Key Success Factors for Women in Management in Turkey

Zeynep Aycan*

Koc University, Turkey

Cette étude recense les facteurs qui influencent l'évolution de la carrière des femmes en Turquie. Bien que les femmes soient bien représentées dans les emplois intellectuels, elles occupent, en Turquie, seulement 4% des situations directoriales. Cet article expose les résultats de deux recherches. La première visait l'investigation du contexte socioculturel par le mise en évidence des stéréotypes sexuels et des attitudes envers la promotion professionnelle des femmes. 318 hommes et femmes ont rempli un questionnaire évaluant les attitudes envers les femmes managers. L'autre étude était qualitative et exploitait la perception des facteurs de succès jugés fondamentaux dans le développement des carrières féminines, cela par l'entremise d'entretiens en profondeur réalisés auprès de 52 femmes managers de niveau moyen et élevé de 27 organisations différentes. Les données sont analysées à partir de trois catégories: les facteurs individuels, organisationnels et familiaux. Il apparaît que les facteurs de succès clés pour les femmes managers sont la confiance qu'elles ont en elles-mêmes et leur détermination à atteindre leurs objectifs de carriére. Puis vient le soutien de la famille et de l'organisation. L'obstacle le plus difficile à surmonter relève des normes culturelles relatives aux rôles sexués.

This study explores the factors that influence women's career advancement in Turkey. Despite the fact that women are well represented in scientific and professional jobs, they occupy only 4 per cent of top management positions in Turkey. This paper reports the results of two studies. The first study aimed at investigating the socio-cultural context by identifying gender-role stereotypes and attitudes towards women's career advancement. A total of 318 male and female respondents filled out a questionnaire assessing attitudes towards women in management. The second study was qualitative and explored the key perceived success factors affecting women's career development through in-depth interviews with 52 high and middle-level women managers in 27 different organisations. The results are discussed under three categories: individual, organisational, and family-related factors. Findings show that the

* Address for correspondence: Department of Psychology, Koc University, Rumeli Fener Campus, Sariyer, Istanbul, Turkey. Email: zaycan@ku.edu.tr

key success factors for women managers are their self-confidence and determination to achieve their career objectives. Next comes support from the family and organisations. The most significant barrier seemed to be the cultural norms toward gender roles.

INTRODUCTION

Women are under-represented in decision-making positions in almost all countries. An increasing awareness of this fact has led various interest groups to engage in research and policy-making activities. Particularly in North American, Western European, and developing Asian countries, governments have arranged legal accommodations, prepared incentive programs, and designed many organisational changes for women to become integrated into the economy at higher levels. The scientific investigation of women's progress in management is dominated by research in North American and Western European contexts. The few published studies on women in the developing world are based primarily on anecdotal and impressionistic evidence. The most notable examples are the collections of essays on women in management in a few selected countries in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Davidson & Burke, in press; Cinar, 2001).

This paper reports the findings of two studies that address the question of why women are less represented than men at senior organisational levels in Turkey. The first study aims at understanding the socio-cultural context with a specific emphasis on attitudes towards women's career advancement. The second study investigates the key success factors that enabled women to become high-level managers within the Turkish socio-cultural context. Turkey has a number of unique characteristics that have important implications for women's status in society. First, Turkey is the only secular country in the world where 98 per cent of the population is Muslim. Second, Turkey is geographically and culturally a blend of East and West. The ways in which these cultural characteristics and this historical heritage shape women's status in Turkey will be discussed first, followed by a theoretical discussion of the barriers to women's career advancement.

Women in Turkey: Historical, Economic, and Cultural Perspectives

In their guide for Western businesspeople, Morrison, Conaway, and Borden (1994) describe women's status in the Turkish business context as follows: "Remember that Turkey is primarily a Muslim country, so the vast majority of your business contacts will be male. . . . Any business women you meet will probably be Greek or Armenian rather than Turkish" (p. 394). If people

prepare to do business in Turkey by following such popular, but erroneous, "how to do business" books, they will surely experience "culture shock". Turkish women actively participate in almost all domains of work life at all decision-making levels. The question is why there is such a common misconception about Turkish businesswomen.

As the cited "advice" indicates, this is partly because Turkey is a country where the majority of the population is Islamic. Although 98 per cent of Turks are Muslim, Turkey has officially been a secular state since the early 1920s with the adoption of the Parliamentary Democratic Government System. With the demise of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, started the era of modernisation in Turkey with a strong emphasis on liberalisation and the emancipation of women. Emphasising women's role in educating future generations, Ataturk declared, "Our women must be even more enlightened, more virtuous, and more knowledgeable than our men!" (Inan, 1967). The Educational Reform Act in 1924 gave women equal educational rights. The Dress Reform Act in 1928 prohibited women from covering their heads and entire bodies with long black veils. The new Republic marked the end of polygamy as well as the end of divorce by men only. Perhaps the most notable was the reform in 1934 that granted women the right to elect and to be elected in local elections and in 1935 in national elections.

Despite these modernisation attempts, the representation and status of women in social, political, educational, and economic life has remained below desired levels envisioned by Ataturk. By 1999, 29.7 per cent of women over 12 years of age participated in the labor force, whereas 68.3 per cent of men did (State Institute of Statistics—SIS, Household Labor Force Survey Results, 1989–1999). The majority of economically active women work in agriculture (56.8% of women vs. 25.2% of men), while many fewer work in industry (14.4% of women, 29.5% of men) and services (28.8% of women, 45.3% of men) (SIS, Labor Force Survey Results, 2000). There is also a large informal sector in Turkey in which a sizable number of women work (e.g. waged domestic household helpers).

According to the most recent population census data, women's literacy rate is lower than that of men (77.6% vs. 94.1%) (Hancioglu, Koc, & Dayioglu, 2001). Similarly, the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary enrolment ratio is substantially higher for males than females (55% vs. 68%, respectively; Human Development Report, 2001, UNDP), and 3.7% of women and 6.2% of men enroll in university (SIS, 2000). Women are also significantly under-represented in national and local politics. In 1999, only 4 per cent of the members of parliament, 5.5 per cent of mayors, and 1.6 per cent of municipality commission members were women (Higher Election Committee, 1999, cited in Kabasakal, Aycan, & Karakas, in press).

Representation of Women in Professional Jobs and Management Positions

Entry to the professions by women was very important in the modernisation of the Republic. In the early years, families in the middle and upper classes placed a high value on educating their daughters especially in prestigious professions (Kabasakal, Aycan, & Karakas, in press). According to recent data (SIS, 2000), Turkish women comprise 32 per cent of professionals in scientific and technical jobs, 35 per cent among managerial personnel, and 11 per cent among entrepreneurs, directors, and top management positions. Turkish women also represent a substantial proportion among pharmacists (60%), physicians (19%), dentists (30%), lawyers (34%), and professors (23%) (Gürüz, 2001).

Women's representation, however, drops in top management positions. Tabak (1989) found that in the 500 largest manufacturing companies in Turkey, 15 per cent of managers were women, whereas only 3 per cent of top managers were women. Research on more than half of Turkish banks and insurance companies found that 26 per cent of middle managers were women, whereas only 4 per cent of top managers were women (Kabasakal, Boyacigiller, & Erden, 1994). Several studies conducted in Turkey in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s indicate that the ratio of women senior executives does not exceed 4 per cent in the private sector or 7.6 per cent in the public sector (Kabasakal et al., in press).

Turkish women's representation in managerial positions and professional jobs, while low, is comparable with that of their counterparts in some economically developed countries. e.g. the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany (ILO, 1997). A number of reasons help to explain Turkish women's active participation in professional business life. First, Turkish women are able to rely on their family network (e.g. mother, mother-in-law, and other extended family members) for childcare. If family support is unavailable, women, especially of middle and upper socioeconomic status (SES), hire help (i.e. nannies) to care for their children. Due to large-scale migration from rural Anatolian parts of Turkey to urban cities, many women from low socioeconomic backgrounds work as cleaners and baby-sitters. This inexpensive labor is affordable for dual-career families. In Turkey daycare centers are not as common as home-based childcare. Whereas companies with more than 50 women are obliged by law to provide daycare, the majority do not offer this service, and instead pay the fine, claiming high cost and geographical dispersion among branches.

The second positive influence on women's career advancement is that Turkish corporate life is relatively young and still developing. It is difficult to find sufficiently qualified candidates to fill managerial positions. With demand exceeding supply, there is less competition for managerial and professional positions. Qualification is the main criterion in the recruitment

process, not gender. One is seen as qualified by getting a good education, and a good education is accessible primarily to those of urban standing and a high socioeconomic status. Women's career success, therefore, depends primarily on social class (Kabasakal, 1998).

Third, organisational culture in Turkey is generally "family-friendly". Paternalism is a salient cultural dimension in Turkey (cf. Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, & Khursid, 2000). Paternalism in organisations implies that there is a family-like climate in organisations where superiors are concerned with and involved in the professional as well as personal lives of their subordinates. This creates a "family-friendly" organisational culture where women's needs to handle work and family responsibilities are understood and tolerated.

Even with these three culturally based supportive factors, the low ratio of women in senior executive positions points to the continued existence of the glass-ceiling phenomenon (Kabasakal et al., in press). In the next section, we will discuss the factors that impede women's career advancement in the world and in Turkey.

FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT

The literature on women's career advancement highlights the importance of individual and situational factors (e.g. Tharenou & Conroy, 1994). The *individual factors* include three issues: women's attitudes towards career advancement, work-related demographics, and early socialisation. Attitudes exhibited by women who get ahead in their career included high self-efficacy, a strong desire to succeed, salient career (as opposed to family) identities, internal attribution to success, and positive attitudes towards mobility and relocation (e.g. Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993; Lobel & St Clair, 1992; Morrison, White, & van Velsor, 1982; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). With regard to work-related demographics, research found that women with higher educational attainments (Adler, 1993) and higher socioeconomic status (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Kabasakal & Ozugur, 1995) stand a better chance of career advancement. This last point may be especially important in developing countries where socioeconomic status plays a more crucial role in determining career success than does gender (e.g. Cheng & Liao, 1994; Mansor, 1994; Wright & Crockett-Tellei, 1994). Moreover, job-relevant criteria such as having extensive work experience and knowledge, seeking difficult and high visibility assignments, and continuously exceeding performance criteria also determine the extent to which women are recruited for higher positions (Adler, Brody, & Osland, 2000; Becker, 1971). The third factor, early socialisation, affects women significantly: parental encouragement and maternal employment have been found to positively influence women's career success (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

The *situational factors* are usually discussed under two categories (cf. Tharenou & Conroy, 1994): the work situation (e.g. organisational culture and practices), and the home situation (e.g. spousal support and family responsibilities). With respect to work situation, Adler (1993) noted that a male-dominated organisational culture is an obstacle to women's success. This is partly because women find it very difficult to enter the "old boys' network" (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Marshall, 1984), especially in non-Western "traditional" cultures (e.g. Cheng & Liao, 1994). According to Kanter's (1977) theory of sex discrimination, structural characteristics (e.g. length of career ladder, number of male-dominated hierarchical levels) assist men's rather than women's career advancement. Further, gender bias (i.e. favoring men) in training and development activities constitutes a barrier to women's career success (ILO, 1997; Izraeli & Adler, 1994; Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994). A part of the organisational culture is the attitude of "decision-makers" towards women in management. There is a higher likelihood of discrimination against women through human resource management practices such as selection, performance appraisal, and training and development. With respect to family situation, research indicates that women's careers suffer when they are married and have children (Davidson & Cooper, 1987; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Research also confirms that spousal support plays a very important role in women's career advancement (e.g. Riger and Galligan, 1980; King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995).

The literature does not *explicitly* discuss the role of the socio-cultural context in influencing women's career advancement. However, it is suggested that socio-cultural context determines work- and family-related values and societal norms regarding gender roles, and attitudes towards women in management (e.g. de Leon & Ho, 1994; Riger & Galligan, 1980). Turkish culture is characterised by low gender egalitarianism (e.g. Fikret-Pasa, Kabasakal, & Bodur, 2001; Kagitcibasi, 1986). Despite the previously discussed supportive factors in the Turkish culture, inequality especially with respect to gender roles constitutes a potential barrier to women's career advancement in Turkey. Traditional gender roles are such that women are primarily responsible for family care, where the family includes husband and children as well as parents and in-laws. Any activity including work that would endanger the family's welfare or honor is considered inappropriate for women. In general, the society encourages women's participation in the workforce *provided that* family life does not suffer because of women's work (cf. Esmer, 1991).

Given the importance of socio-cultural factors, but their apparently mixed influence in Turkey, the first study was designed to elucidate the socio-cultural context in Turkey with regard to attitudes towards women's career advancement. The target population, and therefore the sample of this study, comprised urban and educated people working in a corporate business context in the largest metropolitan city in Turkey: Istanbul. Although this population

does not fully represent Turkish society, this is the most active and influential community in Turkey's business life. The second study, which involved in-depth interviews with 52 high-level women managers, was designed to understand how businesswomen "made it to the top" within the socio-cultural context described in the first study, including investigating the relative importance of "individual" and "situational" factors.

STUDY 1: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT IN TURKEY: GENDER-ROLE STEREOTYPES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Method

Participants.   For this study, there were 318 respondents. The gender distribution was almost balanced: slightly over half of the respondents were females (54%). The sample characteristics of male and female respondents are presented in Table 1. Almost half (44.2%) of the participants were members of a business organisation in the finance sector attending a technical training program. With the permission of the trainer, we distributed our questionnaire during a break. The remainder of the data were collected with the assistance of women managers who participated in the second study. These women secured permission to distribute the questionnaire in their organisations. In both cases, the questionnaires were completed anonymously and took 15 minutes on average to complete. The completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher or mailed to her; thus confidentiality was further ensured. Because nearly half of the sample came from a single organisation, results obtained from this group and the rest of the sample were compared, and no significant discrepancies were detected.

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in the First Study

	Females (n = 172)	*Males* (n = 146)
Age		
$M =$	29.48 yrs	33.34 yrs
SD =	4.32	3.57
Education		
High school or vocational school	38%	33%
University	50%	55%
Master's	12%	12%
Tenure in the organisation		
$M =$	5.4 yrs	7.6 yrs
SD =	2.8	1.9

Measurement.   The questionnaire contained two sections. The first section asked about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section used the Turkish version of the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS; Peters, Terborg, & Taylor, 1974). The WAMS instrument was used for two main reasons. First, it includes items referring to gender-role stereotypes (e.g. "The place of a woman is near her husband and being a good mother") as well as attitudes towards women's career advancement (e.g. "It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men"). Second, although a relatively old instrument, it remains among the best measures reflecting the prevailing attitudes in society towards women's career advancement.

The WAMS was translated and validated for Turkish samples by Eker (1989). It consists of 20 statements. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on five-point Likert scales. High scores indicate positive attitudes towards women in management. In Eker's (1989) study using the WAMS in Turkey, the instrument was found to have adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: .87). The internal consistency estimate for the present sample was $\alpha = .84$.

Results and Discussion

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to examine the WAMS scores of male and female respondents. Results showed that although societal attitudes towards women in management were slightly positive ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .48$), there was a significant gender difference; $t(317) = 3.48$, $p < .001$. Females held more positive attitudes towards women in management ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .57$) than males ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .44$). To further examine the dimensions of attitudes, the WAMS items were factor analysed (Table 2).

Factor analysis revealed four orthogonal factors explaining a total of 55.2 per cent of variance. The first factor was labeled "Gender-Role Stereotypes", which included items related to perceptions of women as capable of handling work and family responsibilities. The second factor, labeled "Attitudes Towards Women's Career Advancement", reflected the extent to which society accepts women as key decision-makers in business life. The third and fourth factors had low eigenvalues and failed the scree test. The internal consistency among items in these factors was also low, so we chose not to include them in subsequent analyses.

Table 3 presents means and standard deviations for the first two factors and their component items. These findings can shed light on the differences between men's and women's attitudes. Because men usually make the key decisions concerning women's career development (e.g. recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, promotions, etc.), it may be their attitudes that impede (at least partially) women's advancement. It is also important to understand women's own attitudes towards gender roles and career

TABLE 2
Principal Components Factor Analysis of WAMS Items with Varimax Rotation

Items	Factor loadings			
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*
Factor 1: Gender roles				
● On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organisation's overall goals than men.	0.80			
● Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	0.80			
● Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	0.76			
● In the family of working women there is more disagreement between spouses.	0.74			
● The place of a woman is near her husband and being a good mother.	0.74			
● On the average, a woman who stays at home all the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half time.	0.72			
● It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	0.67			
● Family life of a working woman is disorganised.	0.66			
● The chance factor and the suitability of the work to women can be the reasons for the success of women managers.	0.63			
● Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	0.53			
Factor 2: Attitudes towards women's career advancement				
● It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.		0.78		
● Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.		0.75		
● The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.		0.72		
● Women have the objectivity required to evaluate business situations properly.		0.65		
● Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.		0.61		
Factor 3: Attitudes towards women's femininity in business life				
● The possibility of pregnancy does not make women less desirable employees than men.			0.68	
● Women would no more allow their emotions to influence their managerial behavior than would men.			0.56	
● To be a successful executive, a woman does not have to sacrifice some of her femininity.			0.54	
Factor 4: Employee attitudes towards women managers				
● Workers are displeased with their women employers.				0.80
● It is less desirable for women than men to have a job that requires responsibility.				0.59
Percentage of explained variance	25.88	14.17	8.57	6.58
Cronbach's alpha	.89	.80	.55	.33*

Note: *This coefficient represents the inter-item correlation between the two items.

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations and Mean Comparisons on WAMS Factors and Items

	Overall sample		Male respondents		Female respondents		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Factor 1: Gender-role stereotypes (τ)	3.07	0.92	3.13	0.68	3.00	1.07	0.23
• On the average, women managers are less capable of contributing to an organisation's overall goals than men.	3.15	1.41	3.09	1.15	3.21	1.60	0.75
• Women cannot be assertive in business situations that demand it.	3.15	1.37	3.34	1.11	2.97	1.53	2.43*
• Women are less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than are men.	3.12	1.27	3.21	1.16	3.03	1.36	1.23
• In the family of working women there is more disagreement between spouses.	3.07	1.27	3.07	1.10	2.93	3.06	0.03
• The place of a woman is near her husband and being a good mother.	3.10	1.45	3.26	1.32	2.95	1.54	1.91*
• On the average, a woman who stays at home all the time with her children is a better mother than a woman who works outside the home at least half time.	3.06	1.33	3.03	1.28	3.07	1.37	−0.28
• It is not acceptable for women to assume leadership roles as often as men.	2.99	0.93	3.06	1.15	2.91	1.39	1.03
• Family life of a working woman is disorganised.	3.11	1.23	3.14	1.13	3.08	1.30	0.40
• The chance factor and the suitability of the work to women can be the reasons for the success for women managers.	2.94	1.15	2.97	0.99	2.91	1.27	0.51
• Challenging work is more important to men than it is to women.	2.93	1.11	2.93	1.10	2.93	1.13	0.07
Factor 2: Attitudes towards women's career advancement	4.19	0.67	3.78	0.67	4.53	0.43	11.98***
• It is acceptable for women to compete with men for top executive positions.	4.27	0.89	3.82	0.95	4.66	0.61	9.60***
• Society should regard work by female managers as valuable as work by male managers.	4.46	0.77	4.18	0.85	4.70	0.59	6.42***
• The business community should someday accept women in key managerial positions.	4.04	0.97	3.63	0.97	4.38	0.82	7.38***
• Women have the objectivity required to evaluate business situations properly.	4.20	0.92	3.73	0.93	4.60	0.69	9.56***
• Women possess the self-confidence required of a good leader.	3.98	1.29	3.57	0.93	4.32	0.77	7.92***

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.
(τ) Items under Factor 1 are reverse coded.

development in order to assess their level of interest and willingness to pursue a managerial career.

After establishing internal consistency among items (shown by the Cronbach alphas in Table 2), sub-scale scores were computed for each factor. Negatively worded items were reverse coded, so that a high score on a sub-scale indicated positive attitudes. Table 3 shows that both men and women scored in the middle in terms of gender-role stereotypes (Factor 1). They were moderate (i.e. somewhat agree, somewhat disagree) in their beliefs about women's competencies to carry out work and family responsibilities with success. This suggests that there is doubt about women's competencies (e.g. assertiveness, intelligence, willingness) to become successful business leaders. This doubt also exists regarding working women's competence in handling family responsibilities. It is particularly interesting to note that women scored lower (i.e. agreed more) than men on the item "The place of a woman is near her husband and being a good mother".

In a nation-wide survey Erguder, Esmer, and Kalaycioglu (1991) found that 85 per cent of respondents believed that Turkish women's real place is at home. In fact, Turkish women themselves seem to hold more "traditional" gender roles compared to men. In another national survey, Kagitcibasi (1986) found that women valued maintaining a "happy home" and good relationships with the spouse much more than did men. Kandiyoti (1978) asked women to define the characteristics of "successful women". The most desired characteristics included being a good mother and a wife (32.9%); being socially active and useful to the community *along with* being an accomplished housewife (23.2%); and being able to combine a career with household duties (25.6%). Only 12.2 per cent listed self-sufficiency and self-actualisation as important indicators of success. The present study's findings also point to the fact that women's domestic responsibilities are still considered important, and that there is a pervasive concern regarding whether women's career advancement would prevent them from fulfilling family responsibilities.

The second factor was related to societal attitudes towards women's career advancement. The findings revealed that both men and women agreed that women's status in work life should be improved. As can be seen from Table 3, women held this belief more strongly than did men. Women, while holding more traditional/rigid gender-role stereotypes, strongly supported women's career advancement. This seeming paradox could be explained in two ways. As previously discussed, societal attitudes are such that women are expected to excel in their careers without compromising their domestic responsibilities. Alternatively, the findings may point to the perceived discrepancy between the "actual" and "ideal" status of women in society. In Factor 1, women are portrayed as somewhat less competent than men to succeed in high-level positions. Doubts were expressed with regard to women's competencies in handling family responsibilities (the perceived "actual" status). In Factor 2,

however, there was clear support for career development for women (the perceived "ideal" status).

The findings of the first study formed the basis for investigating the key success factors contributing to the career development of the women managers who participated in the second study. The main purpose of the second study, therefore, was to examine how women managers themselves perceive the most important factors contributing to their success and how they relate these factors to the Turkish socio-cultural context (i.e. gender-role stereotypes and societal attitudes towards women in management).

STUDY 2: INDIVIDUAL, ORGANISATIONAL, AND FAMILY-RELATED FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Method

Participants.   For the second study, 52 women managers in top and middle-management positions from 27 different private sector large-size organisations were interviewed. A pool of names of women managers was generated from the rosters of 30 randomly selected private sector organisations in Istanbul. From this pool, 70 names were randomly drawn and contacted for an interview appointment. Among those who were contacted, five had left their jobs and 13 declined the request for an interview due to heavy workload. The remaining 52 women managers were interviewed in their offices. Interviews took two hours on average. They were conducted in closed-door offices to prevent overhearing and disturbance. With the permission of the participants, all but one of the interviews were tape-recorded.

The average age in the sample was 40 years (range: 25–57). Overall, they were highly educated. Two respondents had a high school diploma, 36 had a university degree, 16 had a master's degree, and two had a doctorate. Thirty-two were married, and among the married, 26 had children (two maximum). The position titles included two CEOs, one board member, three executive group managers, one general manager, two associate executive managers, three directors, 36 middle managers, and three managers and supervisors. The departments in which respondents worked included sales and marketing, engineering, finance, information systems, human resources, purchasing, and research and development.

Data Collection and Analysis.   Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Questions were generated to inquire about individual, organisational, and family-related factors influencing the participants' career success. In addition to the questions about demographic characteristics, the women managers were asked about issues related to family life, spousal support, their own socialisation,

organisational support, and societal factors that influenced them positively and negatively in their careers. They were also asked how they started their career, whether or not they considered themselves successful, and what three key factors contributed the most to their success.

The interview tapes were coded, typed, and content analysed. In analysing the data, Miles and Huberman's (1994) method was followed. That is, the researcher and a graduate student coded data independently. In the first phase, each coder read the transcripts to identify the key factors under the predetermined categories (i.e. individual, organisational, and family-related). In the second phase, subcategories were identified to further the understanding of the layers of factors within each category. In the last phase, each factor was weighted by counting the number of respondents who provided the same or similar answers or emphasised similar themes. Several strategies were used to ensure the reliability and validity of the analyses. The use of two independent coders ensured convergence in interpretation. Member checks as proposed by Maxwell (1996) were used by mailing research findings to all participants. More than half of the participants were called randomly and 92 per cent concurred with the interpretation of the data gathered from their own interview. Finally, a peer-debriefing method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was administered, and the findings were presented to uninvolved peers.

Results and Discussion

Content analysis revealed that there were indeed individual and situational factors associated with women's career advancement. Situational factors are further broken down into "organisational factors" and "family-related factors".

Individual Factors.   Three issues emerged from the content analysis: key success factors, work centrality and career-orientation, and attitude towards gender roles.

Factors to which women attributed their success. All interviewees considered themselves "successful" while also maintaining a firm belief that they could and should do better. The most frequent responses to the question "What are the three most important factors that you believe contributed to your career success?" are listed in Table 4. It is clear that women attributed their success primarily to personal characteristics. Based on their own experiences, women managers expressed their opinions on the key success factors as follows.

> The greatest of all barriers against women is their low self-confidence. At the sight of the first disappointment or a problem, the ones with low self-confidence are the ones who give up and use children and husband as an excuse.

TABLE 4
Percentage of Women giving Specific Responses: Individual Factors

	Percentage
Factors to which women attributed their success	
Decisiveness; knowing what you want, and making conscious choices	76
Love for the job	69
Integrity and trustworthiness	64
High self-confidence	57
Always working with a plan, good time management	56
Self-sacrifice and self-discipline	56
Taking work seriously; devotion and concentration	50
Good fit to the job	40
Sensitivity and harmony in interpersonal relations	38
Openness to learning and development	22
Determination, pursuit, and precision	21
Work centrality and career orientation	
"How and when did you start to work?"	
Not a decision, but a natural thing to do	100
Started working for financial reasons	5
Started working for career-related reasons	95
"What would you do if there was a situation that required you to make a choice between your career and family?"	
Choose the family	4
Try to find a way to balance	85
Take every precaution to prevent the conflict from happening	25
Attitudes towards gender roles	
Perceive household work and childcare as primary duties	4
"How do you handle the housework?"	
Coordinate and delegate among helpers	96
Do some of the housework (especially cooking) regularly myself	23

> First, a woman should think she is worthy of a certain position, and then she should deserve this position. If you don't think you deserve it, no one else does.

> Women readily absorb value judgments of the society which they live in, and position themselves accordingly. "I am a woman; my priorities are my home, husband and children". It is such thoughts that are critical when making a decision at a crossroad. It is not always easy to cope with the consequences of these types of decisions.

It should be noted that these observations are limited to women managers' own experiences, and should not be considered as expert opinions about the barriers and key success factors for all women.

Work centrality and career orientation. Career has always been central in the lives of these women. The answer to the question, "How and when did

you decide to work?" was overwhelmingly the same: to work was not a matter of choice but a natural thing to do (Table 4). For them, work meant freedom, independence, and standing on one's own feet. Erguder et al. (1991) also found that freedom and independence were among the primary benefits of working to Turkish women. A woman manager expressed her commitment to her career as:

> I may think of getting a divorce, but I would never think of quitting my job. Because a husband can never replace the sense of security your profession provides; your profession and your career is your chief security.

Despite the centrality of work in their lives, female managers are careful in maintaining a balance between work and family. An associate general manager of a large bank stated that although she had left work for two and a half years when her children were very young, she never regretted it or believed that it affected her career negatively. Another manager, when explaining why she did not wish to be in a higher position, stated that a higher position meant too much sacrifice from her family. She was not willing to make that sacrifice.

The question "What would you do if there was a situation that required you to choose between your career and family?" was a very difficult question for the women to answer. Contrary to popular belief, women managers did not immediately say that they would choose their family. Instead, they suggested ways to prevent the conflict and balance the conflicting demands: "There would always be a balance between the two", "I would change my present job, but I would still be productive in some other ways", "I would take every precaution not to face such a decision" (Table 4).

Adler (1994) also found that Asian women, while highly committed to their careers, continually sought ways to balance their professional and family lives by getting help from hired in-house workers and/or extended family members.

Attitudes towards gender roles. The women managers who participated in this study did not consider household work as their primary responsibility; rather, they saw their role as coordinating it among helpers (e.g. paid helpers, family members, or spouse; Table 4). Reflecting on their own experiences, they advise women not to internalise societal expectations without questioning them. There were a few women managers who felt guilty for not fulfilling their wifely and motherly "duties" (Table 4). They criticised themselves, however, for such feelings.

> We must first change our *own* mentality and evaluate our own roles more critically. We, ourselves, must first believe in the fact that responsibilities that come with marriage are common and shared between husband and wife. Being excessively thankful to the spouse for helping with housework defies the very concept of "shared living".

Situational Factors—Organisational Culture and Practices.   Career development opportunities. Answers to the question "Are there practices in your organisation encouraging women to be promoted to higher-level management positions?" were usually similar: there were no efforts to support women, but no systematic barriers either (Table 5). Respondents in a few companies reported that upper-level managers (mostly male) openly encouraged women to have a more active role in management, but this was limited to personal efforts rather than to company policy. Women who have had overseas work experience (especially in the United States and Western Europe) stated that they see themselves as more privileged compared to their Western counterparts. The women who worked in multinational companies stated that they were both proud and surprised to discover that they were the only women at many high-level management meetings.

Among the women interviewed, only a few answered "yes" to the question, "Have you ever felt that just because you are a woman you will not be able to advance in your career in this organisation?" This is in line with previous findings on Turkish women managers (i.e. Katrinli, Ozmen, & Zeytinoglu, 1994). However, the fact that successful women did not experience the "glass-ceiling" does not mean that it does not exist. The barriers may be too subtle to detect. Alternatively, these women may have developed strategies to overcome these barriers early in their careers. It is also possible that they have a need to attribute their "success" to internal factors. Similarly, they could believe that they had reached their "desired" status, so as to minimise the feeling of relative deprivation (cf. Crosby, 1982). The ones who did report the "glass-ceiling" attributed it to insufficient opportunities for development as well as to difficulty in getting access to male networks.

> Although training programs are crucial for career development, we are not given enough opportunities for training. We are especially disadvantaged for upper level management training programs that are conducted overseas. There are two reasons. First, it is assumed that women will not be able to join this type of training due to family responsibilities, and therefore are not even asked for their opinion. Second, there is fear that there will not be any return on this costly investment to a woman employee as she will probably get married, have children, and quit!
>
> The communication and support network among men is strong and hard to penetrate. When you cannot communicate with them the way they do among themselves, they ostracise you. Yet, when you communicate with them in similar ways, they can readily reach faulty opinions about you. Two things happen when you are left out of their communication network. First, you are not getting the critical information about what is going on in the company (e.g. position openings). Second, men naturally prefer to work with people whom they can easily and efficiently communicate with, so when there is an opening for a position, they often choose among the male candidates.

Human resource management practices. Participants experienced no systematic biases against themselves in the human resource management practices of their organisations (Table 5). In the recruitment process, however, being a woman may be a disadvantage for certain jobs. Women managers stated that when recruiting, they think about the demands of the work, rather than the gender. A female manager declared, "I, myself, do not prefer women for jobs that demand physical strength, endurance, and travel." Women stated that the most disturbing issue in the recruitment process was the inquiry about their marital status and family plans (i.e. whether or not they planned to get married and have children).

Women managers sometimes experienced being at a disadvantage in performance evaluations, especially if the performance evaluation was not based on objective criteria and if the evaluator was a man. Because of the difficulty in getting into men's communication networks, it is more likely that men assess women unjustly. Women managers stressed that there were no large gender-related differences in salary assignments. According to the United Nations Turkey report (UNDP, 1996), women's average non-agricultural wage is 84.5 per cent of men's (p. 51). In terms of promotion to top management positions, women encounter barriers, as previously discussed.

Organisational culture. As noted earlier, Turkish companies tend to be "family-friendly", that is, tolerant of women's family responsibilities. For instance, in cases of emergency or sickness, employees do not face problems in obtaining leave of absence. However, because women usually take absences for family reasons, they are the ones who have to deal with the negative consequences of such behavior (Table 5). A woman manager described her experience as follows.

> Organisations are understanding of your family responsibilities, but you have to pay the price for that. I did not stop working until the last three days of my pregnancy just to prevent the top-management from using it against me in my promotion decision. I do not remember taking a single day off because of my children and family. They just need to find another excuse if they don't want to promote me.
>
> I kept my pregnancy a secret during the first four months. None of my customers knew that I was on maternity leave. I did not let it be used against me.

Almost all women were in agreement that they occasionally took work home, but *never* carried home to work. Overall, women managers were aware of gender-role stereotypes and barriers against women, and positioned themselves accordingly (i.e. behaved in non-stereotypical ways) from the beginning of their careers.

Situational Factors—Family Support.   Two issues are examined under this category: spousal support, and women's socialisation and support from the extended family.

TABLE 5
Percent of Women giving Specific Responses: Situational Factors

	Percentage
Organisational support	
Career development opportunities	
Training and developmental opportunities as a factor that women attribute their success to	12
"Are there practices in your organisation to encourage women to be promoted to higher-level management positions?"	
Yes, but not institutionalised	13
"Have you ever felt that just because you are a woman you will not be able to further advance in your career in this organisation?"	
Yes	10
Human resource management practices	
Experienced discrimination in recruitment and selection	
Yes	15
Experienced discrimination in performance appraisal	
Yes	23
Experienced discrimination in wages and salary	
Yes	2
Organisational culture	
Management is understanding of women's family-related responsibilities	
Yes	96
Women experience discrimination because of the family-related responsibilities	
Yes	96
Carried family-related problems to work	
Sometimes	2
Never	98
Family support	
Family support and a stable family life as a factor that women attribute their success to	45
Spousal support	
Instrumental only	16
Emotional only	16
Both instrumental and emotional	50
No support at all	20
Socialisation	
Equal opportunities to male and female children	100
Mother as a role model and a source of instrumental and emotional support	94

Spousal support. King et al. (1995) distinguish two types of spousal support: instrumental (participation in household chores) and emotional (psychological support such as motivating, listening, encouraging, etc.). Among the 32 women who were married, half of them reported receiving both kinds of support (Table 5).

In answering the question, "Why do you think your spouse supports you?", factors emerged such as whether his socialisation had emphasised respect for equal rights of women, his personality characteristics, and his familiarity with doing household chores. Some women attributed spousal support to their own efforts. A very interesting answer was: "I owe his support to myself!" Some women managers stated that they "socialised" their husbands into sharing household responsibilities. Since the early years of their marriage, they made it very clear to their husbands that they would pursue a career and expected their husbands to assist and support them along the way.

Among the most important reasons for lack of spousal support are societal norms and value judgments. Men who do housework in Turkey may be called names and looked down on as being "weak" and "not manly". It is not unusual to observe a man doing household chores at home in the *absence* of family and friends.

Women's socialisation and support from the extended family. The way women managers were socialised played an important role in their career development. All respondents stated that they received full support from their families on this account. There was no difference between male and female children with respect to educational opportunities provided by their family (Table 5). In some families, there was a greater effort to provide daughters with a good education and career. Most of the participants grew up in big cities and came from middle- or middle-upper-class families. A manager, highlighting the differences in opportunities between the rural and urban parts of Turkey, stated that she was privileged to be brought up in a well-off family in a country like Turkey.

One of the most interesting findings of this study is the role of mothers in women managers' lives. All but three women stated that their *mothers* were highly influential in their career choices and success. Mothers who worked were seen as role models, whereas others who could not work were the primary source of support to their daughters' career development.

> Although my mother only had primary school education, she had a wish for more. She was very smart and energetic, and had excellent management skills. She lived through me what she herself couldn't accomplish. When with people, she used to announce that her daughter would be on TV someday and that everyone will listen to her. She was right on.

> My mother had two undergraduate degrees. She has always worked hard. Working hard was our only reality. A woman who did not work was, in my mother's eyes, a parasite; we naturally had no other choice but work.

Mothers of these women were the first generation of the new Turkish Republic who lived through Ataturk's reforms for women's emancipation. They were raised with high ideals for women's development and empowerment, and they raised their own daughters with the same ideals. Mothers' contribution to their daughters' careers was not limited to their encouragement and mentorship. Mothers alleviated working women's most serious problem by helping them with childcare.

CONCLUSION

The two studies reported in this paper examine the factors that contribute to women's career advancement in Turkey. The first study describes the socio-cultural context with respect to gender-role stereotypes and attitudes towards women's career development. The second study investigated women managers' perception of key success factors in their own careers with a specific focus on their experiences in dealing with the gender-role stereotypes. Data collected from in-depth interviews with women managers confirmed the importance of both individual and situational factors. Among the "individual" factors high self-confidence, achievement orientation, determination, and career orientation were felt to have contributed substantially to their success. They all came from a good socioeconomic background that gave them a particular advantage in a country like Turkey, where SES and educational attainment are of prime importance in career success (cf. Kabasakal, 1998). Women from a high SES not only have higher qualifications, but also have a better chance to access networks that matter (Zeytinoglu, Ozmen, Katrinli, Kabasakal, & Arbak, 2001).

The "situational" factors included work situation and home situation. The women in this study stated that they experienced difficulties in getting into social and communication networks in male-dominated organisational cultures. They also described human resource management practices as being neither supportive nor discriminatory of their advancement. However, a subtle discrimination in selection, performance appraisal, and promotion might have taken place due to limited access to male-dominated networks. Respondents reported that their success was due also to spousal support and help from family members and/or paid workers with the childcare and household chores. Finally, they perceived that the support and encouragement they received from their families (especially mothers) during socialisation was one of the key factors contributing to their success.

In this study, the socio-cultural context was explicitly discussed as a key variable influencing both individual and situational factors in women's career advancement. Findings of this study suggest that the socio-cultural context impacts women's career advancement in two ways. First, gender-role stereotypes may constitute a barrier in cultures where women's family-related

responsibilities cannot be negotiated. Second, attitudes towards women's career advancement create barriers for women. Gender-role stereotypes and attitudes towards women's career advancement, in turn, influence women's own self-perceptions and ideals as well as the support they receive from their organisation and families.

Overall, the findings revealed that attitudes towards women in management were slightly positive in Turkey. It is noted that women held more positive attitudes than men, as has been shown in previous research (e.g. Eker, 1989; Garland & Price, 1977; Stevens & De Nisi, 1980). Despite high support of women's career advancement, gender-role stereotypes remained rigid. It was particularly interesting to find that women respondents in the first study held slightly more traditional attitudes towards gender roles. This may be due to the fact that women, as transmitters of culture, strongly internalise societal attitudes towards gender roles. Alternatively, females may find it more appropriate to "think like men" and suppress their "feminist" attitudes in order to gain acceptance in male-dominated organisational cultures (Kabasakal, 1998). In any event, women managers in the second study admitted that they had to fight against such gender-role stereotypes. Women managers had to convince *themselves* first that it was okay not to personally fulfil domestic duties, but instead get assistance from family or paid help. They had to learn not to feel guilty in a cultural context where people—even their own family and friends—wondered why they had to work and how they could leave their children for work. Second, they had to convince their partners/spouses to accept them as career women and share the household responsibilities. Last but not least, they had to prove to their organisations that they were capable of handling higher responsibilities, and that their family duties did not interfere with their work.

Women managers in the second study attributed their success mainly to individual factors such as determination, intelligence, self-confidence, and hard work. They also acknowledged the importance of support networks in the family and at work. An interesting finding was that mothers played a key role in creating women's self-confidence and high ideals. Mothers were both role models and primary supporters of their daughters' careers. Mothers as socialisation agents for their sons also play an important role in the lives of working women. Turkish men are used to being "looked after" and "served" at home by women (i.e. sister, mother, wife, etc.). Men who were socialised by their *mothers* to share household chores were the ones who provided support to their working wives.

These results indicate that women's career development in Turkey relies on both individual and situational factors. In fact, one can argue that individual factors such as self-confidence, determination, career orientation, and attitudes towards gender-role stereotypes (i.e. refusing to comply with them) are somewhat more important for women in overcoming the situational

barriers. However, the qualitative nature of this study does not allow testing a model comparing individual and situational factors. Future research should include a more rigorous test of those factors (including culture) that influence the career development of both men and women in Turkey. It is also important to compare the experiences of women who made it to the top with those who did not.

In addition to describing their own experiences, the women managers who participated in the second study also expressed their opinions on the experiences of all women. They shared their observations about the barriers to career advancement of women in general, and suggested ways to overcome them. Although such opinions are valuable, they are limited to their own experiences and observations. It is wrong to assume that women managers, just because they are women, are experts about all women. They are not; they are only experts on their own experiences.[1] In fact, Adler et al. (2000) reported the gap between perceptions and actual experiences of barriers to career advancement of women senior executives. It would be wrong to generalise the experiences of women managers who participated in the present study to all women professionals in Turkey.

The main limitation of this study is its sample. It dealt only with professional women working in the private sector in the largest metropolitan center, Istanbul. However, the fact that more than half of the corporate business organisations operate in this city and that the sample was randomly drawn from a pool of a large number of organisations partially ensures representativeness. Future studies should also sample non-metropolitan cities of Turkey where societal values are more traditional and gender roles are more rigid.

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