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Social Representations of Women Managers in Private Banking Industry

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Abstract

In this research, we explored the social representations of women managers in private banking industry in Turkey. Observing the changes and transformations in banking industry and economy through the analysis of data collected in two periods: 2008 (N=220) and 2018 (N=172) from female banking employees, we used the word evocation technique for the analysis of social representations, then generated word cloud visuals to cross-validate our findings. Social representations analysis relies on the Vergès method, which takes into account the frequency of finding a word or expression and the rank of appearance, and word cloud visuals were generated to observe the temporal changes and generalized frequencies of evocations over a decade. We observed positive social representations aligning with positive attributes for women managers described in women leadership theories. Positive and negative representations are expressed in different ways by female and male participants. A highlight in our findings was the increase in negative representations for women managers by women participants from 2008 to 2018. This study can provide important insights on the status of gender equality in leadership positions in banking industry in Turkey.

Key words: Woman Managers, Banking, Social Representations, Management, Gender
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1. Introduction

Women's presence in managerial positions has increased significantly, although men still seem to dominate managerial jobs and senior positions in organizations globally. In recent decades, women's attributes and characteristics, leadership roles, organizational practices, and culture have changed so that women have become more advantageous in higher managerial positions (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) discusses the possibility of a male-biased inclination in identifying and assessing the qualities of senior managers. Approaching managerial positions from a masculine perspective brings advantages to men and disadvantages to women in personnel selection, advancement, and promotion processes, based on biases on sex (Schein, 2001). Even though the number of such cases decreased over time, prescriptive leadership stereotypes still reflect masculine hegemonic roles in societies today (Koenig et al., 2011).

It is debatable whether visionary, skilled, and socially capable women are expected to rise to leadership positions (Baker, 2014). Even if we believe that men and women have different conceptualizations of leadership, diverge attitudes and personality traits, gendered behaviors stem from socially constructed stereotypes rooted in complex social and psychological processes (Eagly, 1997; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Cultural norms, beliefs and assumptions play a significant role in evaluating the effective leadership styles and characteristics thus cultural context need to be determined while searching for the best leaders (Jogulu, 2010). National culture and values rooted in society effects expected leadership attributes and behaviors, and the effectiveness of leaders. (Pasa et al., 2001). Gender stereotypes and segregation lead to problems such as glass ceiling, labyrinth and gender pay gap (Ali, 2015: 110). Women face visible and invisible barriers that prevent them from reaching to top managerial positions (Hoyt & Simon, 2016: 398-408) regardless of the characteristics attached to it. These obstacles women face in organizational settings derive from gender stereotypes within societies. Although these stereotypes regarding gender have started fading away, they persist and continue to effect women's positions in the workplace (Hoyt, 2010).

Social representations theory offered by Moscovici in 1961 have received an immense recognition in both social psychology and other social sciences providing a reference point in many related studies. "Social representations are ways of making sense of things about the world we live in" (Moscovici, 1988: 231). They are embedded in people's social lives and provide them frameworks to categorize and classify circumstances and help interpret what is happening around them (Breakwell, 1993). "Social representations are about processes of collective ways of making sense resulting in common cognitions which produce social bonds uniting societies, organizations and groups" (Hoijer, 2011: 3). They provide knowledge and common sense, help people make sense about the things, and act accordingly (Sammut et al., 2015: 6-8).

Social representations have two main functions including familiarizing the unfamiliar through comparing and interpreting things by using earlier

representations and transforming them into concrete things that could be perceived easily and forcing people to act on them (Hoijer, 2011). For the social group, social representation of an object provides a consistent meaning within the group (Sammut et al., 2015: 8). Evaluation of the representations gives important clues about how the group constitutes their internal reality. All group activities revolve around representations, and group attitudes, behavior, interactions, and priorities are determined by these representations (Abric, 1971).

The main purpose of the social representation's theory is "to understand innovation rather than tradition, a social life in the making rather than a pre-established one" in Moscovici's words (1988: 219). Therefore, evaluating social representations provides an understanding of real or symbolic social change about the meaning of things in the society. Since representations reflect societal and cultural thinking (Hoijer, 2011), investigating the role of social representations on the relationship between leadership and gender will provide an understanding about the transformation or perceptions of people.

Following a review of relevant literature focusing on social representations theory, we conducted two consecutive studies in 2008 and 2018, investigating the social representations of women managers in private banking industry. We compared male and female employees' representations in two periods a decade apart, and observed the extent to which social representations has evolved. Turkish banking industry is known to be women-dominated, as they represent 51% of employees, however, this proportion is only ¼ the middle level management positions, and only a few women are present in the top management (Banks Association of Turkey, 2019).

In parallel to the growth and development of banking industry in Turkey, women employment rates increased, and the positive relationship between women employment rate and banking outcomes such as performance and risk has been frequently emphasized in previous literature (Bertay & Sınar, 2020). Besides the increasing women employment rate, the transformation of women workforce potential is an important factor for banking outcomes. Understanding social representations of women managers in Turkish banking sector can provide important insights for the progress of gender equality in leadership positions in Turkey.

2. Gender and Leadership

Although equality between women and men is now an often-emphasized phenomena, at least at formal audiences around the world, the reality is that women are still exposed to various inequalities in business life. The main reason that creates these inequalities is evaluated in the context of gender, and gender is stated as a cultural construction in which appropriate roles for women and men are produced completely socially (Scott, 1996). In the structure in which the individual's behavior

is first learned and then staged, men and women display the role attributed to them through socialization and internalization (Connell, 1998).

While examining gender, the symbolic representations created for men and women, the meanings of these symbols and how they are interpreted, are discussed, and the existence of gender in politics and economy, even though it is established by kinship, is mentioned (Scott, 2007, Connell, 1998, Giddens & Sutton, 2016). Gender specific social roles are rooted in physical sex differences, mainly men's strength and size and women's reproductive capabilities with the interaction of societal and cultural circumstances and expectations regarding efficient division of labor (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 458).

West and Zimmerman, in 1987, revealed a new conception of gender as "a routine accomplishment anchored in everyday relationships" (West & Zimmerman, 2007). In other words, gender is a social construct brought about by the interactions between individuals, which, to their turns, materialized in institutions. According to the authors, the fact of 'doing gender' engenders the construction of the differences between men and women which are used to maintain the argument that the existence of such differences and even the existence of gender has a primordial and natural character.

It can be inferred that it is through the concretization of these gender relations, which West and Zimmerman emphasize, that power relations and, consequently, relations of domination are formed in the composition of societies. Since gender relations are so ingrained in social organization as the elements of the legitimacy of interaction practices, they can be found everywhere in the public sphere of the workforce and the private sphere of the home. It's by analyzing gender relations and their expressions in these different social spheres of life that we can find reasons for behavior that become institutionalized. Ridgeway explains that gender, as a system of inequality of status, stands recognizable in work organizations by the gendered nature of industrial relations which include employee evaluations the relationship between the supply and demand of jobs (Ridgeway, 2011).

As gender roles are distributed within the culture, and social structure, expectations attached to these roles are assumed as if they are "natural and inevitable" (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 459-460). Social expectations regarding gender related work roles trigger normative pressures on both sexes and leads to behaviors that are consistent with these expectations (Eagly, 1997). Socialization forces individuals to obtain gender specific personality traits and skills (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 458). Different skills and beliefs held stereotypically by women and men result not only from social upbringings and environmental conditions (such as aggressive behavior of men who are involved in military and sports activities) but also from some other social processes that lead to sex differences in societal roles (Eagly, 1997). These gender roles are internalized and accepted by people partly due to societal sanctions because of deviating from them; and, thus, influence people's identities and self-concepts. Incongruent behaviors may be sanctioned

with disapproval, rejection, neglect or with more serious punishments (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 468-469; Heilman, 2001). Therefore, women may internalize stereotypical traditional gender roles and behave accordingly due to normative pressures and situational cues in their environment (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

There are two main approaches to the lack of women in senior management positions. The first category consists of barriers applied by institutional practices, barriers arising from the target, detention, rank of men over women, and especially barriers arising from the jobs that make up future senior executive career paths. Explanations in the second category includes behavioral and cultural reasons, such as stereotyping, ostentation, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relationships. Other explanations focus on structural and cultural explanations originating from feminist theory (Oakley, 2000).

Research also supports the critical role of gender stereotypes in societies that influence leadership roles. Men do not face obstacles when they prefer an autocratic leadership style, whereas women need to involve other members of the organization in decision-making processes to be accepted by the group members (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Investigating the descriptive and prescriptive differences in managerial styles for both sexes, Vinkenburg et al. (2011) found that women are expected to show both inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, while demonstrating only inspirational motivation is enough for men to become a transformational leader suited for top positions.

Even though the laws now include women's protective clauses, there is an obstacle called the "glass ceiling" apart from the problems women experience in the labor market. Although women provide conditions such as success and education, another obstacle is that they face invisible and insurmountable obstacles. This glass ceiling constitutes an invisible barrier for women and minority groups that prevents them from moving up the corporate ladder (Weyer, 2007).

Women must make more effort than men do and also need to prove that they are suitable for managerial positions. Besides, the study of Johnson et al. (2008) showed that female leaders are expected to show both consideration and strength, while male leaders are only expected to show strength in line with stereotypical gender roles. Moreover, male leaders are perceived as more effective than female leaders. Considering also that expectations on female leaders create more burden, it becomes clearer why women cannot reach to managerial positions within organizations (Johnson et al., 2008).

Even if we assume that women and men lead differently, some research suggests that women are more effective than men. Transformational leadership is said to be more effective in contemporary organizational settings, and women are more prone to transformational leadership since their stereotypical gender role are congruent with most of the characteristics transformational leadership requires

(Jogulu & Wood, 2006). In Bass et al. (1996)'s study, women are rated higher than men regarding transformational leadership qualities since they tend to be more caring and show more concern about moral and ethical issues. Eagly and Johnson (1990)'s meta-analysis investigating whether there is a difference between leading styles regarding sex, it was found that women prefer a more democratic and participative leadership style than men, while men tend to lead in a more autocratic and directive style than women. Aggregation of research results investigating leadership styles of women and men yields that men are more transactional, autocratic and business oriented while women are more transformational, participative and people oriented (Applebaum et al., 2003). Vinnicombe (1988) studied the personality differences between male and female managers. Although women are not found suitable for managerial jobs due to cultural stereotypes, they are classified as visionaries and catalysts, categories in which people are suited best in high managerial positions if given an opportunity to manage. Several studies found no significant differences between sexes regarding leadership qualities or effectiveness (e.g. Bass et al., 1996; Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; Schyns & Sanders, 2005).

According to Applebaum et al. (2003), effective leadership is not "the exclusive domain of either gender" as they can both learn from each other (p.43). Although women and men may have different traits and leadership qualities, one should not compare them with each other, rather leverage these differences and consider them as complementary skills. These differences could add value to the organization and should be viewed as strengths rather than weaknesses (Baker, 2014).

3. Methodology

Sample

Three major private banking institutions in Istanbul were selected for the sampling of this study. The samples used in this research are twofold and were collected in 2008 and 2018. In 2008, the sample was consisted of 130 female and 90 male participants (N=220), with their average age being approximately 32. While 80% of them have university degree, 20% of them have high school degree. Married participants represent 58% of the sample, 35% are single, and the rest is either divorced or widowed. Looking at the distribution of their experiences and professional positions, 57% of them have more than five years of banking experience, 26% of them were simply blue-collar employees, 41% are expert/assistant expert, and 33% of are director/assistant director. The sample in 2018 was consisted of 98 female and 74 male participants (N=172) with their average age being approximately 31, and 48% of them were married while 45.5% were single. While 51% of the participants have had five or more years of banking experience, 25% of them were clerical employees, 44% were expert/assistant expert, and 31% of them were director/assistant director. Both sample groups were

selected from employees serving in the same branches of the same private banking institution.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, social representations were determined through the application of word evocation technique. Using word of evocation, the following questions were asked to all subjects: The spontaneous nature of this free association technique activated by an inductive word allows and enables access to the elements that constitute the semantic universe. Both the manageability of this technique and the freedom of evocation left to the subjects make it a practical method, particularly in the context of field research where concerned actors of the social field often have little time to devote to research methodologies based on the collection of heavier data (Roussiau, 1998).

Participants were asked to make a list of words that came to their mind when they hear the word "woman manager". Moreover, the words expressed by them were analyzed and classified as negative or positive according to the meaning given to them. The method used in this research simultaneously considers the frequency of finding a word or expression and its rank of appearance (Vergès & Bastounis, 2001), to find out the cognitive structure of the representations. Derived from these two criteria permitting to establish a two-by-two table with four boxes, the produced terms are placed in relation with the level of the frequency of production and their average mean rank.

The box in which there is a positive congruence between the two criteria (very frequent and the first ranks of appearance) is likely to host the elements which are the most central for the meaning of the representation. The other boxes cover the peripheral elements. However, according to (1994), two of these boxes are ambiguous as the one with terms having a high rank of appearance with a low frequency constitutes the peripheral zone. The second peripheral zone is composed of terms and expressions that are produced with a low frequency, and a low rank, implying that for those participants who produce these social representations evocations, they are important ideas. These two peripheral zones are potential sources of change of the social representation itself, as items from these two peripheral zones might integrate the central nucleus of the representation.

In addition to the social representations analysis conducted with the Vergès method, we also implemented word cloud based on the evocations and their frequencies, which does not take the rankings into account, but brings a robust and simplified visual for comparison of groups and periods. We used the Word cloud package v.1.8.1 of Andreas Mueller (2020) on the same data we used in our first step analysis and implemented this data science solution in Python programming language on a Google Colab notebook on cloud which can be seen in the figure 1 to 4 (Mueller, 2020).

4. Findings

The social representations of female and male participants in 2008 and 2018 about the women managers are presented in the Table I. Positivity and negativity of evocations, as well as their frequencies, are shown in parentheses. In 2008, substantial qualitative differences were observed in the positive and negative evocations of the female and male participants about women managers. As emphasized above, a social representation would consist of a central system (central nucleus) and a peripheral system. According to Abric (1987, p. 65-66), central nucleus plays a privileged role in the representation while the other elements depend directly on it because it is in relation with their weight and value to the subject. Central elements have obvious status and help provide a framework of interpretation and categorization for new information.

In the central nucleus of 2008 data, the positive evocation of male participants are "sensitivity to details", "different perspectives", "open to innovations" and "self-acceptance exertion". Female participants also expressed positive representations towards women managers, with the evocations such as "creativity", "challenger", "easy adaptation to changes", and "bringing joy to the management". Negative representations, however, are "jealous" and "capricious", mostly expressed by female participants, while male participants' negative evocations were "irritable/grumpy" and "overly emotional". Figure 1 and 2 respectively shows the word cloud generated for cross-validation, including responses from female and male participants in 2008 in which red color represent negative and green color represent positive evocations, while the darkness of color and size of evocation represent frequencies.

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Table I. Social representations of woman managers

	2008 **EVOCATIONS BY** **FEMALE EMPLOYEES** **N=130**	**2018** **EVOCATIONS BY** **FEMALE EMPLOYEES** **N=98**	**2008** **EVOCATIONS BY** **MALE EMPLOYEES** **N=90**	**2018** **EVOCATIONS BY** **MALE EMPLOYEES** **N=74**
Central nucleus	Creativity (69,+) Jealousy(64,-) Bringing joy to management(60,+) Challenger (52,+) Easy adaptation for change(49,+) Capricious (48,-)	Ambitious (51,-) Aggressive (49,-) Jealousy (48-) Communication oriented (48,+) Manipulator(47,-) Challenger (44,+) Fussy (41,-) Capricious(41,-) Self-disciplined (39, +)	Sensitivity to details(46,+) Overly emotional (44,-) Different perspectives (40,+) Self-acceptance exertion (37+) Open to innovations (33,+) Grumpy (31,-)	Ambitious (36,-) Sensitivity to details(32,+) Overly emotional (29,-) Self-disciplined (28,+) Self-confident (28,+) Grumpy(25,-) Negative energy (25,-)
1st periphery	Amusing (31,+) Flexibility (30,+) Power games (30,-) Encouraging (28,+) Demonstrating herself (28,-)	Stressful (26,-) Gossiping (25,-) Maternal (24,+) Power games (22, -) Encouraging 21,(+) Demonstrating herself (20,-)	Listening to problems (25,+) Interfering like a mother(22,-) Diversity addition(21,+) Sensitivity to personal problems (20, +) Gossiping (19,-)	Listening to problems (23,+) Sensitive to personal problems (22,+) Gossiping (22,-) Bringing private life to work (21,-) Compassionate(21,+)
2nd periphery	Immediate adaptation (16,+) Fussy (15-) Grumpy (14-)	Mobbing (17,-) Empathy (15,+) Perfectionist (12,-) Grumpy (12,-) Egocentric (11,-) Low self-confidence (11, -) Overly talkative (10,-) Difficult person (10,-)	Bringing private life to work (11,-) Flexible(10,+) Mixing up the work and emotions (9,-)	Helpful (10,+) Inconsistent (9,-) Mixing up the work and emotions (9, -)
Distant peripheral zone	Unable to get along with women (8,-) Sacrificing her own private life (8,-) Listening to problems (7, +) Interfering everything (7,-) Ignoring her femininity (6,-) Unhappy (6, -)	Unable to get along with women (9,-) Listening to problems (8,+) Gracious/ (7,+) Stubborn (7,-) Ignoring her femininity (6,-)	Scatterbrained (8, -) Mind being occupied by housework (7, -) Unable to handle the work and the marriage together (6,-) Handling the situation (5,+) Psychologist (5,+) Disrupting the work order (5,-)	Scatterbrained (7,-) Stressful (7,-) Mind being occupied by housework (6,-) Unable to handle the work and the marriage together (5,-) Coaching (5,+)

Source: Authors' calculations
* Numbers in parentheses indicate representations' frequencies
**Negative and positive marks in parentheses indicate the evaluation of participants' evocations

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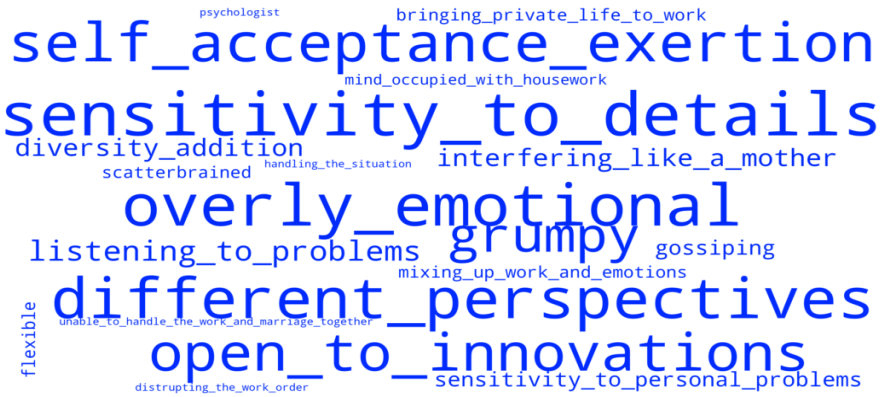
The peripheral elements also have their functions. They concretize, regulate and defend the central meanings according to the diversity of contexts and individualities, as they regulate central meanings attributing more meaning to them to make them more suited to the specific situation of an individual. Peripheral elements solely take on meaning in a specific context, while central system is relatively independent of the immediate context (Abric, 1994, p. 25-28).

In the first periphery, female employees positively view women managers as "amusing", "flexible", and "encouraging", but negative representations still exist, such as playing "power games", or "demonstrating herself". On the other hand, male employees positively consider women managers as "listener", "sensitive to personal problem", and see them as "diversity addition". Moreover, the negative representations of male employees are: "interfering like a mother", and "gossiping" in 2008.

Figure 1. Word cloud of Female Participants in 2008

In the second periphery and distant peripheral zone, female employees' evocations are mostly negative, such as "fussy", "grumpy", "unable to get along with women", "interfering everything", "ignoring self-femininity", and "unhappy". Similar to male employees, negative evocations are also present for female employees, such as "bringing private life to work", "mixing up work and emotions", "scatterbrained", "mind being occupied by housework", "unable to handle the work and marriage together" and "disrupting the work order". Few positive evocations are also present in second periphery and distant peripheral zone such as "immediate adaptation" and "listening to problems" both indicating attributed adaptation and communicative capabilities for woman managers.

Figure 2: Word cloud of Male Participants in 2008



When central nucleus evocations from 2008 and 2018 are compared, an increase in the negative evocations of the participants was observed in 2018. Evocations such as “ambitious”, “aggressive”, and “manipulator” are the most frequent ones among female participants in 2008, while these do not exist in 2008 data. Male participants evoked “ambitious”, “grumpy”, “negative energy” about woman managers. Figure 3 and 4 respectively represent the generated Word cloud for the responses of female and male participants regarding women managers in 2018 as well.

In the first periphery of 2018 data, negative evocations are more frequent among female employees (such as “stressful”, “power games”, “demonstrating herself”) then male employees (such as “bringing private life to work”). “Gossiping” is a negative evocation common among both male and female participants which became more frequent in 2018 compared to 2008. Male participants underlined positive aspect of women managers with evocations such as “listener” and “sensitivity to personal problems” both in 2008 and 2018.

Figure 3: Word cloud of female participants (2018)

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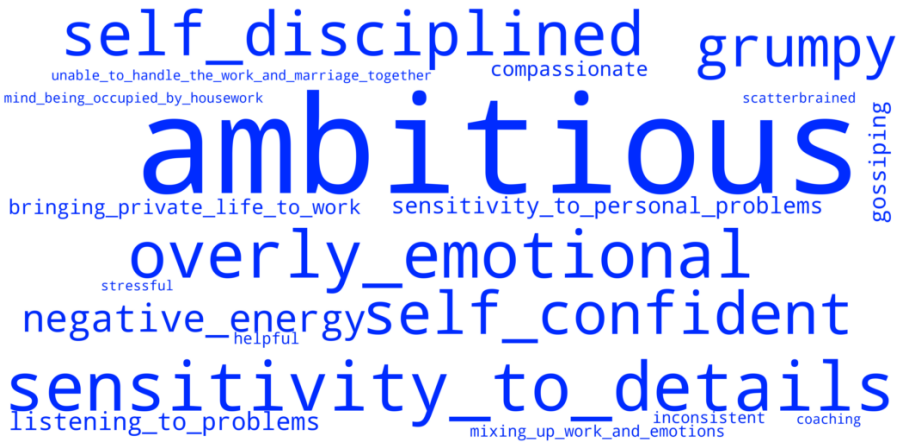
In second periphery, the "mobbing" evocation which was not present in 2008 has become a distinct one in 2018 for female participants. "Perfectionism" and "egocentrism", "low self-confidence", "overly talkative", "difficult person" are also new among the negative evocations for female participants in 2018. Another evocation that was not mentioned by male participants in 2008 is the "inconsistency" that emerged in 2018.

Figure 4: Word cloud of male participants (2018)



Most of the social representations in the distant peripheral zone are negative in both 2008 and 2018. For female participants, social representations such as "the disability to get along with women", "sacrificing her private life", "unhappy", "forgetting her own femininity" were present for women leaders in 2008. In 2018, "stubborn" was also added to these representations. When it comes to male participants, social representations in 2008 were conflict between private life and the work-life conflict that emerged in the distant peripheral zone. The representation of "psychologist" for male participants in 2008 was replaced by "coaching" in 2018 as well.

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the social representations of male and female participants towards "women managers" based on two consecutive research in 2008 and 2018, focusing on the banking industry known as being a sector with male dominance in the top executive/managing levels but with female presence in lower-level positions. This study has two dimensions of analysis, comparing female and male participants' social representations, as well as the temporal differences between the social representations in 2008 and 2018. The motive behind this study was our permanent observations of female employees' complaints about women managers during the training and coaching activities we have been undertaking in the banking sector.

When the social representations derived from the two steps of research are analyzed holistically, the positive and negative aspects of the women managers which were substantial characteristics in previous research are also observed in our recent survey. For instance, bringing different perspective, being open to innovation, creativity, easy adaptation to changes are the representations that have not changed since 2008. Many studies such as Vinnicombe (1988), Eagly and Johnson (1990), Stanford et al. (1995), and Applebaum et al. (2003), as well as more recent studies of Barsh, Cranston, Craske (2008), support these positive characteristics of women managers. Numerous positive representations in the findings of our study align with the studies listed above that emphasize positive attributes for women managers, which are especially confirmed in our study for the private banking industry in Turkey. Although stereotyping regarding classical woman roles are present, they are mostly conceptualized or interpreted as work-life conflict. These representations are, in fact, less frequent and are not in the first ranks as can be seen in the findings.

Social representations theory is highly suitable in evaluating societal issues in professional settings with the consideration that these representations are cooperation tools (Lahlou, 2001). Representations protect social order since they tend to maintain hegemonic interests over alternative representations. However, since they are relational, they are also open to critique and dialogue and challenge institutionalized stereotypes within a society (Howarth, 2006).

When comparing the social representations of female and male participants towards women managers, positive and negative representations are expressed in different ways by the female and male participants. For example, positive social representations for woman managers that were frequently expressed by female participants are being creative, being a challenger, being able to adapt to changes, bringing joy to the management. For male participants, these were expressed as paying attention to details, bringing different perspectives, being open to innovation, spending effort to make themselves recognized. Negative representations towards woman managers demonstrate also qualitative differences, as the most frequent representations among male participants were being excessively emotional, irritable/grumpy, and spreading negative energy while being aggressive, manipulator, jealous and capricious were negative representations among the female participants.

Social representations are not static, rather dynamic; and subject to continuous evolution (Lahlou, 2001). Negative representations of women managers for female participants, with its evolution in a decade, is particularly a significant finding of our study. When the 2008 study was repeated in 2018, we observed that the social representations of women managers has become even more negative. For instance, "being ambitious" was among the most frequent evocation among male and female participants which implies to a more negative construction in the cultural context of Turkey.

The evocations of being aggressive and applying mobbing to employees observed in 2018 were not present in 2008. A recent study focusing on mobbing in

Turkey (Cevher ve Öztürk, 2015) also highlights the aggressive behavior of woman leaders towards women employees. Women's negative representations for women managers is a particularly interesting finding in our study. While women rights movement cooperation is pro-active in the controversial and complex environment of Turkey in terms of women participation in labor, career advancement, and broader rights, why would women hold negative representations for women managers?

Lutgen-Sandvick, Dickinson, and Foss (2012) historically explains how the identity construction of women bullying women is encouraged. In this context, women commit to bullying on women to exhibit power status, especially as an outcome of the fear of being perceived as low performing or weak. Deconstructing this identity has a particular importance, therefore, conducting research about social representations become even more important. The answer may also further be related to the "Queen Bee Syndrome" described by Harvey (2018), Faniko, Ellemers & Derks (2016), and Derks, Laar & Ellemers (2016). In her article titled "when queen bees attack women stop advancing", Harvey (2018) found that 70% of 100 women in the UK were exposed to bullying from other females and described Queen Bee (QB) Syndrome as mean women personalities with negative behavior, demoralizing, undermining and bullying others, which must not be confused with strong, ambitious or assertive women. Sex eventually emerges as a key factor of discrimination whereas queen bees and alpha males both contribute to inequalities (Derks, Laar and Ellemers (2016). Faniko et. al (2016) list three indicators of QB response from previous literature as distancing themselves from women colleagues, trying to assimilate themselves in higher-status group, and legitimize current male-dominant status quo, opposing to progressive policies improving women's roles.

This study has important findings and practical implications about women managers' personal development training. Trainings should be designed to promote and highlight positive attributes of women managers and coping with negative ones. The importance of women-only trainings for the development of the women leadership in the next generations was already underlined by Vinnicombe and Singh (2003), according to which women-only training can enable women to clarify their leadership ambitions and recognize their leadership strengths. In their study, Hopkins et al. (2008) discussed that consulting psychologists and human resource professionals can play an integral role in helping women and organizations to highlight three themes: increasing women's portfolios of human, social and political capital; recognizing women as a strategic business advantage and strengthening women's connections with their organizations. For several reasons, coaching and training may be of particular value to women, as their unique developmental concerns include connection, wholeness, authenticity, agency, and self-clarity which will manifest over the course of a woman's professional life (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005).

A limitation in this study is the limited sample size which can be expanded into a larger population. Additionally, various industries where woman leadership is increasing significantly can be included in future studies for added generalizability and validity of our findings. Moreover, including different qualitative methodologies can

be leveraged to conduct more robust and in-depth analyses to test and support the findings of this study regarding social representations.

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