

Public Opinion of Women as Corporate Leaders in Bulgaria

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Abstract

Percentage of women managers on a world scale is smaller in comparison with that of men managers and with total female presence in the labor market. Culture and traditions make people see in the woman mainly the mother and in the man – the family leader who earns the maintenance. Presented facts emphasize the importance of study public opinion of women managers, by revealing peculiarities of stereotypes of women managers and exploring the specific way employees perceive their direct supervisors when they are women. The aim of the present empirical study is to analyze stereotype and perception of woman manager in Bulgaria, in comparison with those of man manager and the mutual influence between them. Results obtained reflect the influence of the historical and cultural development and the actual socio-economic situation in Bulgaria, on stereotypes and perceptions of managers of both genders. These results would have a practical value in “Human Resources” sphere. They also could be a reference point for activities and policy of some state institutions and associations with social orientation, because they present the position in Bulgaria towards the participation of women in managerial sphere.

Keywords: women managers, men managers, the ideal manager, stereotypes, gender role stereotypes, perceptions, “glass ceiling”, professional career of women

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Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDY.....	4
1. Managerial Position – Specificities of Women Managers.....	4
1.1. Management and Leadership.....	4
1.2. Women Managers.....	5
1.2.1. Explanatory Model of Significant Factors in Professional Career of Women.....	5
1.2.2. Situation of Women in Bulgarian Labor Market.....	6
1.2.3. Women Managers in Bulgaria – recent data.....	7
2. Public Opinion and Managerial Position.....	9
2.1. Interpersonal Perception and Managerial Position.....	9
2.2. Stereotypes and Managerial Position.....	10
2.3. Factors for Reliable Study of Stereotypes and Perceptions, as Components of Public Opinion of Women Managers.....	11
III. EMPIRICAL STUDY.....	12
1. Aim, Tasks and Hypotheses.....	12
2. Method of the Empirical Study.....	14
2.1. Sample.....	14
2.2. Measures.....	16
2.2.1. Method for the Investigation of Characteristics of the Ideal Manager.....	16
2.2.2. Method for the Evaluation of Perceptions and Stereotypes of Woman and Man Managers	16
2.2.2.1. Psychometric Data of the Method for the Evaluation of Perceptions and Stereotypes of Woman and Man Managers	17
2.3. Applied Methods for Statistical Analysis of Data.....	18
IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY.....	19
V. CONCLUSION.....	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	31
APPENDIX A	
APPENDIX B	
APPENDIX C	

I. INTRODUCTION

Before determination of characteristics of contemporary women as corporate leaders and the description of public opinion of them, the concepts “management” and “leadership” have to be analyzed.

In Bulgarian scientific literature, when we talk about a “leader”, we usually refer to an informal leader, for the formal one, the concept “manager” is applied. In Anglo-Saxon literature, there is not such a difference between the two terms – “leader” is considered to be a more general concept and it could be used for both types of leaders (*Rusinova, V., Stoitsova, T., Pencheva, E., Vasileva, L., Hristova, A., Zhilyova, S., 2001*). Hence, in present analysis the concepts “manager” and “corporate leader” are used as synonyms.

Women managers are less in the world than men managers (*Barberá, E., Ramos, A. & Sarrió, M., 2000*). It often happens that employees do not agree to have a woman as a their direct supervisor. Culture and traditions make people see in the woman mainly the mother and in the man – the family leader who earns the maintenance.

In Bulgaria there are not any formal obstacles in front of the professional development of women managers. Their percentage of participation in managerial sphere (approximately 30%) is similar to the average in other 27 EU countries (*European Commission, 2009*). The questions why this difference exists and whether any prejudices towards women’s capabilities in managerial activities which impede their career development and cause their lower presence in managerial sphere exist, remain open in the Bulgarian society. In the presence of prejudices towards women’s professional skills the public opinion of women, who have managed to reach a managerial position, could be affected. If the public opinion of corporate managers is negative, it could become one of the main factors for companies’ low competitiveness. The last is related to employees’ dissatisfaction and it reduces the effectiveness of their work.

The represented facts emphasize the importance of a study on the public opinion of women in managerial position. Therefore, a research of specific ways how employees perceive their direct supervisor when they are women is very important. Part of the problem is the necessity of revealing peculiarities of the stereotypes of woman and man managers. There are evidences that stereotypes are a main source of influence on the interpersonal perceptions. Stereotypes and perceptions of men managers have to be included in the theoretical basis and in the empirical study as criteria for a comparison. That will make the specificities of women managers more remarkable.

In studies, analyzed in relation to the present research (most part of which are written by foreign authors) there is an emphasis upon stereotypes or upon perceptions of woman and man managers. **The aim** of the present empirical study is to analyze the above mentioned stereotypes and perceptions and their mutual influence. The foreign studies have not discussed this problem. Moreover, in Bulgarian psychological literature it has not been made a sufficient study on the topic of women managers. The main part of the studies is sociological and demographic, related to women entrepreneurs. The result is that it reveals just a fragment of the complex question about women in the managerial sphere. The most important aspect of this issue – the public opinion of women managers, has not been studied properly. The present empirical research is focused on the specificities of this opinion, by investigation the stereotypes and the perceptions of woman and man managers, prevailing in the Bulgarian society.

The research expectations are that the obtained results will reveal some differences from the cited foreign studies. The distinction is due to the peculiarities of the historical development of Bulgaria and the actual socio-economic specificities of life in the country. Bulgaria’s specific situation was marked by the following important factors of differentiation – approximately 50 years of Totalitarianism, a large period of transition and the present

membership in the European Union. These facts are the reason why the results obtained in Bulgaria may differ from those obtained in other European countries. The essence and the influence of the above mentioned factors are reviewed in more details in the following theoretical part of the present research.

The results of the empirical study will demonstrate to what an extent is the public opinion of women managers in Bulgaria characterized with equality of both genders in the managerial sphere. They will represent information about the state of these problems in Bulgaria.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDY

In the theoretical basis of the research, principal concepts of the topic are analyzed. Firstly, specificities of the concept “woman manager” are described, and then the question for “public opinion” of women with a managerial position in the organizational hierarchy is studied, too.

1. Managerial Position – Specificities of Women Managers

1.1. Management and Leadership

The managerial position is a degree of career advancement, related to specific obligations and responsibilities. The organizational effectiveness depends on the managers- they are the main factor. The successful business leader in contemporary organizations has to combine in himself/herself professional skills of a manager who organizes, controls and directs corporate activity as well as represents personal qualities of a respected informal leader who is capable to maintain a good communication with his/her colleagues and subordinates. The **image of an ideal manager** is examined in the present study. That is a supervisor who directs the organization but at the same time motivates his/her subordinates and is concerned about their work satisfaction. Therefore, for the purposes of the empirical research, **specificities of manager’s role** and **the theory of leadership styles** are presented.

Managerial activity is concentrated in two basic ways – on the one hand it is related to technical equipment, finances and work conditions on the other hand it is oriented towards career development of subordinates, good relationships between them and their loyalty to the organization.

As basic functions of the manager could be determined, as follows – **the planning, the organization and the control** (*Gotsevski, T. 2004*). The successful combination of these three important functions in manager’s performance with the skill to create satisfactory relationships in work environment, guarantees the development of an effective team activity and a competitive organization.

As it was mentioned above, an inseparable part of the problem of managerial role and activity is the issue of leadership skills, especially in case of describing qualities and capabilities of the ideal manager. With a purpose of explaining the nature of leadership and mechanisms of its manifestation, a lot of classic and contemporary approaches towards leadership are created. A widespread explanatory model for leadership processes, based on the behavior is the **Theory of behavioral models or leadership styles**. The followers of this theory are oriented towards the identification of typical behavioral models, which enable leaders to exert an effective influence on their subordinates. In the 50’s of the XXth century development of a variety of research tendencies oriented towards the exploration of leader’s behavior started. According to the model or the theory applied, the leadership type could be differentiated generally into two basic leadership styles:

- **oriented towards the task leadership style** – the leader’s basic concern is the achievement of group’s aims;

- **oriented towards the relationships (staff, people) leadership style** – the leader is oriented generally towards the necessities of his/her subordinates, the good relationships with them and their satisfaction.

There are series of theoretical and experimental evidences that the leadership effectiveness is bigger, when leaders use the both leadership styles (*Cuadrado, I., Molero, F. & Navas, M., 2003*).

Researches demonstrate that the most effective leaders use elements of various models but one of these models is “leading” and it defines their behavioral leadership style.

Despite of the existence of empirical data about the universality of the basic characteristics for successful management (*Sanyal, R., & Guvenli, T., 2004*), some specificities in the image of the ideal manager are observed in frames of different cultures (*Brodbeck, F. et al., 2000*).

In relation to the peculiarities of **leadership style of women managers**, it has to be emphasized that it is proved that in some cases women possess particular type of values, due to a gender specific process of socialization, which provokes the emergence and practice of a leadership style different from the men’s one. The leadership style of women is considered as more **oriented towards people** (*Cuadrado, I., 2003*), (*Cuadrado, I., García, M. & Navas, M., 2001*), (*Eagly, A. & Johnson, B., 1990*), (*Kabacoff, R. & Peters, H., 1998*), (*Rosener, J., 1990*).

1.2. Women Managers

1.2.1. Explanatory Model of Significant Factors in Professional Career of Women

The Industrial Revolution opened lots of doors for the working women whole over the world. Their participation in the working processes started growing extremely fast. The XXth century was a period of fight and gains in different life spheres for the women– from the free access to education to the aspiration to equal opportunities to start their work carriers. In the 90’s of the last century they entered into managerial sphere.

Most of the women who try to reach managerial positions in organizations usually face the so called “**glass ceiling**”. This is a metaphor, related to invisible, artificial obstacles, which are faced from many women, who are aspiring leadership positions (*Burn, S., 1996*). This is a consequence of the existence of **gender role stereotypes** and the expectations they cause regarding to their appearance and behavior manner (prescriptions, norms) (*Morrison, A., White, R. & Van Velsor, E., 1987*). It is considered that stereotypes of women **could lead to people’s opinion for them as unsuitable for a managerial role** (*Burn, S., 1996*).

The factor, determining the emergence of “the glass ceiling” in organizations – gender role stereotypes, has to be placed and studied in the frames of a larger context- the rest of the obstacles in front of women’s professional career. Revised studies show that specific difficulties in career advancement of women are related to the influence of **formal, social-psychological, organizational and personal factors**. Based on the interactions between them, we propose an explanatory **Model of significant factors in professional career of women** (See: *Figure 1*).

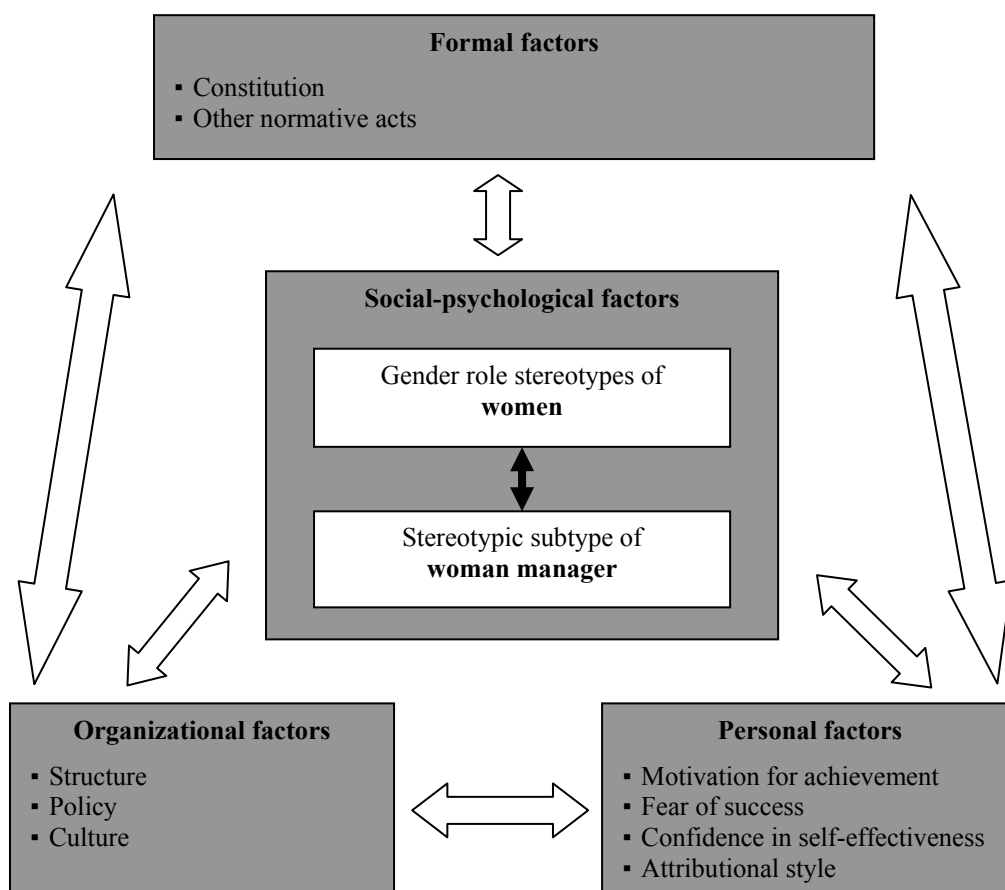


Figure 1. Model of significant factors in professional career of women

This is a system model and each factor is related to the others. In a particular situation some of these relations could become stronger and more remarkable, because all these factors function in the background of a historical and cultural development and the actual socio-economic situation in Bulgaria. Hence, series of particular studies are needed, in order to be possible to determine strength and intensity of the presented relations.

The present study will analyze and put accent on the **substantial intermediate factor** in this model – the **stereotypic subtype of woman manager**, dominating in the society, as a basic component of the **public opinion of women managers**.

1.2.2. Situation of Women in Bulgarian Labor Market

During a large period of 45 years as a **totalitarian country** (1944-1989), Bulgaria had to demonstrate a high level of economic growth, despite of the isolation of The Camp of Socialist Countries from the “Capitalist” world. However, in Bulgarian industry the technologies were not on a high level, which was an obstacle for the improvements in the production. The great amount of human participation in a labor force became a more appropriate way to try to increase the production. Stimulating participation of good and talented “workers” from both genders in all the sectors and levels of industry and social sphere became an aim of the Planned Economic policy. At the same time, this type of policy “fitted” well into the propagated idea of communist government for “equality between people”. Therefore, during large decades Bulgarian women had to work in the same way as men in all type of professional sphere and hierarchical levels.

The following **period of transition** started in 1989 and Bulgaria is still passing through it. This period has an important influence on employment and professional career, especially on women. The large number of dismissals of work force and the suspension of the activity of many state organizations led suddenly to an increase of unemployment among both genders. The emerging private business offered work places principally for men, because the social policy, related to women (payment of maternity leaves, leaves for children illnesses, etc.) was not favorable for employers. Hence, this period is related to many difficulties for working women in general and especially for women, aspiring career development. They had to demonstrate professional skills much greater than those of men in order to be a preferred candidate for a work position or to run an own business as entrepreneurs.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the civil, trade and labor legislation, Bulgarian woman has the legal right to participate in the economic life in an equal way as man (*Nikolova, M., 1994*). In 2003 the Parliament passed the Law on Protection against Discrimination, which forbade any form of direct or indirect discrimination on the base of people's gender, race, nationality, etc. The National Council for Stimulation of Gender Equality (within the authority of Council of Ministers) created bases of a national structure, related to gender equality at the end of 2004. Since 2005, the First National Action Plan for Stimulation of gender equality has been put in practice. There were guaranteed equal opportunities for both genders for having an access to economic activities. Also the aims of this plan consist in taking measures for elimination of gender role stereotypes of women and men.

According to the represented analysis of the historical peculiarities and the actual situation in Bulgaria, it could be summarized that there **are not any formal barriers** for the professional development of the both genders. But if there are some differences in carrier advancement for women and men, they are a consequence of the influence of one or more from the rest of the factors, compounding the **Model of significant factors in professional career of women**:

- social-psychological factors (gender role stereotypes and subtypes);
- organizational factors;
- personal factors;

The recently concluded **membership of Bulgaria in the European Union** in 2007 intensifies even more the requirements towards the country, related to the establishment of gender equality.

1.2.3. Women Managers in Bulgaria – recent data

The growing number of women in high organizational levels should be related to an enhancement of their education level (*Kotseva, T., 1996*). The censuses of population carried out by the National Statistical Institute in the period from 1946 to 2001 show that the percentage of women with university education has a stable growth and since 1992 it has exceeded that of the men in the towns as well as in smaller villages (*NSI, 2001*). A statistical survey for the period from 2002 to 2006 determines that the part of the women with university education continues to be higher than that of men. According to the information for 2007, **women are 59.07% and men 40.93% of the university graduates in the country** (*NSI, 2008*). Presented data reveals that nowadays the intellectual potential of women in Bulgaria could satisfy requisites of the labor market, including the high specific requirements for a managerial position.

The participation of both genders in the labor force in Bulgaria is relatively balanced. Data for 2007 show that **women are 46.77% of employed and men – 53.23%** (*NSI, 2008*).

However, this approximately equal distribution in employment does not remain the same in a vertical plane. In 2007, the percentage of **men employers is 72.91% and that of women in the same position – 27.09%** (NSI, 2008).

The present analysis is not oriented towards the particular organizational level (middle or top level) of these managers. Hence, an accent will be put on data, revealing the percentage not just of women employers but that of women in all managerial positions in organizational hierarchy – positions, related to power, leadership, decisions making and supervising of subordinates.

In the EU27 in 2007 third of the managers (including corporate managers and managers of small enterprises) were women. There were fewer female managers than male managers in all Member States, with the highest portion of female managers recorded in France, Poland, Italy and Spain (See: *Table 1*).

Table 1. Comparison between proportion of female managers in post-communist and “west democracy” EU countries in 2007 (*European Commission, 2009*)

COUNTRY	Proportion of female managers in <u>post-communist countries</u>	COUNTRY	Proportion of female managers in <u>other EU27 countries</u>
Bulgaria	30.1	Belgium	30.8
Czech Republic	27.6	Denmark	26.2
Germany*	29.8	Germany*	29.8
Estonia	31.9	Ireland	21.1
Latvia	34.2	Greece	28.7
Lithuania	32.1	Spain	34.9
Hungary	28.9	France	39.2
Poland	35.0	Italy	35.0
Romania	27.1	Luxembourg	22.3
Slovenia	25.7	Netherlands	27.5
Slovakia	29.5	Austria	31.9
		Portugal	32.1
		Finland	17.4
		Sweden	24.5
		United Kingdom	33.2
Average post-communist countries	30.2	Average “west democracy” countries	29

* Germany figures in both columns because it integrates the post-communist and the West countries heritage

** Malta and Cyprus are excluded from cited data, because their data lack reliability, due to small sample size

Proportion of women managers in post-communist countries is approximately equal to that in “west democracy” EU countries. Data for Bulgaria coincide with the average for all EU27 countries, indicated on the table.

The cited data as a reveal of educational potential of women in Bulgaria is not completely done for all of them. Despite of prevailing over men with university education, women have a lower presence in the managerial sphere. This is a data of comparative analysis of two representative national surveys of Alfa Research in May 1999 and in January 2008. Surveys prove that “percentage of Bulgarians, who would prefer a man as a direct supervisor has decreased from 42% in 1999 to 31% in 2008. The percentage of employees, who consider that gender of the manager does not matter has increased from 46% to 58%” (Cit. <http://karieri.bg/show/?storyid=493020>).

As a general conclusion of the data, presented in *Table 1*, it has to be emphasized that percentage of women (30% approximately) in managerial sphere in Bulgaria differs from men's (70% approximately), but it is not lower than the average for EU27. This proportion depends on a large amount of factors, a great part of which are included in the represented **Model of significant factors in professional career of women**, among which are the stereotypes of women managers- the object of our study. However, it has to be stressed that the scientific exploration of these stereotypes requires the parallel study of employees' perceptions of managers from both genders.

2. Public Opinion and Managerial Position

The study of public opinion in the present research examines the two basic components of the concept – **interpersonal perception** and **stereotypes**, in the context of women managers' issue.

2.1. Interpersonal Perception and Managerial Position

The interpersonal perception consists in impressions about an individual or a group and in processes of forming, keeping and evoking from memory information about others in order to form an opinion for them (*Arnold, J., Cooper, C. & Robertson, I., 1995*). Despite of being a base for people interactions in everyday life, interpersonal perception is extremely important in formation of relationships and attitudes towards individuals and groups in organizations, too (*Ilgen, D. & Klein, H., 1989*). Therefore, the process of interpersonal perception has a crucial importance for the organizational effectiveness (*Mitchell, T. R. & Larson, J. R., Jr., 1987*).

R. Shiffrin & W. Schneider postulate two kinds of perception processes – **the automatic and the controlled processes** of elaboration of information (*Shiffrin, R. & Schneider, W., 1977*). There are evidences that, when people face inconsistent signals, they are not disposed to pass from an automatic (based on schemes and stereotypes) processing of information to a controlled one. This kind of situations often provoke an emergence of so called **systematic "errors" in perception, one of which is the stereotyping** (*Buchanan, D. & Huczynski, A., 1997*), (*Mitchell, T. R. & Larson, J. R., Jr., 1987*).

Most of the contemporary studies of managerial sphere include an research on people impressions, perceptions and expectations towards the manager and they are based on different ways of determination.

It is necessary for studies on perception toward managers from both genders to note if they are conducted in an **organizational environment** (participants are real managers and subordinates) or in **laboratory conditions** (in the most cases participants are students).

The scientific reviews of S. Brown as well as the meta-analyses of G. Dobbins & S. Platz and A. Eagly & B. Johnson determine that results of **laboratory studies** reveal **differences between perceptions of woman and man managers**. Authors prove that in **real organizations** observers **perceive managers of both genders in similar way** (See: *Ayman, R., 1993*). The data obtained in a cross-cultural study confirm that real managers of both genders possess equal characteristics and behavior, important for work performance. (*Gibson, C., 1995*). An organizational research of subordinates' perception of the power of their supervisors shows no differences between power of men and women managers, who occupy equal positions (*Ragins, B. & Sundstorm, E., 1990*).

The review of empirical investigations of perception in managerial sphere demonstrates that the most reliable studies are **the organizational researches, where real managers are objects of perception** (*Ragins, B. & Sundstorm, E., 1990*) **and evaluators are people in closest professional relationships with them – for example, their subordinates** (*Ayman, R., 1993*), (*Eagly, A., Makhijani, M. & Klonsky, B., 1992*). In these kind of investigations there are not any differences determined between managers of both genders, because personal

experience reduces the impact of gender role stereotypes, which often distort the process of perception. The influence of these stereotypes on interpersonal perception, their essence and specificities will be analyzed in more details in the following part of the present research.

2.2. Stereotypes and Managerial Position

Stereotypes are generalized and usually based on values impressions about representatives of a particular group. Groups could be formed, according to different criteria, for example – race, gender, occupation, age, etc. (Stangor, C., Lynch, L., Duan, C. & Glass, B., 1992). Stereotypes are not always based on facts, so they often lead to an excessive simplification of the evaluation process and to wrong conclusions. (Williams, R., De la Cruz, X. & Hintze, W., 1989).

Despite of their stability, it is possible that in certain conditions some changes occur in stereotypes. Based on our theoretical reviews, we indicate as principal ways for change of stereotypes the two cognitive models of M. Rothbart – **the bookkeeping model and the conversion model**. According to these models, the change of stereotypes occurs, due to the influence of information of the reality, which does not confirm the stereotypes (Rothbart, M., 1981).

Gender role stereotypes contain the experience of a large number of generations related to the desirable behavior of men and women in various situations, their peculiar character traits, moral qualities and virtues (Азапова, Е., 2000). Most authors consider that principal differentiating stereotype peculiarities are placed on the imaginary bipolar axis “**instrumentality-expressiveness**”. **Male roles** and way of living are more “**instrumental**” and oriented towards activity, and **female** ones are “**expressive**” and related to communication (Kon, I., 1990).

Gender role stereotypes exist in more general categories – “men”, “women”, and as more specific **subtypes** – “carrier woman”, “businessman”, etc. The borders between the subtypes are not so clear but they do contain different characteristics and people’s evaluation of them varies (Deaux, K. & Lafrance, M., 1998). According to the M. Heilman’s **Lack of fit model** women are evaluated as less suitable for professions and work positions, considered as typically male (Heilman, M., 1983). It results that, if the managerial position, for example, is typified as “male”, people expect a male set of behaviors. Hence, applicants for managers or actual managers of the “expected” male gender are considered to be more effective (Eagly, A., Makhijani, M. & Klonsky, B., 1992). Many researchers, confirm the wide spread assumption “**think manager, think male**”, that is to say, that the presence of qualities, required for a successful management is more probable in men, than in women (Brown, S., 1979), (Jabes, J., 1980), (Schein, V., 2001), (Willemsen, T., 2002). Therefore, masculinity is found to be an important predictor for carrier success of women. It seems that women managers have to develop in themselves series of male qualities and demonstrate a kind of behavior, which is typical for men managers in order to progress in the predominating “male” working world (Powell, G. & Butterfield, A., 1979). However, there are evidences that the most successful managers are not the masculine ones but the **androgynous** – people, characterized with a flexible combination of masculine and feminine qualities, varying in dependence of situation (Powell, G., 1993).

In everyday life as well as in professional sphere, people often pay attention on physical appearance of other people (Deaux, K. & Lewis, L., 1984) and perceive attractive individuals more favorably (“**what is beautiful is good**” phenomenon) (Aronson, E., 1972), (Feingold, A., 1992), (Reingen, P. & Kernan, J., 1993). Thus appears the “**stereotype of physical attractiveness**”.

Attractive men progress successfully in all types of professional sphere, but attractiveness exerts a favorable influence on carrier of women, just in the area of jobs and

work positions, considered rather as female (*Heilman, M. & Saruwatari, L., 1979*). **On higher levels in management (typically male activity), the physical attractiveness usually is considered as an advantage for men and as an obstacle for women (*Korsini, R., 1998*).** Therefore, **stereotype of attractive woman manager is rather negative and that of attractive man manager – positive.**

As it has been written above, gender role stereotypes describe woman as unsuitable for a managerial position. The existence of physical attractiveness emphasizes her femininity and this way the gender role stereotype of woman becomes even more notable. Probably, this is the reason why the attractive women managers are considered more unacceptable for positions of high responsibilities than the unattractive ones. In these cases the **“what is beautiful is good”** phenomenon is modified in **“beauty is beastly” effect** (*Heilman, M. & Saruwatari, L., 1979*). In the case of men managers, the physical attractiveness is found to be a not obligatory, but “favorable” supplement to the existing set of abilities, related to the successful performance in their work, abilities, which are a part of the widespread masculine gender role stereotype. Therefore, the stereotype of attractive men manager acquires even more positive value.

A conclusion could be made, that the stereotype of physical attractiveness is close related to the gender role stereotype and increases its influence.

In relation to the role of personal experience with the object of perception, explored in presented theories, it could be interesting to study the question if stereotypes of physical attractiveness of woman and man managers influence on employees perceptions of their direct supervisors or their evaluation is based on real skills of these managers.

2.3. Factors for Reliable Study of Stereotypes and Perceptions, as Components of Public Opinion of Women Managers

The important role of stereotypes of women managers in presented explanatory **Model of significant factors in professional career of women** emphasizes the necessity of determination of peculiarities of these stereotypes in Bulgaria, as a component of public opinion of women managers in the country. In relation to the investigation of specificities of public opinion of women managers, it is necessary to study perceptions of them. **The comparative analysis between the mentioned stereotypes and perceptions** is a possibility to check if mental representations of individuals are congruent to reality in contemporary organizational sphere.

In order to make specificities of stereotype and perception of woman manager more salient, they have to be compared with stereotype and perception of man manager, that is to say, **analysis of peculiarities of public opinion of woman manager requires a comparison between woman and man manager.** These stereotypes and perceptions have to be evaluated by means of a method, containing identical items in order to make possible the application of qualitative methods for statistical analysis in the following comparison between profiles of respective stereotypes and perceptions.

One of the principal limitations of the most of the empirical research of gender role stereotypes in managerial sphere is related to the method applied. In the most cases evaluating scales used by investigators are compounded of general stereotypic characteristics of the stereotype of man, components of the so called instrumentality (for example, athletic, individualist, etc.) or of the stereotype of woman, consisting in the so called expressiveness (for example, kind, loving, etc.). However, these gender-related specificities are unsuitable, even confusing, when the matter of interest is the evaluation in managerial sphere. The reliable study of women and man managers requires the determination of **specific managerial characteristics**, according to which their behavior could be evaluated (*Sczesny, S., 2003*). Hence, present empirical study includes a previous investigation of peculiarities of the ideal

manager. This is a base for the following evaluations of stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers.

It has to be emphasized again the conclusion that the most reliable are studies, conducted in **real organizations**, where the object of perception are **real managers** (*Ragins, B. & Sundstorm, E., 1990*) and evaluators are their **direct subordinates** (*Ayman, R., 1993*), (*Eagly, A., Makhijani, M. & Klonsky, B., 1992*).

Moreover, it could be better if every respondent evaluate in **one testing procedure** stereotypes and perceptions of women and men managers due to the greater accuracy of the following comparison between different scales profiles (*Fernandes, E. & Cabral-Cardoso, C., 2003*), (*Maier, K., 1997*).

It could be summarized that **the study of stereotypes and perceptions of women managers requires analysis in comparison with men managers, on the base of characteristics, necessary for a successful management, determined previously. Respondents must have experience under the direction of woman or man manager in order to make a comparison between their perceptions of the particular manager with the corresponding stereotype of woman or man manager.**

Present empirical study is structured, according to requirements indicated above towards the specificities of the method and the participants.

III. EMPIRICAL STUDY

1. Aim, Tasks and Hypotheses

The aim of the empirical study is to analyze stereotype and perception, as components of the public opinion of woman manager in Bulgaria, in comparison with those of man manager and the mutual influence between them.

For the realization of the investigation purpose, the following **t a s k s** of the study are formulated:

First stage of the study

Task 1. To determine the basic characteristics, respondents ascribe to the “ideal manager”, not specifying his/her gender.

Task 2. To distribute respondents in subgroups, formed on the basis of different characteristics – gender, education degree and residence in the capital or in a smaller town.

Second stage of the study

Task 1. To analyze stereotypes of woman and man managers and to reveal the difference between them as well as to analyze perceptions of woman and man managers, revealing the differences between them.

Task 2. To explore the mutual influence between stereotype and perception of woman manager as well as the mutual influence between stereotype and perception of man manager.

Task 3. To determine the influence of respondents’ characteristics (gender, education degree and residence in the capital or in a smaller town) on their evaluation of stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers.

Task 4. To analyze the influence of perceived physical attractiveness on the perceptions of woman and man managers.

Based on studies explored, in relation to the theoretical basis of the empirical investigation, the following **h y p o t h e s e s** are formulated:

Hypothesis 1.

1.1. It is supposed that there is a difference between stereotypes of woman and man managers, being the evaluation of stereotype of woman manager lower.

The hypothesis is formulated on the base of results of series of reference studies (*Brown, S., 1979*), (*Jabes, J., 1980*), (*Schein, V., 2001*), (*Willemsen, T., 2002*), according to which it is considered in the society that the presence of qualities, required for a successful management is more probable in men, than in women.

1.2. It is expected that there is not any difference between evaluations of perceptions of woman and man managers.

The hypothesis is based on a revision of organizational studies (*See: Ayman, R., 1993*), (*Gibson, C., 1995*), (*Ragins, B. & Sundstorm, E., 1990*), which prove that in real work sphere, subordinates perceive managers of both genders in equal way.

Hypothesis 2.

It is expected that there is a mutual influence between stereotype and perception of woman manager as well as between stereotype and perception of man manager.

The hypothesis is based on the assumption that the stereotyping is one of the most important systematic “errors”, distorting perception (*Buchanan, D. & Huczynski, A., 1997*), (*Mitchell, T. R. & Larson, J. R., Jr., 1987*). On the other hand, the cognitive models of change of stereotypes demonstrate that information, acquired through perception process, could influence on stereotype, too (*Rothbart, M., 1981*).

Hypothesis 3.

A specific influence of respondents’ characteristics (gender, education degree and residence in the capital or in a smaller town) on stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man manager is expected.

Hypothesis 4.

4.1. It is assumed, that level of perceived attractiveness influences on perception of woman manager, being the considered as attractive women evaluated lower than the unattractive ones.

In managerial sphere physical attractiveness is considered as an obstacle for women (*Korsini, R., 1998*), (*Heilman, M. & Saruwatari, L., 1979*), that is to say that there is a negative stereotype of attractive women managers, which may influence on the perception of them.

4.2. It is supposed, that level of perceived attractiveness influences on the perception of man manager, being the considered as attractive men evaluated higher than the unattractive ones.

In managerial sphere physical attractiveness is thought as advantage for men (*Korsini, R., 1998*), (*Heilman, M. & Saruwatari, L., 1979*). It is possible that this positive stereotype influences on the perception of attractive men managers.

There are not any data from past researches in Bulgaria, concerning the evaluation of stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers. Therefore, some studies of foreign authors, analyzed in relation to the theoretical basis of the research, served as a base of formulated hypotheses. In cited foreign studies are not realized with the same method as Bulgarian investigation, because it is culturally specific. Hence hypotheses outline just expected tendencies. Present study is not cross-cultural, so we do not present equal methods, but just tendencies. A comparison of interpretations of results of foreign studies is made. Results of present investigation will reflect the influence of specificities of the historical and

cultural development and the actual socio-economic situation in Bulgaria, on existing stereotypes of managers of both genders in Bulgarians' mind and on employees' perceptions of their direct supervisors. It has to be considered that in the historical development of Bulgaria a significant differentiation between the role possibilities of men and women is not observed. The "totalitarian heritage" with the image of "women work, as men do" and the following period of transition, characterized with increased competitiveness in labor market, where women had to demonstrate fully their capabilities, could have led to a absence of negative stereotypes towards professional skills of Bulgarian women. Hence, it is possible to be determined some differences between the results of present empirical study and data, obtained in foreign investigations.

2. Method of the Empirical Study

2.1. Sample

In the first stage of the study 32 respondents of both genders were included as experts. This number corresponds to the requirements for representativeness of a qualitative study. The criteria for selection of the experts were – a university degree in field of "Work and Organizational Psychology" and work practice as "Human Resources" specialists as well as an experience in managerial position.

The **32 experts** were a **random sample**, including the following groups of respondents:

- managers in organizations;
- masters of "Work and Organizational Psychology";
- specialists in the sphere of "Human Resources".

The **randomization of the sample** was ensured by selecting the experts, taking into account the following:

- **the experts** are representatives of **both genders**;
- **the managers** were selected from **different types of companies and organizations** (large, medium and small size; private and state property);
- **the masters of "Work and Organizational Psychology"** were selected in the frame of the Master program "Work and Organizational Psychology" in the **Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"** – the largest and most prestigious education and scientific center in Bulgaria, offering 88 degree courses in humanities and sciences;
- **the specialists in the sphere of "Human Resources"** were selected from **different types of companies and organizations** (large, medium and small size; private and state property).

The data were collected by means of interview of the research team with the experts. The mode of the interview was "face to face", and was conducted off the work site in order to avoid distortion of results.

In the second stage of the investigation participated until present moment **400 employees** in companies and organizations in the capital of Bulgaria (Sofia) and in a randomly selected smaller country town (Shumen). The survey was anonymous.

In order to obtain a random sampling of all working citizens in the capital of Bulgaria, we used as a reference points the administrative buildings of the 24 City Districts (administrative subunits) in Sofia (www.sofia.bg/en/index_en.asp), then we went to each coordinate and took the nearest housing unit to find respondents. In our meetings with people, living in the housing units, at first we asked the potential respondent if he/she was working at the present, and if he/she has ever had a direct supervisor to work with 1 year as a minimum (in order to exclude of the study the unemployed, the self employed and people, who have never worked). Only respondents, who answered positively to this question, were offered to fill the main questionnaire in present research.

In the randomly selected smaller country town – Shumen, the testing procedure was the same, as in Sofia.

The sample was formed proportionally to the number of employed, living in each district, indicated by the National Statistical Institute (NSI, 2006). The proportional distribution of respondents in different districts is presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Number of respondents in the 24 City Districts in Sofia and Shumen

		Number of employed	Proportion		Number of respondents to be tested	
SHUMEN		36174	Sofia/Shumen	12.90	54	
SOFIA (capital) – total		466615			54 x 12.90 = 696.6 ≈ 697	
City Districts in Sofia:						
1.	Sredets	11442	Sofia/Sredets	40.78	Sredets(697x40.78)...	17.09 ≈ 17
2.	Krasno selo	28825	Sofia/Krasno selo	16.19	Krasno selo	43.05 ≈ 43
3.	Vazrazhdane	13964	Sofia/Vazrazhdane	34.92	Vazrazhdane	19.96 ≈ 20
4.	Oborishte	11020	Sofia/Oborishte	42.34	Oborishte	16.46 ≈ 17
5.	Serdika	18173	Sofia/Serdika	25.68	Serdika	27.14 ≈ 27
6.	Poduyane	31731	Sofia/Poduyane	14.71	Poduyane	47.38 ≈ 47
7.	Slatina	23123	Sofia/Slatina	20.18	Slatina	34.54 ≈ 35
8.	Izgrev	11470	Sofia/Izgrev	40.68	Izgrev	17.13 ≈ 17
9.	Lozenets	15980	Sofia/Lozenets	29.20	Lozenets	23.87 ≈ 24
10.	Triaditsa	21669	Sofia/Triaditsa	21.53	Triaditsa	32.37 ≈ 32
11.	Krasna polyana	20002	Sofia/Krasna polyana	23.33	Krasna polyana	29.88 ≈ 30
12.	Ilinden	13897	Sofia/Ilinden	33.58	Ilinden	20.76 ≈ 21
13.	Nadezhda	27904	Sofia/Nadezhda	16.72	Nadezhda	41.69 ≈ 42
14.	Iskar	28234	Sofia/Iskar	16.53	Iskar	42.17 ≈ 42
15.	Mladost	42395	Sofia/Mladost	11.01	Mladost	63.31 ≈ 63
16.	Studenski	12145	Sofia/Studenski	38.42	Studenski	18.14 ≈ 18
17.	Vitosha	17202	Sofia/Vitosha	27.13	Vitosha	25.69 ≈ 26
18.	Ovcha kupel	21035	Sofia/Ovcha kupel	22.18	Ovcha kupel	31.43 ≈ 31
19.	Lyulin	46273	Sofia/Lyulin	10.08	Lyulin	69.15 ≈ 69
20.	Vrabnitsa	19652	Sofia/Vrabnitsa	23.74	Vrabnitsa	29.36 ≈ 29
21.	Novi Iskar	9574	Sofia/Novi Iskar	48.74	Novi Iskar	14.30 ≈ 14
22.	Kremikovtsi	8340	Sofia/Kremikovtsi	55.95	Kremikovtsi	12.46 ≈ 13
23.	Pancharevo	9346	Sofia/Pancharevo	49.93	Pancharevo	13.96 ≈ 14
24.	Bankya	3219	Sofia/Bankya	114.96	Bankya	6.06 ≈ 6
Total number of respondents in both cities – 751						

The testing procedure was realized in the appropriate time of the day, when working people are at home – from 18 to 19.30 o'clock during the week and in the Sunday afternoons.

The data collection started in Shumen and then continued in Sofia.

The frequency distribution of demographic characteristics of 751 respondents, aged from 20 to 70 years (mean – 36 years), with work experience from 1 to 47 years (mean – 13 years) is presented in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of subgroups of respondents, based on their demographic characteristics (N=751)

№	<u>GROUPS</u>	Frequency	Percent
1.	GENDER		
	- men	345	45.9
	- women	406	54.1
2.	EDUCATION DEGREE		
	- secondary education	231	30.8
	- university education	520	69.2
3.	RESIDENCE		
	- residence in the capital (Sofia)	697	92.8
	- residence in a smaller country town (Shumen)	54	7.2

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Method for the Investigation of Characteristics of the Ideal Manager – interview (See: Appendix A)

The method was applied in the **first stage** of the empirical study and was addressed to the already mentioned **32 experts**. The **interview** contains an open question oriented towards the determination of the main qualities, which are ascribed to the **ideal manager** in Bulgaria.

An **expert team** of three philologists and all members of the research team participated in the processing of data obtained.

After a **frequency distribution** of characteristics, indicated by the 32 experts, 81 adjectives were obtained. These adjectives were ordered in **synonym groups**, by means of expert evaluation. The method applied by the expert team was **paired comparison** of the 81 adjectives, until the forming of 20 synonym groups. We labeled every group with the adjective, fitting at best to the meaning of all adjectives in the group. These 20 adjectives-labels of the groups, were the base for the construction of the scale in the **Method for the evaluation of perceptions and stereotypes of woman and man managers** – a questionnaire, which was applied in the **second stage** of the empirical study. We consider that the number of 20 adjectives included in the questionnaire is the optimal for people's psychological perception. The **“physical attractiveness”** was added additionally as a final item, because it was not mentioned from the 32 experts.

The 21 characteristics of the ideal manager obtained, which compound the evaluation scale of perceptions and stereotypes of woman and man managers are as follows: **competent, charismatic, enterprising, creative, sociable, purposeful, scrupulous, organized, stress-resistant, decisive, realistic, analytical, effective, convincing, flexible, just, responsible, tolerant, exigent, willing to take grounded risk and physically attractive**.

2.2.2. Method for the Evaluation of Perceptions and Stereotypes of Woman and Man Managers – questionnaire (See: Appendix B)

The method was applied in the **second stage** of the empirical study and was addressed to the mentioned **751 employees**. It is a **questionnaire**, compounded of four identical scales with 21 antonymous couples of the adjectives, which in the first stage of the study are proved to describe the ideal manager. According to these characteristics, the employees evaluated perceptions and stereotypes of woman and man managers by means of 7-point bipolar scale.

The two poles of the scale contain the following evaluation degrees:

- Negative pole of the scale – low (value 3), moderate (value 2) and great (value 1) degree of evaluation of the negative form of the 21 characteristics of the ideal manager, indicated above;

- Intermediate point of the scale (value 4);

- Positive pole of the scale – low (value 5), moderate (value 6) and great (value 7) degree of evaluation of the positive form of the characteristics.

There are empirical evidences of applicability and reliability of the 7-point bipolar scale of adjectives, related to managerial role, in the study and comparison between stereotypes of woman and man managers (*Frank, E., 2001*). It has to be emphasized again that stereotypes and perceptions of men managers are included in the empirical study, as criteria for comparison, which could make specificities of women managers more remarkable.

The first question of present evaluation method is ***“Have you had women as your direct supervisors in your professional carrier? If “no”, please, go to the next page and answer to the next question, if “yes”, would you describe the last one you worked with, according to the presented couples of characteristics?”***. Respondents had to fill in their answers in the following evaluation scale of **perception of woman manager**. The next scale of the questionnaire is oriented towards **perception of man manager** and the question is formulated by analogy with the previous. En relation to the evaluation scale of **stereotype of woman manager** in Bulgaria, respondents answered the question ***“How would you describe the typical woman manager in Bulgaria?”***. The question ***“How would you describe the typical man manager in Bulgaria?”*** is followed by the evaluation scale of **stereotype of man manager** in Bulgaria.

Every respondent filled all four evaluation scales in one testing procedure.

The order of the positive and negative pole of the evaluation scale varies, with the purpose of avoiding automatic answers. Respondents had the possibility to add after each scale other qualities, which they had in mind and were not present among the antonymous couples of adjectives and to evaluate them. Only few respondents indicated additionally some adjectives. Hence, these characteristics were not included in the following data processing. The small number of the added qualities confirms that the set of 21 antonymous couples really exhausts in a great degree the possibilities for description of managers, according to psychological point of view.

In order to achieve reliability of data received, a basic requirement towards respondents was to have as a minimum 1 year of work experience with the particular manager, they had described in the evaluation scales of **perceptions of woman and man manager**. Hence, cited scales are followed respectively by the questions ***“How many time do you work/ have you worked with her/him?”***. Other question, related to direct supervisors is orientated towards their marital status (***This woman/man manager is/was: single or married?***), in order to explore the influence of this characteristic on overall perceptions of woman and man managers.

In order to enhance reliability of results obtained, a **Scale of “social desirability” effect** was presented and filled by 224 respondents, tested with the Method for the evaluation of perceptions and stereotypes of woman and man managers. The scale is tested for reliability and validity (**coefficient alpha Cronbach = .6929**). (*See: Appendix C*)

2.2.2.1. Psychometric Data of the Method for the Evaluation of Perceptions and Stereotypes of Woman and Man Managers

Internal consistency

The 7-point evaluation scale of the Method for the evaluation of perceptions and stereotypes of woman and man managers, containing 21 couples of antonymous adjectives for

description of these perceptions and stereotypes, demonstrates a high internal consistency (coefficient **alpha Cronbach** = .9223). Statistical data of the applied *Item Analysis* are presented in *Table 4*.

Table 4. Item Analysis of the scale applied in order to test the consistency of the method (N=751)

№	<u>ITEMS</u>	Alpha Cronbach, if item deleted
1.	Competent	.9187
2.	Charismatic	.9195
3.	Enterprising	.9187
4.	Creative	.9193
5.	Sociable	.9205
6.	Purposeful	.9201
7.	Scrupulous	.9174
8.	Organized	.9175
9.	Stress-resistant	.9206
10.	Decisive	.9181
11.	Realistic	.9163
12.	Analytical	.9178
13.	Effective	.9171
14.	Convincing	.9171
15.	Flexible	.9179
16.	Just	.9177
17.	Responsible	.9172
18.	Tolerant	.9185
19.	Exigent	.9216
20.	Willing to take grounded risk	.9196
21.	Physically attractive	.9215

Results of the *Item Analysis* indicate that all characteristics in the scale, including the added additionally item “physical attractiveness” contribute in a similar degree to the high internal consistency of the evaluation scale.

2.3. Applied Methods for Statistical Analysis of Data

The **statistical elaboration** of the empirical study’s data was processed with the program *SPSS*. Except the *Item Analysis* applied in order to define psychometric characteristics of the methods of the empirical study, in the analysis of data obtained, the following statistical methods were applied also:

- *Percent Distribution* – in comparison between percentages of high and low evaluations of studied stereotypes and perceptions;
- *2 Related-Samples Test (nonparametric test)* – in analysis of differences between evaluations of investigated stereotypes and perceptions;
- *One-Way ANOVA*:
 - in study of mutual influence between stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers and influence of physical attractiveness on perceptions of woman and man managers
 - in determination of influence of respondents’ characteristics (gender, education degree and residence in the capital or in a smaller town) on stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers
- *Spearman Correlation Analysis* – in determination of the interdependence between perceptions of woman and man managers, on one hand and Scale of “social desirability” effect, on the other hand.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

In order to test the formulated hypotheses, series of comparisons between evaluations of stereotypes and perceptions of managers of both genders were realized. These comparisons were made mostly on two levels – according to the general score of the four scales and according to the 21 basic characteristics of the ideal manager, included in these scales.

Before the testing of formulated hypotheses of present empirical study, it has to be done a brief review of the results obtained. This primary general analysis of evaluations of stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers is a base for the following comparisons between them.

Data analysis shows that the most of the stereotypes and perceptions evaluations of woman and man managers are grouped in its “positive” area, according to the scale for characteristics of the ideal manager, that is to say, are higher than the “intermediate” value 4. The evaluation scale is divided into positive and negative area (*See: Table 5*).

Table 5. Percentage of high and low stereotypes and perceptions evaluations of woman and man managers, compounded by basic characteristics of the ideal manager

	Stereotype of woman manager (N=751)		Stereotype of man manager (N=751)		Perception of woman manager (N=531)		Perception of man manager (N=655)	
	% lower than 4* (inclusively)	% higher than 4*	% lower than 4* (inclusively)	% higher than 4*	% lower than 4* (inclusively)	% higher than 4*	% lower than 4* (inclusively)	% higher than 4*
Competent	9.6	90.4	8.0	92.0	15.1	84.9	13.1	86.9
Charismatic	15.3	84.7	16.9	83.1	26.6	73.4	26.3	73.7
Enterprising	7.9	92.1	6.3	93.7	13.2	86.8	15.4	84.6
Creative	16.1	83.9	17.3	82.7	26.2	73.8	28.2	71.8
Sociable	5.6	94.4	8.4	91.6	14.3	85.7	15.1	84.9
Purposeful	7.6	92.4	6.8	93.2	12.8	87.2	12.5	87.5
Scrupulous	15.3	84.7	13.2	86.8	22.8	77.2	20.5	79.5
Organized	9.7	90.3	9.6	90.4	17.9	82.1	18.6	81.4
Stress-resistant	17.3	82.7	12.6	87.4	27.3	72.7	22.1	77.9
Decisive	8.3	91.7	6.5	93.5	15.6	84.4	15.9	84.1
Realistic	13.6	86.4	8.9	91.1	24.1	75.9	21.2	78.8
Analytical	13.7	86.3	9.6	90.4	21.3	78.7	20.0	80.0
Effective	11.6	88.4	9.7	90.3	22.0	78.0	16.3	83.7
Convincing	7.2	92.8	8.0	92.0	13.4	86.6	11.6	88.4
Flexible	9.6	90.4	12.0	88.0	24.1	75.9	22.7	77.3
Just	18.8	81.2	18.5	81.5	29.8	70.2	24.7	75.3
Responsible	8.1	91.9	10.7	89.3	14.5	85.5	12.2	87.8
Tolerant	19.2	80.8	19.0	81.0	28.2	71.8	22.9	77.1
Exigent	6.4	93.6	8.0	92.0	7.7	92.3	8.7	91.3
Willing to take grounded risk	19.7	80.3	14.5	85.5	34.1	65.9	29.8	70.2
Physically attractive	14.0	86.0	25.6	74.4	23.4	76.6	33.9	66.1

* The intermediate value divides the evaluation scale into positive and negative area

It could be summarized that analysis of the obtained results reveals that percentages of negative evaluations are significantly lower than the positive ones, in case of stereotypes of woman and man managers, as well as in case of perceptions of direct supervisors from both genders. This “positivism” demonstrates the favorable attitude of the sample of Bulgarian

employees towards women and men managers and a rather benevolent attitude towards their direct supervisors, independently of their gender.

According to the testing of formulated hypotheses of the present empirical study, the following results and conclusions could be indicated:

1. Bulgarian employees evaluate higher stereotype of woman manager than stereotype of man manager (according to general score and 8 characteristics) (See: Table 6). Hence, the Hypothesis 1.1 for the higher evaluation of stereotype of man manager, based on foreign researches, is not confirmed.

Table 6. Statistical significance of differences between evaluations of stereotypes of woman and man managers, by comparisons of general score and basic characteristics of the ideal manager (N=751)

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
Stereotype of man manager/ Stereotype of woman manager (general score)	Negative Ranks	367	364.44	133750.50	-2.637	.008**
	Positive Ranks	325	326.24	106027.50		
	Ties	59				
Competent	Negative Ranks	143	164.91	23581.50	-.937	.349
	Positive Ranks	173	153.21	26504.50		
	Ties	435				
Charismatic	Negative Ranks	216	200.89	43392.00	-2.135	.033*
	Positive Ranks	177	192.25	34029.00		
	Ties	358				
Enterprising	Negative Ranks	196	166.32	32599.00	-1.662	.097
	Positive Ranks	148	180.68	26741.00		
	Ties	407				
Creative	Negative Ranks	200	181.93	36385.50	-1.733	.083
	Positive Ranks	163	182.09	29680.50		
	Ties	388				
Sociable	Negative Ranks	268	177.53	47579.00	-8.402	.000***
	Positive Ranks	89	183.42	16324.00		
	Ties	394				
Purposeful	Negative Ranks	179	170.86	30583.50	-.222	.824
	Positive Ranks	168	177.35	29794.50		
	Ties	404				
Scrupulous	Negative Ranks	195	183.96	35873.00	-.064	.949
	Positive Ranks	184	196.40	36137.00		
	Ties	372				
Organized	Negative Ranks	219	186.00	40733.50	-3.129	.002**
	Positive Ranks	152	186.00	28272.50		
	Ties	380				
Stress-resistant	Negative Ranks	160	174.73	27957.00	-3.156	.002**
	Positive Ranks	210	193.70	40678.00		
	Ties	381				
Decisive	Negative Ranks	157	172.58	27094.50	-2.358	.018*
	Positive Ranks	197	181.42	35740.50		
	Ties	397				
Realistic	Negative Ranks	145	165.83	24045.00	-3.241	.001**
	Positive Ranks	200	178.20	35640.00		
	Ties	406				
Analytical	Negative Ranks	142	190.73	27083.50	-5.531	.000***
	Positive Ranks	253	202.08	51126.50		
	Ties	356				
Effective	Negative Ranks	171	170.05	29079.00	-.618	.537

	Positive Ranks	176	177.84	31299.00		
	Ties	404				
Convincing	Negative Ranks	181	161.25	29186.50	-.922	.356
	Positive Ranks	151	172.79	26091.50		
	Ties	419				
Flexible	Negative Ranks	230	186.90	42987.50	-5.906	.000***
	Positive Ranks	127	164.69	20915.50		
	Ties	394				
Just	Negative Ranks	188	186.52	35065.00	-1.042	.298
	Positive Ranks	175	177.15	31001.00		
	Ties	388				
Responsible	Negative Ranks	202	170.42	34425.50	-4.381	.000***
	Positive Ranks	127	156.37	19859.50		
	Ties	422				
Tolerant	Negative Ranks	239	186.97	44686.50	-3.014	.003**
	Positive Ranks	151	209.00	31558.50		
	Ties	361				
Exigent	Negative Ranks	183	159.51	29190.50	-2.890	.004**
	Positive Ranks	131	154.69	20264.50		
	Ties	437				
Willing to take grounded risk	Negative Ranks	137	179.82	24635.50	-4.504	.000***
	Positive Ranks	229	185.70	42525.50		
	Ties	385				
Physically attractive	Negative Ranks	291	181.00	52671.00	-10.329	.000***
	Positive Ranks	70	181.00	12670.00		
	Ties	390				

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

Comparisons between stereotypes of woman and man managers, according to basic characteristics of the ideal manager are presented on *Figure 2*.

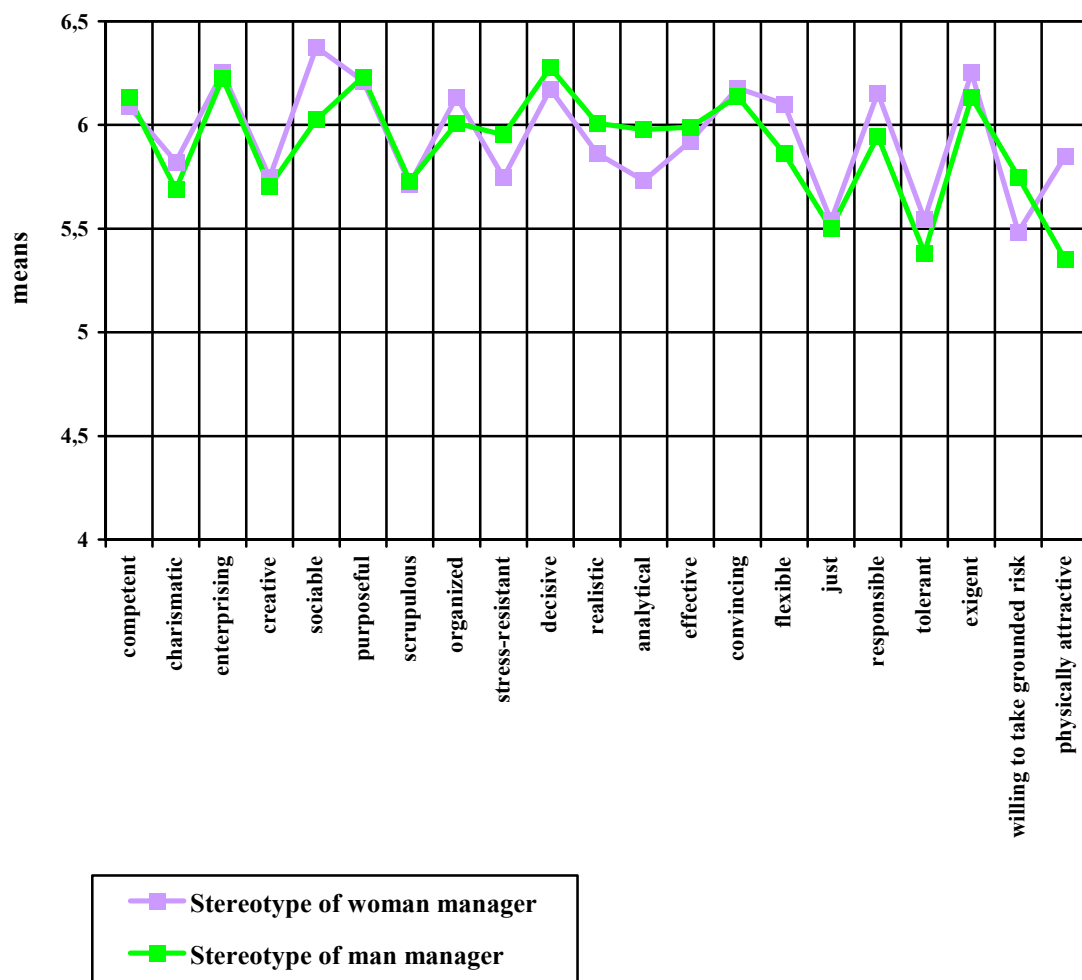


Figure 2. Comparison between stereotypes of woman and man managers, according to basic characteristics of the ideal manager

Women managers are evaluated as more **charismatic, sociable, organized, flexible, responsible, tolerant, exigent and physically attractive** as men managers. The differences are statistically significant.

Man managers are considered to be more **stress-resistant, decisive, realistic, analytical and willing to take grounded risk**, in comparison with women. The differences are statistically significant again.

We could conclude that observed differences are gender typified.

Stereotype of woman manager – the substantial intermediate factor of presented **Model of significant factors in professional career of women**, is not related to the expected underestimation of her managerial skills and capabilities, in comparison with those of man, independently that in some characteristics is evaluated lower, in other the evaluation is higher than man's. Therefore, it is possible that differences of the level of carrier advancement of both genders in Bulgaria are a consequence of the impact of other factors, compounding this model –organizational (structure, policy and culture) and/or personal factors (motivation for achievement, fear of success, confidence in self-effectiveness and attributional style). It has to be stressed that all these factors function in relation with the historical and cultural development and the actual socio-economic situation in Bulgaria.

2. The expected in Hypothesis 1.2 absence of differences between perceptions of woman and man managers (according to general score and almost all characteristics, except: enterprising, purposeful, stress-resistant, exigent and physically attractive) is confirmed (See: *Table 7*).

Table 7. Statistical significance of differences between evaluations of perceptions of woman and man managers, by comparisons of general score and basic characteristics of the ideal manager (435)

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
Perception of man manager/ Perception of woman manager (general score)	Negative Ranks	212	217.16	46037.00	-.136	.891
	Positive Ranks	215	210.89	45341.00		
	Ties	8				
Competent	Negative Ranks	125	133.70	16713.00	-.957	.339
	Positive Ranks	142	134.26	19065.00		
	Ties	168				
Charismatic	Negative Ranks	141	163.18	23008.00	-1.810	.070
	Positive Ranks	181	160.19	28995.00		
	Ties	113				
Enterprising	Negative Ranks	165	145.60	24024.00	-2.086	.037*
	Positive Ranks	125	145.37	18171.00		
	Ties	145				
Creative	Negative Ranks	147	152.56	22427.00	-.942	.346
	Positive Ranks	143	138.24	19768.00		
	Ties	145				
Sociable	Negative Ranks	151	129.41	19541.00	-.877	.381
	Positive Ranks	120	144.29	17315.00		
	Ties	164				
Purposeful	Negative Ranks	150	141.41	21211.00	-1.986	.047*
	Positive Ranks	123	131.63	16190.00		
	Ties	162				
Scrupulous	Negative Ranks	162	154.56	25038.00	-.296	.767
	Positive Ranks	151	159.62	24103.00		
	Ties	122				
Organized	Negative Ranks	156	141.72	22109.00	-1.709	.087
	Positive Ranks	125	140.10	17512.00		
	Ties	154				
Stress-resistant	Negative Ranks	128	152.65	19539.50	-3.010	.003**
	Positive Ranks	183	158.34	28976.50		
	Ties	124				
Decisive	Negative Ranks	138	159.96	22074.00	-.036	.971
	Positive Ranks	159	139.49	22179.00		
	Ties	138				
Realistic	Negative Ranks	151	156.27	23596.50	-.127	.899
	Positive Ranks	157	152.80	23989.50		
	Ties	127				
Analytical	Negative Ranks	123	146.75	18050.00	-1.901	.057
	Positive Ranks	164	141.94	23278.00		
	Ties	148				
Effective	Negative Ranks	135	136.63	18444.50	-1.509	.131
	Positive Ranks	151	149.65	22596.50		
	Ties	149				
Convincing	Negative Ranks	128	145.36	18605.50	-1.005	.315
	Positive Ranks	154	138.30	21297.50		
	Ties	153				
Flexible	Negative Ranks	160	163.67	26186.50	-1.236	.216
	Positive Ranks	151	147.88	22329.50		

	Ties	124				
Just	Negative Ranks	149	149.01	22202.00	-1.404	.160
	Positive Ranks	163	163.35	26626.00		
	Ties	123				
Responsible	Negative Ranks	136	118.47	16112.00	-.964	.335
	Positive Ranks	109	128.65	14023.00		
	Ties	190				
Tolerant	Negative Ranks	152	141.11	21449.00	-.951	.342
	Positive Ranks	150	162.03	24304.00		
	Ties	133				
Exigent	Negative Ranks	166	130.14	21604.00	-4.090	.000***
	Positive Ranks	93	129.74	12066.00		
	Ties	176				
Willing to take grounded risk	Negative Ranks	145	146.96	21308.50	-.853	.394
	Positive Ranks	155	153.82	23841.50		
	Ties	135				
Physically attractive	Negative Ranks	179	141.27	25288.00	-2.730	.006**
	Positive Ranks	113	154.78	17490.00		
	Ties	143				

* $p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

Comparisons between perceptions of woman and man managers, according to basic characteristics of the ideal manager are presented on *Figure 3*.

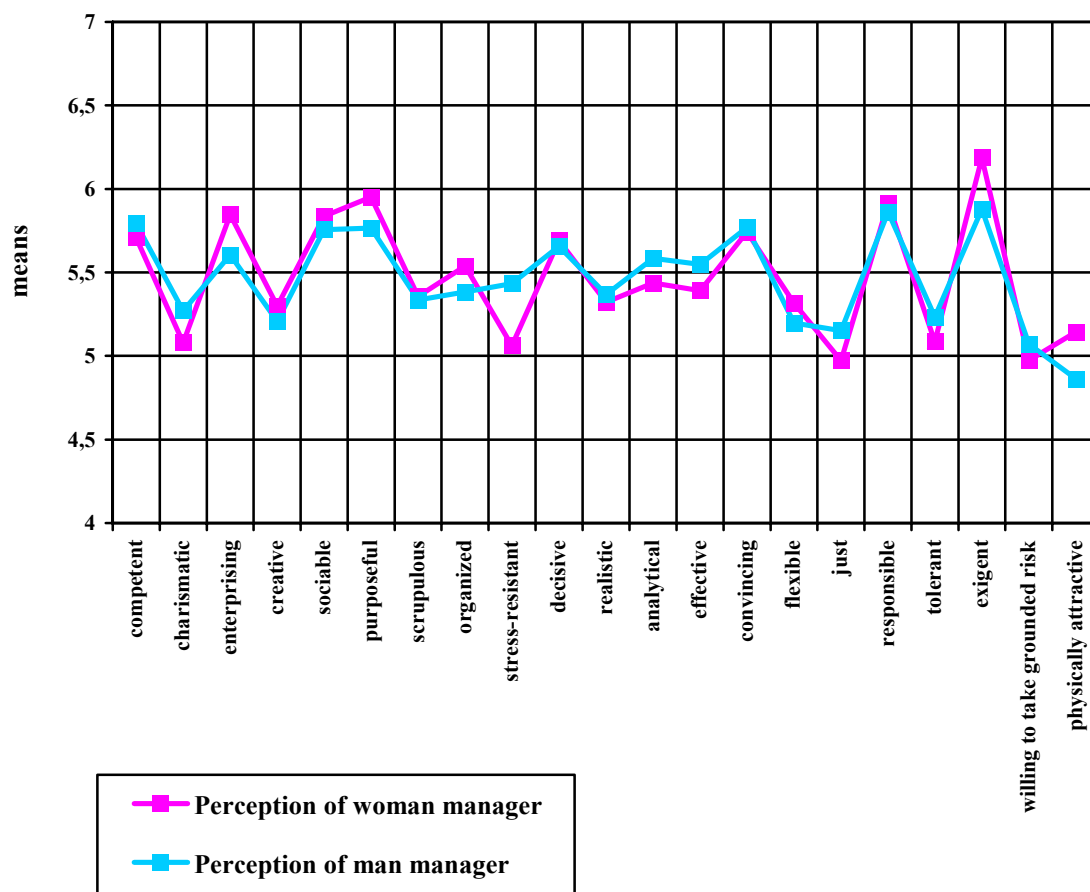


Figure 3. Comparison between perceptions of woman and man managers, according to basic characteristics of the ideal manager

Women direct supervisors are evaluated statistically significantly as more **enterprising, purposeful, exigent and physically attractive** as men managers, which are evaluated as more **stress-resistant**.

Obviously, real supervisors are not so gender typified, as stereotypes of woman and man managers. Results obtained show, that studied employees in Bulgarian organizations think that their direct supervisors of both genders possess in equal degree most qualities and skills, necessary for successful management. These evaluations do not vary, according to marital status of direct supervisors (See: *Table 8*).

Table 8. Statistical significance of differences between perceptions of woman and man managers with different marital status, by comparisons of general score

	<u>MARITAL STATUS</u>				Significance	
	Single		Married			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	Single direct supervisor woman N = 154		Married direct supervisor woman N = 377			
Perception of woman manager (general score)	117.27	20.46	113.61	21.32	3.300	.070
	Single direct supervisor man N = 111		Married man manager N = 544			
Perception of man manager (general score)	114.92	20.62	115.17	20.99	.013	.910

Single and married managers are defined to be equally skilled and qualified. So there is not any influence of prejudices, related to marital status.

In order to ensure reliability results obtained in evaluation scales of direct supervisors, a *Spearman Correlation Analysis* of general scores of Scale of “social desirability” effect, on one hand and perceptions of woman and man managers, on the other hand is done. (See: *Table 9*).

Table 9. Correlation between Scale of “social desirability” effect and perceptions of woman and man managers, by comparisons of general score

	Scale of “social desirability” effect (general score)	
	Spearman’s rho	p
Perception of woman manager (general score) N = 134	-.155	.074
Perception of man manager (general score) N = 198	.120	.092

Results obtained show that there is not statistically significant correlation between Scale of “social desirability” effect and evaluations of direct supervisors, so we could suppose that respondents’ evaluations correspond to their realistic opinion and are objective.

3. There is a mutual influence between stereotype and perception of woman manager as well as between stereotype and perception of man manager (See: *Table 10*, *Table 11*). Hence, Hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

The mutual influence between stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers is determined by means of *One-Way ANOVA*. With this purpose, groups of respondents with low and high evaluations of stereotype and perception of woman and man managers are formed. In mentioned groups are included employees, which evaluations are distant at one standard deviation below or at one standard deviation over the mean of corresponding stereotype and perception.

Analysis’ results about the mutual influence of stereotypes and perceptions of managers from both genders are presented on *Table 10* and *Table 11*.

Table 10. Statistical significance of differences between perceptions of woman and man managers between groups with low and high evaluations of stereotypes of woman and man managers, by comparisons of general score

	<u>EVALUATION OF STEREOTYPE</u>				Significance	
	Low evaluation		High evaluation			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	Low evaluation of stereotype of woman manager N = 74		High evaluation of stereotype of woman manager N = 65			
Perception of woman manager (general score)	95.74	19.90	130.32	13.79	138.015	.000
	Low evaluation of stereotype of man manager N = 107		High evaluation of stereotype of man manager N = 105			
Perception of man manager (general score)	100.19	23.22	121.45	21.95	46.890	.000

Table 11. Statistical significance of differences between stereotypes of woman and man managers between groups with low and high evaluations of perceptions of woman and man managers, by comparisons of general score

	<u>EVALUATION OF PERCEPTION</u>				Significance	
	Low evaluation		High evaluation			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	Low evaluation of perception of woman manager N = 86		High evaluation of perception of woman manager N = 104			
Stereotype of woman manager (general score)	111.57	22.52	136.09	12.23	90.878	.000
	Low evaluation of perception of man manager N = 113		High evaluation of perception of man manager N = 92			
Stereotype of man manager (general score)	117.24	19.85	131.61	13.63	34.835	.000

There is a statistically significant influence of stereotypes of woman and man managers on corresponding perceptions of direct supervisors. The influence of perceptions of managers of both genders on stereotypes of woman and man managers is statistically significant, too. Hence, there is a mutual influence between corresponding stereotypes and perceptions.

Cited above results indicate that there is a constant process of exchange of information between objective reality and generalized impressions in employees' mind.

4. Employees' characteristics gender, education degree and residence influence statistically significantly on stereotypes of woman and man managers, but do not on perceptions of woman and man managers (with the exception of the influence of gender on perception of woman manager) (See: *Table 12*). These results partially confirm Hypothesis 3.

Table 12. Statistical significance of differences between stereotypes and perceptions of woman and man managers of employees with different gender, educational degree and residence, by comparisons of general score

	<u>GENDER</u>				Significance	
	Men		Women			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	N = 345		N = 406			
Stereotype of woman manager (general score)	119.96	19.90	129.06	14.29	52.821	.000***
Stereotype of man manager (general score)	122.52	17.96	125.29	15.73	5.073	.025*
	N = 201		N = 330			
Perception of woman manager (general score)	112.11	19.01	116.23	22.19	4.794	.029*
	N = 318		N = 337			
Perception of man manager (general score)	113.56	20.91	116.60	20.84	3.470	.063
	<u>EDUCATION DEGREE</u>				Significance	
	Secondary education		University education			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	N = 231		N = 520			
Stereotype of woman manager (general score)	127.40	16.42	123.76	18.12	6.851	.009**
Stereotype of man manager (general score)	127.66	15.04	122.41	17.36	15.669	.000***
	N = 155		N = 376			
Perception of woman manager (general score)	113.21	20.45	115.27	21.39	1.037	.309
	N = 209		N = 446			
Perception of man manager (general score)	114.08	20.78	115.61	20.98	.769	.381
	<u>RESIDENCE</u>				Significance	
	Sofia		Shumen			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	N = 697		N = 54			
Stereotype of woman manager (general score)	124.35	17.71	131.70	15.97	8.760	.003**
Stereotype of man manager (general score)	123.53	16.88	130.22	15.18	7.983	.005**
	N = 493		N = 38			
Perception of woman manager (general score)	114.81	20.87	112.82	24.42	.314	.576
	N = 607		N = 48			

Perception of man manager (general score)	114.90	20.87	117.98	21.52	.966	.326
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* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

On base of results presented it could be summarized that women, employees with secondary education and citizens of the smaller town (Shumen) evaluate stereotypes of managers of both genders more favorably than other subgroups. They have more positive generalized impressions of managers in comparison with men, employees with university education and citizens of the capital. Their positive view could be a consequence of a general tendency to tolerance of these groups or of insufficient information, leading to greater idealization of discussed managers. It is interesting that they do not overestimate their real direct supervisors in comparison with the other subgroups. An exception is the case of the higher evaluation which women give to perception of woman manager, probably due to a typically female “in-group favoritism”. These results confirm that perceptions of woman and man managers are not influenced on any prejudices, related to employees’ characteristics.

5. Level of perceived physical attractiveness influences on perceptions of woman and man managers, being the considered as attractive direct supervisors evaluated higher than the unattractive ones (See: *Table 13*). Therefore, Hypothesis 4.1 is not confirmed, but Hypothesis 4.2, is confirmed.

The influence of perceived physical attractiveness on perceptions of managers from both genders is analyzed by the means of *One-Way ANOVA*. By analogy to the tests of Hypothesis 2 they are formed groups of respondents with low and high evaluations of the direct supervisors’ physical attractiveness.

The results of the data processing are presented on *Table 13*.

Table 13. Statistical significance of differences between perceptions of woman and man managers between groups with low and high evaluations of physical attractiveness of woman and managers, by comparisons of general score

	<u>EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS</u>				Significance	
	Low evaluation		High evaluation			
	M	SD	M	SD	F	p
	Low evaluation of physical attractiveness of woman manager N = 95		High evaluation of physical attractiveness of woman manager N = 311			
Perception of woman manager (general score*)	97.27	18.46	115.51	19.71	64.089	.000
	Low evaluation of physical attractiveness of man manager N = 129		High evaluation of physical attractiveness of man manager N = 295			
Perception of man manager (general score*)	94.02	21.38	118.51	17.17	156.399	.000

* without the “physical attractiveness” item

The influence of direct supervisors' physical attractiveness on a perception of woman and man manager is statistically significant.

Hence, it could be concluded that physical attractiveness is a factor of influences on employees' perception of their direct supervisors.

V. CONCLUSION

Present study is realized by means of a culturally specific methodology, adapted especially for the Bulgarian sample. Methods, applied in foreign investigations, on which the hypotheses are based, are not the applied in present study. The investigation is not cross-cultural and that is why the idea of hypothesis is just to outline some expected tendencies of similarity and difference. On the base of presented analysis, it could be summarized that the results of present study of stereotypes and perceptions as components of public opinion of women managers among employees in Bulgarian organizations reveal some specificities in comparison with the data from foreign researches, indicated in the theoretical review. The determined specificities probably are consequence of the influence of the historical and cultural development of Bulgaria as well as of the actual socio-economic situation in the country. The present empirical study shows that there is a mutual influence between stereotypes of woman and man managers and respective perceptions of direct supervisors. Results does not reveal the indicated by foreign investigators negative prejudices towards managerial capabilities of women managers – according to some gender typified characteristics, managerial skills in stereotype of a woman manager are evaluated even higher than those of a man manager. The equal evaluation of perceptions of direct supervisors of both genders confirms that there is not any influence of such negative prejudices on perceptions of professional skills of these managers. It is possible that these results reflect the presence of a traditionally positive attitude of Bulgarians towards the capabilities of women in position of responsibility. They could also be a consequence of the processes of modernization of the organizational life, which postulate as a basic value the work competence and gender loses its importance. It is important to emphasize, that the efforts of state institutions, associations and societies with social orientation as well as of proper organizations have to be oriented not towards the support of one preference social group but towards the ensuring of equal opportunities for manifestation of capabilities and skills of women managers, as well as of men managers.

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