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STATUS OF WOMAN-ENTREPRENEUR IN CZECH REPUBLIC

The article is aiming to find out the respondents' opinions on women's status in Czech Republic by using the questionnaire method. 4004 respondents participated in this research (November 2013 – March 2014), 248 women and 156 men, mostly with university and high school degrees. The results show that current status of businesswoman is undervalued. There are still not equal conditions, caused by gender stereotypes coming from the past.

Keywords: gender issues; managerial position; traditional gender roles; business and entrepreneurship.

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СТАТУС ЖІНОК-ПІДПРИЄМЦІВ У ЧЕСЬКІЙ РЕСПУБЛІЦІ

У статті проаналізовано відповіді респондентів з приводу статусу жінок-підприємців у Чеській Республіці. Опитування було проведено авторами статті з листопада 2013 по березень 2014 рр., в ньому взяли участь 248 жінок та 156 чоловіків, переважно з вищою та повною середньою освітою. Результати опитування продемонстрували, що статус бізнесвумен у країні лишається недооціненим. Умови роботи та ведення бізнесу не можна назвати гендерно рівними, що пов'язано переважно із застарілими соціальними стереотипами щодо гендерних ролей.

Ключові слова: гендерні питання; управлінські посади; традиційні гендерні ролі; бізнес та підприємництво.

Табл. 3. Літ. 11.

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СТАТУС ЖЕНЩИН-ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЕЙ В ЧЕШСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ

В статье проанализированы ответы респондентов по поводу статуса женщин-предпринимателей в Чешской Республике. Опрос был проведён авторами статьи с ноября 2013 по март 2014 гг., в нём участвовали 248 женщины и 156 мужчин, преимущественно с высшим и законченным школьным образованием. Результаты опроса показали, что статус бизнесвумен в стране по-прежнему недооценен. Условия работы и ведения бизнеса нельзя назвать гендерно равными, что связано преимущественно с устаревшими социальными стереотипами в отношении гендерных ролей.

Ключевые слова: гендерные вопросы; управленческие должности; традиционные гендерные роли; бизнес и предпринимательство.

Introduction. The question, what life conditions are given to women by the society, is being discussed very often. When we take a look at schools, we can find that girls are usually better and more responsible students than boys are. Later on though, positions with higher salaries are almost always held by men. Are they cleverer? Why do they get higher than women do?

Simply expressed, women's life is more difficult than men's one. Most religions prefer men, women are considered inferior. Women try to prove to be successful, get involved in politics, get education, and claim equal salary but it is still lower than men's. Women's participation in legislative bodies is even lower. Women's position in the society has gone through specific development. In the past, they mostly held

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housewife position but today they have jobs almost at all positions. Women are characterized by the desire to get knowledge and also, they match many requirements managerial positions. Women-entrepreneurs in some cases can contribute more to their work than men.

In the XXI century, women work in almost all fields, they demonstrate they can be self-sufficient and financially independent but their status is still not ideal. For example, there were only 15% of women in the Chamber of Deputies in Czech Republic during 1998–2002. While Scandinavian countries and Canada women represent over 35%. As for the president, Finland was the first country in the world to have a woman at this position.

The aim of this article is to outline the development of women's social status using the accessible information and to characterize their status in Czech Republic empirically.

1. Women and men at managerial positions. In the USA, most of managers-women are single and childless. There is less number of men with the same status.

Women at high managerial positions are not considered an exception anymore. Many positive examples in management field are proving it. But, there is still not enough number of them. Thanks to international companies presence worldwide, much prejudice towards women-managers has lowered. One of the reasons is that male managers already got used to women being at managerial positions, this trend is also applicable to Czech Republic. In the world of professionals, managerial quality is not evaluated by the fact whether it is man or woman but by personal characteristics and skills (Franklin, 2012).

Here we talk about the ability to make a decision, motivate others, learn continuously and be persistent. On the other hand, not all employees are willing to accept woman as their manager. It is connected with the common perception of the traditional woman's role. For some men, woman as a boss is an unacceptable idea. For others, it is more important whether a woman-manager can teach them, whether they can respect her as a professional and personality and whether she is correct and fair.

Men accept challenges, women are vigilant. Contrary to men, women are less courageous and think longer in case they are offered an alternative. They consider pros and cons. Often, the same thing can become a challenge for men, but for women it can be colossal torture. They could feel huge responsibility for the results. And just because of this, women often disqualify themselves. Women also hesitate to ask for a favour. They do not want to be perceived as importunate. At the same time, women are afraid of rumors regarding their professionalism or the way they got the position.

Women are excellent communicators and diplomats; they do not pamper their ego when negotiating but they try to achieve the results, which would satisfy all parties in negotiation. We should not also forget their empathy and lower individualism (Paulik, 2012).

The biggest problem of women is that contrary to men, they have to decide whether they would work, or have a baby in a specific time. Mostly, they have to give up something. Because of motherhood, their career and salary is "frozen" for several years. Because of that, when considering high school or university, girls often choose such field, in which they can continue their work after motherhood without particular problems. Women often do not show much effort to achieve a position because

after their comeback it would not be so hard. On the other hand, today some men would agree to stay at home with a child to let the wife continue her career.

Also, women do not like some management systems in companies. Many of them do not feel comfortable with organizational structure having somebody above and under their position. Women prefer partnership to formal superiority. If a woman sits on managerial chair, she wants people to work for her because not because they are ordered to.

When European business is considered, the number of women is still not equal by numbers and positions to men's. Although women represent around 55% of all university graduates, their employment is by 21% lower as compared to men. Significant inequality in salaries and duties and responsibilities can be also observed. By European committee, the average difference between men's and women's salaries is around 15%.

2. Status of woman-entrepreneur in the Czech Republic. Our empiric research aiming to find out respondents' opinions on women's status in Czech Republic was carried out in November 2013 – March 2014 using the questionnaire method.

The questionnaire titled "How people of Czech Republic perceive women entrepreneurs" included 15 questions (closed, semi-open and open ones). The evaluation was done via Likert's scale. The respondents could choose the options: definitely agree, rather agree, rather disagree, definitely disagree. The respondents were addressed personally and by email. 404 respondents participated in this research. The given questionnaire investigated opinions on both current women's social status, their status at work as well as the overall status of women entrepreneurs (Poczatkova, 2015).

The chosen results of questionnaire research. 248 women and 156 men participated in the survey mostly with university and high school degrees. The biggest number of respondents belonged to the age group of 21–30 years.

The respondents' opinions on individual statements were quite interesting. The answers were very vigilant and realistic, see Table 1.

Table 1. Perception of statements by respondents, own elaboration based on the authors' questionnaire research

Statements	Definitely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Definitely disagree
A. Traditional gender roles (man as a breadwinner and woman as a housewife) should be kept	13	110	179	102
B. Women have the same ability to hold the same professions as men do	50	173	136	45
C. Discrimination of women in the private sector does not concern Czech women	19	144	195	56
D. Job applicants are only evaluated by skills and practice but not by gender	27	136	201	40
E. Men and women have the same salary at the same position	9	109	171	135
F. The number of managers is almost the same when it comes to gender	4	52	205	143
G. Women-entrepreneurs should be more supported by the state	50	43	60	30

The answers showed significant respondents' caution. They mainly chose middle way in the answers (rather agree or rather disagree). We can state that division into man as a breadwinner and woman as a housewife is dying down.

Considering the statement B, the answers were similar. 55% of the respondents expressed agreement, while 45% disagreed. This means that more respondents perceive the option of women's employment in men's profession as possible but not equal.

As for statement C, the 40% of respondents answered positively but 60% see this situation in a different way perceiving some discrimination in the private sector.

As far as D is concerned, here 60% of the respondents agree with it, only 40% did not. It can be stated that gender is a significant factor when applying for a job.

Statement E dealt with salaries at the same position. 75% of the respondents did not agree, only 25% did. Inequality in men's and women's salaries is quite obvious.

Evaluation of statement F was unequivocal. Only 13% of the respondents did agree with it, 87% think differently. This disagreement is also related to recommendations of the European Union concerning the number of women and men at managerial positions and making this number equal.

The answers to statement G were arguable. They were spread among all options. Opinions of the respondents whether the state should support women-entrepreneurs are not unambiguous.

Basing on the presented research results, it can be stated that perception of women-entrepreneurs is positive in Czech Republic. The evaluation shows that the respondents think that Czech women have the same options and there are no barriers at the labour market. Some respondents stated that if any inequality should be discussed, then they would mention financial reward and women's option to achieve higher managerial positions.

The respondents expressed clearly the idea that women are able to hold high managerial positions but the number of those should not be limited by law. All demands for a certain position should depend on personality and qualification of an applicant not on the gender. The issue of legislative correction of the number of women-managers is being discussed very often currently. Opinions are not clear. As for the question whether women should make business, the respondents clearly said "yes"; the fact that few respondents faced negative behavior towards businesswomen can be considered as a positive sigh. Most respondents have own positive experience when making business with women.

According to the respondents, women between 31–40 years old make business the most. It can be said that women are welcome at labour market and are perceived positively. But when the state support is concerned, here the respondents are not so positive.

Woman as a potential mother is connected with a caring role and the duties this role brings in. This ascribed care often complicates woman's professional development and becomes the barrier for entrepreneurship. Harmonizing family and career is one of the biggest barriers in business and demands family support and understanding.

Many women consider such a business strategy, when they can combine work and housekeeping. Own business gives women more freedom contrary to corporate employment when it comes to balancing work and family.

After all the gathered data were evaluated, it can be concluded that the current status of Czech women is not equal to men's one. The biggest inequalities are seen in salaries, pensions, number of businesswomen contrary to businessmen, higher unemployment of women and lower number of women in Czech parliament.

3. Conditions for women. Let us mention the examples of the countries, which have the highest ranks in the Gender Equity Index and Gender Inequality Index. Table 2 shows the first 20 countries with the highest GEI rate as compared to Czech Republic.

Table 2. Countries order by Gender Equity Index 2009, own construction based on (Social Watch, 2009)

Order	Country	GEI rate
1.	Sweden	88
2.	Finland, Rwanda	84
4.	Norway	83
5.	the Bahamas, Denmark	79
7.	Germany, New Zealand	78
10.	the Netherlands, Spain	77
12.	Barbados, the Philippines, Lithuania	76
15.	Australia, Hong Kong, Colombia, Latvia	75
20.	Canada, Kazakhstan, Moldavia, Great Britain, the USA, Vietnam	74
53.	Czech Republic	68

Table 3 shows that the best result as for GII evaluation in 2012 belonged to the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark (last two – same 3rd place). It has to be pointed out that the first 10 countries in the list are European countries; the first country out of Europe is Singapore, at the 13th place.

Table 3. Countries' order in Gender Inequality Index 2012, own construction based on (Human Development Report, 2013: 156–159)

Order	Country	GI rate
1.	the Netherlands	0,045
2.	Sweden	0,055
3.	Switzerland, Denmark	0,057
5.	Norway	0,065
6.	Germany, Finland	0,075
8.	Slovenia	0,080
9.	France	0,083
10.	Island	0,089
11.	Italy	0,094
12.	Belgium	0,098
13.	Singapore	0,101
14.	Austria	0,102
15.	Spain	0,103
16.	Portugal	0,114
17.	Australia	0,115
18.	Canada	0,119
19.	Ireland	0,121
20.	Czech Republic	0,122

Scandinavian countries are generally the best in this issue, all of them provide women with such conditions so as to enable them balance family and work life. Women can work from home, have flexible working hours, companies provide medical care and own kindergarten etc.

As for Czech Republic, there are general recommendations to get the society be deeper engaged into this issue, focus on every day women's status at work, help balancing family and work life (e.g., companies' kindergarten, sharing the working position etc.).

This all would be possible only if deep prejudices of employers and business partners are removed, however, this demands long-term initiative in this field.

Specifically, public awareness campaigns would help eliminate gender prejudice. One of the main roles in this process belongs to the state.

Conclusions. One of long-term aim of the EU is to achieve total equality between men and women in its institutions but also within different areas of social life. According to European commission, women business potential is an undiscovered source of new growth. Today, women represent about 30% of all European entrepreneurs. Women face biggest barriers when gaining sources to start own business. The Commission has launched European network of women-entrepreneurs so that they can share their experience and work as mentors at regional seminars and meetings with potential businesswomen.

Currently, the role of businesswomen is undervalued. Not equal conditions are mostly caused by gender stereotypes coming from the past. If a woman decides to start own business she can make her ideas and visions develop and thus she can avoid hierarchy in companies (usually men dominated). When making her own business, a woman can determine her own rules and develop her potential. Thus women-entrepreneurs can become a contribution to further economic growth (Poczkova, 2015).

Society perceives woman as a mother with a caring role first of all. Therefore, this role can become a problem and a barrier, because of which woman even does not start her business. Balancing family care, motherhood and business can become the biggest issue.

Each woman has to determine her priorities, think about her knowledge, skills and abilities to use her potential for making business fully.

The process of perception transformation is slow and it takes a long time till women would have truly same options, chances and conditions as men in all fields and all parts of the world.

Nowadays, the interest in the issue of women in business – as entrepreneurs and employees – is on the rise for the wide public, in media and among business professionals as well.

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