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The Problem of Gender Inequality in Periodicals Today

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Abstract: The article addresses the problem of gender inequality in Ukrainian periodicals today. A detailed analysis of Ukrainian and foreign studies on the issue in question shows that women mostly deal with gender psychology. Besides, the article clarifies such concepts as “gender”, “gender psychology”, “gender equality”, “sexism”, and “feminism” and “gender inequality”. In 2021, a Swedish-Ukrainian project was signed that marks the campaign for overcoming inequality of rights between men and women. There is also the project initiated by the European Union (GENPATH). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on linguistic sexism and gender inequality in the Ukrainian government, politics, jurisprudence, healthcare. Considerable attention is paid to the most common violations of rights of women psychologists (motherhood, a lack of mentoring, uneven distribution of rights). Another issue is gender inequality in the family and its possible consequences. Quite noteworthy are findings on gender roles in European countries, sexism, and, most importantly, the significance of gender equality. One can see that the main reasons behind gender inequality for women are the dominance of men and, interestingly, the Covid-19 pandemic outburst. The article proves that the media cover men more often than women. Finally, it indicates that men find it hard to struggle with “the male crisis”.

Keywords: *gender, gender psychology, sexism, feminism, language inequality.*

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Introduction

In Ukraine, the problem of gender equality is indeed relevant. The Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2018) is the main document that ensures gender equality in the country. This document aims to achieve equal rights and opportunities for both women and men in all spheres of society, eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender and apply special temporary measures to restore the balance between women’s and men’s ability to enjoy equal rights. The article aims to analyze the thorny problem of gender inequality, summarize and systematize information from current periodicals.

First, it is essential to clarify such concepts as “gender”, “gender psychology”, “gender equality”, “sexism”, “feminism”.

As noted by Melnyk (2004), gender is a system of values, norms and characteristics of male and female behaviour, lifestyle and way of thinking, roles, and relations that women and men adopted during socialization influenced by social, political, economic, and cultural aspects. Gender equality means equal human rights and opportunities that allow individuals of both sexes to participate in all spheres of society equally.

Tkalych (2011) claims that gender psychology is a branch of psychology that studies the characteristics of gender identity acquired during socialization and influencing social behaviour following gender. In this regard, gender psychology is a new scientific field whose findings are expected to address the psychological component of various problems in personality development.

At the same time, sexism implies that for the most part, women are inferior to men, Melnyk (2004). Besides, sexism negatively affects women’s and girls’ health, self-esteem, as well as changes their behaviour. It is quite common among women journalists, housewives, as well as those women who deal with humiliation inflicted by men (e.g., contempt, insults). Men may also suffer from sexism on the ground of nationality, age, health disorders, religion, or sexual orientation.

Feminism can be viewed as 1) the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes and 2) organized activities on behalf of the rights and interests of women, Berry College (2018).

Lewis (2019) explains the emergence of gender inequality. The researcher mentions the famous historian figure Lerner (1987) who claims that gender inequality arose in the Middle East in the second millennium BC. Male domination over women is the result of historical development, not “natural” or biological, Lerner (1987). Archaeological findings indicate

that there were more male graves. Male burials were identified by the remains of arrowheads or other weapons and female graves by ceramic remains. It follows that women and children may not have had an official burial at the time, while men could have been granted better burial places. Thus, one may assume that gender inequality has already existed for a very long time.

Literature Review on Gender Inequality in Various Activity Areas

Many Ukrainian and foreign researchers have studied the problem of gender inequality (Dutta, 2020; Cherry, 2020; Melnyk, 2004; Rodrigo & Clavero, 2021; Tkalych, 2011).

Tkalych (2011) theorizes that gender psychology is associated with the study of problems that women are facing today. He emphasizes psychological differences between men and women, namely, in cognitive, motivational, emotional, behavioural and personal spheres.

According to Cherry (2020), "psychology has long emphasized the contributions of male psychologists"; meanwhile, "the important contributions of female psychologists are often overlooked". In the early 20th century, only 12% of psychologists in the USA were women. They endured professional discrimination: they were forbidden to study with men, obtain degrees and, consequently, find employment.

Dutta (2020) raises the issue of linguistic sexism, arguing that the Ukrainian language and culture are focused on male standards. In contrast to Spanish, Ukrainian and French, English is a gender-neutral language since it lacks grammatical gender. Therefore, to reconsider gender inequality, one should pay particular attention to language, because people speak it and, as a result, use it to build a society.

Chepurko (2010) studies the inequality of men and women in employment in Ukraine. Men seem to have greater advantages (e.g., more secure employment in the event of significant changes in working conditions). Women mostly work in such fields as education, catering, health care, trade. Recently, more women have started working in industrial enterprises (construction companies, transport, heavy and light industry). Under current Ukrainian law, women and men are equal, although there are still cases of gender discrimination.

Voznyuk (2019) highlights the issue of gender equality among lawyers. The scholar indicates that top executive positions are mostly held by men. According to the Ukrainian National Bar Association, 63% of men and only 37% of women work in this field. In Europe and North America, the number of law graduates is equal: 50% to 50%. One of the challenges

women lawyers are facing now is choosing between a career and motherhood. Another problem is deteriorating work conditions after maternity leave.

Rodrigo & Clavero (2021) suggest two reasons behind growing gender inequality in higher education. First, men's power relies on gender models which makes women remain subordinate. Second, the Covid-19 pandemic outburst exacerbates gender inequality between sexes. Women's careers suffer from quarantine restrictions in a way that educational institutions are closed and children are forced to stay at their homes. As a result, women university teachers lack time to prepare their pieces of research for publication. It is therefore important to take measures to improve gender equality by eliminating all obstacles to women's promotion and helping them maintain a balance between work and personal life. Given that gender is an interdisciplinary concept inherent in many fields, Rodrigo & Clavero (2021) emphasize different concepts, including feminist institutionalism, social constructivism, post-structuralism.

Kowalczyk et al. (2018) consider psychosocial hazards in the workplace as an aspect of horizontal segregation in the nursing profession. From September 2017 to April 2018, they conducted a study that involved 640 respondents (87% – women, 13% – men). The obtained results, however, demonstrate that psychosocial hazards more influenced surveyed men, rather than women. In particular, the survey aimed to identify three main criteria: hazards, complexity, haste. Hazards involved working hours, night shifts, burnout, exhaustion, loss of self-esteem, deteriorating family relationships. This proves that health care workers may experience adverse symptoms associated with deteriorating physical and mental health. Consequently, all these factors can lead to professional medical errors.

England et al. (2020) state that progress toward gender equality in the United States has slowed. They believe that one of the main reasons behind it is the avoidance of gender in families. The researchers assume that husbands should help their wives with household chores and share family responsibilities. Otherwise, the emotional overload will make women more stressed, and as a result, will lead to family conflicts and frustration.

Vecina & Piñuela (2016) cover the issue of domestic violence. They believe that ambivalent sexism maintains patriarchy and, thus, reinforces intimate partner violence. Besides, they analyze benevolent and hostile sexism. The first one relies on authority and the other one on justice (Vecina & Piñuela, 2016).

As noted by Cifre et al. (2018), young people in Spain find it difficult to access the labour market due to high rates of unemployment. The labour

market is not gender-neutral which means that women are typically at a disadvantage. Young men under 29 are more likely to be unemployed, while women are more likely to work part-time. Besides, the established gender roles in society affect employment opportunities for both men and women, yet in different ways.

Haworth (2021) indicates that women in North Africa and the Middle East are particularly disadvantaged. In Saudi Arabia, women are prohibited from driving. In Egypt and Bahrain, it is only husbands who can allow their wives to leave the country. In South Asia and Africa, girls under 18 are to marry at the behest of their parents, against their own interests. This, no doubt, contradicts the right to choose a partner. In most Middle Eastern countries, husbands can divorce their wives verbally, while wives are not allowed to grant their citizenship to their children. In Turkey and Slovakia, women are not allowed to join frontal battles. Domestic violence is rather widespread in India. Even in the most developed countries, men are mostly employed in high-paying industries. In Tanzania, the ownership of the land belongs exclusively to the husband. In Afghanistan, access to education has always been a major problem for women, especially given the recent events.

After all, gender equality is essential for the sustainable development of society and the realization of every person's rights. Equality between men and women is based on the following factors: both sexes a) have equal financial opportunities at work, b) can participate in power distribution, c) enjoy access to education, d) develop their interests and talents, e) share family responsibilities equally. One might wonder, however, whether men are concerned with gender equality. The answer is probably yes since they are at risk of morbidity and mortality, associated with violence, alcohol use, and accidents.

On the occasion of International Women's Day (2020), the Inter-factional association "Equal Opportunities" and the United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine prepared a guide on "Gender Equality: Myths, Facts and Public Policy" and presented it at a meeting of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Yabchenko (2020). On January 27, 2021, the UN Foundation and the Swedish Embassy in Ukraine, in cooperation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, launched the Swedish-Ukrainian project. Ukraine has taken an important step in overcoming gender inequality by becoming a full member of the Biarritz Partnership. Thus, the Ukrainian government have made new commitments at the legislative and regulatory levels, in particular those relating to the granting of parental leave to both mother and father. It

will largely help Ukrainian women combine a successful career with family life.

As noted by Aartsen (2021), there are only a few cross-national studies addressing gender differences. However, one should pay particular attention to the research project GENPATH, funded by the EU-Gender-Net Plus programme to promote gender equality. This project is a research collaboration between six European countries and Israel, Aartsen (2021).

It follows that research on gender quality in various activity areas (psychology, politics, jurisprudence) in Ukraine suggests that it is women who more often suffer gender inequality. The same situation is observed in other foreign countries. Quite controversial is linguistic sexism. Domestic violence should also be considered as a form of gender inequality.

Thus, Ukrainian authorities are taking steps to overcome gender inequality and establish harmony between men and women.

Reflecting on the Woman's Image in Today's Periodicals

Gender issues are being studied in an interdisciplinary aspect, so recently there have been many studies in which the subject is discussed simultaneously in different fields of science such as philosophy, linguistics, journalism, sociology, political science and many others.

As is well-known, every society in any historical epoch strives to regulate the relationship between men and women by developing certain rules, responsibilities or norms.

Considering the concept of "gender", Maierchuk et al. (2017) analyze similarities and differences between men and women. They also distinguish between masculinity and femininity, calling it gender polarization. The researchers claim, however, there are fewer similarities between men and women. In the 19th century, men gained more benefits in life than women. They took an active part in political life and enjoyed better career prospects. Even though today women's opportunities for employment and career growth have increased, gender inequality unfortunately remains.

Shturkhetskyi (2015) sees gender inequality in sexism. In the 1960s, feminist leaders spoke out against commercials on household cleaners and appliances used mostly by women. The reason lies in the fact that these commercials starred beautiful women being portrayed as sexual objects. It was expected to make men purchase these goods with the help of a woman's body image. Such a marketing move, unfortunately, degrades the dignity of the individual. Moreover, it is a failure from the start. First, women may feel negative about such advertising. Second, men may feel offended being seen as sexual predators. Eventually, commercials on household appliances only

turned out to be more effective than those promoting an attractive female body. As one can see, advertising contributes to forming public morality. Shturkhetskyi (2015) points out advertisements in the construction industry since they are also oversaturated with women's sexual attractiveness. Unfortunately, commercials often contain vulgar phrases which may distract the consumer from the product.

Sydorenko (2004) analyzes different aspects of gender symmetry and asymmetry. In 2002, the results of the monitoring of the largest-circulation all-Ukrainian newspapers, including 27 magazines authored by 40.3% of women and 59.7% of men, were summarized and made public. The analysis of the texts shows that women are mentioned 5.5 times less than men. At the same time, the topics of politics, social sphere and sports are mostly covered by men.

In the context of journalism, it is equally important for both men and women to have good oratory skills, show professionalism and adhere to justice. It follows that gender harmony is a democratic value that should be maintained and preserved.

Bureychak (2011) raises the issue of the gender experience of Ukrainian men. Unfortunately, such experience is often negative and leads to "the male crisis". This concept should be understood as a manifestation of depression, pessimism, inappropriate behaviour, aggression, alcohol abuse. In most cases, this is due to social conditions or difficulties with one's adaptation. The problems causing the male crisis are usually of demographic, medical-social and destructive origin. The main reason behind it should be seen in the violation of emotional and physical stability, financial and professional success. In this situation, women play an essential role since they can influence men's states by indulging their weaknesses or sustaining their strengths.

Many researchers suggest that the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, which negatively affected Ukraine's economy and, consequently, men's situation, is viewed as one of the reasons for men's problematization in the media. In this case, men become victims who, unfortunately, cannot manage and improve their state on their own. Bureychak (2011) distinguishes 3 types of mass media concepts of men in crisis: neutral, patriarchal and gender-egalitarian.

As shown by the media review, gender inequality negatively affects both men and women. Unfortunately, men find it harder to struggle with the male crisis.

Ribarovska et al. (2021) indicate that the emergence of gender inequality in the postmodern era is associated with the Covid-19 pandemic:

increasing mortality, deteriorating mental health, changing approaches to education. All these factors have surely had a significant impact on the social group of low-income citizens and women. The researchers also claim that owing to quarantine restrictions, the number of publications on neuroimmunology and psychiatry by women has dropped. The reasons for that seem to be related to women's need to care for their children during the working day, given that children occasionally study from home under quarantine restrictions. At the same time, women with little experience, young families with health problems, and, surely, people who have been infected with Covid-19, are most affected by gender inequality.

As noted by Guerrina et al. (2021), the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected human health, in particular, rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders. Evidence suggests that women are more likely to suffer from musculoskeletal conditions, such as osteoarthritis, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis.

Dang & Nguyen (2021) consider negative consequences of the pandemic in socio-political life, including gender inequality. They claim that it has affected income, expenditure, savings and led to high rates of unemployment. Using data from a six-country survey that covers countries in different geographical locations and at various income levels, they prove the following: women are 24% more likely to lose their job than men; their income is much lower.

Profeta (2021) also believes that the Covid-19 pandemic has only worsened gender inequality. Social distancing has become an obstacle to women's employment since now women need to spend even more of their time on household chores and childcare.

Labour market data also suggest gender inequality worldwide. It must be noted, however, that in Europe, women are more educated than men. At the same time, more men are engaged in science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM). Gender inequality is also observed in those countries where women work more because of the motherhood penalty. In times of partial economic recovery after the pandemic, the employment rate of men was much higher than that of women. Moreover, women with lower qualifications fell into the category of the poor. At the same time, the amount of time spent on childcare, even if both parents were at home or working remotely, was found to be different between women and men: women tend to spend 2 hours more time on it.

During the pandemic, some countries have gone so far as to invest in families (additional childcare leave, babysitting vouchers, wage supplements).

It follows that gender equality contributes to a sustainable society and an increase in the birth rate. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage women to fight for it, thereby influencing public policy.

According to Jameela et al. (2021), there are fewer women researchers in the higher education sector. Evidence indicates “disproportionate numbers of women scholars employed in precarious, part-time and/or teaching-only roles; a very low proportion of women in senior professorial roles” (Jameela et al., 2021). To solve this particular problem, a project entitled “Women and JAS” was launched.

Chatterjee & Werner (2021) state that “while women are increasingly entering the field, they are less likely to be recognized as experts and leaders, with fewer women speaking at national medical conferences or grand rounds, receiving prestigious awards, being promoted to full professorships, or holding leadership roles”.

Conclusions

Thus, a detailed analysis of Ukrainian and foreign studies proves that the issue in question is indeed relevant. This article shows that women mostly deal with gender psychology. It also explains such concepts as “gender”, “gender psychology”, “gender equality”, “sexism”, and “feminism”. Importantly, the article justifies the emergence of gender inequality and discovers ongoing projects aimed at overcoming gender discrimination.

The scientific value of the article is the emphasis on linguistic sexism. Specific attention is paid to manifestations of gender inequality in government, politics, medicine, psychology, and jurisprudence. Besides, the article covers family discrimination and illustrates the most common violations of women’s rights abroad.

In 2021, Ukraine and Sweden launched “Equality Springboard”, a project on social norms gender stereotypes elimination for better resilience and prosperity of women and men in Ukraine. There is also the project initiated by the European Union (GENPATH). Thus, the problem of gender equality is indeed important and relevant.

One can see that the main reasons behind gender inequality for women are the dominance of men and, interestingly, the Covid-19 pandemic outburst. The article proves that the media cover men more often than women which negatively affects both male and female personalities. Unfortunately, men find it hard to deal with the gender experience which leads to “the male crisis”.

Therefore, gender equality is critical for the sustainable development of society and the realization of every person's rights.

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