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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Meta-Synthesis Study on the Glass Ceiling Factors in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

For the past 100 years, Turkish women have had the opportunity to obtain an education and enter the labor force due to the democratic regime established in 1923. Despite some economic and social barriers, they have taken advantage of these opportunities and advanced in their careers to some extent. However, as with all women around the world, they face barriers in their career paths. This study aims to analyze the scientific research studies on the glass ceiling syndrome conducted in Türkiye to gain detailed insights into people's perception of the glass ceiling and capture their perspectives on the factors that contribute to it. This is a meta-synthesis study aimed at conducting a systematic review of selected qualitative studies and integrating their findings. A systematic search was conducted across local academic databases, namely, Dergipark and Tubitak Ulakbim-Equal. MAXQDA 2022 software was used to code and analyze the articles. The factors forming glass ceiling defined by the studies were renamed as 18 subthemes in total and classified under three themes: (1) personal factors, (2) sociocultural factors and (3) organizational factors. Although the role of motherhood and work life balance was found to be the most frequently referred factor, some current research revealed that not only women but also men experience this syndrome in Türkiye, despite the patriarchal culture of the country. The study's limitations are noted, and the implications and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: *Glass ceiling, Qualitative studies, Meta-synthesis, Factors forming glass ceiling, career barriers*
JEL Codes: M1, M12, M14

1. Introduction

Women's endeavor to find a place in social life with equal rights with men has a long history. Different forms of social inequality are experienced worldwide, gender inequality being only one of them. Despite the social changes that have made women take place in working life, they still have to strive to get paid the same as men for the same job, to have the same opportunity to be selected for an open position, and to promote their current jobs. The case is even worse in some parts of the world.

Glass ceiling is a phenomenon experienced by women and minority members in the workplace that describes the situation in which, despite the fact that there is no visible obstacles in terms of education, skills, organizational rules, or legal issues, fewer of them hold managerial positions in the workplace than men. Moreover, they usually, they need to work much harder to reach high-level positions, and some positions are simply impossible for them (Dreher, 2003; Cotter & Hermsen, 2001; Wirth, 2001; Davidson & Cooper, 1992).

Together with transition to a republic in 1923 and the adoption of the Turkish Civil Code in 1926, Turkish women obtained the rights to join the education system and the labor force with equal rights protected by the Constitution (Doğramacı, 1984). Since then, significant social and cultural changes have occurred in the country. However, changing the legislative framework does not necessitate changes in every corner of the country. In practice, gender inequalities persist in some areas. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022, among 146 countries, Türkiye ranks 124th in gender equality, 101st in educational attainment for women, 112th in political empowerment, 134th in economic participation and opportunity, and 99th in health and survival (WEF-GGGR, 2022).

Share

Index rank out of 29 countries
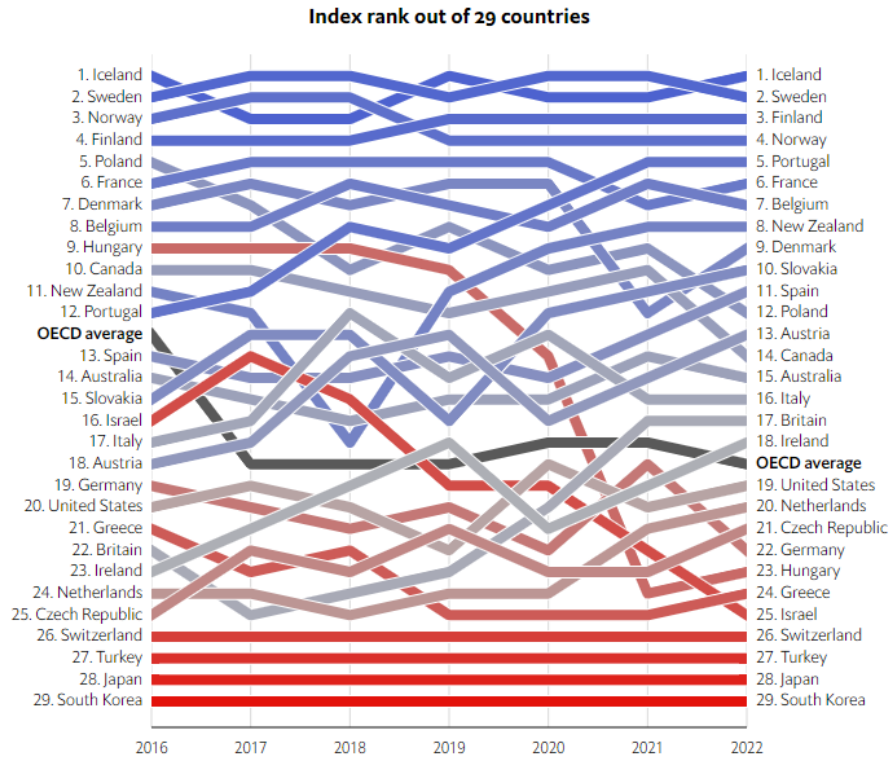
Figure 1. Glass Ceiling Index of *The Economist*

Source: The Economist (07.03.2023):

https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/glass-ceiling-index?utm_medium=pr&utm_source=dnawire-a

According to the "Glass Ceiling Index" of *The Economist* (2023) that lists the "*best and worst OECD countries to be a working woman*" Türkiye has ranked 27th among 29 countries since 2016 – which was below the OECD average and did not change in 2022.

According to the "UN Women Turkey" Brochure by the United Nations' entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, women's participation in the labor force in Türkiye was 34.4%, and women holding senior and middle management positions in companies account for 17.3% in 2019 (UN Women Turkey, 2019).

The reasons underlying these numbers must be understood from a scientific point of view to remove barriers to women in working life. The current study aims to provide empirical data on the determinants of the glass ceiling that hinder the representation of women in the workplace and the top of organizational hierarchies in Türkiye.

To this end, scientific research papers related to studies conducted in Türkiye regarding glass ceiling syndrome were reviewed throughout the last 22 years. Among them, those studies that used the interview and qualitative analysis methods were compiled. Meta-synthesis determined the factors that form the glass ceiling syndrome among employees from different sectors.

The following are the research questions:
1. What themes are referred to as the factors that form the glass ceiling among Turkish employees?
2. Do only women experience this syndrome, or do men and minorities experience it as well?

2. Glass Ceiling Factors

The glass ceiling research is based on the question "Why are there so few women at management levels?" (Powell, 1999). Initially, the reasons listed reflected two approaches: personality-oriented explanations claiming that women's personality traits and typical behavior do not fit managerial positions, and organization-oriented explanations blaming organizational structures for

creating obstacles that prevent women from being promoted to managerial positions (Riger & Galligan, 1980). Kanter (1977) identified organizational barriers, such as a general antipathy toward female executives, group dynamics that emerge when a female member of the organization seeks promotion and male managers who prefer male candidates for promotion (quoted in Powell & Butterfield, 2015: 308).

Some factors that form the glass ceiling seem similar in different parts of the world. The Career Barrier Inventory (CBI-R) by Swanson and Tokar (1991) and Swanson, Daniels, and Tokar (1996) includes 13 subdimensions concerning career barriers for women: sex discrimination, lack of confidence, multiple role conflict, conflict between children and career demands, racial discrimination, inadequate preparation, disapproval by significant others, decision-making difficulties, dissatisfaction with career, being discouraged from nontraditional careers, disability and/or health concerns, job market constraints, and difficulties with networking or socialization."

Cech and Blair-Joy (2010) identified the glass ceiling factors as structural barriers (executive organizational culture and ideologies), human capital (limited number of female candidates for executive positions), and individual motivation (lacking personal motivation, preferring family) in a study conducted in California, USA.

Dehaghani, Cholmaghani, and Goli (2013) researched the glass ceiling in state organizations in Isfahan, Iran, and concluded that the phenomenon is affected by two major factors: organizational and cultural factors. Organizational factors include a lack of equal training opportunities and career strategies for women, communication barriers between men and women, the absence or scarcity of successful female role models, and a lack of equal employment opportunities in organizations. Meanwhile, cultural factors include senior managers who, under the influence of patriarchal culture, do not believe that women can do well as managers, as well as gender inequalities in society's collective mind implying that women in managerial positions would threaten male leadership and authority, which stems from the underlying conviction that men and women cannot be partners in working life (Dehaghani et al., 2013).

Afza and Newaz (2008) examined the existence and factors causing glass ceiling collected data from different sectors in Bangladesh. They identified five main factors creating the glass ceiling effect that eventually inhibits women's career opportunities: management perception, work environment, work life conflict, sexual harassment and organizational policy.

Regarding the literature in Türkiye, which was formed primarily through quantitative research, similar themes were listed as factors forming the glass ceiling. One of the most frequently cited studies is that of Hoşgör, Gündüz-Hoşgör, and Memiş (2016), who conducted a study covering female healthcare professionals. They listed the factors that cause the glass ceiling under three main themes: individual, organizational, and social factors. Table 1 presents their subdimensions.

Table 1. Main themes and subdimensions of glass ceiling factors

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS	ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS	SOCIAL FACTORS
1. Multiple Role-Taking 2. Personal Preference and Perception of Women	1. Organizational Culture and Policies, 2. Lacking a mentor 3. Non-Participation in Informal Communication	1. Professional discrimination 2. Stereotypical Judgments

Source: Hoşgör et. al (2016: 348). "The research of relationship and differences between sociodemographic features and glass ceiling syndrome healthcare professionals case". Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, Volume: 13, Issue: 35: 345-362.

These themes and subdimensions were also mentioned by other scholars, namely, Karaca (2007), Yılmaz (2013), Kök (2021), Zeybek (2010), Atan (2011), Büyükyaprak (2015), Öztürk (2011), Terzi and Deniz (2020). Moreover, Yavuz and Uzun (2019) and Taşkın and Çetin (2012) used the same classification. In particular, Taşkın and Çetin (2012) added to the previously mentioned factors a lack of equal opportunities for men and women, obstacles created by male and female superiors, and different perceptions of women in the workplace. Meanwhile, Derin (2020) categorized the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling into three dimensions: barriers created by male managers, barriers formed by female managers (queen bee syndrome), and barriers created by the individual (internalizing patriarchy, lacking training, or career goals).

The number of studies conducted using the quantitative method is relatively high in Türkiye. However, more qualitative research concerning such a topic influenced by cultural factors and psychology is needed. This paper aims to comprehensive analyze the present qualitative research papers concerning the glass ceiling conducted in Türkiye.

3. Research Method

The study employed meta-synthesis, one of the qualitative literature compilation methods. Meta-synthesis is a procedure in which similar qualitative research papers are analyzed (Walsh & Downe, 2005) and the results are evaluated with a qualitative perspective to determine similarities and differences (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014). Moreover, the data obtained undergo interpretive analysis in order to reach new results (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Polat & Ay 2016). In other words, the meta-synthesis analysis unit is a set of deliberately selected qualitative research studies conducted on a specific topic related to the predetermined research question of the meta-synthesis researcher. The procedure is the reinterpretation of primary qualitative research findings, which is a systematic review and integration of findings from selected qualitative studies (Zimmer, 2006; 312). Thus, common categories, themes, and patterns are identified to achieve a holistic reinterpretation (Finfgeld, 2003; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Bazzoli & Probst, 2022).

Thorne (2022) defined two fundamental perspectives on meta-synthesis: first, this work explains the perspectives of various scholars created to explain the topic through their investigations; second, it leads to increasingly comprehensive understandings of the topic across time and space. The meta-synthesis is conducted using a standard systematic collection and evaluation of the qualities of the documents to be included, which includes a detailed search protocol and inclusion criteria. The systematic approach considers the choice of database(s), criteria, and publication periods. The inclusion criteria is important for determining the appropriate documents for meta-synthesis (Timulak 2014; Flick 2015).

A meta-synthesis research study is conducted following certain steps that scholars commonly agree with. The present study took the following steps (Staneva, Bogossian, & Wittkowski, 2015; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Polat & Ay, 2016; Bazzoli & Probst, 2022):

1. Decide on the research questions.
2. Determine the search keywords following the initial review of the relevant literature.
3. Decide on the database(s).
4. Select the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
5. Search for the database and select the documents to be included considering the criteria.
6. Read the selected documents and analysis process in detail (coding, defining the themes and subthemes, defining similarities and differences among the documents).
7. Synthesize the findings reached through meta-synthesis and reach the conclusions.
8. Report the process and findings in detail.

Brannigan et al. (2016) first decided on the database (ERIC, EBSCO, SCOPUS, etc.); Subsequently, they decided on the search key words, determined the time, and finally decided on the language of the publications. In terms of the optimal number of documents to be included in a meta-synthesis analysis, Polat and Ay (2016) stated that the optimum number was between 8 and 12. However, Finfgeld-Conett (2010) stated that it is difficult to predetermine the number of publications to be included in a meta-synthesis study and suggested deciding based on the research topic and questions, as well as the content of the research reports to be included.

The inclusion criteria were determined in selecting the articles to be examined. First, those studies applied in Türkiye focusing on glass ceiling as their main topic were chosen. In order to ensure similarity in the presentation of the results, theses and conference papers were eliminated, and only academic articles were involved. Academic articles published from January 2000 to July 2022 on the subject were scanned in the Dergipark and Tubitak Ulakbim-Equal databases. The oldest study conducted according to the phenomenology pattern, among the studies in which data on the glass ceiling was collected through face-to-face interviews, was from 2016.

As the criteria for selecting qualitative research reports for meta-analysis, first those conducted in Türkiye with the main topic of glass ceiling were listed. Following a thorough reading, it was observed that some texts did not focus on the glass ceiling despite being listed in the key words, so they were eliminated. Due to the back translation procedure that would have been required, only studies presented in Turkish language were chosen to avoid adequacy and equivalence concerns (Reiss, 1983; Shveitser, 1993; Son, 2018).

The search key words "cam tavan (glass ceiling)" and "nitel (qualitative)" were used. Therefore, while many possible keywords such as "glass ceiling syndrome," "glass ceiling phenomenon," and "glass ceiling perception" were included in the scanning process, a filter was imposed on studies using qualitative methods to exclude studies using quantitative methods, as in a meta-synthesis study only qualitative research papers can be included.

The abstracts and methodology sections of the 69 studies identified in the initial search were scanned, and studies in architecture and engineering concerning physical glass ceilings such as those on cars or house ceilings were excluded. In a subsequent step,

studies labeled as related to the glass ceiling but not related to the glass ceiling in view of their subjects and findings were eliminated. Because meta-synthesis requires studies to be similar in terms of method and approach (Walsh & Downe, 2005), studies that use the keyword qualitative but are essentially literature reviews, compilations, bibliometric analyses, meta-analyses, document reviews and studies in which metaphors were used as a data gathering tool were excluded. Following a thorough review, 16 academic articles were selected for meta-synthesis and uploaded to the MAXQDA 2022 software.

The findings and results of the articles were coded under the theme names determined by the researchers using the software in order to achieve conceptual unity. As the same concepts were given different names in different studies and coded accordingly, a thorough reading of the articles was performed, and different themes pointing to the same concept were grouped under joint codes, resulting in a coding framework. The codes were aligned under upper codes based on related literature, and the themes and subthemes to be evaluated were determined. The researchers reviewed coding twice later.

In order to present a detailed evaluation of the population and sampling of the articles, a table was formed and presented in the annex section (Annex 1).

4. Findings

Coding was used to establish patterns and points for comparison, resulting in new interpretations and reconceptualization presented as the key "themes" of the glass ceiling in Türkiye. The findings of the meta-synthesis were analyzed for revealing and explaining themes and then subthemes; thus, the factors that form the glass ceiling in the Turkish context were listed.

4.1. Themes and Subthemes

Considering the factors listed in the literature, each article was carefully read, and codes were determined. A sum of 3 themes and 18 subthemes was reached. According to the literature, the themes were named *individual factors, socio-cultural factors* and *organizational factors.*

The distribution scheme and coding frequencies of all the themes coded in the documents included in the meta-synthesis are presented in Annex 2.

4.1.1. Individual Factors

This theme includes the glass ceiling factors from the participants' experiences. Among the reasons female employees refrain from stepping up in their careers, one might prefer their family as they do not want to fall behind in mothering and spouse roles (work–family balance) or standing aloof from managerial positions as they doubt their competences. According to the findings of the studies, this doubt stems from the lack of role models or mentors and the lack of self-confidence. The themes related to the conditions mentioned are given in Figure 2:
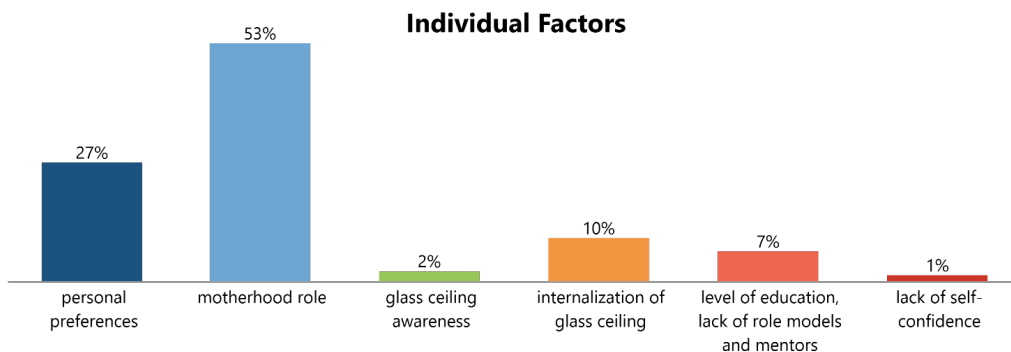
Individual Factors

personal preferences	motherhood role	glass ceiling awareness	internalization of glass ceiling	level of education, lack of role models and mentors	lack of self-confidence
27%	53%	2%	10%	7%	1%

Figure 2. Individual Factors and its Subthemes

- **Personal Preferences:** One of the barriers for women occupying managerial positions is their own preferences or the limits they impose on themselves (Korkmaz, 2016). Individual preferences of participants in undertaking managerial roles, personality traits, the behavior of not preferring the workload and stress imposed by managerial roles, problems with family–work balance, and avoiding a masculine outlook are all examples of expressions in the personal preferences code.

- **Motherhood Role:** The importance of women's motherhood roles was the most frequently expressed theme by participants in the studies examined. Within the framework of this theme, which was coded in a total of 13 documents, it was observed that a working woman's motherhood roles affect her job behaviors. This very often quoted factor is mentioned in two different forms: first as work–family conflict, which meant that women felt consciously or unconsciously an obligation to be a mother first and to hold the family above all. Second, all-female managers were expected to act "like a mother" with compassion and docility, sometimes tolerating misbehavior among their subordinates.

- **Glass Ceiling Awareness:** Considering that the first step to solving a problem is raising awareness of the phenomenon (at least the meaning of the phrase "glass ceiling"), this issue seems overlooked. Most of the research samples were chosen among women with management experience who had experienced career barriers and could overcome them to some extent. More male managers and subordinates should have been included to learn more about awareness. Only three studies mentioned the participants' awareness only with reference to a single code.

  "*While women working for the enterprises that accepted interviews gave very vivid examples about their work environment, problems, own lives and lives they have witnessed; some of the male participants, though limited in number, were utterly unaware of the surrounding problems. For instance, there were male participants who were unaware of the problems that their peer with whom they shared the office was going through although one of their subordinates (another male participant) was totally aware*" (Karakaya & Reyhanoğlu, 2020: 56).

- **Internalization of Glass Ceiling:** One issue to consider when confronting the glass ceiling is the internalization of the glass ceiling by individuals, which is women accepting work life as it is presented to them and losing motivation to advance in their careers at some point. As an example:

  "*It was concluded that teachers who assert that they encounter social and organizational obstacles...think that they cannot and will not overcome these obstacles...thus quit putting in efforts and state that they give up. It was determined that they ignore these challenges and remain effortless against such impediments as they consider career barriers such as job fixing, allowing inadequate people to get the upper hand while ignoring adequate ones, and favoritism cannot be overcome*" (Uçar & Güven, 2020: 226-227).

- **Level of Education, Lack of Role Model(s), and Mentor(s):** This code addresses women's complaints about being unable to prepare for promotion exams at work or advance in their education due to gender roles and familial responsibilities imposed on them. The expression "lack of role model(s) and mentor(s)" refers to women expressing their inability to advance in managerial positions because they have not encountered female executives whom they could adapt as role models or who could guide and inspire them for such positions.
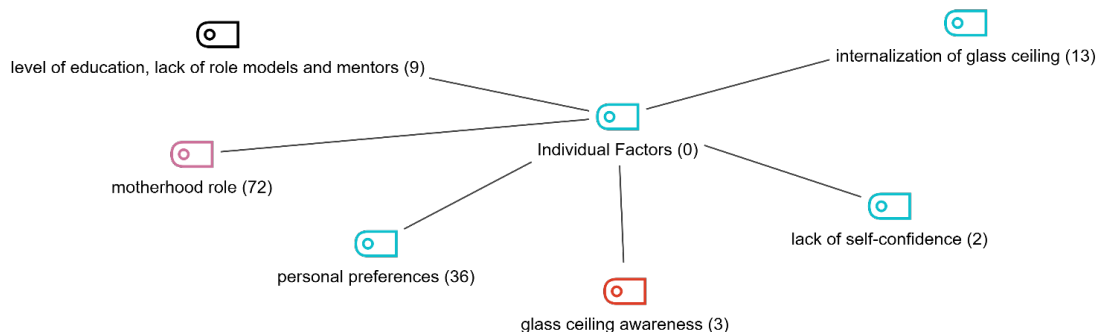

Figure 3. Code map for individual factors

- **Lack of Self-Confidence:** People who have high levels of self-reliance and self-efficacy more easily take management and leadership roles. It is stated that the reason underlying a woman's unwillingness to claim a management position is sometimes lack of self-confidence (Powell & Butterfield, 2015). As seen in Figure 3, this theme was merely coded twice in a single document, while receiving more international attention.

4.1.2. Sociocultural Factors

The sociocultural environment influences glass ceiling factors such as perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices. Figure 4 depicts the coding percentages of the sociocultural factors and their subthemes.

- **Gender-Based Discrimination:** As seen in Figure 5, with 27 mentions in all documents, this was the most frequently coded factor in the sociocultural factors. This code encompasses the findings in which women participants in the studied articles assert that they encountered career barriers merely because they are women and cannot obtain some positions due to gender obstacles.
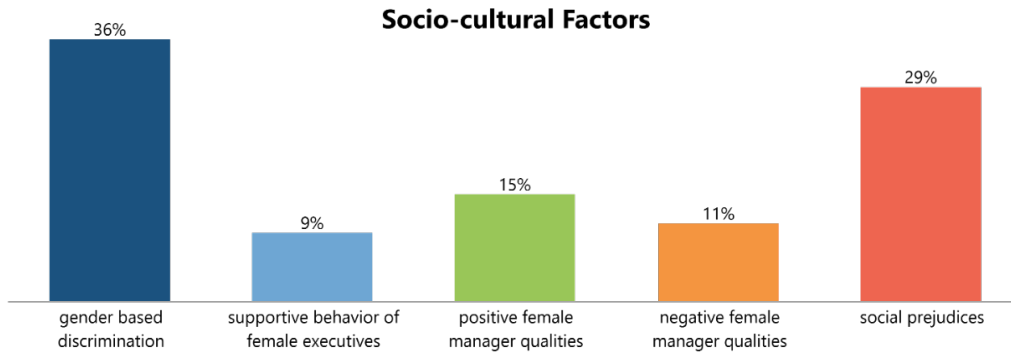
Figure 4. Sociocultural Factors and its Subthemes

- **Supportive Behavior of Female Executives:** This theme was formulated in order to compare two studies on queen bee syndrome, which is closely related to the glass ceiling. According to Kobal (2021: 70), the participants in their study do not exhibit queen bee syndrome and, on the contrary, show supportive behavior toward their female subordinates. Similarly, female employees report receiving positive support from female managers in both their professional and personal lives. However, Karakaya and Reyhanoğlu (2020) obtained findings that completely correspond to the definition of queen bee syndrome in the literature, revealing that both male and female employees do not want female managers based on the grounds that these managers treat other women harshly compared to men and do not exhibit supportive behavior toward others.
- **Positive Female Manager Qualities:** This code refers to positive traits commonly associated with female managers, such as being scholastic, versatile, empathetic, visionary, open-minded, selfless, moderate, self-disciplined, and endowed with aesthetic judgment, good communication skills, and problem-solving capacity.
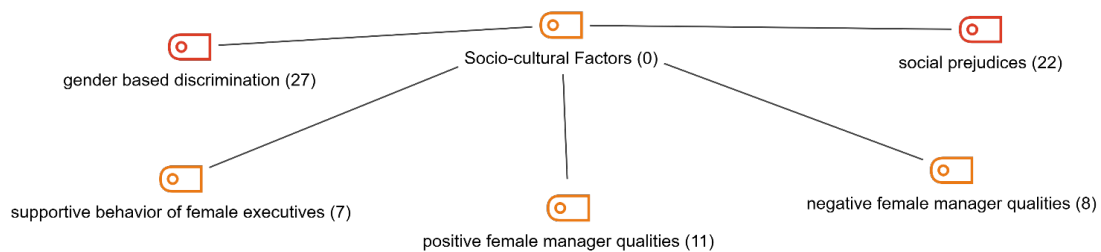

Figure 5. Code Map for Sociocultural Factors

- **Negative Female Manager Qualities:** This code refers to negative characteristics associated with female managers, such as being sentimental, naive, fragile, arrogant, capricious, envious, malevolent, relentless, and subjective, frequently making irrational decisions, demonstrating cronyism, and lacking authority. For example:

  "Participant Ö1 touches upon the problems they encounter about authority saying "... unfortunately male executives seem to be more effective in establishing authority compared to female ones' while participant Ö6 reports "having male executives is an advantage; schools are more disciplined and under authority' in support of this view" (İmamoğlu-Akman & Akman, 2016: 755).

- **Social Prejudices:** The findings related to social gender roles and stereotypes were grouped under this code. It was discussed how difficult it would be to change fundamentalist views about the role and place of women in society, and examples comparing men and women were provided.

  "Almost all participants reported that (in family life) it would not be a problem if men were at a higher career level, but it would not be preferred to have women at higher career levels and even if this was preferred it would turn out to be a problem after a while. A male executive in manufacturing sector (İ2Ü) responded to this question as "I would pity a man if his wife had a higher career, the structure of the society, customs and traditions all these effect relationships. They say man is the head of the family. If he is the head, then he has to be somewhere above everyone else.'" (Karakaya & Reyhanoğlu, 2020: 60).

4.1.3. Organizational Factors:

This theme includes glass ceiling factors related to the workplace and working conditions, such as organizational structure, sector properties, organizational culture and policies, and legal procedures. Figure 6 shows the subthemes of organizational factors and their coding percentages.
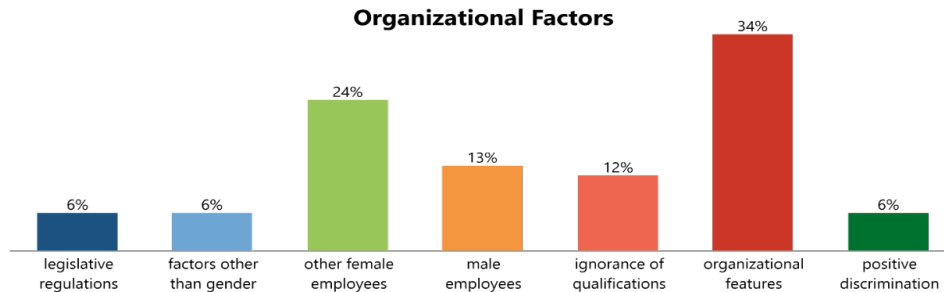
Organizational Factors

Figure 6. Organizational Factors and its Subthemes

- **Factors other than Gender:** Findings indicating that the glass ceiling affects not only female employees but also male employees are coded under this theme. This code was determined in only two articles, one for academy (Tahtalıoğlu & Özgür, 2020) and the other for human resources executives (İpçioğlu et al., 2018) with both male and female participants. Because the glass ceiling is commonly perceived as a phenomenon that only affects female employees, studies indicating that it also affects male employees in Türkiye have contributed to the existing literature, and this topic should be investigated further.

- **Other Female Employees:** This theme was used to code findings about female employee rivalry and resistance to female executives. This subtheme which was coded 16 times reveals that female executives are not only challenged by male subordinates and superiors but also by female employees in terms of glass ceiling barriers. One of the significant examples reads as follows:

  "It was discovered that glass ceiling that stems from the rivalry among women rests on actual experiences of the participants rather than their observations. Although participants of the present study report that they suffer queen bee syndrome and apple worm syndrome[1] they rarely express such grievances experienced by other female executives" (Tanrısevdi et al., 2019: 1606).

- **Male Employees:** This code represents resistance from male employees to female executives.

  For instance: *"While female employees react to female executives with personal jealousy, male coworkers sometimes set difficulties by simply resisting the women in management position. As stated by a female participant (H2KY) men have an idea that says "I don't get orders from a woman.' They won't go and ask their female executive's opinion unless they have to. They just keep to their own course and even asking for her approval feels offending."* (Karakaya & Reyhanoğlu, 2020: 61).

The researchers initially anticipated that only resistance from male employees to female executives would be coded under this theme; however, other career barriers related to male coworkers appeared during the research process.

"Being exposed to mobbing by male employees, male priority, lack of equality, and income inequality are the antecedents of the male concept analysis. Among the findings of the analysis, injustice, harassment, male-dominated structures and the effects of structures on the management processes, the idea that education is not a solution for the disappearance of the male-dominated structure, the inequality in the number of male and female managers . . . were determined." (Erdoğan & Acar, 2019: 2131).

- **Ignorance of Qualifications:** Ignorance of qualifications and consideration of other factors when a promotion opportunity arises has been a frequently expressed complaint in almost all organizations in the articles. This theme denotes findings related to instances in which factors such as political views, religious beliefs, personal relationships, and gender replace individual qualifications as a basis for job promotions for both men and women. For example:

  "It was observed though a participant from the service sector (H2Ü) asserted 'The job belongs to those who deserve it.' and emphasized that there is no difference between people with equal education and competence. However, while this person was an associate degree graduate, a postgraduate woman with more experience than this person worked as his subordinate." (Karakaya & Reyhanoğlu, 2020: 63).

- **Organizational Features:** This was the most frequently coded factor among the organizational factors theme, as shown in Figure 7, with 23 mentions. As glass ceiling determiners, this theme includes codes such as organizational culture, pay, legal and sectoral attributes of the institutions, organizational policies, and facilities offered to female employees such as daycare

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[1] Apple worm syndrome: Tanrısevdi et al. (2018: 1604) labels the rivalry of women working at the same level in the same organization with this term.

and breast-feeding leave. According to the codes, firms consider female employees' possible pregnancy and motherhood as lost performance and special problems, and some firms are hesitant to provide daycare services. For example:

". . . The general director calls Ayşe to his office after (the human resources manager's) new baby was born. He asks "Girl can you do this work if you take this job?". When Ayşe says that she can, he says "all right then, let's send this milkmaid home to look after her baby." And announces that he promoted Ayşe to the post of human resources manager." (Karakuş, 2021: 255).

- Positive Discrimination: "Positive discrimination against women and the disabled" has been a popular phrase used by politicians, officials, and high-ranking employers to give the impression that they care about breaking down glass ceilings. This code covers responses to questions regarding the existence of positive discrimination towards women. Positive discrimination toward women was reported, especially in educational institutions, during the preparation of timetables and allocation of off days (Kirişci and Can, 2020). Meanwhile, positive discrimination was abused by women, according to some male and female participants (Karakaya and Reyhanoğlu, 2020). However, it was stated that women did not face positive discrimination when it came to appointment to executive positions (Tüzel and Çalık, 2019: 1487).
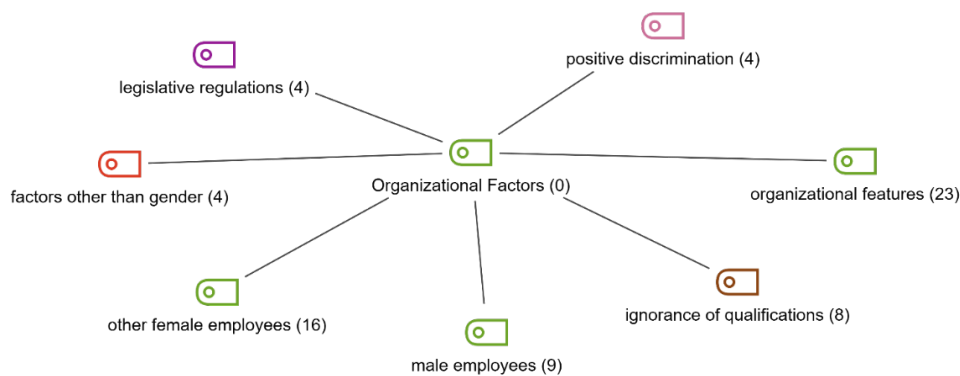

Figure 7. Code Map for Organizational Factors

- Legislative Regulations: Discrimination at workplace is against the Constitution, but some sectors were declared not to have favorable working conditions for women. Studies that question whether there are legal barriers to women being managers in organizations, which revealed that legal regulations may differ across sectors, but the barriers encountered stem from attitudes in practice rather than legal structures.

5. Discussion, Contribution, and Implications

Despite the progress in terms of joining the labor force and reaching high-level education opportunities, it is observed that Turkish women have more to do before reaching the position they deserve in social and economic life. This is not only a problem of gender equality, but also of benefiting from the full potential of the country's labor force. Perceptions of the glass ceiling and organizational injustice inevitably negatively affect the employee's behavior. Öktem et al. (2018) studied the perceptions of glass ceiling syndrome as a carrier barrier for female hotel employees, as well as organizational justice and work alienation. Data gathered through interviews was used in this study. The Analytic Hierarchy Process was used to examine the effects of these perceptions on employee behavior. Findings reveal that work alienation was the most important perception, and personnel behaviors vary according to such organizational perceptions (Öktem, Kubat & Kızıltan, 2018). Therefore, extensive research using various scientific methods must be conducted to understand the causes of the country's glass ceiling problem and find effective solutions.

As Appendix 1 suggests, the present research examples conducted in Türkiye have focused on very similar populations, which probably resulted in similar findings as the literature review also suggests. In this context, not only the glass ceiling but also other career barriers should be included in open-minded scientific studies on various sectors, with populations including men, women, immigrants, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups.

In addition, it was observed that the abundance of quantitative studies using similar scales resulted in similar findings, and the unique cultural factors of the glass ceiling were only determined through qualitative research. In conclusion, more qualitative research should be conducted on such a topic influenced by social, cultural and psychological factors. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013)

stated that as a contribution of interviews with participants used in qualitative studies there is a certain flexibility in terms of responses and interaction between the researcher and the participant, and that richer findings are possibly obtained because the questions and answers are not confined as they are in surveys. This method sometimes brings up the participants' meanings, interpretations, and experiences, who even realize them when speaking during the interview.

Regarding the glass ceiling factors, it was observed that some factors were referred to very often, while others had not been examined adequately. The most frequently reported subtheme was the motherhood role of women. The most important reason for the nonparticipation of women in Türkiye's labor force is their personal and family responsibilities. The work-family conflict of working women originates from the deep roots of traditional gender roles in Turkish culture (Çoban, 2021). Meta-synthesis showed that this factor has three aspects. First, this role appears to be an integral part of a woman in terms of cultural perceptions, since every woman was expected to "act like a mother" in working life, especially when in an executive position. Participants stated that they are supposed to be kind, affectionate, tolerant, and supportive as managers. Second, some of the female participants did not consider claiming managerial positions because they felt guilty about prioritizing work as management positions would mean more time and energy to be spent at work. Thus, after becoming a mother, some women slowdown in their career course, while some simply quit. Society considers that a woman's priority should be her family, and women feel that way (Karaca, 2007; Özgen & Ufuk, 2000; Özkazanç-Pan, 2012). Third, a married woman is considered a potential mother by employers and high-level managers, and it is assumed that they will lose concentration on their job and performance at some point due to family–work conflict. As a result, male candidates are preferred for positions during recruitment and promotions, and female employees are prioritized when downsizing decisions are made.

It was observed that the glass ceiling experienced by minorities or people with disabilities in Türkiye was not considered in an adequate number of studies. Factors other than gender, which would cause glass ceiling syndrome, were especially overlooked in most studies. This factor includes political views and religious preferences that affect both male and female professionals and was mentioned in a mixed-method article by Tahtalıoğlu and Özgür (2020), who analyzed a population of both male and female academics. Future studies should consider this factor as it introduces a new point of view to the literature on the glass ceiling.

Lack of self-confidence is another factor that discourages women from pursuing managerial positions. According to Dickerson and Taylor (2000), women choose between being a group member and a leader based on their self-efficacy perceptions. Their study concluded that women who trust their leadership skills are more eager to get management positions, while those with lower self-confidence tend to prefer group membership. Both the literature review and the meta-synthesis results revealed that the lack of self-confidence factor has been mentioned very rarely in the studies conducted in Türkiye. In fact, despite the increase in the level of education and the number of women in work settings, as they grow up, Turkish girls are usually not encouraged by their environment to take on leadership roles. Therefore, this reluctance of Turkish women to become executives needs to also be analyzed from this perspective.

The topic of sociocultural factors revealed that in Türkiye, the same management acts and attitudes are not evaluated similarly for men and women. This is probably due to different societal perceptions of gender roles when considering male and female behavior. Competitiveness, power, and participation are important components of organizational processes. These qualities are encouraged among male professionals, as the stereotypical expectation of them is to be aggressive and compassionate. Conversely, women are expected to make connections, work cooperatively, and use their emotional intelligence. This type of supportive behavior, however, may not be rewarded within the appraisal and promotion system. As a result, the negative belief that women lack the necessary qualities to lead at work becomes commonplace. Stereotypes are formed about women in working life and those who act differently, such as aggressively and compassionately, are disliked by society (Berkery et. al., 2013; Profiroiu & Nastaca, 2016; Coffman et. al., 2019; Hartman & Barber, 2020). The same behavior is praised for men but chastised for women, prompting some women to decline executive positions out of fear of "becoming manlike" (Kirişci and Can, 2020).

Another important fact determined in the meta-synthesis was the tendency of the research participants to refer to women's personality traits, especially those who hold a management position. The "Positive Female Manager Qualities" and the "Negative Female Manager Qualities" were deliberately coded separately in order to reveal the dilemma that participants feel about having female executives: on the one hand, they praise women for their so-called "feminine" qualities, such as being patient, tolerant, affectionate and well organized; on the other hand, they criticize them for being emotional or lacking authority. This tendency results in a stereotype of female executives, which could also reflect societal prejudice against female executives. It was observed that male and female coworkers shared this prejudice.

The most important contribution of this meta-synthesis study is to determine that the glass ceiling in Türkiye has been examined so far through similar perspectives with similar results. This study aimed to determine the themes and subthemes included in the relevant research studies to reveal which are handled more frequently and which deserve more focus. It was concluded that mixed-method research with comprehensive populations would give more novel results.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The most important limitation of this study is that, due to the unique characteristics of the meta-synthesis method, only a limited number of documents were included. As a result, potentially valuable studies conducted using different methods were not possibly included. This study only covers the results of studies conducted within a specific time frame and using a specific research method. Furthermore, some articles written in English were not included because some concepts, particularly those in direct quotes from participants, could have been misunderstood or misinterpreted by the researchers and coded under incorrect themes as they would have been back translated (for further information on back translation, please see: Son, 2018).

As a conclusion, It was determined that future meta-synthesis and meta-analysis research encompassing the results of various research reports could be beneficial. The glass ceiling is an important topic that matters not only in terms of productivity and better human resource management, but also for social justice and equality. Besides, as it matters for minorities, women, and other disadvantaged groups, it is a complex issue that deserves more in-depth research using qualitative and quantitative methods together. Cultural differences should be considered, and various research populations, like different sectors and age groups, and definitely both men and women, should be included. This study revealed that different sectors can produce different results on this topic. Therefore, future research on a population encompassing multiple industries may yield novel results comparing glass ceilings in various aspects of work life. The themes and subthemes identified here as being less frequently searched for could be included in new research studies, while those that have received much attention could be approached from different angles.

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Appendix

Table 2. Articless included in the Meta-synthesis

No	YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	ARTICLE NAME	RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING	FINDINGS
1	2016	Gülşah İmamoğlu-Akman and Yener Akman	Opinions of female teachers about their female administrators in the context of queen bee syndrome	14 female teachers in Altındağ, Ankara. MEB (Ministry of Education)	The study results revealed three main themes concerning female supervisors and female employees according to the views of the participants in the study. These themes were support, temperament and sufficiency. They concluded that there is a negative attitude towards female managers.
2	2017	Selva Staub	Leadership styles and language of women in Turkish business life	4 senior manager women from companies CORPORATE	It was concluded that there are certain differences between male and female leadership styles, the language they use, the social and emotional intelligences. The female executives perform more masculine language, appearance and management style due to rivalry with their male counterparts. On the other hand, they try to keep their femininity outside the office due to the expectations from the society they live in.
3	2017	Dilvin Bulut and Duygu Kızıldağ	Gender discrimination and its effects on female human resources managers	12 female human resources managers CORPORATE	It was determined that the number of female participants who state that they face challenges, obstacles, ignorance and discrimination is not high. A majority og the participants stated that oppportunities of education and promotion are equal for both men and women. More than half of the participants think that men and women are paid equally, while the rest of them strongly feel the opposite way. It was stated that men are supported more in working life and women suffer from work-life balance issues.
4	2018	Songül Demir	Women in academia: the situation of women in academia and its interference with their domestic life	100 female academicians ACADEMY	The study revealed come negative factors on carrier paths of female academicians based on gender roles which implies the existence of sex-related prejudices independently of their level of education. In this respect, permanent solutions towards an improvement program can only be found through considering both these effects and gender related prejudices.
5	2018	İsa İpçioğlu, Özüm Eğilmez and Hilal Şen	Glass ceiling syndrome: a research in the context of human resources managers	6 female and 6 male human resoruces managers in Bilecik, Turkiye	It is determined that the glass ceiling is an individual obstacle caused by people, and the social factor is the most important factor. Also, the majority of the
				CORPORATE	participants stated that glass ceiling is not unique to female employees, and that all employees face career barriers. The most important strategy to fight glass ceiling is personal development in an individual sense, giving equal work and education opportunities to employees in an organizational sense.
6	2019	Esma Erdoğan and Pınar Acar	Women and business life in the context of glass ceiling syndrome: a qualitative research study in the education sector	20 female employees (academic and administrative staff) from a private university ACADEMY	The basic concepts concerning women's carrier barriers were determined as mobbing, glass ceiling syndrome, restriction or limited empowerment at administrative positions, gender-based discrimination and injustice.
7	2019	Filiz Tanrısevdi, Pınar Sarpkaya and Ruhi Sarpkaya	Glass ceiling experiences of the female managers in educational organizations	22 female school managers and deputy managers MEB	It was determined that the participants decided to become executives for Professional reasons and female managers could bring significant advantages to the education organizations. Also, social reasons were the main reasons for the lack of female managers in institutions of education.
8	2019	Emel Tüzel İşeri and Temel Çalık	Corporate career barriers faced by women school managers and their solutions to overcoming these barriers	10 female school managers in Ankara, Turkiye MEB	All of the participants stated that women's rates of representation in management levels within the body of the MEB is insufficient. They believed that this condition could be fixed only through women's individual efforts and aspirations. Most of the participants think there is no positive discrimination against women in the process of selecting women as school managers in the MEB, but there is positive discrimination against men.
9	2020	Gülseda Kirişçi and Niyazi Can	The remarks of education administrators and school principals on glass ceiling syndrome	25 school managers: 13 male and 12 female in Kahramanmaraş, Turkiye MEB	It was determined that women encounter glass ceiling barriers through their career advancement both as an administrator or administrator candidates. Also, women restrain themselves in order not to hinder the roles traditionally ascribed to them which also indicates that women experience the glass ceiling barriers due to personal reasons. Long and difficult working hours obstacle was expressed as organizational obstacles. The view that management role has no gender was mostly agreed upon. It was concluded that there are equal opportunities for both men and women, yet, women prefer not to be promoted to an administration post.

Table 2. Continued

10	2020	Merve Uçar and Sibel Güven	Remarks of primary school teachers on glass ceiling as a career barrier	Erkek-kadın 109 male and female teachers in Çanakkale, Turkiye MEB	It was determined that most of the participants saw the glass ceiling as an "obstacle". Also, the teachers who did not express their opinion about the glass ceiling due to lack of knowledge of the concept were more than the ones who had an idea about the glass ceiling. Primary school teachers stated that they consider the exams and interviews they needed to take as career barriers, and as a coping strategy, they generally remain indifferent to obstacles and do not claim any managerial positions.
11	2020	Şeyma Karakaya and Metin Reyhanoğlu	Being a female manager in a male-dominated world: a research on female managers' environment	24 people: 6 managers, 6 subordinates and 6 superiors and 6 peers of them employed in 6 companies (3 from service sector and 3 production plants) in İstanbul, Turkiye CORPORATE	It was concluded that women taking on a management position in working life, they face new barriers stemming from themselves, their close circle, their counterparts, the opposite sex, social sexual judgments, and business policies gradually. With the effect of sectoral differences, women exhibit an attitude that is accepted as a "male management style" while climbing the career ladder and in the managerial position.
12	2020	Hava Tahtalıoğlu and Hüseyin Özgür	A field research on Turkish academicians' perceptions on glass ceiling in regard to administrative duties	24 male and female academicians from the universities established in 1992 (together with the quantitative data collected from 576 participants from the same population) ACADEMY	The research was conducted on the selected sample using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative research results revealed the glass ceiling factors as organizational culture and policies, stereotypes and prejudices, fears and anxieties, role conflicts, professional eligibilities, disappointments, and informal communication networks. Also, it was concluded that the effects of glass ceiling syndrome were not only caused by gender differences.
13	2021	Sonay Bulut and Mustafa Çelikten	Female school managers in Turkish Education System	18 female school managers MEB	It was concluded that female school managers experience more demotivating events than those that would motivate them. The most demotivating instances are those experienced with the students' parents. The second mostly mentioned demotivation source was student behavior followed by the treatment from the senior administrators. The personal traits that female administrators feel that hinders them are listed as being emotional and anxious under responsibility, being too selfless, naive, quiet, patient etc. The reasons why they do not prefer to be a manager were listed as motherhood and life-work balance problems.
14	2021	Meral Özertürk and İbrahim Gül	The opinions of women in education on the glass ceiling syndrome before being manager	13 school managers and deputy managers in Sinop, Turkiye MEB	It was determined that female perceive the glass ceiling syndrome as a negative situation that hinders their career development. They think the most important reason for this is the male-dominated society. While the female administrators feel that they are respected as much as their male counterparts, their feminine qualities are highlighted by their administrators. They stated that they are preferred for jobs that require visuals, but not for positions holding important decisions. The female administrators stated that parents who come to the school mostly prefer a male administrator as the addressee.
15	2021	Hava Yaşbay Kobal	A qualitative study of women working in the private sector in the context of queen bee phenomenon	33 female managers from different sectors and their subordinates CORPORATE	It was determined that female managers adopt a democratic or situational management style and they think they support female employees to advance in their careers. Female employees stated that they did not encounter queen bee behavior and the female managers approached them with understanding and empathy and supported them in their career development.
16	2021	Esra Karakuş Umar	Being a woman in management in business life in Turkey: A qualitative study on concepts glass cliff and glass ceiling	6 female managers from different companies CORPORATE	It was concluded that women who experienced the glass cliff and who were stuck to the glass ceiling experienced the glass cliff from a sectorial perspective. The active presence of women in "home office" applications will deepen the image of women in business life that develops in parallel with traditional gender roles. Such a situation may cause the woman to work under precarious conditions thus, women should be supported to work in areas "outside home".

Kod Sistemi	2017-Bulut	2021-Bulut	2018-Demir	2019-Erdoğan	2020-KARAKAYA	2021-KOBAL	2021-Karakuş	2020-Kirişçi	2017-STAUB	2020-Tahtalioğlu	2019-Tanrısevdi	2019-Tüzel	2020-Uçar	2021-ÖZER	2016-İmamoğlu	2018-İpçioğlu	TOPLA
Individual Factors																	0
personal preferences	5	4	1	2	6		4	5	1	3	1		2			2	36
motherhood role	9	5	8	3	15	4	5	13	1		3		1	3		2	72
glass ceiling awareness					1								1				3
internalization of glass ceiling	1	2					4			1		1	1			3	13
level of education, lack of role models a				2	1			1		1	3	1					9
lack of self confidence																2	2
Socio-cultural Factors																	0
gender based discrimination	3	2	1	1	5	1	5	1			3			3	1	1	27
supportive behavior of female executive					2	5											7
positive female manager qualities					1	2		2	1		3			2			11
negative female manager qualities					1	1		2						4			8
social prejudices		1		2	5		3	4		1			1	2		2	22
Organizational Factors																	0
legislative regulations					3							1					4
factors other than gender (+)										2	1					1	4
other female employees	1				7						4	1		2			16
male employees				2	1		1	2					1				9
ignorance of qualifications					1					5			2				8
organizational features	1			3	6		5	2		2	1	1	1			1	23
positive discrimination					2			1			1						4
∑ TOPLAM	20	14	10	15	57	13	28	33	3	15	21	7	9	9	9	15	278

Figure 8. Matrix of all codes and all documents