

## BARRIERS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The current situation shows that women, in comparison with men, are a more vulnerable social group. Gender stereotypes lead to an underestimation of the abilities of women and their labor input.

**Methodology:** The paper analyzes two groups of gender stereotypes, which in fact represent barriers that impede the professional development of women in the Russian labor market. The authors established a level of agreement with the influence of barriers on female professional activity in two groups of respondents - women with or without professional experience.

**Result:** The authors identified and compared the leading barriers to female professional activities. In general, in the structure of the female professional mentality, there are certain personal stereotypes that, together with socially determined gender stereotypes, have a complex impact on unlocking the female employment potential.

**Applications:** This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

**Novelty/Originality:** In this research, the model of barriers in the professional development of women is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

**Keywords:** *gender stereotypes, female professional mentality, discrimination, female career, professional barriers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Competition in the labor market places equally high demands on both men and women. But the traditional division of gender roles, which is typical for Russia, affects the position of women in the labor market. Throughout the twentieth century, employment rights and opportunities granted to women conflicted with established gender stereotypes. According to the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation for 2017, the employment rate of women in the Russian Federation is 63.8%, and the share of women in the total number of employed is 53.8% ,81. In the Samara region, these figures are 64% and 49.8%, respectively. Sufficiently high rates indicate the actual prevalence of the family model, where the man is not the sole breadwinner of the family, and the woman continues her professional activities after the birth of children. However, despite the undoubted progress in the integration of women into the labor market, it is too early to talk about complete equality in the distribution of work. It is more difficult for women to climb the career ladder and occupy a leadership position, and this is due not so much to legislative factors as to existing gender stereotypes. In modern society, from the point of view of legislative and legal factors, women have all the opportunities to become a successful professional. [Hackett, G., & Betz, N. E. \(1981\)](#). But, nevertheless, gender stereotypes that are common in Russian society in relation to women's professional activity also occupy a strong position in the structure of women's professional mentality ([Tarasov, 2011](#); [Malakhova, O. Yu. 2018](#)).

### METHODOLOGY

One of the central issues in foreign studies is the discrimination of women in the labor market. According to G. Becker, who was one of the first who drew attention to this problem, the nature of discrimination lies in the personal preferences of economic agents, who for various reasons refuse to work contacts with women "3". The ideas of G. Becker were developed by K. Herrow and M. Spence and occupy a central place in the theory of "statistical discrimination". This theory is based on the imperfection of information in the labor market.

In American and European studies, the mention of the "glass ceiling" phenomenon in the career of a woman is common, W. Korpi, T. Ferrarini & S. Englund, RMFernandez & S. Campero. The glass ceiling is the term for American management to designate a particular form of discrimination, an invisible barrier that limits the career development of women.

Russian scientists pay great attention to hidden discrimination. E.A. Mosakova claims that a woman throughout her life is discriminated against by sex, age, and place of residence "10". Due to hidden discrimination, horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market of ([Ibatova, et al. 2017](#); [IBATOVA, & SHEPELYUK, 2017](#)) arises. Horizontal segregation is characterized by the separation of men and women into groups of occupations. Vertical segregation arises due to the inequality in the distribution of men and women across the service hierarchy. B. Bergman argued that as a result of occupational segregation, there is a difference in pay between men and women of 12. It arises due to the excess of labor

supply over demand in industries where traditionally there are more women. S.Y. Roshchin and S.A. Suns explain the presence of vertical segregation by the existence of gender roles, according to which women devote a lot of time to performing household duties. Therefore, it is more difficult for them to focus on work.

Legislation of the Russian Federation prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all areas of society. The Constitution of the Russian Federation and a number of international conventions ratified in Russia (Convention No. 100 "On Equal Remuneration of Men and Women for Work of Equal Value"; Convention No. 111 "On Discrimination in Employment and Occupation"; ILO Convention No. 156 "On Equal Treatment and Equal opportunities for working men and women, workers with family responsibilities ") guarantees equality of rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen, regardless of gender, race, nationality, etc.

Nevertheless, it is possible to talk about the existence of discrimination in a hidden form. Hidden discrimination is closely related to gender stereotypes. In the Russian labor market, due to the influence of certain stereotypes, an employer may refer to a woman as a less rewarding workforce.

In questions of the study of discrimination, the focus is on objective factors - work experience, marital status, the presence and number of children. Socially determined gender stereotypes are primarily based on them. There are also subjective, personal stereotypes that do not allow a woman to claim leadership positions. They are not given enough attention in research. These personality gender stereotypes are present in the structure of the female professional mentality and encourage women to agree with them.

According to the data of the Institute of Socio-Economic Development of the Territory of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 2013, 11% of women believe that their rights may be infringed upon employment; 5% - at dismissal from work "14". At the same time, 30 and 39% of respondents found it difficult to answer. In addition, 20% of respondents were aware of similar cases with other women, while, in their opinion, men do not face such situations at all.

Studying gender stereotypes, which actually become barriers to a woman striving for professional growth, is an important task for researchers. A woman who wants professional self-realization may face the need to overcome gender stereotypes that exist behind the scenes in the labor market. In the research of scientists (AJ Koch, SD D'mello, & PR Sackett), E. Kuhlmann, and others, V.M. Sharapova, I.A. Borisov, N.V. Sharapova N, GK Kazibekova, NV Kulagina, NL Antipin, considered gender stereotypes in the way of women seeking leadership positions ([Jahani, Rostami, & Shabanzadeh, 2016](#); [Villalobos, 2018](#); [Laamena, et al. 2018](#)).

A study to identify the most common gender stereotypes, which in fact are barriers to the realization of labor potential in a management position, was conducted by D. B. Shtrikova. The barriers were divided by the author into socially determined gender stereotypes and personality stereotypes of the female professional mentality ([Jones, S. J., & Palmer, E. M. \(2011\)](#)).

Socially determined stereotypes ([Bain, O., & Cummings, W. \(2000\)](#)):

Traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society. The gender roles of women and men differ depending on the economy, politics, religion and other social factors of a particular country's society.

Gender Personality stereotypes:

1. Competence-qualifying stereotype - insufficient level of education, qualifications, competencies.
2. The absence or lack of personal qualities that promote and accompany professional success. The presence of such a stereotype can be explained by such reasons as the underestimation of their abilities, personality complexes and the choice of an unsuitable field of activity ([McElwee, G., & Al-Riyami, R. \(2003\)](#)).
3. Gender stereotypes regarding the profession - the idea that there are "male" and female professions. Appropriate representations are formed from a very early age, including through personal observation.

In general, socially determined gender stereotypes, along with personal stereotypes of the female professional mentality, have a complex effect on the professional development of women, reinforce and reinforce the negative influence of each other.

## RESULTS

Analyze the existing socially determined and personal barriers that impede women's professional development in the Russian labor market and identify the main ones. To establish the level of agreement with the influence of an appropriate barrier on women's professional activities of each of the respondents and in each group. Determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the two groups in the level of agreement with the influence of occupational barriers. Identify the leading barriers in professional activities for women with work experience.

The study included groups of women: 1) 7 female students of the 4th year of the Samara State Technical University, specialty "Customs" at the age of 20-21, who have no work experience, unmarried without children, and 2) 7 ladies with professional experience, higher education, between the ages of 24-35 years old (average age of 27 years), marital status - married or having a regular partner, both with and without children ([Linehan, M., Scullion, H., & Walsh, J. S. \(2001\)](#)).

The research procedure was to conduct a written survey, were on a 10-point scale, respondents had to express the level of agreement with the influence of a certain barrier on women's professional development.

Results, depending on the agreement with their content, were grouped into three “fields”:

1. The score of 8 points and above - a high level of agreement [Stokes, M. J. \(1984\)](#);
2. Score from 4 to 7.99 points - the average level of agreement;
3. Score from 0 to 3.99 points - low level of agreement.

Table 1 shows the average values for each group in terms of the impact of each barrier on women's professional development.

**Table 1:** Results of a comparative analysis of barriers in professional activities for women without experience and with work experience

Barrier	Average values		Mann-Whitney U-test
	respondents with no work experience	respondents with work experience	
Traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society	5,42	7,42	8,5**
Discrimination in career advancement	3,28	8,14	0*
"Double employment"	3,14	4,28	13
Insufficient education	5	3,14	8**
Lack of personality traits	7,28	5,14	7,5**
Gender stereotypes regarding the profession	4,42	4,71	20

\* - the differences are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

\*\* - the differences are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

We will analyze the level of agreement with the influence of barriers on women's professional activity in a group of female students with no work experience.

Low marks in this group received barriers "discrimination in career advancement", and "double employment". In our opinion, in the first case, this is due to the lack of experience and discussion of this topic in the immediate environment. In the second case, the respondents of this group have no experience of their own family life, and in the parental family, they do not notice the manifestation of this barrier [Gupton, S. L., & Slick, G. A. \(1996\)](#).

The average level of the students' consent measures expressed in relation to gender stereotypes regarding the profession, insufficient education, traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society, the lack of personal qualities. The assessment of the first of these barriers slightly exceeds the threshold of low values, but still, the girls agree with the division of professions into “male” and “female”. We assume that the values of the assessment of the second factor are associated with a feeling of insufficient competence in their professional field since before completing their studies they have 3 more semesters of study. The assessment of the third barrier suggests that gender stereotypes about the role of women are quite strong within our culture and are passed on from generation to generation. In the fourth case, the respondents indicate a lack of qualities that contribute to the achievement of success in their professional activities.

A high level of agreement with the influence of barriers on the professional development of women in this group has not been identified.

Let us analyze the levels of agreement with the influence of barriers on women's careers in the second group of women with work experience.

The lowest rating was given to the “insufficient education level” barrier. Probably, ladies positively assess both their level of education and existing offers on the educational services market, where, if desired, you can receive retraining or advanced training in any field of activity.

Medium level measures of consent for women expressed in relation to the barriers of “double employment”, gender stereotypes regarding the profession, lack of personality traits and traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society. The average level of influence of the first barrier is related to the fact that women are already faced with the need to combine professional and domestic responsibilities, but nevertheless, this factor does not have a strong influence. Perhaps with the appearance of children, this barrier will get higher marks. Gender stereotypes regarding the profession reflect agreement with the existence of professions and fields of activity that are traditionally masculine. Moreover, traditionally masculine respondents include professions associated with hard physical labor and work with complex technical systems, such as the rocket and space industry, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding, etc. Nevertheless, they recognize that there will be positions for women in enterprises of the corresponding profile. The lack of personal qualities

of the respondent is attributed to the average level of agreement. The range of personal qualities necessary for a successful professional activity is quite broad and individual, and the respondents have the same quality as they both contribute to and hinder their professional development and successful career. The average scores on the indicator “traditional gender stereotypes regarding the role of women in society” are still in the field of the average level of agreement, but are close enough to a high level of agreement, where there is “discrimination in career advancement”. Moreover, women positively accept their traditional role of wife and mother and do not themselves believe that it can seriously hinder professional development, but agree that there may be interruptions related to the birth and upbringing of children.

In 2018, the authors conducted a study that showed that motherhood, other things being equal, does not inhibit the career advancement of a woman. Domestic affairs, which are more on the shoulders of women, do not have a significant negative impact on the prospect of a woman in a leadership position. It was also found that women managers differ in female non-managers only in terms of working time, and the burden of household chores is the same. Consequently, domestic and family work does not impede the achievement of the status of a manager and the gender stereotypes that exist in this regard are not confirmed in the actual practice of “22”.

Determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the two groups in the level of agreement with the influence of professional barriers [VanTuyle, V., & Watkins, S. G. \(2009\)](#).

With respect to the “career advancement” barrier, the differences between the two groups are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Moreover, for students, it is in the field of a low level of agreement, and for women with work experience - in the field of a high level of agreement. This difference is due to the fact that the second group has already encountered the manifestation of this practice of career advancement when men were mainly promoted to leading positions.

The differences between the groups in assessing the barrier of “traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society” are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Due to the fact that women have their own family, they are more aware of their own roles, which in Russian society are traditionally associated with the roles of wife and mother.

In relation to the “insufficient level of education” barrier, the differences between the two groups are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The low level of agreement compared to the first group is related to the fact that women have already “tested” the obtained competences in the conditions of real professional activity, assess them quite high and understand that they can receive appropriate training if necessary. So that the absence of any necessary competencies, they will be able to fill through training in an educational institution [Worrall, L., Harris, K., Stewart, R., Thomas, A., & McDermott, P. \(2010\). Barriers](#).

Differences between groups on the assessment of the barrier "lack of personality traits" are statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), despite the fact that both values lie in the field of average values. Women with professional experience give a lower value to this barrier. This is probably due to the difficulty of determining the preferred personal qualities in a particular profession, their set is individual.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to determine the significance of the barriers that impede women's professional development in the Russian labor market in two groups of subjects. Students without work experience identified a personal barrier - “lack of personal qualities”. The next level of significance is the barrier from the socially determined group - “traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society”. Women with work experience expressed a high level of agreement with the influence of socially determined barriers “discrimination in career advancement” and associated with it “traditional gender stereotypes about the role of women in society”. In the future, it is planned to add another group of subjects, married women leaders with children (25-27).

The problem of self-realization of women in their professional activities lies in differences in informal norms and rules for men and women throughout society or within individual professional communities. The labor potential of women in the form of education and work experience has already been accumulated to a great extent. It is about overcoming existing gender stereotypes, which are changing much more slowly than the socio-economic situation. At the same time, it should be noted that the current situation is caused by both socially determined gender stereotypes from employers and professional communities, and personal stereotypes of women's professional mentality, which result in lower career aspirations.

Denote ways to overcome existing gender stereotypes [Newmarch, E., Cumpston, A., & Taylor-Steele, S. \(2000\)](#).

1. Develop a strategic plan for creating conditions for the most efficient use of women's labor potential in the labor market.
2. Develop a comprehensive program to create a positive image of women in the labor market. This image should emphasize a high level of professional knowledge and skills of a woman and success in achieving career aspirations (without using comparisons with men). The formation of this image should involve the media, film industry, social networks and the Internet space as a whole.



3. Conducting periodic events, creating a “hotline” and online consultations to inform women about their labor rights and opportunities and about the procedure for their violation.

The realization of women's labor potential is possible only with the constructive participation of the state, business circles, and society. At the state level, the realization of women's labor potential will contribute to an increase in economic growth rates and the development of innovations. At the business level, the rejection of discriminatory practices and the introduction of new forms of employment for women will increase productivity. At the level of society, the replacement of stereotypes that impede the professional self-realization of women by stereotypes that will contribute to this, will lead to an increase in the quality of life of Russians and reduce the level of social tension.

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