

# ***The Barrier and Reasons' Analysis of Female Occupational Development Based on Identity Intersectionality***

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**Abstract:** This research aims to explore the unequal treatment of Chinese women in their career development due to gender differences and the causes of this social phenomenon. Through the classification of relevant literature, the situation of women in different fields of work is comprehensively analyzed and compared to illustrate the specific manifestations of inequality. This study argues that the causes of this social phenomenon of female unfriendliness due to gender differences can be roughly discussed and divided into three types followed, which are physical differences, stubborn stereotype, and traditional man-centered view. In addition, how to reduce the inequality caused by gender differences in different industries in China is also of great significance, the specific suggestions generally include improving women's educational level, increasing gender awareness at the social level, and requiring companies not to use gender as one of the selection criteria for candidates when recruiting. Such discussion might not only protect women's rights and interests in the workplace, but also promote gender balance in Chinese society.

**Keywords:** Female, Occupation Development, identity, intersectionality, inequality

## **1. Introduction**

In China, gender equality as a social topic has gradually received more and more attention in recent years because of the significant differences between men and women in career development [1]. Zhang et al. noted through research that female applicants are on average less likely to be invited to further interviews by recruitment firms than their male counterparts, provided all other factors remain equal. Such inequalities are due to a combination of factors, including age, working field, financial level, social class, and hometown background [2]. Therefore, it seems like there is no one-size-fits-all solution to how to reduce gender inequalities. In fact, with the positive impact of the promotion of quality education in China, the underlying gender bias has been slowly broken, and the awareness of gender equity has become more and more obvious [3]. Nevertheless, China's gender revolution is uneven in various fields, inequalities due to gender disparities continue to affect women's career development in varying ways [4]. In China, for women, reducing the various workplace issues caused by gender differences can not only effectively safeguard women's workplace rights and promote women's career development, but also have a positive impact on the whole society. Therefore, based on the specific manifestations of identifying women's gender issues in their workplace inequality and the reasons for the occurrence of such social phenomena, how to effectively reduce the occurrence of

this phenomenon in China's social background has a positive effect on the normal development of women in the workplace and the protection of women's rights and interests. The purpose of this study is to reconnoiter and identity the barrier and challenges that female face in their occupational development, explore the reason why such phenomenon happened, and, how to gender inequalities, protect women's rights in the workplace and strengthen their sense of identity.

## **2. The barrier of female occupational development**

Gender inequalities in women's career development are common, and how to achieve a higher level of gender equality to promote women's career development requires different challenges and obstacles. The first more representative barrier is the purer discrimination and inequality due to gender, which is particularly evident when female graduates seek employment [1]. Research by Zhang et al. shows that even if female job seekers perform well in the screening of resumes, male candidates who are notified by recruitment companies to invite them to the next round of interviews still account for the majority when they have basically the same background such as education and work. In other words, women are only likely to get in the interview if they perform better than men in all aspects. This is only the stage of job search, and admittedly, this phenomenon is a great regret for women's career development.

On the other hand, women's workplace status and salary levels are also not as guaranteed as they should be.

Consistent with the retirement policy in China which has been valid after 1978, the legal retirement age for womanly worker is 50 while the age for female cadres is 55. Nevertheless, for male workers and cadres, the age raised to 60 years old [5]. Such hasty retirement is not as seen as a privilege, thus such difference in the legal retirement age may affect the wage growth of those who are about to retire earlier. Liu also pointed out in the study that for female workers aged 30 to 49 at aged, concerning female workers and cadres, the salary difference is about 15% higher than that of male in the same situation, and this difference persists until retirement [5]. This means that female workers are likely to be paid less than male workers when the positions are the same; In addition, based on differences in retirement age, female cadres cannot be guaranteed the same level of salary before retirement as for male cadres.

Besides that, women also face a strong gender-conscious challenge in their careers, which is women's appearance, like too fat or too skinny, such strongly judging with negative words about women's appearance usually have a much greater impact on women in the workplace than men, because Avan Amsterdam and van Eck also indicated that although sometimes men are also scrutinized for their figures [6]. Men are more likely to define their fat identity as a positive impression in the workplace, making their body size closely associated with power and authority. At the same time, women are more oppressed and scrutinized in all aspects of appearance, which may expand their influence and voice while increasing women's anxiety, making women's career development more and more difficult.

## **3. Reasons of why gender discrimination and inequality happened**

Inequalities due to gender differences include, but are not limited to, the situations mentioned above, and the more specific causes of these phenomena are broadly divided into three types followed.

### **3.1. Physical differences**

It is true that there are fundamental differences in the physiology of men and women, including physical strength and human emotions for example, men generally have greater strength, while women have a stronger ability to empathize with others [7]. It demonstrated that even for graduates

from same major, men tend to default having stronger abilities, especially in physical work, while women are defaulted to being less capable, and are forced to change job functions. In Xu & Luo's study of physical education graduates, the basic information and valid information of candidates who are interested in becoming physical education teachers were collected through implicit association testing (IAT) and questionnaire methods based on neural network models, and the results showed that male physical education students were more likely to view physical education teachers as competency-centered careers, while female students were more able to provide psychological and emotional support for students. As a result, men take the initiative in the employment rate in sports.

In addition, the biological structure of women's fertility has also become a potential discrimination mechanism in the labor market, especially in non-state-owned enterprises and smaller companies [8]. Also, Wang and Wong indicated that since establishments might use the unmitigated fertility rate to evaluate the impending instruction and substitute costs of female employees and the concomitant productivity of feminine employees, this is not friendly to female job applicants, especially unmarried female job seekers.

### 3.2. Stubborn stereotype

Through data collection and research on the occupational/social roles of women and male roles, Zhang proposes that contemporary societal perceptions portray men as more functional social roles and are often closely related to sports, largely based on gender differences between men and women, while women are more allocated to family relationships. This can be seen as a very typical stereotype of gender differences between men and women, and the combination of biological differences between men and women makes men and women invisibly produce clear boundaries in social roles, and society is more inclined to judge whether an individual is suitable for a position according to gender, rather than more out of consideration of personal ability [9]. Therefore, the impact of this stereotype on women's employment may be more profound. In some parts of China, the prevalence of patriarchal thinking can even be exaggerated to the point that a significant number of families choose to have a second child when they realize that the first child is a daughter, simply because they expect the second child to be a boy [10]. Guo also argues in his research that education has a decisive impact on the reasons behind the transmission of such traditional ideas that belong to the waste of the time to today's society. In general, the higher the average level of education in a family, the clearer the understanding of the objective impact of gender; in other words, older generations with higher levels of education will not have a more extreme view of gender and will not provide low-quality educational resources because the offspring are girls. Girls born and raised in such families often receive good education and embrace more modern ideas, making it easier to realize whether their oppression stems from gender differences.

### 3.3. Traditional man-centered view

The dominance of men in many occupational fields, such as aviation, is not just a phenomenon unique to China, but in other Asian countries, such as India, women still receive judge hegemony because of their gender in the profession [11]. Although the number of female pilots has increased in recent years, men still occupy the absolute voice, which poses certain challenges for female pilots, because even if they are excellent in all aspects, they are prejudiced and discriminated against due to gender differences, resulting in women not being able to fully develop their talents [11]. A similar situation has been seen in the study of Gangadharan, where men have strong opposition to female leaders because they believe that women's leadership is a violation of social rules, even for the male group. However, this is not the case. Although not a study from the same time period, the articles of Gangadharan et al. and Chu et al. agree that in organizations represented by enterprises, women's

leadership is more conducive to organizational development. In other words, the inclusion of women makes organizations more empathetic and can reduce gender-led bias to a greater extent [12]. Women generally have a higher sense of responsibility, so female leaders amplify the negative relationship between CSR and the intensity of corporate fraud, which has a positive impact on the overall development of the company [13]. So, while many studies have proven that men and women have the same ability and academic background in a role, industry preferences have always favored men.

#### 4. Suggestion

From a historical and cultural point of view, the ideas of 'son preference' and 'male superiority and female inferiority' advocated by Confucian culture still have a certain impact on today's Chinese society [14]. Under such social context, the significance of education is even more important. Although the education level of Chinese women has continued to improve with the level of economic development in China, inequalities due to gender differences are still common [15]. At the compulsory education level, the enrolment rate of women is already lower than that of men of the same age, and at the tertiary level, the opportunities for continuing education are becoming less and less available, especially in rural areas, where boys in the family are often given priority over the right to education, regardless of age [14]. Therefore, improving women's education level and attaching importance to women's education level is still one of the key measures to safeguard women's rights and interests.

On the other hand, social ideology and gender awareness are also particularly important for women's gender cognition. Therefore, the propaganda made by the state at the social level is supposed to emphasize the awareness of gender equality, encourage women to break the gender monopoly of men in various industries; at the same time, give appropriate guidance and advice to enterprises, and formulate relevant policies if necessary, so as to prevent enterprises from screening job applicants by gender when recruiting, but provide the same and fair competition opportunities for male and female job seekers.

As mentioned above, there does not seem to be a general solution to identity's inequality due to gender differences, to quickly improve the status of women and completely protect women's rights and interests in the workplace. Nevertheless, as an increasing number of women's awareness of inequality is already a sign of progress, because it means that a significant proportion of women have moved beyond male-dominated thinking and begun to explore the potential possibilities of their own gender identity. Although the influence of traditional thinking and male-dominated thinking still has a non-negligible impact on women in the workplace, through receiving a higher level of education and pioneering more modern ideas with the encouragement of China state, it is possible to break the gender monopoly of men in the workplace to a certain extent, protect women's own rights and interests, and achieve better development.

#### 5. Conclusion

Overall, the current career prospects for Chinese women are uncertain, but the future development may be positive. Due to various objective and subjective reasons caused by gender differences, it is not easy for women to overcome the difficulties created by biological differences and social environment in their career development. However, with the continuous development of society, the influence of traditional ideas is not what it used to be, and women can break the traditional ideas dominated by men by receiving a higher degree of education and combining their own efforts to strive for more voice and dominant positions. Reducing gender disparities and achieving gender equality has a decisive positive impact on organizations, regardless of industry or field of work, so it is

especially important for Chinese women to defend women's legitimate workplace rights and reduce the occurrence of inequalities such as discrimination.

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