



# Gender Differences in Motivation for Success and Their Impact on Personal and Professional Achievements of Students

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## Abstract

Research on gender differences in students' motivation to succeed has essential economic and social implications. In a modern economy based on knowledge and innovation, gender differences in motivation can significantly influence the distribution and efficiency of human capital. The study aims to identify gender differences in personal and professional achievements among university students. Research shows that men are more likely to strive for high goals and demonstrate high motivation to succeed, while women tend to have more realistic goals and sustainable achievements. Diagnosing motivation using T. Ehlers' method showed that boys have a high level of motivation (25.6), while girls have an average level of motivation (21.85). A moderately high level of motivation was more pronounced in girls (12.5) than boys (9.3). Cultural and social factors, gender stereotypes, and societal expectations may explain these differences. Understanding gender differences in motivation can help develop educational and professional programs that promote equal motivation in students of both genders. This paper contributes to increased productivity, innovation, and competitiveness in the labor market. Considering motivational factors allows the creation of more effective systems for stimulating labor and optimizing resources, which leads to sustainable economic growth and development.

**Keywords:** Motivation for Success, Gender Stereotypes, Students, Personal Achievements

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Research on gender differences in students' motivation to succeed has important economic implications. Human capital becomes critical to growth and development in a modern economy based on knowledge and innovation. Gender differences in motivation to succeed can significantly impact the allocation and efficiency of using this capital. Gender differences in motivation influence students' choice of professions and career paths. High motivation for success in boys and moderately high in girls can lead to different approaches to professional development, affecting their participation in various sectors of the economy. Understanding motivational differences can help employers create environments that support the development of both male and female workforces, thereby increasing overall productivity and innovativeness.

Different levels of motivation can determine worker performance and productivity. Boys with high motivation can strive for more ambitious goals, which promotes innovation, while girls with moderately high motivation can produce consistent results and work more effectively in teams. Considering motivational factors allows you to create more effective labor incentive systems, which leads to resource optimization and cost reduction.

Information about gender differences in motivation to succeed can help design educational and professional development programs that address the specific needs and potential of students of both genders. This contributes to a more rational distribution of investments in human capital. Education policymakers can use this data to create conditions that promote maximum self-fulfillment for all students, which in the long term increases economic growth by improving the skills and productivity of the workforce.

Promoting gender equality in the labor market and education has positive economic effects. Equal access to opportunities for self-realization and professional growth contributes to the workforce's full potential, ultimately

stimulating economic growth. Creating equal opportunities for men and women to achieve success helps remove barriers to equality and promotes more inclusive economic development. Thus, the study of gender differences in students' motivation to succeed is closely related to economics through its impact on the labor market, economic efficiency, investment in education and development, and the promotion of gender equality. Understanding and addressing these differences can help create a more efficient and equitable economic system supporting sustainable growth and development. The study aims to identify gender differences in the sphere of personal and professional achievements among university students.

**Research Question:** Research on gender differences in personal and professional achievements will create opportunities for more effective use of human capital, allowing students to realize their potential in economic activity better and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Gender differences in professional achievements

Differences in motivation and achievement between women and men can significantly impact their professional careers. Research shows that men are more likely to strive for high goals and demonstrate high motivation to succeed, while women tend to have more realistic and achievable goals [1]. These differences may be due to cultural and social factors, as well as differences in upbringing and societal expectations. The terms “glass ceiling” and “sticky floor” often describe women's obstacles in advancing their careers. The glass ceiling refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from achieving senior management positions despite their qualifications and experience [2]. “Sticky floors” describes a situation where women are

stuck at the entry- and mid-levels of the career ladder with no opportunities for advancement.

Gender differences in motivation and personality characteristics also influence professional achievement. Women are more likely to face barriers to career advancement, such as gender stereotypes and an imbalance between work and family responsibilities [3]. These factors may limit their ability to develop professionally and achieve senior organizational positions. Considering gender differences in personal and professional achievements can create opportunities for more effective use of human capital. Developing programs that consider these differences can help students better realize their potential and increase their competitiveness in the job market. For example, special mentoring and career counseling programs for women can contribute to their professional growth and success [4].

Unfortunately, gender stereotypes play a significant role in shaping professional achievement and career growth. Men are often perceived as more ambitious and capable of leadership, leading to their promotion to leadership positions. This bias is not only unfair but also limits women's career opportunities. Women, on the other hand, are often judged on different criteria, such as “team player” or “supportive”, which may limit their career opportunities [5].

## **2.2 Gender differences as a factor of interpersonal understanding in adolescence**

Several factors influence personal development. One of them can rightfully be considered one or another gender identity. In a family, gender ideas are formed even before the birth of a child, showing interest in who will be born: a boy or a girl. Social, cultural, and psychological aspects refer to the traits, norms, stereotypes, and roles considered typical and desirable for those society defines as women or men [6].

Scientific evidence has established that gender differences, while rooted in biological psychophysiological disparities, are primarily shaped by societal norms and cultural influences [7]. The significance of studying these gender differences in the context of interpersonal understanding and mutual comprehension during adolescence is underscored by the necessity to enhance the effective utilization of human capital. This involves devising strategies to assist young individuals in overcoming life challenges and interpersonal obstacles. A comprehensive understanding of these differences can pave the way for creating an environment that maximizes the potential of both genders, thereby boosting their economic productivity and overall effectiveness in the labor market.

The term “gender,” a widely recognized concept, encapsulates various social, cultural, and psychological aspects that define the relationship between the sexes, their statuses, unique interests, requests, needs, and strategies. Gender is a “complex sociocultural construct” that encompasses role, behavioral, mental, and emotional disparities between men and women [8]. This comprehensive understanding of gender is crucial for the in-depth analysis of its influence on personal development and interpersonal relationships.

In psychology, gender is a socio-biological characteristic that helps people define the concepts of woman and man. In economics, gender is a socio-biological characteristic that determines differences in the roles, behavior, and perceptions of men and women, influencing their participation in economic activities. Understanding gender perspectives helps analyze how social norms and expectations shape career paths, access to resources, and professional development opportunities for both genders, influencing overall economic growth and development. The social psychology of gender is a vast field for studying attitudes, prejudices, discrimination, social perception and self-perception, self-esteem, and the emergence of social norms, roles, and mutual understanding. Mutual understanding at the social level is

ensured by the consistency and conventionality of social-role expectations and typical patterns of interpersonal relationships [9].

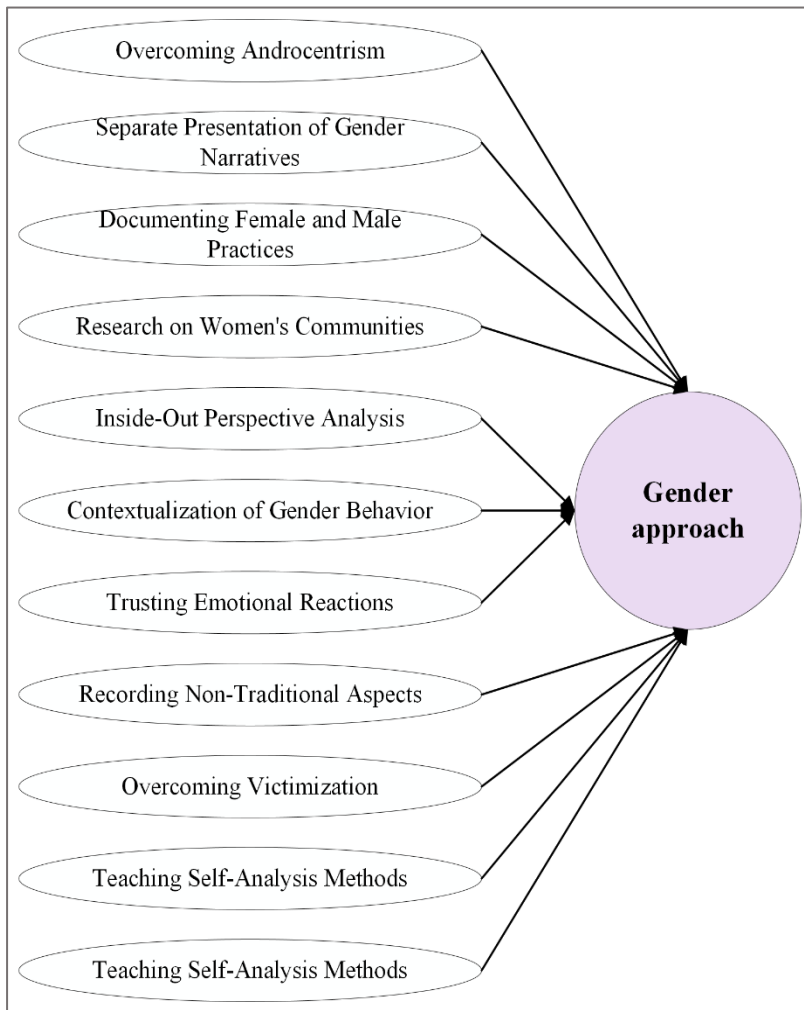
Several skills contribute to better mutual understanding - empathy, constantly collecting and updating information, creating new categories, and correcting one's behavior. In real interpersonal interaction, competence turns out to be a negative quality for women: high competence of women does not enjoy the favor of either men or women because it undermines existing stereotypes. These data were also confirmed in experiments when men and women tried to eliminate competent women from their group in cooperative and competitive interaction [10,11,12].

A woman and a man see the meaning of their existence in a happy life. Although each culture in each historical era gives rise to different ideals of happiness and stereotypes of ideas about it, there is a certain commonality and unity - a happy life without love, without one's chosen one (chosen one), alone is impossible. So, we can say that gender differences determine the process of interpersonal understanding. Thus, understanding another person in boys occurs through intellectual similarity and emotional sympathy, and experience in girls.

### **2.3 New directions in the study of gender**

Modern gender research is guided by several fundamental principles, which include open recognition of the researcher's engagement and involvement in the movement for gender equality [13,14]. The central and most influential part of the gender community of the early 21st century believes that classifying a scientist as a gender scientist means his explicit agreement with the feminist perspective. A feminist perspective provides specific analytical tools and concepts that help better understand and interpret gender differences and inequalities. These include concepts such as patriarchy, gender roles, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Among the tasks set by those who use a gender approach to the analysis of social phenomena, one can highlight: (1) overcoming androcentrism, a categorical refusal to "mix" male and female narratives when reconstructing the life of individual ethnic groups; (2) informal attention to gender differences, separate presentation of the life practices of men and women, (3) separate documentation of men's and women's lives and practices when analyzing the lifestyle of any ethnic group; (4) a particular study of all types of social practices of women's communities and positioning women as "key informants"; (5) special attention to the analysis of female/male experience from the point of view of its bearers/bearers themselves, their life perspective, a look at respondents "from below" and "from within" (insiding), and not "from above", from the position of a sophisticated bearer of the highest truths; (6) conceptualizing female/male behavior as influenced by different social and historical contexts; (7) the ability to listen to one's own emotional reactions, to compare one's life experience with the experience of the informant; (8) fixation of aspects that are not always raised (or not raised at all) by traditional researchers (the role of the daughter in the family, the practices of women's everyday life in hygiene and the treatment of women's diseases, the social experience of trans- and bisexuals, lesbians and gays, the mechanisms of society's rejection of unmasculine men and so on.); (9) focusing on an optimistic perspective and overcoming practices of victimization; (10) training "objects under study" in methods of analyzing their own lives, formulating goals and life tasks related to the elimination of inferiority; (11) the non-authoritarian nature of the conclusions and, in this sense, a departure from the standards of traditional research, in which it is essential to convince - while maintaining the critical focus of the work against biological determinism and the idea that Nature gives something, and therefore unchangeable (that is, against essentialism).



**FIGURE 1.** Gender approach to the analysis of social phenomena

*Note:* compiled by authors

Gender studies have influenced academic discourse and had a tangible impact on political and social spheres. They have stimulated activism among political leaders, leading to increased attention to issues of gender equality and inclusion. This has resulted in the creation and support of relevant programs and initiatives. For instance, the number of women in politics has increased, and there is now more focus on issues related to women's rights and gender equality [15,16]. At the local level, gender studies have contributed to developing programs aimed at improving women's living and working conditions. These programs

include support for women entrepreneurs, initiatives to protect against violence and discrimination, and educational programs to raise awareness of gender issues [17]. The influence of gender studies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been significant, helping to create more inclusive and equitable societies. In the United States, they have led to the gender expertise of legislation, political figures' activism, and various public programs' development. These initiatives are instrumental in reducing gender inequality and improving the quality of life for all citizens.

## 2.4 Student motivation and academic achievement

Student motivation and academic achievement are important indicators of success in an educational environment. Various constructs such as self-perception of ability, task values, goals, and achievement motives predict academic achievement above and beyond intelligence. Research has shown that self-perceptions of ability and task value are potent predictors [18]. Autonomous motivation profiles are also associated with higher academic achievement. Students with self-determined motivation better achieve results in physical education and academic subjects (Boiché et al., 2008). Motivation influences the use of learning strategies, influencing academic performance. Students' perceptions of ability and learning strategies significantly predict academic success [19].

It is a well-documented fact that girls and women often surpass boys and men on various measures of academic achievement. One potential explanation for these trends is the presence of gender differences in motivation. Men tend to showcase and defend their abilities, while women are more inclined to work hard and rectify their shortcomings. Social and educational contexts shape these motivations and are further influenced by gendered socialization patterns, values, and behavior [20].

A study among college students found a significant difference in motivation and achievement between women and men. Women demonstrated higher intrinsic motivation, positively affecting their academic results, while external regulation was more important for men [21]. Gender differences in motivation and academic achievement vary across cultural contexts. For example, a study among students from different countries found significant cultural differences in school motivation. However, in most cultures, women showed higher motivation and achievement rates than men [22].

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Methodology for diagnosing personality for motivation for success by T. Ehlers

The personality diagnostic technique for motivation to succeed, developed by Theodor Ehlers, is a psychological test to assess an individual's motivation to succeed. The test consists of statements rated on a Likert scale covering aspects such as desire for success, self-confidence, perseverance, risk-taking, and self-control. Based on the respondent's responses, a total score is calculated and interpreted in the context of motivation to succeed, with high scores indicating high motivation and low scores indicating lack of motivation or barriers. The technique is used in psychological counseling, vocational guidance, education, and scientific research, helping to identify and develop a person's inner motivations to achieve their goals.

### 3.2 Mann-Whitney U test

The Mann-Whitney rank correlation coefficient was used for the mathematical processing of data. The Mann-Whitney Rank Correlation Coefficient, also known as the Mann-Whitney U test or simply the Mann-Whitney U test, is used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between two independent samples. This test is instrumental when the data is not normally distributed and the sample size is small. A low U-statistic indicates a significant difference between samples. To determine statistical significance, compare the U value with the critical values from the tables for the appropriate significance level (for example,  $\alpha=0.05$ ) and sample sizes  $n_1$  and  $n_2$ .

Research base: University of International Business LLP, Almaty. The personality questionnaire is designed to diagnose, identified by Heckhausen, the motivational orientation of an individual to achieve success.

The stimulus material consists of 41 statements, to which the subject must give one of 2 answer options: “yes” or “no”. The test refers to nanoscale methods. The degree of expression of motivation for success is assessed by the number of points that match the key.

*Keys:*

– 1 point is awarded for answers “yes” to the following questions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 41;

– also awarded 1 point for answers “no” to questions 6, 19, 18, 20, 24, 31, 36, 38,39;

– answers to questions 1,11, 12,19, 28, 33, 34, 35,40 are not considered.

Next, the total points scored are calculated.

*Registered indicators:*

– from 1 to 10 points: low motivation for success;

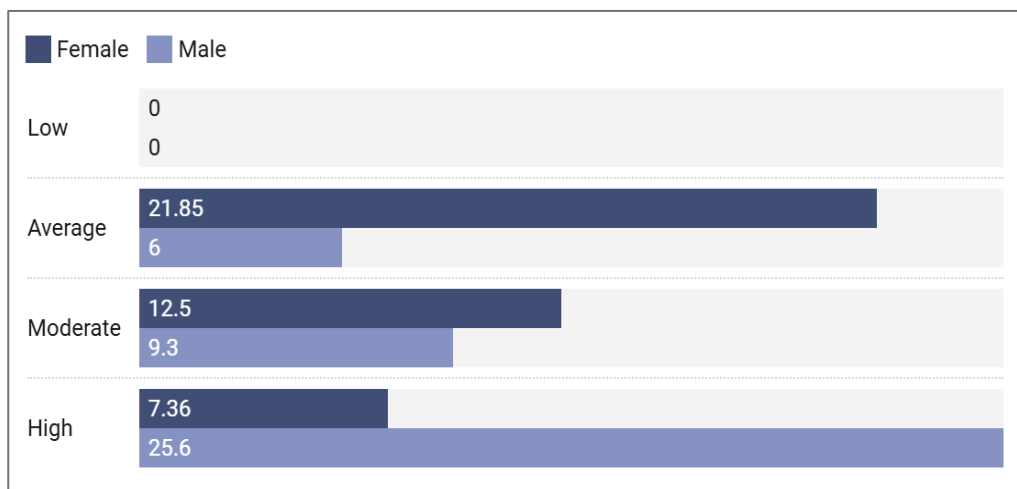
– from 11 to 16 points: average level of motivation;

– from 17 to 20 points: moderately high level of motivation;

– over 21 points: too high level of motivation for success.

#### 4. RESULTS

All indicators of subjects who belong to the system are distributed according to four parameters: “Very high level of motivation”; “Moderately high level of motivation”; “Average level of motivation”; "Low level of motivation." A study of personality diagnostics on student motivation for success is shown below in Figure 2 (N=50).



**FIGURE 2.** Personality diagnostics for motivation for success in boys and girls by T. Ehlers

*Note:* compiled by authors

The study results show:

1. Young men have a high level of motivation (25.6). They need to set higher goals; the higher a person’s motivation for success—achieving a goal—the lower the willingness to take risks. They fear failure, so they often do not achieve the final result.

2. The average level of motivation prevails among girls (21.85). This finding has practical

implications, suggesting that girls set realistic goals and accurately assess their capabilities. They prefer competitive success, where victory is a personal achievement rather than a luck-based outcome.

3. The moderately high level of motivation among girls is (12.5) for boys (9.3).

4. There is a low level of motivation among boys and girls. This suggests that girls are more

successful in achieving their goals since they adequately assess their capabilities.

Results of correlation analysis using T. Ehlers' method of personality diagnostic research on motivation for success (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1.** Results of correlation analysis of personality diagnostics on motivation to success.

| No.                             | Motivation levels | U-amp results |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1                               | Very tall         | -             |
| 2                               | Moderately high   | 13            |
| 3                               | Average           | 34            |
| 4                               | Short             | -             |
| <i>Note:</i> compiled by author |                   |               |

Statistically significant relationships were established (at a significance level (from  $p \leq 0.01$  to  $p \leq 0.05$ ) in boys and girls from 18 to 21 years old according to the method of studying personality diagnostics on motivation for success by T. Ehlers (2 out of 4 criteria).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The study revealed significant gender differences in students' motivation levels to succeed, which may impact their personal and professional achievements. The main goal was to understand how these differences can promote or hinder students' self-realization in society. According to the diagnostic results using T. Ehlers' method, various motivation levels for success prevail among students.

The young men showed a high level of motivation for success (25.6), which indicates a desire for high goals, but they are often afraid of failure, which can hinder the achievement of final results. On the contrary, girls demonstrate an average level of motivation (21.85), indicating a more realistic assessment of their capabilities and a preference for competitive conditions. A moderately high level of motivation was more pronounced in girls (12.5) than boys (9.3), which may indicate more excellent stability and readiness to overcome difficulties in girls. Both boys and

girls have a low level of motivation, which suggests the desire of both groups to succeed.

Correlation analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant differences in motivation for success between boys and girls, especially in moderately high and medium levels of motivation ( $U_{mp} = 13$  and 34, respectively). The lack of data for very high and low levels of motivation underlines the need for further research to more fully understand these categories, emphasizing the ongoing importance of this study in student motivation.

These results highlight the importance of considering gender differences when developing student support and development programs aimed at increasing their motivation to succeed. Understanding the characteristics of motivation in boys and girls can help create more effective educational and psychological strategies that contribute to their personal and professional growth. Thus, the study confirms the hypothesis that identifying gender differences in motivation for success can contribute to more successful self-realization of students in society.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study revealed significant gender differences in motivation for success among students, which influence their personal and professional achievements. Young men demonstrate high levels of motivation to succeed and strive for high goals, but their desire for success can hinder the achievement of final results due to fear of failure. On the contrary, girls show an average level of motivation, which indicates a more realistic assessment of their capabilities and a preference for competitive conditions, contributing to their stable achievements. A moderately high level of motivation is more pronounced in girls than in boys, which may indicate more excellent stability and readiness to overcome difficulties in girls. A low level of motivation is absent in both groups, indicating a desire for success in both sexes. Correlation



analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant differences in motivation for success between boys and girls, especially in moderately high and medium motivation levels. Understanding gender differences in motivation to succeed has essential economic and social implications, including developing educational programs, creating conditions for self-fulfillment, increasing productivity and innovation, and, most importantly, promoting gender equality. Taking these differences into account can contribute to more successful self-realization of students and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

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