**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The aim of the study presented in this article was to examine how people in independent senior management positions (exposed and highly placed in the organisational structure), who are perceived as *successful people* in the social space, perceive themselves and the achieved professional success, and to what extent the attitudes adopted, perceptions and evaluation regarding themselves

can be identified with impostor syndrome. Successful people, especially in the context of professional success, are usually defined as those who, in the professional and social dimensions, have achieved above-average results expressed in social, financial, economic, and job status.

**Methodology:** This article presents the results of a preliminary qualitative study conducted among 32 senior managers, directors, and business owners employed in large Polish organisations and in subsidiaries of foreign companies located in Poland. The research used Rosenberg’s SES self-assessment scale and individual in-depth interviews (IDI).

**Findings:** The research showed to what extent the problem of impostor syndrome actually affects people who seemingly should not be affected by it (managers).

**Value Added:** Research shows how diverse the perception of professional success is among people holding prestigious managerial positions.

**Recommendations:** Further in-depth research should be conducted to explore additional, individual psychological aspects related to the sense of professional success among managers.

**Key words:** impostor phenomenon, psychological distress, impostor fears, perfectionism, low self-esteem

**JEL classification code:** M500, M510, M530