

Gender Inequality and Gender Discrimination among Working Women: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

Even today, many workplaces struggle with unfair treatment based on gender, shaping how women move forward in careers and engage professionally. This research looks into how often discrimination occurs, focusing on female workers within companies and institutions. Instead of interviews, a fixed survey was chosen to gather measurable responses directly from women employed across sectors. Results show patterns of favoritism, outdated assumptions about roles, along with uneven access to progress, all playing parts in limiting development. Equal conditions do not exist everywhere – these shapes daily interactions, decisions, and long-term outcomes for women at work. Real shifts begin once barriers fall, replaced by straightforward guidelines that shape spaces where belonging fits naturally into daily life rather than standing out as special. What matters most emerges only when ideas move beyond paper into motion shifting habits slowly while opening doors previously unseen.

Keywords: *Gender inequality, Gender discrimination, working women*

Still present, gender imbalance affects how women engage professionally today. Although gains appear in education and job involvement for women, differences in influence and visibility endure across companies. Rooted less in personal views than in systemic rules, social expectations, and past trends favoring male dominance (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), such inequity persists quietly. Access to support, decision-making roles, or upward movement frequently differs - shaping outcomes without open declaration. Gender differences in the workplace are still present and influenced by ongoing, small factors.

Even with advances seen in several areas, leadership roles remain mostly held by men, regardless of sector or profession. In contrast, roles offering limited power and lower pay tend to include more women. Career paths tend to advance at different speeds - men move upward faster under similar conditions. Over years, these views flow into decisions about advancement, subtly guiding how offices function. Where people stand in organizations sometimes reflects old ideas more than current realities.

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Social expectations deepen differences in how genders experience work life. Where customs assign caregiving mainly to women, employers may question their commitment, drive, or fit for authority positions. Such views can lead to unfair treatment - like expecting less output after a woman marries or has children - or leaving her out of key assignments (International Labor Organization, 2022). Within companies aiming for fairness, hidden cultural patterns still affect behind-the-scenes choices. Though policies appear neutral, long-held assumptions quietly guide who gets seen as leadership material.

Even with more women working, institutions lag behind in adapting their frameworks. Performance standards, ideas about authority, work norms - these still reflect setups made when men were the primary labor force. As a result, career settings frequently ignore lived differences like time spent on family care or limited entry into influential social circles (World Economic Forum, 2023). Where design does not match reality, imbalance continues. Longer exposure happens more often when these things are around.

These days, there is more worry about the lack of equal gender representation in jobs. This concern is growing because it affects economic growth, business success, and fairness in society. With workplaces turning increasingly international and knowledge-focused, integrating women fully evolved - not just as a moral choice but as a practical requirement. Despite laws and inclusion efforts, disparities based on sex continue shaping how women move through professional life. Hidden structures of authority persist, often reducing female access to recognition, leadership roles, and influence - shifting credit toward team outputs rather than individual skill. Such patterns affect assessments of work quality, compensation levels.

Still present, inequality grows stronger through unseen connections and guidance roles mostly held by men. Because influence often flows through private circles, reaching top roles depends heavily on who one knows. Women appear less often in these groups, which narrows their paths toward growth at work. Over time, missing from such spaces deepens existing imbalances across company hierarchies. Though not always planned, being left out shapes outcomes years later.

When gender bias is seen alongside broader job setting imbalances, it becomes clearer that barriers women face is rooted in structures, not personal failure. Understanding this shift in perspective supports efforts toward workplaces where fairness, belonging, and equal standing take shape more naturally.

Need for the Study

Even with increased attention and laws promoting equality, differences in how people are treated at work remain tied to gender. Studies show obstacles still block women's progress - fewer chances to reach leadership positions, pay gaps, evaluations influenced by bias, along with doubts cast on their abilities (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). This unfair treatment appears in small ways like unkind comments, labeling people, leaving others out, bullying, and having little influence on decisions (Rebelo et al., 2024) Even though obvious unfairness has decreased because of improvements and rules, these hidden forms are hard to notice or change. They can cause women to feel exhausted, lose trust in themselves, pull back, and become less involved (Dahal et al., 2022) Stereotypes can change how people view abilities and leadership. Confidence in women, at times, draws negative reactions when voices rise (Heilman, 2024). Such patterns sustain imbalance, despite effort or intent. This research matters due to its focus on how bias leads to unequal treatment of women at work.

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Where ability is valued more than identity, fairness grows - conditions improve when each person receives genuine chances to succeed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kim et al. (2022) examined the relationship between workplace gender discrimination (WGD) and depressive symptoms among 3,190 female employees in South Korea using data from the Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families (2018). Perceived WGD was measured using a six-item questionnaire, and depression was assessed with the CES-D-10 scale. The findings showed that women reporting high levels of WGD had significantly higher odds of depressive symptoms compared to those reporting low discrimination. The association was particularly strong among younger women, highly educated employees, non-standard workers, and those in specific job conditions such as high autonomy or smaller workplaces. The study highlights WGD as a significant psychosocial stressor negatively affecting women's mental health, while noting that causal inference is limited due to its cross-sectional design.

Love, Nikolaev, and Dhakal (2023) conducted a study titled "The well-being of women entrepreneurs: the role of gender inequality and gender roles." The study included women and men entrepreneurs across 80 countries using World Values Survey indicators of life satisfaction and socio-economic factors. Data were drawn from secondary survey datasets. The research design was a cross-national quantitative analysis. Results showed women entrepreneurs reported lower well-being in low- and middle-income countries but higher well-being in high income countries. The findings suggested that gender inequality, traditional gender roles, and weak financial systems widen well-being gaps, while equality-focused policies improve outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Problem Statement

The study was done to examine the relationship between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination among working women.

Aim

This study aims to determine the relationship between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination among working women.

Objectives

- To assess the level of Gender Inequality among working women.
- To assess the level of Gender discrimination among working women.
- To examine the relationship between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination among working women.

Hypothesis

- **H₀:** There will be no significant relationship between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination among working women.

Variables

- Independent Variable: Gender Inequality
- Dependent Variable: Gender Discrimination

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Research Design

The current study uses a correlational research design and a quantitative research approach to investigate the connection between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination. The data will be summarized using descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation. Since correlation quantifies the degree to which variables vary together, inferential statistics more especially, Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used to ascertain the link between the two variables.

Procedure:

This study wants to understand how unfair treatment based on gender affects women at work. To accomplish this, we will use the Gender Equity Scale (GES) and a survey about how people feel they are treated unfairly as research tools. The survey will have questions that check various topics and ask for personal details like age, education, family type, number of children, and income. We will give out questionnaires to the participants and collect information from working women in the specified age group. Selection of individuals follows a defined procedure, involving three hundred employed females. Following data gathering, analysis takes place through application of SPSS software. Patterns linking gender disparity to discriminatory experiences emerge during examination. The focus remains on professional women throughout evaluation.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique:

The sample for the present study consists of 300 working Women. Purposive sampling will be used to choose participants based on inclusion criteria pertinent to the study's goals in order to investigate the connection between Gender Inequality and Gender discrimination in this particular demographic.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Women working whether full-time or part-time.
- Employed women 18 years and older.
- Women who have worked for a minimum of six months in their current organization/job (to ensure sufficient familiarity with workplace practices).
- Participants must be able to read and comprehend the language of the study (e.g., English/local language, as relevant).
- Women who willingly agree to take part in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Out-of-work women, learners, housewives, or pensioners.
- Women who have been employed at their current job for fewer than six months.
- Male workers or individuals identifying beyond the defined population of the study (if the study is exclusively about women).
- Self-employed women lacking organizational oversight, especially if workplace discrimination is a significant factor.
- Participants who refuse to give consent or submit incomplete answers to the study survey.
- Women presently on extended leave (e.g., maternity or medical leave) throughout the data collection duration.

Tools Used

1. Gender equity scale (GES).
2. Perceived discrimination scale (PDS).

Tools Description

Tool 1: The Gender Equity Scale (GES)

The Gender Equity Scale (GES), created by King and Miles (1995), is a dependable and valid tool utilized to evaluate views on gender equity and inequality within organizational and workplace settings. The scale focuses on clear rules and processes for fairness. This includes being fair in promotions, pay, access to opportunities, making decisions, and getting support from the organization, rather than just emotional feelings. Previous studies have shown that the internal consistency is strong, with Cronbach's alpha values usually ranging from 0.78 to 0.89. This means the scale is reliable.

The GES is made up of several items that assess employees' views on fairness and equality in different workplace practices. Responses are noted on a Likert-type scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores of items are combined to generate an overall score, where increased scores suggest a higher perception of gender equity and decreased scores indicate greater perceived gender inequality. The scale has shown sufficient construct and convergent validity and has been extensively utilized in research focused on organizations and gender.

Tool 2: Perceived Discrimination scale

The Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS) created by Williams, Yu, Jackson, and Anderson in 1997 is a popular tool that allows people to report their personal experiences of feeling discriminated against. The scale looks at how people feel about unfair treatment and bias, instead of what really happened. It looks at how people face unfair treatment in daily life and at work. This includes how they are judged, promoted, treated by others, and if they can get the resources they need. Research using the scale has shown that it is very reliable, with Cronbach's alpha values usually between 0.80 and 0.92. The PDS has several questions that look at how often and how strongly people experience unfair treatment because of their gender. Items are rated using a scale, like from never to very often. Scores are found by adding up answers. Higher scores mean people feel they experience more discrimination. The scale has shown solid qualities, relatedness, and standards. It is accurate and has been widely used in research about gender discrimination, job stress, and how happy employees are.

Statistical analysis:

To investigate the association between Gender inequality and Gender discrimination, Pearson's correlation coefficient will be applied. The data collected for both variables will be summarized and described using descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation. The relationship between Gender inequality and Gender discrimination will be examined using inferential statistics, which will allow the direction and strength of the association between the variables to be determined. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to examine the gathered data.

Operational Definitions

- **Gender Inequality:** Gender equity means treating men and women fairly and giving them the same opportunities at work. In this study, gender equity is measured using the Gender Equity Scale (GES). A higher score means people feel there is more gender fairness, while a lower score shows people feel there is more gender unfairness.
- **Gender Discrimination:** Treating someone unfairly because of their gender. Perceived gender discrimination is when a person feels they are treated unfairly or

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treated badly at work because of their gender. In this study, perceived gender discrimination is measured using the Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS). A higher score on this scale means that a person feels they have experienced more discrimination.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Gender Inequality	46.79	13.999	300
Perceived discrimination	21.16	8.131	300

The descriptive table shows the mean and standard deviation for the variables. Gender Inequality has a sample N=300, mean= 46.79 and standard deviation=13.999 and perceived discrimination has a sample N=300, mean= 21.16 and standard deviation=8.131.

Table 2 Correlational analysis showing the relationship between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women.

		Gender Inequality	Perceived Discrimination
Gender Inequality	Pearson Correlation	1	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	303	303
Perceived Discrimination	Pearson Correlation	.410**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	303	303

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table shows the values of Pearson's correlation among the two variables. There appears to be a correlation of 1 and a significance of .410** ($p < .001$). There is significance at 0.01 level and a positive correlation between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women. It implies that the higher the Gender Inequality, the higher will be the level of perceived discrimination.

As a significant relationship is noticed between the two variables, there is a relationship between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women. Thus, the null hypothesis (H₀: There is no relationship between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women.) is rejected. This study examined the association between Gender Inequality and perceived discrimination among working women.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to explore how gender inequality affects how working women feel they are treated unfairly. The results showed a strong positive relationship ($r = .410$, $p < .001$) between the two factors. The data showed a clear and steady trend. Higher structural inequality was linked to increased experiences of personal bias. As power

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and opportunity gaps grew, signs of discriminatory treatment became more frequent. Rather than being isolated acts, these experiences reflect a systemic environment where unequal treatment is normalized.

Contrary to the belief that formal policies alone ensure fairness, a different pattern emerges. What seems like objective decision-making may instead reflect gender stereotypes that influence routine interactions. When organizational power is uneven, repeated biases create a steady basis for exclusion amid professional competition. Instead of disappearing, these problems in the system might cause issues that make it harder to move up in your career later on. Having a diversity policy doesn't stop unfair treatment; it might just hide it for a little while if the actions are only for show. One possible reason relates to how organizations define leadership and how women interact with it. Evaluating performance through a masculine lens might keep certain biases alive. For some, the "double bind" of needing to be both assertive and warm seems to slow professional growth linked to merit. Navigating these biased expectations alongside peers can create a strange kind of professional fatigue. A common awareness of being overlooked can, at times, preserve a bond among people facing similar challenges, making personal disappointments feel less sharp. Though invisible, this thread connects those who endure quiet frustrations without recognition.

It stands shown, unfairness at work often ties closely to how people experience bias, where much of what changes links back to company design. Yet such patterns could stem from shared viewpoints, tendencies in personal accounts, or traits particular to those observed. Still, reduced imbalance fails to ensure harmony; within organizations labeled fair, females may remain distant from key connections or meet subtle barriers in finding real guidance. Though progress appears present, unseen hurdles persist quietly.

Still, the result seen now questions whether token gestures truly shield women from unfair treatment. Instead, patterns suggest a direct link where significant structural inequality actually drives discriminatory behavior under certain conditions. What stands out is that future research should focus on the reasons behind power gaps, the types of leadership models chosen, and shared networking habits. This will help us better understand which workplaces achieve social stability through equity instead of losing talent.

Summary

The present study examined the association of perceived workplace discrimination with perceived gender inequity of working women. Three hundred respondents supplied data through two established survey instruments, the Gender Equity Scale (GES) and Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS). Aggregate statistics showed that, on average, participants noted some degree of perceived gender inequity ($M=46.79$, $SD=13.999$), and a moderate degree of perceived discrimination ($M=21.16$, $SD=8.131$). A Pearson r -test determined that there was a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .410$, $p < .001$) between those women's perceptions of workplace gender inequity and perceived workplace discrimination. The null hypothesis was rejected, thus establishing an association between perceived gender inequity and perceived discrimination. The results challenge the utility of having only symbolic diversity initiatives in organizations, and demonstrate the deep-rooted, systemic nature of biases embedded in organizational structure.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that there is a statistically significant positive correlation (i.e., the two variables of gender inequality and perceived discrimination experienced by female

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employees) of .410 ($p < .001$), which indicates that as structural and systemic inequities increase in an organization, women's experiences of discrimination also increase. This rejects the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between gender inequality and experiences of discrimination. Additionally, the research results suggest that workplace discrimination is not just a random occurrence or isolated incidents of behavior between individuals; rather, it is a direct result or manifestation of larger structural issues of inequality within institutions. Many organizations may have established formal procedures to address discrimination at work; however, with the existence of gender stereotype biases and unequal distribution of power, female employees will continue to experience negative impacts on their careers because of the dysfunctional nature of organizational systems. Therefore, addressing the biases and discrimination that exist in an organization's work environment requires substantive change to the organizational system, decision-making processes, and leadership models used within the organization to achieve a genuinely equitable workplace.

Limitations

This study used surveys from 300 working women who reported their own experiences. This might lead to some bias because their answers are based on personal views instead of hard facts. The results showed a strong connection ($r = .410$, $p < .001$), but they are based on this specific group of people. Future research should involve different working women from various jobs, ages, industries, or locations to make the results more applicable to everyone. Its design shows a relationship between things but doesn't prove one causes the other, lacking deeper understanding of cultural or organizational details.

Recommendations

Change begins when organizations replace gestures with actions: bias education, fair advancement rules, one-on-one guidance systems adjust imbalance. From scrutiny of choices comes culture shift - leaders who examine assumptions help open doors once closed. Power reshapes when women step into central positions, disrupting old patterns without announcement. Quiet checks on fairness, required by rule makers, nudge industries toward balance - especially in fields demanding advanced knowledge such as medical services.

Future Research Ideas

Over time, following groups of women may reveal how shifts in inequality affect patterns of bias. Different roles, life stages, or nations could shape the data when included more widely. Insights often hidden in numbers emerge clearly through personal accounts gathered by interview. What appears in figures gains meaning when voices explain their context.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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