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Perceived Gender Equality in Managerial Positions in Organizations

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Background and Purpose: This research aims to achieve two main objectives: to investigate differences between male and female managers regarding the perceived gender equality in organizations and to analyze the gender differences in relationships among the perceived gender equality, the perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, the perceived satisfaction with work, and the perceived work-family conflict.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The sample of research includes 82 managers in Slovenian organizations. In first stage, we analyzed with t-test differences between male and female regarding perceived gender equality in decision-making positions. In the next step we developed the conceptual models and used structural equational modeling (SEM), and analyzed differences between constructs in two conceptual models.

Results: The research results show that female managers perceive gender equality in organizations in general to be significantly lower than males; furthermore, perceived gender equality is positively related to the perceived satisfaction with employment position and career as well as to the perceived satisfaction with work, but both relationships are significantly stronger for female managers. On the other hand female managers seems to cope more efficiently with the perceived work-family conflict since it has significantly different impact on female managers' perceived satisfaction with work, as compared to the male managers.

Conclusion: To achieve more gender equality within organizations and a reduction of the gender gap, the legislative initiatives cannot be successful without appropriate corporate strategy sets, which presents the framework for doing business and determines the internal working culture. The findings offer several policy, as well as business practice-oriented implications.

Keywords: *gender balance; decision-making position; employment satisfaction; work satisfaction*

1 Introduction

Gender equality in all areas of life and work is a fundamental right, a common value of the European Union (EU), and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives in terms of economic growth, employment, and social cohesion—the main targets of the *Europe 2020 Strategy* (European Commission 2010b). It has been the focus of EU since the *Treaty on European Union in 1957* (Consolidated version of the Treaty on EU 2012). Yet despite all efforts, research results in EU countries show that women are still disadvantaged in the labor market, where segregation and inequalities persist in working conditions (Franc et al. 2010). The EU and its member states have responded with policies (the adoption of national laws based on the Community acquis) to reduce the imbalances

in gender equality and reconcile the professional, private, and family lives of women and men. In addition, European social partners actively promote gender equality at the workplace through various programs and projects, tackling gender inequality at the workplace in different fields (Austrian Institute for SME Research 2010).

The European Commission's (2014a) *Report on equality between women and men 2014* outlines the progress achieved in the six priority areas (i.e., equal economic independence for women and men; equal pay for work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity, and the end of gender-based violence; promotion of gender equality beyond the EU; and horizontal issues like gender roles, including the role of men, legislation, and governance tools) of the *Women's Charter* (European Commission 2010a) and the commission's *Strategy for equality*

between women and men 2010-15 (European Commission 2011c). Gender gaps in employment and decision-making (the focal point of the present research) have narrowed in recent years, but women in EU-28, for example, still account for less than a quarter of company board members, despite representing almost half of the employed workforce (46%). Furthermore, the extent of gender equality varies substantially across member states and has not reached everyone (European Commission 2014a). In the Slovenian labor market (the case country of the present research), the general participation rate of women (63%) is still lower than the general participation rate of men (71.2%) (European Commission 2014a). Slovenian students' educational choices show an overrepresentation of women in traditionally female fields (e.g., education) and an overrepresentation of men in traditionally male fields (e.g., engineering). Statistical data for the EU member states (European Commission 2015) show that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, particularly in politics and business. However, the situation differs substantially among EU countries. In Slovenia, an important shift has occurred within the last few years regarding women's representation in decision-making positions. Namely, the share of women on boards (20%) is equal to the EU-28 average (20%), whereas the share of women in national government stands at 38%, which is far above the EU-28 average (28%) (European Commission 2014a). The unadjusted gender pay gap in 2013, presenting the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female paid employees, expressed as a percentage of the former, is in Slovenia well below the EU-28 average. In Slovenia, women earned 3.2% less than men in 2013 (EU-28: 16.4%) (Eurostat 2015). Across member states, the gender pay gap varied by 26.7 percentage points. As expected, economic sectors with even negative gender gaps were male-dominated sectors in 2013.

Deficient work-life balance policies hamper women's employment and therefore the potential for economic growth (European Commission 2014a), while on the other hand previous research has suggested the strong positive relationship between the gender equality (measured by the Gender Equality Index) and the gross domestic income across EU member states (EIGE 2013). Duflo (2012) argued that a bi-directional relationship exists between economic development and gender equality, stating that in one direction development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women whereas, in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women can hinder development.

Gender balance and equality can have an important effect on national economies at the macro and micro level, but previous research results have led to vague conclusions (Seguino 2008; European Commission 2011a) for several reasons. On the other hand, the empirical research into several different aspects by which gender equality may

affect work performance is still scarce, particularly regarding the perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations. Thus, the focus of the present research is to analyze different aspects of gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations in Slovenia. The two main objectives of this research are (i) to investigate differences between male and female managers regarding the perceived gender equality in organizations and (ii) to analyze the differences in relationships among perceived gender equality, perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, perceived satisfaction with work, and perceived work-family conflicts between male and female managers.

2 Theoretical background and hypothesis development

2.1 Perceived gender equality between male and female managers

With female labor-force participation on the rise and more women gaining access to top management positions, an important question is how these changes affect the workplace environment and well-being of workers (Semykina and Linz 2013). The research results in the literature explaining the gender differences regarding the relationships of gender equality in the organizations are vague and often focused on particular perspectives. Gender inequality may arise when considering career advancement, in which women are most likely to be at a disadvantage (Powell and Butterfield, 1994). Research results indicate that gender has not been identified as a factor that would be independently associated with the inequality perception (Shanafelt et al. 2012). Several organizational and socio-cultural factors have been identified in the literature that impede women the benefits of upward mobility. Examples of such factors explaining vertical segregation are human capital barriers (lack of education, resources, and experience), differences in communication styles, exclusion from informal networks, lack of mentors and role-models, and limited management support for work/life programs (Lewis 1997, 1998; Mani 1997; Dolan 2004; Sabharwal 2015). Social and organizational psychologists (e.g., Heilman and Parks-Stamm 2007; Koenig et al. 2011) studied the causes of this factors based on gender stereotyping. A commonly held assumption is that women lack adequate human capital for managerial positions (Burke 2000). This perception lead to the stereotype, that woman may be less effective top managers than men. In light of this fact, this article examines differences in perceived gender equality in decision-making positions between men and women.

In order to investigate differences regarding perceived gender equality in organizations between male and female managers (objective (i) of this research), hypothesis H1

was formed:

H1: Regarding perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations, significant differences between female and male managers exist.

2.2 Gender equality perception and job satisfaction

Studying job satisfaction has long been of great interest to researchers and management professionals. Higher job satisfaction is associated with improved employee productivity and is often cited as instrumental to maintaining high employee retention rates (Wood et al. 2012, Green 2010, Munyon et al. 2010, Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza 2007). The concept of perceived satisfaction was grounded in the Herzberg's (1968) two-factor job satisfaction theory. According to this theory, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not two opposite extremes, but two independent continua. Employees react to their working conditions and distinguish job context factors named "hygienes" and job content factors named "motivators" that determine two independent continua. If the motivation needs are fulfilled, they will lead to employee satisfaction. However, when motivation needs are not fulfilled they will not lead to employee dissatisfaction but to no-satisfaction. Similarly, absence of hygiene needs will lead to employee dissatisfaction but their fulfillment will lead to employee no-dissatisfaction.

In our research the perceived gender equality is included as factor that contributes to the satisfaction of individuals motivational needs, therefore it could be expected that it contributes to the managers' job satisfaction. But, gender differences regarding this relationship are observed and several view-points may be taken into account. Namely, the previous research results revealed, that levels of job satisfaction generally do not vary by gender (Poggi 2010). But on the other hand, the "Paradox of the contented female worker" (Mueller and Wallace 1996; Phelan 1994) tries to explain roughly equal levels of job satisfaction among men and women, despite the fact that women often face inferior working conditions (lower pay, fewer promotion opportunities), based on the lack of sensitivity to perceived gender inequality. It is also vague if the gender equality at the workplace affects men's job satisfaction. As pointed out by Semykina and Linz (2013), men may be indifferent to it, yet working for an organization that treats all employees equally may affect men's job satisfaction both positively or negatively. It can be expected that men have negative attitudes toward women in top manager positions (Baldwin et al. 2001); they may also perceive the organization's policy that allows women access to the top management positions as creating a more competitive work environment for them, resulting in a lower satisfaction with work and career. Yet men might enjoy higher job satisfaction working for organizations that promote gender

equality in top management positions (Semykina and Linz 2013).

The importance of both extrinsic rewards (received for job performance) and intrinsic rewards (associated with job attributes), as well as the importance of workplace environment (Linz and Semykina 2012, Wood et al. 2012, Bockerman and Ilmakunnas 2009, Stewart et al. 2007, Carr et al. 2003) have been extensively studied in literature. Since perceived gender equality at workplace shape the overall workplace environment, this factor may explain variation in job satisfaction. Examining the roles of such factors is also important from the organization's point of view. The management of career perceptions has a direct impact on employee performance, which in turn impacts the organization's performance (Hitt et al. 2001). However, perceptions are likely to be influenced by worker personality and aspirations, which, if not accounted for, may bias the results (Poggi 2010). To examine perceived gender equality, one should take these subjective criteria into account. We therefore focus on perceptual data, referring to employees' assessment of the gender equality and satisfaction with the employment position and career as well as the work, to get a precise understanding of the relationship between perceptions and gender.

The nature of managerial work tasks often leads to situations, where they take their jobs home with them (on one hand) and do not leave their family problems outside the organization (on the other hand) (Netemeyer et al. 2005). Therefore they experience high level of conflicts between work and family domain (Drew and Murtagh 2005). The impact of work interfering with family proved to be significantly related to job satisfaction for different groups of employees (Adams et al. 1996) and for both genders (Karateppe and Baddar 2005). Traditional gender roles and stereotypes are still present in societies, suggesting that household activities and childcare continue to be seen as women's tasks. That is why the perceived work-family conflict is included into this research, where we emerge from job demands of managers that interfere with performing home and family responsibilities.

In order to analyze the gender differences regarding relationships among perceived gender equality in organizations, perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, perceived satisfaction with work, and perceived work-family conflicts, between male and female managers (objective (ii) of this research), hypotheses H2 through H5 were formed:

H2: Significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations and perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career.

H3: Significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between perceived gender equality in deci-

sion-making positions within organizations and perceived satisfaction with the work.

H4: Significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between perceived work-family conflicts and perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career.

H5: Significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between perceived work-family conflicts and perceived satisfaction with work.

Furthermore, the higher the level of satisfaction with employment position and career, the higher on average the level of satisfaction with work in general, both for men and women, as reported by previous research results. Mishra et al. (2014) reported that such a constantly positive causation is found between composite measures of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Similar results have emerged in this field of research, with 90% of cases showing positive directions of this relationship and with none of the scattered negative relationships being significant (Rice et al. 1980).

H6: Gender differences regarding the relationship between perceived satisfaction with employment position and career and perceived satisfaction with work are not significant.

3 Data and methodology

3.1 Sample

Data for this research were gathered via a questionnaire from a random sample of female and male managers in Slovenian organizations. The questionnaire was designed in three phases. In the first phase, we reviewed the literature, which enabled us to develop a research model with multidimensional constructs (i.e., variables)—namely, perceived gender equality in organizations, perceived work-family conflicts, perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, and perceived satisfaction with work. Because of the lack of an established and standardized way of measuring these phenomena in the academic literature, where to date only partial solutions have been used (European Commission 2011b; Judge et al. 1994; Karatepe and Baddar 2006; Orser and Leck 2010; Singhapakdi et al. 2013; Lyness and Brumit Kropf 2005; Shapiro and Olgiati 2002), we performed in-depth individual interviews with three female and three male managers in five companies in Slovenia in February 2015. Two companies were considered large and three medium sized based on the number of employees. The aim of this part of the qualitative research was therefore to obtain information that

helped us in the design of specific domains that constitute the multidimensional variables used to analyze the complex phenomena.

In the second step, the questionnaire was prepared and pretested online with three male and three female managers. This step resulted in the measurement scales of multidimensional variables, as described in Appendix A. All items, consisting of single multidimensional variables, were assessed by respondents using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

In the third phase the questionnaire was used in the survey research. The random sample of 200 medium-sized and large companies was selected from the population of medium-sized and large companies in Slovenia. The survey was conducted in 2016 using e-mail addresses of male and female top managers and executive managers. A 41% response rate was achieved, meaning $n = 82$ completely filled in the questionnaires. The entire population in Slovenia is 207 large companies and 1076 medium-sized companies (Rebernik and Širec 2016).

In the structure of the sample, 43.9% of respondents were males and 56.1% were females. The majority of them were university graduates (79.3%), while 33% of respondents held a postgraduate degree (master's degree or doctorate in science). Regarding their management position in the organization, 52.5% of respondents were partners, managers of the company, or regional managers; 26.9% were presidents or members of the management boards or company directors; and the remainders held other managerial positions in organizations.

3.2 Methodology

Descriptive statistics and parametric t -test were used (0.05 significance level) to test gender differences regarding the perceived gender equality in organizations (i.e., hypothesis H1). To test hypotheses H2 through H6, first reliability and validity were explored. The analysis of the data set was based on exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the conceptual framework and assumptions.

The EFA (Hair et al., 2010) employed the principal component analysis and Varimax method. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistics (KMO > 0.5), and the significance level ($p < 0.05$) were calculated. Fulfillment of criteria regarding factor loadings ($\eta \geq 0.5$), communalities of variables ($h > 0.4$), and eigenvalues of factors ($\lambda \geq 1.0$), was analyzed. Item reliability was assessed using R^2 .

The reliability and validity of the measurement instrument were assessed, keeping in mind the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.7$). Scale validity was analyzed by focusing on convergent validity. As part of the convergent validity, we examined average variance extracted (pc^{AVE}) and

composite reliability coefficients (ρ^{CR}), keeping in mind the criterion (Hair et al. 2010; Fornell and Larcker 1981; Bagozzi and Yi 1988): $\rho^{\text{AVE}} > 0.5$ and $\rho^{\text{CR}} > 0.7$ and the criterion by Byrne (2010) $\rho^{\text{CR}} > \rho^{\text{AVE}}$. In order to check multicollinearity, we used variance inflation factors (VIF) < 5.0 (Hair et al. 2010).

The quality of the measurement model was also measured by the variance explained by the model for a particular construct (R^2) as well as the Stone-Geisser (Stone 1974) Q-squared coefficients; thus, we examined the predictability value of the structural model. Acceptable predictive validity in connection with an endogenous latent variable is suggested by a Q-squared coefficient greater than zero (Kock 2013). To test the model, the following rules were also applied: average path coefficient (APC, $p < 0.05$), average R-square (ARS, $p < 0.05$), average adjusted R-square (AARS, $p < 0.05$), average block VIF (AVIF < 5.0), average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF < 5.0), Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR ≥ 0.7), the R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR ≥ 0.9), statistical suppression ratio (SSR ≥ 0.7), nonlinear substantiated by an association causality direction ratio (NLBCD ≥ 0.7), and goodness-of-fit (GoF ≥ 0.5) (Tenenhaus et al. 2005; Schepers et al. 2005; Kock 2013).

To test the hypotheses, we used the path coefficient associated with a causal link in the model (β or γ), t -value, significance level ($p < 0.05$), and indicator of Cohen's effect (f^2) with 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicating the small, medium, and large effect sizes (Cohen 1988). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and WarpPLS software (which is usually used in the case of small samples) were used.

To test significance of gender differences, the pooled standard error method was used (Kock, 2013).

4 Results

Hypothesis H1 was tested based on individual statements in the measurement scale for perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations. Results in Figure 1 and in Appendix B show that male and female managers differ significantly ($p < 0.05$) in terms of the average agreement on 8 out of 11 items and at all 8 aspects women perceived the lower level of gender equality as compared to men. On only one item did female managers assess the agreement with the statement to be on average equal than male managers: Female managers were in general equally self-confident regarding the necessary abilities and skills needed for leading positions compared to male managers (women: 5.69 ± 1.227 ; men: 5.69 ± 1.390). This was also the highest assessed item by women.

The results further revealed that the important differences ($p < 0.001$) between female and male managers are especially regarding the decision-making process (GE9) (women: 4.76 ± 1.594 ; men: 6.22 ± 0.637), regard-

ing equal payment (GE11) (women: 4.63 ± 1.743 ; men: 5.89 ± 1.116), regarding opportunities to be at the managerial position (GE4) (women: 4.50 ± 1.643 ; men: 5.78 ± 1.222) and regarding influence in the organization (GE10) (women: 4.65 ± 1.676 ; men: 5.94 ± 0.893),

Thus, support for H1 was found: The results demonstrate that, regarding perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations, significant gender differences exist between female and male managers.

When testing hypotheses H2 through H6, we first present the results regarding the conceptual model, including both males and females, to form the measurement scales for constructs of the research. A measurement scale development process consisted of generating initial 31 items for all 4 constructs together; after performing the EFA, results indicated that it was meaningful to use EFA for all four constructs (all KMO > 0.5 ; BTS significance $p < 0.001$), and the item analysis in the second and the third iterations of the factor analysis led to a one-dimensional factor solution for all constructs in the conceptual model (Appendix C). The obtained measurement scales consisted of six items for perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations, of seven items for perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career, further on of four items for perceived satisfaction with the work and finally of three items for perceived work-life conflicts. In the process of development of constructs we therefore had to exclude items GE2, GE3, GE7 and GE8 of perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations, items SEC2 and SEC4 of perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career, as well as items SW1, SW3, SW4 of perceived satisfaction with the work, due to values of communalities being less than 0.4, or due to factor weights being less than 0.5, indicating the low share of item variance explained by the factor (construct) obtained. To obtain the one-dimensional factors we also excluded items GE5 and SEC5.

All four obtained measurement scales proved high reliability (all Cronbach's alpha > 0.7). Results in Table 1 indicate that 75.4% of the total variance is explained by the perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations construct. Furthermore, 77.8% of the total variance is explained with the construct of perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career, 65.3% of the total variance is explained by the perceived satisfaction with the work construct, while the perceived work-life conflicts construct explains 85.2% of the total variance.

In the next step, we employed CFA; the results are presented in Table 1. All factors weights and R^2 of items for constructs were higher than value 0.5. The structure of constructs therefore remained unchanged.

Descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix are presented in Table 2. Table 3 shows the results of the AVE

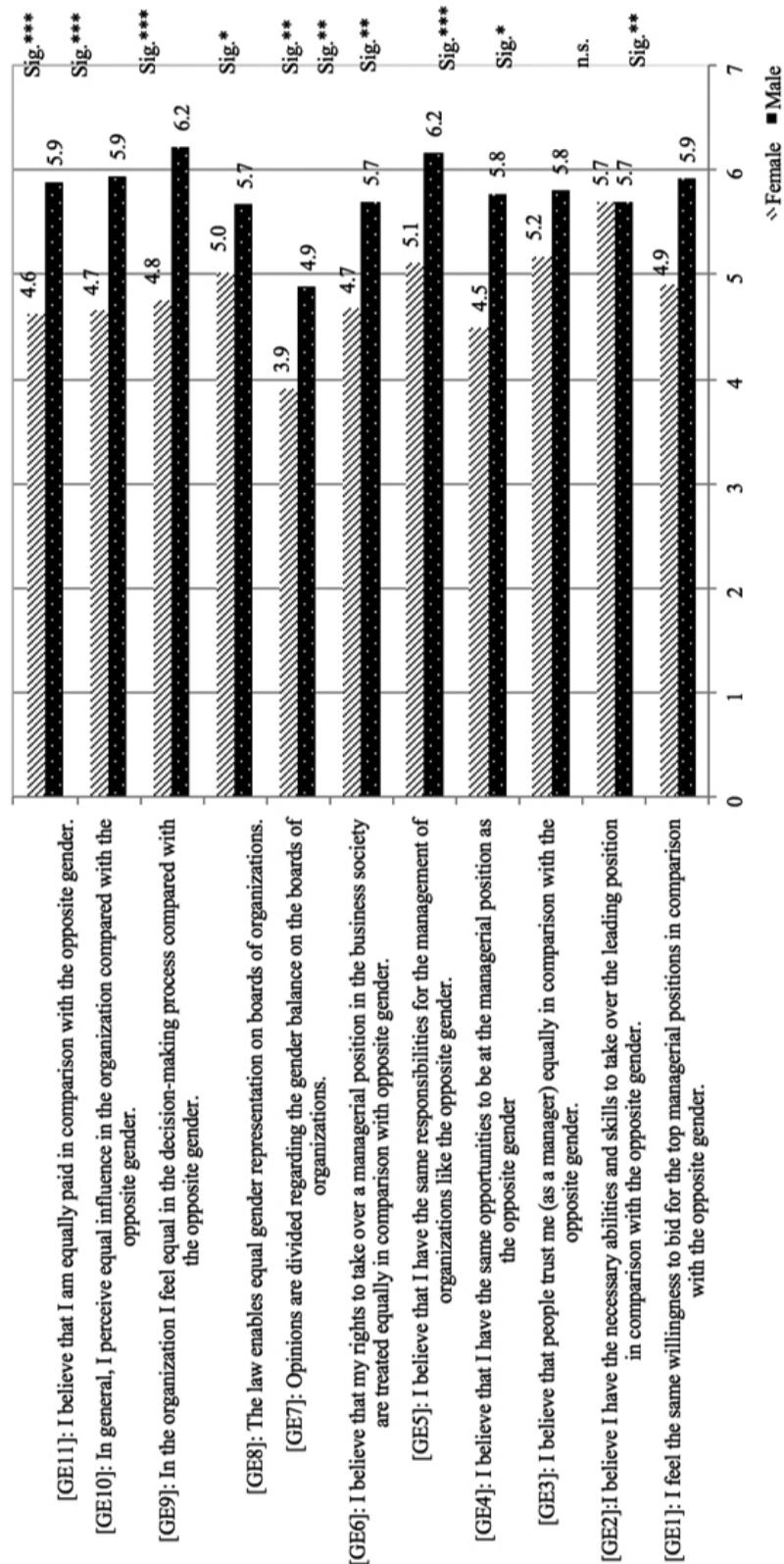


Figure 1: Results of testing H1 (individual items)

Sig.* - gender difference significant at the 0.05 level; Sig.** - gender difference significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Notes: ^a All factor loadings are significant at the 0.001 level. ^b Measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, Mean (M); Std. Deviation (SD); perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC); perceived work-life conflicts (WFC).

Model path	Factor loading ^a	Variance explained	R ² (item reliability)	M ^b	SD
<i>Perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations - GE</i>					
GE1 ← I feel the same willingness to bid for the top managerial positions in comparison with the opposite gender.	0.774		0.599	5.35	1.526
GE4 ← I believe that I have the same opportunities to be at the managerial position as the opposite gender.	0.889		0.790	5.06	1.597
GE6 ← I believe that my rights to take over a managerial position in the business society are treated equally in comparison with opposite sex.	0.812	75.39	0.659	5.12	1.590
GE9 ← In the organization I feel equal in the decision-making process compared with the opposite gender.	0.945		0.893	5.40	1.456
GE10 ← In general, I perceive equal influence in the organization compared with the opposite gender.	0.921		0.848	5.22	1.524
GE11 ← I believe that I am equally paid in comparison with the opposite gender.	0.856		0.733	5.18	1.619
<i>Perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career- SEC</i>					
SEC1 ← Overall, I am satisfied with my working position.	0.879		0.773	5.38	1.321
SEC3 ← In general, I am satisfied with the type of work I'm doing on the job.	0.884		0.781	5.54	1.033
SEC6 ← In general, I am satisfied with the success that I have achieved in my career.	0.826		0.682	5.34	1.288
SEC7 ← I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting the goals of my entire career.	0.925	77.8	0.856	5.28	1.230
SEC8 ← I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting the goals regarding my personal income.	0.816		0.666	4.72	1.605
SEC9 ← I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting goals for my career promotion.	0.896		0.803	5.01	1.410
SEC10 ← In general, I am satisfied with my career.	0.941		0.885	5.45	1.198
<i>Perceived satisfaction with work - SW</i>					
SW2 ← People in the organization respect my expertise in my field of work.	0.747		0.558	3.96	1.469
SW5 ← My working position allows me to strengthen my professional skills.	0.790	65.3	0.624	4.23	1.542
SW6 ← My work requires a lot of creativity.	0.793		0.629	5.34	1.288
SW7 ← My working position helps me develop creativity outside the workplace.	0.749		0.561	5.28	1.230
<i>Perceived work-life conflicts - WFC</i>					
WFC1 ← Difficulties of my working situation interfere with my family life.	0.924		0.854	4.16	1.774

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results (continued)

WFC2 ← Due to the time devoted to my work it is hard to meet my family obligations.	0.943	85.2	0.889	4.10	1.726
WFC3 ← Because of the duties associated with the work I have to often change plans for family activities.	0.902		0.814	4.18	1.827

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of all Variables

Notes: ***correlations are significant at level 0.001, *n.s.* non-significant; Square roots of average variances extracted (AVEs) shown on the diagonal; perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC), perceived work-family conflicts (WFC)

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. SEC	5.25	1.140	(0.882)			
2. GE	5.22	1.343	0.557***	(0.868)		
3. SW	4.26	1.114	0.540***	0.437***	(0.770)	
4. WFC	4.15	1.638	-0.079 ^{n.s.}	-0.097 ^{n.s.}	-0.411***	(0.923)

Table 3: Indicators of Quality of Research Model

Notes: Perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC), perceived work-family conflicts (WFC)

Constructs	Cronbach's α	pc^{CR}	pc^{AVE}	R ²	Adj. R ²	Q ²	VIF
1. SEC	0.952	0.961	0.778	0.355	0.339	0.348	1.765
2. GE	0.934	0.948	0.754	(-)	(-)	(-)	1.508
3. SW	0.771	0.853	0.593	0.466	0.445	0.468	1.811
4. WFC	0.913	0.945	0.852	(-)	(-)	(-)	1.248

Table 4: Standardized Path Coefficients for Proposed Model for Females

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$; *n.s.* non-significant; f^2 effect size; S.E. standard error; perceived gender equality at decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC); perceived work-family conflicts (WFC); GoF = 0.614, APC = 0.316 ($p < 0.01$), ARS = 0.482 ($p < 0.001$), AARS = 0.452 ($p < 0.001$), AVIF = 1.315, AFVIF = 1.179, SPR = 1.000, RSCR = 1.000, SSR = 1.000, NLBCDR = 0.800.

Hypothesized path	Path coefficient	f^2	S.E.
γ_1 (GE → SEC)	0.641***	0.419	0.114
γ_2 (GE → SW)	0.354**	0.225	0.128
γ_3 (WFC → SEC)	-0.043 ^{n.s.}	0.010	0.145
γ_4 (WFC → SW)	-0.155 ^{n.s.}	0.058	0.139
β_5 (SEC → SW)	0.388**	0.251	0.126

analysis. It can be seen that the AVE values are above 0.5 and, moreover, are above the correlation coefficients for each type of construct.

To check the reliability of the constructs, we tested convergent validity. The ρ_c^{AVE} values for this model exceeded 0.5 for the reflective constructs (Hair et al. 2010), thereby indicating convergent validity for all constructs (see Table 3).

Table 3 indicates that all values of the latent-variable Q^2 coefficients are greater than zero. Adjusted R-squared coefficients are equivalent to R-squared coefficients, with the key difference that they correct for spurious increases in R-squared coefficients due to predictors that add no explanatory value in each latent variable block. Composite reliabilities ρ_c^{CR} for the three constructs ranged from 0.853 to 0.961, exceeding the minimum requirement of 0.7. As all ρ_c^{CR} values were higher than ρ_c^{AVE} values, we confirmed the convergent validity for all the constructs studied. The VIF values ranged between 1.248 and 1.811 (well below 5.0), providing confidence that the structural model results were not affected by collinearity. The examination of the endogenous constructs' predictive power showed that satisfaction with the work and the prediction of satisfaction with employment position and career were significant.

To test hypotheses H2 through H6, first the structural equation models for each gender were formed (see Tables 4 and 5 and Figure 2); the results of testing the significance of gender differences regarding the path coefficients are presented in Table 6.

The important results of this research is, that the effect of perceived gender equality in organizations on perceived satisfaction with employment position and career is significant and positive for both genders, but the effect is significantly stronger among female managers. Thus, we found support for hypothesis H2—namely, that significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between the perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations and the perceived satisfaction with

the employment position and career.

On the other hand, the effect of perceived gender equality in managerial positions in organization on perceived satisfaction with work is positive and significant among female managers, while not significant (but negative) among male managers. The gender difference regarding this relationship is significant. Therefore, hypothesis H3—namely, that significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between the perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations and the perceived satisfaction with the work—is supported.

Support for H2 and H3 suggests that perceived gender equality has a significantly stronger positive effect on perceived satisfaction with work as well as on perceived satisfaction with employment and career among female managers, as compared to their male colleagues.

Among female managers the perceived work-family conflicts have no significant effect neither on the perceived satisfaction with employment position and career nor on perceived satisfaction with work. Among male managers the strong significant and negative effect on perceived satisfaction with work was found. The gender difference regarding this relationship was also significant, while regarding the relationship between perceived work-family conflicts and perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, it was not. Therefore, the hypothesis H4 is not supported, nevertheless the weak yet significant positive relationship between perceived work-family conflicts and perceived satisfaction with employment position and career among male managers undoubtedly calls for further research in the future. Martins et al. (2002) examine factors that moderated this relationship (e.g. age, gender, marital and parental status) and found out that career satisfaction of female managers and that of older individuals of both genders were the most adversely affected by work-family conflict. Whereas women's career satisfaction was negatively affected by work-family

Table 5: Standardized Path Coefficients for Proposed Model for Males

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$; *n.s.* non-significant; f^2 effect size; S.E. standard error; perceived gender equality at decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC); perceived work-family conflicts (WFC); $GoF = 0.441$, $APC = 0.293$ ($p < 0.01$), $ARS = 0.307$ ($p < 0.01$), $AARS = 0.256$ ($p < 0.05$), $AVIF = 1.020$, $AFVIF = 1.461$, $SPR = 1.000$, $RSCR = 1.000$, $SSR = 1.000$, $NLBCDR = 0.800$

Hypothesized path	Path coefficient	f^2	S.E.
γ_1 (GE \rightarrow SEC)	0.243*	0.068	0.149
γ_2 (GE \rightarrow SW)	-0.049 ^{n.s.}	0.006	0.163
γ_3 (WFC \rightarrow SEC)	0.259*	0.076	0.148
γ_4 (WFC \rightarrow SW)	-0.549***	0.316	0.130
β_5 (SEC \rightarrow SW)	0.363**	0.148	0.141

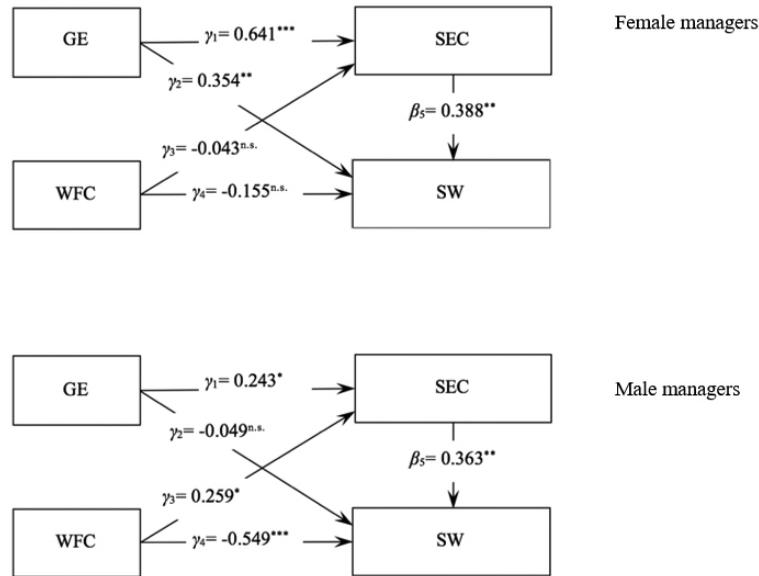


Figure 2: Conceptual models with results

Table 6: Significance of Estimated Coefficients and Differences for Males and Females

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; *n.s.* non-significant; perceived gender equality at decision-making positions within organizations (GE); perceived satisfaction with the work (SW); perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career (SEC); Perceived work-family conflicts (WFC)

	Males		Females		Differences between males and females	
	β	Std. error	β	Std. error	Difference (male – female)	t-value
γ_1 (GE \rightarrow SEC)	0.243*	0.149	0.641***	0.114	-0.398*	-2.187
γ_2 (GE \rightarrow SW)	-0.049 ^{n.s.}	0.163	0.354**	0.128	0.305*	-1.998
γ_3 (WFC \rightarrow SEC)	0.259*	0.148	-0.043 ^{n.s.}	0.145	0.216 ^{n.s.}	1.102
γ_4 (WFC \rightarrow SW)	-0.549***	0.130	-0.155 ^{n.s.}	0.139	-0.394*	-2.046
β_5 (SEC \rightarrow SW)	0.363**	0.141	0.388**	0.126	-0.025 ^{n.s.}	0.134

conflict throughout their lives, men showed such adverse effects only in later career, when they were 40 and older. This parameter, that might shed the light on our results, will be studied in future research. These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests that men and women prioritize their work and family roles differently (Tenbrunsel et al., 1995). But we found the support for hypothesis H5—namely, that significant gender differences exist regarding the relationship between the perceived work-family conflicts and the perceived satisfaction with work.

The important result of this study is also that perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career sig-

nificantly affects perceived satisfaction with the work. This effect is positive and significant regardless of the gender. The gender difference between the coefficients in both models is also not significant; therefore, we found support for hypothesis H6—namely, that gender differences regarding the impact of perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career on perceived satisfaction with the work are not significant.

5 Conclusions and discussion

Despite the non-discriminatory legal regulations, the presented study results show that several gender differences

and inequalities exist regarding the balance in the decision-making positions within Slovenian organizations. The research results suggest that perceived gender equality is perceived significantly differently by female and male managers. Female managers perceive gender equality to be significantly lower in general than males, including the lower assessment of personal willingness to bid for the top managerial positions compared with the opposite gender. As female managers are self-confident in the necessary skills and abilities needed for decision-making positions in organizations, there are obviously other reasons for the underrepresentation of women in top managerial positions in organizations. One reason for this is undoubtedly the general organizational culture in organizations, as female managers perceive having significantly lower opportunities for acquiring the top managerial position than the opposite gender.

The research highlights that women not only get fewer leadership opportunities than men, but they also often get different kinds of opportunities. Psychology professors Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam described the glass cliff as a phenomenon in which women are more likely to be put into leadership roles under risky and precarious circumstances. First, some evidence suggests that the selection of a woman can signal a change in direction, especially when a company has a history of having all male leaders. Second, research indicates that we believe men possess qualities that fit better with running successful companies, while women possess qualities that can make them more suitable in difficult situations. These kinds of findings have led some to conclude that, when we think crisis, we think female (Ryan et al. 2011). Perceived gender equality within organizations showed significant differences between female and male managers in decision-making positions. Hypothesis H1 was therefore supported.

We further found solid support for hypothesis H2, claiming the existence of significant gender differences regarding the relationship between perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations and perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career. Our results confirmed a significant and positive effect among women managers in terms of perceived gender equality in organizations on perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, the same was among male managers. The difference between the two was also significant.

We also confirmed hypothesis H3, suggesting the existence of significant gender differences regarding the relationship between perceived gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations and perceived satisfaction with the work. The significant positive effect is confirmed for female managers, while negative yet not significant effect was found among male managers, with the significant difference among genders. The business climate in organizations in general does not provide equal

respect and equal evaluation of managers, as female managers perceived these attitudes significantly lower in general. If these results are added to previous findings on the lower perceptions of opportunities in the top managerial positions for males, it seems that female managers face different treatment than their male colleagues. For example, the glass cliff phenomenon (Ryan et al. 2011) may result in negative consequences all around. For individual female managers, being put in command when the odds of success are low can set them up to fail. Despite inheriting the problems, women in glass cliff positions are seen to be fully responsible for the bad state of affairs. After becoming synonymous with a failure, career advancement can be undermined. It seems that, in Slovenia, men in the top management positions do not have clear positive attitudes toward gender equality in decision-making positions within organizations. Some results found in the literature (Baldwin et al. 2001) also describe the situation where gender equality at work is perceived as a more competitive work environment for men. Furthermore, our research results show equal average self-confidence of male managers regarding their own abilities and skills to take the leading positions when compared with female managers. This supports the conclusion that gender equality in decision-making positions may be, to a certain extent, understood as a threat to males in top management positions.

Gender equality therefore act as motivator for both genders, as far as the perceived satisfaction with employment position and career is considered, but its' effect is significantly stronger for female managers. Regarding the motivation effect when perceived satisfaction with work is analyzed, results are not so clear; while significant positive effect was found among female managers, among male managers it was not, even more, it was negative, yet not significant.

We also confirmed the gender differences regarding the effect of perceived work-family conflicts on satisfaction with work – hypothesis H5; but the hypothesis H4, about the gender differences in effect of perceived work-family conflicts on perceived satisfaction with employment position and career, was not supported. Additional moderating factors should be studied to gain a deeper insight into this phenomenon. Bardwick (1980) suggest that women place emphasis on relationships throughout their lives, whereas men are more likely to sacrifice relationships for the sake of their careers in early career. In later career, when many individuals plateau, it is likely that they will be less inclined to prioritize career over family and personal life and, thus, they may be less tolerant of work-family conflict (Bardwick, 1986). It seems that female managers cope with the perceived work-family conflicts more efficiently, since their perceived conflicts in work-family interface has significantly different impact on their perceived satisfaction with work, as compared with males (the effect among female managers themselves is also even not significant).

Past research results, that are very scarce and also deal with some selected groups of employees, didn't confirm gender differences regarding the perceived work-family conflicts (Karatepe and Baddar 2005), while our research revealed that female managers not only perceive work-family conflicts on average lower as compared to male managers, but also that female managers on average experience lower negative effects of these conflicts on perceived satisfaction with work, as compared with male managers.

Hypothesis H6 suggested that gender differences regarding the influence of the perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career on perceived satisfaction with the work do not exist. We confirmed that this effect is positive and significant regardless of the gender and that the gender difference between the coefficients in both models is not significant.

These research results confirm that perceived gender inequalities in Slovenian organizations do persist despite the non-discriminatory legal regulations. Therefore, several policy- and business practice-oriented implications need to be addressed. One instrument in this context is the identification, highlighting, and dissemination of good practices of companies and employers with an outstanding commitment and business policy fostering gender equality. For this purpose, different tools have been developed and initiatives have been created. They are aimed at corporate-level barriers as non-legislative instruments, especially labels, prizes and awards, charters, and rankings/indexes for organizations that have developed internal good practices on gender equality in decision-making positions (Austrian Institute for SME Research 2010).

In order to improve gender balance in company boardrooms, the Proposal for a directive adopted by the European Commission on 14 November 2012 set a quantitative objective of at least 40% representation for each gender among nonexecutive directors (supervisory board members in a dual board system) by 2020 (or 2018 for state-owned undertakings). The commission's proposal applies to companies listed on stock exchanges in the EU member states, but excludes all small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), even if they are listed on stock exchanges (European Commission 2014b). In line with the commission's proposal, the Slovenian Ministry intends to upgrade the legislation introducing the establishment of minimum quotas for the less represented gender. Drafts of the principle of quotas for managerial positions in companies will be ready this year and will be followed by a broad public debate (STA 2015).

To achieve more gender equality within organizations and a reduction of the gender gap, the legislative initiatives cannot be successful without appropriate corporate strategy sets, which presents the framework for doing business and determines the internal working culture. Experience shows that gender equality—in order to be sustainably established—has to be an integral part of the overall cor-

porate strategy. Management is responsible for the implementation of the corporate strategy, where individual managers act as role models and multipliers within and outside the company. The human resource department, as a central point of contact for human resource issues of business units, needs to offer strategic advice on how to address gender equality sustainably and provides instruments and processes to attract, retain, and develop top talent (e.g., by designing regular evaluation processes). To achieve the objectives of balance equality in decision-making positions in organizations, the educational system at all levels of education is important to both female and male managers. Cultural and social norms are very difficult to change, yet certainly not in a short period of time. From this perspective, the integration of the principles of gender equality in all areas of work and life into all stages of the education system is a measure that can contribute to changes in deep-rooted principles of gender inequality in the cultural and social norms.

The current study also comes with limitations, several of which offer opportunities for future work. From the methodological point of view the limitation of our paper is that only quantitative approach was used, although the topic of the research, that refers in a wider sense to the sociology of organization may call for qualitative approach as well, especially using in-dept interviews within case studies (Small, 2009). As already mentioned above the relationship between perceived work-family conflicts and perceived satisfaction with employment position and career calls for further research in the future, as well as other relationships in the model, could be investigated with an appropriate combination of qualitative and quantitative research. In a quantitative part of the research also the enlargement of a sample size should be reconsidered, which is relatively limited in the present research.

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Zaznana enakost spolov na vodstvenih položajih v organizacijah

Ozadje in namen: Namen raziskave je doseči dva temeljna cilja: raziskati razlike med moškimi in ženskimi managerji glede zaznane enakosti spolov v organizacijah in analizirati razlike med spoloma v odnosih med zaznano enakostjo spolov, zaznanim zadovoljstvom na delovnem mestu in kariero, zaznanim zadovoljstvom z delom, in zaznano konfliktnostjo relacije delo-družina.

Zasnova/metodologija/pristop: Vzorec raziskave zajema 82 managerjev v slovenskih organizacijah. V prvi fazi smo s t-testom analizirali razlike med moškimi in ženskami glede zaznane enakosti spolov na položajih odločanja. V naslednjem koraku smo razvili konceptualna modela in z uporabo strukturnih enačb (SEM) analizirali razlike med konstrukti.

Rezultati: Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da ženske managerke zaznavajo enakost spolov v organizacijah na splošno bistveno nižja kot moški; dojemanje enakosti spolov je pozitivno povezano z zaznanim zadovoljstvom na delovnem mestu in kariero, kot tudi z zaznanim zadovoljstvom z delom, vendar sta obe povezavi precej močnejše izraženi na strani žensk. Zdi se tudi, da se ženske managerke bolj učinkovito spopadajo z zaznano konfliktnostjo, ki izvira iz relacije delo-družina, saj ima slednji bistveno drugačen vpliv na zaznano zadovoljstvo žensk z delom, v primerjavi z moškimi.

Zaključek: Za doseganje večje enakosti spolov v organizacijah in zmanjšanje razlik med spoloma, ne gre pričakovati, da bi bile lahko zgolj zakonodajne pobude uspešne brez ustreznih poslovnih strategij organizacij, saj le te predstavljajo okvir za poslovanje in določajo notranjo delovno kulturo. Izsledki ponujajo implikacije tako oblikovalcem politik, kot tudi poslovni praksi.

Ključne besede: *ravnotežje med spoloma; položaj odločanja; zadovoljstvo z zaposlitvijo; zadovoljstvo z delom*

Appendix

Appendix A

Perceived gender equality in organizations
[GE1]: I feel the same willingness to bid for the top managerial positions in comparison with the opposite gender.
[GE2]: I believe I have the necessary abilities and skills to take over the leading position in comparison with the opposite gender. [GE3]: I believe that people trust me (as a manager) equally in comparison with the opposite gender. [GE4]: I believe that I have the same opportunities to be at the managerial position as the opposite gender. [GE5]: I believe that I have the same responsibilities for the management of organizations like the opposite sex. [GE6]: I believe that my rights to take over a managerial position in the business society are treated equally in comparison with opposite sex. [GE7]: Opinions are divided regarding the gender balance on the boards of organizations. [GE8]: The law enables equal gender representation on boards of organizations. [GE9]: In the organization I feel equal in the decision-making process compared with the opposite gender. [GE10]: In general, I perceive equal influence in the organization compared with the opposite gender. [GE11]: I believe that I am equally paid in comparison with the opposite gender.
Perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career
[SEC1]: Overall, I am satisfied with my working position. [SEC2]: I often think about stopping engagement in a managerial position. [SEC3]: In general, I am satisfied with the type of work I'm doing on the job. [SEC4]: Most people in similar workplaces are very satisfied with the work situation. [SEC5]: People working in a senior managerial position often think about stopping the pursuit of a leading position. [SEC6]: In general, I am satisfied with the success that I have achieved in my career. [SEC7]: I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting the goals of my entire career. [SEC8]: I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting the goals regarding my personal income. [SEC9]: I'm satisfied with the progress in meeting goals for my career promotion. [SEC10]: In general, I am satisfied with my career.
Perceived satisfaction with the work
[SW1]: I feel valued in the business environment. [SW2]: People in the organization respect my expertise in my field of work. [SW3]: I feel that working on my position allows me to realize my potential overall. [SW4]: I feel that I learned new things that can help me better perform work activities. [SW5]: My working position allows me to strengthen my professional skills. [SW6]: My work requires a lot of creativity. [SW7]: My working position helps me develop creativity outside the workplace.
Perceived work-family conflicts
[WFC1]: The demand of my work interfere with my home and family life. [WFC2]: The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill my family responsibilities. [WFC3]: Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.

Appendix B

Items	Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
[GE1]: I feel the same willingness to bid for the top managerial positions in comparison with the opposite gender.	F	4.91	1.697	p < 0.05
	M	5.92	1.052	
[GE2]: I believe I have the necessary abilities and skills to take over the leading position in comparison with the opposite gender.	F	5.69	1.227	p > 0.10
	M	5.69	1.390	
[GE3]: I believe that people trust me (as a manager) equally in comparison with the opposite gender.	F	5.17	1.403	p < 0.05
	M	5.81	1.167	
[GE4]: I believe that I have the same opportunities to be at the managerial position as the opposite gender	F	4.50	1.643	p < 0.001
	M	5.78	1.222	
[GE5]: I believe that I have the same responsibilities for the management of organizations like the opposite gender.	F	5.11	1.663	p < 0.01
	M	6.17	1.108	
[GE6]: I believe that my rights to take over a managerial position in the business society are treated equally in comparison with opposite gender.	F	4.67	1.606	p < 0.01
	M	5.69	1.390	
[GE7]: Opinions are divided regarding the gender balance on the boards of organizations.	F	3.91	1.532	p < 0.01
	M	4.89	1.652	
[GE8]: The law enables equal gender representation on boards of organizations.	F	5.02	1.273	p < 0.05
	M	5.67	1.195	
[GE9]: In the organization I feel equal in the decision-making process compared with the opposite gender.	F	4.76	1.594	p < 0.001
	M	6.22	0.637	
[GE10]: In general, I perceive equal influence in the organization compared with the opposite gender.	F	4.65	1.676	p < 0.001
	M	5.94	0.893	
[GE11]: I believe that I am equally paid in comparison with the opposite gender.	F	4.63	1.743	p < 0.001
	M	5.89	1.116	

Appendix C

Items of "Perceived gender equality at decision-making positions within organizations"	Comm.	Factor 1 - "Perceived gender equality at decision-making positions within organizations" - loadings
GE1	0.600	0.774
GE4	0.791	0.889
GE6	0.659	0.812
GE9	0.893	0.945
GE10	0.849	0.921
GE11	0.733	0.856
KMO: 0.811; BTS: Chi-square=295.764. $p < 0.001$; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.880		
Items of "Perceived satisfaction with the work"	Comm.	Factor 1 - "Perceived satisfaction with work" - loadings
SW2	0.597	0.747
SW5	0.670	0.790
SW6	0.690	0.793
SW7	0.656	0.749
KMO: 0.755; BTS: Chi-square=114.036. $p < 0.001$; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.710		
Items of "Perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career"	Comm.	Factor 1 - "Perceived satisfaction with the employment position and career" - loadings
SEC1	0.772	0.879
SEC3	0.782	0.884
SEC6	0.682	0.826
SEC7	0.856	0.925
SEC8	0.666	0.816
SEC9	0.803	0.896
SEC10	0.885	0.941
KMO: 0.900; BTS: Chi-square=591.580. $p < 0.001$; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.947		
Items of "Perceived work-family conflicts"	Comm.	Factor 1 - "Perceived support of family" - loadings
WFC1	0.853	0.924
WFC2	0.889	0.943
WFC3	0.814	0.902
KMO: 0.741; BTS: Chi-square=170.083. $p < 0.001$; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.912		