Women and the Path to Corporate Management

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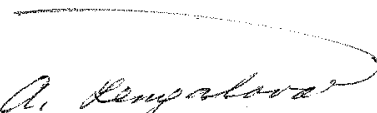Powell, Gary N. 2011. Women and men in management. California: SAGE Publications.
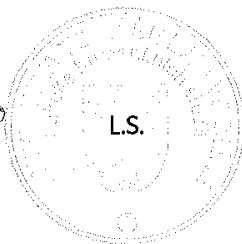
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ABSTRAKT

Táto bakalárska práca skúma situáciu žien z hľadiska manažérskych pozícií a možností dosiahnuť vyššie pracovné pozície v tejto sfére. Teoretická časť sa venuje charakteristike žien ako manažérok a tiež sa zaoberá porovnaním pracovných možností žien v predošlých storočiach a v súčasnosti. Dôležité je zdôrazniť, že práca navrhuje konkrétne riešenia, ktoré by mohli pomôcť ženám dosiahnuť vyššie pozície v manažmente, ako sú mentoring, socializácia, mimopracovné aktivity ako aj dôležitosť vyváženia pracovného a súkromného života. Analytická časť je venovaná dotazníku, ktorý bol zodpovedaný manažérkami pobočiek banky XY. Cieľom tejto bakalárskej práce je na základe dotazníku zistiť relevantnosť navrhnutých riešení a mieru, do akej sa zhodujú s výsledkami odpovedí manažérok.

Kľúčové slová: manažérky, manažéri, ženské pracovné možnosti, mentoring, socializácia, mimopracovné aktivity, vyváženosť

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis examines the situation of women who hold managerial positions and their possibilities to achieve higher working positions in the field of corporate management. The theoretical portion of the thesis is based on the work and characteristics of women. Moreover, it concentrates on the changes in female working conditions from the 19th century to present conditions. It is necessary to mention that the thesis proposes specific solutions in order to help women achieve higher positions in corporate management, such as mentoring, socializing, out of work activities, and the balance between work and private life. The analysis is based on a questionnaire, answered by the female managers of the XY bank subsidiary. The aim of the thesis is to judge the relevance of the proposed solutions and how they correspond with the results of the survey.

Keywords: female managers, male managers, female working possibilities, mentoring, socializing, out of work activities, balance

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> Amy, a midlevel sales manager struggles with a problem: "My mentor´s idea of a development plan is how many external and internal meetings I can get exposure to, what presentations I can go to and deliver, and what meetings I can travel to, "she says. "I am too busy, I have three kids. On top of that, my current boss wants me to focus on 'breakthrough thinking'. I am going to be in a wheel chair by the time I get to be vice president, because they are going to drill me into the ground with all these extra credit projects." (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 81)

The story above serves as an example of how women are sometimes treated in corporate management. Men have always possessed more advanced posts and had fast growing successful careers (Mikuláštik 2006, 24). Considering the working possibilities and conditions, the situation for women has improved over the centuries; however women still struggle with the process how to find a path to success (Eagly, Carli 2007, 72). Most of the time they find it overwhelming, exhausting and sometimes they simply surrender due to unequal opportunities and time consuming family duties (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 185). Women should have equal opportunities as men to achieve their goals and hold high positions in corporate management. When searching for solutions a wide range of proposals could be taken into the consideration.

The aim of my thesis is to search for solutions which help women achieve higher positions in corporate management and at the same time to evaluate the proposals covered in my research. The research, based on the responses of female managers from the XY bank subsidiary in Trenčín region in Slovakia, connects the proposed solutions with the real life scenarios. The survey is only implied for 16 XY subsidiaries (80% of the total number of subsidiaries) in Trenčín region, Slovakia. In the first part, I will develop measures and ideas in order to improve the situation of women in management. These proposals are questioned/tested in the survey. The graphs and tables will simplify comprehension of the results. Moreover, the analysis of the outcomes will be offered. The suggestions for the yet unsolved phenomenon were designed according to my personal assumption of its necessity in corporate management

The thesis will also depict problems of inequality in the working sphere over the last three centuries. Furthermore, it will heavily concentrate on working situations and barriers standing in the way of a successful career life of women in the 21st century. The terms *glass ceiling* and *labyrinth*, still applicable today, will be explained to the reader in order to display the obstacles and barriers connected with both phenomena.

In addition, the first part introduces the differences between male and female characteristics as leaders, and the preferred leading styles of women in corporate management; in order to gain a proper background when analyzing the responses in the practical part. Not only will properties of female leaders be mentioned, but also the pay gap between female and male. The importance of mentors, socializing or balance between work and family are outlined as the most essential elements when starting a career and aiming high. To prove the existence of women who balanced their work and family, some examples of female managers who achieved this, are introduced.

I.   THEORY

1 WOMEN AND MEN IN MANAGEMENT

Men and women differ in a wide range of qualities and characteristics. Referring to common stereotypes, women are known to be friendly and kind, whereas men tend to be more self-centered (Eagly, Carli 2008, 1). These stereotypes have grown with the humankind since early childhood (Mikuláštik 2006, 44). Moreover, certain professions are seen as being typical for men or women. For instance, women most likely hold positions in the field of human resources, while men are mostly connected with technical and organizational work positions (Křížková, Pavlica 2004, 101). Later on, this stereotypical phenomenon has an impact not only on the private life but also on the social and work life (Mikuláštik 2006, 44). The obvious differences between typical male and female characteristics might have a huge impact on their working behavior reflected in the different leading styles in a management position.

The first chapter concentrates on the basic differences between males and females as leaders and how they are seen as managers in the working environment. In addition, the chapter discusses female styles of leading and provides an illustration of women acting as male leaders. In the first chapter, the issue of female managers is greatly described in order to underline the difficult circumstances for women in corporate management. Firstly, the qualities, characteristics, and leading strategy of the female managers have to be understood in order to follow the upcoming chapters. The reader must be aware of the qualities of female managers since the survey in the analysis is based on a questionnaire with only female managers in leading positions of XY bank. Therefore knowing women's characteristics is essential. In order to understand female qualities, male qualities need to be discussed as well.

1.1 Men in management

Men achieve high positions in management faster than women (Ryan, Haslam 2005, 81). The reason might be their strength and dominant appearance (Mikuláštik 2006, 46). In general, male leaders are more likely to work in corporate management than their female counterparts. Dominant behavior, which they are known for, one could believe it is the natural reason why they possess so many high positions (Křížková, Pavlica 2004, 12). However the type of behavior represents only a part of the numerous male characteristics.

1.1.1   Characteristics of men at work

"Men are naturally more dominant and competitive than women and therefore are more likely to gain authority roles" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 29). They are considered to be stronger and feel very positive about their opinions (Mikuláštik 2006, 46; Eagly, Carli 2007, 3). "People expect male leaders to speak assertively, compete for attention, influence others, and initiate activity" (Ibid. 2007, 122). In this situation they may feel strong, as dominant leaders. This can be observed during meetings, when they "make more task contributions than women" (Powell 2003, 105). Moreover they tend to talk more often during meetings and most of the time they "determine the topics of conversation" (Claes 1999, 423). In such situations, men gain even more power while they act as they are the only ones who express a valid opinion. In cases when women do not express their opinion, there is a possibility that male dominance increases. But strength does not always have to be the primary reason for their success. It may be only one piece of the whole puzzle.

Men tend to take risks more often than women (Mikuláštik 2006, 46). They prefer taking risks, which keep them more enthusiastic and passionate about their occupation. In order to take risks, males request more demanding challenges since they believe that solving them will bring success (Fagan 2012, 4). Sometimes the risky assignments follow a path of an unsuccessful downfall. If difficulties occur, according to men, they were not caused by a personal failure but by the surroundings (Mikuláštik 2006, 46). It is possible that men are more open to failures and mistakes, which represents an inseparable part of risk taking. Having said this, one has to bear in mind that if they only blame their surroundings for failures it could be easier for them to move on.

Men are less likely to support their co-workers or colleagues as their female counterparts. They prefer working alone and do not have a tendency to socialize in the working environment (Ibid., 46; Powell 2003, 105). They tend to be self- centered and most of the time assured by their own opinion (Claes 1999, 443). Such self- orientation could be the reason of their unsociability which does not inhibit them being good leaders.

1.1.2   Men as leaders

As mentioned above, most of the time male leaders appear strong, dominant, and are more likely to become leaders than women. The features mentioned are also the stereotypes that are used against female leadership (Mikuláštik 2006, 46). One could argue that men can lead better because they are not only more assertive and ambitious but moreover they do

not tend to be influenced by features such as family or emotions (Eagly, Carli 2007, 122; Powell 2003, 105). It is probably the rich connection between strength, authority and "traditionally masculine traits which have a higher perceived value in management positions" that make men great leaders (Crampton, Mishra 1999, l01).

1.2   Women in management

Almost half of the women working in top management positions in corporate management are unmarried or are divorced and one third of those who are married do not have children (Mikuláštik 2006, 41). Moreover women are seen as being of lower social status and they "are expected to specialize in subordinate roles" (Powell 2003, 105). This theory has its roots in the ancient times when men were in charge of the most demanding duties, such as hunting. Later in time, women were obliged by society to stay at home and take care of the children and household. Women were not exposed to danger as much as men and families did not depend on the work women performed (Eagly, Carli 2007, 12). However, research shows that now women hold more management positions than "any other period in history" (Eagly, 2007 9). As Knaths (2009, 84) said, being a good manager means being a good listener. But it is not only the listening skills; women also have other characteristics that define them as good leaders.

1.2.1   Characteristics of female managers

"People expect female leaders to speak more tentatively, not draw so much attention to themselves, accept other´s suggestions, support others, and solve interpersonal problems. There is a basic expectation that a woman is going to be the comfortable, team-building, soft, forgiving type." (Eagly, Carli 2007, 122)

Referring to the quote, women appear friendlier than men since they express their emotions when interacting with co-workers (Mikuláštik 2006, 45). The fact that they are open-minded, "smile more and lean towards others," definitely helps them socialize (Powell 2003, 106). Women do not tend to be as self- centered as men, so they are open to the new ideas in decision making where they 'apply an intuitive approach' (Mikuláštik 2006, 45). "Women display more deference and warmth" which might help them to socialize easier and become a good team player (Powell 2003, 106).

Women possess "feminine qualities such as relationship building and teamwork" (Claes 1999, 431). "Their emphasis on social behaviors in teams is consistent with a desire

for positive interpersonal relationships in their jobs, thus they consider their work as a partnership and long-term oriented" (Knaths 2009, 84). "When they are working in teams, women view them as families or communities where members nurture and support one another" (Powell 2003, 107). Colleagues represent an inseparable part of a working environment, someone who can understand them and help individually (Mikuláštik 2006, 45). To emphasize, women consider socializing crucial for their work position (Claes 1999, 347).

1.2.2   Style of leading

According to Klenke there are two styles of leading: democratic and autocratic style. She also points out that according to research women apply a democratic style of leadership technique rather than the autocratic one (Klenke 2011, 17). "Democratic style, also called participative style" takes the opinions of all team members into account when making decisions, in contrast to the autocratic style "which does not follow such a path" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 125). "Despite women´s tendency towards a democratic style leadership, some women are extremely autocratic, and some men are extremely democratic" (Ibid., 135). For instance "world leaders who were the 'first' of their sex; Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meier, Indira Gandhi, would be better known for their autocratic style (Ibid., 126). These women were probably only a minor exception to the typical female democratic style.

According to Eagly´s research, "female leaders were somewhat more transformational than male leaders, especially when it comes to giving support and encouragement to subordinates" (Ibid., 130). The transformational style, established by political scientist James MacGregor Burns "involves establishing oneself as a role model by gaining followers´ trust and confidence" (Klenke, 2011, 17). The style is known for its "interrelated components: charismatic, inspirational, intellectually stimulating, and individually considerate" (Ibid., 17). This type of leader states future goals, develops plans to achieve the goals, and innovates, even when their organization is generally successful. They mentor and empower followers, encouraging them to develop their full potential and contribute more effectively to their organization" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 128). "They are inspiring, optimistic, moral and equitable" (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 188). In contrast, transactional leaders, are described as those "who establish give-and-take relationships that appeal to subordinates´ self-interests" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 128).

1.2.3 Women leading as men

In contrary, some women do not follow the role of the democratic or transformational leading style. These women tend to behave in a way that is normally seen as male behavior. By doing so they trying to hold on to their position in a male dominated working environment (Mikuláštik 2006, 45). They perform these "masculine characteristics" in order to become visible as a management quality individual to their male counterparts, but they are only seen as a "non-conformist, and consequently as unpredictable and unsuitable for promotion" (Claes 1999, 348). "When women violate performance expectations or act assertively, their contributions are likely to be rejected" (Powell 2003, 105). This statement is confirmed by one female leader in Eagly´s and Carli´s research: "I think that there is a real penalty for a woman who behaves like a man. The men don't like her and the women don't either" (Eagli, Carli 2008, 4). There is a chance that this dominant masculine behavior appears to others as inappropriate and unreal and thus might be disrespected by all.

1.3 Summary

To conclude, there are numerous differences between male and female managers. Men represent a transactional style of leadership being more assertive and dominant, which might be the reason why they are preferred as leaders (Eagly, Carli 2007, 130). Women are more fragile and sensitive; they do not take as many risks as men and are afraid to stand up for themselves (Mikuláštik 2006, 46). Men work hard to achieve their goal and fulfill their ambitions. Women are team players and open to the new ideas. Moreover, the superb communication skills that women possess may be one of the reasons women are good applicants for leading positions (Brooks, Brooks 2002, 63). Women perform the transformational style, known as being great listeners, which is helpful and crucial to building a work relationship (Eagly, Carli 2007, 128). Their career is slowed or delayed because they tend to prefer family over work (Mikuláštik 2006, 47). "The situation has slightly changed in recent years and women do achieve high positions more often than before", although, the situation is still not balanced (Fagan 2012, 3). The history of the improvement of a woman's position at work will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

2   WOMEN FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Looking back to the past, women have certainly made a huge step forward. From the time when they served only as housewives through their very first vote until the moment of successful women leaders (Klenke 2011, 36). Barriers have undoubtedly created a demanding path. Courage, determination, and a belief in oneself were a crucial part of this challenging process. From Joan of Arc having the courage to defeat England, to the Queen Elizabeth of England the longest-reigning monarch of all time, to the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, also called the iron lady, famous for leading the United Kingdom in the 20th century; over the centuries these incredible women and others have been slowing creating a strong foothold in management positions for the women of today (Ibid.). Competition and pressure were assumed to be devastating, these women fought hard to achieve their goal and to become known throughout history. Chapter two will be devoted to a comparison of various possibilities for female achievements during different centuries. Moreover, the main obstacles women must face in the corporate environment and which problems ambush them will be discussed. The majority of this chapter will be dedicated to the 21st century; in order to comprehend the background information of the current working situation for women.

2.1   Women at work in the 19th century

In the 19th century women worked in big factories such as sewers or some of them arranged flowers for the hats of the rich. These women worked for 14 to 18 hours a day in terrible, dangerous conditions for only 0.10 or 0.18 dollars an hour (Renzetti, Curran 2005, 267-268). Industrialization and urbanization contributed to the clearer gender segregation in work, because a border between a household and office work was established (Sirovátka 2006, 168). From the beginning, men and women were segregated into different types of working positions. Men would obtain a position which required higher qualification, meaning higher income. As an excuse they said that women would only work permanently in these positions until they got married and had a family. At the end of the 19th century more than 53.7% of men and only 20% of women were employed in the United States (Renzetti, Curran 2005, 267-268). It might be assumed that gender discrimination in the work place was limited while the women did not obtain the chance to work in the field they desired.

2.2 Women at work in the 20th century

The situation for work equality started to change in the 20th century. With men leaving to fight in the Second World War, the work places became unoccupied. Women started to replace their male counterparts in the factories, companies, or in any other working positions. Even though, there was still huge work segregation until the thirties. This was the first time when women could perform jobs that had only been performed by men (Paludi, Neidermeyer 2007, 6). At that time, the United States government appealed to employers to pay out the same wages to women as to men; moreover, they encouraged them to sponsor kindergartens. After the Second World War, most of the women lost their employment in order to 'make place' for the returned soldiers. Some women did leave their jobs, nevertheless 80% of women desired to stay and work, even in a lower position with a decreased salary. Women also wished to work because of the rise of divorce rates. "Some sought employment because they recognized the risks of becoming financially dependent on their husbands." At the end of the 20th century, almost 60% of women and 75% of men were employed (Ibid. 2007, 6). The percentage of the employed women never decreased to the figure it was at before the war; however, women still struggled to achieve the superior 'male' positions. This barrier was especially difficult to overcome (Renzetti, Curran 2005, 267).

2.3 Women at work in the 21st century

The situation in 21st century has slightly changed bringing along the unsolved problems. "There is a higher proportion of female managers in the service sectors, such as retailing and banking, than in more industrial sectors, such as manufacturing, mining and information technology" which might be the causes of the pay gap since "women and men still tend to work in different sectors/jobs on a labor market" (Ryan, Haslam 2005, 83). "On the one hand, women and men are often over-represented in certain sectors, with 'female' jobs (mostly in health care, education and public administration) being in general less valued than typically male professions. On the other hand, within the same sector or company the jobs done by women tend to be of lower value and less well paid" (European Commission 2011, 16).

2.3.1 Pay Gap

The problem of pay gap from the 19th and 20th century lasts until now. According to recent data Slovak women earn on average 85.5% of the men´s salary (European Commission 2012, 31). Women do not receive the same amount of money as men monthly. "The gender pay gap, which is the average difference between men´s and women´s hourly gross earnings across the economy as a whole, in the EU remains at 14.5% in Slovakia" (Ibid, 31). Sirovátka (2006, 226) argues, that the smaller wages which are received by the women cannot be interpreted as a discrimination of the employer. He states that in this case other factors such as education, experience, or length of time spent in the workplace have to be considered. Renzetti and Curran (2005, 299) support the statement by arguing that a majority of women see their primary roles as mothers, therefore they seek for lower paid jobs which requires only a small financial investment in their education. Because of the fact that men earn more than women they do not leave work because of a lack of time spent with their families and children (Karsten 2006, 126).

2.3.2 Glass ceiling

The well-known barrier called *glass ceiling* was first introduced on Wall Street Journal by two journalists - Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt. They explained the term as an invisible barrier through which women are unable find a way into higher positions. They were being constantly held back by men who could easily break the glass and proceed up their career ladder (Eagly, Carli 2007, 4). This *glass ceiling* can result in a lack of female confidence and once women believe they are disadvantaged beyond control, they might no longer be as interested in the top managing positions as men with the same qualification (Powell 2003, 195). Later on the *glass ceiling* finally broke. Some women had made a path up to the top. However, the process was not easy. Along with the *glass ceiling*, other problems had to be overcome. Because some paths can be difficult to find, new term *labyrinth*, was established by Eagly and Carli (2007, 6). The term *labyrinth* better describes the mix of obstacles and struggles that needed to be conquered. Using the term *glass ceiling* is not often used because of its misleading interpretation; for instance the ceiling "precludes the possibility that women can overcome barriers and become leaders" (Ibid., 7). I see the *labyrinth* as a workplace and the obstacles such as pay gap or sexual harassment are the death ends in the *labyrinth* which women wish to pass. In the *labyrinth*, the obstacles and difficulties might be seen easier to overcome as in the *glass ceiling*.

Nancy Faunce experienced the obstacles at the beginning of her career. Working for a small company, the vice president "refused to let her sell because she had no experience, and refused to give her any experience. He pointed out that the rest of the sales had more experience and she had none." So she "begged him to give her a shot but he only sent her to write the description of the job she would like to do." What she did was filled in "the six pages of job description" and she left the other six pages blank. When he asked her what the blank pages were for, she replied that they were for him. After few weeks she became tired of this game and started to sending out her resumes and searching for new job. "The Senior Vice President wind of it somehow, took her for a lunch" where she explained the whole situation and let him know that she "will not sit around and wait and play games." In a year "she wound up on top of the heap as the number one salesperson" (White 1992, 78-79).

2.3.3 Women and the labor market

Women are mostly employed in less stable jobs or lower quality jobs. Moreover research shows a higher number of unemployed women than men in corporate management. According to the statistics, the women employment rate in Slovakia is 67.4% (OECD 2013). Sirovátka (2006, 237) states there are three factors which may be the cause of inequality. One of them is pressure of a family caretaker role. Most likely it is the woman who takes care of the household and a child, therefore a special treatment from employers is required. In most cases, it is the woman who takes maternity leave and disrupts or even permanently leaves work. Another factor is connected with prejudices against females. According to the social pattern, women are seen as mothers and householders, acting less flexible than men in the work place. The last feature Sirovátka proposes is the possibility that women consider themselves weak. They lack confidence and motivation because of their natural role as mothers, therefore they accept offers which are unacceptable for men.

2.3.4 Sexual harassment

Not only discrimination but also sexual harassment imposes difficulties for women working in a corporate management position. Most likely, women are the victims of sexual harassment. (Mikuláštik 2006, 40-41). Therefore women might be more interested in jobs with male minority and no longer compete for high positions with a male dominated staff. 8.5 % of working women possessed these 'feminine jobs' such as administrative workers in 2008 whereas only 14% of men workers carried these positions (Krížková 2009, 24).

2.3.5 Successful leaders, devoted mothers

Some women have overcome the obstacles, broken the *glass ceiling* and achieved leadership positions (Ryan and Haslam 2005, 81). These "women who found the way are the path breakers of social change" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 199). In the 21st century there are female leaders, who are both great mothers and successful leaders. Being experts in multitasking, these women combine their working time with the time they spend with their children. They take their kids for business trips not just to be with them, but also to show the children where their mothers are when not at home. But combining work and family time is not just about taking children on business trips, it also has other advantages. The top female leaders sometimes work from home. Rather than spending the Sunday afternoon dealing with their work, they leave it for night time when the kids are already in bed. Another example is having business meetings during lunch, so at night, they can enjoy family dinner. However the flexibility they need to do these things can only be obtained in the high position they possess. They are able to create their own schedule, decide when to have meetings, postpone meetings if necessary. All of these things make it easier to spend more time with their children (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 186). Not only must women work hard and gain respect from their male counterparts, but most importantly they have to find a balance between their family and work. These days, merging family with work is a demanding task (Ibid.). The issue of a balance between work and family will be discussed more in the next chapter.

2.4 Summary

Since the Second World War, employment of women has risen and has never reduced to the point before the war. During the war, women began to hold positions that were previously only performed by men (Paludi, Neidermeyer 2007, 6). However, huge gaps in the salary differences have not disappeared (Renzetti, Curran 2005, 267).

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of salary discrimination has not completely disappeared yet and women must deal with this issue every day. "The pay gap also reflects other inequalities on the labor market. Many women work part-time or under atypical contracts: although this permits them to remain in the labor market while managing family responsibilities, it can have a negative impact on their pay, career development, promotion prospects and pensions" (European Commission, 2011, 17). Women who were trying to

pursue a higher career were blocked by the *glass ceiling* at the turn of the 20th and 21st century (Eagly, Carli 2007, 4).

In the 21st century sexual harassment started to create problems along with the continued battle of salary discrimination (Mikuláštik 2006, 40-41). This new difficulty might be an answer to the question of why some women are afraid of upper level job opportunities and often reach for lower positions, which are consistently employed by females (European Commission 2011, 16). In addition, as already discussed some women were able to pass through the *labyrinth* and pursue their dream career. Moreover, at the high positions, they were finally able to synchronize family and increased work responsibility (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 186). Solutions that could be proposed in today´s corporate management for women in order to achieve higher positions will be discussed in the following chapter.

3   WOMEN ON THE LADDER TO SUCCESS

Women do not hold as many top positions in corporate management as men (Mikuláštik 2006, 24). Fortunately, the situation is said to be changing, however major inequalities still exist. According to American research in Fortune 500 companies, only 6% of employees from the group of chairman, president, chief executive officer and chief operating officer are women (Eagly, Carli 2008, 1). How could we help women to improve this situation? In the following pages, I will try to find an answer to this question with the support of my own research which is covered in the analysis. Factors influencing the matter will be further discussed. Moreover, a few proposals will be introduced for successful growth in corporate management. Suggestions will be evaluated according the findings in the survey which is based on the responses of 16 female managers in leading positions of the bank XY. I will evaluate the connection between the theory and the results from the survey.

This chapter will discuss multiple factors which are equally connected to the research. First of all, the elimination of gender discrimination within working environment will be emphasized. Secondly, help offered by companies support the career growth of the female managers will be explained. In addition, the concept of mentors will be introduced. Moreover, the importance of balance between work and family, an issue which is assumed to be the most essential key in the development of a women´s career, will be discussed. This topic will be observed from multiple angles including the acquisition of help from partners and family, and a lack of family or company support. The last part of this chapter will be dealing with the matter of socializing.

3.1   Gender discrimination

According to recent research, female managers still experience gender discrimination in the working environment. This problem is portrayed by an example; Slovak women earn on average 85.5% of the men´s salary (European Commission 2012, 31). "Discrimination [also] occurs if women receive fewer leadership opportunities than men with equivalent qualifications" Eagly, Carli 2007 67-68). In these conditions, reaching for an upper level career may be overwhelming.

However, more essential is the lack of female promotions out forward by male superiors. Some male leaders may believe that women fail to have the qualities as leaders, and as a result they promote a male manager to a higher position even though male and female applicants might be equally experienced (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 82).

"Promotions come more slowly for women than for equivalent men" (Eagly, Carli 2007, 72). The stereotype that women tend to have families in the future cause superiors to fear that they will lose employees. Not only does the possibility of needing maternity leave but also a lack of leading qualities bias the superior's choice when choosing a candidate for promotion (Křížková, Pavlica 2004, 99). Such behavior from the companies might not seem reasonable. A promotion decision should not be judged based on possible future plans, but be based on present performance and qualities. With this approach the lag between male promotions and female promotions might be shortened.

3.2 Mentoring

It is assumed that having a mentor is one step in the right direction. "It is someone who is higher up in the organization, who possesses a wealth of experience" (Crampton, Mishra 1999, 92). The more senior the mentor, the faster the mentee´s career will advance (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010). With the help of a mentor women can learn faster. Having a mentor who can appreciate a women´s performance for his or her own benefit and for whom the woman does not represent any danger is the best combination (Knaths 2009, 87). "The mentor will help you to develop your reputation; help get your name known by the senior management" (Linehal, Walsh 1999, 349). This theory is said to represent one of the possibilities of how women could achieve higher positions. However there are also some downfalls concerning mentoring.

The survey from 2010 shows that even though 21% of women have had more than 4 mentors in comparison with 15% of men who had mentors, "males received 15% more promotion" than their female counterparts (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 82-83). What is the cause that even though more women are mentored, they are still less promoted than men? The reason is probably rooted in the relationship between sponsors and women. "A sponsor is usually someone a level or two above the employee who is aware of her talent and will recommend promotions or assignments" (Crampton, Mishra 1999, 92). From research, both men and women admitted that they received valuable advice from their mentors, "but it is mostly men who described being sponsored" where women stated "the mentoring relationships have helped them understand themselves and the ways they might need to change as they move up the leadership pipeline", whereas men confess "their bosses and informal mentors have helped them plan their moves and take charge in new roles" (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 83). We might assume that these examples do not help women reach

higher positions. Even though women had a mentor and were engaged at work, they received a different treatment as men.

Fothová (2006, 37) states that the problem might be rooted in the gender of the mentor. She argues that if women are led by a female mentor, they possess a higher chance of reaching their goal. She states that male mentors tend to be afraid of losing their position to the female managers; therefore it is not that uncommon when professional needs are not supported as expected. In such cases Fothová (2006, 37) suggests a possibility of locating a female mentor from outside of the company. However there might be a "lack of women in senior management positions" (Linehal, Walsh 1999, 350). The women managers are most likely to be encouraged by the role models; the women who have achieved their goal and broke the *glass ceiling*. With this benefit female managers "could encourage more females to partake in the management" (Ibid., 350).

To conclude, having a mentor might be the first step to achieving career success. A mentor is able to guide the managers and help them proceed on their ladder of success. Although, obstacles may occur in some cases, mentors are still considered a lift to success (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 82).

3.3   Balance between work and family

To be capable of 'fighting' for the higher positions in corporate management, female managers ought to be internally balanced in work and private life. According to the Baruch, Biener, Barnett´s research (1987, 133) women lack productiveness at their workplace if they bring family problems with them. This means that if women want to achieve a higher position they must possess a clean shield between work and family (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 185). "This concept of 'work-life balance' was created in 1986 when Americans started paying more attention to their jobs than their families" (Newhard 2012, 432).

In this subchapter I will introduce more possibilities of how women can be helped and why balance between work and family is so crucial. Last but not least, I will acknowledge the reader that even high position women can manage their top positions and spend enough time with their children.

3.3.1   Family impact on women´s performance at work

Women are the ones "who interrupts their career, take more days off, and work part-time" (Eagly, Carli 2008, 5) "because they mother, they invest tremendous amounts of time and energy in raising their children, making sure they turn out 'right'" (Milkie et al 2010,

1330). This results in having overall less years of job experience, less "hours of employment per year" which reflects in slow "career progress and reduces earnings" (Eagly, Carli 2008, 5). Women hold more domestic responsibilities than men. Most of the time, it is a woman who is in charge of making appointments or taking care of a sick member of the family. She has to arrange children´s activities and maintain domestic chores. Even though most of the men provide care for their young children, such as feeding, diapering and bathing, pushing baby strollers in a park (Ibid., 2007, 58), research shows that in 2005 married men devoted only 11 hours a week to housework where married women devoted 19 hours (Ibid., 2008, 6). The results are clear. Women decrease working hours (Nordenmark, Mikael 2002), takes breaks from work, drop out of jobs, "take leaves of absence and sick days and seek flexible jobs and part time jobs" (Ibid., 2007, 58). Women do not see any other opportunities for managing a household and combining work with children; therefore, they default to these conclusions. In contrary, not all the women who have children leave their jobs. "One study found that the likelihood of a mother remaining in her full-time job after childbirth is 75% that of a childless woman remaining in hers during the same time period" (Ibid., 57). The phrase 'Having it all', meaning "achieving a successful career and successful family", tend to be frequently used by the women refusing to admit that they decided only for a half of the one whole (Ibid., 175). The truth is that most women usually decide which path they will take. They tend to postpone having a family, which might have an impact on difficulties with pregnancy or having a family at all (Mikuláštik 2006, 18). Families can have enormous impacts on the career of women; however, following suggestions might serve as a possible solution for reaching compromise.

3.3.2   Lack of family support

Another reason why women leave their jobs for the family is the fact that they rarely find support in their husbands or close family. Males expect that it will be them who will work on their career, therefore, when a woman appears to be in a process of achieving a high position, "it may pose a threat to their marriages if the husbands are uncomfortable breaking with traditional sex role norms" (Cheung, Halpern 2010, 187). We assume that in most cultures the man is expected to lead the family and follow a career. We come across the first opportunity how men could ease the balance between work and family for women; to support and encourage them (Ibid.). If they receive support, they can find the needed

balance for the basic elements. If they come home stressed from work, the husbands can comfort them, listen, and provide support.

3.3.3 Husbands and household

When planning a family, the concern of maternity leave needs to be taken into consideration. For centuries women stayed at home with the newborn child (Mikuláštik 2006, 18, 21). Therefore taking maternity leave might be another alternative how husbands can help their wives follow their careers. They could hold the position of their wives, including cleaning, cooking, taking care of children, where women could work and devote more time for work and the career. These women would not lose their motherhood duties, they would still play with children or take them for trips; they would only care for less domestic duties (Eagly, Carli 2007, 50). However, most of the time, this is not the case. For a lot of male executives it is easy to retain their high positions. Their wives stay at home and take care of the household and children; therefore, they do not have to devote such a lot of time to their children, and can fully concentrate on their jobs. Promoting and achieving a higher position for these women would be time-consuming and overwhelming. Only very few women executives have unemployed husbands, who take care of all the domestic responsibilities as described in the previous chapter (Ibid., 49). If men stay at home with the child, women would find balancing work and family easier and possibly be able to gain the higher employment positions.

3.3.4 Help from the company

Benefits from a company might also help balance family and work. A cooperative company should understand a woman´s needs and attempt to meet them; whether dealing with work or family issues. Every company should realize that work and private life related changes occur together typically. The firm should be involved in the consequences of major changes within the company and help the individual to establish a strategy of how to balance family and work (Mikulášik 2006, 21). Fortunately, help from companies is becoming very popular: "Implementing programs such as time based, attachment based, assistance based, and child-care based programs are a good" alternative that could help them in a great amount (Crampton, Mishra 1999, 102). If companies were willing to offer child-care within the workplace, women would not ask for more days off, they wouldn't consider leaving a company for family reasons and would be able to continue their career. Other possibilities to be implemented in the company strategies could be flexible work

hours, part time work, work from home or sharing a working position (Sirovátka, Hora 2008, 226). By implying such innovation into the business, women might be able to devote their time equally to their children and work. This could help them find balance between work and family faster.

3.4 Socializing

Socializing is also essential when working on a career. Being part of the team and spending professional time with the bosses is effective in creating possible promotion opportunities. Young female managers might think only their talent and hard work will shift them on the ladder of success. It is also crucial to make friends and be ready to keep good relations and friendships in the work environment (Mikuláštik 2006, 164). Therefore female managers should participate in most of the outdoor or indoor after work activities. This could help them express their opinions and ideas in a more relaxed environment and gain their superior´s interest (Eagly, Carli 2008). However, socializing in the work place might not be as easy as it seems. Women are not likely to be part of the 'males club' (Fothová 2006, 115). Fothová (2006, 116) argues that women are not excluded by their male counterparts because they hold the post of female managers; they are simply not welcomed as women. In such cases female managers tend to stay aside or they try to become part of the male company. However when women try hard to become a member of the male group, the men have a tendency to keep an even bigger distance from women. Until the moment when women do not forget their additional chromosome X in the changing room, they would never be equally part of the males group (Ibid.).

If the boss plans a football game or fishing as an out of work activity, women are often not welcomed, assuming that the popularity of football and fishing within women is very low. In such cases, women do not receive enough occasions to spend professional time with their boss, where he could notice the quality of their work and consider future promotion (Eagly, Carli 2008). According to Fothová (2006, 116), women will probably never be a part of the 'men's club'. The more women attempt to join the 'club' the more they are refused. Women should do everything they can to become a part these occasions, because they have equal rights to be part of the team. If they feel awkward, to ease the situation is to simply invite a female counterpart to join. By such action, the boss might notice the confidence and lack of fear being surrounded only by males and he might

reconsider woman's abilities and qualities with a positive measure. Socializing might be hard for some women, but it is an essence of achievement.

3.5 Summary

The main issue of this chapter was to find possible solutions which could help women achieve higher positions in corporate management. The elimination of gender discrimination affecting women was discussed. As a second possibility, mentoring and sponsoring were introduced. An experienced mentor should be capable of supporting women to achieve better outcomes (Knaths 2009, 87). On the other side, mentoring and sponsoring might not have always been essential. If the mentors do not treat women the same way as men, where they offer and sacrifice more for males because they believe they have a higher chance to succeeding, then mentoring is unhelpful (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010). A large part of the essay was focused on the balance between work and family. With a synchronized personal and work life, women have a higher rate of achievement. As the findings propose, the problem could be solved with help from members of their families, especially husbands (Cheung, Halpern 2010). Moreover, if men take some of their wives' responsibilities, for instance stay home and perform the housework, women would have more time to concentrate on their job (Eagly, Carli 2007). However not only husbands can help their wives but also companies can provide some help. By creating a child-care facility within the company, women would not be stressed about their children while at work; therefore they would be able to concentrate more (Crampton, Mishra 1999). At last, the essence of building relationships in working environment was discussed including after work activities. All these findings discussed in chapter three will be implied to the survey introduced in the upcoming chapter.

II. ANALYSIS

4   WOMEN AND THE PATH TO CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

In chapter three I proposed the possibilities of how women could achieve higher job positions in corporate management. Obtaining help from mentors, husbands or employers was proposed to solve this dilemma. However, theory does not always create a realistic result. A survey was established to determine if these proposals would be effective in reality. The questionnaire in both English and Slovak form can be found at the appendix of my bachelor thesis.

4.1   Target of the survey

A survey was established to determine if these proposals would support women in their career or not. The questionnaire consists of 16 questions. These 16 respondents are all female management heads of the XY banking company at different branches in the Trenčín region in Slovakia. The name of the bank where the respondents work cannot be revealed due to the bank's wish to remain anonymous. The survey is implied only for 16 subsidiaries of bank XY (80% of the total number of subsidiaries) in Trenčín region, Slovakia. They were split into groups based on their marital status and age. The women were separated into two age groups. The first group includes women between the ages of 30-40 years old and the second group includes women between the ages of 41-55. There are a total of 10 women between the ages of 41-55, and 8 of these women have at least one child. One woman is single; between the ages of 20-30. The remaining 5 women are between the ages of 30-40, and 4 are childless.

The research will be dealing with the responses the women provided and will compare them according the presumptions made in chapter three. The questions are divided into the separate groups according to the purpose they serve, similarity, and target. The findings will be described after each question and an analysis will be held after every group of questions. How the proposals in chapter three differ and overlap with the survey is shown in the analysis. Moreover, the most essential points covered in the analysis will be stressed at the end.

In the practical part the graphs and tables are used to help to express the answers from the survey. The x-axis shows the specific answers that were chosen by the female respondents in the survey. The y-axis represents the number of women who gave the specific answer in the survey. The tables were used in order to express the extensive answers more

comprehensive to the reader. Tables consist of the answer choices, a number of responses and the total percentage a number represents.

4.2   Career development

Before the analysis was conducted, separation of the women according to their status was essential. The two following graphs illustrate the number of women that fit into each category based on whether they have children or not and the number of years it took for them to receive a management position.

*Graph 1. Period of achieving the current position*

This graph shows 5 of 12 women with children reached their current working position within 5 years of working for the company. Three of these women represent the category between 41 and 55 years old. Four women with children reached their after working a maximum of 10 years for the company. The age of the women in this category is equally divided between the two age groups. The last 3 women between age 41 and 55 achieved their position in a total 16 years working for the company. Graph also shows that both women between the ages 30-40 gained their position within 10 years and one 30-40 year old woman reached her career goal in 5 years, while the other women achieved her position in 11 years.

Surprisingly the results show that the women with children achieved their goal in a shorter time than some of the women with no children. The findings from the research do not fully correspond with the theory proposed in chapter three, which claimed women with children reach a management position later than the women who are childless. Overall, the women with children reached their current positions faster than their childless counterparts. It can be assumed that these successful women received help from their partners or families. The family support in the survey will be discussed later.

4.3   Mentors

The following section consists of 4 questions relating to the issue of mentoring.

**Question number 1: Did you have a mentor while working towards your current position?**
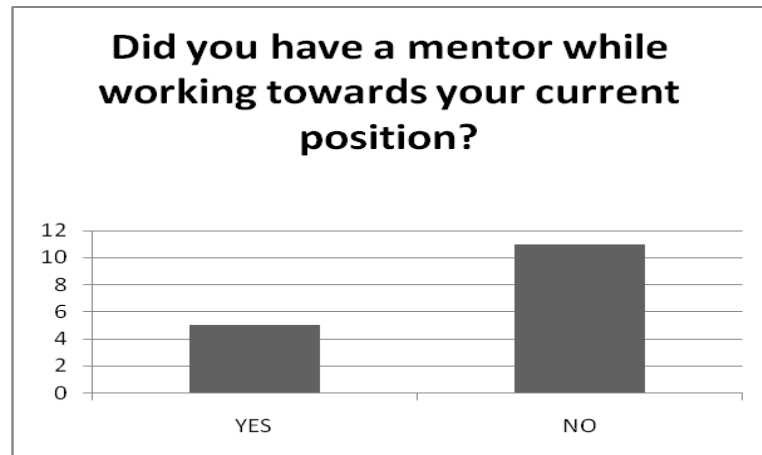
Graph 2. Having a mentor

The first graph shows that 11 female managers did not have a mentor while on the path to the higher positions, and 5 women did have a mentor.

Question number 2: Did the mentor help you to achieve the current position?

For question number two 5 responses will be taken into the consideration since only 5 women responded 'yes' to having a mentor in the previous question.
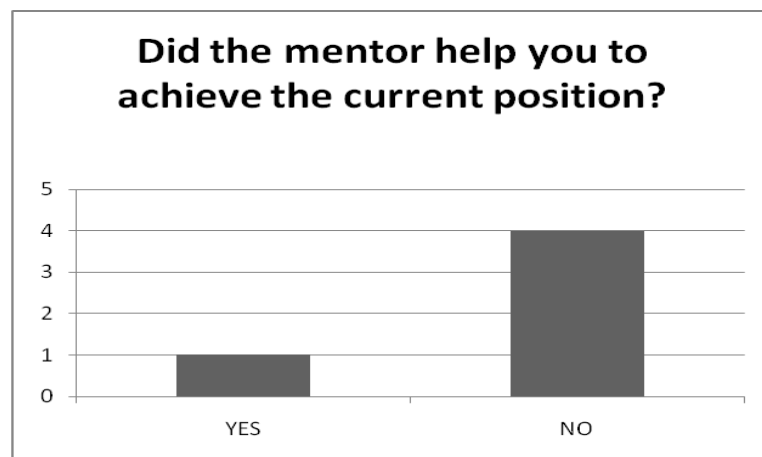

Graph 3. Help from a mentor

Four women stated the mentor did not help them achieve their career goal. Only one woman claimed the mentor helped her to obtain the current position.

Question number 3: Was the mentor a man or a woman?

All 5 women were supervised by the female mentors while working towards their career.

Question number 4: When did the mentor help you?

As in the first question, in question number 4 the number of responses has decreased to only 5 women who experienced a mentor while working on their career.
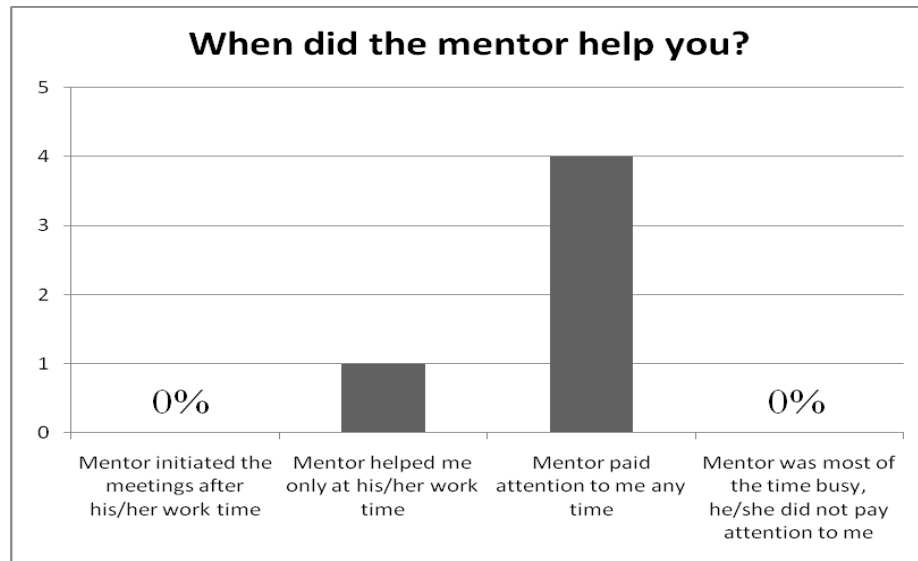
Graph 4. Time devoted by a mentor

As can be seen in the graph the majority of the mentored women, 4, stated, mentor was willing to supervise them anytime. On the contrary, one woman claimed the mentor helped her only during the mentor's work time. The two response options from the survey, *Mentor initiated the meetings after his/her work time* and *Mentor was most of the time busy, he/she did not pay attention to me,* were not chosen by any of the women.

The importance of mentors was discussed in the previous chapter. When having a mentor women are assumed to achieve their career faster (Knaths 2009, 87). However, in the survey, majority of women lack having a mentor during their career. Only few women experienced the benefits of having a mentor. In all of the surveyed situations the mentor was a woman. As argued in chapter three, the occurrence of female mentors is very rare and women tend to receive more male mentors. (Ibarra, Carter, Silva 2010, 83). It is odd that the 5 surveyed women all had female mentors rather than male mentors, but perhaps this is common in banking since more women tend to work in banking than men (Křížková

2009, 24). In contrast with the theory in the third chapter the majority of women stated that the mentor did not help them to achieve the high positions.

4.4   Work and family balance

The following section consists of 3 questions. The questions only target the women with at least one child. Since there are 12 women who fulfill this condition, the same number of responses will be seen in all the following questions in this section.

Question number 5: Did you take maternity leave?

All the women with children stated that it was them who took maternity leave to care for their child. The reasons are discussed in question number 6.

Question number 6: Why did not your partner take maternity leave?

Why did not your partner take maternity leave?		
Answers	**total responses**	**percentage (%)**
At that time he had higher income, we could not afford it	8	66,67
According to my partner, women should stay at home and take care of the children	1	8,33
According to me, women should stay at home and take care of the children	2	16,67
At that time he was working on his career	1	8,33

Table 1. Partner and maternity leave

According to the majority of women, the reason why they took maternity leave is because their partner earned more money at that time. This popular answer obtained 8 responses. Only 2 women claimed that *Women should stay at home and take care of the children*. The same number of responses was selected by the women who as a reason stated *At the time their partner was working on his career* and *The partner thinks women should stay at home and take care of the children.* Obviously, the women took their financial situation into a consideration when making a decision about maternity leave.

Question number 7: Did maternity leave influence your career growth?
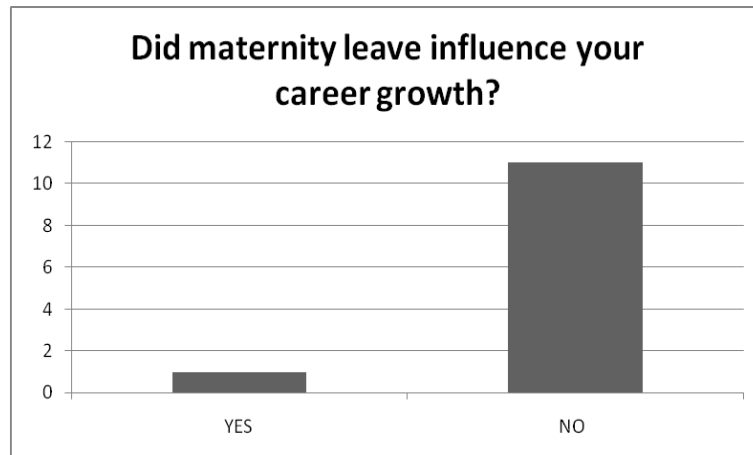
Graph 5. The influence of maternity leave on career growth

As the graph shows only one woman stated that maternity leave was the reason why she achieved her career later than desired. The majority of women do not believe maternity leave influenced their career growth.

Question number 8: How did you manage to balance work and your family?
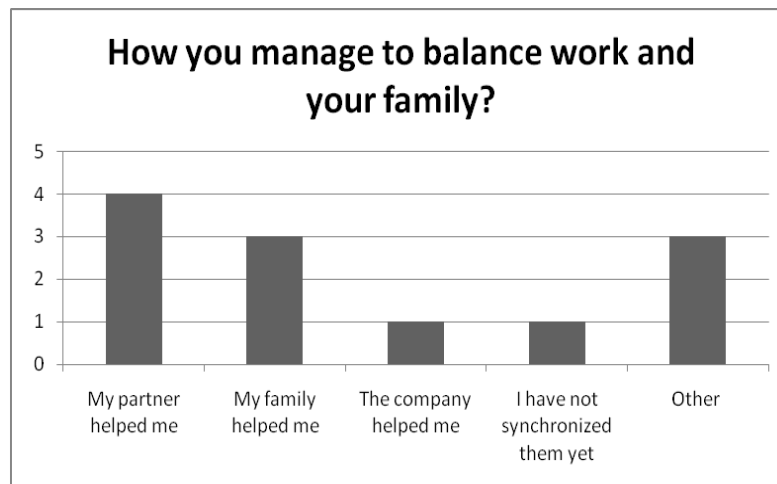
Graph 6. Balance between work and family

The majority of the women 4 stated that they received support from their partners when they were searching for a balance between their work and family. 3 women claimed that it was the family who helped them balance these two elements and only one woman stated that the company supported her. She claimed the company offered training programs which assisted her in finding the necessary balance between work and family. One respondent stated she has not synchronized these two elements yet. In addition to that, last 3 women shared their own view of the situation. One was not only unable to balance her work and

family, but her work caused her marriage to end in a divorce. The second woman stated the previous position she held was based on the same level of difficulty as is the current position, therefore balance was already established. The last female manager claimed that the ability to balance work and family is a specific skill each individual needs to possess and does not require any external help.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, a high percentage of women tend to take maternity leave since they consider it natural (Mikuláštik 2006, 18-21). Most of the time job opportunities and career growth is limited because women take time away from work to care for their family. The same results were discovered in the survey. All of the women participating in the survey who are mothers, took maternity leave; claiming the reason to be their financial situation. The same reason was proposed by chapter two where female managers stated the husband´s job and position is more important since he earns more and therefore it is the woman´s responsibility to stay at home and take care of the children. As found in chapter three, taking maternity leave slows down the career process. However as the survey showed, the careers of these women were not affected by maternity leave at all. We can only assume that during maternity leave these women were not trying to work on their career but were concentrating only on a family. Therefore they might not have realized how maternity leave affected them professionally. Only one woman agreed that maternity leave slowed her career advancement and she is not married, therefore it might represent a bigger struggle for her since she was taking care of the child by herself.

As discussed earlier, balance between work and family is considered essential in order to work on a career and achieve a high position (Baruch, Biener, Barnett 1987, 134). As discussed in chapter three, a woman's family and partner are considered to be the most influential helpers. The survey overlaps with theory since a majority of the women expressed receiving help from their husband in order to synchronize work and family and achieve their goals. We might assume that the situation is improving and men are really becoming more involved in household chores and child care.

4.5 Inequality at work

Question number 9: How often do you experience a gender inequality at work?
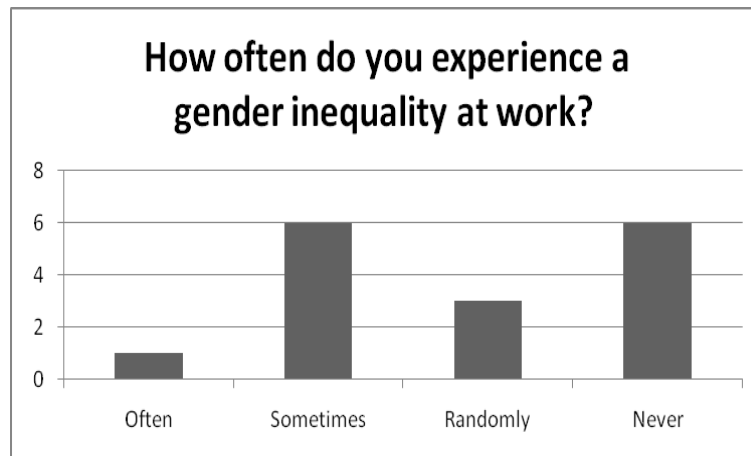
Graph 7. Gender inequality at work

The table above shows only one woman stated that inequality appears at work *Often*. Alternatively, the answers *Sometimes* and *Never* were chosen by 6 respondents. 3 women out of 16 felt that it is *Random* to find gender discrimination at work. How they solve such situations is discussed in the following question.

Question number 10: If you answered *Often, Sometimes, Randomly,* how do you deal with inequality at work?

In question number 10 the response *Never* from the previous question was not taken into consideration, since it is negative response. Therefore only 10 responses will be discussed. The women were allowed to write their own reasons.

The most frequent response chosen by the women who experience gender discrimination *Often, Sometimes* or *Randomly* was the answer *I do not deal with it.* Other responses such as *I over look it, I try to prove I am better, It try to argue, but with no results, I discuss it with my female colleagues* or *I light up a cigarette* were stated only once.

It was already discussed that women experience gender discrimination regarding salaries and promotions more often than men (Eagly, Carli 2007, 72). However, if we compare the findings from chapter three with recent research we might find major similarities. If we compare the merged answers representing the occurrence of gender discrimination with the answer *Never,* visible evidence of discrimination can be seen. Therefore the assumption

from chapter three appears correct. Despite a high number of women witnessing discrimination, only a few responses have shown the rare appearance of discrimination at the workplace which could be considered unusual. Moreover as was assumed, the women were unable to solve the issue since they did not want to come into the conflict with their male colleagues or employer. The theory is mirrored in the survey where the surveyed female managers observed the inequality; however they feel desperate and empowered to deal with the problem.

4.6 Out of work activities

Question number 11: Do you participate at the out of work activities organized by your company for its employees?

The majority of asked women, in this case 14 out of 16, stated that they participate in after work activities organized by their company. Only 2 women did not show interest in such activities. One of the reasons was the lack of time for the personal activities and free time which could be better spent with the family. The other reason of disinterest was the distance; the activities do not tend to be organized close to the home of the woman.

Question number 12: If your male superior organized a typical male after work activity, such as watching football or going fishing, would you participate at such activity?
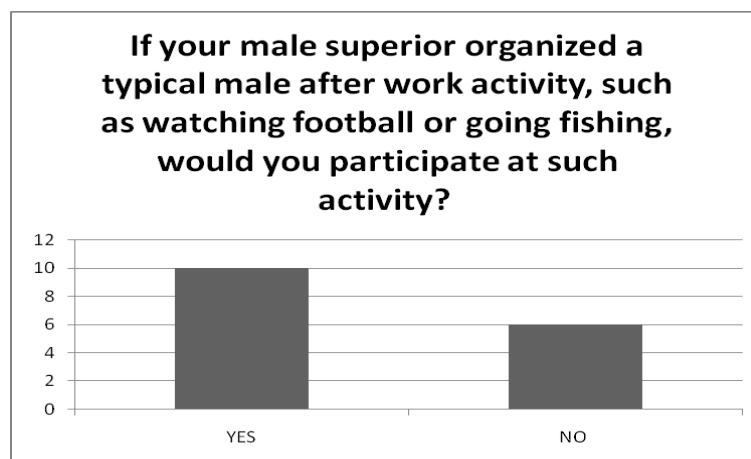
*Graph 8. Participating at after work activities*

As it's shown, the answers varied as in the previous question. The graph shows that the majority of women, in this case 10, would participate in the activity, whereas 6 women would show disinterest.

In the second part of the question women were encouraged to state their own reasons why they would or would not participate in such activities. The answers were not united. Women who agreed to participate in after work activities such as fishing or watching football found these activities interesting. Another reason mentioned by the women were the diversity of activities they would like to experience for amusement. The reasons of why some women selected the answer *No* resemble were the fact that fishing or football are typical male activities and these women would consider the activity a waste of time. Others claimed to have different after work interests.

The results do not affirm the findings from chapter three, which states the majority of women would rather not take part in male orientated activities. As discussed in chapter three, women need to socialize within the company to help their career flourish. Based on my research the majority of surveyed female managers participate in after work activities. However, the conditions for socializing might not always be ideal and some of these women refuse to take part in the typical male activities. This is the point where my findings collide with the research. Surprisingly, a high number of women in the survey stated that they would not become discouraged and would participate in male activities after all. Interaction with only a male group does not seem as an issue for these women.

4.7   Career influence on private life

Question number 13: How did career growth influence your private life?
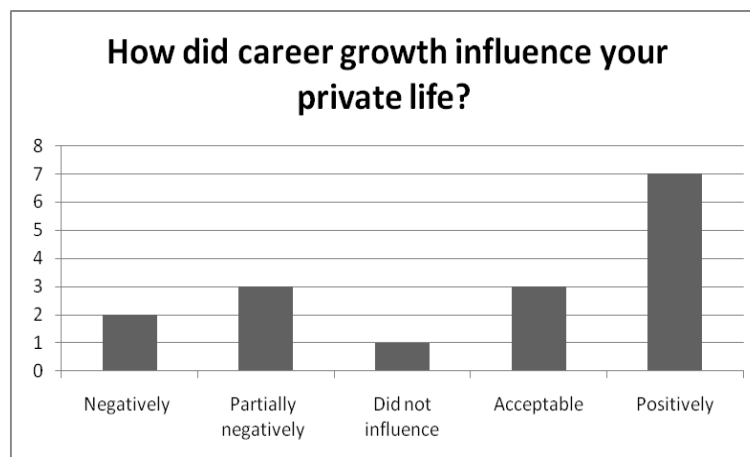
Graph 9. Career influence on private life

It can be observed that 2 women claimed their career growth had a negative influence on their private lives. 3 of 16 women stated that the career had a partially negative influence on their private life where only one woman said that her personal life was not influenced by the career. On the other hand, the private life of 3 women was

influenced in an acceptable way and the majority of women, 7, claimed that their career growth had only a positive impact on their private life. The reasons of the chosen answers will be discussed in the following question.

Question number 14: What kind of a fundamental change did your life overcome after you became a leading manager?

In question number 15 the answers will be separated into two groups. First, the answers *Negatively* and *Partially negatively* will be taken into account and second, the responses *In an acceptable way* and *Positively*. The choice *Did not influence* was not taken into consideration, since it would not represent a valid meaning to the question. The women were allowed to write their own reasons. The most frequent positive changes were *Higher salary* and *Learn how to handle more responsibility.* Both of these answers were stated twice. Other changes influenced by career growth were stated only once. The answers are as following: *Better organization within the family, A change of thinking at work, Help from the partner concerning the household, Personal development, New experience how to lead people, How to think of myself at first in the work, I started to see things differently and I no longer try to solve a problem which I cannot influence.* The women complained that after becoming a leading manager they *Lack of free time for family* and *Free time in general* moreover the career growth influenced their life in such range that they ended up divorced.

A success in career may bring along some changes, such as a lack of time for family or household. The majority of the surveyed women hold the same view since after they achieved a high position in management, they lacked time for their family and their free time was also limited.

4.8   Help from a company

The seventeenth question will be separated according to the target. At first the question will be analyzed by all women who do not have a child, secondly only the answers of the women who have at least one child will be taken into the consideration. By separating the question into these target groups it will be found how much having a child can influence the responses for the question. The 12 women who have at least one child could choose multiple answers therefore the total number of the responses expanded to 17.

Question number 15: According to you, which of the following could your company employ to help women in their career growth?

Comment: Women with children

According to you, which of the following could your company employ to help women in their career growth?		
answers	total responses	percentage (%)
A program, which will take care of the children while the women are at work	1	5,88
A training, during work time (seminars, meetings with successful women, role plays)	9	52,94
Better working conditions (flexible working hours, part time work)	5	29,41
A third person, 'an advisor', who would listen, advise and help women with their work problems	0	0
Other	2	11,76

Table 2. Programs implemented by the company 1

Comment: Women with no children

Only 4 women in the survey are childless, therefore only 4 answers will be used. The women chose only 1 answer.

According to you, which of the following could your company employ to help women in their career growth?		
answers	total responses	percentage (%)
A program, which will take care of the children while the women are at work	0	0
A training, during a work time (seminars, meetings with successful women, role plays)	3	75
Better working conditions (flexible working hours, part time work)	0	0
A third person, 'an advisor', who would listen, advise and help the women with their work problems	0	0
Other	1	25

Table 3. Programs implemented by the company 2

If the responses of the women with children and the women who are childless are compared it can be observed that trainings, seminars and meetings with successful women is the most favorite answer. The choice was chosen by 9 women with children and by 3 women with no children. The second most favorable response was chosen by 5 women

with children and was *Better working conditions*. On the other hand, this answer was not chosen by any childless women. Surprisingly, only one woman with a child stated a program for children as a good idea to be implemented by the company. This possibility was not chosen by any childless woman as well as the third answer, having an advisor. This response was not popular by any women with children either. 2 of the women stated their own comment about the programs which could be introduced in the company. According to one, there is no need to support women in a special way. She states that if they are determined enough they have to fight the obstacles by themselves since it will be part of their managing jobs in the future. In addition to that, one woman introduces the idea of an internship; learning 'next to the manager' before she reaches a higher position. According to one woman with no children there are no possible solutions how the company could help women to grow.

Help from a company represents an essential element for women to achieve their goal. As mentioned in chapter three, women should gain an understanding from the company if they are to overcome work or family changes. Moreover the importance of flexible working hours or having part time work is emphasized by the women in the survey. Despite not mentioning these possibilities in chapter three, according to these female managers, training, seminars and meetings with already successful women could help women to achieve their goals faster.

Question number 16: What would you recommend the women who want to grow in their career and achieve high position jobs in corporate management?

The responses of question 16 will be used as a part of recommendation in the conclusion of my bachelor thesis. The question is not utterly connected with the presumptions suggested in chapter three and it does not necessary influence the results of the survey.

4.9   Summary

It may be observed that the majority of the presumptions discussed in chapter three were proved relevant by the results of the survey. From the survey it can be seen that gender discrimination in the working environment still represents an issue; however these women have no problem to participate at male dominated social events. Mentoring was expected to be very essential, however mentors did not help these women achieve their positions, moreover majority of the women did not even have a mentor throughout their careers. In

order to help women in their career, companies could implement more seminars, role playing or trainings with successful women. In comparison with the presumptions in chapter three, these women also experience the gender inequality at the workplace. Despite a big promotion and great career these female managers lack sufficient time for their family and for themselves. Last but not least, the stereotype of women as mothers is unfortunately still not part of the past and women stay home with their children since men typically had a higher salary. However, men have slowly started to help women and maybe will equally divide the household duties across the partnership.

According to the female managers from the survey, women must be devoted not only to their job but also to their family if they want to achieve their goals, because balance, ambition, courage, and determination are the key points of being successful.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my thesis was to search for solutions that would help women to achieve higher positions in corporate management and evaluate those proposed solutions with my research.

The thesis discussed the theory that women tend to be more suitable for some specific jobs; as the European Commission stated, they can appear as great leaders in all fields of employment with the preferred democratic leading style (European Commission 2011, 16). In addition to that, the thesis compared the present working possibilities for women and those of previous centuries. When men left for the war, the women received the opportunity to work in male dominated positions and the number of employed women has risen since then (Paludi, Neidermeyer 2007, 6). However, as discussed in chapter two, women still do not receive the same payment as men and they are still not promoted as frequently as men. Fortunately, the number of women who have broken the "unbreakable" glass ceiling is increasing. In the 21st century, the term labyrinth was introduced by Carli and Eagly (2007, 6). I see the labyrinth as a workplace and the obstacles such as pay gap or sexual harassment are the dead ends in the labyrinth where women attempt and sometimes fail to proceed in their career. Although the path is crooked, examples of successful women proved the existence of female managers who found their way through the labyrinth.

The research, based on 16 responses of the leading female managers of 16 XY subsidiaries in Trenčín region in Slovakia, connects the proposed solutions with the real life scenarios. The name of the bank where the respondents work could not be revealed due to the bank's wish to remain anonymous. The women were asked to respond to the questions based on the presumptions in the theoretical part. The survey was only implied for 16 XY subsidiaries (80% of the total number of subsidiaries) in Trenčín region, Slovakia.

According to the analysis, not all of the proposals suggested in the theoretical part are relevant solutions. For instance, the principle of mentors was overestimated in the proposal as the research showed only a low percentage of the female respondents experienced a mentor. Moreover, a mentor did not help them achieve the position they currently hold. When dealing with socializing, the female respondents tended to participate at various occasions designed by their superiors, even if it included a typical male activity which disagrees with the presumptions that women do not find interest in the typical male after work activities. In comparison, the proposals reached a consensus with the analysis when

majority of the female respondents claimed to be successful because of the help from their partners and families. In addition, women do experience gender inequality at the workplace as assumed in chapter three.

The reasons why some proposals suggested in chapter three were not relevant for the survey is the fact that the suggestions were chosen mostly according to American literature and they were based on the American working environment. The results gained from the survey; however, showed a visible, clear path and are relevant in reality for 16 subsidiaries of XY banking company in Trenčín region in Slovakia.

For future recommendation I will use the responses from the last question in the survey, where all 16 female managers were asked to state how they reached the top. The responses mostly overlapped with my suggestions and were merged all together as follows: They were not scared and believed in themselves. The key element was to balance out work and family. It was important to dedicate some time for work but also devote some time for children and the partner. Success was based on hard work, courage and ambitiousness. They knew the goal they wanted to achieve. In addition to that they made plans and kept smiling. They worked on their personal development; they educated themselves intensively, displayed their qualities and never surrendered. Moreover, as discussed in chapter three, mentoring, support from the companies and participating at the out work activities should not be underestimated.

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APPENDIX P I: WOMEN AND THE PATH TO CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Madams,

My name is Katarína Mičková and I am a third year student studying English language in Business Administration at Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Czech Republic. I am writing a bachelor thesis on the topic Women and the Path to Corporate Management. I would like to ask you to complete my questionnaire which is the essential part of my bachelor thesis. The questionnaire consists of 16 questions. Thank you very much for your time.

Katarína Mičková

Status (circle your current family status):

Single (no children)   Single (with children)   Married (children)
Married (no children)   Divorced (no children)   Divorced (children)
Living with a partner (no children)   Living with a partner (children)

Age:

20-30   **31-40**   **41-55**

How long did you work in the company until you achieve your current position?

Please circle the suitable answer

1. **Did you have a mentor while working towards your current position?** Yes - No

2. **Did the mentor help you to achieve the current position?** Yes - No
3. **Was the mentor a man or a woman?**
4. **When did the mentor help you?**
   A. Mentor helped with only within his work time.
   B. Mentor initiated the meetings also after his work time.
   C. Mentor paid whole attention to me.
   D. Mentor was most of the time busy; he did not pay attention to me.
5. **Did you take maternity leave?** Yes- No
6. **Why did not your partner take maternity leave?**
   A. At that time he had higher income, we could not afford it
   B. According to my partner, women should stay at home and take care of the children.
   C. According to me, women should stay at home and take care of the children.
   D. At that time he was working on his career.
   E. Other (state):
7. **Did maternity leave influence your career growth?**

8. **How did you manage to balance work and your family?**
    A. My partner helped me.
    B. My family helped me.
    C. The company helped me.
    D. I have not balanced them yet.
    E. Other (state):
9. **How often do you experience a gender inequality at work?**
    A. Often   B. Sometimes   C. Randomly   D. Never
10. **If you answered *Often, Sometimes, Randomly,* how do you deal with inequality at work?**
11. **Do you participate at the out of work activities organized by your company for its employees?**
12. **If your male superior organized a typical male after work activity, such as watching football or going fishing, would you participate at such activity?**
13. **How did career growth influence your private life?**
    A. Negatively
    B. Partially negatively
    C. Did not influence
    D. Acceptable
    E. Positively
14. **What kind of a fundamental change did your life overcome after you became a leading manager?**
15. **According to you, which of the following could your company employ to help women in their career growth?**
    A. A program, which will take care of the children while the women are at work
    B. A training, during a work time (seminars, meetings with successful women, role plays)
    C. Better working conditions (flexible working hours, part time work)
    D. A third person, 'an advisor', who would listen, advise and help women with their work problems
    E. Other (state):
16. **What would you recommend the women who want to grow in their career and achieve high position jobs in corporate management?**

APPENDIX P II: KARIÉRNY POSTUP ŽIEN K VRCHOLOVÉMU MANAŽMENTU

QUESTIONNAIRE

Vážené dámy,

Moje meno je Katarína Mičková a som študentkou tretieho ročníka oboru Anglický jazyk pre manažérsku prax na Univerzite Tomáše Bati v Zlíne v Českej Republike. Témou mojej bakalárskej práce je Cesta žien k vrcholovému manažmentu, ktorej hlavným cieľom je pomôcť ženám dosiahnuť vyššie pozície v manažmente. Preto by som Vás chcela poprosiť o vyplnenie môjho dotazníku, ktorý tvorí dôležitú časť mojej bakalárskej práce. Dotazník sa skladá s 16 otázok. Ďakujem Vám za Váš čas.

Katarína Mičková

Rodinný stav:

Slobodná   Slobodná (dieťa)   Vydatá (dieťa)   Vydatá (bezdetná)

Rozvedená (bezdetná)   Rozvedená (dieťa)   Žijem s partnerom

Vek (aktuálny údaj podčiarknite):

     20-30   31-40   41-55

Ako dlho ste pôsobili vo vašej firme, kým ste získali pozíciu, ktorú zastávate?

Vami vybranú odpoveď, prosím, zakrúžkujte.

1. **Mali ste na ceste k získaniu manažérskej pozície mentora?** Áno – Nie
2. **Pomohol Vám mentor dosiahnuť post, ktorý teraz zastávate**? Áno - Nie
3. **Bol to muž alebo žena?** Muž - Žena
4. **Kedy Vám mentor pomáhal?**
   A. Mentor mi poskytol rady v rámci jeho pracovnej doby
   B. Mentor mi poskytol rady aj v rámci jeho voľného času.
   C. Mentor sa mi naplno venoval.
   D. Mentor bol väčšinu času zaneprázdnený, nevenoval mi zvýšenú pozornosť.
5. **Boli ste to vy, kto zostal na materskej dovolenke?** Áno - Nie
6. **Prečo nezostal na materskej dovolenke partner?**
   A. V tom čase mal väčší príjem, nemohli sme si to dovoliť
   B. Podľa partnera by sa žena mala starať o dieťa a muž pracovať
   C. Podľa mňa by sa žena mala starať o dieťa a muž pracovať
   D. V tom čase pracoval na svojej kariére
   E. Iné (uveďte):
7. **Ak ste boli na materskej dovolenke, mala táto skutočnosť vplyv na to, ako rýchlo ste získali kariérny rast /post na ktorom sa práve nachádzate?**

Áno – Nie

8. Ako ste zosúladili rodinu a kariéru?
A. Pomohol mi partner
B. Pomohla mi rodina
C. Pomohla mi firma
D. Nezosúladila som
E. Iné (uveďte):

9. Ako často pociťujete v práci nerovný prístup z pohľadu pohlaví?
A. Často   B. Niekedy   C. Zriedka   D. Nikdy

10. Ak ste odpovedali *Často, Niekedy, Zriedka*, ako situáciu riešite?

11. Zúčastňujete sa mimopracovných aktivít, ktoré organizuje Vaša firmy pre svojich zamestnancov? Áno – Nie (prosím uveďte dôvod)

12. Ak by Váš nadriadení (v tomto prípade muž) usporiadal typicky mužskú mimopracovnú aktivitu, ako napríklad sledovanie futbalu alebo rybolov, zúčastnili by ste sa takejto aktivity? Áno - Nie

13. Ako ovplyvnil Váš kariérny rast Váš súkromný život ?
A. Negatívne
B. Čiastočne negatívne
C. Neovplyvnil
D. Pozitívne
E. Prijateľným spôsobom

14. Ako zásadnou zmenou prešiel Váš život v súvislosti s postupom na manažérsku pozíciu?

15. Ako by podľa Vás mohla Vaša firma najlepším spôsobom pomôcť ženám rýchlejšie postupovať v manažérskom kariérnom raste ?
A. Program, ktorý zabezpečí starostlivosť o deti v čase keď sú ženy v práci
B. Tréning, v pracovnom čase, ktorý by im pomohol získať vyššiu pozíciu (semináre, meetingy s už úspešnými ženami, riešenie modelových situácií)
C. Lepšie pracovné podmienky (flexibilná pracovná doba, práca na polovičný úväzok)
D. Tzv. tretia osoba, poradca, ktorému by sa ženy zverovali s pracovnými problémami- nasledovné riešenie
E. Iné (uveďte):

16. Čo by ste osobne odporučili ženám, ktoré túžia kariérne rásť a získať vyššie manažérske pozície?