Gender Inequality in the Aviation Industry: A Comparative Analysis on the Glass Ceiling Syndrome

Havacılık Sektöründe Cinsiyet Eşitsizliği: Cam Tavan Sendromu Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz

Dorlion Journal

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Abstract

Today, career development is among the important issues in terms of human resources. Career development can be defined as the process carried out by the human resources on behalf of their employees in order to have qualified human capital. When looking into careers, we find a topic known as "career problems," which is the subject of scientific inquiry. The glass ceiling syndrome is at the top of these problems. By comparing the representation rates of women in top management of East and West-based airline companies, this study assesses the current situation of the glass ceiling syndrome. While the female representation rate in airline companies in the ASEAN region is 28%, this rate is 27% in Western-based companies. This situation shows that women face significant obstacles in accessing leadership positions. Female representation rates' being lower in airline companies based in the West reveals that gender equality cannot be achieved even in developed countries. The study emphasizes that increasing the proportion of women in top management is important for both social equality and institutional success. It is recommended that strategic steps be taken to ensure greater participation of women in leadership positions.

Keywords: Management and Organization, Career, Career Problems, Glass Ceiling Syndrome.

Öz

Günümüzde kariyer geliştirme, insan kaynakları açısından önemli konular arasındadır. Kariyer geliştirme, insan kaynaklarının çalışanları adına nitelikli insan sermayesine sahip olmak için gerçekleştirdiği süreç olarak tanımlanabilir. Kariyerlere baktığımızda, bilimsel araştırmanın konusu olan "kariyer sorunları" olarak bilinen bir konu ile karşılaşıyoruz. Cam tavan sendromu bu sorunların başında geliyor. Bu çalışmada, Doğu ve Batı merkezli havayolu şirketlerinin üst düzey yönetimlerinde kadınların temsil oranları karşılaştırılarak, cam tavan sendromunun mevcut durumu değerlendirilmektedir. ASEAN bölgesindeki havayolu şirketle-

rinde kadın temsil oranı %28 iken, Batı merkezli şirketlerde bu oran %27'dir. Bu durum, kadınların liderlik pozisyonlarına erişimde önemli engellerle karşılaştığını göstermektedir. Batı merkezli havayolu şirketlerinde kadın temsil oranlarının düşük olması, cinsiyet eşitliğinin gelişmiş ülkelerde bile sağlanamadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, üst düzey yönetimde kadın oranının artırılmasının hem toplumsal eşitlik hem de kurumsal başarı için önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Kadınların liderlik pozisyonlarında daha fazla yer almasını sağlamak için stratejik adımlar atılması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yönetim ve Organizasyon, Kariyer, Kariyer Sorunları, Cam Tavan Sendromu.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is considered one of the most important global development issues of the 21st century. More than just a moral and ethical imperative, it is also a fundamental prerequisite for economic growth, social cohesion and innovation. In the business world in particular, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making mechanisms prevents institutions from fully realizing their potential. This situation is characterized by the invisible barriers that prevent women from advancing in their careers, known as the "glass ceiling syndrome." This syndrome is a phenomenon that prevents women from reaching senior positions despite their merit and experience, often resulting from subconscious biases and structural barriers. The aviation industry has historically been a male-dominated field. In addition to cockpit and technical roles, female representation in management positions has been quite low. This may be a reflection of cultural norms, traditional hierarchical structures and gender stereotypes in the industry. However, today, the importance of diversity and inclusion is increasingly understood in all industries, including aviation. Diverse perspectives lead to more innovative solutions, stronger decision-making processes and ultimately higher financial performance. Therefore, increasing female representation in airline senior management is not only a matter of equality, but also a strategic necessity to ensure competitive advantage.

Gender equality has become an important issue within the framework of sustainable development goals today. The adequate representation of women in top management positions in the business world is not only a requirement of social justice, but also plays a critical role in increasing corporate performance and innovation. However, invisible barriers called the glass ceiling syndrome (Akşit Aşık, 2014; Al- Manasra, 2013; Aranha, Aquinas - Saldanha, 2019; Baumgartner - Schneider, 2010) make it difficult for women to reach top management positions. This situation becomes more evident especially in sectors with traditional and hierarchical structures such as airlines. In this study, the representation of women in top management of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and Western-based airline companies was examined and the current situation of these companies was evaluated in the context of gender equality. This study is based on approaches that address gender inequality theories and structural and cultural barriers in organizations in order to understand and analyze the obstacles women face in their career development. In particular, the concept of glass ceiling syndrome has been examined in light of these theoretical frameworks. In this way, the current situation regarding the representation of women in

senior management in the aviation sector and the potential obstacles they face have been analyzed in detail.The reason for focusing on the glass ceiling syndrome in the article is that this syndrome is a current and universal career problem. The fact that it involves invisible and uncertain but difficult to overcome barriers that prevent women from accessing senior management positions despite their merit and experience requires special examination of the subject. In addition, the low rate of female representation in historically male-dominated sectors such as aviation suggests that the glass ceiling syndrome is more pronounced in this area. Finally, the fact that increasing female representation in senior management is a strategic necessity not only for social equality but also for institutional success, innovation and the acquisition of broad perspectives is another important reason for focusing on this syndrome. The aim of this study is to better understand the dimensions of the glass ceiling syndrome in the airline sector and to offer solutions to overcome the obstacles to the representation of women in top management. It is a necessity for airline companies to raise their current status regarding gender equality to more contemporary levels, not only for the protection of women's rights, but also for institutional sustainability and social progress. In this context, it is aimed that the findings of the study will guide the relevant stakeholders and raise awareness about gender equality.

The main contributions and originality of this study to the field can be emphasized with the following points:

Sectoral Focus and Comparative Analysis: Our study provides a unique perspective by examining a universal issue such as the glass ceiling syndrome in the aviation sector, which is traditionally a male-dominated field. In particular, the comparative analysis conducted between airline companies based in the East (ASEAN region) and the West is of great importance in terms of revealing that gender inequality is a global problem despite geographical and cultural differences and that even in Western companies considered developed, female representation rates are low. This comparison offers a rare and in-depth perspective compared to similar studies in the literature.

Quantitative Determination of the Current Situation: The study provides a current 'snapshot' to the field by providing concrete, numerical data on the current representation rates of women in senior management in the aviation sector. This situation constitutes a starting point and foundation for future qualitative or more in-depth quantitative research.

Implications for Policy and Practice: The findings are more than just an academic finding; they highlight the need for strategic steps for airline companies and human resources managers to ensure greater participation of women in leadership positions. This provides important implications for practical applications as well as the theoretical contribution of the study.

Ethical Statement: This study was conducted in full compliance with all applicable ethical standards. The information and findings presented in this article have been reported

in accordance with the principles of honesty and transparency. Scientific integrity and objectivity were maintained throughout all stages of the research. Furthermore, all sources used in the study have been properly cited. Since the research is based on a literature review and document analysis, ethical committee approval was not required.

2. THE CONCEPT OF CAREER, CAREER PROBLEMS AND GLASS CEILING SYNDROME

Career can be defined as *"a process that restructures the job position and increases the motivation of employees in direct proportion to the work experience and activities an employee has gained throughout his/her work life"* (Aktaş, 2015). Today, significant changes in organizational and managerial structures are shaped by the emergence of new approaches such as network organizations, organizational downsizing and lean organizational structures. These changes, with the influence of globalization and technological advances, have created significant effects on the career development of individuals and have brought new problems to the agenda. These problems can be conceptualized as "career problems" and can arise from both individual and organizational factors (Bozkurt, 2019). Examples of these career challenges include career plateau, dual-career couples, moonlighting, dual-careerism, and the glass ceiling syndrome. The glass ceiling syndrome has garnered significant attention and remains a focal point of contemporary research. Numerous studies have demonstrated that this phenomenon is prevalent almost everywhere in the world (Aranha, Aquinas - Saldanha, 2019; Al- Manasra, 2013; Carnes, Morrissey - Geller, 2008; Eiser - Morahan, 2006; Baumgartner - Schneider, 2010; Buckalew, Konstantinopoulos, Russell - El-Sherbini, 2012). The active participation of women in business life and the improvements in their education levels have made this subject more popular. This concept was used in management and organization literature in 1986 by Wall Street Journal reporters Hymowitz and Schellhardt to define the factors that prevent women from advancing in their professional lives in America. Later in 1987, Morrison and his friends used this concept in their book and developed a new perspective on the positions of women in corporate firms (Uysal - Ak, 2020).

Glass ceiling syndrome refers to the situation that makes it impossible for women to rise to top management positions within an organization simply because they are women (Akşit Aşık, 2014). Glass ceiling syndrome is an effective method used to examine the inequality between women and men working in organizations. According to this method, women cannot receive the promotions and advancements they deserve due to artificial and uncertain obstacles that are put in their way (İpçioğlu, Eğilmez - Şen, 2018). These barriers may be social, cultural and individual, as well as attitudinal, behavioral and structural. Research confirms the existence and effects of these barriers (Aranha, Aquinas - Saldanha, 2019; Al- Manasra, 2013). These barriers are artificial and uncertain, and they are also very strong barriers that are very difficult to overcome. Women sometimes make an effort to overcome these obstacles in their careers. However, it should not be forgotten that these barriers are not ones that women can overcome alone. The solution to this is more under the

responsibility of the organization's management (Uysal - Ak, 2020; Kossek, 2023; Mahmoud - Abdul Wahab, 2023; Thompson - Taylor, 2024).

The glass ceiling syndrome has been the focus of academic research and public debate for decades as a significant phenomenon that hinders women's career development in the business world. This syndrome is characterized by invisible and often ambiguous barriers that limit women's access to senior management positions despite their merit and experience. Extensive studies have been conducted in the literature on the different dimensions and causes of the glass ceiling syndrome (Al- Manasra, 2013; Aranha, Aquinas - Saldanha, 2019; Baumgartner - Schneider, 2010). The structural barriers of the glass ceiling have been examined first. These barriers can arise from deficiencies in organizational culture, human resources policies, promotion processes, and networking systems. For example, the existence of a traditionally male-dominated culture in some companies can lead to women feeling excluded or unsuited for leadership roles. In addition, a lack of transparency in determining career paths and applying promotion criteria can make it difficult for women to obtain the opportunities they deserve. Informal networks and lack of mentoring are also important factors that prevent women from reaching senior management levels. The fact that men often have larger and stronger professional networks can limit women from being aware of important opportunities or finding support through these networks. Secondly, the individual and psychological dimensions of the glass ceiling syndrome have also been addressed. Women's self-perceptions, societal expectations of leadership roles, and psychological factors such as the "imposter syndrome" can affect their career development. Some studies show that women believe they need to have more qualifications and experience than men to be promoted, and therefore take fewer risks or put themselves forward less. In addition, gender stereotypes can negatively affect how women are perceived in leadership positions. Women leaders who are seen as aggressive or assertive may face negative judgments compared to their male counterparts. This can cause women to limit their leadership behavior and not reach their full potential.

Thirdly, the effects of the glass ceiling syndrome on demographic and cultural differences have been investigated. It has been observed that there are significant differences in the severity and manifestations of the glass ceiling across countries and sectors. For example, although more progress has been made in gender equality in Western countries, this does not mean that the glass ceiling syndrome has completely disappeared. In developing countries, women may face more obstacles to their participation in the workforce and their rise to leadership positions due to the influence of social and cultural norms. It has been stated that these obstacles are more pronounced in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as the aviation sector. Finally, strategies and interventions to break the glass ceiling syndrome are also widely covered in the literature. Approaches such as developing diversity and inclusion policies, creating transparent promotion processes, offering mentoring and sponsorship programs, providing flexible work arrangements, and providing unconscious bias

training are among the main solutions suggested to eliminate the glass ceiling. The effectiveness of these strategies is critical both in supporting women's career development and in improving corporate performance.

2.1. More Detailed Examination of the Dimensions of Glass Ceiling Obstacles

In the literature, comprehensive studies on the different dimensions and causes of the glass ceiling syndrome can be mentioned (Al-Hadded - Kotb, 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Structural Obstacles: Obstacles arising from deficiencies in organizational culture, human resources policies, promotion processes and network systems can be detailed. It can be stated that traditionally male-dominated cultures can lead to women feeling unsuited to leadership roles or being excluded. It can be explained how the lack of transparency in determining career paths and applying promotion criteria makes it difficult for women to obtain the opportunities they deserve. It can be added that informal networks and lack of mentoring are important factors that prevent women from reaching upper management levels, and how the fact that men generally have larger and stronger professional networks can limit women from being aware of important opportunities or finding support through these networks (Al-Hadded - Kotb, 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Individual and Psychological Dimensions: It can be explained how women's self-perceptions, social expectations regarding leadership roles and psychological factors such as the "imposter syndrome" affect their career development. It can be emphasized that some studies show that women believe that they need to have more qualifications and experience than men to be promoted and therefore take less risks or put themselves forward less. It can be added that gender stereotypes can negatively affect the perception of women in leadership positions and that women leaders who appear aggressive or assertive may face negative judgments compared to their male colleagues (Huang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

3. THE METHODOLOGY

In this study, the number of women and men on the boards of directors/management/executive of airline companies in ASEAN countries (Myanmar National Airlines has not been added to the table as no reliable information about its top management could be found on its official website) and nine Western countries (in return for nine ASEAN countries) have been examined and compared with each other. For this purpose, the total numbers of people on the boards of directors, the number of men, the number of women and the ratio of women in the total have been shown on a table. Boards of directors are the highest executive positions in a company. Therefore, the ratio of women in these top management positions can provide an idea about whether women in these countries are exposed to the glass ceiling syndrome. This method can be obtained with simple mathematical calculations, but it is considered an effective method as it is a simple and easily understandable model rather than complex statistical models. Therefore, everyone who

examines this research data, even from different disciplines, will be able to easily understand this syndrome that women face in their careers.

The methodology used in this study is designed within the framework of a comparative analysis and focuses specifically on quantitative data collection and analysis. The research aims to reveal regional differences and similarities of the glass ceiling syndrome by covering the airline sector in both Eastern (ASEAN) and Western geographies. This approach not only identifies the current situation but also provides the opportunity to indirectly assess the potential effects of cultural and economic context on gender equality.

3.1. Data Collection

The data collection process was based on information obtained from the official websites and publicly available annual reports of airline companies in both regions. In particular, the gender distribution of people in the board of directors, executive board and senior management positions was examined in detail. The principle of reliability was taken as the basis during the data collection phase, and companies with unconfirmed or contradictory information were not included in the analysis (e.g. Myanmar National Airlines). This approach aimed to increase the validity and reliability of the research. The collected data were standardized as company name, total number of members on the board/senior management, number of male members, number of female members and female representation rate (%).

3.2. Sample Selection

In this study, airline companies from the East (ASEAN region) and the West (Western countries in general) were selected in order to make a comparative analysis of gender inequality and glass ceiling syndrome in the aviation sector. Purposive sampling method was used based on the principle of data availability and serving the specific comparative purpose of the study. This approach allowed the selection of companies that met certain criteria and were suitable for the relevant comparison. The female representation rates in the top management positions of the selected companies constituted the analysis of the study. The sample of the study includes nine airlines from both regions. The airlines selected from ASEAN countries were determined by considering their regional economic importance and operational size. From Western countries, airlines with similar scale and international operational volume to companies in ASEAN countries were selected. For example, instead of the national airline from Ireland, the selection of Ryanair, which has a larger fleet, allowed the analysis of a company with a wider impact area. This selection strategy made the comparison more meaningful.

3.3. Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using simple mathematical calculations and percentage ratios. The female representation rate was calculated for each company and then regional averages were obtained. This simple and transparent analysis method allowed

researchers from different disciplines and even general readers to easily understand the phenomenon of glass ceiling syndrome. Quantitative analysis allowed comparison of female representation rates both for individual companies and regional totals. In addition, in-depth studies were conducted on companies with high and low female representation rates, and potential causes and implications were discussed. This analytical framework revealed not only the existence of the glass ceiling syndrome, but also its severity in different institutional and regional contexts.

3.4. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Studies

This study has some limitations. First, the analysis is based only on publicly available information and more in-depth factors such as internal human resources policies or unconscious biases could not be examined. Second, the sample size is relatively limited and caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings to the entire airline industry. Third, measuring a complex phenomenon such as the "glass ceiling syndrome" only through gender ratios in top management may not capture all dimensions of the syndrome. Future research can overcome these limitations and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and consequences of the glass ceiling syndrome with more in-depth qualitative studies (interviews, case studies) and larger data sets.

One of the most important limitations of this study is that the inferences regarding the existence of the glass ceiling syndrome are largely based on the numerical representation rates of women in senior management. Although low representation rates strongly indicate gender inequality and the existence of a potential glass ceiling, these rates alone are not sufficient to explain the causes, dynamics and career barriers of women in qualitative depth. It is accepted that employee numbers do not reflect all artificial or ambiguous barriers and do not directly reveal the complex factors behind the glass ceiling, such as discrimination, prejudice, corporate culture, lack of mentoring or networking difficulties.

Therefore, it is recommended that future research should not be limited to numerical data only, but also adopt multi-method approaches. For example, in-depth interviews, surveys or focus group discussions with women and men in senior management positions will provide a more detailed understanding of the perceived barriers, experiences and psychological effects of the glass ceiling syndrome. In addition, more detailed analysis of institutional data on issues such as career progression paths, promotion processes and wage inequalities can provide more concrete evidence regarding the functioning of the syndrome. This study provides an initial detection and a comparative analysis of the existence of the glass ceiling syndrome in the aviation sector, while emphasizing the need for future studies to enrich the knowledge in this field with more in-depth research.

Table 1. Top management Structures of Airlines in ASEAN Countries

THE NAME OF THE AIRLINE COMPANY	BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MANAGEMENT/EXECUTIVE			
	Total	Male	Female	Female Rate
GARUDA INDONESIA	6	5	1	%16
MALAYSIA AIRLINES	9	5	4	*44%*
PHILIPPINE AIRLINES	9	7	2	22%
SINGAPORE AIRLINES	10	8	2	20%
THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL	3	3	0	**0%**
VIETNAM AIRLINES	7	7	0	**0%**
CAMBODIA ANGKOR AIR	11	5	6	*54%*
LAO AIRLINES	4	4	0	**0%**
ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES	5	2	3	*60%*
TOTAL	64	46	18	**28%**

According to the above data, the top management of ASEAN airline companies consists of 64 persons. 46 of them are men and 18 are women. The number of women members is only 28% of the total. The rate of women in Royal Brunei Airlines, Cambodia Angkor Air and Malaysia Airlines is at a desirable level of 60%, 54% and 44% respectively. The fact that these companies give equal place to women in top management can be evaluated positively in terms of the corporate image of these companies and the organizational justice perceptions of employees. There are no women in the top management of Thai Airways International, Vietnam Airlines and Lao Airlines. In this case, it is seen that women experience the glass ceiling syndrome at the highest level in these companies. It can be said that women are represented at very low levels in the top management of the remaining companies. Based on these results, it can be claimed that there is a glass ceiling syndrome in the airline companies in this group. Considering the rates and contributions of women in areas such as society, economy, education and culture, it is essential for these low rates to be at more contemporary levels in terms of gender equality and fairness. In addition to these, some additional explanations will be useful for a more detailed consideration and understanding of the subject. For example, in Malaysia Airlines' Top management, 5 out of 15 members (33%) are women. In Singapore Airlines' Board Committees, there are 21% women.

In Thai Airways International, there is one (10%) woman who serves as Executive Vice President out of 10 members in the Executive Management Team. In Vietnam Airlines, all 11 members who serve as Board of Executive Officers are men. No reliable information about the top management could be found on the official website of Myanmar National Airlines. However, it is seen that the company's CEO is a man named Captain Khup Khan Mung.

Table 2. Top management Structures of Airlines in Western Countries

THE NAME OF THE AIRLINE COMPANY	BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MANAGEMENT/EXECUTIVE			
	Total	Male	Female	Female Rate
TURKISH AIRLINES	9	8	1	**11%**
LUFTHANSA GROUP	5	4	1	20%
BRITISH AIRWAYS	11	10	1	**9%**
AIR FRANCE	13	8	5	38%
RYANAIR	13	7	6	**46%**
DELTA AIR LINES	13	10	3	23%
ITA AIRWAYS	3	2	1	33%
TAP AIR PORTUGAL	9	6	3	33%
IBERIA	8	6	2	25%
TOTAL	84	61	23	**27%**

When the table above is examined, there are a total of 84 members in the top management of airline companies in nine western countries. 61 of them are men and 23 are women. The ratio of the number of women members to the total is only 27%. The company with the highest rate of women in this table is Ryanair, based in Ireland (46%). The fact that this company has almost achieved gender equality in top management can be evaluated positively in terms of corporate image. The reason why Ryanair has been chosen instead of Aer Lingus, the national airline of Ireland, is that Ryanair has a larger fleet. After Ryanair, the company with the highest representation of women in top management is Air France (38%). In addition, there are ten people in the Air France Foundation's Team, which can be considered as the top management level. The fact that nine of them are women shows that Air France values women more in its management levels. When we look at the top management of other companies, we see that ITA Airways and TAP Air Portugal have a

relatively acceptable, although not desirable, rate of female representation (33%). In the remaining companies, we see that the female representation rate is low at under 30% and in British Airways it is very low at under 10%. When we look at the total of the companies in this group, we see that the rate is low (27%).

When the results in Table 2 are compared with the results in Table 1, it is seen that the female representation rates are almost the same (28% vs. 27%). However, when a comparison is made in terms of gender equality and female representation rates in top management, it is seen that Eastern-based airline companies are ahead of Western-based companies, even by one point. Of course, a fractional point such as one point does not mean that the companies in Table 1 are good in terms of having women in top management. What is being emphasized here is that Western-based companies are in a worse situation in terms of the glass ceiling syndrome. In short, these results show us that women in airline companies belonging to developed Western countries are exposed to inequalities in top management, such as the glass ceiling syndrome.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the above findings show that the representation rates of women in top management of airline companies are quite low in both Eastern and Western companies. The representation rate of women in management levels in airline companies in the ASEAN region is 28%, while it is 27% in Western companies. These rates present a picture that is far from equality between women and men in top management. The low representation rates of women clearly reveal the prevalence of the glass ceiling syndrome and the difficulties women face in reaching leadership positions. Increasing the representation rates of women is important not only in terms of gender equality, but also in terms of the institutional success of companies. In addition, more fair and equal representation of women in top management levels is important in terms of making innovative decisions and enabling companies to have broader perspectives. In this context, companies need to review their diversity policies and adopt strategies that will facilitate women's access to leadership positions. For example, steps can be taken such as creating talent pools sensitive to gender equality, providing more support for women in promotion processes and providing flexible working conditions.

Airlines should set clear targets for the representation of women leaders and transparently report on the progress of achieving these targets. It is also recommended that mentoring and leadership programs be created to prepare women for leadership positions. In order to break the glass ceiling syndrome, it is critical that companies implement a cultural change starting from senior managers. This will be beneficial both in terms of ensuring gender equality and in terms of companies gaining a more contemporary and inclusive image.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, several policy and practice recommendations are presented for airline companies and relevant stakeholders:

- **Strategic Commitment and Goal Setting:** Companies should demonstrate a strong commitment to gender equality, starting from the top management, and set measurable goals for the representation of women leaders. Progress in achieving these goals should be regularly reported in a transparent manner.

- **Inclusive Human Resources Policies:** Recruitment, promotion and talent management processes should be reviewed to eliminate gender bias. Special talent pools can be created for women candidates, and active role models and mentoring programs can be provided to support women in promotion processes.

- **Mentoring and Leadership Development Programs:** Special mentoring and leadership development programs should be designed to prepare women for leadership positions. These programs will help women develop the knowledge, skills and networks that will advance their careers.

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Flexible working hours, remote work and part-time work should be encouraged to prevent women from straying from their careers, especially due to childcare and family responsibilities. This will help women balance their professional and personal lives.

- **Cultural Change and Awareness:** Trainings and awareness campaigns targeting gender stereotypes and subconscious biases should be organized within the company. Educating the leadership team on the benefits of diversity and inclusion will be the driving force of cultural change.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Companies should transparently share information about gender representation rates and progress and be accountable for this. This will build trust with both internal and external stakeholders.

Future research can overcome the limitations of this study and examine the cultural and organizational causes of the glass ceiling syndrome in more depth. In addition to quantitative data, qualitative interviews with female managers can provide a better understanding of the effects of the syndrome on personal experiences and the strategies women develop to overcome these obstacles. In addition, it would be useful to examine successful practices from a broader perspective by conducting detailed case studies among airline companies in different geographies. Achieving gender equality in the aviation sector will not only protect the rights of women, but will also play a vital role in the overall sustainability, innovation capacity and global competitiveness of the sector.

Authorship Contribution

The research was conducted as a single author and there is no conflict of interest with other individuals, institutions and organizations.

Ethics Committee Declaration

This article has been produced within the scope of studies in the field, related readings and literature reviews. Since the research is based on document analysis, ethics committee approval is not required.

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