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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL FACTORS THAT DETERMINE PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

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This article presents research into gender differences of social factors that determine professional success. Five external factors such as older siblings in parent families, parents with senior management positions, good academic progress at school and university, having a hobby, satisfaction in life were compared. The purpose of the research was to find factors that determine professional success.

Introduction. The modern world makes high demands on a woman. She has to make more effort to achieve success in her career. This is due to the prevailing stereotype - high positions should be occupied by men. Sex discrimination affects the majority of working women, which is reflected in low wages for women, as well as low payment for traditionally female occupation - childcare. The business career of a woman differs very much from the career of a man. The differences are not only in the style of work, but also in the ways of advancement up the career ladder and in motivation to work.

In today's world, a woman begins to play an increasing role. Previously, the female destiny consisted exclusively in caring for children, doing housework, preserving home comfort. Today many women are striving for their career growth. Some women are completely focused on achieving success in professional sphere; some combine domestic work with advancement of a career [3].

Studies in the USA have shown that while some women find satisfaction in the role of housewives, overall satisfaction with life, including self-esteem, is higher among working women. Experience has shown that years devoted solely to caring for the family deprives women of a sense of self-sufficiency and competence [4].

Main part. The problem of women's self-realization refers to the socio-psychological and social problems of modern society. For Belarus, gender issues in the economy, in particular, women's participation in management, are quite relevant. First, this is due to demographic factors. For many decades the predominance of the female population has been noted. According to the Ministry of Statistics of the Republic of Belarus, at the beginning of 2008, 53% of the population were women and for a number of reasons their number will grow in the future. Women, representing a large half of the electorate, significantly affect the public choice [2].

Overcoming these problems is possible not only due to a change in the situation with the characteristics of the human capital of women, this capital has already been accumulated to a large extent, due to changes in stereotypes, changes in the position of the dominant male group. Such changes can only be gradual, and they can be promoted by setting soft institutional rules that indicate new approaches and priorities. So far, a small amount of experience accumulated in the world can be used.

While women and men believe they are equally able to attain high-level leadership positions, men want power more than women do, according to new research by Francesca Gino, Caroline Wilmuth, and Alison Wood Brooks [1].

New research from Harvard Business School reveals a stark gap in the professional ambitions of men and women. Having surveyed a diverse sample of more than 4,000 men and women, a team of social scientists reports a list of potentially controversial findings: compared to men, women have more life goals, but fewer of them are focused on power; women perceive professional power as less desirable than men do; women anticipate more negative outcomes from attaining a high-power position; women are less likely than men to jump at opportunities for professional advancement; while women and men believe they are equally able to attain high-level leadership positions, men want that power more than women do[5].

The subject of our research is gender differences in professional success. We wanted to carry out a comparative analysis of the influence of external factors on the success of men and women occupying leading positions.

We used a "Questionnaire for successful people", which includes 15 open-ended questions. The questions were about various spheres of life: family, professional activity.

18 women and 18 men aged from 45 to 60 years old took part in our research. All of them were managers. They were representatives of different professions, and had the same social status.

The quantitative processing of data was carried out using a standard computer program STATISTICA.

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Result. In the second stage of the study, in order to determine the nature of the interrelationships of a number of external factors on the professional success of men and women, we used the criterion of Fisher's angular transformation.

Results of the study of the first factor "the presence of older siblings" are presented below.

Table 1 – The presence of older siblings

Group	"Effect"	"No effect"	Sums
	number of subjects	number of subjects	
Men	7 (38,9%)	11 (61,1%)	18 (100%)
Women	10(55,6%)	8(44,4%)	18 (100%)

As can be seen from the table, 38.9% of men and 55.6% of women have older siblings. The received data fall into the zone of insignificance. The presence of older brothers or sisters does not affect the success in future professional life.

It turns out that younger children have the same chances of success in life as older siblings. This contradicts the well-known opinion of A. Adler that the first-born is smarter and more adapted to life. A. Adler argued that the younger child had a high motivation to surpass older siblings.

The second factor is presence of parents with senior management positions.

Table 2 – Parents with senior management positions

Group	"Effect"	"No effect"	Sums
	number of subjects	number of subjects	
Men	8(44,4%)	10(55,6%)	18(100%)
Women	14(77,8%)	4(22,2%)	18(100%)

44.4% of men and 77.8% of women were born in families where parents had influential positions. The received data fall into the zone of uncertainty. In this case, we can say that men and women differ in this factor. Parents with senior management positions have a greater impact on women. Therefore, parental authority, in the first case, is especially important for women, because they are still believed to have lower motivation to achieve success.

Next factor to discuss is an academic performance at school and university.

Table 3 – Good academic progress at school and university

Group	"Effect"	"No effect"	Sums
	number of subjects	number of subjects	
Men	16(88,9%)	2(11,1%)	18(100%)
Women	17(94,4%)	1(5,6%)	18(100%)

88.9% of men and 99.4% of women had a good academic progress at school and university. The data fall into the zone of insignificance, men and women do not differ in this criterion. Career success is based on solid knowledge and good education. However, knowledge alone is not enough to advance in career. An important role is also played by such qualities as an ability to adapt, willingness to take risks, an ability to build corporate relationships and, if necessary, take on a role of a leader, creative approach to work.

The next external factor is having hobbies.

Table 4 – Having a hobby

Group	"Effect"	"No effect"	Sums
	number of subjects	number of subjects	
Men	4(22,2%)	14(77,8%)	18(100%)
Women	17(94,4%)	1(5,6%)	18(100%)

The majority of women (94.4%) and only 22.2% of men have a favorite pastime. The difference is in the zone of significance. According to the statistics, women, on average, have less hobbies than men do. As, basically, a woman is busy doing household duties and they have little time for a hobby. However, our survey reveals that the prevailing proportion of women manage to find time for their favorite occupations. Perhaps, a hobby is some sort of psychological distraction for women. It is time when a woman can be focused on herself and relax from a complex job.

In addition, one more important factor is satisfaction with life.

Table 4 – Satisfaction in life

Group	“Effect”	“No effect”	Sums
	number of subjects	number of subjects	
Men	10(55,6%)	8(44,4%)	18(100%)
Women	7(38,9%)	11(61,1%)	18(100%)

It can be seen from the table above that 38.9% of women and 55.6% of men are satisfied with their life. The data are in the zone of insignificance. We conclude that there are no differences between men and women in this factor.

Professional realization of a person is one of the important conditions that affects the overall satisfaction with one's life. A rather large percentage of women's dissatisfaction with life (61.1%) is associated with a role conflict. Women face difficulties in combining careers and families. Women with low role conflict, according to scientific research, were more satisfied with both professional and family characteristics of their lives. The life situation of women with high role conflict is much less stable. They are distinguished by the lack of a clear orientation to the family or to work, are quite dependent on the opinion and assessment of others.

Conclusion. Analyzing our data, we can conclude that external factors only indirectly affect professional success. Personal qualities play the main role.

Among five external factors (older siblings, parents with senior management positions, good academic progress at school and university, having a hobby, satisfaction in life), only one was significant: having a hobby. It was found that successful women more often had hobbies than men. For women, a hobby is a kind of distraction from difficult work, a means to relieve stress or fatigue.

With further comparative analysis of men and women, according to other criteria, there were no significant differences. This confirms the greater influence of the internal, personal qualities of a person in achieving a professional success.

Thus, the basis of success is professionalism, constant personal self-improvement as well as the possession of a strong character and will.

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