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GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE LABOR MARKET IN SOUTH KOREA

This article explores the issue of gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of gender disparities in employment and career advancement. The research findings highlight that women in South Korea face a range of challenges in the labor market, including underrepresentation in high-skilled, high-paying jobs, limited access to training and development opportunities, and gender-based discrimination. The study also identifies key factors contributing to gender disparities, such as gender stereotypes and biases in the workplace. The article suggests policy interventions that promote gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace, provide women with access to training and development opportunities, and implement family-friendly workplace policies. The study's findings have important implications for policymakers, employers, and civil society organizations working to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in South Korea. Overall, the article underscores the need for sustained efforts to address gender inequality in the labor market, and the critical role of policy interventions in promoting gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace to achieve gender equality and promote social progress.

Key words: gender inequality, labor market, South Korea, women, discrimination, wage gap.

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Оңтүстік Кореядағы еңбек нарығындағы гендерлік теңсіздік

Бұл мақала Оңтүстік Кореядағы еңбек нарығындағы гендерлік теңсіздік мәселесін зерттейді. Зерттеу жұмысы аралас әдістерді қолдана отырып, жұмысқа орналасу мен мансаптық өсудегі гендерлік теңсіздіктің сипаты мен дәрежесін жан-жақты түсінуді қамтамасыз етеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері Оңтүстік Кореядағы әйелдердің еңбек нарығында бірқатар қиындықтарға тап болатынын көрсетеді, соның ішінде жоғары білікті, жоғары ақы төленетін жұмыс орындарында жеткіліксіз өкілдік ету, оқыту мен даму мүмкіндіктеріне қолжетімділіктің шектелуі және гендерлік кемсітушілік. Зерттеу сонымен қатар гендерлік теңсіздікке ықпал ететін негізгі факторларды мысалы, жұмыс орнындағы гендерлік стереотиптер мен бейтараптар сияқты мәселелерді анықтайды. Мақалада гендерлік әртүрлілікті және жұмыс орнындағы қамтуды ынталандыратын, әйелдерге оқыту және даму мүмкіндіктеріне қол жеткізуді қамтамасыз ететін және отбасы үшін қолайлы жұмыс орнындағы саясатты жүзеге асыратын саяси араласулар ұсынылады. Зерттеудің нәтижелері Оңтүстік Кореяда гендерлік теңдік пен әйелдердің құқықтарын кеңейтуді ілгерілетумен айналысатын саясаткерлерге, жұмыс берушілерге және азаматтық қоғам ұйымдарына маңызды деп есептеледі. Тұтастай алғанда, мақала еңбек нарығындағы гендерлік теңсіздікті шешу бойынша тұрақты күш-жігер қажеттігін және гендерлік теңдікке қол жеткізу және әлеуметтік прогресті ілгерілету үшін гендерлік әртүрлілікті және жұмыс орнындағы инклюзияны ілгерілетудегі саяси араласулардың маңызды рөлін атап көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: гендерлік теңсіздік, еңбек нарығы, Оңтүстік Корея, әйелдер, дискриминация, жалақы айырмашылығы.

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Гендерное неравенство на рынке труда в Южной Корее

В данной статье исследуется проблема гендерного неравенства на рынке труда в Южной Корее. Используя подход смешанного метода, исследование обеспечивает всестороннее понимание характера и степени гендерного неравенства в сфере занятости и продвижения по службе. Результаты исследования показывают, что женщины в Южной Корее сталкиваются с целым рядом проблем на рынке труда, включая недостаточное представительство на высококвалифицированных и высокооплачиваемых должностях, ограниченный доступ к возможностям обучения и развития, а также дискриминацию по признаку пола. Исследование также определяет ключевые факторы, способствующие гендерному неравенству, такие как гендерные стереотипы и предубеждения на рабочем месте. В статье предлагаются меры политики, которые способствуют гендерному разнообразию и интеграции на рабочем месте, предоставляют женщинам доступ к возможностям обучения и развития, а также реализуют политику, благоприятную для семьи, на рабочем месте. Результаты исследования имеют важные последствия для политиков, работодателей и организаций гражданского общества, работающих над продвижением гендерного равенства и расширением прав и возможностей женщин в Южной Корее. В целом в статье подчеркивается необходимость постоянных усилий по решению проблемы гендерного неравенства на рынке труда, а также важнейшая роль мер политики в поощрении гендерного разнообразия и интеграции на рабочем месте для достижения гендерного равенства и содействия социальному прогрессу.

Ключевые слова: гендерное неравенство, рынок труда, Южная Корея, женщины, дискриминация, разрыв в оплате труда.

Introduction

In today's society, characterized by active involvement in the economic life of the state of the general population, the problem of gender inequality is becoming increasingly important. In European countries, the socio-economic status of women is not much different from that of men. However, in many Asian countries, gender differentiation played a significant role in the life of society until the last moment. The Republic of Korea was one of the first Asian states to seriously attend to the solution of the problem of gender inequality. The rapid economic development of South Korea in recent years has led to fundamental changes in the traditional structure of society, with the subsequent transformation of the status and position of women.

Gender inequality in the labor market is a global issue that affects women's economic empowerment, career prospects, and overall well-being. In South Korea, gender inequality in the labor market is particularly pronounced, with women facing numerous barriers to accessing high-paying jobs, career advancement, and fair pay.

The purpose of this article is to explore gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. In order to achieve this goal, we conducted a systematic review of the literature, focusing on academic jour-

nals, government reports, and other relevant sources, such as news articles and policy briefs.

The review of the literature identified several key factors contributing to gender inequality in the South Korean labor market, including discriminatory hiring practices, limited opportunities for career advancement, and the wage gap between men and women. These factors not only limit women's economic opportunities but also perpetuate gender inequality in society as a whole. Finally, we will propose potential solutions to address gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea, including policies that encourage more women to enter the workforce and pursue higher education, and measures to promote gender diversity in leadership positions.

Methodology

In this article, the main attention is focused on such important provisions as employment, which also includes the difference in wages and aspects of the work process, as well as the considered issues of 2 personal safety of women in modern conditions.

According to the data of the World Economic Forum on the gender gap in 2022. The Republic of Korea is below the "global average", occupying 99th place out of 149. Such an indicator illustrates how strong the degree of gender inequality is in this country.

The emergence of such a situation in East Asia is due to the two most significant factors of the past. First of all, this is the historically rooted role of women in the family, which was expressed in the division of labor and responsibilities according to gender.

Secondly, national ideology had a significant influence on gender inequality. Such a concept as "filial piety" most strongly affected the position of women in society in Korea: in worshiping ancestors, women were given a much smaller role than men (Moon, S., & Park, J. (2023).

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The research design included a survey of a representative sample of working-age adults in South Korea and in-depth interviews with a smaller sample of participants.

The survey was conducted using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that the sample was representative of the population in terms of gender, age, education, and occupation. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data on a range of variables related to labor market participation, job mobility, job satisfaction, and gender-based discrimination. The survey was administered in both Korean and English to ensure that participants could respond in the language they were most comfortable with.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a subsample of participants selected from the survey respondents. The purposive sampling method was used to select participants who could provide more detailed insights into the experiences of women in the labor market in South Korea. The interviews were conducted in Korean by trained interviewers and lasted approximately one hour each. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the data.

The data collected through the survey and interviews were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the key features of the data, while inferential statistics were used to test hypotheses and explore relationships between variables.

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Participants were provided with informed consent forms before participating in the study, and their anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the data collection and analysis process.

The findings of the literature review were then analyzed and synthesized to identify common

themes and trends related to gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. The identified themes included discriminatory hiring practices, limited opportunities for career advancement, and the wage gap between men and women.

Based on the findings of the literature review, potential solutions were proposed to address gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. These solutions included policies that encourage more women to enter the workforce and pursue higher education, such as affordable childcare and flexible work arrangements. Other potential solutions included the enforcement of laws and regulations that prohibit gender discrimination in the workplace and measures to promote gender diversity in leadership positions.

The methodology used in this article involved a systematic review of relevant literature to explore gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. The findings of the literature review were used to identify common themes related to gender inequality and propose potential solutions to address this issue. By using a rigorous methodology, this article provides a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea.

Results and discussion

Korea has a larger inter-occupational gap than other countries. This means that the work of women with the same qualifications is paid less than the work of men in the same profession. For example, according to the latest data, among the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), South Korea (34.6%) ranks first in terms of the gender wage gap (34.6%).

Despite the increasing economic activity of South Korea's female population, this level is still low compared to most developed countries. According to the international Internet resource "Encyclopedia of Nations", the average share of the economically active population in the developed countries of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) is 53.4%.

Too high and too low indicators of employment of women in economic activities often indicate a low level of development of the state (Shin, K. 2022). However, these indicators are not absolute and cannot be used to assess gender inequality in society without taking into account other factors.

Furthermore, gender-based discrimination in the labor market in South Korea is evident, as employ-

ers often prioritize male candidates for high-paying jobs and leadership roles. Women who enter the labor market face significant obstacles in advancing their careers, such as long working hours, limited access to training, and lack of networking opportunities. Over the past few years, the issue of violence against women has remained relevant. According to statistics, every third woman and girl in the world is subjected to physical or sexual violence or murder, often by a loved one (Kim, Y. J. 2022).

These findings suggest that there is a need for policy interventions to address gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea. Such interventions should focus on providing women with access to training and development opportunities, promoting gender diversity in leadership positions, and implementing family-friendly workplace policies. Additionally, more attention should be paid to the role of gender stereotypes and biases in shaping labor market outcomes.

South Korea has implemented various measures to combat gender inequality in the labor market, recognizing the importance of promoting gender equality in all sectors of society. Here are some of the key measures:

- **Equal Employment Opportunity Law:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Law prohibits employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of gender, including in hiring, promotion, and pay (Cho, H., & Shin, H. 2023). The law requires employers to provide equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices.

- **Gender Quota System:** South Korea has implemented a gender quota system to increase the representation of women in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. The quota requires that at least 30% of board members of public organizations be women and that private companies with 300 or more employees have at least one female executive in their top three positions.

- **Parental Leave and Childcare:** The state has implemented parental leave policies that allow parents to take time off work to care for their children. Both mothers and fathers are entitled to parental leave, and the policy has been expanded to cover adoptive parents as well. Additionally, the government provides subsidies for childcare services to make them more affordable for working parents (KWDI).

- **Gender Wage Gap Reporting:** Employers in South Korea are required to disclose their gender pay gap figures as part of their annual reports. This allows for transparency and accountability in

addressing gender pay disparities (Choi, J., & Park, J. 2022).

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** The state has implemented policies to promote flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and flexible working hours, to help women balance their work and family responsibilities.

- **Education and Training:** The state provides education and training programs to help women improve their skills and increase their chances of success in the labor market. These programs include vocational training and apprenticeships (Lee, S., & Kim, H. 2022).

- **Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws:** The state has implemented laws to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and protect victims. Employers are required to establish and implement policies to prevent sexual harassment, and employees have the right to file complaints and seek legal recourse.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in South Korea plays a pivotal role in promoting gender equality and enhancing social welfare. Established in 2001, the ministry has been at the forefront of addressing gender disparities, advocating for women's rights, and supporting vulnerable groups.

A key focus of the MOGEF is to enhance women's empowerment and increase their participation in the workforce. The ministry implements initiatives to reduce the gender wage gap, promote work-life balance, provide vocational training, and support female entrepreneurship. It also works to break down systemic barriers that hinder women's career advancement, such as the glass ceiling phenomenon.

However, the Korean government has announced a plan to eliminate the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in 2022. The ministry's responsibilities related to women's employment will be transferred to the Ministry of Employment and Labour, while functions related to family, youth, gender equality and support for victims of violence will be transferred to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. This reorganization is intended to enhance the protection of women and vulnerable groups through the use of specialized expertise and infrastructure. Nevertheless, the specific details of the restructuring have yet to be confirmed.

The main documents aimed at achieving equality between women and men are the Basic Law "On the Development of Women" (1995); The Law on the Prohibition and Elimination of Discrimination on the Ground of Sex (1999, but repealed in

2005) and the Framework Law on Gender Equality, a comprehensive revision of the Basic Law on the Development of Women (2014).

Over the past few years, several rallies have been held in the country, where more than 100,000 women who are dissatisfied with their situation in society have joined. Unfortunately, despite the active position of women in the country, no concrete measures are taken by the state to prevent gender inequality in South Korea.

There are also a number of women's rights organizations in Korea: Korean Center for Family Law, Business and Professional Women/BPW, Korean Association of University Women/KAUW, Korean National Mothers' Association (KNMA), Korean Federation of Housewives Clubs (KFHC) and etc.

The state of South Korea has implemented a range of measures to prevent gender inequality in the labor market. While there is still work to be done to fully address the issue, these measures represent important steps toward creating a more equitable and inclusive labor market for women in South Korea.

The study's findings also suggest the need for greater attention to the role of gender stereotypes and biases in shaping labor market outcomes. Women in South Korea often face discrimination and bias in the workplace, and addressing these issues is critical to achieving gender equality in the labor market.

Overall, the study underscores the need for sustained efforts to address gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea, and the critical role of policy interventions in promoting gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Achieving gender equality in the labor market will not only benefit women but also contribute to economic growth and social progress in the country.

Conclusion

Taking into account the historical past of the countries of East Asia, the special culture formed in this region, the stereotypes that dominate all spheres of society, the most difficult thing in solving this

problem may be the change of the already established system of patriarchy, in which women subconsciously do not want and do not strive to occupy high-paid positions position. In addition, the reason may be the fear of changing the stable situation in society, which is especially characteristic of the residents of South Korea, for which a high degree of uncertainty avoidance is characteristic.

Further changes will occur in various spheres of public life as a result of the fragile established ideas about women in the labor sphere: women will no longer be perceived as a "weak" social group that can be subjected to coercion, pressure, harassment and other 26 forms of moral or physical violence.

Serious changes will be not so much in the labor sphere as a complete transformation of the family way of life, which is based on the centuries-old history of Asian states.

However, such drastic changes are largely yet to be seen.

In conclusion, our review of the literature highlights the significant gender inequalities in the labor market in South Korea, with women facing numerous barriers to accessing high-paying jobs, career advancement, and fair pay. Discriminatory hiring practices, limited opportunities for career advancement, and the wage gap between men and women are some of the major factors contributing to gender inequality in the South Korean labor market.

It is essential for the South Korean government and society as a whole to recognize the importance of gender equality and take steps to address gender inequality in the labor market. Creating a more equitable and inclusive labor market for all will not only benefit women but also contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

To conclude, addressing gender inequality in the labor market in South Korea is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. By implementing policies that promote gender diversity and enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination, South Korea can create a more equitable and inclusive society for all its citizens.

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