



GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITING AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL: STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES OF COMPANIES AS AN ELEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to studying gender equality in the context of recruitment and personnel selection, particularly focusing on strategies and practices of companies as an element of professional ethics. The research aims to highlight the relevance of gender inequality issues in these processes and identify ways to improve the situation. One of the main objectives of this work is to analyze existing strategies and practices of companies regarding gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection. Specifically, the effectiveness of different methods such as the use of smart algorithms and assessment tools, the implementation of gender-balanced decision-making committees, and the development of objective evaluation criteria for candidates are investigated.

The research is based on a systematic review methodology of scientific publications and analysis of studies related to gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection. Both quantitative and qualitative research studies were utilized, providing a comprehensive overview of the issue and enabling conclusions to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of different strategies.

The article provides a general characterization of gender inequality in recruitment and personnel selection and analyzes factors that contribute to stereotypes and biases in these processes. Additionally, various strategies that companies can employ to enhance gender equality are discussed, such as the use of objective evaluation criteria and the expansion of a multidimensional approach to recruitment and personnel training. The overall characterization of the work involves analyzing the current state of gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection, identifying problematic aspects, and offering practical recommendations for companies to achieve greater equality and objectivity. The research findings can be valuable for both researchers interested in gender equality and practitioners working in the field of human resource management and recruitment.

Keywords

gender bias, gender stereotypes, employment discrimination, personnel evaluation, employment decisions.

Problem statement

The concept of "ethics" was introduced by Aristotle, who considered it both as a collection of virtues and as a science that answers the questions of what virtue is and what a person should do to be virtuous. The most important categories of ethics include "good," "evil," "justice," "goodness," "responsibility," "obligation," "conscience," "honor," and so on.

Aristotle used the term "ethics" for practical philosophy, which should provide an answer to the question, "What should we do to perform moral actions?" Over time, the topic of the unity of ethics and economics became

relevant, as discussed by Adam Smith in his works. Business communication ethics is a part of general business ethics complemented by norms of behavior specific to the professional and specialized sphere of activity. Ethical reflection processes are situated at three objective levels with different degrees of aggregation of actors (individual, group, societal) [9].

Firstly, the macro-level of business ethics focuses on questions of a good and just economic system. In this sense, moral aspects of macroeconomic actions, such as income distribution, are questioned in the context of specific economic orders and/or economic constitutions. Due to this orientation, this level of business ethics is also referred to as "ethics of order." Its task is to analyze the quality of the macroeconomic order and discuss ethically justified framework conditions for economic activity. From an instrumental perspective, the ethics of order finds expression in various measures of social, financial, and economic policy.

The meso-level of business ethics concerns the actions and decisions of institutionalized economic subjects, such as companies, trade unions, or associations. At the core of this focus lies the belief that these subjects, by virtue of their nature as holistic and purposive institutions, can be attributed a certain degree of moral status or moral responsibility. Based on this, the analysis and evaluation of responsible actions of such institutions are the subject of the so-called "institutional ethics."

As an individual ethics variant, the micro-level focuses on individuals' actions in an economic context. Accordingly, the main attention is given to the analysis and evaluation of individual behavioral expectations and duties in the role of employer and employee, as colleagues or managers, as consumers, suppliers, investors, or works councils [13].

In a society where globalization and technological changes force us to interact at a new level, ethics becomes increasingly important for maintaining a just, efficient, and sustainable business environment.

The moral and ethical aspect of democratization and humanization of modern society lies in the recognition of universal moral principles and ethical norms that are necessary for all members of the global community. One of the most significant moral principles is the principle of equality, which calls for all individuals to be equal to one another, regardless of any characteristics.

One of the characteristics of an individual's personality is their gender. Sometimes, this trait, which should be valuable both for the individual and the state, becomes an obstacle to the realization of personal rights. Often, this factor violates the principle of equality of basic rights and freedoms. In recent times, issues related to gender inequality have become increasingly relevant in all spheres of human activity. The professional sphere is particularly vulnerable to the manifestation of discrimination precedents. According to a survey conducted by the sociological group "Rating," nearly 60% of respondents believe that certain professions have a pronounced gender stereotype. In their opinion, professions such as "police officer," "politician," "businessman," and "scientist" are considered predominantly male, while "salesperson" or "secretary" are considered predominantly female. However, professions such as "manager," "journalist," and "doctor" are perceived by the respondents as equally accessible and suitable for both men and women [3].

One of the key aspects in addressing gender issues is considering the principle of gender equality in personnel selection and training [9]. This is a priority direction of work at the meso level of business ethics in companies. Ensuring gender balance is important not only at the community or operational level but also at the level of managerial and executive positions in organizations [11]. In the modern business environment, where competition between companies is increasing, selecting and attracting qualified personnel are strategically important tasks. However, decision-making regarding employment and promotion should be based on objective criteria and consider the potential of each individual regardless of their gender. Unfortunately, there are systematic and cultural barriers in recruitment and personnel selection that contribute to gender inequality.

Relevance of the chosen topic: The issue of gender inequality in recruitment and personnel selection directly impacts the lives and career opportunities of many individuals. Research on this topic is relevant from the perspective of building a more equal society where all individuals have equal opportunities for professional development regardless of their gender. Gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection also has a significant impact on the business environment. There is a close relationship and mutual influence between organizational culture and gender equality issues. Organizational culture defines the values, attitudes, and behavioral norms that prevail in the workplace and affect the recruitment process [6, 9]. Studying strategies and practices aimed at ensuring gender equality helps companies attract talented employees, enhance innovation, and improve competitiveness in the market.

Gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection is an element of professional ethics. Companies that strive for success and recognition must adhere to the principles of fairness, equality, and non-discrimination. Research on this topic helps to uncover the ethical aspects of recruitment practices and develop strategies that ensure fair and equal access to employment opportunities.

Thus, research on gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection is relevant and important from social, economic, ethical, and practical perspectives.

Analysis of recent research and publications

Gender equality in recruitment and personnel selection is a relevant and significant topic that attracts the attention of researchers. Cheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook and author of the book "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead" (2013), explores the causes of gender inequalities in career development and offers practical recommendations to improve the situation of women in business [12]. In her book, Iris Bohnet, in "What Works: Gender Equality by Design" (2016), highlights the issue of gender equality in the context of recruitment and personnel selection, proposing specific recommendations and strategies to reduce the influence of stereotypes and ensure greater objectivity [1]. Amanda J. Koch, Susan D. D'Mello, Paul R. Sackett conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining the use of gender stereotypes in hiring decisions and found that stereotypes can distort evaluation and influence candidate selection [8].

Objective and tasks

The research aims to uncover the relevance of the gender inequality problem in recruitment processes and identify ways to improve the situation based on the experience of successfully implemented organizational practices. The main task is to identify elements of professional ethics that support gender equality and investigate their impact on recruitment and personnel selection processes.

Presentation of the main findings of the research

Recruitment and personnel selection are key processes for building effective work teams and achieving organizational goals. However, considering the principles of gender equality, ethics, and humanistic values is becoming increasingly important in these processes.

Personnel selection involves many ethical challenges and issues, as decisions made at this stage can impact the lives and careers of candidates. Below are some of the ethical problems that can arise in personnel selection:

1. Unfair use of information: Recruiters have access to confidential information about candidates, such as medical records or personal data. Using this information to make employment decisions can violate privacy and ethical standards.
2. Deception and manipulation: Recruiters may be tempted to exaggerate job advertisements or distort information to attract more candidates. This can deceive candidates and have a negative impact on their decision-making.
3. Conflict of interest: Recruiters may face conflicts of interest, especially if they receive commission or other material benefits for placing candidates. This may lead them to make decisions in their own interests rather than in the best interests of the candidates or the organization.
4. Unfair working conditions: Recruiters have influence over the working conditions offered to candidates. This can include salary, benefits packages, insurance coverage, professional development opportunities, and more. Unfair treatment of candidates can violate principles of fairness and ethics.
5. Discrimination: One of the most serious ethical problems is discrimination against candidates based on race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, and so on. It is the responsibility of the recruiter to make decisions based on the professional qualities and abilities of candidates, rather than personal characteristics.

All of these issues require recruiters to engage in thorough discussions and adhere to ethical standards during personnel selection. Adhering to ethical principles helps ensure fairness, equal opportunities, and trust in the hiring process.

So, as mentioned above, one of the key aspects of the relevance of gender equality in recruiting and personnel selection is to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their gender or gender identity, to access work and career development. It is important to address the unequal distribution of gender roles and significant gender imbalances in various sectors and positions, which indicate the presence of gender stereotypes and limitations. For instance, a study by Dinter et al. provides data that students with low self-esteem who compare themselves to others based on social indicators and/or encounter gender-related stereotypes are more prone to unsuccessful completion of higher education [2] and, as a result, lack confidence during interviews. Moreover, ignoring gender equality in recruitment can lead to biased candidate evaluations, as gender-based biases and stereotypes may be applied. This can result in underestimating candidates' potential or overlooking talented individuals due to insufficient attention to their abilities and skills.

The impact of gender stereotypes on recruitment processes is a significant issue that deserves attention. Gender stereotypes are beliefs and expectations associated with specific roles and characteristics assigned to men and women in society. They can have a significant influence on candidate selection and evaluation during recruitment.

Researchers identify three conditional groups of gender stereotypes [10]. The first group is based on conceptions of psychological traits and qualities attributed to men and women. According to these stereotypes, men and women are perceived as opposites. Men are attributed with active, creative qualities, problem-solving skills, and competence. Women, on the other hand, are associated with natural-reproductive aspects, demanding submissiveness, dependence, and emotionality.

The second group of stereotypes is based on social principles and regulates professional roles for men and women. Women are assigned family roles, such as wife, mother, homemaker, while men are seen in professional roles.

The third group of gender stereotypes reflects standardized perceptions of differences in work. Women are perceived as suitable for executive and service professions, while men are considered suitable for instrumental and creative work.

All three groups of gender stereotypes are interconnected and have a significant impact on society, including recruitment and personnel selection processes. These stereotypes are formed based on social, psychological, and cultural factors and often violate ethical and moral principles. Understanding this is important to consciously work towards eliminating stereotypes and ensuring gender equality in all areas of life and activity. Awareness of these stereotypes can help organizations achieve gender neutrality in personnel selection.

There are several ways to achieve gender neutrality in personnel selection. One of them is using objective criteria and evaluations in candidate selection that are unrelated to their gender or gender identity. Recruiters can rely on professional skills, work experience, education, and achievements of candidates.

Additionally, it is important to eliminate gender stereotypes during the selection process. Recruiters should be aware of their own biases and stereotypes that may influence their decisions. Implementing structured interviews and assessment methods helps reduce subjectivity and promotes objective selection.

Attention should also be given to creating inclusive job advertisements and expanding the diversity of recruiting sources to attract a wider range of candidates. Strengthening awareness and training of recruiters regarding the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination also contributes to achieving gender neutrality in personnel selection.

Therefore, the main methods of effective recruitment built on gender neutrality in personnel selection can be highlighted as follows:

1. Anonymity of candidates: Using anonymous resumes or removing personally identifiable information (such as name, gender, photographs) from resumes can help reduce initial biases and focus on the qualifications and skills of candidates.
2. Promoting multiculturalism and diversity: Creating diverse committees or groups responsible for candidate selection can ensure a variety of perspectives and avoid biases in decision-making.
3. Developing sensitivity to gender issues: Training recruiters about gender stereotypes, discrimination, and principles of gender equality can improve their awareness and contribute to objective selection processes.
4. Monitoring and evaluating results: Continuous analysis of recruitment processes, taking into account gender distribution, can help identify potential problem areas and implement appropriate corrective measures.
5. Promoting gender equality: Actively implementing policies and programs aimed at enhancing gender equality in organizational culture and communication can highlight the importance of gender neutrality in personnel selection and foster an equitable and inclusive work environment.

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality. Organizational culture includes values, beliefs, norms, and practices that determine the way communication, interaction, and decision-making occur within an organization. Key aspects to consider include creating equal opportunities, openness and inclusivity, eliminating gender stereotypes, and leading by example.

Creating equal opportunities involves supporting equal opportunity principles for all employees, regardless of their gender or gender identity. This means ensuring equal working conditions, career development, and access to advancement opportunities. Specifically, the organizational culture should foster an open and inclusive atmosphere where every individual feels respected, supported, and understood, demonstrating the organization's openness and inclusivity. It's important to create an environment where all voices, including gender-related ones, are heard and taken into account.

The organizational culture should actively counter gender stereotypes and biases. This can be achieved

through training employees on understanding and eliminating stereotypes, promoting diversity, and ensuring gender neutrality in all aspects of the organization's work.

Successful market leaders serve as role models to emulate and set standards of quality and effectiveness. Organizational leaders should lead by example, emphasizing the importance of gender equality and practicing it in their actions. They can actively support and acknowledge the achievements of employees regardless of their gender and gender identity.

The organizational culture should encompass an understanding of gender issues and their impact on the work environment. This may involve educating employees about gender issues, discrimination, and ways to support gender equality. Overall, organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping gender equality by fostering equal conditions and an inclusive environment for all employees.

Gender gaps in job requirements and advertisements, as well as the use of gender as an evaluation criterion in resumes and interviews, are serious problems that affect the level of equal opportunities for all candidates.

Gender inequalities in job requirements and advertisements are manifested in the establishment of sex-dependent criteria and restrictions for candidates. Such inequalities may include requirements for a certain gender composition of candidates, privileges or restrictions related to gender. For example, job advertisements may specify gender requirements related to certain stereotypes that affect the distribution of roles in society. This may be reflected in requirements for "strong leadership" or "female sensitivity" that exclude or limit opportunities for certain groups of candidates. This leads to the exclusion of certain groups of candidates and limits equal employment opportunities.

To combat gender inequalities in job requirements and advertisements, as well as in the evaluation of candidates, it is necessary to review and rethink selection criteria. Organizations should actively work to eliminate gender stereotypes and ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, regardless of gender. It is important to focus on objective parameters that reflect skills, knowledge and experience that are not gendered. To achieve the appropriate level of competencies, the organization must first eliminate internal gender barriers in the leadership and culture of the organization. Internal gender barriers in the organization's leadership and culture are a serious problem that hinders the achievement of gender equality and the unlocking of the team's potential at different levels of management. Internal gender barriers in an organization's leadership and culture can vary for men and women. Some of them include:

1. **Stereotypes:** Beliefs about the traditional roles of men and women can limit opportunities and expectations for their roles in leadership. For example, men may be expected to play a more active, authoritarian role, while women may be expected to play a more passive, supportive role.
2. **Level of ambition:** Men are more likely to have incentives and support for career development because they are perceived to be more ambitious and capable of leadership. Women may have less faith in their leadership abilities or doubts about their ability to reach high positions.
3. **Role conflicts:** Women may face challenges in balancing their professional and personal lives, especially when it comes to senior positions. This can put them in a difficult situation when choosing between their career and family responsibilities.
4. **Prescribed roles and expectations:** The culture of an organization may have expectations about the roles and behaviors of women and men. For example, men may be assigned leadership roles based on gender stereotypes, while women may be assigned supportive or administrative roles.
5. **Discrimination and unequal conditions:** Inequalities in access to resources, development opportunities and support can lead to inequalities between men and women in organizational leadership. For example, wage gaps and threats of sexual harassment can pose challenges for women in professional settings.

Internal gender barriers in leadership and organizational culture impact the opportunities for growth and advancement of both women and men. Gender stereotypes, unequal distribution of family responsibilities, lack of support and mentorship, as well as cultural expectations and resource disparities can hinder achieving gender equality in organizations.

To overcome these barriers, it is necessary to create inclusive and equitable conditions for all employees, ensure visibility and recognition of women's achievements, promote the development of leadership skills and mentorship, and work towards changing organizational cultures to support equal opportunities for all genders. Implementing such measures will contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive work environment, fostering better outcomes and innovation.

Ensuring gender equality is a demonstration of high ethics in organizations. Ethics involves understanding, accepting, and adhering to the principles of fairness, equality, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their gender. Organizations striving for gender equality demonstrate a conscious commitment to these ethical principles. Ensuring gender equality in organizations involves eliminating any form of discrimination

based on gender or gender identity. This means creating fair working conditions for all employees, regardless of gender, ensuring equal access to career opportunities, and eliminating gender stereotypes while adopting the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Ensuring gender equality also includes actively supporting women in their professional development, advancement into leadership positions, and promoting their representation in various fields of activity. This may include mentoring programs, leadership development training, and creating an inclusive work environment where all employees have equal opportunities for professional growth.

In recent years, many large companies have shown active interest in promoting gender equality and implementing strategies that promote equal access to opportunities and equal treatment of employees regardless of their gender.

Google is a company that places great emphasis on gender equality and has developed numerous programs and initiatives to promote equal representation. For example, they have implemented the "Women Techmakers" program, aimed at supporting and developing women in the technology industry. Additionally, Google regularly publishes reports on the gender distribution of positions within the company to ensure transparency and openness [16].

Accenture is an example of a company that actively strives for gender equality. They have set a goal to have 50% women in their workforce by 2025. The company also implements mentoring and support programs for women, as well as initiatives to advance women into higher positions [7].

IBM prioritizes gender equality and inclusion. They have developed and implemented the "Reinventing Women's Leadership" program, aimed at promoting women within the organization and expanding women's roles in the technology field. Additionally, IBM conducts educational events and training on gender stereotypes and equality for its employees [15].

Unilever actively works towards ensuring gender equality within its organization. They have implemented the "Walter Thomson" program to support women in leadership roles and have partnered with the non-profit organization Catalyst to increase the role of women in business [14].

These examples demonstrate that large companies are committed to creating equal conditions for all their employees, regardless of gender. This includes developing initiatives, programs and strategies aimed at reducing gender inequalities and promoting gender equality in the organizational environment.

One of the successful companies implementing measures to overcome barriers is the multinational company The Procter & Gamble Company. "We are committed to building a better world for all of us - inside and outside of P&G. A world free of gender bias, with equal voice and equal representation for all people. A world where everyone is seen as equal. When we do this, economies grow, communities become healthier, businesses can thrive, and the world becomes a better place for everyone," says The Procter & Gamble Company [4]. "The Procter & Gamble Company (P&G) implements initiatives and strategies to achieve gender equality for men and women:

6. Advertising initiatives: P&G is working to eliminate sex stereotypes in advertising and create a more equal and diverse portrayal of the genders. The company recognizes its responsibility to foster a culture that promotes understanding, respect and equality between men and women.
7. P&G Women's Leadership Development program: This program is aimed at developing women leaders in the company. It provides opportunities for training, mentoring and management skills development to help women advance their careers at P&G.
8. Gender equality in leadership: P&G is committed to increasing the representation of women in leadership positions. They work to ensure a more equal distribution of genders in senior positions and set targets to achieve this goal.
9. Partnerships with external organizations: P&G partners with other organizations and groups working on gender equality to work together to achieve equality goals.
10. "The Procter & Gamble Company focuses on four areas where it can have the greatest impact.

One example of a company's successful practice in gender-equal recruitment and staffing is the online platform Airbnb and their Free Reservations initiative [5].

As part of this initiative, Airbnb sets a quota for recruiters that prohibits them from making decisions about applicants based on gender. Recruiters cannot see photos, names, or gender information about candidates until decisions are made about hiring them. This allows for a more objective assessment of candidates and reduces the impact of gender bias on the recruitment process.

The results of this practice have been significant. "Airbnb reports that the Free Reservations initiative has increased the representation of women in technical and leadership roles. In particular, the representation of women in programmers and engineers has increased from 10% to 26%, and in the role of female leaders - from 19% to

30%. These results show that excluding gender during the recruitment process can help improve the gender balance in a company.

This example demonstrates how a company can apply innovative approaches to recruitment that reduce the impact of gender bias and promote a more equal and objective selection of personnel.

Conclusions

Gender equality in recruitment and selection is of great importance for the sustainable development of organizations from an ethical and moral point of view. Implementation of initiatives and strategies aimed at achieving gender equality allows to create a more balanced and diverse work environment, ensure access to equal opportunities and reduce gender discrimination.

Successful practices of companies that actively work on gender equality in recruiting and hiring not only take into account the principles of equality and fairness, but also proceed from ethical and moral principles. They implement gender-free recruitment policies, use anonymous resumes, and partner with universities and organizations to expand their candidate pool. In addition, these companies create a favorable work environment for all employees, where ethical principles, moral values and the principle of equality are respected.

Organizations that consider the importance of gender equality in recruiting and hiring demonstrate their ethical commitment and strive to act in accordance with moral principles. They have greater access to talented candidates, improve their attitudes towards equality and fairness, and contribute to the sustainable development of not only the internal culture of the organization, but also the social environment in which they operate. Ensuring gender equality is a manifestation of high ethics and morality, and contributes to a better working environment, increased productivity and attractiveness of the company for talented employees, which ensures the sustainable success of organizations in the long run.

Research has shown that there are various strategies and practices that companies can use to improve gender equality in recruiting and selection. In particular, it is recommended to introduce objective criteria for evaluating candidates, expand recruitment sources to attract a greater diversity of candidates, conduct trainings and educational programs on gender stereotypes, and be aware of the impact of gender on recruitment processes.

However, this study opens up broad prospects for further research in this area. For example, it is possible to investigate the impact of gender stereotypes on career advancement, to study the effectiveness of specific gender equality strategies and practices in different industries and countries, and to investigate the perception of gender equality among employees and employers.

Understanding gender equality in recruitment and selection is important for achieving a more just and equal society. Research in this area is a step towards improving professional ethics and ensuring gender equality in the workplace.

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