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**Israeli perspective on shattering the glass ceiling:
mustering managers' responsibility for integrating women
high-tech engineers into top executive positions**

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Women high-tech engineers in senior management positions in Israel still encounter barriers on their path to top management positions (Frenkel, 2006; 2008). The boon of high-tech development in Israel has brought women the promise of a new economy, with the companies providing a non-hierarchical environment where professional women are judged by professional merits, invested efforts and actual performance.

While this new business paradigm is slowly beginning to take hold, women still face resistance from Israel's traditionally rigid tendencies for gender categorization. Some women claim they encounter a "glass ceiling" in the Israeli high-tech world, largely hidden subtle barriers that prevent them from moving up in the corporate hierarchy. In their views women executives are concentrated in certain types of jobs that seldom lead to the most powerful top-management posts (Kark, 2007).

Indeed, review of the relevant literature indicates that gender serves as a meaningful parameter of social categorization, enhancing its prominence and destructive impact, demonstrated by women's implicit exclusion from group decision-making processes and meaningful participation. The findings indicate that top management forums are not gender neutral, but the symptoms of gender construction are subtle (Casey, Skibnes, & Pringle, 2011; Glass and Cook, 2016; Nielsen, 2010; Sheridan et al., 2010; Silva et al., 2016;). Women seem to be playing primarily gender-matched roles such as facilitating open debate in top forums, developing and maintaining monitoring mechanisms, albeit have minor influence on actual operations and strategic decision-

making. The latter exclusion presumably stems from the institutionalized perceptions that they are not equal partners.

Notwithstanding the institutional impediments, many talented women are overcoming these barriers by working harder, formulating shrewd career strategies and brokering their time-management skills, to forge ahead, past the obstacles, on their way to the top.

However, the women's efforts seem to be largely unmatched by the society that has made partial and limited investments in changing the structural and institutional environment promoting gender equality and women's full-fledged involvement in top management.

Our research focused on the relationships of gender and voluntary turnover risky decision making among engineers (males and females) in IT firms in Israel. One of the hypotheses, examined in the study was that gender would moderate the relation between management experience and turnover intentions. The hypothesis was confirmed. It was found that the relation between management experience and voluntary risky decision making was significantly different among women engineers in comparison to men engineers in IT companies. Among male engineers increase in management experience enhanced their tendency for voluntary turnover risky decision making ($B=.21$, $p=.03$). Namely, men with longer management experience were more likely to take risk and voluntarily leave the firm. By contrast, among women, the relation between management experience and voluntary

risky decision making was not significant, that is extensive management experience does not appear to encourage | voluntary risky turnover.

It was also found that management experience (of men and women engineers) moderated the relation between alternative to current work perception and voluntary turnover risky decision making ($B=.22$, $p=.00$).

Namely, as the management experience among IT employees (women and men) increases the relation between alternative to current job with voluntary risky turnover becomes stronger ($B=.24$, $p=.00$).

We found that male engineers with more extensive management experience exhibit stronger inclinations for risky decision-making with respect to turnover, especially if they perceive existence of job alternatives in the job market. Contrary result was obtained for female engineers with a comparable management experience.

Thus, the findings seem to point at social construction of gender-roles, mitigating qualified and experienced women's risky decision-making and leaving the organization even when given alternatives in the job market. Why women appear reluctant to change jobs?

Perhaps the labor market is structured in line with the masculine agenda and women do not feel comfortable in such gender - biased environment. The findings portray a potentially problematic phenomenon in both the economic as well as social domains and in particular in the High Tech arena. How can the social institutions and the public muster the top management's responsibility and actions – decisions, policies and their actual implementation - to alleviate or prevent altogether the destructive situation?

What role should management – qualified and experienced women and men - play in this strategic spectacle? These queries will be discussed in the session based on the extant literature and possible future research directions will be proposed.

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