



Article

The Perception of Educators on Gender Equality: A Study in Ecuador

Verónica Díaz ^{1,*}, Henry Vallejos ², Carmen Oval ³, Selin Carrasco ⁴, Carmen Coloma ⁵, Fabiola Flores ⁶, Carola Lozada ⁷, Patricio Rivera ⁸ and María Simón ⁹

- ¹ Instituto Interuniversitario de Investigación Educativa IESED, Universidad de Los Lagos, Osorno 5290000, Chile
- ² Facultad de Ciencias Administrativas, Gestión Empresarial e Informática, Universidad Estatal de Bolívar, Bolívar 020102, Ecuador; hfvallejo@ueb.edu.ec
- ³ Departamento de Educación y Humanidades, Facultad de Educación y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Magallanes, Magallanes y la Antártica Chilena 6210427, Chile; carmen.oval@umag.cl
- ⁴ Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional de San Luis, San Luis D5700 BPB, Argentina; selin.carrasco@gmail.com
- ⁵ Departamento Académico de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, San Miguel 15088, Peru; croloma@pucp.edu.pe
- ⁶ Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad Mariano Gálvez, Interior Finca El Zapote, Cdad 01002, Guatemala; mfloresm27@miumg.edu.gt
- ⁷ Centro de Estudios de Postgrado e Investigación, Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca, Sucre 212, Bolivia; clozada@academicussalutis.org
- ⁸ Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Arturo Prat, Avenida Arturo Prat #2120, Iquique 1100000, Chile; patriv@unap.cl
- ⁹ Instituto de Ciencias Básicas e Ingeniería, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, Hidalgo 42039, Mexico; maria_simon@uaeh.edu.mx
- * Correspondence: mvdiaz@ulagos.cl



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Abstract: Gender equality is a prerequisite for people-centered human development. This exploratory and descriptive study was conducted to investigate the perception of gender among Ecuadorian primary school teachers. Quantitative data were obtained from teachers in public and urban educational establishments. In order to collect the data, an online survey-type opinion questionnaire was applied with the aim of finding out teachers' perception of gender equality within their institutions in educational establishments in the Republic of Ecuador, considering the dimensions of personal perceptions of the subject, the organizational culture, and the implementation of gender equality in the internal management of the educational organizations where they work. The results of the questionnaire show that teachers perceive that there is currently more receptiveness to gender issues than in the past. From the answers received, it can be concluded that people identify with gender issues, even though there is a need for elements and support to enable them to be expressed effectively, on a daily basis and sustained over time.

Keywords: gender equality; Sustainable Development Goals; teachers; urban schools; basic education; Ecuador

1. Introduction and Background

Gender equality and women's empowerment was the third of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 and has now become the fifth of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the post-2015 development agenda (expected to be achieved by 2030). This so-called SDG 5 goal (closely linked to SDG 4 on inclusive and quality education and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities) focuses on eliminating gender disparities at all levels of education, aiming not only to close the gender gap in education but to also increase women's participation in paid employment and ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

of decision-making in political, economic, and public life (UN 2015, 2023). As Kabeer (2010) points out, it can be considered an intrinsic rather than an instrumental goal as it can be explicitly valued as an end in itself.

Today, educators also pay attention to gender equality, for example, through initiatives to encourage more women to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Martínez-Huerta et al. 2024; Panetta and Williams 2018). Despite this, boys outperform girls in mathematics, with an even larger gap among higher-achieving students and with possible consequences for the under-representation of women in highly profitable fields (OCDE 2022; UNESCO 2022; Amorós-Poveda and Bernárdez-Gómez 2024). Mathematics performance has been shown to be a good predictor of STEM college readiness and future labor market outcomes (Chauke 2022; Card and Payne 2021). Stereotypes can induce discrimination if one's own preconceived beliefs interfere with the ability to be impartial or if they impair the performance of group members (Glover et al. 2017; Bohren et al. 2018). At present, it remains an empirical question whether exposure to gender stereotypes in the real world affects the emergence of the reading and mathematics skills gap (Luo et al. 2021) when it is often said that women naturally excel more than men in writing (Reilly et al. 2019; Palmer et al. 2024; Reynolds et al. 2015).

According to Ertl et al. (2017), stereotypes communicated by teachers can be particularly harmful to children as they affect the development of academic self-concept. According to social psychology research, teachers' mistaken expectations can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby prior beliefs are self-confirming (Carlana 2019; Papageorge et al. 2020; Corno et al. 2022).

Adolescents spend most of their time in their schools in contact with their teachers. Attitudes toward sensitive issues such as gender equality are often formed through peer interaction, self-experience, and the observed and/or expressed attitudes of teachers (Jha et al. 2020). Therefore, when considering gender equity, it is important not only to understand students' attitudes but also explore teachers' perceptions of the issue. For Jular-Alba et al. (2021), the opinions, beliefs, ideas, conceptions, expectations, and personal attitudes of teaching professionals have a great influence on the students who perceive them, so it is necessary to have up-to-date information on teachers' perceptions of gender equality.

Along these lines, a very active research topic worldwide is related to teachers' beliefs and attitudes about gender equality and co-education, as evidenced by recent studies reported for Vietnam (Mai and Brundrett 2019); Turkey (Idin and Dönmez 2017; Sari 2017); South Africa and Finland (Engelbrecht and Savolainen 2017); Ireland, the UK, France, Latvia, Italy, and Spain (Fine-Davis and Faas 2014); or Taiwan (Sinacore et al. 2018).

Regarding the gender equality situation in Latin America, according to CEPAL estimates, in Latin America, the percentage of people employed in low-productivity jobs in 2020 was higher among women (52.0%) than among men (49.2%), and for the Caribbean, the figures were 54.3% of female employment and 38.7% of male employment. Furthermore, informality is more prevalent in rural areas (76.2%) than in urban areas (44.8%), while persons with disabilities and migrants often face greater barriers to formal employment. Finally, it should be noted that young people are over-represented in informal employment (CEPAL 2023). Signs of recovery during 2021 show that the fastest growing sectors are those where employment is more male dominated.

Although the presence of women in the region's legislative bodies has gradually increased in recent years, these positions are still mostly held by men. In October 2021, women's share of seats in national parliaments averaged 33.6% of the total. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in women in the region experiencing unprecedented setbacks in terms of economic autonomy, physical autonomy, and decision-making autonomy (CEPAL 2022).

Despite the policies, structural changes, and educational reforms that have taken place over the last two decades, educational care for young people continues to be an issue that has serious consequences that exacerbate inequality and social fragmentation, such as the process of dropping out of school, low expectations regarding the role of education, and a

lack of job opportunities. A sample of 29 countries with recent data on upper secondary completion rates disaggregated by sex, geographic location, and wealth found gaps ranging from 11.5% to 72.2% in completion rates between the poorest rural and richest urban groups (UN 2022).

In Latin America, in terms of equity in education, according to UNESCO (2019), in 2010, the countries of the region had a high level of access and coverage in primary education (average net enrolment rate of 94%). In addition, it was noted that repetition and dropout showed favorable trends over time, which improved retention and completion rates. It is worth noting that, in terms of equity, significant improvements were observed in the care of the poorest population, especially in rural areas (López et al. 2017). However, the evidence presented at the I International Seminar “Sustainable Development Goals SDG4 and SDG5 Agenda 2030-UN” held in Chile at the Universidad Arturo Prat in October 2022 shows that progress has not yet been made in meeting the education targets set out in both goals, according to data provided by researchers from Guatemala, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Chile.

With regard to Ecuador, according to the United Nations report (2022), one of the most worrying dimensions of gender inequality is illiteracy, which at the beginning of 2022 stood at 9.2% of the population between 15 and 49 years of age; this increases substantially in the case of indigenous women, girls and adolescents, and older adults, reaching 16.4%, 17.9%, and 24% respectively. In terms of average years of schooling, the national average is 10.5, with no difference between men and women but with significant lags in the case of rural women, who have an average of 8.1 years of schooling, with indigenous (8) and montuvias (7.3) women in particular having the lowest levels. However, on average, labor income does not reflect this general equality of schooling, with significant gaps even at the highest levels of education, where women’s enrolment rates are higher. The attendance rate in basic education does not show significant gaps between males and females. The urban–rural gap, while appearing to be closing before the pandemic, persisted at 2.2 percentage points by 2021 (UN 2022). On the employment side, the percentage of working people in an adequate employment situation increased from 33.7% in November 2021 to 35.6% in November 2022. Despite this improvement, women recorded an adequate employment rate almost 13.7 percentage points below that of men: 27.6% and 41.3%, respectively (UN 2023).

Evidence reported in international reports (UN 2023; OCDE 2022) indicates that insufficient progress is being made today toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in general (West et al. 2019). In the specific case of SDG 5, the latest available data indicate that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Despite progress in law reform, overcoming gaps in legal protections and repealing discriminatory laws could take up to 286 years, according to the current rate of change (UN 2022). However, the efforts of most countries to report progress at the national level in meeting the targets set for the achievement of the SDGs cannot be ignored. Proof of this is the voluntary national reports submitted by Latin American and Caribbean countries each year to the United Nations. However, despite these efforts, only 24 of the 33 countries in the region have at least 80% of the indicators needed to calculate this index, reflecting the significant data disparity and information gaps at the regional level (Morales 2021).

Therefore, measuring progress toward achieving the SDGs in general and SDG 5 in particular is one of the main challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is why overcoming the obstacles to monitoring and evaluating the SDGs is fundamental to their progress. This is why our research seeks to contribute by generating a form of measurement and methodology—such as the degree of perception—that allows us to compare the progress made by teachers in a particular country.

In this context, the research questions are: how is gender equality related to primary school teachers in urban public schools? What is the teachers’ appreciation of the gender culture in their educational organization? In order to answer these questions, the following objective was formulated: to find out how teachers perceive gender equality within their institutions in educational establishments in Ecuador, considering their personal perception

of the subject, the organizational culture, and the implementation of gender equality in the internal management of the educational organizations where they work.

2. Methodology

This study is part of the international project “Alliances in higher education for the assurance of quality education and gender equity of teachers (2023–2025)” which involves Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru and was conducted by the University of Los Lagos in Chile.

The methodological approach of this study was quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive (Hernández et al. 2014), with the single instrument being an online perception survey of 33 questions, using a Likert scale of 1 to 4 with the following options: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) disagree; and (4) strongly disagree.

2.1. Participants

The study cohort is made up of primary school teachers. The sample is made up of 193 teachers from urban municipal schools in the Republic of Ecuador (cohort 2023). The participants correspond to intact groups, i.e., groups that are already constituted (Hernández et al. 2014), and the criteria for selection were the following: (a) teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience, (b) Internet access to access the online opinion questionnaire, and (c) voluntary participation in the study. Thus, the sample consisted of 58 males, 134 females, and 1 respondent identified as “other gender”, with an average sample age of 53% in the range of 36–50 years.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the objective of the study and the form of response were explained, emphasizing that the test was anonymous and that express consent to participate was required.

2.2. Evaluation Instruments

An opinion survey-type questionnaire was administered to the teachers, which allowed for the collection of information on the gender situation and was validated by the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS 2019). After the pilot application, minor adaptations and adjustments were made after consultation with 8 validating judges for content, resulting in the questionnaire for its final application with items addressed correlatively, which covered the following three dimensions: (1) personal perception with items 1 to 8; (2) perception of the organizational culture of the educational institution with items 9 to 14; and (3) perception of the implementation of gender equality within the educational institution with items 15 to 33.

3. Results and Discussion

The metric characteristics of the questionnaire are presented below. For the first standard, data collection and correction are considered. For the second standard, the computation and interpretation of Cronbach’s alpha for scales are considered. And for the third standard, the concepts related to the nature of the variable, its concurrence or concomitance, its prediction, and substantive essentiality are considered (Kerlinger and Lee 2002).

The direct relationship between gender and total score was $r = 0.057$, i.e., the commonality between the two variables was 3.25%. In turn, the non-significant correlations ($p > 0.05$) between gender and the total scores by dimensions were: gender and teachers’ personal perception: $r = 0.080$; between gender and teachers’ perception of the organizational culture: $r = 0.063$; between gender and its implementation in the teachers’ school institution: $r = 0.033$; and between gender and total score $r = 0.057$, i.e., they happen by chance. Next, Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis of the 33 items with difficulty and discrimination indices.

Table 1. Descriptives, difficulty, and discrimination of items.

Item	Mean	SD	Difficulty	Discrimination
1	3.12	1.041	0.78	0.193 *
2	3.07	1.021	0.77	0.943 **
3	3.13	1.052	0.783	0.898 **
4	2.44	0.983	0.61	0.462 **
5	1.99	0.941	0.498	0.167 *
6	1.89	0.864	0.473	0.096
7	1.87	0.837	0.468	0.139
8	1.85	0.907	0.463	0.029
9	2.78	1.007	0.695	0.596 **
10	2.8	0.977	0.70	0.607 **
11	2.86	0.989	0.70	0.980 **
12	2.68	1.010	0.67	0.69 **
13	2.81	0.986	0.708	0.608 **
14	2.17	0.898	0.543	0.680
15	2.64	0.934	0.66	0.604 **
16	2.40	0.968	0.600	0.592 **
17	2.76	0.992	0.690	0.623 **
18	2.49	0.101	0.623	0.622 **
19	2.93	0.997	0.773	0.524 **
20	1.93	0.997	0.733	0.568
21	3.07	1.036	0.768	0.223 **
22	3.10	1.049	0.775	0.551 **
23	2.17	1.022	0.543	0.571 **
24	2.84	1.029	0.71	0.544 **
25	2.91	0.996	0.728	0.247 **
26	2.77	1.012	0.693	0.503 **
27	2.17	0.917	0.543	0.471 **
28	2.98	1.028	0.740	0.143 *
29	2.82	0.948	0.705	0.417 **
30	2.15	1.008	0.548	0.478 **
31	2.57	1.008	0.538	0.478 **
32	2.67	0.981	0.718	0.225 **
33	2.18	1.056	0.545	0.685

* Significance obtained ($p < 0.05$). ** Significance achieved ($p < 0.01$) in each single correlation.

A detailed analysis of the items was carried out, including the arithmetic mean, which in its average value was 2.58, with a sigma of 1.16. The difficulty for the 33 items ranged from 0.463 (item 8) to 0.783 (item 3). The average difficulty was 0.62 and the average discrimination was 0.48.

In factor analysis, the KMO of item saturation was equal to 0.939. Bartlett's test of sphericity, chi square = 8349, 27 for 518 degrees of freedom, and Sig. = 0.00, was highly significant. Ideally, we would expect amounts between 0.9 and 1.0 (Khine 2013).

The translation of factor weights via the sediment graph is presented in Figure 1 below and shows how the 33 questions are distributed in terms of their factor weights and eigenvalues. Summarized via factor analysis, three components were recorded: the first with 56%, the second with 42%, and three with a weight of 1%. In other words, there are two very solid rocks and one sediment with a low weight.

The Cronbach's confidence index = 0.962 and yielded 0.038 non-identity between ADs and RAs. Cronbach's alpha for scales is identical to a KR20 for parametric quantitative data, and as it is a quadratic index, its value expression ranges between 0 and 1.

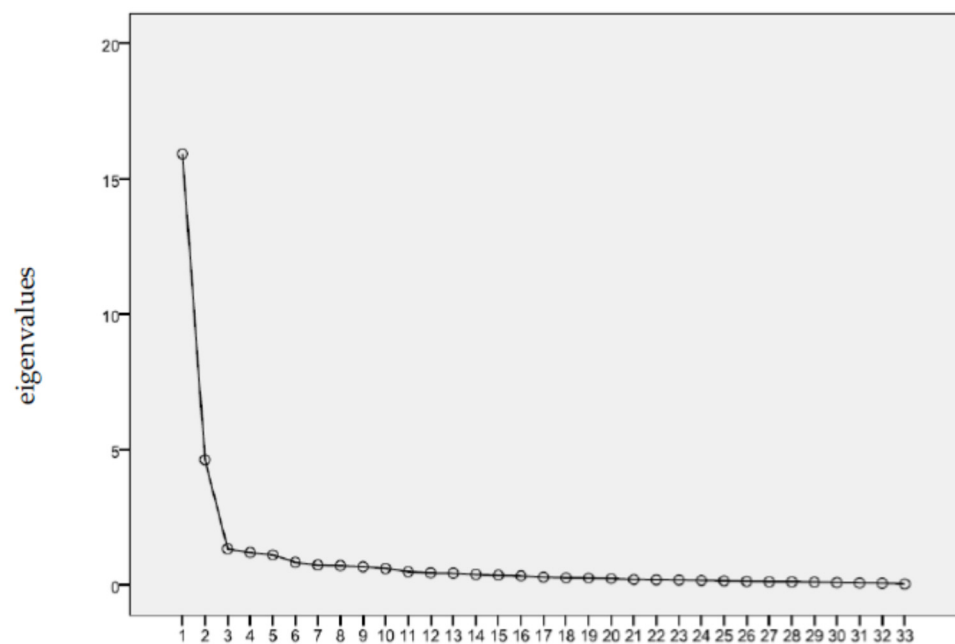


Figure 1. Sedimentation graph.

Analysis of Gender Dimensions

The first dimension of personal perception (items 1 to 8) is divided into two main themes. Firstly, it seeks to ascertain people's perception in relation to the valuation and understanding of gender issues and gender equality according to sex, as concepts linked to an equal human rights approach for women and men, in accordance with the United Nations and the proposals of UN Women. Secondly, it seeks to understand in particular the perception of gender stereotypes among teachers in Ecuador, including elements related to the professional sphere (the sexual division of labor) and emotional expression.

Therefore, it can be subdivided into two themes: (1) the existing affinity on gender issues according to sex (items 1 to 4) and (2) the perception of gender stereotypes according to sex (items 5 to 8). Below are some graphs showing the results in relation to the first dimension of personal perception of gender.

Based on Figure 2, it is positively highlighted that teachers from the different educational establishments showed affinity for gender issues and their relation to equal opportunities. On this point, there was not such a pronounced difference between women (82.09% agreement) and men (74.14% agreement), which indicates that people are aligned with the idea of gender equality and that even beyond interest, they feel identified with the issue, which means a solid baseline that provides support for the subsequent findings, with the exception of talking about gender, where only 42.54% of women and 44.83% of men agree that talking about gender is only related to granting greater rights to women.

Figure 3, corresponding to items 5 to 8, shows the relationship between the gender stereotypes present in the sexual division of labor, that is, understanding that women have a reproductive role, as "housewives" with 23.88% agreement among women and 13.79% among men, and productive work as "providers" with 19.40% of women and 18.97% of men agreeing, with the consequent symbolic burden derived from a biological-sexual determinism; we can see that it is those who adhere to these social representations who are the least likely to do so. In this context, according to Montalvo (2020), it must be recognized that society has evolved in its thinking about these behaviors; however, we still find the repetition of stereotypes which, according to Coppolecchia (2012), consist of two elements: inheritance transmitted from generation to generation and environment referring to the interaction that takes place in the social sphere, within which the different expressions of people with respect to what is socially normal are manifested.

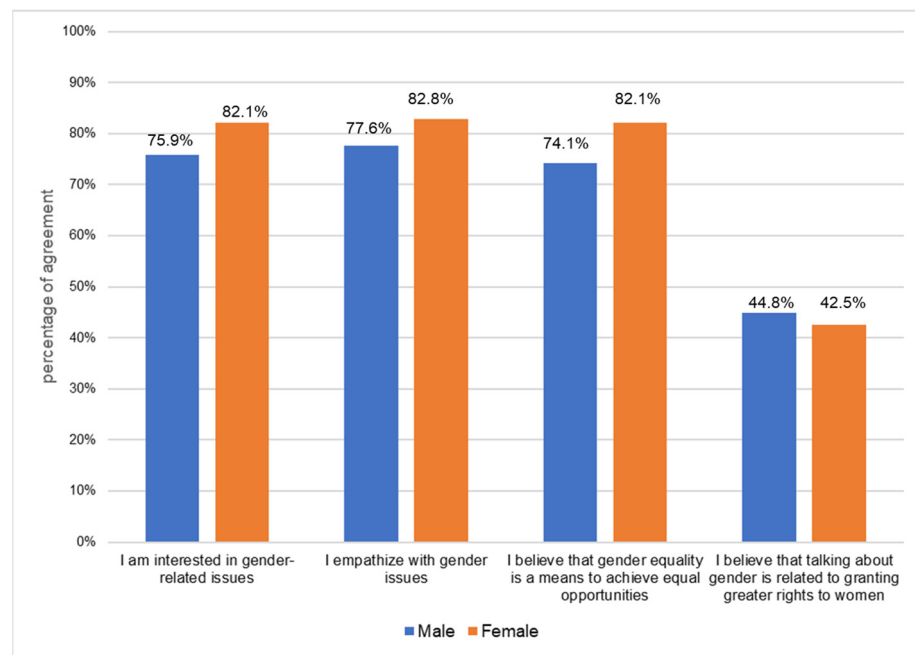


Figure 2. Percentage of agreement on gender issues according to sex.

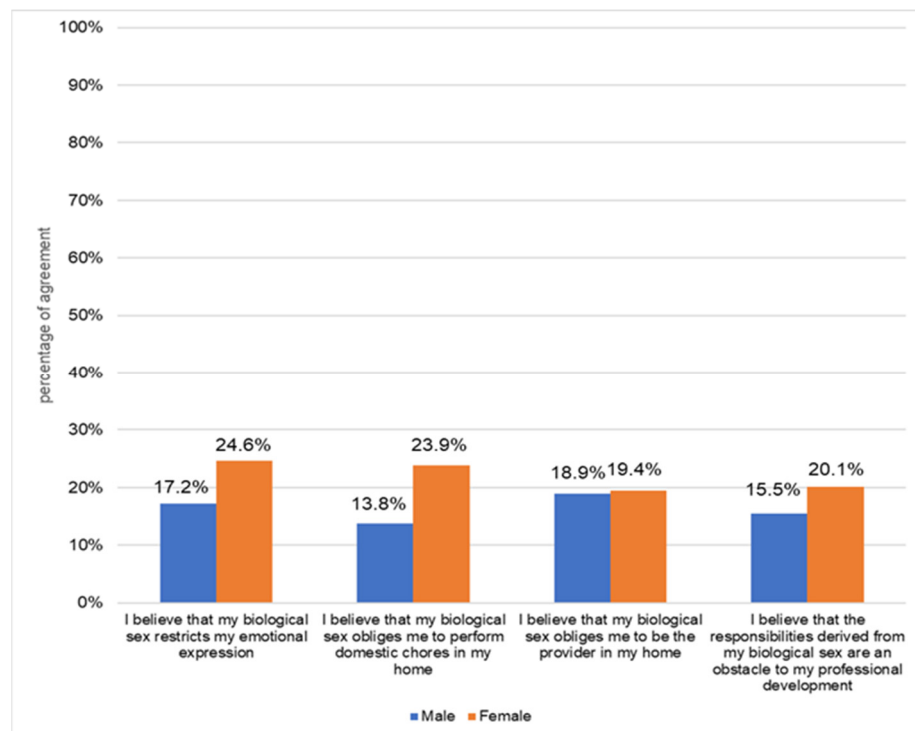


Figure 3. Percentage of agreement on gender stereotypes according to gender.

Historically, the sexual division of labor—men as providers, women as carers—entailed a specialization along gender lines that relegated reproductive work in the context of the family—domestic and care tasks—to the private sphere, making it invisible as socially valuable work and configuring a type of inequality rooted in the very mode of social organization (Gómez-Urrutia and Jiménez-Figueroa 2019).

In Ecuador, according to Vaca Torres et al. (2020), there have been roles imposed on men and women: men are usually the representatives in social life, the ones who work, earn money and make decisions, while women live in the home environment, as mothers and

wives. Advertising fulfils its commercial task and at the same time reinforces stereotypes, proposes classic family models and strengthens social novelties in the mass media. Most behaviours are driven by advertisements, individuals tend to identify with the messages conveyed in the mass media and, in general, they want to fit the ideal model presented in the Ecuadorian media.

The second dimension, gender perception of organizational culture (items 9 to 14), covers the perception over time of gender equality according to sex, the perception of gender equality in different ways of using language among Ecuador's teachers according to sex, and the perception of gender equality both in professional opinions and in the equality of voice and vote in decision-making according to sex.

These items allow one to check whether there is any gender discrimination in terms of valuing opinions on work or decision-making. This group of items is divided into two areas: (1) the perception over time of gender equality in your organization according to sex (items 9 to 11) and (2) the perception of gender equality in different ways of using language in your organization according to sex (items 12 to 14).

According to Figure 4, there is a discrete difference favoring women in the three aspects consulted regarding the perception over time of gender equality that teachers have in their organization according to sex in the present, past, and future, with a greater affinity of agreement that in the future there will be greater equality in their educational institutions.

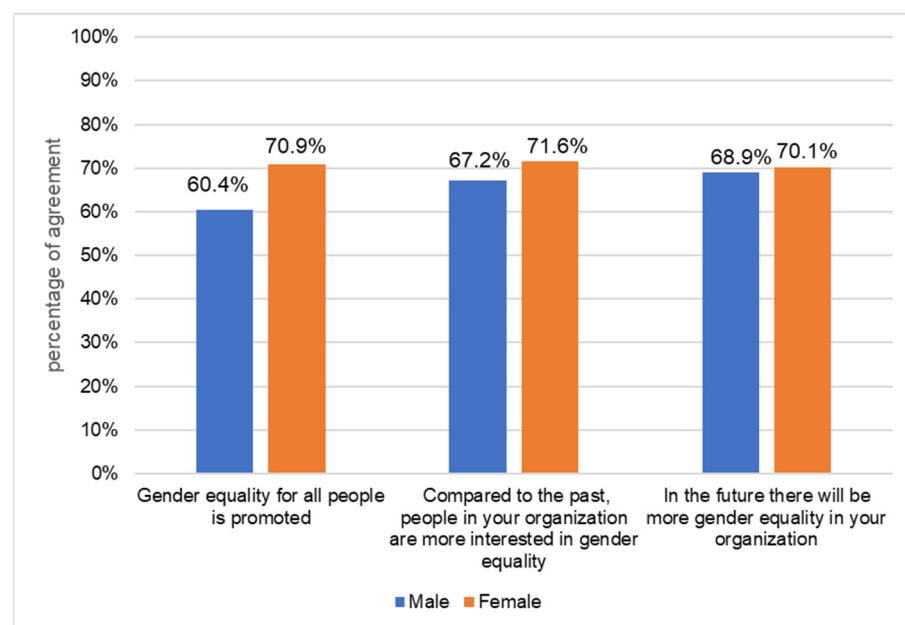


Figure 4. Percentage of agreement on the perception over time of gender equality in your organization by gender.

Figure 5 shows the incorporation of gender equality in the use of non-sexist everyday language in the different educational institutions, with 73.13% of women and 68.97% of men agreeing.

Finally, the third dimension corresponds to the perception of the implementation of gender equality within educational institutions (items 15 to 33). The perception of the implementation of those concrete institutional actions and practices allows one to account for gender equality within the educational workplaces of teachers in Ecuador, in relation to various institutional policies. This dimension is subdivided for analysis into five areas: (1) perception of the existence and sufficiency of institutional actions; (2) procedures, cases, and sanctions for sexual harassment; (3) selection, promotion, and team-building; (4) remuneration policy, incentives, benefits, and access to training activities; and (5) policies for reconciling work and family life.

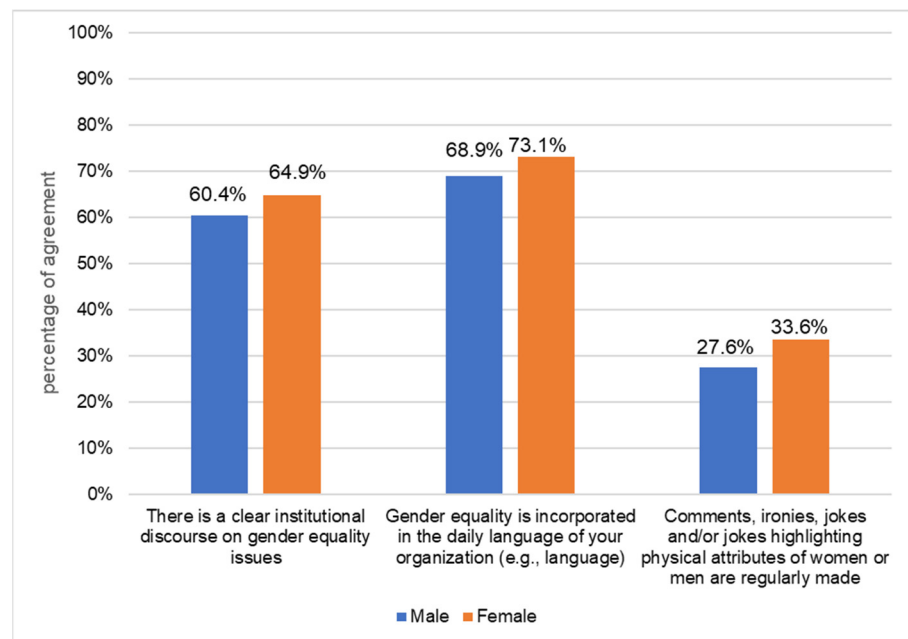


Figure 5. Percentage of agreement on the perception of gender equality in different ways of using language in your organization according to gender.

It is important to note that, if we calculate the difference, 40% of women and 38% of men believe that, in practice, *there are no institutional actions on gender equality*, agreeing with the authors [Gaete-Quezada \(2015\)](#) and [Lizama-Lefno and Quiñones \(2019\)](#) when they state that there are barriers that female teachers experience in accessing positions of authority and prestige within educational institutions. This point is fundamental because here we did not ask whether they agreed with the institutional actions on gender equality but directly asked about their existence, which highlights a situation that should draw attention to the fact that 39% of teachers in schools believe that institutional actions on gender equality do not even exist. Along the same lines, the majority of women (66.4%) and men (60%) agreed with the existence of a policy of equal pay, incentives, and benefits for women and men in their educational institutions. This broad percentage of agreement is replicated in terms of equal access to training and educational activities (73.1% women and 74.1% men).

According to the first statement: “Opinions on work-related matters in your organization are valued differently if they are given by a woman or a man”, 44% of women and 52% of men believe that their opinions on work-related matters are valued differently. This would therefore be indicative of an act of discrimination. Regarding the second statement, linked to equal voice and vote in decision-making, we see that the percentage of agreement between women (74%) and men (76%) increases by 20%. This indicates that when it comes to decision-making, there is no pronounced gender inequality, but when it comes to giving a professional opinion, regardless of whether it is collected, it is valued differently. Finally, the third statement concerns equitable gender quotas in the composition of work teams, specifically whether this is perceived to be indicative of better results. On this point, 79.8% of women and 79.3% of men agree that better results are achieved, with a clear demonstration of gender equality.

Similarly, 79% of women and 78% of men perceive that all positions in their institution can be filled by either women or men. Along the same lines, and in relation to the possibility of promotion, 35% of women and men think that biological sex conditions the possibility of promotion in their school. This is gender discrimination, i.e., a restriction, distinction, or exclusion based on sex. Various studies show an unequal distribution of tasks, resources, and time that affect women’s socio-economic opportunities, reproducing gender inequalities and limiting their possibilities for development and autonomy on equal terms with

men (Castro-García and Pazos-Moran 2016; Delgado et al. 2019; Domínguez et al. 2019; Ferragina 2020; Girardin et al. 2016; Hegewisch and Gornick 2011; Martínez 2020).

Some 27% of the women surveyed perceive that the conditions for the application and selection of senior management positions do not promote equal participation between women and men; in the case of men this corresponds to 31% of similar perception.

It should be noted that in the context of the Republic of Ecuador, the participation of women in popularly elected posts is still very low: to date, no woman has held the Presidency of the Republic; in the last four periods of the Legislative Function, the participation of women in the National Assembly has not reached 40%; in the case of the single-member posts of the highest authorities of the decentralized autonomous governments (GAD), the percentage of women elected as prefects is less than 20% and that of women mayors is less than 10%. However, at the same time, it is enshrined as a right of Ecuadorian men and women to hold public jobs and functions based on merit and abilities through a selection and appointment system that is applied with criteria of equity and gender parity (art. 61, num. 7). Likewise, the Constitution establishes that parity between men and women must be sought in the composition of various state institutions (UN 2022).

For the questions related to sexual harassment or sexual harassment procedures, cases and sanctions in your organization, the answers are shown in Figure 6.

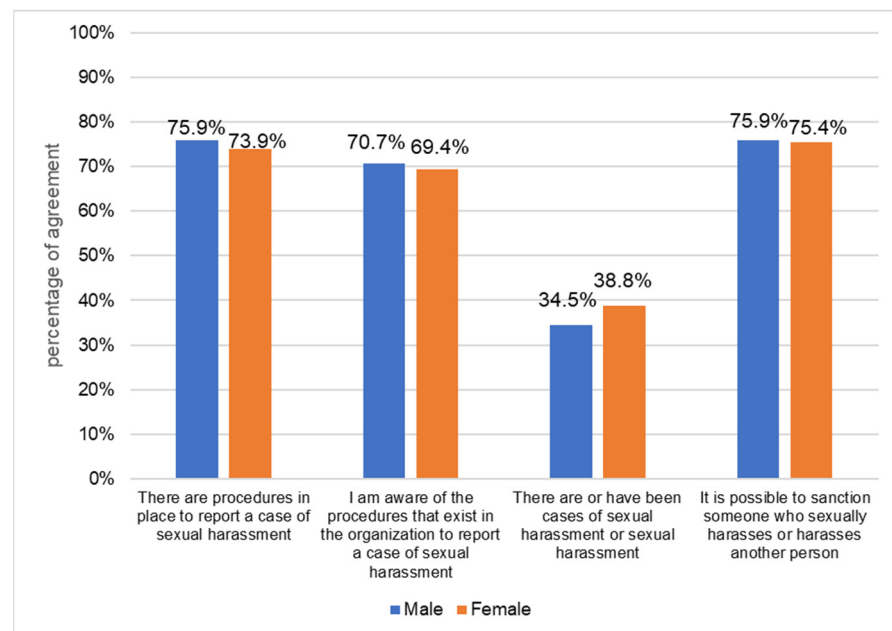


Figure 6. Percentage of agreement on sexual harassment/harassment procedures, cases, and sanctions in your organization by gender.

This figure shows that the percentage of agreement on the existence and knowledge of procedures for reporting sexual harassment is quite similar between women and men, as is the knowledge and sanctions associated with harassment.

In general, it is clear from Figure 7 that there is no major incompatibility between work and family life. Thus, an average of 70% of women and men agree that there are institutional actions that allow for the reconciliation of work and family life for both women and men. In the same line, Montalvo (2020) indicates that work–life balance practices play a significant role in women’s labor force participation.

Regarding approval of time off work and its gender bias, 37% of women believe that because they are women, they would be less likely to be approved for time off work. For men, the figure decreases slightly to 28%. This points to a subtle gender inequality, with men benefiting more than women, probably in response to the gender stereotypes shown in Figure 3.

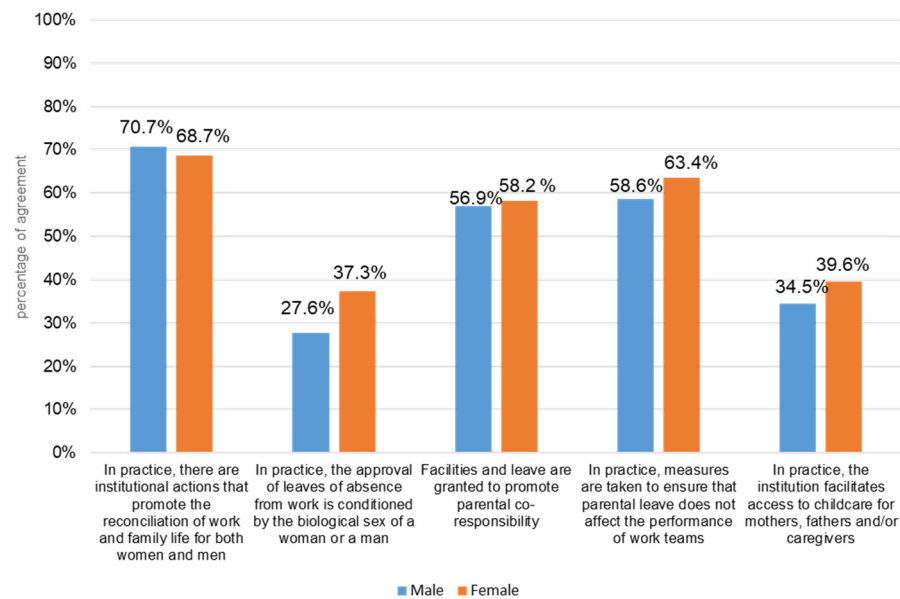


Figure 7. Percentage of agreement on gender equality in work–family policies.

In relation to whether leave is granted to promote co-parenting, on average 58% of women and men agree that this should be the case. Regarding the impact of leave on the performance of work teams, there is an average of 39% disagreement between women and men. In a way, this means additional pressure to the already granted leave as this affectation reflects a similar percentage (63.4% women and 58.6% men), where there is an association between parental leave and a decrease in work performance. This means that these leaves are conditioned by a work expectation, which seems to make it difficult to reconcile work and family life. In contrast to various comparative studies which show that parental leave, insofar as it is appropriately adjusted to the labor market and different family forms, is a suitable instrument to reconcile work and family life (Castro-García and Pazos-Moran 2016; Escobedo and Wall 2015; Ferragina 2020; Karu and Tremblay 2018; Lupica 2016; Ray et al. 2010). Finally, in relation to whether the institution facilitates access to childcare for mothers, fathers and/or carers, the average agreement between women and men is only 37%.

4. Conclusions

In this research, teachers' personal appreciation of gender equality, as well as their perception of the organizational culture and the implementation of gender equality in the internal management of the urban and public schools where they regularly work, was ascertained. The ultimate aim is to contribute to the reflection on the necessary consideration of the gender dimension in policies to strengthen this sector of education. It is concluded that, at present, gender differences occur more subtly than in the past within the educational units. Among the elements that stand out, certain interesting points stand out: the most optimistic percentages of agreement between women and men in relation to gender equality are found in response to those questions that are worded in a more general way, while the most pessimistic are related to questions that are more specifically posed. On the other hand, women's perceptions are—across the board—more optimistic than men's, but in general, the results show that teachers perceive that they and the institutions where they work are more receptive to gender issues today than in the past.

At present, Ecuador has made significant progress in access to education at different levels, for both women and men. However, there are still significant gaps that disadvantage rural, indigenous and mountain women, who have fewer years of schooling than the national average.

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