

THE TRANSNATIONAL
JOURNAL
OF BUSINESS

Effectively Integrating Social Media and Web Based Technologies into the Classroom without Lawyers: *SixStepModel*

Perceptions of opportunities and barriers to women's career advancement in a developing economy

Personal and Professional Development: *Preparing Students for Career Success*

Preparing Students for Career Success in Accounting: *The SCIL-based Model with a Focus on Content Analysis*

The Economics Behind the Marketing of Christianity

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Perceptions of Opportunities and Barriers to Women's Career Advancement in a Developing Economy

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A B S T R A C T

Today companies are working in rapidly changing domestic and global markets thus opening doors to a new generation of leaders to practice their capabilities and knowledge, while at the same time, enabling opportunities for female leaders to advance in their careers. Although women have made substantial strides in the corporate world, representation of women managers in developed and developing economies is still smaller than that of male managers. The literature review conducted in the thesis shows that the glass ceiling effect is the main cause influencing underrepresentation of women on managerial positions.

The aim of this research is to examine the perceptions about the barriers for career advancement of women being at the outbreak of their careers, opposed to women who had achieved middle management and top management positions. The study uses quantitative methodology and questionnaires as the main research instrument to assess the perceptions of Macedonian women managers of the existence and causes of glass ceiling. Contrary to the expectations, findings show that women managers in Macedonia in general do not perceive work environment as being biased against women.

KEY WORDS: *women, employees, gender discrimination, glass ceiling*

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Background

Today companies are working in rapidly changing domestic and global markets and hence are forced to continuously strive for advantage over their competitor companies. Globalization itself brought new changed practices and procedures in the way organizations develop and function all over the globe. In this changing and challenging environment, the leadership and its practices are also changing, opening doors to a new generation of leaders. Leadership skills were traditionally characterized as masculine skill, strongly suggesting that leadership qualities are found solely in the male domain (Basu-Roy, 2008). However, although women leaders contribute significantly to the organization, research still finds them to be significantly underrepresented in corporate leadership roles (Basu-Roy, 2008; Krishnan, 2009; Glass and Cook, 2016).

More precisely, the participation of women has been limited to the periphery of gender-typing, a process of developing gender roles, or gender-linked preferences and behaviours valued by the larger society. This is a complex process based on the historical emergence of modern gender roles, new information technologies, and the growth of white collar workplaces (Basu-Roy, 2008).

Throughout the 19th century women were identified with certain roles like typists, secretaries and stenographers. Managerial positions were rarely open to women, instead concentrated mostly in departments like personnel or women's affairs. Basu-Roy (2008) specifies that this trend of gender typing of jobs continued into the 20th century. After World War II, female workers were able to claim some traditionally "male" jobs which were better paid. In the 60's and 70's, the liberalization movement of women was strengthened and the gender composition of the work force also started changing. The author further notes that 80's and 90's were decades where the position of women in the corporate world improved and the number of women on managerial positions started increasing, contributing to dramatically increased number of women pursuing managerial careers over the past two decades. According to Kawakami et al. (2000), women in management have proven to be equally skilled, educated, and trained as their male peers, and organizations are hiring managerial men and women in roughly equal numbers. However, data show, that even today, the majority of the managerial workforce in organizations consists of men. In this regard, although the inclusion of more women in the workforce has been strongly promoted in recent times, there remain very few women in the organizations middle and top management tiers (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Basu, 2006).

Given the above discussion, a question emerges as to what is holding back women to advance in their career? The answer to the question can be found through research on the existing possibilities for women to advance in the corporate world, with the emphasis of the current status of women in the corporate world, as well as barriers and possibilities for advancing in their career.

Glass ceiling effects

Barriers to career development are shown to be a global phenomenon that affects women all around the globe. Much of the initial focus and research in this area relates to impediments to promotion of women at lower and middle management levels often referred to as a glass ceiling effect (Farrell and Hersch, 2001). The term appears to have originated only in the mid-1980s, coined in a Wall Street Journal piece written by Hymowitz and Schellhardt in 1986 (Eisner et al., 2009). Einser (2009) and Ganguly (2008) define glass ceiling as an invisible employment barrier that limits those with certain characteristics from reaching advanced positions they otherwise might achieve.

By the official definition of the U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, glass ceiling is described as those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organizations into management-level positions (Maxwell, 2007). According to the same source, the glass ceiling as a metaphor for the conditions that prevent many women from reaching their full potential is recognized worldwide. Yet, it is clearly distinguished from formal barriers to advancement, such as education or experience requirements (Jain and Mukherji, 2010).

On the other hand, major problems with the current literature regarding glass ceiling effect is that there is much ambiguity and inconsistency in the definition of the effect. Zeng (2008) states that some researchers use the term glass ceiling to refer to a specific type of labor market discrimination while others interpret the term broadly as a generic disadvantage women and minorities face in the labour market. Additionally, Cotter et al. (2001) list some specific criteria that must be met in order to conclude that glass ceiling phenomenon really exists, and used accordingly.

Nevertheless, the "artificial barriers" that bring the existence of the glass ceiling can be numerous. Hence, the authors proceed by examining different factors that influence career advancement of women.

Factors that influence career advancement of women

Coggan and Chan (2007) argue that women face a number of barriers to their career development that both complicate and limit their career choices and advancement. As the authors further elaborate, if we examine the career inhibitors, we run a risk of drawing up a list of factors that in practice never occurs separately or in isolation, but in fact derive from a small number of common sources. As a result, in different studies we find different combinations of factors that impede the career advancement.

Still, there are few factors that repeatedly appear in many studies. Firstly, some of the authors note gender stereotyping as one of the factors that influence career advancement (Wellington et al., 2003; Ramsey and McCorduck, 2005; Simard, 2008; Buddhapriya, 2009). Secondly, one of the important reasons that restrict upward mobility of women professionals is also exclusion from informal networks (McGuire, 2000; Ismailand MohdRasdi, 2007; Linehan and Scullion, 2008; Wang, 2009). Thirdly, commitment to personal or family responsibilities, where the demands of work and careers are at odds with having a commitment to family and personal responsibilities, is also noted as one of the most important barriers to career advancement (Goodwin, 2005; Watson, 2008; Mishra, 2009). Within these arguments is the gender difference in the career orientation of women with women choosing more family friendly jobs with flatter wage structures (Bertrand, 2011; Albrecht et al., 2015). Furthermore, many authors note that women feel isolated because they lack role models and mentors (Schipani et al., 2006; Bennett and Horwath, 2009). In addition, lack of general management or line experience (Wellington et al., 2003; Buddhapriya, 2009), lack of accountability on the part of senior leadership and gender-sensitive policies by the employer (Catalyst, 2003; Rosener 2009; Buddhapriya, 2009) as well as female characteristics such as less over-confidence, risk-aversion and less competitiveness (Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Bertrand, 2011) are also mentioned as factors that restrict the career advancement of women.

However, some authors argue that the above factors are not the ones influencing career advancement of women, but it is the women's choices. Hence, women's choices, not the male- dominant organizational structures, are the reasons the 'glass ceiling' appears. As a result, women are choosing to leave the workplace on their own, either to commit more to family matters, or because they do not want the stress of having the power positions (Estrich, 2001, cited in Kephart and Schumacher, 2005). Furthermore, a research of the factors constituting the glass ceiling conveyed by Accenture (2006), where nearly 600 successful business executives (both men and women) who have already made it to the top in six countries in Europe and Asia Pacific concluded that female executives no longer see their gender per se as a necessary disadvantage to the progression of their careers. Only 20% said that their gender limited their career advancement. Overall, 35% of female respondents said that gender had no effect on their career opportunities and 25% were neutral on this point, while 20% said that their gender actually helped their careers. On contrary, the men executives surveyed tend to believe more strongly than their female counterparts that gender influences career potential. Even more, some authors disagree that discrimination between men and women in the work place does exist. Another interesting research is done by Glass and Cook (2016) in which they analyse the conditions under which women are promoted to top leadership positions, as well as the challenges faced in the time after the promotion occurred. Their analyses concluded that women, more likely than men, are to be promoted to high risk leadership positions, lack support and authority to accomplish their goals, thus resulting in shorter tenures compared to their male counterparts. The results from the investigation of the glass ceiling in Sweden (Albrecht et al., 2015) suggests that there is a variation in the patterns among private and public sector white-collar workers.

One of the objectives of this paper is to define the main barriers to career advancement of females in Macedonia. The paper will first examine different forms of stereotyping, prejudice and bias related to women and gender. Secondly, the question of commitment to family responsibility will be examined.

Research methodology

The research is designed to give explanation of perceptions of the barriers for women's career advancement as well as comparison of the perceptions of women being at the outbreak of their careers opposed to women who had achieved middle management and top management positions.

The research uses deductive research approach. Deductive research approach is where firstly theory and hypothesis are defined, and then a strategy is developed in order to test the hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2003). Accordingly, the research aim and objective is defined, the theory analysed, and finally the method defined that will suit best in obtaining data needed for the research aim, i.e. the questionnaire.

Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to examine the perceptions of barriers for career advancement of women who are at the outbreak of their careers, opposed to women who had achieved middle management and top management positions. The main research objectives are:

1. To examine the perceptions of the main barriers to career advancement in Macedonia, as perceived by women who are starting the career and those who had achieved higher level management positions.
2. To investigate the women's perception of the importance to each of the stated barriers.
3. To research the perceptions of the barriers for female career advancement at various levels within the companies.

Sampling

Convenience sampling is used to select the participants. Convenience sampling involves selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain for the sample (Saunders et al., 2003). In the case of this research the sample is comprised of women that are on junior, middle management and top managerial positions in companies operating in various industries in Macedonia.

Research instrument

The research collects primary data through self-administered questionnaire data collection technique. Questionnaire is a general term that includes all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (deVaus, 2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2003). The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part is comprised of questions related to the demographic information of the respondents (personal information such as: age, marital status, children and other professional information, such as managerial position, industry where they work, complemented with some questions that illustrate respondents' opinions about their career aspirations and about the position of women in Macedonia). The second part examines the perceptions of women regarding the three barriers to career advancement: 1) different forms of stereotyping related to women and gender in general, 2) commitment to family obligations, and 3) exclusions from informal networks.

The questionnaire utilizes opinion variables, where respondents' perceptions of the influence of career advancement barriers are recorded. The questionnaire uses Likert-style rating scale, asking the respondents how strongly they agree or disagree on the statements, on a five-point rating scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and

5=strongly agree). The questionnaire was delivered by e-mail and returned by the respondents either by e-mail or in-hand. Prior to starting the completion of the questionnaire, all respondents received information on the purpose of the survey, anonymity, use of data and protection of data, as well as the required time it took for the completion of the questionnaire. The participation in the research was voluntary.

Statistical analyses

In order to test the differences in opinion between women on junior, middle and top management level, non-parametric statistical test was performed. The non-parametric tests are statistical tests in which no assumptions are made about any statistical parameter. This is similar to a test in which the data is not assumed have any particular distribution (Dancey and Riedy, 2004). Firstly, we are testing the difference between opinion ranks of women on junior and middle management level, and between opinion ranks of women on junior and top management level separately. For this purpose, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test (WMWT) was used. Additionally, to test the three groups at once, we use the Kruskal Wallis Test (KWT). WMWT is a The Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney test (Mann and Whitney, 1947; Wilcoxon, 1945) that has been widely used as a nonparametric method to compare two treatments when the underlying distribution of the outcome variable is not normal (Yongming et al., 2008). KWT is the non-parametric test equivalent to ANOVA, and it is a generalization of the WMWT. It is used to test more than two groups. The test is used when the data do not meet assumptions required by parametric ANOVA (Dancey and Riedy 2004). The quantitative analysis of the data collected was conducted by using spreadsheet calculations and SPSS (Statistical Packages of Social Science) software.

Results

Sample description

The data for the research were collected from a sample of 86 women managers from all industry branches. As shown in Table 1, 47.7% of the respondents are in the age range of 25-34 years, 39.5% in age group of 35-44, with a small share (12.8%) of women aged above 45. About 65.1% of the respondents are married or living with someone as a couple, 29% are single and have never married, and 5.8% are widowed/divorced/separated, along with 58.1% of women with children and 41.9% women without children.

Table 1. Respondents' personal characteristics

	No. of respondents	Percentage
1. Age		
Less than 25	2	2.3
25-34	41	47.7
35-44	34	39.5
45-54	8	9.3
54 and more	1	1.2
Total	86	100
2. Marital status:		
Married/living with someone	56	65.1
Single and never married	25	29.1

Widowed/divorced/separated	5	5.8
Total	86	100
3. Children		
Women with children	50	58.1
Women without children	36	41.9
Total	86	100

Table 2. Respondents' professional characteristics

1. Level in the management structure	No. of respondents	Percentage
Junior management level	26	30.2
Middle management level	39	45.4
Top management level	21	24.4
Total	86	100
2. Total year of being on managerial position	No. of respondents	Percentage
0-5 years	60	69.8
6-10 years	19	22.1
11-20 years	7	8.1
21-30 years	0	0
31 and more	0	0
Total	86	100
3. Industry	No. of respondents	Percentage
Banking insurance and finance	30	34.9
Government or NGO's	11	12.8
Energy (water supply, gas, electricity)	3	3.5
IT and telecommunications	13	15.1
Education	10	11.6
Manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, construction	7	8.1
Transport and communication	1	1.2
Trade	8	9.3
Tourism and catering services	0	0
Healthcare and pharmaceutical	1	1.2
Military , defense and legal	0	0
Media	2	2.3
Total	86	100

As Table 2 shows, 45.4% of the respondents are in middle management positions, 30.2% in junior management positions and 24.4% on top managerial positions. Most of the sampled managers (69.8%) have been in their managerial positions 0-5 years. However, among the sampled managers, there is no one with working experience above 21 years. The majority of the respondents, 34.9%, work in banking, insurance and finance sector, followed by 15.1% who work in IT and telecommunications.

Career aspirations of women in Macedonia

About 73% of the respondents think that career advancement opportunities in their workplace are the same for women and men. On the other hand, 51% of the respondents confirmed that most of the management in their company are men. Nevertheless, 81% of the respondents think that a woman will be promoted over a man in their organization (Table 3).

Table 3. Women's opinion on questions regarding female position in company

Do you think that career advancement opportunities on your workplace are same for women and men ?	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	63	73
No	23	27
Is most of the management in your company men?	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	44	51
No	42	49
All other things being equal , do you think that women will be promoted over a man in your organization ?	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	70	81
No	16	19

As argued in the literature, women's choices and low career aspirations are the main reasons why the 'glass ceiling' appears, and these result with turnover intentions among women. However, data from our research show a different situation (see Table.4). Namely, on the questions that consider career aspirations, respondents answered as follows: 83% of respondents answered confirmatively that they would like to advance in their career, whereas the remaining 17% do not want to advance. For 65% of women, having a family and facing necessity of balancing work and family do not reduce their career aspirations. About, 50% of the respondents would like to reach top management positions, 15% to a middle management position, while 7% of respondents have other career advancement aspirations, like owning their own business, becoming university professors or switching to another field and reaching the top.

Table 4. Women's opinion on career aspirations

<i>Do you aspire to advance in your career?</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	71	83
No	15	17
<i>Do you think that having a family and facing a difficulty in balancing work and job reduces your career aspirations?</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	30	35
No	56	65
<i>What is the highest job level that you aspire to ?</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Middle management level	15	17
Top management level	50	68
Other	6	7

Perceptions of different forms of stereotypes

The literature highlights that stereotyping leads us to jump to conclusions about what someone is like rather than looking at a person's individual qualities. Stereotyping leads to a widespread assumption that women cannot fully participate in the work for several reasons, and hence has a negative effect on women's professional development. If stereotyping exists, the men in equivalent positions are perceived as more influential than women.

The analyses of the responses suggest that there are differing perceptions regarding this question. About 56% of the respondents answered that they strongly disagree that by virtue of being a woman they cannot fully respond to their work responsibilities, followed by 36% of the respondents who disagree on the subject. Only 7% of the respondents agree with the statement.

Likewise to the above, women also disagree that they are perceived as less influential than men. On the question whether men in equivalent positions as theirs are perceived as more influential, the majority - 48% - disagree that they are seen as less influential than men on same positions. However, the number of respondents who agree and strongly disagree is the same with a representation of 20% of the respondents.

Although research suggests that women are offered less challenging jobs and are often not involved in tackling crucial organizational issues, 47% of the respondents disagree with the statement that they are not involved in tackling crucial organizational issues. About 17% of respondents strongly disagree with the question, 17% were undecided and 15% agree with the statement. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (35%) agree that they were judged for being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing and gentle, with 30% who disagree. Yet, we should stress that 20% of the respondents are undecided on the question.

As elaborated in the literature, women at the beginning of their career are often required to handle detail-oriented tasks. However, as they move to higher levels, they may need to shift their focus from details to the big picture, and therefore can't be given tasks such as typing reports or filing data. On the question whether they consider themselves as detail oriented, 49% of the respondents agree that they are detail oriented. But, when it comes to the question whether they are

given tasks like filling data or typing reports, the percentage between respondents who disagree and agree is 35% and 33% respectively, with a large share of 24% being undecided. Regarding the perception whether women are not hired and promoted in roles that are traditionally stereotypically masculine (e.g. engineering), the majority of the respondents - 38% - disagree with the statement, followed by 24% of undecided and 24% of respondents who agree on the statement.

Perceptions of family commitment

This section represents analysis of the questionnaire responses regarding the perceptions of family commitment. Women are the ones who do the most of the work at home and with the family, thus facing dual burden of balancing the work and family obligations, which often leads to a perception that they are unable to give their best at work.

However, the majority of the respondents answered negatively to the statement that family responsibilities impact negatively on their career (44% of the respondents disagree with the statement).

The majority of respondents (48%) answered that they think they can give their maximum concentration and capacity at work due to their having to balance work and family. Also, majority of women (48%) disagree with the statement that they are not given more responsible tasks since they are being judged as not willing to work overtime/travel abroad. According to the responders, working overtime or over weekends, the late night meetings (business dinners), frequent business trips, like all characteristics of executive working posts are not factors that hamper career advancement. In addition, the majority (46%) of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they cannot fully exploit the possibilities for career advancement, because of their personal and family lives, followed by 41% of women who agree or strongly agree on the question.

Regarding the question whether bosses and colleagues are unsympathetic when a woman has to give priority to her family duties, the majority of respondents, - 42% - are undecided. The number of respondents who agree and strongly agree in total, - 29% - is the same with the respondents who disagree or strongly disagree. Pregnancy and motherhood discrimination are “soft” but really discriminative. This makes women believe they must choose between pursuit of an early career and motherhood. Many times the young women understand or they are advised to delay pregnancy in order to get a “fair” opportunity at work. In this research, majority of 37% of respondents disagree that women are omitted from promotion because of family planning. However, 22% of the respondents are undecided regarding this statement, more than 1/3 of the respondents agree, and also 1/3 of respondents disagree with the statement.

Perception differences between women at different stages in the career

The final step in the analysis is the comparison of the perceptions between the women in junior positions and those on middle management and top management positions. Only questions where differences between perceptions of women on different managerial levels exist will be discussed below.

On the question whether they think that women are not hired and promoted in roles that are traditionally stereotypically masculine (e.g. engineering), there is a difference in the answers of the respondents who are in junior management positions and the ones being in middle management and top positions. Namely, the majority of women in junior management level positions with 30.8% undecided on the question, the majority of women who are in middle management level positions, 38.5%, and top level positions, 52.4%, disagree on the question.

Table 5. Do you think that women are not hired and promoted in roles that are traditionally stereotypically masculine (e.g. engineering)?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Junior management level	3	7	8	6	2
%	11.5	26.9	30.8	23.1	7.7
Middle management level	1	15	13	9	1
%	2.6	38.5	33.3	23.1	2.6
Top management level	3	11	0	6	1
%	14.3	52.4	0	28.6	4.8

The WMWT statistics show no statistical differences between junior and middle management level and between junior and top management levels ($p=0.867$ and $p=0.305$ respectively). KWT statistics also show no significant difference between the three levels.

The authors did find differences between the junior, middle and top management level on the question whether they think women do not fully exploit the possibilities for career advancement because of their personal and family lives. The majority 46.2% of the women which are in junior management level agree that women do not fully exploit the possibilities for career advancement, because of their personal and family lives, followed by 30.8% respondents who disagree on the question. The majority of respondents in the group of women who are in middle management level 46.2% answered that they disagree with the statement, while 25.6% of respondents agree on the question. About 38.1% of women in top management position disagree on the question, and equal percent of women agree with it.

Table 6. Do you think that women do not fully exploit the possibilities for career advancement, because of their personal and family lives?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Junior management level	1	8	4	12	1
%	3.8	30.8	15.4	46.2	3.8
Middle management level	2	18	7	10	2
%	5.1	46.2	17.9	25.6	5.1
Top management level	2	8	1	8	2
%	9.5	38.1	4.8	38.1	9.5

The WMWT between junior and middle management level and between junior and top management level shows no significant difference between the two levels. The test statistics show $p=0.165$ and $p=0.682$ respectively. Same stands for the test statistics from the KWT; they don't show statistical difference between the opinions of the different management levels either.

The authors also find differences among the subgroups of female managers regarding the question whether women think that bosses and colleagues are unsympathetic when women give priority to family life. The majority of women in junior positions 38.5%, are undecided on the question, whereas 26.9% agree and 23.1% disagree. Similarly, the majority of women in middle management positions - 51.3% - are undecided on the question, whereas 25.6% of them disagree and 20.5% agree. Among the women in top level management positions, they are equally divided at 28.6%, between agree, disagree and undecided on this question.

Table 7. Do you think that bosses and colleagues are unsympathetic when women gives priority to family life?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Junior management level	0	6	10	7	3
%	0	23.1	38.5	26.9	11.5
Middle management level	0	10	20	8	1
%	0	25.6	51.3	20.5	2.6
Top management level	3	6	6	6	0
%	14.3	28.6	28.6	28.6	0

There is no significant difference between the opinion of women on the junior and middle management level retrieved from the performance of the WMWT, where $p= 0.273$, and between the opinion of women on the junior and top management level, where $p=0.109$. The test statistics from the KWT indicate that there is no significant difference between the opinions of the junior, middle and top management levels.

Discussion and conclusion

The changing working environment gives a chance to a new generation of female leaders to advance and to practice their capabilities. This research, in particular, was directed towards the Macedonian female leaders, and investigated the extent to which the barriers for their career advancement are recognized. The research idea was based on the assumption that many of the barriers recognized in other research studies will be applicable to the Macedonian case. Barriers to career development are shown to be a global phenomenon that affects women all around the globe. However, from what has been elaborated above, one can conclude that women questioned in the research focused on Macedonian women managers do not perceive their working environment influenced by stereotypes and prejudice towards professional capabilities. Generally, the Macedonian women managers have positive attitude towards the opportunities and possibilities to advance

in their career in today's working environment. Generally speaking, the researched barriers were not supported as barriers to career advancement. Firstly, the possible explanations are: the specific socio-economic situation in Macedonia, and the characteristics of the historical and cultural development of this country. The former is characterized with low female participation and employment rates compared to males and their high share in unpaid family workers. The latter is related to the still traditional role that women have in the typical Macedonian family. Given this overall socio-economic environment, as well as the historical and cultural development of the country, it might be argued that the results of the research are biased to a great extent. Moreover, the rather unexpected results from the survey in Macedonia, might be a result of the heritage from the previous system meaning that post-communist economies are likely to be different cultural zones on the global cultural map (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Secondly, the study gives qualitative research of the perceptions of women managers within the organization, towards the barriers to career advancement. Because qualitative research is based on an individual's account of their experiences and the ways in which they explain these through their subjective interpretations and relate them to constructions of the social world in which they live, one can say that it is possible that the research results are influenced by the subjective interpretations of the current reality as perceived by this study's respondents. Thirdly, as previously elaborated, it is possible that the respondents reflect socially desirable responding, in terms of anonymity of the survey and in terms of fulfilling expectations of the social role that they are holding. In order to exclude the possibility of questioning anonymity of the answers, the study attempted to preclude untruthful answers. However, it is possible to reason for that a socially acceptable bias is present in the responses and it is hereby reported. Recognizing that the results may have been affected by socially desirable responding can bring another perspective on this research.

From all that has been stated above, the study indicates that the Macedonian business environment shows some steps forward in recognizing and overcoming barriers and the influence of what they can have on career advancement. As a result, it enables women to develop their competences and abilities accordingly, that is to say, it is likely probable that the results are a sign of real changes. In particular, as an indication of the changing social roles and of the changing organizational values and manners of how companies work today.

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