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**WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS:  
TRENČIN REGION CASE STUDY**

*The main purpose of this paper is to explore life and work conditions of women in management positions. The paper attempts to highlight the fact that women of the 21st century can prove themselves in management functions within companies, even though their career development is still hampered by gender inequality. Moreover, there is a gender pay gap in managerial positions which makes women disadvantaged at labour market. The structured interviews conducted by the authors provides data on life and work conditions of women in management positions in the Trenčín region. This pre-research will serve as the basis for a follow-up comprehensive and comparative research to be carried out in collaboration with two universities in Valencia, Spain.*

*JEL classification: J31; J16; J24*

*Keywords: gender inequality; equal opportunities; management positions; pay gap.*

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**ЖІНКИ НА УПРАВЛІНСЬКИХ ПОСАДАХ:  
НА ПРИКЛАДІ РЕГІОНУ ТРЕНЧІН, СЛОВАЧЧИНА**

*У статті описано умови життя та роботи жінок на управлінських посадах. Зроблено спробу довести, що у XXI сторіччі жінки вже довели свою успішність на управлінських посадах, однак їхнє кар'єрне зростання часто все одно стримується гендерною нерівністю. Крім того, доведено існування гендерної нерівності в оплаті праці, що робить жінок-управліниць більш уразливими. Проведено структуровані інтерв'ю про життя та роботу серед жінок-управліниць в регіоні Тренчін, Словаччина. Це тестове дослідження, що стане в подальшому базою для повномасштабного вивчення проблеми в співробітництві з двома університетами у Валенсії, Іспанія.*

*Ключові слова: гендерна нерівність; рівні можливості; управлінські посади; різниця в оплаті праці.*

*Літ. 16.*

Елена Делгадова, Моника Гуллерова  
**ЖЕНЩИНЫ НА УПРАВЛЕНЧЕСКИХ ДОЛЖНОСТЯХ:  
НА ПРИМЕРЕ РЕГИОНА ТРЕНЧИН, СЛОВАКИЯ**

*В статье описаны условия жизни и работы женщин на управленческих должностях. Сделана попытка доказать, что в XXI веке женщины уже доказали свою успешность на управленческих должностях, однако их карьерный рост зачастую всё ещё сдерживается гендерным неравенством. Кроме того, доказано существование гендерного неравенства в оплате труда, что делает женщин-управленцев более уязвимыми. Проведены структурированные интервью о жизни и работе женщин-управленцев региона Тренчин, Словакия. Это тестовое исследование, которое станет в дальнейшем базой для полномасштабного исследования в сотрудничестве с двумя университетами в Валенсии, Испания.*

*Ключевые слова: гендерное неравенство; равные возможности; управленческие должности; разница в оплате труда.*

**Introduction.** Labour market of today provides many opportunities for companies to thrive in various sectors of economy. Any company that desires to be success-

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ful at labour market must have strong and flexible management able to predict future market trends. It is no longer true that management and decision-making positions must be filled exclusively by men.

The main purpose of this paper is to explore life and work conditions of women in management positions. The paper aims to place emphasis on the fact that women of the 21st century can prove themselves in management functions within companies, even though their career advance is still hampered by gender inequality. Women in management positions have considerable, yet not fully utilized potential, which could make companies succeed. Moreover, there is a gender pay gap in managerial positions which makes women disadvantaged. Gender-specific wage differential as a wage disadvantage for women has been found in a variety of international studies (Blau et al., 2006, Blau and Kahn, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006).

Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding principles. In 2006, the European Council adopted the first European Pact for Gender Equality. The Pact placed emphasis on the significance of employing women's untapped potential at the labour market by promoting women's empowerment in economic and social life, and on the need to eliminate gender gaps, to fight gender-related stereotypes and to enhance better work-life balance for both men and women. In 2010, the European Commission adopted the Strategy for Equality between women and men (2010–2015). The Strategy states that participation of women at the labour market rose to 62.5% during the last decade. Bringing more women on to the labour market is instrumental in counterbalancing the consequences of shrinking working-age population. One of the Europe 2020 objective, the key policy document for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, is to reach 75% employment rate for women and men. Under the Europe 2020, the Council has committed itself to meet its objectives on gender equality.

**Purpose and methods.** The main purpose of the paper is to explore work and life conditions of women in management positions in the Trenčín region, Slovakia. In addition, the paper attempts to find answers to three partial questions:

How are women in management positions viewed by their male counterparts?

What are the main motivating factors for women building their career in management?

What are the pay and work conditions of women in management positions?

Who are better to cooperate with, males or females?

How do female managers manage to balance work and personal lives?

In addition, the following research question is formulated: Are there any gender differences in management positions?

Besides that, 3 hypotheses are set:

H1: It is assumed that female managers are paid less than their male counterparts.

H2: It is assumed that 70% of female managers would welcome more favourable work conditions.

H3: It is assumed that the majority of posts in management are filled by single women with no children.

Several research methods were utilized, such as literature research method, structured interviews, comparative analysis, and synthesis. 10 women in management aged

25–50 years were interviewed in the months of October 2015 to January 2016. Each interview lasted approximately 50 min., and was related to 8 areas, each containing 3 to 5 questions, such as introduction, professional self-actualization, work conditions, remuneration, personal and family conditions, cooperation, and conclusion.

**Research findings.**

**Family status.** It was found that 4 female managers were married with children, 3 female managers were single with no children, 2 female managers were single with children and one manager was married with no children.

**Sector of work.** 5 female managers work in trade sector, 3 respondents work in the financial sector, one works in logistics and one works in the service sector. The number of subordinates ranges from 8 to 35.

**Professional self-actualization.** The questions asked were aimed to identify the factors that motivate or hinder female managers in achieving goals. It was found that female managers with no children have much higher ambitions than married or single managers with children, such as becoming CEOs or setting up a new company.

Self-motivation and ambition to achieve something help them achieve their professional goals. The respondents also said that insufficient conditions for self-actualization and arrogance of people hinder them in achieving goals. On the other hand, mother managers strive to balance their work and family lives, and integrate their family and professional roles. A forty-six year old married manager with two children working in the trade industry said that the greatest motivating factor for her had been the support of her husband, children, as well her work team. Obstacles that married female managers often face in achieving their goals at work include time and financial constraints. Female managers with no children do not think that being women impedes them to achieve their goals. They do not think that if they were men, they would attain their goals easier. A twenty-five year old single female manager working in the financial sector said "I do not consider being a woman a disadvantage. Just on the contrary. A successful business woman could earn respect and get recognition. It's not about sex. It's about what a person wants to build, what efforts he or she makes to achieve it, and last but not least one should never give up". On the other hand, two mother managers think that if they were men, they would have fewer problems and could be fully devoted to their work. If women build their career, it is often at the expense of their family lives. Concerning the factors that motivate them in building their careers, the salary is the most motivating factor. Independence and recognition at work are other motivating factors for advancement. A thirty-year-old married manager with no children working in the service sector said: "You know, if I do not think of salary, the chances to advance do motivate me. They are the chances of moving forward, achieving not only business but also personal goals, and doing the job that I like". 90% of women said there are no differences in career advancement of men and women in management.

**Work conditions.** Questions related to work conditions were mostly focused on the work time of female managers. A fifty-two year old manager with two adult children working in trade the sector said: "My work hours are 8 hours a day, five days a week. In reality, however, I work overtime, including business trips". 6 respondents worked fixed time, and rarely could work from home. 3 respondents had flexible

working hours, which they appreciated very much as one of them is a mother. Only one respondent is currently working from home.

It was also found that two single twenty-five year old managers have to do tasks beyond the scope of their job descriptions. For doing additional tasks, these two managers can have the so called bonus holidays abroad which is paid by the employers. Not both of them, however, enjoy doing additional tasks. The respondents were also asked whether they would commute or relocate to another city for career advance. A twenty-five year old manager with a partner and no children said: "I used to commute for two years and I could make it. I think that life is all about varieties, and if I got a chance to relocate, I and my partner would think about it". The remaining respondents would not commute (relocate) or would consider the option with regard to the salary offered.

Concerning fringe benefits, they have not been offered to any the managers surveyed. Two respondents used mobile phones and laptops. The other two respondents used mobile phones and company cars, this being the so-called "autobonus" in Slovak language, meaning the better is the performance, the better is the company's car or the better corporate holiday options. Female managers would also welcome the services of a corporate creche or nursery. A thirty-three year-old married manager with one child, working in logistics said: "I work fixed working hours and now I am working from home. However, it is common that I need to be at work and work from there, and these are the situations when I have to rely on my mother to pick up my daughter from kindergarten. As she is also working, I would welcome the services of a kindergarten". It was found that 60% of the respondents would welcome better working conditions, 20% would rather welcome better working conditions, 10% would rather not to welcome better working conditions, and 10% would not welcome better working conditions.

**Remuneration.** The managers were also asked whether their proposed salaries were accepted by their employers. Only 3 salaries proposed by the respondents were accepted by their employers. 2 respondents indicated that their salaries depend on the work evaluation done. The remaining 5 respondents said that employers did not accept their wage conditions proposed. As mentioned before, the respondents do not think there are differences in career advancement of men and women. 90% of the respondents, however, think that a man in the same position would earn more. Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they would sacrifice their leisure time for a better-paid position and higher social status. It follows that mother managers do not want to sacrifice their free time they can spend with their families for a higher-pay position. Similarly, a twenty-seven year old single manager said, "I would not accept a higher paying position at the expense of losing my free time because I want to shape my life myself. I do not want to be a slave to my job, social status is not worth it".

**Personal and family conditions.** In the area of personal and family conditions, the ways of balancing work and life were looked at. It is a myth that managers should be women with no children. A forty-six year-old married manager with three school-age children, working in the trade sector said: "Although it is demanding to work in this position and to look after children and do the household chores, everything can be managed. It's all about tolerance in a partnership, and division of work and commit-

ment". It was found that 80% of the respondents can integrate work and family roles. 20% of the respondents do not think that work of a manager can be integrated with partnership roles as they feel that their job is time-consuming and they are currently trying to focus their attention on career building. 70% of the respondents would not give up their careers if their partners wished so. The remaining 30% of the respondents would need to carefully think it over, consider advantages and disadvantages. If they decided to resign, their partners would have to be able to support their families or do household chores themselves. Next, the issue of career development of married managers with children was examined. 3 respondents think career development is possible for married female managers with children, one thinks that it is rather possible, one did not know, one thinks that career development for married female managers is rather not possible, and 4 respondents do not think married female managers with children have equal chances for career advance as single female managers with no children.

Mother-managers accounted for 60% of the sample. Each reported that their career was affected by their motherhood. It is not easy to be a manager and raise children at the same time. A forty-six year old manager, a mother of two said: "I can handle my children caring duties on average. Many times, I feel it is too much for me, but I have a husband to help me". It was found that other respondents must balance work and children care if they do not want to lose the job.

**Cooperation.** Female managers were asked whether their cooperation is better with men, women or mixed team of workers. The question whether female managers feel discriminated against their male counterparts was posed. All the respondents answered they do not feel discriminated against their male counterparts. Their colleagues respect them and take them as equals. Up to 90% of the respondents, however, believe that the companies they work for could benefit from higher representation of women in management or leadership positions. Only one respondent said it is not the gender that makes a good manager.

Regarding the cooperation, 6 respondents work better with males, 2 respondents have better cooperation with men, and also 2 do not care about the gender of those they cooperate with.

**Conclusion.** The number of successful women in management and leadership positions are underrepresented due to persistent gender stereotypes. Women who want succeed in top management face many barriers that they need to overcome while integrating their work and their family roles.

The main purpose of this paper was to explore life and work conditions of women in management positions. In addition, the issues of remuneration, working conditions, motivating factors for career building, work-life balance, cooperation, and discrimination based on sex were investigated. The research findings show there are gender differences between men and women in management positions. Women mostly observe gender differences in performance appraisal and salaries. Gender is crucial in remuneration as men and women are not paid equally for the work of the equal value. Women are also disadvantaged in career development, and are underrepresented in top management and leadership positions. With regard to the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of this article, it was established that women in management posi-

tions get paid less than their male peers. It was also confirmed that approximately 80% of the female managers would welcome better working conditions, including flexitime, creche, and kindergarten services. It was, however, not confirmed that single female managers with no children make best managers. Successful women in management is still underrepresented because of persistent gender stereotypes. Women who strive for senior management positions face many barriers they need to overcome in order to grow and develop their managerial career. It is difficult for them to reconcile all their life roles.

Despite the difficulties related to work-life balance, there has been a rise in the percentage of women in management positions as compared to previous years. Management positions do not have to be exclusively filled by only single women with no children as there are women raising their children, trying to maintain their positions in management and doing their best at work. The gender pay gap remains the biggest problem. The work of male managers is still overpaid.

The limitations of the paper lie, first of all, in the sample of women surveyed, plus the survey was limited to the region of Trencin.

This pre-research will serve as the basis for the follow-up more comprehensive and comparative research planned to be carried out in collaboration with our colleagues from the Universidad de Valencia and Universidad Catolica de Valencia San Vicente Martir in the Spanish region of Valencia. While this pre-research is aimed to test the suitability of the chosen research methods.

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