

## Kadın Okul Müdürlerine Simgesel Temsilcilik ve Kurumsal Simgesel Statü

### Tokenism and The Institutional Token Status of Female Principals

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#### Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, kadın okul müdürlerinin bakış açısıyla okul yönetimini anlamak ve eğitim örgütlerindeki simgesel statülerinin nedenlerini ve sonuçlarını araştırmaktır. Bu araştırmada hermeneutik fenomenoloji yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunun oluşturulmasında amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi tercih edilmiş ve en az 10 yıldır yöneticilik görevine devam eden 9 kadın okul yöneticisi araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Verilerin analizinde içerik ve doküman analizi yöntemleri birlikte kullanılmış, veriler temalar altında sunulmuştur. Araştırmanın sonuçları kadınların sorumlulukları nedeniyle zaman yetersizliği yaşaması, aile desteğinin eksikliği ve kadın okul müdürlerini destekleyen kavramların yokluğu gibi olguların kadın okul yöneticilerinin simgesel temsilciliğinin bireysel; kadınların toplumdaki ikincil konumu, mesleki kalıplaşmış yargılar ve çevrelerindeki insanların olumsuz bakış açıları gibi olguların kadın okul yöneticilerinin simgesel temsilciliğinin toplumsal, bürokratik örgüt yapısı ve cinsiyet ayrımcılığına dayalı bir örgütsel kültür gibi olguların ise kadın okul yöneticilerinin simgesel temsilciliğinin örgütsel sonuçlarını oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Kadın okul müdürlerinin simgesel statüsünün bir sonucu olarak, eylemleri daha görünür hale gelmekte ve bu durum performans baskısına ve yalnızlık duygusuna neden olmaktadır. Ayrıca, araştırma sonuçları, kadınların sosyal hayattaki rolleri, çalışma hayatındaki sayısal varlıkları ve cinsiyete dayalı olarak yaşadıkları ayrımcılığın hem Doğu hem de Batı toplumlarında yaygın olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın okul müdürleri, kadın okul müdürlerinin simgesel statüsü, eğitim yönetimi.

#### Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand school management from the perspective of female school principals and to investigate the causes and consequences of their symbolic status in educational organizations. The hermeneutical phenomenology method was used in this research. The study group consisted of 9 female school principals who had been in management roles for at least 10 years, using criterion sampling as a purposeful sampling method. Content and document analysis methods were used together to analyze the data, which were presented under themes. The results of the study show that factors such as women experiencing time constraints due to their responsibilities, lack of family support, and the absence of supportive concepts for female school principals constitute the individual consequences of their symbolic representation; factors such as women's secondary position in society, professional stereotypes, and negative perspectives from those around them constitute the social consequences of their symbolic representation; and factors such as the bureaucratic organizational structure and an organizational culture based on gender discrimination constitute the organizational consequences of their symbolic representation. As a result of the symbolic status of female school principals, their actions become more visible, leading to performance pressure and feelings of loneliness. Furthermore, research findings indicate that women's roles in social life, their numerical presence in the workforce, and the gender-based discrimination they experience are prevalent in both Eastern and Western societies.

**Keywords:** Female school principals, token status of female principals, education management.

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**Introduction**

Groups, which are private components of organizations, are having an increasing impact on the changing token status of group members. This leads to the formation of dominant and minority groups, which must defend the interests of members of dominant groups. In the literature, this condition is discussed under various headings. Simmel (1950), who first discussed the relationship between the individual and the group members, asserts that there are two reasons why this situation is usually ignored: first, there are two reasons why the individual and the group have different goals that have a collective structure and are internalized by the individual as if they were his own simple and primary goals. The first of them is that as they expand, social goals become more powerful. The second reason is that, particularly in contemporary social life, the individual is forced to use increasingly complicated strategies to carry out these objectives. In other words, the significance of the individual is determined by their similarities and differences with other individuals, and the individual's "solo status" is created by how the individual differs from other people or by the things the individual does.

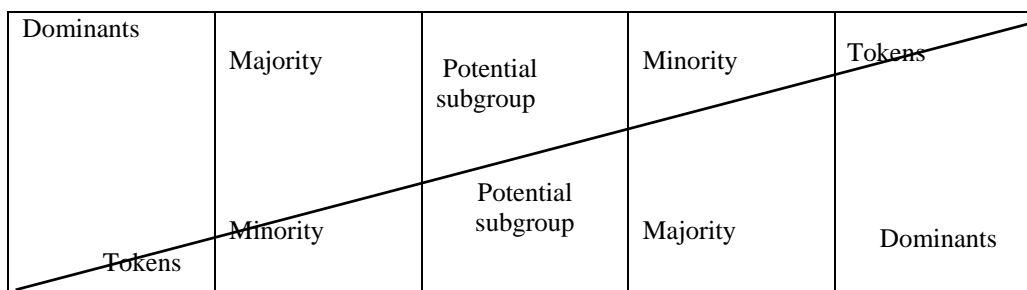
Simmel's work took on a new dimension in the 1970s as a result of political and social developments that raised issues such as the status of women in organizations, working conditions, gender discrimination, and the representation of women in the workforce. Laws (1975) characterized this condition as gender discrimination in the workplace when members of the dominant group don't share privileges and authority with members of the minority group, notably women. According to Laws (1975) women' disadvantaged group position despite their numerical majority in the organization, constitutes the infrastructure of women's token status at management levels.

Kanter (1977), who takes a different approach on the issue of women's underrepresentation in management, claims that the issue can't be adequately explained by structural differences, as Simmel (1950) has noted, or by social content, as Laws (1975) suggests, and that the major hindrance to women becoming managers isn't gender. The gender of the women and the fact that they will be excluded by the dominant group if they demand leadership (double deviant) are the main reasons. Kanter (1977), who conceptualizes tokenism as a perceptual tendency, exemplifies this situation as follows:

X X x x X X 0 X x X

If a person sees nine Xs and one 0, the 0 will stand out. It may be overlooked, but if it is noticed, it will be more noticeable than the other Xs. Moreover, the X's will be perceived as more similar because they are different from 0. And it will be easier to assimilate 0 than X, which is doing the same job. The same perceptual factors apply to social situations and are used to create pressure on women. Socially and culturally different people in the group are the elements that shape the interaction dynamics, and it is possible to define two groups in the context of these basic components. These are uniform groups that consist of a single human type and are considered homogeneous in terms of basic factors such as gender, race, or ethnicity, although they differ within themselves, and dominant groups in which one group has 85% superiority over another group. The few groups within this dominant group are defined as "minority" as they are symbolically accepted as representatives of their category. It is difficult for people in this group to have power. This dominant group structure reflects the male-female relationships in organizations as well as the low number of women in management and certain professions (Kanter 1977; 1993). The model in question is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Proprtional Representation of Social Groups in Organizatons



Kaynak: Kanter 1993

Figure 1 illustrates the proportional representation of social groups in organizations. According to Figure 1, it is seen that a numerical majority seems important to be the dominant group, but it isn't true in all conditions. Culture, interaction, structural, and personal factors also affect and shape the interaction dynamics beyond the definition of majority and minority groups. Female preschool teachers, for example, are regarded as dominant, whereas female school principals are regarded as tokens. So we can claim that the token status of women in leadership positions

can't be attributed to the proportion of women in the workforce (Zimmer 1988; Yoder 1991). It is social status that has an essential place in the underrepresentation of women (Gustafson 2008).

### **Reasons for a Female School Principal's Token Status**

Contrary to Kanter's theory, the low number of female managers can't be explained only by the numerical minority ratio and social stereotypes. Studies demonstrate that there may be a variety of factors that vary depending on social structure (Constantinople 1982; Yoder and Sinnet 1985; Sax 1996; Ray 2001; Gardone-Bergstrom 2004; Vaughan 2011; Moore 2011; Stokes 2011). In this study, these factors are examined under the headings of individual, social and organizational factors.

**Individual Factors.** *Individual factors contributing to female school principal's token status are personality traits and socialization processes.* It can be said that personality traits such as weak self-perception, women's unpretentious behaviours (Taylor, Peplau and Sears 2010), being less career-oriented in leadership and management than men, having a lower desire to be successful, the low performance myth used as an excuse to create less female employment in professions, and low leadership positions are individual factors that affect female school principals' token status. Also, discrimination, which is an indicator of women's employment (Mathipa and Tsoka 2001), can be shown among the main reasons why women don't prefer management. Madden (2008), on the other hand, argues that the absence of women in management positions can't be explained only by sexist factors; the maturity level of the individual is more important than all other characteristics.

The socialization process causing women to internalize social gender roles as a result of the socialization process in which women are taught to be "a good wife" and "a good mother," while men are taught to be the family's head (Sağlam and Bostancı 2012) is the other reason for the female *school principal's token status*. Expectations of women's work and family roles (Weber 1998) cause women to internalize social gender roles (Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Hersch 1991; Prentice and Carranza 2002; Risman 2004; Weber 1998) and influence their career development preferences (Friedman and Greenhaus 2000; Kirchmeyer 2002; Mathe 1989).

Women prefer teaching, which is accepted as a female profession where they can devote their time to their families and children (Sperandio 2010) rather than management because of the conflict experience between the role of mother and job role (Abreu-Hornbostel 2012; Cooke 2003; Kim 2010; Marks 1977; Mathe 1989), great time pressure to keep up with all their work (Neale and Özkanlı 2010; Sağlam and Bostancı 2012) and long working hours (Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Hersch 1991). Besides common stereotypes such as "Thinking like a manager is thinking like a man" (Kanter 1993; Schein and Mueller 1992; Schein et al. 1996; Schein 2001; Manwa 2002; Moorisi 2010; Powell, Butterfield and Parent 2002; Prime, Carter and Welbourne 2009; Ryan et al. 2011) affect female principals' beliefs about themselves (Limbach 1994) and create psychological barriers in their preference (Fullagar et al. 2003; Parker and Fageson 1994). So women' transition to the management level turns into a complex experience (Moorisi 2010) and isn't planned (Moorisi 2010; David and Woodward 1998). We can say that this is the failure of gender reforms implemented in schools (Blackmore and Rennie 1999).

**Social Factors.** The patriarchal social structure that refers to a culture-specific gender emphasis on men dominating or using power over other people (Connell 2005; Hearn 1992) and norms that define how they should see others (Moreton 2001; Percupchick 2011; Siann 1994) and its results are another factor that affects female school principals' token status via gender roles, which are defined as power relations built by society (Weber 1998). Stereotypes such as women being different from men (Kanter 1993; Limbach 1994; Warning and Buchanan 2009), being less intelligent and authoritative than men, shape women's social relations within the organization (Ridgeway 2009) and prevent women from taking power-representing positions such as management (Springer 1998). This situation results in men acting as principals, generally reinforcing the sense of the difference between their home and work lives and distancing themselves from family and child responsibilities (Collinson and Hearn 1994). Work environment policies consider a man who can devote himself completely to his work as the ideal employee because he has a wife with a dominant responsibility for housework (England 2010; Malhotra and Sachdeva 2005; Ferree 1990; Kanter 1993). This is because women who enter the field of management, defined as a male profession, exhibit masculine behaviors to get rid of stereotypes about themselves and be perceived as good managers (Kanter 1993; Mathe 1989; Powell et al. 2002) or to act as managers by reinforcing their gender roles.

**Organizational Factors.** The bureaucratic structure of organizations, the masculine characteristics of the bureaucratic structure, and the effect of these characteristics on the organizational culture constitute the organizational factors that affect the career development of women (Kanter 1993; Collinson and Hearn 1994; Maddock and Parkin 1994). As a matter of fact, when women begin to threaten the collective structure within the organization, the organizational culture, which consists of a wide network, includes sexist daily practices, attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and theoretical rules shaped by gender perception and is used to oppress or neutralize women (Maddock and Parkin 1994). Organizational culture and the token status of female managers pose a two-way threat within the organization. The first of these is the danger that women who are in the minority position in

the organization will revolt; for those who don't have psychological self-awareness and don't feel the need to review their usual actions, the self-consciousness created by the presence of women can be disturbing (Kanter 1993). However, it is also possible for the individual to achieve harmony between his own culture and the organizational culture, or for the organization to have a cultural structure that supports differences (Bond and Pyle 1994). For example, while women and men assume different roles within the organization in traditional organizational cultures such as the Gentleman's Club, Barracks Courtyard, and Dressing Room, it is accepted that there is no gender equality or difference in more recent cultures such as Gender Blindness and Smart Macho (Maddock and Parkin 1994).

### **Results of Female School Principals' Token Status**

**Visibility.** Crocker and McGraw (1984) indicate that visibility means being more prominent and attracting attention for women. There are three different approaches to the visibility of managers' actions. The first approach belongs to Kanter (1977), who indicates that women managers' actions attract more attention. For example, female school principals' actions attract more attention than the environment's and teachers', even though female school principals, who are considered commodities in society, constitute a numerically smaller group in schools. So, female school principals have higher visibility than male school principals, who are accepted as the dominant group. The second approach belongs to Acker (2006), who brings a different perspective to the visibility of women managers and states that the members of the dominant group within the organization aren't aware of their privilege and seek inequality outside the organization, whereas the visibility or invisibility situation within the organization is based on inequality, and this situation changes according to the perception of gender of the members of the organization. The third approach belongs to Geys (2013), who supports Kanter's (1977) approach that visibility is a result of the perceptual tendency of female managers and the managers' being loved and accepted by their environment, states that it isn't independent of its other characteristics, and asserts that the gender of the managers is one of the basic tools used automatically and unconsciously in grouping individuals, especially in Western societies.

**Performance Pressure.** It is obvious that women's actions are always being watched within the organization, that their faults and romantic connections are widely known, and that women are unable to keep things private. This situation, which is defined as social pressure, causes symbolic consequences for some women, such as the thought that their performance has potential effects on women who will take place in the organization. It is obvious that women's actions are always being watched within the organization, that their faults and personal relationships are widely known, and that women can't maintain privacy within the organization. This situation, which is defined as social pressure, causes symbolic consequences for women, such as the thought that their performance has potential effects on women who will take place in the organization in the future. Other occurrences of performance pressure in the workplace include the fact that women must work for their success rather than their existence, or that when a woman performs an action well enough to attract the attention of the dominant group, she must work harder than anyone else to avoid the dominant group's socially humiliating behavior. (Kanter 1977).

**Polarization.** Polarization is the use of gender perception in order to prevent women from coming into management positions. This situation puts women at a disadvantage in terms of gaining opportunities and rewards (Laws 1975), and women with token status are accepted into the group only if they prove their loyalty (Kanter 1993). This polarization causes a perceptual tendency called "Glass Ceiling Syndrome" in the literature (Kanter 1977; 1993). The perception of polarization leads to situations such as dominant culture exaggeration, a reminder of differences, informal isolation, and loyalty tests within the organization. The exaggeration of the dominant culture defines the male group members who are accepted as dominant in the organization by emphasizing and exaggerating the cultural factors shared against women, creating an in-group solidarity environment, and trying to structure the masculine mindset within the organization (Holmes 2006). This circumstance gives a chance to women to dramatize the subjects that prohibit them, but ironically, women underline the dominant culture rather than undermining it (Kanter 1977; 1993).

A pronounced sensation of "marginalization" by women early in their professions is regarded as serving as a reminder of the disparities. The conscious and strong emphasis placed on women's differences in the organization by their male colleagues, and sometimes even non-managerial female colleagues, often causes women to feel isolated (Wyn, Acker, and Richards 2010). The tendency of women to exaggerate the differences due to their low numbers in order to avoid generalizations and stereotypes also contributes to the continuation of this culture (Kanter 1993). Informal isolation is the relationship between an individual and a certain group, and it is sociologically important (Simmel 1950). Because the members of the dominant group have secrets they need to protect or don't know how much they can trust women, they feel uncomfortable with the presence of women in the organization to carry out certain activities. This is especially true when the information to be shared has the potential to harm dominant group members, and although men argue among themselves, they don't talk about low commitment to work in front of women, concerns about job performance, conspiracies to gain an advantage, or strategies to influence managers. Also, loyalty tests harm them. Positive test consequences result in more female

participation in dominant group activities, and negative test consequences result in more isolation. There are two ways women can show loyalty and maintain good relations with dominant group members. The first is to accept the undesirable and inappropriate personality traits of other group members by accepting stereotypes about other members of their group and accepting that they are exceptions within the group; the other is to allow themselves to be seen as the source of humor for the group (Kanter 1977; 1993).

**Assimilation.** Gender stereotypes and gender perception emphasize how individuals in the organization should behave based on their status. This situation causes women who have a place in the management of the organization to follow a masculine role, exhibit similar leadership behaviors with men, and lose their authority when their femininity comes to the fore (Laws 1975; Moreton 2001). The results of the research conducted by Wyn, Acker, and Richards (2010) with female principals in Austrian and Canadian universities also show that they are aware that it isn't possible for women to be fully assimilated in the process. Therefore, being a manager at the university develops as a constant reminder of an identity that one doesn't have and a constant definition of the identity one does have.

Kanter (1993) states that the roles of mother, seducer, pet and iron maiden are basically defined for women in the organization. The role of mother, which is the most common role in organizations, imposes the role of being a sympathetic and good listener and being a person to talk about problems to women in managerial positions (Kanter 1977). Women see and accept this job as a singular one, with boundaries set by the dominant male group via a drawn-out process (Laws 1975). In contrast to the mother role, the seductive role can produce anger when a woman forms an intimate relationship with a coworker because it is a scarce resource and the outcome of a high-status male acting in the guardian position. In the pet stereotypical role, women are described as cute and playful by the dominant male group and accepted as the group's symbolic mascot (Kanter 1977). The stereotypical role of the iron maiden is a contemporary version of the stereotypical roles that strong women will be placed in. It is stated that if women aren't included in one of the first three stereotypical roles mentioned above, they are defined as people who are more respected, treated equally, and kept at a certain distance by men (Kanter 1993).

### **Rationale and Purpose of the Study**

Despite the high number of women employed in educational institutions worldwide, their representation in school management is quite low. While this phenomenon is often viewed in the literature as the individual symbolic status of a minority group, it carries much more profound meanings within the context of educational organizations. This study offers a unique contribution to the literature by examining the token status of female school principals. The study involved in-depth interviews with nine female school principals working in Kocaeli, a city known for its cosmopolitan social structure, and examined the individual, societal, and organizational factors contributing to their token status, as well as its consequences. In this respect, the research distinguishes itself from approaches that explain tokenism solely on the basis of numerical scarcity, reconceptualizing it as an institutional condition that shapes the professional legitimacy, visibility, and representational burden of female school principals. Furthermore, within the context of the Turkish education system, where male dominance persists in school management despite the numerical weight of women in the teaching profession, this study makes visible the structural and cultural dimensions of tokenism in educational leadership, thus providing a contextual and critical contribution to the literature on educational management and gender. In this context the research takes into account the following issues in order to fulfill this objective:

- (1) What are the personal reasons for the low number of female principals in educational organizations?
- (2) What are the social reasons for the low number of female principals in educational organizations?
- (3) What are the organizational reasons for female principals' token status in educational organizations?
- (4) What are the effects of the lack of female principals in educational organizations?

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

Since social and educational issues are abstractions based on the extensional experiences of people and this research is about the life experiences of female school principals, the hermeneutic phenomenology design, which is based on the concrete meaning of the participants' life experiences (Ajjawi and Higgs 2007; O' Donoghue and Punch 2003; Creswell 2007; Smith 2001), was used. So, in the data collection process, the interview technique, which gave voice to many people and allowed them to express their lives in their own words (Kvale 2006) was used.

#### **Study Group**

The study group consists of 9 female school principals selected according to criterion sampling, a purposive sampling management. Criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, is used in this study. Being a school principal for at least ten years is used as a criterion. This approach has been used to identify individuals or situations that can create a rich source for the researcher's problem (Patton 2002).

### **Research Instruments and Processes**

Semi-structured interview techniques and document analysis were used as data collection tools. The interviews were entered into a computer system and placed under Participants 1 and 2, and the analytic process was started by getting a printout. Document analysis, including a summary of the ongoing literature, transcripts of the interviews, and notes taken (Glesne 2012; Creswell 2009; Patton 2002), was used. While the researcher took the necessary notes, they were added to the participant files once the interviews were uploaded to the computer system and reviewed. However, to support the data with the literature in the process of interpretation, the literature research continued during the data collection process.

### **Credibility and Transferability**

To increase the credibility of the research, two different data types, such as note-taking and voice recording, were used to support the interpretation of the research data in the structural verification, and the data files that were transcribed and added to the notes taken by the researcher were checked by an expert. In addition, the interview form prepared by the researchers was examined by an expert before the research process, and the questions supporting the existing theories were changed or removed to ensure that the questions were objective. The interviews were distributed to the participants to guarantee the study's external validity.

The voice recorder and note-taking data were downloaded to the computer, transcribed, and then double-checked by listening to the original recordings. The researcher and an expert independently examined the controlled datasets to identify similar patterns. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), comprehensive definitions of terms are essential for qualitative researchers. Because of this, direct quotations were used to round out the themes. The study's result was verified by comparing it to the raw data, and recommendations and comments were given to improve the reliability of the research.

### **Ethics of Research**

Before the interviews were used to gather research data, phone calls were made to the sample participants to introduce the researcher and set up an appointment for the meeting after briefing them on the topic. Before the appointment, the participants were informed that their names and the school they work for would be kept private. The interviews were held in places where the participants preferred to meet to ensure that they were free to express their ideas and that the meeting wasn't time-limited. While transcribing the interview, personal data like names and school names wasn't recorded. 58 pages of documents were acquired as a consequence of the transcription of the 16 hours and 20 minutes of interviews conducted with the nine research group participants. The analysis was then completed with the inclusion of the interview notes.

### **Data Analysis**

The content analysis approach was determined through the analysis of the data obtained in the research. In this context, the interviewees were first numbered (e.g., K1 for Participant 1) and prepared for analysis. In the second stage, the data were read by the first researcher, and codes were created. The codes created were confirmed by the second researcher (an expert). In the third stage, the themes were determined by the researchers, and the direct quotations that make them up were examined. In the last step, the themes' direct quotes were interpreted in the literature.

## **Findings**

### **Findings on Individual Reasons of Female School Principals' Token Status**

When the opinions of the school principals are considered, the subjects of personality traits and internalized preconceptions are emphasized. The following are some of the participants' points of view:

*Women are fearful, not brave. They think that senior management won't support them (P 5).*

*They believe that teaching is a profession better suited to them. If they prefer working as teachers, they can work for only half the day while having the other half of the day off. Nevertheless, becoming a principal requires you to give up a lot of things, including your motherhood and the time you would spend with your kids. (P 7).*

On the other hand, some participants claim that having qualities like courage and leadership has a positive effect on their position as a school principal. They also stress the value of the assistance they receive. These are the participants' views on the issue:

*I can be a leader. I enjoy completing tasks. Regarding structure, I was appropriate for this. I enjoy solving problems. (P 3).*

*In the beginning of my career as a principal, I studied with a group that greatly inspired me. They helped me tremendously. Nobody has ever inquired as to why you chose to work as a principal. In both my roles as a principal and a teacher, I have always benefited from the support of my friends. (P 4).*

Analysis of the participant viewpoints demonstrates that women's choices for becoming school principals are significantly influenced by the support of their families, coworkers, or other school principals. So most of their rise to managerial roles was unplanned, and family support has a significant influence on their management decisions.

### **Findings on Social Reasons for Female School Principals' Token Status**

It becomes obvious that the patriarchal social structure's societal prejudices and gender roles are at the forefront when the sociological factors underlying the token status of female school principals are investigated. The following is a list of some of the participants' perspectives:

*Women's decisions are significantly influenced by social roles. Although the woman has begun working, her social obligations as a wife, mother and housewife haven't changed. These obligations have been transferred from one generation to the next as though only women were expected to fulfill them. (P 2)*

*In the first year, they were asked: "May we talk to the manager?" when they called for registration. Nobody imagined that the kindergarten would have a female principal. (P 9)*

Analyzing the perspectives of the participants reveals that gender stereotypes, the myth of the manager and the social family structure all significantly contribute to women's preferences. According to the participants, women choose teaching since it allows them to fulfill their social and familial commitments. In relation to gender roles, the participants also talked about time limitations. These are some of the participants' views on the topic:

*Lack of time is the biggest obstacle. You need to spend more time in school in order to avoid overtime. (P 8)*

Studying participant opinions reveals that female principals don't prefer to be managers because of their responsibilities as mothers and in the home. The fact that women in the teaching profession have more opportunity to fulfill their gender responsibilities and carve out time for themselves further emphasizes the relevance of the time issue.

### **Findings on Organizational Reasons of Female School Principals' Token Status**

As the opinions of the participants on the underrepresentation of women in school leadership are investigated, it becomes obvious that the themes of bureaucratic organizational structure, queen bee syndrome, and organizational culture predominate. According to the female principals, the organizational structure effectively promoted to executive positions, according to female principles of the organization. Some of the participants' perspectives include the following ones:

*I failed the interview despite passing the written exam. I was informed that because I am a woman, the top management doesn't support me. (P 7)*

*The hardest part of the principalship process for me was managing the school culture. I have had to deal with is the perspective of female school principals. (P 2)*

Analyzing the participants' opinions indicates that the sexist organizational climate and the bureaucratic organizational structure are responsible for the low number of female principals. It's critical to keep in mind that

this situation involves more than just a male dominant group and a female minority group. Despite the fact that women constitute up the majority at educational institutions, social norms and prejudices prevent them from supporting female principals. The following are some of the participants' viewpoints on the matter:

*The female teachers at my former school were envious of me. They don't want their friends to leave until they do. (F 3)*

*I had the impression that several of my female friends were envious. Following that, they lessened or stopped interacting with me. One of my best friends started acting differently. (F 5)*

The female school principals who participated have emphasized that the relationships between schools and their environments are another bureaucratic barrier. The female school principals who took part in the interview claimed that their relationships with the school's surroundings were plagued by bureaucratic issues, particularly with municipalities, and that the male principals were able to address their school-related issues more quickly and easily thanks to their friendships with these individuals. The following perspectives are just a few of the ones shared by the participants:

*Our president makes promises in advance and then ignores them. Since we are female, we go back to ask and he commends his assistant for coming up with a solution right away. The issue is still present at our school a year later. Yet, the manager before me was yelling, calling, and getting it done. This is a man's benefit. (P 1)*

*I am unable to play a game of football or drink tea in a cafeteria. Som male principals complete the tasks faster, because they receive outtakes form their conversations. (P 9)*

When the opinions of female principals are analyzed, it is clear that the bureaucratic organizational structure prevents women from achieving principalship positions and that female managers frequently concur with male instructors that they shouldn't be subject to female managers' control. Female principals emphasized the difficulties they had in gaining official power and acceptance inside the organization. They asserted that initially, instructors had their qualms about them taking on the role of managers because of how teachers saw male principals and the impression that female managers would be capricious. The female principals who took part in the interview also acknowledged that society's perception of women can occasionally be unfavorable. The female principals who participated in the interview also asserted that the way society views women occasionally has an adverse impact on how well female school principals connect with their surroundings. Also, they asserted that their environment tried to put them under pressure and didn't accept them because of their gender when they first started in managerial positions.

### **Findings of Female School Principals' Token Status**

The lack of female principals in educational institutions has had detrimental repercussions, including visibility, polarization, and assimilation. Female principles are under performance pressure since visibility is used to imply that their activities are more notable. The participants' opinions on the subject are as follows:

*Even though I had always brought and cleaned every item that was required, including the draperies from the teachers' room. The president saw that the flag had been folded one day. "You are a lady, this isn't good," he said. When a woman makes a mistake, they criticize it; when a male does, they don't. Women teachers therefore put forth more effort than men. (P 5)*

As it was seen from the quotation, female principals who participated in the interview claimed that their behaviors and mistakes are perceived as much more remarkable than those of male managers, and they claim that this situation creates performance pressure on female managers. The perception of failure was something that participants said they tried very hard to overcome, particularly in the early years of being a principal, before performance standards were raised.

Polarization, which is characterized as the establishment of cultural barriers to keep women out of managerial positions, is the exaggeration of differences and social isolation. The following are some of the participants' opinions on social isolation, polarization and exaggeration of differences. Some of the participants' opinions on the subject are as follows:

*We don't behave like males. Being mothers, we are quite sensitive. My husband's managerial style, for instance, is totally dissimilar from his. He has strong rules. Unlike most men, we have distinct viewpoints. For instance, we are better at maintaining the school's appearance and cleanliness. (P 3)*

*I was so incredibly lonely that when I shut the door, I started crying. I asserted that the assistant principal was updating the District Directorate of National Education as well as the previous principal and providing information to him. They were frightful in terms of both their attitudes and features. (P 5)*

*Despite the large number of people nearby, I am by myself. I feel alone when talking to coworkers. We aren't able to meet in private, for example. The timing is off. So the large number of female principals to meet makes me happy. (P 7)*

Female principals who participated in the interview claimed that it was sometimes difficult to communicate with their coworkers due to their management responsibilities and workloads making them feel lonely. Another factor that draws attention to the participants' opinions is their emphasis that they differ from male principals in terms of management comprehension and organization. The following are some of the participants' opinions on assimilation and the mother role it creates as a result of gender stereotypes and gender perception:

*In terms of management, there was no difference. I also possess the managerial discipline and mindset of a man. (P 3)*

*Since I didn't see myself as a woman when I walked into the school, there wasn't such a gender thing, I just focused on my job, so I didn't see much. (P 7)*

Female principals don't believe that gender roles and cultural norms are beneficial to their management style, according to an analysis of participant comments. The participants' opinions on the mother in the management metaphor that came from the assimilation dimension are as follows:

*They see me as a mother figure, and I can tell that they have trust and confidence in me. I think that women are more concerned about the issue. (P 7)*

*Outside of my job as a principal, we communicate well, and they can communicate their ideas well. They assert that even though I'm the principal, they prefer to speak with me. They come to relax in my room. I'll be here for them to relax." (P 8)*

The fact that they are "mothers" and the communication that results from this was one of the main priorities raised by the majority of female managers who took part in the research. Female principals claim that they are different from male managers in this respect since they are more reachable to teachers, students, and employees on a daily basis, as well as parents that visit the school.

## **Discussion**

### **Discussions on the Reasons for Findings on Results of Female School Principals' Token Status**

The stereotypes that women internalize as a result of socialization (Kanter 1993; Schein et al. 1996; Schein 2001; Manwa 2002; Powell, Butterfield and Parent 2002; Prime, Carter and Welbourne 2009) are the leading individual factors. As a matter of fact, the teaching profession is one of the professions most frequently associated with women by the society (Aslanargun 2012), and women don't volunteer for managerial positions that require long working hours due to their gender roles in spouse, child care, and job responsibilities (Cooke 2003; Mathipa and Tsoka 2001; Marks 1977; Friedman and Greenhaus 2000; Kirchmeyer 2002) exemplify this situation. The unplanned transition of women to managerial positions also supports this view (Moorisi 2010; David and Woodward 1998).

The patriarchal nature of society also contributes to the symbolic status of female school principals. Its cultural demands that women run the home and the family (Moreton 2001) led female school principals to extend gender roles to managerial positions. The environment supports women in this circumstance, but it can also be harmful because it is perceived as a reflection of the caring, sociable, and relationship-focused gender ideal (Percupchick 2011). The number of women in management positions also supports this negative perception (Jagusztyn 2010;

Kanter 1977; 2003; Schein 1994). As a matter of fact, Britton (2000) states that the number of women or men in occupations is important in naming organizations as female or male dominant. The perception that men are the only ones who can thrive in management is furthered by the terminology used to define "manager," which is remarkably similar to terminology used for men (Abreu-Hornbostel 2012). Also, the creation of an organizational structure that is skewed toward men also leads to a negative perception of women in management.

The last factor determining the token status of female managers is organizational. Women define power differently than males (Kanter 1993; Abreu-Hornbostel 2012), and as a result, they prefer to deploy different sorts of authority than men (Aslanargun 2009), which contributes to the image that female managers are less authoritarian and brave than male managers. This circumstance, in which social perception is successful, causes the action of "offering a safe job," one of the strategies used to render women ineffective in the workplace, as well as the formation of an exaggerated behavior of protecting women by not giving them risky and visible assignments (Kanter 2003), which is done in order to acquire formal power. Despite their best attempts, it prevents women from assimilating into the patriarchal organizational culture (Moreton 2001). Because, despite appearing to recognize women's dominance in the workplace, men continue to silently emphasize cultural stereotypes (Coffrey, Cook and Hunsaker 1994). One illustration of this situation is the fact that women are more conscious of the sexist culture within organizations (Maddock and Parkin 1994).

### **Discussions on the Results For Findings on the Results of Female School Principals' Token Status**

Female school principals are more likely to experience social isolation because of their higher visibility within the organization (Kanter 1977). Performance pressure, in addition to women's efforts to work more (Kanter 1977; 1993), includes their efforts to introduce themselves and their work at every opportunity and to let people around them know how they are.

Another effect of tokenism is that women in positions of power are more likely to face social isolation, and the majority of them feel "marginalized" at the beginning of their careers (Wyn, Acker and Richards 2010). Female managers frequently express how polarized they feel as a result of this circumstance. Furthermore, the circumstance in question demonstrates that the quantity and quality of women's social life (Simmel 1950) are more significant in the development of this condition than the numerical ratio.

Social stereotypes determine the social roles of individuals (Eagly and Steffen 1984) and they force women to adopt masculine traits in order to be accepted (Kanter 1993; Powell, Butterfield and Parent 2002), which reduces their power (Moreton 2001). In other words, female managers are exposed to assimilation, and in organizations where men are dominant, women are empathetic. Since they are described as excellent listeners and individuals who can talk about difficulties, women in management often find themselves acting as the group's mother (Kanter 1977).

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