Woman or Man? A Qualitative Research on Gender-Based Management Perception

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Abstract: In today's businesses, it is seen that the patriarchal management patterns of the past gradually lose their effect and business organizational structures are formed in which women are more involved. Although the increase of women in the business world is considered as a positive development, not many studies have been done on the perceptions created by the employees. The main question of this research is: Do you want to work with male or female managers? Why? In this context, the main purpose of the research is to determine the positive and negative aspects and preferability of working with male and female managers through the perceptions of the employees. Content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. As a sample, 15 employees were determined. The MAXQDA 20 program was used for the analysis of the data obtained, and also was benefiting from the Hierarchical Code-Sub Code Model to determine the positive and negative characteristics of male and female managers. As a result of the research, it was determined that the employees preferred to work with male managers more.

Keywords: Woman managers, Man managers, Perception of gender-based management, Qualitative research

Introduction

Management is a process involving efforts to achieve predetermined goals with a group of people. The people who direct this group of people by persuading and at the beginning of the process are called managers. A manager is a person who ensures the successful realization of planning, organizing, directing, coordination and control processes. The place of men in the managerial position dates back to ancient times.

Although women have recently started to take an active role in business life, their numbers are not sufficient in managerial positions. The fact that female employees are less involved in senior management than male employees, and that their representation power as decision makers in strategically important positions and operational processes is low, has been a research topic that has attracted attention recently. Many studies have been carried out on this subject, associations have been established and awareness has been raised to increase the power of women in management (Sivrikaya & Wolff, 2021)

The topic is still up to topical. In general, although the attitudes towards female managers have become more positive, it is seen that employees still prefer male managers than female managers (Atwater, 2004). There are limited studies in the literature on the reasons why the number of female managers falls behind men and the factors affecting this (Atwater, 2004; Celikten & Yeni, 2004; Balgiu, 2013; Cuadrado et al, 2015; Sivrikaya & Wolff, 2021). From this point of view, the main purpose of the research is to determine the positive and negative features and preferability of working with male and female managers through the perceptions of the employees. The basic question sought to be answered in line with the main purpose is: Do you want to work with male or female managers? Why?

Literature

Perception of Gender in Management

After the Industrial Revolution, women began to take an active part in business life. In the beginning, instead of the men who went to war, they started to work in some fields, especially in the arms production factories, and to be preferred as a workforce in other fields after they did their job well. The main reason for their preference was that they were cheap labor. Despite the increase in their number in business life in the 1950s and after, their number in senior management levels was very limited (Atwater, 2004).

In 2020, the rate of employed people aged 15 and over in Turkey was 42.8%, while this rate was 26.3% for women and 59.8% for men. According to the results of the household labor force survey, while the rate of women in senior and middle management positions in companies was 14.4% in 2012, it became 19.3% in 2020 (www.tuik.gov.tr, 2022).

Recently, it has been observed that although women take a more qualitative place in business life, they cannot take place in senior management levels sufficiently. The most notable of the reasons that prevent female employees from being promoted to senior management is an insidious power glass ceiling syndrome, which makes its impact felt even though it is invisible (Erdirencelebi & Karakus, 2018). In addition, negative organizational behavior disorders such as mobbing, favoritism, glass elevator, work-family life conflict limit the number of women in senior management. On the other hand, the queen bee syndrome, which applies to both genders by female managers who have reached senior management levels despite all kinds of difficulties, draws attention.

In fact, the limited number for women's participation in working life, stem from social (education, etc.), economy (economic crises, the family's obligation to make a living due to divorce and death, etc.) and some communal factors. Especially, social roles are effective in many countries as in our country. The degree of this effect is milder in developed countries, while it is more severe in developing countries. According to the social role theory, women and men take on different roles in their daily lives. According to this theory, a woman is not a free individual and she is limited by her roles and responsibilities in the private sphere. Gender discrimination has been experienced in the business world due to these social roles and it still continues to be experienced. On the other hand, economies exhibiting a patriarchal social structure have brought along a number of obstacles that need to be overcome for women (Bingol, et al. 2019). These barriers are actually based on social role theory. According to this theory, the male takes on the masculine and the female takes feminine functions. In other words, the obstacles faced by women in business life stem from the dominance of masculinity in business life. Upbringing patterns nourish this structure in society and create a kind of "culture trap" (Claes, 1999).

The fact that the requirements of the formal structure and working conditions in business life are generally determined by masculine makes it difficult for women to adapt to business life. On the other hand, the female managers are both taking an active role in business life and endeavoring for their old social roles (housework, childcare and etc.). The effort to keep up with the requirements of all roles causes them to push themselves excessively. As a result of all these, it is possible for women to encounter burnout in business life. The belief that men have the characteristics such as ambition, industriousness, perseverance, courage, assertiveness and competition required for management; constitute the barriers fed by masculine ideas in front of women's advancement. In addition, many women do not demand to rise in their careers in line with the patriarchal mentality they have internalized due to the fact that their see themselves as inadequate, they believe that they will fail, and that being at the top will make lonely (Negiz & Tokmakci, 2011; Karaduman & Ergun, 2018). Another reason is that among the women who participate in the working life, those who are adequately equipped are very limited (Inalan, 2017).

Are Female Managers or Male Managers More Preferred?

Since women's participation in business life is much later than men, the basic rules and structures are arranged on a male basis. However, with the benefits of the age, women have made more efforts to prove that they are equal to men.

According to the study of Kanter (1977), one of the first studies on the subject, the main barriers to women's access to senior management are as follows (Claes, 1999):

• They cannot act or command authoritarian,
• They avoid conflicts, they avoid taking risks,
• Women often apologize, feeling responsible for everything.
• Women want to be involved in every necessary and unnecessary event,
• They always want to be approved,
• They fear abuse of power,
• They do not believe in their own success and attribute success to others.

It is natural to experience differences in management styles due to masculinity and femininity. The main differences in the management understanding of male and female managers in the researches are revealed below:

One of the most obvious differences between men and women is undoubtedly the way they communicate. While women are trying to share success, ask about a situation that is on their minds, explain things to be done indirectly instead of giving orders, and give feedback politely without offending; men tend to brag, give open feedback, say what to do and hide their mistakes (Knicki & Kreitner, 2006: 306-307). According to the generally accepted behavior patterns of women and men in social life; while women have characteristics based on discrimination and value management in establishing relationships and communication; men display more concrete, cause/effect-based and logical characteristics (Cook & Rothwell, 2004: 124-136). Male managers are able to control their emotions more than female managers. In other words, their emotional response levels are lower (Hearn, 1993). While the emotional response of female administrators sometimes provides an advantage, it can sometimes lead to the deterioration of authority and justice (Cekten & Yeni, 2004: 310).

The reason why female managers are preferred is that they use the right side of their brain more efficiently, while men use the left side more efficiently. In other words, women's emotional aspects are stronger, against their superiority in making sudden decisions, assertiveness, quick decision-making, and having a strong imagination. Men are more successful in making rational decisions, coordinating and analytical thinking (Artan & Atay, 2001). While female managers mostly rely on teamwork, male managers adopt the style that allows freedom (Durmus, 2001).

Zenger and Folkman (2019), in their research, found that while female managers are particularly strong in taking initiative, self-development, honesty and resilience; it concluded that men only 'develop a strategic perspective' and are more successful in the 'technical or professional expertise' category.

According to Orucu et al, (2007), reasons for preference of the female manager lists as follows;

• A female manager is one who makes more effort and behaves more carefully,
• She can provide the training needed by the employees better,
• She can adapt to changes more easily,
• She is more successful in motivating its employees,
• She is innovative and more creative,
• Good ability to observe, provides benefits in business processes,
• Communication and problem solving skills are higher.

Method

Purpose and Method of Research

In the study, asked the participants this question "Do you prefer to work with male or female managers?". And it based on this question, it was determined as the main purpose to determine the reasons for this preference. For this reason, the positive and negative aspects of male and female managers were investigated through the perceptions of the employees. In addition, the research also sought an answer to the question of which manager group is more in demand.

Sample of the Research

The sample of the research, consists of private sector employees who work in Konya. The only criterion sought for the sample is to work with both types of managers. Because the participants be asked to compare and

evaluate both types of managers. After the interview with fifteen people, it was determined that the similarity rates of the answers increased, and it was predicted that this number would be sufficient as a sample.

Research Method

Content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods, was used in the research. The interview method was used to collect data. During the interview method, the volunteering of the employees, working conditions etc., factors have been taken into account. For this reason, a meeting schedule has been arranged. The interviews were conducted face to face according to this schedule. The interviews took place between 20-25 minutes on average. In the research, no information that could decipher the participants and their institutions was shared.

Many studies, especially Jagacinski (1987), were used for the questions used for the interview. The questions asked to the participants in the interview are as follows:

1) Could you briefly tell about yourself?
2) Do you prefer to work with female managers or male managers?
3) In your opinion, what are the positive and negative aspects of working with female managers? Can you tell me about the events that happened to you?
4) According to you, what are the positive and negative aspects of working with male managers? Can you tell me about the events that happened to you?

In the study, it was investigated which type of manager was preferred by the employees and the reasons. In the interview process, semi-standardized method was preferred. In this context, additional information was given to the participants in order to better understand the subject, and additional questions were asked in order to get more detailed answers.

Results and Discussion

Firstly, the data obtained as a result of the interviews with the participants were deciphered. After that, the deciphered data was loaded into the MAXQDA 20 program and coding and analysis was carried out through this program.

Reliability of Qualitative Research

For the reliability of the research, the three-dimensional reliability tests that Krippendorff (1980) brought to the literature carried out. These dimensions are: stability, reproducibility and accuracy. The research reanalyzed in two different time periods for the stability dimension. If it determined that there are no big differences between the first data and the second data, it means that the stability dimension of the research achieved. Stability has been achieved in this research. In the reproducibility dimension, the research handled by two different researchers who independently each other. For this study, the similarity rate of the coding made by the two researchers is 88%. In this context, it has seen that reproducibility achieved in this study. For the last dimension, the accuracy dimension, a comparison made with the results of studies with similar subjects in the past. It determined that the results of the research have similarities with the study of Tolay (2020). Thus, the research also provided the accuracy dimension. It can be said that reliability is provided for the research that provides all three dimensions.

General Information about the Participants

Table 1 shows general information about the participants. As seen in Table 1, a representative code given to each participant (K1 to K15). There are 8 female and 7 male participants in the study. 11 of 15 participants are graduate students, 2 of 15, master degree and 2 of 15, PhD. The average age of the participants is 41, and their average total work experience is 16.

Table 1. Information on participants

Participant's Code	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Profession	Total Work Experience (in Years)
P1	Female	38	PhD	Academician	12
P2	Female	40	PhD	Academician	8
P3	Male	42	University	Logistics Chief	18
P4	Male	54	University	Accounting Manager	30
P5	Female	36	University	Public Relations Officer	11
P6	Female	41	University	Finance Manager	18
P7	Male	47	University	Accounting Manager	22
P8	Female	39	University	Public Relations Officer	13
P9	Female	43	University	Administrative Manager	16
P10	Male	51	University	General Manager	26
P11	Male	32	University	Marketing Staff	7
P12	Female	31	Master Degree	Accounting Staff	7
P13	Male	46	University	Finance Manager	18
P14	Female	30	Master Degree	Administrative Manager	6
P15	Male	48	University	Marketing Manager	24

Firstly, to participants, 'Do you prefer to work with female managers or male managers' question asked. The graphical distribution of the answer is shown in Figure 1.
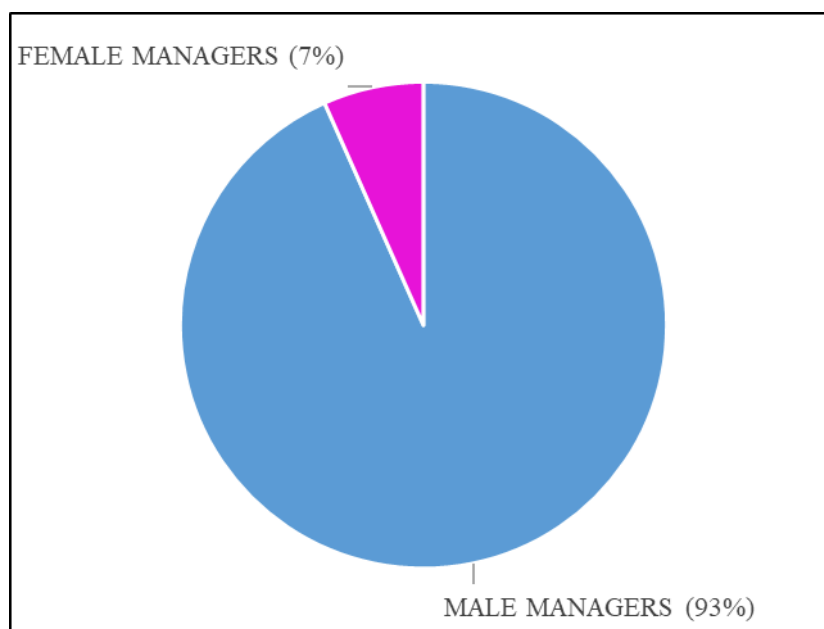

Figure 1. Administrator preferences by gender of the participants

93% of the participants prefer to work with male managers, and 7% with female managers (As seen in Figure 1). Figure 2, shows the results of the Hierarchical Code-Sub-Code Model of female managers, and Figure 3 shows it of male managers. Figure 4 shows the Code Relationship Matrix Code Map.

The Hierarchical Code-Sub-Code Model shows the hierarchical ordering of the upper and lower codes used in the study according to their coding degrees. Code Relationships Code Map shows the clustering states of the upper and lower codes created in the study. Line Width used in the code relations code map. Line Width is a parameter whose thickness increases with the increase of the overlapping codes between the two codes, otherwise it does not, and serves to show the degree of overlapping codes between the two codes.
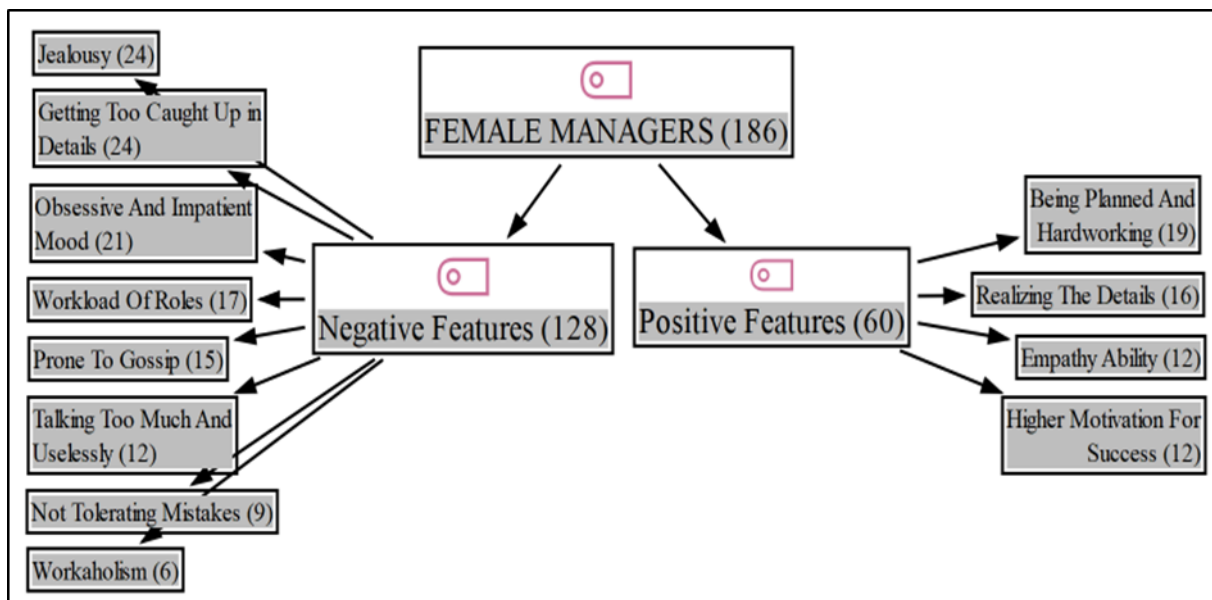
Figure 2. Hierarchical Code-Sub-Code Model of female managers

Figure 2 shows the negative and positive characteristics of female managers. The negative characteristics of female managers (from most coded to least coded) are respectively follows: Jealousy (24), getting too caught up in details (24), obsessive and impatient mood (21), workload of roles (17), prone to gossip (15), talking too much and uselessly (12), not tolerating mistakes (9) and workaholism (6). Their positive features are also respectively follows: Being planned and hardworking (19), realizing details (16), empathy ability (12) and higher motivation for success (12).
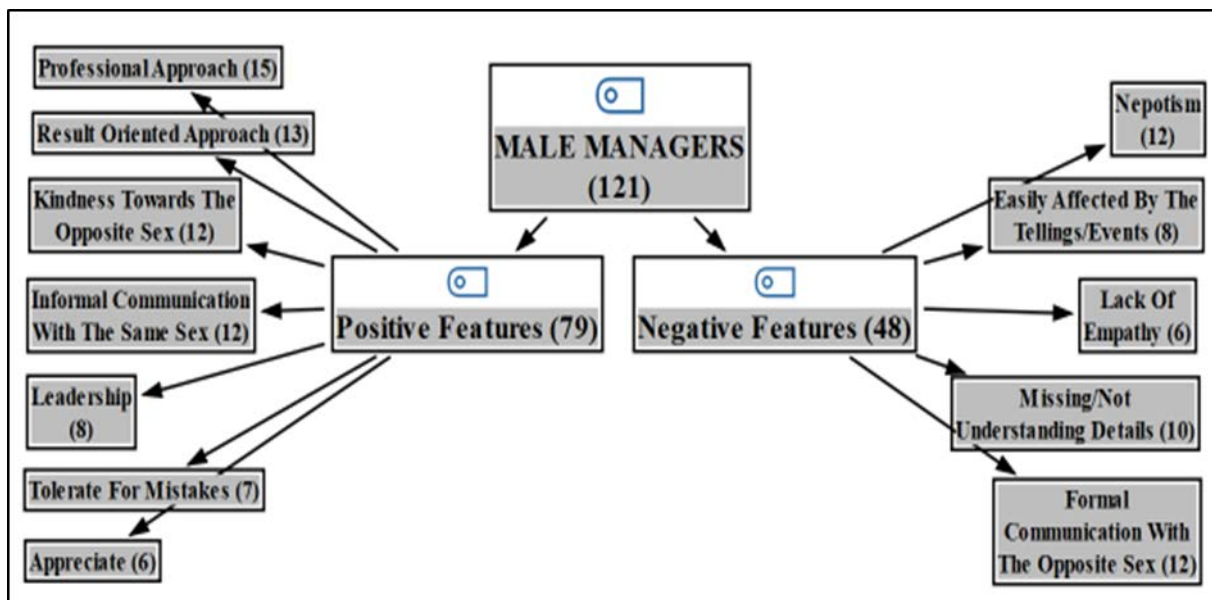

Figure 3. Hierarchical Code-Sub-Code Model of male managers

Figure 3 shows the negative and positive characteristics of male managers. Negative characteristics of male managers are respectively follows: Nepotism (12), easily affected by the telling/events (8), lack of empathy (6), missing/not understanding details (10) and formal communication with the opposite sex (12). Their positive features are also respectively follows: Professional approach (15), result oriented approach (13), kindness towards the opposite sex (12), Informal communication with the same sex (12), leadership (8), tolerate for mistakes (7) and appreciate (6).
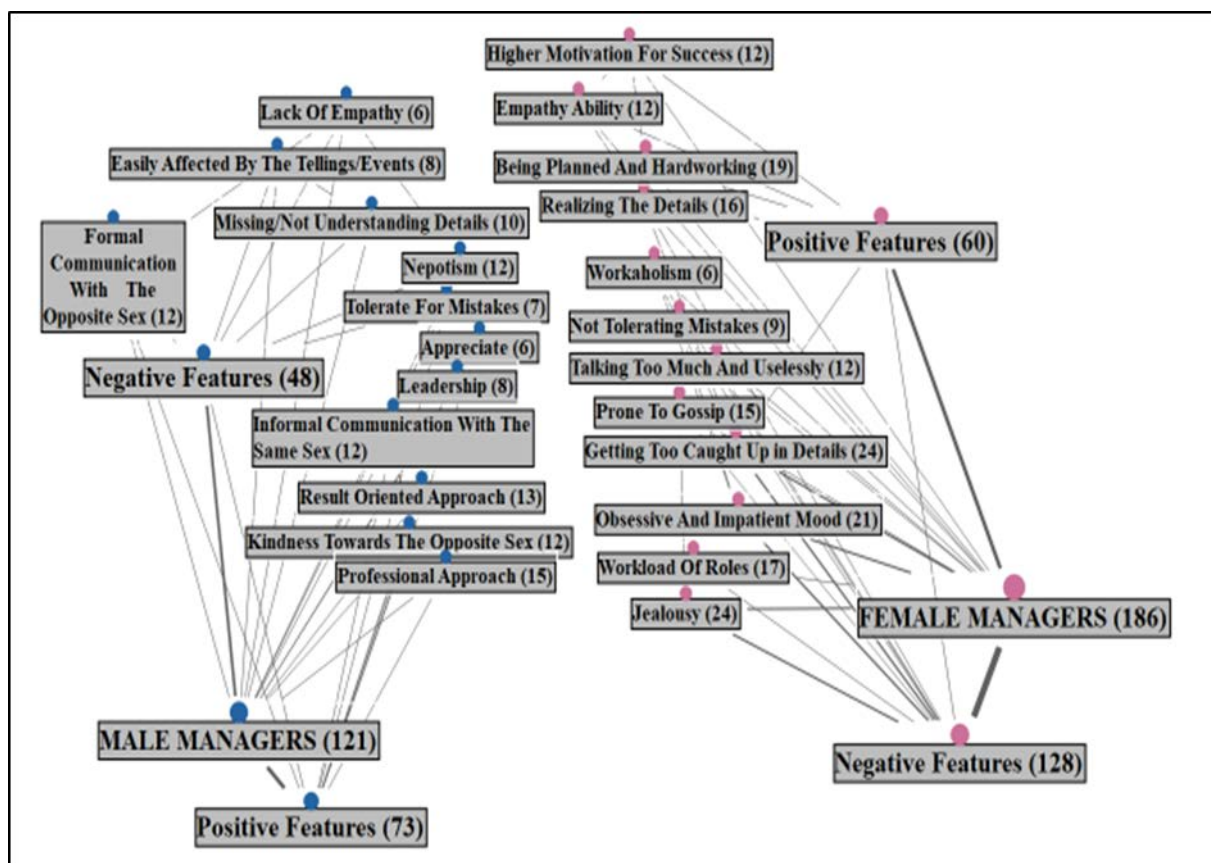
Figure 4. Code relationship matrix code map

Figure 4 shows the clustering of the encoding made according to the comments of the participants through the code map. In this context, when the closeness and line thickness of the "male manager code" with the "positive features code of male management" examined, it concluded that the participants think very positively about the male managers. Similarly, the closeness of the "code of female managers" and the "code of the negative features of women managers" and the ratio of line thickness indicate that the participants did not think very positively about female managers. The fact that 93% of the participants want to work with male managers (see Figure 1) proves this situation.

The participants' views on the subject also included in the study, but, since it is very long and detailed, instead of all the answers, the answers that best describe the subject included. In this context, the participant answers are as follows:

Positive Features of Female Managers

"I think female managers are more planned. They usually act within this plan and work hard in this process."

"For a female manager, being successful is like an inevitable end. She has to be successful to prove herself to men. That's why they're very motivated."

"As a woman, I think it would be much easier for a female manager to empathize with me. It is very difficult for men to understand some female problems and to communicate even if they understand."

"The most important feature of women is to notice every detail and to get results from it. If details are the key to success in a job, female managers become indispensable."

Negative Features of Female Managers

"One of the biggest problems of female managers is that they get caught up in so many details that they can't see the general picture most of the time. The subject to main focus on is often not discussed."

"It is often very difficult to work with female managers, because they are very motivated to be successful and prove themselves. This situation often goes up to working without overtime. He wants everyone to work as much as him and motivated. I had a former female manager who didn't almost go home. Even though she was gone home, she would still work from home and accuse us of being lazy."

"They are so obsessed. But they have this attitude towards everything from the clothing of a staff to the color of their hair, from their demeanor to the way they speak, etc. They want to decide everything for themselves and follow these decisions to the letter, immediately."

"They have too much ambition and motivation. They do not forgive any mistakes if their wishes do not come true. They pretend to listen to you, but they have no forgiveness for mistakes."

"Sometimes they talk so uselessly and so much that I forget what the issue is. Meetings sometimes can be very inefficient."

"They have a habit of knowing all the events within the institution. For this reason, they constantly receive news from the people they choose within the institution. They kind of like to gossip."

"Jealousy is in the genetics of women. In my former workplace, I have often saw that most successful female employees excluded by their own gender. The woman is jealous of the woman. A very clear inference"

"They are so interested in different things that sometimes they can't put much attach importance on their work. The woman has two basic responsibilities as wife and mother. Sometimes these two roles take precedence over the manager role. There is an incident that will set an example for this situation at my current workplace. We have a female manager who is having problems with her husband. She reflects this problem in her work. He has a very aggressive attitude towards male employees. He's also disrupting his work responsibilities because of the extra burden his children bring."

Positive Features of Male Manager

"The male managers don't bring a lot of emotion into his job. They take a more professional approach."

"Male managers are much more courteous, polite and understanding towards female employees. For this reason, I prefer to work with a male manager rather than a manager of my same-sex."

"It is very difficult to communicate with female managers. We have more in common with a male manager, and we can speak the same language. You always have to use a formal language with women managers."

"It is very difficult for a woman to lead in a male-dominated society. I think it goes against our perceptions. It is much easier for a man to lead."

"Everyone makes mistakes at work. While male managers can tolerate these mistakes, I have seen that female managers are more ruthless. So, it is more comfortable to work with male managers."

"The male manager knows what he wants, he doesn't get hung up on the details. But, women are drowning in the details. It takes much longer to get the result."

"Male managers can motivate employees better. It gives rewards. He appreciates the employees. Even when the female manager appreciates, she reveals something to criticize."

Negative Features of Male Manager

"Male managers are fine, but in some cases I prefer to have a same-sex manager, because there is a limit to communicate with male managers. You can't talk about everything."

"I can't say for the whole of them, but some male managers are very callous. They do not prefer to understand the other person's problems. They're like a refrigerator. Whatever you say, he says the stereotypes in his head and closes the subject. Their empathy ability is too restricting."

"Nepotism in the workplace has always existed and will always exist. However, male managers are more prone to favoritism than female managers. This can sometimes be true for those who are close to him, sometimes relatives, spouses, friends, sometimes political circles, and sometimes the same sex."

"Male managers work with very straight logic. It's like the details don't exist. They never question. For them, the general outline of the event is enough. But, details often determine the outcome."

"They believe everything they told or everything they see, without questioning the details. They are quickly also impressed, or I should say, they bleed too quickly. This situation causes weakness in their management."

Conclusion

There are many studies describing the injustices experienced by women employees by addressing issues such as the problems experienced by women in the business world, mobbing, workplace incivility, the patriarchal structure of the business world, and the glass ceiling syndrome. The common result of the studies in general is that various injustices done to female employees and in fact, more female employees should involve in the business world. Based on these views, the question "Would you like to work with male or female managers" taken as the basis in the study and the reasons investigated in depth through qualitative research methods.

In the research, a total of 15 private sector employees (8 women and 7 men) determined as a sample. The first result of the research is very striking. 93% of the participants stated that they prefer to work with male managers instead of female managers. This shows that female managers don't demand much in the business world. In this case, the participants were asked this question, "Why do you want or don't want to work with female/male managers?". Thus, the positive and negative characteristics of male and female managers determined (See Figure 2, Figure 3). Another striking result that emerged, according to these codes, is that the number of codes for only the negative features of female managers is higher than the number of codes for all male managers (positive and negative). In other words, it was seen that the participants explained what they did not want rather than what they wanted. That is to say, the basis of the desire to work with male managers is the undesirability of working with female managers. This result, contrasts with most of the studies of women in the literature that state that women should be more involved in the business world. In this respect, it anticipated that it will contribute to the literature.

As in every study, there are some limitations in this study. Since the instant thoughts of the participants in the study taken as data, the first limitation is the consistency and objectivity of the participants' thoughts on the subject. Another limitation is that the data of the study obtained from the participants in a single province. The results may change when the study repeated in different provinces or in more than one province. Besides to these, time and the economy are other constraints. The new studies can get by reducing the sample to a single sector, using a single gender and changing provinces.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific, ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the authors.

Acknowledgements or Notes

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