

Women's Professional Competitiveness and Employability: Current Psycho-social Situation in Lithuania

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Abstract

The article deals with the research aimed to reveal the structure and psycho-social components of women's employability in Lithuania. The research results allowed to name educative means of women's competitiveness development and enhancement by mapping women's employability and revealing the construct structure of women's professional competitiveness.

Introduction

Rapid and essential political, socio-economical transformation in the recent years made an impact on the development of labour market and human resources in Lithuania. The labour market was developing through the restructuring of economics, deepening of privatization, formation of the mechanisms of market economy and new labour relations. Basic gender issues today are not merely special concerns but are considered to be a crucial element in making policies, plans and strategies for sustainable development. Low economic participation in the labour market, women's unemployment, low incomes in comparison with men still remains as an essential element of social and economic women's exclusion. Despite an increasing number of working women in all the levels of ages in Lithuania, the most complicated gender issue is that many of them are blocked in their attempts to gain access to higher occupational positions.

Successful women's integration into the current free market of Lithuania depends upon various socio-cultural-ideological factors. Social attitudes, morals and social standards concerning social gender, although based on biological difference between men and women, in every economic, cultural, political system are built in a specific way by creating men's and women's specific social parts and relationship models. Lithuania's current situation is specific and individual as the results of its socialist gender equality ideology realization, traditional, often archetypical, gender stereotypes and technologic society values of modernistic free market interchange. Not so long ago, in the soviet times, women in the former USSR used to perform double, sometimes controversial, socio-professional part. On the one hand, while putting ideas of socialist feminism into practice at a national level, a woman was assigned an active part in manufacturing,

politics and social life. On the other hand, though government made efforts to ease some of woman's load of children care and conditions of life, women were not exempted from duties that were assigned to them by traditions of patriarchal society. Moreover, men obtained high social and professional status exclusively (women were in the minority among high rank party functionaries, officials and manufacturers).

However, having established free market economic relationships in independent Lithuania, a model, coordinating interests of women, as a specific group, and parts performed by them in family and social lives, has not been publicly discussed and articulated yet, and even not created. Therefore, not by coincidence, more and more forms of defiance of women's interests, open and latent exclusion and discrimination in various social spheres as well as in labour market are revealed.

Biologically and socially specific situation of women in the society defines specific women's situation in labour market: woman's psychological well-being, employers' attitude towards working women, peculiarities of social system, women's image related to professional activities and family life in media influence women's ability to represent their own interests and be competitive in labour market.

Concept, structure and components of competitiveness and employability are being considered as an important object of scientific research and investigated by many researchers in nowadays scientific social inquiry (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Aiginger, 2000; Barner, 1996; Cosgrove - Sacks, 2001; Martens, 1990). Revelation of culturally particular and gender-specific features of competitiveness and employability would allow to create effective educative and social intervention means of competitiveness and employability enhancement.

That is why an important **research question** is: *what are the culturally specific psychosocial dimensions of women's competitiveness and employability in nowadays Lithuania?*

The research object is women's professional competitiveness and employability. The **aim of the research** is to reveal psychosocial factors of women's professional competitiveness and employability in Lithuania in order to develop strategies of women's employability enhancement. Thus, authors of the article seek to provide a generalized picture of the features which

are characteristic to women's competitiveness and employability in Lithuanian labour market and are encoded in its conceptual variations. This picture may be helpful for organizational initiatives, affirmative action programmes, coping with strategies in implementing equal opportunity and recruitment of women.

The research was carried out within the framework of Open Lithuanian Fund in cooperation with Social Research Scientific Centre (Šiauliai University), Women's Studies Centre (Šiauliai University) and Lithuanian Association of University Women (LAUW).

The methods applied: analysis of relevant research literature, a survey applying standardized and semi-standardized questionnaires, statistical analysis of data (reliability analysis, factor and multidimensional scale analyses, correlation analysis). SPSS software was applied. Dependently on the task the methods of inferential statistics were used to evaluate differences between groups (Mann-Whitney U test for two unrelated samples, Chi-square test for two unrelated samples, ANOVA, z- test; significance $p < .01$).

Having chosen a questionnaire as the main method of the research, the research group evaluated possible advantages and drawbacks of the method. The advantage is that during quite a short period of time and with little expenditure, having questioned an inconsiderable and varied group of respondents as well as having used statistical methods of high abstraction level, it is possible to form a general and impartial psychosocial model of respondents' group.

The disadvantage of the method is that we get to know the research subject through limited, standardized and verbal instrument – a questionnaire. In other words, in this case competitiveness is known through subjective opinion of the respondents themselves, which is expressed within the framework of question and response format presented by researchers. However, more informative methods of research, such as observation, open interview, document analyses, etc. would have required too much of intellectual and material expenditures of which researchers did not dispose.

The structure of the article: the article consists of six parts that deal with theoretical analysis of competitiveness and employability concepts as psychosocial constructs (part 1), presentation of empirical data that reveal dimensions and structure of women's employability in Lithuania - such dimensions as ability to develop one's own professional competences (part 2), independence and autonomy (part 3), portability of professional-communicational skills (part 4), self-confidence, resoluteness and positive self-assessment (part 5), attitude towards family and career (part 6).

1. Competitiveness and Employability as Psychosocial Constructs

Competitiveness, as a specific psychosocial construct, is defined as a result of person's inner (biological,

psychological) and outer (social, ideological, political) factor interaction that reveals itself as an ability to compete in the labour market. The notion of competitiveness is an ability to increase factor incomes and maintain a level of employment (Aiginger, 2000) or it is an ability of entities of a certain field of activity to have the lead and consequently enjoy better performance in comparison to other entities in the labour market. Martens (1990) distinguishes achievement motivation from competitiveness by adding social evaluation as a key component in being competitive. **Competitiveness** is a disposition to strive for satisfaction when making comparisons with some standard of excellence in the presence of evaluative other.

In hypothetic structure of competitiveness there is a possibility to distinguish employability, the so-called hired labour, among other possible components. Employability is encompassing an overview of an individual's career planning, development and job suitability over the individual's working life, and over a number of jobs or careers. The working definition of 'employability' is suggested: it is "the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment" (Hillage and Pollard, 1998, p. 2).

The individual, within employability, is concerned with getting a job, keeping that job, developing his/her skills and experiences into other jobs and moving into other jobs (finding and successfully applying). That is why employability is about three abilities: gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, obtaining new employment if required (Hillage and Pollard, 1998).

The working definition of employability suggested by Cosgrove-Sacks (2002) is the capability to move into and within labour markets and to realise potential through sustainable and accessible employment. For the individual employability depends on the knowledge and skills they possess, the way personal attributes are presented in the labour market and the environmental, economic and social contexts in which work is sought.

Various conceptions in employability structure indicate such components as environmental scanning, portable skills that could easily be transferred from one job and professional sphere into another, self-management, communicational skills (Barner, 1996).

We have to admit that there are a great number of other assessment criteria to estimate professional competitiveness in labour market: financial evaluation of professional activities (salary), professional status in hierarchic structure, social and psychological work security. Competitiveness in labour market in our research was estimated according to easily identified, conditionally impartial, factual criterion: according to the fact of being employed (or unemployed). Among the employed women, majority was called successful career women - high professional positions acquired by businesswomen.

Psychosocial character of hired labour was estimated and analysed by comparing two women's groups:

Table 1

Professional development and seeking for better qualifications

Items of the questionnaire	Unemployed women	Employed women	χ^2 test	
			χ^2	p
I constantly read professional literature (specialized journals and textbooks)	47,5%	75,9%	28,7	<0,001
I develop my professional qualifications by using help of individually hired specialist	0,3%	2,6%	5,8	0,015
I attend various free refresher courses	27,3%	38,8%	5,5	0,019
I attend various fee-paying and pay my own money for that	23,9%	44,8%	18,9	<0,001
Unfortunately I don't have any possibilities to develop my professional qualifications	39,9%	7,8%	41,9	<0,001

116 employed women and 373 unemployed women from all over Lithuania. By means of comparing attitudes, self-evaluation and communicational skills of women from successful and unsuccessful career groups, the research strived to reveal the structure and psychosocial peculiarities of women's professional competitiveness and employability in Lithuania

2. Employability and Constant Lifelong Learning

Our research reveals that far more employed women-respondents of the research than unemployed pay attention to various formal and informal forms of professional development (read professional literature, attend various fee-paying and free refresher courses), study in different institutions (high and higher educational establishments) (see Table 1). The difference could be explained by the fact that employed women, who have a job, have financial resources to pay for evening classes or extramural studies; also direct needs related to available job (seeking for better qualifications, better payment, higher rank) encourage employed women to develop their real and formal qualifications.

Questions to the respondents about their personal abilities to manage modern communication and information technologies reveal that employed women (of successful career) estimate their personal management of modern communication and information technologies (driving, foreign language, computer literacy) higher, which reflects not only higher self-esteem level of employed women's communication skills, as mentioned above, but indirectly shows the inward readiness of this women group and their learning to master up-to-date habits of work. Purposeful development of professional competitiveness determines successful professional competitiveness process (constant learning) and result (job available).

The fact that employed women's self-esteem of modern communication means is higher indirectly testifies wider involvement of the group into social and informational system. Being in the system enables women to estimate their skills, to avoid technological petrification

and to evaluate the skills of up-to-date market. The above-mentioned qualities, self-education, integrating into surrounding processes are the evidence of potential innovative personality.

Our research reveals that learning skills and searching for information skills, attention and time devoted to raise professional qualification (even if it is not necessary at the moment), formal-institutional and informal-independent learning motivation contributes to women's higher professional competitiveness and more successful employability.

Up-to-date economy, which sometimes is called highway economy, supposes fast alterations in labour market. One of the most important abilities under 'highway economy' conditions is the ability to operate in 'here and now' situations, which differ greatly from previous situations. Readiness for constant alterations means the ability to foresee what professional skills and requirements will be necessary tomorrow. Up-to-date labour market is characteristic of the fact that traditional, hierarchic work relationship is declining, and new atmosphere, based on cooperation, interaction, flexibility and innovation is emerging instead. Contemporary unemployment in post-communist transit countries can be caused by relations that take place there (transition from planned economy to free market economy) but these constant changes take place in the West market economy as well, and they are determined by the processes of globalisation and the nature of 'highway economy' itself. Therefore work participants do not have enough time for reorientation of their professional qualifications in constantly alternating labour market. Knowledge and information society economy is changing usual industrial (and agrarian) economic and social relations.

Under conditions of constant alterations, constant learning practice becomes of great importance, which means that labour market participants will be mentally prepared for constant alterations in the labour market and society; and for assessment and alterations of their own professional abilities. Thus, probably, in this context, going into professional details and knowledge is not as important

as readiness to accept new information and learning to learn.

3. Employability and Psychological Dimension of Independence and Autonomy

According to the presumption that success of employability and competitiveness is determined by the factor of how a participant of the labour market assesses his/her personal responsibility and initiative, and how success is influenced by outer factors that do not depend on the person, there was a question in the research questionnaire about the influence of common state policy, people's own initiative and activities of employment agencies on successful employability (see Table 2). Employed women are more inclined to relate the success of employability with their own initiative but not with outer 'helpers', such as employment agencies, pursuing common state policy. Unemployed women have fewer hopes to achieve success in employability while depending on person's own initiative; they think that employment agencies play more important part in successful employability. Such difference between the research groups allows us to presume that autonomy and confidence in his/her own initiative while getting employed is one of the factors of successful professional competitiveness and employability.

Table 2
Autonomy and confidence in one's own initiative while getting employed

	Women		t-test	
	unemployed	employed	t	p
Common state policy	41%	42%	0,29	0,77
Activities of employment agencies	21%	16%	2,4	0,02
One's own initiative	31%	38%	2,7	0,01

Dependence and conformance (opposites to autonomy and independence), as undesirable personal-professional qualities are expressed by traditional and organizational hierarchic parts, which dominated in recent past and still dominate in Lithuania's organizational structures. People are traditionally used to act in subordination: to be under leadership, behave under strict professional instructions. Not accidentally they relate the source of their wealth not to their personal initiative but to the activities of outer structures (state institutions, employers, etc.) and alterations initiated by them. In women's situation not only traditional organizational (paternalistic) relations can be the outer (impersonal) source of wealth but traditional gender relations as well.

The research reveals that unemployed women are more inclined to assign higher professional ranks to men (leading positions, responsible posts, concern for career)

and to delegate paternalistic functions of the wealth source to them (care for family's financial welfare, earn money). Whereas secondary work functions, which provide them with lower status in professional hierarchy structure (irresponsible posts, care for their own looks and family but not personal career, acquisition of feminine, so called humanitarian, professions) are assigned to women.

Orientation towards outer (in consideration of personal 'me') source of welfare was indirectly reflected when the two research women groups had to evaluate their property and social status. 80% of women, who assigned themselves to the 'very top' of society, were unemployed and only 20% of them were employed. That indirectly shows that unemployed women of our research assess their property and social status not according to their personal input – professional development and income, but high property and social status of other members of their family (spouse, parents, etc.). Employed women, who confine in their own personal input and financial status, assign themselves to middle class of society. The research results can also indirectly show that a great number of unemployed women are the wives of wealthy men with high social status.

The research reveals the difference of how employed and unemployed women estimate the influence of 'outer' factors on successful employability. Unemployed women are inclined to relate their success and failures to outer factors. They relate success to coincidence, friends' and acquaintances' help, rather than personal efforts. They also relate their failures to outer circumstances, rather than personal 'inner' factors. The research reveals that employed women relate successful employability to personal-inner factors (self-confidence, optimism, persistence while searching for a job, self-presentation to an employer, initiative). In their opinion, psychological factors are more important than the factors that are difficult to change quickly (e.g., to learn a foreign language) or even impossible to change (e.g., age). Unemployed women do not consider psychological communication characteristics to be significant factors for successful employability. They consider the factor which is difficult to influence or change, e.g. young age of an employee, to be more significant for successful employability.

Dimension of autonomy/dependence is reflected by the component of research which analyses reasons for changing a workplace. Unemployed women, specifying the reasons for changing a workplace or losing a job, indicated 'outer' factors: redundancy, reorganization and bankrupt of the enterprise (30%), maternity leave (12%) and health problems (5%). Inner motivation was the reason for employed women to change their workplace: they were looking for better professional career opportunities (15%), better payment (12%), more prestigious work position (3%), and friendlier colleagues (3%).

On the supposition that higher competitiveness is related to the initiative to set up new business, we have realised that in the attitude level there is no difference in how employed and unemployed women would start their

businesses in proper conditions (Mann-Whitney U test, $p=.3$). Whereas the question about real business experience proves that employed women have tried to start their businesses more often, and unemployed women are more passive in taking the initiative (employed women 33%, unemployed women 21%, $\chi^2=7.2$; $df=2$; $p=.03$).

Autonomy and independence of a woman, a person, is a strong reason for successful integration into labour market in the context of outer social-economic alterations. To educate active but not passive performers of work process employees is one of the strategies to develop women's professional competitiveness and to improve employability.

4. Portability of Professional-communicational Skills and Women's Competitiveness

The fact, revealed by the research, that employed women estimate their modern communicational abilities better (computer literacy, foreign languages, contemporary communication standards), indirectly shows that this women group has better acquired the so called 'portable' professional abilities. Abilities that reflect person's ability to acquire new skills which could be easily transferred from one work environment and professional sphere into another are defined as portable.

Furthermore, we would also relate the value of pre-acquired professional experience acknowledgement to portability of professional skills and competitiveness. The research proves that employed women estimate skills and professional experience which they have acquired in former jobs higher than unemployed women, and they consider it more suitable for current and future jobs. Unemployed women, unable to estimate their professional experience and skills acquired in former jobs, prevent their competitiveness from portability, employment at present and in the future and proper positive self-presentation to potential employer.

The research women groups perceive their current professional situations, their professional past and future differently. That became clear when the respondents were asked to draw a graph of their professional success according to a given format (see Figure).

Employed women's graph rises and reflects optimism and belief in professional success in the future. The group of employed women estimate the past more pessimistically in respect to current and past achievements. Constant development, progress from imperfection to perfection, from misfortune to fortune – that is employed women's professional lifeline. Whereas professional graph of unemployed women falls: they perceive the future as falling, rolling down. Graph of professional success, drawn by unemployed women, is uneven, broken, full of sudden changes. Different self-esteem of their position determines real (objective) chances of the groups in the labour market. Jobless women are more pessimistic concerning their

professional success, and that, no doubt, reflects on current and former experience and sets women against future work achievements and successful professional career.

5. Dimension of Self-confidence, Resoluteness and Positive Self-assessment

Results of the research reveal that communicational skills play specific part in women's competitiveness and employability structure. Skills of direct (face to face) and written communication become important in conditions of limited time and psychological strain, also when work groups become heterogeneous (interdisciplinary, represented by different property-social classes, cultures and subcultures, different geographic regions).

Respondents were given a series of psychosocial dimension scales. Standard factor analysis and reliability analysis were applied in order to test reliability of all the scales. Scale reliability indicators are up to psychometric standards.

Subscales were made on the grounds of statistical indicators. The subscales were interpreted theoretically and were given names, reflecting one or another psychosocial dimension.

Factor analysis of communication style scale reveals a three-dimensional structure of the analysed phenomena. We have extracted three factors that define a communication style: 1) Verbal suggestibility and perceptiveness; 2) Social insularity; 3) Emotional and verbal expressiveness (see Table 3).

Employed women assign more features to their communication style that are common to verbal expressiveness. They are braver in suggesting their ideas, more suggestive while expressing their thoughts and feelings. They think that they understand other people more easily. The construct of the research "Emotional and Verbal Expressiveness" reflects the tendency of employed women to express their ideas, comprehend and express their self-confidence orally. Employed women criticize others more easily and do not avoid arguments, they more boast of their achievements, consider themselves as strong personalities.

Whereas abstention from criticism and arguments is more typical of unemployed women, they are less inclined to boast of themselves. An interview with an employer might be called extreme, because of limited time and of high psychological tension. Working women are more self-confident when they communicate with their employer (see Table 4). They are more concentrated, self-confident, they are calmer and more relaxed, optimistic during the interview. Meanwhile, the unemployed women are more distracted, pessimistic, unsure of themselves, disturbed and scared. There is no difference in both groups of women in how openly their thoughts are expressed and protected, feelings are expressed during the conversation with employer.

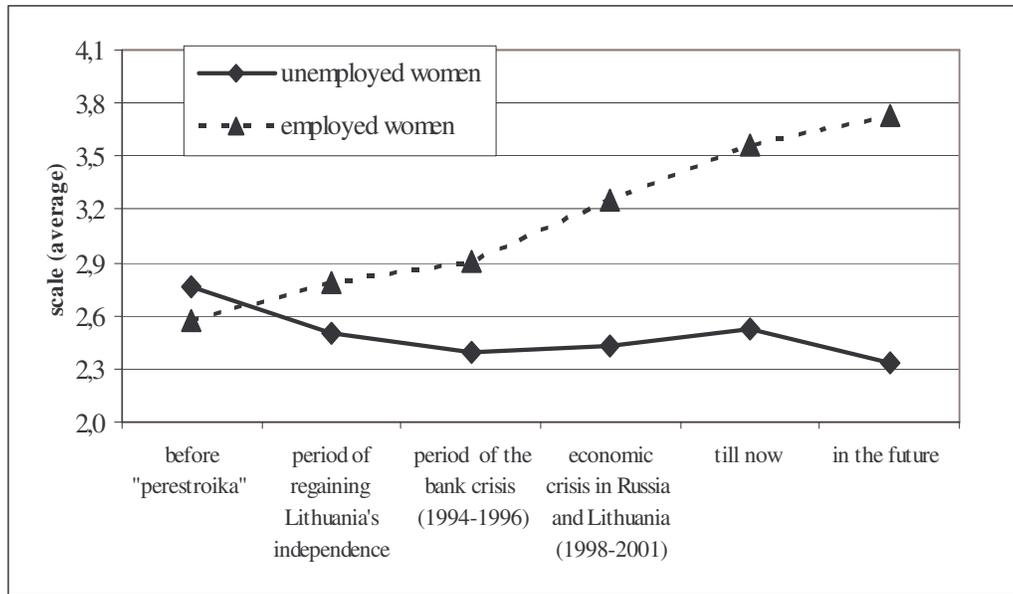


Figure. Self-estimation of women's professional career path

Table 3

Communication style (according to results of factor analysis)

Items and subscales (factors)	Cronbach α	The factor loading of test item (L)	Item-total correlation (r/itt)	Percentage of variance explained
Subscale 'Verbal suggestibility and perceptivity' <i>More characteristic of working women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I talk too vaguely • I can express my opinion very well • There are few people who pay attention to my thoughts, suggestions • I am too shy and unsociable • I find it easy to express my feelings to other people • I understand other people very well 	0,74	-0,69 0,68 -0,63 -0,55 0,54 0,50	0,49 0,56 0,46 0,56 0,53 0,26	20 %
Subscale 'Social reticence' (no difference between women's groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it difficult to chat with other people • I like being among people • Mostly I am too serious 	0,54	0,68 -0,66 0,57	0,43 0,40 0,34	15 %
Subscale 'Emotional and verbal expressivity' <i>More characteristic of working women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it difficult to criticize people • I boast of my achievements • I try to avoid arguments with other people • I am a colourful personality 	0,58	-0,67 0,61 -0,60 0,55	0,41 0,31 0,36 0,39	14 %

Self-confidence and positive evaluation of oneself dimension is clearly identified in the structure of professional competitiveness and employability, revealed

by the research. Namely self-confidence plays the role of a connecting link, common denominator in the situation of professional competitiveness of women.

Self –estimation obtains a distinctive content: 1) ability to realize and introduce to others (employers and colleagues) one's gained professional experience, competence, professional skills; 2) courage to change not only professional environment, but also the content of one's professional competence and take up a new activity, for example, business in order to improve one's social-economical status; 3) to relate one's professional success with inner factors depending only upon the woman herself; 4) to resolve to new educational experiences and professional discoveries; 5) to foresee not only threats and dangers, but also possibilities to new professional relationships, career development, innovations in the ambience of rapid social – economic changes; 6) ability to control direct (eye to eye) communication, demonstrating openness and sincerity.

Some factors-subcales were pointed out – as 'Independence', 'Perfectionism', 'Ignorance of Obstructions, Resoluteness', 'Outward Determination', after the respondents had been given statements, reflecting quality 'Resoluteness' and factor analysis was performed (see Table 5). There is no difference between the groups (Mann-Whitney non-parametric test) of women, how they try to fulfil work independently, without anybody's help,

how they try to concentrate upon the work (subscale 'Independence'). We must admit that diligence, independence of work fulfilment is a clearly articulated cultural value in Lithuania: so there is a possibility that the responses of both groups can be value-culturally programmed.

There is no difference in how women of both groups evaluate the importance of quality of fulfilled work, constant employment and work fulfilment (subscale 'Perfectionism'), whereas there is a difference in how they evaluate the influence of 'outward' factors upon success at work (subscale 'Outward Determination'). Women who do not work are likely to link their success and failure to outward factors. They are likely to link their success with a coincidence than with their personal effort, friends' and acquaintances' help and they lay their failure to the circumstances' charge, but not personal, 'inner' factors. 'Ignorance of obstructions and surefootedness' revealed difference between working and seeking for employment women – obstructions have less destructive and disorientative influence upon working women. Working women treat ill fortune and failure as strengthening force, that can not break them.

Table 4

Conversation with employer as a situation of high psychological tension (structure of the dimension according to the results of factor analysis)

Items and subscales (factors)	Cronbach α	The factor loading of test item (L)	Item-total correlation (r/itt)	Percentage of variance explained
Subscale 'Emotionality and openness' (no difference between women's groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I say what I think/ I think over every word • I am enthusiastic/ I am calm • I am open/ I am inhibited • I maintain my opinion, try to please / I accept his opinion • I speak emotionally / I hide my emotions 	0,67	0,77 0,53 0,53 0,52 0,50	0,42 0,49 0,27 0,47 0,47	16 %
Subscale 'Self- confidence' <i>More characteristic of working women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracted /focused • Not sure where to put hands, eyes/look straight into the eyes • Optimist/ pessimist • Self-confident/unsure of myself • Disturbed, scared /calm, relaxed 	0,58	-0,74 -0,69 0,59 0,58 -0,53	0,28 0,41 0,30 0,32 0,39	16 %
Subscale 'Exaggerated modesty' <i>More characteristic of unemployed women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned / unconcerned • Modestly dressed / a bit provocatively dressed • Try not to upstart / suggest initiatives, new ideas • Praise myself / talk about myself critically • I feel free / I feel restricted 	0,48	0,69 0,64 0,54 -0,49 -0,48	0,39 0,31 0,18 0,17 0,29	15 %

Table 5

Resoluteness (structure of the dimension according to results of factor analysis)

Items and subscales (factors)	Cronbach α	The factor loading of test item (L)	Item-total correlation (r/itt)	Percentage of variance explained
Subscale 'Independence' (<i>no difference between women's groups</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to fulfil work without anybody's help • In life and at work you have to rely only on yourself • I do not think about anything else when I do a task 	0,56	0,76 0,76 0,67	0,40 0,40 0,32	53 %
Subscale 'Outward determination' <i>More characteristic of unemployed women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances are more to blame than me • Success depends upon coincidence, not effort • I must be grateful to my friends for my achievements 	0,39	0,78 0,73 0,49	0,30 0,25 0,15	46 %
Subscale 'Ignorance of obstructions, resoluteness' <i>More characteristic of working women (Mann-Whitney test, $p < 0,001$)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if I am not successful I know what to do next • Obstructions, failures only make me stronger • I would like to take up business though it is risky • My acquaintances call me businesslike • If there is a chance to chose between two opportunities, it is better to act at once, without postponing 	0,53	0,71 0,71 0,49 0,54 0,49	0,39 0,38 0,24 0,25 0,24	35 %
Subscale 'Perfectionism' (<i>no difference between women's groups</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel distressed if I have to reject a difficult task, because I know that I can do it • I lose peace if I can not find work two days in turn • I always try to do work as well as I can • I feel worried if I see that I failed in getting 100% of what I had planned 	0,46	0,67 0,66 0,57 0,50	0,32 0,31 0,25 0,21	32 %

6. Attitude towards Family and Career

The subject of the research itself has determined the specific result of analysis of professional competitiveness – particularities of gender roles. The results of our research into gender aspect add to the models of structure of competitiveness, discussed by foreign researchers (Barner, 1996; Bawden, 1995; Handy, 1998) Admittedly, to get a deeper analysis of competitiveness models it would have been meaningful to make a research with a group of men. Our research looks not only into the peculiarities of competitiveness and potentiality of employability, but also reveals women's orientation to the role of gender, which determines success of professional activity.

Having presented the respondents with the scale of gender roles and stereotypes, a factor analysis was carried out and on the ground of it some factors – statement (item) groups were pointed out (see Table 6).

Comparing the answers of working women and those seeking for employment in regard to the factor 'Professional Gender Hierarchy', it appeared that

unemployed women are more likely to approve of professional gender hierarchy, founded on traditional, stereotypical conception of division of labour between genders. Unemployed women assign higher status to men in professional hierarchy (top positions, responsible posts, taking care of own career, earning money), whereas women are assigned such working functions which are secondary and give woman lower status in the structure of professional hierarchy (second-rate position, taking care not of personal career, but physical appearance and family, acquiring womanly – 'patronizing' professions).

It was observed that the older the women, the higher post they are likely to assign to men and the lower post to the women in the scale of professional hierarchy (see Table 4). It is interesting to point out that in the group of unemployed women over 36 years of age, the attitude towards hierarchy of professional activity in the aspect of gender is more expressed.

The factor 'Woman's social emancipation and gender equality' reflects emancipation model of women, when

Table 6

Attitude towards family and professional career (structure of the dimension according to results of factor analysis)

Items and subscales (factors)	Cronbach α	The factor loading of test item (L)	Item-total correlation (r/itt)	Percentage of variance explained
Subscale 'Professional Gender Hierarchy' (<i>more characteristic of unemployed women</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case a man who has the right qualification and a woman with higher qualification apply for the same position, man should get the work, because he has to support family. It's man's concern to earn money and woman has to take care of home and family. Girls have to be trained to acquire womanly professions (nurses, teachers, dressmakers, etc.). Husband is more able to make serious decisions than wife. It is more important for a woman to help her husband to mind his career rather than seek for her own career. In a group consisting of men and women, men should occupy higher posts. Men should be ashamed if wife earns more. It's person's gender, not professional interests that determine, how much time and energy he/she has to give to family and career. It's more important for a woman to have a well set-up figure and be well dressed. 	0,81	0,76 0,69 0,62 0,61 0,60 0,58 0,54 0,52 0,39	0,64 0,56 0,50 0,49 0,49 0,46 0,43 0,41 0,30	38 %
Subscale 'Woman's Social Emancipation and Gender Equality' (<i>no difference between women's groups</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be good if a woman became the president of our country one day. Women should try to acquire such traditionally manly professions as taxi driver or police officer. Men could acquire such professions which traditionally are thought to be womanly (nurses, kindergarten teachers...). The best way out for a woman is to be independent – work and seek career. Both woman and man should financially equally contribute to the budget of their family. 	0,65	0,72 0,69 0,51 0,40 0,28	0,47 0,47 0,31 0,25 0,17	34 %
Subscale 'Orientation Towards Family versus Career' (<i>more characteristic of unemployed women</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women, bringing up preschool children, should not work; they could work only in case the family needed it financially. I can imagine myself without profession, but without family – not. Work is important, but actually, the majority of women want to have a family and children. 	0,62	0,60 0,54 0,51	0,36 0,32 0,30	35 %

they are assigned roles which in traditional patriarchal culture are called manly (high posts of state leaders, officials, roles of traditionally manly professions assigned to women). The attitude of employed and seeking for employment women towards the statements of this block does not differ.

The attitude of unsuccessful professional career women towards the relationship between the family and career differs from the attitude how working women value their family and career (subscale 'Orientation towards Family versus Career'). Unemployed women are likely to

find excuses for their unsuccessful professional career and its sacrifice in the name of family interests: care of children, role of mother and wife are raised higher than work and professional career.

It was observed that unemployed women are much more strongly oriented to professional gender hierarchy and stereotypical understanding of division of labour between genders. Men are assigned higher status in professional hierarchy (top positions, responsible posts, taking care of career, earning money). Women are assigned such working functions which are secondary and

give them lower status in the structure of professional hierarchy (not responsible posts, taking care not of career, but of physical appearance and family, acquiring womanly-patronizing professions). The attitude of the so called unfortunate career women to the relationship between career and family coordination differs from the way working women value family and career. Unemployed women are likely to excuse career sacrifice in the name of family. We can premise that namely such attitude to woman's coordination of family and career determines the failure of employability.

Conclusions

Comparing empirically two groups of women – employed and unemployed women, culturally particular and gender-specific content of employability was stated. The research revealed the structure and dimensions of women's employability in Lithuania which consists of such components: a) reflection and presentation of own professional experience, skills and competence, b) initiative and purposefulness to change/improve own social-economic situation, c) optimism-pessimism in respect of professional future, d) motivation of in-service (refreshing) training d) resoluteness and independence while carrying out work, f) coordination of gender roles in family and professional sphere, g) self-confidence, i) style of communicating and behaviour in the situations of employability, h) particularities of planning and projecting own activity.

The data received in the research allow us to suggest educative and social intervention means of women's competitiveness and employability enhancement.

Different participation of working and unemployed women in the processes of lifelong learning, stated in the research, shows that under the circumstances of constant changes, under the conditions of 'highway economy', practice of constant learning attaches significance to them. This foresees that the participants of labour market should be psychologically prepared for the critical supervision and changing of own skills, professional competence.

In this context there is a very important intention of women to accept new information constantly and to master how to learn. One more strategy of how to improve women's professional competitiveness and employability is training of autonomy and independence of woman as a personality.

The fact, stated by the research, that working women rate their modern communicative skills (computer literacy, command of foreign languages and communication rules) and previously gained experience better and are able to present it to the employer proves one more time that the so called 'portable skills' are easily transferred from one labour sphere to another, this emphasises the significance of training and enhancing women's employability and competitiveness in the labour market.

The differences of communication style, resoluteness, self-confidence, interview with an employer of employed

and unemployed women, revealed in the research, determines psychological-educational means of enhancing women's employability: in the process of socialization, career advising, consulting, such qualities as self-confidence and resoluteness should be reinforced among unemployed and unsuccessful career women during different trainings.

Career advisors, vocational guidance specialists, pedagogues should pay special attention to coordination of career and family in the process of education. That would be one of the vital factors of enhancing women's competitiveness and employability.

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Moterų profesinis konkurencingumas ir įsidarbinimo galimybės: dabartinė psichosocialinė situacija Lietuvoje

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatomas moterų konkurencingumą ir įsidarbinimo galimybes sąlygojančių psichosocialinių veiksnių tyrimas. Buvo palygintos dviejų kontrastinių tiriamųjų grupių, 116 dirbančių ir 373 darbo neturinčių moterų, psichosocialines nuostatos - požiūris į karjeros ir šeimos vaidmenų suderinimą, asmeninės profesinės patirties refleksija ir pristatymas, profesinio tobulinimosi motyvacija, ryžtingumas ir nepriklausomybė atliekant užduotis, pasitikėjimas savimi, bendravimo stilius, elgesys ir savijauta pokalbyje su darbdaviu. Nustatyti skirtumai tarp tiriamųjų grupių leido atskleisti moterų įsidarbinimo ir konkurencingumo požymius bei suformuluoti keletą rekomendacijų kaip edukacinėmis priemonėmis stiprinti moterų konkurencingumą ir gerinti įsidarbinimo galimybes. Tyrimas atskleidė, kad dirbančios respondentės, gerokai daugiau nei nedirbančiosios, skiria dėmesio įvairioms, formalioms ir neformalioms, profesinio tobulinimosi formoms (skaito profesinę literatūrą, lanko įvairius mokamus ir nemokamus tobulinimosi kursus), tarp jų daugiau yra besimokančių įvairaus pobūdžio ir pakopų įstaigose (aukštesniosiose ir aukštosiose mokyklose).

Dirbančių moterų aukštesnis nei nedirbančių modernių komunikacinių priemonių valdymo subjektyvus vertinimas, o tai netiesiogiai liudija apie šios grupės moterų platesnį išitraukimą į

socialinius ir informacinius tinklus. Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad dirbančios moterys yra linkusios įsidarbinimo sėkmę daugiau sieti su pačių žmonių iniciatyvumu, o ne su tokiais išoriniais "pagalbininkais" kaip įdarbinimo įstaigos, bendrą valstybės politiką įgyvendinančios institucijos. Nedarbančios moterys mažiau nei dirbančios tikisi sulaukti įsidarbinimo sėkmės pasikliaujant pačių žmonių iniciatyvumu ir svarbesnį vaidmenį sėkmingai įsidarbinant priskiria įdarbinimo įstaigoms. Tokie tyrimo rezultatai liudija apie tai, kad autonomiškumas yra sėkmingo profesinio konkurencingumo veiksnys.

Tyrimo metu nustatytas skirtumas tarp dirbančių ir nedarbančių moterų vertinant "išorinių" veiksnių įtaką darbo sėkmei. Nedarbančios moterys yra linkusios savo sėkmę sieti ir nesėkmių priežasčių ieškoti besikreipdamos į išorinius faktorius. Jos sėkmę daugiau sieja su atsitiktinumu, su draugų ir pažįstamų pagalba ir mažiau - su asmeninėmis pastangomis. Nesėkmes daugiau sieja su aplinkybėmis, bet ne su asmeniniais ir "vidiniais" faktoriais. Autonomiškumo/ priklausomumo dimensiją atspindėjo ir tas tyrimo komponentas, kuriame buvo analizuojamos darbo vietų keitimo priežastys. Darbo neturinčioms moterims praradus darbo vietą ir keičiant darbo vietas buvo svarbesni "išoriniai" faktoriai: etatų mažinimas, įmonės reorganizavimas ir bankrotas, vaiko auginimas, sveikatos problemos. Dirbančios moterys keitė darbo vietą daugiau dėl vidinės motyvacijos: ieškojo geresnių profesinės karjeros galimybių, didesnio atlyginimo, labiau prestižinės darbo vietos, geresnio, draugiškesnio kolektyvo. Besiremdami prielaida, jog aukštesnis konkurencingumas yra susijęs su iniciatyva savarankiškai imtis verslo, nustatė, jog nuostatų lygmenyje nėra skirtumo, kaip dirbančios ir nedarbančios moterys imtųsi savo verslo, jeigu būtų tinkamos sąlygos. Tuo tarpu tyrimo rezultatai parodė, jog dirbančios moterys dažniau nei darbo neturinčių moterų grupė bandė pradėti savo verslą, o darbo neturinčios moterys buvo pasyvesnės imantis savarankiško verslo iniciatyvos. Tyrimu nustatyta, kad dirbančios moterys įsidarbinimo sėkmę daugiau sieja su asmeniniais- vidiniais veiksniais (pasitikėjimas savimi, optimizmas, atkaklus darbo ieškojimas, gebėjimas pateikti save darbdaviui, iniciatyva).

Nustatytas nedarbančių moterų ryškesnis orientavimasis į profesinę lyčių hierarchiją, kai remiamasi tradicine, stereotipine lyčių darbo pasidalijimo samprata. Vyrams priskiriamas aukštesnis statusas profesinėje hierarchijoje (vadovaujantys postai, atsakingos pareigos, rūpinimasis savo karjera, pinigų uždirbimas). Moterims priskiriamos tokios darbinės funkcijos, kurios yra antraeilės ir suteikia moteriai žemesnį statusą profesinės hierarchijos struktūroje (neatsakingos pareigos, rūpinimasis ne asmenine karjera, bet savo išvaizda ir šeima, moteriškų-globėjiškų profesijų įsigijimas). Vadinamosios nesėkmingos karjeros moterų požiūris į šeimos bei karjeros santykį, derinimą skiriasi nuo to, kaip dirbančios moterys vertina šeimą ir karjerą. Nedarbančios moterys yra linkusios pateisinti asmeninės profesinės karjeros paaukojimą vardan šeimos interesų. Toks požiūris į moters karjeros ir šeimos interesų derinimą sąlygoja nedarbančių moterų profesinio konkurencingumo ir įsidarbinimo nesėkmę.

Asmens, moters autonomiškumas bei savarankiškumas yra svari prielaida sėkmingai integruojantis į darbo rinką ir moteriai keičiantis išorinių socialinių-ekonominių pokyčių kontekste. Ugdyti aktyvias, o ne pasyvias darbo proceso atlikėjas, darbuotojas, - tai yra viena iš moterų profesinio konkurencingumo lavinimo ir įsidarbinimo gerinimo strategijų.

Įteikta 2004 m. sausio mėn.
Parengta spaudai 2004 m. vasario mėn.

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