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WOMEN'S IMPACT IN LOGISTICS SECTOR REPORT



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UTIKAD Women in Logistics Focus Group (WLFG)
2025





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President's Message



An Invitation from UTİKAD for an Equality-Oriented Future

The transportation and logistics sector, as a field where global competition and technological transformation are rapidly experienced, constantly requires development and innovation. Managing this transformation sustainably is possible not only through technical competence but also with an inclusive, fair, and diversity-supporting management approach. At UTİKAD, we believe that sectoral development can only be achieved with the equal participation of all stakeholders; in this context, we adopt gender equality as a fundamental principle.

This report examines, with a multidimensional approach, the representation rates of women employees in the Turkish transportation and logistics sector, their contributions, and the structural barriers they face. Conducted under the academic consultancy of Prof. Dr. Ebru Demirci, Faculty of Transportation and Logistics, Istanbul University, and with the contributions of the Women in Logistics Focus Group (WLFG), this research fills an important gap for sectoral development.

The data presented in the report clearly demonstrate that women employees add value to our sector not only quantitatively but also through their qualitative contributions. From operational efficiency to service quality, from customer satisfaction to risk management, the positive impact of women employees stands out in many areas. However, the limited representation of women in senior management positions and the persistence of certain social biases remain among the key issues requiring solutions.

As UTİKAD, we are aware not only of our sectoral but also our global responsibilities in establishing an inclusive and egalitarian sectoral structure. With this awareness, as a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, we position the principles of human rights, equality, justice, and sustainability at the core of all our activities. Moreover, the Equality for Women at Work Certificate that our association holds is a concrete indicator of our determination to transform equal opportunity in business into concrete policies.

In this respect, developing mentorship programs that support the growth of women leaders, ensuring transparent implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work, and promoting institutional practices that facilitate women's employment are among our priorities. We are determined to pursue this commitment not only at the level of discourse but also in practice.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Ebru Demirci, who provided scientific consultancy, to Ayşem Ulusoy, UTIKAD Vice President, who pioneered the initiation of this report, to Aslı Malay Tuncer, WLFG Coordinator, to Selin Obdan, WLFG Istanbul Region Deputy Chair, to all WLFG members, to the sector stakeholders who responded to the survey, and to the UTIKAD Executive Board. I believe that this joint effort to increase the visibility and impact of women in the logistics sector will lead the way for a lasting transformation in the future of our sector.

Respectfully,

Bilgehan Engin
UTIKAD President

WLFG Coordinator's Message



Women's Impact in Logistics Is Growing: Now It's Time for Visibility

Although the logistics sector has long been dominated by men, in recent years the contribution of women professionals has been steadily increasing. However, the visibility of this contribution still lags behind its potential. That is precisely why the “Women's Impact in Logistics Sector Report” is not just a dataset for us; it is a tool of awareness, a roadmap, and a call to action.

The Women's Impact in Logistics Sector Report highlights the experiences of women working in logistics in Türkiye, the obstacles they face, and the solutions they develop, while also presenting striking findings on indicators ranging from access to managerial positions to pay equality. For example, analyses of companies under the UTIKAD umbrella show that the share of women in decision-making positions remains below 10%. This data clearly conveys the message: “Qualified women employees exist, but there is a bottleneck in their promotion to higher positions.”

As the Women in Logistics Focus Group (WLFG), we are not only identifying this bottleneck but also developing solutions. Through our mentorship programs, visibility campaigns, and sectoral training modules, we both encourage young women to take bold steps into the sector and support existing professionals. The presence of women in the sector is not only a matter of diversity, but also a matter of efficiency, sustainability, and innovation. The value that women's perspectives bring to processes, relationships, and management is now too evident to ignore.

The Women's Impact in Logistics Sector Report is an important step toward measuring and making this value more visible. Yet, the real transformation will depend on what we do with this data. We hope companies will use this report as a guide in their recruitment, promotion, compensation, and leadership strategies. Ultimately, to create real equality in the logistics sector, we now have sufficient data, examples of good practice, and motivation. Now is the time to make this transformation with determination.

Aslı Malay Tuncer
WLFG Coordinator

SDGs Addressed

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 global targets set by the United Nations for a fairer, more equal, and more livable world by 2030. They cover a wide range, from poverty reduction to gender equality, and emphasize the shared responsibility of all stakeholders.



NO POVERTY

By empowering women economically, both individual and societal levels of poverty reduction are supported.



GENDER EQUALITY

Equal representation of women in decision-making processes, the labor force, and social life is one of the main pillars of this report.



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

By supporting women's participation in registered, secure, and productive jobs, contributions to economic growth are made.



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

The fight against gender-based inequalities in the social, economic, and cultural fields is at the core of this report.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The dissemination of women-focused projects through collaborations among civil society, public, and private sectors strengthens a multi-stakeholder approach to sustainability.

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared to analyze the current state of women's employment in the transportation and logistics sector in Türkiye, the contributions of women employees to the sector, and the structural barriers they face. Conducted by UTIKAD with the contributions of Prof. Dr. Ebru Demirci, Faculty Member at Istanbul University, Department of Transportation and Logistics, and members of the Women in Logistics Focus Group (WLFG), the study is based on survey findings collected from women employees working at various levels across the sector.

The survey questions were structured under three main themes: general evaluation of the sector, participants' perceptions of their own companies, and attitudes toward gender-based judgments in professional life. This structure enabled the analysis of women's employment on sectoral, corporate, and individual perception levels.

Key Findings:

- Women's contributions to the sector are strongly felt, particularly in areas such as customer satisfaction, service quality, operational efficiency, and time management.
- The representation of women in middle management is higher compared to their representation in senior management positions.
- While findings suggest that gender-based biases are decreasing in the sector, they have not been fully eliminated.
- Women's representation in senior management positions remains low (17% of CEOs are women), whereas the proportion of women in middle management is relatively higher.
- It has been observed that gender-based prejudices against women in the sector have decreased but not completely disappeared.
- Most participants believe that women can succeed in the logistics sector and argue for the reduction of gender-based discrimination.

Strategic Recommendations:

- Implementation of mentorship and leadership development programs to increase women's participation in leadership roles,
- Strengthening and monitoring the application of equal pay for equal work policies,
- Encouraging and expanding flexible working models and family-friendly policies that support gender equality,
- Offering training to all stakeholders to raise corporate awareness,
- Collecting, reporting, and sharing gender-based data regularly with the public in line with the principle of transparency to enhance corporate accountability.

This study highlights not only the importance of women's equal participation in the transportation and logistics sector but also its potential to enhance sectoral efficiency and innovation capacity. Every step taken with a gender equality perspective in the sector will provide a strategic gain in terms of competitiveness and corporate sustainability.

1. Introduction

The debates on the identities and social roles of individuals play a significant role in shaping the social, economic, and cultural structures of society. As a result of these debates, the concept of gender has emerged as an increasingly important and multidimensional topic. Particularly, gender equality has become not only a social issue but also a priority in the business world. The growing awareness of this issue across various sectors has led to the widespread adoption of gender equality policies in business and has triggered transformations in labor markets.

In this transformation process, the transportation and logistics sector has also become one of the areas increasingly addressed through a gender equality perspective. Logistics and transportation, as one of the largest employment providers within the service sector, have begun to pay greater attention to gender equality within the framework of sustainability-based strategies. Although efforts are being made to develop new policies in line with gender equality principles among employees, whether this change is sufficient across the sector remains debatable. Particularly in terms of sustainability and social responsibility, increasing women's employment and supporting women in the sector stand out as critical issues.

According to the IMF (2020) report "Women in the Labor Force: The Role of Fiscal Policies," women's participation in the workforce is a direct factor affecting economic growth and development. Increasing women's employment not only contributes to individual career development but also enhances household income levels and reduces poverty. Furthermore, greater involvement of women in business contributes to raising awareness on gender equality and supports the transformation of societal norms.

The transportation and logistics sector has historically been regarded as one of the areas with the most visible gender inequality. Research on the subject shows that gender-based imbalances continue within the sector. Ruel and Jaegler (2021), for example, emphasize the insufficient gender diversity in critical supply chain processes such as production and transportation. Similarly, the Gartner (2020) "Women in Supply Chain Survey Report" indicates that sectoral activities are largely dominated by a male-oriented management approach, with only 17% women in top management positions and 39% of the total workforce consisting of women. The same report also notes that women's representation at middle management levels is 29%. These figures suggest that, despite some progress, gender equality gaps persist in the sector.

Women's participation in the workforce and greater representation in leadership positions are not only matters of equality but also present opportunities for efficiency, innovation, and sectoral growth in logistics. Academic studies show that women in the sector often face barriers such as the glass ceiling, wage inequality, and societal perceptions, which make their participation more difficult (Smith & Johnson, 2020). On the other hand, women's contributions to operational agility, customer satisfaction, and openness to innovation are well-documented (Lee et al., 2018). This demonstrates that promoting gender diversity in logistics is not only an ethical requirement but also a strategic factor that enhances competitiveness in the sector.

This study aims to analyze the current state of women's impact in Türkiye's transportation and logistics sector, including their contributions and managerial perceptions of gender equality. The analysis seeks to identify the key problems regarding women's representation and propose strategies for developing gender equality policies. A limited number of studies in this field in Türkiye has been one of the main motivations behind this work.

This research was conducted with the contributions of UTIKAD, Prof. Dr. Ebru Demirci, Faculty Member of the Department of Transportation and Logistics, Faculty of Transportation and Logistics, Istanbul University, and members of the the Women in Logistics Focus Group (WLFG), with the aim of evaluating the current situation of woman employees in the sector and understanding their contributions to the industry.

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the current state of women's employment in the transportation and logistics sector and measure perceptions toward women employees. The focus is on women's positions in the sector, the opportunities and challenges they face, and the impacts of gender equality policies on companies.

The research is based on a survey designed specifically for women working in the logistics sector. The main target audience was companies operating in transportation and logistics and members of UTIKAD. A total of 181 respondents from UTIKAD member companies participated in the survey. The findings provide a detailed analysis of the current status of women employees in the sector.

Through this research, the current state of gender equality policies across the sector will be evaluated, existing problems and perceptions regarding woman employment will be identified, and solution proposals will be developed. The study aims to provide guidance for steps to be taken towards promoting gender equality in the sector.

1.2. Methodology of the Study

This report is based on survey findings designed to study the roles and impacts of woman employees in the logistics sector. The survey was conducted online using quantitative data collection methods and included employees working at various positions within the sector.

The survey questions were organized under three main categories to ensure analytical clarity and thematic consistency:

General Assessment of the Logistics Industry:

This section evaluates participants' perceptions of woman employees within the sector, the sector's overall stance on women's employment, and opinions concerning its general operations.

Employees' Assessments of Their Own Companies:

In this section, participants' perceptions regarding their companies' policies toward woman employees, practices ensuring equal opportunity, and supportive mechanisms were collected.

Perceptions of Women Employees and the Evaluation of Societal Judgments:

This section presents participants with prevalent societal judgments, biases, and observations concerning women in professional life. The aim is to measure the extent to which woman employees within the sector agree with or challenge these judgments, thereby analyzing the relationship between societal perceptions and individual experiences.

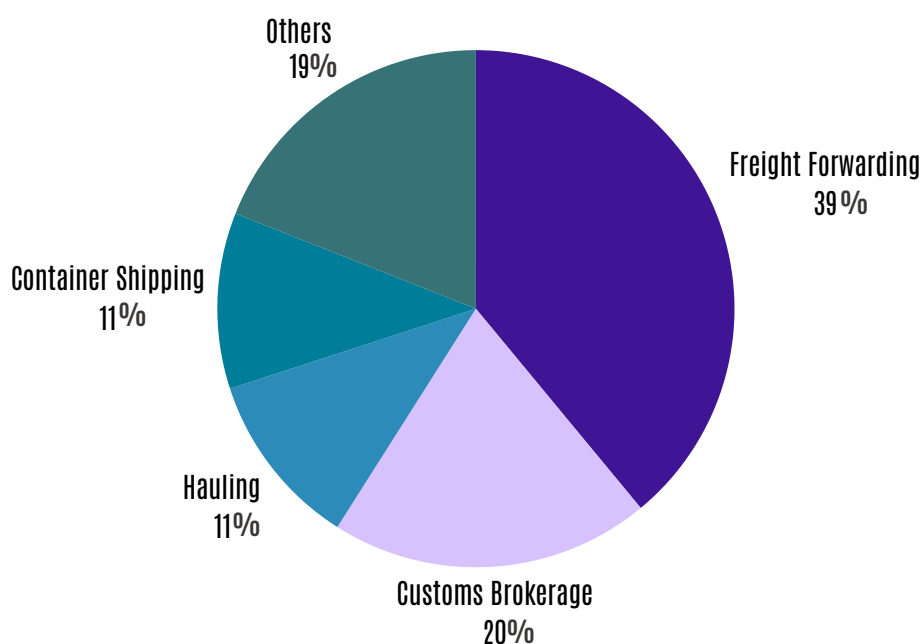
This structural categorization provides a deeper understanding of the sector's approach to women's employment, both at the institutional and individual levels.

2. Characteristics of the Participating Companies

2.1. Main Business Activities and International Network Memberships

The analysis of the main business activities of the surveyed companies shows that freight forwarding holds the largest share (39%), followed by customs brokerage (20%) and hauling (11%). Maritime container transportation (11%) as well as ship agency and airline operations constitute the remaining business activity areas of the survey participants.

Figure 1. Main Business Activities of Companies

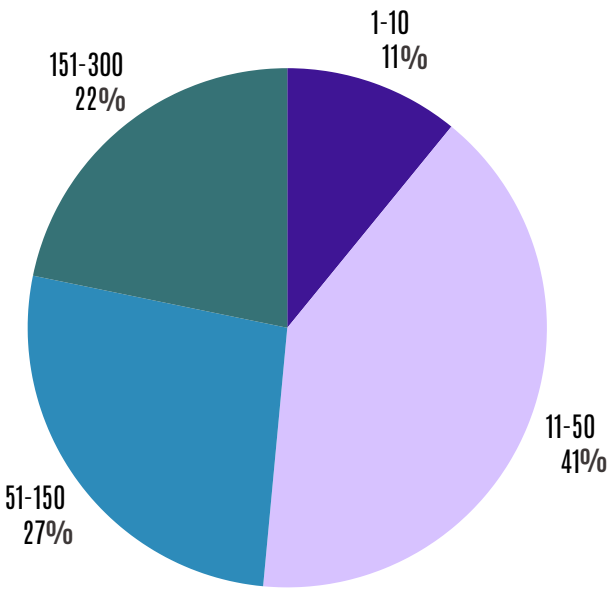


Most companies in the logistics sector are members of international networks. The women's representation rates in these organizations were reported as: WCA (37.6%), IATA (36.6%), FIATA (30.1%), IFA (8.6%), and GLPN (7.5%). In addition, companies are members of various other international networks.

2.2. Number of Employees and Women’s Employment

It was determined that the number of employees varies across companies. For the purposes of this report, firms with 300 or fewer employees are classified as SMEs, while firms with 301 or more employees are classified as large-scale enterprises. Accordingly, approximately 88% of the companies that responded to the survey are SMEs, while around 12% are large-scale enterprises. Looking at the employee distribution among SMEs, it is observed that about 9.5% of the companies employ 1–10 people, around 41% employ 11–50 people, approximately 27% employ 51–150 people, and about 22.5% employ 151–300 people.

Figure 2. Total Number of Employees in Companies



The rates of woman employment in the sector show a remarkable diversity. Among the surveyed companies, 23% employ between 51 and 100 woman employees, while 20.8% employ between 21 and 50 woman employees.

2.3. Management Structure and Women’s Representation

2.3.1. Representation of Women on the Board of Directors

An analysis of the board structures of the surveyed companies shows that the number of board members ranges from 0 to 10. Among the participating companies, 25.9% have three-member boards, 23% have two-member boards, and 18.5% have four-member boards. The proportion of companies with a single-member board structure is 10.4%. In terms of woman representation on boards, approximately 65% of the surveyed enterprises have woman board members.

2.3.2. Representation of Women in C-Level Management

It is observed that men constitute the vast majority in CEO positions. While 72% of companies have a male CEO, the proportion of woman CEOs is only 17%. Approximately 11% of survey participants did not respond to this question.

When examining woman representation in C-Level positions (such as CEO, General Manager, Deputy General Manager, General Coordinator, etc.), it is seen that about 47% of the companies do not have any woman executives at the C-Level, whereas 53% of companies do have woman executives at this level.

2.3.3. Representation of Women in Middle Management

The representation of women in middle management positions within the surveyed companies is as follows: 11% have four woman managers, 18% have three woman managers, 24% have two woman managers, 12% have one woman manager, while 8% have no woman managers at all.

These findings indicate that the representation of women in middle management is somewhat higher compared to C-Level positions.

3. Existence of Gender Equality Practices in the Workplace

This section addresses how sectoral perceptions and company-level practices are evaluated with regard to wage equality between man and woman employees, as well as the presence of gender-based preferences in recruitment processes. In the survey questions concerning perceptions of pay and equality and approaches to recruitment, participants were first asked to assess the general perception within the sector, independently of their own companies, and then to evaluate their perceptions of their own companies' approach to these issues. In this way, the study seeks to identify potential discrepancies between perception and practice.

3.1. Perceptions of Pay and Equality

When asked about perceptions of wages and equality between man and woman employees in the sector, approximately 52% of survey participants stated that they believed equal pay was implemented, while around 40% expressed the view that woman employees received lower salaries than their male counterparts, and 8% did not respond to the question.

In contrast, when evaluating their own companies, about 77% of participants indicated that equal pay was applied to man and woman employees performing the same or similar work, whereas roughly 12% believed that women were paid less.

The data presented above highlight discrepancies between perception and practice regarding pay equality in the sector. While there exists a perception that women are paid less than men across the sector, respondents largely reported that equal pay was practiced within their own companies.

3.2. Approaches Toward Women in Recruitment Processes

Approximately 52% of survey participants stated that they do not observe gender-based discrimination in recruitment in logistics sector, while around 38% expressed the view that woman candidates are less preferred in hiring processes.

When asked about their own companies' recruitment practices, 78% reported that no gender discrimination takes place in their hiring processes, whereas 13% stated that they believe woman candidates are not preferred.

These findings indicate a discrepancy between the sectoral perception and the internal policies of individual companies.

4. Assessments on Gender-Based Judgments

In this section, a series of evaluative statements were presented in order to assess survey participants' attitudes toward gender roles and sectoral gender biases. These statements focus particularly on themes such as the roles attributed to men and women in professional life, career expectations, and equal opportunity. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. For this purpose, a five-point Likert scale was employed, ranging from "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree", to "Strongly Disagree." For the purposes of analysis, similar responses were merged to ensure greater clarity of presentation, resulting in a three-category classification. Accordingly, the responses "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were consolidated as positive views, while "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" were grouped as negative views. The response "Neither Agree nor Disagree" was retained as a separate neutral category and evaluated as "Undecided."

1. The statement “Having a professional career is more important for men than for women” was used to measure the prevalence of the belief in society that having a job or profession is primarily a man’s responsibility. Among the respondents, 49% disagreed with the statement, 25% were undecided, and 26% agreed.
2. The statement “Women solve problems using their intuition, while men solve them through logical analysis” was used to measure the prevalence among respondents of the belief, widely held in society, that men have a more logical approach. Among the participants, 44% disagreed with the statement, 27% were undecided, and 29% agreed.
3. The statement “Solving logistics problems requires an effective and strong approach, which is typically a male characteristic” was used to measure the prevalence among respondents of the belief, common in society, that effective and strong approaches in solving logistics problems can primarily be provided by men. Among the participants, 75% disagreed with the statement, 17% were undecided, and 8% agreed.
4. The statement “Logistics is a sector in which men perform better than women” was used to measure the level of acceptance among respondents of the widespread societal perception that men are more competent and successful than women in the logistics sector. Among the participants, 74% disagreed with the statement, 18% were undecided, and 8% agreed.
5. The statement “Women in business life seek to gain advantages by highlighting their sexuality” was used to assess the extent to which the prejudiced view, occasionally expressed in society, that women achieve success in professional life through their sexuality, is shared among respondents. Among the participants, 64% disagreed with the statement, around 27% were undecided, and approximately 9% agreed.
6. The statement “Women cannot solve problems that arise during logistics operations because they act according to their emotions” was used to determine the extent to which respondents share the widespread societal prejudice that women’s emotional nature hinders decision-making processes. Among the participants, approximately 81% disagreed with the statement, around 13% were undecided, and about 6% agreed.
7. The statement “It is undesirable for women to enter professional life because it will lead to unemployment among men” was used to measure the extent to which respondents support the societal concern and prejudice that woman employment reduces men’s job opportunities. Among the participants, 87% disagreed with the statement, around 8% were undecided, and approximately 5% agreed.

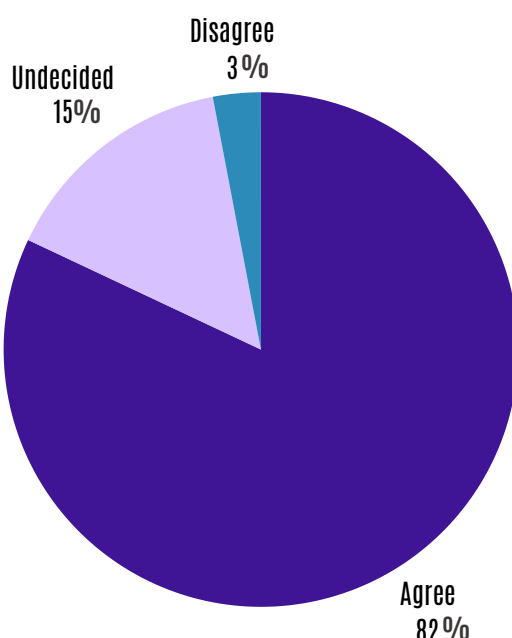
5. Contributions and Perceived Impacts of Women Employees on Companies

This section examines perceptions regarding the contributions of woman employees to operational processes, organizational flexibility, service quality, and overall organizational performance. Participants were presented with statements aimed at evaluating the impact of woman employees in areas such as operational resilience, service quality, risk management, time management, customer satisfaction and loyalty, productivity, employee engagement, and openness to innovation. Designed around a five-point Likert scale, these questions sought to capture both the tangible and perceived contributions of woman employees to businesses as well as the level of institutional awareness concerning gender roles.

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. For this purpose, a five-point Likert scale was employed ("Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neither Agree nor Disagree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree"). During the analysis phase, similar responses were consolidated into three categories for greater clarity. Accordingly, "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were combined as positive views, while "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" were grouped as negative views. The response "Neither Agree nor Disagree" was treated separately as a neutral view and categorized as "Undecided."

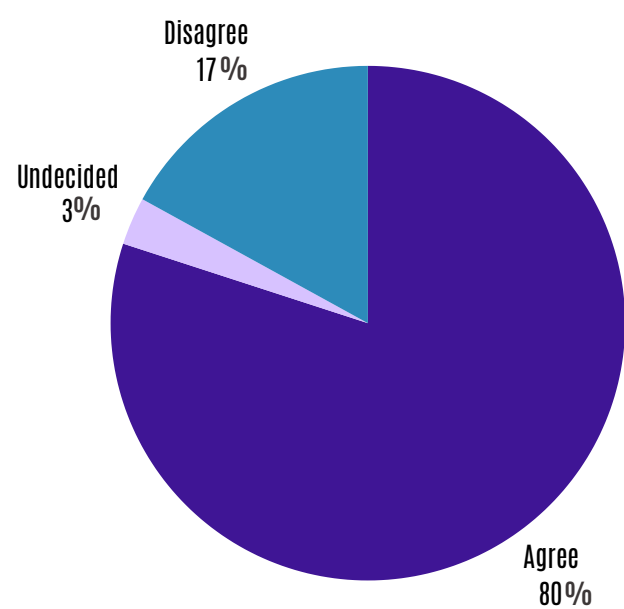
Operational Resilience: 82% of participants agreed with the statement "Woman employees contribute to our operational resilience," while 15% remained undecided. Only 3% disagreed with the statement. These findings indicate that woman employees are perceived as playing a significant role in enhancing organizational flexibility.

Figure 3. Women employees contribute to our operational resilience



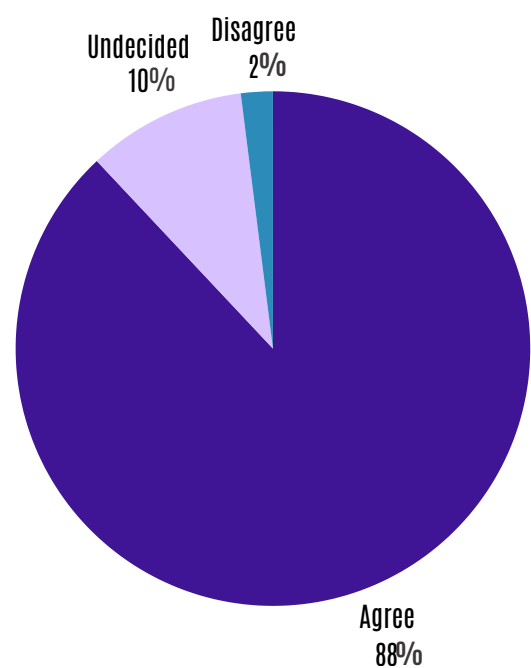
Risk Management: Woman employees were also perceived as having an impact on risk management within organizations. 80% of participants agreed with the statement “Woman employees contribute to our risk management,” while 3% remained undecided. 17% disagreed with the statement.

Figure 4. Women employees contribute to our risk management.



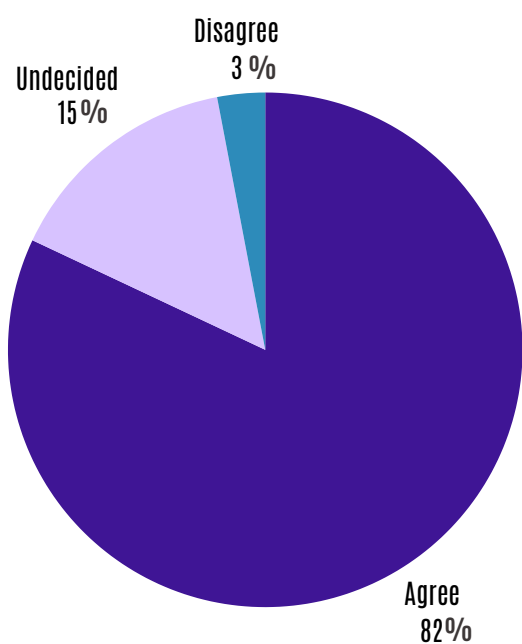
Service Quality: 88% of the survey participants agreed with the statement “Women employees have an impact on our service quality”, while 10% were undecided. 2% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 5. Women employees contribute to our service quality



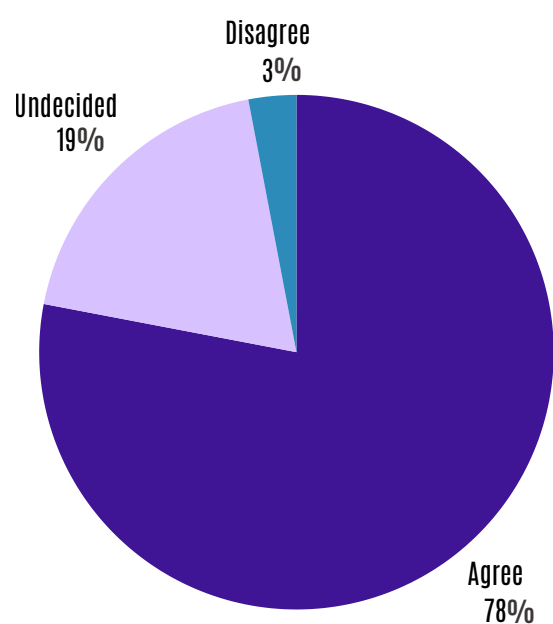
Customer Satisfaction: 86% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "Women employees have an impact on customer satisfaction," while 12% were undecided. 2% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 6. Women employees contribute to our customer satisfaction



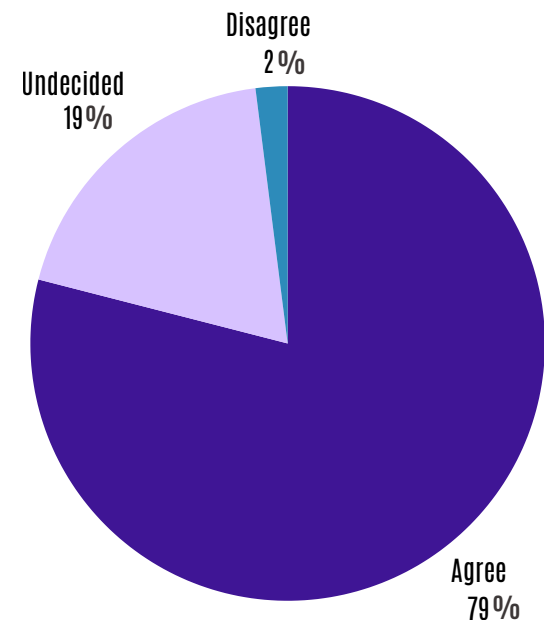
Customer Loyalty: 78% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "Women employees have an impact on customer loyalty," while 19% were undecided. 3% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 7. Women employees contribute to our customer loyalty



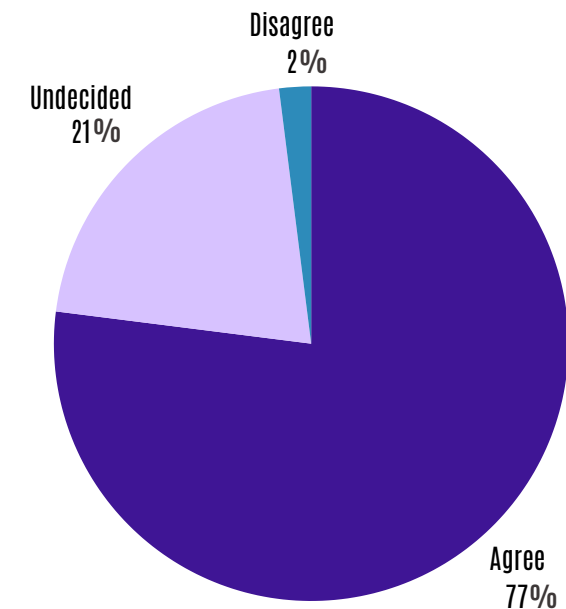
Operational Efficiency: 79% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "Women employees have an impact on our efficiency rates," while 19% were undecided. 2% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 8. Women employees contribute to our efficiency rates



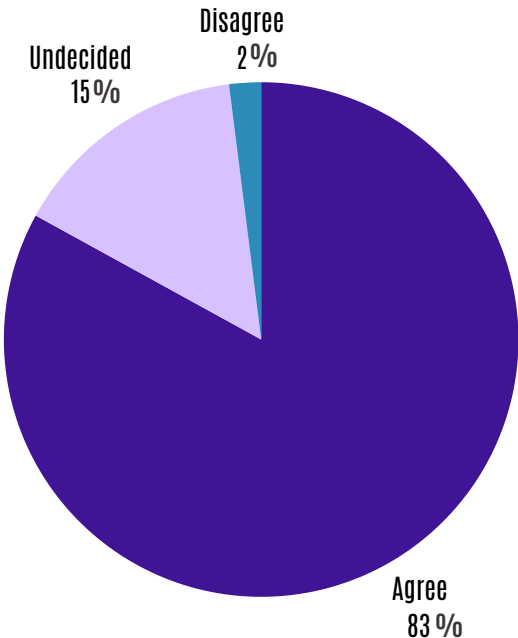
Time Management: 77% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "Women employees have an impact on time management," while 21% were undecided. 2% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 9. Women employees contribute to our time management



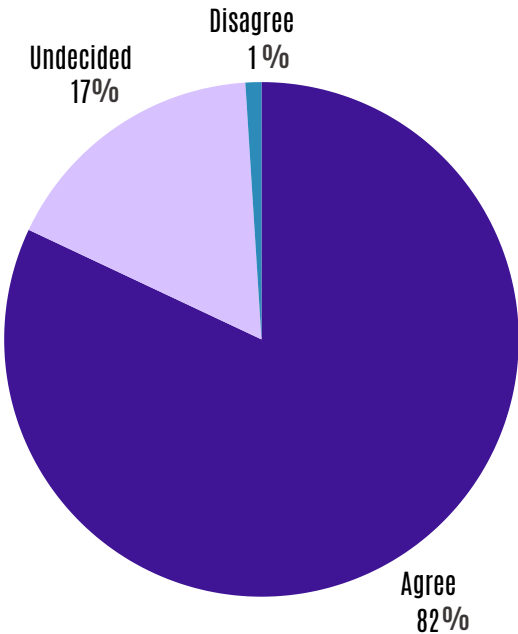
Commitment of Women Employees: 83% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "We are satisfied with the commitment of our women employees," while 15% were undecided. 2% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 10. We are satisfied with women employees' commitment



Openness to Innovation: 82% of the survey participants agreed with the statement "The level of openness to innovation among women employees contributes positively" while 17% were undecided. 1% stated that they did not agree with this statement.

Figure 11. The level of openness to innovation among women employees contributes positively



6. Conclusion and Evaluation

Despite the increasing awareness of gender equality in the transportation and logistics sector, the representation of women employees and their presence in senior positions remain limited. The survey findings presented in this report reveal that women make significant contributions in many areas of the sector, particularly in operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, risk management, and service quality. The impact of women employees is not limited to internal business performance but also offers considerable potential for sectoral innovation and sustainable growth.

When evaluating the key findings of the report, it is evident that the effective participation of women in the workforce contributes not only to business performance but also creates positive effects across the sector. Although women's representation in middle management is higher compared to senior management, the relatively low proportion of women in CEO and C-level positions indicates that the sector still maintains a male-dominated structure. This reflects that the leadership potential of women employees is not being sufficiently transformed into opportunities within corporate structures.

The survey's findings regarding social biases show that while prejudices against women in traditionally male-dominated sectors like logistics have begun to decline, they still persist to some extent. The majority of participants reject the conventional narrative that men are more successful in logistics. This development is noteworthy as it indicates a transformation in gender perceptions within the sector.

To increase the presence of women in senior management positions within the sector, the following steps are of critical importance:

- Expanding women's leadership development programs and institutionalizing mentorship mechanisms in this area,
- Implementing equal pay for equal work policies in a transparent and accountable manner,
- Promoting gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion processes,
- Increasing practices that provide flexibility in women's career planning (such as remote working, parental leave, childcare support, etc.),
- Raising awareness of gender equality through in-house training to help break the male-dominated management culture,

- Strengthening corporate accountability by regularly collecting, reporting, and publicly sharing gender-based data in line with the principle of transparency.

Looking ahead, adopting policies centered on gender equality should be regarded as a necessity for the logistics sector to enhance its competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth. A sectoral structure in which women are not only present in numbers but also play active roles in decision-making mechanisms will strengthen innovation, efficiency, and corporate diversity in logistics.

In this context, the responsibility of all stakeholders in the sector is not only to identify existing inequalities but also to take determined and concrete steps toward transforming them. Making the value contributed by women to the sector more visible will foster not only individual success but also collective progress.

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