

# Women's Empowerment in Belarus State Economic University

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# Theoretical basis of the research

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- *During the preparation of this report some kind of research was conducted to evaluate the real state of things concerning leadership in our University after all dissemination activities in the frame of the Tempus LA MANCHE program.*
  - *The theoretical basis of our research is expressed by the following key words/terms:*
  - Women's empowerment,
  - internal/external locus of control,
  - glass ceiling.
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# Women's empowerment

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- The process of women's empowerment is the issue of awareness, and consciousness. Awareness usually comes first at the manifest level of power relations, where women's subordination is most clearly visible and felt.
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# Internal and external locus of control

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- ❑ Locus of control - the degree to which human beings can control or manipulate forces outside themselves and thereby shape their own destiny.
  - ❑ The locus of control is largely internal, within the individual. There are very few givens in life, few circumstances that have to be accepted as they are, that cannot be changed. There are no limits on what I can do or become, so long as I set my mind to it and make the necessary effort. Life is what I do.
  - ❑ The locus of control is largely external to the individual. Some aspects of life are predetermined, built into the nature of things. There are limits beyond which we cannot go and certain givens that cannot be changed and must be accepted. Life is in large part what happens to me.
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# Glass ceiling

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- is a political term used to describe the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements
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# Why do we need women's empowerment in our education?

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- To start with our Belarusian culture is sometimes considered to be a bit traditional one. It means that it is characterized by a number of features still having rather strong negative attitude towards women's leadership, because the gender roles are quite fixed here. It's a vivid example of an external locus of control.
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- Women's empowerment in this case depends on many factors. These factors are from education to subjective factors such as inner strength and self-esteem. Yet when women's subordination is left untouched on such level as educational one, women will not allow themselves to make full use of their rights.
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- For a process of women's empowerment to be successful, women must have access to definite resources (high professional position in our case). It is here that policy, both of the government and of a local sector (University authorities) can provide effective interventions.
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- Gender equity under the socialist regime was largely a myth, despite government's public presentation of it. Nowadays the situation is changing to the best though quite slowly.
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- It goes without saying that the achievement of gender equity in education requires of concrete action plans to insure implementation of a number of practices of gender leadership in educational process. We needed a special methodology to break the “glass ceiling” practice.
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- The participation of our University in the international program Tempus LA MANCHE was a great opportunity for us in this respect. The results of the dissemination program were widely implemented as the authentic materials in many disciplines taught at the International Business-Communication Department.
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# Short structural gender involvement characteristic of Belarusian State Economic University

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- The overwhelming majority of the University teaching staff are women. Nevertheless the top management of the University is men. The deans of the University Schools are mostly women – 77 %. The heads of the departments are 56 % - men, 44 % - women. The students are mostly girls – 80 %.
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- To evaluate the results of the changes in the mind of the feminine and masculine students two types of questionnaires were composed.
  - The first one contains the questions in the traditional sphere – gender and family relations, the second one – the questions about career possibilities.
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- 200 4-th year students of Belarus State Economic University 125 girls and 75 boys took part in this survey. Their future major was not important. The aim was to clear out the priorities of the young people in choosing their life pattern – weather it is mostly traditional or becoming different, which means conscious understanding of their leading role in the nearest future, moving from external to internal locus of control life style, which means acquiring leadership characteristics.
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# Conclusion

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- The results of our research, which took place after the dissemination process, let us make following conclusion:
  - The students of both genders demonstrate their will to be responsible for their private and professional life. It means that after the graduation from the University they are ready to make decisions at their working places as professionals and to be responsible for themselves and their own families. The difference between masculine and feminine wasn't great.
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# Gender and Family Values and Expectations Survey

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- should the marriage be juridical
  - what is your attitude towards church marriage
  - what is the right marriage age
  - what are the main family values from your point of view
  - what are the characteristic features of an ideal wife
  - what are the characteristic features of an ideal husband
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# Career Possibilities Survey

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- Do you dream about successful career
  - In what case a person can be promoted
  - Do you prefer to get a well-paid job without any future career perspectives
  - Are you ready to work hard, to meet serious challenges at work and at last to become a boss
  - Do you want to be the best in an important assignment fulfilling
  - Do you agree to study more to acquire additional knowledge to succeed at your working place
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***□ Thank you for your  
attention !***

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