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## **STEREOTYPES AND BARRIERS FOR WOMEN PRINCIPALS IN DIFFERENT CULTURES**

### **ABSTRACT**

It has been long debated that discrimination based on the gender is one of the basic barriers that hinder schools achieving the goals in democratic societies. Researches about tackling gender issues have increased recently and investigated whether there are barriers for women for administration. Since management theories are mostly resembles each other throughout the world within the times, comparative studies need to be done considering the cultural context. The purpose of the paper is to compare and contrast researches about women administration at schools and other institutions together with the barriers and stereotypes they experience in promotion. It was employed qualitative research design to analyze 39 articles published in four journals of education, leadership and gender. The studies analyzed in this paper have concluded that women more or less, or overt or covert had to face with disadvantaged settings compared with men in administrations in different cultures regardless of developmental level of countries.

**Keywords:** Women Principals, Administration, Barriers, Stereotypes, Genders

## **FARKLI KÜLTÜRLERDE KADIN OKUL MÜDÜRLERİNE YÖNELİK ENGELLER VE KALIPLAŞMIŞ YARGILAR**

### **ÖZET**

Demokratik toplumlarda okulların amaçlarını gerçekleştirebilmelerinin önündeki engellerden biri olarak kabul edilen cinsiyet ayrımcılığı literatürde uzun süredir tartışılmaktadır. Bu konuda yapılan araştırmalar yönetimde kadınlara yönelik engellerin olup olmadığını incelemektedir. Yönetim teorilerinin dünya genelinde zaman içerisinde birbiriyle benzeştiği düşünüldüğünde farklı kültürel bağlamlarda karşılaştırmalı çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, kadın eğitim yöneticilerinin farklı toplumsal ve kültürel bağlamlarda sergiledikleri yönetim davranışlarını ve karşılaştıkları kalıp yargıları konu alan uluslar arası nitelikte ve eğitim indekslerinde yer alan makaleleri bazı temalar açısından incelemektir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden iç içe geçmiş durum çalışması modeli kullanılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda eğitim, eğitim yönetimi ve liderlik alanlarında uluslar arası veri tabanlarına taranan dört eğitim dergisinde yayınlanan kadın eğitim yöneticileri konusunda 39 makale içerik analizine tabi tutularak yorumlanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre farklı kültürlerde kadınlar, az veya çok, ya da açık veya örtük bir şekilde ülkelerin gelişmişlik düzeyinden bağımsız olarak yönetimde benzer uygulamalarla karşılaşmakta ve erkeklere göre dezavantajlı bir konumda bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın Yöneticiler, Yönetim, Engeller, Kalıp Yargılar, Cinsiyet



## 1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

It has been stated that researches concerning women and leadership issues mostly conducted in developed countries last decades. The basic motives of current practice of administration and perception throughout the literature seem to legitimize de facto statuesque. Studies and researches that have been done previously were mostly fostered by current gendered perception on men. Social construction of gendered identity is mostly developed by dominant paradigm in society. It is the schools that may create gender neutral settings especially for principals and teachers before serving education to pupils. Next generations are mostly acculturated by the prevalent understandings of professionals in schools and teachers and principals are the basic actors to create it (Court, 1998:4; Strachan, Akao, Kilavanwa, and Warsal, 2010; Fuller, 2010:375).

Traditional critics of genders could be the basic reasons why girls are under scored for administration and some current views alleged that biological consideration of sex have been developed to foster statuesque while more modern approaches tend to be favor of equality. It is stated that women hold more position in elementary headships and they could be seen more at secondary headships in the USA. It is also the fact for some developed countries that low representation of women in higher education at senior management level internationally is mirrored in Irish higher education. It has been drawn that historical accounts of popular understandings not only underline masculinity when considering to management issues but also white population informally and culturally stressed race based subjects in terms of discrimination. The gendered divisions assume that men are more apt to management and women for teaching have been traced even today in some respects structurally and it reinforce next generations' point of views' in society and work settings (Leathwood, 2005:401; Rusch and Marshall, 2006:240; Kruger, 2008:160; Grummell, Devine and Lynch, 2009:19; Blackmore, 2010:55).

The critical synthesis of women principals' issue its outstanding features appeared in literature within last decade was examined thoroughly. Since the research questions focused of women principals specially, it was aimed to examine the articles purposefully investigated the work settings and climate of women principals. The articles which have directly analyzed the women leaders in school settings and a few women leaders in universities also included for they have similar characteristics, in the perspective of gendered identity. Content analysis was done after categorization of the articles in terms of the years, countries, design and brief theoretical explanation followed. Furthermore the articles of the journals have undergone to content analysis in terms of women's underrepresentation, stereotypes and common characteristics of barriers among the different context, and then extensive tables summarizing the articles were followed.

The sources for this literature survey include four journals about educational administration and women issues. These journals were selected as samples because of their special focus on women principals and education. There were 39 articles displayed as follows; 7 articles in School Leadership and Management, 20 articles in Gender and Education, 5 articles in Journal of Educational Administration and History and 7 articles in International Journal of Leadership in Education between the years of 1997-2010. The databases examined included ERIC, Educational Abstracts, Social Science Abstracts, and Sociological Abstracts. This time frame was chosen because original theoretical concept of women principals and leadership has generally



been focused of this period. The author has downloaded and analyzed the articles sampled in the study that were nearly 660 pages of total from the university network embarked to these databases.

### **1.1. Research Trends Within 13 Years (13 Yıllık Araştırma Trendi)**

Research trends through thirteen years between 1998 and 2010 have seemed to have sharp fluctuation from any publication of articles in a year to ten articles related with women principals. In 1998, there were four studies underlining the gendered issues in management and education all of which were qualitatively designed (Leonard, 1998; Luke, 1998; Court, 1998; Boulton and Coldron, 1998). In 1999 studies of women leaders were usually about the debates of feminist educational leaders in different management positions, limitations and their unequal work conditions and payment (Rigg and Trehan, 1999; Gatenby and Humphries, 1999; Strachan, 1999; Bown, 1999; Prichard and Deem, 1999). Between 2000 and 2004, there was scarcity of articles related with women leaders in the journals analyzed. While at least four or five articles were published for a year previously, only two articles had been published within four periodicals for four years the topic of which were about management experience of senior women and their leadership training procedure (Wyn, Acker and Richards, 2000; McLay and Brown, 2001).

Contrary to previous years, sharp increase have been appeared about women leaders between the years of 2004-2010 most of which were co relational such as conflict and role discontinuity between principalship and teaching, parental and professional role conflict, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their career, more task based-detailed researches of women leaders' superior position such as premature departure of genders, classroom and discipline management from a gender perspective, shared leadership practices, secondary head teachers' views over time, male role models, the entire appointments process, incongruence level within the masculine discourse, and ethnographic, cultural and indigenous studies such as socio-cultural systems of educational leadership, indigenous women leaders to authenticate and legitimate leadership realities in the cultural spaces, religio-spirituality of black principals. These are different from earlier studies which were more general topics simply underlining the cause of women minority in management role from feminist perspective (Chan, 2004; Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005; Loder and Spillane, 2005; Leathwood, 2005; Çelikten, 2005; Bradbury and Gunter, 2006; Oplatka and Atias, 2007; Court, 2007; Ducklin and Ozga, 2007; Priola, 2007; Thompson, 2007; Bradbury, 2007; Fealy and Harford, 2007; Coleman, 2007; Cushman, 2008; Oplatka and Mimon, 2008; Grummell, Devine, and Lynch, 2009; Isaac, Behar-Horenstein and Koro-Ljungberg, 2009; Neale and Özkanlı, 2010; Sperandio, 2011; Shah, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2010; White, 2010; Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010; Sherman and Beaty, 2010; Fuller, 2010; Witherspoon and Taylor, 2010; Strachan, Akao, Kilavanwa, and Warsal, 2010).

### **2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)**

It has been asserted that administrative roles have mostly been performed by men and there are barriers for women to promote upper level of administration in education. Principal ship is one of the main and problematic areas in terms of gendered perspectives and has been debated for a long time in literature.

The significance of this research is to reveal the so called claims and explore whether there is barriers and stereotypes



considering the administrative roles in different cultures for women principals.

### 3. METHOD (YÖNTEM)

Qualitative research designs have widely been preferred that are case studies (Rigg and Trehan, 1999; Court, 2007; Grummell, Devine, and Lynch, 2009; Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010; Witherspoon and Taylor, 2010) and ethnographic study of education and leadership (Thompson, 2007; White, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2010) were mostly conducted within years. Limited numbers of the studies conducted quantitatively (Prichard and Deem, 1999; Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005; Cushman, 2008; Sperandio, 2011) while testing their hypothesis. Thirty-five of the studies conducted qualitative interview methods except one of which applied a biography of the influential women who had pushed forward a renovation in the history (Fealy and Harford, 2007). They mostly used a case study design and largely in depth qualitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, and observations with semi-structured and open-ended questions. The interviews were mostly performed with women leaders, deans, principals, superiors, teachers, staffs and candidate of that position. Sample sizes ranged roughly between 5 and 30 for the qualitative studies and 100-1160 for quantitative surveys.

Researches about women leaders and principals in educational settings mostly published in the journal of Gender and Education in the early years. Between 1998 and 2007, 16 out of 22 studies related with women leaders were published in this journal instead of the administrative or leadership journals. It is significant that there were not enough room for researches about women leadership or it was not used to publish such kinds of articles in the journals of management and leadership as a result of the consideration of women leaders' issues reduced to gendered identity. Since then, from 2007 to 2010, publications of the women leaders or principals' issue have dramatically increased in the leadership and management journals, that are 13 out of 17 articles have been published in school management and leadership journals. Numbers of sources underlining women leaders for thirteen years periods are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Articles Published in Journals According to Years.  
(Tablo 1. Dergilerde Yıllara Göre Yayınlanan Makaleler)

Years	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
Numbers of articles published in a year	10	2	2	8	1	4	1	1	0	0	1	5	4

Countries where the researches of women leaders mostly took place have significantly altered or disseminated throughout the wide range of different societies. While most studies conducted in England or English speaking countries centered in the last years of twentieth century (Court, 1998; Leonard, 1998; Boulton and Coldron, 1998; Rigg and Trehan, 1999; Gatenby and Humphries, 1999; Strachan, 1999; Bown, 1999; Prichard and Deem, 1999), it has gradually been disseminated to other parts of the world such as Turkey (Çelikten, 2005; Aslanargun; 2012), Bangladesh (Sperandio, 2011), Israel (Oplatka and Atias, 2007; Oplatka and Mimon, 2008), Netherland (Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005), and Singapore (Luke, 1998).

### 3.1. Increase Of Women Principals, and Issue of Gender Equality (Kadın Okul Müdürü Sayısında Artış, ve Cinsiyet Eşitliği Konusu)

Studies conducted about women leaders have generally been specified to certain topics recently. Instead of directly tackling the issue of the women leaders' minorities in superior positions in schools and educational sector (Wyn, Acker and Richards, 2000; Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005; Çelikten, 2005) they have mostly investigated more sophisticated or culture based topics of ethnography, cultural and indigenous studies (Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005:250; Shah, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2010; White, 2010; Witherspoon and Taylor, 2010). The case isn't so much different for other countries throughout the world whether developed, developing or traditional. Although so called movements in favor of feminism and steps for positive regulations for women in administrations, situation hasn't radically improved.

Table 2. Numbers of the Studies Conducted in Countries  
(Tablo 2. Ülkelere Göre Yapılan Çalışma Sayısı)

Context of the studies	Netherlands	USA	England	Melanesia	New Zealand	Australia-Canada	Turkey- New Zealand	Israel	Hong Kong	Ireland	Scotland	Singapore	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Australia	Spain	Turkey	New Zealand, Australia and Canada
Numbers	1	4	13	1	5	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

The percentage of female principals are 21.5 percent in primary schools and 13.2 in secondary schools in Netherlands (Kruger, 2008, 160), in Spain, men held the 70 percent of administration where as women took 30 percent in 2004 (Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010, 150). In Turkey, while only 4 percent of women educators were principals in 2005 (Çelikten, 2005; KSGM, 2011), 44 percent of K-12 schools in the USA (Sherman and Beaty, 2010).

Table 3 summarized the percentage of women principals in proportion to total principals according to some countries in certain years.

Table 3. Percentage of women principals in countries (%)  
(Tablo 3. Ülkelere Göre Kadın Okul Müdürü Oranları (%))

	Netherlands	Spain	Turkey	USA	Hong Kong	New Zealand	England	Scotland
Primary	22	30	11	44	40	40	30	30
Secondary	13			44				12

It has also been debated that gendered issues and social considerations sometimes stemmed from biological differences and social roles in countries. Underlining the biological differences have alleged to serve the interests of men and feminist thinkers have



tended to pass over biological differences in favor of socially constructed understandings of man and woman (Rusch and Marshall, 2006:240; Kruger, 2008:163). It is the case that women leaders and principals have greatly increased and promotion facilities have developed recently. But quantitative increase of women leaders could no longer symbolize the transformation of masculine culture in favor of women even in developed countries. Furthermore, theoretical assumptions and widespread appearance of women leaders could sometimes be interpreted as reproduction of masculine and traditional culture in reality.

### **3.2. Stereotypes for Women in Administration (Kadın Yönetici Yönelik Kalıp Yargılar)**

Stereotypes that were alleged (Fuller, 2010:375) to have constructed and reinforced by girls and boys depending on the social class and ethnicity are pervasive for both gender especially attributed for women at home and work respectively. Women also seem to feel dilemma when to face these tasks and hesitate which to prioritize and which leave behind. Domestic tendencies as caring and nursing are the keys to consider most while tackling the issue. While teaching associated basically with women since they are biologically constructed for nurturing and caring, men are considered for managing for their masculinity and courageous attitude. These are controversial topics for nowadays together with the feminists ideals that try to equalize genders in the hope of gendered neutral settings in society (Loder and Spillane, 2005:27; Bradbury and Gunter, 2006; Bradbury, 2007; Leathwood, 2005).

When underlining stereotyped behaviors in administration Court (1998) alleged after continuous researches that women sometimes need to behave as if they are men in order to be leaders. Likewise, women principals have seemed to behave as instructional leader in the schools paying enough attention on instructional activities and handling discipline problems (Oplatka and Atias, 2007). In order to conceal feminine stereotypical behavior, some women prefer to display masculine way of management to seem more authoritative. Leadership style of women principals in literature are usually described with the open, democratic communicative, confident, self-esteem and cooperative based. They prefer to create change in the schools applying different leadership from men. It is assumed that when women came to the position of administration they are more apt to be democratic, equal to others, and less tolerant to sexism and racism (Prichard and Deem, 1999; Boulton and Coldron, 1998; Priola, 2007; Strachan, 1999; Wyn, Acker and Richards, 2000).

Whatever the popular tendencies and discussions display about genders, it is fact that men and women are perceived different roles and occupations in society. It is not only prevalent for under developed or developing countries that women occupy less paid and devalued positions comparing with men, more or less more developed or modernized western countries also displays the similar pictures.

### **3.3. Common Barriers for Women Principals (Kadın Okul Müdürlerin Yaşadığı Engeller)**

Unequal conditions for women in administration are dated back to ideas of teaching role in nineteenth century. They were seen more apt to be as teacher than manager in organizations (Loder and Spillane, 2005:273). Today it has confronted with controversial and dialogic consideration shaped by popular and wide spread paradigms. While it was asserted that patriarchal and feudal societal structure is the



basic factor that fosters masculinity more management roles over females, modern paradigms, possible threat from the new managerialism (Leonard, 1998:75; Bown, 1999; Fealy and Harford, 2007) and popular thoughts have also played as legitimization for gendered stereotypes (Fitzgerald, 2010). This is because men have been preferred more than women for leadership position traditionally (Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005:250). New trends in modern times such as marketization, privatization, accountability, neo liberal politics have been other factors that seem to devalue and hinder the efforts and will of gender equity (Mc Lay and Brown, 2001; Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010, 150; Priola, 2007; Bradbury, 2007; Leathwood, 2005; Priola, 2007).

Current status quo and understandings of basically men leads and women obeys have been survived in the society and professional work settings overt or subconsciously. It has also been rooted in stereotypical consideration of gendered identity sometimes legitimized that violation of stereotypical behaviors (Krüger, Eck and Vermeulen, 2005:250), for both genders especially for women could be interpreted uncomfortable and unacceptable. This socially constructed and popular understandings have played significantly on the construction of barriers genders felt in administration. As a result of traditionally constructed expectation of genders, behaviors of women leaders have critically been examined and faults have been unacceptably criticized for they are 'the most vulnerable' (Leathwood, 2005) different from men leaders. If the women principals are outsider for leadership (Coleman, 2007) in terms of the accepted societal norms in addition to femininity, barriers could become heavier that of for men (Bown, 1999), and work load for women could sometimes be exhausting that leave no time for home or rest (Luke, 1998), needs superhuman qualities (Strachan, 1999) and they viewed the headship as a harsh occupation. When women occupy lower position than men, there wouldn't be any any problem (Shah, 2010).

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION (TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ)**

One of the most common barriers women face in administration has been related with domestic responsibility and motherhood. Inequality for upper level of administration generally related with considering women for caring (Oplatka and Atias, 2007) or care ceiling (Grummell, Devine and Lynch, 2009). Despite of unspoken condition under the repression of popular utterance gender reform equity directly, biologically determined male-female differences (Kruger, 2008:160) have been the basic criteria in societal role distribution covertly. It was not only traditional point of views toward gendered issue dated back to nineteenth century, it will possibly appear in the future as it is pervasive most of the management position in twenty first century, unless women drop their domestic responsibilities and biological determined attributes that prevent them compete with males on the same ground. It was not only women most likely link their domestic and indoor works could affect their abilities for job (Coleman, 2007), authorities do not tend to value commitments of women principals because of their domestic responsibilities such as children or house work (Bradbury and Gunter, 2006). Cross cultural comparative studies about genders more or less resembles each other that men more favorably for leadership position (Gatenby and Humphries, 1999) except a few of the completed recently (Aslanargun, 2011; 2012). Increased public interest and gender equity researches have lead more studies about women administrators in literature. Educational researchers have tried to investigate barriers and stereotypes that women leaders face



in organizations and management positions recently. Since most of the studies underlined similar obstacles as a cause of women underrepresentation in administration and developed western societies seem more open for women leaders, discrimination and gendered inequity have survived within the times. Feminist studies and democratic movements have created more possibilities and leave more room for women but they have confronted societal and management inequity, still experience gendered barriers and stereotypes as a result of the undervalued consideration that articles mostly dealt.

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