Breaking the Glass Ceiling Through Self-Actualization and Performance Improvements in Croatia

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This research paper touches upon the limitations that women face before entering high leadership positions, glass ceiling effect, queen bee effect, stereotypes, marital choice, performance and perception of female executives in business world today. Many researchers have discussed these topics, while majority of them emphasis importance of self-perception and actualization. The purpose of this research is to clarify the different perceptions and performances of female executives and what contributed to their success and to identify the self-perception of women in leadership positions and their perception of glass ceiling effect in Croatia. This study differs from previous studies because it is conducted in Croatia. Both questionnaires and interviews were used for this study in order to gather more information and to have more participants.

Introduction

Currently, the business world seems to lack the right proportion of female and men leaders. Women CEOs can be found in only 16% of corporate organizations in Fortune-500 firms in US (Soares et. al., 2011) and in European firms only 12% of leadership positions is occupied by women (European Commission, 2011). Statistics showed that number of women supervisors in the US bank industry is 12%, and health care industry counts for 14% women CEOs (Catalyst, 2011). The research done on 4000 companies in 45 countries has shown results that female representatives are better in supervising roles in more developed countries than in emerging countries (Gladman & Lamb, 2012). Furthermore, there is an increase in demand for women representatives in politics Norway (36%) and in France (33%). Research done on 428 biggest and most successful companies in Croatia indicated that there is a difference in ratio of man and women executives. Research has shown that number of male CEOs is 61%, while number of women occupying leadership positions is 39% (Ljubišić, 2011). Author states that market segregation influences men domination in high leadership positions and that there is high possibility of direct discrimination of women when accessing high positions in Croatia. Among hundred leaders in Croatia interviewed in book Hundred Croatian Leaders only twenty five of them are women (Samardžija, 2013).

Female contribution to organization. Billing and Alvesson (2012) brings to the point human factors and freedom of female taking charge of leadership roles but questions substitution. Harmonizing environment for female representatives is meritocracy in the company which means that women are being awarded because of their positive contributions to the company. In this kind of approach, company is seeking for employees not considering their social status, ethnicity or gender but rather seeking for values of individual that fits the company's needs (Billing & Alvesson, 2012). In order to achieve ideal working conditions, various strategies are recommended. Female representatives need to develop contrary stereotypical behavior by distinguishing self from the group by emphasizing values and capabilities (Ellemers & Rink, 2012). Additionally, consistency in proving those values is what employers seek for (Ellemers & Van Laar, 2010).

Limitations of women's entrance to leadership positions general limitations. Limitations of women's entrance to the market exist because of their over-representation in the secondary labor market (Billing & Alvesson, 2012). Women have limitations in networking and connections and have less secure jobs than men (Bowless, 2012). Counter argument is that there are more and more women cooperating in world economy as industry grows. Indian companies faced huge growth in empowering women to grow in companies (Singh, 2003). Female face limits to the approach to power which is a result of segregation of market (Billing & Alvesson, 2012). Women face different types of discrimination in terms of what job they are able to fit into. Women are often being treated as symbols (Billing & Alvesson, 2012). Jyan and Haslam (2005) pointed that female were more likely to be considered for the top leadership positions in times of financial crisis of the company, which puts female representatives in position of being criticized.

Stereotypes and discrimination. Female that have stereotypes in their career development do not accomplish needed skills for top leadership positions (Brush, 1992). Female employees that climb to the top of corporate businesses face social counteractions and struggle with their identity (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Discrimination can be highly visible when female are working in male dominated professions (politics, state departments) (Matthews, Turner, Sumter, 2010). Most of women stated that they were faced with sexual harassments, like gender jokes said by their male colleagues on average, twice a week. Most of participants stated that they didn't say it because they were afraid that they won't be promoted.

When facing stereotypes, women need to have additional help agents (legitimizing) (Burt, 1998). Nonetheless, female representatives fail in having strong connections and developed networks when comparing with men. Connections are crucial in career growth and in developing resources for further growth (Brass, 1984). Women need to be more oriented to interpersonal characteristics of a leader (Brass, 1984) which are: supporting other employees, team building, inspiring others, consulting and contributing to overall positive environment of the company.

Glass ceiling effect. Glass ceiling is a certain level of career advancement of female in the company and they cannot go above it. It represents barrier for women that wants to progress in career (Morrison et al., 1992). This is highly visible when women are employed in male- dominated professions. Research done on 50 American governments resulted in high women involvement in assessment to high positions (Bullard & Wright, 1993). Research identified that women tend to be more democratic oriented than man, women tend to have higher mobility (being promoted more than men), and women use circumvent rather that breaking class cliff. Women succeed in circumvent by securing their job positions

through performance improvements and being able to practice what they preach.

In sixteen medical schools in Canada, men Dean's are dominating (there is not a single female Dean) (Cohen, 1997). Cohen continues that there is no need to consider gendered bias in medical health industry. The factors influencing these results are: stereotypes, failure in mentorships, internal system issues (flexibility), policies and procedures of health care industry. Smith, Caputi, Crittenden and (2012) suggest that career advancement is closely connected with female beliefs on glass ceiling effect.

Queen Bee effect. Queen Bee effect means that women on high positions do not support other female colleagues in their career progress (Barretto & Ellemers, 2008). This phenomenon has been researched and proved by many studies. When being compared with male, female are less supportive to progress of other female in the company (Garcia- Retamero & Lopez- Zafra, 2006). Furthermore, women tend to be competitive and use stereotypes among other women (Ellemers, Van Den Heuvel et.al. 2004.) and tend not to support the same programs of promotion (Ng & Chiu, 2001). Ellemers, Van den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass and Bonvini (2004) also did a research on the "Queen Bee" effect in a company in which they tested male and female PhDs on how they perceive their colleagues. In this research, female interviewees stated that they were more committed to their job obligations than their female colleagues. This proves the fact that women in leadership positions tend to see other women as competitors, and use high level of criticism on other women in the group (Ellemers & Rink, 2012).

Marital choice. The various studies proved that women are being questioned about their marital choices while passing through selection process of job interviews (Symons, 1986). Furthermore, research done on Danish female executives shown that female executives didn't have the same career promotions and opportunities as their male colleagues because of their will to have children (Billing & Bruvik - Hansen, 1985). Female professors that were cooperating in Ellemers (1993) study on female and male different perceptions stated that they felt that marital choice was their barrier in career. Additionally, they even gave up the chance of having children because of the fear of losing jobs (Ellemers, Rink, Derks, & Ryan, 2012).

Women's marital status influences the commitment to work and ability to harmonize family obligations and working commitment (Biernat & Wortman, 1991). Additionally, women face discrimination which is very common nowadays. In these situations, people tend to stress sameness of gender, while looking for masculine characteristics in leadership. This results in women facing the low self-esteem and anxiety (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). Marital choice is closely connected with life satisfaction. Research show that women who have children,

take care of the household and manage to work effectively ranked higher in life satisfaction (Stewart & Salt, 1981) and additionally have high level of self-confidence (Pietromanaco, Manis, & Frohardt- Lane, 1984).

Performance vs. perception. Various researches suggest different kinds of strategies that women use in their way to top leadership positions. Interviews done on 50 women in top leadership positions (25 corporate, 25 owners) brings to the point two different strategies that women used; navigating and pioneering (Bowles, 2012). Navigating is usual career path without using specific strategies (waiting for promotion). Pioneering is following dream of the career development but simultaneously developing community of followers. In pioneering, level of power (authority) among others depends on women's capability to make her values accepted by the group. Nonetheless, women need to have specific and distinct leadership methods in order to develop followers (Bowles, 2012). Authority is a way for employees to co-operate in additional functions to meet collective goals-mine (Follett, 1949). As a result of this research, interviewees stated that pioneering is the new way of leadership style, while navigating takes part in the beginning of career growth (Bowles, 2012). Navigating considers working by rules and looking out for one self in career development by following the rules of the company in extended working requirements. As an example, pioneering considers intrapersonal vision of oneself as a leader, following clear vision where the company goes, and simultaneously developing community of followers who recognize values of a leader (Bowles, 2012).

Self perception of women in leadership positions. Power is necessary in leadership (Murray, 2006). Women tend to have specific perception of their own self-effectiveness, which differs from men's perspective (Misha & Rath, 2013). To support and investigate this thematic, Misha and Rath (2013) did a research on 120 women in order to see their perspectives on their own gender specific behaviors in working environment. Author identifies the favorable behavior called androgyny that combines both male and female characteristically behaviors which can be adaptable to different situations. Women with these characteristics are much better in generalizing as opposed of other women who don't posses androgyny characteristics. Results also showed that androgyny's socialize in working environment and are more effective. This research proved Bem's (1975) theory that androgyny's don't face glass ceiling issues in their career. Even though, women fail in adopting masculine characteristics. The most famous case in adopting masculine characteristics was the case of Ann Hopkins (representative of Price Waterhouse) who was rejected because of the shortfall of femininity (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). Heller and Levitt (2010) stress the gap between women's internal perception of self and the external perception of

others that manager needs to possess masculine characteristics.

Certain studies proved that man and women are much more similar than different (Prime & Carter, 2009). Survey was done on 178 supervisors (27% women CEOs and 73% men CEOs). Results were tested on ten behaviors and participants were asked to identify it as female or male behavior. Post Hoc study is used to identify the difference in male and female perceptions and performances and it was used to analyze results of this research. *Results showed that female behaviors are:* providing support to other employees, praising colleagues and recognizing potentials, developing relationships and improving communication, advising (consult with other employees before taking actions), helping colleagues in developing skills, developing teams and quick problem solving, and inspiring. Participants identified that male tend to be more effective in identifying potential obstacles and problems in company, affecting other employees that are on higher positions and delegating (using authority) (Prime & Carter, 2009). Women participants perceive themselves as more effective than men, but women criticize networking of other women. Furthermore, women perceive that men are outperforming when problems occurs.

Singh (2003) suggests that there is a gap between gender perceptions in organizations and personality traits among employees. To support his beliefs the author conducted a study on 86 CEOs (42 male and 44 female supervisors). Research was based on two instruments: WAMS (Women as Management Scale) and BSRI (Bern Sex Role Inventory). Results show that women tend to think that they are equal when compared with men, but they are struggling with acceptance from executives and other colleagues in the company. Women face criticism from their family members if they come late from work. When women are being promoted, they often feel indignation from their male subordinates. Furthermore, women participants think that they were often judged by being more emotional than professional when solving problems (Singh, 2003). Emotional intelligence is closely linked to personal traits (Applegate, Timur, & Locklear, 2009). Emotional intelligence (EI) relates to how effective individual handles himself and other people. Authors additionally suggest that employees need to go through EI testing in order to be successful in their careers. Thirty seven managers cooperated in research that links self-perception and EI levels. Results showed that CEOs that were confidential in their manager skills have higher level of emotional intelligence. The author suggests that self awareness is connected with self-control and it is crucial indicator in balancing emotions and behavior toward others. Also one of the crucial indicators of managing performance is self-awareness and being able to balance inner energy when interacting with others, meanwhile creating a positive environment and decreasing negative behavior (Applegate, Timur, Locklear, 2009).

Momsen and Carlson (2013) conducted a study with the purpose of identifying changes in female behavior and analyzing leadership values and perceptions that women have in pre and post development of their career. It took three years for this research to be done and different methodology was used. First two years authors conducted a study among graduate students enrolled in the course "Women and Leadership". Thirty two female executives collaborated in third year level of research. Leadership values that students associated with women leaders are: power, decision makers, influence on other employees, and delegation. Experienced women executives associated that they perceive themselves as being authentic, they encourage others, they are passionate about their job, and trustful to their subordinates.

Samardžija (2013) in her book 100 Croatian Leaders interviewed 25 women leaders. Few questions helped to identify question how women perceive their values and values associated as them being leaders. Majority of women stated that factors that influenced their career progress are: educational background and influence of their family, their core values (dedication, responsibility, developed critical thinking), mentorship of their professors and executives, networking in the beginning of their career which helped them in promotion. All of the participants stated that their career success was outcome of their interpersonal traits: responsibility, willingness to work, problem solving skills, being loyal, have control among themselves, believe in themselves, willingness to learn more, sense of empathy, team work, believe in other people, job commitment, enthusiasm. Few of interviewees stated that support of their families helped them in career development. Surprisingly, almost all of interviewees stated that education was not crucial in their career development. Interviewees found different sources of motivation. Most of them stated that inner satisfaction is crucial in development of leadership styles. Additionally, positive attitude in working environment is one of motivators, as well as love for what one does and enthusiasm.

This research will further identify what is the self-perception of women in leadership roles like, and how they perceive glass ceiling issue today in Croatia. This knowledge can help to identify different perceptions on leadership styles and discover why gender plays significant role in assessing high leadership positions (Appelbaum, Shapiro et.al. 2013). Since a lot of researches indicated that women use "queen bee" effect when facing promotions it would be interesting to research do women in Croatia use "queen bee" effect which means that women tend to see other female colleagues as competitors and rivals, and often tend to use criticism and judgment (Baretto & Ellemers, 2008). Furthermore, this research will further identify limitations that women face in working environments, both social and personal determinants. Additionally, this research is focused on linking women's performances with self-perceptions and what are internal and external factors that influence women behaviors and perceptions.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to assess the perception of students and perception of women in leadership positions in Croatia regarding obstacles to female advancement, effect of different factors on female career development, and gender-specific characteristics as displayed in the work environment. A questionnaire consisting of 43 items was distributed to 100 students of hospitality and service management program, and structured interviews consisting of 14 questions were conducted with business practitioners.

Questionnaire. Total of 100 participants collaborated in questionnaire study. Out of those 100, 50 of them were female students, and 50 were male students of RIT Croatia's Dubrovnik campus. In order for questionnaires to be quickly conducted and collected, questionnaires were delivered during classed at RIT Dubrovnik.

Questionnaire consisted of 43 items. Gender variable was used as control variable, and was the only demographic variable in the questionnaire. Attitudes regarding obstacles to female advancement were measured through twelve different four-point Likert questions. Participants estimated the level of effect of different factors on female career development through seven-point Likert scale responses in seven different items. Attitudes regarding gender-related characteristics displayed in the work environment were measured through twelve four-point Likert questions. Participants were also provided with a list of eleven characteristics, and for each of these they were required to determine whether they perceive it as a male or a female characteristic.

Interviews. Total of 20 women on high positions in Croatian corporations from Service industry were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Method used was structured interview, consisting of fourteen questions regarding attitudes toward and description of characteristics needed for success in the workplace, obstacles women face in advancing, and means of overcoming these, gender related characteristics as displayed or attributed in the work environment, and differences in male and female leaders' characteristics. Interviews were conducted by e-mail and face to face. Since the goal was to reach solely participants highly positioned in companies, schools and universities, due to difficulties in reaching people in CEO positions, snowball sampling was used.

Results

Questionnaires were distributed to 50 female and 50 male students of RIT Croatia. All variables were tested for the effect of gender.

Solely significant differences between different categories are reported (*p*≤.05).

Attitudes regarding obstacles and limitations to female advancement in the workplace. Questionnaire respondents' attitudes regarding obstacles and limitations to/in female advancement were measured through four-point Likert questions. Data gathered was reduced to binomial level by combining all 'disagree' categories into a category 'rejected' and combining all 'agree' categories into a category 'accepted'. Majority (76 %) of participants reported agreement with a claim that market segregation affects male dominance in leadership positions. When asked to report on whether women employed in male dominated sectors face inability to progress due to the fact that men are dominating in these sectors, most (51 %) of participants rejected that claim. Most (74 %) participants agree that glass ceiling exists in terms of prevention of advancement of qualified people due to their gender, and majority of participants (73 %) accept the statement that there is a strong possibility of direct discrimination of women on entry into high positions in Croatia. Most (72 %) participants reported agreement with a claim that women do not report discrimination by male superiors due to fear that this would affect their advancement. Also, majority (67 %) of participants agreed that women generally face fear of being accepted by both managers and employees in the company. When it comes to marital choice and family plans, majority (62%) of respondents agreed that male and female individuals do not have equal career advancement opportunities because of marital choice, and majority (66%) reported agreement with a claim that some women give up the chance to have children due to fears of losing their job. Majority (88 %) of participants agreed that women tend to be more competitive toward other women in the company. Also, most (61%) of participants accept the claim that women in leadership positions see other women as competitors and therefore use a high level of criticism, but rejected (65%) the claim that female leaders do not support other female colleagues in career advancement. Although most participants (74 %) agree that prejudices are key limitation to success of female leaders, results indicate that this attitude is associated with gender of participant, women being more likely to agree with such a statement, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 16.84, *p*=.00, *φ*=.41.

Estimated effect of different factors on female career development. Participants estimated the level of effect of different factors on female career development through seven-point Likert scale responses. A Mann-Whitney test indicated that distribution was the same across categories of gender. Education was reported as having the most effect on female career development (*M*=4.48, *SD*= 2.24), followed by responsibility (*M*=4.09, *SD*=1.66), and job commitment (*M*=4.01, *SD*=1.94), while networking in the beginning of the career was

perceived as least important (*M*=3.70, *SD*=2.11), followed by family support (*M*=3.83, *SD*=2.38), mentorship (*M*=3.91, *SD*=1.88), and developed critical thinking skills (*M*=3.90, *SD*=1.63) (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Box-and-whisker plot of effects of different factors on female career development.
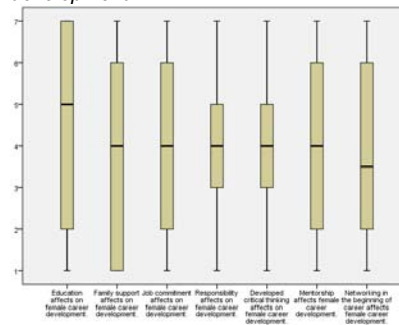
Attitudes regarding gender-related characteristics and stereotypes as displayed or attributed in the work environment. Attitudes regarding gender-related characteristics and stereotypes as displayed or attributed in the work environment were measured through four-point Likert questions. Data gathered was reduced to binomial level by combining all 'disagree' categories into a category 'rejected' and combining all 'agree' categories into a category 'accepted'. Although most (63%) participants rejected the claim that successful leader needs to possess masculine characteristics, significant difference was noted between attitudes of participants of different gender and results indicate that this attitude is associated with gender of participant, men being more likely to agree with the statement, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 15.49, *p*=.00, *φ*=-.39. Similarly, most participants (88%) accepted the statement that women can contribute to the development of the company with their characteristics as leaders, and the data indicates that this attitude is associated with gender of participant, women being more likely to agree with such a statement, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 13.64, *p*=.00, *φ*=.37. Although most participants (56%) accepted the claim that women on high positions tend to be more emotional than men, majority (58%) rejected the claim that women tend to be more emotional than professional while solving the problem. Still, moderate association between two attitudes was recorded, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 9.32, *p*=.00, *φ*=.30, with no association with gender of participants. Most participants (66%) accepted the claim that women tend to be more flexible than men, yet reported attitudes significantly differed between participants of different gender, men being more likely to reject the claim, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 21.56, *p*=.00, *φ*=.46. With 72 % of participants accepting the claim that women have higher sense of intuition then men, again the attitude was shown to be associated with gender of participant, with men being more likely to reject the claim, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 33.53, *p*=.00, *φ*=.58. Most participants (83%) agreed that women are successful in

supporting other employees, and in the same proportion (83%) agreed that women were successful in identifying potential of other employees. Majority of respondents (76%) additionally reported agreement with the claim that women are successful in developing relationships among employees. Out of the sample surveyed 67 % agreed that women most often consult with other employees before they take actions. With majority (53%) of participants accepting the claim that men are usually effective in identifying potential obstacles and problems in the company, attitude was shown to be associated with the gender of participant, women being more likely to reject the statement, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 14.49, *p*=.00, *φ*=.-38. Majority (55%) of participants accepted the claim that men are usually more effective than women in the impact on other employees who occupy senior positions, with no significant difference between attitudes of respondents of different gender.

Ascription of male and female characteristics. Provided with a list of eleven characteristics, participants were required to determine for each of the characteristics listed whether they perceive it as a male or a female characteristic. Effective influence on decision making was reported as male characteristic by majority of participants (73%), with statistically significant difference in attitudes of participants of different gender, but weak relationship between gender and the attitude, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 6.14, *p*=.01, *φ*=.25. Motivating other employees was perceived by 73 % of participants as female characteristics, with attitude being moderately associated with gender of the participant, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 18.32, *p*=.00, *φ*=.43. Majority (54%) of participants reported finding engagement of the external environment to be male characteristic. Creating a positive working atmosphere was found to be female characteristic by 73 % of participants, attitude being associated with gender of the participant, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 22.37, *p*=.00, *φ*=.47. Encouraging productive work ethic was reported as male and female characteristic by equal number of participants (50%), with no recorded relationship between gender of the respondent and the attitude. With 51% of all participants regarding ability to influence others to be female characteristic, association between gender of participants and the attitude was recorded, with male participants (68%) reporting it as a male characteristic, and females (70%) more likely to regard it a female characteristic, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 14.45, *p*=.00, *φ*=.38. The ability to delegate was reported as a male characteristic by majority of participants (81%), while 89 % reported understanding for others as female characteristic. Creation of safe environment was reported as a male characteristic by 67% of participants, with weak association between gender of participant and the attitude, χ^2 (1, *N* = 100) = 5.47, *p*=.01, *φ*=.23. 'Not taking initiative' was reported as a female characteristic by 66 % of respondents, with recorded association between gender of participant and the attitude, with male participants (84%) reporting it as a male

characteristic, and females (52%) more likely to regard it a female characteristic, χ^2 (1, N = 100) = 14.44, p=.00, φ=-.38. The characteristic 'does not accept mentorship' was reported by 86% of participants as male characteristic, with no differences between stances of participants of different gender.

Interviews. Through analysis of the interviews conducted with twenty women occupying leadership positions in Croatia eleven different attributes reported as needed for women to be successful leaders were identified, with 'ability to motivate others' mentioned by majority of the interviewees (80%), followed by 'ability to influence others' and 'integrity', both mentioned by 65 % of interviewees (Table 1). With regard

Table 1
Characteristics needed for women to be successful leaders listed in interviews.

Characteristic	Percentage of interviewees mentioning the characteristic
Ability to motivate others to follow	80%
Ability to influence others	65%
Integrity	65%
A clear vision of her career	50%
Priority setting	40%
Emotional intelligence	40%
Choice of a proper dress code	40%
Selection of development	35%
Tendency for long-term planning	35%
Determination	30%
Fairness	30%

to differences between male and female leaders, six different categories were identified in the interviews conducted, with majority of the interviewees (70%) mentioning the characteristic of being more emotional, and qualities of possessing a higher sense of intuition (55%), and being more insolent (55%) (Table 2). Out of 20 interviewees 70% reported believing that there is a difference in advancement of men and women, most frequently mentioned reasons being tradition (50%), and stereotypes (40%). Six categories of obstacles for female career

Table 2

Differences female leaders when compared to their male counterparts as reported by interviewees.

Characteristic	Percentage of interviewees mentioning the characteristic
More emotional	70%
More insolent	55 %
Possessing a higher sense of intuition	55%
Less aggressive	45%
Having maternal instinct	45%
Less decisive	35%

development were identified in the interviewees' responses; most commonly mentioned (60%) being wide spread belief that leadership position is more suitable for a man, followed by discrimination practices (50%) and fear of success (50%) (Table 3). Although 70 % of interviewees reported agreeing that women face discrimination in the workplace, solely 50% reported being discriminated against. Out of 20 interviewees, 90 % mentioned that there is glass ceiling effect in Croatia. Identified skills utilized by women in breaking the glass ceiling, as mentioned by interviewees were emotional intelligence (40%), perseverance (40%), and ability to make hard decisions (35%). Importance of support from colleagues (40%) and investment in oneself (30%) were also noted as important in breaking the glass ceiling. Out of twenty interviewed female leaders 60% reported being asked about their marital status in the workplace, and equal number of interviewees (60%) reported that their marital status influences their dedication to work, while 55% reported that it is hard for women to align work and business commitments. In this 80% of interviewees mentioned that family support helps women align work and job commitments, and 60% mentioned establishing a balance between family and work is helpful. In elaborating definition of success in the workplace two different strategies were identified, with interviewees (i) identifying success with satisfaction, specifically satisfaction with life (70%), and job satisfaction (25%); (ii) defining success through mentioning causes of it, specifically supporting environment (80%), family support (70%), dedication (45%) and keeping good relationships with other people (40%).

Table 3
Obstacles to female career development noted in the interviewees.

Characteristic	Percentage of interviewees mentioning the obstacle
Belief that leadership position is more acceptable for men	60%
Discrimination	50 %
Fear of success	50%
Glass ceiling	40%
Jealousy of other female colleagues	40%
Wage gap	25%

Conclusion

Overall results proved that female on leadership positions face different kinds of limitations in their career developments. Interviews and Questionnaires showed differences in perceptions of young students and female executives. Students associated market segregation limitation as crucial factor that affects dominance of men in the business market which proves literature finding that female face limits to the approach to power which is a result of segregation of market. Female CEOs associated mentality that leadership position is more acceptable for men, inability to progress, discrimination, inequality, and jealousy of other female colleagues as main limitations. It was interesting that women mostly didn't mention outside factors like poor financial and political situation in the country, but rather focused on the internal factors and limitations like human interactions and situations in the companies. Students were more superficial. When it comes to discrimination, most of the students think that there is high possibility of direct discrimination against woman on entry into high leadership positions, while most of female CEOs mentioned that they didn't have experiences of discrimination but they are aware that it exists on the market. Both populations agreed that women can contribute to the development of the company with their characteristics of a leader. Both students and female executives identified prejudices as key limitations to success of women as leaders.

Results showed that there is a difference in advancement of men and women in Croatia. It can be the result of prejudice, traditional society and unwritten rules that leaders in management have to possess masculine characteristics. This means that we still live in conservative environment, and that further progress needs to be done in our country. Also, there are not only external barriers, but female tend to have

internal barriers and fear of success, which disables them to succeed. A surprising result was that female students who are employed in male dominating sectors face inabilities to progress because of the fact that male are dominating in those sectors. Female CEOs mentioned this kind of discrimination, some even work in male dominating industries and face different kinds of discriminations such as male colleagues making fun of them. This is because men tend to think that women are not capable to deliver the same quality as them, which definitely needs to change in the future because everyone should be treated equally and every effort and work needs to be respected. All participants of this research agreed that male and female don't have equal career advancement opportunities because of marital choice. This research proved that women's marital status influences the commitment to work and ability to harmonize family obligations and working commitment. Female executives explained that marital status influenced their job commitments and that family support was crucial in their career development. On the other side, they were rejected from male CEOs just because of the fact that they decided to have children. This is a major problem, because women need to be respected and their private life shouldn't be even questioned.

Students disagreed with the fact that female on leadership positions do not support other female colleagues in career advancement, while most of female executives had experience of discrimination from other females in the company. Reason for this is because female executives tend to have competitive behavior towards other females and are most likely to employ male candidate, rather than female. Furthermore, female CEOs stated that they had more support from male colleagues while they tend to have better relationship with their female colleagues. This research proved Queen Bee effect, which means that women on high positions do not support other female colleagues in their career development.

All of the participants of this research agreed that women tend to be more emotional than men. Also, agreement was mutual when it comes to statement that women have higher sense of intuition than man. Various differences and characteristic behavior of male and female leaders were listed in this research. Students think that male leaders are more effective than female in influencing on decision making and delegating, while female leaders are better in creating positive environment and motivation of other employees. Students stated that women do not take initiative and men do not accept mentorship. Women's emotional intelligence and higher sense for other is connected with women's role of mother. This is definitely advantage that women have, because generally it makes them better communicators and better motivators.

Student participants stated that education is crucial for career development, while female CEOs stated that most important factors are: satisfaction with life, fairness, supporting environment, dedication, keeping good relationships, job satisfaction, and family support. It seems that students tend to think that education is crucial, but all other factors influence success. It is important to have a clear vision of the future, as many of interview participants and students agreed. Both populations agreed that leadership is associated with the fact how much a person knows herself and how much a person has sense for others. This means that all participants are not associating power with leadership, and that participants are aware that showing empathy and ability to create followers is new way of leadership.

Female executives mentioned that integrity, emotional intelligence, ability to motivate others, priority setting, fairness, determination are characteristics that successful leader needs to possess. These results indicate that female on leadership positions tend to be more capable in relational based style of leadership. They tend to communicate more and are emotionally attached to entire community by creating positive working environment. Women in leadership positions need to use these core values as an advantage and recognize their own strengths and contribution to the overall success of organizations they lead.

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