“Women’s role in organizations and public opinion”

AUTHORS	Natela Tsiklashvili https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0638-7376 Tamila Turmanidze https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4710-2285 Tamar Beridze https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8290-0998

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Natela Tsiklashvili, Doctor of Economics, Professor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Economic Department, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

Tamila Turmanidze, Doctor of Economics, Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Economic Department, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

Tamar Beridze, Doctor of Business Administration, Associate Professor, Faculty of Tourism, Department of Hospitality Management, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

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Natela Tsiklashvili (Georgia), **Tamila Turmanidze** (Georgia), **Tamar Beridze** (Georgia)

WOMEN'S ROLE IN ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC OPINION

Abstract

Georgia still faces urgent problems of women employment, level of raising women's qualification and restricted career opportunities. It impacts economic indicators as well.

Proceeding from the topicality of the problem, the goal of the research is to study the attitude towards the role of women in present-day organizations, applying complex methods of information gathering and analysis, quantitative methods of research.

The conducted research and analysis of outcomes led to the conclusion that, despite progressive changes in the state and society attitude towards gender equality, still there are many controversial issues. It is a typical situation for many countries. Although women represent half of the able-bodied population worldwide, their portion in GDP is only 37%. It indicates that full utilization of women's potential is not or cannot be accomplished. It is significant to identify the hindering reasons.

The research results show that the hindering factors of women's self-realization and career advancement in Georgia are: 61% – family, 27% – education/less qualification, 25% – stereotypes, 34% – inflexible work schedule and inconvenient conditions.

The authors think that, in order for the state to make maximum utilization of women's resources as a valuable economic and political asset, it is necessary that government work out efficient ways to create convenient conditions for women. At the same time, all companies must have labor management strategy that can bring success if all aspects of women's work in each component will be actively applied.

Keywords gender equality, labor market, women's economic opportunities, gender pay gap, glass ceiling

JEL Classification A10, E24, J71, J16, M54, Z30

INTRODUCTION

The survey conducted by us, in contrast to other previously conducted researches, makes clear that the majority of respondents favor the equality of men and women in both family and social life, most of the respondents think that women should be in the position of the head and men and women should be giving income equally to the family. Although the real picture is different in Georgia and not only in Georgia, there is still a sphere of employment for men and women, role models of men and women – according to which men are considered to be the main source of income in the family and women's work is to take care of children, but most of the respondents do not favor inequality.

One of the important issues for the society based on the principles of social justice is the protection of gender balance, which implies the following: women and men should have equal rights and opportunities to make full realization of their potential. However, in Georgia, as well as in the rest of the world, statistical data find another reality. The fact is that the society does not fully understand and cannot appreciate what a valuable asset is women and, therefore, they are less likely to be shown in the economic and political situation.

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1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Promotion of women's economic and political activities, strengthening them is important not only in Georgia, but also in the whole world, because the limitation of access to women's labor market is a great loss for any country. Therefore, many economists, sociologists or international consulting companies are working on these issues.

Gender equality has a great impact on the economy of the country, for instance, according to World Economic Forum (2014, p 39), Asia and Pacific Ocean are losing about USD 42-47 billion, because women's access to employment is limited. Such restrictions have imposed massive costs across the Middle East.

Aguirre et al. (2012) conducted the research about the increase of the GDP in the economy by increasing the number of female participants. According to this, if the female employment rate is equal to men, then the US GDP will grow by 5%, in Japan, growth will be by 9%, the effect will be higher in developing countries. The GDP will increase by 12% in the United Arab Emirates and by 34% in Egypt.

Woetzel's (2015) study found the following: "It is noteworthy that in the case of both men and women equally involved in the labor market, more than 28 trillion (26%) may be added to the world GDP of 2025".

There are less women working in a job with payment than working in a job without any payment. 75% of the workforce in the world are women who are engaged in children's care, care for elderly people, cooking and cleaning without any payment. However, such actions preformed by woman are not taken into account. It is known that the irreparable work carried out by women is now 10 trillion per year, roughly the equivalent of 13% of the total GDP.

According to our research, employed women in public and private sectors have received higher/positive assessments than men with different criteria (see Tables 1-2). That is, the share of employed women is important in the success of the organization. Other studies also confirm this, such as Catalyst's 2007 Studies that have shown that women's work in corporations has a positive effect. Observation was conducted about 500 companies, in which women are at high positions. Compared to the bad and best representative companies of women, it turns out that their impact on company is huge. As a result of the observation, the share capital of the equity increased by 53% and marginal income increased by 42%.

The same opinion is made by Borisova and Sterkhova (2012, p. 5) that if companies have a large number of women in executive committees, they are better performing obligations than those companies that do not have women at top positions. There is a link between the female directors and the stability of the corporation, the diverse management team can satisfy the wider range of needs and interests.

According to Kim (2017), only 30.2% of women hold leadership positions in the marketing agency world, which is a slightly lower figure than in the past two years, according to Campaign and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). On the brand side, a female CEO leads just 4% of Fortune 500 companies and women hold only 19% of senior management positions.

However, companies often create fictitious causes for women in employment or promotion. By scientists and experts, the expression "glass ceiling" is most commonly used for analysis of gender discrimination in the workplace. This term was founded in 1986 by two journalists at the Wall Street Journal in America (Corporation Woman, 1986). One of the earliest explanations is that the glass ceiling is a transparent barrier that prevents women from promoting on high corporate stages.

Despite the fact that women's employment and their involvement in political and economic processes are a lot of researchers' interest object and many important monographs or articles were dedicated, still a lot of unanswered questions remain, which led to our interest and research works in this direction. In all countries, including Georgia, these processes are differentiated, what is caused by national, mental and other distinctive signs and we consider to outline the specific characteristics of the country.

2. AIMS

Our main objective was to study attitudes towards women's role and their involvement in economic and political life by employment in organizations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We used complex methods of collecting and analyzing the information, as well as quantitative research to achieve the objectives of the research.

4. RESULTS

There are different approaches and opinions about gender equality, women's economic and political role in the Georgian society. In reality, what is the widespread role of women and has the perception of a woman only as a "housewife" changed or not? For research and analysis in real situation, we conducted the research. The task of the research was to study the following key issues:

- Is gender equality protected in organizations/companies?
- What barriers are there for the successful career of women?
- How do they assess the role of employed women in the success of organizations?
- Is there support for women's involvement in family, parents, and society?

Within the quantitative research (research included public and private sector workers), 306 respondents were interviewed. The research was conducted in 2018 and covered the entire Georgia.

67% of respondents are female and 33% are male. According to age groups, the surveyed are as follows: 40% of respondents are in the age group of 20-29 years old, 25% – 30-39 years old, 14% – 40-50 years old and 20% – 50 years old and more.

According to the field of employment, it is distributed as follows: real estate operations, lease and customer service – 1%, industry – 1%, electricity, gas and water production, distribution – 4%, education – 8%, trade – 10%, transport and communications – 11%, banking – 12%, construction – 12%, health and social services – 17%, hotels and restaurants – 19%, other – 6%.

4% of the respondents are the owner of the company, 7% – top manager (director), middle manager – 25%, scholar/researcher – 2%, teacher – 11%, consultant/customer relations – 15%, administrator – 6%, other – 30%.

29% of respondents are employed in a small company (10-49 employees), 34% in a medium-sized company (50-250 employees), and 37% in a large company (250 and more).

Gender segregation in employment areas and salary differences are obvious.

Although tourism plays one of the leading roles in Georgia's economic development policy, women's salaries in hotels and restaurants represent only 58 percent of men's wages. At the same time, 60% of the employees in hotels and restaurants are women, and 40% are men. In general, more than half of employed in the tourism industry are women. In some regions, number of women employed in the mentioned area is 70 percent. The tourism needs vital hotel rooms, torn towels and cooks – namely all the things that are considered "natural" for women. All the above factors encourage the fact that women have been created as cheap labor employees by which tourism benefits. The state policy that does not take into account the needs of women, which encourages women to become a low-cost female workforce without having access to their educational system or service, which is suitable for women's needs.

59% of respondents believe that the company maintains a gender balance, while 27% think that gender balance is not maintained and for 14% it is difficult to answer.

According to the surveyed data, 4% of companies, where the research was conducted, do not have women in high managerial position. 22% have only one woman, 19% – 2 women, and 34% have 5 women and more in a high position (Figure 1).

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Source: Result of our research.

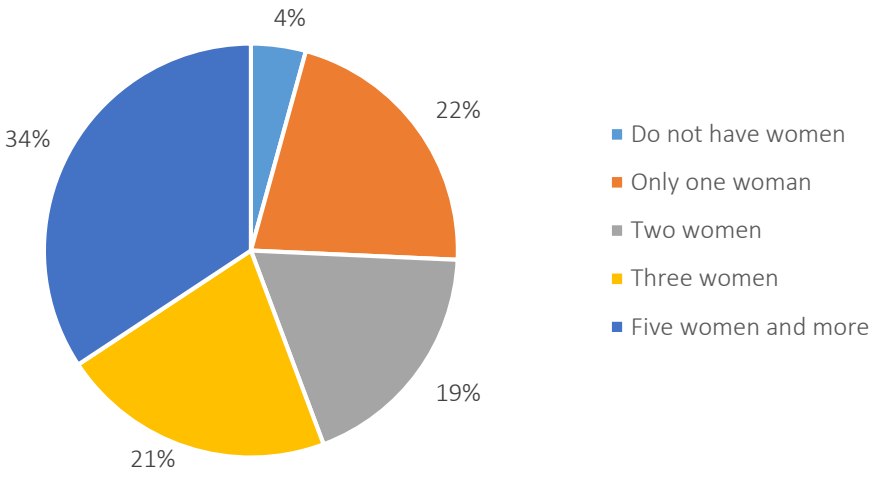

Figure 1. Distribution of percentage share of women in the companies

As for the labor productivity and outcomes of the employed women, 68% of respondents think that women are too well and efficiently deprived in high positions, 30% think that they are more or less obliged to perform their duties, only 2% believe that women cannot take the responsibility. We find it interesting to estimate the characteristics of female and male employees by respondents.

The result of this question is very interesting. The respondents were required to evaluate the characteristic features of the employed men and women by 7 point systems according to 7 criteria. Data were summarized and the average indicator was retrieved. After analyzing the results, it was found that men earned the highest points of 5.61 in the criterion of sense of responsibility, and the lowest in team work – 5.30 points.

It should be noted that women earned a higher score of 6.12 in desire to develop, and the lowest – 5.61 points in communication, influence on employees. It is noteworthy that the lowest point for women is equal to men's highest points – 5.61. We can say that, according to this average indicator, women have been characterized by higher competence by respondents (see Tables 1-2).

As we can see, most of the respondents think that women have a strong desire for self-development, at the same time, it seems that an outdated opinion about the gender equality in society is no longer active and the strength of women is increasing. This is an important motivation for success and career advancement.

We think that this outcome is not surprising that 53% of respondents think that women should be in high position, and 47% think that man should be in high position. Their notes in which they justify the answers are also interesting.

Table 1. The characteristic features of the employed men are evaluated by 7-point system (1 point – very bad; 7 points – very good)

Source: Result of our research.

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average indicator
1	Sense of responsibility	1	0	13	18	24	21	53	5.61
2	Decision making skills	2	2	10	17	24	27	48	5.55
3	Communication, influence on employees	4	3	8	20	29	25	41	5.35
4	Team work	4	4	15	19	17	26	45	5.30
5	Desire to develop	2	5	11	16	25	20	51	5.47
6	Ability to think quickly	2	1	15	19	21	26	46	5.45
7	Ability to work in stressful environment	4	6	11	15	21	20	53	5.42

Table 2. The characteristic features of the employed women are evaluated by 7-point system (1 point – very bad; 7 points – very good)

Source: Result of our research.

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average indicator
1	Sense of responsibility	1	0	5	8	21	27	68	6.08
2	Decision making skills	0	3	5	11	34	29	47	5.72
3	Communication, influence on employees	1	5	6	13	27	31	46	5.61
4	Team work	0	3	2	14	17	34	59	5.97
5	Desire to develop	0	2	3	7	18	32	64	6.12
6	Ability to think quickly	2	1	3	7	22	41	51	5.94
7	Ability to work in stressful environment	2	2	7	7	15	39	54	5.89

Source: Result of our research.

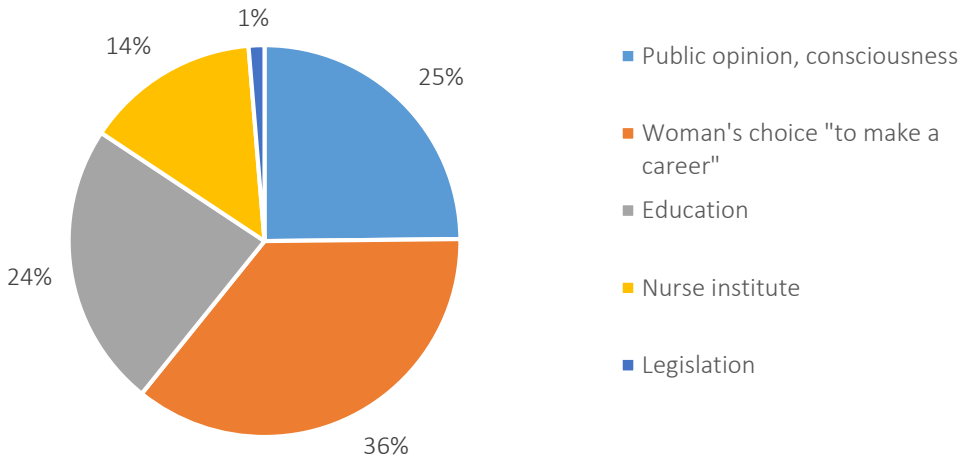

Figure 2. Women carrer growth factors

They think that women's presence in high positions is desirable, because "they are more prudent and they can easily deal with conflict situations", "have the ability to manage the situation/department/organization", "they make quick decisions and they can work in a stressful environment", "women can manage the team better, they are demanding and fair, women are a better diplomat than men".

One of the tasks of the survey was to find out what the employee felt as a hindering factor for women's success, most of the respondents think that the woman's success is hindered by the family, lack of education/qualification, stereotypes, flexible work schedule.

When asked about the stable increase in the number of women in the positions of middle and upper level managers, 25% of respondents believe that public opinion, attitude, consciousness have changed; 36% believe that the increased number of women in the position of managers is determined by the choice of a woman – "to make a career"; 24% believe their own education, 14% for the development of the nurse institute, 1% answered that the legislation helps women's promotion to higher managerial position (Figure 2).

It was interesting for us to find out do they have an employee in organizations that are responsible for dealing with gender issues, 83% said that they do not have such employee, only 8% have confirmed that they have a responsible person in the organization that will ensure the problem of gender equality. 88% of respondents claim that the company has a neutral position regarding gender equality and therefore does not have an action plan for its achievement. 12% of respondents have confirmed that the company has a strategy for gender equality.

It is very important for a woman to combine a job and a family, and it is interesting to find out what the companies are doing about that. 50% of respondents said that the company is compromising with mothers of young children, 2% mentioned that women working in the company serve trans-

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port, 12% answered that women in the company work according to the agreed schedule and 36% think that the company does not compromise.

80% of respondents believe that when selecting employees on the vacant positions in the organization, they do not pay attention to the gender during the job description, and there is an equal demand, 16% believe that vacancy is only for men, only 4% think that vacancy is for women.

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents agree with gender equality, only a small percentage of them understand the actual content of equality. Although most of the respondents agree that women should be in high position, but in a responsible position, such as the President, women do not welcome much. The interesting situation was revealed in the presidential election of 2018 when Salome Zourabichvili won 59% of the electorate (in the second round) only with the support of the ruling party.

CONCLUSION

Although modern reality is no longer relevant to a traditional "structure" that regulates the functioning of men and women in society in the past, as a result of women's emancipation, women assumed the function of economic development of society on her own, Georgian public thinking remains at the traditional pole and the public morality, which determines what is acceptable and unacceptable, appreciates the reality in the traditional context.

Obviously, the transformation of public views is interesting, because public opinion, whether it is progressive or outdated and patriarchal, in most cases, determines the behavior of women not only in the family, but also in society.

The scientific novelty of our research is that there are new different approaches to gender equality, which enabled us to develop those recommendations that will positively change the existing situation.

The problem of gender equality remains urgent in the 21st century. In many countries, important steps have been taken to eradicate gender equality, but women's big potential is still unused. Granting more powers for women means more efficient use of human capital, enhancing productivity and economic growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions above, we have prepared recommendations that we believe provide the full representation and realization of women's economic opportunities:

- Information meetings on gender equality are essential for both employees and employers, both parties need to know what gender equality will bring to the companies.
- We consider it necessary to notify the applicant by written explanation in case of refusal. This will be an effective monitoring of the employer in order to avoid gender discrimination during employment.
- It is necessary to recognize women's double work (work at home and at work), which is manifested in the following, the work at home, as well as work at the office, for a woman to be paid, or to be given some help, such as credits for housewives, that will give chance to them to start their own business, to be independent and to make a choice themselves between family and career.
- Set up a mechanism to provide flexible work schedule for women.

- It is desirable to make changes to the Tax Code, where start-up women entrepreneurs pay tax relief. This will be the most successful step forward for business women.
- It is desirable to take the legislative measure to make a decision in order of presence of a specialist of gender relations in all private and public service.
- In terms of women's activation, the state may establish/comply with mandatory quotas on the number of women employed.
- We consider interesting experience of women in marketing (WiM) network. It is created to educate, inspire, connect and recognize women in the marketing field. From women working in large corporations, charitable organizations through to female entrepreneurs, WiM reflects the evolution of the marketing world.

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