



## GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT FOR COMPANIES: AN EXPLORATORY CASE FROM TURKIYE TO ACHIEVE UNITED NATION'S SUSTAINABILITY GOAL

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** The business world is currently placing great emphasis on sustainability, investing substantial resources to integrate it into their operations. United Nation's Sustainability Goal 5 of "Achieving Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls" is a critically important subject to discuss both for academics and practitioners regarding today's sustainability related concerns and debates. This exploratory case study aims to understand the current situation of gender equality and women empowerment in business and propose a roadmap with thematic areas for companies via achievement of Goal 5.

**Methodology-** We aim to understand the perspectives of the the professionals in Turkey; first preliminary interviews and then face-to-face interviews were applied in manufacturing and logistics industries in Istanbul. The preliminary interview was held with two managers and afterwards, five experts in the field of sustainability and working on SDG 5 were interviewed. A total of ten open-ended questions were posed to representatives from five companies in the manufacturing and logistics sectors during face-to-face interviews.

**Findings-** The literature review on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) revealed various themes related to gender equality and empowerment, including gender-neutral decision making, ensuring well-being of the individual, creating safe spaces, role of value chain for gender equality, environmental impact, ethical approach, awareness, and empowerment in correlation with empowerment and leadership. Based on the research findings, a roadmap with ten thematic areas was developed, including: 1. Breaking gender stereotypes for gender-neutral career, 2. Promoting social sustainability through training opportunities, 3. Implementing gender-neutral recruitment practices, 4. Adopting gender-neutral policies in all decision making processes, 5. Establishing an egalitarian environment within the value chain and permissions, 6. Addressing global deficiencies in training to eliminate gender prejudices and promoting access to health and medicines, 7. Maintaining work-life balance, 8. Supporting advancement of employees with trainings, 9. Considering benefits of society on environmental impacts and 10. Raising public awareness by ensuring ethics.

**Conclusion-** Social, economic, and environmental factors play a very distinctive role in the development of SDG 5 target in leadership. Companies in Turkey are encouraged to prioritize gender equality and women empowerment programs, as their policies will contribute to broader efforts within the country. By actively working towards these goals, businesses can foster a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

**Keywords:** Gender equality, leadership, sustainability, SDG5 target, workplaces

**JEL Codes:** M14, Q01, J16

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