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EgonZehnder

Leaders & Daughters  
Global Survey 2017

**&** Leaders 2017  
Daughters

# Leaders & Daughters Global Survey

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# Cultivating the Next Generation

## Introduction

Egon Zehnder has a long-standing commitment to advancing gender diversity, but this year's Leaders & Daughters Global Survey is a first for us. This examination of the lives and careers of 7,000 women across seven countries—Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, India, the United Kingdom and the United States—is meant to foster a deeper understanding of the ambitions, motivations and realities that women face every day in their professional lives. Our interest was in grasping differences and similarities based not only on geography but also age and seniority.

The findings uncovered a deep and growing feeling of empowerment and ambition—that is until women reached the senior levels of management, where they still grapple with the glass ceiling. We saw levels of engagement and drive decline as women aged.

The goal of this report is to provoke a global discussion of women's professional development that will continue at “*Leaders & Daughters: Cultivating the Next Generation*” events hosted by Egon Zehnder in more than 40 locations around the world. It's our hope that in understanding women's challenges and outlook, we can contribute to their progress everywhere.



Salary Considerations



Career Ambitions



Career Influences



Mentorship



Professional Development

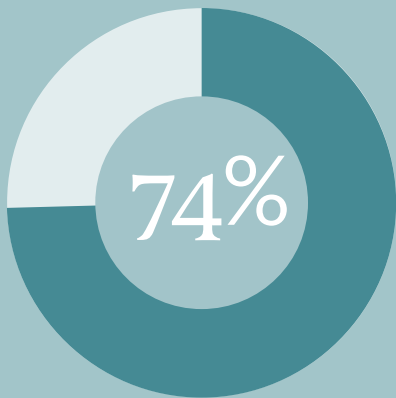


Advocacy



Professional Challenges

## Career Ambitions



of women  
aspire  
to reach  
executive  
leadership  
ranks

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of women in the early stages of their professional career globally aspire to one day reach senior/executive leadership ranks within the organization. Ambition is higher in developing economies such as Brazil (92 percent), China (88 percent) and India (82 percent) and lower in the U.S. (62 percent), Australia (61 percent), Germany (58 percent) and the UK (56 percent).

## Career Considerations

Our survey found that women have a healthy sense of ambition across the board—especially young women. **Nearly three-quarters of our respondents in the early stages of their professional careers aim to reach the top level of the corporate ladder.**

This was especially true for women in developing economies such as Brazil, China and India, who reported higher levels of aspiration than women in the U.S., Australia, UK and Germany. Globally, our respondents wanted the CEO spot more than any other position.

However, the response to the ambition question when considered by seniority exposed the glass ceiling effect: Desire to advance to a top position declines at the senior manager level and above and drops from 72 percent to 57 percent as reality sets in about the challenges for advancement to senior leadership.

We also found the same alignment with age. Globally, younger women were more likely to say they wanted to eventually have a senior role—70 percent for women ages 18-22 versus 20 percent for women ages 51-60.

Youth also corresponded to more confidence about one's future. The older a respondent, the more likely she was to report uncertainty about where she saw herself professionally in five years—29 percent for women 51-60 reporting uncertainty versus only 5 percent for women ages 18-22.

Women overall reported contentment in their current jobs, with about three-quarters globally saying they were very satisfied (27 percent) or satisfied (50 percent). However, we did note a significant geographic split: Women in the U.S. reported the lowest levels of workplace satisfaction—34 percent saying they were not completely or not at all satisfied, while only 16 percent of those in Germany reported discontent. Satisfaction increased with age and seniority across the globe.

Our respondents overwhelmingly favored corporate roles. Only 3 percent said they would be interested in a government minister job and about two in 10 said their goal was to be an entrepreneur or start their own business. Women in the U.S. were most likely to aspire to start their own enterprise (36 percent) while those in Germany ranked as least likely (6 percent).

## Professional Advancement

Women across the globe face consistent hurdles in the workplace. The top three professional challenges our respondents said they experience were broadening their skillset (32 percent), having sufficient opportunity to showcase their abilities and potential (29 percent) and balancing their personal and professional lives (27 percent).

However, for women in developed economies—the U.S., UK, Germany and Australia—work-life balance was the number-two ranked challenge. Women in developing markets—India, Brazil and China—more frequently said overcoming gender bias and stereotypes in the workplace was an issue.

Interestingly, seniority and age did not always mean an alignment of responses: As seniority increased, women were more likely to report gender bias as a challenge—12 percent of women in the C-suite versus 7 percent for the overall sample, but just 6 percent for the 51-60 age set.

**Women in the C-suite in India felt gender bias and stereotypes the most acutely (33 percent) followed by the U.S. (19 percent),** showing there is still work to be done at the highest levels of management across the globe. This proof point further reflected the frustrations of senior women struggling to break the glass ceiling.

Regardless of seniority, we saw a telling discrepancy in how women both experience and report bias in the workplace. Although overall just 7 percent of women reported gender bias or stereotypes as a challenge if asked explicitly, nearly half of the respondents said they believed it is more challenging for women to be promoted to senior management positions than men.

This belief also increased as women rose in the ranks, peaking at a senior manager level. This belief was markedly split along developing countries, with women in the U.S. reporting this at the lowest rates and the highest in China.

### Workplace Challenges

Older women reported fewer professional hurdles, with nearly a third in the 51-60 age set saying they do not have any workplace challenges.

The youngest cohorts of women struggle more with finding the right mentor, aligning their personal values with their profession and finding the right fit in culture. Not surprisingly, challenges associated with work-life balance peaked between the ages of 36 and 40.

### Professional Challenges



Women across the globe experience similar career challenges. Globally, broadening skillsets (32 percent), having sufficient opportunity to showcase abilities and potential (29 percent) and balancing professional and personal life (27 percent) are the top three challenges.

## Money Motivates

Women across countries were loud and clear about what motivated them: money talks. When looking for a job, 57 percent of respondents said a competitive salary matters most. Flexible hours and work schedule came in second, followed by health benefits.

American and German women were largely the exception to the rule, ranking flexibility above a competitive salary. For the entire sample set, salary was more important than clear growth opportunities.

Overall, 46 percent of respondents said they would be more likely to accept a higher salary with undefined growth opportunities, versus 38 percent agreeing to the reverse. Women from China and Brazil were the only countries to choose defined job growth over a higher salary.

Women again reported an inconsistency when it came to valuing diversity in the workplace. Of our total respondents, the vast majority of women globally viewed an inclusive workplace as a positive, with 50 percent saying that such an environment impacts career progress by creating more growth opportunities and supporting progress. And yet, in regards to programs and policies that mattered most when seeking employment, diverse leadership ranked last out of all answers; just 12 percent said it was important.

Diverse leadership was most important to women ages 18-22 (14 percent) and least important to the 51-60 cohort (9 percent). **Women in the C-suite were the most likely group to say that diversity in talent creates too much disparity in opinion, suggesting this issue may start at the top.**

Broken down geographically, German women ranked diversity in leadership last of the policies that mattered most but were the most likely to say corporate social responsibility and working for a purpose-based organization was important (27 percent)—an issue that mattered least to UK respondents (10 percent).

## Salary Considerations

Employed women value a higher salary over potential growth.



## Career Progression

Our survey refuted any commonly held assumptions about a link or relationship between seniority and age. The most senior women in our survey reported very different experiences from the oldest cohort (51-60), especially when it came to women using or accessing resources to advance their careers.

We consistently found that women reported lower rates of advocacy and mentorship as they got older, but women in the C-suite reported using these tools at the highest rates. **This suggests that if women do not reach a professional threshold by a certain age, either they stop tapping into these resources or their companies no longer make them as available.** A case in point here is advocacy: 55 percent of women said they had a senior leader who acted as an advocate on their behalf. This was highest for younger women and declined as women aged but was highest for women in the C-suite, suggesting this was important to their success. Women in Brazil were most likely to have a senior leader acting on their behalf and least likely in the U.S. and UK

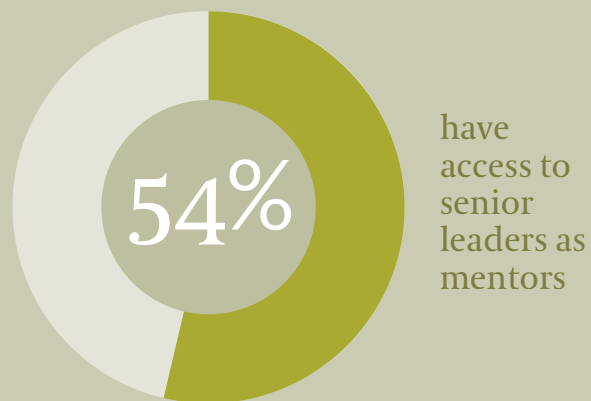
Similar patterns took hold with mentorship. Again, about half of the women reported having a senior leader who also functioned as a mentor. This interaction was most prevalent for young women and women in the C-suite and for senior managers.

Women in Brazil and China led the way and the UK trailed, where a surprisingly large number of women (20 percent) were not sure if they had access to senior leaders who doubled as mentors.

A slightly lower percentage of women (47 percent) said they acted as mentors than were mentored. Surprisingly, women acting as mentors peaked at age 23-30.

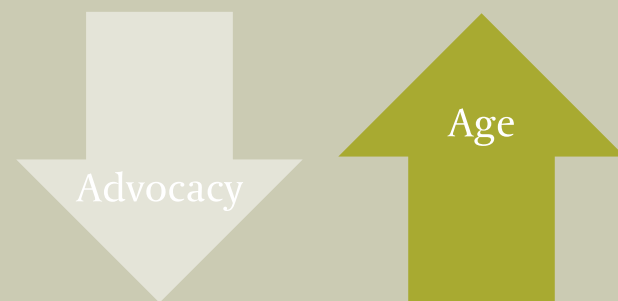
However, broken down by job level, women in the C-suite and senior management were the most likely to serve as mentors—more than 80 percent in both cases. Again we saw a divide by developing and developed economies, where women in developed economies were least likely to serve as mentors.

## Mentorship



Only slightly more than half of women overall (54 percent) have access to senior leaders who also function as mentors. Employed women in India lead the way with 81 percent having access to senior leaders who also function as a mentor. Globally, fewer respondents at the junior level report having a mentor than those in the C-suite – 56 percent and 76 percent, respectively.

## Advocacy



**Advocacy rates decline as age increases, yet rise with professional rank.**

This contradiction peaks with the C-suite, where the majority (71 percent) enjoy advocacy from a senior leader on their behalf. This suggests an opportunity for more advocacy at junior levels globally.

## Professional Development

India, Brazil and China lead the way in providing women with professional development opportunities.



Women in employment in India (95 percent), Brazil (94 percent) and China (92 percent) are more likely to be provided with professional development opportunities than women in Australia (80 percent), Germany (77 percent), the U.S. (75 percent) and the UK (72 percent).

Just over half of the women overall said their organization gives them a platform that lets them actively participate in planning their career. Once more, this dropped off as women aged but increased with seniority.

Women in developing and developed markets split here, with women in China, Brazil and India reporting corporate career planning tools like promotion policies and career coaching at the highest levels and the U.S., UK, Germany and Australia at the lowest. Nearly 9 out of 10 of women respondents globally thought these programs were effective.

Women in developing markets were more likely to be provided with professional development opportunities; the most common, globally, was training followed by mentorship. Mentorship in China was highest (53 percent). It was lowest in Germany (10 percent), where tuition assistance was highest (39 percent). Women were likely to engage with these development programs once a month or every 2-3 months. We saw the age and seniority dichotomy creep up, with frequency of engagement declining as women got older but increasing with her job title.

About three-quarters (75 percent) of women surveyed were either familiar or very familiar with the way their organization fills vacant positions and manages succession planning.

Women working for the smallest companies with less than 50 employees and the biggest organizations with 5,000 or more workers said they were the least familiar. Younger women reported being more acquainted with the process than older women.

Just more than half the women thought their feedback through formal channels influenced company policy. Overall, younger women were more likely to feel like they were being heard. This also split along developed and developing economies, where women in developing economies thought their feedback was more likely to have an impact on company policy.



## Influences

Who influences women's development most? Overall, most women report that no one has been the greatest influence on career ambitions and choices. Mothers (17 percent) are the second-greatest influence, with fathers and husbands tying for third at 14 percent.

**However, we saw drastic differences based on age. Younger women were far more likely to say their mothers had been the greatest influence on their careers, while older women were more likely to say that nobody has been the greatest influence.**

Globally, Indian women were the most likely to say their parents had the biggest impact. It appears that for all of the mentorship opportunities, the most critical support still comes from home.

## Career Influences



Parents are credited with having the greatest influence on careers globally, ranking in the top three across all countries. The roles of husband and father tie for third-greatest influences globally, highlighting the importance of positive male support. The only country to rank a professional influence in their top five was China, listing peers/co-workers as the fifth greatest influence.

## Appendix

*“Leaders & Daughters: Cultivating the Next Generation”*

To further explore the Leaders & Daughters findings, Egon Zehnder has produced the Leaders & Daughters Visualizer.

To experience the Leaders & Daughters data, please visit <http://www.egonzehnder.com/specials/leaders-and-daughters/explore-the-data.html>.

The screenshot displays a web application interface with a red header. On the left, the logo for 'Leaders & Daughters 2017' is visible. The main navigation bar includes three tabs: 'Career Considerations' (which is selected), 'Professional Advancement', and 'Career Progression'. The content area is split into two columns. The left column features a vertical list of items: '+ Career Ambitions' with a target icon, '+ Career Influences' with a head-and-gears icon, and '+ Career Influences' with a head-and-gears icon. The right column is a teal sidebar titled 'Salary Considerations'. It contains a paragraph of text: 'Overall, women in employment are most likely to accept a higher starting salary with undefined growth opportunities, rather than a lower starting salary and a clear career trajectory if they left their current position (46% vs 38%). China and Brazil are the only countries to choose a lower starting salary and a clear career trajectory over a higher starting salary with undefined growth opportunities if they left their current position.' Below the text is a graphic of a woman silhouette with two circles labeled 'Salary' and 'Growth' positioned on either side. At the bottom left of the interface, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

## About Egon Zehnder

Since 1964, Egon Zehnder has been at the forefront of defining great leadership in the face of changing economic conditions, emerging opportunities and evolving business goals. With more than 435 consultants in 69 offices and 41 countries around the globe, we work closely with public and private corporations, family-owned enterprises and nonprofit and government agencies to provide board advisory services, CEO and leadership succession planning, executive search and assessment and leadership development. For more information visit [www.egonzehnder.com](http://www.egonzehnder.com) and follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter.

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