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## Women across Social Groups in Kazakhstan Labor Market

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze existing concepts of gender stereotypes and gender differences in wages, defining of gender pay gap determinants, and to evaluate the level of discrimination against women in Kazakhstan. In the proposed study, the authors explore the conceptual framework and basic directions of the problem of gender wage differentials. In this research, authors propose the methodological tools for presenting a standard form of evaluation of gender pay gap. The developed methodological tools will allow providing authentic and formal analysis on gender pay gap and identifying the main determinants of gender pay differences. Further, the obtained results showed the distribution of wage gap in Kazakhstan's regions and the Duncan's dissimilation index allows us to trace the dynamics of changes in the professional structure between men and women. According to the results, gender pay gap is narrowing with the reduction of the job level and discrimination is related to differences in human capital and education. Wages in the industrial sector are higher for men than for women, because men's professions are characterized by severe and unhealthy working conditions. In addition, employers prefer male managers, but if they take woman managers, they give them salary 3 times less.

**Keywords:** Gender, Gender Economy, Gender Policy, Segregation, Gender Pay Gap, Kazakhstan.

### 1. Introduction

At present, there is a cardinal rethinking of the social role of women in society and the need arises to find measures to ensure their rights and opportunities. Ensuring gender equality is one of the factors of economic growth and the achievement of sustainable development of the country and the region. It has been established that equal involvement of women in political, social, economic life of a country is considered as a necessary condition for achieving progress in socio-economic growth, solving of urgent cultural, social, ethnic and other issues. Thus, one of the main tasks is to ensure equality between a man and a woman in all spheres of life and work, including in the issues of the gender pay gap.

These days, gender differences in wages are among most debated topics of socio-economic research. This is proved by numerous scientific studies and publications, as well as numerous reports done by well-known international research organizations (IMF, UN, OECD, World Bank, etc.) for different countries. Herewith a vast number of the researches are focused on gender analysis of women and men in labor market, as majority of men and women are hired workers for whom earnings and job opportunities to a large extent determines their economic situation.

The relevance of this research is due to the fact that today a woman is actively developing and goes beyond the family environment. The current position of Kazakhstani women in the labor market is characterized by the fact that women's labor is very much in demand, but its payment remains low. Therefore, for Kazakhstan, the gender pay gap has been and remains the main "female gender issue".

The purpose of this research is to analyze of existing concepts of gender stereotypes and gender differences in wages, defining of gender pay gap determinants, and to evaluate the level of discrimination against women in Kazakhstan. This paper is among the scientific works, which identify primary factors of gender wage differences between men and women, and analyze the level of gender inequality and discrimination.

### 2. Theoretical Background and Literature Overview

The literature review of studies on gender stereotype problems and gender pay gap will cover the results of research conducted by scientists from foreign and neighboring countries. The review to a greater extent will be conducted not according to the territorial principle (country of publication), but according to the problem-thematic (orientation, conceptual basis of the study). In the proposed literature review, the task is to explore conceptual framework and basic directions of the problem of gender wage differences.

Some scientific researches on gender stereotyping about capability of men and women (Pheterson et al., 1971; Kisler, 1975; Goldberg, 1983; Kunda & Thagard, 1996). They have found that, in

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accordance with gender stereotypes task performance, success achieved by men are mostly due to their capability, whereas the same success achieved by women is regarded as efforts, luck and so on (Pheterson et al., 1971). At the same time, according to Kissler, the factor of “effort” in men is regarded as a stable, necessary condition of natural male need in achieving, as means of barrier and difficulties overcoming, arising in the way of a goal achievement (Kisler, 1975). In cases where a woman performs so-called “male work”, she performs it competently, then in the perception of others she deserves more respect than men (Goldberg, 1983).

In general, the economic theory of gender segregation presence, as a result of the behavior of employers, is explained by several reasons:

Firstly, this is the under-investment in the human capital of women in comparison with investment in human capital of men due to shorter expected return on financial investments (Becker & Lindsay, 1994). As a result, women and men have the opportunity to occupy jobs that impose fundamentally different requirements on the professional qualification characteristics of an employee.

Secondly, the discriminative practice of hiring and promoting of women, which leads to the fact that workers of different sexes are concentrated on different positions (Wirth, 2001; Kireyeva, 2014).

Thirdly, one of the critical moments of gender segregation is “glass ceiling” model for women. The concept “glass ceiling” describes employment practice of women for positions, which do not imply further career advancement (Coate & Loury, 1993). Such a manifestation is typical enough for many CIS countries, including Kazakhstan.

There through above mentioned causes have an impact of the sphere of employment and lays the foundation for gender inequalities in earnings. At the same time, discrimination against women is detrimental to the economy due to the incomplete use of women's abilities, reducing the attractiveness of career growth for women, which has a negative impact on their work.

### 3. Analysis and Results

The difference in wages between men and women is determined as a difference between average monthly salary between men and women, i.e. as a percentage of men's average monthly salary. Gender politics of the Republic of Kazakhstan leads to situations in which “emancipation” among women, expands for them the repertoire of possible roles and lifestyles, but affects men little. As a result, the role of “breadwinner” is the normative male model and does not imply equal participation of men in homework, childcare and nurturing.

Until recently, gender-sensitive wage statistic was absent. Now there is a sufficient amount of static data to conduct a full analysis. In the international context, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Kazakhstan in 2018 took 60th place in the global gender equality ranking. According to this rating, opportunities for women in the labor market in Kazakhstan (chances for equal wages and careers) make up 70% of men's opportunities.

The distribution of gender wage differences by economic activity has a number of features.

Firstly, a woman has to choose low-paid areas, such as health care, education, and social services.

Secondly, the highest level of underpayments is observed among art workers, professional and scientific and technical activities.

Thirdly, inter-industry differences in wages among men are higher than among women. Salaries in financial and insurance sectors for men are 3.5 times more in comparison with the field of education. On the one hand, this may be the reason for the separation of jobs into “male professions” and “female professions”. On the other hand, this may be the reason for the uneven distribution of women and men in the economy, i.e. manifestation of gender occupational segregation.

### 4. Conclusions

The problems, which related to the study of gender stereotypes and gender gaps in the labor market are quite extensive, dynamically developing and cover many areas of society. Generally, the analysis of the distribution of gender wage gaps has led to the following conclusions.

Firstly, the gender pay gap is reduced with the reduction of the job level: it is minimal for the general group of workers and employees, it is reduced with the transition to the middle and higher level of qualification.

Secondly, discrimination is linked to differences in human capital and education. Wages in the industrial sector are higher for men than for women, because men's professions (milling in oil refining, mechanical engineers, chemical technologist) are characterized by severe and unhealthy working conditions. This situation is typical not only for Kazakhstan, but also for most other countries.

Thirdly, the Duncan's dissimilation index allows us to trace the dynamics of changes in the professional and sectoral structure of men and women. The data obtained indicate positive trends in the field of gender policy in Kazakhstan. However, full integration will be achieved if 26% of men move into feminized employment, or if 26% of women move into male-dominated employment

If we compare with the indicators of number of countries, the situation is not in favor of Kazakhstan. This is evidenced by the data of the global ranking of gender equality of the WEF. Thus, in Kazakhstan, income equality between men and women lags behind developed economies by at least 10-12 years. For example, in Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland, women and men who perform the same work receive the same salary.

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