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Dimensions of Ongoing Role Institutionalization: Romanian Women Managers Representations on Factors Influencing Career Development

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Abstract

This article critically assesses the inferences of the role institutionalization in the representations and self-perception of women executives in Romania, as a first phase in reconstructing social reality. The target of the research is to surprise the manner they interpret the factors and constraints which influence a successful career. We shall reach this target by analyzing the research based on the method of sociological investigation on a national quota sampling on women executives in the public and private field in the context of discrimination and the gender role in these two scopes, the stress resulted in the dynamics occupational environment – family environment. More particular, we shall analyze the factors which prevent and those which enable the careers of women executives, and afterwards we shall compare their interpretations with those in the specialty literature. The results show that women executives in Romania base upon the help of their family and endeavour in order to keep in balance the family life and values with those of the career, under the conditions of a traditional functional model, which capitalizes family as central indicator of life success.

Keywords: role institutionalization; career development; women executives; organizational empirical research; sociology of organizations.

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Introduction

Berger affirms in *Invitation to Sociology* that one of the axiomatic assertions of sociology states that things are not what they seem, statement which lead to the idea of social constructionism, as value added factor of sociologic thinking tradition. Berger warns us to stay away from sociology, if we are to stay the prisoners of the stereotypes we have learned in school but also of the safety of what we call “the world taken for granted” (Berger, 1963: 24). The idea of social constructionism does not only stint to theoretical constructs, but is a living concern as well of empiric on site studies (Buzărnescu, 2007). His work, *Asylums* (Goffman, 1961), shows that total institutions and psychiatric hospitals are the passive, and also imperative, framework for behaviours in report to the image and representations on how hospitalized individuals should act. The author agrees that, in a certain extent, the institutional self is institutionally created. Whyte’s research (1955), *Street Corner Society*, describes the environment of extreme urban poverty, social order in community and adjacency, related to search of profit by criminal actions, social disorganization and anomy status of the community. Such researches are only part of those which, debating on social constructionism, dispute on the dichotomy of social reality, as facets of the same coin. If we agree that society contains non-human built entities, then the human entities include all the other artefacts and behaviours, from paintings to automobiles, from language to culture, concepts or computer games. Artefacts are socially built and not permanently present or natural appearances. In other words, all that is not part of nature is socially built, besides, a founding premise of social sciences and the assumption that scientific truths are subject to social practice and social conventions and objectivity (Gergen, 2001a). In such sense, we register the interpretation of the critics of social constructionism, who classify it as merely another work which describes universe, much too wide to represent a conceptual creation. Such an example is the author Ian Hacking (1999) who wonders “*the social construction of what?*” He identifies the existence of humanly built entities in four areas of reality: theory, discourse, social facts and natural world. Obviously, social constructionism refers to the first three but, depending on the commitment to constructionist paradigm, possibly to the fourth as well, in a certain extent. The concept itself of social constructionism is a social construction, registered as theory. One dedicated scholar in defense of constructionism is Kenneth J. Gergen. He has explicated social constructionism against those experts who prefer the methods of positivistic science as the only valid methods to be used (Gergen, 1991).

Which unites the authors above under the paradigm of social constructionism is the field of interest or, in other words, the analysis level, at a micro level of organizations; either we talk about small groups or face-to-face interaction. In many recent constructionist proposals (Gergen, 2001b), great emphasis is placed

on the dialogue quality of human existence, with regard to the analytical focus and the methodological tools applied (Burr, 2003). The conclusions of researches on behavioural dynamics at micro level led them towards the approach of the macro-social level, of social organization and social order, opposing, in the same time, to the research direction which correlated the manifestations of behaviour in report to the trans- or super-individual phenomena, like social acts (Durkheim, 2002), social body (Spencer, 2002) and social system (Parsons, 1951). We also notice the post-cognitivist concept of the participant which includes the possibility for the individual to take a critical view of what has been manufactured as consent (Burr, 1999).

Coming back to the postulate of social constructionism, namely that the social is not a fact per se, but made, we notice that the social is built, that is, it comes to reach certain targets, not necessarily preliminary and deliberate. Describing social constructionism, Gergen says: "To tell the truth, on this account, is not to furnish an accurate picture of what actually happened but to participate in a set of social conventions. To be objective is to play by the rules within a given tradition of social practices. To do science is not to hold a mirror to nature but to participate actively in the interpretive conventions and practices of a particular culture. The major question that must be asked of scientific accounts, then, is not whether they are true to nature but what these accounts offer to the culture more generally" (Gergen, 2001c).

In the creational process of the social world, people design their ideas on the external environment, becoming real and changing it. Berger and Luckmann describe such phenomena as objective but not from an epistemological standpoint, of knowledge, but describing a world of objects, on which we have a joint perception. This process of human image externalizing till it becomes real by consequence, in the real daily life, is what Berger and Luckmann call the objectivation process. Social constructionism, on the other hand, came as a replica to the incapacity of positivism in the problematic of social issues. Positivism considers as generally accepted reference point the dominant ideas in the definitions and the speech of social issues. Social constructionism states that the people are actors and participants who create their own social world, connoting the idea that perspectives, definitions and explanations are socially built. This is the point at which what Gergen calls "cultural convenience" comes in as a criterion for what is counted as real and right (Gergen, 1999), "A postmodern empiricism would replace the 'truth game' with a search for culturally useful theories and findings with significant cultural meaning" (Gergen, 2001d). Which is regarded from the social point of view as "normal", neutral and immutable is questioned as an idea, politics and practices with a secondary agenda. When notions which are socially regarded as truths are raised, the partisan positions become easily noticeable.

Social constructionism developed two directions: the strong direction, which states that everything is socially built (including the concept of social

constructionism), with critics related to the predominance and validity of theoretical approach related to others. On the other hand, the moderate direction or version states that there is an objective world of social phenomena but also, from epistemological point of view, not all facts are equal, with more or less repeats standards of post-empiricist philosophy of science, implicitly referring to the well-defended positions of the paradigm concept (Gergen, 1994). Such a position tries to avoid the critics of relativism. Therefore, certain facts / objects can be socially built, others not, some can be true, others not. (Fopp, 2008). "Arguments about what is really real are futile. Declarations of truth beyond tradition are, in this sense, a step toward tyranny and, ultimately, the end of communication" (Gergen in the interview conducted by Matthes & Schraube, 2004: 13).

Even if such perspective has to develop the epistemological sub-layer, it is commendable to debate the culturally dominant practices and politics in society, as social constructions with well determined purposes and interests. Therefore, our analysis shall focus on the method women executives interpret themselves the factors which enable or prevent top careers for women, from the point of view of social constructionism marking out a built model of attitudes and perceptions with a generalizing character modelling social behaviour. In other words, the features of this conceptual model really influence the conduct of individuals by their consequences, within the socializing process, by reporting and interiorization of rules, of role-status prescriptions of women in managerial context.

The factors enabling or blocking the development of women's career can be divided in two schools, one which insists upon their socio-psychological nature, especially of those attitudinal and a second, which focus on structural factors. The first school grants a special importance to the topic of socialization and affirms that women are encouraged to adopt a conduct and personality features which do not lead towards performance in executive career, an approach focused on gender. Such an approach analyses the internal influence factors which may explain the low number of women in executive positions within organizations. Passivity, condescendence and risk avoidance lead to a lower rate of success in the world of top management. In the second school, the perspective enables the influence of external factors, the structure of labour world and, generally, the society structure might explain the subordinate position of women in the management field (as well). More recently, we also refer to organizational factors as well (the gender organizational system) in explaining the dynamic of women's career. The de facto situation, when women are involved in the management, can be due to the socialization process which results from the interiorization of attitudes that inhibit career development. Another explanation regards the attitudes of others, of those working together with or for the women executives, therefore, the attitudes the others have in report to women as managers. The fact that others do not see women as successful in the role of manager as men, leads to a perception that operates like a social construct which really influences the career opportunities

for women. A third interpretation is in terms of undeveloped skills due to the nature of the socialization process. The explanation, starting from processes, organizational structures and working environment, can regard the meritocratic theory and that of elites which also often advantage men. The report between the working environment and the context of opportunities is also disclosed in the extent the dynamics of society changed the organizational structures and types in the last decades of the 20th century. And not least, there is the argument that women must generally face more and more difficult family responsibilities than men, the role of mother needing more effort and time than that of father, with a direct influence on career development and opportunities for women. Because, in such a case, we talk about the material organization of society and not about attitudes to maternity and family responsibilities, we are framed in the structural orientation.

The importance of family responsibilities is underlined (Gutek & Larwood, 1987) by the condition that “the obvious difficulty of applying theories destined for the development of women’s career is the treatment of family life as an external irrelevance”. Work and family cannot be considered two separate topics when we talk about women’s career in Romania. The manner society grants by social construction the responsibilities for maintaining family life has obvious implications on the managerial career opportunities of women.

Coming back to our study, we hereby present a sample consisting of women executives, top and average, on which we applied the research instrument that regards the identification of constraints and factors positively influencing career development. We must say that another preliminary objective of our research was the construction of a model of “good practices” in the managerial activity, which may help to the transfer of ideas and values to women that desire to follow a career within the management of an organization. Kenneth Gergen repeatedly has criticized the idea of a specific “constructionist methodology”, in his view any “empirical method” is as good as the other in terms of objective *representation* (Gergen, 2009).

Methodology

Targets and hypotheses

For the fulfilment of the general target, respectively, the identification of key skills which correlate with women’s professional success in Romania the research at national level followed the fulfilment of four specific targets:

OB1. Identification of strategic, organizational, personal effectiveness skills of the successful woman, for the transfer of needed knowledge, attitudes, skills to future managers.

OB2. Identification of the main motivational factors (personal, familial and professional) which positively correlate to the evolution of a successful career.

OB3. Identification of relevant career and life experience models per fields of activity in the public and private sector in order to draft sets of specific competences which can be included in a training program for potential managers.

OB4. Identification of professional vs. Familial attitudes and values as essential factors for the self esteem and image of the successful woman.

We have also elaborated as research hypothesis which regards that there is a high degree of compatibility between the professional and personal (conjugal and familial) dimension for the career evolution of the successful woman in Romania, with the following work hypotheses:

IP.1 The main cultural model of action imposes the cohabitation of the successful professional career with the mode of the “successful mother” as extension of the traditionalist thinking mode, which gives the women the main role in status-role prescriptions and family responsibilities.

IP.2 Successful women in Romania are the best actors in the scope of organizational and communication skills due to the horizon of expectances socialized by the main cultural model in the Romanian society as feminine status-role prescriptions (in other words, the performance fields are preferably attributed to feminine roles).

IP.3 The determining mobiles in the hierarchic, social and professional evolution of successful women in Romania are autonomy in the private sector and freelance, and safety, respectively, in the public and administrative sector.

In the first step, we have divided the individuals to be investigated according to geographical and demographical criteria, starting from the specific of our research. Considering the demographic factor, we consider as basic population the individuals aged between the interval 18-75 years old, women activating in the field of average and top management. From a geographical point of view, the universe of the research took into account the population in the entire geographic area of Romania. The first step of the research regards the identification of 1500 subjects, representing female managers in the private, and state, scope.

The second step is statistic data collection related to the abovementioned individuals.

According to the National Statistics Institute, the female population in Romania on January 1, 2010 was of 11011093 inhabitants. The method chosen in order to calculate the sample volume is represented by quota sampling, which is the most

famous and most used procedure of non-random sampling (Miftode, 2003). Such a method (Pășcută, 2001) limits the subjectivity of operators in choosing their subjects and imposes the framing of such choices in certain quota (indicating the frequencies of the individuals which present certain features). If the distribution of the population according to a number of variables is known, the final sample shall have the same percentage distribution as the total population (Rotariu, & IluȚ, 1998).

The subjects shall be chosen depending on the following quotas: age, residence environment (urban, rural) and geographic distribution in the 4 development macro-regions of the country.

Table 1: Female population on groups related to age, macro-region and residence environment on January 1, 2010.

Age group	Macro-region 1		Macro-region 2		Macro-region 3		Macro-region 4	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
25-29	125603	77385	131356	104166	143479	62586	93950	54447
30-34	128834	83323	133769	118976	160183	75751	97279	62908
35-39	117476	81935	124139	120339	139157	77650	95850	64689
40-44	120984	71938	140344	103506	156364	72296	105436	61225
45-49	103228	54987	112176	70875	112556	46870	79806	43807
50-54	125692	66640	139581	85712	149177	58123	96256	55709
55-59	111292	70765	123104	96081	139134	64923	83667	60864
60-64	78597	65667	81026	87628	96405	64285	61822	63188

Sampling and Method

Before turning to the interpretations it is important to give some more background information on method and sample. We have used the sociological survey and we have chosen this method because it allows the collection of large amounts of information in a relatively short time and makes possible processing them fast with a large area of applicability to populations, although we have built a quotas sample, a sample which can not be “*stricto sensu*” representative.

The survey technique was direct, face to face, because collects information about subjects investigated and the reality in which they are involved directly. The instrument that we’ve used was the semi-structured questionnaire with open and closed questions. Most of our questionnaire dealt with questions of opinion

rather than questions of fact. As a matter of research strategy we chose to deal extensively with opinions to document the inferences of the role institutionalization in the representations and self-perception of women executives.

As a result of the quota sampling, it emerged a quota including a number of 1,500 women executives, which perform their activity in the public sector – 48.9% - as well as in the private sector – occupying top management positions – 55.13%, as well as middle-management - 24.63% and of operational management - 20.22%.

The greatest weight is held by the women executives with ages between: 40 – 49 years (31.8%), 30 – 39 years (28.7%) and 50 – 59 years (22.7%), which is understandable, taking into account the fact that this position in the organizational hierarchy can only be attained after having achieved a certain level of experience, seniority and professional expertise. The values read for items “greatest seniority in a single institution” and “seniority in the current position” only confirms the aforementioned affirmation. As can be seen from the data below, these values also point to a certain degree of mobility of the women executives. Concerning the training level and the income, due to their position, the highest values are registered for university degrees (52.5%) and postgraduate studies (32.7%), respectively RON 1,000 – 2,999 (51.6%) and 3,000 – 4,999 (20%).

Also, there are well represented all the fields of activity where the respondents perform their managerial activity: 1. Marketing 4.4%, 2. Analysis and counselling 7.1%, 3. PR (Public Relations) 3.0%, 4. Technical 3.4 %, 5. Labour organization 2.3%, 6. Project management 3.5%, 7. Management of Human Resources 3.7%, 8. Industry 2.9%, 9. Commerce 13.4%, 10. Communications and advertising 0.6%, 11. Financial/Banking 9.1%, 12. Law 2.5%, 13. Medicine 7.1%, 14. Education 22.3%, 15. Culture 1.0%, 16. Communitarian services 3.3%, 17. Other fields 10.3%. Researchers agree, and the work-family literature has traditionally assumed, that variables associated with the family domain predict Family to Work Conflict (FWC), and that from work domain variables predict Work to family conflict (WFC) (Beaugard, 2006). Both forms of conflict basically result from an individual’s attempts to meet an overabundance of demands emanating from the home/family and work domains in which the individual operates (Boles et al., 2001). There are two types of work-family conflicts, “work interfering with family” (WIF) (Boyar et al, 2008) and “family interfering with work” conflict (FIW) (Carlson et al., 2000; Frone et al., 1996; Gutek et al. 1991; Netemeyer et al., 1996). The cohesion between work and family is an important issue for many scholars, and, unsurprisingly, the research on work-family conflict (WFC) has become a major area in organizational research (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 2002).

Yavas et al (2008) contend that there are three possible consequences of work-family and family-work conflicts: emotional exhaustion, poor job performance

and higher turnover intentions. The distribution of the research subjects in the rural and the urban areas is also pertinent: 78.9% - urban area and 19% - rural area, taking into account the goal of the research and the characteristics of the respondents.

Discussion

As the main goal of the research has envisaged the identification of the key-abilities which correlate with the professional success of the woman executive, the semi-structured interview which was presented to the 1,500 women executives focused on several aspects, namely: the perception of the women executives regarding the professional success, the reasons grounding the choice of the professional career and the factors which have contributed to its development, the difficulties, the hindrances faced by the women executives, but also the solutions used to hurdle them, the strong and the weak points of a woman executive as opposed to a male executive, their perception regarding the importance of the abilities a woman executive must use in order to have success and in what degree these abilities are present in the managerial activity of the 1,500 women executives subject of the research.

The representations of the women executives regarding the professional success, prevalently associate the success with the professional satisfaction (13.36%), performance (13.11%) and the balance between their job and their personal life (12.87%). The set of attributes the success was associated with is represented by: money, promotion in the organizational hierarchy, social recognition, power, the possibility to support their peers, performance, offering a professional and life role model, professional satisfaction, balance between job and personal life. By correlating these attributes, the greatest degree of satisfaction (10 points), was granted: to achieving a balance between the job and the personal life - 27.1%, to performance - 21.8% and to professional satisfaction - 20.7%. Characteristics like money (8.5%), promotion in the organizational hierarchy (5.6%), power (5.3%), are thus not as important in the representations regarding the success of women executives, a fact confirming the influence of the social constructionism due to the socialization process resulting from the internalizing of certain attitudes which are inhibiting in the career development.

Regarding the reasons grounding the decisions of the women executives to build a career in the management area, we notice that the greatest weight (79.8%) is held by the desire of professional and social fulfilment. Also, high values, but also similar, are registered by the “desire to improve your material life” (36%) and the “desire to prove your competences to yourself as well as to others” (34.1%).

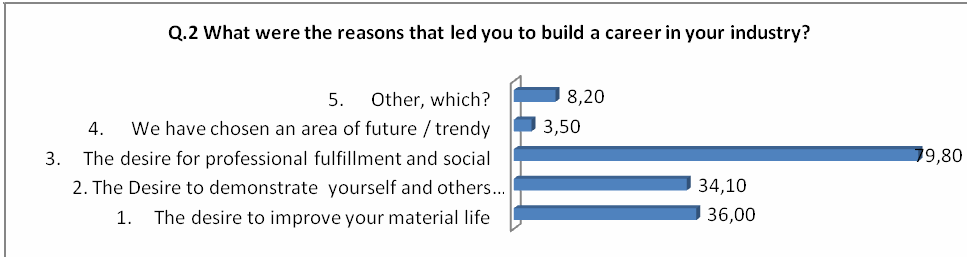


Figure 1: *Reasons grounding the development of a career*

The results point to the fact that our specific hypothesis (IP1, 3) is confirmed. Women executives also identify reasons like the desire to do something good for their family, as well as for society - 32.3%, the ambition and the desire to communicate, of openness to new – 2.1%; the desire to work in the desired field and the satisfaction of the well done work – 1.7%, which complete the motivational framework of the women executives’ process of development and orientation in their career.

The factors which have contributed to the development of the professional career of the women executives, like professional expertise, loyalty, hard work and perseverance are very important, while other factors like: luck, randomness, favourable conjuncture, family and social relations in general, only contribute in a small amount in building a career. These results support our remarks highlighting the fact that in today’s society, the social construction envisaging the responsibilities for up keeping and family life has obvious implications onto the managerial career opportunities of women.

Table 2: *Factors contributing to building a career*

Factors	Largely	Very largely	Total
1. Favourable conjuncture	25.9%	9.1%	35%
2. Professional expertise	39.7%	46.7%	86.4%
3. Hard work and perseverance	21.7%	27.5%	49.2%
4. Loyalty	35.0%	38.0%	73%
5. Family and social relations in general	25.9%	19.9%	45.8%
6. Luck, randomness	11.9%	4.7%	16.6%
7. Others	0.9%	0.5%	1.4%

The representations regarding personal success, starting from personal aspirations and motivations, associate the success with the satisfaction felt (22.2%), with the professional performance obtained and the proven professionalism (19.5%), with hard work (18.4%), with perseverance and responsibility (11.7%). The results positively correlate with those received for the first question of the interview, which prove the validity and the correctness of these appreciations, as they are presented in the comparative registry.

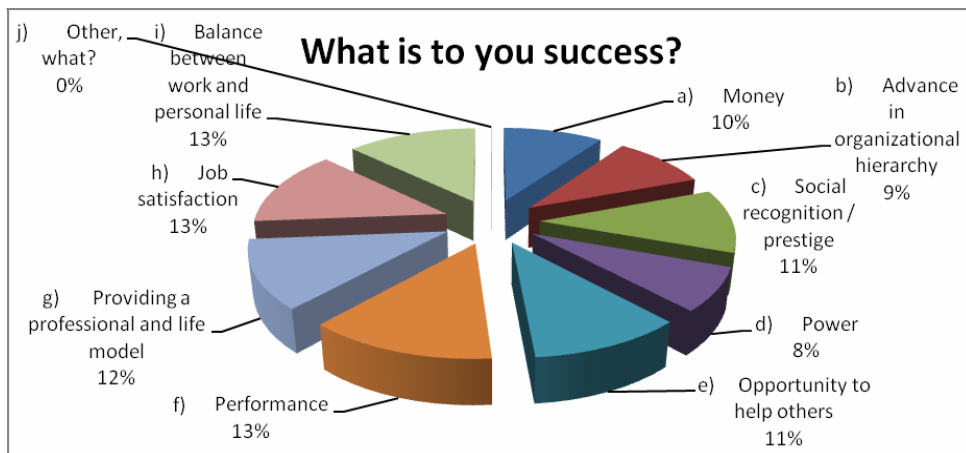


Figure 2: *Representation of success*

The women executives identify in their activity a series of issues and challenges regarding: private, social, professional issues (21.3%), bureaucracy and administrative issues (18.5%), people's lack of competence and seriousness (13.4%), issues generated by the professional reconversion (12.8%). A small 5.7% percent appreciates that they did not face any major issues in their activity. The strategies identified in approaching these issues envisage: a proper communication with the peers and the development of mechanisms for overcoming bureaucracy and administrative issues (29.6%), reorientation of the management system by developing successful experiments (12.4%). Only 0.7% state that the encountered issues could not be solved. Thus can be stressed the high percentage, of 5.25%, of women which did not state the means of solving the faced issues, which either shows lack of interest, either the desire not to present their own solutions in solving these issues. Putting on consistent performances on a regular basis and working for more than regular working hours have also been shown to contribute to WFC (Major et al., 2002).

The identification of the main abilities that a woman executive should possess in order to be successful support the sketching of a profile in what attitude is concerned, envisaging their desirable behaviour. The women executives have attributed scores, between 1 and 20 points, in the order of the importance assigned to various abilities, thus resulting in a hierarchy as presented below:

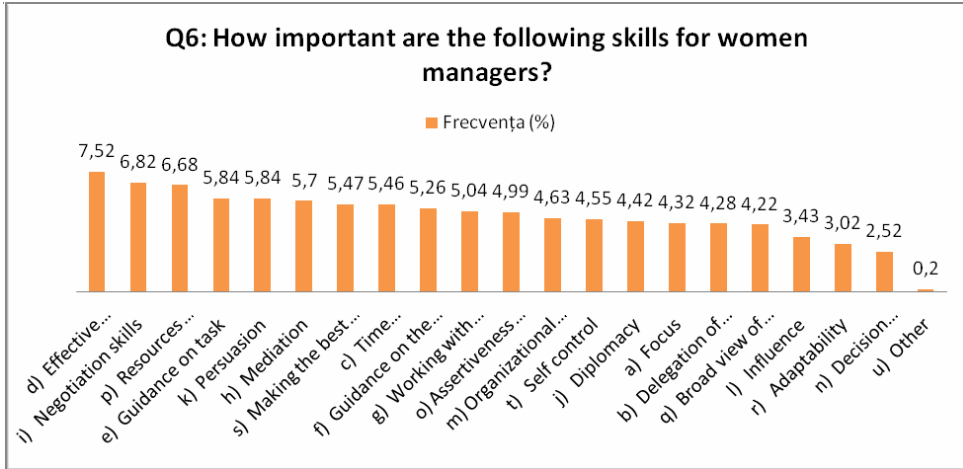


Figure 3: Abilities which are important for the woman executive

It can be assessed that the values obtained by these abilities are similar, but on the first 10 places ranked: efficient communication (7.52%), negotiation skills (6.82%), management of resources (6.68%), orientation towards duties (5.84%), mediation (5.70%), maximum capitalization of the available resources (5.47%), time management (5.46%), orientation towards the result (5.26%) and operating using concepts (5.04%). On the first 10 places, in a descending order, ranked: ability to organize and coordinate (51.7%); taking decisions and solving issues (42.7%); efficient communication (33,1%); general overview of the business (31.1%); time management (24.5%); diplomacy (20.6%); maximum capitalization of available resources (19.8%); management of resources (19.5%); assigning duties and authority towards other employees (19.1%); negotiation skills (15.7%).

The results point to the fact that our specific hypothesis (IP2) is confirmed. To identify the strong features of the image of the Romanian successful woman executive, we have identified the main assets characterizing the respondents. From the received answers can be assessed that the most frequent assets the women executives use in their activity, are mostly: responsibility (67.7%), respect (56.9%), perseverance (51%), commitment (43.9%), trust in personal powers (42.1%), optimism (41.2%), toughness (40%). Less or even not at all are used assets like: empathy (8.1% less and 6.4% not at all), charisma (9.7% less and 4.7% not at all), elegance (9.3% less and 4.1% not at all), talent (7.9% less and 3.9% not at all).

By making a comparison of the answers received for questions 6 and 4 in the instrument applied to women executives, we can conclude that they possess those assets which are consonant with the skills needed by the women executives to build a successful professional career. We especially make reference to: professionalism, responsibility, trust in personal powers, respect, perseverance, efficient communications, negotiation skills and diplomacy, optimism. Surprisingly, assets which are held to be specific to women and which were expected to appear as being frequently used by the women executives, like: empathy, elegance and charisma are less present in the respondents' options, which makes us conclude that it is about an adaptation of the women executives to the world of male executives, so we can say it is about a masculinising tendency of the women executives in their desire to succeed in their chosen career.

The answers received for questions 7 and 15 of the applied instrument only confirm this conclusion. Thus, women executives consider that the most difficult issues faced by a woman executive are: up keeping the balance between the familial and the professional responsibility (62.1%), assuming of risks under fortuitous situations (20.7%) and preconceptions, discriminations towards women (14.6%). It is about the manifestation of misogyny (5.1%) and the lack of confidence in women and their underestimation (7.3%), these results conducting us to achieve our specific objectives (OB 1, 2, 3, 4). Negative attitudes toward women as managers, in turn, have been also found by researchers to limit the promotion prospects of women (Snizek & Neil, 1992).

In the same time, in a comparative and objective registry, the women executives appreciate that they have strengths, as well as weaknesses in comparison with men executives. Thus, they consider they have the following strengths: perseverance, ambition, fidelity (13.3%), negotiation skills, diplomacy, persuasion, responsibility (7.9%), intuition, caution (7.4%), these percents being obtained by ranking these assets among the top ones, in comparison with men executives.

Regarding the weaknesses in comparison to men executives and considered as being the most important, they state: physical appearance, power, sensibility, emotiveness, empathy (18.1%), fear, lack of managerial skills (15%), familial responsibilities (5.7%).

Table 3: Correlation of variables: issues and age

		Q16: Age	Q7_1:What do you think are the biggest difficulties faced by a woman	Q7_2:Balance between work and family	Q7_3: Taking risks in contingency	Q7_4: Others
Q16: Age	Pearson	1	,030	,070**	,029	-,018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	,239	,007	,261	,496
	N	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Q7_1:What do you think are the biggest difficulties faced by a woman	Pearson	,030	1	-,239**	-,144**	,007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,239	-	,000	,000	,784
	N	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Q7_2:Balance between work and family	Pearson	,070**	-,239**	1	-,173**	-,089**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	000	-	,000	,001
	N	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Q7_3: Taking risks in contingency	Pearson	,029	-,144**	-,173**	1	-,004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,261	000	000	-	,874
	N	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
Q7_4: Others	Pearson	-,018	,007	-,089**	-,004	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,496	,784	001	,874	-
	N	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the variables “Which do you think are the greatest issues faced by a woman executive” and “age”, the r (Pearson) coefficient has the value of .070, raking within the significance parameter. Therefore, we identify a moderated correlation coefficient (of average positive intensity) between the two variables, in the analyzed case, the increase of the options for the issue of up keeping the balance between the familial and the professional responsibility correlates with the aging of the respondents. For the variables “Which do you think are the greatest issues

faced by a woman executive” and “*incomes*”, the r (Pearson) coefficient has the value of $-.058$, raking within the significance parameter. We have therefore identified a moderated correlation coefficient (of average negative intensity) between the two variables, in the analyzed case, the increase of the options for other types of issues faced by the woman executive correlating with the decrease of the respondents’ incomes. In conclusion, a great number of women executives (68.6%) appreciate that there are differences between the women and the men executives, but these can be overcome by the women executives’ strengths, which they use in their managerial activity.

These results confirm our main research hypothesis which regards that there is a high degree of compatibility between the professional and personal (conjugal and familial) dimension for the career evolution of the successful woman in Romania and our main and specific objectives respectively, the identification of key skills which correlate with women’s professional success in Romania.

Conclusions

The results of the present research point to the fact that the opportunities for the development of Romanian women executives’ career, as well as the relation between work environment and family life have presently become a very interesting subject for the Romanian society, with an extremely provocative and difficult socio-political and economical context. Women executives play multiple roles (Carlson, & Kacmar, 2000), as wives, mothers and professionals in various fields of activity. As researchers observed in similar context, if she succeeds, a good human resource management practice is to give her more responsibilities (Ng & Chiu 2001). Not only they have to take a dominant role in taking over the familial responsibilities, with the appended cultural and social functionality, but they still arrive to manage and thus, in a certain degree, to reproduce the relation with the traditional way of thinking, which prescribes the attributions of role-status of the woman in the Romanian society, assuming the familial success as a dominant value, complementarily and not in opposition with the professional success. On these lines, we stress the difficulties faced by the mothers with a management career, to get hired on full-time positions and to compete in an equal competition with male executives in their field of activity. As a strategy in maximization the chances of career development, we notice the preference for national or multinational organizations and for educational institutions. Women managers, by avoiding open confrontation, also face less tension (Javidan & House, 2001). The avoidance of conflicts and assuming great risks in a smaller degree also represent a good strategy, largely interiorized by socialization as a factor of a referential model for the social constructionism, which allows the up

keeping of a “social peace” by assuming multiple professional and familial tasks, up keeping both environments “happy” by hard work and passion.

It is observed that the model of the woman executive in the Romanian society is on a strength line different from the pragmatic neoliberal capitalist model, which encourages women executives with strong educational resources, unmarried and lacking familial responsibilities, who desire and are capable to compete on a signally masculine terrain (in terms of rules) of the top management. A conflict of these two models shall lead, in the future, to a redefinition of the work environment – familial environment relationship, of the wives with a career and with familial responsibilities/roles.

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