Exploring the Challenges and Unveiling the Glass Ceiling Effect on Career Progression among Turkish Women in 3 to 5 Star Hotels

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Despite the significant growth in women's participation in the hotel industry workforce, Turkish women continue to encounter limited access to senior management positions. This study investigates the obstacles faced by Turkish women in their pursuit of top managerial roles within the hotel industry and explores potential strategies to break through the glass ceiling. The purpose of this study is to investigate challenges and unveil the effect of the glass ceiling on the career development of Turkish women in 3-to-5-star hotels. The research endeavors to examine the experiences and challenges stemming from gender perceptions encountered by individuals within the hotel industry. Additionally, it seeks to discern the underlying social, organizational, and individual factors contributing to the disparity in leadership or senior positions held by women within this sector.

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Design/Methodology/Approach: The study utilizes a qualitative research approach, employing semi-structured, in-depth interviews with employees from 3 to 5-star hotels in Antalya, conducting an inductive thematic analysis approach the research aims to investigate the challenges faced by women in advancing their careers within the hotel industry and the diverse factors influencing their workplace performance. The statistical sample of the research includes people who have different viewpoints on the subject of the research.

Findings: Twelve women working within the hospitality industry were interviewed. A thematic analysis revealed three interconnected barriers contributing to the glass ceiling faced by Turkish women: cultural and social obstacles, organizational challenges, and personal hindrances. These primary barriers encompass sub-barriers that collectively reinforce the glass ceiling, impeding numerous women from attaining senior positions. This research demonstrates that overcoming the barriers—especially organizational ones—can empower Turkish women to break through the glass ceiling and realize their leadership aspirations. Additionally, the study explores the implications for policymakers, academics, and practitioners regarding the impactful contributions of Turkish women to the hotel labor market."

Practical Implications: This research showed evidence that there are real barriers for these women and the findings from this study offer implications that overcoming these barriers, particularly cultural and social barriers, could help Turkish women to crack the glass ceiling and achieve their dream of leadership.

Originality/Value: The Hotel industry faces a worldwide shortage of Women in Leadership positions. This study aims to explore the challenges faced by the hotel sector in retaining highly skilled female employees who aspire to pursue managerial career trajectories. In addition, this research can add value to revealing gender inequality problems faced by Muslim women employees in the hospitality industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has experienced significant growth worldwide in recent decades, both in developed and developing countries. According to the World Tourism Organization, international tourist arrivals increased from 25 million in 1950 to 1.4 billion in 2018 [1]. This growth has been driven by several factors, including increased affluence and leisure time among people in developed countries, improved transportation infrastructure and technology, and greater awareness of the attractions and cultural offerings of other countries. In addition, many developing countries have recognized this. the potential economic benefits of tourism and have invested in developing their tourism infrastructure and promoting their destinations to international visitors [2].

Across numerous countries, the hospitality industry continues to confront a prominent glass ceiling, impeding the advancement of women into leadership roles and board positions.

According to a study conducted in Nigeria by Ganiyu, Oluwafemi, Ademola, and Olatunji (2018), women made only slight advancements up until a specific level in the organizational hierarchy to the glass ceiling, which prevented them from achieving the highest management levels, women held a significantly smaller share of managerial positions than men due to cultural prejudice, family-related concerns, a lack of networking opportunities, personal and organizational influences, and religious convictions [3].

Another study which was conducted in Aqaba located in Jordan, the findings demonstrated that male organizational culture and practices are more indicative of the glass ceiling than family and social responsibilities in Jordanian organizations. To put it another way, women believe that the organizational culture generally does not foster good attitudes toward women, such as promotion, selection, and mentoring. Therefore, rather than a lack of drive or confidence, the reason women have fewer possibilities than males to advance their careers at work might be attributed to discrimination from informal male networks and organizational policies [4].

The Pune (India) Hospitality industry has overall witnessed low representation of women at the

senior level which is proportionately very low compared to men. There is a glass ceiling that prevents women from advancing professionally. This recommends that an organization's strategy should be created to promote gender diversity, which will motivate strong women to overcome obstacles to professional advancement. According to the study's findings, management's disregard for women's obligations and social roles is the main cause of the impediments to women employees' advancement. It's found that still most of the hotels do not recruit, promote, or assist women workers. to establish opportunities for women to advance in their careers, the difficulties that they experienced in this study were examined [5].

The majority of firms in the hotel sector employ numerous females in employee ranks and even level entry-level management positions, but there aren't enough in middle and top-level management positions (Jadnanansing et al, 2021). Women make up 56 percent of first-line supervisors in the food service industry in the United States, but they are severely underrepresented at the CEO level, with only four publicly traded restaurant corporations having women in the top position [6]. Another example is the hospitality sector, where a recent report by the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Women in Lodging Forum discovered that even though many women were working in this sector, only 5% of CEO positions and 9% of top positions in U.S. hotels were held by women (Vettori & Nicolaides, 2019).

The hotel industry in Turkey is an important contributor to the economy, but it has been criticized for gender inequality in the workplace. The glass ceiling phenomenon, which refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from advancing to top positions in organizations, has been identified as a significant problem in the hotel industry in Turkey.

Despite efforts to address this issue, there is still a lack of understanding of the experiences of Turkish women working in the hotel industry and the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling phenomenon, particularly in 3-star to 5-star hotels. This study aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring Turkish women's experiences of the glass ceiling phenomenon in the hotel industry, specifically in 3-star to 5-star hotels. The study will identify the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling and evaluate the impact of this phenomenon on Turkish women's career advancement and job satisfaction. The

findings of this study can inform policy and practice in the hotel industry to promote gender diversity and inclusion, which can lead to better performance and productivity.

Building upon previous research, this study investigates a notable research gap which was mentioned in "The Role of Women's Career Expectations (CEs) in Changes in their Career Career Advancement (CA)" article written by Ting Liu [7] that the sample in this article is restricted to women who work from 11 three-star or above east coast Chinese hotels as a result data are mainly from eastern China, which could lead to sampling bias. Regarding limitations is mentioned that in the future, researchers should look at a larger group of women who work in different types of hotels in different parts of the country. Secondly, Liu's study [7] didn't look at other important socio-demographic factors that may have a big effect on women's job advancement and growth, such as their marital status and where they are in life.

Therefore, for different types of hotels, the 3-to-5-star hotels chosen additionally for the different countries Turkey (Antalya) has been chosen for this research.

While the existing research by Liu et al. [7] sheds light on women's career expectations and advancement in the hospitality industry, it is essential to address the limitations associated with sample size and geographical focus. The findings in Liu et al.'s study provide important insights into women's experiences in specific contexts. Yet, a narrow scope may overlook the diverse factors that affect women's career trajectories across different settings and cultures. To further explore this critical area, it is valuable to consider the study titled "How Career Expectations Influence Career Expectations Influence Advancement: evidence from WomenWomen in Hotels" by Zhang et al. [8]. This study delves into the career expectations of female hotel employees and examines the impact of socio-demographic factors—such as age, education level, and ethnicity—on their career advancement. Zhang et al.'s research highlights that these factors can significantly influence the opportunities available to women, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach might obscure the nuanced realities they face. By investigating a broader and more diverse group of women across various hotel types and geographical regions, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges

and opportunities faced by women in their career trajectories. For instance, the experiences of women in luxury hotels may differ substantially from those working in budget accommodations, influenced by differing corporate cultures and job expectations. Such diversity in sample selection would not only enhance the generalizability of findings but also highlight varying industry dynamics that can either facilitate or hinder women's progress. Additionally, consider researchers need to consider the organizational factors that impact women's career progression. Leadership styles within organizations, for example, can play a pivotal role in shaping career outcomes. Transformational leadership, which encourages mentorship and provides growth opportunities, may lead to more favorable advancement for women compared to transactional leadership styles that prioritize strict adherence to rules and procedures. Workplace culture also has a profound influence on career advancement for women. Environments that promote inclusivity, support for work-life balance, and proactive measures against discrimination can significantly empower female employees and enhance their career aspirations. In contrast, workplaces that maintain traditional gender roles or exhibit discriminatory practices can create barriers to advancement, perpetuating systemic inequalities. Furthermore, support mechanisms such as mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and professional development workshops should be examined in light of their impact on women's career advancement. By identifying and promoting such supportive structures, organizations can play a proactive role in leveling the playing field for women in the hospitality industry. This expanded perspective will contribute significantly to addressing the research gap and advancing our knowledge in this field. Future studies need to synthesize qualitative and quantitative approaches, gathering both statistical data and personal narratives from women at various career stages. By doing so, the research community can uncover deeper insights into how to effectively support women in navigating their career paths, ultimately leading to a more equitable and inclusive hospitality industry.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach and Data Collection Methods

The author was constantly exposed to issues that relate to women in the workplace, who lived and worked in an Asian country. Interested identifying their opinions on this widespread occurrence and the factors that prohibit them from being able to apply for top positions, through the lens of the epistemic idea of the glass ceiling phenomena, the objective of this study is to identify obstacles that stand in the way of promotions and leadership positions for female employees in Turkish hotels ranging from three-starstars to five stars.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, an interpretative paradigm was adopted for the research. The thinking behind this was that this method would help shed light on why fewer women than males hold executive positions. This approach enables for the comprehension and interpretation of experience from the individual's point of view [9]. Here, understanding women's experiences from a comprehensive and in-depth standpoint is the main goal, instead of dividing it up into smaller pieces, which is a method that is frequently used in survey-based procedures. To do this, the use of an inductive approach was considered appropriate.

The participants should have the chance to share their opinions and experiences with the fewest restrictions possible. In a similar vein, the qualitative method would foster the development of individualized and nuanced information [10], which was important because the study aimed to understand how Turkish workers felt as they were going through it. The only way to know what matters is to investigate the lives of those whose perspectives we value, thus the strategy or instrument that was used to gather data for this study is a semi-structured, in-depth interview. The questions ask participants about the factors that prohibit them from getting promoted, with a conversational tone regarded as a useful way [11] for study participants to communicate their personal stories.

2.2 Sampling

The participants are female employees in the hotel industry in Turkey (Antalya) where the most well-known hotels are located. will start by asking twelve women regarding most references conducted before then there can be more people to participate based on reaching saturation. [12] The face-to-face interview is expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes and will be conducted over this period. The interview is comprised of a series of brief, typical questions

about interviewee traits, as well as a few open-ended questions that address our research issue. The primary purpose of the open-ended que to encourage the respondents to speak freely and openly [13] about their personal experiences and points of view using their own words. However, the adequate sample for this study ought to be accomplished at the point of saturation, which is reached when there is no longer any fresh information being gathered. During the interviews, extensive notes will be written, and with the participants' agreement, the conversations will be audio-recorded so that later verbatim transcriptions can be created from them. To protect the participants' identities, their names have been changed. The demographic information regarding the respondents is presented in Table 1.

2.3 Ethical Issues

This study underscores the importance of informed consent and confidentiality in research involving human participants. Participants were informed that their voluntary contributions were essential and that they retained the right to withdraw at any stage. The study's purpose was transparently communicated before data collection. Participants provided explicit consent for their involvement, understanding that their input would be used solely for research purposes. Confidentiality measures were rigorously upheld to prevent power bias, ensuring that no comments would be shared externally. Personal information was not collected, and

participant identities were anonymized using codes during data presentation.

2.4 Guide for Interviews

A script, which was proposed to unify the interview requirements, will be utilized entirely to direct the interviews; however, it has been determined to provide the interviewees sufficient leeway for them to construct their speeches. Recording to literature review these questions will be asked [14-21]:

(i)   The interviewee's professional path (education, work history, departments they had worked in, expectations, and why they wanted this job: their motivation)
(ii) The interviewee's life history (topics such as marital status, balancing work and personal priorities, children, and family attitudes on women's roles in society)
(iii) Interviewees' perceptions of the glass ceiling in the hotel industry (barriers, reasons, and the biggest issue in their eyes that keeps them from holding the highest positions.

2.5 Data Analysis Methods

By Braun and Clarke (2006): thematic analysis in six phases, as described in Table 2, has been adopted for the current study [22-29].

Table 1. Descriptive details of the respondents

Participants	Age	Position	Educational Qualification	Work Experience	Marital status
Najme	42	Financial department	Master	12 years	Married
Aysan	31	F&B Waitress	Bachelor	6 years	single
Aynaz	29	Marketing and Advertisement	Master	7 years	single
Jamile	48	Senior Accountant	Bachelor	19 years	Married
Elma	34	Banquet Hall	Diploma	8 years	Married
Maede	28	Operator	Bachelor	8 years	single
Atyie	27	Barista	Bachelor	9 years	single
Fatima	33	Waitress of Restaurant	Bachelor	7 years	single
Ayshin	30	HR	Bachelor	5 years	Married
Niloo	32	Reservation Department	Bachelor	9 years	Married
Norah	39	Central Kitchen	Diploma	17 years	Married
Nahal	28	Marketing/ Social Media	Bachelor	10	single

Table 2. Thematic analysis in six phases

Step 1: Become familiar with the data
Step 2: Generate initial codes
Step 3: Search for themes
Step 4: Review themes
Step 5: Define themes,
Step 6: Write-up

It has been decided to adopt the approach of thematic analysis because it is very effective for the aim of gleaning insights from actual events and experiences [30], and it also goes into additional detail regarding the social context that is involved with the interpretation of these experiences.

The first thing is need to do is familiarise ourselves with our data. Before analyzing specific things, it is vital to have a comprehensive overview of all the data collected. This involves transcribing audio, going through the text, collecting first notes, and looking through the data in general to become familiar with it. Step two: In this stage, we begin to organize our data meaningfully and methodically. The process of coding breaks down large amounts of data into more manageable units of meaning which, also referred to as "open coding," entails locating the text's analytical components and giving each one a code. The researcher will look over each interview's transcript and underline anything that stands out as particularly important or intriguing. It can add more codes as going walk through the text, and they will be highlighted along with any phrases or sentences that match the ones that have already been added. Before continuing with the remaining transcripts, our codes will be compared, discussed, and adjusted. It is essential to add that MAXQDA software will be used for data analysis which helps identify themes and coding [31-43].

A theme, as previously stated, is a pattern that highlights something important or intriguing about the data or study question. Step three: in this particular instance, we investigate the codes, and several of them were grouped under the same category, we go back through the codes that we've developed, search for commonalities among them, and start formulating ideas for themes. During this stage, several codes into a single overarching concept will be combined. Additionally, at this point, we may determine that some of our codes are insufficiently specific or not pertinent enough; for instance, because they do not appear very frequently in the data, these codes may be eliminated from further consideration. This research paper aims to identify relevant themes that can yield valuable insights from the data that are being analyzed to achieve goals. After this stage, the codes will be arranged into overarching themes that seem to convey something particular about the study issues.

Step four: During this phase, it is required to go back over the preliminary ideas that were found in Step 3 and build, tweak, and expand upon them. Are they logical? We must check that each of our themes is an accurate and helpful depiction of the data. In the next step, go back to the data set and check to see if there is anything missed by comparing it to the themes, to see if these themes are present in the data. In addition, check to see if these themes are indeed present in the data. Step five: Identifying and giving names to various themes, the final step in refining the themes is to identify the core of what each topic is about, which is the goal of this step. To define a theme, must first articulate what is meant by that term and then determine how that theme contributes to our overall understanding of the data. Step six: Finally, conclude by discussing our findings and demonstrating how this approach provides a solution to our research issue [44-50].

✈

Excerpt from an interview	Codes

✈

Codes	Themes

3. RESULTS OF SUMMARY

3.1 Organizational Barriers

A pattern that occurs within the workplace and its structures, is known as "institutional discrimination." Institutional discrimination is systemic and is rooted in the policies, laws, and procedures of the organization and is designed to keep individuals or groups of individuals subordinate and recognizable. This may be intentional or unintentional and is present in the organizational design itself, and may also include recruitment and recruitment practices in the workplace. This includes systems that may not be intentionally discriminatory. But their effect is the exclusion of women and members of minority groups. These barriers include corporate environments that alienate and isolate members of minority groups.

As mentioned in the theoretical foundations, the glass ceiling refers to those factors that make it more difficult to have career advancement. These factors are within the organization. The issue of women's employment and their career advancements is complex and multidimensional and cannot be summarized in a single set of problems, including the fact that there are problems in the workplace. Recognizing these problems can also be a basis for addressing them and reaching favorable conditions for women. Before specifying the details of this section, it is necessary to explain that in addition to the official space provided by the mission statement, vision, upstream documents, annual budgets, organizational plans, etc. There is an informal space. Of course, there is a lot of information about the informal atmosphere of the organization and it is one of the old issues in management, but it is necessary to mention that in this research, the organization is meant to have activities such as chats, encounters, personal interactions, non-work planning with friends and colleagues, and generally a set of actions that people take in dealing with each other, and these actions are not mentioned in their job descriptions or instructions, etc.

While non-participatory management can prove effective in specific contexts, such as facilitating swift decision-making and ensuring clear top-down directives, it also carries inherent drawbacks. Often referred to as autocratic management, this leadership style centers decision-making authority primarily on the manager or leader. Under this approach, decisions are made unilaterally, with minimal employee involvement. Consequently, this lack of engagement can hinder creativity, and innovation, and, notably, disproportionately affect women within the organization.

The organizational challenges faced by women, particularly in male-dominated workplaces, are deeply concerning. Women often find themselves responsible for critical tasks, such as research and marketing, yet without receiving the same recognition or bonuses as their male counterparts. Instances where supervisors deliberately undermine a woman's capabilities to prove their inadequacy are disheartening. The suggestion to replace a competent female employee with a male counterpart due to perceived difficulties in obeying a woman reflects deeply ingrained biases. Intentionally causing financial losses to a female employee further exacerbates the situation.

Despite possessing superior abilities, women often lack decision-making power and struggle to attain higher positions. Gender inequality extends beyond the workplace and permeates other aspects of life, including education. It is heartening to hear about successful female managers who defy stereotypes and excel in their roles. These women serve as role models, proving that gender should never limit professional achievement. The emotional toll of facing humiliation and negative comments from managers and supervisors is immense [51-59].

Women often carry heavier responsibilities, yet their efforts go unrecognized. The gendered attitude toward your position, especially when calculating salaries and handling invoices, is unjust. Efforts to build friendly relationships with colleagues are met with resistance, as men still prefer male leadership. Your desire to work as a receptionist remains unfulfilled due to rigid prerequisites. Seven years of waiting (Code10, Q3) without progress can be demoralizing. In summary, these organizational challenges underscore the need for systemic change. Women's achievements often go unnoticed, with credit sometimes stolen by higher-ups and they are excluded from critical training programs which can affect their advancement. Organizations must actively address gender bias, promote equal opportunities, and recognize the valuable contributions of women. Only then can we create workplaces where everyone thrives, regardless of gender.

The hospitality industry, despite its dynamic and diverse workforce, grapples with persistent gender disparities, particularly concerning women's career advancement into leadership positions. The experiences shared by women within hotel organizations shed light on several critical issues which is Recruitment Biases and Gendered Assumptions: The hiring process often reflects deeply ingrained biases. In some cases, managers hesitate to hire women, assuming that family responsibilities—such as caring for sick children—will interfere with work commitments. The belief that women are inherently emotional decision-makers perpetuates stereotypes, hindering their chances of securing managerial roles.

The Mirage of Experience-Based Success: Initially, the belief that experience directly correlates with success prevails. However, the hotel environment reveals a different truth. Nepotism often dictates promotions, sidelining merit-based considerations.

Women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions. The scarcity of female managers and supervisors within hotels perpetuates the notion that women cannot lead effectively. The treadmill analogy (Code6, Q3) aptly captures the frustration felt by hardworking women who strive for progress but encounter barriers at every turn.

Hotels must recognize the immense potential of their female workforce. Providing training classes, mentorship programs, and clear pathways for career progression is essential. Addressing gender biases, promoting equal opportunities, and fostering an inclusive environment are critical steps toward dismantling barriers and empowering women in leadership roles.

3.2 Social Challenges

These barriers can interfere with job performance and employer assessments. For example, presuppositions linked to gender are consistently entrenched in traditional views on the role of women in society. Cultural and racial biases are rooted in the values and established norms of the majority. A combination of personal, organizational, and social factors creates barriers to women. Understanding these three categories increases our understanding of this issue and plays an important role in designing solutions and laying the groundwork for the success of women as half of society.

Regarding some social challenges that interviews faced in the hotel, I can mention gender stereotypes persist, influencing job assignments and career trajectories. Certain roles are still perceived as inherently suited for men or women. For instance, despite an engineering background (Code1, Q4), a female employee may find herself assigned to office responsibilities rather than project-related tasks. These stereotypes limit opportunities and perpetuate gender-based divisions within the workplace.

The promotion process often reveals disparities in how male and female employees are evaluated. Instances arise where male newcomers swiftly ascend the organizational ladder, while highly competent female colleagues remain overlooked. A striking example is the talented female chef (Code6.Q5) who was bypassed for a supervisor position in favor of a male counterpart. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as the "glass ceiling," impedes women's upward mobility and underscores the need for equitable career advancement.

Gender biases extend to decision-making processes. Women's contributions are sometimes undervalued due to prevailing stereotypes. Despite their precision and professionalism, female employees may find their work overshadowed by their male counterparts. The belief that men's work is inherently more valuable persists, perpetuating an unequal distribution of recognition and rewards. For instance, they may face restrictions in entering maintenance departments or reviewing cost analyses. Additionally, their opinions and expertise are often disregarded, reinforcing a patriarchal approach to leadership. The reluctance to consider women's perspectives hinders organizational progress and stifles innovation.

The role of motherhood often clashes with professional aspirations for women. While many women desire to express themselves and make progress in their careers, societal expectations place immense pressure on them to prioritize childcare and household responsibilities.

Husbands, influenced by traditional gender roles (Code8, Q7), may discourage their wives from working after childbirth. The belief that women's primary duty lies in raising children perpetuates the notion that their salaries are unnecessary. Even in educated households, the burden of

household duties disproportionately falls on women. The expectation that they should manage both work and domestic responsibilities creates a challenging balancing act.

Cultural norms and religious beliefs significantly impact women's choices. In some societies, the idea of a "good woman" revolves around her commitment to family life rather than her career.

The stigma associated with women pursuing careers outside the home persists. It restricts their autonomy and perpetuates gender inequality.

In the context of hotel organizations, the issue of gender equality remains a persistent challenge. Despite women's substantial contributions, they often find themselves in a precarious position— performing tasks that span multiple roles while receiving inadequate recognition and compensation. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the perception of women as the "second sex," perpetuating unequal treatment. Simone de Beauvoir's concept of the "second sex" underscores the historical and cultural subjugation of women [59-70].

In organizational contexts, this paradigm manifests as a lack of equal rights, limited career advancement, and unequal pay for women. Despite performing tasks equivalent to those of senior managers, women often face stagnant salaries.

The perception that women's work is less valuable persists, perpetuating the cycle of inequality.

Organizations must actively address these disparities. Transparent salary structures, performance evaluations, and promotions are essential.

Recognizing women's efforts through fair compensation and opportunities for growth is crucial.

Leadership should challenge traditional gender norms and foster an inclusive environment where women's contributions are valued equally.

3.3 Individual Challenges

Today, women, especially working women, have to be successful in meeting both expectations and expectations for the job, as well as meeting family expectations and managing home and family affairs. Consequently, working women find themselves exposed to occupational and family expectations and natural needs

The job role and the role that the social and cultural system expects of men overlap to a large extent. A man is in charge of the economic administration of the family, and to do so he must work long hours a day to meet the economic needs of his family; if the employed women have their traditional role, they must also accept job responsibilities and perform the duties associated with it. In these situations, married working women generally have multiple roles that require a lot of time, attention, and concentration, making it difficult for them to balance work and life. Individual and social barriers are deeply intertwined, leading to a lack of self-confidence, motivation, and aspiration. These barriers are usually driven by public perceptions and stereotypes about women and minorities and then internalized by members of these groups. One of the consequences of this may be the formation of a kind of inferiority complex.

All of this means that, apart from organizational factors, other factors determine the success or failure of a job, and this is due to the complexity of today's society. It is no longer easy to integrate life into different parts such as work and family. because the results and actions of each section affect the others.

In the interviews, some cases had similar views in some respects. The delicate equilibrium between professional responsibilities and family life remains a formidable challenge for women within hotel organizations. As they navigate the demands of work and home, several critical issues emerge like "The unseen burden of motherhood: Women, particularly those with children, grapple with immense pressure to balance their roles as caregivers and professionals. The expectation that they seamlessly transition from workplace productivity to household management leaves little room for personal growth or self-care. The absence of time for personal pursuits or leisure activities compounds the strain, leaving women feeling overwhelmed and isolated.

The daily grind—commuting, working, and sometimes putting in overtime—leaves little

energy or resources for anything beyond basic needs. Prioritization revolves around meeting immediate financial requirements, leaving little room for savings or personal investments. The hotel environment, especially in departments like housekeeping and Food and Beverage, often disregards the unique challenges faced by women with children.

The transition from a small town to a bustling hotel setting necessitates adaptation. Language barriers—such as not knowing English initially—expose them to ridicule and erode self-confidence. The struggle to find their voice within the workplace further compounds their challenges. Women often find themselves in a precarious position when addressing workplace challenges. Fear of judgment and the need to navigate male-dominated hierarchies create anxiety. Instead of collaborative problem-solving, reporting issues to managers becomes the norm, perpetuating a cycle of stress.

Confidence erosion is common, especially when faced with male supervisors. The fear of being unable to defend oneself or articulate valid points leads to frequent apologies. The struggle to assert one's abilities and contributions becomes an uphill battle. The hotel industry, while dynamic and bustling, harbors gender-specific challenges that disproportionately affect women. These individual struggles intersect with organizational dynamics, cultural norms, and personal confidence. Firstly, neurological differences play a role—women's brains react more intensely to stressors, impacting their emotional well-being. Hormonal influences further contribute; estrogen levels rise and fall, affecting stress reactivity. Secondly, the perception of stress differs; women may perceive it more readily, leading to heightened anxiety. Thirdly, the erosion of self-confidence occurs due to language barriers and cultural adjustments. Lastly, women's efforts may go unnoticed or be undervalued, affecting performance evaluations and career progression. The struggle to assert one's abilities and contributions becomes an uphill battle [71-80].

Table 3. Summary of findings

Research question	Interview questions provided for participants	Common themes (subthemes)
RQ1. What are the experiences of Turkish women working in 3-star to 5-star hotels regarding the glass ceiling phenomenon?	Q1. Can you explain your personal experiences regarding career advancement in the Turkish 3–5-star hotel industry? How many years have you been in the hotel, where have you started and what is your position now? Q3. What are the main challenges you have faced while seeking promotion in your previous or current workplace?	• Non-participatory manager style • Neglecting Women's Skills • Time Doubts: Women's Task Completion
RQ2. What are the factors that contribute to the glass ceiling phenomenon in the hotel industry in Turkey?	Q 2. How do you see the role of training and professional development in overcoming obstacles to the career advancement of Turkish women in the hotel industry? Q 4. Have you personally witnessed institutional or structural barriers that hinder the career advancement of Turkish women in your organization or industry in general? Q 5. How would you describe your level of confidence? Q 7. Have you noticed certain social or cultural factors that may hinder	• Lack of attention to women in organizational training • Women's Lack of Risk-taking & desire to improve their position • Lack of support from the leader of the organization for women • Lack of respect and support for women's rights in the organization

Research question	Interview questions provided for participants	Common themes (subthemes)
	the advancement of Turkish women in the hotel?	
RQ3. What is the impact of the glass ceiling on Turkish women's career advancement in the hotel industry?	Q 6. Do the responsibilities of your marital status affect your work? Have you had trouble striking a balance between work and personal priorities? Q 8. What were your family members' attitudes and level of support when you expressed your passion for pursuing your current career, and how did their support (or lack of support) affect your career path in the hotel? Q 9. How do you define the concept of the glass ceiling when it comes to the career advancement of Turkish women in hospitality?	• Responsibilities pertinent to being a spouse and mother • Rejection of the culture of women working outside the home Patriarchy of society

4. DISCUSSION

This study explores the challenges faced by Turkish women in the hotel industry, focusing on the glass ceiling phenomenon. Female employees consistently identify Organizational and cultural barriers as the primary obstacles which is also mentioned earlier in [12] research that cultural norms introduce additional obstacles for women seeking promotion to managerial positions. These norms can perpetuate gender-based biases and hinder women's advancement within organizational hierarchies. Negative perceptions toward hospitality careers persist in Turkey society, leading to a reluctance among Turkish women to enter male-dominated industries like hotels. Increasing education and awareness contribute to positive shifts in mindset within Turkish families, emphasizing women's workforce participation and advancement. This study highlights the pivotal role of gender stereotyping as a formidable barrier to Turkish women's career advancement. Specifically, male counterparts in Turkey exert a detrimental influence on the professional growth of Turkish women which was highlighted by (Kalino et al., 2021) that most male-dominated countries cause gender stereotypes. Moreover, within Asian cultural contexts, females are particularly vulnerable to stereotypes, resulting in their exclusion from career development opportunities. These pervasive stereotypes contribute to unfavorable perceptions, ultimately impeding women's trajectories in the workforce. These results link to other studies by (Oprah et al., 2020) Cultural and religious beliefs interact with gender norms in nuanced ways. These norms shape societal expectations and behaviors related to gender roles which mentioned these discriminatory attitudes toward women caused a lot of gaps such as the pay gap.

Work-family conflict emerges as a significant impediment to Turkish women aspiring to attain executive positions within the tourism industry was mentioned in a prior study by (Musharraf and al-Bakri, 2021) the inability to balance work and home duties prevents them from continuing in higher positions. This challenge primarily stems from the demanding working environment characterized by anti-social hours, prolonged workdays, and stressful conditions. This finding is consistent with earlier studies in that he mentioned hotels have difficult conditions in terms of responsibilities and time management which cause work-life balance issues (Sobaih, A.E, 2023). Consequently, women encounter difficulties in securing family support, particularly in Asian countries like Turkey. Similarly, (Batara et al.2024) highlight the disproportionate burden faced by female managers in the Philippines due to societal norms. Balancing domestic responsibilities alongside work obligations remains a formidable challenge. Furthermore, executive women often encounter obstacles in participating in events outside regular office hours due to family and domestic responsibilities which is linked with the Preference theory mentioned earlier [81-84].

The impact of social influence on Turkish women's ability to break through the glass ceiling

is significant. The findings is in agreement with [85] that traditional gender norms perpetuate the belief that men should serve as primary financial providers (commonly referred to as "breadwinners") which points about deciding different social roles about sexes. Conversely, women are often expected to assume predominant household responsibilities, including childcare and caring for parents which was mentioned by (Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019) earlier that it seems in Asian culture that being mother and household duties must be their priority. Consequently, societal expectations encourage women to exhibit traits like shyness, nurturance, and compassion. Despite family support, Turkish women pursuing careers in the hotel industry may encounter societal challenges that undermine their progress. These findings link to social role theory that explains how women grapple with stereotypes arising from their multifaceted social roles. The presence of the glass ceiling in women's leadership roles can be attributed to the misalignment between societal expectations and their actual roles. The interview findings underscore the pivotal role of a robust organizational culture in reshaping societal norms related to gender roles and promoting women's career advancement. Achieving this transformation involves fostering gender equality within the workplace and acknowledging women's achievements. Furthermore, organizations that implement mentoring programs, leadership courses, and networking initiatives empower women to overcome barriers and ultimately break through the glass ceiling. Existing research on organizational culture [86] reinforces the understanding that the prevailing cultural context within an organization significantly impacts employee job satisfaction, morale, and engagement, and challenges in attaining higher-level responsibilities beyond general management.

Earlier studies (Kilic, 2020) have consistently demonstrated that the existence of the glass ceiling fosters a hostile work environment, leading to unhappiness, anxiety, and exhaustion among female employees. Addressing these systemic barriers is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for women. Furthermore, [87-96] underscores the perpetuation of male-dominated organizational cultures, where women are excluded from informal networks [97] This exclusion adversely affects female executives, limiting their access to social capital and hindering their ability to find

mentors and receive essential guidance for career advancement. Interestingly, some interviewees acknowledged that organizational culture influences the selection of women for managerial positions, aligning with the (Rizwan, 2020) findings. The concept of "queen bee behavior" emerges—where women in high-level roles inadvertently perpetuate gender disparities within the organization suggesting that women who face gender discrimination may conform to prevailing stereotypes, sometimes displaying hostility toward junior female colleagues which is linked to Nwokonko [98] studies. Breaking through the glass ceiling demands active job engagement from women. When they actively participate in their work, they not only experience appreciation but also increase their chances of being considered for higher positions. However, several factors impede job involvement. These include an unwelcoming work environment, inadequate skill development, limited access to training opportunities, and a dearth of networking and mentorship programs also, [99] women faced barriers to career advancement due to insufficient mentorship and limited training opportunities, encountering metaphorical 'glass ceiling. These challenges often discourage women from fully engaging in their roles, hindering their career advancement. Moreover, networking and active participation in social activities are critical attributes for achieving and sustaining senior managerial positions. Yet, cultural norms contribute to Turkish women's hesitancy in networking with male colleagues. This aligns with the interaction theory, where limited engagement in crucial networking activities impedes women's success in top managerial roles.

The attainment of managerial positions necessitates a specific skill set and a distinct set of traits. Notably, research by Schein highlights the prevailing gender stereotypes. Women are often perceived as caring and reserved, while effective leadership qualities—such as independence, assertiveness, and confidence—are more readily associated with men. This contrast in perceived traits undermines the recognition of women as capable leaders and perpetuates the "Think Manager, Think Male" mindset. Consequently, men in higher positions tend to favor male candidates for critical roles, perpetuating bias against women in selection and advancement processes. Moreover, individual barriers, such as self-confidence and interpersonal skills, hinder Turkish women's

promotion to upper-level positions, as reported by interviewees.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDA-TION

The issue of women's management is a significant global concern, drawing attention from experts across various fields, including sociology and organizational behavior. International organizations, like the United Nations, emphasize that gender equality is a fundamental human right and crucial for sustainable development. The concept of the "glass ceiling" illustrates the invisible barriers women face in advancing to management roles, often due to subtle biases within organizational cultures that favor men. Despite the acknowledgment of women's capabilities, entrenched gender attitudes persist, leading to systemic biases in hiring, promotions, and workplace dynamics, which hinder women's career progression. These challenges are compounded by societal expectations, work-life balance issues, and the intersectionality of race and socioeconomic status, which create unique barriers for different groups of women. The study highlights the need for societal change in perceptions of women's roles to enable their growth and participation in leadership. It emphasizes the importance of dismantling stereotypes and promoting gender equity within organizational frameworks, including recruitment and promotion practices. Researchers identify three primary barriers to women's upward mobility: social and cultural attitudes, organizational constraints, and individual psychological factors. To address these issues, the study suggests utilizing mass media to promote acceptance of women in managerial positions and implementing merit-based recruitment practices. Additionally, organizations should foster diversity through mentoring and training programs, gender sensitivity training, and family-friendly policies to create a supportive work environment. By addressing these barriers, companies can improve women's representation in management and, consequently, benefit society as a whole.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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