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GENDER ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC SELF-PRESENTATION OF UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

Abstract. *The article deals with the actuality of a problem of economic self-presentation of young men and women as subjects of their economic socialization. The purpose of the study is to identify the socialization impact of traditional and egalitarian gender orientations of students on their economic self-presentation in micro, meso, and macro levels of society. The concept of gender as a cross-cutting characteristic of economic and political stratification of society is outlined. The social and psychological factors that determine the differentiation of economic roles, socioeconomic status, life opportunities and limitations of both sexes are substantiated. The phenomenon of entrepreneurship in various spheres of economic life in terms of the subjectivity of both sexes is described. The model of the economic behaviour of students is presented. The predominant economic guidelines for young men and women toward their roles in the private sphere (family) and the public sphere (education and careers) are revealed.*

Key words: *economic self-presentation, traditional and egalitarian gender orientations, students.*

Introduction.

In the context of economic crisis, research on gender issues is being updated, aiming at identification of the major factors of differentiation of social, financial and economic statuses of men and women, achieving gender equality in employment, which are manifested in unequal opportunities of women and men in terms of authority, education and employment, income and property. The reorientation of the country's economy to market conditions requires young women and men to be proactive, innovative and ability to take risks, and at the same time rational thinking and reflection that are the features of an entrepreneurial subject of economic relations. Modern student youth is at the crossroads of gender self-identification in the economic culture, which exacerbates the problem of investigating young women and men entrepreneurship, enhancing the economic competence of a specialist as an integral part of the profession of a graduate of a higher educational establishment.

Problem Statement.

Economic issues are an inherent component of applied socio-psychological research, covering topics of mutual influence of education and economic status, features of tactics of presentation of oneself, including the ability to work, internalization of different attitudes towards one's self in collectivist and individualistic cultures. The results of the researches testify the difference of value attitudes towards material enrichment of the student youth, which underwent socialization within the framework of market and planned socialist economy [1; 2; 3]. Feminine and masculine-oriented countries with respect to the dominant system of social values, in which financial-status and property ones occupy either a subordinate, secondary, or a prominent, leading position, also have an influence on the nature of economic self-presentation [4].

A gender misbalance, vertical-horizontal stratification is typical for Ukraine. The division of social life into "male" and "female" as the old paradigm of "male domination – female subordination" goes back in time, because of its inefficiency in its various life spheres, starting from the micro-level of the family and ending with the macro level of the occupations' division, leadership position, the ideology of the state. Gender-specific problems are observed in double employment of a woman, her lower economic status and the level of payment, idea exploit of one-sex responsibility (a woman-mother, a woman-caregiver and others) [5; 6; 7].

The experience of European countries is considered to be the most effective regarding implementation of the positive actions on achieving gender equality. Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018–2023) focus on six strategic areas: 1) to prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism; 2) to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence; 3) to ensure the equal access of women to justice; 4) to achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making; 5) to protect the rights of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women and girls; 6) to achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures [8].

Ensuring equal opportunity for men and women in achieving social status, overcoming gender stereotypes, using an egalitarian ideology of economic activity, interchangeability of genders in family functioning is a challenge of time while exploring the social and psychological mechanisms of formation the new economic Human (Homo economicus).

Research Questions.

In the transition period of the society development, reinforced by the financial and economic crisis, the peculiarities of planning and building their own vocational and educational careers are at the forefront of the problem of economic socialization of young women and men, as they are inextricably linked with the demographic situation, the condition of marriage and family relationships, offers in the labor market, employment and unemployment, the expected rate of return on human capital. Rapid market changes, that Ukraine is striving to achieve during last years, are inevitably affecting the spheres of economic lives of sexes, their psychological readiness for self-actualization in the market conditions which require from everyone to accept responsibility for their own economic capacity. This is about economic self-actualization, the success or unsuccess of which influences the social functioning of a family, psychological prosperity of an individual. The term of economic self-actualization is directly related to the professional self-sufficiency of an individual, his/her level of social and economic achievements [7; 9].

According to N. Dembytska [10], the idea of representing the relations of property as a carrier of the economic experience of society is a factor in the economic socialization of youth. V. Komarovska [11] points out that the main factors of economic consciousness formation are: social and economic conditions of labor and life activity of the subjects of economic activity; characteristics of those social groups in which the subjects of economic activity are included; psychological characteristics of individuals as subjects of economic activity; gender peculiarities of individuals as subjects of economic activity.

Based on the definition of the economic culture of personality, provided by V. Moskalenko [12], as an assimilated system of social and economic relations, values and norms that emerge outside the economy and acquire special significance within it in accordance with its needs, then students' gender differences in the construction of future scenarios of their own financial sources should answer the questions that gender expectations determine them most. V. Kravets [13], examining the gender differences in the students' perceptions of the family economy, notes that today's youth are oriented towards an egalitarian type of distribution of family responsibilities. At the same time, with the general trend of democratization of family relations, the concept of "the head of a family" is mostly related to a man.

Purpose of the Study.

The new aspect of our study concerns the current problem of economic self-presentation of girls and boys as subjects of economic socialization. *The purpose of this study* is to identify the socialization impact of traditional and egalitarian gender orientations of students on their economic self-presentation in micro, meso, and macro levels of society.

Conceptual Models.

The new social and economic realities of Ukrainian student life are beginning to develop a new paradigm for personality assessment, an economic dimension that increasingly resists the paternalistic paradigm of the Soviet era and at the same time elevates the role of professional demands. Erudition, awareness is a necessary condition for a culture of economic activity. Economic knowledge helps successful entrepreneurship and effective management. The ability to present oneself is a category operated by social psychologists, exploring the motives of people's professional and career activity, their financial and economic achievements and differentiation of results. Personal prestige is an important category in view of the achieved socioeconomic status. Its component is a reflection of one's own psychic potentials and the results achieved.

The lack of identification with authoritative and entrepreneurial personalities and economically exemplary social groups in the Ukrainian territory impedes the young person's professional and career achievements, and, besides skepticism and social apathy, gives rise to their economic loss and passivity. De jure, there are the legal equality of citizens for education and related financial pursuits and achievement in the field of employment, de facto – despair and gender inequality, which are reinforced by corruption and gender stereotyping. On the other hand, any gender-based measures planned above, such as appointing women to leadership positions or 30% quotas for women, or incorporating maternity benefits into the Labor Code, etc., will not bring the desired economic balance of the genders at all, if with the initiation of social changes, there will be no changes in personal, subjective sphere – in the consciousness and self-consciousness, the content of gender orientations.

Revealing the psychology of gender differences in the economic behavior of student youth, the ability to be guided by economic principles at different levels of material functioning has a hidden psychological basis – positive objective attitude to their personal economic potential and the prospects for its use (self-reflection). It is this very ground that dictates the different economic behavior of men and women in the context of limited material resources and the widening range of personal demands. In addition to the internality of the locus of control, the principles that provide positive thinking play an important role in achieving the desired status of economic well-being and overcoming the psychological pressure of gender stereotypes.

Research Methods.

The methods of the research included a complex of complementary techniques (theoretical analysis of the achievements of positive psychology and standardized psychodiagnostic tests). These methods have been used for the identification of peculiarities of self-reflection, self-presentation and self-monitoring by the students’ youth their professional achievements and working potential, gender differences in their social image presentation. Mainly, the test of “Self-esteem attitudes” (E. Brian & S. Epstein) was used in order to identify young person’s confidence in their own competence, leadership potential, popularity, being a loved one, self-acceptance, general and protective self-esteem, self-control, feeling of physical attractiveness, hospitality [14].

In total, 298 students (180 female and 118 male) from Kyiv, Ternopil and Chernihiv Pedagogical Universities have participated in the research.

Findings.

To what extent do gender stereotypes mediate students’ ideas when it comes to the spheres of responsibility in professional and financial activity of women and men? Distribution of the students’ answers regarding gender differentiation of the economic functioning spheres is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Women’ and men’ answers regarding the spheres of economic activity (in %)

Item No.	Judgement content	Students’ answers	
		Women	Men
1.	The most important responsibility of a woman is to ensure the well-being of the home economy	84	86
2.	Excessive professional activity of a woman interferes with her role of mother and caregiver	45	65
3.	A woman who is a boss, manager or entrepreneur is less financially successful than a man	48	60
4.	A greater financial contribution to the family budget and its financial support should be provided by a man	78	82
5.	Profession and professional career, successful financial business is more important for men than for women	66	85
6.	A man should contribute in every way to the success of a woman’s career by fulfilling all the necessary household responsibilities on an equal basis with her	56	45

The data presented testify to the prevalence of students’ stereotyped economic perceptions of gender differentiation in the areas of economic responsibility among young people, especially

alarms the proportion of gender stereotyping of young women. The manifestations of economic bias can also be explained by the difficulties of self-determination at the transition stage of the Ukrainian economy development and the weakness of its market fundamentals, in particular by objective obstacles to small business development, in which women play a leading role in developed democratic countries.

Comparing the distribution of percentages of students who have a clear understanding of economic concepts, testifies to the differentiation of genders in the public and private spheres of economy, namely the removal of a large proportion of young women from issues of economic functioning outside the family, their greater involvement in microeconomic processes, and their husbands – in the macroeconomic realities of society. Accordingly, the possibilities of making economic decisions and commitments in social and private spheres are different, which means lower psychological readiness of women to participate in the social and economic life of small business, the region of future professional activity, the country as a whole. The differentiation of economic perceptions indirectly testifies to the imbalance of gender between public and private, professional functioning and relevant professional interests and narrow family and household functioning, which also requires a certain level of economic knowledge and economically relevant behavior on the part of women and men.

Although the motivation for economic achievement by starting their own business is found in some women, however, their plans for private business (according to the description of the business field and selection of illustrations) were limited to stereotypically female activities – counseling psychological services, training, or model, advertising, cosmetics, SPA business, design of houses and parks. Therefore, women, as were their mothers, are psychologically ready to be satisfied with a lower salary, position, socioeconomic status. Young women plan to realize their economic potential to a great extent in childcare and housekeeping. Author professional capacity of higher education they got is directed mainly at family life and is less focused on professional growth and career. Women have shown a lower level of economic interests of a social nature, even when considering the trends of macroeconomics in the organization of microeconomic activity, which is not typical of their male peers.

It should be added that according to the verdict of the majority of focus groups on the topic “Why He and Not Me?”, “Why She and Not Me?” only less than a third of the interviewed girls who relate themselves to the elite of Ukrainian society in the future feel themselves resourceful, financially independent, able to move on, to master other, additional professional skills. The protocols of gender-mixed and same-gender focus groups confirm that gender segregation of the economic roles of men and women as a value guideline for the future is also shared by the vast majority of male students who relate mainly to the middle class. When they are asked why they have gender bias regarding gender equality in the occupational and economic spheres, as well as the fact that the success of a woman’s economic career is related to the loss of her womanhood and the diminishing of the success of the role of mother and housewife, most of the respondents, regardless their gender, singled out the impact of childhood memories from their parents’ family (“I remember”: ... “mom’s kitchen apron”; “smell of freshly baked mom’s (grandmother’s) pies”; “joy of family members”, especially us, about the purchase of gifts by the father after getting his salary”... etc.).

Economic culture is manifested not only in the ability to plan and adhere to a monthly or annual budget, but also in taking on new challenges to current savings. It is no coincidence that entrepreneurial traits about housekeeping are more common in women. The girls demonstrated much higher knowledge and skills of savings through better awareness of promotions and seasonal discounts on goods and services, unplanned expenses (medical treatment, emergency repairs, loss of a job, sudden hospitalization, etc.). Women and men found significant differences in professional dreams and plans (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender factor in the choice of labor activity (in %)

Item No.	Options for economic functioning	Women	Men
1.	Group form of professional-financial activity	62,6	45
2.	Individual form of professional-financial activity	34,4	53
3.	Not decided	4	2

The data obtained in the research study confirm the results of our previous studies, namely the fact of more purposeful development of the image of economic ‘‘I’’ in male students due to higher coherence of affective, cognitive and behavioral components with learned common sexual stereotypes about the domination of the material and financial status of male persons and the subordination of women to them [15].

Young women, in evaluating themselves, demonstrated a higher level of self-satisfaction in such aspect of it as moral acceptance, coherence of moral views with real behavior, their own ability to manage people than their male counterparts. At the same time, women show a much higher level on the scale of ‘‘protective strengthening of self-esteem’’, which indicates, on the one hand, a certain degree of acceptance of one’s Self and, on the other, a fear of possible rejection of oneself, rejection of significant others, desire to show oneself in a better way (Fig. 1).

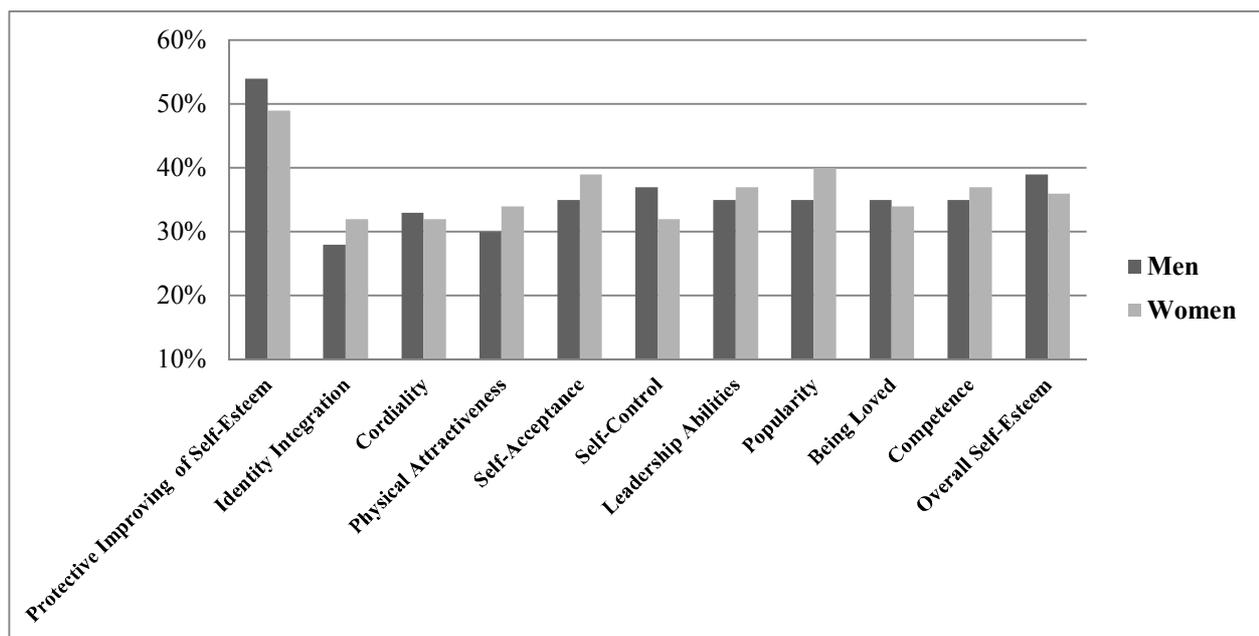


Fig. 1. Mean value of genders using the method of ‘‘Questionnaire of the self-esteem attitudes’’

However, behind the high indicators of the self-esteem scale [14] is hidden a protective response of women, which can also be explained by lower levels of coherence in self-esteem attitudes, such as being “loved” or uncertain that she is physically attractive in the eyes of others, healthy, full of strength, popular, and is respected by people. In contrast to women, men are characterized by a higher level of self-esteem integration, which is not altered by the imaginary or real individual defects of their own Self. For example, higher indicators on the “identity integration” scale imply a better ability of men to integrate their experiences into their own Self, lower internal conflict ability, different facets of Self, which in the end results in a higher level of integration of the male self.

Girls also have a higher level of protective strengthening of self-esteem, which indicates an increased attention to their own selves, which is based on the fear of not fully realizing their potentials, not being properly assessed by the social environment. This indicator testifies to the desire of women to show themselves in a better way, which can sometimes be accompanied by excessive criticism, anger and selfishness. Girls demonstrate a higher level of consistency between moral perceptions and actual behavior, a higher level of appreciation of their own physical attractiveness, their own popularity and competence, their ability to lead and manage people. However, their self-esteem and overall self-esteem scores are lower than men’s. This difference may have an explanation, the roots of which are in fear of a possible negativity on the part of a society that is more focused on the socially successful personality of the man rather than the woman.

In our view, such a gender disparity of results testifies to the greater subordination of a woman’s life scenarios, her goal setting and self-realization to the effects of traditional gender stereotypes, which increase a woman’s anxiety before expecting to have children, motherhood, a combination of professional and home responsibilities, which affects the corresponding anxious reflection of woman’s own meanings of being.

Conclusions.

The results of the study showed a higher level of psychological readiness of men for individual forms of economic activity than women who are more oriented towards group forms of professional and financial activity. The social roles of men and women are still largely mediated by gender stereotypes, which guide the differentiation of their economic self-expression, predetermining the life scenarios declared by the student youth and vision of material commitments. However, the realities of the economic functioning of the genders have shaped the greater personal potential of women in the development of the traditionally masculine economic space, the trigger mechanism for which will dominate the patriarchal egalitarian ideas of personal professional self-presentation. A number of socio-psychological differences between the genders as a consequence of differentiation of their gender socialization should be taken into account in the process of education of economic culture and psychological correction of professional skills, namely: young women do not concede to men in social, varieties of communicative competence and assertiveness in achieving professional goals.

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