Currently, there are inequalities in the representation of females in higher administrative positions in higher education, a result of historical and male dominant societal patterns (Byrd-Blake, 2004). While many cultures in the world support and encourage men in their achievement, women are generally discouraged (Brown & Irby, 2001). For many centuries, the opinions of some philosophers and scientists about women and women's education have caused differentiation between women's and men's specializations and their place in society.

In the U. S. in the 1820s, common schools were opened to help close the illiteracy gap between men and women, but women's education was viewed only for its importance for men. Educated women were needed to raise the next generation of young men into statesmen and philosophers, and educated women were necessary as agreeable companions for their well-placed husbands (Bengiveno, 1995; Miller-Solomon, 1985). In short, education was perceived as a vehicle for making women better wives, homemakers, and mothers. Even earlier, in Emilie, Rousseau (1911) stated that women's education must be planned in relation to men's needs. By the middle of the 19th century, science, specifically biology, was used to justify the differences between genders. Clark (1873), from the medical community, argued that women's brains were less developed than men's so women should not be taught in the same manner as men (Nidiffer, 2001). These kinds of writings and the beliefs upon which they are founded, therefore, were barriers to a coeducation system, as well as barriers to women's achievement in many fields. Nevertheless, in the 19th century and later, some fields were open to females. These included, in particular, teacher preparation, home economics, languages, humanities, and social work. On the other hand, professional schools of law, medicine, business, and divinity were dominated by male students (Chliwniak, 1997).

Increasingly, throughout the 20th century, women have worked in education, particularly in early childhood education. By the end of the 20th century, women's work in education also included high school and even the principalship in elementary schools (Casanova, 1991; Kossan, 2006). What has changed most in the last
two and half decades is the type of work women are doing: They still teach, but now it is not uncommon for women to be principals of high schools, superintendents of schools, and professors in colleges and universities. Yet, slightly over 18% of tenured full professors are women, although women comprise over 52% of the student body. In addition, women in top executive positions in universities are still rare (Cage, 1994).

The most current data on women in presidential positions in higher education were provided through a study conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), Office of Women in Higher Education, reported by Rigaux (1995). Findings indicated that of 2,903 higher education institutions branch and affiliated campuses, 16% are headed by women presidents; only 25% of academic deans are women. Rigaux reported that the highest proportion of women leaders were found in two-year institutions (27%), and women were more likely to lead small institutions. Seventy-one percent of female leaders headed colleges and universities which have full time enrollments of less than 3,000 students. Switzer (2006) indicated, however, that the American Council on Education reported that the percentage of women presidents increased from 9.5 to 21.1% in the 15 years, from 1986 to 2001.

Today, throughout the world, many institutions, like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are carrying out projects to eliminate gender inequalities in higher education and to empower women so that they can assume powerful positions. Although the student body in universities has changed significantly in favor of female enrollment during the last several decades, the most recent data relating to the presidency and academic leadership in higher education institutions indicate that woman are still underrepresented in all leadership ranks (Cage, 1994; Polnick, Reed, Funk, & Edmonson, 2004).

A report by Ronning (2001) also pointed out that women in higher education have to overcome the following barriers: "(a) societal and family attitudes, as well as cultural stereotyping, (b) lower enrollment figures and limited access, and (c) lack of role models and the glass ceiling syndrome" (p. 15). Some of the projects carried out by UNESCO are aimed to break not only tangible barriers, but also the hardest barriers of all, the invisible ones, and to change people's attitudes and promote women into decision-making positions. Some of the invisible barriers include unwritten rules for behavior and a lack of understanding of the need for a family-friendly work environment. Though social changes have taken place in many countries where men take their share of home responsibilities, there is still a long way to go. In addition, it is important not just to get women into top positions, but to use their influence to change the workplace and society into more humane places (Ronning, 2001).

Research on administration shows that although women and men experience the same kind of administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation, coordination, and communication, their leadership styles differ. Employees within the institution and society also expect differences in manner between women and men in their administrative roles (Madden, 2002; Patton, 1990). It is important, therefore, that the academic community understands how underrepresented high status female administrators experience their administrative roles regarding decision-making, coordination, motivation, and communication. In addition, the world needs to see what kinds of advantages and barriers women administrators experience in their professional and personal lives in traditional and male-dominant societies.

Decision-making can be defined as the process of choosing among alternatives; therefore, this process plays a crucial role in educational administration. Decision-making affects all other administrative functions: motivation, communication, planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, and controlling (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). Therefore, every decision has a certain amount of influence on faculty, staff, and student performance, ultimately affecting the development of the organization and society. Research related to women and men administrators indicates that women and men have a different manner as regards to the decision-making process. Leadership behaviors related to women are those of nurturing, caring for others, focusing on relationships, and using interpersonal skills. In general, women use a democratic,
participative, consensus building, and collaborative decision-making approach, whereas men use an autocratic approach focusing on rules, outcomes, tasks, making decisions for others, and discouraging subordinates from participating in decision-making (Casal & Mulligan, 2004; Helgesen, 1990; 1995; Lyman, Ashby, & Tripses, 2005; Madden, 2002; Milwid, 1990). However, findings suggest controversial perceptions about female administration. Even if a democratic, participative manner creates a more effective climate in the workplace, when female administrators exercise this collaborative style of leadership their employees may perceive this approach as an indication of women administrators' incompetence. When women administrators practice autocratic power as the men do, female staff members are especially critical, saying that the female administrators are behaving like men. These stereotypes are challenges for female administrators to overcome (Bass, 1985; Hofstede, 1991; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Instructional leadership, participatory governance in decision-making, and empowering stakeholders are important functions to fulfill for female administrators in order to motivate faculty, staff, and students. Administrators widely agree that motivation plays a crucial role in the performance of employees and students, and ultimately, the organization. Motivation is positively affected by a communal leadership style which is usually associated with women. Communal leaders easily motivate and coordinate their followers since they demonstrate a concern for the welfare of other people by displaying such characteristics as helpfulness, kindness, sympathy, sensitivity, and other "gentle" characteristics. These leaders explain rules and procedures to ensure that people understand them. For female leaders, it is important to provide for their employees optimum satisfaction, fairness, motivation, respect, and pride (McCaffery, 2004; Williamson & Hudson, 2001). But none of these behaviors excludes innovation or creative thinking.

Communal attributes associated with women leadership also require good verbal and written communication. Communication is defined as the "essence of organizations" (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Research results show that executive administrators spend 80% of their time in interpersonal communication (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). The administrators of educational organizations have a multifaceted job, which includes defining mission and vision, setting objectives, organizing tasks, motivating employees, reviewing results, and making decisions. These tasks cannot be accomplished without adequate communication. Effective communication necessitates active listening, understanding, empathy, and feedback.

According to some of the literature, women's and men's communication styles are distinctly different from each other as a result of social conditioning. Women are expected to learn linguistic adaptation for socially normed roles. Women's communication patterns are generally to elicit cooperation or create rapport, whereas men's is to negotiate status and often engage in verbal competition in a definitive and forceful fashion (Samovar & Porter, 2003).

Tannen's study of sociolinguistic patterns of men's and women's relationships at work points out that "conversational rituals common among women are often ways of maintaining an appearance of equality and expending effort to downplay the speaker's authority" (Tannen, 1994, p. 23). This manner, however, often is interpreted as a lack of confidence and competence. Men's conversational rituals involve using opposition in an effort to avoid the one-down position in the interaction.

Tannen (1994) and Thorn (1994) found that gender-related communication patterns constrain how girls and women express leadership. Women generally phrase their ideas as suggestions rather than orders, whereas men express hierarchical and high status manners. Although men's style is accepted as an indication of competency, when women behave in the same manner they are seen as "bossy girls," even by other women. The result is that women in leadership positions, regardless of competence levels, are not supported by either women or men when they appear to carry out their leadership role in an assertive or definitive manner (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Johnson, 1993). Studies of gender differences and women's communication modes indicate weaknesses as well as strengths related to women's way of knowing
(Ferguson, 1984). Women administrators, more than men, need to overcome stereotypical expectations from their colleagues, employees, and ultimately, society. Shakeshaft (1989) found that many women leave their administrative roles because of the attitudes of others toward women. Brile (1987) even found that women were more likely than men to sabotage women colleagues in the workplace.

Gilligan's (1982) research indicates that being "nice" to others at the expense of being self-appreciating and/or confrontational, depending on the situation, has negative effects for women. Women need to overcome this challenge, which is to recognize the difference between concession and negotiation. Concession damages the leadership potential, negotiation builds institutional relationships and empowers members; these are skills that all leaders need.

Women administrators have many challenges in performing their administrative functions which are mentioned above. As a high status administrator in higher education, being a female may also cause some constraints in a woman's professional and personal life. Many research findings suggest that women administrators must balance their personal and professional lives carefully. Authors advise female administrators to take care of themselves physically and mentally, and get support from their family and friends (Madden, 2002; Simmons & Jarchow, 1990).

Shakeshaft and Nowell (1984) reported that women find satisfaction in administrative roles and can attain self-actualization. Women administrators certainly gain status, recognition, respect, and intellectual fulfillment because of their positions. They also have some challenges and costs because of their positions, such as expanded responsibilities, stereotypical expectations, narrow options, stress, and time limitations. According to Stiegemeier (1980), female administrators' expanded responsibilities are as follows: they must be well-prepared, be informed, dress professionally, act professionally, have a good sense of humor, treat others with respect, be assertive, and believe in themselves. In addition, many writers believe a women must be more competent and work harder than a man in order to attain the same career advancement (Simmons & Jarchow, 1990).

In essence, female administrators gain some benefits and have some costs in their professional and personal lives. Because of this, it is crucial to scrutinize female administrators at the top of the decision-making hierarchy in different cultural settings to see how they perform their main administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation and coordination, and communication; whether they encounter any gender discrimination; and what benefits and costs they experience in their professional and personal lives. This study examines how high status Turkish women administrators' exercise their administrative functions and whether they experience gender discrimination in their professional and personal lives. Before explaining the research methodology, it is necessary to look at Turkish female education and how Turkish women gained their rights.

Women in Turkey

Turkey is one of the countries that has been trying to close the gap between women and men in the high status administrative positions in higher education. To understand the positions of Turkish women in society necessitates a brief look at history. When we scrutinize the history of how Turkish women gained equal rights with men in every field, Turkish women's stories appear to have been different from that of others. In contrast to women in countries such as the U.S. or the UK, Turkish women did not act to gain their rights. After the Turkish Independence War and establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), the overall literacy rate was 6-7% throughout the nation. Women's literacy rate was even less than that. Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey and its first president, launched many reforms to give Turkish women equal rights and opportunities. The Civil Code, adopted in 1926, abolished polygamy and recognized the equal rights of women in divorce, custody, and inheritance (Kocaturk, 1999).
Ataturk greatly admired the support that the national liberation struggle received from women and praised their many contributions: "In Turkish society, women have not lagged behind men in science, scholarship, and culture. Perhaps they have even gone further ahead." (Ataturk) He gave women the same opportunities as men, including full political rights. After having voting rights in 1934, 18 women, among them a rural villager, were elected to the National Parliament in 1935 (Kocaturk, 1999, para. 1).

Today in Turkey, according to data gathered in academic year 2004-2005, female attendance was 91.85% in basic education (8-year compulsory education), whereas male attendance was 99.48%. In secondary education, female attendance was 71.88%, whereas male attendance was 89.53%. In higher education, for the age group that would attend college, female attendance was 25.97%, whereas male attendance was 34.78% (TUIK, 2006). Although a gap exists between female and male enrollment from early childhood education to higher education, this gap has been getting narrower.

When the gender ratios of faculty and students are scrutinized, the data show that in the 2003-2004 academic year, the female faculty ratio was 38%, while the male faculty ratio was 62%. Enrollment shows that females constitute 41% of college attendees, while males make up 59% of attendees. Although female enrollment has increased at the undergraduate level, this has not been reflected in the female faculty ratio. The same underrepresentation for female faculty has been seen in high status administrative ranks such as president, provost, and dean. Whereas 25% of total full professors are female, only 6% of female professors are president, 13% hold the provost position, and 14% hold the position of dean (KSSGM, 2003; YOK, 2006).

It is important to investigate the underrepresentation of high status Turkish women administrators in higher education. It is important to know how their administrative roles and personal lives have been affected by being a woman in a male-dominated and traditional society. What kinds of challenges, advantages, and disadvantages do they have in professional and personal lives? There is no research about high status women administrators in higher education in Turkey. Since this study was the first one to investigate this subject, its findings should provide opportunities to understand causes for the gap between women and men in these positions and to recommend policy changes for the disparities that exist.

**Purpose of Study**

This study focuses on the perceptions of high status Turkish women administrators in higher education. They were asked how they perform their administrative functions such as decision-making, motivation, coordination, and communication roles, and whether they have encountered any gender discrimination in exercising these roles and in their professional and personal lives. More specifically, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the demographic attributes of this sample of high status female administrators?

   • Did female administrators encounter gender discrimination while performing the following administrative roles, and if they so, what kind of gender discrimination have they experienced?

   • Decision-making

   • Motivation and coordination

   • Communication

   • In general, have they experienced gender discrimination in their professional lives in the context of the male-dominant society in which they live?
4. Have they experienced gender discrimination in their personal lives?

Method

In this study, mixed methods were used (Caracelli & Green, 1997; Patton, 1990). The main advantage of using multiple methods is the ability to overcome the risk of bias and singularity of viewpoint that can occur through the use of a single method approach. Quantitative data were gathered by administering a questionnaire. Questionnaires consisted of three parts. In one part, questions relate to collecting demographic data. The second part includes 25 items which are related to female administrators' perceptions about encountering gender discrimination in performing their administrative roles, such as decision-making, motivation and coordination, communication, and professional and personal lives. The third part is for voluntary narrative responses. In order to collect intensive data on topics that also appeared in the questionnaire, qualitative data were collected by asking open-ended questions which were mainly parallel to topics of the research questions. The aim was to collect data through open-ended questions that would be more reflective and natural. Based on responses to these questions, and to get more insight into the data, some interviews were also conducted.

The population and the sample for the study were defined as female high status administrators employed as president (rector), provost, and deans in higher education. Sixty questionnaires were mailed to all high status women administrators (total=60) in higher education. As a research sample, 31 of them replied. The return rate constitutes over 50% of the population. The sample consisted of one president (rector), 9 provosts, and 21 deans. Open-ended questions were administered to six high status women administrators located in different metropolitan areas, as well as small and conservative cities. Moreover, subjects were selected from universities possessing varying levels of development in terms of quality of academic programs, staff, and infrastructure.

The quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The voluntary narrative responses and responses to open-ended questions first were transcribed and coded by using an inductive coding approach, and meaningful themes were generated. Finally, findings were organized according to research questions. To confirm these findings, feedback from the informants was solicited (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Data. In this study, data were gathered from a president (3% of sample), provosts (29% of sample), and deans (68% of sample). Rank distributions of the respondents reflected distributions of population (see Table 1).

More than half of the subjects had held their current positions 1-3 years (55%). A majority of the high status female administrators were in the field of social studies (55%). The findings show that two thirds of female administrators are married; more than half of them have one child or no child (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Data on High Status Women Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>President</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positions</td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of the sample reflect social attitudes concerning which fields are more suitable for women. Warner and DeFleur (1993) pointed out that more than half of the women holding academic dean positions were in nursing, home economics, arts, and continuing education. Having more than two children might also be an indication of an obstacle in career development (Davidson & Cooper, 1987).

The survey, as well as the open-ended and interview questions, focused on four major areas in which female administrators may have perceived gender discrimination in exercising their administrative roles: decision-making, coordination, communication, and general professional and personal lives.

**Decision-Making Roles.** Did high status female administrators perceive any gender discrimination in exercising decision-making roles?

The quantitative data revealed that the majority of subjects perceived that their decision-making process was not affected by being female. To some extent they perceived that being a female facilitated their decision-making process in collecting data/evidence/information to solve problems, having their decisions accepted, and implementing their decisions. The majority of them stated that while they were performing their administrator roles, their gender did not affect their work positively or negatively (see Table 2). In short, most of female administrators perceived that their sex was unimportant in their work.

**Table 2**

*Distribution of Perceptions Related to Decision-Making Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Positively</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Negatively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- How does your gender affect your ability/practice in making rational decisions in accordance with goals of your institution?</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>26 (84%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- How does your gender affect you in collecting data / information /evidence to solve problems at a male-dominant work place?</td>
<td>7 (23%)</td>
<td>22 (71%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- How does being a female affect the acceptance of your decisions by your employees?</td>
<td>11 (36%)</td>
<td>20 (65%)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- How have your implementations of decisions been affected by being a female?</td>
<td>11 (36%)</td>
<td>19 (61%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5- Does being a female decision-maker in a male-dominated work environment create conflict within your organization?

6- Has being a woman influenced you to make decisions more in keeping with the traditions of your institution?

7- Do demands and pressures by faculty and staff affect your decision-making process because you are a female?

   Yes  Sometimes  No

8- At meetings and discussions, are your ideas, opinions and suggestions being met by unreasonable objections and skepticism because you are a female?

9- Do your faculty and staff think that you are not objective in your evaluations because you are a female?

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