

SA still has a long way to go when it comes to gender equality in the workplace - survey reveals

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Over a third of South African women feel that their gender and parental responsibilities are holding them back from advancing in their careers.



This is just one of the findings revealed by [CareerJunction](#)'s latest gender survey, which explores gender issues related to the workplace.

9 August 2019 marks National Women's Day, drawing attention to issues women still face, such as parenting, sexual harassment in the workplace, unequal pay and much more.

Although we have made great progress, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Overall, women are better educated than men

When comparing tertiary education, the survey showed that 51% of men have diplomas or higher compared to 59% of women. Interestingly, this gap differs across 3 generational groups, where the gap from Generation X (1965-1979) to Millennials (1980-1994) widens from 5% to 7% and then from 7% to 11% for Generation Z (1995-2015). The latter will most likely continue to widen as more school leavers further their studies.

Salary gaps

The survey explored salary differences between genders by their highest level of education and years of experience. It was shocking to discover that 45% of men and 41% of women are currently not working in their field of study due to the fact they are unable to find work herein. However, for those who are fortunate enough to work in their field of study, no noteworthy differences in income were evident.

A man's world

Despite women paving the way when it comes to education and closing the gap on pay, there are still more men in management and senior management positions (39%) than women (31%).

Certain sectors also remain male-dominant. Like the engineering and construction sectors for example where the ratio of men to women is 16% versus 6% as well as the manufacturing and logistics sector with 10% (M) versus 4% (F). On the other hand, the admin, office & support sector as well as the financial sector remain female-dominant, where the ratio of women to men is 25% versus 11% as well as 17% and 11%.

A gender paradox

Men and women have conflicting views on who has the upper-hand in the workplace. While nearly 60% of men feel that South Africa still has a long way to go until we reach gender equality, women's feelings on this are much stronger (72%).

Looking at respondents' personal experience with gender inequality, one can see why there is a difference in opinion. While 39% of women said that their gender has negatively impacted them in the workplace, this is only true for 17% of men.

But men and women aren't so different after all, at least not when it comes to their biggest career motivators. Both listed work-life balance and career advancement at the top of their list. However, while men favour job fulfilment over money, the opposite is seen for women.

Motherly duties

Women's prioritising of money over job fulfilment is most likely linked to the fact that 31% of women respondents are single parents compared to 19% of men and 84% of women respondents with children listed themselves as the main caretakers of their children. A woman's role in parenting is certainly a significant influence where work is concerned. 36% of women placed their gender and parental responsibilities as big obstacles in their ability to advance in their careers. For men, these weren't as much of an issue (22%).

The survey took a closer look at the work-parent relationship.

While the majority of women get between 1-3 (38%) and 3-6 (36%) months maternity leave, only 18% receive full pay during this period while 28% receive less than 50% of their pay and a shocking 39% receive no compensation at all. Over 40% of female respondents with children rely on their 3 days' annual family responsibility leave to attend to sick children while 18% take annual leave or simply call in sick. Only 7% said their partner steps in to help while only 8% are able to work from home.

So, while South Africa is clearly moving in a positive direction where gender equality in the workplace is concerned, it would appear that there is still a lot to be done in the workplace to close the gap between genders. Organisations need to play their part in achieving this goal, including lending more support to mothers when it comes to their parental responsibilities as well as moving more women into management / senior management positions and male-dominant sectors.

The [CareerJunction](#) Gender Survey was based on the findings from over 1600 responses.

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