SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ DERGİSİ

Journal of Institute of Social Sciences

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi- Journal of Institute of Social Sciences
DOI: https://doi.org/10.54558/jiss.1885732
Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Exploring Glass Cliff Behaviors Among Gen Z: A Faculty-Based Analysis

Z Kuşağında Cam Uçurum Davranışlarının İncelenmesi: Fakülte Bazlı Bir Analiz

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Başvuru/Submitted: 10.02.2026
Kabul/Accepted: 24.03.2026

Atıf/Cite as:
Suvacı, B. (2026). Exploring glass cliff behaviors among gen Z: A faculty-based analysis. *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, *17*(1), 242-256.

Abstract

Aim: *This study investigates the prevalence of "glass cliff" attitudes among Generation Z, a phenomenon where women are more likely to be appointed to leadership roles during periods of organizational crisis or decline. Specifically, the research aims to determine whether professional disciplines and academic socialization within the context of Turkish higher education influence the likelihood of Generation Z exhibiting these behaviors.*
Method: *The study was conducted using a scenario-based approach with a sample of 60 Generation Z students. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive analysis methods. Participants were selected from five different academic faculties: Administrative Sciences, Education, Engineering, Law, and Tourism. This interdisciplinary approach allowed for a comparative analysis of how different educational backgrounds shaped perceptions of leadership and risk.*
Results: *While there's no universal "glass cliff" pattern across Gen Z, significant differences emerged depending on faculty affiliation. Engineering students showed the most gender-neutral, performance-based preferences. In contrast, Education students were most likely to exhibit "glass cliff" behavior. Law and Administrative Sciences students showed a dual tendency toward both gender discrimination and "glass cliff" preferences, while Tourism students' responses remained inconsistent. Notably, the fact that 59% of those who chose female candidates for high-risk scenarios were women suggests an intra-gender dynamic consistent with the "Queen Bee" syndrome.*
Conclusion: *The findings indicate that Generation Z's attitudes toward the glass divide are not uniform but are significantly influenced by their educational backgrounds. Educational background functions as a precursor to organizational bias, with some disciplines reinforcing traditional gender-risk relationships more than others. This suggests that gender-based organizational bias is a complex internalization of existing hierarchies and can even be reinforced by those within marginalized groups.*
Originality: *This research offers a pioneering perspective on the glass cliff theory within the context of Generation Z and Turkish higher education. It expands the scope of the glass cliff theory by identifying academic socialization as a critical factor in the development of organizational bias, even before individuals enter the professional workforce.*
Key Words: *Glass cliff, generation Z, scenario technique, gender discrimination.*

Öz

Amaç: *Bu çalışma, Z kuşağı arasında "cam uçurum" (glass cliff) tutumlarının yaygınlığını-kadınların kurumsal kriz veya gerileme dönemlerinde liderlik rollerine atanma olasılığının daha yüksek olması fenomenini-incelemektedir. Araştırma, özellikle Türkiye'deki yükseköğretim bağlamındaki akademik sosyalleşmenin ve mesleki disiplinlerin, Z kuşağının bu davranışları sergileme olasılığını etkileyip etkilemediğini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.*

Yöntem: *Çalışmada, 60 Z kuşağı öğrencisinden oluşan bir örneklem ile senaryo temelli bir yaklaşım ve betimsel analiz kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar beş farklı akademik fakülteden seçilmiştir: İdari Bilimler, Eğitim, Mühendislik, Hukuk ve Turizm. Bu disiplinler arası yaklaşım, farklı eğitim geçmişlerinin liderlik ve risk algılarını nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yapılmasına olanak sağlamıştır.*

Bulgular: *Bir bütün olarak Z kuşağı genelinde evrensel bir cam uçurum kalıbı bulunmasa da, fakülte aidiyetine bağlı olarak önemli farklılıklar ortaya çıkmıştır. Mühendislik öğrencileri en cinsiyetten bağımsız ve performans odaklı tercihleri sergilemiştir. Buna karşılık, Eğitim Fakültesi öğrencilerinin cam uçurum davranışları sergileme olasılığı en yüksek bulunmuştur. Hukuk ve İdari Bilimler öğrencileri hem cinsiyet ayrımcılığı hem de cam uçurum tercihlerine yönelik ikili bir eğilim gösterirken, Turizm öğrencilerinin yanıtları tutarsız kalmıştır. Özellikle, yüksek riskli senaryolar için kadın adayları seçenlerin %59'unun kadın olması, "Kraliçe Arı" sendromuyla uyumlu bir cinsiyet içi dinamiğe işaret etmektedir.*

Sonuç: *Bulgular, Z kuşağının cam uçuruma yönelik tutumlarının tek tip olmadığını, okudukları alan tarafından önemli ölçüde modüle edildiğini göstermektedir. Eğitim geçmişleri, örgütsel önyargılar için bir öncü görevi görmekte ve bazı disiplinler geleneksel cinsiyet-risk ilişkilendirmelerini diğerlerinden daha fazla pekiştirmektedir. Bu durum, toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı kurumsal önyargıların, marjinalleşmiş gruplar içindeki bireyler tarafından bile pekiştirilebilen mevcut hiyerarşilerin karmaşık bir içselleştirmesi olduğunu göstermektedir.*

Özgünlük: *Bu araştırma, Z kuşağı ve Türkiye'deki yükseköğretim bağlamında cam uçurum teorisinin öncü bir keşfini sunmaktadır. Akademik sosyalleşmeyi, bireyler henüz profesyonel iş gücüne katılmadan önce kurumsal önyargıların gelişiminde kritik bir faktör olarak tanımlayarak cam uçurum teorisinin kuramsal kapsamını genişletmektedir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Cam uçurum, Z kuşağı, senaryo tekniği, cinsiyet ayrımcılığı.*

Introduction

Women face numerous obstacles everywhere in the world and in all areas of life1. These barriers manifest in various forms, ranging from gender inequality in professional and educational settings to discrimination in healthcare facilities and home environments. While gender inequality in the workplace has been the subject of numerous studies, women continue to face various gender-based practices in the workplace as they strive to advance in their careers, and are underrepresented in senior management positions. The primary reason for this inequality is that men are the most likely candidates for top management positions. The fact that women are less frequently found in top management positions does not mean they lack leadership skills. Studies addressing some key quantitative dimensions of gender differences show that employees are beginning to think more positively about the effectiveness of female leaders (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). However, women are still less likely than men to (a) hold positions of authority, (b) have promotion opportunities, (c) be rewarded in their roles, and (d) be part of networks and support systems (Lyness and Thompson, 1997). Given all this, it is not surprising that women face more obstacles in advancing to senior management positions and receive lower salaries than men (Ryan et al., 2016). Furthermore, even if women manage to overcome the aforementioned obstacles and reach senior positions, they may encounter an additional career hurdle known as the "glass cliff." The glass cliff is a newly emerging theory that explains why women are often more likely to be promoted to leadership positions in organizations that are struggling, in crisis, or at risk of failure (Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Cook and Glass, 2013).

Given the increasing need for transformational and relationship-oriented leaders in modern organizations (Eagly and Karau, 2002) and the fact that women are well-suited to such leadership styles, the need for female leaders in these organizations will increase in the future. Furthermore, Generation Z individuals will soon become employers and/or employees of such organizations. Therefore, the attitudes of Generation Z individuals towards female employees will play a significant role in removing the obstacles women may face when advancing to senior positions. Based on this, the aim of this study is to determine what the attitudes of Generation Z towards gender discrimination will be in the organizations where they will work, and specifically, how likely they are to exhibit glass cliff behaviors. Accordingly, the main research question of the study is as follows:

- What is the potential of Generation Z to exhibit glass cliff behavior as a form of gender discrimination?

- Does education/academic discipline have any effect on the glass cliff behavior of Generation Z?

[1]https://unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/girls-and-women/50-of-the-worlds-most-sexist-laws-a-snapshot-of-gender-inequality/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAg8S7BhATEiwAO2-R6scVA8B-wEIs62W9oIWcK1rIdFl8Cz-FXgBNzFVs-lQQAqVjDr05dRoCxxQ QAvD_BwE

To answer these questions, data was collected using the scenario technique in this study and analyzed using descriptive analysis methods.

Gender Inequality, Glass Cliff and Generation Z

Gender inequality refers to the differential treatment of individuals based on whether they are male or female (Zhu, 2021). Unfortunately, today, women face many gender-based discrimination practices in their workplaces simply because they are women. As long as women are prevented from actively participating in political, social, and economic life, gender inequality will persist. Gender equality and social structure require large-scale changes in social thinking. This will only be possible if women in all countries of the world make a great effort in this regard (Gilroy et al., 2015, p. 104). In fact, gender inequality practices in organizations negatively impact the economic growth of countries. Studies have shown that the current gender inequality in the world could cause a loss of up to US$12 trillion in global income, which is approximately 16% of global income. Gender inequality, especially in social institutions, negatively affects economic development by lowering the income levels of countries. This effect is felt more severely in low-income countries (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016). In addition to countries, gender inequality also negatively impacts organizations. Employers affected by gender-unequal behaviors may be influenced by the belief that male employees are superior to female employees. This can negatively impact female employees, leading to physical and psychological problems. Women may sometimes find this situation unbearable and even consider leaving their jobs or withdrawing from the labor market; this leads to an increased waste of human capital for the country. Furthermore, the organization's image can be damaged due to gender-unequal behaviors (Chen, 2018). This gender inequality, which manifests itself at different levels within organizations, can only be resolved through the application of ethical judgment principles, i.e., by ensuring organizational justice (Draulans, 2003).

Gender inequality, which has a negative impact on organizations and indirectly on countries, can manifest itself in different ways within organizations. One of these gender inequality practices is the glass cliff. The glass cliff is a concept that refers to the fact that women are more likely than men to be appointed to higher-risk and more uncertain leadership positions (Ryan et al., 2016, p. 446). Ryan and Haslam (2005), conducting their research in the UK, aimed to draw attention to the invisible barriers women face in their professional careers and introduced the 'glass cliff' metaphor. Ryan and Haslam (2005), as suggested by Judge (2003), used the same dataset in their study to test whether women in leadership positions performed relatively worse for companies or whether women were appointed to management positions, particularly in financially weak companies (Ryan and Haslam, 2005, p. 83). A study examining companies listed on the FTSE 100 index of the London Stock Exchange revealed that companies that appointed women to their boards performed worse than those that appointed men in the five months prior to the appointment, during a period of general stock market decline. Based on this, Ryan and Haslam (2005) concluded that in addition to facing gender discrimination in their professional careers (such as struggling with glass ceiling barriers and not being able to access glass elevators), women are also very likely to encounter what they call "glass cliffs" (Ryan and Haslam, 2005, p. 81).

The 'glass cliff' phenomenon has been the subject of various studies in the literature. Building on the work of Ryan and Haslam (2005), Ashby, Ryan, and Haslam (2007) conducted a study with legal participants to determine how much higher the probability of women being selected as lead counsel in high-risk cases compared to men. Consistent with patterns observed in other areas, the results showed that for a low-risk case, the probability of a male candidate being selected as lead counsel was the same as for a female candidate, but for a high-risk case, the female candidate was more preferred than the male candidate (Ashby et al., 2007, p. 775). This finding further validates the existence of the glass cliff phenomenon. It has also been suggested that glass cliff positions are inherently stressful and lead to female employees feeling less of a sense of corporate identity (Ryan et al., 2007, p. 266).

A study conducted in Sweden with female academics, aiming to reveal the glass ceiling phenomenon in academia, showed that while women can reach higher positions in higher education, these positions are mostly administrative and therefore not as preferred by academics as before. The appointment of women to these less sought-after positions is considered an example of the glass ceiling. Furthermore, academics who are forced to dedicate most of their time to administrative tasks cannot devote enough time to academic research; consequently, their academic achievement decreases. This situation leads to administrative positions in academia in Sweden being seen as less attractive than they once were (Peterson, 2014, p. 42). While the appointment of female academics to high-level positions (such as rector) in Sweden may not seem like an obstacle, the fact that women can be appointed to these positions, given that these positions are not highly preferred by men, can be seen as a glass cliff.

Furthermore, the appointment of Theresa May as the second female Prime Minister of the UK in 2016, during a very difficult period for UK-EU relations, can also be seen as an example of the glass cliff. Theresa May was described by some as a weak Prime Minister, and the Brexit negotiations were criticized as a major failure (Szucko, 2022, p. 79). Given that the position of Prime Minister is not a highly desirable one, the idea that the appointment of a female Prime Minister in the 2016 referendum may have been made with the foresight that it would be a difficult period for the UK also supports the glass cliff theory.

A generation is a group of people born within a similar time frame (at most 15 years), sharing similar ages and life stages, and shaped by the events, trends, and developments of a particular era (McCrindle, 2014, p. 2). The concept of generations is becoming increasingly important in today's world, driven by the impact of rapidly changing technology. To date, gender discrimination practices, whether conscious or unconscious, have generally involved individuals from Generations X and Y. Accordingly, previous studies on gender inequality have focused on individuals from these generations. Now, a new era is beginning with Generation Z, and they may shape the business world of the next twenty years by joining the workforce. Generation Z is a group of people born in the millennium who cannot imagine a world without the internet, use social media as a means of communication, can multitask (blog, listen to music, text, etc.), make quick decisions, and have quite different methods of learning, making friends, and having fun (Csobanca, 2016, p. 66). In fact, Generation Z behaves differently from other generations. They are open to learning new information in the workplace (Ozkan and Solmaz, 2015, p. 480). Therefore, they can be expected to behave differently from other generations regarding gender inequality. For this reason, understanding how Generation Z will behave regarding gender discrimination in the future, especially in terms of the glass cliff phenomenon, is crucial. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to reveal information about how Generation Z behaves, particularly in terms of the glass cliff phenomenon. Although there are various studies on the glass cliff in the literature, there is no study that specifically addresses the glass cliff behavior of Generation Z. Therefore, it is believed that this study will fill this gap in the literature. Furthermore, as a social outcome of the study, it is expected that awareness of gender discrimination and the glass cliff will be raised among Generation Z, and that some potential gender discriminatory behaviors will be reduced in the future.

Methods

Research Design and Comparative Framework

This study adopts a qualitative approach to investigate the "glass cliff" phenomenon-the tendency of women to be assigned to risky leadership roles during times of crisis-among the new generation of the Gen Z workforce. To overcome the limitations of single-discipline studies such as those of Ashby, Ryan, and Haslam (2007), this research is designed as a multi-faculty comparative analysis. By evaluating participants from five different fields of expertise, the study aims to identify the specific impact of educational discipline and field influence on the development of glass cliff attitudes in this generational group.

Sample and Participant Profile

The study population consisted of active university students, particularly those from Generation Z born after 2000. Due to the impossibility of accessing the entire population, a purposive sampling method was used to select 60 participants from two universities in the same city during the 2023-2024 academic year. While academic consensus generally recommends 20-30 interviews for grounded theory studies, 15-30 interviews are considered sufficient for single case studies (Marshall et al., 2013, p. 21). In the present research, 60 interviews were considered sufficient and robust because the study was conducted as a single case study rather than a grounded theory approach aiming to create a new universal theory (Noble and Mitchell, 2016). Participants were equally distributed across five faculties: Law, Education, Administrative Sciences, Tourism, and Engineering.

Data Collection

Data was collected using the scenario method and then analyzed using descriptive analysis. The scenario method, which emerged in strategic management for flexible long-term planning, is a proactive tool used to map future uncertainties. The method gained importance after its successful application by Shell during the 1970 oil crisis (De Boer and Westerheijden, 2005, p. 19).

Unlike quantitative methods that prioritize numerical precision, the scenario method provides a qualitative description of evolution from the present to the future by using hypothetical sequences of events to identify cause-and-effect relationships (Colovic, 2015, p. 1). In this study, the method serves two purposes: to inform Generation Z individuals about the negative organizational impacts of the glass cliff metaphor and to predict potential discriminatory behaviors that this generation may exhibit in the future.

Procedural Implementation

The application of the scenario method followed a structured four-stage process:

1. Identifying Driving Forces: The primary driving force was identified as the likelihood that glass cliff behaviors will become a significant issue for organizations in the future, coinciding with the entry of Generation Z into the workforce.

2. Identifying Critical Uncertainties: The key uncertainty focused on the unknown attitudes of Generation Z toward male and female employees and their potential to engage in practices involving gender discrimination.

3. Scenario Development: A series of possible scenarios were developed involving leadership assignments in various organizational performance contexts.

4. Results and Discussion: The final stage involved presenting and analyzing the findings based on participants' responses to these scenarios.

Data was collected from a total of 60 participants (12 from each faculty) from two different universities and five different faculties in the same city. Four of the faculties (Tourism, Law, Education, and Administrative Sciences) belonged to the same university, while one belonged to another university (because the Faculty of Engineering was not located at the other university). According to the study's objective, all participants were Generation Z individuals. Therefore, all participants were born between 2000 and 2004. The average age of the participants was 22, with none being first-year students; 23 were second-year students, 10 were third-year students, and 27 were fourth-year students. Data was collected through individual, face-to-face interviews. Necessary approvals were obtained from the ethics committee and the rectorate of the universities to conduct the interviews, and requests for permission to conduct the study were sent to each faculty administration. Furthermore, participants signed an informed consent form before participating in the study. Interviews conducted by the researcher lasted an average of 25-30 minutes. To avoid confusion due to the different areas of specialization within the faculties, interviews were conducted individually with participants from each faculty, in chronological order according to the faculties that indicated a suitable date for the interview.

During the interview, participants were given two job postings: one for a high-performing organization and one for a low-performing organization. The job postings were adapted to the participants' faculties, resulting in a total of 10 job postings used in this study. Additionally, six main resumes (three for women and three for men) were initially prepared and then slightly modified to suit each faculty; thus, a total of 30 resumes were created for five faculties, each according to its area of specialization. In preparing the resumes, care was taken to ensure that they were very similar in quality to prevent any factors that might hinder participants' easy selection process.

After making their selections, participants in this group were asked the same four questions as the other group. The four questions asked to the participants were as follows:

1. Why do you think your chosen candidate is the best candidate for the vacant position?
2. Do you think your chosen candidate would be a good team member? Why?
3. Why do you think your chosen candidate is more suitable for this position than the others?
4. If you hadn't chosen this candidate, who would you have chosen? Or who would have been the second best candidate for this position? (Please write the resume number and the candidate's first and last name.)

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The data were analyzed by coding the participants using their faculty initials, scenario number, and participant number. A table showing the codes was created. The table also shows the gender of the coded participant. The table of participant codes is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Codes of the Participants' Faculties, Scenario Numbers, Participant Numbers and Gender

Engineering		**Administrative Sciences**		**Education**		**Law**		**Tourism**	
Code	Gender	Code	Gender	Code	Gender	Code	Gender	Code	Gender
ES1P1	M	AS1P1	F	EDS1P1	M	LS1P1	M	TS1P1	M
ES1P2	F	AS1P2	F	EDS1P2	M	LS1P2	F	TS1P2	M
ES1P3	M	AS1P3	F	EDS1P3	M	LS1P3	M	TS1P3	M
ES1P4	F	AS1P4	M	EDS1P4	F	LS1P4	M	TS1P4	F
ES1P5	F	AS1P5	M	EDS1P5	F	LS1P5	F	TS1P5	F
ES1P6	M	AS1P6	M	EDS1P6	F	LS1P6	F	TS1P6	F
ES2P1	M	AS2P1	M	EDS2P1	M	LS2P1	M	TS2P1	M
ES2P2	F	AS2P2	F	EDS2P2	M	LS2P2	M	TS2P2	M
ES2P3	F	AS2P3	F	EDS2P3	M	LS2P3	M	TS2P3	M
ES2P4	M	AS2P4	F	EDS2P4	F	LS2P4	F	TS2P4	F
ES2P5	M	AS2P5	M	EDS2P5	F	LS2P5	F	TS2P5	F
ES2P6	F	AS2P6	M	EDS2P6	F	LS2P6	F	TS2P6	F
Total	**12**		**12**		**12**		**12**		**12**

E: Engineering, A: Administrative Sciences, ED: Education, L: Law, T: Tourism, S: Scenario, P: Participant, M: Male, F: Female

Findings

The results of the study on candidate preferences are presented under three headings: frequency of resume preference, reasons for candidate preference, and candidate preference ranking.

Frequency of Preference of CVs

Table 2 shows the frequency of resume selections made by participants for both first and second choices in Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, on a faculty basis. While most resumes were selected as participants' first choices at least three times, resume number 6, belonging to a male candidate, was not among the participants' first choices in any faculty. On the other hand, when participants were asked which candidate they would prefer as their second choice, it was observed that six of the participants preferred resume number 6. In other words, all resumes in the study were found to be suitable for the job and were selected as either first or second choices, although the frequency of selection varied.

Regardless of the scenario and faculty, 36 participants preferred a male candidate for the open position, with CV#3 being their first and second choice. The second most chosen CV was CV#2 (28), and the third most chosen was CV#4 (21). Regardless of the number of CVs and scenarios, participants preferred a female candidate 61 times, while they found a male candidate suitable for the job 59 times. As mentioned above regarding the qualifications of the candidates, the participants' CV preferences in terms of gender were also very close to each other. Although the frequency of preference varied, all CVs were considered suitable for the position by the participants. These results also show that the CVs were prepared very similarly to each other in accordance with the purpose of the research and did not have any distinguishing features that would facilitate the participants' preferences. To better understand this situation, the characteristics of the candidates that the participants identified as the reason for their CV preferences were also analyzed and are presented below.

Table 2: Frequency of the Participants' First and Second CV Preferences According to Faculties

First Preferences						
CV Number	**Education**	**Law**	**Administrative Sciences**	**Tourism**	**Engineering**	**Total**
CV No 1 (M)	-	5	-	-	1	**6**
CV No 2 (F)	6	-	3	-	4	**13**
CV No 3 (M)	4	7	8	3	4	**26**
CV No 4 (F)	-	-	-	9	3	**12**
CV No 5 (F)	2	-	1	-	-	**3**
CV No 6 (M)	-	-	-	-	-	**0**
Total	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**60**
Second Preferences						
CV Number	**Education**	**Law**	**Administrative Sciences**	**Tourism**	**Engineering**	**Total**
CV No 1 (M)	1	4	-	3	3	**11**
CV No 2 (F)	2	3	4	3	3	**15**
CV No 3 (M)	3	-	2	4	1	**10**
CV No 4 (F)	3	-	3	2	1	**9**
CV No 5 (F)	3	3	-	-	3	**9**
CV No 6 (M)	-	2	3	-	1	**6**
Total	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**12**	**60**

Reasons for The Choice of Candidates by The Participants

Participants were asked four questions to understand their reasons for choosing candidates. These questions were designed to determine whether participants consciously or unconsciously considered gender as a criterion when making their choices. None of the participants stated that they considered gender in their selections. However, participants cited almost identical characteristics in the resumes as reasons for their preferences, regardless of whether they were male or female.

The following qualities, which participants cited as reasons for preferring certain candidates but were actually very similar for all candidates, are listed below:

- Foreign Language Skills
- Communication Skills
- Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills

- Certificates
- Work Experience
- University Degree
- Technology Skills

Candidates' Preference Rankings

A. Ranking of Participants' Preferences for Scenarios 1 and 2. Table 3 shows the top ranking of participants' candidate preferences for Scenario 1 (high-performing company) based on participants' faculties, years of birth, gender, number of resumes selected, and gender of the resume owners.

Table 3: The Participants' First Candidate Preferences for the Scenario 1

Faculties	The Participants' Gender and Year of Birth	CV Number and Gender of the First Preferred Candidate for Scenario 1
Education	F (2002)	CV#3 (M)
Education	M (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Education	M (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Education	M (2004)	CV#5 (F)
Education	F (2004)	CV#3 (M)
Education	F (2004)	CV#2 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Law	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Law	M (2002)	CV#1 (M)
Law	F (2002)	CV#3 (M)
Law	M (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Law	M (2004)	CV#1 (M)
Law	F (2004)	CV#3 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#2 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#5 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	F (2001)	CV# 2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2002)	CV#3 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Tourism	F (2000)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
General Total	**30**	**30**

Comparing the preferences of all participants reveals that 17 preferred a male candidate for a vacant position in a strong company (Scenario 1), while 13 preferred a female candidate (see Figure 1). This means that almost half (56.6%) of the Gen Z individuals participating in the study preferred a male candidate for a management position that could be considered strong and risk-free. Many studies in the glass cliff literature have found that male candidates are primarily preferred for management positions in firms that are smooth and have a high chance of success (Brucmüller and Branscombe 2010; Ryan et al. 2011; Uyar 2011; Vetter, 2021). While men are equally likely to be selected as leaders in

low-risk jobs as women, women are more likely to be appointed as leaders in high-risk jobs than men (Ashby et al. 2007). While the overall findings of the first scenario do not offer definitive evidence that Gen Z individuals tend to exhibit glass cliff behavior, it is noteworthy that these results may vary depending on the faculty. Therefore, in order to more precisely determine the glass cliff behaviors of the participants in relation to their professions and to identify possible differences in overall results depending on the faculty, it is necessary to analyze the results of the study on a faculty basis.

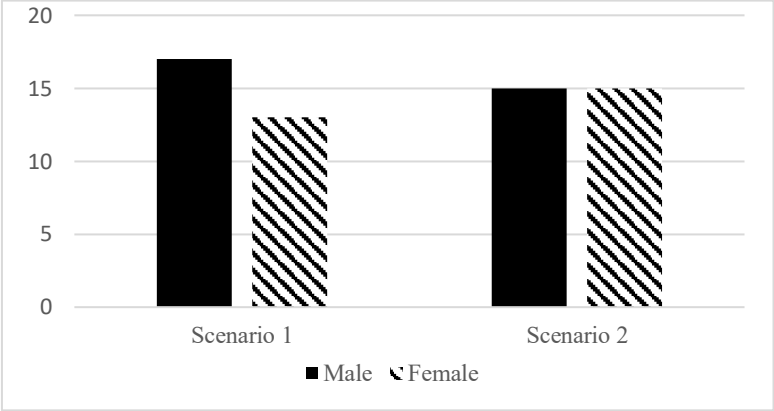

Figure 1. Distribution of the first preferences of all participants based on the scenarios.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of preferences of participants from different faculties regarding Scenario 1. The results show that faculty-specific differences in preferences are significant. For example, the majority of participants from the Faculty of Education (66.6%), who will be training the next generation as future teachers, and the majority of participants from the Faculty of Administrative Sciences (66.6%), who may work as managers in many production and service businesses in the future, preferred a male candidate as a leader for a low-risk position. On the other hand, only slightly more than half (4%) of the participants from the Faculty of Tourism chose a female candidate for the same scenario. This may be due to the absence of gender-based discrimination in most jobs in the hotel industry. One of the most striking findings of the study is that all six participants from the Faculty of Law preferred a male candidate for Scenario 1, a low-risk position. Another striking finding of the study is that almost all participants from the Faculty of Engineering (5 participants) preferred a female candidate in the same scenario, and only one participant preferred a male candidate. This result may be attributed to the fact that participants from the engineering faculty evaluated female managers differently than participants from the education, management, and law faculties, due to the expectation that their work should be gender-neutral.

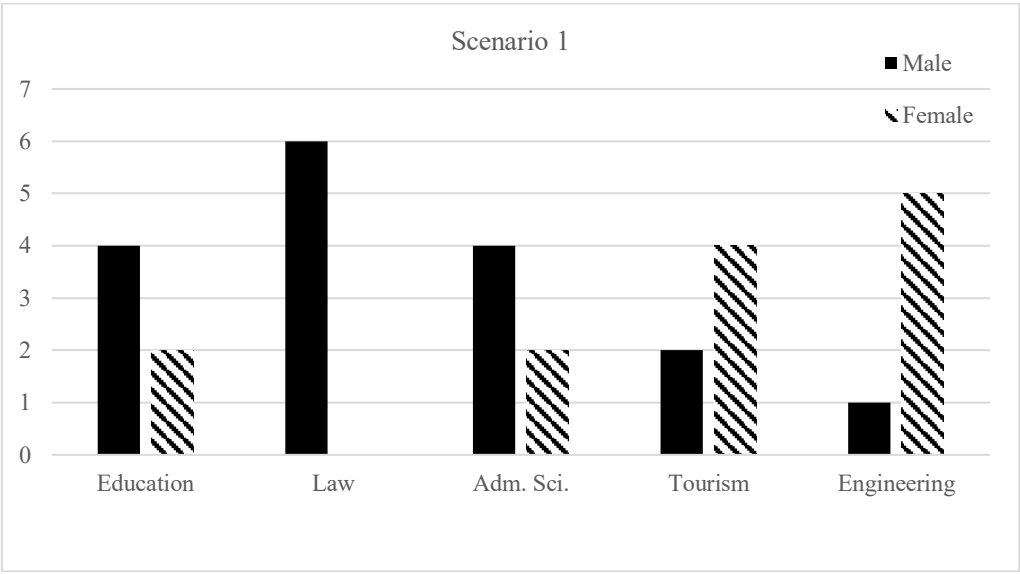

Figure 2. The distribution of the first preferences of the participants from different faculties to the scenario 1.

It should also be noted that nine out of 17 participants (59%) who preferred a male candidate in the job advertisement in Scenario 1 were women. This finding demonstrates that both women and men can be effective in

creating gender discrimination. Indeed, in Ece's (2020) study to determine the effect of age, gender, and management position on glass cliff decisions, it was found that women were more likely than men to make glass cliff decisions.

In accordance with the study design, 30 different participants (6 from each faculty) from the same five different faculties from which data was collected for scenario 1 were asked to select a candidate for scenario 2 from among the six resumes used in scenario 1. Table 4 shows the participants' preferences for scenario 2 candidates by faculty. When all participants' preferences were considered together, it was observed that fifteen participants (50%) preferred a female candidate in the job posting for a senior position in a low-performing organization (Figure 1). Literature review shows that women are generally appointed to leadership positions in low-performing organizations (Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Sabharwal, 2013; Peterson, 2014; Bornat et al., 2018; Morgenroth et al., 2020). In the study, half of the Generation Z participants preferred a female candidate, while the other half preferred a male candidate. While this overall assessment of the results doesn't provide a clear picture of whether Generation Z will exhibit glass cliff decisions, as suggested for scenario 1 above, the outcomes may vary depending on abilities.

Table 4: The Participants' First Candidate Preferences for the Scenario 2

Faculties	The Participants' Gender and Year of Birth	CV Number and Gender of the First Preferred Candidate for Scenario 2
Education	F (2002)	CV#2 (F)
Education	M (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Education	M (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Education	F (2004)	CV#2 (F)
Education	F (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Education	M (2004)	CV#2 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Law	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Law	M (2003)	CV#1 (M)
Law	M (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Law	F (2003)	CV#1 (M)
Law	F (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Law	M (2004)	CV#1 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV# 2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	F (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Tourism	F (2000)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	F (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2003)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#4 (F)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#1 (M)
Engineering	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Engineering	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
General Total	**30**	**30**

Figure 3 shows the distribution of participants' first preferences for Scenario 2 according to their faculties. As mentioned above for Scenario 1, participants' preferences differ significantly according to their faculties. For example, in the second scenario, all participants (100%) from the Faculty of Education preferred a female candidate. At the same time, in the first scenario, most participants (66.6%) from the Faculty of Education preferred a male candidate. These

results suggest that participants from the Faculty of Education may have a very high potential for making glass cliff decisions in the future.

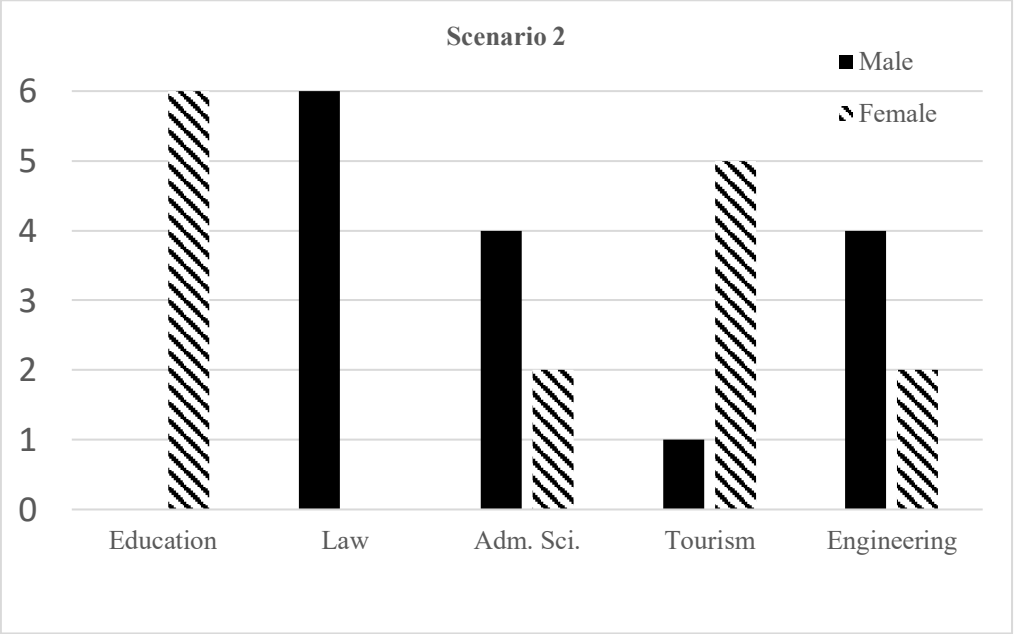

Figure 3. The distribution of the first preferences of the participants from different faculties to the scenario 2.

On the other hand, all Law Faculty participants continued to prefer the male candidate in the second scenario, just as in the first. While this finding suggests that Law Faculty participants are less likely to make "glass cliff" decisions because they would not prefer a female manager in a low-performing firm, all participants in both scenarios preferred the male manager. This finding indicates that Law Faculty participants are more likely to exhibit sexist attitudes in the future. Furthermore, most Administrative Sciences Faculty participants (66.6%) chose the male candidate in the second scenario, just as in the first. While not as strong as the finding for Law Faculty participants, this suggests that Gen Z participants in the Administrative Sciences Faculty are still more likely to engage in sexist behavior in the future by choosing a male candidate for a management position, regardless of whether the position is risky or not.

The vast majority (66.6%) of Tourism Faculty participants preferred female candidates in the first scenario and persisted in their preference patterns in the second scenario as well. Consequently, the majority (83.3%) preferred female candidates in the second scenario too. The glass cliff phenomenon describes a situation where, in high-risk companies, women are appointed to senior management positions, whereas in low-risk companies, male candidates are preferred for these positions. In this context, the similar preferences of Tourism Faculty participants for female candidates in both the first and second scenarios are a significant indicator of high glass cliff tendencies.

Furthermore, the likelihood of Generation Z individuals exhibiting glass cliff behavior in these disciplines may increase due to certain practices they will encounter in their future careers. For example, characteristics of female leaders, the selection of women based on merit, women's preferences, organizational factors, and the reluctance of some men to accept risky positions (Kavoosi et al., 2024) may increase the probability of glass cliff behavior. Kulich and Ryan's (2017) series of archival, experimental, and qualitative studies highlights that women are more likely to advance in the professional hierarchy in difficult and potentially harmful situations.

An interesting finding is that in the first scenario, the majority of engineering faculty participants (83.3%) preferred a female candidate for the position, while in the second scenario, the majority (66.6%) preferred a male candidate. Therefore, it can be said that engineering faculty participants are least likely to exhibit glass cliff syndrome and gender-based discriminatory attitudes in the future.

Another interesting finding from the study concerns the relationship between participants' gender and their preferences. In the first scenario, 59% (nine people) of those who chose a male candidate for the open position were women, and interestingly, in the second scenario, 59% (nine people) of those who chose a female candidate were also women. This preference of female participants, related to job risk, suggests that women are more likely than men to exhibit glass cliff behaviors, such as "queen bee syndrome," which is more effective in the workplace, especially in upper management positions (Groot, 2010). Queen bee syndrome refers to a management style where female employees oppress and ignore other female employees (Karakuş, 2014).

B. Ranking of Participants' Preference of Candidates for Scenarios 1 and 2 in the Second Place. To better understand whether participants would exhibit glass cliff behavior, they were also asked, in given scenarios, which of the remaining five resumes they would find most suitable for the position after their first-choice candidate was removed from the list.

Tables 5 and 6 show the participants' second candidate preferences for scenarios 1 and 2, respectively. In the first scenario, 17 participants preferred a female candidate for the second position in the job posting, while 13 preferred a male candidate as the second candidate. Looking at all the results, more than half of the participants' first preferences (17) for the first scenario were male, while more than half of the participants' second preferences (17) for the same scenario were female. Consequently, considering all participants, it can be concluded that Generation Z is unlikely to exhibit glass cliff behavior. However, as seen in the discussion above of the results obtained from the participants' first preferences, glass cliff behavior tendencies can vary from one faculty to another.

Table 5: The Participants' Second Candidate Preferences for the Scenario 1

Faculties	The Participants' Gender and Year of Birth	CV Number and Gender of the Second Preferred Candidate for the Scenario 1
Education	F (2002)	CV#2 (F)
Education	M (2003)	CV#5 (F)
Education	M (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Education	M (2004)	CV#1 (M)
Education	F (2004)	CV#5 (F)
Education	F (2004)	CV#3 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Law	F (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Law	M (2002)	CV#5 (F)
Law	F (2002)	CV#1 (M)
Law	M (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Law	M (2004)	CV#6 (M)
Law	F (2004)	CV#1 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV#6 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Administrative Sciences	F (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Tourism	F (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	M (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#1 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#1 (M)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#6 (M)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#5 (F)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#5 (F)
Engineering	M (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
General Total	**30**	**30**

Table 6: The Participants' Second Candidate Preferences for the Scenario 2

Faculties	The Participants' Gender and Year of Birth	CV Number and Gender of the Second Preferred Candidate for the Scenario 2
Education	F (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Education	M (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Education	M (2003)	CV#4 (F)
Education	F (2003)	CV#3 (M)
Education	F (2003)	CV#5 (F)
Education	M (2004)	CV#4 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Law	F (2001)	CV#5 (F)
Law	M (2003)	CV#5 (F)
Law	M (2003)	CV#1 (M)
Law	F (2003)	CV#2 (F)
Law	F (2003)	CV#6 (M)
Law	M (2004)	CV#5 (F)
Total	**6**	**6**
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#4 (F)
Administrative Sciences	M (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV#4(F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2000)	CV#6 (M)
Administrative Sciences	M (2001)	CV#2 (F)
Administrative Sciences	F (2001)	CV#6 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Tourism	F (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Tourism	F (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	M (2001)	CV#3 (M)
Tourism	M (2002)	CV#4 (F)
Tourism	F (2002)	CV#1 (M)
Tourism	M(2003)	CV#3 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
Engineering	M (2000)	CV#2 (F)
Engineering	M (2000)	CV#3 (M)
Engineering	M (2000)	CV#5 (F)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#4 (F)
Engineering	F (2000)	CV#1 (M)
Engineering	F (2001)	CV#1 (M)
Total	**6**	**6**
General Total	**30**	**30**

Figure 4 shows the distribution of second preferences for scenario 1 (S1) and scenario 2 (S2) among participants from different faculties. Specifically in the second scenario, participants from the Faculty of Education who preferred female candidates in their first choice also preferred female candidates in their second choice with a majority of 66.6%. This finding confirms that Generation Z individuals studying in the Faculty of Education are highly likely to exhibit glass cliff behavior in the future.

When examining the second preferences of Law Faculty participants, it was found that in the first scenario, half of the participants preferred either a male or female candidate, while in the second scenario, 66% preferred a female candidate. The particularly high preference for female candidates in the second scenario supports the conclusion, based on first preferences, that Law Faculty students are more likely to exhibit both gender discrimination and glass cliff behavior in the future.

When evaluating the second choices of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences participants, in the first scenario 50% of the participants preferred male candidates, while in the second scenario 66.6% preferred female candidates; this is a point where the glass cliff is particularly pronounced.

Analysis of the second preferences expressed by the participants in the Faculty of Tourism reveals a striking shift in their choices. In the first scenario, half of the participants preferred a male candidate, while the other half chose a female candidate. However, in the subsequent scenario, the majority (66.6%) preferred a male candidate. Although the

first preferences, especially in the second scenario, seem to show a tendency towards "glass cliff" behavior, this trend did not continue in the second preferences. Consequently, it is difficult to draw a conclusion regarding the "glass cliff" behavior of the Faculty of Tourism participants based on these results.

On the other hand, in a manner that confirms the previous conclusion drawn from the initial preferences, engineering faculty participants, who concluded that they are unlikely to exhibit glass cliff behavior in the future, overwhelmingly preferred female candidates (66.6%) in the first scenario, while they equally preferred male candidates in the second round.

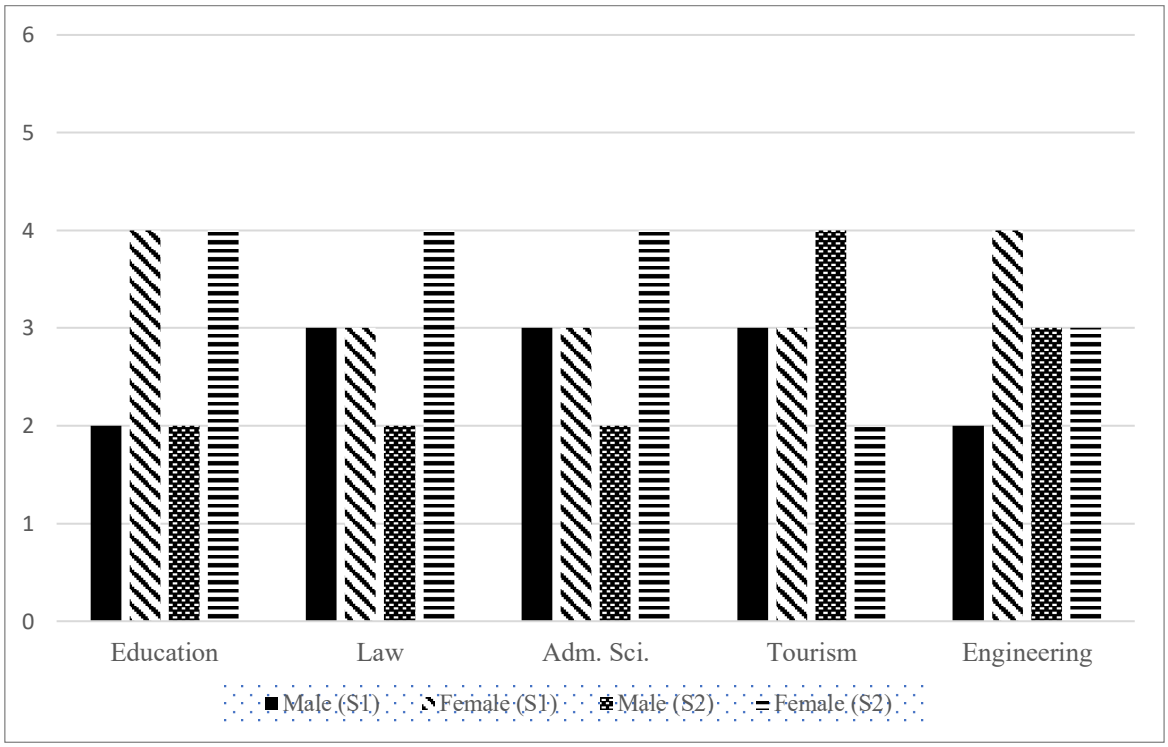

Figure 4. The distribution of the second preferences of the participants from different faculties to the scenario 1 (S1) and the scenario 2 (S2).

Conclusions

This study presents a pioneering investigation into "glass cliff" attitudes within Generation Z, specifically examining how academic socialization within the context of Turkish higher education shapes future leadership preferences. While aggregate data suggest that Generation Z does not exhibit a universal tendency toward the "glass cliff," a detailed analysis reveals that these attitudes are significantly influenced by the participants' professional discipline.

The Role of Educational Socialization: Our findings highlight a critical divergence in organizational perceptions based on faculty affiliation. The results show:

• Engineering: Engineering Faculty students exhibited the most gender-neutral leadership preferences, suggesting that technical disciplines may encourage more objective, performance-based evaluation criteria.

• Education: In contrast, the Faculty of Education emerged as a primary area for potential "glass cliff" behaviors, suggesting that those entering the teaching profession may be more susceptible to traditional gender-risk relationships.

• Law and Administrative Sciences: Participants from these faculties exhibited a dual pattern of gender discrimination and "glass cliff" preferences, reflecting the complex internalization of existing institutional hierarchies within legal and administrative frameworks.

• Tourism: The discrepancy between first and second preferences in the Faculty of Tourism indicates an unstable or evolving perception of leadership risk in the hospitality sector.

Gendered Dynamics and the "Queen Bee" Syndrome: Specifically, the study identified a significant gender dynamic. The fact that 59% of those who selected female candidates for high-risk scenarios were themselves women suggests that women are more likely to perpetuate glass cliff practices; this finding aligns with the "Queen Bee" syndrome. This demonstrates that gender-based organizational bias is not only externally imposed but is sometimes reinforced by those within marginalized groups.

Theoretical and Practical Implications: This study expands the scope of glass cliff theory from the boardroom to the classroom, demonstrating that educational background is a precursor to organizational bias. For policymakers and

university administrators, these findings highlight the need for interdisciplinary gender-sensitive training to break down these stereotypes before students enter the workforce.

Future Research Directions: Given the regional focus and sample size limitations of this research, future studies should expand upon this research through longitudinal designs that track the transition of Generation Z individuals from academia to professional life. Repeating this study in different cultural contexts will further illuminate whether these faculty-based differences are universal or specific to the Turkish socio-educational environment.

Acknowledgement: The author acknowledges the financial support for the project by the Anadolu University Scientific Projects Commission under the project number of 1977.

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