

Introduction

Awareness of gender equality at work has grown in all regions lately, this was made possible by the efforts of the ILO and its members. The ILO introduced the "Decent Work" initiative in 1999 which targets the creation of opportunities for men and women to have access to productive and decent work that promotes dignity, security, equity, and freedom. Yet, gender inequality is widely prevailing in the labor market. Studies highlights that one of the main sources of relative female poverty is that women have limited access to decent work. This paper aims to explore the gender disparities in workers' access and perception of decent work.

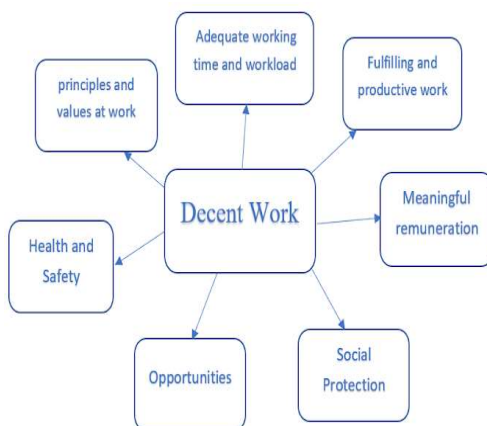


Literature Review

The 8th goal of the sustainable development goals is decent work for all and economic growth. target 8.5 states that all women and men will have full and productive employment and decent work by the year 2030, as well as equitable compensation for the same amount and value of work.



Decent work has several dimensions in which studies highlight that women tend to have a lesser share of each one of these dimensions. A meaningful and fair remuneration, social protection, safe work, career advancement opportunities, and work-life balance are all important aspects of "Decent Work". Studies show that women are more likely than men to be working in the informal economy or in part-time or temporary work that lacks social protection coverage. Women around the world suffer from unequal pay for the same amount of work relative to men, in addition to the occupational segregation and glass ceiling that limits their opportunities. Women tend to be doing more unpaid work in the family beside their paid work affecting their work-life balance. The risks and dangers of women's work are frequently disregarded or underestimated, additionally, women tend to suffer more than men from sexual harassment in the workplace making it less safe for them than men.



Conceptual Framework

Methodology

- An Exploratory research approach was conducted in this paper, in which the gender disparities in each aspect of the decent work stated in the conceptual framework were explored.
- The Decent Work Questionnaire developed by Ferraro et al. (2018) was utilized in order to assess workers' perceptions of decent work at an individual worker level. The Questionnaire consists of 31 five-point Likert scale questions yielding seven factors related to decent work according to the ILO.
- The sample was selected based on age because the study aims to measure disparities in the perception between males and females specifically among the Millennials and Generation Z. The data was collected through a survey that was distributed online. 168 complete responses were collected. 52.4% of the sample were females and 47.6% were males, aging from 18-41, and they work full-time or part-time in Egypt in different sectors.
- The coding of all variables is done according to SPSS. The frequency table for each question specified by gender of the addressed variable is reviewed, additionally, The Independent sample T-Test is utilized in order to compare the variable means between the 2 groups in question (Females and males) and whether any of those means are significantly different from each other.

Results

A

Independent Sample T-Test for "Adequate working time and workload" Variable

	F	Sig.	t	df
Equal variances assumed	17.305	<.001	-2.885	166
Equal variances not assumed			-2.922	161.227

	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		
Equal variances assumed	.002	.004	-.40114	.13904
Equal variances not assumed	.002	.004	-.40114	.13728

Independent-samples t-test results showed that there is a significant difference between males and females in their perception of the adequacy of the work time and workload of their work ($P=.004$). This means that the females questioned have a significantly lower score on the perception of their work's working time and workload ($M=3.3239$, $SD=1.00584$) than the surveyed males ($M=3.7250$, $SD=.76680$).

B

Independent Sample T-Test for "Opportunities" Variable

	F	Sig.	t	df
Equal variances assumed	17.305	<.001	-2.885	166
Equal variances not assumed			-2.922	161.227

	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		
Equal variances assumed	<.001	<.001	-.61619	.12300
Equal variances not assumed	<.001	<.001	-.61619	.12104

The independent-samples t-test indicated that there is a highly significant difference between males and females in the "opportunities" they have with regards to their jobs ($P<.001$). Results showed that there is a significant difference in scores for females ($M=3.5057$, $SD=.91285$) and males ($M=4.1219$, $SD=.64385$).

C

Females on average have lower mean scores than men in all the other variables such as social protection, remuneration, productive work, principles and values at work, except for the health and safety variable in which the males surveyed had a lower score. However, none of these disparities among both genders were significant according to the T-test performed ($P>0.05$) at 95% confidence level.

Conclusion

This paper adds to the literature on studying women's perception of decent work, especially in the Egyptian context. It is extremely crucial to understand women's perception of decent work, their perception of their opportunities to access it, and their assessment of the missing elements needed to make their jobs more decent. This would help develop relevant strategies for the "decent work for all" target that would in fact satisfy women's needs in the workplace.

Previous research indicated that women have lower chances of attaining all aspects of decent work than men. Complementary to that, this study highlights that women in Egypt perceive their opportunities to advance professionally and improve their salaries to be lower than men, additionally, the women surveyed accentuated that they struggle with their workload and working time more than the men, which affects their work-life balance.

This paper provides a roadmap for further research in the area of gender disparities with regards to professional opportunities in the workplace and working women's perception of work-life balance, especially among the younger generations who are considered the workers of the future.



References

- Anker, R., Chernyshev, I., Egger, P., Mehran, F., & Ritter, J. (2002). *Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators: Working Paper No. 2*. International Labour Organization, 1-74.
- Bescond, D., Chataigner, A., & Mehran, F. (2003). Seven indicators to measure decent work: An international comparison. *International Labour Review* 142, 179-211.
- Burchell, B., Sehnbruch, K., Piasna, A., & Agloni, N. (2014). The quality of employment and decent work: definitions, methodologies, and ongoing debates. *Cambridge journal of economics*, 38(2), 459-477.
- Clerkin, C. (2017). What Women Want--And Why You Want Women--In the Workplace. Research Report. *Center for Creative Leadership*, 1-25.
- Deranty, J. P., & MacMillan, C. (2012). The ILO's Decent Work initiative: suggestions for an extension of the notion of "decent work". *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 43(4), 386-405.
- Fapohunda, T. M. (2012a). Towards improved access to full employment and decent work for women in Nigeria. *International journal of humanities and social sciences*, 2(8), 104-112.
- Ferraro, T., Pais, L., Rebelo Dos Santos, N., & Moreira, J. M. (2018). The Decent Work Questionnaire: Development and validation in two samples of knowledge workers. *International Labour Review*, 157(2), 243-265.
- Floro, M., & Meurs, M. (2009). *Global trends in women's access to "decent work"*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Geneva. 1-47.
- Ghoseim H. (2021) Decent Work for Women Through Digital Social Network. In: Leal Filho W., Azul A.M., Brandli L., Lange Salvia A., Wall T. (Eds.) Decent Work and Economic Growth. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Springer, Cham, 188-193.
- Gibb, S., & Ishaq, M. (2020). Decent work: what matters most and who can make a difference? *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 845-861.
- Haddad, M. A., & Hellyer, J. (2018). Decent Work and Social Protection in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 38(1), 86-97.
- ILO (2021c). Gender gap in labour force participation rate: The gender gap in employment: What's holding women back? *International Labour Organization*. Retrieved 27 Dec 2021. From ILO website: <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women/global-gap/labour-force>
- McGrath, S., Alla-Mensah, J., & Langthaler, M. (2018). *Skills for decent work, life and sustainable development: Vocational education and the sustainable development goals* (No. 18). ÖFSE Briefing Paper, 1-19
- UNDP (2021c). Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth: Sustainable Development Goals, *United Nations Development Program*. Retrieved 27 Dec. 2021. From UNDP- Africa website: <https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-8-decent-work-and-economic-growth.html>