

IDENTIFYING THE GAP BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Gender differences in attitudes toward employment continue to influence career choices among students. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective career guidance and promoting equal opportunities in the workforce.

Aims: This study aims to identify and analyze the gap between male and female students' attitudes towards employment, focusing on career preferences, expectations, and risk perception.

Materials and Methods: A structured questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Responses were analyzed to compare attitudes across genders and to identify statistically significant differences in employment preferences.

Results: Among male students, 12 students (24%) strongly agreed and 18 students (36%) agreed with the statement, indicating moderate support for women's employment after marriage. However, 10 students (20%) remained neutral, while 7 students (14%) disagreed and 3 students (6%) strongly disagreed. Among female students, a higher proportion expressed positive attitudes, with 25 students (50%) strongly agreeing and 20 students (40%) agreeing. Only a small number remained neutral or disagreed. Overall, the results suggest that female students demonstrate stronger support for women's employment after marriage compared to male students.

Conclusion: Gender-based differences in employment attitudes persist among students, influenced by socio-cultural norms and personal expectations. Targeted career counseling and awareness programs can help bridge these gaps and encourage equitable participation in diverse career paths.

Keywords: Gender gap, student attitudes, employment preferences, career aspirations, work- life balance, socio-cultural influences

INTRODUCTION

Employment plays a crucial role in shaping the social and economic structure of modern societies. Over the past few decades, women's participation in the workforce has increased significantly; however, differences in attitudes toward employment between males and females continue to exist. Students represent the future workforce, and their perceptions and attitudes toward employment and gender roles are likely to influence future societal trends. Therefore, identifying the gap between male and female students' attitudes toward employment is important for understanding how gender perceptions develop and how they may affect equal opportunities in the workplace [1]. Traditionally, many societies have followed patriarchal structures in which men are considered the primary earners, while women are expected to focus mainly on domestic

responsibilities. Such traditional beliefs have historically limited women's participation in education and employment opportunities. Although social change, modernization, and educational development have improved women's access to employment, gender stereotypes and cultural expectations still influence the attitudes of young individuals toward women's employment. Studies suggest that male students often hold more conservative views about women's employment, whereas female students tend to show stronger support for gender equality in professional fields due to their personal aspirations and lived experiences [2,3]. Educational institutions play an important role in shaping students' perceptions and attitudes about gender equality. Through higher education, students are exposed to diverse perspectives that may challenge traditional gender roles and encourage more progressive views regarding employment. However, research indicates that even among educated populations, gender bias and stereotypical thinking about suitable jobs for men and women can still persist [4,5]. These perceptions may influence career choices, leadership aspirations, and workplace expectations among young adults, thereby reinforcing occupational segregation in certain fields. In recent years, the importance of gender equality in employment has been widely emphasized by international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization. These organizations advocate equal employment opportunities, fair wages, and non-discrimination in the workplace. Despite global initiatives and policy reforms aimed at improving gender equality, disparities between men and women in employment opportunities, wages, and leadership positions still exist in many countries. Attitudes formed during adolescence and early adulthood can significantly influence these long-term social and economic patterns [6,7]. Family background, cultural values, and social environment also play important roles in shaping students' attitudes toward employment. Students who grow up in families where both parents are employed or where gender equality is encouraged are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward women's employment. On the other hand, students raised in more traditional environments may maintain conventional beliefs regarding gender roles in the workforce [8]. Media exposure, education, and interaction with successful female professionals can also help challenge traditional stereotypes and promote more supportive attitudes toward women's participation in different professional sectors [9]. Furthermore, globalization and technological advancement have contributed to increased awareness of gender equality and widened access to information regarding women's achievements in various fields. Social media platforms and digital communication have amplified discussions on gender equity, allowing young people to be exposed to diverse viewpoints and role models. This exposure can gradually reshape traditional attitudes and promote more balanced perceptions of employment opportunities for both genders. Despite these improvements, subtle forms of discrimination and unconscious bias still persist in many educational and professional settings. These biases often manifest in the form of stereotypical expectations regarding leadership abilities, technical competence, and job suitability based on gender. Such perceptions can discourage individuals from pursuing careers in non-traditional fields and limit the full utilization of human resources in society. Therefore, understanding student attitudes is essential for identifying persistent barriers to gender equality in employment [10]. Identifying the gap between male and female students' attitudes toward employment is therefore essential for promoting gender equality and social progress. By examining these differences, educators and policymakers can better understand the underlying factors influencing students' perceptions and develop strategies to encourage equal participation in education and employment. Promoting positive attitudes toward women's employment among students can contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable society in the future.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: The present study was conducted using a descriptive survey research design to identify the gap between male and female students' attitudes towards employment. This design was considered appropriate

because it helps to collect information regarding existing opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of students toward employment opportunities for men and women.

Study Area: The study was carried out among higher secondary school students in selected government and private higher secondary schools. The institutions were chosen to obtain responses from students belonging to different socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

Study Population: The target population of the study consisted of higher secondary school students. Both male and female students were included in the study to compare their attitudes toward employment and gender roles in the workforce.

Sample Size: A total of 100 students were selected as the sample for the study. Among them, 50 were male students and 50 were female students. Equal representation of both genders was ensured to facilitate comparison of attitudes toward employment.

Sampling Technique: The respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique. This method ensured that every student in the selected institutions had an equal chance of being included in the study, thereby reducing selection bias and improving the reliability of the findings.

Inclusion Criteria

- Higher secondary school students
- Students willing to participate in the study
- Both male and female students present at the time of data collection

Exclusion Criteria

- Students absent during the survey period
- Students unwilling to participate in the study

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

Section A: Demographic Information

This section included basic information such as gender and educational background.

Section B: Attitude Questionnaire

This section consisted of statements related to students' attitudes toward employment of men and women.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The questionnaire was designed to assess students' perceptions regarding equal employment opportunities, women's participation in the workforce, leadership roles, and societal acceptance of women's employment.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected after obtaining permission from the concerned school authorities. The purpose of the study was explained to the students, and voluntary participation was requested. Questionnaires were distributed to the students and collected after completion. Adequate time was provided to ensure proper responses.

Data Analysis

The collected data were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Frequency and percentage distributions were calculated to interpret responses of male and female students. Results were presented in tabular form to clearly show differences in attitudes toward employment.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was completely voluntary. Confidentiality of respondents was maintained throughout

the research process. Students were assured that the information provided would be used only for academic purposes.

RESULT

Table 1: Distribution of Students by Gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Total	100	100

Table 2: Opinion on Whether Women Should Work After Marriage

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	12	25	37	37
Agree	18	20	38	38
Neutral	10	3	13	13
Disagree	7	1	8	8
Strongly Disagree	3	1	4	4
Total	50	50	100	100

Table 3: Attitude Toward Equal Employment Opportunities for Men and Women

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	20	30	50	50
Agree	18	15	33	33
Neutral	6	3	9	9
Disagree	4	1	5	5
Strongly Disagree	2	1	3	3
Total	50	50	100	100

Table 4: Opinion on Women Working in Leadership Positions

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	15	28	43	43
Agree	20	17	37	37
Neutral	7	3	10	10
Disagree	5	1	6	6
Strongly Disagree	3	1	4	4
Total	50	50	100	100

Table 5: Perception of Family Support for Women's Employment

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	14	24	38	38
Agree	20	18	38	38
Neutral	8	5	13	13
Disagree	5	2	7	7
Strongly Disagree	3	1	4	4
Total	50	50	100	100

Table 6: Opinion on Whether Women Face More Challenges in Employment

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	18	26	44	44
Agree	17	15	32	32
Neutral	7	5	12	12
Disagree	5	3	8	8
Strongly Disagree	3	1	4	4
Total	50	50	100	100

Table 7: Students' Opinion on the Importance of Women's Employment for Economic Development

Response	Male (n)	Female (n)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	22	29	51	51
Agree	18	15	33	33
Neutral	5	3	8	8
Disagree	3	2	5	5
Strongly Disagree	2	1	3	3
Total	50	50	100	100

Figure 1 : Opinion on Whether Women Should Work After Marriag

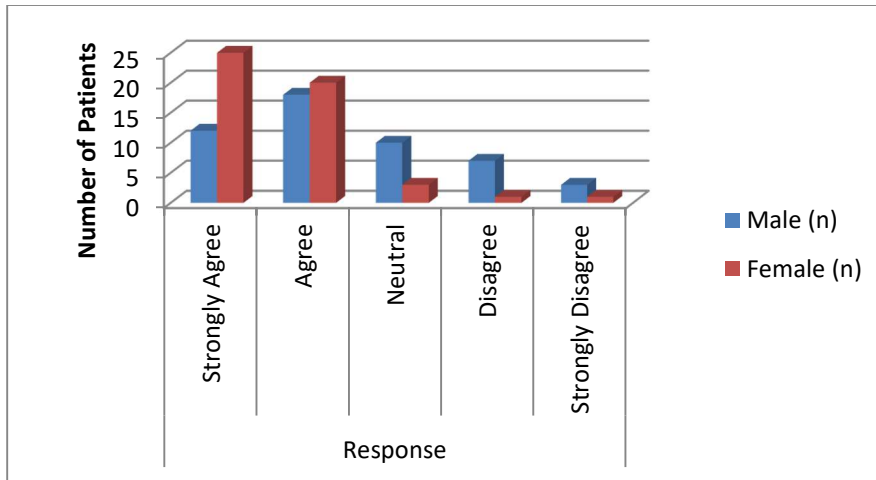
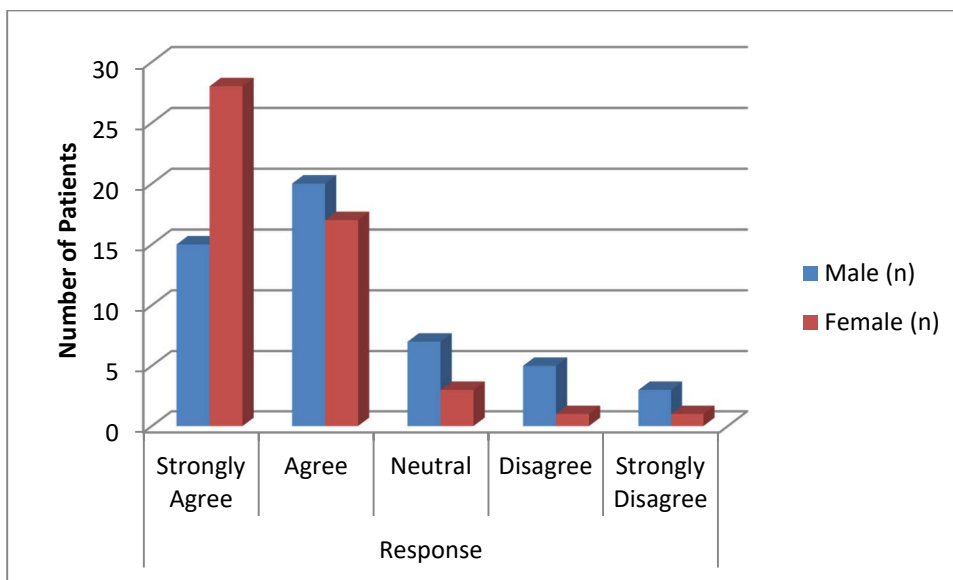


Figure 2 : Opinion on Women Working in Leadership Positions



Distribution of Students by Gender

Out of the total sample size of 100 students, 50 (50%) were male and 50 (50%) were female. The study ensured equal representation of both genders.

Interpretation:

The equal distribution of male and female students provided a balanced comparison, allowing unbiased assessment of gender differences in attitudes toward employment.

Opinion on Whether Women Should Work After Marriage

Among male students, 12 (24%) strongly agreed and 18 (36%) agreed that women should work after marriage. However, 10 (20%) were neutral, while 7 (14%) disagreed and 3 (6%) strongly disagreed.

Among female students, 25 (50%) strongly agreed and 20 (40%) agreed, while only a small proportion were neutral or disagreed.

Interpretation:

Female students showed a significantly more positive attitude toward women working after marriage compared to male students. While male students showed moderate support with some resistance, female students

demonstrated strong acceptance of post-marriage employment for women.

Attitude Toward Equal Employment Opportunities for Men and Women

Among male students, 20 (40%) strongly agreed and 18 (36%) agreed that men and women should have equal employment opportunities. A small proportion were neutral or disagreed. Among female students, 30 (60%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed, with very few neutral or negative responses.

Interpretation:

Most students supported equal employment opportunities. However, female students showed stronger agreement than male students, indicating higher acceptance of gender equality in employment.

Opinion on Women Working in Leadership Positions

Among male students, 15 (30%) strongly agreed and 20 (40%) agreed that women can work effectively in leadership roles, while a few expressed neutral or negative views.

Among female students, 28 (56%) strongly agreed and 17 (34%) agreed, with minimal disagreement.

Interpretation:

Female students showed greater confidence in women's leadership abilities compared to male students. Both groups were generally supportive, but female students demonstrated stronger acceptance of women in leadership positions.

Perception of Family Support for Women's Employment

Among male students, 14 (28%) strongly agreed and 20 (40%) agreed that families support women's employment, while others were neutral or disagreed.

Among female students, 24 (48%) strongly agreed and 18 (36%) agreed, with fewer neutral or negative responses.

Interpretation:

Female students perceived higher family support for women's employment than male students. Overall, both groups showed positive perceptions, indicating increasing social acceptance.

Opinion on Whether Women Face More Challenges in Employment

Among male students, 18 (36%) strongly agreed and 17 (34%) agreed that women face more challenges in employment.

Among female students, 26 (52%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed with this statement.

Interpretation:

Both male and female students recognized that women face greater challenges in employment. However, female students showed stronger awareness of workplace difficulties experienced by women.

Opinion on Importance of Women's Employment for Economic Development

Among male students, 22 (44%) strongly agreed and 18 (36%) agreed that women's employment contributes significantly to economic development.

Among female students, 29 (58%) strongly agreed and 15 (30%) agreed with the statement.

Interpretation:

Most students agreed that women's employment is important for economic development. Female students demonstrated stronger agreement, reflecting higher recognition of the economic contribution of women.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, the distribution of respondents consisted of 100 students, including 50 male and 50 female students, allowing a balanced comparison between the two groups. The findings revealed that a majority of students supported women working after marriage, although female students expressed stronger agreement compared to male students. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Shelley J. Correll, who reported that women are more likely than men to support female employment because they associate

employment opportunities with their own career aspirations and economic independence [11]. The present study also found that most students agreed that men and women should have equal employment opportunities. Female students showed stronger agreement than male students, indicating a more supportive attitude toward gender equality in employment. Similar findings were reported by Alice H. Eagly and Wendy Wood, whose research explained that gender attitudes are shaped by social roles and expectations, and women often support equality in employment due to their lived experiences with gender-based limitations [12]. Another important finding of the study was related to attitudes toward women in leadership roles. The results showed that a large proportion of both male and female students supported women occupying leadership positions, although female students demonstrated stronger confidence in women's leadership abilities. Similar observations were reported by Judith Lorber, who indicated that increased education and awareness have gradually improved perceptions of women's leadership roles in professional fields [13]. The study also revealed that many students believe women face more challenges in employment compared to men. Female students were more likely to acknowledge these challenges than male students. These challenges may include workplace discrimination, gender stereotypes, and difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities. A similar conclusion was drawn by Gary S. Becker, who highlighted that discrimination and structural barriers often affect women's employment opportunities and career advancement [14]. Furthermore, the findings of the present study indicated that most students recognize the importance of women's employment for economic development. Female students showed slightly higher agreement with this statement than male students. According to reports by the International Labour Organization, increasing women's participation in the labor force contributes significantly to economic growth, productivity, and social development [15]. In addition, the findings of the present study are supported by the research conducted by Raewyn Connell, who emphasized that gender attitudes among young people are influenced by cultural norms, education, and social experiences [16]. Similarly, Albert Bandura explained through social learning theory that individuals develop attitudes and behaviors by observing their social environment, role models, and societal expectations [17]. The results of this study are consistent with earlier research conducted by Judith Lorber, who emphasized that education plays an important role in shaping gender equality attitudes among young people and can influence perceptions toward women's participation in professional fields [18]. Studies also suggest that gender-sensitive education and awareness programs can help reduce stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for both men and women in society. Educational institutions therefore have an important responsibility to promote gender equality and positive attitudes toward women's employment. Initiatives such as gender awareness programs, equal opportunity policies, and career guidance services can help reduce gender bias among students. Reports from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization highlight that educational environments that encourage gender equality significantly contribute to improving women's participation in employment and leadership roles [19]. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization has reported that increasing women's participation in the labor force contributes to economic growth, social development, and improved national productivity. Therefore, promoting positive attitudes toward women's employment during the student stage is essential for building a more inclusive and equitable workforce in the future [20].

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the differences in attitudes between male and female students toward women's employment. Overall, students showed a positive outlook on women's participation in the workforce, with most agreeing on equal employment opportunities, women's roles in leadership, and their contribution to economic development. However, female students demonstrated more supportive and progressive attitudes compared to male students, particularly regarding women working after marriage and holding leadership

positions. The study also found that students recognized challenges faced by women in employment, with females showing greater awareness of issues such as discrimination and work–family balance. These findings suggest that gender differences in attitudes are influenced by social and cultural factors. The study concludes that strengthening gender awareness through education can help reduce attitude gaps and promote a more equitable and inclusive workforce.

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