

## **The reality of equal educational opportunities from employees' perspectives**

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to identify the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools from its employees' perspectives (school principals, assistant principals, teachers, and administrators). The researcher used the descriptive approach in addition to a 22-item questionnaire spread over five domains. The study sample consisted of 110 participants chosen by the stratified random sampling method according to their job title as follow: school principal 18, assistant principal 18, teachers 51 and administrators 23. The results indicated that the application of equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the scale paragraphs as a whole was medium with a mean of (2.74). Based on the results, the researcher recommended officials to develop a general framework for equal opportunities, analyze the legislations that govern the workflow in the Ministry of Education with regard to equal opportunities.

**Key words:** Directorate of Education; Employees;; equal opportunities; Irbid Kasbah; Reality

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## 1. Introduction

Justice is one of the most important moral values enshrined in the countries' constitution; all persons within the state must be treated equally regardless of their religion, race, color, national origin, political affiliation or disability. Legislative regulations must strike a balance between the persons' needs and welfare state. At the same time, the world countries draft legal legislations on equal rights and opportunities for all as there will be no equal citizenship unless countries reform their laws to guarantee equal rights and duties for women and men.

Leaving gender inequality unaddressed will cost time and resources to rectify in the future. Therefore, most countries respond to bridge the gap between women and men through ensuring justice and gender diversity in the workplace and increasing gender diversity in leadership roles. (Kakabadse et al., 2015; Terjesen, 2015; Amorelli & Garcia-Sanchez, 2020).

Equal opportunities are compatible with 2030 sustainable development goals and objectives. The fourth and fifth goals state "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, eliminating gender disparity in education and promoting inclusive quality education, giving all children and persons with disabilities the chance to go to school and ensuring equal opportunities for women to fill leadership positions" (UNESCO, 2020).

International organizations work to protect and promote the human rights of persons with disabilities through general, as well as specially designed laws and programs to meet their needs as whole persons. Standard rules on achieving equal opportunities have been established to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the rights and obligations of others without discrimination of any kind on the basis of their disability (United Nations Human Rights, 1993).

The importance of equal opportunities for any political system stems from the fact that employing elites in the place they deserve guarantees the achievement of justice. Consequently, it develops a sense of responsibility among individuals and reflects positively on the value system through building a culture of love and sincerity in the workplace, which in turn, leads to the growth and prosperity of society.

Equity does not mean equality; it is not about the number of rewards and costs, but rather about the balance between them. Therefore, legislators are keen to ensure equal opportunities for achieving Equity for all, not Equality; because equity is not disturbed if the law singles out certain groups with special and distinguished treatment, such as the disabled, martyrs' children, and people with special needs. Achieving social justice should be a national priority.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is constantly Striving to take precedence in all areas, and in order to determine the extent of the Ministry of Education's commitment to achieving justice, the current study investigated the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools.

### **Problem of the study**

In developing countries, there are significant challenges with regard to socio-economic disparities, while developed countries face challenges in ensuring equal opportunities for all to access different levels of education as enshrined in human rights standards.

After four decades of the convention banning the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, they still suffer discrimination in some countries that have ratified the treaty. People around the world believe that women are intellectually and physically inferior to men and that, men are more capable in the workplace, despite the fact that there are no differences between them other than biological phenotypes.

The issue of equal opportunity has received a lot of attention at all levels, and there is research interest in the gender diversity among American and European academics. In socialist economic systems, great efforts are being made to integrate women into economic development; resulted in increasing the rate of female participation in the labor market. In the modern world, gender

inequality and forms of discrimination (both vertical and horizontal) remain in all stages of career, from the entry into the labor market to the difficult access to top positions (Amorelli & Garcia – Sanchez, 2020).

Despite the remarkable increase in female participation in education and labor market, women are still largely under-represented in supervisory, managerial and top positions. According to the report submitted by the European Commission, women in Europe account for around 45% of employment, however, their proportion in high-level positions is still very low (3% - 15%), as compared to men. The literature points to several justifications for promoting gender diversity in the workplace; as there is a fundamental difference between men and women in the cognitive and emotional processes and the way they act, feel or think (Lucifora, 2016).

Some countries toppled into a chasm between the rosy expectations of reducing opportunity gaps and the reality of life. However, the awful truth is the high level of socio-economic inequality that impedes the work of these legislations. Continuing on this line, Ermisch et al., (2012) believe that socio-economic inequality leads to a reduction in the level of equal opportunities among individuals.

Although the political participation of women has witnessed a qualitative and quantitative tangible progress in the past two decades, it is still insufficient and below expectations. In the public sector, women's representation in top-level leadership has decreased and there is no gender parity in ministerial positions and cabinets (Jordanian Economic and Social Council and the United Nations, 2022).

Along the same line, a study conducted in Jordan aimed to analyze the degree of women's representation in the main offices of a group of transport companies. The study concluded that there is a qualitative gap in male and female representation in the group, females constituted 33% of the total workforce compared to 67% of males, in addition to the weak representation of females in decision-making and senior administrative positions, which reflects the stereotypical image of women's work (Dababneh & Al-Awawdeh, 2009).

Bqa'in(2012) pointed out in a study conducted in the southern region of Jordan that opportunities are not equal to reach the leadership position in educational institutions from the viewpoint of department heads and school principals.

This is what researchers in some countries of the world and in Jordan confirmed about the reality of equal opportunities. Accordingly, the study investigated the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools from the employees' perspectives.

The problem of the study lies in diagnosing the reality of equal opportunities and the absence of an accurate evaluation of the problem by employees, especially those working in the center and departments of the ministry, as they are effective tools in achieving justice. Accordingly, the current study seeks to collect the data through answering the following questions:

- 1- What is the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools?
- 2- Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the responses of the study sample related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education attributed to the experience variable?
- 3- Are there statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the responses of the study sample related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education attributed to job title variable?

### **Significance of the study**

The importance of the study stems from the fact that applying the principle of equal opportunities in the various pillars of the state in general and the Ministry of Education in particular represents a

process that helps in achieving justice among all, male and female, healthy and disabled people. Specifically, the importance of this study lies in two main areas:

#### **Theoretically:**

- The findings of the current study are expected to contribute to educational literature by providing potentially significant information and new insights about the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools in Irbid Kasbash directorate of education.
- Assisting decision makers in overcoming the challenges that prevent the promotion of equal opportunities.
- Laying the groundwork for researchers to conduct further studies on equal opportunities from the viewpoints of various workers in the education Directorates.

#### **Practically**

- Developing a policy to ensure equal opportunities for all to highlight gender differences - *if existing* - that are intentionally or unintentionally enforced.
- It is hoped that the study will highlight the need to adopt legally binding standards to improve equal opportunities in Irbid Kasbash directorate.
- Analyzing the legislations that govern the workflow within the public schools in the Ministry of Education with regard to equal opportunities, and determine whether these legislation, laws and regulations contain any, discriminatory references (gender, religion, origins ... etc.).

#### **Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to the assessment of the employees in the public schools in Irbid Kasbash directorate of education in the academic year 2020/2021. It is also limited to the suitability of the study instruments used in data collection. Therefore, these limitations lead well to future researches.

#### **Operational definitions**

**Equal opportunities:** is the policy of giving the citizens of the same country the same opportunities for employment, pay, and promotion. In education, it is ensuring that all children and adults have equal opportunity in terms of access and outcome throughout all aspects of school and receiving learning in a way that enables them to achieve the whole scope of their potential, regardless of social and economic origins (Ahmed, 2012). In this study, it is the degree of the study sample responses to questionnaire items.

**Employees:** all employees of the public schools in Irbid Kasbash directorate of education.

#### **Literature review**

Diagnosing and Integrating the principles of equal opportunity in the public schools of Irbid Kasbash directorate and identifying the defects - *if they exist* - help to create an effective work environment and encourage the achievement of gender justice and equality at various economic, social and political levels.

Adopting equal opportunities contributes to ensuring an equal presence for both men and women in social, economic and political life, which contributes to accepting the differences between them and the different roles that play. However, emphasizing areas of difference should not negatively affect women's share of power in all positions.

The increased representation of women in local councils paves the way for a more equitable perspective on social, economic and political development and supports the benefits of having both women and men around the table when making the critical decisions that determine the success of the company. (Nadeem 2018).

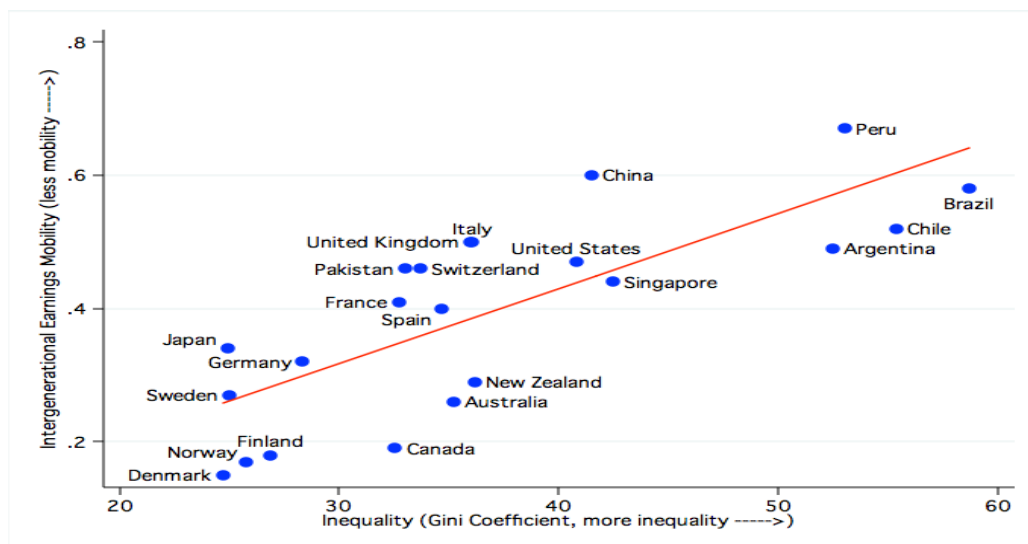
On the other hand, it is morally unfair that people get careers in various fields, while the rest suffer from severe lack of job opportunities. Moreover, the lack of equal opportunity threatens democracy and freedom, which many consider a fundamental right (Rawls, 2009) and contributes to losing faith in society and the spread of contagious social diseases such as violence and crime. (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

Based on the household expenditure and income survey carried out by the Department of Statistics (2017-2018), absolute poverty rates in Jordan are relatively high (15.7%) which means that one million Jordanians live below the poverty line, while the extreme poverty rate in Jordan reached 12% (7,993 Jordanians). World Bank conducted an assessment, using the former survey data, indicated that employment income losses caused by corona pandemic increased poverty among Jordanian households by 11 percentage.

The principle of equal opportunities is linked the intergenerational mobility between different class positions. A society in which the mobility between different class positions is linked to class origins is a society that does not allow social movement between its members, and consequently social inequality is transmitted from one generation to another. While in economically developed societies, there is a good opportunity for mobility between generations, taking into considerations the family's origin in society and children's culture (Erikson & Goldthorpe 2002).

In figure 1 below, Great Gatsby Curve (GGC) illustrates the relationship between the concentration of wealth in one generation and the next generation's ability to move up the economic ladder compared to their parents. More specifically, it shows the relationship between economic inequality and the low rate of intergenerational mobility. The (zero) value indicates that all individuals have the same income and the (one hundred) value shows that the income is concentrated in one person.

Figure 1  
Great Gatsby Curve



In the horizontal axis, a higher value means a more unequal distribution of income and a lower intergenerational elasticity. (Range 0 to 1) refers to higher income mobility; children have a higher chance to earn more money than their parents do. While the vertical axis shows the intergenerational elasticities and the strong relationship of income between generations.

Simply put, an increase in value means an increase in the relationship between the income of parents and children. The country in which there is no high economic equality (horizontal axis) is the country in which there is a large proportional relationship between the income of parents and the income of their children.

The absence of economic inequality can lead to a decrease in the level of equal opportunities and intergenerational mobility which means that there is a relationship between the income of parents and the income of their children.

It is worth noting that the organizational culture plays a major role in achieving equal opportunities (Day, Griffin and Kim, 2014). Organizational culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs and viewpoints of the organization's employees, which has a deep impact on their performance and productivity. Organizational culture is considered strong when the greater part of the employees holds the same type of beliefs and values as concern to the organization. On the contrary, weak culture impose rules strictly on the employees that may create diversity between their personal objectives and organizational goal (Fakher et al., 2012).

### **Dimensions of organizational climate**

There are three dimensions to the organizational climate: structure, responsibility, and reward. The **structure** is the basis through which the employees of the organization realize the policies to achieve the goals. **Responsibility** is the authority to implement the tasks by workers without verifying it with their leaders. In **Reward** dimension, employees are recompensed for good work, which enhances good conduct positively and keep them financially and emotionally satisfied (Holloway, 2012).

A rock solid piece of evidence can be traced in finding out the reality of equal educational opportunities. Empirical research on this topic has yielded effective results.

Nadeem (2017) investigated the relationship between female directors and the sustainability of companies on a sample of 150 Australian corporates listed on the stock exchange. The results indicated a direct relationship between female directors and corporate sustainability. The study further showed that 1 percent female representation would directly translate into a 7 percent increase over the company's social, economic and environmental rating. The result seems consistent with (Reddy, 2019) who stated that board gender diversity impacts a firm performance and help in better decision-making.

Janemary and Kaur (2021) conducted a study aimed at knowing the obstacles that culture and leadership climate pose to talented Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees' in the representation in top management positions. The researcher used the descriptive approach through using existing data in the form of surveys, reports, and articles of certain companies in the UK and US only. The results showed that although there are some companies with good cultures and leaders which allow its Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees to progress in their careers, most companies do not practice an inclusive culture, thus, talented Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic were marginalized.

Terjesen et al. (2015) investigated corporate governance code and the impact of female representation on publicly traded companies in 47 countries. The results indicated that national corporate governance codes increased board gender diversity from 5.6% to 17% during the period from 1990 to 2014. The study also found that the inclusion of board directors gender quota has a positive association with high creativity and innovation in problem-solving.

Campbell & Minguéz-Vera (2008) explored the legislation in Spain, and its relationship to the percentage of female participation on boards. The results indicated that Spain has introduced legislation to improve equality of opportunities which has contributed significantly to increasing female board membership and that greater gender diversity may generate economic gains.

Bqa'in (2012) conducted a study aimed at identifying the degree of equal opportunities for the leadership positions in educational institutions in the southern region of Jordan from school principals and heads of departments perspectives. The researcher used the descriptive approach in addition to a questionnaire developed for the purpose of the study. The findings concluded that the perceptions of equal opportunities for the leadership positions in educational institutions among the study sample was medium.

Coleman (2001) examined the reasons of few relatively presentation of female secondary head teachers in England and Wales. The research used the qualitative and quantitative approach in addition to a large scale questionnaire survey sent to 670 female head teachers in England and Wales. The findings indicated that despite minor changes, there is a high level of discrimination faced by women who aspire to senior management position in education.

Tucker et al., (2005) conducted a study on supporters and opponents of the principle of equal opportunities from their point of view. The study was conducted on two samples: the first consisted of 155 female and 122 male of afro and latin American descendants students from university colleges in Chicago. The second sample consisted of 206 males and 211 females citizens of the same region. The average age of the students in the first and second sample was 20 and 31 respectively. The study concluded that the supporters' opinion of the principle of equal opportunities was to give a quota to minorities in order to achieve social justice among citizens. While the opponents stand against this principle since it leads to the appointment of unqualified persons.

Dababneh & Al-Awawdeh (2009) analyzed the level of gender diversity representation in the main offices of a group transport companies in Jordan. The study sample was selected by the stratified purposful sampling method and consisted of 5000 male and female workers distributed over 31 companies. The study used both the quantitative and qualitative approaches through a questionnaire and interview schedule. The findings concluded that the vast majority of workers believed that the concept of gender integration is limited to being a process aimed at achieving gender equality without realizing that this content recognizes the difference between them

A good body of research, which varied in scope and objectives, was reviewed for the purpose of the study. The current study agreed with (Bqa'in, 2012; Coleman, 2001; Dababneh & Al-Awawdeh, 2009; Campbell & Minguéz-Vera 2008) in terms of objectives and differed from the studies of (Janemary, T., Kaur S., 2021; Tucker et al, 2005; Tucker et al, 2005). The previous studies also varied in terms of method and instrument used. The current study agreed with ((Nadeem, 2017; Terjesen et al. 2015; Bqa'in; 2012) in using the descriptive approach and differed from (Dababneh & Al-Awawdeh, 2009; Coleman, 2001) in which qualitative and quantitative approaches were used.

## **2. Method and material**

The researcher used the descriptive approach, and the questionnaire as a mean for collecting data.

### **Study sample and population**

The study population consisted of the employees working at the public schools in the academic year 2021/2022 (N = 8622 ). The study sample was drawn from the study population by the stratified random sampling method (n=110) from the schools of Irbid Kasbah directorate according to their job title as follow: school principal 18, assistant principal 18, teachers 51, and administrators 23.

### **Study instrument**

Based on an extensive review of the literature and to achieve the objectives of the study, a 22- item questionnaire spread over five domains (policy, environment, commitment, culture, support) was developed to identify the reality of equal educational opportunities in public schools from its employees' perspectives.

### **Validity and reliability of the study instrument**

In order to examine the apparent validity of the instruments, a panel of educational experts in curricula, measurement and evaluation and Arabic language were asked to validate the content of the instruments. They critiqued the items based on their harmony with the study objectives, integrity and clarity of the linguistic formulation, affiliation of the domain under which they were classified and how well they represent the reality of equal educational opportunities in public schools. The

teams' comments and recommendations were studied carefully and taken into account in amending the final version of the instrument.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis was conducted to detect the internal consistency of the scale items by calculating the correlation coefficients between each item and the domain to which it belongs as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Internal consistency reliability coefficient for intstrumnt domains (A Cronbach Alpha

Questionnaire	No	Domain	$\alpha$
<b>Equal opportunity</b>	1	Policy	0.77
	2	Environment	0.90
	3	Commitment	0.64
	4	Culture	0.85
	5	Support	0.94
<b>Total degree</b>			0.93

Table 1 shows that the values of the reliability coefficients using the Alpha Cronbach ranged between (0.64-0.94), with a total reliability of (0.93) which all are considered high and suitable to conduct the study.

In order to classify the responses of the sample members on the scale, Mean scores were valued against the following criteria: (1.00 - 2.33 as Weak; 2.34 - 3.66 as intermediate; 3.67- 5.00 as Strong). The percentage was calculated according to the following equation:  $\frac{\text{The highest value} - \text{The lowest value}}{\text{category number}}$ . In the present research, the highest value was 5; the lowest value was 1; and the category numbers were 3. Thus, the appropriate class intervals were calculated as follows:  $5 - \frac{1}{3} = 1.33$

Class intervals	Class
1 - 2,33	low
2.34 - 3.66	medium
3.67 - 5.00	high

### 3. Results - Findings and discussion

The first research question sought the reality of applying equal educational opportunities in public schools from the employees' perspectives. In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations of the study sample responses on the study instrument domains were calculated and arranged in descending order as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of the study sample responses on the application of equal educational opportunities in public schools from the employees' perspectives.

#	Domains	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
5	<b>Support</b>	110	3.20	1.40	1	Medium
1	<b>Policy</b>	110	2.86	.63	2	Medium
3	<b>Commitment</b>	110	2.77	.56	3	Medium
4	<b>Culture</b>	110	2.55	.78	4	Medium
2	<b>Environment</b>	110	2.32	.55	5	weak



<b>Total</b>	110	2.74	.64	<b>Medium</b>
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Table 2 show that the average responses of the study members on the paragraphs of each domain ranged between (2.32 - 3.20). More specifically, Support domain ranked first with a mean of 3.20 (SD 1.40), followed by Politics domain which ranked second with a mean of 2.86 (SD 0.63) and both domains got a medium degree of application. While Environment domain ranked last with a mean of 2.32 (SD 0.55) and got a low degree of application. The results also revealed that the degree of application of equal opportunities procedures on the items of the scale as a whole was medium with a mean of 2.74 (SD 0.64).

The findings match with the study of (Terjesen et al. 2015) which concluded an increase in board gender diversity from 5.6% to 17% during the period from 1990 to 2014. however, it clearly states that the workforce participation rate of women is still below the men's rate. The findings is also consistent with substantial research evidence (e.g., Campbell & Minguez-Vera 2008; Colman, 2001; Al-Bqa'in, 2012)) on the high level of discrimination faced by women who aspire to senior management position and the weak female representation in the decision-making and senior administrative positions.

The results might be explained by the lack of legally binding legislation to enforce equal opportunities or the fact that laws are replete with loophole that prevent the correct law application. The low level of women in senior administrative positions might also be attributed to the fundamental role of gender in Arab culture that has maintained strict laws and cultural norms regarding segregation of the sexes, since it is a sensitive issue in leadership in these regions from different religious, social, economic, and political perspectives that constitute the motor nerve of daily life.

Furthermore, a major concern when promoting gender balance in decision-making positions is that there are not enough qualified women to hold senior positions who very likely will perform worse than the more qualified men they replace. Socially, women are still taken less seriously than men when it comes to leadership and they continue to live in societal culture that provide them unequal opportunities to succeed and they are seen less valued and experienced than men.

In more detail and in order to find out the study members' responses on the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees perspectives, means and standard deviations on the items of each domain were calculated and arranged in descanting order according to their means as shown in Table 3:

Table 3

Means and standard deviations of the study members' responses on the items of Support domain and on the domain items as a whole arranged in descanting order according to their means.

#	Support items	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
20	Criminalizing of all forms of violence or harassment	110	3.52	1.17	1	Medium
21	Providing appropriate support to employees who are exposed to violence	110	3.10	1.47	2	Medium
22	Providing a qualified staff to deal with complaints related to violence and sexual harassment	110	2.99	1.73	3	Medium
	<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.40</b>		<b>Medium</b>

Table 3 depicts that the average means related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees perspectives on the items of (Support) domain ranged between (2.99 - 3.52). Item 20 ranked first with a mean of 3.52 (SD 1.17), followed by item 21 with a mean of 3.10 (SD 1.47). On the contrary, item 22 ranked last with a mean of 2.99 (SD 1.73) and all items got a medium degree of application. The score of the domain items as a whole obtained a mean of 3.20 (SD 1.40).

With respect to Policy domain, and in order to find out the study members' responses on each item of the domain, means and standard deviations were calculated and arranged in descending order according to their means as shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Means and standard deviations of the study members' responses on the on each item of Policy domain and on the domain items as a whole arranged in descending order according to their means.

#	Support items	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
3	It includes measures to eliminate some of the structural imbalances in equal opportunity	110	3.26	.93	1	Medium
5	.Availability to benefit from flexible work options	110	3.04	.77	2	Medium
4	Interest in protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation	110	3.02	.66	3	Medium
6	Provide standards to ensure gender equality in professional development and career advancement	110	2.75	.76	4	Medium
2	Meet the needs of people with special disabilities	110	2.60	.87	5	Medium
1	The policy is free from any reference to discrimination based on gender, race, or religion	110	2.50	1.36	6	Medium
	<b>Total</b>	110	2.86	.63		<b>Medium</b>

Table 4 shows that the average means related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of (Policy) domain ranged between (2.50 - 3.26). Item 3 ranked first with a mean of 3.26 (SD 0.93) followed by item 5 with a mean of 3.04 (SD 0.77). While item ranked last with a mean of 2.50 (SD 1.36) and all items got a medium degree of application. The score of the domain items as a whole obtained a mean of 2.86 (SD 0.63).

Concerning Commitment domain, and in order to find out the study members' responses on each item of the domain, means and standard deviations were calculated and arranged in descending order according to their means as shown in Table 5:

Table 5

Means and standard deviations of the study members' responses on each item of Commitment domain and on the domain items as a whole arranged in descending order according to their means.

#	Support items	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
14	Employees take shared responsibility for promoting gender equality	110	3.11	.91	1	Medium
10	Promoting gender equality in all fields	110	2.94	.78	2	Medium
12	Linking incentives and promotions to employees' achievements	110	2.73	.86	3	Medium

13	Implementing deliberate strategies to qualify women for leadership roles	110	2.70	1.17	4	Medium
11	Allocating resources to address gender inequality	110	2.36	.60	5	Medium
<b>Total</b>		110	2.77	.56	<b>Medium</b>	

Table 5 shows that the average means related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of (Commitment) domain ranged between ((2.36 - 3.11). Item 14 ranked first with a mean of 3.11 (SD 0.91) followed by item with a mean of 2.94 (SD 0.78). While item 11 ranked last with a mean of 2.36 (SD 0.60) and all items got a medium degree of application. The score of the domain items as a whole obtained a mean of 2.77 (SD 0.56).

In connection with culture domain, and in order to find out the study members' responses on each item of the domain, means and standard deviations were calculated and arranged in descending order according to their means as shown in Table 6:

Table 6

Means and standard deviations of the study members' responses on each item of Culture domain and on the domain items as a whole arranged in descending order according to their means.

#	Culture items	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
17	Providing proactive measures to address gender inequalities	110	2.86	1.33	1	High
18	Providing training programs for employees related to equal opportunities	110	2.71	.91	2	Medium
15	Working to challenge stereotypes and attitudes that support male superiority	110	2.70	.88	3	Medium
16	Modeling and strengthening gender egalitarian values	110	2.35	1.05	4	Medium
19	Employees in the workplace realize the importance of promoting gender equality	110	2.14	.66	5	Low
<b>Total</b>		110	2.55	.78	<b>Medium</b>	

Table 6 shows that the average means related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of (Culture) domain ranged between ((2.14 - 2.86). Item 17 ranked first with a mean of 2.86 (SD 1.33) and a high degree of application followed by item 18 with a mean of 2.71 (SD 0.91) and a medium a medium degree of application. While item 19 ranked last with a mean of 2.14 (SD 0.66) with a low degree of application. The score of the domain items as a whole obtained a mean of 2.55 (SD 0.78).

The result goes in line with the study of (Dababneh & Al-Awawdeh, 2009) which indicated a poor understanding of gender integration in addition to the weak female representation in the decision-making and senior administrative positions, which reflects a stereotypical image that hold women back in the workplace. This requires increasing general sensitivity, understanding and knowledge about gender inequality.

In regard to Environment domain, and in order to find out the study members' responses on each item of the domain, means and standard deviations were calculated and arranged in descending order according to their means as shown in Table 7:

Table 7

Means and standard deviations of the study members' responses on each item of Environment domain and on the domain items as a whole arranged in descending order according to their means.

#	Environment items	No	Mean	SD	Rank	Degree
9	Meeting the requirements of the working (woman (pregnancy, motherhood	110	2.85	1.21	1	Medium
8	Promoting a culture of communication among employees	110	2.12	.59	2	Low
7	Designing the physical work environment according to the needs of the employees	110	1.99	.90	3	Low
	<b>Total</b>	110	2.32	.55		<b>Low</b>

Table 7 shows that the average means related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of (Environment) domain ranged between (1.99 - 2.85). Item 9 ranked first with a mean of 2.85 (SD 1.21) (SD 1.33) and a medium degree of application followed by item with a mean of 2.12 (SD 0.59) and a low degree of application. While item ranked last with a mean of 1.99 (SD 0.90) and a low degree of application. The score of the domain items as a whole obtained a mean of 2.32 (SD 0.55).

The second research question sought whether there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between in the responses of the study sample related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education attributed to the experience variable or not. To answer the question, means and standard deviations of the study members responses on the items of the scale were calculated according to experience variable, as shown in Table 8:

Table 8

Means and standard deviations of the study members responses on the items of the scale according to experience variable.

Experience variable	No	Mean	SD
Less than 5	11	3.49	.01
5-10	45	3.07	.54
More than 10	54	2.31	.46
<b>Total</b>	110	2.74	.64

Table 8 shows that the average means of (less than 5 years experience) category ranked first with a mean of 3.49 (SD 0.01) followed by (5-10 years) category with a mean of 3.07 (SD 0.54), while (more than 10 years of work experience) category ranked last with a mean of 2.31 (SD 0.46).

To find out whether these differences are statistically significant at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), one-way analysis of variance (Anova) was performed on the scale items as a whole according to experience variable as shown in Table 9:

Table 9

Results of One-way analysis of variance (Anova) on the scale items as a whole according to experience variable:

Source	Type sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig (P)
Between Groups	21.022	2	10.511	45.264	.000
Within Groups	24.847	107	.232		

<b>Total</b>	45.870	109
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Table 9 displays that the calculated F value exceeds the tabulated F value. This means that null hypothesis is rejected. The difference among categories is deemed statistically significant. there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the participants' estimates of the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of the scale as a whole attributed to the experience variable. That is, the experience of employees affects the accuracy of their assessments. In order to find out the significance of the differences Scheffe test for post hoc comparisons was used as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Results of Scheffe test for post hoc comparisons between the categories of experience variable:

Experience	Mean	Less than 5	5-10	More than 10
Less than 5	3.49	-	.41809*	1.17769*
5-10	3.07	-.41809*	-	.75960*
More than 10	2.31	-1.17769*	-.75960*	-

Table 10 shows that (less than 5 years) category ranked first in the degree of applying equal opportunities in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives with a mean of 3.49, followed by (5-10 years) category with a mean of 3.07. While (more than 10 years) category ranked last with a mean of 2.31.

This result can be explained that new employees hope and expect that all workers should have the right to work and advance on the bases of merit and ability and that non-discrimination and equal opportunities are basic labor rights for all. While more experienced employees are cautious that equal access and opportunity are still a long distance off and that, the glass ceiling is still alive and well, thus they have negative attitudes about applying equal opportunities.

The third research question sought whether there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the responses of the study sample related to the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education attributed to job title variable or not.

To answer this question means and standard deviations of the study members were calculated on the scale items according to job title as shown Table 11:

Table 11

Means and standard deviations of the study members on the scale items according to job title.

Job title	No	Mean	SD
Assistant principal	18	2.94	.60
School principal	18	2.74	.75
Teacher	51	2.70	.59
Administrator	23	2.67	.71
<b>Total</b>	110	2.74	.64

Table 11 shows that means of the assistant principals ranked first with a mean of 2.94 (SD 0.60) followed by school principals with a mean of 2.74 (SD 0.75). While the administrators ranked last with a mean of 2.67 (SD 0.71).

To find out whether these differences are statistically significant at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), one-way analysis of variance (Anova) was performed on the scale items as a whole according to job title variable as shown in Table 12:

Table 12

Results of One-way analysis of variance (Anova) on the scale items as a whole according to job title variable:

Source	Type sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig (P)
<b>Between Groups</b>	.905	3	.302		
<b>Within Groups</b>	44.964	106	.424	.712	.547
<b>Total</b>	45.870	109			

Table 12 displays that the tabulated F value exceeds calculated F value. This means that null hypothesis is accepted. The difference among categories is not deemed statistically significant. there are not statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the participants' estimates of the reality of applying equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the items of the scale as a whole attributed to job title variable which does not affect the accuracy of their assessments.

This result can be explained that the behavior is linked and directed to the cognitive structure. Job title will not affect professional development related to equal opportunities, when the career upgrade requirement is absent, in addition to its connection with other factors such as years of service and job reports. In addition, the application of equal opportunities procedures does not depend on the job title as it is an instruction awaiting implementation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study concluded that the sample responses on the paragraphs of each domain ranged between (2.32-3.20). **Support** domain ranked first with a mean of (3.20) and a medium degree of application, **Politics** domain ranked second with a mean of (2.86) and a medium degree of application while **Environment** domain ranked last with a mean of (2.32) and a low degree of application. The results also indicated that the application of equal opportunities procedures in the Ministry of Education from the employees' perspectives on the scale paragraphs as a whole was medium.

#### 5. Recommendation and future direction

Based on the results of the current study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Setting a general framework of equal opportunities in the Ministry of Education to direct, guide and control equal opportunities system, taking into account an in-depth analysis of various social and economic challenges that prevent its application, in order to convert it into opportunities that direct the evidence-based decision making.
- Analyzing the legislation that governs the workflow in the Ministry of Education with regard to equal opportunities and determining whether they contain any illegal discrimination on grounds of sex, race, color, language, religion, etc.
- Conducting further research on equal educational opportunities from other workers' point of view such as general secretaries, directors of departments, directors of education.

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