

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS IN STEM**

Master's Thesis

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THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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LAILA WAEL NASR

ABSTRACT

GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN STEM

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MBA Program

Thesis Supervisor: Assist Prof. İsmet Burcak Vatansever Durmaz

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The business environment is a dynamic environment that has been going through major changes over the years. However, since the early days of management literature the nature of segregation of jobs and lack of presence of women in many common fields of work has been evident. Even though women almost make a little more than half the population of the world, women still suffer from inequality and unfairness in many job sectors till our present day. This research aims to study the reasons behind the inequality and explore through literature and research the root of the inequality in some of the most important sectors that suffer the greatest gender inequality in our present days.

Key words: Feminism, Gender inequality, Leadership, Women development, Women leadership, STEM, Technology.

ÖZET

FETEMM'DE LİDER POZİSYONLARINDAKİ CİNSİYET EŞİTSİZLİĞİ

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İşortamı, yıllar geçtikçe büyük değişikliklerden geçen dinamik bir ortamdır. Ancak, yönetim üzerine yazılan literatürün ilk günlerinden bu yana, işlerde ayrımın doğası ve bir çok ortak çalışma alanında kadınların bulunmaması açıktır. Kadınların eredeysel dünya nüfusunun yarısından fazlasını oluştursa da, günümüzde bugüne kadar birçok iş sektöründe eşitsizlik ve adaletsizlikten muzdariplerdir. Bu araştırma, eşitsizliğin nedenlerini araştırmayı ve günümüzde en büyük cinsiyet eşitsizliğine maruz kalan en önemli sektörlerin bazılarındaki eşitsizliğin kökenini literatür yoluyla araştırmayı ve incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtarkelimeler: Feminizm, Cinsiyeteşitsizliği, Liderlik, Kadıngelişimi, Kadınliderliği, FeTeMM, Teknoloji.

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1.INTRODUCTION

According to a study that was done in 2018 by the International Labor Office in Geneva in 2018 a worldwide outlook on the women employment trends that were set in 2018 and forward. The UN agenda for 2030 was set to adopt specific goals relevant to the employment and gender inequality in labor force. Goal 5: which is the Sustainable Development Goal which was about reaching gender equality and empower all females in all ages. This goal is an evidence that there is an increasing awareness to the fact that there has been gender inequality preserving the labor world among the years (Ilo.org, 2018).

Female participation to the labor workforce is extremely critical to the development of the economy and decreasing the financial risks in a society. Therefore, the EU has been promoting gender inequality and has been working on talking issues that will facilitate entry of women into the labor market with more ease (Ec.europa.eu, 2016).

However, this research aims to study the reasons behind gender inequality in not just the labor market generally though, since this fact has been established; it aims to explore, bearing the data and the previous research that has been done in previously, the lack of women participation and presence in leadership and management in work environment and the business world.

According to a numerical study that has been done by Mckinsey& Company and LeanIn.Org. there has been significant improvement in the presence of women in leadership positions however that doesn't diminish the fact that women still remain underrepresented at all work levels. In 2015 women held 37 percent of "manager" positions that increased by only one percent in 2019. "Senior Management/ Director" positions were held by only 32 percent of women that slowly increased to 34 percent while "Vice President" and "Senior Vice-President" positions have increased by 3 percent in four years. The percentage of women who hold C-Suits positions in 2019 have reached 21 percent. About 1 in 5 C-suite

executives is a woman. For every 100 men promoted and hired to hold a managerial position 72 women are promoted and officially take the job. Male candidates result in holding 62 percent of managerial jobs while on the other hand females who hold managerial positions account for 38 percent(McKinsey & Company, 2019).

In the first chapter of this thesis, a detailed look on the literature that was conducted on leadership and the meaning behind the leadership concept with explanation of each general leadership style that has been discovered in the past and how it evolved over the decades to the present. Lastly, in the first chapter an approach on women leadership is discussed and how the gender of the leader paves the obstacles that they are to face in their career.

The second chapter takes a closer look on women development. The first section in this chapter studies the environment that young women grow in, in order to prepare them to take leadership positions and studies the education options that women have access to before joining the work force; leading to discussing the reasons that make the value of women in the work force critical and worth conducting studies that highlights the inequality faced which are discussed in detail in the following sub-title.

Following after that, the sub-section attitudes towards female managers studies how male employees behave towards having a female manager. In the end, the chapter includes sub-section that discuss the glass ceiling concept and the effect of it on the women's career.

In the third chapter it deliberates about women position in STEM careers. STEM is science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers and the reasons behind the gender inequality in these sectors highlighting the IT sector.

The fourth chapter, Data and Method it elaborates on the research design and the time frame of the study and the methodology used to explore the issue of gender inequality in managerial positions in the IT sector as well as the limitations for the study.

Chapter five highlights and showcases the findings of the interviews that have been conducted with the women interviewees. In chapter six, it offers a conclusion and discussion of the findings in chapter five.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW: LEADERSHIP

2.1 UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

Across various resources leadership does not have a set definition of what really is. This is due to the different reasons, firstly different people with various ideas, backgrounds, cultures and concepts use the term leadership and refer to their ideas as the definition of that term.

Secondly, the change in the era has been fast and continuously changing in how organizations conduct business. Theories that were developed fifty years ago are no longer valid or as efficient as how they were when they were developed. This change in the external environment had forced the organization to deal with it in an adaptive way.

Thirdly, in efforts of trying to understand the concept of leadership, it has been broken down to smaller topics in order for it to be more feasible topic of investigation and research.

Fourthly, due to the fact that the topic of leadership is related to human nature it is never complete or finished as the dynamic environment always pushes humans to adapt and change to the external variables around them constantly. Bearing this in mind, there are a lot of missing intervals in research that scholars are trying to cover.

However, the general understanding of leadership is that it is one's ability to direct, inspire and convince others to perform tasks and achieve goals that they would not necessarily do on their own, as the head of a team or an organization (Comstock, 2018). Leadership can be carried out by a person who holds a position in charge formally or informally. Meaning that a leader can be a person who is in a certain position of power, but it is not a set condition (Avery et al., 2004 pp. 13 &14).

Simple definition to leadership that was found across was that it is the process of persuading a prearranged number of people to attain a specific goal or an end result. This definition leads the reader to believe that leadership is a prolonged set of actions that are conducted to change a set of behaviors in a group of people to achieve the same result. (M. Maslanka, 2014)

Wilfred Drath the another of the book “The Deep Blue Sea. Rethinking The Source of Leadership” elaborates on the idea that leadership is a result of personal traits that are present in an individual’s character and therefore contribute to forming a leader, but don’t necessary mean that leadership is limited to these characteristics only. According to Drath they include personal dominance, interpersonal influence and relational dialogue (Drath, 2001)(Parker, 2007).

A Scholar named Bass tried to distinguish the meaning of leadership and divided it to two significant types (Bass, 1960).

Firstly, when the end goal of a person A is to change the behavior of person B, these observed efforts will be called attempted leadership. By the change that might occur in person B’s characters and actions it will be as a result from the efforts of person A which in the end result will be successful goal attained which was considered as effective leadership.

Another scholar called Halpin defined leadership as “presupposes the existence of a specified capacity in leader behavior” (Halpin, 1956).

Despite the fact that leadership may be the most observed action that we observe around us in work and non-work environments, and the fact that it may be one of the most persisting factors that affect the success and the efficiency of a running an organization as well as the employee satisfaction, there are no defined set of rules or statements that narrow down and specify the meaning of leadership. In contrary to that it has been noted by researchers that it is relatively an easy task for someone who conducts leadership to be spotted. This is maybe why scholars have directed their efforts to study

the personal traits that were exhibited by leaders in attempts to explore leadership (M. Maslanka, 2014).

In the early beginnings of leadership, researches were based on theories that were built around certain personal traits and skills that a leader should possess in order to qualify as a leader. At that time, it was believed that leaders were born and not made therefore they had specific criteria and skills that they all shared that qualified them to be leaders. (E. Johns and Moser, 2001).

One of the earliest attempts to study leadership was done by Max Weber who is one of the fathers of sociology. Max Weber defined a list of topics that interrogates authority, legitimacy and status in specific contexts that were military, religion and politics. His devoted efforts were to show the clashing between leaders and bureaucracies, and to underline the importance of the role of the leaders (L. Epley, 2015) (Avery et al., 2004 pp. 77)

In the 19th century a theory that took over the leadership theory was the “Great Man” thesis. This specified that there are very unique and infrequent individuals of the society who possess rare characteristics and skills to lead or express history. However, later on it was found to be unusable a scientific theory and only valid for study cases. (M. Maslanka, 2014)

Then trait theory that established the concept that leadership was a result of personal traits and skills that a person is born with. Nevertheless, these traits were mainly associated with masculinity and discarded from female population which led to the impression that those traits were mainly found in the male population (Silingiene and Stukaite, 2014) (Zalezink, 1977). However, these early theories were focused on the leaders himself, as in how he is and how he reacts and behaves and not how to effectively lead. (M. Maslanka, 2014).

Because an important part of leadership is having a leader understanding whether a leader is born or made had led scholars to observe the actions that leaders perform in

their organization in order to conduct a framework and have a better understanding of their qualities. A lot of frameworks and scholars throughout the years have come up with multiple models that aim to demonstrate some of the essential skills that are to be present in a leader.

Hogan in 2001 had explained that it is not prescribed list of skills and capabilities that form a leader, it is the mix of capabilities and the personality of the leader that forms the leader. He called it “being yourself, with a skill”. The skills effectiveness is directly related to the personality of the leader. A model was developed by Higgs in 2003 to explore briefly the set of personal skills and competences that leaders should have.

Personal Skills:

- i) Genuineness; honesty and being truthful in one’s actions.
- ii) Integrity; being consistent and having matching words to actions.
- iii) Will; a motive to push forward and work hard towards goals.
- iv) Self-belief; realistic evaluation of the skills that are acquired and what can be achieved.
- v) Self-awareness; accurate grasp of self.

Competences:

- i) Envision; the ability to paint a realistic picture for the future that will incorporate employees’ skills and leads the entity forward.
- ii) Engage; enjoying the ability to communicate in various ways his vision.
- iii) Inquire; being accepting to two-way-communication with those who are involved in the process.
- iv) Develop; collaborating with employees to enrich their skills and aid them to make meaningful contributions. (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2004)

A researcher named Warren Bennis in 2004 reasoned that the act of leadership is a creative act that is about creating a series of right-decisions to achieve goals and to move on to the desired destination.

He outlined a set of skills that are important qualities and contribute to making a good leader:

- i) An alluring vision: to direct and lead the employees, they have to have a shared vision that is created by their leaders that they all move towards achieving.
- ii) Environment of Trust: being able to provide the employees with a working environment that is based on trust will directly affect their moral and motivation. Operating trust-based will give them sense of belonging to the vision and to the organization they work in.
- iii) Shared Purpose: giving employees a purpose, pushes them to do all their effort and to push beyond their limits. They are reminded of what is important to them and to the organization and since there are some common ground between the organization and their personal growth, employees will be pushed to achieve end-results and objectives.
- iv) Success: effective leaders value failure as it is a chance to learn and prosper from what was once thought to be the best solution.
- v) Healthy Empowering Environment: reinforcing the spirit of collaboration and unity in the organization will make employees commit to not only the due obligations but to perform effectively in the organization. Increasing their sense of belonging plays an important part of achieving high moral and efficiency in reaching targets and objectives.
- vi) Decentralized Systems: decentralization allows the employees to stay connected to their managers. Two-way communication helps managers benefit from brainstorming and listening to out- of the box ideas and solution. In addition to that, it is a great benefit to increase engagement and commitment to the organization and always incorporating effective and refined feedback into the process to achieve optimum results. (Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube, 2015)

Research that studied leaders' behavior showed two categories to classify the behaviors of the leaders. The first category is task-related behaviors. These behaviors are displayed to get tasks done (Avery et al., 2004 pp. 72, 73 & 74).

Second category is relationship behaviors which are behaviors related to how leaders deal with the people in around them in the work environment. Recent research shows that understanding how leaders form relationships with the people around them is important to the effectiveness and the productiveness in the work environment. Forming good relationships is directly related to higher moral and job satisfaction. Behaviors such as negotiating, giving positive feedback and words of motivation, giving advice and support, and delegation. These behaviors were formed into guidelines by Dr. Gary Yukl who formed some influencing framework. He also suggests a third category which is to be named change-oriented behaviors. Change-oriented behaviors were added as behaviors for modern leaders that include actions such as innovation, adapting and pivoting strategies that would better flow with the dynamic environment of the business (Avery et al., 2004 pp. 72, 73 &74)

2.2 LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leadership style has multiple of definitions. Firstly, it is seen as the mix of various traits and characteristics that are used by the employers who lead and manage a number of employees. Mitonga-Monga and Coetzee (Mitonga-Monga & Coetzee, 2012) also claim that leadership is a pattern of behavior that is put together combining the organizational interests along with the personal interests to achieve a common end result. Another scholar Harris et al hypothesized that can explained as the relationship that is employed by a person to collaborate or make others achieve common end results (Al Khajeh, 2018).

Scholars and behavioral scientists such as Yukl in 1994 that followed Nass in 1990 (Aronson, 2001) who tried to grasp and learn about the specific traits, characteristics, aptitudes, because of the influence in the situation a leader has on people working with or under him and their ability to accomplish end goals and pre-determined objectives.

At first scientists established the trait approach which was around 1990. Trait approach included having the necessary set of qualities that were pre-determined by observers who have observed successful leaders in the past. These set of qualities included physical characteristics, interpersonal skills and level of intelligence.

However, almost forty years later this approach proved to be incompetent and inconsistent. As scholars observed that individual traits are not vital to contribute in the making of good leadership; this transformed their thinking to forming styles of leadership. Simply it was not what the leader is, it is what they do (Aronson, 2001).

Kurt Lewin (Flynn, 2017) has created three main leadership styles that were used as a reference for leadership styles. Many more have been developed across the years since those three; however, Kurt Lewin's three types are the most general.

- 1) Authoritarian Leadership: also known as autocratic leaders. This style of leadership is an extreme form of transactional leadership (Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube, 2015). It uses top-down communication method. Leaders assign rules, set tasks and principles to be followed and if not, punishment will be applied. Limited delegation and brainstorming with the employees are used. Leaders exhibiting this style orders subordinates by providing the task list that needs to be done clearly and determining the how and time of when it should be done.

There is a distinctive difference between the leader and the follower.

This style of leadership has critiqued over the last three decades as scholars claim that it impacts negatively on the employees. Two of the seemingly common factors that are present in organization that uses this style of management are high employee turnover and high rate of absenteeism due to the proven fact that Gen X are highly opposing to this management style.

The environment that managers who employ this style of leadership exhibit characteristics such as lack of trust in the subordinates, inability of the employees to contribute to the decision-making process or participate in any sort of brainstorming sessions for solutions or decisions. This adds invisible power to the hierarchy and creates an environment of tension and fear. Employees working in this environment tend to suffer from the lack of independency and freedom.

However, despite the blame that has been heavily placed on that leadership style, it is still to this day used and considered beneficial in some organizational structures and industries. It has been demonstrated that this leadership style exhibits strong control and power over employees who in turn allows managers to monitor and have a hands-on approach on each and every step in the organization. This ensures the achievement of output standards and the following of the organization's protocols and systems. It is also used in crisis or situations that are extremely time sensitive and doesn't allow much time for deliberation or discussion. (Khan et al., 2015) (Flynn, 2017).

- 2) Democratic Leadership: This leadership style is the next transition from the autocratic style of leadership, despite studies done by Kurt Lewin that it is more challenging to switch from authoritarian style to a democratic style rather than the other way around. He proved that it is the most effective style of leadership measured by productivity, which was proven by his study done with children where there were two groups and the group that had higher productivity levels were the ones with the participative leaders (Khan et al., 2015).

It is also called the participative style of leadership due to the degree of flexibility and allowing the employees to offer their input in the decision-making process. These types of leaders are extremely charismatic and engage with their employees, utilize their feedback and ideas in decision-making process and developing business plans and setting objectives. This style of leadership also allows workers to achieve personal achievements that are aligned with the organizational objectives. As this style of leadership fosters the optimum environment for promotion, skill growth and interpersonal skills to be developed. As Equal numbers of tasks are distributed; employees have a vital role in the organization other than being ordered to get a specific task to be done. Employees enjoy a certain degree of autonomy and freedom of thinking and speech in the organization (Khan et al., 2015).

However, the reason that this is considered a transition from the first leadership style discussed is that the leader has the final say and decision in the organization

(Khan et al., 2015). Despite the fact that the engagement of employees is proven to raise moral and motivation, it also raises the chance of poor-quality decisions and long waiting hauls for actions to be taken (Al Khajeh, 2018).

- 3) **Laisses-Faire Leadership:** a style of leadership where leaders make no connections with their subordinates. It is the absence of leadership. Subordinates enjoy total autonomy and complete control over what they are able to do. There is no authority that forbids subordinates from doing or not doing a task. (Flynn, 2017). The name originally comes from the French term of 'let it be' and it is referred to as the hands-off approach. Leaders following this style of leadership provide no direction to employees in efforts to allow total freedom and remove the burden off team members. This leadership style becomes very beneficial in situations where creativity is crucial for the output or when the group participants are very specialized in specific area.

As advantageous as this leadership style sounds it is quite difficult to operate in due to the number of disadvantages. The grouping of people with any sort of differences will result in conflicts and arguments and wit this leadership style is lacks rules and boarders that might increase the chance of fights between sub-ordinates and might result in dis-assembling of the team spirit and unsatisfied minorities.

In Lewin's study it was observed that the group of children with this style of leadership (also referred to as Delegation) had the lowest productivity levels between the other two groups that were included in the study. (Khan et al., 2015).

Other leadership styles that were later developed are:

- 1) **Bureaucratic Style of leadership:** this style of leadership is less of a leadership and more of following a specific set of principles and procedure that are clearly defined while establishing the organization. If a matter has been reached that does not have a specific procedure or a protocol the manager then goes to a higher level of

authority for help and to inquire about what need to be done. The manager's job at this style of leadership is to implement the rules and make sure they are followed and obeyed. There is no room for flexibility or brainstorming new management solutions with the employee (Khan et al., 2015).

Employees working in that environment are asked and expect to conduct specific set of repetitive tasks and jobs that in turn evolve to become their work routine. This requires them to have clear understanding and grasp over the code of conducts and protocols followed in the organization. Due to the critical nature of understanding the organization's protocols, usually organizations with this style of leadership used, they give intensive training and highlight their scope of focus on security and safety. Such leadership style is valuable for entities that deal with hazardous or sensitive equipment or materials. (Khan et al., 2015).

However, on the other hand, as the tasks become routine this may lead to decrease in employees' motivation and interest in their job and limit their thinking frames to what they are asked or expected to do only (Khan et al., 2015).

Dr. Eric Flamholtz the president and the founder of Management Systems Consulting Corporation (Management Systems, 2018) explained in the nineteen nineties that the explained leadership styles fall on scale of directive and nondirective. The explained leadership styles above (autocratic, democratic, and participative) fall on the directive side of the scale and laissez-faire fall on the nondirective end of the scale.

The highest degree of directive leadership would be showed in autocratic style of leadership which is heavily used in organizations such as the military or situations of crisis. This is called Benevolent Autocratic (Sinha, 1995) (Bird, 1999)

The second highest degree of directive leadership is Democratic leadership. It was named consultative as the employees who are led by this leadership style enjoy the

ability to participate in the decision-making process by voicing their ideas with their managers.

However depending on the degree of autonomy that the employee has and that is allowed by the external factors of the situation that the organization is operating in; in some cases leader allow more participative leadership, the third style, which allows the employees to rather than aid in the decision making process by brainstorming ideas and coming up with solutions.

Lastly, similar to Participative style however, the focus is shifted on the vitality of having the agreement of all employees rather than having the sole role of making the finale decision(Flamholtz, 1990) (Aronson, 2001).

Laissez-faire was identified on the nondirective end of the leadership scale because it was characterized as non-leadership or the absence of leadership. As the person in authority does not seek to exert any type of power to directing the entity's performance or direction.

However, in 1978, further styles of leadership were developed (Aronson, 2001).

- i) Burns (1978) (Aronson, 2001) identifies transactional leadership as the interchange between leaders and subordinate. The subordinate receives a benefit that is set in agreement when the subordinate performs what the agreement between them and their manager is fulfilled. Some scholars state that this is rather a 'managership' and leadership. As they go back to the essence of leadership's definition which was to influence a change in the behavior of the subordinate and motivation to achieve personal growth and organizational objectives. But in Transactional leadership style this is not the case.

Transactional leadership has two factors that contribute to its making, firstly contingent reward, which refers to series of benefits or rewards that the employee will get once they achieve a task with the matching standards. This involves negotiation in good faith

between the leader and the subordinate and exhibit honesty, trust and fairness. Secondly 'management-by-exception' which is the intervention of the leaders throughout the process of achieving and completing the task to give orders to correct mistakes. This is 'passive-management-by-exception'. Another type of Management-by- Exception is active where the intervention takes place to stop deviation from standards safety of the subordinates is endangered. But this proved to be less effective than the first factor.

This Style of leadership makes leaders unable to dedicate enough time for their subordinates despite that they operate with genuine good intentions. However, it was proven effective in organization where its nature requires a strong connection between impersonal rules and well-defined tasks and the results of these tasks affect the rewards being given (Aronson, 2001).

- ii) Burns in the 1978 had identified another type of leadership style. Transformational leadership where the leader possesses strong values and beliefs that they won't compromise. Values such as liberty, equality and justice. According to Mendonca and Kanungo in 1996.

The leader is to stimulate change in the employees' behaviors by some methods that include:

- a) Setting a clear vision for the future.
- b) Inspiring them.
- c) 'Walking the Talk' leading by example and being a role model to them.
- d) Helping employees to achieve self-actualization and personal growth.
- e) Aiding in enriching their skills.

All these aspects are considered when forming and organizational strategy that is geared towards empowering employees. However, on the negative side such explosive power to stimulate change sometimes backfires. Such charismatic leaders may inspire

undesired change in the organization or in the employees. Scholars named House and Howell in 1992 have found that charismatic leaders tend to have defected personal skills that may negatively affect their leadership environment. They have a tendency to strive for more need for power which sparks other negative characteristics such as narcissism, authoritarianism, ability to lose focus quickly and low self-confidence (Aronson, 2001).

Another grouping that was done by scholars in order to identify and distinguish leadership styles into three groupings (Wheatley, 2000; Jaworski, 2001; Senge, 1997; Higgs and Rowland, 2003)

- i) Goal-Oriented: Leaders have a vital role in setting clear end-goals and objectives and a direction to his followers. The leader's roles include setting a clear vision and targets for his followers to achieve by a specific time period. This approach is not limited to autocratic leadership style as the leader's role doesn't limit employees to contribute to improving the method to achieve those goals or voice their opinions.
- ii) Involving: this is a less-leader-focused category where the spotlight is not only on end-goals but on giving and making employees to contribute to the how-to and not just following the leader. Here the leader is to also draw out a clear destination to his followers but it's more interactive approach and there is more employee engagement in the decision-making process.
- iii) Engaging: The leader's attention primarily is poured into allowing his followers to develop and achieve self-actualization. (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2004)

2.3 LEADERSHIP FROM PAST TO THE PRESENT

After having a general grasp about the important elements of leadership, the basic definition, styles and traits that are associated with leadership, we are yet to learn about the differences perceived by the employees when they are working with female and male leaders.

Social science has come a long way since the great man theory which was a concept that assumed that great leaders were only born as leadership is an inherited trait passed over. The theory highlights and base their assumptions on heroic myths which were all based on male characters, therefore assuming that being a man is a quality that is key contribution in being a great leader (Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube, 2019).

Now long gone was this theory, and several other theories came over to correct this misconception about leadership. Leadership in the nineties was considered as someone who can give orders and successfully achieve objectives and goals no matter the consequences or other factors that are relevant to his actions. However, the world took a different glance at leadership changing their idea about what they expect to receive from a good leader (Sharpe, 2000, p. 74)

There is no set list of specific qualities that a good leader can check in order to become 'good' leader, even the term good leadership seems to be to, scientists till this day, linear and has the ability to fit many definitions and point of views. However, scientist have come to agree that in our day a good leader is expected to motivate and guide, rather than give commands and orders employees and subordinates around. A leader is someone who can inspire and motivate a subordinate to conduct a positive change in their behavior and the organization which seems to be the optimum result that leaders aim to achieve (Eagly, 2007).

Leadership itself as a concept has developed through the centuries. It has come a long way from just focusing on enhancing a single individual to lead and become a leadership figure to shifting the focus on the whole context of the leadership. The context of leadership including leadership competencies, giving subordinates the change to have an equal space in their lives for work and personal life. It is considered as a collective concept rather than being it limited to an individual who is performing the act of leading (Gina and Richard L., 2004).

In the past the sole focus on how to educate individuals on leadership and develop them to become leaderships in organizational places was limited to a set of practices. The

most primary practice was class-room type training. This was considered to be the main formal development that individuals could attain. This method of education was accompanied by several other complementary activities such as coaching and mentoring (Gina and Richard L., 2004).

Coaching is considered to be the short-term method that was geared towards achieving specific pre-set goals and objectives and allows using one-to-one method. Following this technique, according to scholars, it allows for more behavior altering and direct learning. As for mentoring, it is considered to be the long-term approach that an individual with experience and knowledge assesses and provides guidance both professionally and personally to the individual with lower experience. These two approaches allow for application of action learning method which is solving real organizational problems as an active learning to harvest three main objectives which are discussion of findings and learnings to precise situations that allows the creation of more abroad leadership skills and tactics as well as achieving measurable and attainable end results to the organization (Palus&Horth. 2003).

In addition to that scholars such as Chappelow (Chappelow. 2004) has noted the growth of a leader developing method called 360 feedback. It starts from top executives with the help with the boss it is re-integrated in the organization. However, it shouldn't be conducted on its own. It has been called the most notable management innovation by scholars in the past (Atwater & Waldman. 1998; London & Beatty, 1993).

As it has been noted from above the trending development methods all involve individuals coming together to learn about leadership. This over the years have developed the concept of creating teams which was originally the effect of transformational leadership applied which employed the leaders' emotional intelligence and the more emotional and humane side of the leaders. This leadership method allowed for more long-term results rather than the short-term goals and achievements of transactional leadership. This idea offers a relevant explanation on how leadership developing educational means that are being offered in the present are less in isolated environment and more engaged in real-time with other individuals. Linking this, to the other concepts that has taken popularity in our present such as helping employees

achieve work and life balance and careering about their well-being and raising concerns and studying the effects of the burn-out culture that was harbored in the past in work environments. (Gina and Richard L., 2004).

2.4 LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN

The role of the gender of the leader may affect how employees perceive leadership that is coming from their leader. And some thought that the gender of the leader may influence the style that is being used to conduct leadership, however according to this study that was done by the Academy of Management Journal (Chapman, 1975), it shared the opinion that gender is one of the factors that affect leadership but also social gender roles stereotypes play a major part of the influence. Female leaders are stereotyped into adopting specific traits in their leadership style that seems to be stereotyping way grouped with the fact that they are females. For example, female leaders are expected to portray more relationship-oriented behaviors, more welcoming and accommodative and male leaders are expected to be more explosive, aggressive and dominant (Chapman, 1975).

This paper proposed two hypothesis and aimed to prove them. First being that there is no noteworthy of a difference between male and female leadership style. the research has progressed with proving that there is no worth mentioning of a difference in male and female leadership style.

However this research brings to our attention that the strength of social norms and culture play an important and vital part in the character development and personality of future leader which can in the future emerge and be seen as a pattern, meaning that when female leaders exhibit certain traits that follow the social and culture stereotypes it is very likely that it is associated with the culture and the societal effects on them during their character development (Chapman, 1975).

The situation that the leadership is exercised in also plays an important role in leadership behaviors. From a female leadership point of view there are target-oriented work environment that possesses failure risks on leaders. For female leaders' studies

have found that they tend to feel the pressure of failure and another sort of pressure that is not felt by male leaders which is the risk of success (Eagly&Diekman, 2005).

Stereotyping and social norms have places females in a tight box of traits that classify women as feminine or female. Female leaders tend to feel that once they achieve the set targets in an organizational environment, they have a high chance of being negatively described as aggressive and unfeminine. On the other hand, if a male leader is to achieve success on the same level being called aggressive will be positively reworded into ambition and risk-taker (Eagly& Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

Bearing this fear in mind, female leaders tend to handle situations with much different approach than male leaders by using accommodative and relationship-oriented-approach. This is supported by the human behavior literature (Chapman and Luthans, 1975).

Another factor that contributes to this fear of success, is how the self-image of female leaders tend to get affected by the treat of their employees and peers in the working environment. The social and cultural stereotypes that have limited females still haunts them in the organizational environment in a form of negative treatment from their peers and superiors. There tends to be little engorgement or acceptance for success as the work environment is generally male dominated (Chapman and Luthans, 1975).

And despite the fact that with passing time females tend to try to avoid stereotypical behaviors, however it has been proven difficult since the male attitudes towards female leaders still very much remains similar and does not seem to change as much. Same attitudes and uncomfortableness towards the idea of being led by a female leader, and male employers being bias and unfair in offering equal employment opportunities and promotion to female leaders, as well as having extremely high expectations from female leaders that don't match the expectations being set to be met by male leaders if they were to conduct the same job. For example, a female leader is thought to sacrifice her family for her career while if they was any misconduct that threatens an employee's job, mangers seem to try their best at retaining a valuable male employee and will not do

much the same for a valuable female employee. (Chapman and Luthans, 1975). The opposing pressure that seems to haunt women throughout the history of being unacceptably too masculine or unacceptably not enough feminine.

Yet, with all these pressures that female leaders face in their working lives, research in 2004 has showed that female leaders portray leadership styles and tactics that are closely positively effective than male leaders, which gives female leaders an advantage over male leaders. As well as male leaders tend to lead in less beneficial styles by attending to worker's failures to meet standards, exhibiting behaviors that shows escaping solving problems until they become critical, as well as being generally absent or choose to stay away.

Research suggests(Judge & Piccolo, 2004) that there are two possibilities on why these results came about. Firstly, being that role of transformative leadership seems to be much highly compatible with a feminine nature rather than a masculine nature. In the sense of it seems to be more fitting and associated with feminine traits rather than masculine traits (Eagly, 2007).

Another possibility is the unfairness that female leaders tend to face in getting higher up in the work hierarchy. The double standers that female leaders face, make female employees more qualified than male employees for leadership roles. A research that as conduct (Baxter & Wright, 2000; Elliott & Smith, 2004) has proven that female employees face much more challenges and difficulties in getting promotion in all management levels and not just at the highest levels. They pass through more obstacles and are more very carefully selected than male employees. So, when they get selected and perform leadership roles in a more effective manner it may be because they are more qualified than male employees who were designated for that leadership role.

To further prove the results of the this research, another research that was done more in detail taking into consider more factors such as company size and measured effectiveness in terms of revenue and financial returns found that companies that have

higher percentage of females in their top management have better financial returns and performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005).

Yet on the other hand, a meta-analysis was conducted in 2006 (Eagly, 2007) to show the evaluation of female leaders' effectiveness' and male leaders' effectiveness' by their peers in different settings. As suspected, male-dominated environments evaluated that male leadership effectiveness was higher than female leadership effectiveness'. However female leaders were judged to be more effective in work environments that seemed to possess more feminine traits like in social services or education. The results of this analysis were not surprising because the organizational environment culture places pressure and extreme difficulties for female leaders to be comfortable and have the ability to gain authority. This might be connected to the fear of success and effects on self-image that the earlier research results had portrayed.

The hypothesis that females face high levels of prejudice when attempting or acquiring leadership positions. This hypothesis was tested and proven true by research conducted on the (CBS News/New York times, 2006) when the willingness to vote for a female candidate for leadership position such as presidency was tested, and the results came only 55 percent. This prejudice affects aspiring female leaders to pursue their rightful leadership roles as smoothly as male leaders (Eagly, 2007).

3. WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

3.1 WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

It is undeniable that presence of female managers compared to the number of male managers is noticeably low, considering the fact that women represent almost half of the population and as more and more females enter the workforce the difference becomes more prominent and clearer. According to Women & Equality Unit in 2002 female workers form around half of the work force but they are clustered in the lower levels of employment. They are also occupying only the third of the managerial positions and are paid less than their male peers. A recent study that was done in Canada that confirms the continuity in the wage gap between males and females where the number of men outweighed the number of women to 3:1 ratio (Bonikowska, 2019).

3.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

In the beginning, a closer more analytical look must be taken to view how female employees are prepared to enter and compete against their male peers in the work environment. It is critical to start this approach from the early ages and not just from the time that the female employees start getting assigned leadership positions as the psychological and environmental factors are crucial in the development of female leadership.

Chodrow (Chodorow, 1978) proposed that the way girls are raised during their childhood are different from boys in the sense that girls are raised to fit a specific pattern to fill the societal expectations where boys have more freedom to develop a sense of identity and think about what they want to be. The research suggests that due to the fact that boys have more freedom to develop a sense of identity separate from their parents it shows in the kind of roles they seek in their adulthood. Bearing in mind that not every family fall for this stereotypical way of raising children however it has been noted to be a very

commonly used pattern. Young girls who are not taught to have a strong sense of identity seem to grow up to be more content and find comfort in low-paying roles without desire to expand their potential leading skills(Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Throughout the years, the gap between the number of uneducated girls and boys has been shrinking significantly, however it has not been totally erased. Young women continue to come to the face of multiple difficulties enrolling in primary and secondary schools. This issue is severely highlighted in low-income countries.

Another issue that is the result of social and cultural norms, is the choice of education that is chosen by young women is very different that the education chosen by young boys. This reason is addressed here because this is one of the factors that affect the wage gap that women suffer from throughout their careers. Women globally tend to dominate health and education sectors where men tend to dominate engineering and sciences (Gender equality and development, 2012).

This difference in the choice of education affect the female labor market. This segregation creates imbalances in some key elements (Belenky et al., 1986):

This segregation plays in emphasizing gender stereotypes by limiting employment options for females.

- i) This limitation then plays an important role when women try to find higher level jobs. As they struggle to find better-paying jobs than their male peers or even equally paying jobs as their male peers labeled as horizontal and vertical dimensions.
- ii) The cultural and societal expectation empowers this segregation as it pushes women to favor careers that will make them able to balance between their careers and their personal lives.
- iii) The low appreciation of women's work and skills also plays an important main element in this gender segregation.

3.3 LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

As the leadership courses that are provided do not address the issue of development of female leaders. Whether intentional or not, a generation after generation of male leaders are produced to the world who do not seem to address the issue of the lack of aid and development that female leaders need in a dynamic work environment that is dominated by male leaders (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

A study that was conducted in 2003 has addressed this issue aiming to analyze the situation in the United Kingdom, in order to move towards a diverse and balanced work environment it is vital to address the issue from the roots and understand the effect of the lack of female leaders and the huge gap between the number of successful male leaders and female leaders (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Female employees are not as easily noticed by talent-spotting as male employees as their talents and potentials are not as exploited as male employees. Male executives who seek to understand and develop their management and leadership skills seem to usually start by taking MBA courses and management classes which unfortunately were development and curated by male educators who seemed to design such programs with the priority of male-dominated work environment in mind. Thus, discarding the critical skill and education that is needed by female potential leaders to become a fruitful and impactful female leader in her work environment (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

This is shown by the comparison of numbers of MBA male students and Female students, which showed that evidently 20 to 30 percent of the students in the UK are females while the rest are male students (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

The reasons for such gap can vary. From financial reasons and inability for young female employees to take loans or to financial bare the weight of enrolling and handling the financial responsibilities of such decision to the possibility that they did not plan their career as clearly as their male peers. Some stated that their reasons were because they didn't see the co-relation between investing in an MBA program and getting a higher job position like their male peers (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

However, addressing the deeper reasons behind this gap can help us understand the difficulty for females to take the decision to invest and take an MBA program. A study that was conducted by Sinclair(Sinclair, 1995, 1997) had concluded that it might be related to the method and the way that program communicates the information to the students rather than access to the education itself. Addressing the issue that, women have more social responsibilities than men and a full-time MBA program is not designed to accommodate to those responsibilities, making it harder for them to take such a design (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Another prominent issue was highlighted in the same study was the lack of male awareness to the differences that the female students face in a learning environment where it is dominated by men. Sinclair who even went to the extent to define MBA education as the masculinized set of rules that is emphasized by the male majority and not just in students form but all the way up to faculty members and key-players in the case studies. This strong presence has led to privileges to the majority. The lack of female presence of course led to weakness in presentation of the female voice in team discussions and in decision making processes and failing to unify the communication differences (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

In addition to the failure of the system but the bias that was unconsciously passed to the male generation made them have stereotypical expectations of their female peers. Their female peers where expected to only take subordinate parts and not leadership roles as well as do social tasks.

Such environment resulted in centralization of power and authority by the male majority on both sides the teaching staff as well as the students' side. "Maleness" was a trait that was considered for being a good teacher and women fell for the stereotypical analysis of them considered being stupid, inexperienced and lack enough knowledge to be qualified for anything more than their current position. This image led them to lose their self-confidence and made them feel like their main goal while doing an MBA program was

not to aspire being a leader but to rather survive such a lethal environment (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

However, MBA programs are not the only executive trainings that are offered. Aspiring female leaders join management development courses, yet they still remain in the minority especially if the course is designed for entry to a managerial and leadership position. This is because they must conduct much more effort than their male peers for such chances to fight against the stereotypical view from their male bosses against the development of female careers and lack of commitment to rectify the imbalance of leadership roles. Moreover, the lack of a strong female mentor to pave the way for potential female leaders to develop their leadership skills and knowledge(Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Another alternative arise for female potential leaders is women-only training developing courses. These were management courses that aimed to rectify and bridge the gap of insufficiencies that the MBA courses lacked for female potential leaders (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

As a research that was conduct by Tanton in 1992 found that women leaders tend to behave like their male peers, meaning they discard away their own identity, values, believes and differences to act like their male peers which is called abrogation of their female self. However female-only training courses have helped women to express themselves openly without abandoning parts of themselves that contributed to who they were as a leader.

This has led some to disagree upon this approach, claiming that this kind of training will not help mend over the differences rather it will help making them more prominent and making it harder for these female leaders to get accustomed to the real world as it is not like that in the work environment.

However, it is important to understand that, these courses do not aim to protect women from the work environments. Unlike MBA courses' environments, such courses help

women to understand their full potential and themselves, explore their managerial skills and develop a deep understanding of their leadership style and the differences that they will face in the work environment. Instead of slowly changing and becoming the female version of their male peers, they understand how to become the most preemptive, effective version of the leaders they are meant to be and achieve the common goals of themselves as well as their organization (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

One of the things that such courses help potential female leaders in is the importance and the value of power politics and connections. Hard work is not enough to reach a senior management position. There is a constant pattern that is reflected in most female managers which was labeled by Rudman in 1998 called the imposter syndrome. Women lack the self-confidence and self-esteem to stand proud and own power politics in the work environment in the fear that they will be found less feminine. Something that MBA structured-like- programs fail to address (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Another important factor that is present in women-only training centers is that it motives potential female leaders to take control of their career and stop letting the environments they grew up in affect their career strategies and choices. Seeing other successful women as success models affects their self-esteem positively, pushing them as they help each other towards achieving bigger goals. Something that is not present in MBA courses(Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002).

Having access to training and developing courses is a crucial step towards going up the organizational hierarchy. Old research previously stated that there is no gender bias when offering training to female and male employees, and that they both get the same opportunities. Yet, unfortunately the reality of the situation is far from the research that was done in 1994. A study in 2007 has directed the spotlight on the fact that female employees are almost always selected to be in staff-level jobs like human resources and communication where male employees are at other departments such as production. Because of this segregation women are not given as much training chances as much as men. Not only that but also little to no importance is given to customized training

chances which lead to inadequate experience and knowledge and creation of a gap in women's careers compared to men's (Abdullahi, 2006).

3.4 IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE LABOR

The female labor force participation is one of the affecting factors to the development of a nation. The more female labor force participation increases, the more that the potential of the nation's economy increases, as there will be higher level of output and the household income will increase. This will make families escape poverty and increase the consumption rate of goods and services. And as time goes by, female labor skills and capabilities develop and adapt to the demands and the needs of the work environment. However, it is crucial to understand that the participation of female labor is a double-edged sword. On one side it can be an indicator to the increase level of development in female- education and a higher rate of women development, or it can be considered as an indicator to uneducated women who are trying to survive from poverty. This is why it is vital to not only look at rate of female participation but the quality of jobs that are being occupied by women. The results of this approach have shed light on gender inequality in the work environments and gender wage gap (Verik, 2018).

The gender wage gap is a persisting global issue ever since the female labor participation has been noticeably significant. Women make relatively lower than men despite the similarity of their jobs in various sectors. While the legalization of equal pay law in the UK in 1970 has helped a little, however until this day women are fighting for their right to earn as much as their male peers. International studies have been done to study up close the reasons for such gaps and why it remains unexplained to this day. Interestingly enough, evidence shows that one of the reasons there is wage gap is because employers engage in such discriminatory acts under the influence of social and cultural norms. Women are raised to face the cultural expectations and obligations they have towards the community they live in. Stereotypically, women are responsible for running the households, raising children, and valuing having different priorities than their male peers. Women may choose a lower-paying job because it is closer to home or because it gives them the benefit to leave early while earning less. Employers exploit

these cultural expectations to their advantage and use it to save labor costs and engage in such discriminatory activities (Hirsch, 2019).

3.5 FACTORS LEADING TO INEQUALITY

There are certain aspects and factors that create such phenomena mentioned above that researchers had tried to study and observe throughout the recent years. The first reason being the most obvious one, which is gender stereotyping. Gender stereotyping is the mind frame that makes individuals believe that a specific race or kind of people exhibit the same traits, behaviors and characteristics on the basis of gender and disregarding any differences that could influence the character from external or internal factors (Block and Crawford, 2013). This mind frame implies that women have specific characteristics that make them unfit for being promoted to be in an executive position. Characteristics such as being too sentimental and emotional, viewed to make them unable to handle negative feedback in a professional manner nor capable to handle work pressure. Secondly, it is believed that women don't have enough aggression nor ambitiousness to exert enough effort and dedication in their job. It is thought that they get unmotivated and their focus drifts to be more family-oriented instead (Suraj-Narayan, 2005)(SoleymanpourOmran, Alizadeh and Esmaeeli, 2015).

Another factor that forms a barrier to women development and taking leadership positions in the workplace is the way of evaluating female employees' work versus male employees' work. It has been noted that organizations put more expectations on female employees' performance than their male employees. This may be because many successful women nowadays have paved their way to the positions they hold now by adopting this methodology. Working harder than their male peers to be able to prove themselves being more efficient and effective, and more eligible for promotions. Because they feel such negative assumptions as being incompetent are ultimately placed due to the lack of trust in female employees' ability to succeed more in the workplace than male employees (SoleymanpourOmran, Alizadeh and Esmaeeli, 2015).

In addition to that, the work environment that female employees face forms a great obstacle. Managers exhibit certain leadership styles and techniques that are more fit for

masculine and male management, which in turns puts pressure on women employees to act the same or otherwise they will be referred to as being incompetent or unsuccessful when in fact different leadership styles may lead to the same goal and possibly better achievements if there weren't so much stiffness and expectations about how should everything be managed (SoleymanpourOmran, Alizadeh and Esmaeeli, 2015).

Moreover, an additional factor that hampers the promotional opportunities to women employees are the flexibility of the working conditions in the organization. Aside from the expectations that are placed on the female employees in the workplace, outside the organization woman have family expectations and responsibilities that they are expected to meet and balance between with no delay. However, organizations don't offer such flexibility to their female employees which often cause them to discard pursuing any chances for promotion (SoleymanpourOmran, Alizadeh and Esmaeeli, 2015).

3.6 ATTITUDES TOWARDS FEMALE MANAGERS

Throughout the years the participation of women in leadership positions has grown through the years. However, it hasn't grown significantly enough to balance out the inequalities that to this day females face in the workplace. According to the catalyst, the percentage of managerial roles that are occupied by women in 2018 in Australia was only 36.3 percent and only 16.8 percent of these women are appointed as CEOs or Head of business across various sectors. In Japan 2017, women held only 10.9 percent in directors' positions. In Canada women are only 10 percent in the C-level management across the 100 largest publicly traded organizations. As in Europe, women accounted for only 17.6 percent of senior positions and only 6.9 percent of this percentage held CEO positions in 2019 (Catalyst, 2019).

Looking in the S&P 500 companies, the higher up the corporate ladder the lower the percentage of women are found, where it starts the total employment as 44 percent and ends in 5 percent in the CEO category (Catalyst, 2019).

These results are proof that the phenomena that was explored by Schein and Mueller in 1970, 'think manager-think male' is still persistent over the decades and remains unchanged. Even though there has been some improvement in the statistics however, there are still major male dominance across the world in the leadership positions. This dominance strengthens the invisible stereotypical behaviors towards female managers who actually manage to make it to the small percentage of the management.

'Think manager- Think male' phenomenon describes how people perceive the idea of the ideal manager should be like. According to this phenomenon, ideal managers are to have male characteristics in order to be able to be promoted and succeed in managerial and leadership positions. Despite the changes, the concept still exists in the mind of management male students who are present in the majority of the research populations. Not only that, but also it is present across the western and the Asian culture despite the various differences (Schein, 2007).

Another study worth mentioning done by Butterfield and Grinnell in The paradigm agency community, the sample of management studies were asked to define what qualities do good managers should possess. Researchers found that students described good managers using male-gender stereotypes. Despite the fact that, this research was conducted twice, the second time including female students (Powell and Butterfield, 2003).

Another research showed that mainly men prefer the idea of a male manager rather than women. In addition to that both female and male employees have negative attitudes towards the idea of having female taking leadership positions. This is mostly due to the common spread idea that females do not enjoy the traits that make them eligible to be a good manager (Balgui, 2013).

Females are looked at as motherly figures who offer nurturing and caring, therefore when a woman is appointed to a leadership position they are titled as 'iron women' where they are discarded of their female attributes and get labeled with masculine attributes. This unintentionally forces women to hide their feminine characteristics

because they are considered to be a flaw rather than a plus to their character (Guvenel, 2016).

Another stereotypical mold that women are seen in other than a motherly figure, is either 'seductress' making women into sexual objects who are unable to manage an organization or a 'pet' where these type of women are put into a role of being small and looking up to male figures and soothing for them on the sidelines however not participating with them (Schein and Mueller, 1992).

This also promotes the discriminatory practices that in relevance to female labor who are criticized as too emotional, intuitive or socially oriented; despite the fact that recent research has proved that managers should enjoy the qualities that women are criticized for. In addition to that, it strengthens the idea that masculine traits are more sought after rather than feminine traits in corporate organizations (Guvenel, 2016).

3.7 GLASS-CEILING EFFECT

The concept of 'Glass-Ceiling' refers to the invisible obstacles that hinders females from climbing up the corporate ladder to attain leadership roles and high management positions (Behery, Al-Nasser and Parakandi, 2017). Research around the globe continuously prove that women globally during a certain phase in their careers get in contact with the 'glass- ceiling' and find themselves having to break through in order to attain their career goals and accomplishments. It is observed naturally after the lowest middle-level management roles, hindering potential female candidates to obtain higher leadership positions.

Despite the laws and regulations that were passed throughout the years by governments in attempts to regulate the gender imbalances and empower women to get promoted to leadership roles and positions; however, the glass-ceiling effect still remains the most difficult to control and the biggest struggle in women's career.

A study that was conducted by Crittenden and Caputi in 2012 to assess women's response to the glass-ceiling in regard to, the effects it has on their career choices. The research showed four circumstances. The first is the Resignation; when females give up or remain unsuccessful to hunt promotions due to social and organizational hinders. The second is the Acceptance; when female employees adapt and get content with the situation they are in and do not seek to go after a bigger position or a promotion. The third is the Resilience; where female employees try to prove themselves in the work environment and fight against the stereotypes by successfully getting promoted to managerial positions. The fourth is the Denial; where female employees do not even believe in the concept or its' existence.

The Glass-Ceiling barriers contain societal, governmental and organizational business structures. Research show that these barriers and constrains are often reinforced by cultures adopted in organizations that are have male dominance and stereotypical views towards leadership and hiring for managerial roles (Behery, Al-Nasser and Parakandi, 2017).

Factors such as the unequal opportunities to access quality education, the occupational gender segregation, stereotyping behaviors and culture barriers. Women are not considered as equal to men in terms of education, experience and jobopportunities according to the human capital model. Moreover, the socio-psychological model shows that the misrepresented women percentage on the senior management level is because of the gender stereotyping behaviors and the gender roles that women are seen in. In combination to that, the systematic hinders are the obstacles that are embedded in the organizational systems that forms obstacles for female candidates to be promoted for leadership positions, for example social networking (Choi and Park, 2014).

For example, in countries with Asian cultures, the glass-ceiling that women face is in the social and cultural obstacles that restrain them from being able to create networking relations and contacts due to the dominance of male in the society, therefore making them unable to have leadership roles and top managerial positions. Also, women in the Asian contexts are viewed as submissive figure that should look up and follow a male figure. Therefore, is seen as unqualified for having a leadership role. In addition, if

women display their characters with masculine attributes such as impose authority and power it is considered a negative and are treated poorly unlike their male peers (Kiaye and Singh, 2013).

Strangely enough, research conduct in 2016 have exposed a behavior called the Glass-Cliff (Sabharwal, 2013). This behavior describes the sudden access to promotions and managerial positions to female employees only in times of organizational crisis and when the percentage of uncertainty and risk is higher than normal. These organizational situations impose such uncommon challenges where it needs immediate results and outcome. With that being cleared, if the promoted female employees fail to control the situation in the desired outcome the result is getting them fired opposed to if a male executive held the same position at the same time. Keeping in mind that at these specific situations it has been noted that female managers are not given as much support and authority as it would have been if it was a male manager (Glass, Cook and Ingersoll, 2016).

Understanding the negative effects of Glass-ceiling concept is a prime key to solving the problem. Glass-Ceiling effects are not just imbalances that women and minorities' problems, they impose negative effects on the economy and attaining gender equality in aspects such as work environments or society. Women make more than half of the population, yet they suffer the lack of fair representation across all organizational levels.

4. WOMEN IN STEM

4.1 WOMEN IN STEM CAREERS

Choosing which field to specify my research on was crucial to highlight the main objective of this research. The under representation of women globally comes from the gender inequality across all segregations as previously conveyed by data in the other chapters. However, despite the major inequality across all charts I aim to highlight the gap between women and men in STEM careers in relation to leadership.

In order to convey the negatives consequences of the lack of women in this area. First an understanding of STEM Careers should be explained. STEM Careers are careers that are in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields. In 2010 a report that has been done by AAUW has conveyed data that shows the high gap between the percentage of women to men in these fields (Catherine Hill, n.d.). And even though this report was made public a decade ago, according to an article published on Status of Women Data that belongs to the Institute for Women's Policy Research in 2015, women in the US States working in STEM occupations only make up around 4.6 percent compared to men who work in STEM occupations making 10.3 percent (Women in the States, 2015). Men are 2.2 times more likely to have a STEM career than women (Women in the States, 2015).

These statistics are a persistent and a prominent evidence to the lack of women in the important fields. Despite the fact that women make up 57.2 percent of all workforce globally according to data collected in 2015 as shown on Smithsonian Science Education Center's website, women only make 24.7 percent of computer and math professionals (Smithsonian Science Education Center, 2020).

According to the Catalyst website (Catalyst, 2019) some data that was collected in regard to, women in STEM fields, in August 2018 the number of females employed in

computer system design and related services in Australia made up 22.8 percent. While in the United States according to data that was collected in 2017 women make up less than 20 percent in high-tech jobs compared to EU-28 which is 32.6 percent (Catalyst, 2019).

With all the data that was previously discussed in mind, comparing STEM industries to non-STEM industries the information technology industry has the lowest representation of females (Catalyst, 2019). In 2017, 28.5 percent of the companies had no women on their board members while only 18 percent of the interviewed companies had 3 plus women in their board members (Catalyst, 2019).

4.2 REASONS BEHIND THE GAP

The American Association University of Women (AAUW, 2013), has released an executive report that was conducted in 2013 that studied the phenomena of the gap between the number of women with careers in the STEM careers and men leading work-life in the same fields. That executive summary concludes that mainly environmental and cultural factors are primary shaping reasons that have evident effect on young girls' interest in joining careers that are stereotypical to being "men" jobs. This misconception has many reflecting indications on young girls who are choosing their careers in the future.

It starts with affecting their "Self-assessments" how they evaluate their own abilities and skills in fields of mathematics and sciences. Therefore, when young girls perceive themselves with lower mental abilities than boys in such educational areas it makes them stray away from choosing to try in these fields and exploring their skills. Abandoning the "growth- mindset" that should be sought after by parents and mentors since young age (AAUW, 2013).

Later on, when these young girls grow up, they are faced by stereotypical views about choosing fields that have masculine attributes and are considered to be for "men" for example being an engineer or a scientist. They are negatively judged for choosing such a profession and referred to be less "womanly" or sought to be less liked due to her

career of choice while discarding them of their success in their career even if their performance is similar to their male peers (AAUW, 2013). A survey that was conducted by AAAS/L'Oreal in 2010 showed that 52 percent of women in STEM careers go through gender-related bias compared to only 2 percent of the male respondents (Nature Cell Biology, 2011).

A research was conducted in the UK to study and show the various papers that were done in efforts of analyzing the reasons behind the inequality in the IT sectors specifically. The research has touched on how the IT field manage to fail at retaining women in this career due to the difficult work conditions that women face such as long working hours and presenteeism (Simpson, 1998), and other factors that are not necessary related to the IT field itself but rather relevant to the organizational practices that are being followed (Platman and Taylor, 2004) (Wilson - Kovacs, Ryan and Haslam, 2006).

An annual report that was done by the organizational trade and industry in 2005 follows up on the phenomena of why women quiet their careers in IT in their 40s and 50s to also show that it was due to the difficult work conditions plus negative emotions that surround the idea of women holding careers in fields that are considered to be for “men”. For example, feeling undesired, unsupported, undervalued career-wise (DTI Interim Report January, 2005a, p. 8) (Wilson - Kovacs, Ryan and Haslam, 2006).

Unfortunately, this unconscious or sometimes conscious bias is embedded in cultures and societies in a way that makes the male members of such societies unaware of the stereotypes and the discomfort that women in such fields or who are interested in having such a career face. It is important to raise awareness to this topic by educating both parties about such unauthentic biased thinking to contribute to solving the issue of the misrepresentation of women in such important career paths.

5. DATA AND METHOD

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is an exploratory study that aims to understand why such phenomenon mentioned above occur. The sample will be conducted from women who have managed to advance in their career to lead or hold a managerial position in the IT sector only. The sample will be 10 women selected using random selection and interviewed using structured interviews. The data collected will be reduced, coded then categorized and lastly displayed in a manner to showcase the findings.

This chapter will showcase the data that has been collected to highlight the challenges and obstacles that are faced by women who are holding leadership and or managerial positions in the IT Sector.

This data was collected from interviews that were done with ten women who have managerial experience in the IT sector and chose to share their experiences and their journey in this career by answering the interview questions that aim to explore the issue of gender inequality in the managerial level in this sector. The respondents were not selected according to region nor limited to a certain country. The only requirements to qualify to this interview was being a female who hold a certain amount of years of managerial experience in the IT Sector. With that being said the interviewees ranged from various countries across Europe, the US and Turkey having a working background in international (company size up too 2000 employee) and national (company size up to 150 employee) organizational backgrounds, as well as national educational institutions.

Respondents were found on social media platforms that are associated with IT and Technological topics as well as women empowerment. LinkedIn and Facebook were the ways that the respondents have reached out to approve and fill out the interview questions. It was crucial to try to not limit women from a specific geographical area or

city as this thesis aims to explore a global phenomenon of gender inequality in the IT sector that is neither limited nor specifically related to a certain a region.

Example of the Interview Questions:

- i) In your opinion, what are the most common obstacles in women's careers? (If there are any)
- ii) In general, do you think that women and men have the same opportunities when pursuing higher positions? Please state your reasoning for your answer.
- iii) Have you felt that being a woman has made it harder for you to get ahead in your career? Please State your reasoning for your answer.
- iv) Do you consider there to be significant differences in the style of leading between men and women? Please state your reasoning for your answer.
- v) What do you think are the best tools to increase the number of women in leadership positions? (E.g. mentoring, quotas, discussion, etc...)

5.2 TIME FRAME OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at the beginning or the month of September 2019, the literature review started from the September and the interviews was conducted online as per the preference of the interviewee. Analyzing the data drawn from the interviews and conducting a report took place in February, and Submission of this research proposal is due to May/June.

Due to the limited time and contacts to women in this sector;the social networking websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn were used to reach out to women who qualify to these interviews. Unfortunately, due to the unfamiliarity between the conductor of the interview and the interviewees some women failed to respond at the designed timeframe. In addition to that the interview was done in English Language which limited the number of women that could openly express their point view using the English Language. This is why this research was done without any limitation to a specific geographic region for ease purposes as well as to measure the global gender inequality issue that is not limited to a specific demographic.

5.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order for the purpose of this study to be explored more thoroughly, qualitative data was collected through Survey type interviews were drawn up in order to allow the respondents to express their opinions in the questions that addressed the gender inequality issue, freely without any limitations to a pre-fixated answers (yes or no).

Open ended questions were used to allow the respondents to state their reasoning to a specific yes or no questions to explore why certain frequent occurrence happen in (according to the data collected different regions). The first four questions were introductory questions that were included in the interview that aimed to give the respondent the chance to introduce themselves if they wish as they were considered optional. The questions addressed their names, age, Job Title and company name. Before asking whether they respondents ever faced gender inequality or their thoughts about this issue, the interview had questions to highlight the highest education level acquired and number of years they held a leadership and or a managerial position in this sector.

5.4 LIMITATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Conducting this study there were several limitations that have obstructed this research, firstly:

- i) Limited amount of number of respondents who qualify to answer the survey. The number of women in the IT sector that have held a managerial and or a leadership position in the IT Sector were more difficult to find.
- ii) Lack of response and or interest from the target audience. Not everyone was able to participate truly in this survey due to a number of barriers that included but not limited to culture and language barriers.
- iii) The demographic that this research study has been conducted in and the language that this research is being designed with are different. This research was conducted

using English Language while the close demographical circle does not always speak fluent English.

- iv) Limitation of the only choice in IT sector from STEM careers.
- v) The culture differences also play an important role in the lack of interest in the survey. As Respondents were reluctant to participate and share their information or opinion on the subject for undisclosed reasons that could have to be related but not limited to trust.
- vi) Societal and cultural characteristics that affect the severity of the gender inequality issue in the IT sector.



6. FINDINGS

The interview was drawn up of fifteen questions that included five introductory questions and two questions that inquired about educational level and experience background. Only one out of the ten interviewees chose not to share her personal details in the survey (Name, Age, Company Name).

The third question was inquiring about the Job title and all the job titles involved key words such as Leader, Manager, Head of, Master, Partner and CIO. One of the respondents holds a Post Doctor position.

The fourth question was for the respondents to enlist their Job Description in order to explore any pattern of activities. However due to the fact that, it wasn't marked as compulsory one out of the ten interviewees didn't choose to disclose her job description. Three of respondent had explicitly stated that one of their responsibilities were including handling budgeting, fundraising and managing funds using words such as fundraising, budgeting and venture capital. Nine out of ten respondents used key words to describe their job responsibilities with words such as managing, developing, supervising, leading.

The fifth question was asking about the years of experience in the managerial position and the answers were starting from 3 years up until 20 years of experience. Three out of ten respondents had three years of managerial experience in this sector. Two respondents had from four to five years of managerial experience. Three respondents had from nine to ten years of managerial experience while only one had twenty years of managerial experience.

The sixth question was to specify the highest educational degree completed. Six interviewees hold a master's degree. Two of them specified the kind of master's degree they hold one was in Oriental Medicine while one was an MBA. One respondent had dropped out of her BA before completing to start her own tech startup. One respondent

holds a Phd while two hold a bachelor's degree. This question was not marked as compulsory which is why one respondent chose not to specify the highest educational degree she owns currently.

The seventh question was to state according to their point of view what the most common obstacles in women's career were, if they thought there were any. The ten respondents had this question marked as compulsory and as an open question to explore what women face in their careers in this particular sector. The respondents had shared their point views according to their experience and knowledge. Despite the variety of responses that women had shared they all had key words that stood out that were main points mentioned in the literature review discussed in the previous chapters.

- i) Lack of role models and guidance to look up to.
- ii) Influence of society expectations and upbringings.
- iii) Sexism, gender bias, stereotyping women to behave in an obedient way.
- iv) Self- image: lack of confidence (as described by the respondent)
- v) Male peers' subconscious sexism and ignorance.

The eighth question was a yes or no question whether the respondent considered that men and women have equal opportunities when pursuing higher positions and only two out the ten responded with yes.

The following question was asking for reasoning and clarification on their opinion whether it was a negative or positive. Two of the respondents have referred to the gender wage gap as a sort of inequality of opportunities despite the fact that they were equal to their male peers in terms of workload and responsibilities. Five respondents have explained that their reasoning was related to stereotyping and how the society limits women to certain images. One respondent had stated:

“Women have to fight harder for the same positions”

While another respondent clarifies more on her point of view saying:

“The higher you want to climb the office ladder, the more it's a social game and the less your talents matter. At a certain level, you'll hit the old boys club.”

Two respondents have referred to the fact that it takes longer for women to reach longer for women to get a promotion that their male peers would get faster due to their gender and it becomes too late. While one respondent claims that despite gender stereotyping having no effect on her career path, she calls it the “mans’ world”.

“the problems often can be retraced to how comfortable you feel as a woman in man’s world. If you don't allow yourself to be trapped into gender stereotypes, listen to your heart and to whatever career path you'll follow - don't listen to so called influencers trying to make you feel uncomfortable just because of gender.”

Another respondent states that she has not lived any gender discrimination in her career, and another adds that she gets a lot of support from her male leaders and mentors however not because of her gender but because she was actively seeking opportunities. This answer is close to another respondent where she says that women are poor communicators due to the upbringing and society effect on women’s behavior (being more tolerate and obedient); therefore, not acting or voicing their opinion to lead or get a promotion.

The tenth question was asking whether being a woman have made it harder for them to get career advancements and four women have respondent with no while six women have respondent with yes.

The following question was asking for stating their reasoning to explore more in depth. Two of the respondents who have stated their opinion as no have explained that they have been working on their traits and their behaviors from previously to not follow being more “feminine” and be “tomboy” as one respondent had phrased it or acquire traits such as being more persuasive, stronger and avoiding showing emotions among a

setting where men are involved. The third respondent had stated that even though it hadn't made it harder for her to get a career advancement she did live through uncomfortable situations due to comments from men about her being a woman in a place where women are not usually present. Two women who have responded with yes have stated that they were in environments that were lacking women so much that it was difficult to get a career promotion. One respondent had said that she had to double her efforts, produce better reports just to stand out against her male peers and be recognized and she claims that she was lucky that she had a mentor who was the reason that she could get ahead. The respondent does not refer to her efforts and her work being the reason she got her position. Two respondents state that it is because of the perceived judgements that because of the gender they won't be able to give the same effort and be there for their work like their male peers. Another respondent states:

“Yes and no... I managed to advance quite fast in my career whilst embracing my feminine qualities, however I have faced many hardships as a direct result of my gender. I imagine that being a man, I may be in the same position now but the journey would have gone much more smoothly. There have also been times when I feel being a woman was an advantage – for example, standing out in a pitch contest when the other 9 finalists are men.”

The twelfth question was whether there was a different leading style between genders and nine out of ten respondents have stated yes. The following question was asking for explanation for their reasoning and seven respondents frame their answers with key words describing the women leadership style with being more “nurturing” more about “collaborating and communicating”.

“Women are more nurturing by nature, women also live collaboration and helping others and that shows in the way we manage teams.”

One respondent states:

“I feel like the people who report to a female supervisor expect to be mommied. My female peer and I deal with more of employees' emotional problems than our two male

team leaders. But our teams are also happier about the career coaching we provide and have high job satisfaction.”

Another respondent refers to emotional intelligence levels and states:

“For sure EQ is always different in between men and women. Therefore, the styles are different.”

Two respondents make states that she thinks it’s not about the gender and that individuals have unique entities with unique leadership styles. She then adds however, that men learn from men, so habits are passed down.

“I believe that individuals are authentic, and we all have our own leadership style. But men learn from other men, so habits are passed down.”

Two respondent makes a referral to men’s leadership style saying:

“Of course, it depends on the individual, but women are generally more diplomatic, approachable, keen to create a nurturing environment in the workplace and attuned to the dynamics of the team. Men often take a more direct approach to interactions, leading with a louder confidence, more aggressive tactics (e.g. sales) and bravado.”

Another respondent states that:

“Women often have to fight much harder to achieve the same career level than men - this sometimes makes it hard even for women having a female boss.”

The last question was an open question asking women to pass forward from their experience what they think can be done to increase the number of women in leadership positions. Examples were added to help and not to limit their brainstorming was: mentoring, quotas and discussions.

Three of the respondents respond with answers that were related to education. Stating that young women should be taught from early up that they can lead and that they are able to be hold a leadership position.

“Definitely quotas! I think education needs to start form younger age like high school and then universities. At that age both younger men and women are more receptive and can easier mold their personalities.”

Another respondent discusses the importance of social influence and society on women’s thinking and limitation of choice:

“Mentoring and quotas can make strides in the short term, but true equality requires a cultural shift away from "man=business/leader, woman=home/family" that will take generations. I'm not a mother, and have no intention to be, but attitudes about maternity/paternity leave is where we start. Both parents need to not only have leave available but be expected to use it and that not hurt their careers. Having to choose between career success and being a good wife/mother is at the heart of so much of the gender discrimination. The default when a company considers a female hire is that she may take a leave of absence for caretaking, whether for a child or an elderly parent. Society views the husband's career as the primary while the wife's is a second income.”

Almost all respondents however agree on mentoring and coaching. And having a successful female figure to look up to for guidance and support.

“Mentoring is fundamental. Quotas is the wrong approach sometimes because it creates an environment in which women's are put into question by peers: is she actually good or is she here to fill a quota?”

While a lot of women have questioned that actual importance and possibly the negative aspects of having quotas some encouraged the idea:

“Quotas are unfortunately necessary and should be enforced, otherwise the change towards parity will take another 100 years. Hopefully when everyone sees women leading well, they will be won over and will hire more women into senior positions. Discussions are useful, but not fully effective because the type of men who are open to listen are not the ones who need convincing; those with bias are likely to switch off whenever they hear ‘feminist’ chat. Definitely put more successful women in the public

eye, e.g. as keynote speakers, as expert advisors on panels, at workshops. Then their skills can be demonstrated to a wider audience.”



7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In a Q&A that was done by Harvard summer School website with Dr. Mary Brinton a sociology professor at Harvard University, she was asked on how countries like Japan and the United States of America could do to increase gender equality. Her answer was quite simpler yet rather complex. She said that humans are all predisposed to acting in a stereotyping manner in some point in their lives. However, as she said that it is a vital key to keep studying our biases and understand the inequality through research that is consciously being conducted so that it can be brought to light and ways to alter this course of action could be carried. She finally adds that as a unit, as a society it is rather a key that members of the society realize their contribution to the place they belong to and the place they take in their society regardless of their gender, and utilize it in a way that can help bring change around them (Harvard Summer School, 2020).

From the interview conduct with Dr. Mary, it is essential to keep looking up where our biases lay and to keep modifying them until we reach a point of balance and an equilibrium. In the interview conduct for this research it was essential to explore where the stereotypical and inequality behavior lays and highlight it, which is the key to beginning to solve the issue.

From the findings in the previous chapter, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire helped the majority of women to discuss their opinions. And despite the differences in work environment and company size, it seems from evidence that gender inequality is a persistent issue in which it had affected them in one way or another throughout their careers. Even the women who have stated that they haven't suffered or are not convinced that inequality exists use gender-infused words to describe what their job or their career path. And the handful of women who have stated that gender inequality hasn't formed an obstacle to them having a career advancement, they still had used words such as "man's world" "old boys' club" to refer to a career or a job. Women feel that they are going into a territory that is not meant for them, regardless of their skills or

knowledge that could be equal or even more than their male peers in some cases according to the interviewees. This is an interesting discovery to be noted. Women seem to be sub-consciously taught to talk and referring their career in IT to belong to men.

When asked about leadership style, the interviewees seem to fall into two main categories.

“Women take better consideration for the person and their needs, as well as the person's circumstances. Men lead based on performance and results ignoring all the personal aspects women do take into consideration.”

The first category that female managers feel that they have more social responsibility towards their subordinates. As another interviewee points out “expect to be mommied” they embody the nurturing and caring role in the organization while male leaders are not expected to have the same duties. Adding to that another interviewee that simply says “[...] Women usually care more which leads to caring working environment.” It is important to add to this category that just like interviewees feel that women leaders are expected to take care of their subordinates’ feelings and emotions they also point out that male managers often embody a more aggressive and straightforward approach. Leading the observer to believe that men don’t take into consideration the same aspects as female leaders. These responses aid the evidence that shows women generally having higher emotional intelligence than their male peers.

Adding to that observation another that is vital to this research which is to take note of the communication style used by women and men when being in a leadership position. An interviewee explains by saying that men use “louder confidence” while women are more “dynamic and approachable”. Another interviewee explains in an earlier question that women are raised up in a way to not be able to say no which doesn’t make them as good of a negotiator as men leading to low quality communication.

The other category that believes that there is difference between female and male leadership styles because all humans are authentic creatures with their differences and unique aspects.

Another notable answer that I received from an interviewee saying that:

“[...] But men learn from other men, so habits are passed down.”

It is important to take a closer look at this answer because it gives the observer a spotlight on one of the most vital aspects on inequality and stereotypical behavior. If one leader behaves with inequality, they are passing down the same tactics and behaviors to their subordinates. As we discussed in chapter one regarding the roles of a leader. A leader is expected to teach and be a role model to their subordinate in order to achieve an objective or a target. Therefore, it is important to start from the top and break the cycle of gender stereotypical habits that are passed down. An interviewee had noted during the interview that due to the male dominance in the decision-making position, decisions are influenced by gender bias. This draws our attention to the need to have more female leader figures. As touched on this subject in chapter two section 2.6 where the attitude towards female managers are explored in literature. The common idea of “Think manager, think man” affects the behavioral habits of employees as well as their learning during the time they spend in the organization.

In chapter two, the issue of wage gap between female and male managers was discussed. Interviewees while answering have referred to it as a factor that promotes inequality in their career life. With the aid of evidence from other literature, these responses from the interviewees prove that wage gap is not only a present issue in STEM careers, moreover it is also showing that it is considered to be the norm. An interviewee stated “Women are often, if not always, offered less money for the same positions [...]” another interviewee adds her experience in two organizations in support to this topic on a separate occasion “I was paid less than my male counterpart, despite contributing the same (if not more) value to the company [...]”.

In the section five in the women development chapter (chapter 2) research have found that some factors that lead to gender inequality was the way women’s work was

evaluated compared to their male peers. The responses gathered from the interviewees have confirmed this point referring to the exact words interviewees used like “fight twice as hard” or “I had to work twice as hard as my male counterparts to make it to CIO. I had to produce better reports, better presentations, more metrics, more output in order to be seen.”

Gathered from the response of the interviewees, women recognize the need for more education options and outlets that should be targeted to younger female generations. Educating young women that they have more options than what society could be shaping up for them, educating them on being strong communicators and having the ability to defend their opinions as well as providing educational outlets that can prepare them to the work environments they will face. During the interviews that were conducted for this research women have expressed how it is not only about skills and capabilities however, women also need to be more aware of how to handle the social ladder and the fierce competition against their male peers as well as their female peers as well. An interviewee has expressed that due to the scarcity of opportunities for women, other rising female employees find that instead of having the females in their organization to have a mentor role or offer support they do the opposite and create a rather toxic work environment.

In chapter two, a critical analysis was conducted regarding MBA programs and how women find that it wasn't as helpful to them as their male peers due to the education type and methodology. As a way to remedy that, an all-women programs were offered to women who aim to have leadership positions that offer to touch base on vital aspects that women seem to struggle with in work environments that are not necessarily related to skills and capabilities such as communication style and handling the power politics.

In addition to education, mentoring and having strong female public figure was repeated as a common theme from the interviewees whether it was one of the factors that lead up to their career advancement or they wished they had a mentor or a female figure they can speak to and share their thoughts and struggles. This was lacking at their times,

which highlights the gap in this sector for strong influential female leaders that could have led and offered emotional and or technical support.

Quotas was mentioned in the interviews as a method to facilitate the decrease in the gap of women taking part of STEM careers. Nevertheless, interviewees seemed to have split answers regarding this method. Some women felt that this always a portal of unqualified women to enter and therefore performance quality will be at risk. However, one interviewee had explained perfectly how quotas could be of an advantage to the current situation of inequality “Quotas are unfortunately necessary and should be enforced, otherwise the change towards parity will take another 100 years. Hopefully when everyone sees women leading well, they will be won over and will hire more women into senior positions. [...]”. the main advantage that can be gained from applying quota is to break the status quo of not having enough women to lead in organizations. To create the new norm of having female figures that lead and hold leadership positions this image will therefore enhance the action of having more women employed in such senior leadership positions and shifting the inequality to an equilibrium.

During one of the interviews that was conducted for this thesis an interviewee has made a key point to the root of the inequality issue which is the social change and as she calls it “cultural shift”. Looking at the bigger picture and not specific to a certain career choice or a sector, although it is applicable in our chosen sector of study; breaking away from the labels and limited roles that women are confined in for a woman means “home and family” and a man “business and a leader”. Some might think this is an attack on women being a mother or a bearing a family in contrast to that, the idea is to create an opportunity for women to enjoy the option of having variety and a choice. Women and men are both entitled to have a career that is equally important and having a family to care for should be the responsibility of both parents and not only the responsibility of women. We often see that women having to take sacrifices on the behalf of their careers to look after her children or an elderly parent while on the other hand, men are not expected to do such a task therefore are not provided with the option of having paternity leave in case of having a family. The idea is to start from the top, passing laws that

could enhance the lives of both parents and viewing the value of their careers as equal and not that one is more significant than the other.

In conclusion, it is important to take a step back to analyze the root of the problem. In our case gender inequality in STEM careers doesn't only have one cause where we can click a button to erase or undo. It is a complex issue that was a result of decades of ignorance and imbalance. However, as a society it is our role to understand the corners of the problem that we face. To have a cause a change that will affect the lives of others in the future.



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