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STEREOTYPE THREAT FOR FEMALE LEADERS: A QUALITATIVE  
APPROACH

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## Stereotype Threat for Female Leaders: A Qualitative Approach

### Kadın Liderler için Basmakalıp Yargı Tehdidi: Nitel Bir Yaklaşım

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores Turkish female middle and top level managers' recall of experiences of stereotype threat. The aim is to contribute to the literature by expanding knowledge about women's stereotype threat experiences using qualitative methods. Interview questions were constructed based on the stereotype threat literature suggesting that stereotype threat has physiological, emotional, cognitive and psychological aspects. Additionally, key outcomes of stereotype threat identified in the literature are performance deterioration, domain identification and coping strategies which were also key components explored in the interviews. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with six female Turkish participants and the data was analyzed by Qualitative Content Analysis via MAXQDA Qualitative Analysis Program. Corresponding with the topics of interviews, six main themes have been collaborated which are "Physiological Responses", "Emotional and Psychological Responses", "Cognitive Responses", "Disengagement and Disidentification with the Domain", "Job Performance Outcomes" and "Coping Mechanisms". The results were found to be in line with the literature on stereotype threat and responses, consequences and coping mechanisms associated with it. Three out of six participants reported most effects in response to the threat. Current findings contribute to the literature by drawing attention to emotional consequences of stereotype threat. Findings of the research also illustrate how deteriorating the effects of stereotype threat are and that it can have significant negative consequences on female leaders in organizations.

*Keywords:* Stereotype Threat, Women Leadership, Qualitative Research, Gender Based Stereotypes, Qualitative Content Analysis

## ÖZET

Bu nitel araştırma orta ve üst seviye yönetici olan Türk kadınlarının basmakalıp yargı tehdidiyle ilgili olan anlattıkları deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Çalışmanın amacı kadınların basmakalıp yargı tehdidiyle olan deneyimleri konusundaki literatüre nitel yöntemler aracılığıyla katkı yapmaktır. Çalışmanın mülakat soruları literatürde yer alan basmakalıp yargı tehdidinin fizyolojik, duygusal, bilişsel ve psikolojik yönleri dikkate alınarak ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Ayrıca, mülakat sorularıyla, basmakalıp yargı tehdidinin anahtar çıktıları olan performansın kötüye gitmesi, alan kimliği ve başa çıkma stratejileri de incelenmektedir. Altı Türk kadın yöneticiyle gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar Nitel İçerik Analizi yöntemi ile MAXQDA program kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan analizler sonucunda altı ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu ana temalar “Fizyolojik Tepkiler”, “Duygusal ve Psikolojik Tepkiler”, “Bilişsel Tepkiler”, “Alan Kimliğinden Uzaklaşma ve Geri Çekilme”, “İş Performansı Çıktıları” ve “Başa Çıkma Mekanizmaları” başlıkları altında toplanmıştır. Bulgular, literatüre paralel bir şekilde ortaya çıkmış ve literatürde yer alan basmakalıp yargı tehdidiyle ilgili verilen tepkilere, sonuçlara ve başa çıkma mekanizmalarına benzerlik göstermektedir. Altı katılımcıdan üçü basmakalıp yargı tehdidinin etkilerini en fazla göstermiştir ve bu tehdidin sonuçlarını bildirmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçları basmakalıp yargı tehdidinin duygusal sonuçlarına dikkat çekerek literatüre katkı sağlamıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları aynı zamanda basmakalıp yargı tehdidinin örgütlerde çalışan kadın liderler üzerinde yıkıcı ve etkin negatif sonuçları olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

*Anahtar kelimeler:* Basmakalıp Yargı Tehdidi, Kadın Liderler, Nitel Araştırma, Cinsiyet Temelli Önyargılar, Nitel İçerik Analizi

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This research thesis focuses on examining the experience of female leaders with regards to stereotype threat in middle and top level managerial roles, in Turkey. Stereotype threat is a social psychological phenomenon, referring to distress caused by a situational experience of being stigmatized as a representative of a group that is negatively stereotyped in some performance domain (Steele, 1992). Stereotype threat is associated with the fear of confirming the stereotype (Steele, 1992; Steele, 1997), which would give credence to negative views about one's in-group. Stereotype threat is likely to arise when one's group identity or the stereotype is salient in a performance situation, given one is aware of this negative stereotype (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Stereotype threat is a commonly studied concept in leadership with regards to female leaders' performances in leadership roles and women's aspiration for leadership roles in general. Experimental studies have been conducted to measure or understand stereotype threat responses, antecedents and experiences of female leaders. In these studies, females' responses to this threat in terms of self-perceptions have been examined. Studies indicate that in response to stereotype salience, female leaders indicate less aspiration and perceive themselves as poor performers as compared to conditions in which those stereotypes are not salient (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Kray & Shirako, 2011; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999).

The research paradigm of stereotype threat relies on experimental methods. The antecedents, consequences and outcomes of this threat have been studied with experimental techniques exclusively. However, the experimental method has its shortcomings as it confines research to laboratory settings with undergraduate students as participants, thus it places limitation to study stereotype threat in field settings, such as its implications in organizations (e.g., Kalokerinos, von Hippel & Zacher, 2014). As these studies rely on quantitative research, there are a limited number of qualitative researches (e.g., Jones, & Carpenter, 2014) in this field; even more limited account exists of how female leaders report their experience of stereotype threat. Moreover, majority of the

studies in the literature (e.g. Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Von Hippel, Zouroudis & Abbas, 2003) have obtained samples from Western countries. In this sense, the present research will be a pioneer study conducted with Turkish female managers using qualitative methods to investigate their stereotype threat experience and related outcomes.

For the purpose of the current thesis study, qualitative methods are used in which interviews are conducted with Turkish female middle and top managers' recall of emotional, physiological, psychological and cognitive dimensions of their stereotype threat experience and related outcomes– if there are any such experiences to recall. Hence, the aim is to contribute to the literature by expanding the research base about women's stereotype threat experience using qualitative methods. The thesis will provide a qualitative methodological angle into existing findings in the literature in terms of (a) how female leaders experience stereotype threat, including cognitive, emotional, physiological and psychological aspects, (b) what type of consequences stereotype threat has in terms of performance and identification with the leadership domain, and finally (c), how these female leaders cope with the threat.

First, this thesis will introduce the topic of stereotype threat by providing a literature review inclusive of definition, mediators, moderators, mechanisms, consequences and history of stereotype threat research. After the literature review, the methodology section will detail the semi-structured interviews that have been conducted with six middle or top-level Turkish female managers working in various private and public sectors. The results section will provide the analysis of the qualitative data via MAXQDA qualitative analysis program using Qualitative Content Analysis. The results are presented in terms of the main themes and subthemes that emerged in the analysis. The last chapter, discussion, will provide an explanation and interpretation of the results in terms of their contribution to the literature while also outlining the strengths and limitations of the study besides suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 STEREOTYPE THREAT

##### 2.1.1 Background

The stereotype threat research paradigm has originally been a response to claims that the academic performance gap between African Americans and White Americans, on the advantage of the latter, was a result of racial genetic differences in mental ability. For example, Herrnstein and Murray's infamous book, *The Bell Curve* (1994), has been interpreted to imply that African Americans are inherently inferior to White Americans in cognitive ability. As a response to such allegation, Stanford researcher, Claude M. Steele (1992), proposed that African Americans' underperformance in academic settings can result from a situational distress of being a member of negatively stereotyped group and facing negative expectations.

Steele proposed the term stereotype threat, which refers to a situational blocking when a person due to his/her race, gender or any source of social diversity feels less skilled as compared to his/her colleague or peers representing the majority group. Stereotype threat emerges from the fear of inadvertently showing poor performance and confirming the negative stereotypes (Steele, 1997). Ironically, this worry prevents targeted individuals to perform to their maximum. Stereotype threat, since then, has become one of the most popular research topics in Social Psychology. According to the author (Steele, 1992) the anxiety is caused by the constant stress and being stigmatized as representative of a negatively stereotyped group. Any failure might be seen as a confirmation of stereotype. In short, stereotype threat refers to distress of confirming a negative in-group stereotype about performance. In response to this fear, targets may perform poorly and disidentify with the domain (Steele, 1997).

Generally, stereotype threat studies use members of stereotyped groups as participants in between-subject experiments, manipulating stereotype threat as an independent variable. Stereotype threat is manipulated by various methods, such as blatantly reminding participants of being members of a negatively

stereotyped group (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998), or subtly, such as placing participants into a solo condition in which they are outnumbered by members of a dominant group (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003). The outcome variable is mainly objective or subjective evaluation of performance (such as self-ratings), though other related outcomes, such as domain identification, are often measured. Ideally, researchers randomly assign participants into an experimental condition in which assumedly the participants feel stereotypically threatened and their dependent test scores are compared to those of participants in a control condition.

According to the Multi Threat Framework proposed by Shapiro & Neuberg (2007) there are six components in two dimensions that cause stereotype threat. These two dimensions are source of the threat and target of the threat. Target of the threat is either self or the group. On the other hand, source of threat is self, in-group members or out-group members. In this case, one can be the target of threat if the stereotypes match with their social identity. Source of threat is the source that has judgments based on the stereotypes; therefore the judging can come from both the in-group and out-group. When the source of threat is oneself, one may fear that upon confirming the stereotype, it would give credence to the expectation that one in fact is the poor performer in the eyes of (a) oneself, (b) in-group others, (c) out-group members. When group identity is psychologically salient, one may fear that upon confirming the stereotype, it would give credence to negative beliefs about one' in-group in the eyes of (a) oneself, (b) in-group others, (c) out-group members (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Shapiro, Willilams & Hambarchyan, 2013).

### **2.1.2 The Stereotype Threat Research Paradigm**

Many studies have been conducted to investigate stereotype threat and to develop an understanding of this phenomenon. Some of these studies have been conducted to investigate factors within the person and in the context as moderators that can enhance or reduce the effects of stereotype threat, mainly on performance. Further, many studies have investigated the mechanism of stereotype threat effects, examining factors that mediate the relationship between stereotype threat manipulations, such as the salience of negative in-group stereotypes and various outcome variables. Some studies specifically focus on psychological outcomes of stereotype threat, while others investigate coping

techniques targeted individuals can use to mitigate stereotype threat effects on their own performances. The following sections outline these research areas of stereotype threat. The aim of this literature review is to provide a theoretical background for the methodological section of this thesis research with regards to the design and development of interview question items for this qualitative study.

### **2.1.3 Moderators of Stereotype Threat**

Members of negatively stereotyped groups who have a strong bond with their in-group are more likely to feel stigmatized and become vulnerable to negative stereotypes about their in-group (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1999; Maalouf, 2001; Steele, 2002; Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002). If the stereotypes are constantly being emphasized, implicitly or explicitly, in the environment it can lead to threat responses. As proposed by Steele (1997) “threat in the air” environments can increase the chances of a person to be vulnerable to stereotypes about their in-group. It was also found that priming can have an impact on stereotype threat to occur (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Additionally, an individual must be aware of the stereotypes and that these stereotypes about their in-group have the potential to have an effect on their performance (Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002).

Cues for the presence of stereotype threat can come in many forms. Firstly, when an individual is in an environment that blatantly reminds them of their in-group stereotypes then it is likely that stereotype threat responses will occur. Similarly, when encountering statements or people that remind them of stereotypical judgments then it is likely for a person to experience this threat (Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999). The threat can emerge when targets in solo status represent their in-group, are accentuating their minority and have an identity that is negatively stereotyped (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003). Furthermore, being chronically exposed to stereotyped situations can lead to vigilance, which can also enhance vulnerability responses (Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006; Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008).

When the self is the target of threat as outlined in the Multi-Threat Framework of Shapiro & Neuberg (2007), the target is motivated to manage a

positive evaluation by oneself and by others. Therefore, the moderators for this target are related to being approved and accepted including level of self esteem and need to belong (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Kernis, Paradies, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000; Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2006). In short, if an individual has high levels of self esteem, they are less affected by stereotypes. Further, if an individual has a heightened need to belong he or she is more likely to be vulnerable to stereotypes.

When the target of the threat is the in-group, then the individual has the desire for their in-group to be evaluated and viewed positively. The moderators then are more likely to reflect cues that activate collectivism, private and public acceptance of group and collective self esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton & Smith, 1997). When collectivism is activated and the group is publicly and privately accepted, it is less likely for stereotype threat responses to occur. However, if collective self esteem is low and the group isn't socially accepted, then there is a high chance for stereotype outcomes to emerge. When others are the source of threat then the moderators are linked to the need for public and social approval. These moderators include self-consciousness and self-monitoring (e.g. Gangestad & Synder, 2000; Inzlicht, Aronson, Good & McKay, 2006). Furthermore, individuals who show high levels of stigma consciousness (Brown & Pinel, 2003) and accept stereotypes as true for their group (Marx, Stapel & Muller, 2005; Schmader, 2002) are more likely to be affected by stereotype threat.

#### **2.1.4 Mediators of Stereotype Threat**

One of the most emphasized mediators of stereotype threat effect is anxiety. Anxiety has been found to be a response given in stereotype threat situations and has the capacity to reduce performance and affect other outcomes of the threat. Many studies have demonstrated anxiety as a mediator of stereotype threat effects (e.g., Blascovich et. al, 2001; Leyens, De'sert, Croizet & Darcis, 2000; O'Brien & Crandall, 2003; Osborne, 2001; Shewach, Sackett & Quint, 2019). Anxiety can cause a person to underperform in tasks and to detach from the domain (Sackett & Quint, 2019). The fear of being evaluated by others, referred to as evaluation apprehension, can also be a mediator between

stereotype threat and various outcomes (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, Steele, & Brown, 1999; Steele & Aronson 1995). Expectancies and dejection were also demonstrated as mediators (Cadinu, Maass, Frigerio, Impagliazzo, & Latinotti, 2003; Keller & Dauenheimer, 2003; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001; Leyens et al., 2000). Negative expectations and feelings of dejection can cause decrease in performance and also disengagement and disidentification with the domain.

Additionally, negative thoughts about performance and negative performance evaluations have shown to mediate outcomes of stereotype threat (Cadinu, Maass, Rosabianca & Kiesner, 2005; Stangor, Carr, & Kiang, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). In this sense, when a person has negative thoughts about their performance evaluation this can in return make them show stereotype threat responses in terms of decrease in performance. Finally, working memory capacity has been shown to reduce in response to negative stereotypes and can lead to decrease in performance (Schmader & Johns, 2003).

For stereotype threat and related vulnerabilities to occur, a person must be aware of the stereotypes. Further, the target must also be in a situation that has the possibility for stereotypes to be present (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005). Therefore, the activation level of a stereotype in the specific domain mediates stereotype threat outcomes (Davies et al., 2002; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002).

### **2.1.5 Consequences of Stereotype Threat**

Stereotype threat can have a range of negative and complex outcomes (Schmader, Johns & Forbes, 2008). According to Wheeler & Petty (2001) there are four different consequences of stereotype threat which are; underperformance, self defeating strategies (Stone, 2002), disengagement and disidentification with the domain (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998 ; Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe & Crocker, 1998), and altered personal identities and behaviors.

Stereotype threat has been shown to have a negative impact on academic test performance, measuring achievement, such as GRE and SAT (e.g. Brown & Pinel, 2003; Croizet & Claire 1998; Quinn & Spencer, 2001; Spencer, Steele &

Quinn, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995). To continue, stereotype threat has been shown to have negative consequences on targeted individuals' identification with the performance domain. Targets often disengage and disidentify with the domain in order to avoid any engagement with the stereotyped environment (e.g. Davies et al. 2002, 2005; Major & Schmader, 1998; Major, et al., 1998; Osborne, 1995).

Being vulnerable to stereotype threat can decrease self-efficacy of individuals in settings where stereotypes are relevant (Aronson & Inzlicht, 2004). Targeted individuals may develop physiological symptoms indicating serious medical conditions such as increase in blood pressure (Blascovich et al., 2001). It is proposed that physiological responses given to such a threat can include sweating of hands, increasing heart rate, getting dizzy, being out of breath and feeling pressure in chest (Huber, Seitchik, Brown, Stemad & Harkins, 2015). Researchers argue that stereotype threat can lead to anxiety symptoms and even general anxiety disorders (Ben-Zeev, Fein & Inzlicht, 2005; Bosson, Haymovitz & Pinel, 2004). Feelings of dejection is also an outcome of the threat (Keller & Daunheimer, 2003). The cognitive aspects of threat include losing concentration and attention, mental blocking, memory impairment (e.g. Shewach, Sackett & Quint, 2019).

#### **2.1.6. Coping with Stereotype Threat**

There are coping mechanisms individuals use while trying to avoid negative consequences of stereotype threat. It was found that disengaging self-worth from the domain that is stereotyped is a strategy targeted individuals can use (Stone et al., 1999). By disengaging self worth, individuals become prone to engage in behaviors that may handicap their performances. By self-handicapping, the targeted individuals create excuses for their poor performance (e.g. Keller, 2002; Stone, 2002). In other words, when individuals have lower levels of self worth, they can perform under their capacity. Furthermore, in order to distance themselves from the stereotyped group, targets may disidentify with the characteristics of their identified group (Pronin, Steele & Ross, 2004) and the environment or situation (Major & Schmader, 1998) that they are exposed to or present within. In addition, in order to disidentify with the stereotyped domain,

individuals may reduce their related career goals and aspirations (Davies et al., 2002; 2005).

## **2.2. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES**

Historically, females in general are less likely to be in high managerial and executive roles. However, in recent years there has been an increase of women occupying leadership roles. A study by Catalyst (2019) illustrates that 29% of all senior managerial roles are held by women – the highest percentage ever reached in history since women actively started working in professional settings. In the same study, it is shown that there is at least one woman in senior managerial positions in 89% of business organizations (Catalyst, 2019). According to Global Gender Gap Report by World Economic Forum (2020), 36% of both public and private sector’s managerial positions are held globally by women. The percentage of women in senior managerial roles is lower in Turkey. According to a research conducted by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) in 2019, 16.3% of women in workforce work in managerial positions and this shows an increase in percentage when compared to 14.4% in 2012 (TÜİK, 2019).

To explain the underrepresentation of women in the leadership domain, the concept “Glass ceiling” is commonly used to indicate discrimination women encounter when they aim to be in top managerial positions (Morrison, & von Glinow, 1990). This term refers to the invisible barrier that prevents women to be in elite leadership roles. Women face many difficulties and obstacles while trying to obtain these high responsibility leadership roles (Ragins & Sundstom, 1989), referred to as “obstacle course” (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). In addition, women are more often than men are appointed into precarious leadership positions that are thought to fail from the start, a phenomenon described as the “glass cliff” (Ryan, Haslam & Postmes, 2007).

Even though women are less present in leadership positions, academic research underlines the suitability of female leaders in organizations. These researches emphasize that the leadership style of women suits the needs of contemporary companies and professional organization. Women tend to adopt a leadership style which has shown to increase the effectiveness of organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli, 2014). Moreover, women leaders

are more likely than men to promote diversity in opinion and are known to show more ethical accountability in professional settings (Eagly, Gartzia & Carli, 2014).

Despite knowing that female managers and leaders bring high quality to organizations many managerial and leadership positions continue to be male dominated (Nekhili, Chokroun & Chitoui, 2018). Studies continue to demonstrate that there is no difference between the performance outcomes of male and female leaders (Hollander, 1992; Powell 1993). Although the findings of “no gender difference in leader performance” have been publicized both in academic and popular literature, there is still a gap between the percentage of males and females in senior managerial positions (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

### **2.2.1 Stereotypical Judgements about Women in Leadership Roles**

Researchers put forward some explanations to address why women are underrepresented in the leadership domain. According to studies on implicit leadership theories, leadership attributes are thought to be more fit with masculine characteristics (Forsyth & Nye, 2008; Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, & Blascovich, 1996). Therefore, characteristics, attitudes and behaviors of men are considered to be more fitting for leadership roles. Additionally, leadership as a social identity is implicitly thought to be more fitting for males rather than females (Hoyt & Chemers, 2008).

Role Congruity Theory by Eagly and Karau (2002) and Lack of Fit model by Heilman (1983; 2001) explain that social roles women are thought to occupy conflict with leadership roles in organizations. The association between masculine characteristics and leadership qualities lead to biases towards women. The association of leadership with masculine characteristics gives rise to stereotypical judgments towards women in leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie & Reichard, 2008; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). Generally, females in comparison to males have more favorable attitudes towards woman managers and perceptions of women’s suitability for the leadership roles (e.g. Bowen, Wu, Hwang & Scherer, 2007; Terborg, Peters, Ilgen, & Smith, 1977;

Tomkiewicz, Frankel, Adeyemi-Bello & Sagan, 2004). This finding has also been confirmed in Turkish samples (Ayca, Bayazit, Berkman & Boratav, 2012).

Women leaders are negatively judged when they show masculine attributes while conducting leadership tasks. On the contrary, women who are highly agentic in their leadership roles face negative reactions for not being feminine enough (Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2004). Specifically, in leadership situations women often experience “social identity contingencies”, which can be characterized as possible judgments, stereotypes, opportunities, restrictions, and treatments related to the persons social identity in a particular environment (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008).

Stereotypes about leadership favor masculine traits, which in return make men seem more suitable for leadership roles (Koenig et al., 2011). Traits such as being agentic, rational, dominant, self-reliant and having strong levels of confidence are associated with being more masculine which make men look more suitable for leadership positions. (Kalokerinos, von Hippel, & Zacher, 2014; Kray & Shirako, 2011). In terms of being agentic, males are thought to be more agentic causing them to be more favored for managerial or leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Haines, Deaux, & Lofaro, 2016). These result women to be less presented in managerial positions in many occupational sectors ranging from academic medicine (Burgess, Joseph, van Ryn, & Carnes, 2012) to STEM fields (Shapiro & Williams, 2012).

Studies have shown that even the commercials shown in television are gender stereotypical as they mostly don't present women in high professional roles (Davies et. al., 2002; Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005). Though there has been a trend in changing these representations of women in media over the past decade, this area still needs improvement (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). This underrepresentation of female leaders in many areas may lead women to lose aspiration and motivation for leadership roles.

Organizational culture plays an important role in threat responses and possible related consequences to occur. Organizations that favor males in executive positions and attributes leadership traits to males can be threatening for women (Gneezy, Niederle, & Rustichini, 2003; Kray & Shirako, 2011;

Niederle & Vesterlund, 2008). Also, organizational cultures that regard females to be less represented in executive roles can make women feel vulnerable to stereotype threat. Moreover, companies that are very competitive can be hesitant to put women in managerial roles. This hesitance may be a direct result of the stereotype that women managers are not as competitive as male managers in professional settings (Leslie, Cimpian, Meyer, & Freeland, 2015).

### **2.3 STEREOTYPE THREAT AND FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

Stereotype threat is a commonly studied concept in leadership (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Kray & Shirako, 2011). As men are more visible as leaders in the public, there is a general idea regarding males should occupy leadership roles. In a meta-analysis conducted a small effect size was found for effect of stereotype threat on women and that moderating effects exist. Performance decrement has also shown to have a small effect size for the women leaders (Hannah-Hanh & Ann Marie, 2008). Women leaders can experience stereotype threat in situations where they are less in number in managerial position in comparison to male leaders. (Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy & Skinnell, 2010; Kanter, 1977; von Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011). Being less in number in these situations can make the gender related stereotypes more salient and can result in women to be constantly aware of them. These threatening environments can cause women to feel anxious and show decrease in performance (Cheryan, Plaut, Davies & Steele, 2009).

Another important consequence the threat has on women leaders is disengagement and disidentification of women from leadership domain. With disengaging and disidentifying with the domain, women can lose their motivation to perform their leadership duties (Hoyt & Murray, 2016; Nussbaum & Steele, 2007). Therefore, being threatened to be representative of the stereotypes can cause underperformance in leadership tasks conducted by female leaders (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010). Stereotype threat can also have serious negative impacts on decision making process and communication of ideas of women leaders (Carr & Steele, 2010). Women can also lose their motivation to be successful in their career and may feel that they don't belong to the sector that they are working in (Cheryan et al., 2009; Walton & Cohen, 2007). To continue,

stereotype threat has also been found to have a negative impact on motivation of female business students to achieve entrepreneurial success (Gupta & Behave, 2007).

In stereotypical environments, there can be a decrease in the self confidence levels of female leaders (Stangor, Carr & Kiang, 1998). With this decrease in levels of self confidence, the job attitudes held by female leaders can also be negatively affected (von Hippel, Kalokerions & Henry, 2013). Moreover, women who are constantly in stereotype threat provoking environments can have less confidence in themselves for being successful in their jobs and may even have the intention to quit (von Hippel et al., 2011).

In order not to be affected by gender stereotypes and to face fewer difficulties related to their professional identity, women leaders tend to separate their professional identity from their gender identity (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011; von Hippel, Walsh, et al., 2011). This separation takes place in order to avoid consequences in terms of stereotype and to face minimal difficulties in their professional roles (Kalokerinos, von Hippel, & Zacher, 2014). With the mediating effect of identity separation, stereotype threat can decrease the well being of female leaders and in return can lead them to have less desire to recommend their jobs to other females (von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & McFarlane, 2015).

In pursue of avoiding these stereotypes, women leaders may use some coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms can also be named as reactance responses (Hoyt & Murray, 2016). These reactance responses include acting more masculine or adopting a masculine communication style (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, et al., 2011). Further, women leaders can engage in a stronger negotiation style and become more persuasive in their actions (Kray, Thompson & Galinsky, 2001). This greater reluctance in negotiation can cause women to face social costs as this can be a disadvantage for them when being compared to male counterparts (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007).

Though mostly negative consequences of stereotype threat have been explored, this threat can also have positive outcomes on women leaders. In researches conducted on this issue, women have shown better performance than

men in some cases due to the responses they give to stereotype threat. Women have shown better performance because being exposed to these stereotypes make them more determined to prove that the stereotypical judgments about women are wrong (Kray, Thompson & Galinsky 2001; Kray, Reb, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004).

## **2.4 PRESENT STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

A lot has been written about the implications of stereotypes on women's aspiration and emergence for leadership roles; and the effectiveness of female leaders. These studies investigate how women in leadership roles are perceived by others, such as their followers, or how these female leaders perceive themselves in response to those stereotypes. In terms of self-perceptions, a larger number of studies, in the tradition of role congruity theory, have explored how stereotypes are internalized by women to guide their preferences to distance themselves from leadership roles; and to seek occupations that better fit gender expectations. A smaller number of studies have specifically focused on stereotype threat in women's self-perceptions and self-evaluation in the context of leadership. These later studies fall into the general paradigm of stereotype threat research, to which the present thesis intended to contribute

In the current thesis study, based on the existing literature, it is examined whether the findings of quantitative studies are confirmed in the sample of six female leaders from Turkey. The study is aimed to shed light on these leaders' physiological, psychological, emotional and cognitive experiences with regards to stereotype threat, besides investigating implications for performance, domain identification and coping.

Physiological responses embedded in stereotype threat experience can include sweating of hands, increased heart rate, dizziness, being out of breath and feeling pressure in the chest (Huber et al, 2015). The Emotional aspects of stereotype threat include feelings of inferiority, feeling incompetent, sadness, feeling sorry for oneself, feeling tense, frustration and anger (e.g. McGee, 2018). Psychological reactions include anxiety, and fear (Shewach, Sackett & Quint, 2019). The cognitive aspects of stereotype threat includes being frozen in thinking, trouble in finding the right words, losing concentration and attention,

mental blocking, memory impairment, making mistakes in speaking, and being unable to correctly express oneself (e.g. Shewach, Sackett & Quint, 2019). Moreover, in the literature it was found that in response to stereotype threat individuals develop coping mechanisms such as trying to show masculinity in one's behavior (e.g. von Hippel et al., 2011).

When consequences of stereotype threat are considered, it has been found that individuals disengage/disidentify with their domain, means disidentification with the leadership role or distancing themselves from coworkers to avoid having a professional image (Nussbaum & Steele, 2007). Further, women in leader roles self perceive as underperforming in leadership tasks and can experience a decrease in work efficiency (Bergeron, Block, & Echtenkamp, 2006; Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001)

The research questions of the current research thesis are based on how targeted individuals experience stereotype threat, as identified in the broader stereotype threat research paradigm. The purpose of the thesis is to provide a qualitative account of these specific experiences of female leaders, and to investigate whether the findings in the literature match with the personal experiences recalled by the participants of the current study. As a general research question, the present study investigates responses female leaders recall giving in situations that could be viewed as stereotypically threatening, the consequences of their experiences on performance and domain identification. Specifically, this research investigates these female leaders' experiences in terms of (a) emotional, (b) psychological, (c) physiological and (d) cognitive responses to stereotype threat besides stereotype threat consequences on (e) performance, (f) domain identification and finally (g) coping.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This study uses interviews as a qualitative research method to examine how gender based leadership stereotypes affect female leaders in terms of stereotype threat responses as reported by the participants, including physiological (heart rate, sweating of hands etc.), cognitive (memory, attention etc.), emotional (fear etc.), psychological (anxiety etc.) responses; consequence of the threat, self-perceived performance, domain identification and coping mechanisms.

#### 3.1 PROCEDURE

In depth, face-to face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. Initially, upon starting data collection an ethical approval has been taken from Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics Committee. Twenty five open-ended questions (See Appendix C and Appendix D) have been prepared by the researcher prior to the approval of Ethics Committee. After ethical approval was taken, participants have been contacted through professional and personal connections of the researcher. Later, a convenient time for both the researcher and each participant was decided. All interviews took place in a confidential setting that was convenient for both the researcher and the participant. Before interviews took place, each participant was asked to fill out an Informed Consent Form (See Appendix A and Appendix B). In Informed Consent Form, it is stated that participation in the study is voluntary and interviews can only take place after the form is signed by participants.

Each interview last between 45 to 60 minutes. A voice recorder was used to record interviews and permission of participants were taken for their voices to be recorded (also included in the consent form). When the interviews were completed, the voice recordings were turned in to transcriptions by the researcher. While the transcription process took place, the researcher removed all personal information (participant's name, organization's name etc.) from the written transcriptions. Written transcriptions were uploaded to MAXQDA 20 Qualitative Analysis program. Using this program, all data were analyzed via Qualitative Content Analysis.

### 3.2 PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited and selected for the study through convenience and snowball sampling. Convenient sampling refers to approaching to potential participants through personal or professional network of the researcher. Snowballing is a sampling technique that relies on asking potential participants whether they have any contacts that have the characteristics or experience the research aims to find. This sampling is mostly used for groups that are not easily reached with other sampling techniques (Frost, 2011).

All participants were contacted through the researcher's personal and professional network. Although 10 participants were asked to participate in the study, only 6 participants were available to be interviewed. Participants were female middle or top-level managers who are currently working or have worked in such positions in various organizations.

Demographic information of the participants can be seen in the table given below:

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants**

	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Work Experience (Years)</b>	<b>Managerial Experience (Years)</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	1975	Master's Degree	Retail	20	11
<b>Participant 2</b>	1985	Master's Degree	Retail	13	8
<b>Participant 3</b>	1978	Graduate Student	Service	20	7
<b>Participant 4</b>	1980	Master's Degree	Energy	20	14
<b>Participant 5</b>	1978	Graduate Student	Service	21	16
<b>Participant 6</b>	1963	PhD	Education	35	9

Participant 1 is 45 years old, is married and has a child. She was previously the marketing manager/director in her last two jobs. She has worked in both energy and retail sector. More than 100 people worked as her subordinates in both sectors. The participant has a degree in Political Science and a master's degree in another field of specialization. She has been in work life for 20 years and has worked as a manager for 11 years. Throughout her career she has lived in Istanbul, in where she also currently resides.

Participant 2 is 35 years old, single and lives in Istanbul. Currently, she works in retail sector as the manager of Human Resources department in her company. She has 13 years of work experience and works as a manager in her current company for the last 4 years. In total, the participant has 8 years of managerial experience in her professional career. She has completed her Bachelor's degree in Economics and has completed two master's degrees, one with a thesis and one without a thesis.

Participant 3 is 42 years old, married and has a child. She has worked in Human Resources department throughout her career. She has 20 years of work experience and has worked as the manager of Human Resources department in her last company. In her last company, which was in service sector, she worked as a manager for 4 years. In total, she has worked for 7 years as a manager. The participant has a Bachelor's degree in History and is currently a graduate student in Psychology.

Participant 4 is 40 years old and is single. She works as District Sales manager in an international company in the energy sector. She has 20 years of work experience and works in managerial position in her current company for the last 7 months. The participant has in total 14 years of managerial experience. She has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a master' degree in the field of Social Sciences. The participant lives and works in Istanbul.

Participant 5 is 42 years old and married. She is the managing partner of her own company. Her company does consulting for over 100 big companies. She has 21 years of work experience and has worked as a managing partner in her company for the last 4 years. The participant has in total 16 years of managerial experience.

She has a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and is currently completing her master's degree.

Participant 6 is 57 years old and has a daughter. She was both the president of a professional chamber and the head of department in her university which she has worked for 25 years. She has 35 years of work experience and was the president of the professional chamber for a year. She was the head of department in her university for 9 years. The participant has obtained a Doctoral degree in Architecture. She has worked in Ankara for her entire professional career and continues to live in the same city.

The ages of participants range from 35 to 57 and the average age of participants is 43.5. Work experience of participants is between 13 to 35 years and the average work experience of participants is 21.5 years. In terms of managerial experience, the experience of participants range from 7 to 16 years. The average year of managerial experience of participants is 10.8 years.

### **3.3 INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION**

This qualitative study relies on interviews to explore participants' stereotype threat experience. Each participant that agreed to be a part of the study was interviewed once. The interviews were semi-structured, starting with general questions about the demographic information of the participant and later become more specific on stereotype threat experiences (See Appendix C and D). The questions are ordered from general to specific questions for two reasons. First, to make the participants more comfortable as they can feel more confident starting with general questions and then later moving on to more personal, detailed questions. The other reason for using such a structure is to give participants enough time to think about the concepts as the questions build up to elaborate on them.

In each interview 25 questions were asked to the participants. The questions were constructed based on the literature on the physiological (e.g. Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008), emotional (e.g. McGee, 2018), cognitive (e.g. McGlone & Pfeister, 2015) and psychological (e.g. Blascovich et al., 2001) experiences of participants given in situations deemed to be stereotype threatening. Along with these experiences, the questions are based on literature on, consequences (e.g. Hoyt & Murray, 2016), performance outcomes (e.g. Davies et al., 2002; Spencer, Steele,

& Quinn, 1999; Spencer & Aronson, 2002) and coping mechanisms (e.g. von Hippel et al., 2011) that are associated with the threat. The interview questions begin with demographics about the participant's career, continues with questions related with leadership and stereotypes, and finally leads to the questions based on stereotype threat experiences where the results of this present study are obtained from. Interview questions were developed on the basis of stereotype threat research findings capturing the likely experiences of targeted individuals in stereotype threat. The 25 questions are categorized into seven categories to examine a different aspect of stereotype threat.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

All interview data were collected with voice recording applications. Participants were notified that voice recording will be made during the interviews before the interview had taken place. After the interviews, the recordings were transformed into written documents. These documents were then uploaded to MAXQDA 20 qualitative data analysis program. MAXQDA allows storing transcriptions separately, cross-connect them, take necessary notes and indicate information in colors. Also, this program facilitates the process of coding, to form themes and master themes. The interviews were analyzed with coding technique and the codes were merged and interpreted with Qualitative Content Analysis technique. Qualitative content analysis is a method used to analyze qualitative data by putting parts of the data into categories by forming main codes and subcodes. The successive part of the qualitative data is coded by a coding frame (Schreier, 2013). In short, this method systematically analyzes data with coding frame rules and with interpretations of the researcher (Soroko & Dolczewski, 2020).

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Under the framework of the general research question “What are the responses female leaders give in terms of stereotype threat and what are the associated consequences?”, the data collected from the participants through the conducted interviews have been analyzed with Qualitative Content Analysis technique using MAXQDA 20 Qualitative Analysis Program .The program seeks to uncover themes and subthemes in the data. With data analysis, 6 main themes and 20 subthemes have been found as results. These 6 main themes, corresponding with the pre-designed categories of the questionnaire are “Physiological Responses given to Stereotype Threat”, “Emotional and Psychological Responses given to Stereotype Threat”, “Cognitive Responses given to Stereotype Threat”, “Disengagement and Disidentification with the Domain”, “Job Performance Outcomes” and “Coping Mechanisms”.

#### **4.1 PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES GIVEN TO STEREOTYPE THREAT**

During the interviews, 4 out of 6 participants have stated that they had experienced physiological responses in situations that can be considered as threatening stereotypically, specifically when the participants were at risk of being stereotypically judged. Subthemes under physiological responses are “Palpitation”, “Headaches and Migraine Attacks” and “Other Physiological Responses”.

##### **4.1.1 Palpitation**

Two participants have stated that they experience palpitations. They explained that they experienced increased heart beat in situations where their managerial performance was judged by males, or when they were in a solo status as woman among males, or when they felt that they were at risk of being unfairly judged on the basis of gender stereotypes.

Participant 6:

*“Like I have said there are department assessments in University, these are like exams, each department undergoes these exams. Therefore, you go to rectorate office with all your work material at hand. 6-7 people including the rector and vice-chancellor wait for you with an unhappy face sitting in a long table waiting. All of them are men. There, because of being a woman and due to the format of the meeting I remember my heart beating fast, that I got excited and that I experienced palpitation.”*

Participant 6 has stated that she has experienced palpitation or increased heart rate in a solo situation where she was the only women among males. In the given situation, both her managerial performance and the performance of her department which she was representing were assessed.

Participant 3:

*“Yes, I don’t remember a specific example but I have experienced these anxiety symptoms. My hands shook, my voice trembled, my heart beat fast, I felt burning in my head and chest and had a feeling of rising and looking at the body from outside.”*

Participant 3 has previously stated in the interview that all the managers in her position and the other top-level managers in company were males. Being the only female manager, she explained that she felt standing out from the group due to her gender category. In those situations of executive meetings she has stated that she experienced increased heart beat.

#### **4.1.2 Headaches and Migraine Attacks**

Two participants have stated that they have experienced headaches and migraine attacks in situations where they were performing their leadership/managerial duties in the presence of males.

Participant 6:

*“Either before or after these important meetings I attended, I used to experience migraine attacks.”*

The participant explains that she has migraine attacks before meetings where her leadership skills would be assessed by male executives. Also, as the participant

has stated previously, during the meetings she was the only women present in the room and that all the males in the room were in higher executive positions than she was. Being in these situations seemed to be overwhelming and she explained that she had migraine attacks before and after important meetings.

Participant 1:

*“I experienced headaches. Also, some people experience problems with blood pressure. This didn’t happen to me however it’s about the psychology of the individual, it causes physical symptoms. These gender stereotypical environments in which I always had to prove myself caused headaches.”*

In this given segment, the participant mentions that the psychology of being target to gender stereotypes and the effort she has given to deal with them caused her to experience headaches. She talks about the significant influence psychology has on individuals and that do to pressure and stress physiological symptoms occur, which in her case results in headaches.

#### **4.1.3 Other Physiological Responses**

Three participants have stated that they have experienced various other physiological responses that include stomach diseases, hands shaking, voice trembling, feeling of burning in head and chest, and problems with their eyes.

Participant 2:

*“I experienced a stomach disease at the time. It was because of the prejudices and the reaction I gave to prejudices. Maybe, if I experienced them today I could have looked at things differently.”*

Participant 2 recalls memories of a stomach disease that she has experienced during her early years in business. She explains that prejudices towards women in leadership positions that was present in her previous work environment was the reason for this stomach disease that she has experienced.

Participant 1:

*“For example, my eyes were wet all the time. What else can I say? I have seen all doctors in all well-known hospitals. The result was that my immune system was weakening. It’s different for everyone; mine was my eyes getting wet all the time. No matter what I used, what I did, my eyes were wet throughout whole winter season of that year. Some get sick, some have problems with blood pressure and some have diabetes. “*

The participant has expressed in previous answers to interview questions that she constantly had to struggle with the stereotypical judgments held by workers in her company and in other companies towards her as a female manager. This constant struggle has made her eyes water, a physiological response that has occurred due to the stress she has experienced in her professional setting.

#### **4.2 EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES GIVEN TO STEREOTYPE THREAT**

In the interviews, all participants have reported giving emotional and psychological responses to stereotype threat. These responses have been given when witnessing unfairness, being judged negatively, being assessed by male leaders and being evaluated differently due to stereotypes about female managers. The subthemes formed under this main theme are “Frustration and Anger”, “Feeling Threatened and Under Pressure”, “Feeling on the Edge”, “Feeling Incompetent”, “Feeling Uncomfortable” and “Anxiety”.

##### **4.2.1 Frustration and Anger**

Two participants have expressed feeling frustrated and angry in response to stereotypes about female leaders. They have expressed that the frustration and anger is experienced as a result of unrealistic judgments and treatments towards female leaders in the workplace.

Participant 4:

*“I have felt that my managerial role was criticized only because I was a female manager. Without any data, there was this idea that I wouldn’t have an influence*

*on others. When I communicated an idea they would ask me who told me this idea. I thought about it. These happened a lot to me. These made me very mad.”*

The participant declares that she has been frustrated because of the unfair criticism she has received in the work place. Moreover, she is frustrated because some of her colleagues think that she can't have an influence on others only because of her gender identity. She also mentions that she has faced this prejudice many times in her professional career.

Participant 3:

*“There have been times when I was very mad, frustrated and angry because of earning less than other male managers who are at the same level as I am. I have never earned the money I should have earned, especially in comparison to other male managers.”*

In the given passage, the participant states that she was aware that she was earning less money in comparison to her male counterparts. She tells that this unfairness in payment that is present only because of her gender has made her feel very angry and frustrated.

#### **4.2.2 Feeling Threatened and Under Pressure**

Three participants have spoken about their experiences of feeling threatened or under pressure. They have told that the stereotypes about women not being as successful as men in managerial positions have created a work environment that has enabled them to have such feelings.

Participant 2:

*“When you know that there are prejudices towards you being a female manager you feel under pressure. Stereotypes make everything harder”*

The participant talks about the prejudices towards female managers in her company making her feel under pressure while performing her managerial duties in her job.

Participant 3:

*“In this work environment I have felt under pressure the whole time. I have felt threatened in such an environment. In this environment, I became stressed easily and I could easily find myself in situations where I shout at others. This happened due to the pressure I felt. In these pressure situations, I panicked easily”*

Participant 3 shares her experience about working in an environment in which she felt under pressure and threatened. This pressure is a result of the gender stereotypes held by other male managers in her company. She doesn't want to confirm these stereotypes and this causes her to feel stressed and panicked.

#### **4.2.3 Feeling on the Edge**

During the interviews two participants have stated that they have felt “on the edge”. This feeling emerged as a result of other male managers having gender biases towards them in which they had to struggle with. Such a struggle caused them to feel depressive due to thoughts that they can't do anything to change these stereotypes or biases held against them.

Participant 3:

*“In my work experience there were times where I struggled a lot. There were times that I felt depressive that made me start using medication. I also started psychotherapy. I had to conduct my managerial duties while I was feeling on the edge”*

The participant talks about her experience of feeling on the edge due to the stereotypes that were constantly present in her company that threatened her as a female manager. She states that the work environment made her very depressive and even made her start psychotherapy.

#### **4.2.4 Feeling Incompetent**

While conducting the interviews, two participants have recollected memories of feeling incompetent. They have felt incompetent as they had to face unfair judgments about their gender. These unfair judgments as they recall are about

the stereotypes that women can't be as influential, smart or as successful as men in managerial positions.

Participant 3:

*“My performance was probably negatively affected by these emotional responses I have given in this company. At one point I was feeling very incompetent. It was because I was a woman along with some other reasons.”*

The participant expresses her feelings of being incompetent in her company as a manager. These feelings were a combination of many reasons including being a woman manager in her company.

#### **4.2.5 Feeling Uncomfortable**

During interviews, three participants have declared that they have felt uncomfortable in their professional settings. This feeling of discomfort emerges from being negatively judged as a female manager and of judgments towards female leaders regarding that problems in their personal lives will affect their job performance.

Participant 5:

*“I was getting divorced while I was working. There was this thought about women that the problems in their personal life will affect their work life. I didn't like this. Yes, I did face a problem in my personal life. Everyone around me cared about my personal problems while I wasn't even thinking about them. This made me feel very uncomfortable.”*

The participant talks about a stereotype regarding females mix their personal problems with work related issues. She talks about feeling uncomfortable when people around her are interested about issues regarding her personal life and think these issues will affect her job performance.

#### **4.2.6 Anxiety**

Two participants have given accounts of feeling anxious while performing their leadership duties. From these accounts, it could be seen that anxiety is

experienced in forms of performance anxiety and anxiety in response to being unfairly compared to male managers.

Participant 4:

*“Yes, I have felt anxiety because my performance as a manager will be negatively judged because I am a woman. This anxiety in my workplace has affected my job performance negatively. I still can’t get over the anxiety I have felt.”*

Participant 4 talks about feeling anxious that her performance will be negatively judged because of her gender. She accounts that this anxiety had a negative effect on her job performance and that she still can’t get over the feelings of anxiety she has experienced.

Participant 2:

*“I realized later on that that there was a common understanding among some of my team members that it is good to work with a male manager and that it isn’t possible to work with a female manager. In response to this I felt anxiety, I felt sad.”*

In the statement above, the participant talks about being anxious in response to the thoughts of her team members. Her team members have thought that it is better to work with a male manager than with a female manager. This prejudice towards working with a woman manager made the participant feel anxious.

### **4.3 COGNITIVE RESPONSES GIVEN TO STEREOTYPE THREAT**

While conducting the interviews, participants have told that they give cognitive responses in situations where stereotypes about female managers are present. These situations include performing managerial duties in presence of males, having their duties assessed by male leaders or while discussing these duties with males. Three subthemes found under the main theme of “Cognitive Responses Given to Stereotype Threat” are “Negative Thoughts about Self”, “Loss of Control” and “Losing Concentration”.

#### **4.3.1 Negative Thoughts about Self**

Participants have told in the course of interviews that being aware of the gender stereotypes held by their male managers towards them and identifying with these stereotypes from time to time made them have negative thoughts about their

position. These three participants said that they have doubted themselves and had thoughts that they were constantly making mistakes while performing their managerial duties.

Participant 6:

*“There are annual meetings organized by the Professional chamber where all professors that hold position as the head of department in their universities’ participate. Generally, in Turkey, all department coordinators are males. I conducted and made the last comments in these meetings both as president of the chamber and as the department coordinator of my department. I objected most of the topics and because of being a women and being younger than the other professors I have questioned my performance.”*

As Participant 6 was objecting to most of the topics that were brought up by male managers in annual meetings where as a women she was in a minority position, she recalls questioning her performance.

Participant 4:

*“In my previous company, especially in 2011 when I started working, I experienced everyday sexism and gender based stereotypes. Working there with these stereotypes present, I thought that I was always making mistakes”*

In the given statement, the participant talks about being aware of the gender based stereotypes and sex-based prejudices towards her in her previous company. These negative stereotypes and prejudices caused her to attribute everything she has done as a mistake.

#### **4.3.2 Loss of Control**

Loss of control was a cognitive response told to be experienced by three participants. These three participants have stated that loss of control have made them clumsy, made them unable to plan things and has resulted in loss of thoughts. Being in situations where they have been assessed or negatively judged by males has caused them to lose their control.

Participant 6:

*“In these meetings I couldn’t talk as good and effective as I wanted to. I even became clumsy and there was a time when I dropped the files that I was carrying. Also, I wasn’t able to think well and control my thoughts during these meetings.”*

Participant 6 states that in meetings where her performance as a female manager was being evaluated by males she wasn’t able to control herself. She has told that this loss of control has resulted in clumsiness and even in a circumstance made her drop the files she was carrying with her to the meeting. She also mentions that she wasn’t able to control her own thoughts in meetings in which she has previously told to hold status as mostly being the only female executive present in the room.

#### **4.3.3 Losing Concentration**

Two participants have mentioned that they have lost concentration in situations where their gender was salient and in which they were outnumbered by males. Concentration loss is an outcome of thinking that they will be negatively judged by males because of judgments they hold against women managers. Participants lose concentration thinking that their managerial duties and their position as a female manager will be assessed in a negative way because of the present negative gender stereotypes.

Participant 6:

*“I have faced serious concentration loss in situations where I was aware that the managers won’t approve or give consent for my plans. I also lost concentration at times when I was aware that they had prejudices towards me as a female manager.”*

The participant states that she experiences concentration loss in situations where her acts as a manager aren’t approved by other managers. In this present situation the participants talks about, all the managers are males and she thinks that she will encounter disapproval and will be judged as a female manager.

#### 4.4 DISENGAGEMENT AND DISIDENTIFICATION WITH THE DOMAIN

Three of the participants have given accounts of disengaging and disidentifying with their domain in response to interview questions. These participants talked about permanently or temporarily leaving their companies and having thoughts about not accepting the managerial roles that are being offered to them. Three subthemes that are under this main theme are: “Leaving Job”, “Temporarily Leaving Workplace” and “Thinking about Rejecting Managerial Role”.

##### 4.4.1 Leaving Job

Two participants have talked about leaving their managerial positions and resigning from their jobs. Participants state that the reason for leaving their jobs and their managerial positions is because of the active gender stereotypes towards women in their companies. These stereotypes being present in the workplace have caused unfairness, which has led these female managers to leave their jobs.

Participant 3:

*“Of course it creates emotional responses. I quit my job. I said I was burned out due to negative expectations that were put on me and that I decided to leave. The next four months passed with efforts to persuade me not to leave. They said I can take a month paid leave, take two weeks paid leave, do a sabbatical, leave for the next three months and then come back. However, they also told me that once I return it will be the same work environment and that they won’t change their behaviors. I said bye and left the job.”*

In the given passage, Participant 3 talks about the reason behind quitting her job and what has happened after she has told everyone that she is going to quit. The participant accounts that she has experienced burnout in her job due to the stereotypical judgments about women in managerial positions that was strongly present in her company. After telling that she is going to leave her job, her colleagues try to persuade her to stay, however they also tell her that they won’t

change their behaviors or their attitudes. In result, the participant doesn't change her mind and quits her job in order not to face stereotypical judgements.

#### **4.4.2 Temporarily Leaving Workplace**

Two participants have recalled during the interviews that they have temporarily left the workplace. Both participants have said that they have left the workplace feeling very angry about the unfair judgments they had faced as a female manager.

Participant 3:

*“For example, one day I remember leaving the company by shouting and throwing an anger tantrum. I left my office around 3 or 4 pm and returned next day at 9 am in the morning. There were days where it was enough. Shouting and leaving the company is of course a dramatic example however it was response to everything that happened.”*

Participant 3 recalls her experience where she has experienced an anger tantrum. Her anger tantrum was a result of unfairness she has experienced in the workplace due to gender stereotypes about her as a women manager occupying an important decision-making position in her company. She recalls this experience as a dramatic one as it involves shouting and short term absenteeism.

#### **4.4.3 Thinking of Rejecting Managerial Role**

Gender stereotypes have also affected thoughts of being fit for the managerial role being offered. While interviews were conducted, two participants have told that they have thought of rejecting the managerial role because of internalizing the gender stereotypes or feeling that others will think that they are not fit for the managerial role because of the stereotypes that females are not suitable for such roles.

Participant 6:

*“There were many times where I thought of rejecting the role offered to me due to the gender stereotypes we have talked about. However, every time I fought with this idea and realized I should continue. So I continued.”*

In the given statement, the participant talks about thinking of rejecting the managerial role that was offered to her. The reason for such a thought emerging from not intending to take a position where she knows she will be judged unfairly because of stereotypes about her gender identity.

#### **4.5 JOB PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**

All participants have told during the interviews that their performance have been affected by the gender based stereotypes that they have encountered. They have said that their job performance has been affected due to struggling with the stereotypes. Participants said that their performance has decreased, their work productivity has declined and that they had to work more than they had to in order not to confirm these stereotypes held against them. The subthemes under the main theme of “Job Performance Outcomes” are “Decrease in Efficiency” and “Decrease in Performance”.

##### **4.5.1 Decrease in Efficiency**

In the course of interviews, two participants have told that efficiency of their performance has decreased. They have said that the obstacles caused by stereotypes have resulted in decrease in efficiency to occur. These participants have talked about not being as efficient as they can be in their job because they have felt tired and bored of the burdens of stereotypical judgments.

Participant 3:

*“There were days where my work efficiency has decreased. I would work less efficiently then I work normally. I can’t remember of specific examples but there definitely have been times this happened”*

Participant 3 has expressed that some days she has experienced a decrease in her work efficiency.

Participant 1:

*“I was in a struggle with these stereotypes. You need to do a lot to prove that these stereotypes are wrong. You need to communicate that you can do the given job. Normally I shouldn’t fight for these things. When men makes mistakes or can’t get*

*a job done, everyone is more relaxed about it. However, when women do the same mistakes there are stereotypical judgments and harsher consequences. This affected me too. I used to get tired and loose my efficiency. I can say that my efficiency has decreased.”*

The participant has expressed that she has struggled with gender based stereotypes about her as a female manager regarding that she wasn't capable of fulfilling the job demands. She said that in order to prove that these thoughts held by other employees are wrong she had to make minimum mistakes and this in return has decreased her efficiency.

#### **4.5.2 Decrease in Performance**

While answering the interview questions, three interviewees have told that their performance has decreased. They have told that this performance decrease was an outcome of the stereotypical judgments they had to encounter in their jobs and feeling anxiety due to being aware of these present judgments.

Participant 4:

*“In this company I have been very hard on myself; I had to prove judgments about female managers were wrong. This caused a decrease in my performance. Like I have said I have divided myself into two. I acted differently towards my top executives and my subordinates and organized them towards different actions. This left me with a lot of anxiety”*

In the given quotation the participant talks about her performance decreasing as an outcome of her anxiety in order not to confirm the negative stereotypes about women managers. As a woman manager, this anxiety led her to be hard on herself with resulting in her performance to decrease.

Participant 6:

*“In general, my friends both in my department and in the professional chamber have always showed me examples of male leaders. They said that if I was a male leader I would have been tenser and that everyone would fear me and be afraid of me. This comparison made me feel anxious, and this anxiety resulted in decreasing*

*my performance. Like I said, under this kind of pressure it is very hard for anyone's performance not to be affected"*

The participant has spoken about being unfairly compared to male leaders and being judged for not acting or engaging in behaviors like them. She has told that this unfair comparison had made her anxious and this caused her performance to decrease.

#### **4.6 COPING MECHANISMS**

In response to the questions being asked in interviews, 3 participants have recalled experiences of changing behavior in response to stereotypical judgments regarding their gender. They have told that they have changed their behaviors in order to gain more respect, to belong, to avoid criticism in regards to these stereotypes and to prove that these stereotypical judgments are wrong. This resulted in coping mechanisms to be used by participants in their work life. The two subthemes that clustered to create this main theme are "Acting Masculine" and "Trying to Control Everything" and "Working More".

##### **4.6.1 Acting Masculine**

During the interviews, two participants have told that they acted masculine or more masculine than they are in order to avoid gender stereotypes. They have told that they have acted in such a way to gain more respect from their coworkers or to fit in as a female leader.

Participant 3:

*"Yes I did act more masculine and I still feel ashamed of it every time I think about it. I can't forget one memory in particular. I have never smoked in my entire life. All male managers entered the room and one of them asked if anyone wants to smoke the cigar that he has brought. I instantly said I wanted to. I am a person who has never smoked a cigarette let alone a cigar. In the end I didn't try but everyone was shocked at my reaction. Then I realized that the only reason I did this was to belong, to be a part of them. That was the reason."*

The participant regards smoking cigar as a masculine act that she has performed. She has told that she has engaged in such an act to fit in with the other managers that were present in the room which were all males. Her desire to belong in the group of male executives as the only female manager made her intend to do something she has never done or have intended to do in her life.

Participant 6:

*“There were times when I chose to act more masculine. In the evening dinners where there was drinking and men talk involved I chose to act more masculine”*

In the given passage, Participant 6 talks about the evening dinners she had to participate as a manager. The participant has also told that she didn't prefer to participate in evening dinners and rather have them done in morning. However, because the majority enjoyed evening dinners where there was also drinking and talks that fulfill the interest of males, Participant 6 had to join them. Participant was also hesitant in being a part of these meetings because, based on the accounts the participants have given to questions previously in the interview, at the time she was a single mother and had family responsibilities. In these evening dinners, the participant talk about acting more masculine than she normally is in order to fit in.

#### **4.6.2 Trying to Control Everything**

In the interviews, two participants have told that they started to have more control over their actions after being in environments where they were judged based on stereotypes about their gender. In order to avoid these stereotypes and to prove that these judgments are false, the participants have told that have been very obsessive in terms of controlling everything.

Participant 6:

*“In meetings with mostly male executives I wanted to control everything. Controlling has come to a point that I was obsessively trying to control all. I knew I couldn't control everything but I couldn't stop myself from doing so. Any mistake I have made could have had harsh consequences on my department that I represent.”*

The participant has stated that she has tried to control everything in meetings where she was the only female in the room being assessed by male managers who are also her executives. She said that trying to control everything has turned into an obsessive behavior that she can't stop. In addition, she has told that she thought any mistake could have severe consequences for her department that she represents in the meetings so controlling everything was a coping mechanism she has used.

Participant 4:

*“Due to the stereotypical judgments about me I became a control freak. They made me want to control everything.”*

Participant 4 has expressed that the stereotypical judgments that she has experienced in the work place had made her want to control all her actions. She wanted to control everything in order to avoid facing judgments that she doesn't deserve just because of occupying a managerial role as a woman.

#### **4.6.3 Working More**

Two interviewees have talked about working more in comparison to other employees in their company. They have declared that they work more in order to prevent being judged negatively as a female manager and in order not to confirm the stereotypes about female leaders. Furthermore, they have stated that they work more so that they won't be negatively affected by stereotypes that can possibly have a negative effect on their job performance.

Participant 4:

*“In order to prevent being negatively judged as a female I worked more than my colleagues. I had to show more performance than they do. Thank God this was the situation in my previous company and not in my current company.”*

Participant 4 talks about working more than others in order to avoid negative stereotypes. She felt that it was necessary for her to work more to show that she doesn't fit with the stereotypical judgments. Also, she states that she is very grateful that she no longer feels that she has to work more than her colleagues in her current company to avoid any stereotypes.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In line with the literature review being conducted on stereotype threat effect, the results indicate that female leaders in managerial position give emotional, psychological, cognitive and physiological responses to stereotype threat. The main themes that have been found via data analysis show that these responses have been experienced by the participants who have been interviewed. Specifically, 3 out of 6 participants were found to be more effected by stereotype threat and the experience seemed to be overwhelming. These participants have reported more responses, outcomes and expressed using more coping mechanisms in response to stereotype threat. Furthermore, these three participants have reported signs of stereotype threat in situations that may be viewed as stereotypically threatening for women in leadership roles such as being in solo status. However, the other three participants showed less stereotype threat responses. In this sense, it could be concluded that while some women are affected by these threat responses others may not be as affected or show no threat responses.

Physiological responses that were reported by participants are palpitation, headaches and other physiological responses. Other physiological responses reported by participants include blood pressure, pressure in chest and problems with eyes. These findings confirm the findings of previous studies (e.g. Blascovich et al., 2001; Huber et al., 2015). Emotional responses were reported by all participants, therefore it is the response most expressed by participants during the interviews. These responses reported by the participants include frustration and anger, feeling threatened and under pressure, feeling on the edge, feeling uncomfortable and incompetence. These findings match with the findings on emotional responses given to stereotype threat (e.g. Schmader, Johns & Forbes, 2008). In previous studies, anxiety was found to be experienced both as a mediator (e.g. O'Brien & Crandall, 2003; Osborne, 2001) and as a psychological response (e.g. Sackett & Quint, 2019) to stereotype threat. Participants have also stated in interviews that they have felt anxiety in situations where they have been stereotypically judged as a female manager. They have also expressed that this anxiety had an effect on their

performance. Lastly, cognitive responses that have been reported by participant are negative thoughts about self, losing control and loss of concentration. These responses also align with the findings of past studies (e.g. Schmader & Johns, 2003; McGlone & Pfeister, 2015).

From the findings of past studies it could be seen that stereotypical gender based judgments can make women leaders disengage or disidentify with their leadership role and domain (e.g. Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Major et al., 1998). As seen in results obtained from interviews, one of the main themes is “Disengagement and Disidentification with the Domain”. Participants recall of experiences support the findings as they have expressed that they have permanently or temporarily left their workplace, and had thoughts about rejecting managerial role that was offered to them.

The performance outcomes found through qualitative research are also parallel to the findings of previous studies (e.g. Davies et al., 2002; Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999, Spencer & Aronson, 2002). Participants have stated that their performance or their performance efficiency has decreased in response to gender based stereotypes that they encounter as a female leader in professional settings.

When results about coping mechanism are taken into consideration, participants have reported to show masculine behaviors or actions in situation where they are trying to cope with stereotype threat. Here, it is important to note that five out of six participants have worked in companies where most of the managers were males. In literature, it is also found that more masculine style is used when women leaders are felt stereotype threatened in male-dominated environments (von Hippel, Wiryakusum et al., 2011). As another subtheme of coping mechanisms, participants have expressed that they have worked more and tried to control everything in order to avoid negative stereotypes about their leadership position. It was found that as a consequence of the threat women can work more than men do, in order to prove that the stereotypes are wrong (Hoyt & Murray, 2016).

## 5.2 THEORETICAL AND APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS

The present study has important theoretical and contributions. First of all, this study is a unique study as there are limited qualitative studies on stereotype threat effect. This study is also unique in the sense that the sample of the study is Turkish female leaders in managers. Secondly, the study aids in having an in-depth understanding of how stereotype threat affects women leaders, the responses given to the threat and the outcomes based on participants' recall of their experience. In this sense, the findings of the research presents information on; in which conditions these responses occur, how these responses turn into different outcomes and personal differences of participants This current study can also form a guideline to form a quantitative measure of stereotype threat effect as there isn't a scale to measure stereotype threat effect (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). With the information obtained through this research, a credible measurement tool can be created.

The findings of this study can also have practical implications for organizations. As a question of the study, participants were asked: "What do you think can be done for women leaders/managers to be less affected/not affected by gender based stereotypes?" as the last question of the questionnaire. All participants underlined the importance of education. They have emphasized the importance of educating children from a young age about gender issues. One participant further elaborated on this stating that the stories, fairytales and even the lullabies told by parents should be changed to prevent stereotypes about women. Two of the participants have told that trainings focusing on issues and biases related to gender should be held in organizations.

Participants have also stated that more examples of female leaders should be shown to the public. They have suggested that more movies and documentaries of female leaders should be made and more books should be written about these leaders. Participants further stated that these women leaders and managers should be emotionally supported by the public, their companies and their families. Participants highlighted the importance of influencing through examples. They have argued that younger women will be more influenced to become women leaders if there are more examples of female leaders in professional settings. Moreover, participants have told that there should be a quota for females to be represented in top executive positions. Accordingly, they have stated that there should more

opportunities inside organizations for women to advance their positions. Opportunities given to women, as expressed by participants, will influence other women inside their organizations or in their social life to advance in their careers.

Majority of the participants emphasized the importance of changing the language used within the organizations. They have said that the language used inside organizations favor men over women and this causes motivation of women employees to decrease. In this sense, participants have mentioned a language that doesn't devalue women must be used while communicating in organizations. Lastly, the participants have underlined that the top executives in the organizations should support female managers and take part in creating an organizational culture that does not favor stereotypes about women in leadership roles.

### **5.3 STRENGTHS**

Being a qualitative study, the study bears many advantages. One of these advantages is that as this study is a qualitative study, therefore the focus is not solely on outcomes but on experiences of female leaders. By examining the experiences of female managers with qualitative methods, the experiences can be learned in detail and their experiences can be clearly understood through specific examples given by participants. These first hand reports give a clear understanding on how these experiences have turned into decrease in performance, why different responses were given to threat, why coping mechanisms emerge and how participants disengage or disidentify with their domain. To ensure this, good relationships were established with the participants and the participants felt confident to speak honestly about their experiences. By examining all of the data with Qualitative Content Analysis, the analysis was focused on personal experiences and rather than general ideas about how stereotype threat has an effect or is being experienced by female leaders.

When literature review on stereotype threat effect was conducted, mostly experimental studies were found and performance measures were taken into consideration in these studies. Therefore, this study is a unique contribution to the literature for being a qualitative study focusing on the personal experiences of female leaders. It is also unique in terms of the sample being interviewed. The

sample compromises of Turkish female leaders which has not been a sample of similar previous studies on stereotype threat.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

Even though the number of participants ( $N=6$ ) is a suggested number for a qualitative study, it would be more beneficial to work with a bigger sample size. Increasing the number participants can make the research more comprehensive in terms of learning about the experiences of female managers. With a larger sample size, more could be learned about the experiences of female leaders in terms of responses, outcomes and coping mechanisms associated with stereotype threat.

Although the participants are from different sectors (retail, energy, service and education), more variation in terms of sectors can aid in having better understanding of stereotype threat experiences of female leaders. Moreover, the experiences of these leaders may show differences in different sectors. Obtaining data from female leaders from different sectors can enhance the knowledge on the research topic. Another limitation of the research is about the education background of the participants. All participants are university graduates and have either finished or are in the process of finishing their master's degrees. For this reason, participants are academically successful and have a better understanding of gender based stereotypes and any gender related threats that they may encounter in work life. In order to have a better understanding of the stereotype threat experiences of female leaders in managerial roles, a sample with a more varied educational background can be interviewed. All the participants that have been interviewed were in a similar age group. Five of the six participants are between ages 35 to 45, with only one participant being 57 years old. Having similar ages may have had an influence in the participants' experiences. Obtaining data from different age groups may have changed the results as different experiences may have been reported during interviews.

The present study is a qualitative study; therefore the questions are in-depth questions that are aimed to examine the personal experiences of participants. Participants being interviewed may have felt hesitant in giving answers to the questions being asked. They may have also been resistant in giving responses that may make them look vulnerable. In this sense, they may have given the wrong

answers, have hidden some answers or have changed their experiences while giving accounts. Social desirability bias may also have had an influence on participants to answer questions in a way that will favor the participants. Social desirability bias has been acknowledged to play a role in qualitative research resulting in participants to manipulate their answers in interviews (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Therefore, it is likely that incorrect answers have been given or details have been changed or manipulated by participants while being reported during the interviews being conducted.

Participants' attention was directed to gender issues with the questions being asked in interviews. Therefore, these topics didn't emerge directly from the participants. While it is possible to put women in stereotype and control conditions in experimental studies to compare how they behave, in qualitative studies it is harder for these themes to emerge without guiding participant's attention to topics related to gender.

The interpretations of the interviews can also be a limitation of the study as there are alternative explanations for the responses or experiences recalled by participants. Participants may have given stereotype threat responses or have shown associated consequences as a result of many factors that also include stereotype threat. As an example, the physiological responses such as stomach diseases or headaches that were reported by participants can be a combination of other factors along with gender based stereotypes that are present within the organization. Participants have told that they have given similar symptoms when they are judged in the workplace because of their age, their position or educational background.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

For future research, as mentioned in the limitations, a bigger sample size could be used for the purpose of the study. Although the sample size is in the given range for a qualitative study, with a more varied sample size there could be more variability in terms of managerial level (top-level managers and middle-level managers), age, educational background and the sector that female managers work in. With a more varied sample size, more data can be obtained for the goal of the study.

With the qualitative findings of the study, an outline for a quantitative measure can be obtained. Therefore, a scale measuring the response levels to stereotype threat effect can be created with the findings of the present study. A scale can be put together based on the answers given by participants. Furthermore, a mixed method study can be made to have an even better understanding of stereotype threat responses of female leaders.

As there are limited number of qualitative studies on stereotype threat and female leadership, a replication study can be conducted to validate the results. A replication study can also be beneficial as different personal experiences can be obtained from interviewing different participants.

## **5.6 PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF RESEARCHER**

During my academic studies, I have written research papers on stereotype threat effect and this made me want to further explore the topic. After completing literature review on stereotype threat, I found that there were limited studies that focus on stereotype threat using qualitative methods. I wanted to do a research that was not previously done, that was a new addition to the literature. While creating a questionnaire for interviews, I realized that it is very challenging to qualitatively explore stereotype threat effect as it is a very complex concept. I wanted to challenge myself and do a study that is new in the field.

Initially, it wasn't very hard to find participants as I have known middle level and top-level managers through personal and professional connections. However, I started data collection during the Covid-19 pandemic period and due to the restrictions, I was only able to reach 6 participants out of the 10 that I have contacted previously. The participants who weren't available to become a part of the research either didn't want to meet online as they don't like talking through online mediums, or in-person due to the restrictions of Covid-19 period. As a researcher, I also felt anxious while conducting interviews due to health concerns.

During the interviews, I was both excited and anxious. I was excited because, though I have conducted one interview for a master's class in my department, I didn't have much experience in conducting interviews. On the other hand, I was anxious because the questions were personal questions and I was

worried about the reactions the participants may give to them. My excitement and anxiety decreased after each interview progressed and as all participants gave honest answers to the questions being asked to them. Similar to my feelings, I realized that the participants were also very excited to be interviewed. They also became more relaxed as they gave answers to the questions. Having their voices recorded also made the participants more self-conscious. Some participants were very hesitant in sharing their personal experiences. These participants chose to speak about general observations rather than talking about personal experiences, and gave longer answers to general questions in comparison to personal ones.

While doing transcriptions of the interviews, I realized that due to my excitement while conducting the interviews I have missed out on some of the things the participants have told. Transcribing all the voice recordings to a written format was very challenging for me as it required high levels of concentration. When I re-read what has been expressed in interviews, I felt fulfilled being able to obtain a lot of experiences. I was also very proud of myself for creating a genuine environment that made the participants comfortable in sharing personal accounts. Data analysis was also very challenging for me. I spent weeks on trying to code the accounts of participants to form subthemes and main themes.

Overall, the experience of writing a thesis with qualitative methods was a very good learning opportunity for me. I have gained a lot of knowledge about stereotype threat experiences, conducting interviews, qualitative research and coding with Qualitative Content Analysis.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kadın lider/yöneticilerin iş hayatı içerisindeki deneyimlerini incelemektir.

Araştırma İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Örgütsel Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı'ndan Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Gergely Czukur'un danışmanlığında Selin Çulcuoğlu tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmada katılımcılara açık uçlu sorular sorularak katılımcıların liderlik rolündeki fizyolojik, psikolojik, bilişsel ve duygusal deneyimleri sorulacaktır. Konuşmalar ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedilmektedir. Görüşmeler yaklaşık 1 saat sürmektedir. Katılımcıların kişisel bilgileri gizli tutulacak ve elde edilen bulgular sadece bilimsel amaçla kullanılacaktır.

Katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük üzerine kuruludur. Çalışma sırasında sebep bildirmeksizin çalışmayı bırakabilirsiniz. Araştırmaya katıldıktan sonra herhangi bir sorunuz olduğu takdirde ya da araştırma sonuçlarını elde etmek için Selin Çulcuoğlu ile irtibata geçebilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki çalışmanın amacını ve içeriğini belirten bildiriye okudum, anladım ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Lütfen aşağıdaki boşluğa kendi el Yazınızla **“Bu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle katılıyorum”** yazınız.

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## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of female leaders/managers in their work life.

The research is carried out by Selin Çulcuoğlu from İstanbul Bilgi University, Department of Organizational Psychology. In this research, open-ended questions are asked to the participants to recall psychological, physiological, cognitive and emotional experiences in leadership roles. The interviews will be recorded by voice recording device. Interviews last approximately one hour. Personal information of the participants will be kept confidential and the findings will be used for scientific purposes only.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. During the interviewing process, you can stop participating without giving any reason. You can contact Selin Çulcuoğlu after participating in the research if you have any questions or if you want to be informed about the results of the research.

"I have read and understood the informed consent form that outlines the purpose and content of the research and agree to participate in this study.

Contact:

Selin Çulcuoğlu

İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

[selinculcuoglu.1994@gmail.com](mailto:selinculcuoglu.1994@gmail.com)

Please write your own handwriting in the space below: **"I voluntarily participate in this research."**

Name:

Date:

Last name:

Signature:

## Appendix C

### Mülakat Soruları

- 1- Kendinizi kısaca tanıtabilir misiniz? Kaç yaşındasınız ve mesleğiniz nedir? Kaç yıldır çalışıyorsunuz? Nerede yaşıyorsunuz? Eğitim durumunuz nedir, hangi bölümden mezunsunuz?
- 2- Mevcut kurumunuzda kaç yıldır görev yapmaktasınız? Çalıştığınız şirkette/kurumda kaç senedir yönetici/ lider pozisyonundasınız?
- 3- Daha önce hangi kurumlarda çalıştınız ve bu kurumlardaki pozisyonlarınız nelerdi?
- 4- Mevcut görevinizin iş tanımından bahsedebilir misiniz? Sıradan bir iş gününüz nasıl geçiyor?
- 5- Yönetici olarak görevleriniz nelerdir?
- 6- Kurumunuzda daha çok kadın mı yoksa erkek mi çalışıyor? Bu cinsiyet dağılımını nasıl tanımlarsınız?
- 7- Çalıştığınız kurumdaki var ise üst yöneticilerinizin cinsiyet dağılımı nasıl? Altınızda çalışanların cinsiyet dağılımı nasıl?
- 8- Sizce cinsiyet temelli önyargılar/ stereotipler liderlik veya yöneticilik rolündeki kadınları etkiliyor mu, etkiliyorsa nasıl etkiliyor?
- 9- Nasıl lider/yönetici olarak seçildiniz? Bu sürecin öncesinden ve sürecin işleyişinden detaylı olarak bahsedebilir misiniz? Seçilme sürecinde neler hissettiniz?

- 10- Sizce kadın yöneticiler veya liderler erkek liderler kadar karizmatik olabilir mi? Olabilirlerse sizce herhangi bir maskülen özellik göstermeden olabilirler mi? Sizce bir kadın lider nasıl karizmatik olabilir?
- 11- Hiç liderlik veya yöneticilik performansınızın kadın olduğunuzdan dolayı negatif algılanacağını düşündüğünüzden, bu performansınızın negatif etkilendiği oldu mu? Bu tarz bir deneyiminiz veya karşılaştığınız benzer bir durum varsa paylaşıp örnek verebilir misiniz?
- 12- Kadın bir lider veya yönetici olarak daha fazla saygı kazanmak adına hiç maskülen veya olduğunuzdan daha maskülen davrandınız mı? Ya da davranmanız gerekti mi? Bununla ilgili örnekler verebilir misiniz? Konuyla ilgili deneyiminizi paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 13- Kadın olduğunuz için başka bir neden olmaksızın liderlik pozisyonunuzun eleştirildiğini hiç hissettiniz veya yaşadınız mı? Sizce hangi cinsiyet temelli önyargılar buna sebep oldu?
- 14- Kadın bir lider olarak altınızda veya takımınızda/ ekibinizde çalışan birine direktif/yönerge verirken hiç zorlandınız mı? Detaylı olarak bu deneyiminizi paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 15- Yönetici görevinizi erkeklerin bulunduğu bir ortamda gerçekleştirirken kadın bir yönetici olarak hiç hafıza veya konsantrasyon kaybı yaşadınız mı? Böyle bir durumda doğru kelimeleri seçemediğiniz oldu mu? Bununla ilgili örnek verebilir misiniz? Konuyla ilgili deneyimlerinizi paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 16- Performansınız veya yaptığınız iş erkeklerin olduğu bir ortamda değerlendirildiğinde bir kadın yönetici olarak nasıl hissediyorsunuz? Böyle bir durumda önyargıların değerlendirmeyi etkileyeceğini düşünüyor musunuz?

- 17- Kadın bir yönetici/lider olarak yöneticilik görevlerinizi gerçekleştirirken herhangi bir fiziksel belirti gösteriyor musunuz? Kalbiniz daha hızlı atıyor, elleriniz titriyor veya buna benzer fiziksel durumlar yaşıyor musunuz ya da hiç yaşadınız mı? Bunlara örnek verip, detaylandırarak deneyimlerinizi paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 18- Yeterli ve donanımlı olduğunuz halde herhangi bir yöneticilik veya liderlik görevi için kendinizi hiç yetersiz hissettiğiniz oldu mu? Niçin yeterli olduğunuz halde yetersiz hissettiniz? Detaylı olarak bu deneyiminizi veya benzer deneyimlerinizi paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 19- Liderlik/yöneticilik pozisyonunuz veya pozisyonun gerektirdiği görevler hakkında bir erkekle konuşurken veya tartışırken kendinizi kadın olduğunuz için negatif yargılanıyor gibi hissettiniz mi? Bu konuda paylaşabileceğiniz bir deneyiminiz var mı?
- 20- Kadın bir yönetici veya lider olarak kendinizi herhangi bir durumda durumun kontrolünü kaybettiğinizi hissettiniz mi? Böyle bir durum yaşandıysa sizce bunun nedenleri nelerdi?
- 21- Kadın bir yönetici / lider olarak erkeklerin sayıca çoğunlukta olduğu bir çalışma ortamında hiç performans kaygısı yaşadınız mı? Böyle bir durum yaşadıysanız örnek vererek detaylandırabilir misiniz? Performansınız böyle bir durumda nasıl etkilendi?
- 22- Yöneticilik görevine seçilirken, kadın bir lider olarak cinsiyetçi önyargılardan kaynaklı negatif algılanacağınızdan ötürü görevi kabul etmemeyi düşündüğünüz bir zaman oldu mu?
- 23- Sizden önce yöneticilik görevini gerçekleştiren kişi bir erkek ise hiç üst yöneticiler tarafından bir kıyaslanma yaşadınız mı? Benzer bir kıyaslamayı altınızda

alıřanlar tarafından yapıldığına řahit oldunuz mu? Bu tarz bir kıyaslanmanın adil olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Performansınız bu kıyaslanmadan dolayı etkilendi mi?

24- Bir erkek liderle hiç kıyaslanmaya maruz kaldınız mı? Bu tarz bir kıyaslanma sizi nasıl hissettirdi? Bu tarz bir kıyaslama yaşadığınız adil olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Böyle bir durum yaşandıysa performansınızı etkiledi mi? Etkilediyse sizi nasıl etkiledi?

25- Sizce kadın yöneticiler veya liderlerin cinsiyet temelli önyargılardan olabilecek en az düzeyde etkilenmeleri için neler yapılmalı?

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions

- 1- Can you introduce yourself? How old are you and what is your occupation? -  
How long have you been working for? What is your education level and from  
which department have you graduated from?
- 2- How long have you been working in your current company? For how long  
have you been appointed as a leader/manager position in this company?
- 3- What other companies you worked for and what were your roles in those  
companies?
- 4- Can you tell me about your job description and about an ordinary work day at  
your job?
- 5- What are your duties as a leader/manager?
- 6- Are there more men or women working in your company? How can you  
describe the gender distribution in your company
- 7- If present, what is the gender distribution of your upper level managers? What  
is the gender distribution of your subordinates?
- 8- Do you think that stereotypes affect women in general in leadership roles?
- 9- How were you appointed/became a leader/manager in your current company?  
Can you tell about the process? How did you felt during this process?
- 10- Do you think women managers/leaders can be as charismatic as male  
managers/leaders? If possible, can they be as charismatic without showing any

masculine traits? How do you think a woman leader can be regarded as charismatic?

- 11- As a female leader/manager have you felt at any moment during a leadership/managerial duty that your performance decreased because you were judged by people who had stereotypes, can you elaborate on this experience?
- 12- Have you perceived yourself negatively as women in leadership roles?
- 13- As a female leader/ manager have you ever tried to act masculine or more masculine than you typically are to gain more respect as a leader? Can you give examples for it and can you share your experience?
- 14- Have you ever felt you were been negatively judged about being a leader/manager solely because you are a female? What gender based stereotypes do you think have caused this?
- 15- As a female leader/manager, have you ever felt anxious while trying to manage your subordinates/followers or while giving instructions to them? Can you elaborate on such an experience?
- 16- As a female leader, have you ever felt like you have lost concentrations or had a mental freezing when you were performing your managerial duties ? Can you give examples for it and elaborate on them?
- 17- How do you feel as a female leader when your performance is being evaluated in presence of men? Do you think gender based stereotypes effect the evaluation?

- 18- As a female leader do any physical symptoms such as palpitation and hand sweating appear while performing your managerial duties? Can you give examples for it and elaborate on them?
- 19- Have you ever felt you were being negatively judged while talking or discussing your leadership position or its duties with a male? Do you have any such experience that you can share?
- 20- As a female leader/manager have you ever found yourself losing control the situation? Why do you think such an experience occurred?
- 21- As a female leader have you ever felt performance anxiety in a male dominated work environment? If such a situation has happened can you elaborate on it? How has your performance been affected by this situation?
- 22- Have you ever thought of declining the managerial/leadership position thinking that you are going to be negatively affected by the gender stereotypes?
- 23- If the managerial/leadership position you are currently in have been conducted by a male in the past, have you ever been compared with him by your upper level managers? Have you ever witnessed such a comparison been made by your subordinates? Do you think it was a fair comparison? How have you felt? Did this comparison affect your performance?
- 24- Have you ever been compared to a male leader or manager? How has such a comparison made you feel? Did such a comparison affect your performance? How did it affect your performance?

25- What do you think can be done for women leaders/managers to be less effected/not effected by gender based stereotypes?

## ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU / RESULT OF EVALUATION BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

Covid-19 salgını nedeniyle İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu, 2019-2020 Bahar döneminde teslim edilecek lisansüstü tezlerin onay yetkisini ilgili etik kurul alt komitelerine devretmiştir. / Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Istanbul Bilgi University Human Research Ethics Committee has transferred its approval authority to the Ethics Board Sub-Committees organized within each graduate program. Thus, the graduate theses to be submitted in the spring semester of 2019-2020 should/must get the approval of the Ethics Board Sub-Committee within their own graduate program.

## ETİK KURUL ALT KOMİTESİ DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU / ETHICS BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE EVALUATION RESULT

Bu bölüm lisansüstü tez araştırmaları için ilgili Etik Kurul alt komitesince doldurulacaktır. / This part to be completed by the Ethics Board sub-committee responsible for graduate dissertation studies.

Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant: **Selin Çulcuoğlu**

Proje Başlığı / Project Title: **Stereotype Threat for Female Leaders:A Qualitative Approach**

Değerlendirme Sonucu/ Result of Evaluation

1. Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur. Veri toplama/uygulama başlatılabilir. / There is no need for revision. Data collection/application may commence : **X**

2. Ret / Application Rejected : \_\_\_\_\_

Reddin gerekçesi / Reason of Rejection : \_\_\_\_\_

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: **29.02.2020**

Unvanı, Adı, Soyadı / Title, Name, Surname:

İmza / Signature:

**Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Ümit Akırmak**



**Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Gergely Czukor**

