

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF WOMEN IN POLISH ENTERPRISES

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**Abstract:** During the last years, there has been visible growth in the professional activity of women in Polish enterprises. In the Polish market, specialists in several given areas are needed, and there are more and more highly educated and qualified women entering the workforce. In the article, the main focus is on showing the differences in the employment possibilities of men and women in Polish enterprises. The differences were examined between women and men working in enterprises of the same size, and of different sizes. Age, education and origin of respondents were analyzed. The analyzes allow to judge further the economic development of Polish enterprises from the point of view of gender hiring practices.

**Keywords:** enterprises, employment of women, the labor market, employment structure.

### 1. Introduction

Economic development in Poland is possible only because of dynamically developing enterprises, but the need for high qualifications affects the competitiveness of the company in the labor market (Rzemieniak, 2011). Because any business entity achieves growth mostly because of employee's involvement, it is very important to hire the proper people to fill any vacancy. An employee recruitment system should be led by competent specialist in any given area. That is a condition of larger enterprise's development. Of course, it cannot be forgotten that in the Polish market there are single-person enterprises in which the owner is an employee. However, these types of units are focused on development and the desire to profit, so here gender does not matter. However, focusing on enterprises employing at least one employee, a division should be made between employing women and men. In the past, social roles were divided between the two groups. Women took care about of the home and children, while men were responsible for family maintenance. This situation has been changing and nowadays there is no such visible division. Men and women both have to work.

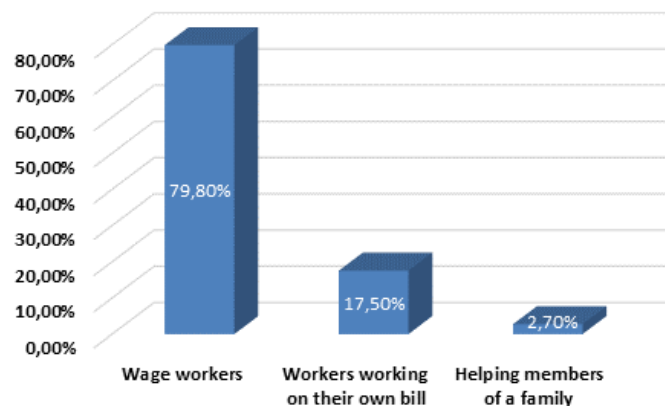
In Poland, financial independence gives women strength and motivates them for further development. In enterprises, it is very important to establish a system of standards that every employee regardless of gender must follow, as well as behavior patterns that must be adopted by all company members. Whether a big enterprise or a team of a few, people must obey the given regulations in order for the enterprise to function on the market (Nogalski, and Szpitter, 2012) Opportunities for development and acquiring new skills are an important social and economic aspect for both women and men who are employees.

## **2. Labor market in Poland**

The current social and economic development allows for greater professional activity of both women and men, but different ways of managing employees by men and women can be seen. Good planning of activities determines the efficiency of the entire company (Rzemieniak, 2013). According to many specialists on this field, women are better managers. Still, in the labor market it is a man's world, where men have more privileges and usually they gain better work positions. Thus, women are discriminated by being forced to work below their ambitions and competences (Kolasińska, 2012).

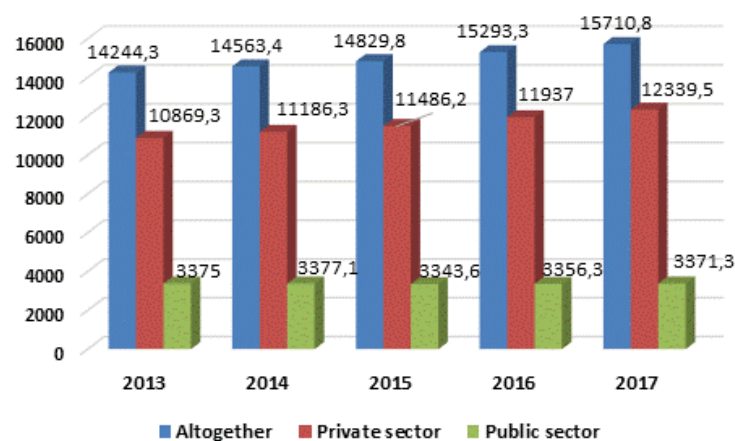
In many enterprises, men are the leading managers. This is mainly due to the perception of men as more often employed. Many employers do not want to entrust important managerial positions to women due to fear of many absences associated with having a family, as more often than not, women look after sick children and other family members. However, this situation is improving because the traditional division of duties is being discarded and family responsibilities are being shared (Czaińska, 2013).

In hiring employees, the employer wants to obtain the best financial results to keep the enterprise alive and to achieve profit. In Poland, the people hired can be divided into three groups: employees, self-employed people and people assisting family members. Each of these groups fulfills certain tasks on the labor market and are equally important for economic development. The graph below presents the total employment structure in Poland in 2017, by employment status.



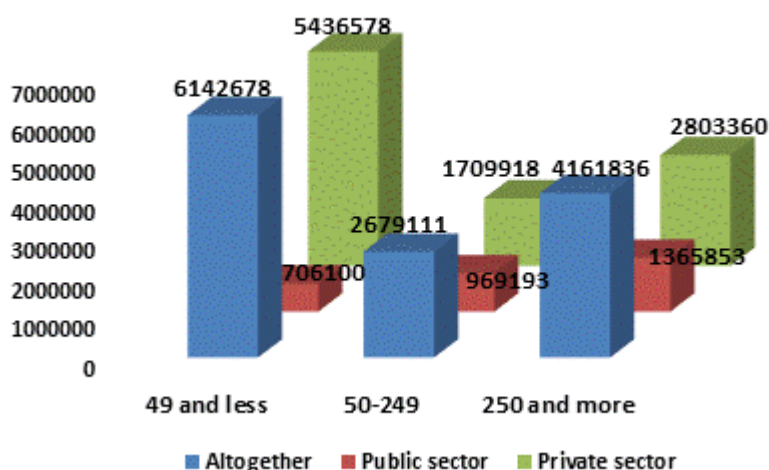
**Figure 1.** Structure of employment in Poland in 2017, by employment status. Own study based on CSO 2018.

The data presented below (Fig. 1) reveals that in 2017, in Poland, 97,3% of all people worked full-time hours, either as employees, or as self-employed. The number of people hired in enterprises is high at 79,8% because of the positive development of Poland's economy. This figure also indicates that a lot of people do not want to start their own business and prefer to be salaried employees. This is connected with financial stability. When working for someone, an employee does not have to worry about the company's turnover, the salary is certain. The situation is different in 17.5% of all the respondents who decided to focus on self-employment. This solution is associated with a greater risk of losing financial stability, but also gives a lot more satisfaction. Self-employment is, therefore, a way for more ambitious people who want to achieve their own success, to realize their own plans and dreams. The remaining 2.7% were family members who help in the maintenance of documentation or other activities performed while conducting business. According to GUS data ([www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl)), in Poland, in 2017, 15710.8 thousand people were employed, compared to the previous year, there was an increase by 417.5 thousand people. The increase in the number of employees took place in the public sector by 15 thousand, as well as in private sector by 402.5 thousand. The structure of employment in 2013-2017 is presented below.



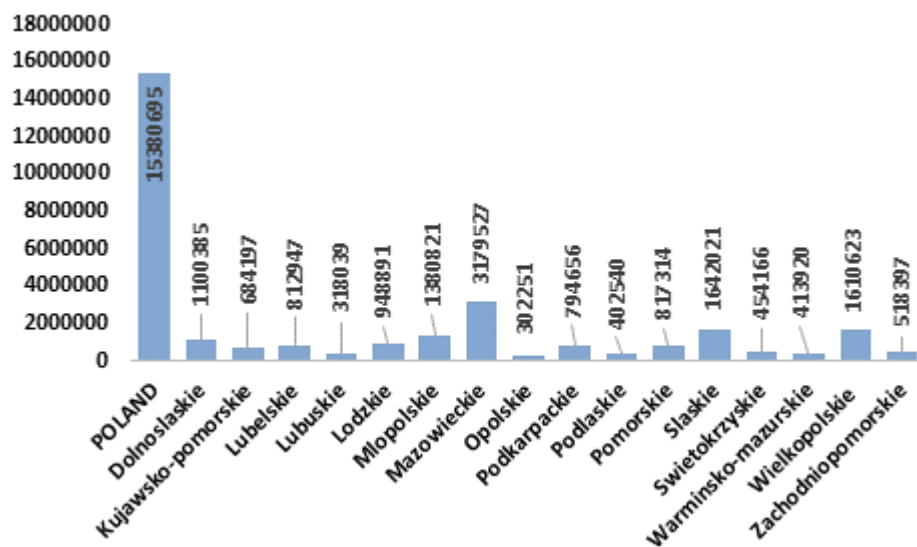
**Figure 2.** Working in the National Economy in 2013-2017. Own study based on CSO 2018.

The data above (Fig. 2) shows the situation of workers in Poland in 2013- 2017. A growth tendency is noticeable. On comparing the total number of employees in 2014, there was an increase of 319.1 thousand to the previous year, while in 2015; there was an increase of 266.4 thousand compared to the previous year. In 2016, the number of employees increased by another 463.5 thousand, and between 2017 and 2016, this number increased by 417.5 thousand. The increase in the number of employees in the analyzed years indicates a decrease in the number of unemployed and reflects the economic development of the country. The best situation was in 2015-2016, where the highest increase in total occurred. In the analyzed years, there was an increase in both the private and public sectors. It is self-evident that employers hire employees according to the company's needs. An important issue is the size of the enterprise. Data regarding the number of employees by company size are shown below (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Number of workers according to the size of enterprises in 2017. Own study based on CSO 2018.

In analyzing the data shown above (Fig. 3), it can be said that most people (614,2678) work in small enterprises (49 or less employees). In this kind of business, the atmosphere is more family-like. The employer knows the employees better and knows their family situation, there is greater empathy and possibility to negotiate working conditions. This kind of enterprise is most often operating in the private sector, and, in fact, employs the most employees there (according to data from 2017, 5,436,578 working people). The second group consists of the largest enterprises. These employed 4,161,836 people in total. Broken down, this figure is 2,803,360 people working in the private sector in 2017 and 1,365,853 people in the public sector. The figures indicate that the Polish labor market is well expanded and employees had a chance to choose a place of work. The employment structure by provinces in 2017 is as follows (Figure 4):



**Figure 4.** Structure of employment by voivodship in 2017. Own study based on CSO 2018.

The data presented in Figure 4 shows employment according to voivodship. It can be seen that most people were working in Mazowieckie voivodship in 2017 (3,179,527 people). The next voivodship is Śląskie at 1,642,021 employed, with Wielkopolskie voivodship at 1,610,623 in third place. Voivodships with the highest number of employed are areas that are well developed economically and where the industry is on the highest level. The production capacity transfers into the number of employees needed to work.

Today, the market is focused on the employee because the needs of Polish enterprises are greater than the number of people in the labor force. Therefore, women have a chance to find gainful employment, and their socio-economic potential is often fulfilled. Striving to create entrepreneurship in business is very important for the economic development of the Polish market (Revengea and Sudhir, 2012). Many good specialists emigrated abroad, because earning potential is higher. Therefore, to retain experienced workers, the needs of having well educated best-working employees must be connected with caring for the employees and their development, both personal and professional.

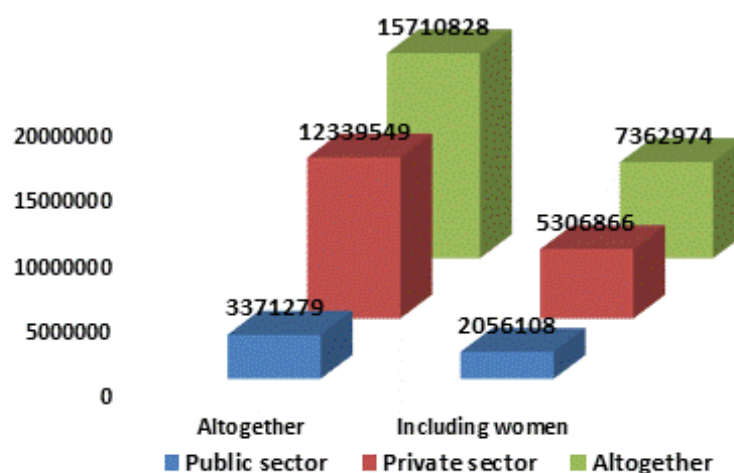
### 3. Women in the labor market

Nowadays, women are both educated, but often enough, mothers and wives. A correct division between work and household duties must meet certain rules thanks to which it is easier to reconcile. The possibilities of self-realization directly affect the social functioning of women. Working women are much better organized than most males and they manage their time more effectively than do the majority of men. In action planning, however, it should be remembered that the plan of the family and professional projects must be real, must have particular goals

and ways to realize them (Dima et al., 2010). Women themselves much more often show the support and possibility to co-work in enterprises. In enterprises, it is important to provide a system of incentives that allows an employee to have greater motivation to work (Lee, et al., 2016). Often, beyond work, women have plenty of duties that have to be well planned in order to be well realized. The creativity and involvement of women as employees are highly valued in enterprises (Rozkwitalska, 2015). These abilities can be harnessed in the work place during the performance of duties. In the sphere of an organizational culture, it is reasonable to underline its impact on work effectiveness (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2016). The ability to lead a family life is used when managing a team. The key issue is to communicate with employees as this positively influences employee behavior during teamwork activity (Pietrasieński, 2013). Cooperation in a team is based on cooperation, trust and support. Employees appreciate an employer's care about particular members of a team-enterprise.

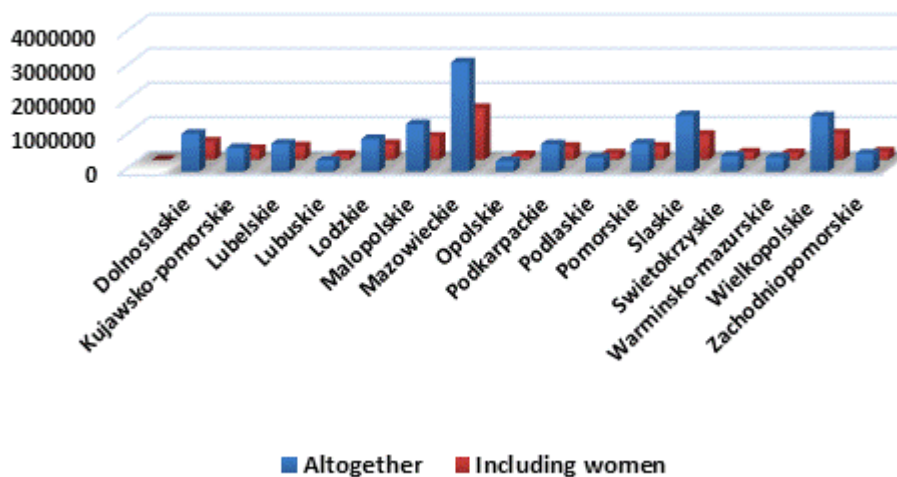
The organizational culture of a team is thus concentrated on collegiality and striving to create an atmosphere of trust and loyalty (Lee et al., 2016). Possibilities of cooperating in the enterprise are important in every work position. Unfortunately, in many workplaces restrictions are met, therefore, many women decide to start their own company as this allows wider freedom of actions. Moreover, doing so enhances the possibilities to adjust the work to family needs.

Of course, not all working-women want to be mothers and wives, a lot focus on personal development and full economic and social independence. These people center their lives around their professional work. The ability to be the owner of a company, whether small or large, forces women-owners to be organized. The owner of an enterprise no matter the gender, must make decisions in order for the company to flourish. The highly changeable nature of business today, whether due to external or internal forces, means the owner must be on the ball (Jelonek, 2007). Making strategically important decisions is often associated with risks that can help or harm the functioning of the company in a competitive market.



**Figure 5.** Workers in 2017 in total, including women. Own study based on CSO 2018.

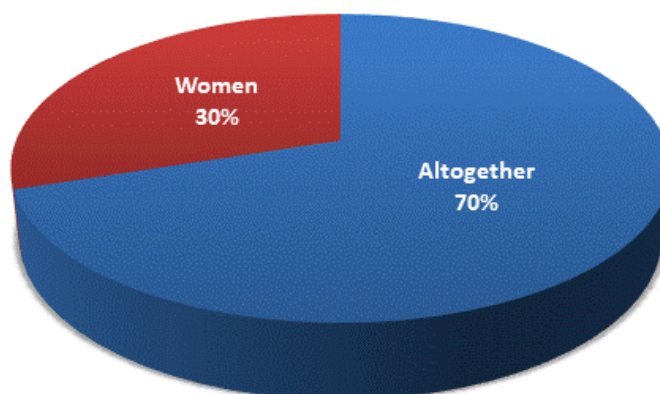
The structure of the working population in 2017 shows that in the private sector, the ratio of women to all employees is 43%, and in the public sector it is 61%. The employment of women by individual voivodships is as follows:



**Figure 6.** Employment of women by individual voivodships in 2017. Own study based on CSO 2018.

According to the data shown in Figure 6, it is evident that the largest number of the employed in 2017 was in Mazowieckie voivodship. The figure coincides with the number of employed women. This voivodship is an economic powerhouse, thus this situation implies intensive impact on employment. The companies operating in this voivodship vary in size and activity, hence, the possibilities to develop professionally, or even to find work, both for women and men, are the highest. Other voivodships of good possibility to find satisfying work are Małopolskie, Wielkopolskie and Śląskie. These particular voivodships allow the adjustment of work offers to current employee needs.

Women who want to run their own business in the private sector have to reckon with many beneficial and unfavorable factors for running a business in Poland. The number of brave women owners is shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** Self-employment in 2017. Own study based on CSO 2018.

According to the data drawn from Figure 7, in the private sector, the number of self-employed was 4,081,651, of which, 42% were women (1,749,589 women). The limits to self-employment are only in the imagination and the desire to take risk. Female entrepreneurship is associated with more or less the same factors as in the case of male entrepreneurship, but they differ in a variety of ways. That is why sex in running a business is important (Borowska, 2013). A choice of activity thanks to which one can exist and do well on the market is very important and affects the way and quality of running a business. Referring to the working women's situation in 2013-2017, the situation is as follows:

**Table 1.**

*Working in the National Economy in the years 2013-2017 (Own study based on the Central Statistical Office)*

Year	Altogether	Women
2013	14244,3	6718,9
2014	14563,4	6874,4
2015	14829,8	6996,7
2016	15293,3	7195,7
2017	15710,8	7362,9

Upon analyzing the data presented in Table 1, it is notable that women in the examined years made up 47% of the entire work force in Poland. This ratio is almost half of the employed. Hence, it can be stated that in the years 2013-2017, both men and women had equal employment opportunities.

While the situation in Poland is good in comparison to other (Eastern) European countries, effort should be made in order to make full use of the social-economic potential of Poles. The capabilities to work of women, as well as men are important factors of sex issues. That is why there should be opportunities for personal development that result in the satisfaction of the inhabitants of the country and in economic development.

#### 4. Summary

The presented article shows the differences between work done by women and men. Because of full employment, the professional activity of women has become more visible in the Polish labor market. Shown analyzes indicate that the ratio of hired women in Polish enterprises is satisfactory in big cities, but the situation is quite different in smaller towns and villages. Women, thus, should have access to funding to set up their own businesses, but they themselves must recognize that life/family activity and professional activity often merge. This situation can be discouraging.



The introduction of programs to aid women in starting up and maintaining their businesses would certainly help. Some changes in the system of perception of working women should be made that allows them to have the opportunity to start a family and to have children. To conclude, social-economical changes are lagging in the Poland of today and must catch up to enterprisal activity.

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