

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Humanities



Bachelor Thesis

Discrimination of women at workplaces: Case Study -

Russian Federation

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

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Business Administration

Thesis title

Discrimination against Women in the Workplace in Russia

Objectives of thesis

The thesis will investigate the issue of discrimination against women in the workplace in Russia. The concept of discrimination forms an important part of a wide range of legislation related to business conduct, employment law and public administration. Laws against discrimination are widespread, but there are debates about how discrimination should be measured, conceptualised and prevented. The thesis will investigate existing laws and debates around discrimination against women in Russia through analysis of particular cases and complaints of discrimination and qualitative interviews with people who have experienced discrimination.

Methodology

The thesis will develop a literature review covering ethical and legal debates about the concept of discrimination and its specific application to sex and gender. It will present and analyze the existing laws, policies and regulations concerning discrimination in Russia through critical comparative analysis of publicly available documents and analysis of significant legal cases. It will investigate experiences of discrimination through qualitative, semi-structured interviews.

The proposed extent of the thesis

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Keywords

Discrimination, Sex and Gender, Russia, Business Ethics, Workplace

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ALTMAN, Andrew. (2020). 'Discrimination.' The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2020 Edition). Edward N. Zalta (ed.). URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/discrimination/>.

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Discrimination of women at workplaces: Case Study - Russian Federation" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 15.03.2023

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Discrimination of women at workplaces: Case Study - Russian Federation

Abstract

This thesis devotes to the concept of discrimination in the workplace, examining its various dimensions and implications. Beginning with an exploration of the definition of discrimination, the study delves into the role of stereotypes as a component of discrimination. Further, it examines the distinctions between direct and indirect discrimination, emphasizing the importance of understanding both forms in addressing workplace inequality. The study also delves into the concept of equality at the workplace, including discussions on equal opportunities, treatment, and pay, as well as labor market segmentation and the glass ceiling phenomenon.

Subsequently, the study presents the interview results, followed by a comprehensive discussion. Finally, it addresses the limitations of the study, including sample size and self-report bias, and offers suggestions for future research in this area. Through its thorough examination and practical insights, this study contributes to a better understanding of discrimination in the workplace and informs strategies for promoting equality and fairness.

Keywords: Discrimination, Sex and Gender, Russia, Business Ethics, Workplace

Diskriminace žen na pracovišti: Případová studie - Ruská federace

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá mnohostranným pojmem diskriminace na pracovišti a zkoumá její různé rozměry a důsledky. Studie začíná zkoumáním definice diskriminace a zabývá se úlohou stereotypů jako součásti diskriminace. Dále zkoumá rozdíly mezi přímou a nepřímou diskriminací a zdůrazňuje význam pochopení obou forem při řešení nerovnosti na pracovišti. Studie se rovněž zabývá konceptem rovnosti na pracovišti, včetně diskuse o rovných příležitostech, zacházení a odměňování, jakož i segmentací trhu práce a fenoménem skleněného stropu.

Následně studie představuje výsledky rozhovorů, po nichž následuje obsáhlá diskuse. Nakonec se zabývá omezeními studie, včetně velikosti vzorku a zkreslení vlastních výpovědí, a nabízí návrhy pro budoucí výzkum v této oblasti. Svým důkladným zkoumáním a praktickými poznatky přispívá tato studie k lepšímu pochopení diskriminace na pracovišti a poskytuje informace pro strategie na podporu rovnosti a spravedlnosti.

Klíčová slova: Diskriminace, Pohlaví a gender, Rusko, Obchodní etika, Pracoviště

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the issue of discrimination against women in the workplace has garnered significant attention worldwide. Despite advancements in gender equality, women continue to face various forms of discrimination, impeding their professional growth and overall well-being. This study focuses on the discrimination of women at workplaces, with a specific case study conducted in the Russian Federation. By examining the nuances of discrimination within this context, the study aims to shed light on the challenges faced by women in the Russian workforce and provide insights into potential solutions.

The chapters that follow delve into the various dimensions of discrimination against women in the workplace. Chapter 3 begins by defining "discrimination" and explores its manifestations, including stereotypes and both direct and indirect forms of discrimination. Additionally, the chapter examines the concept of equality at the workplace, encompassing equal opportunities, treatment, pay, labor market segmentation, and the glass ceiling phenomenon. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the gender pay gap, analyzing the factors contributing to this disparity. Finally, from a legal perspective, Chapter 3 discusses the laws governing discrimination in the Russian Federation, including domestic legislation.

Moving to Chapter 4, the study details the research approach employed in conducting the case study. This includes the use of structured interviews with probing techniques, covering specific themes related to discrimination against women in the workplace. Additionally, the chapter addresses considerations such as sampling size and ethical considerations in the research process.

The last chapter of discussion and conclusion highlights the comprehensive analysis of results and explores the realities of discrimination faced by women in Russian Federation.

In conclusion, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality in the workplace by providing insights into the discrimination experienced by women in the Russian Federation.

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The thesis will investigate the issue of discrimination against women in the workplace in Russia. The concept of discrimination forms an important part of a wide range of legislation related to business conduct, employment law and public administration. Laws against discrimination are widespread, but there are debates about how discrimination should be measured, conceptualized and prevented. The thesis will investigate existing laws and debates around discrimination against women in Russia through analysis of particular cases and complaints of discrimination and qualitative interviews with people who have experienced discrimination.

2.2 Methodology

The thesis develops a literature review covering ethical and legal debates about the concept of discrimination and its specific application to sex and gender. It presents and analyzes the existing laws, policies and regulations concerning discrimination in Russia through critical comparative analysis of publicly available documents and analysis of significant legal cases. It investigates experiences of discrimination through qualitative, semi-structured interviews.

3. Literature Review

This part of the thesis covers the concept of “Discrimination” and relatable terms are used in this concept. In the context of gender discrimination in the labor market, a number of terms are used, which it will be useful to explain first, as they are subsequently used in the following text. These are the terms 'discrimination', 'sex discrimination', 'direct discrimination', 'indirect discrimination', 'equal pay principle', 'equal opportunities for women and men', 'gender mainstreaming', 'sex versus gender', 'labor market segmentation' and 'glass ceiling'. In defining these terms below. Based on a certain definition, each source is assigned.

3.1 The definition of “Discrimination”

Discrimination is a derogatory term when it is applied to the context of relations between different groups. In addition to merely discriminating between social objects, it additionally relates to the inappropriate and possibly unjust treatment of persons as a result of their belonging in a particular social class or category, such as race religion, gender, age or sexual orientation (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2006). A member of a group may be confronted with prejudice if they are subjected to aggressively negative behavior or, more subtly, if they are subjected to less positive responses than an ingroup member would be under similar conditions.

It is widely acknowledged that discrimination constitutes a manifestation of biased conduct. This encompasses actions not only directly harming or disadvantaging another group but also unfairly benefiting one's own group, consequently creating an imbalance for other groups. Schmitt and Branscombe (2011) proposed that favoritism towards one group plays a fundamental role in intergroup dynamics and holds a psychological preference over hostility towards outgroups.

Discrimination is by its very nature a rather structured phenomenon. In view of this fact, there are many types of discrimination. It is not the aim of this thesis to deal with all of them, so the following will be mentioned mainly those that are most relevant in terms of the issue at hand (Schmitt and Branscombe, 2011; Lippert-Rasmussen, 2006). According to the classification criterion of the nature of the impact on members of the group of persons concerned, discrimination can be divided into negative and positive. Negative discrimination is characterized by the fact that a person or group of persons is treated less favorably than

others in a comparable situation. Such unequal treatment occurs for reasons that are legally unjustifiable, namely on the basis of a discriminatory ground, or alternatively, discrimination is the result of arbitrariness, where there is no rational justification for the regulation being implemented. Negative discrimination is directed against an individual or a group, making them worse off. Negative discrimination can be further divided into direct and indirect discrimination. These types of discrimination will be addressed in later sections of this thesis. The opposite of negative discrimination is positive discrimination, which is characterized by the fact that appropriate measures are taken in favor of individuals or groups of persons to eliminate unjustified differences resulting from, for example, their gender, ethnic origin, health status, etc. Such measures may take the form of, for example, affirmative action, which is temporary.

3.1.1 Stereotypes as a part of “Discrimination”.

Most studies on discrimination highlight "stereotypes" as a significant factor contributing to discrimination. Professor Lippmann (1922) coined the term "stereotype" to describe the general perception people hold about a particular social group. Initially, research viewed stereotyping as a rigid and flawed cognitive process. However, more recent research (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2017) suggests that stereotypes are more flexible and adaptable, aiding in simplifying complex situations. People utilize stereotypes as mental shortcuts to comprehend information about others (Macrae et. el. 1996).

Stereotypes encompass more than just beliefs about the traits associated with typical group members; they also include information about other aspects such as social roles, the extent to which group members share specific qualities (like within-group homogeneity or variability), and they can influence emotional responses towards group members. For instance, stereotypes may suggest that women are confined to domestic roles or are weaker than men.

Women entering the labor market are often influenced by stereotypes that affect the perception of the female workforce. For example, according to (Scott, 2022) compared to men, women are still considered less competent and less stable, with low prospects and sometimes even lower performance. In addition, women are almost automatically assumed to have a higher rate of absenteeism, especially due to family and childcare. This is also a potential reason why women are automatically perceived as employees who shows less

willingness to possibly work overtime. In some situations, these reasons are often taken into account more than education and length of experience.

The perception of the female workforce itself is also a paradox. If she is a graduate with no family commitments, she is a precarious workforce from the employer's point of view, as she is likely to go on maternity leave in the future. If, on the other hand, it is a woman with children who is applying for a job, she is expected to be even more family-oriented. Thus, from the point of view of employers, motherhood is something undesirable that makes it more difficult for women to enter the labor market and have equal opportunities.

3.2 Direct and Indirect Discrimination

3.2.1 Direct Discrimination

The term "direct discrimination" refers to an action, which can also include a failure to act, where one person is treated less favorably than another person in a similar situation or would be treated because of characteristics such as race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, belief, or worldview. Direct discrimination occurs when the discriminator intentionally causes a consequence based on one of these listed characteristics (Collins and Khaitan, 2018). This type of discrimination is sometimes also called "apparent discrimination".

3.2.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is an act or omission where, on the basis of an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice, a person is disadvantaged in relation to others because of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, belief or world view. This provision also sets out what cannot be considered indirect discrimination, stating that "It is not indirect discrimination if the provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving it are proportionate and necessary." (Collins and Khaitan, 2018: 31). From this definition, it's evident that in cases of indirect discrimination, the discriminator doesn't intend to produce a specific outcome based on the application of a discriminatory characteristic. However, discrimination still arises as a consequence. Levin and Blit (2002) clearly demonstrated the differences between two, see Table 1.

Table 1: Workplace discrimination

	Direct	Indirect
Nature	Crude	Subtle
Targeted at	Individual	Group of people
Gathering Evidence	Easy	Hard
Proving is	Easier	Difficult
Unlawful	Yes	Yes

Source: Levin and Blit (2002)

3.3 Equality at workplace

3.3.1 Equal opportunities

For society to be fair and just, everyone must have the same chances at work Usmonova (2020). They help make sure that every worker has the same chance to achieve, no matter where they come from or what their personal situation is, gender, age or ethnicity.

"The basic general prerequisites for achieving an equal level of life satisfaction are, in particular, the possibility of equal access for men and women to the resources of public finances, to the resources of public authority or to responsibility for its execution, and to equal access to education and employment." Usmonova (2020: 15).

3.3.2 Equal treatment

The principle of equal treatment is the prohibition of discrimination against employees on the principle of sex. An employer may not refer to the marital or family status of a job applicant. This means that when discussing the selection of a prospective employee, information about whether the prospective employee is single, married or has children is irrelevant to the employer (EQUAL RIGHTS TRUST, 2017).

3.3.3 Equal pay

The core of the principle of equal pay revolves around ensuring parity in compensation for identical or substantially similar work (Oelz, 2013). Such work encompasses tasks of similar complexity, conducted under equivalent conditions, with comparable skills and capabilities from the employee, and yielding similar performance and outcomes within the same employment context under the same employer. Compensation established based on these

criteria should be accessible to all employees without discrimination, irrespective of gender (Oelz, 2013).

3.3.4 Labor Market Segmentation

Gender differences and gender stereotypes can lead to labor market segregation. The latter is manifested by significant gender segregation, which can be specified as a gender division of labor that results in a gender-based division of sectors, jobs and positions. This situation is associated with a number of negative effects, the main ones being the gender pay gap and the dependence on gender stereotypes to exploit the potential of male and female workers. These circumstances have a negative impact on the labor market, where it is possible to distinguish between vertical segregation and horizontal segregation (Collins, 2002). Collins (2002) listed a few reasons of why horizontal segmentation occurs:

- the prevailing industrial structure
- the division of the economic structure into different sectors
- the setting of the welfare state (family policy, focus on gender balance)
- the level and field of education of job candidates
- gender stereotypes (in society or in the family)
- employer barriers.

Horizontal segregation by sex is considered in the context of the significantly different representation of members of each sex in different occupations in sectors and industries. There are sectors of the economy in which women predominate. Women also tend to have different occupations than men. Horizontal segregation also points to the fact that women predominate in those sectors where earnings are generally lower and, within sectors, in those occupations that are the least well remunerated. The only exception to this observation is the insurance and money sector (Collins, 2002). Vertical segregation by gender is reflected in the fact that both in the labor market and in all areas of social life, the share of men increases with increasing levels of management. They then occupy the vast majority of top positions in the national economy (ibid).

3.3.5 Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling represents a kind of invisible barrier that prevents women from advancing in their careers. The term 'glass ceiling' is a metaphorical expression of the fact that, although women may have ambitions to work in top management because of their professional skills, they rarely manage to get past this invisible and difficult-to-define barrier (Johnes, 2021). If a woman somehow manages to overcome the glass ceiling, she may find herself on the so-called glass cliff.

According to research on the "glass cliff" issue, there is a big difference between how men and women are appointed as leaders. Ryan and Haslam (2005) claim that women are more likely than men to be picked for leadership roles, especially when the economy is bad. This drop in performance could be caused by bad press, money problems, or the need to restructure, all of which make it more likely for a leader to fail in these situations.

Picture 1: Glass ceiling



(Johnes, 2021).

3.4 Gender Pay Gap

Both women and men working for the same employer are entitled to receive equal wages or salaries for identical work or work of equivalent value. Work of equivalent value refers to tasks that entail similar complexity, executed under comparable conditions, requiring equivalent or similar skills, capacities, performances, and productivity levels. Any

discrepancy in pay between genders must be justified by objective reasons; otherwise, it constitutes discrimination. An article discussing the oversight of the rule established by the European Community, known as "Article 141 of the Treaty establishing the European Community," which is a component of the legal structure of the European Union. This article ensures the principle of equal pay for both men and women for identical work or work of equal value. It stands as the primary legislation regarding gender pay equality within the EU.

3.4.1 Factors contributing to Gender Pay Gap

There are several factors which might impact the gender pay gap among women. It is generally agreed upon that segregation and work patterns, in particular the breakdown of part-time labor, are two of the most significant factors that contribute to the wage gap (Khaitan, 2018). Both the disparity that exists within the dimensions that were investigated and the distribution of women throughout the dimensions are important issues to consider in this context. When it comes to graduates, for instance, we need to take into account not only the disparities in income that exist between men and women, but also the percentages of male and female graduates who are currently working.

Heilma & Caleo (2018) found that the gap is significantly different along a variety of variables, such as the difference between working part-time and working full-time. A causal interpretation is possible, even if it is only a loose one. When women working part-time receive less an hour compared to those who work full-time, who are paid less than males who work full-time, then it may be concluded that female part-time work adds to the pay disparity. This is especially true when considering the fact that part-time work constitutes a significant portion of the workforce comprising women.

Age is another significant determinant, with the disparity being notably narrower for younger age groups (Qi & Dong, 2016). It reaches its greatest extent for women in their forties, after which it begins to gradually decrease. This could be due to a variety of different reasons. In the first place, historically speaking, women's educational accomplishments have fallen behind those of men. A second factor that contributes significantly to the gender pay gap is parenthood overall (Qi & Dong, 2016). As a consequence of this, it is possible that women have a lower probability than men of receiving promotions at a later stage in their professional lives.

3.6 The Law Perspective of Russian Federation

Russia lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Nevertheless, the Constitution and certain national laws do provide some safeguards against discrimination at workplaces, healthcare and institutions.

3.6.1 Domestic Law

As mentioned in Part 3, Article 19 of the Russian Constitution safeguards individuals from discrimination based on various factors such as sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, religion, convictions, membership of public associations, and a broad protection against discrimination based on "any other circumstance," which has been interpreted to include disability and sexual orientation (EQT 2017 :59)

Yet, Federal Law on the Fundamentals of Health Care and Citizens in Russian Federation, specifically Article 19, summarizes the following criteria that supposed to be obeyed, such as:

- Employers must refrain from making discriminatory judgments at any point throughout the recruiting process. Discrimination might manifest at any stage of this process. For instance, eligibility criteria may stipulate a certain attribute that is exclusively found in individuals belonging to a particular group, thereby leading to indirect discrimination against those who do not possess that attribute. Direct discrimination may arise throughout the process of determining recruiting decisions, particularly if selections are influenced by preconceived biases (EQT, 2017 :59).
- Employers are obligated to refrain from discriminating against their workers while making choices on employment advancement. Direct discrimination occurs when a member of staff is denied a promotion based on a protected trait or a perceived characteristic. Promotions that are contingent upon specific conditions, which may be excessively burdensome or unattainable for individuals with protected characteristics, can be considered indirectly discriminatory, unless they can be justified as a necessary and proportionate method of accomplishing a legitimate objective (EQT, 2017 :59).

- As explained in Para 2 of this Article, harassment is considered discrimination when unwelcome behavior connected to any banned basis occurs with the intention or result of infringing upon a person's dignity or producing an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or unpleasant atmosphere. Workplace harassment may manifest in several ways, such as the use of language that degrades or objectifies women. This behavior can create an atmosphere that causes women to feel degraded or embarrassed. This behavior does not necessarily need physical interaction, nor does it have to be targeted at a specific individual (EQT, 2017 :59).
- Employment advantages, including parental leave, are subject to the right to non-discrimination in employment. Employers must guarantee that their policies and practices regarding employment benefits do not engage in any kind of direct or indirect discrimination (EQT, 2017 :60).

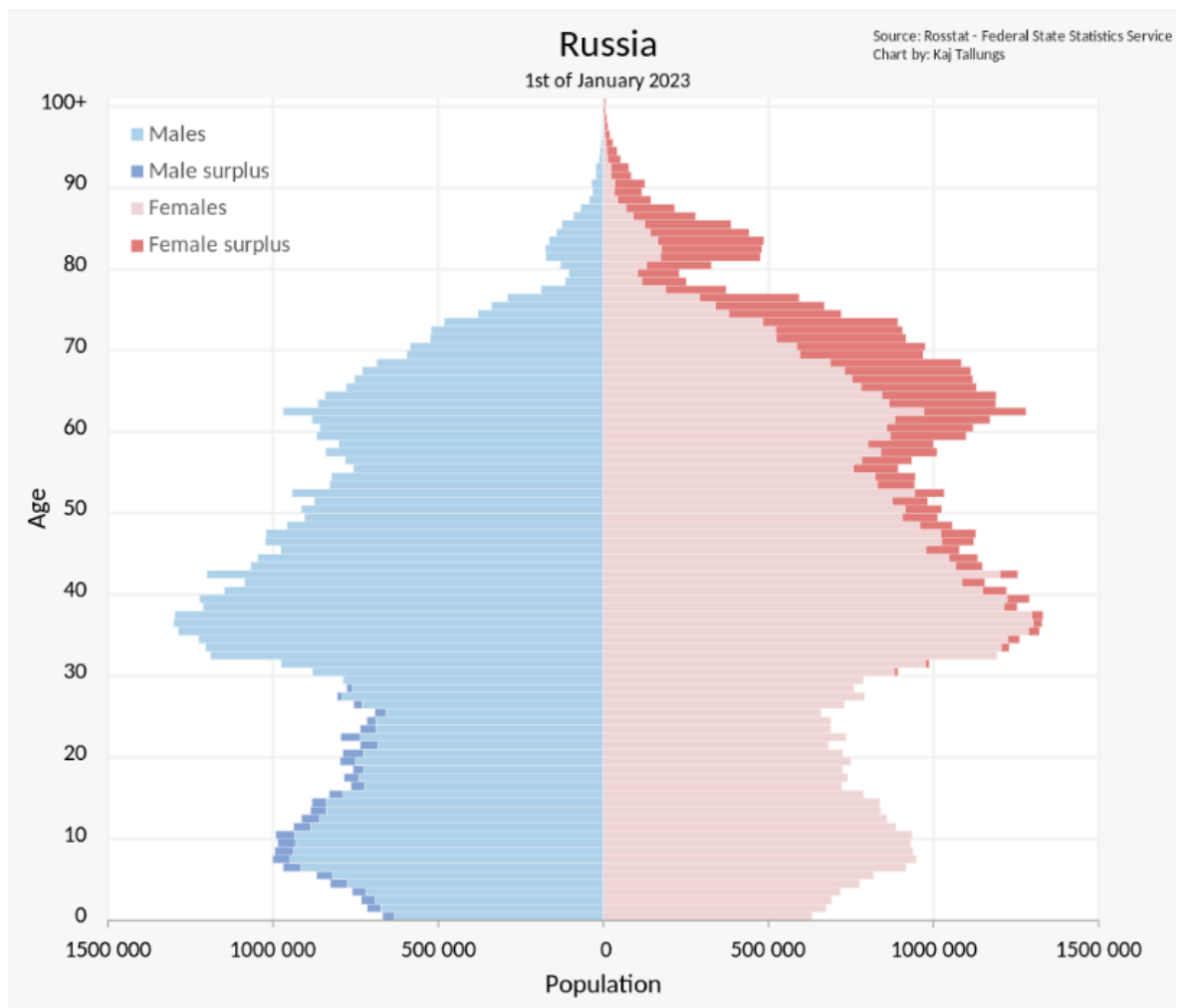
The principle of non-discrimination in employment encompasses the right to make choices on the termination of employment. Employers are prohibited from terminating an employment contract based on any protected trait, since this would constitute clear discrimination. If the employment circumstances, duties, or regulations, such as a dress code, prevent a person with a protected feature from doing their work, it may be considered indirect discrimination unless it can be shown that these constraints are essential and reasonable for accomplishing a legitimate goal (HRW, 2018).

Although Russian law includes legal measures against workplace discrimination against women, the number of discrimination claims is relatively low in comparison to complaints related to wrongful job termination based on other reasons. Gender disparity is a significant and urgent obstacle in Russia's political, economic, and social spheres. Recently, the law of the Russian Federation has focused on creating a foundation for the creation of policies that are responsive to gender and promote equal representation in the fields of politics and economy. The primary objectives of such a strategy in Russia are to:

- Advocate for the promotion of gender equality by upholding women's rights alongside men's rights and freedoms.
- Guarantee the inclusive involvement of both women and men in decision-making processes across all government levels

- Advocate for the equal treatment and equal access to employment and career advancement in the business and financial sector.
- Enhance healthcare services for all genders, leading to an increase in life expectancy.
- Establish circumstances that encourage males to actively engage in childcare and household chores.
- Eliminate any manifestations of violence against both women and men.

Picture 2: Male and Female population in Russian Federation as of 1st January 2023.



Source: Rosstat (2023)

See, Picture – 1, among individuals aged 30-34 years, there are 1,014 women for every 1,000 men. In the age group of 50-54 years, there are 1,180 women for every 1,000 men. For those above the age of 70 years, the number of females is 2.4 times more compared to the proportion of males. In the Arkhangelsk area in North Western Russia, women surpass males

by a mean of 6 percentage points. As new chances arise for individuals to use their diverse skills and flexibility, a notable difference across men and women becomes apparent. Women have greater social disadvantages compared to males because of several socio-cultural features and practices (HRW, 2018). The disparities in life expectancy among males and females mostly stem from socio-psychological and behavioral determinants. Due to their elevated social and professional standing in society, males are subjected to a greater quantity and wider range of psycho-emotional burdens and stress. Males have more tendency than females to experience chronic nerve tension and stress, resulting in the deterioration of their health and early aging, as well as a diminished concern for preserving their health and extending their lifespan. Industrialization disproportionately affects males more negatively than women. Historically, several women have attained gender parity in society. Nevertheless, women in Russia continue to face significant disadvantages in various crucial aspects of life (HRW, 2018), characterized by inadequate rights, specifically:

- The sphere of culture disproportionately underrepresents the contributions of males compared to females. Furthermore, women face discrimination and their dignity is subjected to humiliation in popular culture.
- The area of public relations is mostly dominated by men when it comes to policy-relevant decision-making positions. On the other hand, NGOs that focus on tackling pressing social issues are predominantly led by women.
- Within the economy, there is a larger representation of males in occupations that entail more health and life hazards, and provide better compensation. Women face barriers that hinder their access to these occupations and are instead directed into the informal sector, often known as the "grey economy," where women typically get lower wages compared to males.

4. Practical Part

4.1 Research approach

The practical part is fully based on qualitative method where I interview 3 women from Russian Federation. Bryman (2016: 243) claims that if, hypothesis isn't formulated than the qualitative research should answer stated research questions. Thus, the application of "Grounded theory" or "Discourse analysis" take place.

4.1.1 Structured Interview

A structured conversation, often known as a standardized interview, involves a supervisor administering an interview schedule. The goal is to provide all interviewers the identical questioning context. Each respondent receives the identical interview stimulus as every other respondent. This interviewing method aims to collect interviewees' responses in a way that allows for reliable aggregation, which can only be achieved if the responses are based on the same prompts. Interviewers are required to recite questions precisely and in the identical sequence as they appear on the schedule. Questions are typically precise and frequently provide the interviewee with a limited set of predetermined responses, known as closed, closed-ended, pre-coded, or fixed choice answers. The structured interview is the most common type of interview used in survey research according to Bryman (2016: 210).

4.1.2 Probing Technique

Probing techniques in interviews refer to strategies used by interviewers to gather more detailed and insightful information from interviewees. These techniques involve asking follow-up questions that delve deeper into specific topics, experiences, or responses provided by the interviewee. Probing techniques aim to uncover underlying motivations, attitudes, and perspectives, as well as to clarify any ambiguities or inconsistencies in the interviewee's answers. Some common probing techniques include asking open-ended questions, seeking examples or specific details, using reflective listening, and employing hypothetical scenarios to encourage elaboration and reflection from the interviewee. These techniques help interviewers gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interviewee's qualifications, skills, and suitability for the position or research study Robinson (2023).

4.1.3 Covered Themes

The author covers the following themes within an interview, such as:

Personal Information and Background:

1. How old are you?
2. What job role do you perform at your workplace? For how long are you doing so?
3. Do you have children? If so, how many?
4. When was your first working experience? For how long have you been working?

Experiences of Discrimination and Gender Dynamics:

5. Did you experience any discrimination at your past/current workplace? If yes, what type of discriminative actions did you experience?
6. Did it slow you down in regards to your working duties, or did you lose motivation to work with such people?
7. Have you ever thought that being a woman is an issue in the advancing of your career? If yes, explain.
8. Have you or any of your female colleagues experienced sexual harassment at their workplaces? If so, how did you/they handle such experiences?
9. Do you think that most women experience pay gaps at the workplaces? If so, what is your opinion about it? How could that be prevented?
10. Do you have a common opinion that being an educated woman doesn't really help in advancing your career growth? If yes, explain.
11. Do you agree with the common opinion that women lose motivation when being pregnant and that's why employers limit their career promotion?
12. (Only ask if a participant has kids) You mentioned that you have kids, did it somehow influence your career growth? If so, how exactly?

Attitudes, Beliefs, and Solutions:

13. Do you think that companies should establish certain policies regarding sexual harassment at workplaces?
14. Do you believe that nowadays, women have more or equal rights in every aspect of life, especially at workplaces? If so, why?
15. In your opinion, what is the most frequent issue that women experience at workplaces? Explain your opinion.

4.1.4 Sampling size

Within this research, there are three case studies. The author employs selective sampling (case studies) for a straightforward reason: "There must be individuals who have encountered discriminatory experiences or have observed such incidents in their environment." All interviews were in person.

Table 2: Participants

Participant	Current Occupation	Marital status	Age
1	PR Manager	Married	35
2	Accountant	Divorced	41
3	HR assistant	Single	26

Source: Own.

4.1.5 Ethical consideration

The author obtained consent from the participants to record the interviews, allowing for analysis using a narrative approach, while adhering to ethical considerations.

4.2 Interview and results

The 1st question regarding age is shown in the Table – 1. Therefore, the beginning stems from the second question, which pertains to the "***current job position and the duration of employment.***"

"PR manager...for 5 years now".

Participant 1.

"Accountant, for 15 years".

Participant 2.

"HR assistant for 2 years".

Participant 3.

The job positions differ from each other. The third question related to "***having children and if so, how many?***"

"I have 2 kids."

Participant 1.

"I have 2 girls, 4 and 7".

Participant 2.

"None".

Participant 3.

The 4th question focused on **“first working experience and duration of employment”**?

“I used to work as a receptionist in the hospitality industry for about 2 years. After 2 years, I left as I realized that the promotion wasn’t close.”

Participant: 1.

“Before marketing, I used to work in audit and assurance. but left because of the massive workload I had.”.

Participant: 2.

“I used to work as a receptionist before that.”.

Participant: 3.

The 5th question focused on **“experiencing discrimination at current/past workplace? What discriminative actions did you experience, you know of?”**

“I remember treated unequally in opportunities and advancement...even though I had qualified for work and performed good enough...I was constantly worked hard and spend hours at work for promotions in a favor of others...”

Participant 1.

“Well... I believe I experienced gender – based harassment...jokes...inappropriate comments...(inaudible) workers.... Even though I spoke with the manager...I was still misheard”.

Participant 2.

“I actually faced discrimination at both of my workplaces...It was mostly related to pay – disparities.... I admit having a lower educational level... but still, I don’t think it is reasonable...”

Participant 3.

The narratives from the participants reveal common themes of discrimination experienced by women in the workplace. **Participant 1** recalls feeling treated unequally in opportunities for advancement, despite being qualified and performing well. This suggests systemic biases or discriminatory practices within the workplace, where promotions are unfairly awarded to others. **Participant 2** shares experiences of gender-based harassment, including inappropriate comments and jokes from male coworkers. Despite reporting the behavior to management, the issue remained unresolved, indicating a lack of accountability and support within the organizational culture. **Participant 3** recounts facing discrimination related to pay disparities at both of their workplaces. Despite acknowledging a lower educational level,

they perceive the pay discrepancies as unjustifiable, highlighting the gender-based wage gaps. Narratives underscore different perspective that women face in their working environment.

The 6th question focused on ***“whether it slowed the participants down in their working duties, did they register a loss of motivation”?***

“Yes, the constant feeling of being overlooked for promotions did slow me down in my working duties. It was disheartening to see less qualified colleagues advance while I remained stagnant. I began to question (inaudible)..., which affected my motivation and enthusiasm for my work...That was the reason I left...I didn’t feel like being recognized for the put effort... “

Participant 1.

“Definitely impacted my motivation...I felt like being in a hostile situation which made it difficult to focus on daily tasks...unfortunately I had to work with individuals with a minimal contact...but still total avoidance wasn’t an option...”.

Participant 2.

“Yeap...pay disparities did affect my motivation to work. Knowing that I was being unfairly compensated compared to my male counterparts created feelings of resentment and disillusionment. It (inaudible)... that my hard work and contributions were not being valued equally....”

Participant 3.

These responses highlight the detrimental effects of workplace discrimination on participants' motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Discriminatory experiences suggest to lead to feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and disengagement, ultimately impacting individuals' ability to perform their duties effectively.

The 7th question focused on ***“though that being a women could advance in a career? And if yes, how exactly?”***

“Yes, I have definitely thought that being a woman is an issue in advancing my career. It became increasingly apparent to me as I witnessed male colleagues with similar qualifications and experience being promoted ahead of me. It seemed like gender played a significant role in the decision-making process, with women facing additional barriers and biases when it came to career advancement... “

Participant 1.

“Absolutely, I have thought that being a woman is a hindrance to my career advancement. The gender-based harassment and inappropriate comments I experienced made it clear that my gender was seen as a liability rather than an asset in the workplace.

Participant 2.

“Yes, I have had moments where I questioned whether being a woman was holding me back in my career. The pay disparities I (inaudible)... the systemic inequalities that women face in the workforce. It seemed like no matter how hard I worked or how qualified I was, I was still being overlooked for opportunities for growth and advancement...”

Participant 3.

These responses illustrate how gender-related biases and discriminatory experiences can lead women to believe that their gender is a barrier to career advancement. Such perceptions suggest to erode confidence, motivation, and aspirations for professional growth, contributing to the perpetuation of gender inequalities in the workplace.

The 8th question focused on **“experiencing a sexual harassment at a workplace, if yes, how did they handle it?”**

“Nope, Thanks God Never experienced...”

Participant 1.

““Yes, unfortunately, I experienced sexual harassment in my workplace. I hesitated to report it out of fear of retaliation or not being taken seriously. However, with support from colleagues and friends, I gathered the courage to speak up and inform my supervisor. Although the process was challenging and emotionally draining...The organization took steps to investigate the incident and provide support, which helped me feel validated and protected.”.

Participant 2.

“I know of one case which didn’t happen to me...and I wouldn’t disclose the details...serious matter...fortunately all ended good...”

Participant 3.

In the narrative provided by Participant 2, there is a clear depiction of the complexity and emotional toll of experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. The participant initially hesitated to report the harassment due to fears of potential retaliation or not being taken

seriously. This reluctance underscores the prevalent apprehensions among individuals who encounter harassment, emphasizing the power imbalances and potential repercussions associated with speaking out against such misconduct. This reticence is a frequently observed behavior among women, as noted by Sun (2023), who tend to remain silent and endure the situation rather than voicing their concerns. Kosai (2017) further asserts that such reluctance to speak up isn't something wrong. She claims that women are stoic and forgiving creatures.

However, with the support of colleagues and friends, Participant 2 found the courage to report the harassment to their supervisor. This demonstrates the importance of social support networks in empowering individuals to address harassment and advocate for their rights.

In contrast, Participant 3's narrative provides insight into a different perspective on sexual harassment in the workplace. While the participant did not personally experience harassment, they are aware of a case that occurred but choose not to disclose the details. The participant characterizes the matter as serious, indicating the gravity and significance of sexual harassment as an issue in the workplace. Although Participant 3 does not provide details about the resolution of the case, they mention that it ended well, suggesting a positive outcome. This narrative highlights the importance of organizations taking appropriate action to address and prevent sexual harassment, ultimately leading to positive outcomes for those involved. It seems essential for every enterprise to institute such regulations. However, there is a notable absence of a specific protocol in companies for acquainting employees with discrimination regulations and their corresponding penalties. I do believe that this obligation is primarily moral in nature, rooted in the principles of hospitality, rather than being explicitly outlined in established rules.

The 9th question focused on ***“experiencing a pay gap in workplaces? If yes, what do they think about the prevention of such inequality?”***

“Well...may be...But I probably had to clue...until now... I might start to think of it... “

Participant 1.

“Not aware about it to be honest...I was good with money...”

Participant 2.

“Definitely yes...I have to admit...women in our organizations knew of it...but never raised their voices against that... I think that they were afraid to loss the job overall...”

Participant 3.

Overall, these narratives reveal differing levels of awareness and perspectives on the issue of pay inequality in the workplace. While some participants express uncertainty or lack of awareness, others acknowledge the existence of a pay gap and the challenges associated with addressing it. These responses underscore the importance of raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and advocating for policies and practices that promote fair and equitable compensation for all employees.

The 10th question focused on ***“common opinion about education and its usefulness in advancing in a career growth?”***

“For sure... but also Hospitality plays a huge impact in a career growth... “

Participant: 1.

“I won’t be successful without it for sure...I have to know the standards of IFRS...”

Participant: 2.

“I have mixed feeling about education... I think that nowadays education isn’t that important...but certainly for some industries, such as: doctors, engineers and etc... It is very important...”

Participant: 3.

The narratives reflect diverse perspectives on the role of education in career advancement. While some participants emphasize the importance of education and specialized knowledge, others recognize the significance of practical skills and industry-specific experience. These responses underscore the complex interplay between formal education, practical skills, and industry-specific knowledge in shaping career trajectories and opportunities for advancement.

The 11th question focused on ***“common opinion about pregnancy and a loss of motivation as a key reason why employers limit women’s career promotion?”***

“As a mother of two... I can certainly say that you start to prioritize your family more than work...so, technically yes...I understand the employer’s perspective in that case and the reason why men are preferred more than women... “

Participant 1.

“Yea...100 %... the motivation losses it – self... family is first...I do believe that law allows you to come back after three years...Although my circumstances allowed me to come earlier...”

Participant 2.

“Well...I can only assume that it effects in a negative way...”

Participant 3.

These narratives suggest a recognition of the challenges women face balancing work and family responsibilities, with varying perspectives on the impact of pregnancy on career advancement. It also highlights that participants realize the fact and the sense of why employees prefer male workers more than female workers. All participants agreed with the fact that a loss of motivation could undermine the profitability of a company or somehow damage it, so instead of claiming that it is direct discrimination, which it actually is, participants realized the perspective of employees instead.

The 13th question focused on ***“establishing certain policies regarding sexual harassment at workplaces?”***

“I think it is a must... for both women and men to follow such policies...You should immediately be fired in case of any violation...”

Participant 1.

“Yea...100 %...”

Participant 2.

“For sure...however...there should be an international institution which could somehow deal with such cases...not like domestic rules and policies but international...”

Participant 3.

Overall, these responses demonstrate unanimous agreement on the importance of implementing policies to address sexual harassment in the workplace. They highlight the need for clear rules and consequences, as well as potential considerations for international involvement in addressing this issue.

The 14th question focused on ***“women having more equal rights in workplaces, if so, why?”***

“Well...generally... I started seeing women holding more executive positions lately...so...It might indicate a shift towards equal rights...”

Participant 1.

“To be honest I don’t know if that is something new...well...I would say that it is a matter of personal experience...”

Participant 2.

“I am hesitant to say yes...as I am getting started with my career...let’s see how things turn into...”

Participant 3.

Overall, these responses reflect varying degrees of awareness and perspectives on the status of women's rights in the workplace. While Participant 1 sees signs of progress, Participants 2 and 3 express uncertainty or lack of clarity on the issue, indicating the need for further observation and analysis.

The 15th question focused on **“common opinion about the most frequent issues that women experience at workplaces?”**

“In my experience, one of the most common issues I've encountered in the workplace is gender discrimination...I am not able to speak for the rest of the women out there...”

Participant 1.

“From my personal perspective, I've found that one of the most frequent challenges I face in the workplace is balancing work and family responsibilities. Personally, I've struggled with a lack of support or flexibility from employers, making it difficult for me to advance in my career...”

Participant 2.

“I think that many women face unwanted advances, inappropriate comments, or subtle forms of discrimination on a regular basis...”

Participant 3.

Participant 1 acknowledges that, based on their own experiences, gender discrimination is one of the most common issues encountered in the workplace. They make it clear that their perspective is limited to their own encounters and express an inability to speak for all women. This response suggests a recognition of the complexity and diversity of experiences among women in the workforce. **Participant 2** provides a personal perspective on the challenges they face in balancing work and family responsibilities. They highlight struggles with a lack of support or flexibility from employers, which has hindered their career advancement. This response illustrates the personal impact of systemic issues such as work-life balance and the importance of individual experiences in shaping perceptions of workplace challenges. **Participant 3** offers a broader perspective on the prevalence of sexual

harassment and discrimination faced by women in the workplace. They suggest that many women encounter unwanted advances, inappropriate comments, or subtle forms of discrimination regularly. This response underscores the existence of gender-based harassment and discrimination in the workplace and highlights the need for systemic change to address these issues. These narratives reflect a range of personal experiences and observations regarding the challenges faced by women in the workplace. They underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing systemic issues such as gender discrimination, work-life balance, and sexual harassment to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment for women.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Discussion

Each participant offered unique insights based on their personal experiences and observations, shedding light on various aspects of workplace discrimination, career advancement, and organizational policies. One notable theme that emerged from the interviews was the prevalence of discrimination against women in the workplace. Participants shared experiences of gender-based harassment, unequal opportunities for advancement, and pay disparities in the Russian Federation. These narratives highlight the systemic biases and barriers that women face in their careers, contributing to feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and disengagement. Additionally, the interviews underscore the impact of discrimination on women's motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Participants expressed feelings of being undervalued, overlooked, and demoralized due to discriminatory practices within their respective workplaces. These experiences not only hindered their professional growth but also affected their mental and emotional health.

However, women's behavior is somewhat irrational. Kosai (2017) describes women as stoic creatures, loving and caring. For example, participant n. 2, who experienced sexual harassment at work, initially hesitated to raise her voice. Which, to a counterpart, might seem very illogical (Sun, 2023). And often times, women start questioning themselves: What did I do wrong to receive such inappropriate conduct? That is rather a rhetorical question, which could be answered in the following research.

The interviews also revealed differing perspectives on the effectiveness of organizational policies in addressing workplace discrimination in the Russian Federation. While some participants emphasized the importance of implementing clear rules and consequences for sexual harassment, others called for international institutions to handle such cases. The significance of international institutions should not be dismissed so easily. This response implies that domestic laws and regulations are ineffective. In my view, women in the Russian Federation feel insecure in such situations. Despite the existence of written laws and established regulations, it appears that none of them function as intended. This response may indicate a deficiency in the Russian Federation's legal system. And as far as my knowledge

goes, there are many cases where women were misheard, for example the case of Anna Klevets (2008) as follows:

“One of the most significant cases related to discrimination against women in the sphere of labor is the appeal to the court of Anna Klevets, who in 2008 tried to defend her right to work as a subway train driver's assistant. At that time, the plaintiff was not able to satisfy her demands: the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation pointed out that women cannot perform this job because it is physically and emotionally demanding and requires intense attention (Decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation No. GKPI09-36 of March 2, 2008)” (Sazanova, 2023).

Or for example the case of Svetlani Medvedevoi (2012), which was another high-profile case on the topic of gender discrimination is the appeal to the court of Svetlana Medvedeva, who in 2012 tried to find a job as a driver (Sazanova, 2023). Then the woman was denied employment with reference to the fact that the profession is on the list of prohibited professions, with such arguments agreed by the courts of all instances (Determination of the Samara Regional Court on November 19, 2012 in case No. 33-10556/2012). Svetlana Medvedeva then filed a complaint with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Medvedeva v. Russian Federation). The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, having considered the case, noted that there was *no evidence to* show that the inclusion of the position of a helmsman-motorist in the List of Prohibited Occupations for Women was justified by scientific data on the harmful effects of this type of activity on women's reproductive health. In particular, no evidence has been provided that high noise levels can adversely affect a woman's reproductive health. Moreover, the UN Committee considers that the introduction of such a provision in the law reflects traditional views of women as wives and mothers and undermines their social status, education and career prospects.

Upon reviewing these cases, it becomes evident why Participant 2 highlighted the involvement of third-party institutions alongside domestic ones. In the second case, the UN Committee successfully resolved the dispute, leading to Svetlana being offered the job in 2017. However, upon reflection, it's noteworthy that it took five years to demonstrate that the employer had acted unlawfully.

The discussions based on the interview responses offer valuable insights into the challenges and experiences of women in the workplace. By highlighting the systemic barriers and biases that women face, these narratives underscore the importance of fostering inclusive and equitable work environments where all employees can thrive and succeed.

5.2 Limitation of Work

There are certain limitations that shall be recognized by the author.

5.2.1 Sample Size and Generalizability

The study only included a small number of participants, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The perspectives shared by these participants may not fully represent the experiences of all women in the workforce. Future research with a larger and more diverse sample size would provide a broader understanding of the issues discussed.

5.2.2 Self-Report Bias

Participants may have provided responses that they believed were socially desirable or aligned with societal expectations. This could have influenced the accuracy and completeness of the information gathered during the interviews. Additionally, participants may have been reluctant to disclose sensitive information or negative experiences, leading to underreporting of certain issues.

5.2.3 Subjectivity and Objectivity

The interpretation of the interview responses is inherently subjective and influenced by the researcher's biases and perspectives. While efforts were made to maintain objectivity during data analysis, the participant's background and experiences may have influenced the interpretation of the findings.

5.2.4 Scope and Depth

The interview questions covered a range of topics related to workplace discrimination and career advancement, but certain areas may not have been explored in sufficient depth. For example, while the interviews touched on gender discrimination and sexual harassment, other forms of discrimination (e.g., racial or ethnic discrimination) were not explicitly addressed.

5.2.5 Inaudibility

In some parts of recorded interviews, there were inaudible parts which the author couldn't analyze.

5.3 Further Research

5.3.1 Intersectionality

Investigate how intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability, intersect with gender to shape experiences of discrimination and privilege in the workplace. Understanding the unique challenges faced by women with multiple marginalized identities can inform more targeted interventions and policies.

5.3.2 Policy Evaluation

Evaluate the effectiveness of organizational policies and interventions aimed at addressing gender inequities in the workplace. Research could assess the impact of initiatives such as diversity training, mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and pay equity measures on improving gender representation, retention, and advancement. However, that would require a certain company for an analysis.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the interviews conducted as part of this study provide profound insights into the realities of discrimination against women in the workplace within the Russian Federation. Each participant's unique experiences and perspectives shed light on the prevalence of discrimination, including gender-based harassment, unequal opportunities for advancement, and pay disparities. These narratives not only highlight the systemic biases and barriers that women encounter but also underscore the significant impact of discrimination on their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Moreover, the discussions surrounding organizational policies and legal frameworks reveal varying perspectives on their effectiveness in addressing workplace discrimination. While some participants call for clearer rules and consequences for sexual harassment within organizations, others advocate for the involvement of international institutions, citing deficiencies in domestic laws and regulations. High-profile cases such as those of Anna Klevets and Svetlana Medvedeva exemplify the challenges women face in seeking justice through domestic legal channels, often necessitating recourse to international bodies for resolution.

The delays and complexities involved in resolving these cases underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to combat workplace discrimination against women in the Russian Federation. Such reforms should include enhanced legal protections, robust enforcement mechanisms, and proactive measures to promote gender equality in all aspects of employment. By fostering inclusive and equitable work environments, organizations and policymakers can empower women to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the workforce, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

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8. List of pictures, tables, graphs and abbreviations

8.1 List of pictures

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8.2 List of tables

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Appendix

Interview question

1. How old are you?
2. What job role do you perform at your work place? For how long are you doing so?
3. Do you have children? If so, how many?
4. When was your first working experience? For how long have you been working?
5. Did you experience any “Discrimination at your past/current workplace”? If yes, what type of discriminative actions you experienced?
6. Did it slow you down in regards of your working duties, lost motivation to work with such people?
7. Have you ever though that being a woman is an issue in the advancing of your career? If yes, explain.
8. Have you or any of your female – colleagues experienced sexual harassment at their workplaces? If so, how did you/they handle such experience?
9. Do you think that most of the women experience pay gaps at the workplaces? If so, what is your opinion about it? How that could be prevented?
10. Do you have a common opinion that being an educated women don’t really help in advancing your career growth? If yes, explain.
11. Do you agree with the common opinion that women loss motivation when being pregnant and that’s why employees limit their career promotion?
12. (Only ask if a participant has kids). You mentioned that you have kids, did it somehow influence your career growth? Is so, how exactly?
13. Do you think that company should establish certain policies in regards of “Sexual Harassment” at workplaces?
14. Do you believe that nowadays, women have more or equal rights in every aspect of life, especially at workplaces? If so, why?
15. In your opinion, what is the most frequent issue that women experience at workplaces? Explain your opinion.