

SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN MANAGERS: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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Abstract

As it is known, the performance of managerial functions in different countries has different requirements. Of course, it is connected with the mentality of the country, with the peculiarities of attitude to the leaders, with the specifics of economic development. It is therefore interesting to study the similarities and differences between managers in different countries. The article analyzes the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of managers in 18 European countries, including Russia and the Czech Republic.

The source of the information is the 8th wave of the European social survey (ESS, 2016). The main purpose of the study is to identify common/similar characteristics of managers in different countries and differences, as well as building of typology of countries on the basis of socio-demographic and economic characteristics of managers.

The surveys hypotheses were tested using the ANOVA mean module analysis and the Chi-square criterion. In addition, groups of countries with similar characteristics were identified by hierarchical cluster analysis. As a result of the study, there were obtained the average characteristics of managers in European countries, which reflect the specifics of the organization of labor, the development of social and labor relations, the career of managers in these countries.

Key words: managers, female managers, working hours, number of subordinates

JEL Code: M10, M14

Introduction

Performance of managerial functions involves compliance with certain requirements. On the one hand, these requirements are due to the specifics of the work performed, on the other hand, they are due to subjective ideas about who should be the head and how he should behave. It is naturally that in different countries typical models of managers will differ, first of all, because of differences in mentality: peculiarities of gender stereotypes and role representations. The study of socio-professional characteristics of managers in different countries will reveal the peculiarities of employment of managers in these countries, as well

as describe typical characteristics of managers in different countries, identify similarities and differences in typical models of managers.

1 Research

The identification of socio-professional characteristics of European managers was based on the 8th wave of the European social survey (ESS, 2016¹). The European Social Survey (ESS) is a biennial cross-national survey run by the ESS European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC).

The study tested the following hypotheses. First, in studied European countries, the proportion of female managers will be less than that of male managers. This hypothesis is due to numerous statistics, including the countries of the European Union, that the proportion of women managers in Europe is quite low. This situation, according to many authors (Lee, Um & Kim, 2004; Hewlett, Luce & West, 2005), is due to existing cultural stereotypes about women's ability to take a leading position in the organization. On the other hand, low employment rate of women in decision-making positions may be a consequence of historical experience, when women performed household tasks and were generally underrepresented (and previously absent) in the labor market (Becker, 1965; Bernhardt, Noack & Hovde, 2008; Blau, Brummund & Yung-Hsu Liu, 2013). This situation can also be caused by cultural stereotypes. However, relevant literature also suggests, that the reason is difference between man and woman on the personality and/or genetic level (Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001; Schmitt, Voracek, Anu, & Allik, 2008).

Secondly, average number of working hours for managers will be higher than the standard working time per week in each country, respectively. Here we assume that managers have a higher workload in comparison with the standard number of working hours. For example, in some countries, such as Russia, managers are often assigned an abnormal working day, which results in exceeding the hours of work of the manager compared to the established 40-hour working week. At the same time, a higher number of working hours is often perceived as a factor of higher productivity. (De Waal, de Heijden, van der Meyer & Selvarajah, 2012; De Waal, Van der Heijden, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2016).

Third, the average number of subordinates of female managers will be less than that of male managers. This assumption is based on the fact that female managers are more likely to be "met" at the lower levels of government, while male managers are more likely to occupy

¹ <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/>

the top positions in the organizations. This phenomenon is studied by economists within the segregation. (Cohen, Huffman, Knauer, 2009).

Fourthly, the number of years of education, the average age of managers, the degree of influence on the adoption of important decisions in the organization, the possibility of organizing daily work in all countries will be different. Despite the integration processes, we assumed that these socio-professional characteristics would be more explained by the national peculiarities of the development of social and labor relations, and, accordingly, will differ from country to country. It is known that models of decision-making by managers and the influence on decision making are also different in different organizational environments (Papadakis, Lioukas, Chambers, 1998; Wooldridge, Schmid, Floyd, 2008; Van Rensburg, Davis & Venter, 2014), and taking into account the assumption that national culture affects organizational culture, one should expect the presence of cross-country differences in the degree of influence of managers on decision-making and organization of the current activity. In addition, the perception of the manager, his age and education, also refers to the characteristics of the company's outlook and should be different in different national cultures (Schein, 1992).

The following variables were selected for the study: manager's status (manager=1, if $jbspv=1 \& njbspv > 0 \& wkht > 0 \& wkhtot > 0^2$), gender (gndr, 1-male, 2-female), number of subordinates (njbspv), actual number of hours worked per week (wkhtot), number of years of education (eduyrs), age (agea), country (country), ability to affect important decisions in the organization (iorgact), ability to organize daily activities (wkdcorga). The distribution of the listed variables is presented in table 1.

Tab. 1: Descriptive statistics of selected variables

| Variables | Frequency | Variables | Frequency | Variables | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| Number of managers interviewed | 8445 | Age | | Number of managers interviewed in a country | |
| | | - mean | 52,01 | - Austria | 293 |
| | | - median | 52 | - Belgium | 413 |
| Gender | | - min | 15 | - Switzerland | 487 |
| - male (1) | 4950 | - max | 99 | - Germany | 896 |
| - female (2) | (58,6%) | The assessment of possibility of organizing daily work | | | |
| | 3493 | - mean | 7,92 | | |
| | (41,4%) | | | | |

² jbspv – existence of a duty to manage employees; njbspv – number of subordinates; wkhtct - number of working hours per week fixed in the contract; wkhtot – actual number of working hours per week.

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|--|------|----------------------|-----|
| Number of subordinates | | - median | 8,00 | - Estonia | 456 |
| - mean | 26,68 | - min | 0 | - Finland | 416 |
| - median | 5 | - max | 10 | - France | 631 |
| - min | 1 | The assessment of degree of influence on the adoption of important decisions in the organization | | - United Kingdom | 554 |
| - max | 18000 | | | - Ireland | 610 |
| Actual number of working hours per week | | | | - Netherlands | 618 |
| - mean | 44,36 | | | - Norway | 511 |
| - median | 42 | | | - Poland | 235 |
| - min | 1 | | | - Russian Federation | 285 |
| - max | 168 | | | - Sweden | 478 |
| Years of education | | | | - Slovenia | 362 |
| - mean | 14,36 | | | - Israel | 598 |
| - median | 14 | | | - Czech Republic | 252 |
| - min | 0 | - Iceland | 350 | | |
| - max | 48 | | | | |

Source: authors

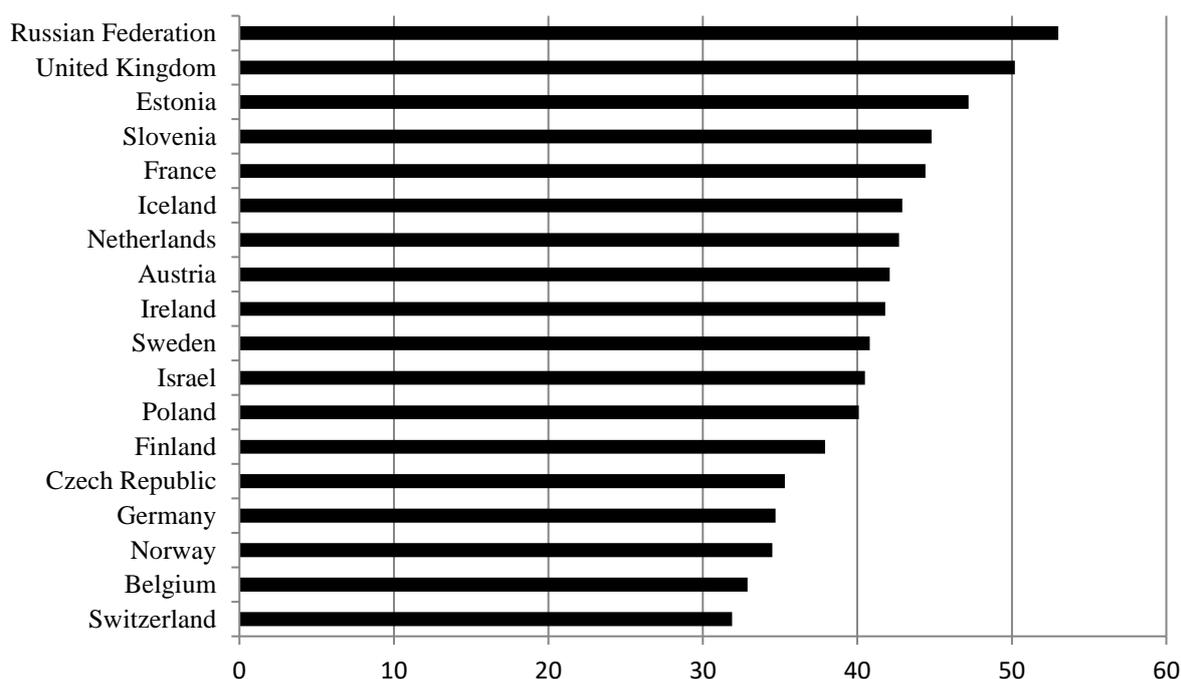
Since in our study we compared the socio-professional characteristics of managers in different countries among themselves, the weighting of variables was not required.

2 Results

To test the first hypothesis, the proportions of female and male managers were calculated. The results are presented in Fig. 1. It can be seen that in only two countries (Russian Federation (53%) and United Kingdom (50.2%)) the share of female managers exceeds that of male managers (more than 50%), in all other countries male managers dominate. That is, it can be concluded that for the majority of the studied European countries the first hypothesis was confirmed. The lowest percentage of female managers is recorded in Switzerland (31.9%).

The second hypothesis was to compare actual working hours of managers with the number of working hours in conditions of standard employment in each country. According to our calculations the minimum average number of working hours is in Netherlands (40.7), and the maximum average – in Czech Republic (51.86). At the same time, the maximum standard legally established number of working hours in European countries is 40 hours. Thus, the actual number of hours worked per week exceeds the standards established by law.

Fig. 1: The share of female managers by country



Source: authors

The third hypothesis involves the comparison of the number of subordinates between male and female managers. For most countries, this hypothesis was not confirmed – there were found no statistically significant differences between the number of subordinates of male managers and female managers. Only for three countries differences in the number of subordinates turned out to be statistically significant (table 2).

Tab. 2: Average number of subordinates of male and female managers (only statistically significant results are shown)

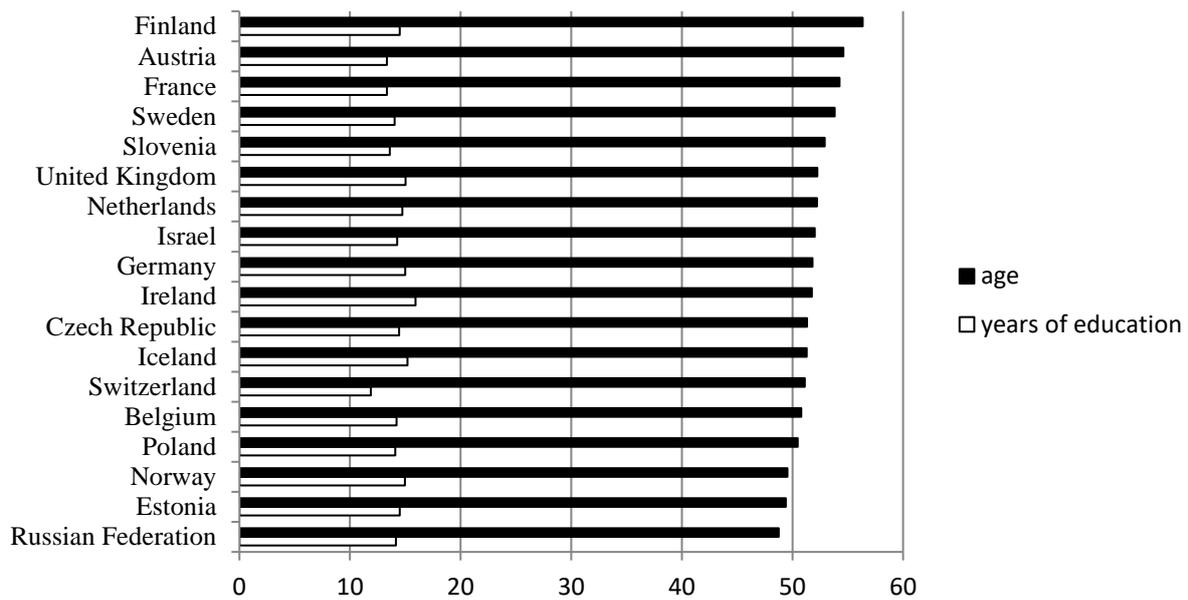
| Country | Gender | | | | Notes |
|-------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---|
| | male | | female | | |
| | Mean | Std.dev | Mean | Std.dev | |
| Germany | 38,72 | 210,16 | 11,84 | 26,63 | Differences between groups are statistically significant: F-criterion ³ = 5,170, p = 0,023 |
| France | 23,28 | 67,46 | 14,36 | 41,33 | Differences between groups are statistically significant: F-criterion = 3,863, p = 0,050 |
| Netherlands | 33,37 | 106,14 | 15,39 | 38,72 | Differences between groups are statistically significant: F-criterion = 6,845, p = 0,009 |

Source: authors

³ $F - criterion = \frac{\text{intergroup average square}}{\text{intra - group average square}}$.

To test the fourth hypothesis, there were calculated average values of number of years of education, age of a manager, degree of influence on important decisions in the organization, degree of influence on the decision on the organization of daily work. For all these variables cross-country differences were statistically significant for F-criterion. The results are presented in figures 2 and 3.

Fig. 2: Distribution of age and number of years of education of managers in different countries, years



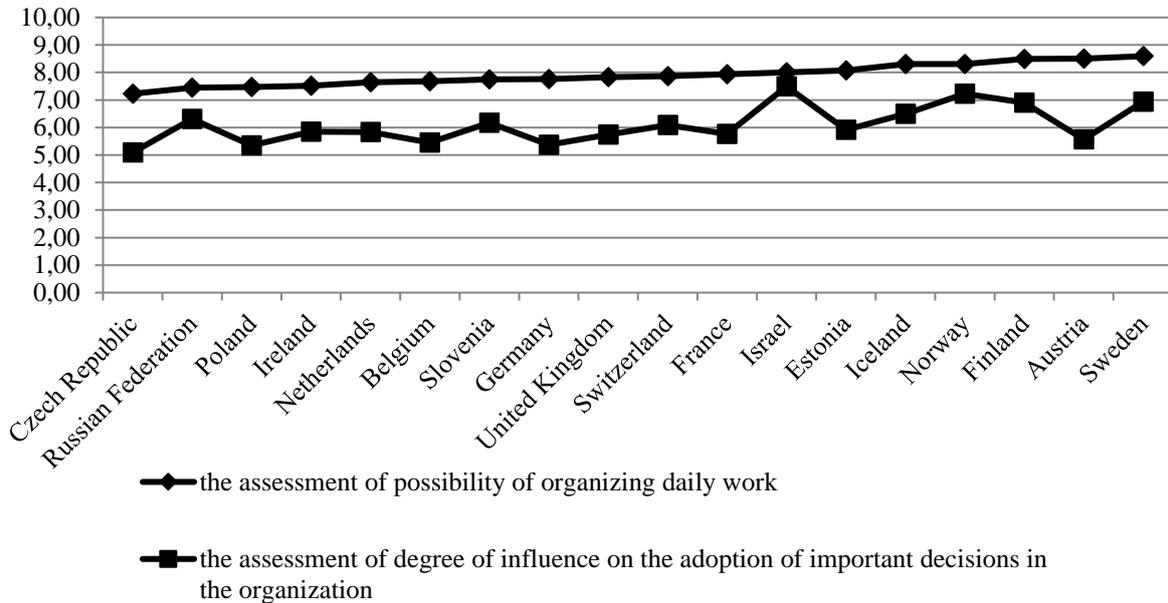
Source: authors

Figure 2 shows that the average age of managers varies from one European country to another. So the minimum average age of managers is fixed for Russia (48.75 years), and the maximum – for Finland (56.34 years). There is also a difference in the average number of years that managers spent on education. So the longest average period of education is fixed for Ireland (15.93 years), and the shortest – for Switzerland (11.87 years).

European managers assess their ability to influence on important decisions in the organization and organize daily work in different ways (Fig.3). There are reflected differences in the estimates of the degree of influence on important decisions in the organization and the organization of everyday work. So the opportunities to influence on the adoption of everyday decisions managers evaluate lower than the ability to organize current activities. In addition, estimates differ statistically significantly from country to country. Thus, the possibility of organizing daily work received the highest marks in Sweden (8.59), and the lowest marks in

the Czech Republic (7.23). The ability to influence on important decisions in the organization received the lowest scores in the Czech Republic (5.09), the highest - in Israel (7.49).

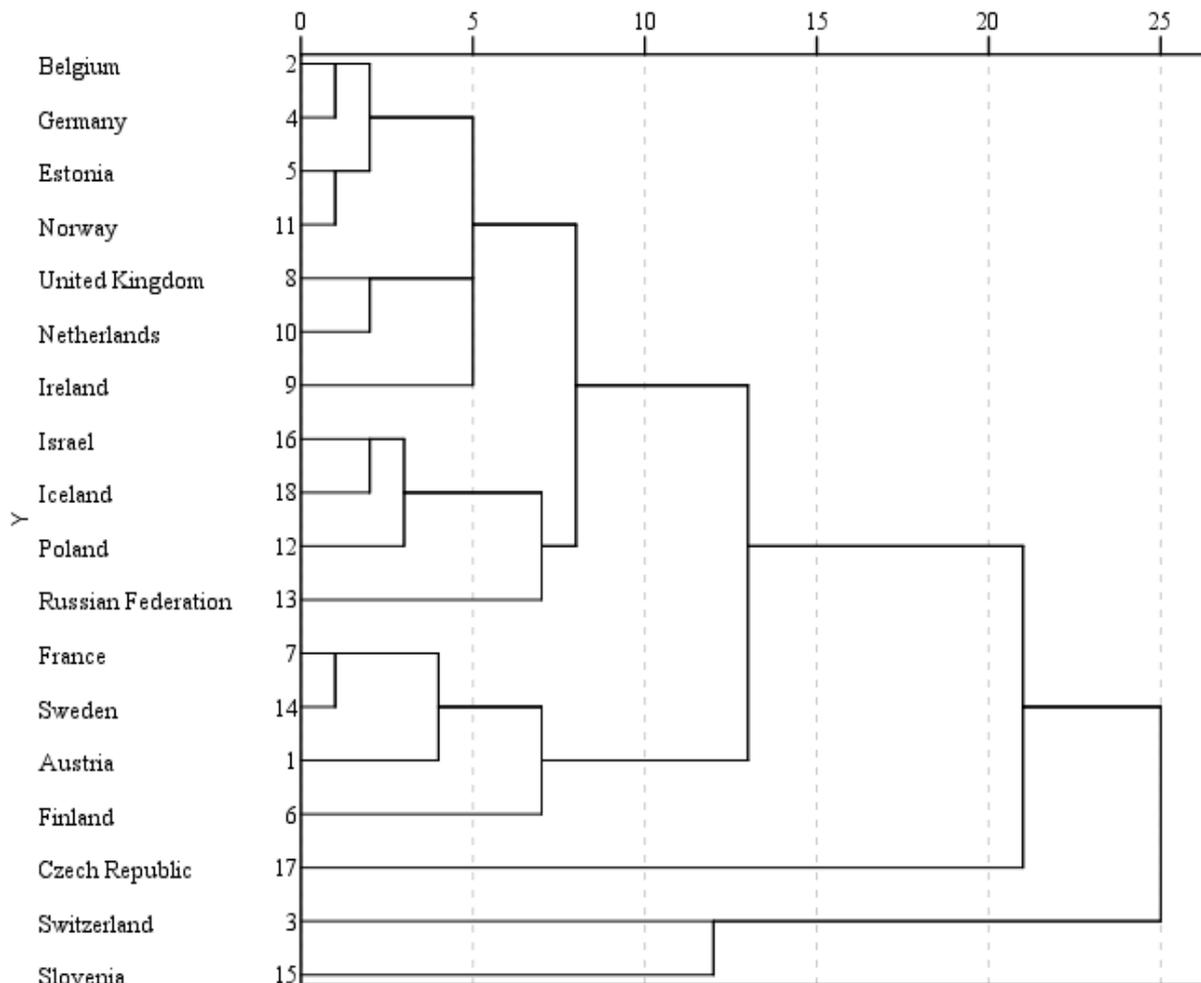
Fig. 3: Distribution of assessments of degree of influence on important decisions in the organization and the possibility of organizing daily work (0 - minimum, 10 - maximum)



Source: authors

On the basis of the average individual characteristics of managers in each country there was compiled a database in which countries acted as observations. Further, there was used hierarchical cluster analysis to group countries by similarity/difference of socio-professional characteristics of managers (based on Z-values). The variables were: age of a manager, number of years of education, number of working hours, number of subordinates. As a result, there was obtained the following dendrogram (Fig.4). Figure 4 shows that on the first stage there was the unification of countries in 3 groups - Belgium and Germany, Estonia and Norway, France and Sweden, that is, according to socio-professional characteristics, managers in these countries are most similar to each other. Managers of Switzerland and Slovenia are the most distant in terms of these characteristics (they join the rest managers at the last stage).

Fig. 4: Dendrogram with using the method of inter-group relations



Source: authors

Conclusion

The analysis of socio-professional characteristics of managers in European countries showed that, despite the existing objective processes of integration of the world economy, inter-country differences between managers are quite strong.

Firstly, the average age and number of years of education vary from country to country. This fact testifies not only to the different views of Europeans on managers, but also to different models of the labor market, including domestic markets. For countries with a low average level of education of managers, for example, Switzerland, Slovenia, it can be assumed that for occupying a managerial position work experience is more valuable than education, while for Ireland education is likely to have a significant impact on the ability to become a manager. For countries with high average age of managers, it can be assumed that a managerial position is associated with experience that is acquired with age. And here age will act as a proxy variable for assessing the abilities needed to perform managerial functions.

Secondly, the proportion of female managers varies from country to country, and in two countries (Russia and the United Kingdom) it exceeds that of male managers. Despite UN and EU efforts to empower women, the proportion of female managers in a number of countries is still low. So in Switzerland and Belgium the number of female managers is 2 times less than the number of male managers.

Thirdly, as it is known, the work of a manager is perceived as more responsible and requiring more time. That is why we have assumed that managers will work on average longer than the normal duration of the working week. This hypothesis was confirmed. And, despite the spread in average hours of employment by country, in all countries managers are employed more than the normal duration of the working week.

Fourthly, despite the managerial status, the ability of managers to influence on adoption of important decisions for the organization, as well as to organize the current work is limited. This fact can be explained by the great influence of shareholders and owners on the activities of managers.

Thus, the study shows the existence of cultural national characteristics, which determine the different socio-professional characteristics of managers in different countries.

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