GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ASSIGNMENTS TO PRECARIOUS LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: EVIDENCE FROM THE TURKISH CONTEXT

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Outline

• Glass ceiling and findings from previous gender research
• Glass cliff
• Research by Ryan, Haslam, and others
• Sexism as a potential trigger of glass cliff
• Objectives and hypotheses of the present study
• Findings
• Concluding remarks
Glass Ceiling

• Managerial advancement process is different for women and men.
• Glass ceiling: Transparent barrier preventing women from rising above a certain level in corporations because of their gender.
• Women around the world have been breaking through the glass ceiling.
• What lies beyond the glass ceiling?
Glass Cliff

• Women may continue to face gender discrimination even after they break through the glass ceiling to ascend to leadership positions.

• Glass cliff: The phenomenon that women are more likely than men to be appointed to leadership positions associated with increased risk of failure and criticism.
Research by Ryan & Haslam

• Archival Studies:
  • Performance of FTSE 100 companies, both before and after the appointment of male and female board members → women were more likely to be appointed to executive positions when company performance had been poor.
  • UK general elections → women candidates were nominated for less winnable seats.

• Does poor performance lead to the appointment of women to leadership positions?
• Are women being selected for executive positions that are riskier?
Research by Ryan & Haslam

- Experimental Studies:
  - High school students,
  - Business graduates,
  - Professionals
  - Female candidates were consistently selected over identically qualified male candidates when the performance of the organization was declining.

- Women are preferentially selected for precarious leadership positions associated with organizations in crisis.
Why does Glass Cliff occur?

- Women were perceived as more suitable for a leadership position than a male candidate when company performance was declining rather than improving.
- Women were perceived as having more leadership ability in poor performance situations.
- Why?
Why does Glass Cliff occur?

- Ryan, Haslam, & Postmes (2007): One possible reason for women’s appointment to risky positions is sexism.

- Sexism is a prejudice against women:
  - Hostile sexism
  - Benevolent sexism
  - Hostile and benevolent sexism cause gender inequalities not only in social but also in organizational contexts.
  - It is these sexist views that form the basis of several discriminatory practices against women in the employment settings.

- One objective is to investigate sexism as a potential contextual factor that may trigger glass cliff.
Attempts to replicate the glass cliff

- Adams, Gupta, and Leeth (2009)
- Nutley and Mudd (2005)
- How generalizable is the glass cliff?
  - Gender stereotypes are culturally determined.
- Another objective is to contribute to the generalizability of the glass cliff phenomenon.
Hypotheses

• **Hypothesis 1:** Compared to an identically qualified male candidate, the female candidate is more likely to be evaluated as suitable for the leadership position in a company when the company performance is declining rather than improving.

• **Hypothesis 2:** Compared to an identically qualified male candidate, the female candidate is more likely to be evaluated as having greater leadership ability when the company performance is declining rather than improving.

• **Hypothesis 3:** Participants who score high on sexism are more likely to appoint women to the glass cliff positions than participants who score less on sexism.
Findings