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EJGS

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Eurasian Journal of Gender Studies (EJGS) is a double-blind peer-reviewed publication dedicated to disseminating scientific research on gender issues. These issues encompass a range of topics including encouraging the submission of original research, theoretical frameworks, and review articles that explore gender intersections with cultural, social, economic, and political contexts in the Eurasian region.

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- Geographic and Regional Perspectives on Gender

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Aims: to contribute to the scholarly discourse on these and related topics by publishing rigorous research, case studies, reviews, and theoretical analyses that provide insights into the complex dynamics of gender issues in the Eurasian region.

Key topics covered in the journal: Issues of Gender Pay Gap, Career Development Models, Gender Perspectives in Business Management, Access to Leadership Positions, Gendered Aspects of Environmental Policy, Gender in Political and Religious Contexts, Geographic and Regional Perspectives on Gender.

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Evaluating Parental Leave: Examination of Policy Impact on Gender Equality and Family Well-Being

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Abstract

This study examines paid parental leave policies across selected countries, including Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan. By conducting a comparative analysis of key parameters such as duration, eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and specific provisions for mothers and fathers, the study identifies trends, disparities, and best practices within these frameworks. Results reveal that Nordic countries like Sweden and Finland offer extensive and inclusive parental leave provisions, which support gender equality and work-life balance. In contrast, countries such as Bulgaria and Kazakhstan exhibit more constrained policies characterized by shorter durations and lower benefits. The findings underscore the significance of robust parental leave policies in supporting working families, promoting gender equality, and enhancing societal well-being. This comparative study illustrates how the conditions of paid parental leave policies vary significantly due to the economic backgrounds and financial development of the selected regions. This analysis would help to identify best practices that could be adapted to various socio-economic contexts, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these policies on workforce participation and child development outcomes.

Keywords: Paid Parental Leave, International Practice, Gender Equality, Children, Family, Kazakhstan, Governmental Support

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1. INTRODUCTION

Paid parental leave policies have become a point of discussion worldwide as societies recognize the importance of supporting families during critical life transitions. Ensuring adequate time off for new parents not only fosters healthier family dynamics but also contributes to broader societal well-being [1]. Paid parental leave policies typically encompass provisions for both mothers and fathers, acknowledging the shared responsibility of childcare and the importance of parental involvement in the early stages of a child's life. While maternity leave, granted exclusively to mothers, is a common feature worldwide, paternity leave, designated for fathers, varies significantly in availability and duration [2]. In many countries, maternal leave spans a longer duration compared to paternity leave, reflecting traditional gender roles and societal norms. However, there is a growing recognition of the need to promote gender equality in parental leave policies by providing equitable opportunities for both parents to participate in caregiving responsibilities.

Across the globe, countries have implemented diverse paid parental leave policies tailored to their socio-economic contexts and cultural values. Scandinavian nations, such as Sweden, Norway, and Iceland, are renowned for their progressive parental leave systems, offering generous benefits and flexible arrangements for both mothers and fathers [3]. These countries prioritize gender equality and parental involvement by providing extensive parental leave periods with a portion reserved specifically for fathers, encouraging their active participation in child-rearing. In contrast, some regions, particularly in the United States and the parts of Asia, have lagged behind in establishing comprehensive paid parental leave policies. The absence of federal mandates in the United States leaves parental leave largely at the discretion of employers, resulting in disparities in access and benefits. However, there have been initiatives at the state and corporate levels to improve parental leave provisions, connecting

with varying degrees of success.

Effective paid parental leave policies not only provide financial support but also protect parents from workplace discrimination and ensure job security during their leave period. Legal safeguards against discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status, coupled with guaranteed return-to-work rights, are essential components of inclusive parental leave policies [4]. Additionally, measures to promote a supportive work culture that values work-life balance and accommodates the needs of working parents contribute to the effectiveness of these policies.

The implementation of robust paid parental leave policies has far-reaching implications for citizen well-being, extending beyond the immediate benefits to parents and children. By alleviating financial stress and allowing parents to prioritize caregiving responsibilities without jeopardizing their livelihoods, paid parental leave fosters healthier family dynamics and strengthens social bonds [5]. Moreover, increased parental involvement in early childhood development positively influences children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, laying the foundation for their future success.

It should be stated that countries with well-developed parental leave policies often report higher levels of employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention, indicating a positive correlation between supportive workplace policies and overall societal well-being. Furthermore, equitable parental leave provisions contribute to narrowing gender gaps in the workforce, promoting women's participation in employment and leadership roles [6]. Paid parental leave policies are integral to fostering inclusive societies that prioritize the well-being of families. While progress has been made in many parts of the world, there remains a need for continued advocacy and policy reforms to ensure universal access to comprehensive parental leave benefits. By prioritizing the needs of parents and children, societies can create a more equitable and prosperous future for all citizens.

The article would like to delve into the international landscape of paid parental leave policies, exploring the conditions for mothers and fathers, examining existing policies across the globe, highlighting countries with exemplary frameworks, and assessing the impact of these policies on citizens' well-being.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Evolution of Parental Leave Policies

Parental leave policies have evolved significantly over the past century, reflecting changing societal norms, economic conditions, and gender roles. The concept of providing time off from work to care for newborns or newly adopted children emerged in the early 20th century, initially driven by maternal and child health concerns. However, it was not until the latter half of the century that parental leave policies began to gain traction to support working families and promote gender equality in the workforce [7].

The first legislative efforts to establish parental leave provisions can be traced back to European countries in the 1970s and 1980s, with Sweden pioneering the implementation of a gender-neutral parental leave scheme in 1974. This groundbreaking policy granted both mothers and fathers the right to take time off work following the birth or adoption of a child, with a portion of leave reserved exclusively for fathers to encourage their participation in childcare responsibilities. Other Nordic countries soon followed suit, adopting similar parental leave models characterized by generous benefits and flexible arrangements [8].

In the ensuing decades, the proliferation of parental leave policies spread across Europe and beyond, driven by a growing recognition of the importance of work-life balance, gender equality, and child well-being. Legislative initiatives at the national and supranational levels, such as the European Union's directives

on parental leave, further catalyzed the adoption of parental leave provisions in member states [9].

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have witnessed a diversification of parental leave policies, with countries experimenting with various models, including paid leave, unpaid leave, and combinations thereof [10]. While some nations prioritized extending leave durations and enhancing benefit levels, others focused on promoting greater flexibility and inclusivity in eligibility criteria to accommodate diverse family structures and caregiving arrangements [11].

Overall, the historical evolution of parental leave policies reflects a broader shift towards recognizing the importance of supporting working parents, promoting gender equality, and facilitating work-family balance in contemporary societies.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks of Parental Leave Policies

The development and implementation of parental leave policies are underpinned by various theoretical frameworks and concepts that highlight the multifaceted nature of this issue and its significance in promoting societal well-being. It is possible to emphasize several vital perspectives, shaping the discourse surrounding parental leave policies.

First, gender equality is a central paradigm of parental leave policies, aiming to address traditional gender roles and stereotypes by promoting the equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities between men and women. By providing parental leave benefits to both mothers and fathers, these policies seek to challenge gender norms and foster more excellent gender balance in both the household and the workforce. Gender equality perspectives emphasize the importance of parental leave in empowering women economically, enabling their participation in the labor market, and reducing gender disparities in employment and career advancement [12].

Second, the concept of work-family balance

underscores the need for policies that effectively support individuals in managing their work and family responsibilities. Parental leave policies play a crucial role in facilitating this balance by providing employees with the time and flexibility to care for their children without sacrificing their careers or financial security. Work-family balance perspectives advocate for policies that recognize the interdependence of work and family life and promote supportive work environments that accommodate employees' caregiving needs [13].

Third, parental leave policies are viewed as a form of social protection that safeguards the well-being of families and children by providing financial support during critical life transitions. From a social protection perspective, parental leave is seen as essential for promoting social cohesion, reducing poverty, and mitigating the social and economic risks associated with childbirth and child-rearing. These policies are grounded in social justice and solidarity principles, aiming to ensure that all families have access to adequate support regardless of their socio-economic status [12, p.5].

Fourth, human rights perspectives emphasize the rights of parents and children to a healthy and supportive family environment, as enshrined in international human rights instruments. Parental leave policies are viewed as instrumental in fulfilling these rights by enabling parents to provide care and nurturing to their children without facing discrimination or financial hardship. Human rights frameworks advocate for parental leave policies that are inclusive, non-discriminatory, and responsive to the diverse needs of families, recognizing parental leave as a fundamental human right rather than a discretionary benefit [14].

In summary, theoretical frameworks such as gender equality, work-family balance, social protection, and human rights perspectives provide valuable insights into the rationale, objectives, and principles that underpin parental leave policies, highlighting their significance in promoting equality, well-being,

and social justice for families and children.

2.3 Overview of Parental Leave Policies in Different Countries

Paid parental leave policies vary significantly across countries and regions, reflecting differences in socio-economic contexts, cultural norms, and policy priorities. Critical factors of comparison include duration, eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and provisions for mothers and fathers.

First, from the side of duration, Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Iceland are known for offering some of the most extended parental leave durations globally. In Sweden, parents are entitled to up to 480 days of paid leave per child, with 90 days reserved exclusively for each parent. Similarly, Norway provides up to 49 weeks of parental leave at full salary or 59 weeks at 80% salary, with a portion designated for each parent. In contrast, countries like the United States typically offer shorter leave durations, with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) providing up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for eligible employees [15].

Second, eligibility criteria for parental leave vary widely across countries. In many European nations, parental leave benefits are available to all employed parents, including part-time and self-employed individuals, with minimal qualifying conditions. However, in countries with less comprehensive systems, eligibility may be contingent on factors such as employment status, earnings, and length of service [16].

Third, benefit levels also vary considerably, ranging from complete salary replacement to partial or flat-rate payments. Nordic countries typically offer generous benefits, with some providing nearly 100% wage replacement during parental leave periods. In contrast, countries like the United States often offer lower benefit levels or no paid leave at all, leaving many families financially vulnerable during periods of parental leave [17].

Fourth, many countries have implemented

policies encouraging fathers' parental leave uptake, aiming to promote gender equality in caregiving responsibilities. In Sweden, for example, a portion of parental leave is reserved exclusively for fathers, incentivizing their participation in childcare. Similarly, Iceland has introduced a “use it or lose it” policy, granting additional leave to families where both parents share caregiving responsibilities [18].

While there is considerable variation in paid parental leave policies across countries, there is a growing recognition of the importance of supporting working families and promoting gender equality through comprehensive and inclusive parental leave provisions. Countries with more progressive policies tend to prioritize longer durations, broader eligibility criteria, higher benefit levels, and requirements that encourage fathers' involvement in childcare.

3. METHODOLOGY

Selection of Countries

The selection of countries for comparison was based on a combination of factors, including geographical diversity, socio-economic indicators, and the availability of comprehensive parental leave policies. Sweden and Finland were chosen for their reputation as leaders in parental leave provisions, particularly in the Nordic region. Bulgaria was included to represent an Eastern European country with emerging parental leave policies. Iceland was selected for its innovative approach to parental leave, including initiatives to promote gender equality. Estonia, known for its progressive social policies, was also included in the analysis. Kazakhstan, as a Central Asian representative, provides insights into parental leave policies in a different cultural and economic context.

Data Collection

Data on parental leave policies for each selected country were gathered from official

government sources, legislative documents, international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), and reliable academic publications. Information was collected on critical parameters, including duration, eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and provisions for mothers and fathers.

A comparative framework was developed to facilitate the systematic analysis of parental leave policies across the selected countries. This framework included categories such as duration of parental leave, eligibility criteria (employment status, length of service), benefit levels (wage replacement rates), and provisions for mothers and fathers (earmarked leave for fathers, incentives for shared caregiving).

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed to compare parental leave policies among the selected countries. Quantitative analysis involves summarizing key policy parameters to identify patterns, trends, and variations across countries. Qualitative analysis focused on identifying policy innovations, best practices, and areas for improvement based on a deeper examination of policy documents and contextual factors.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following comparative analysis examines parental leave policies across Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan. By evaluating key parameters such as duration, eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and provisions for mothers and fathers, this study aims to understand the development and inclusivity of parental leave frameworks in these diverse countries. Through this comparative lens, it is possible to identify trends, disparities, and best practices in parental leave policies, shedding light on the varying approaches to supporting working families and promoting gender equality globally. It is possible to compare parental

leave policies across Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan based on some categories. First, this is the duration of parental leave. Sweden offers up to 480 days of parental leave per child, with 90 days reserved exclusively for each parent. This generous duration allows for flexible distribution of leave between both parents. Finland provides a total of 164 weekdays of

parental leave, which can be shared between both parents. Additionally, families are entitled to an extended partial care allowance until the child reaches the age of 3. Bulgaria offers relatively shorter parental leave duration than Nordic countries, with mothers entitled to 410 days and fathers to 15 days of leave (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1. Comparison of parental leave policies in different countries

Country	Duration of parental leave	Eligibility criteria (to all employed parents)	Benefit levels	Provisions for mothers and fathers
Sweden	Up to 480 days	minimal conditions	80%-100% of salary, capped	Earmarked leave for fathers, incentivizing shared caregiving
Finland	164 weekdays	no minimal conditions	70%-75% of salary, capped	Shared parental leave between both parents, promoting equality
Bulgaria	Mothers: 410 days Fathers: 15 days	no minimal conditions	Flat-rate benefit	Limited leave for fathers, the potential impact on caregiving involvement
Iceland	Five months each parent	no minimal conditions	80%-100% of salary, capped	Dedicated leave portions for each parent, encouraging shared caregiving
Estonia	1.5 years	no minimal conditions	Flat-rate benefit, varying	Flexible distribution between parents, promoting shared caregiving
Kazakhstan	Mothers: 70 days Fathers: shorter duration	no minimal conditions	Flat-rate benefit	Limited leave for fathers compared to mothers, the potential impact on caregiving involvement

Note: compiled by author based on [18,19,20,21,22,23]

Based on Table 1 above, this generous duration allows for flexible leave distribution between both parents. However, additional unpaid leave options are available. Iceland offers one of the most progressive parental leave policies globally, with each parent entitled to 5 months of leave, which can be shared or transferred between parents. Additionally, parents can opt for an additional two months of leave. Estonia provides 1.5 years of parental leave per child, with a portion reserved for each parent. Parents can also take extended leave until the child turns 3, receiving

a partial benefit. Kazakhstan offers 70 calendar days of paid parental leave, with additional unpaid leave options available. The duration of leave is shorter compared to other countries in the comparison.

Second, this is the available eligibility criteria. Parental leave benefits in Sweden are available to all employed parents, including part-time and self-employed individuals, with minimal qualifying conditions. Parental leave in Finland is available to all employed parents, and benefits are not contingent on length of service or income level. Parental leave benefits

in Bulgaria are available to employed mothers and fathers, with no minimum length of service requirement. However, fathers' entitlement to leave is limited to 15 days. Parental leave benefits in Iceland are available to all employed parents, including self-employed individuals, with no minimum length of service requirement. Parental leave benefits in Estonia are available to all employed parents, with no minimum length of service requirement. Self-employed individuals are also eligible. Parental leave benefits in Kazakhstan are available to employed mothers, with no minimum length of service requirement. Fathers are entitled to paternity leave, but the duration is shorter than mothers.

Third, there are benefit levels. In Sweden, parental leave benefits typically range from 80% to 100% of the parent's salary, up to a capped amount. In Finland, parental leave benefits are usually paid at around 70-75% of the parent's earnings, up to a capped amount. Parental leave benefits in Bulgaria are typically paid at a flat rate, equivalent to a percentage of the parent's salary. In Iceland, parental leave benefits are usually paid at around 80-100% of the parent's salary, up to a capped amount. Parental leave benefits in Estonia are typically paid at a flat rate, with variations depending on the length of leave taken. Parental leave benefits in Kazakhstan are usually paid at a flat rate, equivalent to a percentage of the parent's salary.

Fourth, there are provisions for mothers and fathers. Sweden encourages fathers' participation in caregiving by reserving a portion of parental leave exclusively for fathers, incentivizing their involvement in childcare. In Finland, parental leave can be shared between both parents, promoting shared caregiving responsibilities. While both parents are entitled to parental leave in Bulgaria, fathers' entitlement to leave is limited to 15 days, potentially impacting their involvement in caregiving. Iceland promotes gender equality in parental leave uptake by offering each parent a dedicated portion of leave, encouraging shared caregiving responsibilities. Estonia allows for flexible distribution of

parental leave between both parents, promoting shared caregiving responsibilities and gender equality. Kazakhstan provides parental leave for both mothers and fathers, but the duration of leave for fathers is shorter compared to mothers, potentially impacting their involvement in caregiving.

Generally, parental leave policies across Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan vary in duration, eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and provisions for mothers and fathers. While Nordic countries like Sweden and Iceland offer generous and inclusive parental leave provisions, countries like Bulgaria and Kazakhstan have more limited policies with shorter durations and lower benefit levels. Overall, policies that promote gender equality, shared caregiving responsibilities, and financial support for parents tend to be associated with better-developed parental leave frameworks.

Furthermore, the analysis suggests that countries with more parental leave policies tend to have higher workforce participation rates among mothers and improved child developmental outcomes. This correlation underscores the potential long-term benefits of investing in robust parental leave systems, including improved economic stability and reduced gender disparities in employment. In addition, it is possible to analyze composite indexes such as the gender equality index (GEI) of each of the countries mentioned above. It is possible to highlight some significant findings for each of the analyzed countries.

First, the Swedish indicators suggest a potential advantage in female labor force participation and a significant advantage in female educational attainment.

Second, Finland has a slight advantage in female labor force participation and a more significant advantage in female educational attainment than Sweden.

Third, Bulgaria has a lower female labor force participation score than Sweden and Finland.

Fourth, Iceland consistently ranks as the most gender-equal country globally, according

to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report. See Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. Simplified gender equality sub-index results for different countries (based on labor force participation (LFP) and wage gap (WG))

Country	Data	Normalization	Weighting	Aggregation
Sweden	Female LFP: 80% Male LFP: 85% Gender wage gap: 15%	LFP score: $(80/85)*100 = 94.1$ WG score: $(1-0.15)*100 = 85$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*94.1)+(0.5*85) = 89.55$
Finland	Female LFP: 74.3% Male LFP: 73.2% Female tertiary education: 73.1% Male tertiary education: 66.4%	LFP score: $(74.3/73.2)*100 = 101.5$ Education score: $(73.1/66.4)*100 = 109.9$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*101.5)+(0.5*109.9) = 105.7$
Bulgaria	Female LFP: 56.1% Male LFP: 71.2% Gender wage gap: 13.2%	LFP score: $(56.1/71.2)*100 = 78.7$ Wage gap score: $(1-0.132)*100 = 86.8$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*78.7) + (0.5*86.6) = 82.8$
Iceland	Female LFP: 83.7% Male LFP: 81.3% Female tertiary education: 76.7% Male tertiary education: 73.7%	LFP score: $(83.7/81.3)*100 = 102.9$ Education score: $(76.7/73.7)*100 = 104.1$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*102.9) + (0.5*104.1) = 103.5$
Estonia	Female LFP: 74.3% Male: 73.2% Gender wage gap: 17.3%	LFP score: $(74.3/73.2)*100 = 101.5$ Gap score: $(1-0.173)*100 = 82.7$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*101.5) + (0.5*82.7) = 92.1$
Kazakhstan	Female LFP: 58.2% Male LFP: 74.2% Female tertiary education: 58.9% Male tertiary education: 56.7%	LFP score: $(58.2/74.2)*100 = 78.4$ Education score: $(58.9/56.7)*100 = 103.9$	Equal (50% each)	Overall score: $(0.5*78.4) + (0.5*103.9) = 91.2$
<i>Note:</i> compiled by author based on [24,25,26]				

Considering the outcomes from Table 2 above, it is possible to highlight some significant findings for each of the analyzed countries. Its index suggests a close parity in both labor force participation and educational attainment between genders in Iceland. Fifth, Estonia has a slightly higher female labor force participation. However, a noticeable gender pay gap exists, leading to a lower score in the wage gap component. Finally, Kazakhstan has

a lower score in female labor force participation compared with other studied countries. Still, a slightly higher female educational attainment rate is a positive sign for gender strategies' effectiveness.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study comprehensively examines paid parental leave policies across selected

countries, including Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan. Generous Leave Durations and Benefit Levels:

a) Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Estonia:

These countries offer extensive parental leave durations, often exceeding a year, with benefits designed to replace a significant portion of the salary. This approach ensures that taking leave does not lead to substantial financial hardship, encouraging both parents to take advantage of the policy.

b) Kazakhstan: In comparison, the leave duration in Kazakhstan is notably shorter, with benefits that replace a smaller fraction of the usual income. This discrepancy can dissuade families, especially fathers, from taking leave, reinforcing traditional gender roles, and limiting parental involvement in early childcare.

Inclusive Eligibility Criteria:

a) Nordic Model: Characterized by inclusive eligibility criteria, these policies ensure that nearly all working parents, regardless of their employment type or history, can access parental leave benefits. This inclusivity supports non-traditional workers and promotes equal opportunities for all parents to bond with their children.

b) Kazakhstan: The eligibility criteria are more restrictive, potentially excluding a significant portion of the workforce. Such limitations can exacerbate inequalities, especially among vulnerable groups, and reduce the overall effectiveness of the policy in supporting family well-being.

The comparison underscores the importance of robust parental leave policies in promoting gender equality, supporting working families, and nurturing a more inclusive and equitable society. The stark differences in parental leave policies between countries like Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, and Kazakhstan highlight the varying degrees of support provided to working families and underscore the profound implications these policies have on gender equality, economic vitality, and societal health. As nations strive to create more inclusive and equitable societies, developing and

implementing comprehensive, gender-neutral parental leave policies should be a priority, offering valuable lessons from the Nordic model for countries worldwide.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Female Employment in Kazakhstan: a Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Women's participation in paid employment is essential for economic and social progress. This article aims to analyze the employment and economic activity of women in Kazakhstan to identify labor market problems. By examining global gender wage gaps and employment rates with a focus on Kazakhstan, the review highlights persistent inequalities and the effectiveness of support programs. The research shows that education significantly enhances women's employment opportunities, with higher educational attainment correlating with increased workforce participation and better pay. However, cultural attitudes often hinder full integration, as traditional gender roles and societal expectations continue to influence career choices and opportunities. Descriptive statistics and histograms illustrate vital trends, such as high employment rates among women over 15 and a significant gender wage gap. Progress in increasing women's wages is evident, yet disparities persist, particularly in high-paying industries where women are underrepresented. The results underscore the need for continued efforts to achieve full gender equality in the labor market. Recommendations include implementing policies to ensure equal pay for equal work, supporting vocational training and career growth for women, and conducting public awareness campaigns to challenge long-held stereotypes. By addressing these issues, the study aims to improve working conditions for women, reduce the gender pay gap, and enhance their economic participation, ultimately contributing to broader economic development.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Women, Employment, Gender Wage Gap, Economic Activity, Kazakhstan

SCSTI: 06.61.33

JEL Code: J16, J21, J31

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1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of women's participation in paid jobs cannot be overstated, as it is a crucial driver of economic and social progress. The historical dynamics of this employment have witnessed substantial changes in recent decades, mirroring the social, economic, and political transformations across various countries and regions. A comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's participation in paid jobs is instrumental in evaluating the efficacy of government programs and policies aimed at bridging the gender gap in employment and enhancing working conditions for women.

According to a UN report, 77 percent of women prefer a paid job, and 66 percent of men support their aspirations. However, most women still need to find their preferred job. This mainly happens due to the inability to combine family responsibilities and work. Also, because of stereotypes, young girls do not go to study for STEM professions, and women prefer to get into "female" professions, the pay for which is lower than for "male" ones. At work, women often encounter gender segregation: in the same position, pay for women and men is different. Women's employment in paid jobs has been an essential topic of study over the past decades [1,2,3].

This literature review will examine the historical dynamics of women's employment in paid jobs and analyze the factors influencing this share. To better understand the topic, a comparison of women's employment rates in different countries will be provided, as will an assessment of the impact of policies and support programs on increasing women's employment. Particular attention will be paid to employment trends among women, the impact of education and skills on their employment, and the role of cultural and social factors. It is essential to understand that as long as workers are underpaid due to gender, all government efforts aimed at reducing inequality become ineffective.

Inequality can reduce motivation and increase dissatisfaction among women. Low

economic activity leads to women's financial dependence on men.

This study aims to analyze and evaluate indicators related to women's employment and economic activity. It will also include a comprehensive review of the economic activity of working-age women, the gender wage gap, and the economic status of women in Kazakhstan. By examining these aspects, the review aims to shed light on women's complex problems in the labor market and propose potential solutions. The structure of this work is as follows: a literature review, methodology sections, an analysis of the results obtained, and a conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research shows significant differences in women's employment compared to men's employment. Many factors influence women's participation in paid jobs: educational attainment, cultural attitudes, and government policies. Research shows that higher levels of education increase female employment. Women more often began to choose a job in second place after leaving. Until now, in the consciousness of the central population, the stable role of a woman as a housewife remains. It is the woman who, when employed, is simultaneously engaged in care, which is classified as unpaid work [4].

Another empirical study found that working women have fewer health problems. Government support programs such as paid parental leave and access to preschool education are essential in reducing inequality [5]. A study of the pandemic period showed that women were more often at risk as the most minor in-demand workers. Also, women usually lost their jobs on their initiative, as they chose family during this challenging period [6]. Other authors highlight many new topics, such as workplace leadership, harassment, and gender-sensitive policymaking [7]. The emergence of new issues may be because, previously, such topics could not arise due to the small number of working women. Over the past 30 years, women's participation in the

workforce has increased. This trend is also gaining momentum in developed and developing countries. However, the increase in working women is low in countries with transition economies and lagging countries. There is also a pay gap between men and women across countries (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Comparison of pay levels for women and men in workplaces

Country	Gender Pay Gap	Source
Estonia	20 %	[8; 9; 10]
Germany	20 %	[8]
Luxembourg	5 %	[8; 11]
Netherlands	11.5 %	[12]
USA	20-23 %	[13; 14; 15]
Great Britain	18.1 %	[16]
South Africa	27.1-89 %	[17; 18; 19; 20; 21]
Nigeria	77 %	[17]
Tanzania	12% - cities, 83% - rural areas	[19]
Russia	7 %	[22]
Armenia	5.5 %	[22]

Note: compiled by authors

It is crucial to note that the gender pay gap is not a localized issue but a global one. The most significant disparities are observed in African countries, particularly in rural areas where girls' education is alarmingly low. This is further exacerbated by the underrepresentation of women in professions, a trend that is partly due to employers' lack of registration in official structures. Additionally, informal self-employed women's businesses in villages contribute to this disparity [22].

In the United States, pay segregation occurs due to the presence of children, household responsibilities, participation in trade unions, and the presence or absence of specific skills. Scientists have proven that there are a lot of other factors that are not related to gender stereotypes [12,13]. Replacement of female managers occurs more often than male managers. The pay of substitutes has a difference of 20%, which shows horizontal segregation. Other scientists have proven that

female managers cope better with company crises, and ethnicity does not matter [14,15].

In Switzerland, there is discrimination against women by employers, as shown by several surveys. Studies in the Netherlands and Switzerland showed a non-significant pay gap [23]. In addition, scientists have found that personal characteristics are more important in employment than gender. The trend towards hiring specialists with high cognitive abilities has been growing recently. Interestingly, a study conducted by Semykina and Linz showed similar results. The authors argue that those workers who consider external circumstances to be the reason for influencing decisions have low earnings. Women and men who had higher earnings showed a tendency towards internal independence in decision-making [22].

As a result, a reasonably broad topic for studying the representation of women of different ages in the labor market shows the problems of women's employment depending on the country and region of residence. This issue is still poorly understood in Kazakhstan.

While the gender pay gap remains a persistent issue, there is reason for optimism. Women's participation in paid jobs is on the rise, particularly in countries with developed economies and high levels of education. This positive trend is primarily attributed to the role of government policies and support programs, which have been instrumental in increasing women's employment and reducing the gender wage gap. However, it is essential to acknowledge that significant challenges and barriers still exist, and concerted efforts are needed to achieve full gender equality in the labor market.

3. METHODOLOGY

Works that include a literature review show the same results as quantitative studies. This is how the author Osundina O. used data on women's health and work. The conclusion was that working women tend to get sick less [5]. Decomposition analysis allows us to identify horizontal segregation using data on women's

and men's wages [7]. Other scientists use cross-sections from the Current Population Survey (CPS) based on survey data [12]. Methods of

statistical analysis are in the description (Figure 1).

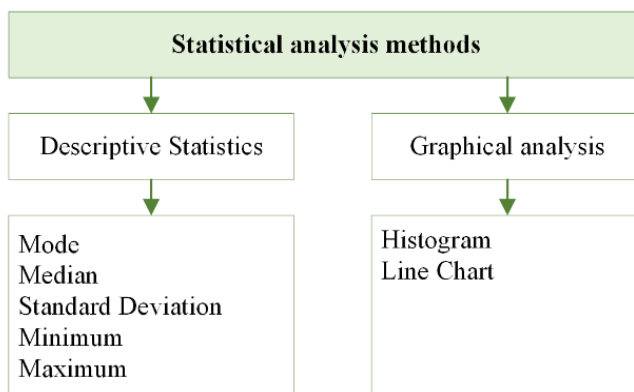


FIGURE 1. Research Methodology

Note: compiled by authors

Descriptive statistics include the following: mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and the 25th and 75th percentiles. Descriptive statistics involves calculating various statistics to describe the essential characteristics of data. The mean, median, and mode give an idea of the central tendency of the data. The standard deviation shows the degree of spread of the data around the mean, which is essential for understanding the variability of the data.

Mean: Represents the average of all observations for each indicator. The basic calculation formula is presented below:

$$\mu = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}{n}, \quad (1)$$

где μ – Mean;
 x_i — every observation,
 n — number of observations.

Median - this value divides the data in half so that 50% of the values are below it and 50% are above it. If the number of observations is odd, the median is the average of the two middle observations. The basic calculation formula two is presented below:

$$Median = \begin{cases} x_{(\frac{n+1}{2})}, & \text{if } n \text{ is odd} \\ \frac{x_{(\frac{n}{2})} + x_{(\frac{n}{2}+1)}}{2}, & \text{if } n \text{ is even} \end{cases}, \quad (2)$$

Mode - is the value that occurs most often in the data set. Standard Deviation measures the dispersion of data relative to the mean value. The basic calculation formula 3 is presented below:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2}{n}}, \quad (3)$$

где σ — Standard Deviation;
 μ — average value;
 x_i — every observation;
 n — number of observations.

The minimum and maximum values (Minimum and Maximum) are calculated — the smallest and largest values in the data set. The 25th and 75th percentiles (25th and 75th Percentiles) are indicators below which 25% and 75% of the data are located, respectively.

A Histogram is a bar graph showing the frequency distribution of data values. It allows us to visually assess the shape of the data distribution and identify the presence of biases,

concentrations, or anomalies. Histograms in this analysis are used to illustrate the distribution of the share of women in paid jobs, the employment rate among women over 15 years of age, and the share of the economically active working-age population among the Line graph is used to display time series, such as the trend in the average monthly salary of women. The horizontal axis represents time (years), and the vertical axis represents the indicator's value (salary in thousands of tenge). A line graph helps identify trends and changes in an indicator over time and allows for assessing the speed and stability of changes. These methods will enable us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data, identify critical

trends and variability, and present the analysis results in a visual form.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Abbreviations will be introduced to better present the results. The share of women in paid workplaces, % is A, the Level of employment among women over 15 years old, % is B, the Share of the economically active population of working age among w is C. The ratio of the average monthly salary of women to men, % is D. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for four women's employment and economic activity indicators.

TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics

Indicator	Location		Spread				
	Mode	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	25th percentile	75th percentile
A	49.8	49.9	0.456	48.9	50.6	49.5	50.1
B	61.2	61.2	0.995	59.8	62.8	60.4	61.8
C	78.8	78.8	0.916	76.7	80.3	78.5	79.2
D	30.06	32.2	04.01	21.06	34.2	30.05	33.0

Note: compiled by authors based on [24]

The number of observations is 13, and there are all the data. The mean of the first indicator is 49.8%, and the median is 49.9%, indicating that women make up approximately half of the workforce in the study locations. The standard deviation is 0.456, which means little variability in the data. The minimum and maximum values are 48.9% and 50.6%, respectively. Thus, the range of changes is small, as evidenced by the 25th and 75th percentiles of 49.5% and 50.1%.

Further, the average and median for the indicator "employment rate among women over 15 years of age" are equal to 61.2%, which indicates high employment among women in this age group. The standard deviation is 0.995, indicating slightly more significant variability than the first measure. The minimum value is 59.8%, and the maximum is 62.8%. The 25th

and 75th percentile values are 60.4% and 61.8%, respectively. This means that half of the observations fall within the narrow range of 60.4% to 61.8%.

For the third indicator, the mean and median are 78.8%, indicating high economic activity of working-age women. The standard deviation is 0.916, indicating little variability. The minimum value is 76.7%, and the maximum is 80.3%. The 25th and 75th percentile values are 78.5% and 79.2%, respectively, confirming the concentration of values in a narrow range.

The average ratio of the monthly average wage of women to men's salary is 30.06%, and the median is 32.2%, indicating a significant wage gap between women and men. The standard deviation is 4.01, indicating more significant variability than other indicators.

Next, Figure 2 shows the distribution of women's share of paid jobs.

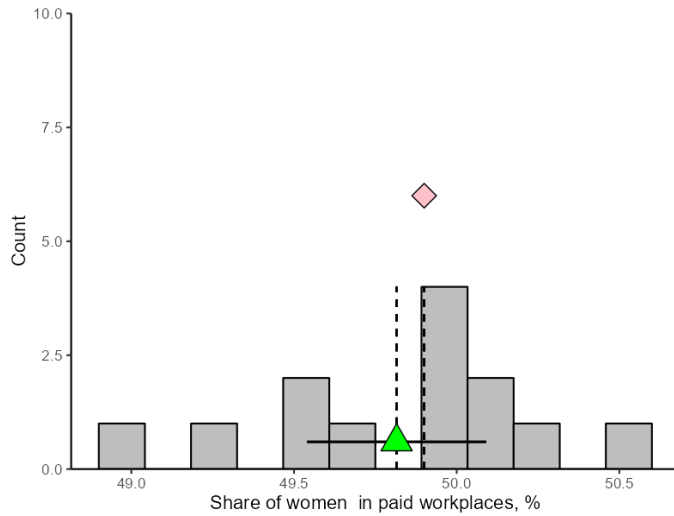


FIGURE 2. Distribution of women's share in paid jobs

Note: compiled by authors

The histogram shows that most observations are centered around the value of 49.9%, which corresponds to the median and mean. The most common values range from 49.5% to 50.1%. This confirms the previously mentioned low variability in the data, where the percentage of women varies within a

narrow range of around 50%. Overall, the histogram clearly illustrates the symmetrical and concentrated distribution of women's share of paid jobs. Figure 3 shows the dynamics of the average monthly salary of women in thousands of tenge from 2010 to 2022.

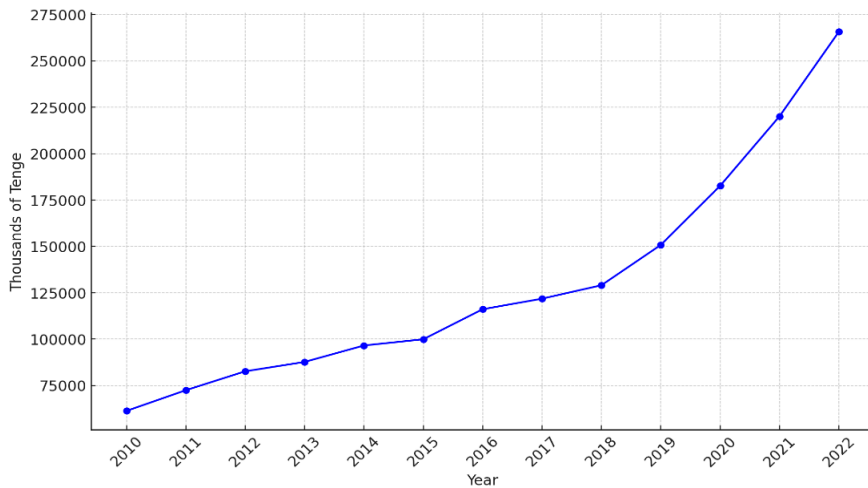


FIGURE 3. Dynamics of the average monthly salary among women, in thousands of tenge

Note: compiled by authors

The horizontal axis represents years, and the vertical axis represents the average monthly salary in thousands of tenge. The

monthly average wage has steadily increased since 2010. In 2010, the average salary was 61,273 thousand tenge, and by 2022, it increased to 265,762 thousand tenge.

This significant increase is especially noticeable after 2015, when wages began to rise faster. For example, from 2015 to 2016, salaries increased from 99,911 to 116,108 thousand tenge, and from 2020 to 2021 - from 182,679 to 220,160 thousand tenge. The graph illustrates a stable wage increase, which may indicate positive economic trends in

Kazakhstan over this period.

Most observations are centered around the value of 61.2%, which corresponds to the mean and median for this indicator. Figure 4 shows the distribution of employment levels among women over 15 years of age.

The graph illustrates the consistent rise in average monthly salaries in Kazakhstan, likely reflecting broader economic growth and improved labor market conditions over the past decade.

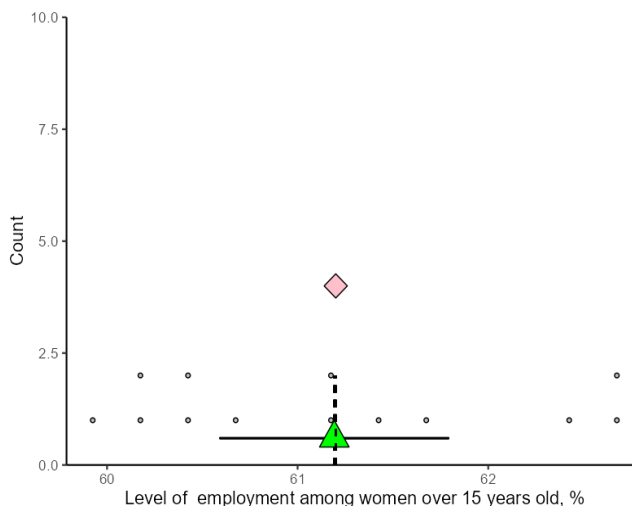


Figure 4. Distribution of employment rates among women over 15 years of age, percentage

Note: compiled by the authors

The most significant number of observations falls on values of about 61%. This confirms the low variability of the data, with a minimum employment rate of 59.8% and a maximum of 62.8%. The 25th and 75th percentile values are 60.4% and 61.8%, respectively, indicating that the data are concentrated in a narrow range. Visually, the histogram shows that data on the employment rate of women over 15 years of age have a symmetrical distribution around the average value. This visualization confirms the findings from descriptive statistics that the employment rate for women over 15 years of age averages 61.2%, with slight variations from this value.

The horizontal axis shows the percentage of

the economically active population, ranging from 76.7% to 80.3%. The vertical axis displays the number of observations for each indicator's value.

Next, Figure 5 shows the distribution of the share of the economically active working-age population among women.

The histogram shows that most observations are concentrated around the value of 78.8%, corresponding to this indicator's mean and median values. The most significant number of observations falls on values of about 78.8%, confirming the data's low variability. The minimum value of the share of the economically active population among women is 76.7%, and the maximum is 80.3%. The 25th and 75th percentile values are 78.5% and

79.2%, respectively, indicating that the data are concentrated in a narrow range. Visually, the histogram shows a symmetrical

distribution of values around the average, confirming the high economic activity of working-age women with minor deviations.

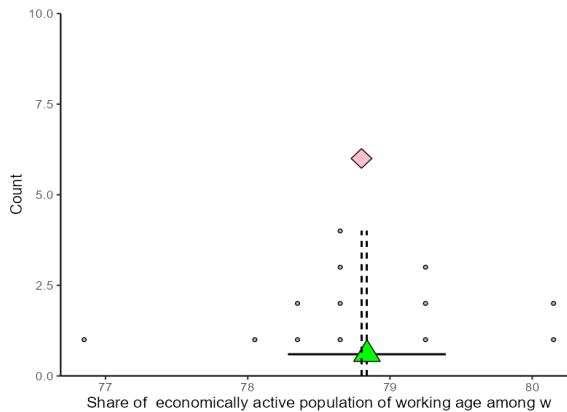


FIGURE 5. Distribution of the share of the economically active working-age population among women, percentage

Note: compiled by the authors

This visualization reinforces the findings from descriptive statistics that, on average, 78.8% of working-age women are economically active.

The presence of segregation can be determined based on data on the level of wages in Kazakhstan among men and women (Figure 6).

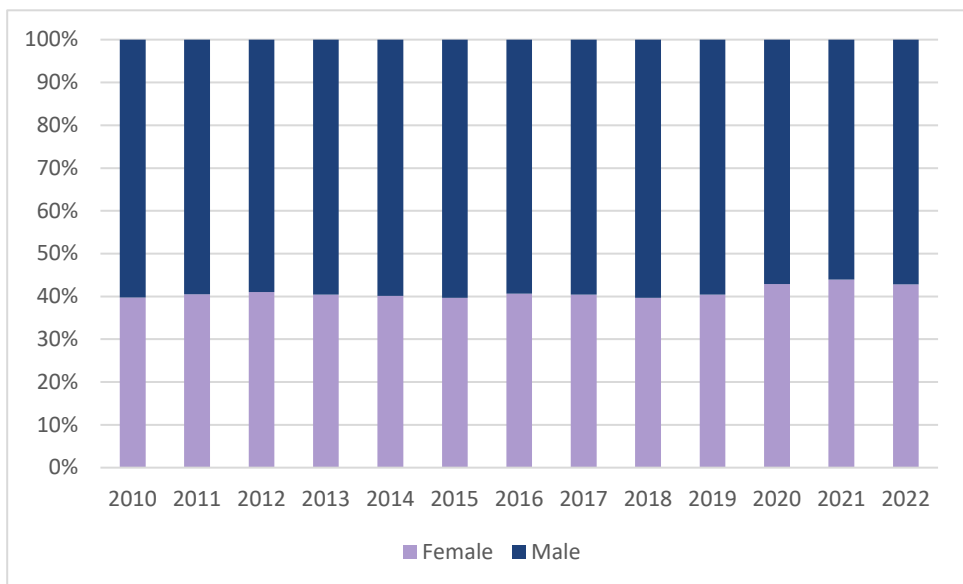


FIGURE 6. Distribution of wages of women and men

Note: compiled by authors

An analysis of wage data for men and women from 2010 to 2022 shows significant

wage increases for both genders. During this period, women's wages increased from 61,273 to 265,762 (approximately 4.3 times), and

men's wages increased from 92,853 to 355,296 (approximately 3.8 times). Despite the overall increase in wages, the gender wage gap remains a stark reality, with men consistently earning more than women. The absolute gap increased from 31,580 in 2010 to 89,534 in 2022. However, the relative gap has narrowed: if in 2010 women earned about 66% of men's wages, then in 2022 - about 75%. This suggests that women's wages are growing faster than men's, but it's important to note that the narrowing gap is still significant. The data underscores the need for continued efforts to reduce the gender pay gap and improve wage equality, as the issue is far from resolved. Policy interventions and organizational initiatives should accelerate the pace of wage equality to bridge the remaining gender pay gap more effectively.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study aims to identify current trends and challenges in women's employment and provide recommendations to improve their economic status and reduce the gender pay gap. The analysis revealed horizontal segregation in women's wages, consistent with the literature review on the pay gap between women and men [8, 10, 13, 14, 15]. Based on the results of the analysis, the following recommendations:

1. The significant wage gap between women and men requires developing and implementing policies to ensure equal pay for equal work. Recommended measures are increasing wage transparency, regular wage audits, and mandatory compliance with the principles of gender equality when setting wages.

2. Given the high level of employment among women, it is essential to continue to support and encourage their economic activity. This may include vocational training and retraining programs, creating favorable conditions for combining work and family responsibilities.

3. The high economic activity of working-age women indicates the significant potential of this population segment. To maintain and

increase this activity, programs should be developed to support women's entrepreneurship, improve working conditions, and provide additional opportunities for career growth.

4. Regular monitoring of women's employment and economic activity indicators will allow timely identification of problem areas and the development of measures to eliminate them.

5. Campaigns and educational programs should be conducted to raise public awareness of the importance of gender equality in the workplace. This will help change long-held stereotypes and create a more inclusive work environment.

These recommendations aim to improve working conditions for women, reduce the gender pay gap, and increase their economic participation, which ultimately contributes to the development of the economy as a whole. Business leaders and entrepreneurs can apply the recommendations to create more inclusive and equitable work environments, increase women's employment rates, and ensure equal pay for equal work.

Academic and research institutions can use the recommendations to conduct further research and educational programs to increase awareness of gender inequality in employment. Thus, future researchers can perform a more detailed analysis to identify hidden disparities. Also, the barriers and obstacles women face in finding jobs and advancing in their careers have yet to be studied. It can also explore different age groups and education levels.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



The Role of Economic Assistance in Overcoming the Consequences of Domestic Violence: an International Review

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Abstract

Understanding the factors affecting the participation of women in paid work is necessary to assess the effectiveness of government programs aimed at reducing the gender gap in employment and improving working conditions for women. The purpose of the study is to obtain reliable and reasonable conclusions about the best practices and strategies for economic support for victims of domestic violence. This literature review studies the historical dynamics of women's employment in paid work and analyzes the factors affecting this process. Methodologically, the study uses a systematic review of the literature, a comparative analysis, a qualitative analysis of the data, and the systematization of information. A comparative analysis of different countries' approaches reveals the most effective practices, taking into account legislative acts, social programs, and economic initiatives. Examples from the USA, Austria, Sweden, and other countries show that security orders, police intervention, crisis centers, and economic support programs are key components. In Kazakhstan, recent legislative measures and the creation of crisis centers have become a step forward, although there are problems in solving issues of psychological and economic violence. The study emphasizes the importance of a multifaceted approach to the fight against domestic violence, including legal, preventive, protective, and economic support measures.

Keywords: Gender, Domestic Violence, Economic Assistance, Financial Independence, Social Programs, Legal Measures

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1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of women's participation in paid jobs cannot be overstated, as it is a crucial driver of economic and social progress. The historical dynamics of this employment have witnessed substantial changes in recent decades, mirroring the social, economic, and political transformations across various countries and regions. A comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's participation in paid jobs is instrumental in evaluating the efficacy of government programs and policies aimed at bridging the gender gap in employment and enhancing working conditions for women.

According to a UN report, 77 percent of women prefer a paid job, and 66 percent of men support their aspirations. However, most women still need to find their preferred job. This mainly happens due to the inability to combine family responsibilities and work. Also, because of stereotypes, young girls do not go to study for STEM professions, and women prefer to get into "female" professions, the pay for which is lower than for "male" ones. At work, women often encounter gender segregation: in the same position, pay for women and men is different. Women's employment in paid jobs has been an essential topic of study over the past decades [1,2,3].

This literature review will examine the historical dynamics of women's employment in paid jobs and analyze the factors influencing this share. To better understand the topic, a comparison of women's employment rates in different countries will be provided, as will an assessment of the impact of policies and support programs on increasing women's employment. Particular attention will be paid to employment trends among women, the impact of education and skills on their employment, and the role of cultural and social factors. It is essential to understand that as long as workers are underpaid due to gender, all government efforts aimed at reducing inequality become ineffective.

Inequality can reduce motivation and increase dissatisfaction among women. Low

economic activity leads to women's financial dependence on men.

This study aims to analyze and evaluate indicators related to women's employment and economic activity. It will also include a comprehensive review of the economic activity of working-age women, the gender wage gap, and the economic status of women in Kazakhstan. By examining these aspects, the review aims to shed light on women's complex problems in the labor market and propose potential solutions. The structure of this work is as follows: a literature review, methodology sections, an analysis of the results obtained, and a conclusion.

2. METHODOLOGY

A literature review is a methodologically rigorous and reproducible process for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all available research on a particular topic.

Stages of research:

- (1) Systematic literature review;
- (2) Comparative analysis;
- (3) Qualitative data analysis;
- (4) Systematization of information;
- (5) Interpretation and synthesis of data.

A systematic literature review provides a comprehensive and informed analysis of the problem, allowing reliable and valid conclusions to be drawn about best practices and strategies for economic support for victims of domestic violence.

A comparative analysis of the approaches and strategies of different countries to support victims of domestic violence highlighted the main trends and the most effective practices,

A qualitative analysis of data from various sources identified key methods and strategies of economic support: analysis of legislative acts, social programs, and economic initiatives.

All received data was systematized and organized in a table for visual presentation — critical trends in combating domestic violence in various countries.

Based on the analysis and systematization of information, general conclusions were drawn about the most effective methods of

economic assistance and their impact on reducing domestic violence and increasing women's financial independence.

Select countries

Countries were selected that have extensive experience and proven practices in combating domestic violence and supporting victims. For example, Sweden and Austria are known for their innovative legislative initiatives and social programs.

Including countries with different levels of economic development, such as the United States and Sweden, as well as developing countries, allows us to compare approaches and identify effective methods applicable to different economic conditions.

Analysis of countries with different cultural and social contexts, such as Indonesia and Kazakhstan, helps to understand how cultural characteristics influence the design and implementation of interventions to support victims of violence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 International experience and strategies to combat domestic violence

The total number of OSCE-participating countries that do not have laws on marital rape is 28. In this situation, “underdeveloped” countries should rely on the experience of “developed” ones. Among such countries are Austria, Germany, Sweden, and the USA. Most European countries adhere to international norms and legal acts in the field of protecting women from violence.

To study the experience of combating domestic violence in Europe, it is advisable to turn to countries with rich experience and current practices. Their practice shows that an effective way to combat domestic violence is to create the institution of protective orders. A review of international practices and strategies to prevent domestic violence (Table 1) shows that each country uses a combination of legislative, preventive, and economic measures to support victims of violence.

TABLE 1. Critical trends in combating domestic violence against women in different countries

Country	Authors	Prevention programs and strategies	Protection measures	Economic support programs
USA	[4, 5, 6, 7]	Civil protection orders	Social services for children and families, Reducing repeat violence	Financial support for families, Economic independence programs
Austria	[8, 9]	Police intervention	Police can evict violators	Financial benefits
Sweden	[9]	Prohibition of corporal punishment of minors, Law on the inviolability of the person of a woman, a child who witnesses domestic violence is recognized as a victim	more than 200 crisis centers, psychological assistance is also provided to men who have realized their tendencies towards violence and abuse.	Funds are allocated for providing consultations, both by telephone and in person, for the maintenance of crisis centers, and for programs to work with aggressors.
Bulgaria	[8]	Public condemnation	Public condemnation	
Great Britain	[10, 11, 12]	Protection orders, notices of violence	Information about previous partner violence	Grants for support
Germany	[9, 13]	Interdepartmental cooperation	Joint actions of police and medical institutions	Financial grants for victims

Indonesia	[14, 15, 16, 17]	Legal and preventive measures	Ratification of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law	Economic support for victims
Poland	[9, 18]	Public condemnation	Public condemnation	Economic consulting
Romania	[19]	Criminal procedural measures	Supporting victims in legal proceedings	Financial assistance programs
Serbia	[20]	Urgent protection measures	Temporary eviction and no contact order	Entrepreneurship support for victims
Belgium	[21]	Restrictive measures	Offender Program	Employment support
Bosnia and Herzegovina	[22]	Family legislation, special laws on the prevention of violence	State support	Grants for victims
Russia	[23, 24, 25]	Legal remedies	Temporary eviction of the offender	Governmental support
Ukraine	[21, 26, 27, 28]	Restrictive measures, Support for victims, criminal liability for perpetrators	Offender Program, Right to Protection from Domestic Violence	Financial assistance and training
Kazakhstan	[29, 30]	Crisis centers	Law aimed at respecting women's rights and ensuring the safety of children	Financial support for victims of violence
<i>Note: compiled by authors</i>				

Table 1 includes experiences from countries that have adapted responses to domestic violence to suit their local context and culture. The critical aspect remains the coordination of the efforts of various government and non-government organizations to create an effective system to support victims of violence and prevent its recurrence.

3.2 Measures to combat domestic violence in the world

The US government devotes enormous amounts of money to researching domestic violence and developing new approaches to combating it. For example, from 1994 to 2000, the US government allocated \$435.75 million to combat intimate partner violence (IPV) and \$1.5 billion to combat violence against elderly family members. Specific programs in this area are carried out by nine US ministries, including the ministries of health, education, justice, defense, etc.

Over the past decade, the United States has seen a consistent trend toward a significant drop in the rate of all forms of violent crime, including murder. Domestic violence rates have also been declining nationwide since 1994.

US legislators quickly responded to the "discovery" of the problem of domestic violence: first against children, then against women, men, and elderly relatives, which resulted in the adoption of several special laws. At present, practically nothing is known about the effectiveness of most of them. However, some experts are already discussing the haste to use specific legitimate measures [7].

For example, laws requiring healthcare personnel to report suspected domestic violence to the police or other authorities (depending on state law) may have a negative effect. Violation of the principle of confidentiality undermines patients' trust in medical personnel, which can prevent both victims of violence and perpetrators from seeking medical help [8]. The likelihood of

retaliation against victims of violence and medical personnel increases. Finally, the efficiency of the work of doctors decreases as they try not to ask unnecessary questions in order to avoid subsequent mandatory interaction with exceptional services.

The system of social protection of women from domestic violence is based on a wide variety of programs and practices (about 1800). Shelters for women, which emerged in the 1970s, are especially common (1200) [9]. Today, there is a network of various social services providing medical and legal services, 24-hour hotlines, advice on finding housing and work, and treatment for alcohol and drug addiction.

Although the United States allocates vast amounts of funds for various programs to prevent and combat domestic violence, the money is still not enough. Because of their limited nature, funds are often spent on "doing something" rather than "learning something." In addition, according to some American scientists, practitioners want to avoid evaluating the results of their work [10]. Part of the reason is the concern that representative scientific studies will not confirm the hypothesis about the effectiveness of a particular program. The presence of data confirming the program's ineffectiveness threatens to limit the financial resources for its implementation. Therefore, sociological statistics are widely used to "make demands" in the struggle to distribute financial resources.

3.3 Measures to combat domestic violence in Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, crisis centers and shelters for victims of domestic violence also provide tremendous support to women who find themselves in difficult life situations [29]. These include government organizations, such as the Zhansaya crisis center, and non-governmental, non-profit organizations working with the support of interested parties (for example, the well-known "Mother's House" by Bulat Utemuratov). Every year, several hundred victims of domestic violence

are admitted to such centers [30, 31].

The adoption in April 2024 in Kazakhstan of a law aimed at respecting women's rights and ensuring the safety of children, as well as amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses, became a good help in the fight against domestic violence in the country. These measures will help improve the legal, social, institutional, and other foundations of the state's family policy, as well as strengthen the protection of women's rights and the safety of children, tighten administrative and criminal liability for violations of their safety, and also contribute to the prevention of violence in family and household relationships. Today, women and their children in Kazakhstan receive a wide range of services aimed at recovery in crisis centers. One of the most critical areas is social and psychological rehabilitation. This is done to ensure that all applicants receive high-quality psychological support under conditions of equal access.

Considering that the consequences of domestic violence affect many aspects of the victim's life - physical and psychological health, social functioning, and legal status, crisis centers should have specialists from medicine, psychology, victimology, pedagogy, law, and the social sphere.

However, despite the fact that the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan mentions domestic violence of all four types (physical, psychological, sexual, and economic), the primary fight is mainly with physical violence. Statistics on psychological and economic types of violence are not collected. This kind of data can only be obtained when victims of domestic violence enter crisis centers and fill out questionnaires. But, based on these collected data, no statistics are generated at the state level. There are no mechanisms and procedures to document and record statistics on psychological and economic violence.

Legislation on the prevention of domestic violence defines a "victim" as a person harmed by such actions but does not include a definition of "aggressor" [32]. This gap in the law has an impact on the overall situation in the

fight against domestic violence since the primary attention of government agencies is focused on protecting and helping victims. However, there are no effective measures to deal with abusers. The analysis shows that the primary efforts in the fight against domestic violence are focused on legal measures and the provision of specialized social services for victims [33].

Meanwhile, only practical cooperation at all levels will allow the successful implementation of programs that provide emergency and long-term assistance to victims of domestic violence and their families. Non-governmental organizations manage to make a significant contribution to the fight against domestic violence since victims often trust specialized centers rather than government agencies [34]. However, in Kazakhstan, using the example of the Zhan-Saya crisis center, we see that the state system is trying to transform itself to the needs of people, in this case, victims of domestic violence and people who find themselves in difficult life situations. The adoption in April 2024 in Kazakhstan of a law aimed at respecting women’s rights and ensuring the safety of children, as well as amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses, became a good help in the fight

against domestic violence in the country. These measures will help improve the legal, social, institutional, and other foundations of the state’s family policy, as well as strengthen the protection of women’s rights and the safety of children, tighten administrative and criminal liability for violations of their safety, and also contribute to the prevention of violence in family and household relationships [35].

3.4 Impact of domestic violence on work and support across countries

Frequent absences from work due to medical appointments, court dates, or physical and emotional exhaustion can decrease productivity. Chronic emotional stress, stress, and depression can reduce cognitive function, affecting the ability to make decisions, solve problems, and perform complex tasks. Addressing the concerns of women workers helps improve their productivity and contributes to a more inclusive and supportive workplace.

Table 2 helps identify general trends and best practices that can be applied in Kazakhstan to improve the situation with support for victims of domestic violence.

TABLE 2. Dynamics of the average monthly salary among women, in thousands of tenge

Impact on work	Target group	Countries	Sources
1. Loss of work and disability; 2. Reduced productivity and absenteeism; 3. Psychological and physical health problems.	Help is provided to all women	USA, Sweden, Bulgaria, UK, Indonesia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine	[4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28]
	Help is provided to all low-income women	Austria, Germany,	[8, 9, 13, 23, 24, 25]
	Help is provided to all women and children	Russia	[29, 30]

Note: compiled by authors

Economic assistance to women survivors of domestic violence includes various support measures aimed at increasing their financial independence and stabilization. Social

assistance and financial support are the leading measures. Research shows that financial assistance and employment opportunities reduce violence in families by increasing women's independence from abusive partners

[35]. Women who have experienced violence face financial difficulties such as debt and stolen money. Social workers can provide financial and emotional support, essential for recovery [36]. Educational programs and skills development can also significantly improve the financial well-being of women survivors of violence. Programs to teach financial literacy have proven effective in the short term [37].

Individual savings account (IDA) programs for victims of violence have shown that women can successfully accumulate savings and use them to purchase assets, which contributes to their economic stability [38].

Government Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs can provide the financial stability needed to leave an abusive relationship. However, some requirements, such as child support reporting, may increase the risk for victims of abuse. Thus, effective economic interventions for women survivors of domestic violence include social and financial support, educational programs, savings programs, and government support programs. These measures help women achieve financial independence and reduce the risk of returning to abusive relationships.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Financial independence and stability allow victims of violence not only to overcome current difficulties but also to avoid returning to an abusive partner. Policies and measures to support women economically must be comprehensive and consider different aspects of their lives. Practical economic assistance for women survivors of domestic violence must include a variety of measures aimed at financial stability and independence. Social and financial support, educational and savings programs, government programs, and protective orders play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and recovery of victims. The experience of various countries shows that an integrated approach and cooperation between government agencies, social services, and non-governmental organizations are necessary

conditions for successfully combating domestic violence and supporting its victims.

To effectively combat domestic violence and support victims in Kazakhstan, comprehensive measures are needed, including social, financial, and legal support.

Firstly, it is necessary to expand the network of crisis centers and shelters, such as the Zhansaya crisis center. These centers should provide victims of violence with temporary housing, medical, psychological, and legal assistance, as well as assistance in finding employment. Crisis centers must offer high-quality social and psychological rehabilitation programs for all applicants, ensuring equal access to services.

Secondly, developing and implementing training and advanced training programs for women will help them acquire skills in demand in the labor market and ensure their financial independence. Conducting financial literacy courses is also necessary, as it will help women effectively manage their finances and plan for the future.

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Gender Differences in Motivation for Success and Their Impact on Personal and Professional Achievements of Students

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Abstract

Research on gender differences in students' motivation to succeed has essential economic and social implications. In a modern economy based on knowledge and innovation, gender differences in motivation can significantly influence the distribution and efficiency of human capital. The study aims to identify gender differences in personal and professional achievements among university students. Research shows that men are more likely to strive for high goals and demonstrate high motivation to succeed, while women tend to have more realistic goals and sustainable achievements. Diagnosing motivation using T. Ehlers' method showed that boys have a high level of motivation (25.6), while girls have an average level of motivation (21.85). A moderately high level of motivation was more pronounced in girls (12.5) than boys (9.3). Cultural and social factors, gender stereotypes, and societal expectations may explain these differences. Understanding gender differences in motivation can help develop educational and professional programs that promote equal motivation in students of both genders. This paper contributes to increased productivity, innovation, and competitiveness in the labor market. Considering motivational factors allows the creation of more effective systems for stimulating labor and optimizing resources, which leads to sustainable economic growth and development.

Keywords: Motivation for Success, Gender Stereotypes, Students, Personal Achievements

SCSTI: 06.77.59

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1. INTRODUCTION

Research on gender differences in students' motivation to succeed has important economic implications. Human capital becomes critical to growth and development in a modern economy based on knowledge and innovation. Gender differences in motivation to succeed can significantly impact the allocation and efficiency of using this capital. Gender differences in motivation influence students' choice of professions and career paths. High motivation for success in boys and moderately high in girls can lead to different approaches to professional development, affecting their participation in various sectors of the economy. Understanding motivational differences can help employers create environments that support the development of both male and female workforces, thereby increasing overall productivity and innovativeness.

Different levels of motivation can determine worker performance and productivity. Boys with high motivation can strive for more ambitious goals, which promotes innovation, while girls with moderately high motivation can produce consistent results and work more effectively in teams. Considering motivational factors allows you to create more effective labor incentive systems, which leads to resource optimization and cost reduction.

Information about gender differences in motivation to succeed can help design educational and professional development programs that address the specific needs and potential of students of both genders. This contributes to a more rational distribution of investments in human capital. Education policymakers can use this data to create conditions that promote maximum self-fulfillment for all students, which in the long term increases economic growth by improving the skills and productivity of the workforce.

Promoting gender equality in the labor market and education has positive economic effects. Equal access to opportunities for self-realization and professional growth contributes to the workforce's full potential, ultimately

stimulating economic growth. Creating equal opportunities for men and women to achieve success helps remove barriers to equality and promotes more inclusive economic development. Thus, the study of gender differences in students' motivation to succeed is closely related to economics through its impact on the labor market, economic efficiency, investment in education and development, and the promotion of gender equality. Understanding and addressing these differences can help create a more efficient and equitable economic system supporting sustainable growth and development. The study aims to identify gender differences in the sphere of personal and professional achievements among university students.

Research Question: Research on gender differences in personal and professional achievements will create opportunities for more effective use of human capital, allowing students to realize their potential in economic activity better and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gender differences in professional achievements

Differences in motivation and achievement between women and men can significantly impact their professional careers. Research shows that men are more likely to strive for high goals and demonstrate high motivation to succeed, while women tend to have more realistic and achievable goals [1]. These differences may be due to cultural and social factors, as well as differences in upbringing and societal expectations. The terms “glass ceiling” and “sticky floor” often describe women's obstacles in advancing their careers. The glass ceiling refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from achieving senior management positions despite their qualifications and experience [2]. “Sticky floors” describes a situation where women are

stuck at the entry- and mid-levels of the career ladder with no opportunities for advancement.

Gender differences in motivation and personality characteristics also influence professional achievement. Women are more likely to face barriers to career advancement, such as gender stereotypes and an imbalance between work and family responsibilities [3]. These factors may limit their ability to develop professionally and achieve senior organizational positions. Considering gender differences in personal and professional achievements can create opportunities for more effective use of human capital. Developing programs that consider these differences can help students better realize their potential and increase their competitiveness in the job market. For example, special mentoring and career counseling programs for women can contribute to their professional growth and success [4].

Unfortunately, gender stereotypes play a significant role in shaping professional achievement and career growth. Men are often perceived as more ambitious and capable of leadership, leading to their promotion to leadership positions. This bias is not only unfair but also limits women's career opportunities. Women, on the other hand, are often judged on different criteria, such as “team player” or “supportive”, which may limit their career opportunities [5].

2.2 Gender differences as a factor of interpersonal understanding in adolescence

Several factors influence personal development. One of them can rightfully be considered one or another gender identity. In a family, gender ideas are formed even before the birth of a child, showing interest in who will be born: a boy or a girl. Social, cultural, and psychological aspects refer to the traits, norms, stereotypes, and roles considered typical and desirable for those society defines as women or men [6].

Scientific evidence has established that gender differences, while rooted in biological psychophysiological disparities, are primarily shaped by societal norms and cultural influences [7]. The significance of studying these gender differences in the context of interpersonal understanding and mutual comprehension during adolescence is underscored by the necessity to enhance the effective utilization of human capital. This involves devising strategies to assist young individuals in overcoming life challenges and interpersonal obstacles. A comprehensive understanding of these differences can pave the way for creating an environment that maximizes the potential of both genders, thereby boosting their economic productivity and overall effectiveness in the labor market.

The term “gender,” a widely recognized concept, encapsulates various social, cultural, and psychological aspects that define the relationship between the sexes, their statuses, unique interests, requests, needs, and strategies. Gender is a “complex sociocultural construct” that encompasses role, behavioral, mental, and emotional disparities between men and women [8]. This comprehensive understanding of gender is crucial for the in-depth analysis of its influence on personal development and interpersonal relationships.

In psychology, gender is a socio-biological characteristic that helps people define the concepts of woman and man. In economics, gender is a socio-biological characteristic that determines differences in the roles, behavior, and perceptions of men and women, influencing their participation in economic activities. Understanding gender perspectives helps analyze how social norms and expectations shape career paths, access to resources, and professional development opportunities for both genders, influencing overall economic growth and development. The social psychology of gender is a vast field for studying attitudes, prejudices, discrimination, social perception and self-perception, self-esteem, and the emergence of social norms, roles, and mutual understanding. Mutual understanding at the social level is

ensured by the consistency and conventionality of social-role expectations and typical patterns of interpersonal relationships [9].

Several skills contribute to better mutual understanding - empathy, constantly collecting and updating information, creating new categories, and correcting one's behavior. In real interpersonal interaction, competence turns out to be a negative quality for women: high competence of women does not enjoy the favor of either men or women because it undermines existing stereotypes. These data were also confirmed in experiments when men and women tried to eliminate competent women from their group in cooperative and competitive interaction [10,11,12].

A woman and a man see the meaning of their existence in a happy life. Although each culture in each historical era gives rise to different ideals of happiness and stereotypes of ideas about it, there is a certain commonality and unity - a happy life without love, without one's chosen one (chosen one), alone is impossible. So, we can say that gender differences determine the process of interpersonal understanding. Thus, understanding another person in boys occurs through intellectual similarity and emotional sympathy, and experience in girls.

2.3 New directions in the study of gender

Modern gender research is guided by several fundamental principles, which include open recognition of the researcher's engagement and involvement in the movement for gender equality [13,14]. The central and most influential part of the gender community of the early 21st century believes that classifying a scientist as a gender scientist means his explicit agreement with the feminist perspective. A feminist perspective provides specific analytical tools and concepts that help better understand and interpret gender differences and inequalities. These include concepts such as patriarchy, gender roles, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Among the tasks set by those who use a gender approach to the analysis of social phenomena, one can highlight: (1) overcoming androcentrism, a categorical refusal to "mix" male and female narratives when reconstructing the life of individual ethnic groups; (2) informal attention to gender differences, separate presentation of the life practices of men and women, (3) separate documentation of men's and women's lives and practices when analyzing the lifestyle of any ethnic group; (4) a particular study of all types of social practices of women's communities and positioning women as "key informants"; (5) special attention to the analysis of female/male experience from the point of view of its bearers/bearers themselves, their life perspective, a look at respondents "from below" and "from within" (insiding), and not "from above", from the position of a sophisticated bearer of the highest truths; (6) conceptualizing female/male behavior as influenced by different social and historical contexts; (7) the ability to listen to one's own emotional reactions, to compare one's life experience with the experience of the informant; (8) fixation of aspects that are not always raised (or not raised at all) by traditional researchers (the role of the daughter in the family, the practices of women's everyday life in hygiene and the treatment of women's diseases, the social experience of trans- and bisexuals, lesbians and gays, the mechanisms of society's rejection of unmasculine men and so on.); (9) focusing on an optimistic perspective and overcoming practices of victimization; (10) training "objects under study" in methods of analyzing their own lives, formulating goals and life tasks related to the elimination of inferiority; (11) the non-authoritarian nature of the conclusions and, in this sense, a departure from the standards of traditional research, in which it is essential to convince - while maintaining the critical focus of the work against biological determinism and the idea that Nature gives something, and therefore unchangeable (that is, against essentialism).

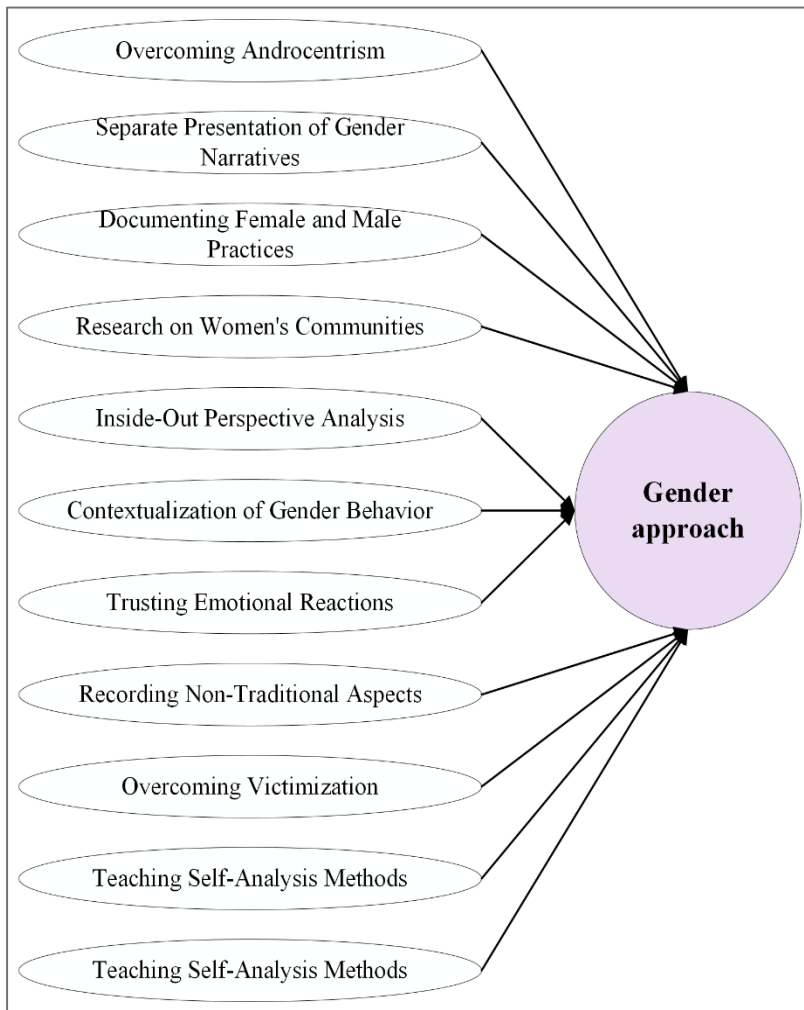


FIGURE 1. Gender approach to the analysis of social phenomena

Note: compiled by authors

Gender studies have influenced academic discourse and had a tangible impact on political and social spheres. They have stimulated activism among political leaders, leading to increased attention to issues of gender equality and inclusion. This has resulted in the creation and support of relevant programs and initiatives. For instance, the number of women in politics has increased, and there is now more focus on issues related to women's rights and gender equality [15,16]. At the local level, gender studies have contributed to developing programs aimed at improving women's living and working conditions. These programs

include support for women entrepreneurs, initiatives to protect against violence and discrimination, and educational programs to raise awareness of gender issues [17]. The influence of gender studies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been significant, helping to create more inclusive and equitable societies. In the United States, they have led to the gender expertise of legislation, political figures' activism, and various public programs' development. These initiatives are instrumental in reducing gender inequality and improving the quality of life for all citizens.

2.4 Student motivation and academic achievement

Student motivation and academic achievement are important indicators of success in an educational environment. Various constructs such as self-perception of ability, task values, goals, and achievement motives predict academic achievement above and beyond intelligence. Research has shown that self-perceptions of ability and task value are potent predictors [18]. Autonomous motivation profiles are also associated with higher academic achievement. Students with self-determined motivation better achieve results in physical education and academic subjects (Boiché et al., 2008). Motivation influences the use of learning strategies, influencing academic performance. Students' perceptions of ability and learning strategies significantly predict academic success [19].

It is a well-documented fact that girls and women often surpass boys and men on various measures of academic achievement. One potential explanation for these trends is the presence of gender differences in motivation. Men tend to showcase and defend their abilities, while women are more inclined to work hard and rectify their shortcomings. Social and educational contexts shape these motivations and are further influenced by gendered socialization patterns, values, and behavior [20].

A study among college students found a significant difference in motivation and achievement between women and men. Women demonstrated higher intrinsic motivation, positively affecting their academic results, while external regulation was more important for men [21]. Gender differences in motivation and academic achievement vary across cultural contexts. For example, a study among students from different countries found significant cultural differences in school motivation. However, in most cultures, women showed higher motivation and achievement rates than men [22].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology for diagnosing personality for motivation for success by T. Ehlers

The personality diagnostic technique for motivation to succeed, developed by Theodor Ehlers, is a psychological test to assess an individual's motivation to succeed. The test consists of statements rated on a Likert scale covering aspects such as desire for success, self-confidence, perseverance, risk-taking, and self-control. Based on the respondent's responses, a total score is calculated and interpreted in the context of motivation to succeed, with high scores indicating high motivation and low scores indicating lack of motivation or barriers. The technique is used in psychological counseling, vocational guidance, education, and scientific research, helping to identify and develop a person's inner motivations to achieve their goals.

3.2 Mann-Whitney U test

The Mann-Whitney rank correlation coefficient was used for the mathematical processing of data. The Mann-Whitney Rank Correlation Coefficient, also known as the Mann-Whitney U test or simply the Mann-Whitney U test, is used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between two independent samples. This test is instrumental when the data is not normally distributed and the sample size is small. A low U-statistic indicates a significant difference between samples. To determine statistical significance, compare the U value with the critical values from the tables for the appropriate significance level (for example, $\alpha=0.05$) and sample sizes n_1 and n_2 .

Research base: University of International Business LLP, Almaty. The personality questionnaire is designed to diagnose, identified by Heckhausen, the motivational orientation of an individual to achieve success.

The stimulus material consists of 41 statements, to which the subject must give one of 2 answer options: “yes” or “no”. The test refers to nanoscale methods. The degree of expression of motivation for success is assessed by the number of points that match the key.

Keys:

– 1 point is awarded for answers “yes” to the following questions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 41;

– also awarded 1 point for answers “no” to questions 6, 19, 18, 20, 24, 31, 36, 38,39;

– answers to questions 1,11, 12,19, 28, 33, 34, 35,40 are not considered.

Next, the total points scored are calculated.

Registered indicators:

– from 1 to 10 points: low motivation for success;

– from 11 to 16 points: average level of motivation;

– from 17 to 20 points: moderately high level of motivation;

– over 21 points: too high level of motivation for success.

4. RESULTS

All indicators of subjects who belong to the system are distributed according to four parameters: “Very high level of motivation”; “Moderately high level of motivation”; “Average level of motivation”; "Low level of motivation." A study of personality diagnostics on student motivation for success is shown below in Figure 2 (N=50).

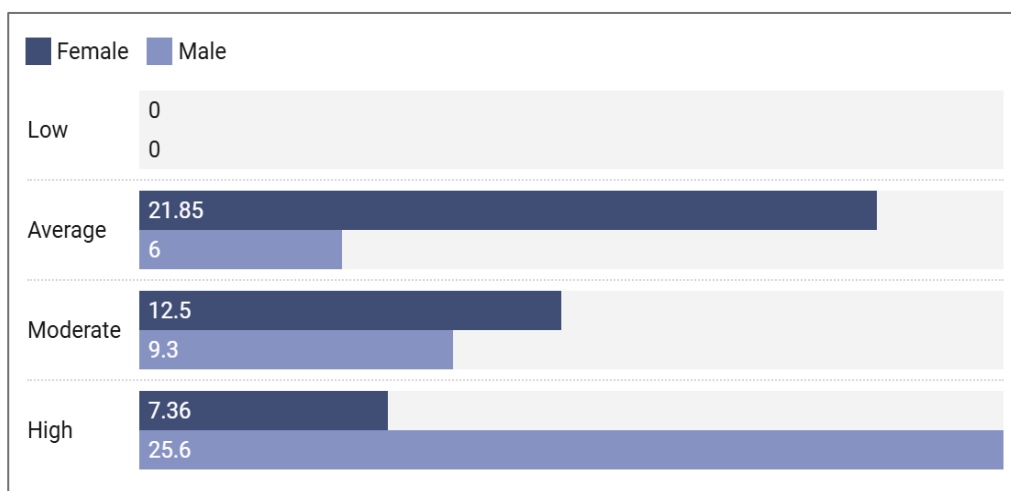


FIGURE 2. Personality diagnostics for motivation for success in boys and girls by T. Ehlers

Note: compiled by authors

The study results show:

1. Young men have a high level of motivation (25.6). They need to set higher goals; the higher a person’s motivation for success—achieving a goal—the lower the willingness to take risks. They fear failure, so they often do not achieve the final result.

2. The average level of motivation prevails among girls (21.85). This finding has practical

implications, suggesting that girls set realistic goals and accurately assess their capabilities. They prefer competitive success, where victory is a personal achievement rather than a luck-based outcome.

3. The moderately high level of motivation among girls is (12.5) for boys (9.3).

4. There is a low level of motivation among boys and girls. This suggests that girls are more

successful in achieving their goals since they adequately assess their capabilities.

Results of correlation analysis using T. Ehlers' method of personality diagnostic research on motivation for success (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Results of correlation analysis of personality diagnostics on motivation to success.

No.	Motivation levels	U-amp results
1	Very tall	-
2	Moderately high	13
3	Average	34
4	Short	-
<i>Note:</i> compiled by author		

Statistically significant relationships were established (at a significance level (from $p \leq 0.01$ to $p \leq 0.05$) in boys and girls from 18 to 21 years old according to the method of studying personality diagnostics on motivation for success by T. Ehlers (2 out of 4 criteria).

5. DISCUSSION

The study revealed significant gender differences in students' motivation levels to succeed, which may impact their personal and professional achievements. The main goal was to understand how these differences can promote or hinder students' self-realization in society. According to the diagnostic results using T. Ehlers' method, various motivation levels for success prevail among students.

The young men showed a high level of motivation for success (25.6), which indicates a desire for high goals, but they are often afraid of failure, which can hinder the achievement of final results. On the contrary, girls demonstrate an average level of motivation (21.85), indicating a more realistic assessment of their capabilities and a preference for competitive conditions. A moderately high level of motivation was more pronounced in girls (12.5) than boys (9.3), which may indicate more excellent stability and readiness to overcome difficulties in girls. Both boys and

girls have a low level of motivation, which suggests the desire of both groups to succeed.

Correlation analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant differences in motivation for success between boys and girls, especially in moderately high and medium levels of motivation ($U_{mp} = 13$ and 34, respectively). The lack of data for very high and low levels of motivation underlines the need for further research to more fully understand these categories, emphasizing the ongoing importance of this study in student motivation.

These results highlight the importance of considering gender differences when developing student support and development programs aimed at increasing their motivation to succeed. Understanding the characteristics of motivation in boys and girls can help create more effective educational and psychological strategies that contribute to their personal and professional growth. Thus, the study confirms the hypothesis that identifying gender differences in motivation for success can contribute to more successful self-realization of students in society.

6. CONCLUSION

The study revealed significant gender differences in motivation for success among students, which influence their personal and professional achievements. Young men demonstrate high levels of motivation to succeed and strive for high goals, but their desire for success can hinder the achievement of final results due to fear of failure. On the contrary, girls show an average level of motivation, which indicates a more realistic assessment of their capabilities and a preference for competitive conditions, contributing to their stable achievements. A moderately high level of motivation is more pronounced in girls than in boys, which may indicate more excellent stability and readiness to overcome difficulties in girls. A low level of motivation is absent in both groups, indicating a desire for success in both sexes. Correlation

analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant differences in motivation for success between boys and girls, especially in moderately high and medium motivation levels. Understanding gender differences in motivation to succeed has essential economic and social implications, including developing educational programs, creating conditions for self-fulfillment, increasing productivity and innovation, and, most importantly, promoting gender equality. Taking these differences into account can contribute to more successful self-realization of students and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Integrating Gender Relations into Social Policy: An Analysis of Challenges and Approaches

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author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Abstract

This research analyzes the integration of gender relations into social policy, focusing on the challenges and approaches within various social protection systems. It begins by examining the heightened interest in social policy over the past decade, highlighting its role in mitigating the adverse effects of economic reforms and alleviating poverty. The study explores the preference for "social policy" over "welfare state" in gender research, particularly in Kazakhstani practice. Key areas of analysis include labor markets, institutional bases of social and gender policy, and the nature of political debates in the field. Critiques of traditional frameworks that overlook non-market labor are addressed, emphasizing the need for gender-inclusive policies that promote equitable responsibility distribution between men and women. "Defamiliarization" is explored as an emerging trend advocating for state-provided services to promote women's economic independence and reduce their reliance on familial support. The research evaluates childcare, elder care, and parental leave policies through case studies and comparative analysis of Kazakhstan and other countries. The findings underscore the importance of integrating a gender perspective into social policy to ensure comprehensive support for all forms of labor, both market and non-market. Policy recommendations are provided to enhance gender inclusivity, aiming to create more effective and equitable social protection systems that support all individuals' well-being and economic independence, particularly women.

Keywords: Gender Relations, Social Policy, Social Protection, Defamiliarization, Gender Equality, Childcare and Elder Care, Women's Economic Independence

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1. INTRODUCTION

The last decade has seen a remarkable increase in attention to social policy, especially concerning social protection systems. This intensified focus has enabled governments to significantly boost their social spending allocations, playing a crucial role in mitigating the adverse impacts of economic reforms and reducing poverty following the extensive failures of the neoliberal model of economic growth. Consequently, this shift has allowed numerous social movements to demand more robust and effective social policies aimed at addressing and alleviating the repercussions of market failures.

In the global academic discourse, particularly among international sources, researchers specializing in gender issues prefer the term "social policy" over "welfare state." This preference is based on the belief that "social policy" more accurately reflects the dynamic nature of ongoing processes and the global changes accompanying them. This terminological distinction is also evident in Kazakhstani practice, where social policy is identified as a distinct area of research. This field encompasses the social insurance and broader social protection systems.

Several interrelated areas have been identified in the theorization of gender and social policy: the nature of labor and employment markets, the institutional basis of social and gender policy, and the character of political debates in social policy. These areas form the cornerstone of contemporary research, underscoring the intricate connections between gender dynamics and social policy frameworks.

Traditional assessments of the social sphere, which do not incorporate the gender dimension, often focus on economic factors such as the economic role of individuals based on their market value, treating hired labor as a commodity in the labor and employment market. Some gender studies adopt similar criteria. For instance, Esping-Andersen's work compares social security systems based on the level of "decommodification" as a criterion for

classifying states, evaluating how social insurance payments mitigate the commodity value of labor.

The relationship between the main institutions of social policy influences the typology of regimes. The effectiveness of social policy is impacted by the active involvement of women in decision-making processes across the state, labor market, society, and family, as well as the interaction between these institutions. Gender-inclusive social policy can be categorized as gender-neutral or gender-sensitive. According to Liebert, such a policy does not grant exclusive rights to any particular group but facilitates certain processes. For instance, a gender-sensitive approach might include mechanisms where the state supports households through adequate pensions, benefits, and insurance instruments for intra-family care of the elderly, sick, and children. This approach ensures that intra-family care is not exclusively a female responsibility, promoting a more equitable distribution of duties between men and women.

Relationships within the family are a focal point for gender scholars. Recent studies advocate for states to be classified as "women-friendly" based on the criterion of "defamiliarization," which refers to the ability of women to live in decent conditions and provide for themselves independently of their family or marital status.

This study aims to analyze the integration of gender relations into social policy, specifically focusing on the challenges and approaches within various social protection systems.

The research is structured into several main parts, starting with an Introduction that outlines the study's background, significance, and objectives. The Literature Review follows, providing historical context, critical theories, and a comparative analysis of global and Kazakhstani practices. The Methodology section details the research design, data sources, and analytical techniques. In the Theoretical Framework, the study delves into labor and employment markets, institutional bases, and political debates, integrating

feminist critiques and alternative gender models. The Case Studies and Comparative Analysis section examines specific countries' policies and compares gender-inclusive approaches. Findings and Discussion summarize vital insights and discuss the impact of gender dynamics on social policy effectiveness. Policy Recommendations offer actionable suggestions for enhancing gender inclusivity in social policies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The past decade has witnessed a significant surge in interest regarding social policy, particularly in social protection systems. This heightened focus has empowered governments to increase allocations for social spending substantially. These efforts have been instrumental in mitigating the adverse effects of economic reforms and alleviating poverty, following the widespread shortcomings of the neoliberal model of economic growth and dynamism. Consequently, this shift has enabled numerous social movements to articulate demands for more robust and

effective social policies to address and ameliorate the repercussions of market failures [1].

In the global literature, particularly among foreign sources, researchers specializing in gender issues tend to prefer the term “social policy” over “welfare state.” This preference stems from the belief that “social policy” more accurately captures the dynamic nature of ongoing processes and the global changes that follow them. This terminological distinction is also reflected in Kazakhstani practice, where social policy is singled out as a distinct area of research. This field encompasses both the social insurance system and the broader social protection system [2,3].

In the theorization of gender and social policy, several key interrelated areas have been identified: the nature of labor and employment markets, the institutional basis of social and gender policy, and the character of political debates in the field of social policy (Figure 1) [1]. These areas form the cornerstone of contemporary research, highlighting the intricate connections between gender dynamics and social policy frameworks.

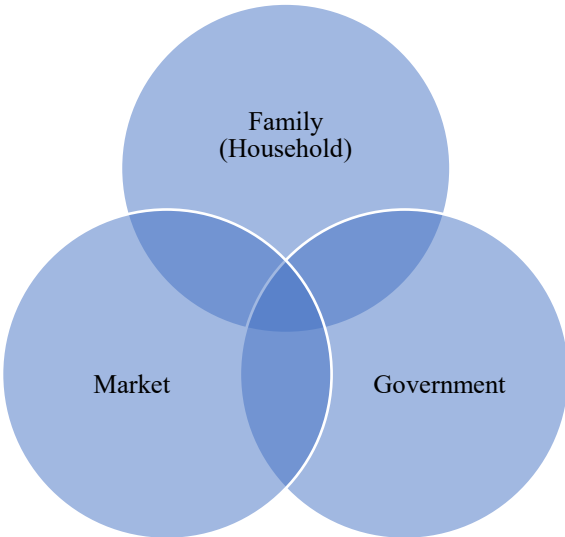


FIGURE 1. Institutional framework for social and gender policy jobs

Note: compiled by authors

Traditional assessments of the social sphere that do not incorporate the gender dimension often focus on economic factors, such as the economic role of individuals based on their market value, where hired labor is considered a commodity in the labor and employment market. Some gender studies adopt the same criteria. For instance, Esping-Andersen's work compares social security systems based on the level of "decommodification" as a criterion for classifying states. This approach evaluates how social insurance payments mitigate the commodity value of labor. However, this framework often neglects the valuation of work performed within the family, a critique notably raised by feminist scholars [4].

The relationship between the main institutions of social policy influences the typology of regimes. The effectiveness of social policy is impacted by the active involvement of women in decision-making processes across the state, labor market, society, and family, as well as the interaction between these institutions. Gender-inclusive social policy can be categorized as gender-neutral or gender-sensitive. According to Liebert, such a policy does not grant exclusive rights to any particular group but facilitates certain processes. For instance, a gender-sensitive approach might include mechanisms where the state supports households through adequate pensions, benefits, and insurance instruments for intra-family care of the elderly, sick, and children. This approach ensures that intra-family care is not exclusively a female responsibility, promoting a more equitable distribution of duties between men and women [5].

Relationships within the family are a focal point for gender scholars, and recent studies advocate for states to be classified as "women-friendly" based on the criterion of "defamilialization." This concept refers to the ability of women to live in decent conditions and provide for themselves independently of their family or marital status [3,6,7]. Typically, social security systems protect formally employed workers, thereby incentivizing informally employed individuals to seek

formal employment. However, this system faces criticism for excluding individuals engaged in-home care, such as caring for the sick or children, from being recognized as informally employed. Housework, predominantly performed by women, often goes unrecognized in labor statistics, leading to the concept of "double employment" for women, who balance official employment with extensive household duties. Lister evaluates social rights using the criterion of "defamilialization" to highlight these issues [8].

This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of understanding social policy not only as a mechanism for economic redistribution but also as a critical domain influencing gender relations and societal equity. By examining these interrelated areas, researchers can better understand the multifaceted impacts of social policy on gender dynamics, thus contributing to more effective and inclusive policy-making. Recent studies emphasize the necessity of integrating a gender perspective into social policy analysis to ensure that both market and non-market labor, particularly caregiving and domestic work, are adequately valued and supported.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study includes several key stages and approaches for a comprehensive analysis of the integration of gender relations into social policy:

Literature Analysis: A thorough review of existing academic literature on the topics of social policy, gender studies and social protection systems was conducted. The analysis examined global sources reflecting international experience, as well as studies related to the practice of Kazakhstan. Particular attention was paid to works devoted to the integration of gender perspectives into social policy, including criticism of traditional models and proposals for alternative approaches.

Comparative analysis: A comparative analysis of the social policies of various

countries, including Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, was performed. Aspects of social protection were considered, such as childcare policies, elderly care policies and maternity leave policies. The comparative analysis allowed us to identify common trends, successful practices and problem areas in the implementation of gender-inclusive policies in different contexts.

Case study: Specific cases of implementation of gender-inclusive social policies in different countries were studied. These cases helped to identify successful practices and existing problems. In each case, support mechanisms were analyzed, such as state pensions, benefits and insurance instruments for intra-family care for the elderly, sick and children. Particular attention was paid to how these measures contribute to the redistribution of household responsibilities and reduce gender inequality.

Policy recommendations: Based on the analysis and findings, recommendations are developed to improve gender inclusiveness in social policy. These recommendations aim to create more effective and equitable social protection systems that take into account both market and non-market work. In particular, measures are proposed to improve the availability of child and elderly care services, increase flexibility and compensation for maternity leave, and strengthen gender equality policies.

This comprehensive approach provides a deep understanding of the impact of gender relations on social policy and develops practical recommendations to improve social protection and achieve gender equality.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Integrating Gender Relations into Traditional Models of Social Policy

Based on extensive research and numerous discussions in the field of gender economics, two primary approaches have emerged. The first approach advocates for the integration of

gender relations into existing traditional models of social policy, suggesting transformation through the reconstruction of fundamental categories. Notable researchers such as Orloff A. and Liebert W. contribute to this perspective, each offering distinct frameworks that aim to address gender disparities within social policy [9].

Orloff's Model of Gender-Integrated Social Security

In her model, Orloff adheres to the traditional social security system but proposes significant modifications to alleviate the burden of domestic work for women. This is achieved by transferring some of these responsibilities to state services. The core of Orloff's model is the triple relationship between the state, market, and family, which she uses to analyze gender stratification and to advocate for providing women with greater access to paid work.

Orloff's approach emphasizes the need for state intervention in redistributing domestic responsibilities, which are traditionally shouldered by women. By doing so, her model seeks to reduce gender inequality and enhance women's participation in the labor market. This paradigm shift is crucial for promoting gender equity and ensuring that women have the same opportunities for economic independence and career advancement as men [10].

Liebert's Perspective on Gender-Sensitive Social Policy

Liebert W. also contributes to the discourse on gender-sensitive social policy. According to Liebert, integrating gender elements into social policy does not entail granting exclusive rights to a specific group but rather facilitating processes that support households equitably. This includes mechanisms where the state provides support through adequate pensions, benefits, and insurance instruments for intra-family care. Such policies aim to ensure that caregiving responsibilities are shared more equitably between men and women, thereby promoting gender neutrality in family roles.

Liebert's framework aligns with Orloff's in recognizing the importance of state support in achieving gender equity. However, Liebert

further emphasizes the necessity of policies that address both the economic and social dimensions of gender relations, ensuring comprehensive support for all household members regardless of gender [11].

4.2 Critiques from Alternative Gender Models

Authors of alternative gender models of social policy, such as Lewis J., Ostner I., Pfau-

Effinger B., Fraser N., and Sainsbury D., criticize the established model of the male breadwinner. They argue that it is insufficient to reconstruct the traditional model of the social protection system by merely including gender aspects, as the model itself is inherently oriented towards a male-dominated world. These scholars contend that a more radical transformation is necessary, one that fundamentally rethinks (Table 1) the assumptions and structures underlying social policies to ensure true gender equity [12-17].

TABLE 1. Alternative gender models

#	Study	Main critiques	Proposed alternative approach
1	Jane Lewis	The model is outdated and male-biased	Develop policies promoting gender-neutral caregiving
2	Ilona Ostner	Overlooks women's unpaid domestic labor	Emphasize shared caregiving responsibilities
3	Birgit Pfau-Effinger	Reinforces traditional gender roles	Integrate gender equity across all policy areas
4	Nancy Fraser	Limits women's economic independence	Support dual-earner/dual-career households
5	Diane Sainsbury	Inadequate for modern family dynamics	Reflect diverse family forms in policy development

Note: compiled by authors

4.3 Recent Research and Emerging Trends

Recent studies underscore the importance of integrating a gender perspective into social policy analysis. These studies highlight the need for policies that value both market and non-market labor, particularly caregiving and domestic work, which women predominantly perform. Scholars advocate for a more inclusive approach that recognizes the economic contributions of domestic work and supports gender equity in all spheres of life.

Emerging research also explores the concept of "defamilialization," which refers to the state's role in providing services that enable individuals, especially women, to live independently of their family roles. This approach is gaining traction to promote

women's economic independence and overall well-being, regardless of their marital or family status.

Integrating gender relations into traditional models of social policy requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the intersections of state, market, and family. By adopting frameworks that redistribute domestic responsibilities and support gender equity, policymakers can create more inclusive and effective social policies that promote the well-being and economic independence of all individuals.

Focusing on two main aspects – access and financing of care services, as well as policies on maternity leave, social benefits and gender equality – is essential for a better understanding and analysis of gender policies in the context of social protection (Figure 2).

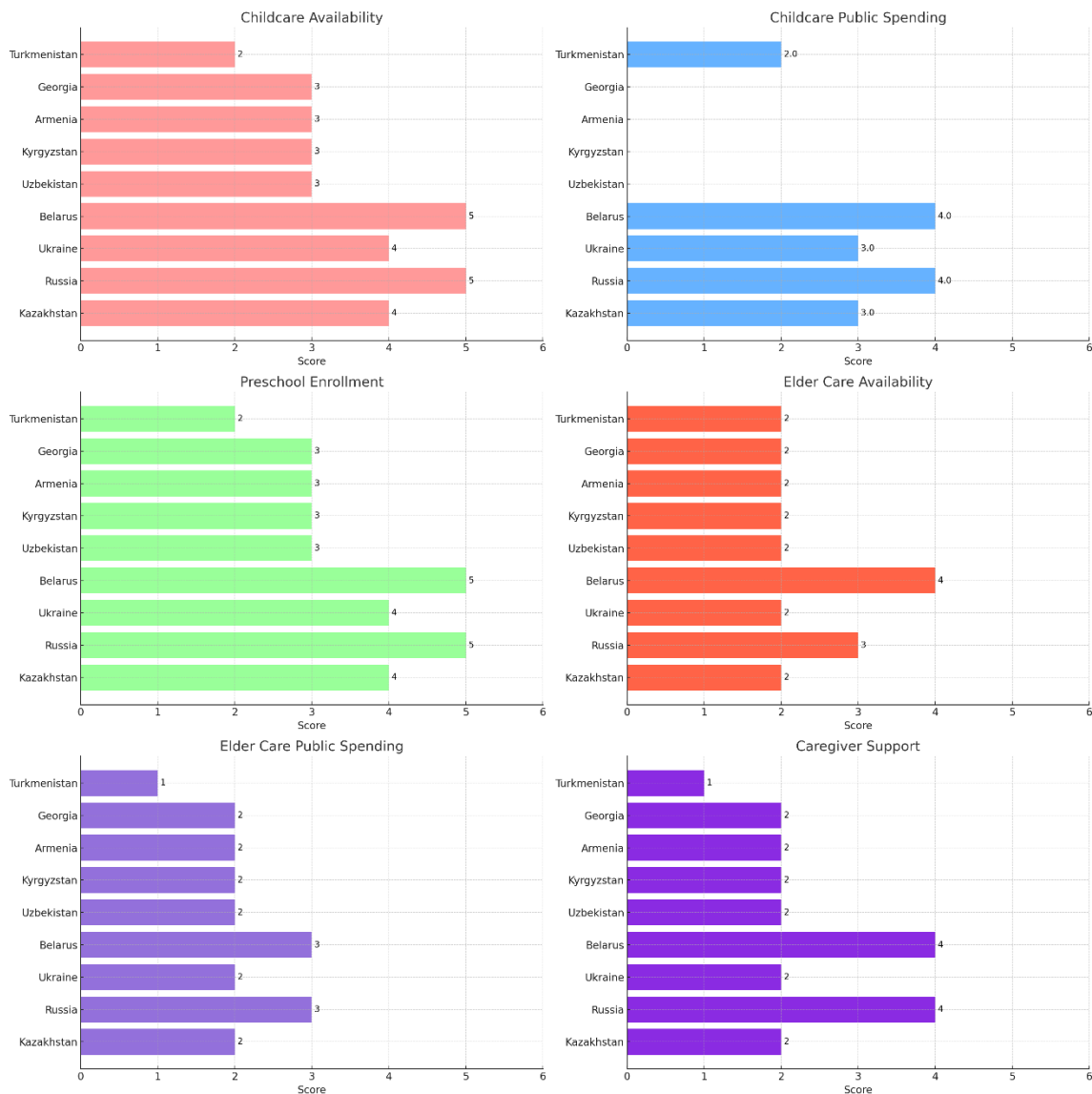


FIGURE 2. Availability and financing of care services

Note: compiled by authors

These graphs and descriptions provide an overview of the current status and differences in access to and support for child and elderly care across countries.

Childcare Availability

The graph shows the levels of childcare availability in different countries. Russia and Belarus stand out as having the highest availability, while Turkmenistan has moderate availability with an increasing trend.

Childcare Public Spending

Russia and Belarus also lead in government spending on child care, which is higher than in Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Georgia show low but increasing expenditures, while in Turkmenistan, expenditures remain low.

Preschool Enrollment

Russia and Belarus again lead the way with high preschool enrollment rates. Kazakhstan

and Ukraine are showing growth in this indicator, while Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Georgia are at a moderate level. Turkmenistan has a low recording rate.

Elder Care Availability

Belarus has the best availability of care for the elderly; however, most countries, including Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and others, rely mainly on family care and have limited availability.

Elder Care Public Spending

Belarus and Russia stand out for their moderate government spending on elderly

care. In other countries, costs remain low, and in Turkmenistan, they are deficient.

Caregiver Support

Belarus and Russia provide better support for caregivers than Kazakhstan. Support is limited in other countries, and in Turkmenistan, it is very limited.

Policies on maternity leave, social benefits, and gender equality (Table 2) provide a comprehensive understanding of the status and effectiveness of various aspects of social protection aimed at supporting gender equality and family well-being.

TABLE 2. Comparative analysis of key aspects of social policies related to maternity leave, social benefits and gender equality in different countries

Criteria	Kazakhstan	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus	Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia (Armenia)	Turkmenistan
Maternity Leave	126 days, compensated	140 days, compensated	126 days, compensated	126-140 days, compensated	126 days (140 days), low compensation	112 days, low compensation
Paternity Leave	Available, limited use	Available, moderate use	Available, limited use	Available, moderate use	Available, limited use	Not available
Parental Leave Flexibility	Limited	Higher flexibility	Growing flexibility	Higher flexibility	Limited	Very limited
Unemployment Benefits	Available, limited	More generous	More generous	Comprehensive	Limited	Very limited
Social Assistance	Available, often insufficient	More accessible	More generous, economic challenges	Comprehensive	Limited	Very limited
Housing Support	Limited	Better than KZ	Limited	Better than KZ	Limited	Very limited
Gender Equality Policies	Present, uneven enforcement	Better than KZ	Stronger policies, varied implementation	Significant focus, societal lag	Limited	Very limited
Work-Life Balance Support	Growing, limited	Better than KZ	Growing, moderate	Better than KZ	Limited	Very limited
Gender Pay Gap Measures	Present, slow progress	More effective measures	Stronger policies	Significant focus, slow progress	Limited	Very limited
<i>Note:</i> compiled by authors						

Russia and Belarus stand out as the countries with the most generous and comprehensive social protection and gender

equality measures. They provide extended and well-compensated maternity leave (140 days and 126-140 days, respectively), moderately

used paternity leave, flexible parental leave, comprehensive unemployment benefits, and social assistance. These countries also have more robust gender equality policies and support for work-life balance, making them leaders in social policy.

Turkmenistan, unfortunately, consistently exhibits the least supportive policies across multiple criteria. It provides the fewest days of maternity leave with low compensation, does not provide paternity leave, and has minimal parental leave flexibility, unemployment benefits, and social assistance. Gender equality policies and support for work-life balance are also minimal. Turkmenistan ranks last on all criteria, starkly indicating the urgent need for significant improvements in social policy.

Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Armenia occupy intermediate positions, offering moderate measures of social support and gender equality policies. In these countries, maternity leave is compensated between 126 and 140 days, paternity leave is available, but with limited use, and parental leave flexibility is limited. Unemployment benefits and social assistance are also present, but less generous than in Russia and Belarus. These countries desire to improve but still need significant reforms to reach leaders.

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia, while showing limited efforts, are also demonstrating a promising trajectory in their social policies. Despite offering low compensation for maternity leave and limited provisions for flexibility in parental leave, these countries have seen positive trends in increasing the availability of social benefits and assistance.

Their gradual improvements, despite limited resources, are a beacon of hope, indicating potential for further development.

4.4 Summary of Key Findings

Childcare and Education Services

Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus: Kazakhstan is improving but still lags behind Russia and Belarus, which have more developed childcare systems and higher public spending. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia,

Turkmenistan: These countries have limited childcare availability and low public spending, though Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan show some signs of growth.

Elder Care Services

Kazakhstan and Similar Countries: Kazakhstan and its peers, including Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkmenistan, rely heavily on familial care with low public spending on elder care. Russia and Belarus: Slightly better elder care services compared to Kazakhstan and its peers, but still largely reliant on family.

Parental Leave Policies

Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus: These countries offer compensated maternity leave, with Russia and Belarus having more flexible parental leave policies. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkmenistan: Offer maternity leave but with lower compensation and less flexibility in parental leave policies.

Social Benefits and Support

Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus: Kazakhstan has limited unemployment benefits and social assistance, while Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus offer more generous systems. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkmenistan: Have limited social benefits and support systems, with Turkmenistan being particularly limited.

Gender Equality Policies

Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus: Kazakhstan has policies but inconsistent enforcement, while Russia and Belarus have stronger measures in place. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkmenistan: Generally have limited gender equality policies and slow progress in this area.

Kazakhstan, while making notable progress in defamilialization, especially in childcare and early education, still faces challenges similar to those in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, and Turkmenistan. These challenges include limited public elder care, less flexible parental leave policies, and inadequate social benefits. Russia and Belarus generally provide better support in these areas. To further reduce reliance on familial support, Kazakhstan and

its peers could enhance public elder care services, increase the flexibility and compensation of parental leave, and improve social benefits and gender equality policies [18-22].

Analysis of gender policy in Kazakhstan

Gender policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan is related to all post-Soviet countries. The pre-independence general Soviet social protection system provided all citizens equal social guarantees and government assistance. The support system for women was exceptionally well built through various insurance instruments (benefits, assistance to young mothers, nurseries, access to universal education, and help in obtaining an apartment); as a result of the information blockade, the implemented social policy developed in the form of a separate direction not in line with global gender trends within the framework of the Soviet ideology of gender equality. Although effective in content, social policy needed ambivalence [21].

Despite its autonomous development, some scientists recognize that the Soviet model can be classified as a welfare state policy according to the typology of welfare regimes [22].

However, the term "gender" was an alien and Western concept in the Soviet past [23].

The Kazakhstani social protection system had its characteristics. Being a derivative of the Soviet system, it promoted the idea of gender equality, but at the same time, during the reform period, social policy was inconsistent [21]. Also, despite the state-supported gender policy, there were manifestations of sexism based on traditional gender stereotypes.

5. DISCUSSION

An analysis of world literature showed that early gender studies in the field of social security considered mainly the typology of social policy regimes (Esping-Andersen, Orloff A., Connor O.), and most subsequent concepts in theorizing gender aspects were built based on this triple model "State- Market- Household" and on the possibility of integrating gender relations into existing models. Over time, the research direction took on a different character, and social policy was analyzed from a different angle (Figure 3), where the criterion was "defamiliarization" [2].

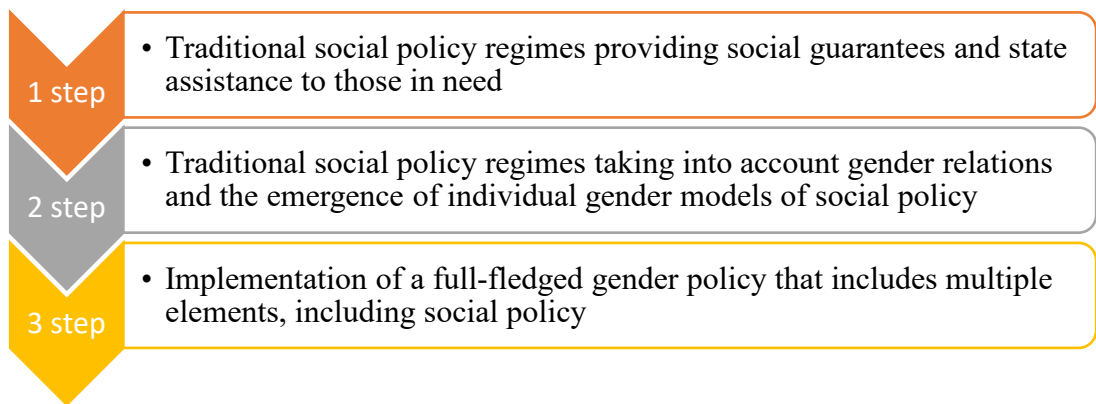


FIGURE 3. From social policy to gender policy

Note: compiled by authors

Introducing a novel concept, we witnessed the emergence of new individual models of social policy. These models, in contrast to the traditional ones that depicted a man as a breadwinner and a woman as a housewife,

were met with criticism. Even in families where both partners were employed equally, the woman was still traditionally assigned the role of educator and housework responsibility.

The new models, however, considered "dual employment," social guarantees of the state and the market, increased access to paid work, women's economic activity, and division of household labor. Thus, social policy began to act as a component of gender policy.

Limitations and recommendations of the study

The study's literature review was limited. Literature and resources were selected using the following keywords: gender and social policy, gender economics, and gender indicators of the social protection system.

In the analysis of the theoretical chapter, the concepts of "decommunization" and "destabilization" were mainly considered since they were directly related to the typology of regimes of social states. At the next stage, the scope of research will be expanded, and relatively new concepts will be considered: "degeneration" and "feminization of poverty."

This study analyzed secondary statistical data, carefully selected for their "validity" and "reliability." We relied on widely recognized gender-sensitive indicators, greatly facilitating data systematization and comparative analysis of social policies in non-Western countries.

However, it was observed that there is a shortage of official statistical data on many indicators related to gender economics. In such cases, it is recommended to conduct research based on primary data. Therefore, our subsequent analysis will include a survey and expert interviews to ensure the robustness of our findings.

6. CONCLUSION

This research underscores the importance of integrating gender relations into social policy to create more inclusive and equitable social protection systems. Over the past decade, the increased focus on social policy has been instrumental in mitigating the adverse impacts of economic reforms and reducing poverty. The preference for the term "social policy" over "welfare state" in gender research

highlights the dynamic nature of these processes, particularly in Kazakhstani practice.

The study examined vital areas such as labor markets, institutional bases of social and gender policy, and political debates. Traditional social policy frameworks often overlook non-market labor, primarily performed within the family, leading to significant gender disparities. The research highlighted the need for gender-inclusive policies that promote equitable responsibility distribution between women and men.

"Defamiliarization" emerged as a crucial trend, advocating for state-provided services to enable women's economic independence. Case studies and comparative analyses of Kazakhstan and other countries revealed varying degrees of effectiveness in childcare, elder care, and parental leave policies. Findings indicate that incorporating a gender perspective into social policy ensures comprehensive support for all forms of labor, both market and non-market. Policy recommendations include enhancing public elder care services, increasing the flexibility and compensation of parental leave, and improving social benefits and gender equality measures.

Future research should continue to explore new concepts such as "degeneration" and "feminization of poverty" while addressing the limitations of current data availability. By focusing on these areas, policymakers can develop more effective and inclusive social policies that support all individuals' well-being and economic independence, fostering a more equitable and just society. The role of academics in this process is crucial, as their research can provide the necessary insights to shape these policies effectively.

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