Head of Audit,
Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği
Supervisory Board Member

Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği (Woman on Board)



With this research, we understood once again that there are some padlocks deep in the minds of men, women and children in the world, as well as our country, whose keys have been thrown into the sea many years ago. While it devolves upon us as the enlightened generation to stamp out those misconceptions and make way for progress, we are also equally aware that such progress can only be achieved by ensuring that the topic of gender equality features prominently in public discussions, company boardrooms, academic circles and child rearing families. It is unrealistic to assume that gender equality may thrive independently of social factors in the insulated world of company boardrooms; therefore, what we need are holistic solutions to raise social awareness of gender equality. I want to congratulate the KPMG Turkey leaders, who participate in our program as mentors and mentees, for their valuable contributions to this research which will help lay out the path to better opportunities for women and break the glass ceiling.

In these parlous times where nothing is stable and the paradigms that define us are constantly shifting, development, growth, sustainability and prosperity can only be achieved through collective effort. Countries and institutions must make it a matter of priority to provide a work-life balance for their citizens, remove the stereotypes that stand in the way of progress, reintegrate neglected skills into production and promote equal rights for men and women; otherwise, it will be children losing out and not women.

But I believe that future steps to be taken by the institutions led by the mentors and mentees of this program will help further cement gender equality as enshrined in the founding of our nation and pass it down to future generations.

Hande Yaşargil

**Mentor Consulting Managing Partner,
President of Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın
Derneği**



Matters such as women's role in society and the workplace and their access to decision-making roles carry unequivocal implications for the society and world we live in, our common past as human beings and our future and the heritage we will leave to our children. We therefore need society as a whole to take this matter seriously and actively participate in discussions concerning gender equality. The world as we know it is no longer a bed of roses where all is bliss and splendor and if current trends continue, our sole heritage to our children will be pain and strife. We no longer need the news to tell us that women's active participation in society and the world of business as decision makers will drive the economy forward, raise the profit margins and boost the stock markets in order to justify equal rights for women.

Science tells us that women have a different set of values to men, endowed

with a holistic vision that makes them much more sensitive to social and environmental issues. We also know that women are less prone to selfish individualism, thinking themselves part of the web of human life. However, it is also true that they need to be much more well-educated than their male counterparts to land high paying jobs or pursue a political career. So, as things stand, is it not obvious where we should turn to equip our leaders with the skills and competencies they need to find solutions to the problems facing us today in the modern world and the world of business? If we can't see the obvious here, then it is akin to blindness with potentially grave consequences for the humanity...

Burçak Güven

**Forbes Editor-in-Chief,
Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği
Deputy President**

Purpose and significance of the research

The research examines upper and middle level female managers, their career goals and paths, success factors in business life, the distribution of the positions they hold and what sort of problems employed female managers face in their working lives. A survey of male and female managers was conducted to investigate how career, success and happiness are perceived differently by men and women. On the other hand, in-depth interviews with female managers helped us investigate what sort of

problems women in managerial positions face, whether they suffer any sort of discrimination in their career journeys, and whether the conflict of roles they find themselves in has a negative impact on their careers, while also shedding light on the support mechanisms they use or the obstacles they face during their pursuit of managerial roles. We aimed at creating strategies to stamp out inequality in the workplace by studying examples of women who have successfully broken the glass ceiling.

The research method

KPMG Turkey conducted a study under the project 'Kilidi Kırarak - Breaking the Glass Ceiling' to reveal how women occupying middle and senior level positions in corporate companies are managing their careers and crack the code of how women can be successful in the workplace. The study was carried out in three stages using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Quantitative research, the first phase, was conducted by ERA Research & Consultancy using an online questionnaire. This field work consisted of 235 middle and senior managers answering the survey that was open from February 18, 2016 until April 17, 2016. The survey, conducted with 150 female and 85 male managers, tried to reveal how people working in corporate companies manage their careers.

Qualitative research, the second phase of the research, was conducted by Galatasaray University Sociology Department Instructor Assoc. Prof. Feyza Ak Akyol. In this part of the research, face-to-face in-depth interviews containing open-ended questions were conducted with female managers of companies of various sizes and from various sectors in Istanbul. Ten female managers participated in the interviews which lasted from March until May 2016.

The third and final phase sought answers to the key questions identified during the initial two phases of the research. We tried to find the key to 'breaking the glass ceiling' in the workplace by conducting open face-to-face interviews with women and men sitting on company boards. The following discussed 'women in the workplace' with us, throwing light on issues and making valuable suggestions for improvement;

Borusan Holding CEO **Agah Uğur**

TAT Gıda General Manager **Arzu Aslan Kesimer**

Tuborg CEO **Damla Birol**

IBM Turkey General Manager **Defne Tozan**

Oxford University CRIC (Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict), Istanbul University Faculty of Political Sciences, Advisory Board Member for Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği

Prof. Dr. Deniz Ülke Arboğan

Eczacıbaşı Healthcare Division EVP **Elif Çelik**

KVK CEO **Muzaffer Akpınar**

Cardtek Regional Sales & Marketing EMEA EVP **Sinem Altuncu**

Boyner Holding Board Member **Ümit Boyner**

Gender equality

Gender refers to the natural and biological differences between men and women, while gender describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine referring to the cultural and socially-constructed differences between men and women. Gender refers to the role of men and women in society or an individual's concept of themselves (gender identity). How an individual is expected to behave, think and act is dictated by the society in which he or she lives.

Gender is an all pervasive phenomenon as our self-perception, identity, liberties, rights and the freedom and opportunities we enjoy are inextricably linked with how others perceive us and what privileges they deem us worthy of. There is now an almost indisputable consensus in the modern world that economic and social progress cannot be achieved without the elimination of gender inequality.

The United Nations defines gender equality as equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for men and women. Gender equality refers to men and women enjoying equal social and economic rights without facing any sort of discrimination due to their gender, sexual identity or orientation.

It is about equal visibility for the women and men in all spheres of public and private life where both women and men have equal responsibilities, opportunities and freedoms. The term also denotes equal distribution of resources between both women and men. In Europe, equality in real terms is still a far away, despite improvements in the legal status of women in recent years. Gender discrimination still exists in many aspects of our lives despite progress with regards to access to education, participation in the labor force and political representation, with men still holding onto their traditional roles, while women are still restricted from fighting for their rights and seeking more representation.

Agah Uğur
CEO, Borusan Holding



“ In today's world, gender inequality has become one of the most important items on the global agenda. According to the report of the World Economic Forum, inequality dividing women and men with regards to employment and equal opportunities is at its lowest level since 2008, at 59%. However, only a measly 3% of Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs. According to the predictions of experts, we will have to wait until 2186 to see gender inequality completely disappear. All data points in the direction of swift measures to eliminate all traces of inequality. And many prominent global figures are making similar calls. ”

Promoting gender equality

A nation's welfare and happiness depends as much on economic, social and cultural factors as it does on the education of its citizens. Knowledge and skills are added values that contribute to a nation's socio-economic and cultural progress. Today, we are all living in a knowledgeable society and increasing competition makes the matter of providing quality education more important than ever before. Encouraging more women to pursue higher education will not only contribute to their self-development and prosperity, it will also increase the country's economic potential.

Besides this, the education system also plays an important role in overcoming gender stereotypes.

Female employment is the key to achieving economic independence and greater equality between women and men. Increasing women's employment rate in Turkey is a prerequisite for achieving full employment, sustainable economic and social progress. These goals can only be achieved through balanced growth in all regions and increased employment of women.

Participation of women in the labor force

The issues surrounding female employment can be summarized as follows:

- As the educational level of women increases, so does their participation in the labor force. Thus, there is a need for extra training programs aside from regular education to develop women's professional skills and competencies.
- There is no legislation that mandates discrimination with regards to women's employment or continuing work once they have been employed. However, there are some cases of certain jobs and occupations that are not socially considered as fit for women, of unfair distribution of duties, of companies putting women first when it comes to laying off staff during periods of economic slowdown and of low-paying illegal jobs that further aggravate gender inequalities.
- It still remains the case that women are directed towards roles and careers traditionally seen as female occupations which pay much less than male occupations due to the socially accepted notion that there are 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs'. Temporary low-paying jobs mainly reserved for women lead to social and economic insecurity.
- The industries where cheap female labor is exploited the most are those such as textiles, food, fashion, and tobacco. However, when compared to the agricultural sector, the female labor force in these sectors is quite low.
- Women working in the agricultural sector are pushed outside the system of legal employment since they are earning barely or no income with their unwaged family worker positions despite there being no legal obstacles barring them from legal employment.
- The underlying reason why most women's careers are short-lived and/or they are not able to utilize their full potential toward furthering their career goals is the difficulty they face with regards to striking a balance between home and work life. Women should be allowed to share their child, elderly or patient care responsibilities with their husbands, and/or the government should make arrangements to relieve the burden on their shoulders. However, social support institutions such as kindergardens and day nurseries are still nowhere near enough to meet the requirements.

Research findings

Career progress

Although career is defined as the sum of the jobs that one holds over a lifetime, the concept of career has a broader meaning. A person's career is important for a variety of reasons. Career helps one build an identity for him/herself and acquire social status. Career gives us focus and meaning. Entailing communication one way or another, all occupations have a social side to them. Career keeps us on track to meet all our personal and professional goals.

'Cultural Capital' as the cornerstone of career

There has been a notable increase in the number of women receiving education in the last 50 years which directly correlates with their participation in the labor force. The answer to the question as to why there are so few women on management boards can be found in the number of girls attending school.

The concept 'cultural capital' coined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu signifies how social inequality is reproduced through certain state apparatuses (such as schools). Cultural capital can be defined as the aggregate of high culture and skills acquired through education. Education is not solely acquired at school, it also includes the transmission of values through family. Having acknowledged both aspects of education, it should be noted that through schools as organizational structures, educational background

and strata can be disseminated and reproduced.

Almost all the female managers interviewed in the second stage of the qualitative research think that being a woman does not prevent someone from rising through the ranks, despite deep-seated prejudices around gender in society. This is because women who hold senior executive positions have a high level of cultural capital comprising of two components, educational background and lifestyle. They are all graduates of top-tier high schools or colleges, the best the nation has to offer, or have bachelor's or master's degrees from respectable overseas institutions. Rather than being a mere coincidence, these women's glowing credentials in education can be traced back to their own parents' successful careers. Family histories can be viewed in the following table:

Family history of female managers interviewed

	Position	Family history
K1	General Manager, Chairman of the Board	A pilot father, a committed mother who is a dominant character despite being a housewife, an intelligent elder brother who is a graduate of electrical and electronic engineering
K2	Research Center Director	Father an admiral, mother a housewife, an elder sister who is a graduate of business administration
K3	Founding Partner	Father a retired army officer, mother a crown solicitor
K4	Founding Manager	Mother and father both math teachers, sister a doctor
K5	Head of Strategy	Mother and father both MBA graduates, grandmother a university lecturer, grandfather an engineer
K6	Executive Vice President	Mother a housewife, father a civil engineer
K7	CEO	Mother and father both retired teachers
K8	Marketing Deputy General Manager	Mother a housewife, father a manufacturer of carpenter machines
K9	Founding General Manager	Father a professor, mother a lawyer
K 10	Human Resources Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board	A 'visionary' father

Individuals with a high level of cultural capital that involves having an educational background and lifestyle are more likely to foresee in advance the changes unfolding around them and be more assertive about the kind of life they want to lead. Therefore, an individual with a good deal of cultural capital is more likely to find herself in a distinguished position in society, having a clear advantage over others with a less privileged background.

By looking at the things to which a person attributes the greatest significance in his/her life, one may draw valuable inferences about the extent and form in which cultural capital has made a difference in that person's life.

The self-confidence generated by such distinction is reflected highly in interviews conducted with the managers.

*"In terms of my career, I've been lucky. I didn't need to send off applications all over the place."
(K4, 54-years-old)*

*"I was a good student... My job interview went really well... not because I was the best there, but I was one of the best... In hindsight, it looks like a decision made unintentionally, but I've always known better what not to do than what to do in life."
(K1, 51-years-old)*

*"Because I was already a Vice Chairman at the tender age of 30. I was General Manager by the time I was 35... But, I'm a pragmatic person in many aspects, always choosing to look at things from the standpoint of 'well this is how our lives are and they have to keep pace with it' rather than a more pessimistic view where you believe life only throws at you obstacles and challenges to work your way through. So that makes me less stressful about things... Yes, I always think things through."
(K2, 47-years-old)*



Career, children, career

Household responsibilities feature so prominently in working women's lives that most of the time women are encouraged to give up their careers to create more time for their domestic duties. When the female managers were asked about

'the most significant life-changing event in their lives' during the quantitative phase of the research, they all gave different responses. But, 'having children' was the most frequent response we got from the respondents.

Prof.Dr.Deniz Ülke Arıboğan
Oxford University CRIC, Istanbul
University Faculty of Political Sciences



“ It is very important to work with the right strategy and vision without getting lazy. Resources and means are limited, there is no need to waste. In that respect, it is necessary to set out your targets clearly and then determine a suitable strategy to achieve them. The importance of using your time efficiently can never be overstated. I believe no woman should

brush aside her domestic and maternal responsibilities for the sake of pursuing a career. It's pretty much impossible to make a successful business figure out of an unhappy woman. At first, women have to learn how to be happy. They should then start investing in their intellectual and physical skills to improve themselves and regain their confidence. ”

That greatest life-changing event

What has been that life-changing event in your life, if any? What impact did that change have on your career?

Becoming a mother: It brought balance to my life, gave me a sense of perspective. Quitting my job and setting up my own company: It brought with it a sense of freedom, put me on the path to success and took down my barriers.

Kids: Having kids of my own left me having to put the brakes on my fast-paced career journey.

Being unemployed for a while. I felt it was time I looked at things from a different perspective.

I can describe being a mom as the most transformative experience in my life. It left me having to postpone my career plans by one or two years. I was working for my previous employer when I took maternity leave and I wasn't promoted despite the fact that I had worked enough years there to earn a promotion. So I resigned and started working here.

The biggest change came when I decided to change my perspective on things. Learning to think in new ways and creating something new out of my unique knowledge and experiences changed my entire career.

Deciding to resign as General Manager. Resigning opened up a whole new world of opportunities, allowing me to turn over a new leaf in my life.

Because, in general, when women venture out into the world of business, it is often at the expense of their familial duties and responsibilities. This in turn diminishes the appeal of working life for women on the bottom rung of the career ladder. As for female managers, that's a totally different story.

If we were to describe in general terms the survey participants, they are high-ranking female managers who had already risen in their careers before or around the time they got married, having children at a later period in their lives. For these women, having children had an equally significant impact on their lives but their dedication to their career saw them returning to the rough and tumble of the business world.

One of the female managers puts it this way:

"Considering the extra workload that comes with having children coupled with the demands of working life... Working in retail you really need to get used to the hectic nature of the business. I felt caught between a rock and a hard place, I didn't want to give up my children or my career. I breastfed both of them for 6 months. Looking back on things now, I don't have the slightest idea how I made it all happen. But somehow I did. There were certainly times where I was forced to make sacrifices, dealing with both the stores and office work at the same time." (K1, 51-years-old)

Another female manager speaks with great confidence about how she struck a balance between family and work life:

"I went back to work a month after I gave birth... My boss didn't put me under any pressure to. One month after giving birth, my line manager gave me a call and said 'We really miss you and need you back here.' At the end of the day, we are a team of 4-5. So, I came up with a solution. The office was right across from the street where I lived. I used to breastfeed my child first thing in the morning and my mom was staying with us at that time. I'd go back home at lunchtime for another breastfeed and tried not to get too late leaving work. I'd started working part-time anyway. My initial intention was to get on with the business of childbirth and wait until my child had grown up a bit before going back to work. This was on my mind after 2-3 months. Having children is really great but work life is something entirely different. I just had a great desire to do decent, honest work and I think I struck a great balance between work and home life." (K8, 51-years-old)

Career and the sense of corporate belonging

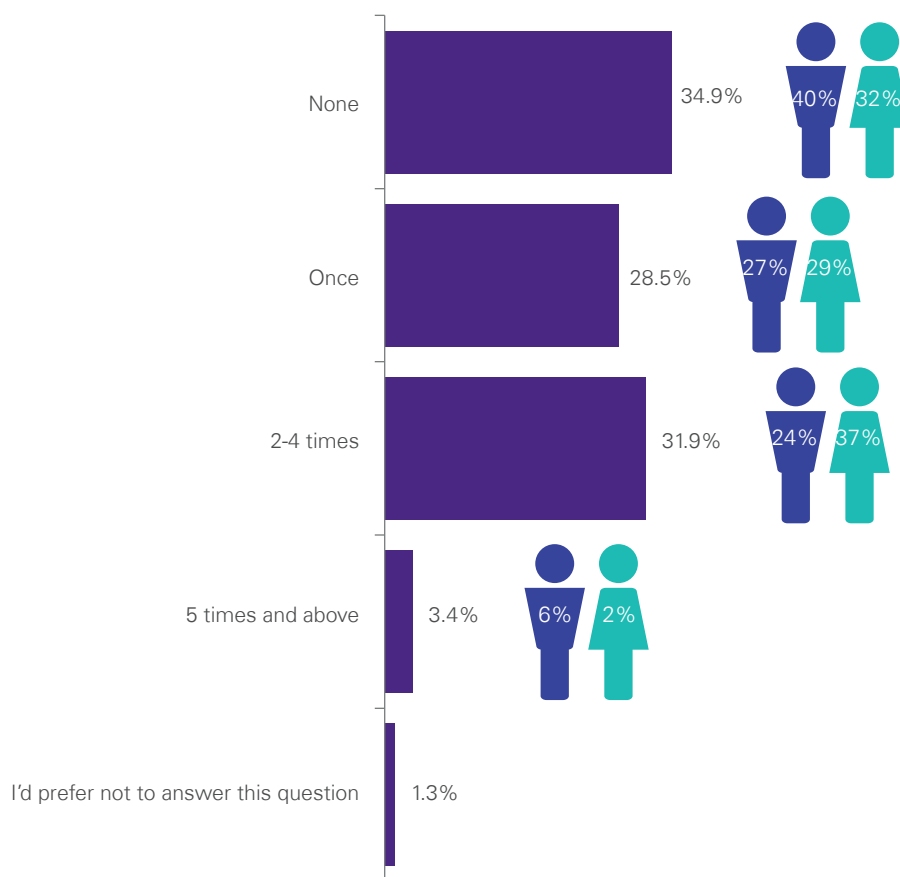
A sense of corporate belonging is when employees feel like they are part of the company they work for, treat it as their own, and make that extra effort for the benefit of the company. Employees with a heightened sense of belonging put their best foot forward for the company and look after its interests. They feel like a member of one big family. They tend to be more obedient, do their job more enthusiastically, show genuine interest in self-improvement, exhibit stellar work performance and receive a sense of satisfaction from what they do. Management staff are more likely to show such attributes than those in lower ranks.

When asked during the qualitative part of the survey how many companies they had changed so far, 52% of the respondents replied that they had changed companies 1-3 times before ending up at their current job. The survey has also revealed that female and male managers have changed similar number of companies.

It has also been determined that female managers tend to switch companies for the same role more often than their male counterparts. While the rate of women who changed companies 2-4 times for a similar role was 37%, it was 24% for men.

Number of times changed to a different company for a similar role

Please state how many times you have changed to a company so far for a different role at the same level in order to gain more experience.



Base = 235

Among the most cited reasons for postponing or canceling plans for a career switch are the ‘tendency to see a task through to its very end i.e. a project’ and ‘affiliation with a person or group.’ It can be said with a degree of certainty that company loyalty has some impact on the decision of company managers to switch careers. There is a higher percentage of female managers who say they ‘postponed their plans for a career switch due to the impact on family’.

Reasons behind postponement of career switches or not moving at all and their frequency*

Please state how many times you have postponed a change in career or changed your mind about it due to the reasons below. *The rate reflects the answers of those who replied ‘at least once’.

		
Due to your level of expertise or worries about not having enough experience	13%	16%
Due to concerns about losing your contractual rights or company perks and benefits	16%	23%
Due to opportunities/company offers for senior employees	14%	25%
Due to its impact on family	15%	29%
Due to satisfaction with your current flexible working conditions	19%	30%
Due to affiliation with a person or group	35%	43%
Tendency to see a task through to its very end i.e. a project	39%	56%

Female Base = 150
Male Base = 85

Research shows that women are unwilling to apply for a role unless they are certain they fully fulfill the required criteria whereas men see no problem with applying for a role if they believe they fulfill the average criteria.

When a female interviewee is asked ‘Do you feel ready for this CEO position?’, the usual response is: ‘These are basically areas where I feel lacking; I can only accept the role if I improve myself to become a good leader.’ When a male interviewee is asked the same question, he takes the risk and accepts the position. (K3, 39-years-old)

That kind of self-confidence seems to have its roots in motivational 'male pep-talk' men give one another in casual environments. Not having enough women at the workplace works against a woman's chances of finding the same motivational encouragement from a female co-worker. Companies usually try to overcome such shortcomings through in-house mentoring and leadership programs. A female manager explains how women are pushed outside such male support mechanisms drawing from her own observations:

"It's like an exclusive 'men's club' with lots of male banter. Like, when a male colleague comes up and says 'This guy that I know has a yacht, why don't we go hang out there at the weekend', I get left out automatically cause most of the time they are my seniors, and even if I was their equal, it wouldn't make any difference. There's a men's 'league'.... The communication network really matters in many companies. When choosing a partner to work with on a project, people tend to prefer to work with those they feel closer to and have more things in common. I believe women always get left out in the process. But, if you're a social person and you create value, I don't think anyone refuses to work with you just because they 'hang out or play golf' with their close male friends. I think people are just reading too much into it. I mean, when does this all start to get serious for them? For instance, they're playing golf and socializing in a magnificent nature for 6 hours. And while all's that happening, matters of business come up of course one way or another and you might be isolated from the contents of the conversation. It doesn't even necessarily have to be a colleague; the same goes for relationships with customers... My boss could choose not to invite me over for a drink with the owner of one of the leading family companies in the country. They say they had a man-to-man dinner and drank a few glasses of something. Business definitely talked during those sorts of meetings. What I mean is that there are definitely cases, considering the communication network within a company and how companies make contacts with customers, where women may feel left out of the loop. Even if you don't usually miss out on much in either case if you're physically there, no matter what you do, you don't get access to those confidence and self-esteem pumping mechanisms which work in a men's club." (K5, 37-years-old)

Being a female manager

According to research, characteristics attributed to male and female leaders are different. Characteristics attributed to men include authority, being focused, giving orders, being structuralist and change, whereas characteristics attributed to women are being participative, focusing on relationships, being transformative, caring about individuals, being a good team player and sociability. While female characteristics all come together to form a transformational leadership, male attributes are construed as pointing toward a transactional leadership. Men are more inclined to have job-oriented leadership skills, while women tend to exhibit individually-focused leadership skills.

The results from the qualitative research conducted with the female managers show that women tend to exhibit relationship-oriented, cooperative, team-spirited, empathetic and transformational leadership characteristics.

"The drawback of it all is women tend to focus too much on risks, while men tend to be more action-oriented like 'Well, let's see how it goes and if there are problems along the way, I'll find a way of dealing with them'. Women are more inclined towards being reflection-focused, leading them to refrain from taking decisive action. You are always left one step behind." (K1, 51-years-old)

"What do I mean by that? Firstly, women are not as ruthless and/or as capitalist as men. I saw that especially in my old boss. We were all gathered around the table, one of the men said: 'Alright now, so this is how it's going to be. We are closing down the worksite. We are laying off 1000 people,' to which a woman sitting across the table from him responded, 'I see that this is what needs to be done, but how are we going to pay these people back? That's something we should talk about, too.' There is a sense of mercy instilled deep inside them." (K5, 37-years-old)

"We can say that women are much better at persuasion, communicating with others and building trust due to their more developed skills of empathy. And motherhood probably plays a role in that as well." (K4, 54-years-old)

What the female managers associate with womanhood



- Creative
- Spicing up the boardroom
- Contentious
- Adapting easily to changes
- Flexible
- Encouraging others
- Confidant
- Self-sacrificing
- Empathetic



- Jealous
- Lost in details
- Grumpy
- Not getting along well with other women
- Living out private life
- Being meddlesome

“ Women are far behind men in terms of representation, equality and occupying senior management roles. ‘The Women in the Workplace Survey’ published this year in Davos contains results that support this conclusion. Women are confronted with invisible barriers on every step of their career journeys, from recruitment to promotion. ”

Agah Uğur - CEO, Borusan Holding

Another spectacular point that deserves attention is the invisible barriers that women erect themselves. They balk at the idea of being proactive, and tend to split hair over almost everything because they are perfectionists. We understand from the statements of female managers that raising a girl is a totally different story...

Elif Çelik

Eczacıbaşı Healthcare Division
EVP



“ Men put themselves forward even if they feel only 60% ready for the role. However, women still tend to procrastinate even if they completely feel ready. I mean let's say there is a new opening in the company for a managerial role. Male workers usually come and say 'I'm a candidate for this one' when I actually know they are not ready. I have never actually seen a female worker step forward to say she wishes to be considered for the role, which indeed takes courage to do. Women's

perfectionism and tendency to get lost in the details gets in the way of their career progression. What underlies such timidity is usually your family history, how you have been raised by your parents and social pressures. Unfortunately, we raise girls by telling them things like 'Oh, please, that's not something you would be capable of doing, just don't try to do a man's job, ah hush please, what do you know.' I am sure we can make a difference when we start raising girls by telling them 'You can do it'. ”

A boys' club but no women's club

Although the female managers say they are not subject to any sort of discrimination in their careers, they are quite uncomfortable with the masculine talk that dominates boardrooms. While some women just cannot enter this predominantly male social network that protects men's territory of authority, some women prefer to imitate the masculine tone and blend in order to become part of the network.

“But, no matter what you do, you don't get access to those confidence and self-esteem pumping mechanisms which work in a boys' club. There is no women's club to fill that void.” (K5, 37-years-old)

A well-balanced life

It is remarkable how women today are at the forefront of social progress, assuming a leading role in driving social change and development. In other words, female leaders play a key role in the establishment and development of important relationship networks in society. Even when they sometimes face cultural, economic and social obstacles, overcoming those obstacles becomes a motivating factor itself.

"But having children on the other hand also plays a key role in the formation of managerial competencies. I think it has helped me become more patient and tolerant and played a huge part in helping me grow up. Motherhood has benefited me in so many ways." (K4, 54-years-old)

Organizations need to use their resources effectively, just as much as they need advanced planning and management processes in order to survive and succeed. Human resources constitute a significant part of organizational resources and female employees are a part of this.

A female manager talks about her family responsibilities as if she was talking about a business organization:

"I hired a nanny who helps us when needed. My husband and I both have drivers. It is all organized; who is picking up the children from where and at what time, and their sports activities. The plan has to be very clear, otherwise you just can't make it work. And life goes on just seamlessly with support from the staff we hired."

Another female manager tells us about how she moved work to her home:

"There was a time when my work life was interrupted after I gave birth. But this was something I really fought against... I started attending meetings. And I got back into the swing of things after 4 and a half months. But my work schedule was quite weird. I used to leave the office and go home to breastfeed Hazal. Then the nanny used to come at around 20.30-21.00 to give me a hand with the housework. The company CEO would also drop by at mine at around 22.00 and we used to work until 03.00. Most of the work got done at my house because I now had a child. I'm not even mentioning my daughter's crying episodes..."

All the female managers who participated in the qualitative survey suggest that the key to their success is making a 'well-balanced life', i.e. keeping a professional balance between their business, family and private life. Most of the time they find themselves juggling work and family duties, while trying to keep up with their male colleagues. In doing so, they reproduce the gender roles they unintentionally internalize:

"My husband travels a lot though he tries to spend as much time as possible at home. Even though we tried to share responsibilities around the house/kids, we ended up having to hire two nannies. I got lucky and we got the mornings covered, Ege's nanny stayed with us for eight years. She was staying somewhere close to our house. We helped her with the rent. I've always been so lucky to have her living near and have her grandma and grandpa to support us too." (K8, 51-years-old)

"There was always someone around to help with things and that was good for everyone involved. Otherwise, mothers are placed under immense stress, running themselves into the ground and the same goes for fathers or grandmothers. It upsets the balance within the family. Luckily, we always got help. The nanny, for instance, was responsible for looking after the kids. And we hired someone extra to help with the housework. We gave them all different responsibilities so that they wouldn't be overwhelmed with work. We hired someone to do the housework, cleaning, cooking and all that; and a separate maid to look after the child. Meanwhile, the grandmas were always there to look over things." (K10, 42-years-old)

Damla Birol

CEO, Tuborg



“ There is a saying that I often quote: ‘Send back down the lift that you have used to lift yourself up so that others can do the same too.’ I think this is one of the basic things that needs to be done to bring women’s status at the workplace on a par with those of men.

But of course there are other things young women need to do to be successful. My suggestion is, if working makes you happy, push your luck to the limit; believe me when I say that as you gain more experience and rise through the ranks, it will become easier to establish a work-life balance. ”

As a result...

- **Female managers are loyal to their jobs**

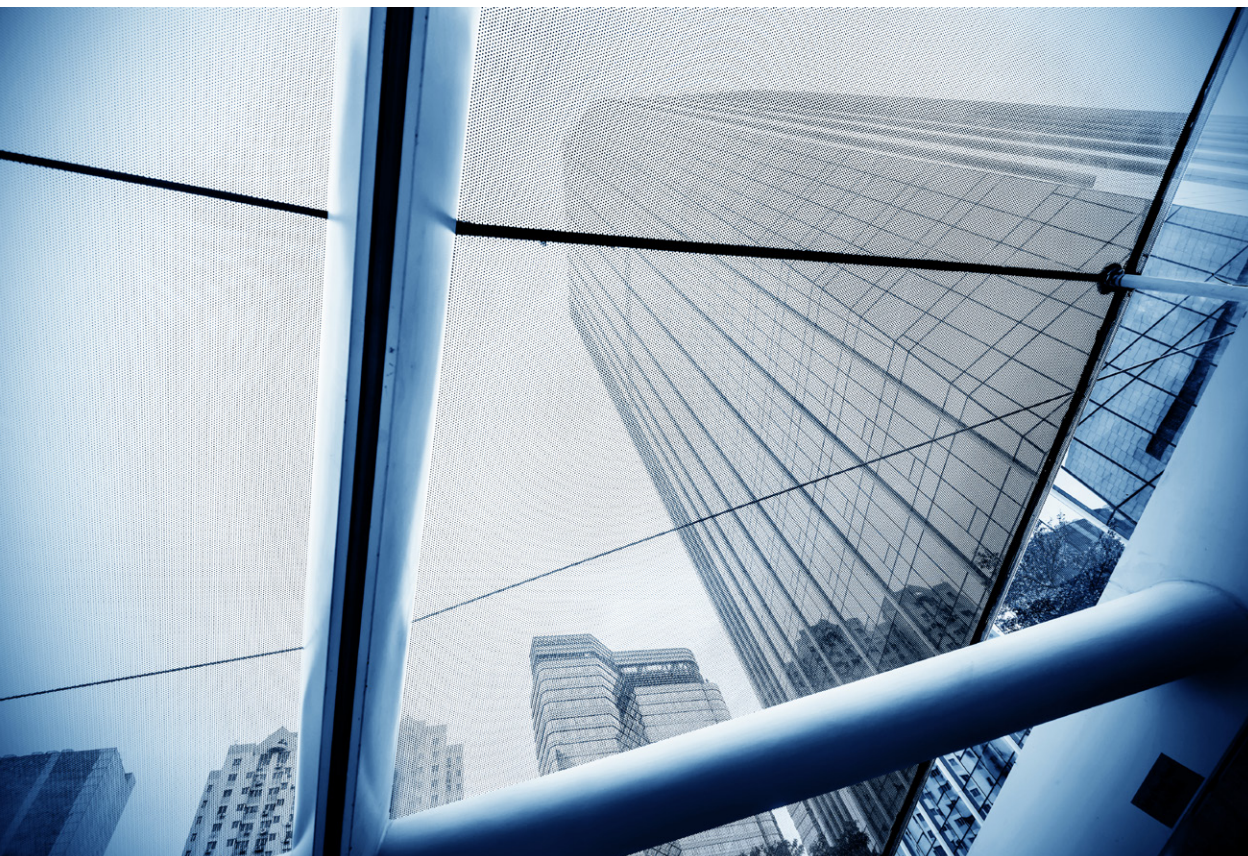
Women who get the promotion they deserve fighting against all the setbacks they suffer in the world of business tend to be more loyal and have more respect for their jobs, being aware of the hurdles and obstacles they have had to overcome to get there.

- **Women pay more attention to detail**

No one wants to work with a manager who does not know what they are doing, always asking other people for their opinion on the next step that they should take. Therefore, women who are known for their attention to detail are much better at getting things done, making life for their employees easier in the process. They are skillful multitaskers.

- **Women have higher emotional intelligence**

Women are known to have higher emotional intelligence than men, giving them the ability to look at events from different perspectives. In a crisis situation, they listen to everyone equally and try to make decisions using both their logic and emotional instincts. They are highly capable of empathizing with people.



Glass ceilings

The female managers say that while women experience no discrimination of any sort when applying for low-paying roles, it is the high-paying roles where they are underrepresented. They are not quite sure about the reasons why women have such a hard time getting their feet on the career ladder; is it because of women's own preferences or the pressures of the system?

The glass ceiling syndrome is a concept that emerged in the United States in the 1970s. These ceilings are defined as invisible and artificial obstacles created by organizational prejudices and patterns that prevent women from landing senior management positions. What the concept of glass ceiling refers to is the vagueness of issues faced by women at workplace. The three dimensions of the "Glass Ceiling" are emphasized;

1. Obstacles placed by male managers:

The most important of these obstacles are prejudices against women. Such prejudices, which are mostly negative, help reinforce the view that women are inherently incapable of dealing with high profile tasks. They are viewed as lacking in aptitude, personality and determination. Other obstacles created by male managers are 'difficulties in communicating with women' and 'men's relentless desire to hold power'.

2. Obstacles placed by female managers:

While obstacles placed by male managers are discussed, those put in the way by female managers are mostly ignored. These obstacles placed by women include the fallacy of oneself as a reference i.e female managers' inner voices telling them 'If I made it so high up in my career, then others can follow suit and do the same. There is no need to treat them differently.' It also includes the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' (women's jealousy of one another), referring to the belief of being the 'only woman' on board is an indicator of success and privilege.

3. Obstacles placed by oneself:

The following can be counted among some of the barriers women build around themselves that prevent their promotion to management roles; attitudes on gender roles, giving no unequivocal answer to the question of 'What is a woman's place?', internalizing social values without questioning them, accepting and adopting prejudices against women, work-family conflicts and not being able to deal with feelings of guilt, lack of self-confidence, indecisiveness, not knowing what one wants, not having the desire to, means or confidence for self-improvement and for changing one's circumstances for the better, the belief that the system cannot be changed, the urge to support the system, choosing not to rise in one's career/not being career-driven, and not taking into account the necessities and obligations it takes to get ahead in one's career.

The female managers we interviewed believe that there are 'glass ceilings' in industries such as finance, retail, banking and consultancy where there are an equal number of male and female employees filling entry and middle level manager roles. They also mentioned other issues such as lack of self-confidence among women, beyond merely dwelling on discrimination as exemplified in the 'boys' club' concept that embodies rigid male privileges.

"The problem is not just with the rooms we sit in. It's wrong to just look at places with the highest number of employees and say 'Well, this is not actually what the glass ceiling looks like.' As the lucky minority, we, as women, pretend that the glass ceiling does not really exist, getting all sorts of support we can get our hands on, both from each other and our families, giving each other courage and strength in the process, and using our education and cultural sophistication."

Queen Bee Syndrome

While obstacles placed by male managers are discussed, those put in the way by female managers are mostly ignored. One of the obstacles created by female managers is the practice of taking oneself as a reference. That inner voice telling them 'If I made it so high up in my career, then others can follow suit and do the same' renders invisible the barriers put in women's way in the world of business.

One female manager told us that women liked playing the 'victim',

referring to the fact that people struggling with planning out their lives (men or women) may tend to pile on the agony using discrimination as an excuse for their failure. Emphasizing that making oneself an eligible, sought-after employee is entirely in one's own hands, most of the female managers believe that the glass ceiling does not exist, despite their awareness of issues with regards to equal opportunities for women. These women believe the basic issue is with most women not having the character traits needed to become a manager.

"I mean I never felt like there was actually a glass ceiling but I believe there are differences between men and women's perspectives on work life and how they express themselves. The world of business has inevitably been shaped and designed according to men, women joining in the labor force at a much later period than men, and men traditionally occupying management roles. At the end of the day, men and women are quite different from one another. The way they make decisions, how they choose to express themselves, ask for things, or their ways of thinking about things... It is therefore quite natural that working life may not make much sense to them at the beginning."

"They work themselves up into a lather by thinking like 'I can't move forward just because I'm a woman'. I think this is uncalled for. However, if a woman is being mobbed at work and this can be substantiated with solid evidence, she should either resign or report it to the authorities. Why make a rod for your own back when you can simply quit? One should learn to come to terms with the system and try to work out its intricacies. Even if they cannot get a clear perspective on things, they should not seek refuge in such ideas or use discrimination as a pretext."

Overcoming obstacles

What is positive discrimination?

Until equality can be achieved, the following can support women's development in the workplace;

- Encouraging the job applications of women,
- Increasing female employment by imposing quotas,
- Choosing women over men when two equally qualified candidates from both apply for the same role,
- Supporting women's career progression.

What is not positive discrimination?

- The idea that "women need to be guarded and favored",
- Employing/promoting a person for being a woman, with total disregard for her qualifications,
- Providing flexible working hours only for women,
- Providing parental leave only for women.
- Flexible working hours for women only.
- Maternity leave without paternity leave.

“ Some countries have adopted the approach of imposing quotas to make sure more women sit on management boards. This leaves some women feeling worried that they are only there because they are women and not on account of their merits. However, support for the quota system seems to be gathering pace, with many people thinking there needs to be intervention of some sort if natural change is not happening fast enough. I have never had any personal experiences with quota so far. But I believe that when it comes to the issue of seeing more women getting promoted to high-paying roles, there is no single magical solution to that. ”

Damla Birol - CEO, Tuborg

Half of the female managers participating in the interviews on the second phase do not lean towards positive discrimination. They believe that positive discrimination, when not properly enforced, could have dangerous implications, changing how women are perceived for the worse and undoing gains on efforts towards gender equality.

"I personally would never like to think that I was chosen for a particular position just because I am a woman. There is something about it that goes against the notion of equality. (Talking about women who have been promoted only because they are women) People not promoted on merit will struggle to fulfill what is expected from them as they don't have the right qualifications for the role."
(K2, 47-years-old)

"Trying to enforce positive discrimination at work would be a grave mistake (women being catapulted from one role to another for the sake of filling female manager quotas). On paper, everything may seem balanced, with gender equality achieved, but you cannot stop a male counterpart at a board meeting looking around the table and thinking, 'Oh little Elif is only here because she is a woman.' Only those who deserve it need to be in the board room, but people should not be unfairly removed from their positions either, because they are woman or have other liabilities."

"I don't ever remember operating on the logic that we need a man for that particular role or a woman for that other role. I can't recall leading any discussions with regards to whether we should employ a man or a woman, either. I therefore don't believe that we should employ the practice of positive discrimination here. Discussions around what sort of person we should employ focus more on the qualities we are looking for in the person we wish to fill the role. I have never been in a situation where someone came to me and said we should choose a female candidate over a male applicant. To us, it is all about having the required competencies. Everyone has a different skill set that make them unique." (K9, 37-years-old)

I personally strongly oppose any method of tackling discrimination with discrimination. (K5, 37-years-old)

Those who hold the view that positive discrimination is an unavoidable necessity in this country where equal opportunities can only be achieved through quotas make up the other half of interviewers.

"It could work if there was also another policy that stipulated that there must be female candidates. Positive discrimination is important in that regard for reinforcing awareness. It may sound off-putting when put that way but I'm a supporter. When there are so many profound differences to be overcome, only positive discrimination can pave the way for bridging them." (K1, 51-years-old)

"The vast majority of managers in Turkey are male, which is unfair considering there are just as many women that are equally qualified, experienced and educated. Although it may sound debasing at first, I believe we need positive discrimination until we get to that point where we've completely stamped out inequalities at the workplace." (K3, 39-years-old)

"I personally believe there should be a degree of legal incentive and support frameworks to dismantle the gender inequality which is not so easy due to the sociological structure" (K7, 47-years-old)

Ümit Boyner
Board Member,
Boyner Holding



“ I see quotas as a convenient tool for both raising awareness and preparing company board rooms for more female presence. We are already a member of the 30% Club initiative in Turkey. This is an issue which can be resolved not just through placing quotas but also preparing companies for more female employees, encouraging women, and spreading the equality culture across the whole company. **”**

Gender balance in management

Almost all of the female managers agree that management boards should not consist of only men. An increase in the number of women in senior management roles means an increase in role models. As that number increases, so will the percentage of female employees rising from the bottom rungs of the career steps. Therefore, they share the belief that women need to communicate and cooperate with each other for raising social awareness about the need to increase female presence on management boards.

"You get more creativeness and productiveness from the management boards with a mixed presence of both women and men. As women and men can look at issues from different perspectives, having equal numbers of men and women on management boards will help create an environment where different opinions are encouraged."
(K4, 54-years-old)

However, we do not see this awareness translating into action. There is little mention of social responsibility projects being conducted to promote and increase female employment or other projects to improve and support female leadership.

"I'm mentoring employees as much as I can."
(K1, 51-years-old)

It is no coincidence that women take a more active role in business life in countries with low birth rates. Men are more successful in advancing onto senior management positions due to interruptions in women's careers owing to physiological and family reasons. Because motherhood negatively affects women's career plans, most women give up their careers to raise their children. The fact that companies do not have facilities or nurseries to take care of young children are among

the factors causing women to quit their jobs.

While companies employing more than 100 female employees are legally obligated to open nurseries, most companies find a way around it by keeping that number just below 100. This, in turn, prevents women from participating more in business life. Therefore, childcare practices should also be supported by the correct application of existing laws.

"Nobody wants to build nurseries. There is no way this will work without nurseries. Women are expected to be more productive in terms of children. They are therefore given extra time to be able spend more time with their children. That serves no purpose other than dissuading employers from hiring female employees. There is not enough support from the government for nurseries." (K2, 47-years-old)

"One interesting point that bears mentioning is that companies which provide more child-friendly work environments for their employees enjoy good returns on their policies in increased employee loyalty. For instance, when you leave it to your employees to decide when to drop off and pick their children from the nursery, which is one less thing for them to worry about and is inevitably translated into higher productivity. I don't think you can achieve that by offering more money." (K3, 39-years-old)

“ We all know that quote which says women are from Venus and men are from Mars; this actually means different perspectives. Men and women tend to look on things from different perspectives. Perspectives of men and women complete each other. I don't believe either that 80% of those on management boards should be females. That is not good, either. I believe in the balance which is achieved by equal contribution from both sides. **”**

Elif Çelik - Eczacıbaşı Healthcare Division EVP

Common attributes of female leaders



In the third stage, female and male managers from big companies in Turkey answered questions framing the existence of women in business life and the obstacles they face. We drew the following conclusions from the interviews with regards to the matter of supporting female managers' career journeys:

- The majority of female managers come from well-educated working families who believe in the virtues of education and give their children responsibilities.
- Most of them are graduates of top-tier universities and received education abroad.
- Some have MA degrees but most took up careers at an early age by weighing up the work opportunities.
- For most of them, having a good career stands at the top of their personal goals.
- They look at life from a positive, optimistic and self-confident perspective.
- They have understanding partners who support them with their career and are sharing within the family life.
- They have postponed having children to later in life.
- They either get support from their families to look after the kids and for housework or have nannies working for them.
- They had supportive colleagues at work which they all see as a blessing.
- Female managers working for large companies also have supported initiatives and projects organized by businesses to enable women to more actively participate in business life and become managers.
- They believe that they have got this far in their careers by putting in that extra bit of effort which men do not need to.
- While some managers say they have been discriminated in terms of salary, others state they had not have such experience.
- They have always given support to other female colleagues working together with them. Most believe in quotas at work. There are female managers among the interviewees who did use positive discrimination when choosing candidates for a role.
- It is seen that foreign companies or long-established Turkish companies provide female managers support in their careers.
- It is also understood that male managers are also making efforts to increase the number of female managers. They all believe that female employees make great contributions to company success.



Benefit level of certain elements in life/work life

Cited here are numbers that indicate the total number of 'very beneficial' and 'beneficial' responses.

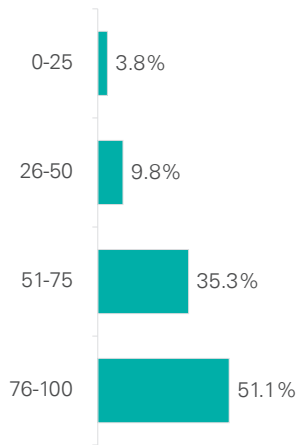
		
Colleagues	85%	90%
Establishing relationship with colleagues	89%	87%
Managers	81%	89%
Family members	82%	84%
A training program organized or sponsored by your company	76%	77%
Mentor or someone who guides you in an unofficial capacity	67%	81%
Personal feedback, for example 360-degree feedback	69%	78%
Friends	69%	67%
Volunteer activities	56%	57%
Personal coach, someone who is hired to help you with your personal growth	35%	50%
Professional organizations	33%	37%

Female Base = 150
Male Base = 85

Career goals

Did you have a goal in mind when starting your career?

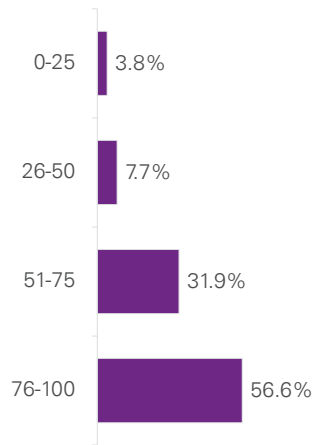
Goal percentage at the beginning of career *



Average = 72.8

*0: I never had a goal <->
100: I had big goals

**Do you currently have goals?
Current target percentage ***

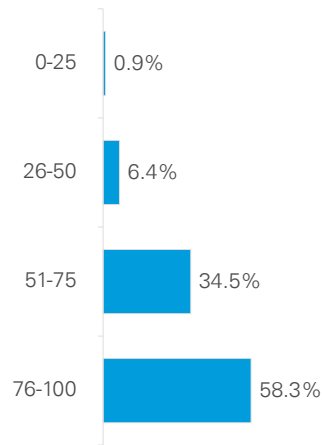


Average = 75.5

*0: I do not have a goal <->
100: I have big goals

How successful do you think you are in achieving your goals?

Percentage of success in achieving goals*



Average = 76.5

*0: I have not been able to reach any of my goals <->
100: I have reached all my goals

Base = 235

Sinem Altuncu
Regional Sales & Marketing EMEA
EVP, Cardtek



“ I know what this means as the child of a working mother. And I understood it even better after I had my child. Being the child of a working mother helps you learn to stand on your own two feet as most of the time you have to do everything on your own. You have to take care of yourself. That is the good part but there are some drawbacks to it, too. I want to tell you a memory that I have never forgotten.

We were performing Cinderella in English at prep school and I was playing the angel. Everyone's parents were there to see the play. I had a friend called Sinem and she was playing Cinderella. Her mom had done her make up. But the play was on a week day at working hours and neither my mother nor my father had been able to attend. It always stayed with me as it was a very important day for me. ”

10 essentials for breaking the glass ceiling

The women in management roles gave us 10 prerequisites including simple formulas for breaking the glass ceiling, for women wishing to stay in business life and pursue a career:

- Receive a good education
- Forget stereotypes about being woman
- Have self-confidence
- Be brave
- Believe that you can do the best
- Stop getting so stuck in the details
- Don't hesitate to make decisions
- Work hard and with a plan and spare time for your loved ones
- Stress is the biggest enemy of success, try to be calmer
- Having both a career and children is quite doable, do not miss out on life.

Arzu Aslan Kesimer General Manager, Tat Gıda



“ The most important key to success is working hard no matter what others may say. Success does not come without effort.

I believe as a manager that personal development planning should take precedence over career planning. That is what I always suggest to my own team here; our primary concern should always be developing ourselves and nurturing our minds and spirit.

When establishing your team, do not try to choose people who are carbon copies of yourself, who cannot do anything

but approving you and supporting every opinion you have.

Having those kind of people on your team only creates setbacks for you and your business and stifles progress.

Having a career is definitely important, but family and friends are just as important; knowing that their existence creates balance and striking a good work-life balance is very important. My advice to young people is not to sacrifice your social life for your career. There is a simple formula to achieve that: Be a good planner... ”

Becoming a mother or postponing motherhood

One of the issues that featured prominently in the second and third stages of the research was motherhood. Despite the increased participation of women in the labor force, the fact that one of the reasons behind the decline in the number of female managers is 'taking maternity leave' is a serious cause for concern.

- We have this common trend among female managers in Turkey of postponing motherhood until much later in life. Whereas working mothers in management roles are left having to choose between protecting their careers, moving further up the career ladder, or putting their career plans on the back burner altogether.
- Most female managers in Turkey prefer to take a career break after giving birth, unless they have people who can help them or understanding. This is because the fast-paced and hectic world of business does not tolerate career breaks, despite legislation on maternity rights. Female managers who have become mothers need to keep pace in order not to lose their place.

What about the West?

A quick look at the West, especially EU countries, shows that;

- Female managers take paid or unpaid maternity leave without fear of being laid off thanks to working legislation that is rigorously enforced. They are given a leeway in tweaking their work schedules to fit in their childcare routines. As companies do not enforce 'flexible' working hours as in Turkey that see employees leave work at unreasonably late hours, women can get home, see their children and spend time with their families at reasonable hours.
- Womanhood and motherhood are of great importance in Western countries where population density is relatively low. Families are encouraged to have more children through incentives.
- Female managers, who are usually on equal pay with male managers, get back to their careers after maternity leave without suffering any career-threatening backlash.

Motherhood is your highest calling

Becoming a mother is a transformative experience for women. Leave all aside, it is the law of nature... but working women need to carefully plan that particular stage of their lives. You should choose the right moment to have a baby so that motherhood does not get in the way of your career plans!

With higher levels of female employment we see ever more barriers being erected to hamper women's career progress in societies like ours. The fact that more and more women are working does nothing to change the perceptions of a woman's role in society: being a wife and mother. The initial years for most women starting a career are spent trying to find a balance between home and work life, trying to fulfill their domestic duties, while on the other hand competing with their male rivals.

While most societies are coming to terms with women pursuing their career goals, being a wife and mother is still considered something that all women need to strive towards.

With such stereotypes still in place, when they become mothers, women are caught up in a dilemma between taking a career break or continuing with their careers. It is not only women taking career breaks who try to fulfill their domestic duties while at the same time achieving big successes in the business world; the same applies to women continuing their career journey despite all the hardships they are faced with. What supports women during that tough stage in their lives to help them get on in their careers are family members, understanding managers and teammates.



“

It is true that life may get tough for women who wish to be mothers and work at the same time, but that does not necessarily have a negative impact on motherhood. On the contrary, skills learned during motherhood help develop women's professional skills. Besides this, it is their choice at the end of the day and no one should be in a position to judge them for that. //

”

Ümit Boyner - Board Member, Boyner Holding

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For one thing, it is impossible to deny or disregard the social and cultural norms that make it difficult for women to work. It is an undeniable fact that working mothers have to fight on both fronts and this gives them extra responsibility. According to research data, 58% of women say they have chosen not to pursue a career due to their domestic roles and responsibilities. However, the main reason why motherhood can get in the way of career plans is not mothers dedicating themselves solely to the care of their children, as often thought. It is rather that, after becoming mothers, women are not viewed as serious players in business life, not offered the roles they deserve and don't get paid enough, ending up despairing over the obstacles they face. //

”

Damla Birol - CEO, Tuborg

There are a large number of women who have had to give up on their career goals, choosing motherhood over a career. It is also so unfortunate to see that most women seem to be in silent compliance with their circumstances.

“ My son Demir was born in March, 2006. I had then been promoted to the position of Head of Investment. The Deputy General Manager called me after I gave birth and asked whether I was coming back, which was not really possible seeing as Demir was only one month old. I now know that being a mother is quite a unique experience. Someone else was offered the role when I told my manager I wouldn't be able to get back to work yet. It unfortunately remains the case that if you take a career break as a woman in Turkey, you are pushed into oblivion. I had to go back to being the branch manager after three months. ”

Sinem Altuncu - Regional Sales & Marketing EMEA EVP, Cardtek

Defne Tozan
General Manager, IBM Turkey



“ There is an age gap of eight years between my first and second child. It was especially after the birth of my second child that my family stepped in to give me support. As I travel quite often due to the nature of my business, I was only able to strike that fine balance between home and work life with support from my family and partner. ”

Increasing the number of female managers

There are government policies in Turkey that support the employment of women, but the increase in the number of female managers is closely related to the extent to which companies are ready to take responsibility for the issue. This was one of the questions we directly asked during the 'Kilidi Kırarak/Breaking the Glass Ceiling -Phase 3' interviews. We have seen major companies leading the Turkish economy take important steps toward achieving that goal. Turning positive outcomes into a sustainable strategy will help us achieve the aim of building a more modern and stronger nation.

“ We initiated a project called 'Birlikte Biz' (We are in it Together) to help increase the number of women in management roles. I'm the co-president of that project. Eczacıbaşı Group cares about women's rights and works hard to see inequalities disappear. Our business practices are in full compliance with the women's rights policies of the Turkish Industry and Business Association, KAGIDER and the UN. Our female recruitment rate is 42-43%, but it is our aim to see that number increase to at least 50%. Our current rate of female employees working in the community is 34%. We are working towards increasing that rate to 40%. And one issue I'm particularly sensitive about is putting more women in the director's chair. The percentage of women in senior management roles currently stands at 23-24%, which we aim to increase to 35% by 2020. ”

Elif Çelik - Eczacıbaşı Healthcare Division EVP

“ The percentage of female employees at IBM is 50%. Even though it may not sound so politically correct to measure work performance by gender, it is a fact that businesses perform better when more women are in senior management. That's what the statistics say. This has to do with women's ability to look at things from a different perspective and empathize with others, which I believe is a natural gift they are born with.

IBM has policies in place that promote gender equality. I have never felt any sort of discrimination towards me as a woman since I started working for IBM. IBM stands strong on the issue of gender equality.

I have never felt discriminated against or been treated differently than others, but it's true to say that it is sometimes women who put barriers around themselves. When offered a new role, women tend to get insecure asking "Do I really have what it takes to pull this off?" I have seen that kind of attitude in women, while men are much more relaxed. Women lock themselves up, thinking they are not skilled enough. In fact, all skills can be improved especially in a time we all have advanced technical means. ”

Defne Tozan - General Manager, IBM Turkey

Muzaffer Akpınar

Chairman of Board, KVK



“ We have women engineers in our management team. Half of the managers in Penta Tekstil are women. We haven’t established quotas to achieve that; it just worked out that way. For instance, I had some colleagues working as textile or chemical engineers taking up management roles during certain periods. I had this female colleague of mine, a graduate of business administration who was the head of planning and sales. We have no barriers. I believe that in the near future the percentage of female managers will rise above 50.

There is for instance the issue of ‘equal pay for equal work’ whose repercussions are felt across the whole world. Under my management, never did I ever hear someone say, ‘Let’s pay her less, she is a woman isn’t she?’ We do not have that kind of discriminatory culture here. I have had the pleasure of working with teams made entirely of females throughout my career and witnessed many success stories with more than half of them made possible by women. ”

“ Tat Gıda is a company established under the roof of the Koç Group and the group is taking pioneering steps towards making work more equal for women, following in the footsteps of the late Mustafa Koç who once said “A society without women is a society without a future.” At Koç Holding and its group companies, we signed up to the ‘Equality at Work Manifesto’ put together by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2013. This has allowed us to speed up our works to integrate our gender equality vision into our management practices and work processes. Under the cooperation agreement signed with UN Women in 2014, Koç Holding became the co-

collaborator of the ‘HeForShe’ campaign launched worldwide by UN Women. The late Mustafa Koç was one of the most influential 10 leaders in the world. At Koç Group, we organize events and conduct studies under the leadership and guidance of Ömer Koç, our Chairman of board who picked up the torch following the death of Mustafa Koç, to raise social awareness of the issue.

We organized special training programs for our employees and managers under the project ‘Ülkem İçin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğini Destekliyorum’ (I Support Gender Equality for My Country) sponsored by the Koç Group. ”

Arzu Aslan Kesimer - General Manager, Tat Gıda

To sum up, the following are general conclusions about the obstacles come women's way to management roles drawn from the interviews:

- Social stereotypes exist that see women as unfit for managerial roles.
- Women have been pre-conditioned to believe that they should not aim for management roles.
- Motherhood is seen as something that disrupts a woman's career goals.
- Maternity leave is considered a waste of time.
- There is a prejudiced mindset considering a woman for a role or promotion on the grounds that she may not be able to work hard or travel if she gets married or has children.
- Most board rooms are male-dominated in the business world. There is a widespread misconception that men must have the final say.
- Women lack self-confidence due to all these factors.

“ I think it is a serious issue that women need to show more effort to prove their worthiness for a higher level role than men. Besides, it is also true that women usually earn less than men, whatever position they may hold. Research shows that women find it especially discouraging when their voices are not heard at board meetings or people tend to view it as a sign of aggression and dominant behavior when they try to stick to a matter. Research also shows that when female employees make mistakes, they are not so easily forgotten, while any success they achieve is viewed as pure luck. ”

Damla Birol - CEO, Tuborg



Conclusion

Despite a rapid growth in female presence in the business world, the proportion of female employees in senior management positions is still very low. The obstacles women face in landing senior management positions are among the most common examples of gender discrimination. Invisible barriers known as 'glass ceilings' in management jargon and 'gender'-based thought patterns in society are known as the biggest obstacles to the advancement of women in the workplace. These are known as the reasons for the presence of invisible and often hidden obstacles that prevent the progress of women's careers, regardless of their merits. This brings with it serious problems in management, as well as negatively affecting the career advancement of women.

Nevertheless, the fact that more and more women, especially well-educated women with cultural capital living in urban areas, are able to get managerial positions shows that the female workforce is now less exposed to discriminatory attitudes.

Research results show that male and female managers have similar attitudes toward gender discrimination. Female managers, like their male counterparts, do not admit the gender discrimination issue for the organizations at which they work.

This shows us how a fair distribution of the cultural capital is vital for ensuring a democratic society with equal opportunities. In that sense, cultural capital emerges as a significant factor in establishing social equality, which can only be achieved not by creating a privileged system where good education is within the preserve of an elite few, but through creating a more egalitarian society based on equal social and educational opportunities and non-discrimination that will ensure a fairer distribution of wealth and income.

Suggestions

Despite changes to the law on gender equality, social perspectives regarding women still remain unchanged due to the persistence of the old mind-set. Therefore, what we need is awareness and change of mentality.

The following are the measures need to be taken to achieve gender equality;

- Offering equal educational opportunities and rights for women
- Prioritizing women's involvement in health, politics and civil working life
- Fighting social prejudices regarding women's roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring couples take joint responsibility for family life
- Including women in family matter decisions
- Equally distributing rights and responsibilities
- Raising boys and girls by treating them equally in a family
- Encouraging women to take more active roles in society, increasing female employment, helping to create a work-life balance for women
- Preventing violence against women
- Prohibiting gender discrimination and allocating more resources to the fight against discrimination
- Creating equal opportunities
- Providing positive discrimination in favor of women until gender equality is achieved

We need to raise awareness, not just among women but also among men, of the fact that the traditional notion of separate spheres that confines women to domestic spaces is something that needs to be dismantled to pave the way for gender equality. Steps must be taken towards ensuring that society as a whole accepts women as equal human beings who deserve equal opportunities in order to ensure gender equality and get rid of the barriers and traditional notions of female social roles.

**"Women's issues"
are not just
women's problems.**

**"Women's issues"
are society's issues.**

**Everyone
is equally
responsible for
tackling "women's
issues".**

In today's conditions where human capital is very important, both public offices and private establishments need to apply positive discrimination in favor of women seeking higher managerial roles to make the best use of their skill sets while helping create a work environment women can establish a more balanced work-life relationship.

The representation of women in managerial roles is also crucial in terms of ensuring the democratization of countries, sustainable development, respect for human rights, and creating a workforce that benefits positively from diversity; something that is becoming ever more significant under the influence of globalization.

Because the presence of women in managerial positions;

- Increases productivity through increased creativity and innovation,
- Increases satisfaction by giving a true representation of customers and consumers,
- Works positively on the corporate/country image,
- Attracts the attention of investors who are sensitive to gender equality issues.

To increase the female presence on senior management boards;

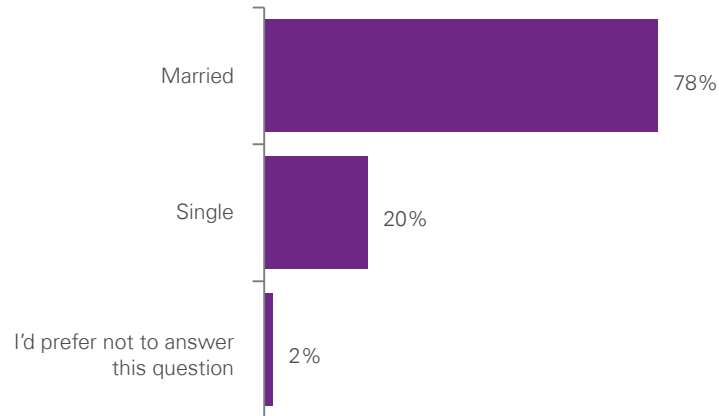
- Participation in awareness training programs must be encouraged.
- Companies must employ an equal opportunities approach when recruiting.
- It must be ensured that there are a balanced number of female and male employees at each management level.
- There must be a special focus on traditionally male occupations and professions.
- Equal opportunities for career planning and development must be provided.
- The 'equal pay for equal work' policy must be adopted.
- Practices that will reinforce gender equality in the workplace must be supported.
- Attention must be paid to gender sensitivity in all forms of verbal, written and visual communication.

Quantitative research participant profile

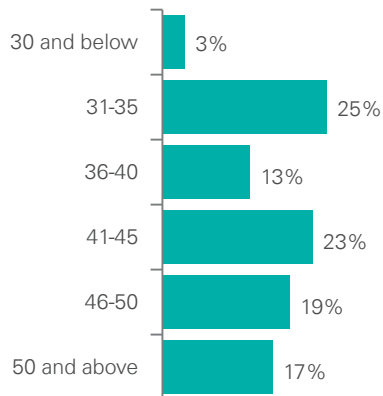
Gender



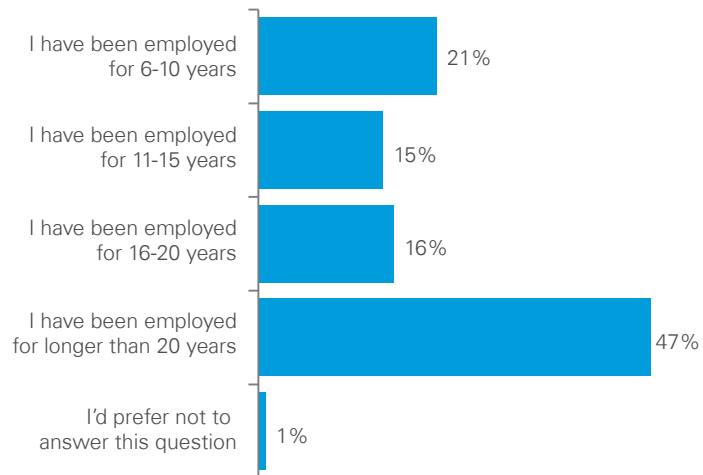
Marital status



Age



Number of years spent working



Title of the person interviewed	Number of responses	%
Manager	51	21.7
Director/Coordinator	34	14.5
Executive Vice President	29	12.3
Senior Manager	26	11.1
General Manager	21	8.9
CEO	16	6.8
Department Head	12	5.1
Board Member	12	5.1
Partner/Founder	10	4.3

Industry of employment	Number of responses	%
Consultancy	87	37
Finance	52	22.1
FMCG	15	6.4
Audit	15	6.4
Automotive	12	5.1
Retail & Wholesale	11	4.7
Construction & Real Estate	9	3.8
Insurance	9	3.8
Information Technologies/Software	8	3.4
Energy	7	3
Communication/Media	6	2.6
Manufacturing	6	2.6
Transportation & Travel	6	2.6
Telecommunications	5	2.1
Service	5	2.1
Health	4	1.7
Holding	4	1.7
Logistics	3	1.3
Public sector	2	0.9
Hotel/Restaurant/Entertainment	2	0.9
Food	2	0.9
Oil & Gas	1	0.4
Pharmaceutical	1	0.4
Other	12	5.1
Total	235	100

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Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın Derneği (The Association of Female Board Members)

We know that women all over the world are promoted much less frequently, earn much less, and are rarely assigned to roles that entail loss-profit management. There are only very few women on the management board of companies that lead the national economy. Yönetim Kurulunda Kadın (YKKD) was founded in 2012 by Praesta TR and Mentor Consulting Managing Partner Hande Yaşargil and Forbes TR Editor-in-Chief Burçak Güven to work towards creating a society where women can enjoy equal rights with men in every sphere of life.

It became an association in 2017 with a mission to 'Promote Social Progress by Increasing Women's Presence on Management Boards.' The first institution in Turkey founded for the purpose of promoting social progress through making women more visible in society, YKDD offers a certificate program on board membership accredited by reputable academic institutions and a mentoring program that allows its participants to receive mentoring from the most effective business people and opinion leaders of the country. The program offered through 18 month-long courses prepares female mentees for higher roles, while also offering a choice to companies seeking to employ highly qualified managers for their boards.

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