

CSW

LmunA 2021

Research report

Forum: [CSW]

Issue: [Encouraging women to participate
in male-dominated fields of work]

Student Officer: [Elisa Perez], [Main chair]

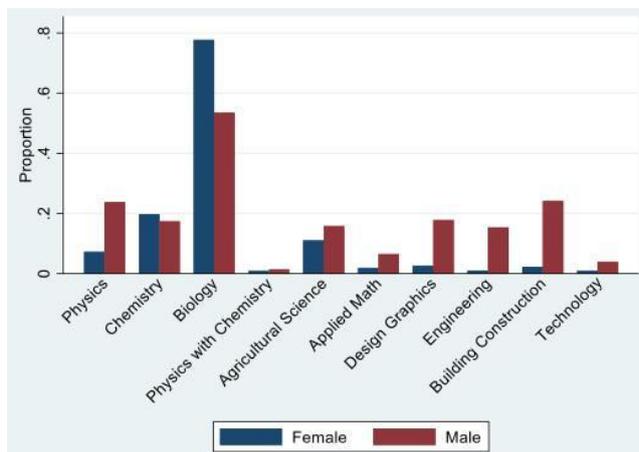


LMUNA

Lorentz Lyceum
Model United Nations
Arnhem

Introduction

Over the past decades, women have continued to form a large part of the workforce, predominantly in health, educational and administrative fields of work. However, a great part of careers and industries remain male-dominated with minimal increases in the percentage of women occupying roles in these fields. Although these numbers are changing, the growth percentage persists to be nearly non-progressive. Nevertheless, the opportunities for traditional male jobs have increased as women are becoming more educated and are covering a wider range of industries. Often discussed are the male-dominated STEM subjects, which universities and other educational sources highly encourage women to pursue. In this workforce women are highly anticipated and therefore have a wide selection of opportunities. However, the challenge still consists in encouraging women to participate in these male-dominated fields of work.



Gender comparison in STEM subjects bachelor degrees

Definition of key terms

Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM)

STEM is an abbreviation for four closely connected areas of study: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There has been a significant push internationally in recent years for women to pursue a career in STEM jobs.

Voluntary Extra Time (VET)

Voluntary extra time is an opportunity to work extra hours outside of your regular scheduled shift times. VET is optional and is paid at the same rate as your normal pay.

Positive discrimination

Positive discrimination is the act of favoring individuals forming a part of groups known to have been discriminated against previously. Through the act of positive discrimination equality is pursued.

Glass ceiling

An unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities.

General Overview

Up to this day, the male-dominated fields of trade have been highly resistant to change. With various researchers, unionists and feminist spokespeople determined to better the situation, it remains an international obstacle. Especially the electro-technology, construction, manufacturing and automobile related trades are dominated by men; as well as various engineering studies, aircraft flight, farmers and first responders (including firefighters, police, etc.).

It is however difficult to accurately determine total female participation in these fields due to VET hours and the trades in countries. Both of these statistics are not publicly reported by gender and mainly not disaggregated on a routinely basis. In spite of this, researchers have successfully analyzed gender differences in available data, revealing significantly low female participation in countries worldwide in male-dominated fields, such as the following:

- In Europe women under the age of 25 account for only one percent of those working in the construction field
- In India 30 percent of woman are construction workers, although these are mostly unskilled workers and head-load carriers, with only 1,4 percent participating as technical workers
- In the United States of America 3 percent of woman account for those working as electricians and only 2,1 percent as carpenters
- In Australia 2 percent of women are skilled trade workers
- In Canada the percentage of women accounting for trade work is 4,5 percent

One of the main reasons for the gender inequality in these and various other fields of work is introduced early on in educational programs. The VET classes are the biggest connection to male-dominated traineeships and apprenticeships, which are predominantly male. Even earlier in education Voluntary Extra Time in School (VETiS) is many times offered to students, a nationally accredited VET program with which students can attain their secondary school certificates. Already huge gender inequalities can be seen within these programs, creating massive gender gaps in the future.

It is however important to portray a clear contrast between male-dominated fields of work and male-dominated positions. Often referred to as the 'glass ceiling', a certain barrier occurs in advancement for woman reaching a specific level. Although they have at last been encouraged to participate in these male-dominated fields, a further challenge is reaching higher goals within these fields. As of now, woman make up less

than 30 percent of selected board members within some of the most prominent companies.

Major parties involved

United Nations Development Programme(UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme, founded in 1966, helps countries and nations to further develop themselves resulting in improved lifestyles. One of its goals also focusses on equality, empowering women as much as possible in all its projects.

United Nations Women (UN Women)

Created by the General Assembly, the UN Women is an NGO dedicated to gender equality and women empowerment. The organization holds meetings across the globe to discuss gender inequality in the workplace. UN Women works with governments to create laws, programs and policies to ensure they are implemented correctly and effectively as a benefit to women worldwide.

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labor Organization is responsible for creating and supervising international labor standards. With one of its main objectives being gender equality in the workplace, it widely addresses the lack of women in certain fields of work and has already made four key equality conventions.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development shapes various policies internationally fostering prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being. To find solutions for economic, social and environmental issues and establish evidence-based standards, the OECD works with governments and citizens of countries and nations. These policies have lead to creating more job opportunities for women and fostering a strong education.

Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)

The International Coalition for Gender Equality is formed by the ILO, UN Women and the OECD. In order to take concrete steps towards equal pay in all work fields, EPCIC works at regional, national and international levels. They provide support to governments, employers' and workers' organizations, thereby improving their legislation, skills and monitoring. By achieving equal pay, the gender pay gap in male-dominated fields is reduced, hereby encouraging women to participate in these fields.

Timeline of key events

1951: The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation holds the Equal Remuneration convention

1958: The ILO hold the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation or Discrimination

1961: John F Kennedy makes women's rights a key issue of the New Frontier, and assigns women to many high-ranking posts in his administration.

1975: The UN sponsors the First International Conference on Women in Mexico City

1979: Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

1981: The ILO hold the Workers with families Responsibilities Convention

1981: The General Assembly holds The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1999: The ILO focusses on gender integration in all technical cooperation projects

2000: The ILO holds Maternity Protection convention

2004: The ILO debates on a resolution based only on the integration of gender equality in companies

2019: The 42nd International Women's Rights Day

2021: The ILO holds the Violence and Harassment Convention

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Previously, the UN member states and the ILO have held various conventions against gender inequality within the work atmosphere, in which attention is focused on encouraging women to participate in male-dominated fields of work. As a result, more companies have taken family-friendly measures such as private lactation rooms for mothers, take home meals and company sponsored full time centers on its grounds. This has proved to reduce stress and increase employees overall well-being, as well as their loyalty and performances. These policies have made the work place more attractive to women, however are limited to the graduated. Besides, it is not possible for all firms to provide part time jobs as it leads to great loss of its total profits. As a result, the measures function counterproductively. As it is now less beneficial for firms to hire women and they are not obligated to do so, companies are encouraged to not recruit women.

A different attempt to solve the issue has been introduced at a governmental scale where gender equality is widely promoted in all sectors of society. In this attempt, they have made use of quota systems. According to the ILO, the quota system is intended to ensure women form part of a certain percentage in decision making bodies. Not only have governments used this to increase the amount of women with high positions, but they have also used this quota system to encourage companies in male-dominated fields to hire women. This way, the work places decrease gender inequality and encourage more women to partake in these fields. However, not all countries have successfully introduced this quota. In France for example, some political parties prefer to pay a fine rather than introduce more women into their party. In general, gender quotas are criticized for their undemocratic character and therefore should be temporary. The purpose of the quota is never to advantage one gender, however to reduce gender inequalities within a nation.

Possible solutions

A big issue that discourages women to participate in male-dominate fields of work is anxiety and self-doubt. Being surrounded by men, women often develop the idea they are not doing enough or as well as the male employees. Therefore, employers can take steps to reduce this angst and encourage women to participate. For example, by exposing women to powerful female role models, they are more likely to see and believe that they are indeed well fit for this field of work and all positions within it. This could be done monthly, with meetings organized between junior and senior female employees to give younger women the chance to develop themselves professionally and show them it is possible to succeed. This mentorship would be provided to increase female confidence at the work place.

It is of utmost importance to provide good representation in work places.

Throughout all structural levels, women should be present and companies should strive for gender equality within the different levels. By providing this representation, the female confidence is increased and women are shown that it is indeed possible to achieve all positions. This will encourage them to select male-dominated fields by means of interests instead of letting the anxiety and self-doubt discourage them. One way to increase the number of women in senior positions, is by encouraging companies to implement programs and projects for women in order to develop and utilize their skills.

However, these measures do not address the root of the problem. The issue initiates much earlier and is integrated in educational systems. Primarily, it is essential that all girls have access to a full education, in order to eliminate the difference in education between girls and boys at a young age and grant girls access to the level of education they are capable of doing. It should be shown from a young age that any career and any path in all fields is possible for women. To encourage male-dominated fields, both states and companies could take action by creating scholarships, grants and programs introducing girls to the fields.

Bibliography

- Barker, E. (2018, September). Retrieved from Perkbox:
<https://www.perkbox.com/uk/resources/blog/what-is-positive-discrimination>
- Beilock, S. (2019, February). *research based advice for women working in male-dominated fields*. Retrieved from Harvard business review:
<https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-based-advice-for-women-working-in-male-dominated-fields>
- Current population survey data*. (2021). Retrieved from Census bureau:
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/data.html>
- Dayton, D. (2020, August 21). Retrieved from Chron:
<https://work.chron.com/highpaying-nontraditional-jobs-19950.html>
- Delaney, J. (2019, April 19). *It's not just for boys! Understanding gender differences in STEM*. Retrieved from Voxeu: <https://voxeu.org/article/understanding-gender-differences-stem>
- gender inequality index*. (2021). Retrieved from UNDP:
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>
- Hunt, A., & Samman, E. (2016, September). *Women's economic empowerment*. Retrieved from Odi: <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/10683.pdf>
- Jones, L. (2019, October). *women's progression in the workplace*. Retrieved from assets publishing service:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840404/KCL_Main_Report.pdf
- Kagan, J. (2021, April 19). *glass ceiling*. Retrieved from investopedia:
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/glass-ceiling.asp>
- Kerr, M. (2020). *high-paying non traditional jobs*. Retrieved from chron:
<https://work.chron.com/careers-male-dominated-10935.html>
- Meaning VET*. (2019, December 26). Retrieved from Indeed:
<https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Amazon.com/faq/what-does-vet-mean?quid=1bcpcncmeobrdh>
- These occupations are dominated by women*. (2020, March). Retrieved from Ilostat:
<https://ilostat.ilo.org/these-occupations-are-dominated-by-women/>
- Wattis, L. (2013). *Exploring order and disorder: Women's experiences balancing work and care*. Retrieved from Womens studies:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813484241>
- Wright, T. (2016). *Womens' experience of workplace interactions in male-dominated work*. Retrieved from gender work organization:
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12074>

Further readings

ILO- How many women work in STEM? <https://ilostat.ilo.org/how-many-women-work-in-stem/>

ILO- How women are being left behind in the quest for decent work
<https://ilostat.ilo.org/how-women-are-being-left-behind-in-the-quest-for-decent-work-for-all/>

UN women- Womens empowerment principles
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/businesses-and-foundations/womens-empowerment-principles>

UN- Worldswomen
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/wwEduc2010.htm>

CSW

LmunA 2021