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PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

The first chapter of the article addresses the role of women in senior management, with the definition of the main framework concepts: gender, masculinity, femininity, conditions and barriers for active participation of women in top management. In the second chapter the authors present the findings of the study, their own and other empirical studies on the issue. The qualitative analysis was based on the interviews of 150 senior managers. The focus is made on the goals, values and obstacles in achieving management goals. The study defines the indicators of women participation in senior decision-making through the selected criteria (power, social competence, political competence).

Keywords: gender; role of women; senior management; decision-making.

Єва Жівчікова, Тетяна Машарова, Крістіна Рачкова УЧАСТЬ ЖІНОК У ТОП-МЕНЕДЖМЕНТІ ТА ПРИЙНЯТТІ РІШЕНЬ

У статті описано роль жінок у вищому ешелоні управління та влади, надано визначення таким ключовим концепціям даної галузі дослідження, як: гендер, маскуліністність та феміністність, сприятливі умови та бар'єри для активної участі жінок в управлінських процесах. Представлено результати власного дослідження на основі опитування 150 управлінців. Акцент в аналізі зроблено на таких параметрах як цілі, цінності та перепони. Ключовими критеріями, які визначають роль жінок в топ-менеджменті, є сила влади, соціальні компетенції та політичні компетенції.

Ключові слова: гендер; роль жінок; вище керівництво; прийняття рішень.

Рис. 3. Табл. 6. Літ. 22.

Ева Живчикова, Татьяна Машарова, Кристина Рачкова УЧАСТИЕ ЖЕНЩИН В ТОП-МЕНЕДЖМЕНТЕ И ПРИНЯТИИ РЕШЕНИЙ

В статье описана роль женщин в высшем эшелоне управления и власти, даны определения таким ключевым концепциям данной области исследования, как: гендер, маскулинность и феминность, благоприятные условия и барьеры для активного участия женщин в управленческих процессах. Представлены результаты собственного исследования, основанного на опросе 150 управленцев. Акцент в анализе сделан на таких параметрах как цели, ценности и препятствия. Ключевыми критериями, которые определяют роль женщин в топ-менеджменте, являются сила власти, социальные компетенции и политические компетенции.

Ключевые слова: гендер; роль женщин; высшее руководство; принятие решений.

Introduction. The main goal of this study is to examine the participation of women in senior management and decision-making. To realize this objective the following tasks have been identified:

- to define the key terms;
- to present partial empirical studies in the context of the issue;
- by the selected indicators to examine the measurement of women in senior management and decision-making roles.

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Research methods: the general theoretical methods of scientific knowledge — analysis and synthesis of the available bibliography, comparison and *the empirical data collected during the survey*.

The study uses the relevant terminology of social sciences — sociology, social policy and corporate sector terminology respectively, and also of personnel management as a scientific discipline.

Literature review. Classical theories dealing with control processes in the middle of the 1970s did not pay attention to women enforcement at the labor market. With their traditional approaches the authors failed to notice the managing disparities in the distribution of men and women in various organizations. Taylor and Weber (1911; 1897) can be considered as authors of traditional or "classical" management theories (Vojtovic, 2006), who were taking the issue of women in management as irrelevant.

The first study dealing with the issues of women participation in management was written in the of the 1970s in the United States focusing on the analysis of the labor market in terms of gender (Kordos, 2014). Since the 1990s the studies have began to explain the gender imbalance in management. Currently, based on the increasing demand for skilled labor in managerial positions, there is an increasing importance of women in management. The European Commission has adopted a proposal according to which women representation in top management of companies should increase till 2020 up to 40%, and this has sparked a debate on the issue of establishing quotas for women in top management. Until 2020 a transitional period is being predicted during which firms should adjust the quotas and policies.

Currently in the European Union something like 14% of women are on corporate executives positions and in Slovak Republic it is just below the European average with 13%. Most women in top management can be found in Scandinavian countries, where quotas have been already in force for several years.

Basing on the binding EU documents Slovak Republic has drawn up several documents too. The basic document is the "National Strategy of Gender Equality for the years 2009–2013" (www.mpsv.cz) which defined the operational objective #1: to achieve balanced participation and representation of women and men in power and decision-making.

Masculinity, femininity and gender. Even though managerial rules and principles were created solemnly by men, the position of women in management is relevant. Traditional managerial attributes and norms are more masculine, as created by men, therefore women need to accommodate to them. Management practises currently experience a switch from traditional ways of management to a more holistic approach. More people-centric and individual approach to employees is promoted with coaching based individual development. Usually referred more masculine characteristics are: the ability to succeed, toughness, performance-driven approach — and it tends to loose its dominant importance to such characteristics such as the willingness to help, cooperation, intuition which come into trend, even though in past these were considered as weaker traits of females. Top management demands for the so-called feminine characteristics open doors for successful women to senior positions.

Based on different manners of bringing up, socialization, life expectations and attitudes women behave differently from men, what also influences their different management style and leadership. It is connected with the mentality of both genders

and is reflected in their work. The feminine and/or masculine attitude is congenital, genetically predominated and socially determined.

Bemova (1974) in the research on gender differences questioned the nature base of these differences and the concept of androgyny was introduced. Questioning the traditional perception of masculine and feminine Bemova (1974) reshaped the concept of the nature predominated men and women. In this research masculine and feminine characteristics were considered as two independent personality traits, later introduced in the gender ideology preaching the non-dependence on the gender factor. Kiczkova a Szapuova (2011: 42) refer to gender as expectations, social roles, behaviours constructed by society and also stereotypes, judgements, self-reflection, perceptions of what is suitable for men and women. Gender is recognized in the social science's vocabulary since the second half of the twentieth century. Based on Knotlova et al. (2011: 4) "gender is an elementary analytical category in the research of relationship differences between men and women. It points out to the fact that men and women are heterogeneous groups".

Gender characterizes the behavioural characteristics rather than biological predominance. Oakley (2000: 11) explains gender as "hypothetical construct, representing that man and women characteristics are formed by culture and society. Gender advocates the claim that gender as such in roles, behaviours and norms related to men and women varies in different societies, historical epoques and groups, whereas sex of a human is universal and invariable".

Masculine and feminine personality characteristics are genetically given, however it varies and those are not connected to the sex of a human, that means diverse masculinity and female characteristics among men and women exist regardless the sex, and that clarifies why some of top female managers possess masculine personality characteristics.

Conditions and barriers for women participation in management. Barriers of women's engagement in senior management can be divided into two main categories: inner and outer factors. By inner factors we mean personality traits, characteristics, motivation and temperament. Outer conditions are given by society and its principles, values, norms and prejudices. Role and active engagement of women along with horizontal and vertical segregation are often researched in the gender context. Limits and barriers into senior managerial roles are known as "glass ceiling". Women striving for top senior positions, often experience the above mentioned barriers. Here are some of the combinations and factors creating this "glass ceiling":

- social barriers including access to education, employment, gender structure of the society, gender stereotypes;
- information barriers, lack of information about women participating in top management;
- differentiation barrier, recruiters tend to select people similar to them;
- gender inequality of work labor – successful women on the senior management usually work in less popular industries
- "old-boys networks" – informal network into which (like men sports club) it is hard to get in, especially for women;
- sexual harassment;
- gaps in antidiscrimination laws.

Tokenism is the policy and practice of making a perfunctory gesture towards the inclusion of members of minority groups. In practice it means that an individual represents a minority in a group, organization, work place. This representative can be seen as unique – token of a group and can be experiencing stereotypes from the side of the group.

Judging from lower numbers among senior managers women can experience the tokenism effect. If a woman has masculine characteristics, it is unlikely that she would become the gender idol for other women. Women with masculine characteristics (Badinter, 1999) are less likely to be accepted than men with feminine characteristics, these women face refusal and prejudice, as proven by the women leadership research (Eagly, Karau and Makhijani, 1993. In: Kusa, 2000). Strongly determined women will face refusal by the environment unless they are able to show feminine personality traits such as empathy, openness, relationship approach. Female manager in the context of tokenism is not perceived by the majority group (men) as individual, but rather a representative of the group (women). Kanterova (1993) describes the basic elements of tokenism in the organizations and work environment:

- attention: women become the centre of attention, from the psychological perspective woman is standing out of the crowd;
- contrasts – observers tend to exaggerate stereotypes, generalization and differences between the main group and the minority individual;
- performance pressure – women experience more control, pressure and less trust from their managers and often work more than their male colleagues;
- assimilation – the more a unique individual in a group tries to convince and argue with the majority, the more attention is given to this individual.

Female managers often tend to feel the need to work more and harder with growing stress and uncertainty. According to Hearn and Parkin (1987) women are generally identified with motherhood and this fact supports the idea of women's ultimate role in the society. In order to keep up and hold on to the position women transform their behaviours and ways accordingly to the masculine ways as a form of respect for the paternal system.

Methodology and findings. As numerous gender studies show, values are not equal (Fischer, 2000).

In our quantitative empirical study, we have focused on comparing the motivating structure of 150 females and males in top management positions. Partial results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The ranking of particular motive importance of top management, %, own creation

Female			Male		
1.	good team	47.4	1.	good team	36.8
2.	financial reward	26.3	2.	financial reward	23.7
3.	working atmosphere	23.7	3.	certainty and long-term work perspective	18.4
4.	limited stress on the workplace	21.1	4.	salary	15.8
5.	salary	15.8	5.	limited stress on the workplace	13.2
6.	certainty and long term work perspective	7.9	6.	working atmosphere	5.3
7.	fair work evaluation	2.6	7.	fair work evaluation	2.6

The results show that the first two motives (good team, financial reward) are identical and differentiation comes in the third and fourth motives. Women consider working atmosphere more important, what can be connected to empathy as a feminine feature and the relationship-based focus.

The next partial question addresses the values which are connected to the work results and performance of top and senior management.

In Figure 1 it can be seen that 44.7% of women can see as their strongest motive the target to exploit their potential. Thus, one could say that for women this value is associated with the process of achieving, orientation to the process and not the result. Expected results were chosen as the strongest target by men (35%), showing their task orientation. These results are not surprising – they correspond to management style preferences of men and women in many studies.

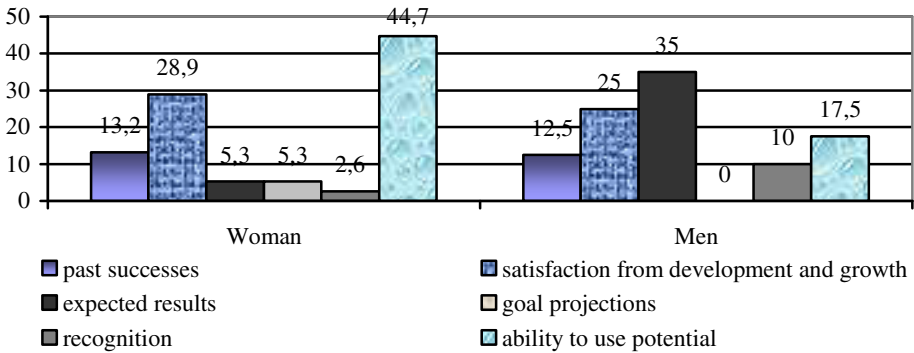


Figure 1. Target values linked to work, own creation

Next we examine the barrier assessment in work. For men as well as for women the remuneration and interpersonal relationships are the extensive obstacles (Figure 2).

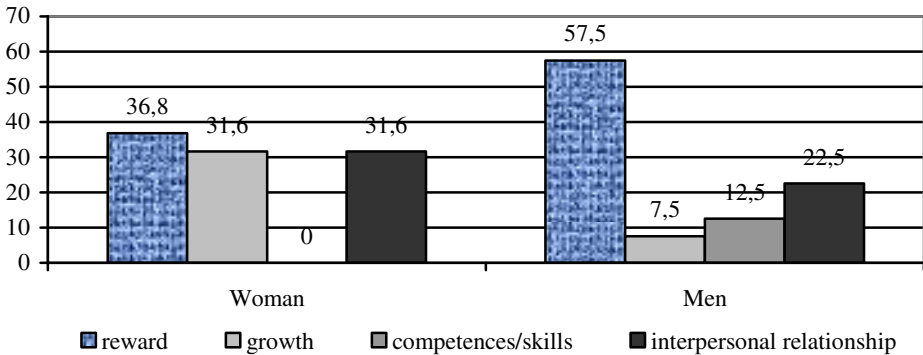


Figure 2. Obstacles result achievements, own creation

Men, unlike women, perceive competences as another obstacle, women – growth. This finding is interesting in terms of organization segregation and this corresponds with still continuing different organizational conditions for women in top management.

Key results. The issue of gender equality can be assessed by means of indicators. Some claim that broadening and introduction of new indicators will not improve the objective evaluation of the matter; however it improves the understanding of the issue. If it is possible to evaluate the level of gender equality in a country with the use of multiple parameter composition indicators.

Indicators of gender equality are understood as qualitative-quantitative characteristics of social and economic processes, which contain particular social development aspects of gender and their perception by population.

In order to have uniform terminology in the research we will further refer to the term "life value" (in literature also recognized as domain, component, file, aspect, dimension) (van Kamp, 2003).

Indicator of gender inequality GII (Gender Inequality Index) is published regularly by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**. GII is an important indicator of progress (or lagging behind) in gender equality and it consists of several sub-indicators, focused on gender equality specific value. GII represents human development conditions in terms of gender variables through 3 values (domains) of life, which are generally considered as the most important. Regarding our issue we are interested in the value (domain) associated with social competence representation of women and men in parliament (Table 2). The participation of women in political life is, according to the Human Development Report, the largest source of gender inequality.

Table 2. Ranking of selected EU countries in the GII (2014), authors' construction based on (UNDP, 2014)

Country	Participation of women in parliament	GII (Index)
1. Sweden	44.6	0.054
2. Finland	42.5	0.075
3. Denmark	39.1	0.056
4. Belgium	38.9	0.068
5. Netherlands	37.8	0.057
22. Slovakia	18.7	0.164
28. Hungary	8.8	0.247

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) introduced **Gender Equality Index (GEI)** upon the request of European commission to monitor and compare the gender equality situation through core values (domains) – work, money, knowledge, time, power (Table 2), health and gender-based violence. "The indicator does not compares the status of women by itself, but the so-called gender differences in particular categories. Thus it is unique compared to the UN indicators mostly dealing with the development or stimulation of women" (Pietruchova, 2014). The smallest progress in gender equality confirmed by law experts in political and economic decision-making power research area having been assessed by us. The smallest gender-balanced representation is in the boards of the largest listed companies, the average score of the Union was only 23.3%. Slovakia appears to be ranked above the average (Table 3).

Gender Gap Index (GGI) indicators has been introduced by **World Economic Forum (WEF)** to monitor and compare the gender equality situation by means of the key indicators – health, education, economic participation and political compe-

tence. This indicator focuses on these selected gender equality factors in the context of European countries competitiveness (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 3. Ranking of the selected EU countries in the GEI (2013), authors' construction based on (EIGE, 2013)

Country	Power	Gender differences within boards of directors	Gender differences in parliament	Gender differences in government	GEI (Index)
1. Sweden	74.3	51.5	92.8	88.9	74.3
2. Finland	68.8	50.3	77.4	98.9	73.4
3. Denmark	60.0	35.6	74.6	92.3	73.6
4. Netherlands	52.2	29.7	76.4	64.7	69.7
5. France	50.0	22.8	37.7	62.2	50.3
13. Slovakia	33.1	41.9	34.3	32.5	40.9
27. Cyprus	12.2	8.4	25.1	32.6	42.0
EU 27	38.0	23.3	44.1	47.9	54.0

Table 4. Ranking of the selected EU countries in the GGI (2014), authors' construction based on (WEF, 2014a)

Country	Political competence	GGI (Index)
1. Finland	0.6162	0.8453
1. Sweden	0.5005	0.8165
2. Denmark	0.4306	0.8025
3. Ireland	0.4140	0.7850
4. The Netherlands	0.4116	0.7730
24. Slovakia	0.1061	0.6806
28. Hungary	0.0636	0.6759

Table 5. Slovakia in the context of political competence in the GGI (2014), authors' construction based on (WEF, 2014b)

GGI (Index)	Women in parliament index	Participation of women in state bisies (Index)	Participation of women in public leadership (Index)
0.681	0.23	0.08	0.04

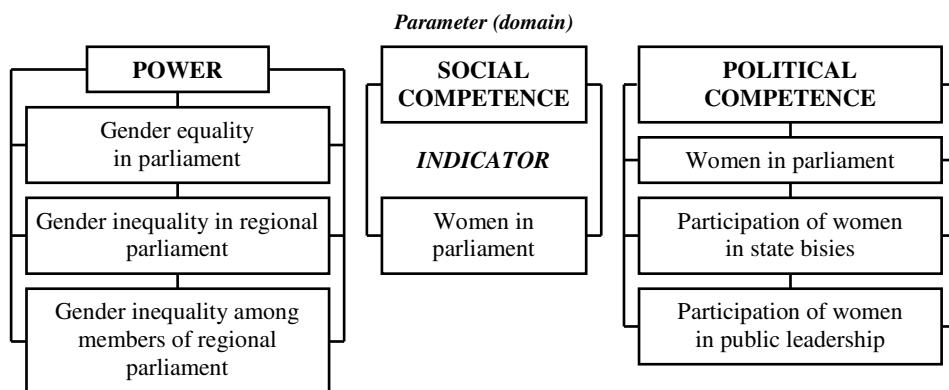


Figure 3. Selected parameter (domain) and its measure in the GEI, GII, GGI, own creation

In accordance with the Report on Gender Equality in Slovakia (2013) one of the main principles of democracy is to create equal opportunities for all people. Women, however, are only the one third of employees of government, senior managers and represent the minority in all national and governmental institutions. The Constitutional Court of Slovak Republic is the most gender equal workplace with the highest share of working females. Overall, in legal affairs there is a significant feminism pattern. Women are involved less significantly in public and political life, the EU elections were one of the most significant event. The participation share of women at national level is comparable with the one in the corporate and business sectors (Table 6).

Table 6. Selected gender indicator, authors' construction based on (Report on Gender Equality in Slovakia, 2013)

INDICATOR	Women SK	Women EU 28	Men SK	Men EU 28	Gender difference SK 28	Gender difference EU 28
Political participation at the EU level	38	36	62	64	24	-28
Political participation at the national level	19	27	81	73	62	-46
Political participation in government	7	28	93	72	86	-44
Corporate participation	24	26	76	74	52	-48
Gender participation in Constitutional court	54	35	46	65	-8	-30

Conclusion. To conclude the authors would like to highlight the growing trend in the field of gender equality in the society. This is also supported with numerous researches and newly introduced indicators (factors) of gender equality evaluation facilitated by important institutions. Usually the criteria consist of multiple sub-indicators based on the specific element of gender equality. International standards require these criteria be constructed in a simple manner based on internationally available data and assumptions. European Institution of Gender Equality can be used as a good case among international institutions, providing balanced indicator based on a narrow research scope.

The criteria (and/or indicator) selection in this particular research was narrowed onto composition criteria of gender equality, presented by the Gender Equality Report in Slovakia. The authors acknowledge the fact that the research on this particular topic and indicators on gender equality is much broader than this particular research. Therefore, the authors suggest that for future research the focus could be on the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) by UNDP; Gender Equality Index (GEI) by Social Watch; European Union Gender Equality Index (EU GEI) – as in Plantenga et al. (2009).

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