Leaky pipeline: Women Lost in the Academic System, Evidence from Turkey[1]

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Abstract

Gender inequalities that exist in a society have an important role to hinder women to utilize their educational rights because they impinge on education. Though education system founded on equality principle, there are confidential messages about women and men are not equal. This kind of messages negatively affects women to take part senior-levels in the academic system. Leaky pipeline metaphor, is described as keeping out of women in the hierarchy of academic system, is specially used for women on their academic career trajectories (Women and Men in Higher Education, 2008).The purpose of this research is to make clear the main factors that prevent female academicians to undertake managerial tasks in Turkey. Qualitative research approach was used in this study. The data were collected using a semi-structured interview consisting of open-ended questions. The participants of this study were five volunteer female-academicians from social sciences departments such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography and educational sciences from Cankiri Karatekin University. The collected data were analysed by using content analysis.According to the anticipated findings of this study are those; there are some indistinguishable factors that prevent the assignment of female-academicians to the managerial tasks such as the roles of women in the society, gender inequalities, and childrearing methods of families. Women are rarely included in the managerial tasks since the norms and values of Turkish society require and demand women to dedicate themselves to their family and children.

Key words*: Female academicians, Leaky Pipeline, Women in Management, Gender Inequality.*

Introduction

Women are subordinated almost in all areas all over the world. Gender-based division of labor, and the hierarchical structures rooted in stereotypes in sharing of tasks and responsibilities are seen as on the basis of gender inequality. Men have acquired in a superior position to women from both social and political aspects. To be precise, they have property control, and as father-figures they have a significant authority over children as well as women. As Sultana (2011) claimed that patriarchy is the main hindrance to women's progression and improvement.

Gender inequalities that exist in a society have an important role to hinder women to utilize their educational rights because they impinge on education. Though education system founded on equality principle, there are confidential messages about women and men are not equal. This kind of messages negatively affects women to take part senior-levels in the academic system.

In education both women and men should be given equal rights and opportunities. This situation ensured initially by the 42nd article of Constitution of Turkish Republic (1982), the Basic Law of National Education (MoNE, 1973) and international agreements such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). In Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is stated that "everyone has the right to education. Education should be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education should be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit" (Article, 23). Also, in All Forms of Discrimination of Human Rights, it is stated that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights

with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women" (Article, 10) and "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights" (Article, 11). However, especially in male-controlled societies men are superior to women, and restrict women's human rights to some extent (Sultana, 2011). In the same vein, although women and men have equal rights to education, they do not have equal-opportunities in education while they begin education at the together. Gender differences in adult literacy rates keep on extensive in most of the countries in the world (United Nations, 2010).

The women's participation in the labor force is an important indication of their welfare (Blau, 1999). Specifically, the work of women in married couples plays a crucial role in the prevention of family poverty and determination of the level of family income inequality (Jonung &Persson , 1993; OECD, 1991). Over time, women have been able to enter the male-dominated professions. As a consequence of equity legislation and enhanced access to education and work opportunities, woman workforce has been increasing in the South Africa (Franks, Schurink & Fourie, 2006; Mostert, 2009; Van den Berg & Van Zyl, 2008). Nonetheless, the women are still hardly working in occupations that provide higher status, power, and authority. In view of the total employment, the women are underrepresented in some occupations such as legislators, managers, and trade workers. In the majority of countries in the world misrepresentations and discrimination in the working life limits the representation of women in senior positions and the number of women's initiatives remain at low levels (Elborgh-Woytek, Newiak, Kochhar et al, 2013). On the other hand, they get more space in the service sector. This kind of work discrimination caused insistent gender equity in all places (United Nations, 2010).

Women have been prevented from taking part in top-level positions when they are passing through the managerial pipeline; thus, only five percent of executive positions today are carried out by women (Korn/Ferry International, 1993). In the literature the issue of loss of women in the academic system is metaphorically termed as "leaky pipeline", "glass roof" and "glass ceiling" (Barinaga, 1992; Braddock, 1994; Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, 1993; Karcioğlu & Leblebici, 2014; Leeman, Boes & Rin, 2009; Phillips & Reisman, 1992; Ragins, 1998). To be precise, while 'glass roof' described as invisible and gender-based obstacles that determine the highest place women reach, 'leaky pipeline' means that women are regularly eliminated in the academic system, during their process of academic improvement from primary education to their decision-maker position (Göğüş Tan, 2011). Ceilings are barriers and this metaphor illustrates how particular individuals and groups are prevented from moving up organizational hierarchies or stepping into prestigious jobs (Ryon, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009). However, leaky pipeline metaphor tries to explain why women are eliminated in the system. According to Ryon, Pollock and Antonelli (2009) this eliminating is random in this process so this metaphor will do little help people understand the situation. Despite that, this metaphor is important to explain the relationship between women roles in the family and duties in academic system.

Under-representation of women in science often relate to the shortage of women 'in the pipeline'. The pipeline flows from one stage to another, and the flow (or 'supply') of girls/women diminishes over the stages (Polkowska, 2013). The gender composition of the science work force is a function of initial differences between young women and men in their possibility of entering ''the pipeline,'' coupled with gender differences in the possibility of dropping out along the way (Alper, 1993).

Leaky pipeline metaphor is described as keeping out of women in the hierarchy of academic system, is specially used for women on their academic career trajectories (Women and Men in Higher Education, 2008). Female administrators give an importance continuous communication with the staff, and they try to inform the personnel about the decisions (Sherman, 2000). In this situation, the problem is not about getting women into the pipeline, rather it is about giving them the "support needed to reach their full potential" once they get there (Knight Higher Education Collaborative, 2001, cited by Frail, 2012). Therefore, there is a crucial need to support women to become willing to have managerial tasks.

Consequently, women participate increasingly in working life as an essential and important part of labor force. As a natural result of this participation, women witness with some problems in their workplaces in working life. Among these are low levels of wage compared to men and less level of chance given to women in the management posts can be named (Bacak, 2010).

Although women have made great steps in many areas such as education, business, policy, and science throughout history, gender inequalities still continue. Specifically, there are one billion illiterate adults in the world, and more than 65 percent of them are women (www.goethe.de/ins/uy/prj/jug/.../3_int_girls.pdf). Like many areas in academic field there is still a gender difference that is vital to be corrected. Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate women's reduction in the academic field, and to make clear the main factors that prevent female academicians to undertake managerial tasks in Turkey.

Method

Qualitative research approach was used in this study to obtain more detailed data about factors those female academicians to undertake managerial tasks.

Participants

The participants of this study were 4 volunteer female-academicians from social sciences departments such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography and educational sciences from Cankiri Karatekin University in Turkey. The average age of participants was 36. Three of them are married and have children and one of them is single. One of them is associated professor and three of them are assistant professor. Also, two of them were deputy dean.

Data Collection Methods

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview consisting of open-ended questions. In order to collect the data of this study a semi-structured interviews were conducted with a fair-minded outline which permit for attentive, informal, and two-way communication.

Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze data, direct quotations were used. During the analysis, capital letter, "M" is used to indicate married, "S" is used for single and a number and age is used. Also participant information has been kept secret. The general aims of the study were told to the participants. The records of the semi-structured interviews were typed and given to the participants in order to ascertain whether the texts reveal their sense or not.

Findings

According to the findings of this study there are some indistinguishable factors that prevent the assignment of female-academicians to the managerial tasks such as the roles of

women in the society, gender inequalities, and childrearing methods of families. It was seen that marriage and having children are important factors that hinder women to have administrative roles in their work-life.

What are the factors that prevent the assignment of female-academicians to the managerial tasks?

Women are rarely included in the managerial tasks since the norms and values of Turkish society require and demand women to dedicate themselves to their family and children. The following quotation illustrates this finding.

"*I don't have any managerial responsibility now. I was a deputy-dean just before my marriage. I had to give up my duties because my husband wanted to have a child. Although he is also a faculty staff another university, he expects me to disclaim my responsibilities. Because I am a woman…*" (1, 34, M)

"*I was a deputy dean but after I gave up managerial tasks because of marriage and having a child. I can give priority my baby because of being associated professor. Now the priority is baby. Also I'm interested in my home and academic world. After a while I think that they will balance.*" (3, 40, M)

The results of this study showed that the participants stated that the roles in family also have an impact on why do not have administrative roles. The results revealed that the common roles of women academicians are*; wife, mother, citizen*, and *child*.

Being an administrator considered an extra-workload for women. If women have administrative role they allow little time their home. When women work as administrators whatever they do seen worthless. That's why the female academicians do not want to become an administrator.

To be a woman and duties

Participants stated that they have lots of problems when they perform their duties and responsibilities due to their gender. The following excerpt exemplifies this finding:

"*There are countless problems. First of all, it is really hard for a woman to excel in the area where men-hegemony is obvious. Second, since you are married your colleagues try to exclude you from the system. They criticize you very often. They blame you to be more family-centered. That is, they said 'you look like a housewife, your family is more important than your job; you don't have any other matter but your child'. Or if you are single they marked you 'spinster, unskilled, picky, or fussy'. Unfortunately, men in the same situation (I mean a single man) do not treat in the same manner.*"(1,34, M.)

"Yes*, I have some difficulties. It is necessary to strike a balance between home and job. One of the causes of these problems is to be a woman.*"(4, 40, M)

There are some prejudices in the society that are hinder women to have important administrative responsibilities. Some idioms in the society insult the women. One of the participants complains in this issue:

"*There is an understanding in our community; women do not become an administrator, and women have long hair with «short-mind». So the women do not included in the managerial decision making. They should stay in the background.*" (2,34, M).

Discussion and Conclusion

In conclusion, most of the female academicians do not want to have managerial roles and responsibilities due to their social roles and responsibilities of family life. This finding is parallel with the study of Williams and Ceci (2012), they claimed that women prior to motherhood over science.

Similarly, Polkowska (2013) maintained that for women giving a birth and raising a child is more important than their profession. Since the human capital resources are accumulated through the employee's individual choices in the past, the choices (i.e. to give a birth) make women less capable of being promoted in academic area.

Besides, female academicians thought that men do not respect and regard them because of their gender. As said by Çelikten (2004), there is a generally accepted estimation about women preventing the assignment of women to the superior managerial roles. This present study showed that the norms and values of the society necessitate and request women to devote themselves to their family and children.

Likewise, Gerni (2001) claimed that marriage, housework, and children force women interrupt their career. These obligatory interruptions make difficult women to promote managerial positons. In addition, women seen as too sensitive, emotional, and lack leadership skills. As a result, men candidates assigned or promote to the managerial positions (Coleman, 1997). Women may naturally grow as people leaders but require development to make the leap to business leadership just as the men do (Frail, 2012).

According to Brawn (1996) there are two reasons why women do not successful in managerial roles. One is inner factor in the organizations and the other external factor in the organizations. While inner factors in the organization are social structure of society, and gender roles, external factors in the organization are the excessive structural features of organization. These factors decrease women's performance in work force.

The literature asserted that male administrators have more autocratic management style than females. However, this viewpoint cause a common sense about women that they cannot execute big business because they are naive, fragile and tender. In order to overcome this kind of negative view points, females encouraged to have managerial roles. In addition, the social press on women should be getting rid of through education and rising awareness of society.

As said by Gold (1996), in order to be impartial women make decisions with their colleagues. However, this creates negative attitudes towards female administrators. On the other hand, when performing their job females are more objective than males.

According to the research findings of this study are those; there are some indistinguishable factors that prevent the assignment of female-academicians to the managerial tasks such as the roles of women in the society, gender inequalities, and childrearing methods of families. Women are rarely included in the managerial tasks since the norms and values of Turkish society require and demand women to dedicate themselves to their family and children

In order to make unbiased decisions in workplace the women should be supported to get managerial roles. In addition, the self-confidence of women about their ability should be increased by giving them responsibility in managerial issues.

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