

# ATTITUDES OF MOLDOVAN EMPLOYEES TOWARDS SOME ISSUES CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

## ATITUDINILE ANGAJAȚILOR MOLDOVENI FAȚĂ DE ANUMITE PROBLEME ALE OCUPĂRII ÎN FUNCȚIE DE GEN DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

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### Abstract

*One the current issues that society is facing and that is acutely perceived is gender discrimination. Besides many countries that have been involved in the fight against this multifaceted phenomenon Republic of Moldova is involved, too. A number of studies have covered various aspects of this phenomenon in the country, but in this paper will be identified the actual perception of gender discrimination of Moldovan employees, the types of gender discrimination that employees from Republic of Moldova face from their own perception and the perceived severity of gender discrimination by gender, facets that were scarcely covered in other studies.*

**Keywords:** *discrimination, employee, equality, gender, Moldova.*

**JEL:** *J16, J21, J24, J71, M54.*

### 1.Introduction

Society having been composed from men and women, to survive and develop it needs a working structure that establishes the relations between such large groups of people. Even though there exist multiple views on the roles of men and women, all of them can be brought down to two. One of them and first to be developed is the patriarchal point of view that considers women and men roles as being biologically constructed and unchangeable. The other one and the one who developed recently is the feminist or matriarchal point of view which considers the roles of men and women as being socially constructed and changeable. Patriarchal society sees women and men as having different roles and, therefore, having different rights and obligations. Having the man as the main or sole breadwinner in the family and woman doing the domestic work puts the woman in a relation of dependency on man. The Industrial Revolution gave the possibility of women to work in factories, mines or other places outside the household, besides doing domestic work. From a patriarchal point of view the Revolution contributed to the gradual uprooting of women from their household and diluted their traditional biological roles. The opposite point of view that focused on empowerment of women as a discriminated group in comparison with men has grown in popularity in XIX<sup>th</sup> century when women's rights movement gained momentum. The limits of development of feudal system, which was replaced by capitalist system, together with the rediscovery of Greco-Roman culture in the West contributed to the disruptive potential of Enlightenment Age ideas of philosophers and other intellectuals which, in fact, reversed the traditional values of society. The spread of such a reversal of values from intellectual elites

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towards masses of people in the following centuries made possible the emergence of women's rights movement that knew a few waves until present that focused on various issues: electoral rights, employment rights, individualism and diversity, women abilitation using social networks. The main idea between these issues is the problem of gender discrimination and the striving towards reaching gender equality in different areas of human activity.

## **2. A shortreview of recent studies on gender-relatedissues in employment in Moldova**

One of the most critical gender-relate dissues that are actual today are related to the gender discrimination in employment sphere. In a number of studies from Republic of Moldova were researched some aspects of gender discrimination in the sphere of employment. For example, in a study from 2017 [Raport general, 2017] as sources of gender discrimination were identified: discriminatory job advertisements, discriminatory legislative provisions on the basis of age and professional status related to labour relations and reasonable non-accommodation of working conditions. Another study from 2017 [Studiu privind tendințele discriminatorii, 2017] on discriminatory job advertisements used by private sector was identified that sites that contain job vacancies don't have ad guides, templates, or rules that would avoid discriminatory formulas and also that discriminatory employment ads contribute to consolidation, reproduction and perpetuation in the field of work social stereotypes regarding gender, age, physical appearance and other features. An older study on Romanipeople from 2014 [Studiu cu privire la situația femeilor și fetelor rome, 2014] shows that Romani women were paid less than ethnic Moldovans, refused or avoided to be employed, were being offered unqualified job offers. A study from 2016 on wage inequalities [Inegalitățile salariale, 2016] in Republic of Moldova has shown that women suffer direct and indirect discrimination on pay. These studies don't cover the analysis of the perception of employees themselves on gender discrimination and it's severity, a study on which was done as a part of a STCU scientific project.

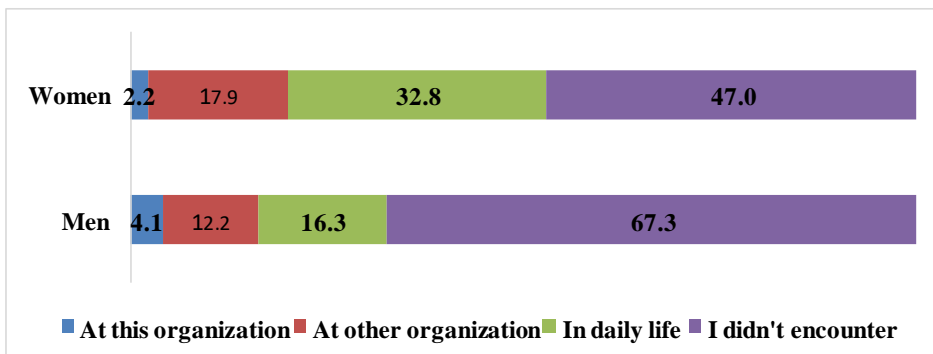
## **3. The results and discussions of the survey on gender equality**

In the framework of STCU Project #6336 "*Innovative approaches to applied computations and software development for gender equality regulation on labour market*" (2018-2020), which has as the main purpose the creation of an automatized gender auditing platform for enterprises, at the marketing stage was created a survey to determine the perception of employees from the Republic of Moldova. In the survey on the gender issues in employment participated 245 respondents that were employees from all the regions of the Republic of Moldova. The male and female proportions of respondents are relatively equal (men – 46.6% and women – 53.4%). The employees were divided in 3 groups: under 35 years old – 44.3% of respondents, from 35 to 50 years old – 32.1% and over 50 years old – 23.6%. In order to have a better picture of the gender situation at the enterprises where the respondents work the questionees were asked about the ratio between men and women in the organization. Women constitute an important part of the staff at the majority of the enterprises. A third of respondents worked in companies where more were women (39.3%). Another third of respondents (34.1%) were employees of companies where the number of

men and women is nearly equal. The rest of respondents worked at companies with: more men (14.7%), nearly all women (9.0%) or nearly all men (2.8%).

The respondents were asked about their subjective perceptions on the existence of gender inequality at the workplace. The majority of respondents is negating the existence of gender equality at the workplace, though, there are some differences between men and women. Much more men negate its existence (82.2%) than the female respondents (69.5%). This difference between men and women's answers and the fact that the majority of respondents negated the existence of gender inequality point to the strong presence and influence of traditional roles of men and women in the Moldovan society to which most of the men as well as most women ascribe. A minority of answers, regardless of the gender (15.6% - for men and 17.6% - for women), in which the existence of gender inequality at the workplace is affirmed shows that gender issues in generalized terms are not given enough attention. This lack of attention may be the effect of the ideologized use of terms related to gender problematics and putting the gender problems in concrete terms and asking respondents in these terms makes people more open to discuss gender issues. This may be an effect of the fact that a bigger share of women found difficult to answer this question (13.0%) than men (2.2%). In the *Figure 1* there are the answers of respondents by gender at the question if they faced personally gender discrimination and where. As is expected, men in a greater measure said that they didn't encounter gender discrimination (67.3%) than women (47.0%). An important share of women respondents (32.8%) encounter gender discrimination in daily life. Also, the share of respondents which said that they encountered gender discrimination at the organization where they work or at another organization is much smaller, regardless of the gender. In general, women in a greater measure said they face gender discrimination.

**Figure 1.** Structure of respondents' answers by facing personally gender discrimination by gender, % of respondents

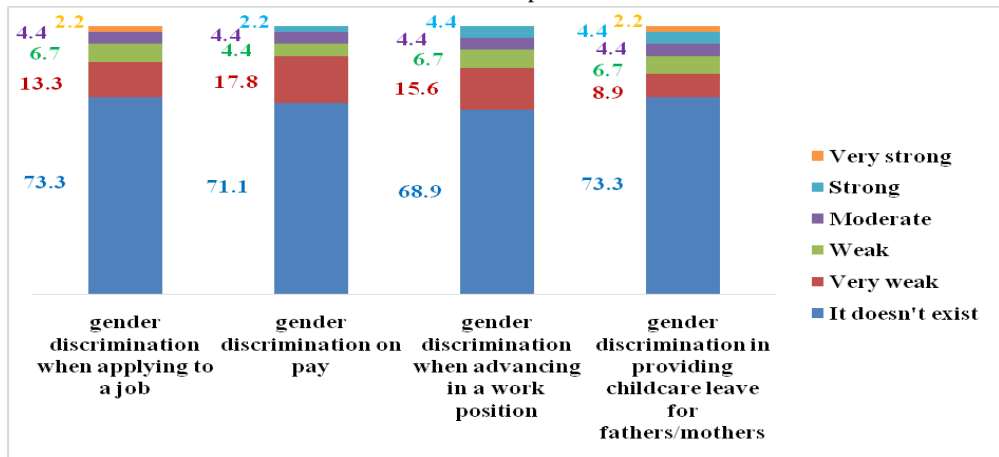


Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results

How severe is perceived the gender discrimination by men and women by type of gender discrimination can be seen in the *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*. In *Figure 2* where were shown the answers of male respondents the majority of respondents (circa 70%) said that gender discrimination doesn't exist, regardless of the type of discrimination. But, from those male respondents that admitted gender discrimination the greatest part of them considered it

very weak or weak. From the type of gender discrimination men consider more severe the one concerning the provision of childcare leave and in a lesser measure the gender discrimination when applying to a job, when advancing in a work position and on pay.

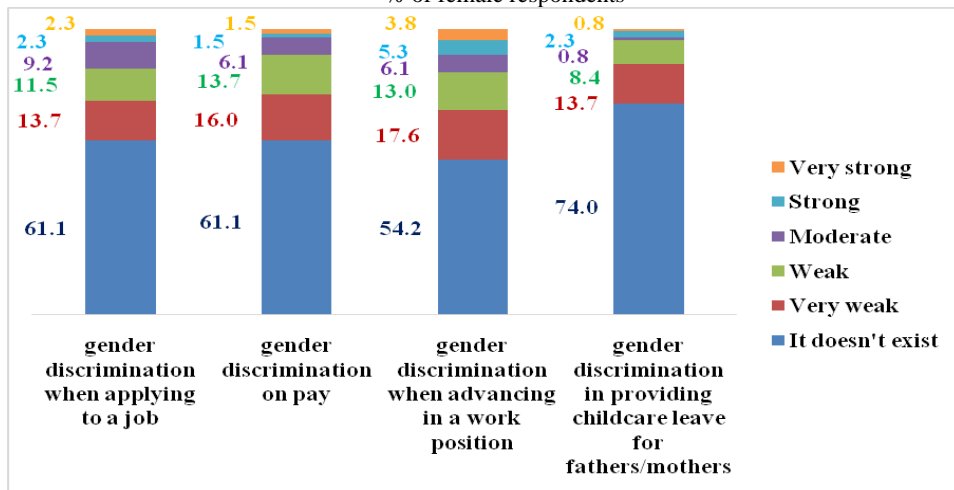
**Figure 2.** Structure of male respondents' answers by severity of the gender discrimination, % of male respondents



Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results

In the **Figure 3** there were shown the answers of female respondents on perception of severity of gender discrimination by type. It can be seen that women's choices were more nuanced.

**Figure 3.** Structure of female respondents' answers by severity of the gender discrimination, % of female respondents

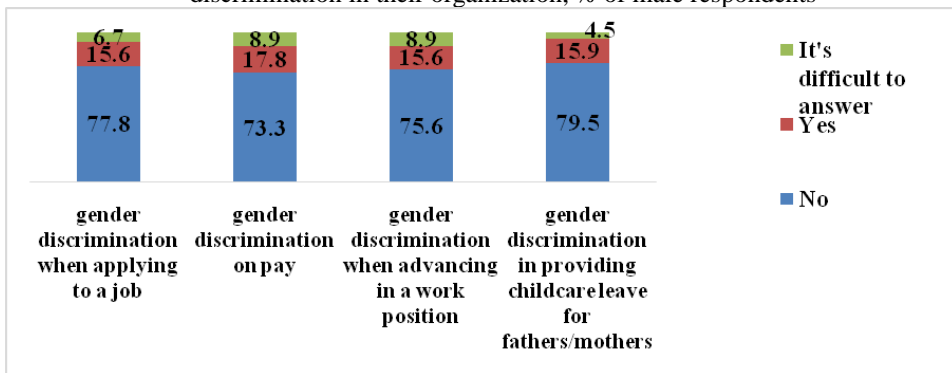


Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results

By type of gender discrimination women in a greater measure have considered it's non-existence in provision of childcare leave for fathers/mothers (74.0%), in a lesser measure

when applying to a job or on pay (61.1%) and in a much lesser measure – when advancing in a work position – half of respondents – 54.2%. Unlike men, women perceived a higher severity of the gender discrimination. This is shown by bigger shares of answers of weak and moderate severity. In a much greater measure women saw with moderate severity gender discrimination when applying to a job (9.2%), on pay (6.1%), when advancing in a work position (6.1%) than at providing childcare leave for fathers/mothers (0.8%). Regardless of gender, practically, an insignificant share of respondents considered the severity of gender discrimination strong or very strong. When asked about the knowledge of cases of gender discrimination by their type, the majority of men admitted that they don't know (circa 70-80%) (*Figure 4*).

**Figure 4.** Structure of male respondents' answers by the knowledge about the cases of gender discrimination in their organization, % of male respondents

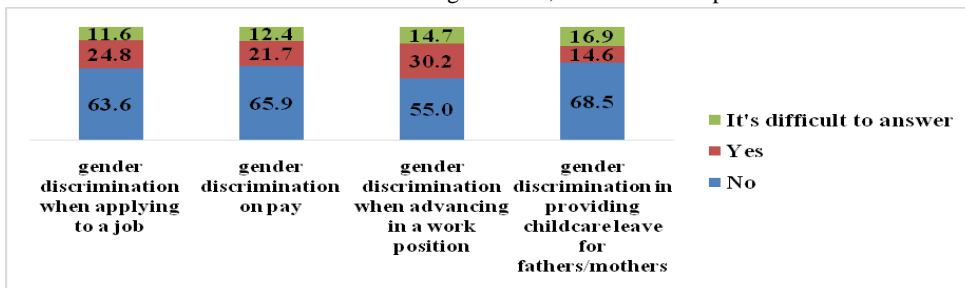


Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results

Only a small share of men confirmed about knowing cases of gender discrimination, regardless of the type of discrimination.

In the case of women the majority of respondents, though in a lesser measure than for men, have said that they don't know about cases of gender discrimination (circa 60-70%) (*Figure 5*). There is a difference between the types of gender discrimination.

**Figure 5.** Structure of female respondents' answers by the knowledge about the cases of gender discrimination in their organization, % of female respondents



Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results

A little more than half of the women denied knowing about cases of gender discrimination when advancing in a work position, while a third of them confirmed knowing

about such cases, while for other types of gender discrimination the proportion is lesser towards admitting knowing about such cases than for negating. Also, women in a greater measure than men found difficult to answer the question.

Framing the question in an open one and asking about specifics, about respondent's voice, a different picture is found. People, regardless of gender, state about cases or other types of gender discrimination. When were asked what other kinds of gender discrimination also met or knew/heard respondents eagerly gave answers, which can be divided in the following types shown in **Figure 6**, whereit's seen that some types of measures that appear to reduce discrimination are seen by some respondents to foster it, affecting both women and men, like gender quotas or positive discrimination.

**Figure 6.** Other types of gender-related discrimination



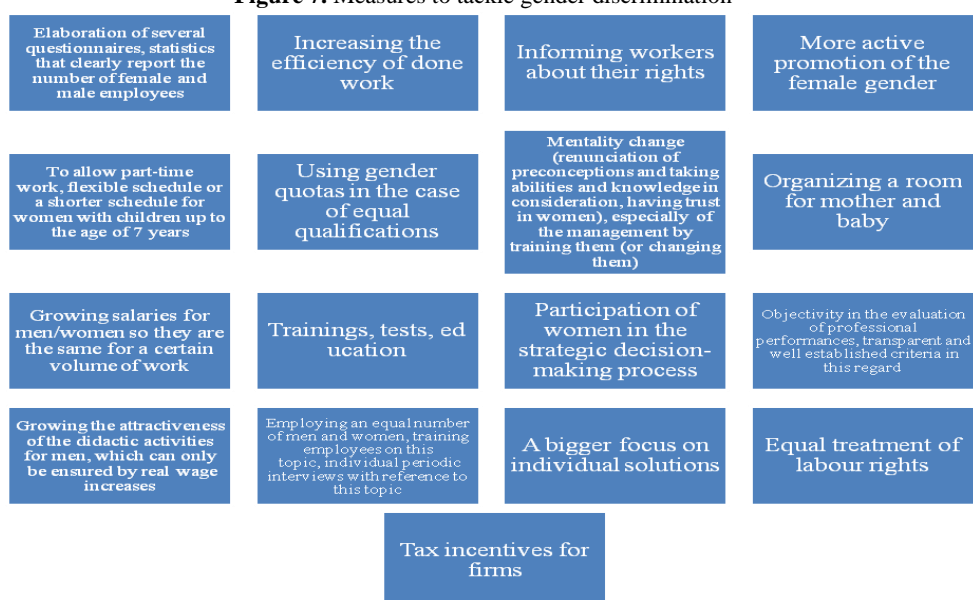
*Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results*

Some respondents have considered as type of gender discrimination some forms of corruption, bribery - receiving non-material benefits, nepotism. Some answers refer to stereotypes directed to women: gender specified in job advertisements, sexual harassment,

mobbing, offenses against women drivers, gender segregation, marital status, presence of children and other characteristics of the employee that exacerbate gender discrimination – age, spoken language, religion, ethnicity, income level, social status and others. Some other answers are related to advancing on professional ladder - gender discrimination regarding the perception of women in managerial position, gender discrimination when applying for qualification courses. Using terms from physical sciences, it can be said that the amplitude of resultant discrimination grows from the interference of various types of specific discrimination.

Also, respondents were asked openly about what measures would they consider to be necessary to ensure gender equality in the enterprise where they work. All their answers can be divided in the following types (*Figure 7*):

**Figure 7.** Measures to tackle gender discrimination



*Source: Elaborated by authors on the basis of STCU project's survey results*

In the *Figure 7* where the answers of respondents were aggregated it can be seen that respondents gave answers addressed to different stakeholders: enterprises – increasing efficiency of done work, focus on individual solutions, equal treatment of labour rights, creating a special room for mothers and babies, flexibilization or reducing schedules for mothers, trainings, growing salaries to the level where it's the same pay for the same work done, objective evaluation of done work. Measures addressed, especially, at the state authorities refer to: tax incentives for firms; measures oriented towards changing mentality, preconceptions; gender quotas; informing workers about their rights; promotion of female gender.

In general, it can be said that respondents recognized various types of gender discrimination, even though, at individual level, they weren't eagerly acknowledging their own encounters with cases of such a phenomenon.

#### **4. Conclusions**

However may be approached and tackled the issue of gender discrimination in the Moldovan society, including in the employment sphere, it's an area in which the majority of people do not perceive gender discrimination as a severe phenomenon, regardless of gender, though women in a bigger measure perceived it than men. From the types of gender discrimination in a slightly higher measure were perceived more severe, especially by the women, the gender discrimination when applying to a job and when advancing to a work position than gender discrimination on pay and in providing childcare leave for mothers/fathers. Also, respondents when were asked on a scale of answers of the vicinity degree of gender discrimination towards them (at the organization where they work – at another organization – in daily life – not encountering), while most of them negated encounter with gender discrimination, the share of the rest of them was diminished to the degree of the vicinity of the respondent. People were more eagerly to negate the existence of gender discrimination when questions were put in general or abstract terms, while they answered more earnestly the open questions where they could give more concrete or specific answers. People associated gender discrimination with corruption, stereotypes and other problematic issues like: marital status, the presence of children, income level, ethnicity, spoken language and other social and economic characteristics of employees. Borrowing terms from physical sciences, it can be said that the amplitude of resultant discrimination grows from the interference of various types of specific discrimination. Because the gender discrimination is such a multifaceted problem, the respondents have proposed measures that covered various aspects of employment sphere: gender quotas, tax incentives, flexibilization of work schedule, organizing special rooms for mothers, participation of women in the strategic decision-making process, increasing wages, informing workers about their rights, focusing on individualized solutions and others. All these answers show that the problem of gender discrimination should be approached at all levels, from the level of state policies to the level of solutions for individual employees, with special focus on individual solutions, which is very often neglected.

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