

DOI: 10.28934/jwee20.12.pp72-86
JEL: Z2, J16

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Persistence of Gender Stereotypes in Sports



Daniela Palaščáková¹

Technical University of Košice, Faculty of Economics, Department of Economics,
Košice, Slovak Republic

Lenka Palaščáková²

Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Department of
Security and Defense, Liptovský Mikuláš, Slovak Republic

ABSTRACT

Equality among women and men is the fundamental principle of the European Union. European Commission has declared to eliminate and resolve the gender inequalities in decision-making within the Women's Charter as well as the strategy for women and men equality. Although there is a continuous growth in women's participation in sports, women are still underrepresented in the decision-making bodies of the sports institutions at local, national, European and global level. However, gender inequality remains common in our society, even though the way how individuals experience gender discrimination differs. The reason is the fact that inequality is the consequence of various factors influence, not the gender itself only. When strengthening gender equality in sports and decision-making, eliminating gender inequalities is the most important. Following the contemporary interdisciplinary research of sports, the primary goal of this article is to research the persistence of gender stereotypes in sports and analyze causal relationships

¹ Corresponding author, address: B. Němcovej 32, 040 01 Košice, Slovak Republic, e-mail: Daniela.Palascakova@tuke.sk, tel. +421 902 409 294

² Address: Demänová 393, 031 01 Liptovský Mikuláš 6, Slovak Republic, tel. +421 917 681 969, e-mail: palascakova.lenka@gmail.com

resulting from gender inequality. The analysis itself was carried out in IBM SPSS Amos software, which is ideal for creating causal models and whose environment offers a model display.

KEY WORDS: *analysis, discrimination, causality, gender, equality, stereotype, strategy, sport*

Introduction

One of the key priorities of the European Union (hereinafter “EU”) is to ensure the equality between men and women in the social-political and economic world. As many professionals who helped establish the understanding of discrimination as an economic issue, such as Arrow (1971), Becker (1971), Blinder (1973), Oaxac (1973), Cain (1986) state that it is necessary to provide the equality of opportunities, salary equality and to increase the employment rate of women predominantly. The increase in the employment rate of women is necessary for sustainable economic growth and development. The study of professional literature, scientific works and strategic documents dealing with the causal relations between employment, gender and salaries tend toward the conclusion that there are strong gender differences and inequalities between the mentioned areas (Drolet, 2001; Cassells, Vidyattama, Miranti & McNamara, 2009; Matěju & Anýžová, 2015). The contemporary situation shows a worse and more difficult position of women in comparison to men.

The extent of literature resources within the field of gender equality and gender inequalities is very fruitful regarding the interdisciplinary topics and offers wide topics to study. We did not miss the scientific activity in the field of authors Gyarfášová (2014), Barošová (2009), Pauhofová (2016), Filadelfiová (2010, 2014) etc. The fact is that our paper represents a partial view of the issue only.

It is a very actual topic that should be a subject of public discussions as per the results of the social survey of Eurobarometer from 2015 (European Union, 2015). The European citizens clearly expressed their sensitive attitude toward gender equality within the survey, where the majority of them confirmed the existence of gender inequalities, mostly in the field of the labor market. It is a very serious and actual global problem as the gender inequalities are the subject of significant international organizations such as UNESCO (UNESCO, Building Peace in the minds of men and women,

2017), United Nations (hereinafter “UN”) and its independent specialized organization UN Women, including the integration of the problem into *United Nations Development Programme* (UNWomen, 2017), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter “OECD”), International Labor Organization (hereinafter “ILO”), or even World Economic Forum (hereinafter “WEF”). WEF annually points to the development of the gender gap in the world through the *Report on the global gender gap*. It quantifies the range of gender inequalities in this report, as well as the development throughout the time and space concerning the qualified relative inequalities in the field of health, education, economy, and politics. However, the continuous regular reporting of WEF pointed out the extremely slow development in this area (Global Gender Gap Report, WEF, 2016). We must emphasize the significance of *the National strategy of gender equality in the Slovak Republic for 2014-2019* at the national level. The above-mentioned strategy is dealing with the areas with the most remarkable evidence of inequality between men and women. Strategic priorities are in line with European priority areas. They are particularly defined as follows: area of economic independence and labor market, area of participation in decision-making in public and economic life, area of education, science and research and area of humanity and body integrity (violence elimination). There is also institutional and legislative protection of gender equality and international cooperation and developmental assistance between strategic areas. The strategy was the basic principle of *the Action plan of gender equality in the Slovak Republic in 2014-2019*.

The short intersection of the selected strategies and programs, as well as the contribution of Slovakia to the resolution of the problem at the national level, point out the initiative of world authorities to the resolution of gender equalities.

Within the context of this paper, there is a space for the creation of the initiative to deal with gender equality in sports and intensify the social dialogue on this topic. We focused on gender equality in sports as an applied scientific discipline clarifying the interesting circumstances of sport and its impact on the sporting achievements of representatives.

Referring to contemporary interdisciplinary sports research, the primary goal of our paper is to examine the persistence of gender stereotypes in sports and analyze the causal relationships resulting from gender inequality. Following the main goal, we have set the secondary goal, based on the causal analysis, to specify out of the characteristics of family

conditions the characteristics with the most impact on the persistence of stereotypes which cause problems of gender equality. We strive to suggest the targeted measurements and initiatives which could help increase the participation of women in the decision-making process in sport.

Gender Equality in Sport

Sport is traditionally considered to be a discipline where men dominate. There has been a delay within the progress in gender equality limited by social role models of femininity and masculinity where sports are often related to the “muscular” characteristics, such as physical strength, resistance, speed, high range of competitive and confrontational spirit. Females doing sports can be considered as “masculinist” and males not interested in sports can be considered as “non-muscular”.

However, dimensions the sports have reached so far force us not to analyze the sports purely as physical, dynamic activity but even as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon. For instance, for the professionals such as Sekot, Leško, Drobny (2004), Weiss, Coakley (2001), Novotný (2011), Gábriš & Križan (2011) who deal with the research of sport and its impact, the important role is to identify the most significant social impacts and social relationships. Some of them consider the social component, the human interactions, impact on their health and psychology as well as the individual happiness to be very important. Others consider economic impacts from positive phenomena resulting in the social impact of sports and doing sports to be more significant. Sport brings substantial economic advantages in the entire EU and is a significant tool for outward relationships.

According to psychologist Gerbery (2010), the problem of gender inequality lies even within the applied ways of thinking that are not related to the present state of society. He called this phenomenon “human mechanism”. In his opinion, the 21st century should be the feminization of male life paths and transferring good practices from other countries.

Dominant gender stereotypes influence not only the participation of women in decision-making in sport organizations but even their participation in sporting activities. Even if there is a continuous growth of women’s participation in sports, women are always insufficiently represented within the body organs of sports institutions at local, national, European and global level. There is a very low level of women represented

at the top decision-making positions of sports organizations of the member countries European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018The occupation of a coach is another area in the sport with the insufficient representation of women. Based on the data from seven EU member countries, it is estimated that only 20% up to 30% of all sports coaches in Europe are women (European Commission, 2014). There are more males employed in sports than females, based on the database of gender statistics European Institute for Gender Equality (hereinafter "EIGE") which says that the employment rate of women in sports decreased, while the employment rate of men increased at European level in 2012-2014.

There was a suggestion regarding the strategic actions in terms of gender equality in sports during 2014-2020 being approved after the EU conference on gender equality in sports held in 2013. Governing bodies in sports and non-governmental organizations agree on the conditions and proposals within the suggestion that there is a lot of work ahead of us. They call us to develop and arrange national and international strategies regarding the conditions in gender equality in sports through coherent and particular efforts at the EU level.

The Committee in its conclusions on gender equality in sports calls the sports organizations to strengthen the gender balance in governmental bodies and committees as well as the area of management and training. It also requires elimination of non-legislative obstacles prevent women to place these positions (European Commission, 2014).

Methodology

As we stated in the introduction, the primary goal of our paper is to research the persistence of gender stereotypes in sport and analyze causal relationships resulting from gender equality. We split the analysis results based on the methodological point of view into two levels. Firstly, the results of causal analysis, where the aim was to specify the characteristics with the most impact on the persistence of stereotypes which cause problems in gender equality out of the set of characteristics in the area of family conditions. Following the above mentioned, we set the following causal hypothesis: the most remarkable impact on persistence and perception of gender equalities through the optics of entrepreneurs in their relationship to their employees has the family condition of "single mother" out of the set of selected characteristics.

Secondarily, regarding the persistence of gender stereotypes in sports, we have chosen the total number of medals as the standard of success in sports: gold (G) + silver (S) + bronze (B) at the most significant international sports events, such as Olympic Games in 2009 – 2018.

We have got into the causal relationships through the professional publications of Peyrot (1996) who deals with the clarification of causal modeling use and its logic, interpretation included. The modeling can be simple when using logical-hierarchical analyses or analyses called a path. However, the modeling form of structural patterns consists of significant statistical advantages and Peyrot marks it as the most advanced method. Pearl (2009) offers a very complex view on the problem of causality and offers the description of empirical and statistical range in his work. According to Schenk (1981), causal modeling is a special procedure that reveals causal relationships in complicated systems of variables through empirical data.

We have chosen the causal analysis through the modeling of structural patterns. We performed the analysis in IBM SPSS Amos software for creating causal models and its environment offers even the presentation of the model. We did the modeling according to the publication of Byrne (2010) who is a true professional in the field of modeling the structural patterns.

Besides this, we followed the prognostic work of Smrčková (2015) who used the method of structural patterns for examining the impact of skills on literacy. Her work was our inspiration in terms of how to present the model presenting causal relationships in terms of its content and form. The publications of Matěja and Večerníček (2015), or Matěja and Anýžová (2015) with the same purpose as the ones mentioned above.

The model was designed based on data acquired from the questionnaire survey focused on the current situation of gender equality in practice among entrepreneurs (employers). The questionnaire survey aimed to map the contemporary view of entrepreneurs on gender equality regarding the expenses, problems, and assets of this phenomenon. The result of this survey was presented in other papers.

When creating the questionnaire, we followed the advice of authors who have already surveyed questioning the entrepreneurs. Conclusions made out of their suggestions consist of restricting the number of questions because entrepreneurs are generally not interested in surveys so much. It has been a disadvantage in our questionnaire when modeling the causal

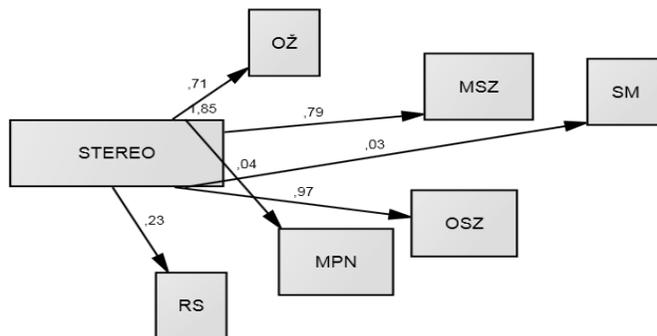
relationships because we lacked data which could create a better picture of the causal relationships.

Results

Discrimination at the global, European and even Slovak level is still high. We analyzed it through gender inequalities between males and females. We set the causal hypothesis regarding the determined goals based on the suggestion that the employers are creating a gender gap considering the research results of the works of Drolet (2001), Mitra (2003) or Cassells Vidyattama, Miranti and McNamara 2009 (2009). We decided to apply their findings into the case in Slovakia, respecting the results of Rizman (2017) who points to the extent of the gender gap in Slovak conditions. Considering the findings of the above-mentioned authors, we focused our attention on the field of subjective perception of stereotypes through the optics of entrepreneurs (employers) and their response to the impulses when evaluating the employers for family conditions.

The model presented in Figure 1 consists of one latent variable expressed as the level of stereotypes persistence when choosing the employees for entrepreneurs (employers). It consists of the variables related to various types of family conditions. Besides the latent variable of stereotypes persistence, we tried to add even other variables, however, the model has been always deteriorated and losing its statistical attributes. The limitation of such a model seems to be optimal for our purposes.

Figure 1: Causal model presenting the intensity of selected characteristics



Source: own collaboration through IBM SPSS Amos

Whereas:

- STERO expresses the level of stereotypes persistence,
- OŽ means the condition of the father as the breadwinner,
- MSZ means the condition of the mother,
- SM means the condition of a single mother,
- OSZ means the condition of the father as a stable employee,
- MPN means the condition of the mother as a person with the high load considering the difficulty of synchronization of her family and work life,
- RS expresses the family condition of being married.

In the following Tables 1 and 2, we state the standardized and non-standardized regression balances.

Table 1: Standardized regression balances

Relationship	Estimate
RS <--- STEREO	1,000
MPN <--- STEREO	1,000
OŽ <--- STEREO	1,000
MSZ <--- STEREO	1,000
SM <--- STEREO	1,000
OSZ <--- STEREO	1,000

Source: own collaboration

Based on the values of balances in Table 1, we can see that standardized regression balances point out to the statistically significant impact of all determined characteristics for the stereotypes persistence.

Table 2: Non-standardized regression balances

Relationship	Estimate	P-value
RS <--- STEREO	0,231	***
MPN <--- STEREO	0,042	0,329
OŽ <--- STEREO	0,711	***
MSZ <--- STEREO	0,787	***
SM <--- STEREO	0,033	0,472
OSZ <--- STEREO	0,967	***

Source: own collaboration

In Table 2, we can see that the statistical significance from non-standardized regression balances is assigned to the characteristics “family condition”, “father as a breadwinner”, “mother as the assumption of a stable employee” and “father as a stable employee”. At the level of significance of 0.05, the characteristics of “single mother” and “the condition of the mother as a personality with high load” were not determined as statistically significant. The causal model that we designed in the IBM SPSS Amos program explains the persistence of stereotypes. According to the results of causal analysis, there is an impact of “family condition of employees”, “family condition of being married” on the persistence of gender stereotypes in our determined series of characteristics. Besides this, stereotypes are caused even with opinions such as “father as a breadwinner”, “father or mother as stable employees” which are evaluated by the employers. A causal relationship has not been confirmed for the family condition of “single mother” and “mother as a person with the high load considering the difficulty of synchronization of her family and work-life”. Based on the results of causal analysis, we must state that we can refute the causal hypothesis.

Through the causal analysis, we wanted to point out to the fact that entrepreneurs at the level of employers create a gender gap between men and women even by the life-long support of stereotypes regarding the family condition. Besides the determined model, we strived to look for even further causal relationships from data acquired by the assessment of a questionnaire survey but none of the models were statistically significant.

Number of Medals in Sports According to Gender

As we have already stated within the section of material and methods, the number of medals, gold (G) + silver (S) + bronze (B), was selected as the measurement of success of Slovakia on a particular international sporting event, such as OG. We assumed that the results at the greatest international sporting event are influenced by biological gender + social gender (usually referred to as a gender) besides of other factors such as the wealth of a country reflecting GDP per capita, population size, etc.

In this sense, it is necessary to look at the traditional gender roles which can determine how much time women spend with duties related to caring what can consequently influence their time for sports activities or solid sports preparation. Index of gender equality of EIGE Institute clearly shows

the fact that women, in comparison to men, spend more time doing the activities related to care and therefore have less time to participate in other social activities, such as sporting, cultural, recreational activities, etc (Gender Equality Index, European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018).

In Table 3, you can see the number of medals from OG – Summer Olympic Games (hereinafter “SOG”) and Winter Olympic Games (hereinafter “WOG”) in the researched period from 2008 – 2018 in the following order: gold (G) + silver (S) + bronze (B).

Table 3: Number of medals at OG in 2008 – 2018

SVK	Year / Number of medals at OG (SOG, WOG) acquired by women (W) and men (M)						Total
	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	
	(SOG)	(WOG)	(SOG)	(WOG)	(SOG)	(WOG)	
G	3/2M,1W	1/W	0	1/W	2/2M	1/W	8/4M,4W
S	2/1M,1W	1/W	1/W	0	2/2M	2/W	8/3M,5W
B	1/M	1/M	3/2M,1W	0	0	0	5/4M,1W
Total	6/4M,2W	3/1M,2W	4/2M,2W	1/1W	4/4M	3/3W	21/11M,10W

Source: own collaboration based on www.olympic.sk

If we don't look at the final number of medals at SOG, we can find out that seven of eight medal positions were acquired by woman, Anastasia Kuzminova (3 golden, 3 silver, 1 bronze) who has got one golden and two silver medals in 2018, one golden and one silver medal in 2010 and one golden medal in her least the successful year of 2014. There is only one bronze medal among the men acquired by Pavol Hurajt in 2018.

The Slovak representation team was more successful at SOG acquiring a total of 14 medals (5 golden, 5 silver, 4 bronze). In comparison to WOG, men were more successful (4 golden, 3 silver, 3 bronze) than women (1 golden, 2 silver, 1 bronze) at SOG.

As we do the comparison, only one woman, Anastasia Kuzminova, was successful at WOG who acquired seven medals (3 golden, 3 silver, 1 bronze) and three women were successful at SOG, acquiring 4 medals in total - Elena Kaliska (1 golden), Zuzana Štefečková (2 silver) and Danka Barteková (1 bronze).

A just representation of women at events, appreciation of their successes, uneven financing of women and men teams or media coverage of

women and their successes are very important topics to be dealt with. However, we cannot overlook the problems behind the gates of great sporting events and their long-term social consequences. It seems that we can call for gender equality within the great sporting events and ignore the fact that the events itself reproduce social inequality at the same time (Lenskyj, 2011).

Conclusion

According to the results, the global decrease in the gender gap is very slow. The fact that it is not a dilemmatic topic can be caused even by its interdisciplinary characteristics. It is a very complex and long-term problem that can be the reason for postponing its solution. Simply said, we have got used to this inequality and exactly this kind of attitude is keeping it alive. From the results of the causal analysis, we can say that the entrepreneurs in the position of employers always keep some stereotypes in their behavior that they use to judge their employees. We have dealt with the stereotypes regarding the family condition in our research where the determined characteristics were identified as the reasons for stereotypes preservation.

The level of the number of women on maternity and parental leave is almost unchanged, women deal with parental tasks. The influence of parenthood on the level of employability as well as focusing on the sporting careers of men and women brings the most remarkable gender inequalities.

What we can get from the recent researches of various agencies (EIGE) is that measurement of the change range in decision-making in sport is limiting the absence of suitable indices at the level of EU. Even though some data are already available, there still is a lack of data categorized by gender to compare all the member countries. Regular monitor and evaluation of gender statistics are missing as well in the regions of Slovakia. The lack of suitable information disables the policymakers to accept the goals reflecting different needs of women and men and it supports more equal rate of their participation.

When strengthening gender equality in sports and decision making, the most important is to eliminate gender stereotypes. The elimination of gender stereotypes plays a key role when eliminating the obstacles which limit women to achieve their positions in sports. The broader range of targeted measurements, such as public discussions, workshops, training programs and active policy supporting young women in sports, would help gender

equality and increase in women participation within the decision-making in sports. The influence of legislative and voluntary measurements could be strengthened through the activity focused on the increase of public awareness for the fight against normative gender roles.

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Article history: Received: 26 March, 2020

Accepted: 5 May, 2020