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SUBJECT: GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE AZERBAIJANI CIVIL SERVICE: THE MODERATING ROLE OF AGE AND GENDER IN EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of topic:

One of the global problems facing humanity to this day is gender discrimination in the workplace. This is especially noticeable in the public sector, despite the fact that it is in this area that the principles of justice and equality are expected to be followed. For example, the civil service in Azerbaijan. Despite the fact that the country has undergone a number of socio-economic transformations, this problem remains relevant to this day. Various measures have been taken to solve this problem. One of them is the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other legislative efforts (United Nations, 1979). However, the dynamics of work in public institutions are still influenced by gender bias.

The public sector in Azerbaijan includes issues such as wage disparity, unequal access to leadership positions, and limited opportunities for women to participate in decision-making. Despite the fact that women occupy a significant part of the Government of the State, their role is often excluded both in decision-making bodies and in other leadership positions (Gender Information Center, 2022; OECD, 2021). This is due to societal stereotypes about the roles of women and men. The latter are often associated with power and leadership, while women are assigned a supporting or subordinate role.

The result of gender discrimination in public service is a weakening of public confidence and the effectiveness of institutions. Employees who face gender bias experience increased stress and job dissatisfaction, which reduces their productivity and commitment to their responsibilities. Thus, productivity drops and leads to a leak of frames (Clark et al., 2010; Greenberg, 2006; Bowen et al., 2016). Moreover, this leads to a lack of innovation in the public sector. The authority of the Government is also being undermined, as the public has little trust in State institutions.

The impact of gender discrimination on the public sector plays an important role in the context of Azerbaijan due to the historical past of the state and socio-cultural norms. Workplace dynamics are still influenced by traditional gender roles. Society often puts female employees in a dependent position due to prejudice. Thus, female employees, especially young ones, are forced to overcome these biases, while older women employees are more tolerant due to their similar work experience (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001). On the other hand, men working in fields that are associated with women's work may also face biases that affect their professional experience.

Even though there has been progress in promoting gender equality, especially in the public sector, it is not uniform across different demographic groups. Factors such as stress levels, employee commitment, and job satisfaction depend on perceptions of injustice at work. Moreover, gender, age, and other individual characteristics also contribute to determining employees' perception of discrimination.

One of the solutions to these problems is to study the relationship between the performance of employees in the public sector in Azerbaijan and gender discrimination. Thus, this study can serve as a basis not only for future research, but also for policy reforms. In other words, thanks to the research, both a theoretical understanding of workplace processes and practical recommendations will be implemented that would contribute to the development of an unbiased working environment in the public sector of Azerbaijan.

Object and subject of the study:

The object of this study is the civil service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which exhibits various forms of perception of discrimination, including gender and age. Thus, this study evaluates the consequences of these phenomena at both the organizational and individual levels.

The subject of the study is civil servants of various committees, ministries, and other executive authorities of Azerbaijan. As part of an empirical study, respondents of both sexes, different age groups, and positions were included in the sample to analyze their perceptions and reactions to discriminatory practices.

This study includes a conceptual model that is partially based on the conceptual model written in the research conducted by Zahid Ali Channar (2011). It illustrates the relationship between key employee outcomes and gender discrimination. They are as follows: job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and stress levels. Nevertheless, the current study modified the conceptual model and included two moderating variables: gender and age. The theory of social roles and justice is the basis of the model. In other words, the impact of social expectations and perceptions of fairness on workplace performance is explained by it. Therefore, the model includes the following components:

Independent variable: According to most sources, gender discrimination in the workplace is defined as unfair treatment at work based on gender. This includes such phenomena as limited career growth, unequal pay, and biased hiring practices.

Dependent variables:

The Job Satisfaction variable determines the level of employee satisfaction with the work environment. For example, this includes factors such as career growth, salary, and others. The Stress Level variable defines the psychological stress and anxiety that is caused by

discrimination in the workplace. At the same time, variable Job Commitment determines the degree of emotional attachment and dedication of employees to their workplace.

Moderating variables:

This study takes gender as a moderator into account, as it examines the extent to which the effects of discrimination in the workplace are different for women and men. The explanation for this is that female employees have to face a number of difficulties in an environment where men display their dominant qualities. Thus, they experience more negative consequences.

This study also takes age into account as a moderator, as it examines how the effects of discrimination in the workplace vary for employees of different ages. The explanation for this is that female employees, especially young ones, may face more severe negative consequences.

Research question and hypotheses: Research question is: How do gender and age moderate the relationship between workplace gender discrimination and employee outcomes?

Following research hypotheses were developed according to findings:

H1: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.

H2: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.

H3: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress.

H4: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.

H5: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.

H6: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress.

Purpose and objectives of research

The aim of this study is to draw attention to the development of civil services in Azerbaijan, to examine the current situation regarding discrimination in state bodies and to contribute to the implementation of reforms by revealing shortcomings. Civil servants implement state policy, and it is crucial to create decent working conditions for them and examine the factors that affect their work process. At the end of this study, it will be possible to analyze the current situation regarding discrimination in the civil service and draw conclusions and act.

Objectives of the research

In order to study the impact of gender discrimination in the public sphere of Azerbaijan, this study applies both the Equity Theory and Social Role Theory. This is because they both provide a detailed picture of the organizational and social factors that affect not only gender bias, but also its impact on the working environment in the public sector.

Social role theory

The influence of cultural expectations regarding gender roles on the workplace atmosphere is explained by this theory (Eagly, 1987). Thus, there is a so-called dichotomy. This is when women are marginalized in areas where men are preferred, as women are given a secondary role, and men are perceived as natural leaders, which is why they work in leadership positions. Moreover, women who exhibit leadership patterns in behavior may be punished by society for not conforming to traditional gender norms (Rudman and Glick, 2001). This phenomenon is known as the "backlash effect". It is especially noticeable in those areas where the hierarchical environment is clearly expressed. For example, public service.

According to Eagly and Karau (2002), women working in leadership positions face a lot of opposition and condemnation, as they contradict traditional female stereotypes. Thus, this theory explains the reasons for the obstacles and skepticism towards women in public administration. This problem is also relevant in the public sector of Azerbaijan. This is due to the influence of cultural norms based on traditional gender roles on the structure of workplaces. As a result, women are restricted from holding senior positions. In other words, women most often perform administrative or supportive functions in the workplace. At the same time, men work in leadership positions. This leads to systemic obstacles to equality.

Thus, despite the fact that public service should serve as an example of equality and justice, it strengthens traditional norms and becomes a reflection of social prejudice, which negatively affects women and their right to participate in government on an equal basis.

Equity theory

One of the founders of this theory is James Adams (1963). Its main focus is the perception of fairness in the workplace by employees, as well as the effects of perceived inequality. According to this theory, employees compare their results and costs with their colleagues. If there is an inequality during the comparison, then employees experience workplace dissatisfaction and stress.

Modern realities and studies that have also explored this topic only confirm the relevance of the Equity theory in the workplace. In particular, this concerns discrimination based on gender. Equity in distribution and procedural fairness, according to Colquitt (2001), play an important role in employee satisfaction. At the same time, gender bias contributes to systemic inequality, as it contradicts these principles. Moreover, according to Greenberg

(2006), perceptions of discrimination negatively affect employees, increasing stress and reducing trust in businesses and organizations. Thus, discrimination is a critical problem for the public sector. This is because public trust is being undermined. The gender hierarchy in the Azerbaijani public sector is an obstacle to women's career growth. As a result, they are forced to work in lower positions. This phenomenon is known as the "sticky floor" effect. Thus, this problem requires a solution or targeted reforms, as it reduces the effectiveness of the organization and job satisfaction.

Methods of analysis

In order to obtain extremely important results, it becomes necessary to analyze the source data. Google Forms is the tool in this study for collecting the data used in it. IBM SPSS 29 also assisted in their analysis. Demographic data has been statistically processed. According to authors such as Dennick (2011), reliability is ensured by the inclusion of Cronbach's alpha analysis. At the same time, regression analysis was included in order to assess the relationship between variables. Moreover, authors such as Conrad and Shi (2009) emphasize the importance of including the Pearson correlation coefficient in the study in order to measure the direction of the connection and the strength between them. Eventually, others were also included. For example, Standardized beta coefficient, R square, and Significant value. Since the hypotheses in this study include moderation, the conditions for interaction were created (gender discrimination x Gender factor, gender discrimination x Age).

Scientific novelty of research

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the fact that, for the first time in the context of the Azerbaijani civil service, a quantitative analysis of the relationship between perceptions of gender discrimination and factors such as job satisfaction, stress levels, and job commitment has been conducted. Moreover, unlike other studies, the analysis includes moderators such as age and gender, which reveals differences in the impact of discrimination on different demographic groups. The Social Role Theory and Equity Theory also allowed interpretation through local culture.

Thanks to the integration of the Equity Theory and Social Role Theory, it is possible to critically approach the analysis of the phenomenon of gender discrimination in the Azerbaijani public sector. Both theoretical points of view complement each other. In other words, they both explain the psychological consequences that affected employees and the cultural origins of discriminatory practices. Thus, this approach makes it possible to identify processes occurring at a deeper level.

Social Role Theory is relevant in the context of the Azerbaijani civil service. This is because gender role expectations are still influenced by traditional social norms. Thanks to this

theory, it is possible to clarify the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and the resistance and scepticism shown by society towards them during their attempts to realize leadership qualities. Thus, State institutions are characterized by rigid formal authority and hierarchy. In such circumstances, women can be punished for displaying leadership qualities, as they violate normative gender roles.

On the other hand, the psychological explanation of how discrimination is perceived is provided by Equity Theory. This includes different types of discrimination: discrimination based on gender, age, or other. Moreover, the function of this theory is to explain the negative impact of discrimination on the workplace. In this case, it's low commitment to work, dissatisfaction, stress, etc. These consequences may be caused by employees comparing their remuneration and contributions with the results of other employees. Thus, this theoretical approach is significantly important for the variables of this study, especially perceived discrimination and job commitment or job satisfaction. Moreover, thanks to the theory of justice, the reactions of both young and older employees are compared. The former tends to feel that they are being underestimated. The latter feels fierce competition for promotion. The statistical data in this study also supports these conclusions.

I CHAPTER. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Gender discrimination in the workplace

Unfair treatment of people based on gender, which undermines equality in professional opportunities, is called gender discrimination in the workplace. Limited access to senior positions, unequal pay, and a biased assessment of employee performance are some of its manifestations. Even with various policies in place, discriminatory practices are still carried out in government structures. As a result, female employees face difficulties in being promoted to senior positions.

The "glass ceiling" effect, which was noted above and described by various researchers, including Cotter et al. (2001), is found in various government institutions. It explains the structural challenges women face in order to grow in their careers, even with equally high qualifications. Those institutions that include a rigid hierarchy face this problem more often. This is because the leadership is dominated by men. Other researchers, such as Smith (2019), have identified a disproportionate disadvantage for women in hiring caused by bias. In other words, occupational segregation is increasing. Ultimately, job satisfaction decreases under the influence of gender bias, while stress levels increase. In this case, employees are less committed to work (Greenberg, 2006). Therefore, special measures are required to create fair and favorable working conditions, particularly in the public sector.

1.2. Impact of gender discrimination on employee outcomes

1.2.1. Job satisfaction

Organizational effectiveness and employee well-being are reflected in job satisfaction. Numerous studies have revealed that job satisfaction is significantly reduced due to gender discrimination in the workplace. The reduced motivation and sense of injustice experienced by employees are caused by gender discrimination in the workplace. Most of the employees who reported their dissatisfaction with the work environment often faced gender discrimination, which was a barrier to recognition (Clark et al, 2010). This has also been highlighted by other researchers such as Bowen et al. (2016), who have argued for increased staff turnover as a result of discriminatory practices. As mentioned above, discrimination is not the same for all employees. In particular, it affects female employees. As a result, there are systemic barriers to career growth.

1.2.2. Stress levels

Gender discrimination increases stress levels in the workplace. This negatively affects both the physiological and psychological well-being of employees. A hostile work environment

is being created in which there are no career prospects. This leads to job dissatisfaction and anxiety. There is frustration and a sense of helplessness among those employees who have faced gender discrimination. Moreover, there may be health problems. For example, exhaustion, high blood pressure, depression.

Researchers such as Kessler et al. (2008) and Greenberg (2017) have confirmed how decreased productivity and emotional burnout are the result of prolonged exposure to discrimination. Thus, female employees who work in areas where men are more preferred feel a lack of support and lack of career opportunities.

1.2.3. Employee commitment and enthusiasm

The success of an organization, staff stability, and productivity improvement depend on how enthusiastic and committed the employees are to their work. Despite this, these factors are significantly weakened as a result of gender discrimination. Employees face a lack of trust, motivation, and commitment. This is due to employees' understanding that gender bias is an obstacle to their career growth, recognition, and salary. They feel unrecognized and unappreciated, which ultimately deprives them of the motivation to invest efforts in the effective performance of their duties. According to Meyer et al. (2002), an employee's psychological attachment to their workplace, which reduces staff turnover and promotes loyalty, is job commitment. However, discrimination undermines it, which ultimately leads to staff turnover. This increases the likelihood that employees will look for favorable opportunities at another workplace and quit. Women's job commitment may be lower due to the fact that they face a biased assessment of effectiveness. This is especially true in areas dominated by men. However, it is worth noting that this works in the opposite direction. Men who work in female-dominated fields also face bias, which affects their career advancement and their job commitment.

In addition to commitment, employees' intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm are reduced as a result of gender discrimination. Desi and Ryan (2000) also write about this. According to them, if employees feel systemic inequality, internal motivation also decreases. The same thing happens with initiative and creativity. As employees face unfair treatment in the workplace, they may accuse management and the organization of dishonesty and lack of growth. In other words, the trust of employees is being undermined. As a result, distrust leads to such consequences as staff turnover. One of the favorable solutions to this problem is the introduction of transparent policies, an inclusive work culture and equal career opportunities, which supports the enthusiasm of employees and their commitment. In this case, employees of both sexes felt that their work was appreciated.

1.3. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.

Employee job satisfaction is highly dependent on gender discrimination in the workplace, especially when viewed through the lens of gender. Thus, job satisfaction is a person's emotional reaction to their employees and work. According to many studies, women are more acutely aware of discriminatory behavior than men. As a result, unlike male colleagues, job satisfaction levels fluctuate and are likely to decrease. Thus, we can assume a moderating effect of the gender factor, which either weakens or enhances this phenomenon. The gender of the respondent plays an important role.

Hypothesis 2: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.

The work environment significantly influences commitment to the organization and enthusiasm for work. A special role is played by how inclusive or honest it is. This is because psychological and emotional attachment to a job or organization may weaken as a result of workers encountering gender discrimination. Female employees may be more susceptible to strong perceptions of gender discrimination in the workplace, which negatively affects their commitment. In other words, loyalty, motivation, or the desire to work are most likely to depend on the gender factor. Thus, the purpose of this hypothesis is to identify and assess the strength of the relationship between commitment to work and discrimination based on gender.

Hypothesis 3: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress.

Unfair treatment at work and discrimination can also cause stress at work. This is especially true among employees who are biased by gender. They are more likely to have an increased stress response. As a result, productivity at work and health suffer. According to previous researches, female employees come under higher psychological and emotional stress when confronted with discrimination. In other words, this hypothesis suggests that there is an increased correlation between stress levels and gender discrimination in women than in men.

Hypothesis 4: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.

The perception of gender discrimination and employees' reactions to it may depend on the age difference. It is assumed that older employees, due to their experience in developing a coping mechanism, are less sensitive to unfair treatment than younger employees. This is especially due to the fact that younger employees are more idealistic and sensitive. In other

words, the direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and gender discrimination may depend on the age of employees. Therefore, the assumption of this hypothesis is that the impact of gender discrimination on job satisfaction varies according to age.

Hypothesis 5: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.

In addition to the work environment, a person's stage of life and career can also have a significant impact on commitment to work. It is assumed that young employees who have faced discrimination are more likely to change jobs than older employees. This is because older employees show tolerance either because there are fewer opportunities to find new jobs, or because they take longer to arrive at the service. Thus, the assumption of this hypothesis is that the relationship between commitment to work and perceived discrimination can be moderated by age. In other words, certain age groups may face more pronounced consequences.

Hypothesis 6: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress.

The age difference can also have an impact on the interaction between workplace discrimination and stress level. It is assumed that older employees are more stress-resistant and less susceptible to stress than younger employees. Perhaps this is due to the accumulated experience among the former, and its absence among the latter. Thus, the assumption of this hypothesis is that the relationship between stress levels and gender discrimination in the workplace is moderated by age. In other words, the interaction of one age group is stronger than the other.

1.4. The civil service in Azerbaijan

Ensuring the implementation of laws, policies and programs is the main function of the civil service of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In other words, it represents the basis for the functioning of government. Citizens' trust in government institutions directly depends on the transparency and effectiveness of public services (World Bank, 2020). Even with the various reforms undertaken in the civil service system of Azerbaijan, various problems related to different types of discrimination are still being identified: gender, age, belonging to minorities, etc. (UNDP, 2022).

1.4.1. The structure of the civil service in Azerbaijan

The fundamental mechanism for the implementation of State policy is the civil service system in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Constitution and the national legislative framework are the foundations on which it functions. The key governing bodies of the state administration

of Azerbaijan are: The President and the Milli Majlis (National Assembly). It also includes other state committees, ministries, and executive authorities (Government of Azerbaijan, 2023).

The Head of State is the President. His broad executive powers include both the right to appoint and dismiss heads and ministers of government agencies. The unicameral legislative body is the Milli Majlis. Its functions include both passing laws and overseeing the accountability of the executive branch. The highest executive authority is the Cabinet of Ministers. Its function is to ensure the implementation of strategic reforms and national programs and coordinate the activities of ministers and subordinate departments (ADB, 2021).

Various policy areas, which include education, health, foreign affairs, and defense, are under the control of specialized ministries and State committees. Executive authorities and public service institutions play an important role in providing social and administrative services to citizens (OSCE, 2022).

Civil servants are required to maintain neutrality, professionalism, and efficiency in accordance with a centralized, hierarchical model reflected by the institutional structure. At the same time, the identification of issues related to inclusivity, such as age or gender differences in public service, is part of the functioning of these bodies (OECD, 2019).

1.4.2. Gender discrimination

One of the obstacles in the field of civil service in Azerbaijan, as already mentioned, is gender discrimination, especially against women. Despite the formal gender equality enshrined in legislation, women's participation in decision-making remains limited in government agencies. The data from the report of the Gender Information Center (2022) showed that the number of women working in the civil service of Azerbaijan is only 28%. Moreover, only 8% of them work in a managerial position (Gender Information Center, 2022). In other words, there is an invisible barrier ("glass ceiling") for women in the Azerbaijani public sector, which hinders their career advancement.

Gender bias also occurs in job applications and certifications, according to reports from women. The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of Azerbaijan conducted a study according to which about 36% of women working in the civil service and interviewed in the survey admitted that they feel that their achievements and competencies are less recognized compared to men working in this field (Center for Strategic Studies, 2022).

1.4.3. Age discrimination and other forms of discrimination

The next pressing issue is age discrimination. This is especially noticeable among specialists under the age of 30. The reason for this phenomenon is the distrust on the part of the leadership towards the younger generation. As a result, they face opaque performance evaluation procedures, limited access to information, and promotion. A report conducted by the

National Institute of Public Administration in 2021 showed that the number of young employees working in the civil service was 18%. Moreover, only 2% of this number work in senior positions (National Institute of Public Administration, 2021).

At the same time, employees who have reached the age of 55 and older may often experience stress due to the need for early retirement. As a result, they feel unmotivated and isolated, as their participation in both professional development programs and new projects is limited. Thus, they feel a sense of loss of professional status.

The next discrimination that exists in Azerbaijan is discrimination based on religion and ethnicity. In particular, this applies to representatives of the Talysh, Lezgian, and Russian-speaking communities. Thus, representatives of some religious minorities also report difficulties they have to face in promotion or employment (Human Rights Watch & Freedom House, 2021). This is confirmed by reports from international organizations. These include Human Rights Watch and Freedom House.

1.4.4. The main causes of discrimination

Firstly, socio-cultural stereotypes. Personnel policy is still influenced by the traditional view of the role of women and senior citizens in society. For example, women's career orientation is neglected or even underestimated. At the same time, older employees are seen as less productive (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2012).

Secondly, there is a lack of institutional protection mechanisms. The implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in practice faces a number of challenges. This is due to the lack of independent control structures. Such legislative acts include the Labor Code and the Law "On Civil Service" (Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2018; Law on Civil Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2001).

Thirdly, there is a low level of transparency. The lack of transparency of competitive procedures when applying for public service jobs is one of the following reasons. According to reports, this is due to protectionism and personal connections when promoting and hiring (Human Rights Watch & Freedom House, 2021; UNDP, 2022).

After all, there is an underrepresentation of youth and women in the decision-making process. The lack of support in the form of mentors or role models increases the number of difficulties, creating a vicious circle. As a result, young people and women do not see prospects and have no desire to participate in management (Fredman, 2011; Gender Equality Commission, 2021).

1.4.5. Cases of discrimination

According to an article published on one of the news sites, in 2020, a young specialist with a red diploma and knowledge of two languages was not allowed to participate in the

ministry's competition (News.az, 2020). The reason for the refusal was the lack of "recommendations" from high-ranking officials. At the same time, a male candidate with lower academic performance and knowledge was accepted for the position she applied for.

The next incident occurred in Ganja in 2021. Despite his extensive experience and qualifications, an employee who reached retirement age was transferred to a low-paying position without explanation. Despite attempts to clarify the situation, contacting the HR department was unsuccessful (Report on Age Discrimination in the Public Sector, 2021).

There was also a case in which a woman applied to participate in an international exchange program. Despite her proper experience and skills, she was rejected. According to the wording of the refusal, due to the presence of her children and the direction requiring frequent business trips, they found a more suitable candidate (Gender Equality Monitoring Report, 2021).

II CHAPTER. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

2.1. Research philosophy

Many authors present in their works the process of developing and refining a hypothesis, called philosophy. There are a number of other authors who believe that philosophy is an approach to perception that helps researchers gain reliable knowledge by turning ideas into reliable conclusions. The research philosophy in this study is based on positivism. According to authors such as Collis and Hussey (2021), positivism is seen as a rational approach, according to which the world is an interaction of cause-and-effect relationships that do not depend on people or things. According to Ryan (2018), positivism includes both experimentation and quantitative research in order to objectively analyze data.

2.2. Research approach

A specific method is chosen by the researcher in order to collect, study, and interpret the data. They mainly include inductive and deductive methods (Saunders, 2007). According to Collis and Hussey (2021), the main difference between the former and the latter is that the former uses data to build theories. While the second one, according to, verifies theories that already exist. (Kara, 2020). Thus, this study will use the deductive method. Due to the fact that deductive reasoning is the basis of quantitative research, this study uses statistical analysis. It includes the correlation or association between variables and their measurement.

2.3. Research strategy

Some authors describe the functions of research design as collecting information and providing a detailed understanding of certain phenomena. This includes both a description of the behavior and their characteristics (Sirisilla, 2023). At the same time, other authors note that the main function of research design is both the validity of the methodology and ensuring the legitimacy of the results (Collis and Hussey, 2021). In other words, it helps to generalize the choice of strategies and methods on the part of researchers. Explanation of phenomena and their prediction is a function of the explanatory research plan (Sue and Ritter, 2012). Thus, a description of the interaction between variables and hypotheses is applied. This study applies to an explanatory research plan. In other words, the influence of one variable on another is revealed and hypotheses are tested. Moreover, in addition to correlation and regression analysis, moderators are included in this study: age and gender. In order to collect quantitative data, a survey is used.

2.4 Data collection

Data collection is considered as one of the main parts of statistical analysis. According to Collis and Hussey (2021), the data generally consists of two parts: primary and secondary. The primary is that type of data that is newly collected for a certain study. At the same time, auxiliary sources are well-known as secondary data. It is usually related to articles published in magazines, books, and other sources. This study applied both types of data. Civil servants participated in the survey for the collection of primary data. 271 people (139 females and 132 males) participated in the study. Secondary data was collected from various previous studies.

2.5 Sampling

The residents of Azerbaijan working in the civil service are the target group of this study. Both genders (men and women) took part in the survey. Moreover, there are three age categories they are divided into: from 18 to 34, from 35 to 51, and 52 and above. According to authors such as Moorley and Shorten (2014), there are probability and non-probability samplings based on the target group. The distinction between them is that the latter provides each individual with equal opportunities. A non-probability sample can be a source of bias due to the selection of participants based on convenience. In this study, a non-probability sampling was used to reach large number of people who are currently civil servants. A social network was used to send the survey to participants via a link.

2.6 Operationalization

The survey is relevant and prepared accordingly to the research topic that studies the relationship between employees' outcome and workplace gender discrimination. There are five sections provided. The first section covers questions related to the demographic data. In other words, the place of residence (Azerbaijan or others), job position (civil servant or others), and age were asked. The respondents who didn`t meet these criteria were excluded from taking part in answering the following questions. There are sixteen questions in the second section provided. Consequently, the study divided them into four questions in every section. It is explained by the corresponding variables (Job Satisfaction, Stress Level, Job Commitment, and Gender Discrimination) under study. The Likert scale was used for representing them. In other words, the responses were provided as follows: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Uncertain (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). The survey was translated into Azerbaijani language because the residence of respondents is Azerbaijan. Ultimately, the anonymous link was prepared and shared with them on the social media. After the data was collected, the analysis of responses was carried out.

III CHAPTER. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. Demographic profile of respondents

The frequencies method was used in this study to analyze the collected data, which covers general information about the survey participant. Demographic data about the participants is as follows:

Table 3.1.1. Demographic data

Categories	Frequency (N=271)	Percentage
Total valid	271	
Missing system	0	
Total	271	

Gender		
Male	132	49
Female	139	51
Other		0

271 people responded to the survey. Therefore, 271 reliable responses were received. This study included 4 questions in each of the sections in this survey. Each section is associated with variables: perceived gender discrimination in the workplace, stress levels, job satisfaction, and job commitment. It is also worth noting that the JS variable has been reverse-coded.

For the reliability of the survey, participants could choose between participating in the survey or refusing it. As soon as they agreed to participate, they had to go through a qualifying round in three categories or questions. This was done to determine whether the participants were suitable for this study. These included issues related to age (18 years and older), position in 1the civil service in Azerbaijan, and place of residence (Azerbaijan).

There is a slight difference in percentage between the females and males participating in the survey. According to the results, 51% of females and 49% of males participated in it.

Table 3.1.2. Participants (civil servants)

Categories	Frequency (N=271)	Percentage
Supportive position	37	13.6
Administrative-executive position	175	64.3
Administrative-leading position	59	22.1

According to Table 3.1.2, based on the responses regarding the position of the survey participants in the civil service, it was revealed that the most common position is administrative-executive (64.3%).

3.2. Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of the test. The scale factor varies from 0 to 1. Therefore, high reliability is determined by a high coefficient. Some authors, such as Ahdika (2017), argue that the coefficient is considered fairly reliable in the range from 0.4 to 0.6. At the same time, if it is between 0.8 and 1, it is considered very reliable.

In Table 3.2.1. below, Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to check the overall nature and accuracy of the variables (Gender Discrimination, Job Satisfaction, Stress Level, and Job Commitment). Based on that, it is easy to see that observed variables (GD, JS, SL, JC) have good (reliable or very reliable) correlation coefficients, of which the highest is the variable SL (0.915), and the lowest is JC (0.757).

In order to verify the accuracy of the variables in this study (gender discrimination, stress levels, job satisfaction, and job commitment) and their general nature, an alpha Cronbach analysis was performed (Table 3.2.1). Thus, according to the results, all the observed variables have reliable and very reliable Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Of these, the variable JC (0.757) has the lowest coefficient, and the variable SL (0.915) has the highest coefficient.

Table 3.2.1. Cronbach`s Alpha

	Cronbach`s Alpha	N of Items
Gender Discrimination	.886	4
Job Satisfaction	.810	4
Stress Level	.915	4
Job Commitment	.757	4

3.3. Descriptive statistics

In order to perform statistical analysis in SPSS (Pearson correlations, grouping, etc.), it becomes necessary to convert a nominal Gender variable into a numerical variable. In other words, the numeric categorical variable was created by replacing old values with new ones. Thus, since the old values in this study were Female and Male, they were replaced with 0 and 1. Due to this, further calculations are possible.

Table 3.3.1. Gender groups (Descriptive Statistics)

Question	Female (Mean)	Female (SD)	Male (Mean)	Male (SD)
GD1	2.69	1.13	2.29	1.20
GD2	2.52	1.14	2.46	1.16
GD3	2.17	1.10	2.26	1.23
GD4	2.68	1.22	2.25	1.24
JS1_rev	1.95	0.80	1.98	0.88
JS2_rev	2.60	1.09	2.21	1.06
JS3_rev	2.50	1.10	2.36	1.13
JS4_rev	2.19	0.96	2.14	1.04
SL1	2.38	1.15	2.10	1.10
SL2	2.22	1.13	2.08	1.08
SL3	2.27	1.15	2.22	1.14
SL4	2.19	1.08	2.19	1.08
JC1	3.54	1.04	3.41	1.10
JC2	3.58	1.17	3.62	1.11
JC3	3.65	1.10	3.83	1.06
JC4	2.94	1.01	3.35	1.16

Gender Discrimination (GD)

According to Table 3.3.1., the indicators of perception of discrimination based on gender (GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4) are higher among women than among men. For example, men have an average GD1 of 2.29, while women have 2.69. It can be assumed that women are more susceptible to feelings of discrimination. At the same time, the difference in perception between the sexes is more pronounced and is confirmed by the variables GD3 and GD4. According to the table, the indicators of standard deviations are lower in the female group, which indicates a more homogeneous perception of discrimination among it.

Job Satisfaction (JS)

According to Table 3.3.1., it is worth noting that female employees show on average a higher level of satisfaction (JS1_rev, JS2_rev, JS3_rev, JS4_rev). For example, the JS2_rev value for women is 2.60, while for men it is 2.21. It can be assumed that there are differences in expectations from the profession, or women are more adapted to the conditions. Despite this, the JS1_rev index among men (1.98) is slightly higher than that among women (1.95).

Stress Level (SL)

According to the Table 3.3.1., it is worth noting that the stress level in all SL variables was higher in women than in men. For example, women's SL1 is 2.38, while men's is 2.10. This is especially noticeable for SL1 and SL2. Thus, it can be assumed that the gender environment significantly affects the emotional state of women in the civil service rather than men. Moreover, it can be assumed that there is a diversity in women's individual stress experiences, since the standard deviation is slightly higher.

Job Commitment (JC)

According to Table, the level of engagement and commitment to work is almost equally high among both sexes. Despite this, men show a higher average value than women. This is especially noticeable in terms of JC3 (3.83 vs. 3.65). Perhaps this is due to the fact that men occupy leadership positions and are interested in the stability of the position. Moreover, the JC4 index in women is significantly lower than in men (2.94 versus 3.35). Thus, it can be assumed that due to a less favorable perception of career opportunities, women are less loyal to work.

Table 3.3.2. Test of Normality (Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk results)

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
GD_mean	0.171	271	<.001	0.923	271	<.001
JS_mean	0.160	271	<.001	0.944	271	<.001
SL_mean	0.194	271	<.001	0.898	271	<.001
JC_mean	0.139	271	<.001	0.945	271	<.001

This study also conducted Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests to evaluate the distribution of variables. Thus, since p < 0.001 for all variables, a deviation from the ideal normal distribution was revealed in both tests (Table 3.3.2).

Table 3.3.3. Normality Indicators Based on Skewness and Kurtosis (Z-values)

Variable	Skewness	Skew_SE	Kurtosis	Kurt_SE	Z_Skew	Z_Kurt
JS_mean	0.724	0.148	0.394	0.295	4.89	1.34
GD_mean	0.771	0.148	-1.135	0.295	5.21	-3.85
SL_mean	0.911	0.148	0.153	0.295	6.16	0.52
JC_mean	-0.787	0.148	0.503	0.295	-5.32	1.71

Even if there are violations of normality (Skewness), it is acceptable to analyze using Pearson correlation and linear regression in the case of a large sample size (Table 3.3.3). In this

study, n=271. This has been recommended by various authors (Field, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Moreover, the variables were averaged and derived from Likert scales. An analysis of the normality of the residuals in the regression models was also performed, which revealed their proximity to normal.

3.4. Factor analysis of research data

The survey data was used to carry out Factor analysis. In order to determine whether the research data is suitable for doing factor analysis the "KMO and Bartlett's" test was applied. Its results are as follows:

Table 3.4.1. KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.946
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3071.690
	Df	120
	Sig.	<0.001

A look at Table 3.4.1. shows that the KMO value is 0.946 and the meaningfulness (sig.) value $p<0.05$ is seen to be. For a good factor analysis, the selective sufficiency of The Associated value must be 0.6 and above (Tabachnick, 2007: p.165). In this sense, it seems that research statements are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3.4.2. Disclosed general variations of research variables

Components (Factors)	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	**Variance %**	**Cumulative%**
1	8.817	55.108	55.108
2	1.242	7.763	62.871

"Principal component" and "varimax" methods were used to perform factor analysis. Eigenvalues which have value higher than 1 were taken as a factor. As can be seen from Table 3.4.2., the variance results of factor analysis showed that the values of the two components are greater than one. If so, the first component reveals 55.108% of the variance, the second component 7.763%. In total, two components together reveal 62.871% of the variance. The disclosure of 60% and above of the general variance in the Social Sciences is considered successful (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 3.4.3. Factor analysis

Rotated Component Matrix Construct and Items	Factor/L.
Perceived Gender Discrimination	
I have witnessed gender discrimination in the civil service.	0.753
I believe that my gender affects how I am treated in the work environment.	0.690
Gender plays a role in the distribution of additional rewards in the civil service.	0.743
I believe that it is more difficult for women to be recruited into the civil service compared to men.	0.732
Job Satisfaction	
Regardless of my gender, I feel like a valued and respected employee. (Reversed)	0.545
I believe that gender equality is ensured in government institutions. (Reversed)	0.631
I feel that my contributions are evaluated equally with those of my opposite-gender colleagues by management. (Reversed)	0.475
If I have concerns about gender equality in my workplace, I would not hesitate to express them. (Reversed)	0.376
Stress Level	
I experience stress due to gender-based issues in the workplace.	0.846
I often feel psychological pressure at work because of my gender.	0.814
The presence of gender discrimination causes emotional tension for me.	0.842
I feel unsafe to express my opinions due to gender dynamics in the workplace.	0.830
Job Commitment	
I would leave the organization if gender discriminatory practices persist.	-0.560
I do not feel a strong emotional attachment to this job due to gender imbalance.	-0.591
I plan to continue working in this organization regardless of gender issues.	-0.636
I am proud to be part of this organization, despite any gender-related challenges.	-0.780

The factor analysis was performed using the principal component method with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. The main purpose of this analysis is to identify hidden latent factors underlying the dataset. These include questions about gender discrimination, job satisfaction, commitment to work, and stress levels.

Table 3.4.3. can be divided into two components or factors. The first category includes perceptions of discrimination and stress levels. Thus, high values indicate that those employees who experience gender discrimination also experience high levels of stress. In other words, the strong connection between these constructions is confirmed.

The second component or factor can include the opposite statements about job satisfaction and commitment to it. Negative values indicate an inversion of the scale. In other words, high values reveal low satisfaction and commitment.

3.5. Pearson correlation (gender groups)

In this section of the study, Pearson correlation analysis was applied to test the hypothesis in order to determine the strength of the relationship. Guilford's rules of thumb were also applied. Thus, the p-value of the correlation is a number between 0 and 1, indicating a linear relationship between the two variables.

If the P-value is less than 0.05 (5%), then the null hypothesis can be rejected. The absence of a relationship between the two variables is determined by the latter (H0).

Figure 3.5.1. Guilford`s rules of thumb

Correlation Coefficient	Strength of relationship
< 0.20	Negligible relationship
0.21 - 0.40	Low correlation, a weak relationship
0.41 - 0.70	Moderate relationship
0.71 - 0.90	High correlation, strong relationship
>0.90	Very strong relationship

This study applied Pearson correlation analysis for each gender group.

For this purpose, the responses were grouped by gender. In other words, correlation coefficients had to be calculated separately for each of the groups. Averages were applied to aggregate each of the four variables (gender discrimination, stress level, job satisfaction, and job commitment) into the following categories: GD1-GD4, SL1-SL4, JS1-JS4, JC1-JC4. As a result, a generalized indicator was calculated. Segmentation has a beneficial effect on the methodological approach.

The results for both sexes are as follows:

Table 3.5.1. Correlation Matrix: Female Respondents

	GD	JS_Rev	SL	JC
GD	1	.779**	.832**	-.780**
JS_Rev	.779**	1	.801**	-.807**
SL	.832**	.801**	1	-.783**
JC	-.780**	-.807**	-.783**	1

Female Respondents (N = 139)

All the variables studied have a strong and significant relationship with each other, since $p < 0.001$ (Table 3.5.1). Thus, there is a high degree of interdependence between the variables GD (perceived gender discrimination) and the well-being of women working in the public sector.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev): r = 0.779, p < .001

Table 3.5.1 shows a negative correlation between job satisfaction in the women's group and perceived gender discrimination, since JS (job satisfaction) was reverse-coded. Thus, job satisfaction decreases significantly as a result of increased gender discrimination.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.832, p < .001

Pearson's correlation analysis shows a fairly strong positive correlation between stress levels among female employees and perceived gender discrimination. Therefore, the increase in stress levels is caused by increased perceived discrimination based on gender.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job commitment (JC): r = –0.780, p < .001

According to the analysis, a negative relationship was revealed between job commitment and perceived gender discrimination among the female group. It implies that there is a decrease in job commitment as a result of increased perceived gender discrimination.

Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.801, p < .001

The analysis revealed a strong inverse relationship between stress levels and job satisfaction. Thus, the decrease in job satisfaction is caused by increased stress among female employees.

Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.807, p < .001

Job commitment and job satisfaction have a strong negative relationship between each other. It is assumed that, to a large extent due to gender discrimination, lower job commitment is predicted by lower job satisfaction.

Stress Level (SL) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.783, p < .001

Job commitment and stress levels have a strong negative relationship between each other. It is assumed that a decrease in job commitment occurs as a result of increased stress levels.

Ultimately, the analysis suggests that job satisfaction, commitment, and stress are significantly influenced by perceived gender discrimination in the workplace among females working in public service. Thus, strong correlations support the assumption that females are more vulnerable to the negative effects of gender discrimination in the workplace. In other words, the gender factor moderates the relationship.

Table 3.5.2. Correlation Matrix: Male Respondents

	GD	JS_Rev	SL	JC
GD	1	.646**	.690**	-.545**
JS_Rev	.646**	1	.628**	-.694**
SL	.690**	.628**	1	-.425**
JC	-.545**	-.694**	-.425**	1

Male Respondents (N=132)

Due to the fact that $p < 0.001$ in Table 3.5.2 among men working in the public sector, it can be assumed that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between all the variables studied. Despite this, the power of associations in women is usually stronger.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev): r = 0.646, p < .001

According to the analysis, job satisfaction and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a moderate negative correlation with each other. There is a negative impact of increased gender discrimination on job satisfaction (JS is reverse-coded). On the other hand, this influence is stronger in the female group.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.690, p < .001

Stress levels and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a positive correlation with each other. Therefore, stress levels increase as a result of increased gender discrimination. On the other hand, this influence is stronger in the female's group.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.545, p < .001

Job commitment and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a moderately negative relationship. Therefore, job commitment decreases as a result of increased gender discrimination. However, females working in the public sector have a stronger influence.

Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.628, p < .001

According to the analysis, stress levels and job satisfaction have a strong inverse relationship between each other. Therefore, satisfaction decreases as a result of an increase in stress levels (JS is reverse-coded).

Job Satisfaction (JS_Rev) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.694, p < .001

Job commitment and job satisfaction have a moderately strong negative relationship between each other. Therefore, job commitment decreases due to a decrease in job satisfaction.

Stress Level (SL) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.425, p < .001

Ultimately, according to the analysis, stress affects job commitment less in the male group than in the female group, as there is the weakest correlation here.

3.6. Regression analysis (gender groups)

The multiple linear regression model will be applied in this paper. Its inclusion of more than one regression variable explains this. Therefore, unlike the Pearson correlation, which pays attention to the correlation between only two variables, independently of the others, it is able to take into account the influence of several variables simultaneously.

Multiple regression was performed to include interactions between gender and gender discrimination variables to test hypotheses about the constraining role of gender in the relationship between gender discrimination and employees` outcome.

Table 3.6.1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.719[a]	.517	.512	.57066

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, GD, GDxGender

b. Dependent Variable: JS_Rev

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.6.1), which shows how the dependent variable (JS) is influenced by three independent variables (Gender, GD, GDxGender). Thus, the results show that 51.2% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 48.8%.

Table 3.6.2. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	93.103	3	31.034	95.300	< .001[b]
Residual	86.948	267	.326		
Total	180.051	270			

a. Dependent Variable: JS_Rev

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.6.2). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable JS is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significance value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.6.3. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.701	.133		5.264	< .001
GD	.641	.049	.802	12.992	< .001
Gender	.307	.179	.188	1.710	.088
GDxGender	-.137	.068	-.230	-2.006	.046

a. Dependent Variable: JS_Rev

Since p < 0.001, the significance index of the gender discrimination (GD) variable is high (Table 3.6.3). Moreover, since B = 0.641, the direction is negative (JS reverse-coded). Therefore, job satisfaction decreases as the perception of discrimination increases.

However, as p = 0.088, the gender variable turned out to be insignificant. In other words, the direct impact of gender on the job satisfaction was not confirmed.

In the end, since p = 0.046, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxGender) was also confirmed. Moreover, since B = -0.137, and the coefficient is directed in a negative direction, it can be concluded that job satisfaction decreases as a result of more pronounced discrimination in a certain gender group. In this case, females. Thus, the results support the H1 hypothesis.

Multiple regression was performed to test the H2 hypothesis, which states that gender plays a deterrent role in the relationship between perceived gender discrimination in the workplace and job commitment. Variables such as gender and gender discrimination and their interactions were also included.

Table 3.6.4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686[a]	.470	.464	.62100

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, GD, GDxGender

b. Dependent Variable: JC

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.6.4), which shows how the dependent variable (JC) is influenced by three independent variables (Gender, GD, GDxGender). Thus, the results show that 46.4% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 53.6%.

Table 3.6.5. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	91.376	3	30.459	78.981	$< .001^b$
Residual	102.967	267	.386		
Total	194.343	270			

a. Dependent Variable: JC

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.6.5). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable JC is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significance value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.6.6. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.124	.145		35.381	$< .001$
GD	-.674	.054	-.812	-12.571	$< .001$
Gender	-.472	.195	-.279	-2.418	.016
GDxGender	.244	.074	.394	3.279	.001

a. Dependent Variable: JC

Since $p < 0.001$, the significance index of the gender discrimination variable is high (Table 3.6.6). Moreover, since B = -0.674, the direction is negative. Therefore, job commitment decreases as the perception of discrimination increases.

As $p < 0.016$ and B = -0.472, the significance index of the gender variable is moderately high. Thus, the direct influence of gender is revealed. In other words, it is possible to come to the conclusion that men are less devoted to work than women.

In the end, since $p < 0.001$, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxGender) was also confirmed. Moreover, since B = 0.244, and the coefficient is directed in a positive direction, it can be concluded that job commitment decreases as a result of more pronounced discrimination in a certain gender group. In this case, females. Thus, the results confirm the H2 hypothesis.

Multiple regression was performed to test the H3 hypothesis, which states that gender plays a deterrent role in the relationship between perceived gender discrimination in the workplace and stress levels. Variables such as gender and gender discrimination and their interactions were also included.

Table 3.6.7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768[a]	.590	.586	.65134

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, GD, GDxGender

b. Dependent Variable: SL

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.6.7), which shows how the dependent variable (SL) is influenced by three independent variables (Gender, GD, GDxGender). Thus, the results show that 58.6% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 41.4%.

Table 3.6.8. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	163.322	3	54.441	128.324	< .001[b]
Residual	113.273	267	.424		
Total	276.595	270			

a. Dependent Variable: SL

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, GD, GDxGender

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.6.8). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable SL is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significance value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.6.9. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.094	.152		.621	.535
GD	.864	.056	.872	15.349	< .001
Gender	.537	.205	.265	2.620	.009
GDxGender	-.208	.078	-.282	-2.671	.008

a. Dependent Variable: SL

Since p < 0.001, the significance index of the gender discrimination variable is high (Table 3.6.9). Moreover, since B = 0.864, the direction is positive. Therefore, the stress level increases as the perception of discrimination increases.

As p < 0.009 and B = 0.537, the significance index of the gender variable is moderately high. Thus, the direct influence of gender is revealed. In other words, it is possible to come to the conclusion that males experience less stress at work than females.

In the end, since p = 0.008, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxGender) was also confirmed. Moreover, since B = -0.208, and the coefficient is directed in a negative direction, it can be concluded that the relationship between gender discrimination and stress level is more pronounced in a certain gender group. In this case, females. Thus, the results support the H3 hypothesis.

Table 3.6.10. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.	Supported
H2: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.	Supported
H3: The gender moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress level.	Supported

3.7 Pearson correlation (age groups)

Correlation analysis was applied in this study for each of the age groups.

The results are as follows:

Table 3.7.1. Correlation Matrix: 18-34 age group

	GD	JS	SL	JC
GD	1	.769**	.787**	-.706**
JS	.769**	1	.787**	-.800**
SL	.787**	.787**	1	-.688**
JC	-.706**	-.800**	-.688**	1

18-34 Age Group (N = 118)

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Satisfaction (JS): r = 0.769, p < .001

According to the analysis, in this age group, gender discrimination and job satisfaction have a strong negative relationship with each other. This is because the JS is reverse coded. In other words, increased perceived gender discrimination in the workplace reduces job satisfaction.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.787, p < .001

The analysis shows that stress levels and gender discrimination have a strong positive correlation. Thus, the stress level among young civil servants is increasing as a result of an increase in perceived gender discrimination in the workplace.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.706, p < .001

According to the analysis, job commitment and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a strong negative correlation between each other in this age group.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.787, p < .001

In this age group, stress levels and job satisfaction have a negative relationship. Therefore, job satisfaction decreases as a result of increasing stress levels (JS is reverse-coded).

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.800, p < .001

In this age group, job commitment and job satisfaction have a strong positive correlation between each other. Thus, the commitment of employees in the civil service to their work decreases as a result of lower job satisfaction.

Stress Level (SL) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.688, p < .001

In this age group, job commitment and stress levels have a strong negative relationship. Therefore, the commitment of employees working in the public sector decreases as a result of increased stress.

Table 3.7.2. Correlation Matrix: 35-51 age group

	GD	JS	SL	JC
GD	1	.690**	.767**	-.633**
JS	.690**	1	.668**	-.725**
SL	.767**	.668**	1	-.582**
JC	-.633**	-.725**	-.582**	1

35–51 Age Group (N = 132)

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Satisfaction (JS): r = 0.690, p < .001

In this age group, job satisfaction and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a strong negative relationship. Thus, job satisfaction is decreasing due to increased gender discrimination.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.767, p < .001

According to the analysis, stress levels and gender discrimination in this age group have a close positive relationship.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.633, p < .001

Job commitment and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a moderate or strong negative correlation with each other. Thus, job commitment is decreasing as a result of increasing gender discrimination in the workplace.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.668, p < .001

According to the analysis, in the middle-aged group, stress levels and job satisfaction have a pronounced negative relationship between each other (JS is reverse-coded). Therefore, job satisfaction decreases as a result of increased stress levels among public sector employees.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.725, p < .001

Job commitment and job satisfaction have a strong positive correlation between each other. The commitment of public sector employees to their work is growing as a result of increased job satisfaction.

Stress Level (SL) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.582, p < .001

Job commitment and stress levels have a moderate negative relationship between each other. Thus, job commitment decreases as a result of increased stress levels among middle-aged public sector employees.

Table 3.7.3. Correlation Matrix: 52 and above age group

	GD	JS	SL	JC
GD	1	.662**	.659**	-.703**
JS	.662**	1	.794**	-.742**
SL	.659**	.794**	1	-.598**
JC	-.703**	-.742**	-.598**	1

52 and above Age Group (N = 21)

All correlations show a stable relationship and remain statistically significant even with a relatively small sample size. In other words, especially in terms of motivation and psychological well-being, older employees are influenced by gender discrimination in the public sector.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Satisfaction (JS): r = 0.662, p < .001

In this age group, job satisfaction and perceived gender discrimination in the workplace have a clear inverse relationship. Thus, job satisfaction among the older age group is decreasing as a result of the growing perception of gender discrimination.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.659, p <.001

According to the analysis, stress levels and perceived gender discrimination have a strong positive correlation with each other. Thus, the stress level increases as a result of increased perception of gender discrimination among older employees.

Gender Discrimination (GD) and Job Commitment (JC): r = –0.703, p < .001

Job commitment and gender discrimination in the workplace have a strong negative correlation between each other. Therefore, job commitment is decreasing among older employees as a result of increased gender discrimination.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Stress Level (SL): r = 0.794, p < .001

Stress levels and job satisfaction (JS is reverse-coded) have a strong negative relationship between each other. In other words, job satisfaction among older employees decreases as a result of increased stress levels.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.742, p < .001

In this age group, job commitment and job satisfaction have a close positive relationship. This is because the JS has been reverse-coded. Therefore, job commitment decreases as a result of decreased job satisfaction.

Stress Level (SL) and Job Commitment (JC): r = −0.598, p = .004

Job commitment and stress levels have a moderately negative relationship between each other. Therefore, the attachment of older employees to work in the public sector decreases as a result of higher stress levels.

3.8 Regression analysis (age groups)

In this study, in order to test the hypothesis about the moderating role of age in the relationship between satisfaction and gender discrimination (H4), multiple regression was performed to include the interaction between gender discrimination variables (GD) and age (Age). The absolute value of the betta coefficient is responsible for the order of effects of the independent variables` impact on the dependent variable.

Table 3.8.1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716	.513	.507	.57311

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.8.1), which shows how the dependent variable (JS) is influenced by three independent variables (Age, GD, GDxAge). Thus, the results show that 50.7% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 49.3%.

Table 3.8.2. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	92.355	3	30.785	93.728	< .001
Residual	87.696	267	.328		
Total	180.051	270	-		

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.8.2). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable JS is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significant value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.8.3. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.773	.137	-	5.636	< .001
GD	.618	.053	.774	11.686	< .001
Age	.113	.140	.086	.811	.418
GDxAge	-.062	.053	-.139	-1.180	.239

Since $p < 0.001$, the significance index of the gender discrimination (GD) variable is high (Table 3.8.3). Moreover, since B = 0.618, the direction is negative (JS reverse-coded). Therefore, job satisfaction decreases as the perception of discrimination increases. A strong effect size can be revealed as the standardized coefficient Beta = 0.774.

However, as $p = 0.418$, the age variable turned out to be insignificant. In other words, the direct impact of age on the job satisfaction was not confirmed.

In the end, since $p = 0.239$, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxAge) was not confirmed. It implies that the relationship between job satisfaction and gender discrimination is not moderated by age. Thus, the results reject the H4 hypothesis.

Table 3.8.4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.667	.444	.438

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.8.4), which shows how the dependent variable (JC) is influenced by three independent variables (Age, GD, GDxAge). Thus, the results show that 43.8% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three

independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 56.2%.

Table 3.8.5. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	86.343	3	28.781	71.153	< .001
Residual	108.000	267	.404		
Total	194.343	270	-		

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.8.5). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable JC is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significance value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.8.6. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.874	.152	-	32.006	< .001
GD	-.547	.059	-.659	-9.323	< .001
Age	-.001	.155	.000	-.004	.997
GDxAge	-.008	.059	-.016	-.129	.898

Since $p < 0.001$, the significance index of the gender discrimination (GD) variable is high (Table 3.8.6). Moreover, since B = -0.547, the direction is negative. Therefore, job commitment decreases as the perception of discrimination increases.

However, as $p = 0.997$, the age variable turned out to be insignificant. In other words, the direct impact of age on the job satisfaction was not confirmed.

In the end, since $p = 0.898$, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxAge) was not confirmed. It implies that the relationship between job commitment and gender discrimination is not moderated by age. Thus, the results reject the H5 hypothesis.

Table 3.8.7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.762	.581	.576	.65875

The R-square was presented above (Table 3.8.7), which shows how the dependent variable (SL) is influenced by three independent variables (Age, GD, GDxAge). Thus, the results show that 57.6% of the change in the dependent variable is influenced by three

independent variables. At the same time, random errors or non-model variables account for 42.4%.

Table 3.8.8. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	160.731	3	53.577	123.464	< .001
Residual	115.864	267	.434		
Total	276.595	270	-		

Next, this study checks whether it is possible to extend the linear regression model to all indicators as a whole, and whether it is applicable (Table 3.8.8). For this purpose, the F-test in the ANOVA table is applied. A significant degree of the dependent variable SL is explained by this model, since the F-criterion has a significance value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.8.9. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.285	.158	-	1.805	.072
GD	.802	.061	.809	13.183	< .001
Age	.130	.160	.080	.808	.420
GD×Age	-.062	.061	-.112	-1.029	.305

Since p < 0.001, the significance index of the gender discrimination (GD) variable is high (Table 3.8.9). Moreover, since B = 0.802, the direction is positive. Therefore, stress level increases as the perception of discrimination increases.

However, as p = 0.420, the age variable turned out to be insignificant. In other words, the direct impact of age on the stress level was not confirmed.

In the end, since p = 0.305, the presence of the moderation effect (GDxAge) was not confirmed. It implies that the relationship between stress level and gender discrimination is not moderated by age. Thus, the results reject the H6 hypothesis.

Table 3.8.10. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Result
H4: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job satisfaction.	Not Supported
H5: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and job commitment.	Not Supported
H6: The age moderates the relationship between perceived gender discrimination and stress level.	Not Supported

RESULT

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between gender discrimination in the workplace and key employee performance outcomes — job satisfaction, stress levels, and organizational commitment — in the Azerbaijani civil service. This is because despite various measures to combat gender discrimination in the workplace in Azerbaijan, bureaucratic rigidity and traditional gender norms still have an impact on workplace culture. The focus of this study was to assess not only the direct impact of gender discrimination, but also how demographic factors such as gender and age moderated this impact. Thus, the understanding of gender inequality in public service and the psychological mechanisms that manifest it has been deepened due to the results obtained.

Interpretation of Key Findings:

According to the results of the study, the decrease in job commitment, job satisfaction, and increased stress levels among civil service employees are convincingly explained by the impact of alleged discrimination. The results described in other papers that also explored similar relationships in both the private and public sectors are also consistent with the findings of this study (Clark et al., 2010; Greenberg, 2006; Bowen et al., 2016). According to the data obtained in this study, it can be assumed that negative emotional reactions and attitudes are caused by a violation of a psychological contract as a result of perceived injustice. Thus, the assumptions of the theory of justice are confirmed. As a result of increased psychological stress, feeling undervalued and a victim of discrimination, employees leave their workplace.

According to the results of the correlation analysis, female respondents showed closer relationships. One example is that among women, the correlation between job satisfaction and gender discrimination was r =-.779 (p < .001). At the same time, the correlation between stress levels and gender discrimination was r = .832 (p < .001). These indicators are significantly lower in men. Thus, they amounted to r = -.646 and r =.690, respectively. Thus, it can be assumed that female employees are more susceptible to discrimination in the workplace. The Social Roles Theory is consistent with this conclusion, as according to it, women are more likely to be psychologically affected as a result of violations of ideas about inclusivity and equity, and more often face discrimination in the workplace caused by ingrained expectations regarding gender roles. (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

In light of the socio-cultural context of the country, the conclusion that female employees working in the Azerbaijani civil service have a more pronounced negative reaction

to discrimination is particularly important. This is due to the fact that patriarchal and hierarchical structures are maintained by the state administration of Azerbaijan, as in many other post-Soviet states. As a result, there is an imbalance in leadership and decision-making. According to previous studies, women in such an environment created by institutional cultures are explicitly or implicitly prohibited from asserting themselves or expressing dissatisfaction in any way (Cotter et al., 2001).

Moderating Role of Gender:

According to the results of the moderation analysis, the assumption about the influence of the gender factor on the strength of the relationship between employee outcome and perceived gender discrimination is confirmed. The increased negative effects of discrimination on female employees in the civil service are confirmed by significant interactions in models that predict job commitment and job satisfaction. Thus, this conclusion is confirmed by other studies studying this topic. They also highlighted the encounter of female employees with serious psychological problems in the context of traditional organizational culture or male dominance (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

This effect of gender restraint plays an important role in the development of policies and support mechanisms. Thus, it is an empirical justification for change. However, it is worth noting that a unified approach to workplace reform will be ineffective if the negative effects of discrimination are heterogeneous. In order to solve these unique problems faced by women employees in the civil service, it is necessary to put into practice various individual mentoring programs, strategies, special complaint channels, and gender-sensitive assessment processes.

Moderating Role of Age:

In this case, the hypothesis of age-dependent moderation was not confirmed. According to the analysis, no significant age-related interaction effects were identified in this study, despite expectations based on other previous work, suggesting a more sensitive attitude to alleged discrimination among young employees (Ng & Feldman, 2012). A number of factors can influence this.

The first factor is the likely inadequate reflection of empirical or psychological differences among the selected age groups of the study (from 18 to 34 years old, from 35 to 51 years old, and over 52 years old), which affects the perception of discrimination. The second factor may be that unlike in other countries and sectors, expectations and age standards in the Azerbaijani civil service are more uniform. One example is that, regardless of age, employees face a uniform experience as a result of a rigid bureaucratic culture. At the same time, there is a possibility that older employees are more tolerant of perceived inequality and have developed

sufficiently effective coping mechanisms. Eventually, age as a moderator becomes less significant.

At the same time, this may indicate that longitudinal and other qualitative studies are needed, since the lack of age differentiation does not necessarily mean that age is insignificant. Thus, additional research would help to identify the interaction between discrimination in the workplace and generational identity in various institutional contexts.

Psychological Mechanisms and Institutional Trust:

The psychological mechanisms used to reflect workplace dynamics on organizational performance are highlighted by the close relationship between stress and perceived discrimination, as well as between job commitment and stress. Thus, people face not only a sense of violation of justice, but also emotional stress, as a result of which the working staff experiences emotional burnout and exhaustion. Ultimately, this leads to absenteeism and staff turnover. In other words, employees' productivity decreases, as high stress levels negatively affect their ability to work and their interest in contributing to the achievement of the organization's goals.

Since the trust of an organization is the cornerstone of the effectiveness of a bureaucracy, this phenomenon is especially important and relevant in public service. Employees' trust in management will be undermined by a lack of a sense of security and if their efforts are not appreciated. This will lead to disagreements in the performance of work, and changes in policy. Moreover, the negative consequences for social justice, governance, and the provision of public services can be long-lasting.

Comparison with Previous Studies:

The results in other studies conducted in both non-Western and Western countries are consistent with the results of this study. One example is Veles et al. (2013). According to this study, perceived discrimination against minorities leads to increased anxiety and stress, which ultimately negatively affects well-being in the workplace. The following example is a study conducted by Özkanlı and White (2008). They found that cultural stereotypes and structural barriers are the main factors that contribute to gender inequality. However, the contextual focus was Turkish higher education. This study also observes structural patterns.

The contextual focus on the Azerbaijani state environment distinguishes this study from others in terms of its unique organizational dynamics. This is due to the fact that national traditions, bureaucratic culture and post-Soviet heritage are suppressed in this environment. Thus, the consequences of discrimination are particularly persistent and acute in the context of the interaction of institutional conservatism and gender norms.

Practical Implications:

There is a high need for urgent measures to prevent consequences for public administration. In order to increase work efficiency and avoid staff turnover, reducing the prevalence of gender discrimination in the workplace should be one of the main strategic priorities for institutions. Thus, gender discrimination is a major factor, not a secondary one, which determines workplace outcomes.

Secondly, when assessing jobs, there is a need for cross-sectoral analysis and disaggregated data due to differences in indicators based on gender. In order to conduct fair and accurate events for organizations, there is a need to implement a system for monitoring employee dissatisfaction and satisfaction by demographic group.

Thirdly, there is a need to institutionalize the mental health support system. This is due to the rather strong influence of perceived discrimination on stress. Anonymous information tools, confidential consulting services, and wellness programs are important components of an inclusive and functional public service. In other words, they are no longer optional.

Limitations

It is necessary to recognize a number of limitations in this study, even with important information about the impact of alleged gender discrimination on job satisfaction, stress levels, and organizational commitment in the Azerbaijani civil service.

Limited Generalizability:

Since the sample in this study was made up of employees in the public sector rather than the private sector, as a result, the results of the study cannot be generalized to different institutional and socio-political conditions. In other words, they depend on the context. Moreover, the participants and their reactions could very closely depend on employment practices, government structure, and cultural norms unique to Azerbaijan. In other words, it is worth paying attention to this factor when applying these results to other organizational and national conditions. Thus, in order to increase cross-contextual applicability and external reliability, it is necessary to cover different geographical regions. Moreover, both the public and private sectors should be included in the study.

Self-Reported Measures:

Errors in memorization and social bias may have influenced the respondents' responses. Their experience of stress or discrimination, felt in the workplace, could be either belittled or exaggerated. This is due to personal prejudice or fear of reprisals. Thus, the objectivity and accuracy of the data are questionable. The respondents may have been influenced by memory, mood, or a desire to present themselves in a favorable light. To increase the reliability of the

answers, the following studies should focus on triangulation using alternative data sources. These include surveillance or interview methods. In other words, the lack of this may affect the reliability of the results obtained.

Cross-Sectional Design:

Since the data was collected at a single point in time and a cross-sectional methodology was applied in this study, causal relationships between variables cannot be definitively established. For example, the relationship between gender discrimination and job satisfaction. As a result, the ability to observe changes over time is limited by this structure. The same applies to assessing the orientation of associations. It is becoming more difficult to understand whether discrimination leads to a decrease in job satisfaction or whether the perception of discrimination increases among dissatisfied employees. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal studies, as they clarify the temporal dynamics and track the pattern over time. Ultimately, in both social and organizational contexts, this would provide more evidence of cause-and-effect relationships.

Focus on Perception Rather Than Objective Discrimination:

The focus of this study is not objectively confirmed discriminatory practices, but alleged discrimination. Employee perceptions do not reflect institutional or legal violations, even though they are important for understanding employee well-being. Due to the fact that expectations, preferences, and cultural influences vary, the interpretation of dynamics and individual experiences in the workplace may vary. In other words, such attention can introduce subjectivity. Thus, the actual prevalence of discrimination may be underestimated or overestimated. Future research should take this factor into account and include objective indicators. These may include third-party assessments or filing complaints, which would provide a balanced view of discrimination in the workplace.

Cultural and Political Sensitivities:

There is a possibility that some respondents refrained from giving honest answers. This is due to the cultural and political specifics of age and gender discrimination in Azerbaijan. In other words, the scale of discriminatory practices may be underestimated. Since individuals are afraid of being stigmatized due to the fact that discussion of these topics is not encouraged, they avoid an open exchange of thoughts. Thus, this can lead to data distortion and bias of responses towards more socially acceptable ones. Consequently, the frequency and depth of discrimination may not be fully reflected.

Moderator Limitations – Age and Gender:

The moderators of this study are age and gender. However, ethnicity, political affiliation, education level, and other factors may interact with moderators. Although they were

not included in this model, they could also play an important role in the results. At the same time, they can confuse the observed relationships. Thus, the accuracy and clarity of the moderation results may be limited. For example, the level of education or ethnic group may vary the influence of age on the perception of discrimination. In other words, a model that does not include these factors may provide a partial picture of the complex dynamics of what is happening. In order to provide a more effective explanation, future studies should include a more complete set of moderators.

Measurement Constraints:

The constructive validity and internal consistency of some scales could be affected due to their recording in the reverse order and adaptation. The variety of interpretation could also be limited due to the relatively small number of points in each dimension. One of them is job satisfaction. Although ensuring contextual and cultural relevance requires changes to the established scales, the psychometric reliability of the instrument may be reduced. The multidimensional nature of such complex concepts as perceived discrimination and job satisfaction may not be fully reflected as a result of the small number of elements in each structure. In other words, future research should use more comprehensive and proven tools.

Unbalanced Representation of Demographics:

Some demographic groups were underrepresented in this study, even though there were attempts to collect a balanced sample. For example, they include men in certain age groups or people in senior positions. Thus, it could skew the results in favor of the experience of junior or middle-level employees. In other words, the views on the dynamics and discrimination in the workplace of those employees who occupy senior positions and make decisions were not taken into account. Thus, the ability to generalize the results across the entire spectrum of civil service employees may be limited. Moreover, some trends and patterns may be hidden as a result of the underrepresentation of key groups. In order to increase the reliability of comparisons and ensure a more equitable geographical distribution, future studies need to pay attention to this and include stratified sampling of.

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, job satisfaction and commitment are significantly reduced as a result of increased perceived gender discrimination. Moreover, government employees experience increased stress levels. The deterrent role of gender in this study has also been confirmed. In other words, discrimination affects women more than men. At the same time, the statistical significance of age's deterrent role has not been proven. Due to this, it can be concluded that the impact of discrimination depends more on gender than age. Thus, despite

existing policy efforts and legislation, the continuing role of gender inequality in shaping employee experience has been highlighted by these results.

Several key conclusions follow from the results of this study. Despite the fact that gender equality is one of the important focuses of the Azerbaijani Constitution and civil service laws, women continue to face gender discrimination in the public sector. Unconscious biases and institutional culture only normalize discrimination. Thus, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. Moreover, their attempts to show leadership skills face condemnation or other "negative effects." This is especially noticeable in patriarchal societies. In other words, the Azerbaijani society is no exception. In this country, women are also expected to perform traditional roles, which hinders their career advancement, especially in the public sector.

Secondly, perceived discrimination has a significant impact on one of the central dependent variables in this study, job satisfaction. According to the results of the study, those employees who felt undervalued because of their gender had the least motivation to work. Moreover, their commitment to work was also significantly low. In other words, they are more faced with the desire to leave public service. Thus, the efficiency of the public sector is also affected. This is due to the fact that there is staff turnover and a decrease in labor productivity. Therefore, this problem requires urgent measures, which have had a positive effect not only on employees, but also on the civil service as a whole.

Thirdly, the commitment of the organization is also significantly influenced by perceived discrimination. Employees working in the civil service are painfully aware of the prevailing injustice in the workplace. This makes them less likely to share the goals of the institution. In other words, they are less likely to remain in public service in the long run. Moreover, they have no desire to invest in their work beyond the required minimum. Thus, loyalty becomes fragile in an environment where discrimination undermines meritocracy. This is most noticeable among those who feel excluded from the decision-making process.

Fourth, according to the results of this study, those who perceived discrimination experienced increased stress levels compared to others. In other words, emotional burnout can result from prolonged exposure to discriminatory practices. It also leads to both physical and mental health problems. Thus, there is frequent absenteeism, which in turn leads to reputational and financial costs for the civil service. Female civil servants are more likely to experience psychological stress and anxiety. This is because they must constantly prove their worth in a male-dominated environment. Thus, it is necessary to take the necessary measures to ensure that women remain satisfied with their working conditions and do not experience increased stress levels.

Age did not produce statistically significant results, while the role of gender as a moderator was confirmed. In other words, this is an indicator that gender remains the cause of discrimination in the Azerbaijani civil service. Despite this, there are a number of works that indicate the existence of age discrimination. Cultural nuances or some limitations in measurements may reflect a lack of statistical significance. In other words, it can influence how discrimination is perceived or reported. Thus, for the next studies, there is a need to continue studying this issue. To provide a more detailed picture, a variety of age-related bias indicators should be included.

The contextualization of global theories in the post-Soviet transition period is one of the most important results of this research. The legacy of hierarchical governance, limited transparency, and centralized control are still the foundations upon which the civil service in Azerbaijan is built. Gender biases and patriarchal norms continue to shape organizational culture, even with various political reforms and attempts to change the situation. The Social Role Theory and Equity theory successfully explain how structural inequality is introduced into organizational practice. Thus, they only acquire a new relevance. This helps to understand which methods and reforms should be changed or implemented to improve the situation in the public sector, especially for women.

According to the results of the study, in practice, multi-level, comprehensive reforms are required. Moreover, they should go beyond simple legislative changes. This is because the existing legal framework is insufficient to address deep-rooted gender bias in the workplace, even though it provides the necessary framework. One of the most important steps towards change is systemic cultural transformation, which must be supported by permanent mechanisms of accountability, training, monitoring and being under institutional leadership. Thus, legal policy must undergo radical changes in order to have sufficient impact to create inclusivity in the workplace.

The multidimensional approach aimed at combating gender discrimination in the public sector is reflected in the policy recommendations put forward in this study. One of the first main tasks is to improve work with staff. To effectively ensure gender neutrality, this includes reviewing assessments, hiring procedures, and promotions. This is especially necessary to increase transparency and create conditions in which justice would prevail. As mentioned above, it is necessary to ensure gender neutrality at every stage of the work cycle. Ultimately, this would create favorable conditions for inclusivity and equal opportunities for all workers, especially, in the civil service in Azerbaijan.

The second important step is the institutionalization of gender auditing and measurable equality indicators in both government agencies and ministries. This makes it possible not only

to assess the current state of gender equality, but also to provide evidence-based recommendations for monitoring progress and implementing reforms over a certain period of time. As a result, accountability, transparency, and sustainability of efforts to ensure equal opportunities for employees of both sexes are enhanced through the introduction of such mechanisms. In other words, the identification of hidden forms of discrimination, as well as a timely response to institutional weaknesses in the field of inclusivity, is carried out through regular audits.

The third important step is to create a system of psychological protection. In order to create a supportive and safe environment for all employees, in particular for representatives of marginalized or underrepresented groups, mechanisms for confidential reporting of bias, harassment and discrimination are needed. They should be combined with psychological support services. Qualified specialists, together with feedback channels, should be able to provide timely assistance. Thus, they must be included in these systems. Training on emotional burnout, stress management, and cultural development are extremely important for maintaining a healthy workplace environment within organizations. This would promote the cohesion of employees of both sexes and increase productivity.

Moreover, thanks to this study, it is possible to identify the gap between institutional practice and legal norms. Thus, this study also contributes. The practical application of the obligations included in various international agreements ratified by Azerbaijan remains weak. One example is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This is due to the lack of monitoring tools and limited political will. Society's resistance to change also plays an important role in this. The solution to this problem is the coordinated efforts of international organizations, civil society, government agencies, and academia.

Limitations of the study also deserve mention. The research relied on self-reported data, which is subject to social desirability bias and perception-based variance. Additionally, the study did not disaggregate data by sector or ministry, which could mask variation in discriminatory practices across different institutions. The cross-sectional nature of the data also limits the ability to draw causal inferences. These limitations offer avenues for future research, including longitudinal studies, mixed-methods approaches, and comparative analyses across countries or public-private sectors.

Recommendations for gender and age equality in the civil service

Gender:

According to the study, gender significantly influences the relationship between job satisfaction, stress levels, job commitment, and perceived gender discrimination. Thus, it is necessary to implement a number of measures to eliminate gender inequality in the public sector of Azerbaijan. The following recommendations are provided in this study to improve workplace equality and mitigate gender discrimination.

First, in order to create a safe and inclusive work environment, public sector organizations need to develop comprehensive policies. The main function of such a policy is to clearly define discrimination based on gender. One of the problems that women may face in the workplace is harassment from employees with unacceptable behavior (McLaughlin et al., 2012). To this end, there is a need to include protection measures for applicants and the availability of reporting mechanisms that would allow information about incidents to be disclosed safely. Moreover, legality and accountability are ensured by bringing the framework in line with international conventions. One of them is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979). At the same time, in order to maintain the effectiveness of these measures, there is a need for constant annual reviews.

In order to achieve gender equality, each government agency or government department has the task of creating a special gender department. This should be done to institutionalize efforts, allowing departments to take responsibility for monitoring gender representation in both leadership positions and staff (UN Women, 2022). In this way, the transparency of the process will be achieved by facilitating balanced participation and identifying differences through the handling of complaints of gender discrimination. There is also a need for ongoing training to promote gender equality. As a result of these efforts, the staff will increase their competence and awareness in this area (ILO, 2020). Moreover, the cooperation of the Gender Equality Bureau with NGOs is necessary for external verification and accountability. This would allow us to approach the problem comprehensively in accordance with public standards.

To prevent gender bias, it is necessary to restructure both recruitment and promotion in government institutions (Bohnet et al., 2016). In order to ensure equal opportunities at the interview stages, there is a need to set clear goals for compiling gender-balanced candidate lists (OECD, 2021). Gender-specific promotion indicators should also be checked. In order to eliminate problems, a thorough investigation should deal with any inconsistencies. In order to create equal conditions for career growth and objective decision-making, recruiters and HR managers need to be trained in evaluation criteria.

The next important measure is the development of targeted leadership development programs to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Moreover, the provision of rewards to talented women by senior managers and their protection may be another measure that will help women climb the career ladder (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Highlighting the achievements of female employees will further inspire them to make great efforts and achievements, which will increase their recognition in leadership positions. In other words, the organizational culture will become more inclusive and balanced.

In order to take gender factors into account, it is necessary to undergo regular training so that it is an ongoing practice, and not a one-time initiative (Devine et al., 2017). Employees need to undergo annual training in order to recognize their hidden biases in order to overcome unconscious bias. Moreover, managers and managers should be provided with specialized modules, as decision-making processes and organizational culture are closely dependent on them. Employees can also participate in seminars based on scenarios simulating real-world discrimination cases. This would allow them to gain invaluable experience in both identifying and preventing gender bias. Thanks to an integrated training approach, it is possible to create a fair working environment at all levels of the public sector.

The next effective measure is the creation of women's support groups for employees in government institutions in order to ensure gender equality. Thanks to them, female employees can learn the necessary professional skills, establish contacts and receive the necessary support from the community. In other words, government organizations would provide women with a safe space where there is an exchange of strategies and experiences among women (Catalyst, 2020). This would have a positive impact on their career growth. The increase in their contribution to the work is due to the financing of ERG initiatives.

Since most of the responsibilities related to childcare lie with women, it is necessary to promote a policy that would be focused on the interests of the family. To this end, there is a need to introduce flexible operating modes. This includes both remote work and work with a flexible schedule (Kossek & Michel, 2011). This will allow women to meet the needs of their families as well. It would be beneficial for both sexes to provide generous parental leave, as both men and women would be able to effectively fulfil their parental responsibilities. Moreover, financial support for child care services would also allow both men and women to ease the burden. Thanks to these measures, both sexes would be able to successfully combine both family and professional responsibilities.

In order to make progress towards gender equality, one of the most important measures is to improve the legal framework and its enforcement practices. Despite the existing laws aimed at combating discrimination, there is a need for prompt and fair consideration of

complaints and strengthening the mechanisms of the laws (Fredman, 2011). This can be achieved through the creation of specialized labor dispute courts, as they help reduce bureaucratic delays and consider discrimination claims. Those whose guilt in systematic discrimination has been proven must be sanctioned or pay large fines. Thus, this measure serves as a deterrent. Since victims of discrimination fear retribution for disclosing information and reporting misconduct, they should be provided with comprehensive legal support and protection. This will create a culture of accountability.

Progress in gender equality can also be achieved through comparative analysis and public accountability. Annual reports on gender equality should be published by government agencies. They include information about promotions, pay differences, and the effectiveness of the policy (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022). Moreover, the organization can assess its progress in accordance with international standards through participation in international initiatives on comparative analysis of gender equality.

Age:

Organizations need to recognize the unique advantages that employees of each age group bring to the workflow. One of the measures may be to organize regular internal campaigns. Thanks to this measure, it is possible to identify and emphasize the value of the age difference, which contributes to innovative approaches to solving problems. To create inclusivity and a culture of respect, it is necessary to celebrate achievements equally, regardless of the age of employees (Post et al., 2009). Through digital platforms, meetings, and newsletters, both older and younger professionals can share stories, which will unlock the potential of working in a multi-generational team.

The next measure that helps to reduce the age gap is the creation of mentoring programs for representatives of different generations (Kooij et al., 2017). This will create a favorable environment for inclusivity in the workplace. Sharing their experiences and skills with each other allows both generations to achieve mutual respect. Thus, age stereotypes are destroyed due to the mutually beneficial cooperation of different generations.

The next measure that should be taken to foster inclusiveness in the workplace is to ensure equal access to professional development and training. For example, the removal of age restrictions on professional development or leadership programs, which will allow employees of all ages to achieve career growth (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Learning opportunities can also be developed to facilitate different career stages. Mid-level specialists can take advanced training programs, while basic courses will be provided to new employees. The civil service must constantly evolve through training. In other words, employees' participation in seminars, education, and certifications should be encouraged. Thanks to this measure, employees will not

only keep up with the information flow around them, but also feel appreciated, which will inspire them to make a meaningful contribution to their work.

To create respectful and fair workplace conditions for employees of all ages, organizations need to strictly adhere to anti-ageism policies. Anti-discrimination regulations should also be reviewed. Organizations should include training for HR managers to identify both explicit and implicit forms of age discrimination (Swift et al., 2017). Moreover, the latter should pay special attention to biased formulations when applying for a job. After all, by regularly monitoring workplace complaints of bias based on age differences, corrective measures are being taken to ensure accountability.

The next measure that should be taken is designing career pathways that acknowledge age diversity. In other words, flexible systems that satisfy the ambitions and needs of employees at various life stages should be implemented by organizations. For instance, accelerated leadership opportunities and learning can be offered by "fast-track" programs to those employees who are potential staff at a younger age (Schalk et al., 2010). It would drive innovation and retain talent. Simultaneously, late-career transition programs and re-skilling initiatives should be offered to those workers who are at an older age. It is explained by the fact that older workers should be assisted in adjusting to new roles and staying engaged. Moreover, diverse aspirations should be recognized by companies instead of relying only on seniority-based promotions. In other words, the growth of employees should be either vertical or lateral, based on individual objectives.

The following measure that should be taken is to integrate age diversity metrics into organizational key performance indicators. Thanks to the fact that inclusivity is not just a value but a measurable priority would be ensured. Gaps or imbalances in representation can be identified by enterprises with the help of tracking age distribution across different hierarchical levels and departments (Choi & Pak, 2006). Targeted strategies should be developed to address differences such as the lack of provision for certain age groups, regardless of the position of employees. The next step is to incorporate these findings into institutional strategic plans. Ultimately, it is necessary to bring the goals for age diversity, taking into account their alignment with the broader goals of enterprises. These measures promote accountability and transparency, which have a positive effect on creating a balanced workforce and inclusivity for workers of all ages.

One of the next important measures is to increase the psychological safety of young employees. Providing support to young employees who are afraid to express their ideas because of the negative consequences plays an important role in creating an enabling working environment in which employees will feel heard. In order to resolve this problem, there is a

need for an open dialogue between subordinates and managers and supervisors (Edmondson, 1999). This will allow both sides to welcome different points of view. Moreover, it is necessary to create an anonymous feedback system with clear protection so that employees are not afraid of exposure and negative consequences. In this way, it builds trust between employees and drives innovation.

Offering health and well-being programs tailored to different age groups demonstrates an organization's commitment to holistic employee support. Since health needs vary by career stage, early-career employees may benefit more from stress management resources, time management workshops, and mental health counselling. In contrast, mid- and late-career professionals might prioritize physical wellness, ergonomics, and preventive care. Companies should therefore design inclusive health programs that address these differing needs, such as ergonomic consultations, gym memberships, mental health days, or customizable health insurance plans (Zacher & Schmitt, 2016). Tailoring benefits in this way fosters higher employee satisfaction, reduces burnout, and promotes long-term engagement across generations.

Comprehensive employee support and commitment to work can be provided by offering health and well-being programs that are accessible to employees of all ages. Young employees may be interested in mental health and stress management resources. At the same time, older employees are more interested in physical health, prevention, and ergonomics (Walker & Taylor, 1993). Thus, taking into account the different needs of employees, organizations should develop inclusive medical programs, as this helps to increase employee satisfaction and intergenerational interaction.

The encouragement and recognition of achievements in the field of an inclusive approach to working with age groups is a source of inspiration for the organization in its continuous efforts and attention to ensuring greater consideration of age diversity in the workplace. Healthy competition arises from the awarding of industry and internal awards for successful achievements in promoting age diversity. In other words, conducting successful initiatives such as inclusive hiring policies, age-balanced leadership teams, and intergenerational mentoring can be highlighted by these recognitions. Moreover, the value of contributions from representatives of all age groups is enhanced by the use of role models of all ages in internal communications. For example, online event coverage, newsletters, etc. In other words, commitment to inclusivity and belonging are formed through public recognition.

Since the workforce is changing at a rapid rate, it is necessary to constantly update and study the age policy in such conditions. Thus, it would contribute to the effectiveness and relevance of the enterprises' practices. Other important factors that should be given special

attention are changes in the economy (pressure, crisis), social values, and of course, technology, which have a significant impact on the attitudes of different generations. In view of this, there is a need to conduct internal surveys and ongoing research, which would allow employers to keep abreast of the constantly changing situation. Moreover, it is also possible to examine career priorities and other workplace expectations from employees of different ages. This would help to anticipate their needs and adjust policy to them. Ultimately, there is a need to include employee feedback, as responsiveness and inclusiveness would be guaranteed. All these points of the above-mentioned policy create a favorable environment in which every employee of any age would feel support and understanding, which would have a positive impact on the work process.

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APPENDIX

Abbreviations

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

GD: Gender Discrimination

GD_mean: Mean Score of Gender Discrimination Items

GDxAge: Gender Discrimination × Age Interaction Term

GDxGender: Gender Discrimination × Gender Interaction Term

HR: Human Resources

JC: Job Commitment

JC_mean: Mean Score of Job Commitment Items

JS: Job Satisfaction

JS_mean: Mean Score of Job Satisfaction Items

JS_rev: Reverse-coded Job Satisfaction

KMO: Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

p-value: Probability Value

SL: Stress Level

SL_mean: Mean Score of Stress Level Items

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

α (Alpha): Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability Coefficient)

β (Beta): Standardized Regression Coefficient

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Survey questions

Demographic questions	
Gender	Male
	Female
Age	18-34
	35-51
	52 and above
Job Position	Supportive
	Administrative-executive
	Administrative-leading
How long have you been working in this organization?	Less than 1 year
	1-3 years
	4-7 years
	8+ years

Likert questions
1. Perceived Gender Discrimination
I have witnessed gender discrimination in the civil service.
I believe that my gender affects how I am treated in the work environment.
Gender plays a role in the distribution of additional rewards in the civil service.
I believe that it is more difficult for women to be recruited into the civil service compared to men.
2. Job Satisfaction
Regardless of my gender, I feel like a valued and respected employee. (Reversed)
I believe that gender equality is ensured in government institutions. (Reversed)
I feel that my contributions are evaluated equally with those of my opposite-gender colleagues by management. (Reversed)
If I have concerns about gender equality in my workplace, I would not hesitate to express them. (Reversed)
3. Stress Level
I experience stress due to gender-based issues in the workplace.
I often feel psychological pressure at work because of my gender.
The presence of gender discrimination causes emotional tension for me.
I feel unsafe to express my opinions due to gender dynamics in the workplace.
4. Job Commitment
I would leave the organization if gender discriminatory practices persist.

I do not feel a strong emotional attachment to this job due to gender imbalance.
I plan to continue working in this organization regardless of gender issues.
I am proud to be part of this organization, despite any gender-related challenges.