Barriers to Women's Leadership in Turkey[*]

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ABSTRACT Traditional notions in society are being eliminated; the idea that women can become leaders in society has gained acceptance. This study investigated women who participated in a Grundtvig project sponsored by the European Union (EU) entitled "Developing Women's Leadership Skills in Society." A phenomenological model was used. Qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured survey administered to a focus group of 32 women in Hendek, Sakarya; response frequencies were analyzed. The results, which demonstrate the importance of EU projects to social development, indicate that women have an interest in developing their personal skills to become leaders in society and that women increasingly believe that they can become leaders in society. However, women also believe that there are certain barriers to women's leadership in Turkey, including low levels of education among women, socio-cultural factors, and the responsibilities traditionally ascribed to women in a patriarchal system, such as caring for children and housework. To increase the number of women leaders in society, women should be supported and educated equally, relevant laws should be changed, prejudices that suggest that women cannot be leaders should be eliminated, and quotas for women should be implemented to increase women's participation in politics.

INTRODUCTION

National histories are replete with examples of famous leaders who have rescued their countries from turmoil. Similarly, organizations also require leaders when facing internal weaknesses and external dangers (Basaran 2004). Leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization" (House et al. 1999: 184).

Although both men and women may be effective leaders, leadership is unequally distributed between the genders. According to Bass (1981), though more women are assuming leadership roles than ever before, the notion of women's leadership remains unacceptable to many people, both male and female. When traditional norms of leadership are firmly entrenched, changes in perceptions are difficult to realize. In Turkish society as in most others, leaders have customarily been males.

In the past, leadership opportunities for women tended to be limited to female-only organizations, such as sororities, convents, and women's educational institutions; even so, women's college presidents have almost always been men (Moran 1992).

The literature is rife with studies that have explored alleged differences between male and female leaders. Chusmir and Mills (2004) indicated that over the past three decades, people of both genders have proclaimed the superiority of their own gendered leadership styles. Heated debates regarding the leadership styles of women versus men were particularly prominent in the 1990s, as researchers attempted to qualitatively clarify contemporary gender differences; such research has continued apace ever since (Antonaros 2010).

Many researchers have indicated that gender inequality in the workplace is in part the result of managerial practices; such researchers have often assumed that the adoption of particular practices is associated with managers' gender. For example, Nelson and Bridges (1999) argued that the scarcity of women in authority positions sustains gender inequality in the work-

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place (Cohen and Huffman 2007). In Turkey, the process of modernization (or Westernization) began a little more than a century ago under the Ottoman Empire; this process accelerated after the 1920s (Yalcin 1967). The Ataturk government set Turkey on the road to technological, economic, political, and social modernization at the dawn of the twentieth century (Titrek and Cobern 2011: 401). Since 1964, Turkey has entered into various agreements with the European Union (EU) as a candidate for EU membership. Interesting cultural issues have surfaced: some Europeans have opposed the membership of Turkey in the EU out of a belief that Turkey has "a different culture, a different approach, and a different way of life" (Güney 2005). Turkey remains a deeply religious society; religion affects Turkish culture and people's social behavior. The widespread practice of Islam raises the question as to whether the path of modernization in Turkey will more resemble that in the US or that in Europe (Titrek and Cobern 2011).

In Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Iceland, and Norway, the percentage of women leading high-capacity organizations is greater than 10%; in Turkey and Italy, this percentage ranges from 5%–10%; and in other countries, this percentage is even lower. Women's leadership in Europe remains lacking (European Commission 2008). Moreover, the participation of women in political life in Turkey is insufficient. The Turkish cabinet has only a single female member, but cabinets in Finland and Spain have 12 and 9 female members, respectively. Based on the percentage of mayors and city council members in Europe who are women, Russia has the largest percentage (29.5%), followed by Iceland (26.9%) and Sweden (26.9%); by contrast, Turkey is at the bottom of the fourth rank (Euractiv 2009). Whereas on average, women comprise 30% of municipal council members in Europe, in Turkey, this rate is approximately 2.5%. In terms of women's representation in public office, Spain, Slovenia and Eastern European countries have equal numbers of women and men, but in Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey, women comprise less than 10% of representatives (European Commission 2008). Though Turkey has the highest percentage of female academicians and teachers in Europe (European Commission 2009), regarding women in political, social, and managerial positions, Turkey is substantially different from Europe and other developed Western

countries; it thus faces unique challenges. Studies have indicated that the US faces similar problems regarding women's participation in social and political life; women in the US continue to face challenges in advancing to the highest positions in corporations and in politics. In the US, only 2% of the CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies, 16% of all members of the US House of Representatives, 16% of all US senators, 16% of all governors, and 24% of all state legislators are women. Internationally, in terms of the number of women in the lower house of national legislative bodies, the US ranks in the middle range (85th) (Taylor et al. 2008).

Numerous studies have highlighted the impact of culture on gender roles and the construction of gender (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Kashima et al. 1995). Theorists have maintained that perceptions of women and their roles in leadership are determined by national cultures (House, Wright, and Aditya 1997). Deaux (1984) examined masculine and feminine behaviors as if they were personality traits. He posited that men and women's gender role identifications vary along the dimensions of masculinity and femininity rather than biological sex, and that such identifications determine thought and behavior. After conducting research across a wide variety of organizational settings, Eagly and Karau (2002) proposed role congruity theory, which argues that role congruity contributes to discrimination and hinders women from assuming senior leadership positions. In support of that argument, Keohane (2007) noted that throughout human history, leadership has been "closely associated with masculinity: the king, the father, the boss, the lord are stereotypical images of leadership." Role congruity theory argues that behaviors are consistent with socially acceptable gender roles and that characteristics usually ascribed to leaders are typically perceived as incongruent with the characteristics ascribed to being female (Eagly and Karau 2002; Hyde 2005). Theorists have indicated that the division of gender into two norms implies that one gender is in a position of power and the other is in a position of subjugation. This thinking facilitates an "us versus them" understanding of gender differences; in this view, women must work to become more like those in positions of power, whereas men must avoid becoming feminine and weak (Christman and McClellan 2008).

As the literature indicates, attitudes toward gender roles contribute to barriers to women's

leadership. The Bargaining for Women's Equality Course Notes (1999) suggested some common barriers to women's leadership:

- ✓ Family responsibilities
- ✓ Sexist attitudes
- ✓ Sexual harassment
- ✓ Violence against women
- ✓ Racism
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Language/literacy barriers
- ✓ Lack of specific skills
- ✓ Sexist structures
- ✓ Lack of money
- ✓ Lack of support systems
- ✓ Status of "women's" jobs
- ✓ Being labeled a feminist
- ✓ Role model pressures
- ✓ Low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence
- ✓ Standard models of leadership/activism
- ✓ Socialization of women
- ✓ "Accent" bias
- ✓ Guilt
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Too little organizational support
- ✓ Homophobia/heterosexism
- ✓ Ageism
- ✓ Local union politics
- ✓ Dominant stereotypes/images of women
- ✓ Stereotypes about women with disabilities
- ✓ Lack of partner support
- ✓ Internalized oppression/self-hatred

Taylor et al. (2008) also indicated barriers in their study "Why Aren't There More Women in Top Elective Office?". They indicated that fewer women are elected to higher office because many Americans remain unprepared to elect a woman to high office; that women face discrimination in all areas, including politics; and that women's family responsibilities leave no time to pursue politics.

Although many barriers to women's leadership exist, the research has strongly suggested that women and men are equally effective as leaders in a wide range of situations (Thinking Made Easy). In a survey, respondents rated women as better or equal to men regarding seven of eight leadership traits. According to a Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends Survey in the US, half of all adults indicated that women are more honest than men, whereas only one-in-five indicated that men are more honest. Respon-

dents indicated that honesty is the most essential leadership trait among all traits measured by the survey (Taylor et al. 2008).

Some researchers have described the general characteristics of female leaders. Helgesen (2011), Hadary (2003), Nguyen (2013), and Claus, Callahan, and Sandlin (2013) have argued that women place a high value on relationships and judge the success of their organizations based on the quality of relationships within them; prefer direct communication; are comfortable with diversity, because they are outsiders themselves and know the value that fresh eyes bring; are unwilling (and unable) to compartmentalize their lives and so draw upon personal experience to bring information and insights from the private sphere to their jobs; prefer leading from the center rather than the top and structure their organizations to reflect this; and ask big-picture questions about the work they do and its value.

"Europeanization" is a multidisciplinary concept that has been used in reference to EU membership in recent years; however, a standard definition of what constitutes Europeanization remains elusive. It has been argued that the position of women in economic, social, and political life can be used as an essential indicator of Europeanization. This study investigates whether, with the process of Europeanization, women in Turkey are coming to be offered equal chances to men in education, business, politics, and public administration. In Turkey as well as in Europe and the US, there are social barriers to women's leadership. However, Taylor et al. (2008) claimed that, in the US, people's perceptions regarding leadership positions are changing: 6% of 2,250 adult respondents indicated that, overall, women make better political leaders than men; 21% indicated that men make better leaders; and the vast majority (69%) indicated that men and women make equally good leaders. However, to our knowledge, no such research on how women's leadership is perceived has been conducted in Turkey or Europe. Consequently, this study examines perceptions of women's participation in business life, leadership and decision-making, and the problems of female managers in public administration. Barriers to women's leadership were evaluated and suggestions to ameliorate such barriers are provided. We sought answers to the following sub-questions:

1. Can women become leaders? Why or why not?

2. Do you define yourself as a leader? Why or why not?
3. How did this EU project enhance your leadership skills?
4. What are the barriers that women face in leadership roles in Turkey?
5. What should be done and what kind of education should be provided to women to equip them with the skills to become leaders in Turkey?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research employed a phenomenological model. Qualitative data were collected in a focus group interview where participants were invited to freely express their opinions rather than rehash accepted views (Gibbs 1997; Kroll, Barbour, and Haris 2007; Kuº 2003). Focus group interviews are widely used in educational research (Gilflores and Alonso 1995; Wilson 1997) and play an essential role in the collection of qualitative data. In this study, qualitative research was conducted by systematically analyzing interview data (Ekiz 2003; Kus 2003; Merriam 1988; Rossman and Rallis 1998; Uzuner 1997; Uzuner and Çolak 2004; Yildirim and Simsek 2005). Focus group interviews are considered effective in the study of homogeneous groups (Greenbaum 1998; Morgan 1997; Patton 1987, 2002; Stewart, Shamdasani, and Room 2007; Yildirim and Simsek 2005). In this research, a semi-structured focus group interview was conducted. Clear, unidimensional questions were developed and potentially misguiding questions were avoided (Bogdan and Biklen 1992). During the focus group interview, the participants were not guided in answering, but were directed to answer questions without deviation; participants were granted equal amounts of time to speak (Krueger and Casey 2000; Yildirim and Simsek 2005). The focus group interview, which lasted 102 minutes, was recorded on video and later deciphered. Ninety pages of data were obtained from the interviews. The reliability of the research was calculated using the "Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 110" formula (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Participants

The participants were women who participated in an EU Grundtvig project entitled "Devel-oping Women's Leadership Skills in Society"; a homogenous sampling technique was used. We created a web page for this EU project (http://www.womenlead.sakarya.edu.tr/index.html). This social development project has been conducted continually in Turkey, Germany, and Romania. Our questionnaire was administered to Turkish attendees of the Women's Leadership Education Program at Sakarya University. The group comprised approximately 40 women and not all attendees participated in this research. Using a semi-structured questionnaire interview format, data were collected and analyzed using frequency analysis.

Thirty-two women participated in this research: 10, 9, 9, and 4 participants were 20–30, 31–40, 41–50, and over 50 years old, respectively. Regarding marital status, 14 were single and 18 were married; 12 had graduated from high school, 3 had graduated from junior colleges, 12 had license degrees, and 2 had master's degrees; 14 were teachers, 3 were housewives, 3 worked in banks, and 12 worked as tradesmen in Hendek, Sakarya. Regarding political orientation, 12, 9, 3, and 8 indicated that they leaned social democratic, nationalist, liberal, and conservative, respectively. In addition, 31 respondents indicated that democracy was the most appropriate political system for Turkey, whereas 1 respondent indicated that autocracy was the most appropriate political system.

FINDINGS

When the participants were asked whether women are able to become leaders, nearly all participants answered in the affirmative. Moreover, participants indicated that, with sufficient chances and social equality, women have the potential to become good leaders because of their higher EQ compared with men. According to the participants, people with leadership skills can become leaders in society (n = 8); certain participants stated that women are more intelligent and more conscientious students than are men (n = 6) and that this is why they are well positioned to become leaders. Three and two participants stated that women can become leaders when they develop skills (n = 3) or are offered chances (n = 2). One woman stated that she is the leader of her own house. Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"All women have leadership skills and we are capable of leading as long as we trust ourselves." (W 8)

"We are more intelligent than men, especially in terms of emotions." (W 22)

"Women are already the leaders of their homes." (W 10)

Secondly, the participants were asked whether they defined themselves as leaders. Many participants defined themselves as potential leaders (n = 23); some stated that they were not leaders but that they had an interest in becoming leaders after participating in the project (n = 9). As to why the participants believed that they were capable of becoming leaders, some participants stated that it was because they could explain themselves (n = 4); some participants indicated that it was because they were capable of differentiating their own group from others (n = 3); and some participants said that their personal skills and attitudes were suitable for leadership (n = 10). Some participants also indicated that they did not believe they had leadership skills (n = 6) and that this was why they had decided to attend the leadership program. Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"We have sufficient education and we are able to become leaders in society. I already lead men and women in my school." (W 6)

"I have sufficient education and I can create a vision different from that created by men. Because of our personal skills, women can become leaders in society." (W 30)

"I feel very strongly regarding leadership and I believe I can lead others. I can motivate people to achieve goals."(W 13)

The participants indicated that they participated in the project for reasons of personal development (n = 18), because of an interest in leadership (n = 9), to attend EU Mobility (n = 9), to participate in a social activity (n = 6), to develop relationships with their neighbors and family (n = 5), and other reasons (n = 4). Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"I am attending this project for reasons of personal development. It is very important to be happy in life." (W 3)

"I am alone in Hendek and I would like to forge good friendships and be happy." (W 15)

"I am interested in the academic study of leadership. It's crucial for my career." (W 31)

"I would like to visit other countries, especially in Europe, in order to meet other people and understand other cultures that are substantially different from those in my own life." (W 9)

Though many participants already defined themselves as leaders prior to participating in the project (n = 21), many participants also indicated that they did not view themselves as leaders (n = 9). Some indicated that they realized the potential within themselves after participating in the course (n = 6). In response to the question "Why did you define yourself as a leader before participating in this project?" some participants stated that they were born with leadership skills (n = 2), and one stated that she had done so because she had prior experience managing a group (n = 1). A few stated that they did not intend to become leaders (n = 2) and some stated that they did not have leadership skills (n = 3). Two indicated that, as teachers, they already had leadership experience. Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"I feel that I was born with leadership skills. In addition, I was a leader before participating in this project. In my school, I have leadership position." (W 2)

"Before, I thought that I couldn't be a leader. After participating in this course, I came to understand that I have leadership potential and I am capable!" (W 5)

"As a teacher, I am already a leader in my classroom. I lead my students, who are numerous." (W 1)

Participants indicated that they intended to share what they had learned in the leadership program in their social environment (n = 5), in business environments (n = 13), everywhere necessary (n = 3), in family environments (n = 7), in relationships in daily life (n = 3), in friendly banter (n = 9), and in politics (n = 3). Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"I intend to use the extremely useful knowledge and skills I learned in my social environment to enhance my perceptions." (W 21)

"I am a teacher and I believe this knowledge will be effective in helping to develop my school." (W 14)

"I am involved in politics; these skills will be extremely useful for my political career." (W 32)

Participants were also asked about the effectiveness of the women's leadership education program, which was held every Friday evening for five hours over 20 weeks at Sakarya University; at the conclusion of the program, participants received a certificate. Some participants stated that the program was good and did not

need to be altered (n = 4), some stated that there should have been a question-and-answer session and that aspects of the program should have been open to debate (n = 4). Two indicated that the course would have benefited from lectures by successful leaders (n = 2) and one stated that the physical environment should be changed (n = 1). Some participants indicated that the content should be limited and that it should be practical rather than theoretical (n = 5); some participants indicated that the program should involve study visits to the EU and that there should be an international education component (n = 3); a few participants believed that the number of participants should be reduced and an age limit put in place (n = 2); and a few others believed that the number of women educators should be increased (n = 2). Participants indicated that the program should be more transparent. Based on these responses, in another phase of the project, the project team invited female leaders in Turkey, such as Gülsüm Azeri, the CEO of a major fuel company (Petrol Ofisi), to give lectures about women's leadership in the workplace. Some of the views of participants regarding the education program are as follows:

"The education program is perfect. It doesn't need to be modified. Being at university again is really amazing for me." (W 1)

"The education program is good, but perhaps actual leaders could participate and we could debate with them." (W 27)

"I think the education program is good and that all participants should participate in trips to the EU. I know there are limitations, but I hope I will be in the EU section." (W 28)

Regarding the factors that prevent women from becoming leaders, some participants indicated that men in Turkish society are unwilling to see women in positions above their own (n = 5); some participants stated that men do not support women (n = 3); and others said that the fact that women are responsible for housework and caring for children and are subject to family pressures are barriers to women's leadership (n = 12) in Turkish communities. In other words, the prescription of women's social roles is a barrier. Some participants indicated that women are prevented from becoming leaders by the patriarchal structure of society, male dominance, and cultural factors (n = 15); gender discrimination in society (n = 4); by social pressures and the prevention of girls from being educated (n = 10); by

a lack of self-confidence and inaction (n = 3); and because women are not given the same privileges granted to men (n = 2). Some examples of the participants' responses are as follows:

"In my view, the main barrier is men. Men don't want to see women leaders in Turkish society and this is why they do not support women as leaders." (W 24)

"I think that housework and caring for children are substantial tasks that women are forced to spend too much time on; this is the main problem. Women have no time to assume roles in society." (W 5)

"My answer is related to social factors. The patriarchal structure of Turkish society is the main factor. Other barriers to women's leadership include male dominance, the necessity that women care for children, and gender discrimination." (W 7)

The participants were asked what they thought should be done to provide women with chances to become leaders in Turkey; they indicated that women should be supported (n = 12). Some participants said that society should be educated about gender equality (n = 13), that laws should be changed accordingly (n = 1), that prejudices that dictate that women cannot be leaders should be eliminated (n = 2), that there should be positive discrimination toward women (n = 3), that Turkey should participate in EU activities (n = 1), that there should be quotas to increase women's participation in social and political activities (n = 1), that equal educational opportunities should be provided (n = 5), that women should be seen as individuals first (n = 1), and that the importance of women to society should be promoted on TV (n = 1).

"I believe that women should be supported in becoming leaders in society and politics. Furthermore, there are insufficient chances for women to learn about leadership." (W 28)

"In my opinion, prejudices in society regarding women's leadership should be eliminated. We have to join the EU." (W 9)

"To increase women's leadership in Turkey, there should be quotas to increase women's participation in social and political life." (W 10)

The participants were asked whether education is essential to assuming leadership. Nearly all of them stated that education is the most crucial factor in women's leadership (n = 26) and that in Turkey in the present, insufficient educa-

tion is a barrier to women's leadership. Some participants stated that only women who had engaged in sufficient personal training and development could lead others (n = 5); a few stated that women could be more successful if they developed their leadership skills through education (n = 2); one participant said that education reveals a person's potential; some participants stated that education should be lifelong because the world is constantly changing and developing (n = 2); and one participant said that what makes us human is knowledge. However, a few participants stated that education is not enough to become a leader in society because the qualities required for leadership are inborn and there is thus no need for additional education (n = 3).

" Education is extremely important and may be the most important issue at present." (W 9)

"Education is the most important factor. It cannot be fleeting—learning should be lifelong because changes occur quickly in life and adjusting to such changes is not easy." (W 11)

"Education is not important for becoming a leader in society. Leadership comes from within and if you were not born with leadership qualities, you cannot become a leader. Education is ineffective for making people into leaders." (W 30)

DISCUSSION

This study examines the effectiveness of an EU Grundtvig leadership program intended to develop women's leadership skills, investigates the perceptions of women regarding women's leadership in society, and determines barriers to women's leadership in Turkey in order to assess whether women can become leaders in Turkey.

In Turkey, the process of modernization (or Westernization) began a little more than a century ago during the Ottoman Empire and accelerated substantially after the 1920s (Yalcin 1967). State laws, educational policies, and school programs have become scientific, democratic, and secular. To catch up with developments in the West, many educational programs incorporating Western science have been adopted. Western-style schools and institutions of higher education have been established (Güney 2005). Contemporary Turkish people have started to change their minds; women now have more chances to become educated and have assumed a greater role in social and political life, as in Western and European countries. The results of this research demonstrate that EU projects are essential to the development of society all over Europe, particularly in regard to traditionally disempowered groups, such as women. Such people are crucial to society and women must be socially equal to men. Furthermore, women in rural areas believe that they can become leaders in society. Based on the findings of the study, we suggest that the EU support a greater number of projects to enhance the status of women in all European countries, including in Turkey. Furthermore, this study indicates that women have an interest in the personal development of leadership skills and that many define themselves as potential leaders. Many women believe that their leadership skills are equal to those of men. Taylor et al. (2008) found that gender discrimination against women, traditional roles, and the public's resistance to change are key factors that prevent women from attaining high political office. Yet at the same time, the public gives higher marks to women than to men regarding most leadership traits; this suggests that, when it comes to character, the public is pro-female. In a survey by Taylor et al. (2008: 4), 51%, 43%, and 38% of respondents indicated, respectively, that the major reason for this slow movement toward gender parity in top political positions was that Americans simply are not ready to elect a woman to high office, that women who are active in politics are hindered by men, and that women are discriminated against in all realms of society—and politics is no exception.

In this project, we also organized an educational leadership program at a university that lasted 20 weeks and incorporated social activities organized by the learners. We determined that leadership programs are effective in developing women's leadership skills, establishing equal opportunities for women, and enhancing women's confidence to become leaders. The women who participated in this project believed that they would be able to use the leadership skills they acquired in social life and in politics. In Turkey, women have an interest in participating in politics, but believe that there are barriers to women's leadership and women's participation in politics. The most important barrier to women's leadership is that women are less educated than are men. In addition, socio-cultural factors and the traditional responsibilities of women as part of the patriarchal structure, including caring for babies and housework, have prevented women from becoming leaders. These

issues were consistent with those demonstrated by Yaprak (2009) regarding women's leadership and those indicated by the Bargaining for Women's Equality Course Notes (1999).

As the participants' responses indicated, women should be supported and provided equal educational opportunities in order to facilitate their becoming leaders in social, political, and economic life. Education is the most essential factor in facilitating women's leadership. In Turkey, women are currently enrolling in higher education at rates equal to those of men; they expect to be employed. Education significantly influences future employment opportunities, income potential, and access to health information and resources (Adler and Newman 2002) and it is an essential determinant of social and economic status (Maranzan et al. 2013). Based on the results of the study, we determined that women both have a desire to be employed and a desire to become decision-makers in the workplace. To develop women's leadership in Turkey, all Turkish women should vote for women in elections. By serving on city councils or as mayors, women can acquire sufficient experience to lead Turkish society. In politics, facilitating women's leadership must start with participating in elections and with female candidates running for city council and mayor positions. According to Yaprak (2009), although Turkish law provides no precedent for the unequal treatment of men and women, socio-cultural and informal barriers in Turkish society and politics exist; these barriers must be eliminated to enable women to participate in social, political, and economic life.

The participants also suggested that laws should be changed, that prejudices that dictate that women cannot be leaders should be abolished, that there should be positive discrimination for women, that Turkey should join the EU, that women should have more chances to become leaders, that there should be a quota for women to increase women's participation in activities such as politics, that women should have equal access to education, and that the importance of women in society should be promoted on TV. Moreover, as the responses of the participating women indicate, women's participation in educational and leadership programs is crucial to the development of consciousness. Women must break glass ceilings in the workplace. Frize (1991) suggested strategies to enhance women's leadership in society, such as promoting sensitivity among women and men about the importance of valuing and respecting women's contributions and abilities, empowering girls and women to believe in themselves, raising awareness of successful women, emphasizing male role models who support progress, nominating women for awards and prizes, supporting women in meetings to build their credibility, training women regarding different communication styles and approaches, and encouraging men to share parenting and household work (for example, 21% of men took parental leave in 1998, whereas none did in 1991).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study elucidated barriers to women's leadership in Turkish society. Turkish society has a mixed culture that includes elements from Islamic and Western culture. Legally, women have equal rights; women can study wherever they want, participate in socio-cultural activities, and assume leadership positions. However, certain socio-cultural barriers remain that prevent women from assuming leadership positions in Turkish society; in particular, women are prevented from assuming leadership positions because of their motherhood responsibilities and economic issues. If women are afforded familial and economic support as well as educational program opportunities at all levels, they will be able to assume leadership positions in Turkish society.

As this study indicates, family support (or lack thereof) is an essential factor in women's leadership in Turkey that can either contribute to or impede women's leadership. In addition, women can be agents of change in facilitating women's leadership. In the Turkish context, because of the strength of social expectations that women are dutiful wives and mothers, appropriate policies and measures must be developed to lessen the time demands of women's domestic work and childcare so that women can invest as much time as men in their careers. Furthermore, women should learn to take advantage of the work-family interaction rather than consider work-family balance a major concern. In the socio-cultural context, EU projects grant women chances to develop their careers and assume social leadership roles.

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