

# Perception of Gender Issues at Work

Emilia GRESAKOVA \* and Darina CHLEBIKOVA

University of Žilina, Žilina, Slovakia; emilia.gresakova@fpedas.uniza.sk; darina.chlebikova@fpedas.uniza.sk

\* Correspondence: emilia.gresakova@fpedas.uniza.sk

**Abstract:** In this article we deal with the analysis of the situation of equal opportunities in the field of gender issues in practice. The aim of the article is to describe the importance of creating a corporate culture that promotes equality and diversity in the workplace, as well as to describe the specific situation of gender inequality in the labor market and to testify to people affected by gender issues in practice. In this work, we investigate statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice between managers and executives, as well as between the working areas of education and transport. The questionnaires were used to verify the hypotheses and respondents' opinion on the issue, which also implies an analysis of partial objectives. The aim of the research is to analyze gender differences in the labor market and describe the perception of the issue of the position of men and women in the work process and to compare their equal chances. The work is concluded with proposals and recommendations to support equalization of inequalities in the labor market.

**Keywords:** gender; discrimination; equal opportunities; gender issues

**JEL Classification:** J7; J70; J71

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## 1. Introduction

In the knowledge of the hierarchy of society and the subsequent division of labor, the most important step is the knowledge of biologically given differences and the socio-cultural gender, the so-called female and male roles are claimed by the authors (Borchorst and Siim 2008).

Thus, undoubtedly, the basic definitions include gender and gender. (Groucutt et al. 2018) briefly describe that sex is exclusively about the biological differences between men and women, on the basis of which we can categorize human beings as men and women. Gender is already related to the social meanings given in relation to the gender. Gender points out the differences between men and women and is concerned with building gender identities.

In relation to gender differences, we should also define the concept of discrimination, which (Kliestikova et al. 2018) cite as a disproportionate difference in treatment of individuals or groups of individuals. Discriminatory treatment fails to respect the established equal rights for all groups and individuals, and this demonstrates resistance to diversity.

(Luminița 2018) claims that gender differences point to forms of discrimination, namely direct and indirect. Direct discrimination means an act or omission in which a person is treated less favorably than that treated, or could be treated in the comparable situation, with another person. Indirect discrimination is defined as a situation where an outwardly neutral regulation, decision, instruction or practice disadvantages a person in comparison with another person.

(Neary et al. 2018) also mention another type of discrimination, namely multiple discrimination. It defines it as a number of concurrent factors such as gender and age, or health and age, which intensify disadvantage. They refer to other forms of discrimination according to the applicable anti-discrimination law and are: Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Unauthorized Sanction, Instruction to Discrimination and Encouraging Discrimination.

(Ranki et al. 2018) already define a specific form of gender discrimination, and that is gender role, which is based on the anticipated behavior of men and women based on the images of understanding of "masculinity" and "femininity". Gender roles are a learned gender socialization that begins shortly after birth and transmits socio-cultural beliefs and values that are transmitted to the child.

(Tesch-Romer et al. 2008) point to discrimination against women in hidden forms of the labor market, as confirmed by a published analysis by the European Commission based on the following factors of a survey of horizontal segregation in the labor market, indicating high employment rates of women with low pay. It was also a sectoral segregation where women's attention was more concentrated in the public sector, while men mostly in the private sector. In vertical segregation, it is a glass ceiling, limiting women's opportunities and opportunities. Remuneration structures focus on personal remuneration in which women are found to be disadvantaged (e.g. paying overtime which not every woman can perform in addition to family responsibilities).

In practice, there is a system of collective bargaining characterized by an androgenic approach. Furthermore, inequalities in household and family responsibilities and multiple discrimination of inequalities in education based on prejudice and gender stereotypes manifested in the choice of fields of study as well as the "male model" of the labor market and its remuneration system - points to efforts to integrate into the work environment and this often forces women to adapt to a typical male model. (Van den Brink et al. 2010) argue that due to gender stereotypes, society is devaluing and subordinating women's work. The authors take the view that the structure and organization of society is based on gender stereotypes and that unequal power relations between men and women exist and persist.

## 2. Methodology

We carry out the research using a questionnaire, which is necessary for obtaining information on the research objectives. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part is devoted to surveying demographic data about respondents. In these informative questions we find out gender, age, region, marital status, number of children, educational attainment, work area and position in organizations. The respondents come mainly from three main work areas, namely transport, education and health. When it comes to organizational issues, we differentiate between a manager in a particular organization or an executive. The second part of the questionnaire is composed of questions concerning the gender issue in practice.

The questionnaire contains 9 questions, to which we obtained answers in a scale consisting of 5 variants of answers in the following wording with numerical expression: 1 - Definitely yes, 2 - Rather yes, 3 - Don't know, 4 - Rather not, 5 - Definitely not. Respondents should mark only one answer that is closest to their opinion. 162 respondents participate in the research. Respondents are randomly addressed through an online version of the questionnaire. We approached schools, transport and health organizations from all over Slovakia. We assume that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice between executives and managers and we assume that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice among respondents working in the field of education and transport.

We used arithmetic mean and standard deviation in descriptive statistics. The arithmetic mean is the most commonly used positioning characteristic and is calculated from all quantitative values. Defines the sum of all character values divided by their number - the range of the file.

The standard deviation  $\sigma$  is the square root of the variance. The variability of a feature is usually characterized by a guide deviation, because the standard deviation has the same dimension as observed sign.

To evaluate the hypotheses, we used a paired t-test, which is used to compare the mean values of two populations. We compare two samples, where in samples from one observation can be paired with samples from another observation.

## 3. Results

In the first hypothesis we analyzed statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice between managers and executives. We addressed 24 managers, representing 15% of the respondents and 88 executives, representing 54% of the respondents. The test results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice between managers and workers.

Questionnaire items	Organization classification	Average	Standard deviation	Standard deviation	Significance
Q 1	Managers	3,21	1,449	2,065	,024
	Workers	2,47	1,375		
Q 2	Managers	3,92	1,176	2,813	,003
	Workers	3,01	1,450		
Q 3	Managers	4,54	,884	2,626	,001
	Workers	3,75	1,400		
Q 4	Managers	4,50	,885	2,550	,002
	Workers	3,76	1,339		
Q 5	Managers	3,38	1,345	2,200	,018
	Workers	2,58	1,624		
Q 6	Managers	3,13	1,541	2,657	,007
	Workers	2,19	1,453		

The full questionnaire items were as follows:

Q1: Have you ever encountered any form of discrimination in employment?

Q2: Do you think there is an unjustified penalty in your workplace?

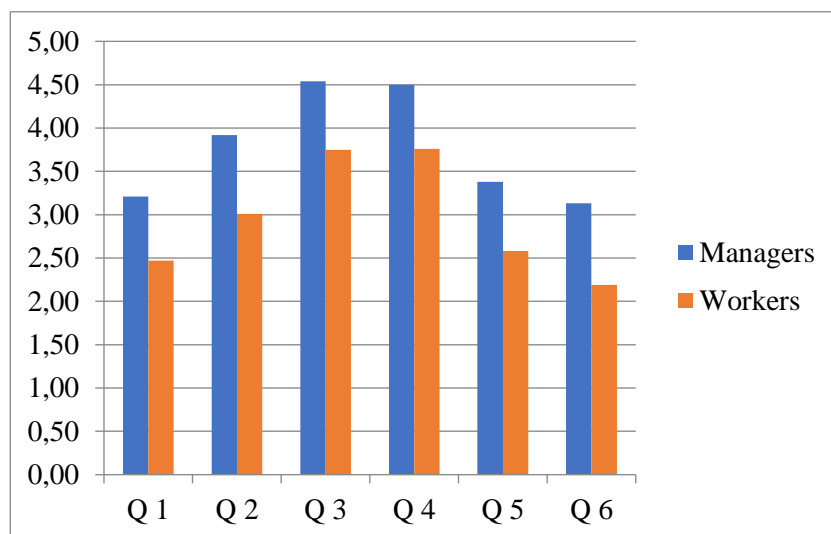
Q3: Do you think there is a discrimination instruction in your workplace?

Q4: Do you think there is incitement to discriminate in your workplace?

Q5: Do you have personal experience in different pay for work of the same value?

Q6: Do you know someone who has had a problem with pay discrimination?

In figure 1 we can see differences in the perception of gender issues in practice in terms of inclusion in organizations, namely in managerial and executive positions.



**Figure 1.** Average response values in terms of inclusion in organizations.

Neither managers nor executives responded to the question of whether they encountered any form of discrimination but executives were closer to a positive answer than managers. On the question

of unjustified sanction at the workplace, the managers replied that they had not previously encountered unjustified sanction while executives took a neutral stance. Neither managers nor executives have encountered this form of instruction and incitement to discriminate, but managers tend not to answer, while executives tend not to answer. On the question of personal experience in remuneration for work of the same value, more managers were more neutral than executives. Regarding the question of knowing someone who had a problem with pay discrimination, executives answered positively.

We state that hypothesis 1: We assume that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice between executives and managers have been confirmed.

In the second hypothesis we analyzed statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice among respondents working in the field of education and transport. We addressed 53 respondents from education, which represents 33% of respondents and 59 respondents working in transport, which represents 36% of respondents.

**Table 2.** Statistically significant differences in gender perception in practice in education and transport.

Questionnaire items	Organization classification	Average	Standard deviation	Standard deviation	Significance
Q 7	Education	,51	,973	2,630	,010
	Transportation	1,08	1,330		
Q 8	Education	1,58	,865	-3,632	,000
	Transportation	2,34	1,308		
Q 9	Education	1,53	,823	-2,830	,006
	Transportation	2,08	1,236		

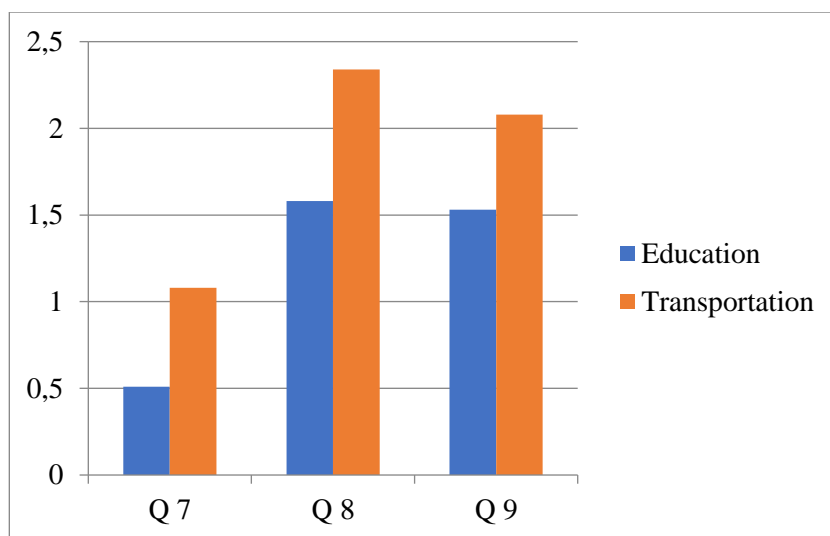
Full questionnaire items:

Q7: How did the employer react to defending your rights?

Q8: Are you aware of the opportunities for the employer to promote equal conditions through retraining?

Q9: Are you aware of the opportunities for employer to promote equal opportunities through training?

In figure 2 we can see differences in the perception of gender issues in practice in terms of work, education and transport in particular.



**Figure 2.** Mean response values in terms of work area.

Question no. 7 is not compiled by scale as other questions. It consists of specific model responses of the employer when the employee defended his rights in remuneration. Education respondents were more inclined to reply that the employer pointed out differences in the quality or quantity of work done. Transport respondents were inclined to reply that their employer criticized their work and pointed out their shortcomings. The respondents answered the question whether respondents are aware of the promotion of equal opportunities by the employer in the form of retraining and provision of vocational training.

We state that hypothesis 2: We assume that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of gender issues in practice among respondents working in the field of education and transport have not been confirmed.

#### **4. Discussion**

Research activities on gender issues, multiple causes analysis and knowledge of the link between obstacles to gender equality in employment were also addressed by the authors (Belén et al. 2018) as part of the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources. In this research, the authors dealt with the characteristics of the labor market both in Slovakia and in Europe and its gender imbalance in terms of the proportion of employment of men and women in individual labor sectors, which they believe is one of the most important cause of gender inequality.

(Diehl 2009) see the main differences in the degree of participation between men and women, opportunities and rights. The authors build on the empirical findings that follow from the research of OECD member states.

(Durana et al. 2019) analyzed differences in wage valuation between men and women in her analyzes, and found differences in wage valuation between men and women. She found that wage differences are greater where women work in their sector than when they work in the male sector. It is based on gender segregation of the sector, with the term 'female' sector attributed by the author to the service sector and 'male' to craftsmen, manufacturing workers and skilled workers in the use of machines, apparatus and equipment. The findings are based on the gender segregation index for occupational groups and on sectoral segregation and average wages in 2001.

(Jenson 2009) further elaborates on the findings of the analyzes, while pointing to discrimination against women in the following areas, women have experienced higher long-term unemployment and higher concentration in lower-paid jobs. In addition, we have seen a low representation in management positions and differences in pay in the same or related job positions.

The authors (Allison and Risman 2013) were also interested in the evaluation of factors taking into account regional disparities and territorial specificities of labor markets. On the one hand, they examined the various causes in relation to the analysis of demographic data and the concentration of employment and vacancies, and on the other hand the findings of the social construction of labor policy, the reconciliation of work and family, motivation, but also the barriers associated with it.

The aim of the article was to point out the perception of gender issues in the labor market. Gender issues in practice are still a persistent form of discrimination. Gender discrimination seems to be most apparent in the field of work. The employment rate of women is still significantly lower than that of men. There are many unjustifiable differences in paying wages for work of equal value between men and women. Lower wages or under-representation of women in managerial positions are still problematic areas of gender inequality in the labor market.

It is the development of terms related to gender issues and specific general gender differences given by genetic equipment and gender differences in the workplace in the theoretical part. We discussed the concept of opportunities and the importance of creating a corporate culture with an appeal to the principles of equality. The research carried out confirmed the persisting differences in the perception of gender issues between managers and executives. Even the Anti-Discrimination Act is not sufficient to ensure that differences in perception of inequality are not demonstrable. It is increasingly appealing for the implementation of the internal directives of enterprises that are focused on equal opportunities.

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