



## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS THAT EFFECT UNIVERSITY WOMEN MANAGERS

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**Abstract.** In this study, social and cultural effects of the low rate of woman managers at universities are tried to be identified. Women have been increasingly appearing in every field of business; on the other hand, although women compared to men constitute majority in educational organisations, they appear in the positions other than management. We will try to work out the social role of women and how they are affected by the social change, how gender discrimination in management and academy hinder promotions of women and why women do not prefer working in top positions.

**Keywords:** Woman managers, woman academics, feminism, gender discrimination

### Intriduction

Social change means alterations in the present interaction of community, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of individuals, social organisations and their functions (Doğramacı, 1993). The rapid social change which started with the industrialisation period came up with the idea of “equality” on women rights between 1940-50 in Europe.

As mentioned in the article 23 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1945); “ Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment; Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.” (www.unhchr.ch);

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights proclaimed in 1976 (www.tbmm.gov.tr) guarantees women conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work; rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay and equal opportunity to be promoted to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

In Voting and Civil Rights Acts proclaimed in 1976 (www.belgenet.com) the Article 3 signifies the necessity of equal voting and personal rights for both men and women;

A programme was arranged to impede unequal practices between men and women through The Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (www.un.org), 1979;

Declaration on Fundamental Principles and the Rights at Work, 1998 (DFPRW) (www.ilo.org) set forth several amendments for working women rights;

Amsterdam Treaty (AT),1999, (ec.europa.eu)states in the Article 2 that equality between sexes should be encouraged and the arrangements to stop any discriminational practices in the Article 3.

Turkish women started to gain higher status in Ottoman period. Women were banned to be sold as concubines and slaves in 1856, later in 1869 Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi which makes girls attend schools came into effect, in 1870 Darül Muallimat which educated women teachers was

opened. Following these educational adjustments, women became salaried workers in 1897, appointed as civil servants in 1913 and started to work as merchants and salespersons in 1914.

Legal and structural reforms enabling women to appear in public services sped up with the recognition of Republic. Atatürk always pointed the importance of women work force on the development of a country (Doğramacı, 1993) and supported his idea with the adjustment of laws and his reforms that were put into practice one by one. Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu (Unity in Education) which enables girls and boys equal rights and opportunities in education was approved in 1924. In 1930 “Municipality Law” provided women to vote for mayor and to be elected as mayor and in the same year the laws implying maternity leave were put into practice. In 1934 women started to appear in politics by the approval of the voting and election ([www.kssgm.gov.tr](http://www.kssgm.gov.tr)).

The theoretical base which enables the equal social rights to women and men was formed by the legal adjustments. It took rather longer the reforms and laws to put into practice. Today the effective role of women is taking a vital part in social and business life. Wirth claims that women now are showing up in many professions that are so called “man’s job” and they are climbing up the carrier ladder more quickly than they did in the past (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006). On the other hand, the role of women in business life is formed by their social role that they undertook during the history. The prior role of women is to take care of their children and to handle housework. Being a woman means being a skilful and well-matched wife and a good mother (Doğramacı, 1993). These roles effects working women in two ways; (a) working woman takes the responsibility of her job in addition to her housework and children and can’t share it with her husband (Doğramacı, 1993), (b) woman that are expected to be giving, sensitive, moody and indecisive, incapable and that talks over her problems and that are expected to appear attractive and fragile being judged not with their intelligence but beauty (Pogrebin, 1980), socialised not to be enterprising, aggressive and following strength or control (Bridge, 2003) so that they prefer professions such as nursing, teaching, physiotherapy and rehabilitation which allows them to fulfil their prior social role. The rate of woman academics are rather low (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006).

### **The Barriers of Management Women Experienced**

The barriers that women face in business are based on socio-cultural qualifications and closely related to socialisation period; norms, laws and theoretical adjustments; educational level and industrial development (Aycan, 2004).

The most important barriers of women who wants to be managers and follow their carrier are discrimination and prejudgement. In this sense, the thoughts based on this discrimination are that women would leave work or take a long break when they have children (Bridge, 2003), that management was formed by men and manly attitudes such as strength, effectiveness and rationalism (Reay and Ball, 2000), positive discrimination to protect women, that women are not believed to undertake the responsibilities requiring high performance (Aycan, 2004). These are the barriers that are mostly experienced by women and occurred covered or wide-open in business life.

Besides, women themselves forming some barriers can be mentioned as another important point. Women’s attitude towards the roles of sexes, internalising social bias without criticising, indecisiveness, not having the opportunity, belief or wish to change the conditions or to improve themselves, the belief that the system is stable, feeling obliged to support the present system, not being tended to carrier, not being able to dare the difficulties and necessities of promoting (Aycan, 2004), that women who have children are faced with role conflicts (Arslan and Yapıcı, 2006), and that they quit their job not to hinder their responsibilities for their children, losing their self confidence because of criticising themselves firmly before they accept promotion (Bridge, 2003) can be mentioned here. These attitudes are proved by the researches of Goode and Bagilhol. Their paper shows us that rather less woman managers in the universities organised before 1992 tended to change the system of their organisation (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998). In some papers it is considered women being very sensitive to be a barrier in business or management, while Snogross’s studies in psychology points out that women are not more sensitive than men and that sensitiveness does not depend on gender but status (Reay and Ball, 2000) .

From the point of other woman colloquies also hinder women taking up the steps of the promotion. Other women colloquies can be identified in two ways; (a) woman managers' attitudes; being eager to become only woman in management - called queen bee syndrome, feeling tense because of comparing herself with others in every way called multi-dimensional jealousy and pretending as male actors of the organisation to show she is one of them (Aycan, 2004); (b) woman colloquies' attitudes; when one of them wants to climb up, other women's trying to block her way and to keep everyone in place in the group called crap basket (Keuthen, 2005).

In organisational basis, the following can be mentioned; male managers' supporting their fellows to keep the control, role conflicts of woman managers and men (Aycan, 2004), a little role models of woman managers, that maternal leave needs a break (Arslan and Yapıcı, 2006) and this break causes some problems in management and promotion, common management attitudes which have patriarchal values contradicting with woman's style, woman managers' being obliged to prove that they deserve their position (Bridge, 2003). Some researchers assert that the risk of not coming back to the position after maternal leave comes up with the thought that after having a child, women wouldn't accept carrier as a satisfying opportunity (Davidson, 1999).

### Women in Academy

An academic should takeover many roles such as role of an instructor and researcher; s/he serves both university and science. In fact being an academic requires overloaded work (Bailyn, 2003, Deem, 2003). Academics have to give priority to their jobs (Bailyn, 2003). In this sense, it is clear that women's social roles prevent them from becoming an academic. On the other hand, the ones which prefer to be an academic can't have the chance to move on because their both roles needs too much time (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006). One of the woman managers who has taken part in Goode and Bagilhole's research says that she had to work much including her part-time work when she had a young child to reach her position and now she is asking herself how long and how much more she can struggle to get a promotion in her organisation (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998). The ones who prefer their career have also some disadvantages. Most of the top woman managers do not have children and are single (Bailyn, 2003), or they got divorced in the early years of their career and are now single parents (Luke, 2002). The ones who spend twice as much energy to fulfil their responsibilities to their work and their family and who sacrifice their sleep become less effective and competitive (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006).

Having departments for many professions, universities are convenient organisations for vertical and horizontal gender discrimination. Women vertically take part in positions that have low status, low wage and low title, horizontally in positions that have low prestige and low wage (Luke, 2002, Shein, 1973). Gender is closely related to organisational structure, managers of academy, the size of the department, coherence to external commercial activities, competence of funding in academy (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998, Luke, 2002). Woman academics face with both the glass ceiling that prevents them from becoming aware of what they want and the glass wall which prevents them from reaching effective positions and limits their wages (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998). Women have barriers in every period of their career because of the patriarchal aspects of their organisations, societies and families (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006). Woman managers that participated Goode and Bagilhole's research stated that recently practised management style is affected by "common patriarchal thoughts" (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998). Bailyn signified that he is not sure that the procedures follow gender equality and are impartial in terms of assessing competencies, promotion and keeping the position (Bailyn, 2003). Male managers states that they feel more comfortable when they work with their fellows and they externalise women in employing and promoting to keep "old boys' club" (Luke, 2002). The women that are capable of overcoming the barrier are expected to obey the common rules. Woman managers stated that when they don't play the game with their male colloquies' rules, they are called the one who unbalance the boat and they never get the chance to persuade the others (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998). Goode and Bagilhole's paper on the application letters for the position of teaching at universities shows that the rate of women candidates are more than that of men (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998).

Apart from glass ceiling pipeline theories supports that women can't reach the top management positions because they are not able to form a populous and qualified mass (Luke, 2002). Bailyn pointed out that working alone in profession causes more gender discrimination while a few faced less. When a woman is alone in the profession, the problems are perceived as personal ones, but the discriminations become clear with the raise in number (Bailyn, 2003).

In English universities inequality is similar; woman managers constitute only 15% of the current staff (Goode ve Bagilhole, 1998). In Turkiye, the increase in the number of universities raised the proportion of woman academics to 38% (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006). In contrast, the rate of woman managers is only 11,9% in total. In 53 state university, the rate of woman rectors is 3%, the rate of deans is 11,1%, that of academy managers is 12,7% and that of institute managers is 13,3% in total.

According to Todd and Bird, the prior aim of women is marriage and their family and because of that they have less career tendency than men (Aldemir and Bhatti, 2006). For Adams, being an academic requires qualifications such as competence and success that are formed by male experiences. To Georgi, a scientist has to be compatible and assertive but women who behaves in this way are accepted to be rude and grumpy (Bailyn, 2003). Virginia Valian claims that people's assessment of performance and expectations from men and women are unconsciously differs, as a result when a man gets higher points for a work that he fulfilled, woman can't get that much for the same one (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998).

In the early years of information age as the other organisations, universities are to put into practice transformational and transactional attitudes excessively in management. To Newman, with the transformational concepts that are accepted in academies recently such as long term power based on individuals, transferring authority, interaction with staff and customers, women will have much more opportunities to have top positions in management (Goode and Bagilhole, 1998).

### Feminist Theories

Women rights struggle has started in the early years of 18<sup>th</sup> century. With the intellectuality period the thought of equality on the basis of eliminating slavery started to spread and develop with the name of "Human Rights". Prior feminists had the opportunity to start their struggle questioning "Are women humans?"

In this period the basic and the first theory of the feminist move is Liberal Feminist Theory. Liberal conception supports that woman should leave private and appear in public, vote because politics which had excessively patriarchal decayed values needed moral perspectives of women (Donovan, 2001, Kitch, 1994). Intellectual liberal feminists shares the sentiments of Seneca Falls Convention 1848; (a) one can only find the truth through conscience which mean believing in mind and the truth can not be held by any of the customs or organisations, (b) women are alike men ontologically, (c) social change depends on critical thinking gained by education, (d) each individual is alone apart from the others looking for the truth itself and his/her honour depending on independence and living freely and rationally, (e) that men and women should have the equal political rights (Donovan, 2001).

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cultural feminists accepted the thoughts of liberal feminists such as critical thinking and the importance of improving oneself they strongly emphasised the collective, irrational and intuitional way of the life (Blackmore, 1993). They highlighted the differences of women from men rather than the similarities . The pioneer of the theory , Fuller asserts that women have perception beyond rationalism on explaining the links which are not clearly seen between various lives (Donovan, 2001). Cultural femisits different from liberal ones didn't only pointed social roles of women but also the roles of women in family, religion and marriage.

Following the Liberal and Cultural move of feminists Marxist Feminist Theory suggests theories explaining and adjusting social concepts in addition to the human rights doctrine of the previous theories. Marxism is based on materialist determinism theory which asserts that the root of society is the standards of economic and financial situations (Donovan, 2001, Ganderston, 1991). Engels points out that women are kept indoors with housework and it is impossible to have equal rights as long as they are externalised productive work. Margeret Benston supports that women's status highly depend

upon finance and housework does not have a financial profit (Epstein, 1988). The difference between Feminism and Marxism is that Feminism focuses on gender and social roles rather than materialism on the basis of ideological structure so that labour is to Marxism and gender is to Feminism. Marxist theory is dialectic materialism and feminism is consciousness (Donovan, 2001).

Individualisation of women depends upon existentialism philosophy and the most important studies were the subject of Simone de Beauvoir. To Beauvoir, each individual exists concretely producing ideas fluently; and s/he fulfils her/his independence passing beyond the others'; and justification of existence is only possible by reaching a limitless point of view (Hopton, 1999). The conflict that women experience is because of being stuck between the human right to exist individually and expected roles of being dependant to others (Beauvoir, 1993). Beauvoir's thoughts about Liberal and Marxist Feminism are that demanding equal rights that men have does not mean ignoring the dissimilarities of women and to accept this privileged situation one should go beyond the limits of historical materialism which considers men and women only financial sources (Beauvoir, 1993).

## Method

In the study qualitative study method was applied and the study was held by semi-structured interviews with the woman managers in a state university. All the interviews were recorded on an audiocassette recorder. Everything was noted during the conversation to pace the interviews and to write down a statement or idea. In addition, any observation or summary points that came to mind immediately after the interviews were also noted. In the answers, every point of view of woman, with each individual point of view exposed its theoretical approach. Every answer given had been exposed and by comparing them, they were interpreted depending on feminist theory.

## Findings

To the woman managers the first question was that whether they think being a manager is raising difficulties, with the responsibilities to their husbands and family and while one of the managers said "it is a problem about managing the time" the other said "with a good planning no timing problem occurs" and with these answers they mean that the difficulties should be coped by using the time efficiently. On the other hand two of the managers said that their husbands are understanding people and for this reason they don't have difficulties and the other one said that her family always support her.

As one of our managers mentioning, by the thought that women having more responsibilities on family in a patriarchal community, "a woman can deal with the responsibilities of the family while working", on the other hand the other woman principal supported this but pointed that this is too tiring.

Four woman managers, answering the question "in a man dominant community is it harder for a woman to be a manager?", stated that they have problems in management area because of the patriarchal community. As one of our woman managers saying that "men see management as power, they don't want woman to have the power", the other states that the fastidiousness and detailed work of women are demonstrated as a disadvantage by the man workers.

The woman managers who especially work in the areas related with masculine features, state that they come across with problems about improving in their areas. One of the woman managers stated that once she made an application and her application was rejected because most of the workers were men and her management should have bad effects on their creativity.

Our two other woman managers, different from other answers, stated that individual features is in the most important place. In this context, one woman principal notified her point of view by saying "It is related with the women's' attitude and decisiveness; therefore it won't be harder. Not the gender discrimination but the worthy individuals should be given a chance". One of the woman managers expressed the importance of the advantage of being a woman in this area as well as individual features with this sentence, "On the contrary it has also advantages. People behave more kind and polite; depending on this, more calm atmosphere is provided."

To the question whether they are motivated about being a manager or leader by the family and the surrounding that you grew up with, four of our woman managers shared the opinion that they didn't come across with such an attitude. As two of these managers stating that they were always supported by their family, the other two emphasised that they were motivated by their own effort and expressed their opinion with these words; "During all my education period I aimed at being well-equipped by reading too much, investigating and analysing.", "I tried to exceed by reading".

On the other hand one of the two managers who are against this idea, "Family guides the way you perceive facts in your surrounding. If you have the right to take a share in the decision this improves your self-confidence. Motivation is related with self-confidence.", the other principal, "I always felt considering their behaviours when I was young", with these states they mentioned the importance of their family and surroundings in their recent position.

Three woman managers who gave positive answers to the question whether they'd prefer their school to be managed by woman managers or not; "The size of intuition of the woman managers are always too effective.", "Woman managers can easily get along with other people especially when they are self-confident. Also, occasionally man managers should disobey the moral principles whereas this is impossible for a woman principal.", "If a woman who is a principal in a university is a mother, she behaves to her students by taking her experiences into account. She communicates better and more effectively.". With these declarations, they introduced the differences of woman managers' behaviours.

On the other hand some other three woman managers who mentioned that they hadn't experienced a gender discrimination related with this area yet stated, " business knowledge and management knowledge are more important factors than gender." A woman principal expressed her opinion about this subject with the words : "For a manager, ID and position should be more privileged than gender." . One of the woman managers that supports this idea basically, expressed the idea of the difference of woman managers to man managers with these words : " Women are pragmatic, businesslike and versatile. In the woman gene there is value of being effective and this furnishes the duty. Men are more sentimental and they can lose their objectivity easily."

About the subject whether YÖK – the Higher Education Association - supports the women to be principal or not, one of the woman managers emphasised that they are encouraged, by saying : "In every rectors meeting it is claimed to increase the number of the woman managers", and the other woman principles share the idea that no obstruction or encouragement.

When the woman principles' ideas about the positive discrimination for increasing the number of woman managers are asked, as two of the managers stated that this is a must and according to them they can take courage of this, other four stated that they are against positive discrimination with the answer : " education of women should be handled carefully and for this mission qualified women should be trained."

Five woman managers who stated that the women's physiological difference is not an obstacle on being a manager said : " Especially maternal leave can be planned. As well as the community gives the woman the role of reproducing, it should give the vacation right. We have office managers; by authority transfer, during the break the problem about management can be prevented.". Against these managers, one other woman principle of ours' said : "The women at the age of reproduction should be not preferred. Because they can make their choices in that area and this can be a disadvantage. If I were going to make a choice I wouldn't choose the women in this period. Also to be a manager needs some physical power. When people are finished with their power, their tolerance limit becomes lower. Physical tiredness, should be an obstacle for making the necessities of the work.

To the woman principals, it is asked whether the cultural and social surroundings can accept the women as managers. Two of the woman principals working in the counties expressed the peoples' and at first the local administrations' negative reaction to this opinion with these words : " In the first period of my duty most of the men principals in the protocol weren't used to greet me in official ceremonies. But after a couple of months, after one of them greeted me the others also followed him.", "Firstly, because of the fact that they were too conservative, they were against a university in their surrounding. Although they didn't mention their opinion by words they were trying to mention their

opinion by body language and mimics. Afterwards, although local managers visited the new-built school which were managed by a man, they didn't visit the school that I manage." Other four woman principals stated that they didn't come across with such a problem.

Other question is that whether it is harder for the workers to accept when the manager is woman. Two of our woman principles, because that they are working in woman dominant areas mentioned that they do not face with problems. Besides, the other woman principle stating "I experience lack of support and jealousy" shows the basic attitude that a woman manager can face from her colloquies. One of the managers stated "Women usually make people work hard and tough person spoils the game" while the other said, "I am a self-disciplined and authoritative person. I never have problems with my staff. Everyone is aware of their duties." The experiences shows us the effects of woman style in management. The other two managers stated no troubles with their staff.

Another question is asked to managers to identify the other possible factors that hinder women and three of the managers pointed out the barriers based on women's characteristics "such as liable identity and women's not able to limit the cases because of focusing too much. In their personal life and business that causes many troubles. When one becomes a manager, s/he has to deal with a lot of problems but men easily leave it when they are not able to sort it out. Besides, social roles are more satisfying. Women prefer being a mother and they do not need professional work." , "women are not self-confident and not ready to take responsibility. They do not accept dealing with the outcomes of their decisions. They pretend shy and incompatible. They need to prove that they are courageous and decided." Others mentioned the strength of men and they are preferred as managers compared to women.

## Conclusion

Most of the women managers took part in our study agrees that some professions and management are identified with patriarchal values. These manly attitude base ideas results in disapproval of woman's differences because of gender. In this sense, some pointed out that when they wanted to depict feminine style, they were immediately criticised. On the other hand, that woman managers participating production, effectiveness and productivity do not face with any barriers is supported by Marxist Feminist Theory. Considering the answers of our managers, woman managers can not reflect their personal or individual differences to their work. Thus, it is not yet possible for women to appear beyond their gender in their organisations as we mentioned in Existential Feminism Theory.

Some of the experiences that the managers justify are the existence of "old boys' club" and, therefore, women are not allowed to join. Besides, according to the experiences of the ones who work mostly with women, identifies their groups in similar aspects of "crab basket" and they point out that women colloquies do not support their fellows to get promoted.

Woman managers had to overcome the identical barriers and problems with other professions during the period that they spent affording to take part in management staff. In the study, women do not mention any experienced obstacles in their professions in academy. In the light of the answers of the woman managers took part in this study and references that were scanned before the interviews, following should be mentioned;

Social behaviours and attitudes are the barriers for women to work in management and academies. Society should encourage the idea that woman is capable of working in every field and that production and management can not be fulfilled depending upon gender but education and consciousness. In this sense, the families should avoid gender discrimination and take the responsibility of growing an individual. The equal distribution of the responsibilities, identified by social roles, between people would finish women being obliged to make a choice between career and family and their exhaustion and lack of performance depending on the overloaded responsibilities. Grown as individuals, girls are not likely to be liable because of lack of self-confidence in their life. The barriers emerged from women's characteristics should also be overcome by education. Woman managers emphasised the success coming up with education that they personally afforded to have so that in addition to personal ones it is vital to support and lead these efforts for community. Another barrier pointed out by the

woman managers is maternal leave during their career. In this sense, organisational practices such as transforming authority, accessing web effectively can prevent women from the undesirable effects of the short break on their career.

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