Female Leadership Ambitions in Germany: A Comparative Qualitative Career-stage Analysis

Elisa Weisman, Anmol Kaur and Rania Azougaghe
Hochschule Macromedia, University of Applied Sciences, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

e.weisman@macromedia.de
ankaur@stud.macromedia.de
razougaghe@stud.macromedia.de

Abstract: Despite more than a decade of policy intervention, the share of women in leadership positions in Germany has remained essentially unchanged at approximately 29%, well below the EU average of 35.2% (Statistische Bundesamt 2025). While structural barriers are extensively documented, less attention has been paid to how women themselves form, revise, and act upon their leadership ambitions across career stages. This study therefore asks: How do women in Germany form, revise, and act upon leadership ambitions across career stages, and under what conditions do they perceive leadership as worth pursuing? This paper presents a comparative qualitative study drawing on 31 interviews with Young Professionals (n=17) navigating whether to pursue leadership for the first time, and established leaders (n=14) navigating whether to advance further. Applying the Boundaryless Career Model (Sullivan and Arthur 2006a), Role Congruity Theory (Eagly and Karau 2002), Self-Determination Theory (R. M. Ryan and Deci 2000), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991), the analysis yields both deductive and four inductively emergent findings: a universal concept-context split in which ambition is conditional rather than absent; a systematic career-stage shift in the central question women ask; sustainability as a primary evaluation criterion; and the tension between seeking influence and avoiding depletion. Together, these findings suggest that many participants evaluated not leadership as such, but specific organizational models of leadership that they perceived as potentially depleting. Implications for talent management, employer branding, and leadership pipeline design are discussed.

Keywords: Female leadership ambitions, Qualitative research, Germany, Career-stage comparison, Sustainability, Influence without depletion

1. Introduction

Germany presents a paradox in the landscape of gender and leadership. Despite sustained political commitment including mandatory gender quotas for supervisory boards since 2016 and a well-developed legal framework for equal treatment in employment, the proportion of women in leadership has remained static for over a decade at 29.1%, placing Germany at rank 22 among 27 EU member states (Statistische Bundesamt 2025). At the executive board level, the figure is approximately 19%, a number that has stagnated and, in some sectors, declined (DIW Berlin 2025). The policies are in place. The numbers have not moved.

What makes this particularly difficult to explain is the growing disconnect between ambition and confidence. A 2025 survey of over 1,000 professionals conducted by the German gender equality initiative Chef:innensache found that while 24% of women now aspire to leadership, up five percentage points, only 26% believe they will reach it. This represents a decline of 6.8 points and the lowest level since 2022 (Karrierezuversichtsumfrage 2025 2025). In other words, ambition is rising while confidence is collapsing. Structural explanations such as the Glass Ceiling (M. K. Ryan and Haslam 2005), the Broken Rung (Krivkovich et al. 2025), the Gender Pay Gap, and network disadvantage (Lalanne and Seabright 2022) are important, but they do not by themselves fully illuminate how women interpret, revise, and act upon leadership ambitions across career stages. Women graduate from higher education with equal or greater leadership ambition than men, yet that ambition declines consistently during the early career years (Beaupre 2022). Understanding why requires examining how women themselves form, revise, and sometimes abandon their ambitions and finally what changes across career stages.

This paper addresses that gap through a comparative qualitative study conducted in Germany in 2026, examining Young Professionals navigating whether to seek leadership for the first time and established leaders deciding whether to advance further. Although existing theories explain important aspects of leadership ambition, less attention has been paid to how individuals evaluate whether leadership itself is sustainable over time. The aim of this study is to examine how women in Germany form, revise, and act upon leadership ambitions across career stages. The guiding research question is: How do young professionals and established female leaders evaluate leadership opportunities, and under what conditions do they perceive leadership as sustainable, legitimate, and worth pursuing?

Based on the qualitative findings, the paper develops a twofold argument: first, the question women ask appears to shift across career stages from whether they can and want to lead to whether they still want to and at what cost; second, many participants evaluated not leadership as a concept, but specific models of leadership they experienced as potentially depleting. The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework and literature review. Section 3 describes the methodology. Section 4 presents the findings. Section 5 discusses implications for theory and practice.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study integrates four theoretical frameworks, each addressing a distinct dimension of female leadership ambition, presented alongside the literature they help to organize. Together they reveal the research gap to which this study responds.

2.1 Self-Determination Theory and the Conditions for Ambition

Self-Determination Theory (R. M. Ryan and Deci 2000), proposes that intrinsic motivation depends on fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, or the experience of volition and self-determination; competence, or the experience of effectiveness and mastery; and relatedness, or the experience of meaningful connection with others. When these needs are frustrated — through micromanagement, lack of recognition, or social exclusion — motivation and ambition diminish. For this study, SDT explains why capable women may not pursue leadership: if a role offers insufficient autonomy, limited opportunities for meaningful competence experience, or a hostile social environment, the motivation to seek it does not activate regardless of external incentives. This is consistent with evidence that women who anticipate discrimination modify their aspirations pre-emptively, before encountering the barrier itself (Azmat, Cuñat, and Henry 2025), and that early career experiences of low autonomy and poor organizational fit systematically erode workplace ambition in ways entirely consistent with SDT's account of need frustration (Beaupre 2022).

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior and Perceived Control

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen 1991) links behavioral intention to three factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Applied to leadership ambition, it means that a woman's intention to pursue a leadership role is shaped by her attitude toward leadership, her perception of social expectations from family, colleagues, and the broader environment, and her belief in her own ability to succeed in a specific context. A woman may hold a genuinely positive attitude toward leadership in principle while simultaneously facing normative pressure against it or doubting her ability to succeed in a particular organization. These distinctions are central to understanding the gap between stated ambition and actual career decisions. The Gender-Equality Paradox adds important context: in high-equality societies, women are more likely to prioritize meaningful work over hierarchical advancement, which TPB interprets as a rational reweighting of perceived costs and benefits rather than a deficit of ambition (Stoet and Geary 2018). Germany, with high formal equality alongside persistent informal gender norms, provides a relevant context for examining this phenomenon.

2.3 The Boundaryless Career Model and the Redefinition of Success

The Boundaryless Career Model (Sullivan and Arthur 2006b) reconceptualizes the career as driven by personal values and meaning rather than hierarchical progression within a single organization. Where traditional models equated success with vertical advancement, the Boundaryless Career Model recognizes that contemporary workers, particularly younger generations, increasingly define career success in terms of flexibility, learning, work-life integration, and personal fulfillment. This framework is essential for interpreting women who express genuine ambition but resist hierarchical structures not because they are lacking drive, but because they apply a different definition of career success. When a participant defines success as really feeling that she has created and changed something rather than as reaching a particular organizational level, this is not an absence of ambition. It is a different and entirely legitimate form of it. This study extends the model by arguing that many women are not simply redefining the destination of their careers but actively evaluating whether the dominant leadership model is compatible with the kind of professional life they wish to sustain over time, which points to a dimension that is less explicitly developed in the framework.

2.4 Role Congruity Theory, Structural Prejudice, and the Research gap

Role Congruity Theory (Eagly and Karau 2002) addresses the structural prejudice that women face in leadership contexts. Leadership roles are culturally associated with agentic characteristics such as assertiveness, decisiveness, dominance, while women are socially expected to exhibit communal

characteristics including warmth, cooperativeness, and nurturance. This incongruence creates a double bind: behavior conforming to leadership expectations violates gender norms and is judged as inappropriately hard, while communal behavior is judged as insufficiently decisive for leadership. Women who internalize this double bind may come to doubt whether they fit the leadership role. This is driven not from any lack of capability, but from a rational reading of an environment that evaluates them against contradictory standards.

The empirical literature maps directly onto this mechanism. The Glass Cliff describes the tendency for women to be appointed to leadership precisely in crisis conditions, exposing them to higher risk of failure (Reinwald et al. 2023; M. K. Ryan and Haslam 2005). Network disadvantage compounds the picture: the professional networks of female executives are systematically less effective than those of male counterparts in generating advancement (Lalanne and Seabright 2022), while active sponsorship, rather than mentoring alone, remains the most consistently effective intervention for women's advancement yet is unevenly distributed (Gröschl et al. 2025). A comprehensive meta-analysis confirmed that structural and contextual factors systematically advantage men in the processes through which leaders are identified and selected (Badura et al. 2018). Despite the richness of this body of work, a critical gap remains. What is missing is a qualitative understanding of how women at different career stages form and revise their ambitions, and in particular how they evaluate whether leadership itself is worth pursuing. The McKinsey Women in the Workplace reports (Krivkovich et al. 2025) consistently document attrition from the pipeline at multiple points, but do not illuminate the subjective mechanisms behind those losses. The present study addresses this gap by comparing both groups directly within a single analytical framework. It includes those who have not yet entered leadership and those who are already there in direct comparison.

3. Methodology

The study adopts an exploratory qualitative research design appropriate for questions of subjective meaning-making, lived experience, and individual decision-making processes (Flick 2022). A comparative design examining two distinct groups within a single analytical framework enables identification of both group-specific and cross-group patterns. Data were collected through 31 interviews conducted in Germany between April and May 2026: 29 audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and two written asynchronous interviews with established leaders who could not attend synchronous sessions due to scheduling constraints common in senior professional populations (Meho 2006). All audio interviews were conducted in German, recorded with consent, and fully transcribed. The interview guide covered six thematic blocks drawn deductively from the four frameworks and reviewed iteratively throughout the fieldwork phase to accommodate emergent themes (Mayring 2015).

The sample comprises 17 Young Professionals aged 26 to 35 (INT1-17) without formal personnel responsibility (Beaupre 2022), and 14 established leaders aged 37 to 47 (INT20-32) with direct personnel responsibility, drawn from sectors including technology, finance, human resources, aviation, and the public sector. Five established leaders held migration biographies, a dimension that emerged as analytically significant. Sampling followed a purposive logic targeting heterogeneity across sectors, organizational types, career trajectories, and cultural backgrounds in order to maximize the range of perspectives captured (Patton 2015). Recruiting senior professionals is consistently more resource-intensive due to time constraints and organizational gatekeeping (Saunders and Townsend 2016), which accounts for the slightly smaller established leader group relative to the Young Professional group.

Analysis followed Mayring's (2015) qualitative content analysis combining deductive categories derived from the four frameworks with inductive categories formed from the material itself, intentionally producing two layers of findings: deductive findings that test and extend existing theoretical explanations, and inductive findings that represent genuine empirical extensions of the framework. MaxQDA supported systematic code management, cross-case comparison, and frequency analysis. Thematic saturation was assessed independently for each group and approached within the available sample (Fusch and Ness 2015). Two researchers independently coded a subset of interviews and resolved discrepancies through discussion to strengthen coding consistency.

4. Findings

The analysis produced deductive findings grounded in the theoretical frameworks and four inductive findings that extend beyond them. While presented separately, the four inductive themes reflect a broader evaluation process: rather than assessing leadership in terms of status or authority, participants consistently assessed

whether leadership could be integrated into a sustainable professional and personal life. Quotations are translated from German unless otherwise noted.

4.1 The Concept-Context Split: Ambition Is Conditional, Not Absent

Across the 31 interviews, no participant rejected leadership in principle. However, all participants attached conditions to their willingness to pursue or continue pursuing it. Positive evaluation of leadership was coded in 88% of interviews. This finding complicates the persistent narrative that women lack leadership ambition and shifts the analytical question from why women do not want to lead to what conditions must be present before they will.

INT12 stated without hesitation: "No, I want to become a leader" while she would decline under the wrong conditions. INT3 turned down a promotion because the financial terms were irrational: "Why should I do even more than I already do if it doesn't pay off financially?" INT16 declined not from lack of capability but from self-knowledge: "I'm a harmonious person and rather reserved. That's not quite who a leader is supposed to be." INT29 described the same gap from the established leader perspective: "I see myself as a bridge builder. When those three things align, people, organization, and market, that's what success looks like to me."

Financial cost-benefit calculation was one of the most consistent codes across the dataset, appearing in 14 of 17 Young Professional interviews and 9 of 14 established leader interviews. Three patterns emerged: offers declined because promotion would mean performing the same work for less pay due to qualification differentials; structural pay gaps rendered ineffective by organizational pressure, as INT4 experienced with the Wage Transparency Act; and the net income logic INT1 described "You're essentially working for the state." Financial calculation is frequently a rational response to documented structural inequality. Interpreting such decisions primarily as motivational failure therefore risks overlooking the structural and economic conditions shaping them.

4.2 The Career-Stage Shift in the Central Question

For Young Professionals, the central question is whether they can and want to lead under what conditions. For established leaders, it becomes whether they still want to go further and at what cost. This shift is a central finding of the comparative analysis, and it is not a shift from ambition to its absence. Ambition was present in both groups, although it was expressed and evaluated differently. What changes is the sophistication of the evaluation and the source from which conditions are drawn.

Conditioning of leadership readiness is equally strong in both groups; what differs is its origin. Young Professionals set conditions based on anticipation and observed experience; established leaders based on what their personal experience was. INT22 captured this directly: "Earlier, more responsibility was automatically positive for me. Today I think much more carefully about what that means." INT25, a female leader with several years of experience, was equally precise: "I would rather be genuinely good at what I do than mediocre in a role that doesn't fit me" Three subgroups emerged within the Young Professional group: those with clear ambition and a defined timeline; those with conditional openness who had often already declined a concrete offer; and those with a clear current refusal rooted in distinct personal reasoning: personality alignment, health concerns, or a deliberate alternative path. Not all established leaders moved away from ambition: the public sector team lead INT29 held a concrete plan toward department head or a ministerial position, demonstrating that career stage determines the nature of the question being asked, not its direction.

4.3 Sustainability as an Evaluation Criterion

Participants evaluated leadership not primarily through the lens of status, title, or advancement, but through what the data reveal as a sustainability calculus: can this role be sustained over time without depleting what matters to me? This finding is related to work-life balance but meaningfully broader. It encompasses energy, recovery, identity, and long-term viability, and it applies equally to participants with and without children.

INT27 offered the most complete articulation: "Career doesn't always mean going higher. Sometimes it's a success to be satisfied with what you have." The senior transportation manager INT28 framed sustainability as a non-negotiable condition: "A leadership role would have to offer a great deal of flexibility, freedom, and room to shape things, otherwise it simply doesn't fit into my life." INT21 was the most direct: "I see no reason to voluntarily add more pressure to my life right now." INT29 described work-life blending as intentional management of focus rather than separation: "If you try to be at two parties at once, you just end up overwhelmed." What distinguishes sustainability from simple work-life balance is that participants are not

describing a trade-off between work and home. They are describing an internal standard applied before accepting any role. In these accounts, leadership roles that did not meet this standard were not necessarily rejected out of fear or lack of ambition, but because participants judged them incompatible with the life they intended to sustain.

4.4 Emergent Rather Than Planned Leadership Pathways

For a significant portion of the established leader group, leadership was not sought but found. Often through organizational need, accumulated expertise, the departure of a predecessor, or simply because others were relying on them and a formal title eventually followed. INT24 became a UX team lead when her predecessor went on maternity leave and she was the person who understood the task. INT27 became head of accounting because she was the institutional memory of her department. INT23 described her entire trajectory as: "That's just how it happened." INT30 was the most direct: "I never had the intention to take on leadership, but I keep sliding back into it. That's just my nature."

This pattern complicates the Boundaryless Career Model's assumption of intentional self-direction: what these participants describe is a form of career emergence shaped by opportunity and the recognition of others rather than personal strategy. It has a direct practical implication: formal promotion processes that rely heavily on explicit self-nomination may disadvantage emergent leaders. Organizations that rely primarily on candidates putting themselves forward may risk overlooking women whose leadership potential becomes visible through practice, recognition, and organizational need rather than explicit career planning.

4.5 Influence Without Depletion

Participants across both groups expressed a genuine desire for impact and influence while being critical of the dominant model through which that influence is typically exercised: one demanding constant visibility, political navigation, performative availability, and personal sacrifice. INT9 articulated this most directly: "It's not that I want to be the boss. What draws me is having genuine influence over how people work and feel at work." INT28 reflected: "I become excited very easily and tend to go all in. Perhaps that was not always healthy or sustainable," adding that women in leadership are "often placed in symbolic positions" with an expectation to "remain quiet and not complain."

INT17 resolved this tension through the works council, choosing organizational influence without the depletion she had observed in others. INT31 described her ideal future role not as one with more authority but as one with more colleagues, more exchange, and more depth. This finding reframes the central question of the study. In this sample, participants were not simply rejecting leadership. Rather, many were critical of specific organizational models of leadership that they perceived as structurally depleting. They associated this model with constant visibility, the absorption of personal identity, and the extraction emotional resources that are not replenished. The women in this study want influence. Many want to lead people. What many appeared to question was a version of leadership that they associated with many German organizational contexts: one marked by constant visibility, political navigation, and high emotional demands.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings provide a qualitative explanation of how the ambition gap may persist despite the presence of leadership ambition among participants. Rather than indicating a simple deficit of ambition, the interviews suggest that leadership ambition is filtered through evaluations of financial fairness, sustainability, legitimacy, and anticipated depletion. The following discussion separates empirical findings, theoretical interpretation, and practical implications.

5.1 Empirical Contribution

The concept-context split, observed across all 31 interviews, provides qualitative evidence that the narrative of lacking leadership ambition is too simplistic. Every participant evaluated leadership positively as an idea; what varied was the evaluation of context, including the financial terms, the organizational culture, and the model of leadership on offer. This shifts the policy question from how to motivate women toward how to create conditions under which existing ambition translates into action. The financial cost-benefit finding makes this concrete: when advancement is structurally not attractive for women, declining it is the economically rational choice. Addressing gendered pay inequalities may therefore be an important condition for translating leadership ambition into action, rather than only an equity concern.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

The theoretical contribution lies in showing that, while the findings support existing frameworks, they also reveal dimensions those frameworks do not fully capture. The sustainability finding broadens the Boundaryless Career Model (Sullivan and Arthur 2006b) beyond flexibility and meaning to include long-term personal viability as a career evaluation criterion. The influence-without-depletion finding reveals the gap between leadership as position and leadership as practice, a distinction not fully captured by the frameworks used in this study. The legitimacy-through-competence dimension embedded in the data connects Role Congruity Theory (Eagly and Karau 2002) to the behavioral disadvantage in self-promotion documented by Badura et al.(2018): the double bind is not only evaluative but behavioral, producing a systematic underinvestment in self-marketing that compounds structural disadvantage. The emergent pathway finding challenges the Boundaryless Career Model's assumption of intentional career navigation and carries a direct practical implication for promotion design. The study proposes sustainability as an important additional dimension in understanding female leadership ambition. Rather than asking whether women aspire to leadership, a more productive question is whether available opportunities are perceived as sustainable, legitimate, and worth pursuing.

5.3 Practical Contribution

The findings suggest that the Broken Rung (Krivkovich et al. 2025) may operate not only through formal processes, but also through anticipatory adjustment. Women adjust ambitions based on what they observe before they are ever passed over (Azmat et al. 2025). The absence of visible female role models may therefore be understood not only as a representation problem, but also as a factor shaping ambition formation (Beaupre 2022). For established leaders, the emotional exhaustion produced by leadership experience is an organizational design problem, not a personal failing. Leadership structures perceived as consistently depleting may make advancement less attractive and contribute to erosion. Organizations should ensure advancement is financially rational for women by closing pay gaps and addressing qualification-based differentials. Creating genuine visibility through active sponsorship, rather than mentoring alone, appears to be a particularly important intervention (Gröschl et al. 2025). They should redesign promotion processes to surface emergent leaders who do not self-nominate and invest in reducing the performative and political costs of leadership roles. For employer branding specifically, aspirational messaging that oversells leadership may be evaluated critically against lived experience. When the gap between the marketed image and the actual condition of the role is too large, it damages organizational credibility rather than building pipeline.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study should be noted. The sample is drawn exclusively from Germany, and the findings are shaped by Germany's specific combination of formal gender equality, persistent informal gender norms, tax structure, and parental leave system. The degree to which findings generalize to other national contexts is an empirical question that future research should address. The qualitative design, while appropriate for the research questions, does not support statistical generalization. The unexpected prominence of migration biographies in the established leader group raises intersectional questions that this study is not designed to answer with the depth they deserve, and future research should examine how migration background, cultural heritage, and leadership ambition interact in the German organizational context. In addition, because this study is based on a purposive qualitative sample, the findings should be understood as analytically transferable rather than statistically generalizable.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the persistent gap between female leadership ambition and advancement is best understood as a sustainability challenge, not an ambition deficit. The women in this study did not simply reject leadership. They evaluated whether available roles were financially fair, personally sustainable, culturally legitimate, and compatible with the influence they wished to exercise. The findings suggest that closing the gap may depend less on changing women’s ambitions and more on creating forms of leadership that ambitious women perceive as financially fair, personally sustainable, and worth pursuing.

Ethics Declaration: All participants provided voluntary informed consent and were assured of anonymity. Interview data were anonymized prior to analysis. No sensitive personal data beyond professional context were collected. Ethical guidelines of Hochschule Macromedia for empirical research involving human participants were followed throughout.

AI Declaration: This paper was developed with the assistance of an AI language model (Claude, Anthropic), which was used for language editing, condensation of sections, and stylistic refinement. All analytical interpretations, theoretical framings, findings, and final content decisions were reviewed, validated, and approved by the research team. The authors take full responsibility for the content of this paper.

References

Ajzen, I. (1991) 'The theory of planned behavior', Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 179-211. doi:10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Azmat, G., Cunat, V. and Henry, E. (2025) 'Gender promotion gaps and career aspirations', LSE Research Online Documents on Economics. Available at: https://ideas.repec.org/p/ehl/lserod/120741.html

Badura, K.L., Grijalva, E., Newman, D.A., Yan, T.T. and Jeon, G. (2018) 'Gender and leadership emergence: A meta-analysis and explanatory model', Personnel Psychology, Vol. 71, No. 3, pp. 335-367. doi:10.1111/peps.12266

Beaupre, J.G. (2022) 'To lead or not to lead: Exploring how young women's early career experiences impact their leadership ambition', Gender in Management: An International Journal, Vol. 37, No. 8, pp. 1064-1079. doi:10.1108/GM-11-2021-0344

Chef:innensache (2025) Karrierezuversichtsumfrage 2025: Karriere im Spannungsfeld [online] https://chefinnensache.de/karriere-im-spannungsfeld/

Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2000) 'Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being', American Psychologist, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 68-78.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2018) The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, 5th ed., SAGE, Thousand Oaks.

DIW Berlin (2025) Immer mehr Vorstandinnen und Aufsichtsratinnen, aber nach wie vor ein weiter Weg bis zur Geschlechterparitat, DIW Wochenbericht, 2025(03). doi:10.18723/diw_wb:2025-3-2

Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. (2002) 'Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders', Psychological Review, Vol. 109, No. 3, pp. 573-598. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.109.3.573

Flick, U. (2022) The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design, SAGE, London. doi:10.4135/9781529770278

Fusch, P.I. and Ness, L.R. (2015) 'Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research', The Qualitative Report, Vol. 20, No. 9, pp. 1408-1416. doi:10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281

Groschl, S., Gabaldon, P., Hahn, T. and Kelan, E.K. (2025) 'The emergence and effects of sponsors for women leaders', Gender, Work and Organization, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp. 1786-1796. doi:10.1111/gwao.13217

Herlitz, A., Honig, I., Hedebrant, K. and Asperholm, M. (2025) 'A systematic review and new analyses of the gender-equality paradox', Perspectives on Psychological Science, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 503-539.

Krivkovich, A., Goldstein, D. and McConnell, M. (2025) Women in the Workplace 2025, McKinsey and Company [online] https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/women-in-the-workplace

Lalanne, M. and Seabright, P. (2022) 'The old boy network: Are the professional networks of female executives less effective than men's for advancing their careers?', Journal of Institutional Economics, Vol. 18, No. 5, pp. 725-744. doi:10.1017/S1744137421000953

Mayring, P. (2015) Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken, 12th ed., Beltz, Weinheim.

Meho, L.I. (2006) 'E-mail interviewing in qualitative research: A methodological discussion', Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, Vol. 57, No. 10, pp. 1284-1295. doi:10.1002/asi.20416

Patton, M.Q. (2015) Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods, 4th ed., SAGE, Thousand Oaks.

Reinwald, M., Zaia, J. and Kunze, F. (2023) 'Shine bright like a diamond: When signaling creates glass cliffs for female executives', Journal of Management, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 1005-1036. doi:10.1177/01492063211067518

Ryan, M.K. and Haslam, S.A. (2005) 'The Glass Cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions', British Journal of Management, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 81-90. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2005.00433.x

Saunders, M.N.K. and Townsend, K. (2016) 'Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in organization and workplace research', British Journal of Management, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 836-852. doi:10.1111/1467-8551.12182

Statistisches Bundesamt (2025) Deutschland unter EU-Durchschnitt: Weniger als jede dritte Fuhrungskraft ist weiblich [online] https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2025/11/PD25_393_13.html

Stoet, G. and Geary, D.C. (2018) 'The gender-equality paradox in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education', Psychological Science, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 581-593. doi:10.1177/0956797617741719

Sullivan, S.E. and Arthur, M.B. (2006) 'The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility', Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 19-29. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.001