



Organisational culture in Romania: The fine line between success and failure for women in academia

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ABSTRACT

Experiences of discrimination in the academic world discourage women from taking part in contests to occupy higher academic positions. People tend to evaluate academic management based on what they consider to be normal behaviour for both women and men. Because of this, women are often perceived as less appropriately equipped to occupy an academic managerial position than men, especially in fields (such as the academic field) where male stereotypes are regarded as more efficient.

This research was intended to evaluate the organisational culture and environment within the largest university centres in Iași (Romania) in relation to the accomplishment and execution of academic and scientific tasks by academic staff, as well as measuring their personal and professional satisfaction. We used a qualitative method (the 'life story' interview), as we wanted to identify certain events and defining traits of women in academia by focusing on their subjective experiences. For this purpose, we took into account the following three indicators: professional

motivation and satisfaction, balancing personal and professional life, and success and failure in the academic world.

Focusing on the obstacles women meet in their attempt to reach scientific/academic management positions, we have noticed that one of the major difficulties women in the academic world are confronted with when becoming academic managers is creating a balance between family life and their career. The interviewed women are not willing to give up domestic tasks for the benefit of professional tasks, as they are part of the traditional family model. On the other hand, this study shows that these women do not lack motivation to take up a managerial position, but that the norms promoted in the academic environment disadvantage women, despite the fact that the interviewees consider these formal norms to be gender-neutral.

KEY WORDS

personal satisfaction | academic performance | management position | male stereotypes | work-life balance

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major difficulties women in the academic world are confronted with when taking on management positions is creating a balance between family life (especially when they have dependent children in their care) and their career. Domestic activities are normally time-consuming, limiting the period that can be dedicated to professional activities (Gardiner et al. 2007; Tomas et al. 2010). Even in this era, domestic activities often remain the responsibility of women as a result of gender stereotypes.

Organisational culture is born under the influence of structural conditions, such as opportunities, power, and female and male staff distribution in the organisational hierarchy. In order to understand the persistence of gender inequality in the academic and scientific world, it is also important to understand the latent, subtle, and indirect processes within organisations that form the basis of gender differences. These processes are often referred to as second-generation gender barriers (Ibarra, Ely and Kolb 2013). To this extent, we can say that rational procedures and institutional structures give rise to an apparent neutrality and impersonality that hides class, race, and gender (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The trajectory of science depends largely on the talent pool of future researchers available. At the moment,

women represent a large part of that pool, but some studies show that, compared to men, women are more likely to “go to waste through the drain” (the ‘leaky pipeline’ phenomenon) (Ceci, Williams and Barnett 2009).

This research addresses a subject that has been poorly studied in Romania compared to other countries; the only results involving Romania are found in studies conducted at the level of European Union institutions. For example, according to the She Figures report, in Romania the percentage of women leading higher education institutions is very low: only 15.5% of the heads of higher education institutions are women (European Commission 2019: 128). When we shift our focus to universities that have the capacity to deliver PhDs, the situation is worse: just 7.3% of the heads of these particular higher education institutions are women (European Commission 2019: 130). These percentages make Romania one of the few remaining countries in the European Union that does not encourage the appointment of women among heads of universities. Multiple reasons have been offered to explain the rather small proportion of women within the field of research or the difficulties women encounter in furthering their academic career. During the 19th century there was the idea that women had inferior minds, an idea no longer accepted today. Nowadays, the most sensible argument for justifying the absence of women in high academic positions relates to

maternity (Noback, Broersma and van Dijk 2016).

Another explanation for this phenomenon – this time psychological – implies that women have difficulties in furthering their careers because they are shy, not aggressive enough, and don't have enough role models (O'Connor 2011). Other reasons explained below point to the motivation and strength required to build a career in the academic and scientific world.

Motivation can manifest itself in the desire to have multiple responsibilities and achieve the common goals of the organisation. This is assessed as positive ambition. On the other hand, negative motivation is characterised by self-serving conduct and individual desire for power. Positive motivation is linked to learning, development, and self-accomplishment, while negative motivation is linked to hierarchy, status, prestige, and salary. Both motivation categories are significant from a cultural point of view (Benschop et al. 2013).

Discourses around career and motivation can be catalogued as gender discourses, but are paradoxical at the same time. The centre of the paradox lies in the fact that two elements or situations that apparently cancel each other can actually occur at the same time (Van den Brink and Stobbe 2014). Employees who wish to climb up the hierarchy must let the organisation know without explicitly mentioning it. This is problematic especially for young women, who are often perceived as being less ambitious than men. This places them in a double dilemma, as they need to explicitly

show their managers that they have not lost their ambition, yet without being allowed to say it explicitly. If women do not explicitly state that they have the motivation to climb up the hierarchy, they reproduce the dominant discourse on women and their lack of ambition (De Vries 2010; Van den Brink et al. 2016). Women in the academic world must be visible and invisible at the same time in order to be able to evolve professionally: visible with regard to their ambition and skills, but invisible with regard to their feminine bodies (Van den Brink and Stobbe 2014).

All of the issues highlighted above – as well as the relation between family life and career, the second generation of gender barriers, and motivation issues – are discussed in the 'Results' section. At first sight, it might appear that there is a theoretical discrepancy between these sections. However, the aspects mentioned in the introduction and the conceptual framework of this article, such as the relationship between professional and family life, the second generation of gender barriers, and professional motivation are discussed in the 'Results' section as follows: work-life balance; failure and success in the academic environment; satisfaction and organisational culture. This article intends to focus on those indirect causes that lead to the lack of women in academic management, among which are those mentioned above.

METHODS AND OBJECTIVES

This research was intended to evaluate the organisational culture and environment within the academic world of Iași in relation to the accomplishment and execution of academic and scientific tasks by academic staff, as well as measuring their personal and professional satisfaction.

In light of this objective, we decided to use a qualitative method, as we wanted to identify certain events and defining traits of women in the academic world by focusing on their subjective experiences. For this purpose, we have tried in the present research to take into account the following three indicators: professional motivation and satisfaction, balancing personal and professional life, and success and failure in the academic world. Qualitative research encourages the ongoing discovery of problems and takes into account the points of view of the interviewed subjects (Scheele 2005).

We chose to use the 'life story' interview method in order to identify, sequentially and very precisely, the professional development stages that women in the academic and scientific world go through, taking into account the fact that the reality of the academic world is a very dynamic one. From a methodological point of view, choosing such an interview type is deliberate, as life story interviews allow very complex experiences to be expressed (Rhoten and Pfirman 2007).

This type of interview is often considered to belong to feminist methodology. The main points of this instru-

ment focus on the continuity of the story and the personal reflection of the person interviewed (Atkinson 2002).

The interview inquiry is based on a semi-structured interview – the interview guide that was compiled having established only the main themes the study focused on – being adjusted throughout the interviews (Piercy 2004). The research results are not representative for the population the interviewed subjects are part of. First of all, we need to remind everybody that in the case of a study conducted using the interview method (as with all qualitative methods), the purpose is not to generalise the results, but to explore the subjective meanings of the phenomenon; therefore, the sample does not need to take into account representation, but only its saturation (Creswell 2005). This necessitates selecting candidates who display the qualities necessary to achieve the objectives. *The criteria used to select the population to take part in the study were:*

- *gender*: the participants at this stage of the study were only women who work in the largest university centres in Iași (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași – eight women, Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iași – three women, Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași – two women);

- *field of activity*: some of the women carry out only research activities (four women), while the rest of them perform both research and teaching activities (nine women);

- *professional experience*: considering the objective of the research, we

decided to find out whether there is a difference between generations regarding the chosen objective. For this reason, women were selected based on whether they could be classified as senior or junior women;

- *personal background*: three of the participating women have one child, five of them have two children, and three women have three children. Also, 11 of the women who participated of this study are married, while two are unmarried.

The test sample of the study comprised 13 women involved in the academic and scientific world in Iasi. They were grouped into two categories: senior (women with experience in the academic and scientific world) and junior (women who are just starting out in the academic and scientific world). The names of the women participating in the research were modified so as to ensure their anonymity. Categorisation was done by taking into account the research and teaching experience of the women who were the subjects of the study. Thus, women with up to seven years of experience were included in the junior category, while women with teaching experience of more than seven years were placed in the senior category. This categorisation was made following a study conducted in Romania in 2010 (Balahur and Balahur 2010) and was inspired by research coordinated by Harper et al. (2001), which states that the average period necessary for a new employee from the academic and/or scientific environment to obtain a position in middle management is seven years.

Of all the women interviewed, six are juniors and seven are seniors. Due to the nature of the research, we also need to mention that 11 women have children, while two do not. For carrying out the research, a non-randomised 'snowball' sampling method was used; the women interviewed were recommended by people who are part of the STAGES project (Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science).

We decided that the two selected categories should comprise senior and junior women alike, since, as Marston and Brunetti (2009) stated, the professional satisfaction of women in the academic world varies depending on the position they occupy. At the same time, advancing from one position to another requires a certain level of productivity and takes time.

RESULTS

Satisfaction and organisational culture

In order to assess the satisfaction level of the women who were part of the study in relation to their academic activity, we tried to identify which are the main factors that contribute to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. From their accounts, we could identify their motivation in pursuing an academic profession, as well as their attitude towards the factors defining women's work in the academic and scientific field.

Rosser (2005) identified four areas where academic satisfaction could appear: remuneration and benefits,

career satisfaction, job security, and relationships with students, colleagues, and superiors.

To emphasise the necessity of distinguishing between junior and senior women when it comes to their professional satisfaction, we can refer to the studies of Marston and Brunetti (2009) or Wilson (2012), who focus on the fact that academic satisfaction varies depending on the professional level. A higher professional position will normally provide a higher level of satisfaction. In our case, an individual's professional level depends largely on their productivity (in order to rise to a superior academic position, it is essential to publish research papers in that specific area of expertise). Thus, the longer a person spends within the academic world, the greater their chance of becoming more productive.

In the case of the present research, women with professional (work) experience in the academic field are part of the senior group. To emphasise what was stated, Sabharwal and Corley (2009) show that senior academic staff are more satisfied with their professional life than junior staff. The results of the interview pointed to the same conclusions as the study above; junior women more often brought up their professional dissatisfactions from the moment they entered the university and scientific world: *"I regret that I don't have a good relationship with Mr B (her superior), although things would have been better... that was the situation"* – (Liliana - junior, married, two children).

Although, as previously mentioned, senior women presumably have much

higher productivity, there are cases when junior women focus on this aspect in order to express their professional capability. However, their accounts of their own productivity are closely related to situations in which they considered themselves aggrieved: *"I want to have 20 papers. I have over 100 in the bibliography. Nobody has more projects than me. I need a course and some more articles. This is all I need. And then I go, no problem. And I can let A. have it with a minimum"* – (Larisa – junior, divorced, two children). By this, Larisa means to say that she wants to keep improving her skills before she seeks a promotion, even though she is already qualified for a more senior position. The junior women's situation is also mentioned by Valian (1998) when he states that the volume of material published by a woman is larger at the beginning of her career, and then gradually decreases.

In the case of the accounts given by the research subjects, all women referred to the second area mentioned above: career satisfaction. *"It is a prestigious profession, but you get it after years and years of effort and patience"* – (Irina – senior, unmarried, without children). Although the women did state that they were happy with their career paths, one of the senior subjects pointed out her dissatisfaction regarding the position she was in after very many years dedicated to academic and scientific activities: *"You know, I have been an assistant since year X... the steps were as follows: to get to be lecturer, then assistant professor and... to dream of becoming a profes-*

sor, but, unfortunately... I have a file for each of these positions, but there are no vacancies” – (Maria – senior, married, one child). The legal system in Romania does not stipulate any age or seniority requirements in order to move up the ladder, yet other demands – including a minimum number of published articles and books – make promotion possible only for those who have a certain level of experience. The reality in this country has not shown any pattern in terms of the number of years it takes to reach a higher academic position.

In accordance with the Law of National Education, and depending on the maximum number of potential students allocated to a faculty through the Order of the Minister of National Education, universities approve the organisational function chart for each component faculty. Thus, a faculty can have on its organisational chart nine assistant lecturers, six lecturers, five associate professors, and three professors. Based on the above, an assistant lecturer cannot hold a lecturer position if this position is not vacant, even if he/she meets the requirements regarding participation in research projects and number of published papers.

As regards their satisfaction level in relation to their salary, most women said they were unhappy: *“The money is very, very little for all the effort we put into it” – (Luiza – junior, married, three children). Despite all the inconveniences and discontentment, seniors admit that the difficulties those now beginning their career have to face are a lot more challenging than their own: “I don’t know how these young women*

manage. I think I would go someplace else to work, I wouldn’t stay here for this kind of money” – (Claudia – senior, married, three children). In the academic world, salary is closely related to position. Thus, as Valian (1998) mentioned, even small differences in treatment can lead to huge differences in advancement, and implicitly in salary. What the women said in interviews showed such dissatisfaction only where the juniors are concerned: “I didn’t feel discouraged... because at some point, in two years’ time, Mr. G will retire... then, if M. doesn’t do the work, there’ll be no one else to do it” – (Larisa – junior, divorced, two children). The same author (Valian 1998) states that women need to reach a higher productivity level than men in order to get a promotion in their career, as many of the juniors in the study actually showed when they highlighted the fact that their professional achievements are superior to those of their fellow male colleagues: “Where quotations are concerned, I have over 100, almost 200. Nobody has more projects than I do [among male colleagues]. I need a course and some more articles... Now I can let A. [male colleague] get it [a superior position] with a minimum” – (Larisa – junior, divorced, two children). This explains very easily the paradox described in the theoretical part of the article. Although she has the competency to get promoted in academia (in this case, significantly more projects and citations than her male colleague), a man was targeted for promotion ahead of her. She let her colleague take the position although

she was more qualified for it. Her 'silence' made the appointment possible. This can be explained by the fact that she does not explicitly mention having the motivation to climb up the academic hierarchy. This example could add to the discourse on women and their lack of ambition.

The third area where professional satisfaction may be achieved is in relationships with students, colleagues, and superiors. Most of the research subjects highlighted this factor as significant. In one paper by Marston and Brunetti (2009), teaching activities represent a very strong source of satisfaction for teachers. Interacting with students brings more satisfaction to junior women. They draw attention to the fact that one of the reasons why they like their work in the academic field is because of the interactions with their students: "*I like young people. I like their company and I know that I can be a source of knowledge for them*" – (Luiza – junior, married, three children). In contrast, Sabharwal and Corley (2009) consider that professors who allocate much of their time to teaching consider themselves more dissatisfied with their work. This is the same as what most of the seniors said: "*Teaching kind of gets in my way*" – (Corina – senior, married, two children). In spite of all this, juniors are aware of the fact that in order to advance in their academic careers, they have to concentrate more on research than on teaching, although they get more pleasure from the teaching side of their academic and scientific activities.

Work-life balance

Balancing family life with work means that a person should identify a satisfying way to accomplish both their professional and family tasks (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw 2003). The conflict between professional life and personal life could be defined as one in which accomplishing work-related goals affects family-related goals, and vice-versa.

Fox, Fonseca, and Bao (2011) also mention the fact that women are much more likely to face conflicts linked to finding this balance between their professional and personal lives. This statement correlates closely with the results of the study due, on one hand, to social and cultural expectations regarding the role of women within the family – an aspect also present in the discourses of the junior women ("*My mother told me: stay in the kitchen, you're married now*" – Ioana – junior, married, one child) – and on the other hand, to the traditional education women receive in their families, where they are taught that one of the woman's duties is to take care of domestic chores. This topic mainly arises in the seniors' interviews ("*The fact is, I'll say it again, I really wanted to stay at home for the first two years, being a mother and all*" – Nadia – senior, married, one child).

In overcoming the conflict between work and family, Mathew and Panchanatham (2011) emphasise the importance of the involvement not only of the state, through its protection mechanisms for maternity and family ("*Is there anything else except for maternity leave?*" – Corina – senior,

married, two children), but also of the management of the higher education institution (*"It would be nice if the university contributed with something when one of the employees has a child. They gave me one monthly salary, that's all"* – Veronica – junior, married, two children).

One of the differences between seniors and juniors was that with seniors the feeling of guilt was more poignant when they failed to carry out domestic duties as planned, given that they consider domestic chores to be their job: *"From a family point of view, my opinion is that I should have done much more. That is to have had more time to spend with them, to communicate with them"* (Maria – senior, married, one child). Maria's case contradicts the results of a study performed by the Center for Advanced Human Resources Studies with Cornell University (2010), which found that if employees feel that their family life affects their work, they feel guilty, while if they feel that their work affects their family life, the feeling of guilt is absent.

Maybe the most important factor contributing to the escalation of the conflict between work and family is having children (Amstad et al. 2011; Thompson and Prottas 2006), a fact also supported by the present study: *"If women have two, three children at home, they find it very hard to publish and do research, let alone handle a management position"* (Oana – senior, married, two children). In order to get promoted, women in the academic field have to prove their competence by means of research and publications.

To accomplish these objectives, the interviewed women, regardless of their category, have adopted various strategies designed to relieve them of their family tasks, especially of those linked to children, such as: hiring a person to take care of the child (*"I mean I have somebody, the nanny of my boy, who comes to our place from time to time"* – Ioana – junior, married, one child) or asking for their grandparents' help (*"He started to go to daycare when he was only one year old. Before that we used to care for him in shifts, my father and I"* – Corina – senior, married, two children). The various impositions related to raising children cause a lot of women – as is generally the case of the seniors in our study – to postpone their desire to occupy a position in the academic management hierarchy until their children are old enough not to be dependent on their mother's care anymore (Baumgartner and Schneider 2010): *"...the worries about family have faded in the meantime. E. is older now, so I am not needed at home anymore. Already things have taken a trend where I feel I can manage them and live up to them"* – (Corina – senior, married, two children).

Academic activity has the advantage of a flexible working schedule, a factor many of the junior women mentioned. But this also implies that some work-related activities must be transferred from work to home (*"This is mostly how I worked, at night, after the children went to sleep"* – Dana – junior, married, three children), which can cause conflicts relat-

ed to failing to accomplish domestic chores.

One study by O’Laughlin and Bischoff (2005) found that women’s busy schedule (mixing home and work activities) affects their productivity. This is contradicted by the interviewed women, both seniors and juniors, who choose either to go back to their workplace after finishing their domestic activities, or transfer their work tasks to home. This is because, as a study by the Center at Cornell University (2010) has shown, although they spend long hours at their workplace (“*I work on average 10 hours per day*” – Florentina – senior, married, without children), women also have to deal with most of the domestic chores and family care activities: “*Mostly, everything at home is my responsibility*” (Nadia – senior, married, one child).

In her study, Hochschild (1989) described several family typologies: traditional, transitional, and egalitarian. According to her, in the traditional family, the woman believes herself to be dependent on her husband despite having a job; her main tasks have to do with the family sphere, whereas the husband is the one who provides the main financial support of the family. When the woman needs the man’s help in accomplishing one of the domestic chores, she asks for it only because she cannot handle it alone, not because the chores are seen as the duty of both partners. This type of family is standard for many of the cases discussed, but mainly where the juniors are concerned. They often argue that their partners do accomplish many of the chores they would normally do

themselves, but only when asked to do so (an attitude that women consider normal): “*...he asks me all the time, ‘Why didn’t you tell me?’... It’s the same with picking up children from school. I realise around 3 p.m. that I don’t have time and I have to pick them up from school just when I realise that I still have something else to do*” (Luiza – junior, married, three children).

In regard to the accomplishment of family tasks, all cases bring to the foreground the same situation: women are those who have to deal with all tasks linked to childcare and family duties, their life partners getting involved only when women find it impossible to accomplish these tasks on their own: “*When we have to hand in our reports I sometimes stay at work until midnight... that’s when my husband takes care of the children and food*” (Luiza – junior, married, three children). The interviews clearly show that the women involved in the study belong to the traditional type of family, about which Schippers and Grayson-Sapp (2012) state that it promotes the responsibility of women over family tasks. Even when women with life partners try to prove that they are not part of such a family model, their discourse still leads to the above-mentioned conclusion. One study by Amstad and Semmer (2011) argues that the family model of one partner can influence, depending on its intensity, the behaviour of the other partner, who adopts that specific family model.

Failure and success in academia

One of the studies conducted by Pyke (2013) argues that women are isolated and kept to the side of the academic field because of their low numbers. These results contradict the findings of the present study, regardless of the participants: *“I like what I am doing ... I have colleagues I get along with very well, no matter their gender”* (Claudia – senior, married, three children). In spite of this being a common sentiment, some senior women argue that the informal norms of the academic world benefit men: *“Well, we women can’t, for instance, reject our students in general, or things like that...”* (Oana – senior, married, two children). It can be argued that improving organisational conditions for women is not enough without a change in the societal perceptions of the skills, abilities, and roles that a woman can have. Unlike men, women internalise gender roles specific to them – such as a higher degree of empathy – as part of early socialisation. Thus, it can be said that women's vision of employment relationships includes a closer connection with students. This is time-consuming and produces inferior results on indicators that are important for professional development in the academic and scientific environment (publication and participation in research teams).

The personal experiences of women regarding fair treatment can make them feel that they belong in the academic world (Richman, vanDellen and Wood 2011). The cases of senior women often reflect the results of the

above-mentioned studies, as in their discourses we often find the idea that they've never felt treated by their husbands with an attitude of superiority and that relationships between men and women promote equality: *“They are not made for men or for women... In the academic world, norms are impersonal. Now, if we want to give them a certain interpretation, we can interpret them”* (Florentina – senior, married, without children). We see the same conclusion (that formal and informal norms do not favour men over women) in the juniors' discourses, although some juniors have experienced discrimination. One example is that of Ioana (married, one child), who was supposed to be included in a research project before she gave birth. However, the woman in charge of hiring told her colleague: *“Why did you hire her for two months for this project when you knew she was going on maternity leave?”*

At the same time, a similar study conducted by Richman, vanDellen and Wood (2011) underlines the fact that being exposed to a discriminatory situation can stunt academic performance. Although, as stated above, some junior women have experienced such a situation, they have gathered their strength in order to prove their abilities in their field of expertise: *“He’s been occupying the position of lecturer for six or seven years [male colleague]. Professor G. has recently been including his name on all the papers just to help him get some promotion. However, I managed to overtake him by my own strength”* (Larisa – junior, divorced, two children).

As one of the senior participants in the study stated, one of the reasons why women do not end up in academic leadership positions has to do with the fact that women are not willing to give up the time dedicated to research and their family for such a position: “Now, those who assume management positions are people who practically sacrifice a professional area, something that has to do with their professional career. Some are willing to do it, others are not. I don’t think there are many women who would be willing to give it up” (Irina – senior, unmarried, without children). Peterson (2014) states that academic leadership positions, which implicitly include administrative tasks, are time-consuming. In spite of this, Clarke, Hyde and Drennan’s study (2013) showed that, contrary to what one participant in the study declared (“In addition to teaching, there are other activities... they take up a lot of time, such as the administrative activities... Yes, I’d like to keep getting involved in this administrative part” – Florentina – senior, married, without children), that most senior women dedicate a significant part of their working time to accomplishing administrative tasks, even if they don’t want to deal with these responsibilities.

The women’s discourses have unveiled the fact that, especially with senior women, one of the problems the academic staff has to face is the struggle for resources, which leads to a lack of cooperation and communication between academic staff members (Gasser and Shaffer 2014). This can produce a deficiency in the infor-

mation and resources necessary for carrying out teaching and research activities: “I don’t know why, but it seems to me that the more we have access to information, the more we frighten one another. I don’t know if my colleagues know what I do. We tend to become very secretive and very focused on one direction” (Corina – senior, married, two children).

Furthermore, according to Clarke, Hyde and Drennan (2013), women are much more affected than men by what the reference literature calls reduced academic mobility (taking part in conferences, practice sessions, training courses etc.). As it creates the possibility of establishing connections with colleagues in the country or from abroad, academic mobility can lead, among other things, to beneficial results in terms of a person’s rate of publication in scientific journals. In Romania, moving up the hierarchical ladder entails being subjected to a calculation scheme (the calculation scheme of the score necessary to apply for a higher position is provided by the Law of Education). The women’s discourses have emphasised this problem not only for junior women, but also for senior women who have dependent children in their care. In this case, the difference is not between junior and senior women, but between women with independent children and women whose children are dependent on the presence of one of their parents. Similarly, there is no difference between the case of women who have a partner and those who do not, one example being that of Claudia (married, three children): “My husband has

a very busy schedule... If we are talking about mobility, especially longer-term mobility, then I can't commit because there's no way to do it... for the time being... my child is seven years old and needs all my attention. Another woman, divorced, with a five-year-old child says: *"At this point, a long journey cannot be discussed..."* (Larisa – junior, divorced, two children). Consequently, it becomes clear that women, regardless of their situation, with children or not, married or unmarried, are professionally affected by the impossibility of traveling for long periods of time.

Moreover, domestic duties – especially those related to raising and caring for children, which fall under the responsibility of the participants – have a domino effect on their mobility level. The reduced mobility of women affects their chances of conducting research and their opportunity to create collaborative relations with their colleagues. All these factors make the accomplishment of professional development tasks even more difficult.

The fact that academic management teams don't get heavily involved in supporting academic staff in situations that require their input can lead to dissatisfaction regarding the balance between family life and work: *"The University did not help me at all when I gave birth to D..."* (Corina – senior, married, two children). According to Marston and Brunetti (2009), universities should more carefully examine the problems members of their academic staff face in balancing the two spheres of their lives, as this can generate positive or negative outcomes in their

academic performance. Sensing the gap between the staff and the academic management, one of the participants declared: *"...I think the university could do more for mothers in that period following their giving birth"* (Ioana – junior, married, one child).

In the end, we can mention Chandler's observation (2011) that people tend to evaluate academic management based on what they consider to be normal behaviour for women and men respectively. Due to this fact, women are perceived as being less appropriate to occupy an academic management position than men, especially in areas where male stereotypes are deemed more efficient. Thus, there appears to be a question whether women could bring something new to academic management. Most women agree that women can have the same qualities as men, and the other way around: *"Both women and men can have the same leadership qualities"* (Irina – senior, unmarried, without children). In addition, the interviewees mentioned that there could be some differences linked to skills, pointing out the fact that women can actually have some managerial skills that men lack, such as: organising skills (*"...I think many women know how to organise their time, to do more things at the same time"* – Maria – senior, married, one child), more practicality due to their maternal instinct (*"A woman is more linked to the reality and the pragmatism of day-to-day life, because if a woman is a mother, she understands better"* – Veronica – junior, married, two children), intuition (*"Generally, a woman can empathise*

better with various problems that may appear with the people she works with" – Oana – senior, married, two children), and proficiency in adopting a collaborative management style ("*...when I have difficult decisions, I prefer to consult several people before I make a decision*" – Larisa – junior, divorced, two children). However, in the academic world, women are perceived as being less appropriate for occupying an academic managerial position. Participants do not consider this perception to be true, asserting that actually women have skills that exceed those of men in some areas.

Although all participants in the study agree that they are at a disadvantage regarding their professional development, they do not consider themselves discriminated against. This lack of awareness about potential discrimination will allow the academic organisational culture that promotes 'male' norms and regulations to continue putting women in second place.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Focusing on the obstacles women face when trying to get a position in academic and scientific management, it turns out that one major difficulty these women deal is finding a balance between family life (especially if they have dependent children in their care) and their career, as domestic duties are time-consuming and limit the period available for professional activities (Gardiner et al., 2007; Tomas et al., 2010). Although it may seem that this could be a valid concern for all partic-

ipating women, their interviews show that it appears mainly as an issue for senior women. According to Gardiner et al. (2007), when having a child, a lot of women in the academic world 'access' one of the benefits granted by the state (such as maternity leave), which creates a difference between themselves and their male colleagues. Such an explanation occurs in the case of both senior and junior women.

Regarding the accomplishment of family tasks, all cases bring to the foreground the same situation: women typically have to deal with all tasks linked to childcare and household duties, their life partners getting involved only when women find themselves unable to accomplish these tasks on their own. The interviews clearly show that the women involved in the study belong to the traditional family type, viewed by Schippers and Grayson-Sapp (2012) as one that promotes the responsibility of women over family tasks. Even when women with life partners want to prove that they are not part of such a family model, their discourse invariably leads to the aforementioned conclusion. One study performed by Amstad and Semmer (2011) argues that the family model of one partner can influence, depending on its intensity, the behaviour of the other partner, who comes to adopt that specific family model.

This micro-study proved that, for the participating women, professional failure or the reduced chance of occupying a managerial position in the academic sphere are derived from the negative effects that domestic responsibilities have on their career devel-

opment. From a different perspective, the major difficulties women in the academic world face when having to decide whether to participate in academic management revolve around finding a balance between family life and career, as domestic duties are time-consuming and limit the period that can be dedicated to professional activities.

This research has revealed the importance of a flexible schedule that would allow the development of professional activities in the academic and scientific environment in a context dominated by household duties. Although the academic environment can be described as offering a flexible schedule, it is also unpredictable, which puts mothers in a difficult position.

Turning our attention to the barriers women face in accessing a position within the academic and scientific management system, it becomes apparent that one of the major difficulties women in academia face when deciding to get involved in management is balancing family life and career, household activities being time-consuming and restricting the period that can be allocated to professional activities.

This study has shown that women are not willing to give up domestic tasks for the benefit of professional tasks, as they are part of the traditional family model as it was described by Hochschild (1989). Based on this finding, in order for the academic world to benefit from women's abilities and competence, the system needs to be reformed and redefined so as not to

hinder their ability to perform family responsibilities.

The analysis of the interviews shows that the women participating in this study do not lack motivation to take up a managerial position, but that the norms promoted in the academic environment disadvantage women, despite the fact that the participants consider these formal norms to be gender-neutral. In Romania, gaining a promotion in the academic environment is based on performing research activities that are disseminated at conferences and via specialist publications. The fact that women devote a small part of their time to research is the result of pervasive gender stereotypes in society: domestic tasks are considered the responsibility of women. Therefore, unlike men in academia, women are unable to allocate too much time to research activities.

As in a domino effect, domestic responsibilities also have negative effects on women's mobility. They find themselves 'stuck' in a particular area, which leads to an inability to create professional support networks, to work in international research teams, or to attend conferences. With all this in mind, we can say that the women participating in this research are not devoid of motivation, any information resulting from our study being based solely on the gender stereotypes existing in society and, implicitly, in the academic environment. Thus, women will be concentrated in low positions, and will consequently be paid a lower salary than men.

This article is not intended to debate whether cultural stereotypes or the

work-life conflict are the reasons why there are so few women occupying managerial positions in the academic environment. However, we can conclude from the article that these concepts are interconnected, and that if we do not take measures to prevent them from replicating, the academic environment will come to be dominated by masculine characteristics.

The results brought to the fore through this paper could represent the starting point for a new study oriented towards innovative research directions likely to address a much more specific dimension of the topic or, conversely, extend the study of these issues to the level of several university centres.

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Organizaciona kultura u Rumuniji: Tanka linija između uspeha i neuspeha žena u akademskom svetu

GEORGE MARIAN ICHIM¹

SAŽETAK

Ovo istraživanje bavi se temom koja se slabo proučava u Rumuniji u poređenju sa drugim zemljama; jedini rezultati koji uključuju Rumuniju mogu se naći u studijama sprovedenim na nivou institucija Evropske unije. Prema izveštaju Evropske komisije (2019), samo 15,5% šefova visokoškolskih ustanova u Rumuniji su žene, odnosno tek 7,3% kada se u obzir uzmu univerziteti koji dodeljuju doktorske titule, što ovu zemlju čini jednom od retkih članica EU koja ne podstiče imenovanje žena među šefovima univerziteta.

Prikazano kvalitativno istraživanje, sprovedeno u najvećim univerzitetskim centrima poznatog univerzitetskog grada Jaši, metodom intervjua „životna priča“, uzelo je u obzir tri pokazatelja: profesionalnu motivaciju i zadovoljstvo, usklađivanje ličnog i profesionalnog života i uspeh u akademskom svetu. Pokazalo se da profesionalni neuspeh ili smanjene šanse za zauzimanje rukovodećeg položaja u akademskoj zajednici kod intervjuisanih žena proizilaze iz negativnih efekata koje porodične obaveze imaju na razvoj njihove karijere odnosno iz poteškoća da pronađu ravnotežu između porodičnog života i karijere budući da kućne obaveze oduzimaju puno vremena ograničavajući period koji se može posvetiti profesionalnim aktivnostima.

Istraživanje je otkrilo značaj fleksibilnog rasporeda koji bi omogućio razvoj profesionalnih aktivnosti u akademskom i naučnom okruženju u kontekstu u kojem dominiraju porodične obaveze. Iako se akademsko okruženje može opisati kao fleksibilno po pitanju rasporeda radnih obaveza, ono je takođe nepredvidivo, što majke dovodi u teškoće.

Takođe, istraživanje je pokazalo da ispitanicama ne nedostaje motivacije da zauzmu rukovodeće pozicije, ali da norme promovisane u akademskim krugovima stavljaju žene u nepovoljan položaj, uprkos činjenici da ispitanice ove formalne norme smatraju rođno neutralnim.

Ovaj članak ne namerava da raspravlja da li su kulturni stereotipi ili sukob između poslovnog i privatnog života razlozi zbog kojih u akademskom svetu ima tako malo žena na rukovodećim položajima. Međutim, iz članka možemo zaključiti da su ovi koncepti međusobno povezani i da će, ako se ne preduzmu mere da se spreči njihovo umnožavanje, akademska zajednica biti dominantno muška.

KLJUČNE REČI

lično zadovoljstvo | akademski učinak | rukovodeća pozicija | muški stereotipi | usklađivanje poslovnih i porodičnih obaveza

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