

Women in the Labor Market - an Example of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship

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Abstract. The paper focuses on the issues of self-efficacy and career orientation of women. These issues are particularly important in the context of dwindling labor resources and increased interest of women in professional activity. In addition, the responsibility for the shape and course of the career has been shifted towards an individual as its implementer. The aim of the paper is to get to know women's opinions about self-efficacy and to identify their orientation towards their careers. The research was carried out on a group of women from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship employed or self-employed. Their results demonstrated that the respondents are convinced of their own efficacy, but they do not assess their ability to achieve the expected results highly. Efficacy in solving problems can be used by employers with whom they would like to get involved for a long time. They are also aware of the importance of their knowledge and practical skills in their professional life. They strive to pursue a career within one organization, focusing mainly on horizontal displacement. They are flexible, have a high mobility propensity, but this is especially the case of internal mobility. Harmonious integration of private and professional life is essential for them. Less important is independent action, gaining new management positions and socially useful activity. They have a moderate need for creativity and taking on challenges. Taking into account the obtained results will contribute to the broader use by employers of the potential of women.

Keywords: Changes in the Labor Market, Women, Self-efficacy, Career Orientation.

1 Introduction

Numerous socio-cultural, political and economic transformations are the features of modern times. There are also changes in the labor market, among which demographic trends, especially the aging of societies, are particularly unfavorable. This situation is important for the economic situation as it affects consumer demand as well as the supply of labor resources. Demography was recognized as one of the fundamental development challenges for Poland [18]. The labor market is also becoming more and more diverse (taking into account such criteria as gender, ethnicity and others, the importance of the emotional aspect of work is also growing) [2]. The use of diverse knowledge and experiences, predispositions and sensitivity [7] of employees enables

organizations to gain benefits related to, among others, customer relations, human resources management, relations with the environment, the situation within an organization, as well as financial benefits and society [19].

Unfavorable trends in the labor market in Poland result in searching for ways to use optimally the potential of available labor resources. At the same time, an increase in the role and importance of women for economy [16] and their interest in professional activity [10, 23] make organizations identify new sources of recruitment of potential employees, including women [19].

At the same time, research shows that women have a low opinion about themselves, they are reluctant to take up professional challenges, risks, and are also afraid of working in a high position [14]. In addition, the need to reconcile work and family responsibilities often make it difficult to pursue a career.

The presented premises lead to seeking solutions that provide conditions that will enable the organization and women to achieve their goals and objectives. Lack of support can result in the loss of valuable employees and, as a result, can have a negative impact on the employer's situation. The contemporary career, despite the fact that the burden of responsibility for its shape and course has shifted towards an individual as its implementer [5], is managed in the organization [2]. Therefore, it is important from the organizational perspective to use the potential of women as employees and to engage in their career.

The aim of the paper is to get to know women's opinions about self-efficacy and to identify their orientation towards their careers. In order to achieve the goal the literature on the subject was analyzed, numerical data published by the Central Statistical Office was used, and empirical studies were conducted on a group of working women from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The study describes demographic changes taking place in Poland, with particular emphasis on the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. It shows the importance of self-efficacy and specific orientations in a career. The results of empirical research were presented and subjected to the qualitative analysis.

2 Changes in the Labor Market in Poland and the Podkarpackie Voivodeship (Selected Aspects) – the Condition and Prospects

In Poland, unfavorable demographic trends take place, among which a decline in population and aging of the population is most visible. According to the estimates of the Central Statistical Office, the population of Poland in 2050 will amount to 33.95 million, which means a drop by almost 4.5 million (11.7%) compared to the end of 2017. This trend in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship will be even less favorable, as the estimated decline will amount to 12.16%.

The majority of Poland's inhabitants are women (51.6%) - there are 107 of them per 100 men. This value is differentiated taking into account the age criterion. Men predominate in the population up to 49 years, in the remaining group the feminization rate is on average 125, the higher the age group, the higher the value of the rate. It has remained unchanged since 2010 and according to forecasts, as time passes, it will

decline to 105 in 2050. In the Podkarpackie, women also constitute the majority, but their share in the population structure is slightly smaller than the average in Poland (51%), the feminization rate is 104. For this region, also in 2050 lower values than the national average ones are expected - the share of women will decrease slightly to the current state and will amount to 50.8% of the population, while the feminization rate will be 103.2.

At the same time, the value of the age median will increase by almost 41 years in 2017 and is estimated at 52.5 in 2050, but it will be higher for women (54.8 years), while for men it will reach 50.1 years. Such the result means the aging of the population (the median statistical age of a Polish citizen is constantly growing - since 2000 by more than 5 years, and since the beginning of the 1990s by more than 8 years). For the statistical inhabitant of the Podkarpackie it will be even higher, and it will amount to 53.9 in 2050 (for men 51.9, for women 55.9).

The result of changes in demographic processes are changes in the structure of population in economic age groups. In 2017, the working age was dominated by people of working age, which accounted for 61.2% of the general population (Fig. 1). This group was dominated by people of the mobility age (18-44 years) - their share amounted to 38.7% of the population, while those of non-mobility age (45-59 / 64) accounted for 22.5% of the population. Children and youth (0-17 years) accounted for 18% of the population, and post-working age people (women - 60 years and more, men - 65 and more) 21%. The population structure according to economic age groups has changed unfavorably since 1990 - the percentage of people in post-productive age has increased - from 12.9%, and productive - from 57.5%, with an increase in the group of people of non-mobility age. The share of people in the pre-working age (from almost 30%) decreased significantly. These unfavorable tendencies will be deepened according to estimates and in 2050 the population structure according to the criterion of economic age groups will be as follows: 14.6% of the population will be people of pre-working age, up to 48.8% will decrease the percentage of people of working age, but will significantly increase a share of people in post-working age to 36.5%. Even less advantageously, these trends will be shaped in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship where children and youth will constitute 13.6% of the total population, people in the post-working age of 37.5%, and in working age 49%.

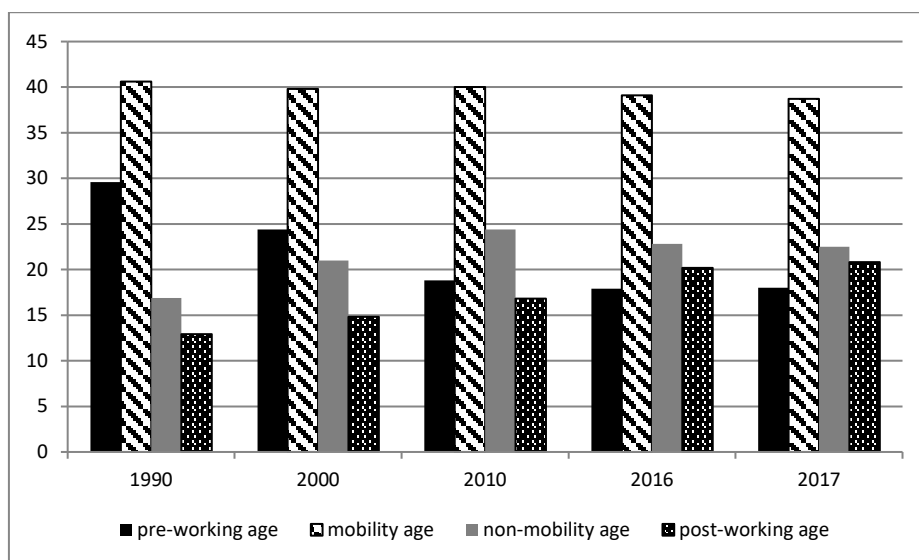


Fig. 1. Population by economic age groups (in %) in 2017 [6].

An important measure indicating the relationship between individual economic age groups of the population is the age dependency ratio which reflects the number of people in non-productive age per 100 persons of working age. The value of this ratio has been increasing for several years - in 2017 it was 63 and 55 in 2010. Particularly important, however, are the partial ratios - the number of people in the pre-productive age to the working age and the number of people in post-productive age to productive age. The value of the ratio for people of pre-working age has remained unchanged for several years and has been 29 since 2010, while the value of the ratio for post-working age increased to 34 in 2017. Such a relationship is unfavorable for the situation in the labor market as it means that the share of future labor resources is smaller than the share of those who have already left the labor market. Prior to 2010, both relations were more favorable: in 2000 they were 40 to 24, and in 1990 - 52 to 22.

According to estimates, in 2050 the age dependency ratio will be 105, while the value of the pre-production age ratio will be 30 and post-working age will be 104, 28 and 77 respectively. It indicates a less favorable situation than the average in the country.

An important issue in the context of changes in the labor market is the professional activity of the population (Table 1). Research conducted among people aged 15 and more shows that over half of people in this group were professionally active in 2017 (56.2%), which mainly concerns men (65.1%) and less than half of women (48%). Since 2010 the value of the ratio for both groups has been slightly fluctuating, but it has increased for men, while for women after the initial increase it is falling. The upward tendency is characterized by the general employment rate, showing the percentage of people working in the professionally active group, which value is up to 53.7%, as well as for individual groups - for males up to 62.2%, for females up to 45.8%.

Table 1. Economic activity of population (in %) [6].

Specification	2010	2015	2016	2017
Activity rate	55.3	56.2	56.2	56.4
Men	63.7	64.6	64.8	65.2
Women	47.6	48.4	48.3	48.4
Employment rate	50.0	51.9	52.8	53.7
Men	57.8	59.8	60.9	62.0
Women	42.8	44.7	45.3	46.1

Bearing in mind the unfavorable demographic trends in the labor market in Poland, resulting primarily in the shortage of labor resources, and at the same time increasing an interest of women in professional activity, it is necessary to strive to benefit from their potential. For this purpose, it is necessary to diagnose the current condition regarding the possibilities and needs of women.

3 Self-efficacy in the Professional Activity of the Individual

Self-efficacy, i.e. an individual judgment of one's own abilities, an ability to achieve the expected results [1], concerning the individual's beliefs about their ability to engage in a specific field of behavior [4]. Generalized self-efficacy, however, explains the wide range of human behavior [16] and reflects the individual's ability to cope with problems (difficulties, obstacles) in different situations [14].

Self-efficacy affects the individual's well-being, thinking, motivation and action [1], their choices, the effort involved and perseverance in the implementation of their efforts [3]. It is therefore important for the professional activity of the individual. People with strong conviction about their own abilities are willing to take on challenges, set more difficult goals, which leads to interest in and commitment to the activities carried out. They are more persistent, even in the event of failure. They have a sense of exercising control over difficult situations [14].

The conviction of self-efficacy is one of the factors determining the level of development of basic cognitive, self-management and interpersonal skills [1], necessary for professional activity and career management, as well as expected by employers [15]. Self-efficacy expresses the image of the individual's competence, its equipment with the means to carry out the intended activities [14]. It is a significant determinant of undertaking a specific action and its continuation.

4 Career Orientation as an Image of Oneself in a Career

Career orientation [12] or career anchor [21] is a set of talents and abilities perceived by the individual, basic values, motives and needs related to a career [20]. Its importance stems from the impact on career choices, decisions regarding the choice and

change of the profession, working conditions, as well as the employee's reactions to their professional experience. The career anchor shapes values important in the life of an individual, determines individual views on the future [13].

The identification of career anchors enables an organization to find a match between organizational and individual needs. The career anchor directs the employees' efforts and indicates the actions that can be taken to achieve career goals [13]. Eight career anchors are identified [11, 20]:

- Technical/Functional Competence – related to the concentration on the internal, technical aspect of the work content and functional area of work,
- Managerial competence – related to the pursuit of vertical promotion for a managerial position, which is a means to achieve a sense of success,
- Autonomy/Independence – concerns situations related to the performance of professional duties, in which the entity is as limited as possible by organizational requirements in the use of its professional competences,
- Security/Stability – applies to both geographical security (investing in a stable lifestyle in a specific geographical area), as well as employment security,
- Entrepreneurial Creativity – related to the aspiration to obtain a new result by the individual – development of a new product or service, set up their own business,
- Service or dedication to a cause - related to devotion to others and making the world a better place to live and work,
- Pure Challenge – refers to overcoming difficult obstacles, solving difficult problems and winning with the most talented opponents,
- Life style – related to the pursuit of lifestyle development, integrating the family and professional aspect with care for self-development.

The career anchor reflects the relationship between the character of the career chosen by the individual and its motivations and needs, the declared hierarchy of values and perceived competences.

5 Research Methods

The questionnaire of the polish version of the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) by R. Schwarzer and M. Jerusalem [14] was used in the research, consisting of 10 statements. Answers were given on a four-level scale, where 1 means the answer "no", 2 – "rather not", 3 – "rather yes", 4 – "yes".

Career orientation was examined using a short version developed by Schein [1985] Career Orientation Inventory (COI) by Igarria and Baroudi [1993]. The inventory contains 25 statements, of which 15 related to the importance of each of the issues related to career (assessed on a scale from 1 – "no importance" to 5 - "centrally important"), and another ten related to preferences for careers assessed on a scale from 1 - " not at all true " to 5 – "completely true". The use of a short version of the questionnaire was justified by specific needs resulting from the purpose of the study, as well as the standardization of the research tool and the reduction of time-consuming use of it.

6 Research Results

Studies were carried out in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship from May to June 2018. 300 working women – employed (regardless of their form) or self-employed workers were invited to the research. 288 questionnaires were obtained (96%). The average age of women was 29.2 years, the average professional experience was 6.26 years, of which 84 women (29.17%) had experience longer than five years. The majority of respondents (61.8%) were single people. Respondents lived mainly in the city (59%).

Individual indicators were calculated as average values from responses to statements specifying sense of self-efficacy in a career (fig. 2), as well as career orientation (table 2). The results of the conducted research indicate that women are convinced about their own efficacy, but their assessment of the possibilities and ability to achieve the expected results is not high - it amounts to an average of 3.05.

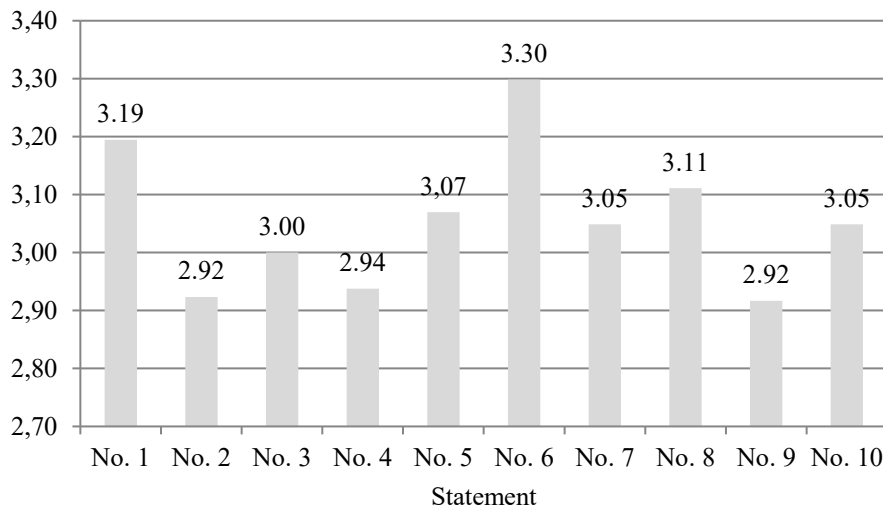


Fig. 2. Self-efficacy in career - average results from respondents' answers.

Women are the most convinced that they can solve majority of problems if they put enough effort into it (average result 3.30), and in case of difficult problems they struggle hard enough (average result 3.19). However, they assess the lowest their efficacy in troublesome situations in which they do not know what to do (2.92) and in situations of opposition from other people (2.92). Women also declare that they would not be able to cope with unexpected events (2.94).

The analysis of career orientation results showed that women were the most job-oriented, which ensures them employment stability – the result of 4.77 significantly distinguishes out of the others (Table 2). Individuals anchored in the security sphere are looking for an employer with whom they could become emotionally involved, be loyal to him, which translates into career planning within the organization [22].

Table 2. Descriptive characteristics of respondents' answers regarding career orientation.

Specification	Average result
Technical competence	4,33
Managerial competence	4,19
Autonomy/Independence	4,04
Security – Job tenure	4,59
Security – Geographic	3,64
Entrepreneurial Creativity	3,84
Service or dedication to a cause	3,95
Pure Challenge	3,67
Life style	4,21

Women are aware of the growing importance of knowledge and skills – they are strongly anchored in technical competences (average result 4.33). This means that it is important for them to be an expert in a specific field and to confirm their own championship. The obtained result proves that horizontal promotion is satisfactory for them. Such orientation, however, due to the rapid changes in technology, requires continuous updating of knowledge, acquiring new knowledge and improving skills in order to remain competent.

The lifestyle (average result 4.21) is of lesser importance for the respondents and managerial competences (average result 4.19). The first result means striving for harmony between various aspects of life, especially professional, personal and leisure time [22]. The expectation of flexible working time and mobility should be explained by the multiplicity of roles that women perform in society. However, managerial orientation is associated with well-developed interpersonal, leadership and emotional skills, as well as the skills of integrating one's own work and the team, which go beyond the technical aspect of the job. Individuals with this orientation strive to gain new experiences in managerial positions, increase the scope of power and make decisions about financial consequences [22]. Their advantage is responsibility for the organization's results and identification with its success.

Women declare lesser inclination to act independently (average result 4.04). This means that they are moderately interested in broadening the scope of their independence, and at the same time taking over responsibility for the implemented activities. They expect flexibility while accepting organizational rules and restrictions. The work of an independent specialist is only appropriate for some of them.

Women are also averagly oriented to socially useful activity – providing help and support to others (average result 3.95). To this extent, they also have developed social needs. They are moderately interested in achieving significant results that go beyond the professional context related to earning income (eg improvement of the environment, safety of other people or interpersonal relations).

Respondents declare a relatively low level of skills and motivation in the field of entrepreneurial creativity (average result 3,84), which means that they feel the moderate need for creativity and creation of new products. The challenges marginally motivate them to act.

The worst women are anchored in geographical stability (average result 3,64). This means that they have little predisposition to stabilize their lives in geographical terms – settling in a specific region and abandoning the displacements proposed by the employer. They accept the risk related to a change of place of work or residence.

7 Conclusion

The current demographic situation in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and trends in this field should be assessed as unfavorable for the labor market. The decline in population, the increase in the age median and the value of the age dependency ratio constitute the reason for the dwindling labor resources. At the same time, the increase in the professional activity of women, as well as the employment rate in this group, leads to interest in using their potential.

The research indicated that the inhabitants of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship declare the ability to solve serious problems. Efficacy in solving problems can be used by employers with whom they would like to get involved for a long time. Employment stability proves the aspirations of women to achieve employment and a certain remuneration in an unstable environment, which will ensure their safety in private life. They are willing to submit to the leadership of other people, do not aspire excessively to take up management positions. A career within an organization, taking into account primarily horizontal displacements, is beneficial for them – they score highly on the level of development of their interpersonal, emotional and teamwork skills. Women are flexible, show a high propensity for mobility, but this is especially the case of internal mobility.

Activity without restrictions related to bureaucracy and autocratic management style is not significant for them. They also do not strive to initiate change, to take calculated risk, to become independent. Women are not focused on rivalry, searching for new solutions, overcoming barriers and limitations. It is more important for them to achieve balance between family and career activities than independence and entrepreneurship. Therefore, employers should invest in their development and provide conditions for flexible work.

The results regarding the sense of self-efficacy in a career are important for employers due to the fact that the level of motivation, affective states and actions of the individual depend to a greater extent on its perception of the possibility of a specific action than on the objective state [3]. Self-perception is significant for professional activity, because a human prefers a profession that is compatible with their abilities, interests and aspirations. An individual strives to carry out a job that creates opportunities to use their own competences [8]. However, knowledge about career orientation is useful both for an individual planning a career or intending to change its current course, as well as for employers supporting employee activities in career management. Taking into account the issue of self-efficacy and career orientation of women, will contribute to the broader use of their potential by employers.

The research was conducted on a group of women from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, which is not a basis for generalizing the obtained results to the entire

population of the country or even the region. The respondents' answers may also be influenced by other characteristics that have not been included in this research.

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