

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP VERSUS GLASS CEILING EFFECT: A THEORETICAL MODEL FROM TURKISH IT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Glass ceiling effect, the barriers that prevent women to become senior managers, still effects women employees in 21st Century. However, recent researches indicate that women are more tend to exhibit today's prominent leadership behaviors -transformational leadership- than men. Basing on these findings this research examined whether women can overcome these barriers by utilizing transformational leadership behaviors. A grounded theory approach was followed to analyze the data, was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with women senior executives of the prominent IT sector firms operating in Istanbul. As a result, a theoretical model explaining the path of women employees from glass ceiling barriers to senior leadership was introduced. The research findings indicate that participants exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, and most importantly the female instincts of the women executives are in accordance with transformational leadership behaviors. Consequently, it was defined that women mostly affected by individual barriers, and are able to overcome glass ceiling barriers by relying on their feminine instincts that are strictly in accordance with transformational leadership features.

Keywords: *Glass ceiling effect, Transformational leadership, Grounded Theory, IT sector*

INTRODUCTION

The role of women in society, women rights, gender equality, women in business, woman as a mother and woman as a wife, carrier woman, super women and many other concepts have been the subject of women studies for years (Helson, 1972; Kabeer, 2005; Stoltz-Loike, 1992). A wide range of concepts and issues indicate that women confront various problems that have not resolved yet, and from another perspective indicate the richness of female identity.

The increase in women education level and participation of women in professional life with the 1970s; the debate about *Should women be in business life?* shifted to *Can women be an executive?* Entering the 1980s, a new problem that women confront in business world emerged. Even after, women were in business life and rose to middle management but there was a barrier, exactly at the level of rising to senior management. A barrier that cannot be seen, cannot be defined, do not take place in official organization policies, not related to competency or capacity, and prevent women to be senior managers. These barriers are commonly identified as *glass ceiling barriers* in literature.

Although the findings indicate that women employees are still under the effect of glass ceiling, in recent years researches conducted on women leadership propose that women executives are tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. (Abolade, 2014; Adesua-Lincoln, 2012; Folta et al., 2012; Growe & Montgomery, 2000; Paulišić & Božac, 2013). Transformational leadership -theorized by Bernard Bass (1985)- is a prominent leadership style in today's turbulent business world, and represented with four dimensions: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Common vision, cooperation, communication, ethical and moral values, integration are the featured key concepts of this leadership approach. The leaders that have these features are also responsible for building an organizational climate to achieve these concepts.

In this research, it was assumed that the increase of women senior management rates may associated with the transformational leadership behaviors of women executives, and the idea of this research emerged *Do women employees overcome glass ceiling barriers by utilizing transformational leadership behaviors?*

This research examined the glass ceiling effect that women employees confront, and the role of transformational leadership in overcoming these barriers with an exploratory grounded theory approach in Turkish IT Sector. For this purpose, at first, conceptual background of the research will be mentioned. Later on, research questions, research methodology, sample and data will be introduced, and the theoretical model was emerged from coding analysis and interactions among components will be explained. Consequently, in the last section research results will be discussed, limitations of the research and recommendations to future researches will be presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Glass Ceiling Effect

The glass ceiling effect was issued in literature for the first time with the article of Hymowitz & Shellhard in 1986, and was defined as the barriers that take place just under the top management level in organizational hierarchy and prevent and restrict women to raise senior management level (Dreher 2003). In March 1995 official report of Federal Glass Ceiling Commission -operates under US Labor Department- the glass ceiling barriers were grouped under 3 titles: societal barriers, internal structural barriers and governmental barriers. The Commission defined the 'glass ceiling' as, invisible barriers that constrain women and minorities, regardless of their qualifications and achievements, from climbing up to upper stairs of organization (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission 1995). The definition reflects not only workforce inequality but also discrimination, the other important point is that the term glass ceiling did not only associated with solely women employees but also with the minorities in workplace. Cotter et al. (2006) also defined glass ceiling barriers as a specific kind of discrimination related to race and gender inequalities, and based these barriers on 3 three reasons: 1)The perception of 'no chance to be a senior manager because of their gender' of middle level women managers, may lead to pessimism and discouragement, 2) Lack of gender diversification in top management levels, 3) Gender related barriers, observed in hard workforce market, may affect negatively the procurement of needed competencies and resources.

Many researches were carried out on glass ceiling phenomenon, and the barriers commonly classified under the titles of societal and organizational factors (Grove and Montgomery 2000; Samineni and Reddy 2013; Truman and Baroudi 1994; Virick, and Greer 2012). According to research findings, stereotypes, social roles, familial responsibilities, work-family conflict are the commonly confronted societal barriers by women employess; and the organizational barriers are informal networks, organizational culture, lack of role model and mentor, discrimination, prejudices about women's leadership skills and capabilities, and queen bee syndrome (Truman and Baroudi, 1994; Grove and Montgomery, 2000; Ahuja, 2002; Katz and Salaway, 2004; Virick and Greer, 2012).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was coined by McGregor Burns (1978), theorized by Bernard Bass (1985) and gained a different perspective by Peter Senge's (1990) systems thinking, is a prominent leadership approach in today's turbulent era. Burns (1978) considered transforming leadership as an interactive process that leaders and followers raise each other to upper levels with regard to motivation and morality. Transforming leaders raise the level by appealing to high ideals and values of their followers. Bernard M. Bass, a student of Burn's, excluded the idea that transforming leadership arises only in the upper levels of organizational hierarchy and developed a new leadership theory that was based on new paradigms of *transformational* and *transactional* leadership styles, and introduced to leadership literature in his featured book *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (Bass, 1995).

Transformational Leadership is represented by 4 dimensions: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). *Idealized influence* or in other words *charisma* dimension of leader provides adopting the sense of vision and mission, impresses pride, and in return leader gains respect and trust. *Inspirational motivation* promises high expectations, utilizes symbols in order to conflate efforts; and articulates the important goals in simple manner. Intellectual stimulation encourages the improvement of intelligence, rationality, and intentive problemsolving capability. *Individual consideration* deals with subordinates individually, supports them and advises (Bass, 1991). Common vision, cooperation, communication, ethical and moral values, integration are the featured key concepts of this leadership approach. The leaders that have these features are also responsible for building an organizational climate to achieve these concepts. Although till 1980s

transactional leadership style -relationship among leader and subordinates bases on mutual transaction, as rewarding and punishment according to performance- subjected to many researches, the groundbreaking leaders have always been transformational leaders (B.M. Bass & R. Bass, 2008). As Bass (1991) defined transformational leaders as superior leaders that have the ability of enhancing the expectations of their followers' by raising their awareness, and gathering them around a common vision that is beyond their individual interests. The findings of researches, were conducted on women's leadership style, indicate that women leaders are tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. (Adams and Weiss, 2011; Adesua-Lincoln, 2012; Babaoglan and Litchka, 2010; Brandt and Edinger, 2014; Chandler, 2011; Eagly and Carli, 2003; Fatima et al., 2011; Folta et al., 2012; Hasan and Othman, 2012; Grove and Montgomery, 2000; Paulišić and Božac, 2013).

Research Questions

According to research results it is expected that more women executives -have the feature, or potential of transformational leadership style- are represented in senior management. Grant Thornton IBR (2016) women in business research indicates that although a significant increase in women senior management rates through worldwide have been observed, women senior executive rates are still lower than men (Grant Thornton IBR 2016). Basing on these findings it was assumed that women employees may overcome glass ceiling effect by utilizing their transformational leadership skills, and an explorative qualitative pattern, grounded theory, methodology was followed in order to examine this process in depth. Hence, the answer of the following research questions was examined.

RQ1: Did women leaders perceive Glass Ceiling Effect while rising to top management level?

RQ2: Which barrier is most perceived by women leaders?

RQ3: Which leadership features have a positive impact on overcoming the glass ceiling effect?

RQ4: Which transformational leadership behaviors are exhibited by women leaders?

METHODOLOGY

Research Goal

The aim of this research is to examine whether women employees can overcome these barriers by utilizing transformational leadership behaviors, and also examine the effective factors in this process. For this purpose, semistructured interviews with 14 women senior executives were conducted.

Sample and Data Collection

Researches conducted on women leadership in Turkey indicate that women employees are centered in education and banking sector (Babaoglan & Litchka 2010; Bayrak & Mohan, 2001; Minibaş-Poussard et al. 2011). According to the Information and Communication Technology Sector Market Data report issued by Turkey IT Sector Association (TUBISAD) in 2013, the female employment rate in IT Sector was 27% -it is merely one quarter of the total employment rate in IT Sector (TUBISAD, 2014). Depending on the data it is likely to define IT sector as a male-dominated sector in Turkey. The sample of this research was selected from IT sector, in order to examine the success of women leaders in a male-dominated sector, and also for the sector's rapidly-developing and turbulent nature. In order to define the framework of the sample; the foundations and associations about IT Sector, the newspaper and journal articles and web sites about the firms and their women leaders, were scanned. A purposive sampling methodology was followed while choosing the sample. Women leaders, were living in Istanbul and working in the prominent firms in 2014 that have a vast ecosystem, were preferred. Consequently 35 women executives were identified. Requests for interviews were sent to the executives via post with a permission form was taken from researcher's institution that clearly explain the main subject of the study, affiliations of researchers. 14 senior managers accepted the request and included in research process. While arranging the interview questions it was paid attention not to add private questions about their ages, marital status, and number of children regarding their sensibility. It was considered appropriate to set them free in case of they want to express. Most of the participants stated that they were married, some of them were divorced and one participant stated she had never married. The ones who were mother stated they had one or two children. 7 participants had master's degree, one of them doctorate, and great majority of them had an engineering based education at university: computer engineering: 3 participants, electrical and electronic engineering: 3 participants, business administration: 2 participants, industrial

engineering: 1 participant, environmental engineering: 1 participant, mathematics engineering: 1 participant, petroleum engineering: 1 participant, Statistics: 1 participant, electrical engineering: 1 participant. This may be interpreted as their quantitative basis has a positive impact on analytic thinking ability in business life.

A semi-structured interview method was preferred for data-gathering process; due to that it is an efficient method in gathering information about participants' experiences, attitudes, opinions, complaints, emotions, and beliefs. In qualitative researches, intended purpose of interview method is to consider the subject of the study in participants' lens, and to understand how they gained that point of view. In semi-structured interview type, the interview form is pre-arranged, and open-ended questions are included (King, 2004; Myers & Newman, 2007). By following semistructural interview method, 10 open-ended novel questions with probes was arranged in accordance with the research questions. After the questions were arranged, we consulted 4 academicians interested in the research field. Following mutual assessments, deficient points were reexamined and the interview questions were put into the final form. While arranging the interview questions it was paid attention not to add private questions about their ages, marital status, and number of children regarding their sensibility, and let them free to express willingly. The subject of the study, information about the researchers and the assurance regarding the identity of the participants would be kept confidential especially noted in the text section of the interview form. This statement was submitted to each participant just before starting the interview. The interviews took place where the participants arranged, from December 4, 2014 to January 29, 2015, and took averagely 1 hour 15 minutes. In order to prevent data loss, audio recorder was used with permission of participants. During the interviews, researcher did not adhere to predetermined questions strictly. A flexible and exploratory approach was adopted in order to provide a basis for improvised dialogues and new questions were added to the interview form, basing on improvised dialogues. After each interview, audio records are deciphered in to World document and send via email to the participants, in order to receive their approval.

Analysis and Findings

A grounded theory methodology was followed in data analyzing process. Grounded theory was first conducted in early 1960s by two sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, in an observational field research on hospital staff dealing with near-death patients. Theory introduced to literature by the two researchers in 1967 with the publication: Discovery of Grounded Theory (Strauss, 2003). Glaser and Strauss (2006:1) defined grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data, systematically obtained and analyzed in social research”. Grounded theory is a qualitative pattern that bases theoretically on pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism. Therefore, grounded theorists aim not only to reveal the conditions of phenomenon; but also to define how the observed actors react to these conditions actively, and the results of the actions (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). In this research, coding processes that were developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) for grounded theory researchers followed in analyzing the data: open coding, axial coding and selective coding processes, and Saldaña's (2009) coding manual was utilized. The coding process was followed in this research is displayed on Figure 1 below:

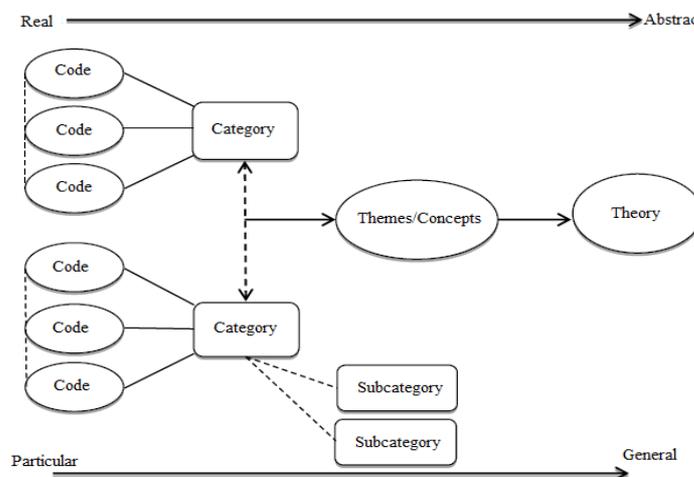


Figure-1: The Coding Process in Grounded Theory

Source: Saldaña (2009: 12)

As shown on figure 1, in a grounded theory research theory formation process improves from particular to general, and from real to abstract. The codes emerge from documents reflect the participant's experiences, opinions, and ideas. Therefore, they are particular to individuals and reflect a reality. If the similar codes emerge for other participants, they can be gathered under the same title. Hence, common and shared concepts start to emerge through coding process, and researchers construct a theory by moving away the particular, and approaching to the general.

In the first step *-open coding* process- the data were scanned line by line in-depth, and the audio records were also re-listened simultaneously in order to recall the interview time, gestures, mimics and emotional expressions of participants. In this process at first, glass ceiling factors and transformational leadership components that were identified during the literature review process were searched in the data. *Provisional coding, structural coding, descriptive coding* methods were used. Every new gathered data compared with the former data systematically. As the new codes emerged that were not in the researchers' mind at the beginning of the research, researchers passed through the initial coding phase. To identify the descriptive futures of participants *attribute coding* method was used. In vivo codes were also used in first cycle coding process. Examples for codes and explanations are presented on Table 1.

Table-1: Examples for Codes

Participants' Expressions	Codes and Explanations
"... I recognized long after... There were women who cannot stand my success in business life... Once a woman who was one of my ex-colleges came to me and said '... I behaved you so bad but when I slapped, you always turn the other chick like a prophet... what a good person you are'"	Queen bees (Provisional coding) Queen Bee Syndrome is one of the glass ceiling barriers identified in literature, so that in open coding process we searched for this barrier especially, and entitled the code with a similar expression as used in literature.
"... I see it clearly that everything is related to family. The raising up style and parents expectations from their children has a great influence on children's future preferences on their family life in the future..."	Family culture (Descriptive coding) The code entitled as <i>family culture</i> in order to represent a statement about the influence of parents on their children's future success.
"... That's the mother's dilemma; it is a horrible feeling of guilty and really hard to explain. Your child won't be at that age again..."	"Mother's dilemma" (in vivo code) The code is taken directly from the participant's expression in order to identify an individual glass ceiling barrier.
"... I started to sport in an early age, and in a disciplined manner. Training hours, tournament and races. Oriented to the goal, and professionally... I have not realized that before, but I think sports may have an impact on my business life..."	Sports and social activities (A descriptive code emerged during initial coding process) The code appeared in one of the interviews spontaneously. Realizing that it can be an effective factor on carrier path of women, we added it to interview form, and addressed to participants whether they were interested in sports in their early life and after.
"... Actually, I consider myself as a lucky character so as not to confront barriers as defined 'glass ceiling' in any period of my life. Neither in school time, in business life, in X Turkey office, nor in X foreign office..."	Not perceive glass ceiling (Thematic coding) This thematic code emerged during selective coding process with other 2 thematic codes, in order to express the glass ceiling perceptions women employees, and to combine the themes of the theoretical model.

In *axial coding phase* temporary codes were reviewed, similar ones were combined, other new codes also emerged, and were gathered under categories. In selective *coding process*, the themes and the relations among them were defined, and the missing parts of the theory were completed through returning the data. *Not perceive the glass ceiling* presented in Table 1 is one of the thematic codes emerged during this process.

Theoretical Model

By following Corbin and Strauss (1990)'s coding paradigm that has a reminder function in defining whether the phenomenon is represented within the frame of conditions, interactions, strategies tactics, and results (Strauss, 2003), a theoretical model with 6 components (themes) was constructed and represented on Figure 2: 1) Glass ceiling effect 2)Glass ceiling perception 3)Effective factors 4)Strategies and features, 5)Transformational leadership, 6)Easy exit

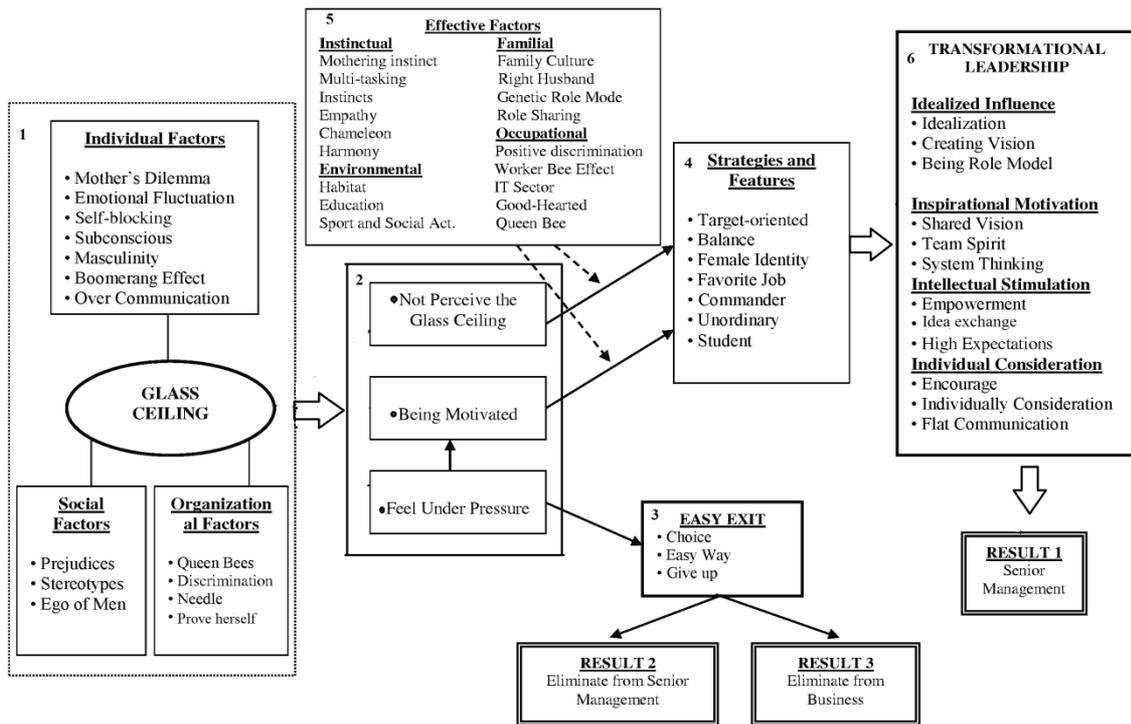


Figure-2: Theoretical Model

In theoretical model, the numbered squares represent the themes; the arrows represent direction of the relationship among the themes; the dashed arrows represent the influence of the external factors on gaining a leading character, and transformational leadership behaviors. As displayed on fig. 2; there are 2 ways women employees follow in their career journey. The first one results in senior management. These are the women who do not perceive glass ceiling barriers or perceived but motivated. They are also the ones that exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. The second way ends up with eliminating from senior management or totally from business life. Character features of women, strategies they follow and the effect of external factors have a vital role in being a senior manager or eliminating.

Findings indicate that women confront glass ceiling barriers that were classified under three categories: individual factors, social factors, and organizational factors. Individual factors are on the forefront among other barriers, as it was represented with seven codes:

Mothers dilemma is an in vivo code representing a working mother's feeling of guilty that derives from the child-work conflict.

Emotional fluctuation represents the disadvantage of women in business life that they sometimes cannot control their emotions. This fact can also affect their decisions and relationships with colleagues. A woman's instincts and emotions are valuable in the case that they use them properly.

Subconscious represents certain roles that established in society, upbringing style or the individual's observations during life can engrave in one's subconscious. Women can feel guilty or feel under pressure when they fail to fulfill the roles that are accepted as 'true' subconsciously.

Self-blocking represents the assumptions as 'I cannot be a senior manager' or 'They will not let me to be an executive' that block women in their career path. These assumptions can derive from lack of self-confidence or feeling of inadequacy.

Masculinity is an in vivo code that represents the fact that some women exhibit behaviors that are 'attributed to men' by society in order to make themselves accepted in workplace, establish the authority or set themselves apart from *vamp women*, and guard themselves from disruptive behaviors of the men. A participant ascribed this kind of behavior to her workplace's environment as:

"... I deliberately direct myself to behave masculine. Because when you behave like a woman, they consider it from a different point of view... In office I should behave like that..."

Boomerang effect is a metaphor code, defines the barriers that generated by yet another woman. As a boomerang turns back to whom threw it, the boomerangs that women threw may turn a full circle and hit another woman. The best example for this fact is the mothers who have boy child. The mothers who raise their boys with the opinion of they are 'exclusive', actually raising wrong husband candidates for other women and biased individuals against women to the society. Also the girl child mothers have responsibility in this situation. A girl that was raised with the opinion of 'she should serve her husband' it will not be surprising if she thinks in the future the best carrier is at home, not at business life.

Over-communication is an in vivo code was used to describe the barriers related to the fact that women use their communication skills excessively. The findings indicate that business life is still defined as men's world and men mostly prefer direct communication. So that over communication can give rise to some problems. The problems can appear as gossip in workplace or as an implicitly expression.

Besides individual barriers, women also confront society-based barriers that were represented with three codes: *Prejudices*, *stereotypes*, and *ego of men*. The first two codes are commonly issued in related literature about women's social roles were established in society. *Ego of men* represents the fact that some men cannot stand women's success and superiority. In patriarchal society boys are brought up as they are 'exclusive'. This fact may an effective factor for *ego of men* besides the other factors. Parenting style has a vital role in this kind of problems, and there is a relationship among the codes *ego of men* and *boomerang effect*. Men who cannot stand women's success may be the boomerangs thrown by mothers, and affects negatively the psychology of a woman.

The codes *queen bees*, *discrimination*, *needle*, and *prove herself* represents the organizational barriers that women confront in business life. The code *queen bees* -also its common title in literature *queen bee syndrome*- defines the conflicts and jealousy among women employees, and ambition of being alone at the top. It is a kind of *boomerang effect* appears in organization. Woman constructs barriers on another women's way.

Discrimination is also one of the common barriers issued in literature. It defines the inequalities between men and women employees related to opportunities, treatments, job offers, promotions and so forth. *Needle* is a metaphor code that was used to identify the insulting or derisive behaviors towards women by male colleges in workplace. As a *needle* pricks, such kinds of behaviors aggrieve women. The *needle* can appear as psychological harassment or making fun of women's feminine attributes as period terms or menopause. Also needle may partly be related to the code *masculinity* that women who confront with such insulting behaviors may behave in a masculine manner to avoid themselves.

Prove herself, identifies the fact that women should show performance and work harder than men for being promoted upper echelons. It can be mentioned in other words as *fighting against prejudices* and *defeating them*.

Women employees perceive these individual, social, and organizational barriers in three ways. Some of them have never confronted glass ceiling barriers. Some of them confront but have the ability of turning the advantage on their own by accepting them a motivating factor. Also some women can perceive these barriers much more later they confronted for the reason that they did not stumble on them. A challenging character trait, working intensive, enjoying their business or not to pay attention to these barriers are effective in overcoming these barriers. A participant expressed how she motivated herself as:

"... Now I am talking about the barriers... I talk about them for I accepted them, but at the time you don't understand that you confronted a barrier and you say to yourself "These are common struggles of business life. They are not specific to me or my femininity. Everybody experiences them." Once you accept the barriers, then you lose your resistance. Because you are unable to cope with them otherwise you change your gender..."

As there are women employees who do not perceive or ignore the barriers, there are also the ones who perceive them and feel under pressure. These women affected by glass ceiling barriers follow two ways. Some of them prefer to struggle, and were motivated by this effort. The others prefer the *easy exit* and lose the chance of being a senior manager.

The theme *easy exit* identifies the ways followed by the women employees that feel under pressure and not struggle with the glass ceiling barriers, and represented with 3 codes: *Choice*, *easy way*, and *give up*. It is a fact that every woman does not obliged to struggle with barriers and to be a senior manager. It is a *choice*. The code defines the fact that women draw back willingly to devote time for her private life, to work in less intensive positions, or to address different interests. Also a woman whose family or husband

has economically good conditions may prefer not to struggle, and not to take responsibility. This kind of woman takes the *easy way* out, stay in lower positions or leaves the business life; and also some women are unable to cope with the barriers and obliged to leave the work, or stay at lower positions -although they wanted to be a senior manager. A participant described this fact with a balloon metaphor.

“...While climbing up the pyramid's top as a balloon with attached weights, it comes to a level that they cannot carry these weights anymore. They cannot ascent to the top of the pyramid. The weights that pull down the balloon can be defined as familial, cultural or organizational. Sometimes a woman should work 'one and a half times harder' than a man to get the same position. So, they cannot rise with these weights or they give up climbing the pyramid...”

Successful women senior manager's -who did not choose the *easy exit*- common features and strategies they follow, are gathered under the theme *strategies and features*. According to findings, successful women managers have 7 common points was represented with the codes: *Target oriented, balance, female identity, favorite job, commander, unordinary, and student*.

Self-awareness, improve herself on the way to target, show performance, being determined and patient are the significant features of the successful senior managers. A *target-oriented* character is effective on ignoring or not to perceive the difficulties of business life -including the glass ceiling barriers.

Balance is a key factor in a senior woman manager's life. Private life and business life, emotions, behaviors require fine adjustment. The priority should be able to shift in times of need from business life to private life, and the reverse. Participants neither identified themselves as a *super woman* nor as a *carrier woman*, but as *balance woman*. Also the emotions and instincts should be kept under control and used properly in order to turn them into advantage.

Women make difference in business life with their *female identity*. Behaving like a man -as mentioned under *masculinity* code- surpasses their significant features. A participant related the increase in women manager rates to that today they are much more aware of their feminine features and identity:

“... Women are successful in their carriers for they own their feminine features. Therefore, I say that they should hold to their female identity. We can see more woman managers today for they are aware of their identity...”

Commander is a metaphor code that identifies women's capability of organizing. Actually, every woman is a commander. There are various battlefields in their life to fight, and victories to win. This fact adds value to women as making quick decisions in under uncertainty conditions, and tremendous organizing skills. Business world is still defined as *men's world* and senior women managers are the *unordinary* characteristics that challenge the barriers. Their unordinary aspect makes its presence also in their lives. Lifelong learning is also one of the common features of the senior woman managers. They are aware of that they can learn something from any mistake and learn something from anyone else.

The factors that have a significant effect on women in the means of gaining leadership behaviors and overcoming glass ceiling barriers were represented under the theme *effective factors* with four categories: *Instinctual, familial, environmental, and occupational*. According to the findings, women have strong instincts related to their leadership behaviors. If instincts are used properly, they really take advantage for women in business life. We titled women's instinctual features under this theme with 6 codes: *Mothering instinct, multi-tasking, intuitions, empathy, chameleon, and harmony*.

Mothering instinct is one of the significant instincts of women, and includes more than one feature. A mother loves unconditionally, protects, embraces, teaches her child and takes responsibility in general manner, while business life is cruel. A woman with this special instinct can bring this cruel world a humanistic perspective and can increase the motivation of her team. A participant associated mothering instinct with the behaviors that a successful manager should exhibit very well:

“... Who is the mother? A mother is the one who takes responsibility. Who is the mother? She is the one who teaches. One of the most important problems of a manager derives from the fear that the person who he taught something will be his rival one day. If you have such a fear, you shouldn't be on that position. No mother fears that one day his child will be better than her. If you reflect this instinct on your business properly, nobody will be better than you anyway...”

Mothering instinct can appear also in behaviors of a woman who is not a mother, as a participant expressed:

“... I don't have a child but if I had, I would prefer a girl. I would really like to have a girl and raise her... May be for psychological reasons... Why do I feel this way? Why do I want to raise a girl? Why do I want to bring a girl child who is better than me in society? ...”

As mothering is a strong instinct that takes advantage for women, it should be used in workplace properly. Otherwise it is likely that she will be abused.

As women undertake various roles both in private life and business life in general, they are able to consider more than one responsibility, prioritize and put them into practice quickly. Versatility -defined as *multi-tasking* in business life- is a naturally developed feature of women and takes advantage for them in business life.

Intuitions are also one of the strong emotions provide benefit for women in business life and for sure if used properly. A participant shared her experience about how her intuitions benefited her in a business bargain:

“... Not in the beginning of my career but now I have learnt to rely on my intuition that what it says comes true at the end of the day. Whenever I followed my intuitions I always gained. Hence, I think that women have an advantage if they know how to use and dare to use it. For instance, it happened to me during a bargain with one of the most respected businessmen of Turkey. He said me that “You are a mother. You have intuitions. Now, I will say you something, look in to my eyes and listen to your intuitions. I did what he said, and replied as “Yes I rely on you” and bound the bargain. If there was a man in the place of me the bargain may not be bound. Hence, I love to use it...”

Empathy is one of the beneficial features of women that ensure staff's commitment and increases the motivation. *Chameleon* is a metaphor code that represents the adaptation feature of women and related to women's multi-tasking feature. As a woman has to cope with various roles and this instinct gains woman in business life, adapt to crisis atmosphere quickly and make effective decisions and also assume different roles.

The code *harmony* represents the integrative feature of women. Harmony, an inherent instinct, can appear when cooking or when doing a patch-work. This integrating feature of women provides advantage in business life as a participant expressed:

“...Integration is a familiar thing for women. For instance, while cooking we put a little of that and a little of that until it tastes better. Hence, in business life for instance in Smart Home Technology. This technology requires sensor tech, mobile tech and network etc. I assert that in such kind of techs women should be occupied due to that this kind of technologies require information gathered from various professions and also requires an understanding of the demands of the consumers. Today emotions are also involved in integrating different technologies as deep technologies are developed to the higher point. Namely, we advanced in sensor techs and also in communication techs but the application which will combine these areas have not been discovered yet. Yes... the women will combine them...”

Familial factors that have an impact on women in the manner of being successful in business life, and gaining leadership behaviors were defined with four codes: *Family culture*, *right husband*, *genetic role model*, and *role sharing*. The participants without any exceptions stated that family support and parenting style of their families have a great impact on their success in business life. No stereotypes are imposed, no discrimination among children, and support them setting goals. Children grown up in such democratic environment do not try out to go beyond moreover the limits of their family. Besides, a *right husband* has a vital role in a married woman senior manger's success. Findings indicate that married participants have supportive, open-minded and empathetic husbands. A woman who wants to be successful in her career should stay away from the men that were mentioned under the *ego of men code*. Also, a family member – parent, sister, aunt, etc., taken as a role model and has an impact on women senior manager's life. Especially if *genetic role model* is a female and has an influential character as, an aunt who is a successful manger, high educated sisters, mother or grandmother who has a strong and struggling character etc. taken as role models by girl child and helps to put future aims. Genetic role models impact is much more effective than ordinary role models. And as a familial factor *role-sharing* represents the fact that a working woman should share some responsibilities as housework and child care. Women share these

roles as getting help from family members or by outsourcing. If a women go to work as knowing that everything is fine at home her motivation at work will be increase.

Environmental factors were represented with 3 codes: *Habitat, education, sports and social activities*. According to the findings, participants grew up in major cities of Turkey as Istanbul Ankara and Izmir. The occupations in terms of education, social life, cultural activities etc. are better in major cities than the rural areas. Growing up in major cities provides advantage of overcoming the glass ceiling effect and confronting fewer barriers. The participants graduated from the major universities of Turkey and most of them mentioned that the culture of the schools they attended in secondary and high school education, and also in university have an impact on their success and world view. Most of them educated in schools that accept students with examination and most of the courses are in foreign language-commonly in English. Although not all of the senior managers had education in a foreign country, they emphasized the importance of foreign education by the means of gaining self-esteem and a wider point of view and also being familiar with different cultures. And *sports and social activities* gained the participants features that are beneficial in business life as a target-oriented character, discipline, team spirit and human relations, as some of the participants stated that they were active in sports and social activities.

The effective factors related to workplace were represented with 4 codes: *Positive discrimination, the worker bee effect, IT Sector, and good-hearted queen bee*. According to the research findings, especially international companies practices positive discrimination for women employees. It is an organizational policy, is practiced in order to increase the number of women employees and to provide gender diversification in organization.

The worker bee effect, a metaphor code, represents the fact that women employees work more efficient with their male colleges by the means of integrating capabilities. Women-women matches may bring out some problems derive from *queen bees* or *over communication*. The right female-male combinations may increase the motivation and performance. The international companies are aware of *the worker bee effect* and give importance to diversification in organization as mentioned in *positive discrimination* code.

Competence-based and flat hierarchic nature, also the higher education level of *IT sector* is a benefit for women in rising to senior management, as confronting fewer difficulties.

Good-hearted queen bee is a metaphor code used to identify the women managers that supports and motivates women employees. They are the role models and the mentors. Organizations are the subsets of the society. As there are also good and bad people in social life, there are *also the queen bees* and *the good-hearted queen bees* in organizations.

According to the coding analyze results, all the participants exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. Bass's (1985) transformational leadership dimensions were taken into account while arranging the category names: *Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration*.

Idealization identifies the influence of the leader on her subordinates. As they consider their leader as a person who is admired, skilled and superior. Behaviors, ethical approach, making proper decisions in crisis environment and trust have a significant influence on idealization of the leader. *Building a common vision*, all the members of the organization involved in, is one of the basic functions of a transformational leader. Participants stated that they adopt a participant management style and considerate the ideas and suggestions of their staff also in building vision.

One of the prominent features of a transformational leader is being considered as a *role model* in organization. An idealized leader's behaviors, attitudes, the method she followed are followed by her staff. A leader who is aware of being a role model can use this feature to motivate and direct the employees. Participants also stated that they feel they were considered as a role model. It is also a motivation factor for the leader.

Leader's motivation methods used to direct her employees towards the target were explained under the category *inspirational motivation* with 3 codes: *Shared vision, team spirit, and systems thinking*. A transformational leader should articulate the common vision, the road map, and the benefits they will gain when they achieved the target. As the employees are aware of their role in organization towards the vision, and the interaction among the units, they will be motivated and work more intentionally. A participant expressed the importance of a clearly articulated vision and exemplified a dialog between she and her team.

“... I think my greatest side is drawing the whole picture as, “You should address here and produce this outcome. The other one will take this output from there and that is the whole picture we will have formed at the end.” I also believe that it simplifies my staff’s work. Otherwise, in most cases the reason of the conflicts and inefficiency in firms is that the employees are not aware of who will use and how will be used the outcome she produced. Therefore, they cannot manage the time plan and the output, and cannot see the whole picture...”

If the members of the team can share the responsibility of the whole success, failures, gains and losses, this means that the leader achieved to establish the most efficient motivation factor -the team spirit. It is about the human relations and a synergy among the team members, and the one who is responsible for establishing the team spirit is the leader. A participant’s expressions are a good example for the team spirit:

“...We have a common song and we sing it altogether, then we hug each other and leave the office. Namely, there is an environment of love and trust among the team. If you cannot establish such an environment, the business will not work. You work with human not with machines. Therefore, mutual trust and love are very important factors. If there is no love among the team, serious problems will emerge. You should love each other in the team, otherwise you should leave...”

The essence of *systems thinking* is being aware of that you are an operating wheel of the system. Every system is a subset of another system. Employees should be aware of their contribution to the organization and realize the interaction among units. This awareness of integration has a great impact on motivation and performance towards the vision. Thus, a transformational leader should be a *systems thinker* and practitioner. A participant’s point of view proves that she is a systems thinker:

“...Actually, regular conversations with one of my friends from another department that we have no relation in the way of our tasks have the same function. Yes... I am there for business but the questions in our conversation about “...What is its function in the whole picture? Where does that project place in the whole picture? Where does the firm place in the big picture? Where does that businesses place in your life?” Such questions emerged during our conversations are very important, as an irrelevant conversation about something may give you an idea about a problem that you cannot solve in your business...”

The essence of systems thinking is also related to *mothering instinct*. A participant’s expressions support this thesis:

“...If you behave as a mother ... A mother is not the one who only pities somebody. No... For instance, it is a common view that a woman manager cannot fire an employee. I say obviously that in first time it was really difficult for me but it is something like... Imagine the organization as a ‘ship’, many people work here and there is such a person that causes problem in working system. If I fire that man for he causes a loss in organization, for not he is a bad person, then only then I act like a real mother. A mother can admonish her child sometimes. Namely there is nothing strange about that...”

A transformational leader encourages her employees to go beyond their limits, find solutions to the problems, and produce new and novel ideas. This feature of the participants was represented under the category with 3 codes: *Empowerment*, *idea exchange*, and *high expectations*.

By giving responsibilities, transformational leaders encourage her employees to take responsibility, make decisions, and find solutions. *Empowerment* is also an awareness-raising practice. As a prominent feature of participative management style, transformational leaders give importance to idea exchange and participation of the employees in decision making in order to provide opportunity to different opinions and new ideas. As, IT sector achieving a continuous and rapid growth, it is possible that younger sector employees may be more interested and wise about new technologies, and their opinions are valuable.

High expectations, setting high goals keep employees active and encourage challenging and finding right solutions in short time. A participant expressed how she practice this strategy in workplace and stimulate her employees:

“... People need a challenge... Namely, not so much but a little harder than they can, and allow them to achieve. For instance, you cannot practice this in high-risk tasks with limited time, but if the dead-line is feasible, you should allow them to achieve and go beyond their limits...”

The features as, encouraging the employees to improve themselves, observing their mood and dealing with their problems, adopting a warm communication style, were explained under the category *individualized consideration* with three codes: *Encourage*, *dealing with*, and *flat communication*. A transformational leader, observe her employees, consider their competencies and deficiencies, encourage them to improve themselves, and coaches them. Observing the mood of the employees, listening to them and dealing with their personal problems are the transformational leadership behaviors, and also related with the codes *empathy*, *mothering instinct* and *intuitions*. As a participant expressed:

“... Though not all but some of my employees mention me about their girlfriends, problems in their life... Actually, I deal with them like a mother and I think it is an advantage of women...”

Transformational leaders adopt an accessible management style and closer relations with their employees instead of a hierarchic management style. As a participant stated:

“... I practice open-door policy and my employees are aware of my sincerity. Therefore, none of them refrain from saying me ‘I want to speak about something’...”

CONCLUSION

As a result of this research, a theoretical model was introduced that explains the relationship among the factors effective in gaining transformational leadership behaviors, and the role of these factors in overcoming the glass ceiling effect. The nature of grounded theory enabled us to conduct an in-depth research so, new concepts and relationships was emerged.

Results indicate that women confront glass ceiling barriers and it is determined that the most perceived barriers are individual factors with 7 codes. Glass ceiling barriers are commonly centered in social and structural/organizational factors in literature (Ahuja 2002; Babaoglan and Litchka 2010; Folta et al. 2012; Grove and Montgomery 2000; Katz and Salaway 2004; Ndaba 2013; Pflanz 2011; Samineni and Reddy 2013; Truman and Baroudi 1994; Virick and Greer 2012). The findings as ‘women construct their glass ceiling barriers’, and ‘researching the glass ceiling effect’ in-depth by following grounded theory methodology, distinguish this research from the others. The most perceived glass ceiling effect was defined as *mother’s dilemma*. Women, who can overcome this conflict by finding solutions, proceed in their career path. *Emotional fluctuations block-herself*, *subconscious*, *masculinity*, *boomerang effect*, and *over-communication* are the other individual glass ceiling barriers that women confront. As the women employees are aware of that the greatest barrier derives from them, they will focus on solutions and step forward to overcome these barriers.

Besides the individual factors, women also confront with social and organizational barriers. *Stereotypes* and *prejudices* are the frequently encountered social factors in literature (Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly and Johnson, 1990). The code *ego of men* is a new emerged social factor of this research besides the stereotypes and prejudices. It is also triggered by *boomerang effect* and blocks women’s business life. This finding also draws attention on child rearing style. The other social glass ceiling findings of this research -*queen bees*, *discrimination*, and *prove herself*- are the factors take part in literature (Ahuja 2002; Grove and Montgomery 2000; Katz and Salaway 2004) and the code *needle* emerged as an organizational factor representing the disturbing behaviors of men colleagues in workplace. *Needle* also triggers *masculinity* -an individual glass ceiling effect.

The prominent structural/organizational glass ceiling barriers that take place in literature lack of mentor and role model (Ahuja 2002; Ndaba 2013; Pflanz 2011) did not found in this research. Findings indicate that women take family members as a role model from a child. Especially strong and successful women figure in family -mother, sister, aunt etc.- have a great impact on overcoming the barriers and setting goals. This distinguishing finding is titled as *genetic role model*. Participants also stated that they did not need a mentor support in business life; this may be because their *target-oriented* and *unordinary* personal features. Though they did not receive a mentor help, working in international companies mentioned that they also serve as a mentor to women employees and advised beginners being open to support.

It was defined that the women senior managers that overcome the glass ceiling effect exhibit transformational leadership behaviors and *instinctual*, *familial*, *environmental*, and *occupational factors* have great influence on gaining these behaviors. *Family culture*, *genetic role model*, *right husband*, *sports and social activities*, and *IT sector* are the prominent effective factors. Especially family culture has an important role in ignoring and overcoming the barriers. Later on, the right husband is a supportive power

of women in their career path. The most remarkable finding of this research is that the female instincts are in harmony with the transformational leadership behaviors. This leadership style exists in female nature, it is based in their instincts, and the women that are aware of this power and use it properly, with the support of familial, environmental and occupational factors, will be successful. This finding also supports Morley (1994)'s findings in terms of women's quantitative under-representation is related to self-concept and being aware of their abilities. *Mothering instinct* -defined as an individual glass ceiling barrier- can turn into an advantage with regard to inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, and affect positively the organization performance. The prominent instinct-based features of women senior managers -chameleon, empathy, instincts, and multi-tasking- have a great role in being efficient transformational leaders. These findings support the views that women are tend to behave transformational leadership behaviors (Abolade 2014; Adams and Weiss 2011; Adesua-Lincoln 2012; Babaoglan and Litchka 2010; Bayrak and Mohan 2001; Chandler 2011; Eagly and Carli 2003; Fatima et al. 2011; Folta et al. 2012; Growe and Montgomery 2000; Hasan and Othman 2012; Paulišić and Božac 2013; Pflanz, 2011), and introduces a different point of view by emphasizing the effect of female instincts on transformational leadership behaviors.

It was also found that women senior managers have common features and strategies. This theme is important in terms of introducing current women senior manager profile. *Female identity* is one of the prominent codes of this research and emphasizes on once again the importance of female instincts.

Positive discrimination policies in international companies support our finding *worker bee effect* that emphasize the proper male-female combinations in workplace increases the performance. International companies practice positive discrimination deliberately to increase the diversification. This may be because they are aware of the female instincts and the proper combinations.

As it is a soft and intellectual, competency-required nature, IT sector accepts women employees and managers easier. Especially women's instinctual features, *harmony* and *chameleon*, address to IT sector - the sector that changes rapidly and requires integration.

It is a remarkable result that all 14 participants exhibit transformational leadership behaviors. The findings related to female instincts are in accordance with transformational leadership behaviors, presents a different point of view to research field. Transformational leadership exists in woman nature. As being aware of these futures, preventing female identity and using their instincts properly, women can activate their leadership features. Familial, environmental and occupational factors are also effective factors in being successful women leaders.

This research conducted in IT Sector with the participation of 14 senior managers. Future researches that will be conducted in different sectors and samples will allow comparison of findings. The scales that will be formed with regard to the codes emerged in this research can be utilized in quantitative research, and also will contribute to this research's reliability. The interviews that will be held with the subordinates will contribute to the consideration of leadership behaviors by employee's point of view. The data of this research were gathered from current women senior managers. Researches that will be conducted on beginner women employees will allow to be informed of the current situation of the glass ceiling effect.

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