



Difficulties and problems faced by women in the labor market

Dificuldades e problemas enfrentados por mulheres no mercado de trabalho

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Maraisa Roberta de Oliveira

Janaina Aparecida Alves Scaliza

ABSTRACT

Over time, several changes end up taking place in human societies, influenced by the most varied factors. The job market is a good example of such a phenomenon, where transformations have the power to profoundly impact an individual's life. Although such transformations often occur quickly, influenced by technological developments, some aspects end up undergoing changes considerably more slowly, one of them being the paradigms connected to female work, paradigms that end up presenting considerable difficulties and dilemmas to women who are part of the process. or intend to integrate the labor market. Therefore, the present work aimed to identify the difficulties and problems faced by women in the labor market, using a combination of theoretical and practical methods. Initially, a systematic survey was carried out on the subject, using various bibliographic sources, available in physical and digital media. Subsequently, seeking to deepen the study, a questionnaire was applied, focusing on the knowledge of the respondents' view on the relationship of women with the labor market, based on their experiences and perceptions. At the end of the study, it was possible to identify that the information collected during the bibliographic research coincides with the perception of the respondents of the questionnaire, where although the way women are seen and treated in the labor market has improved, there is still a long way to go. traveled for a state of true equality to be reached.

Keywords: Woman, Market, Work, Difficulties.

1 INTRODUCTION

Work and its influence on people's lives have been the subject of many discussions and studies over the years, due to its primordial role in human societies. Among the various aspects that involve work, the different ways in which men and women interact with the market constitute a rather complex scene, and, as Maneschy (2022) states, the debate about women in the labor market has been gaining considerable strength over the past five years, increasingly highlighting the dilemmas involved.

The survey conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2018) exposes some interesting data that reinforce the importance of an in-depth study on such a topic, where women continue to receive about 3/4 of what men receive, in addition to other quite considerable differences regarding other aspects, such as the presence in leadership positions,



child rearing and household chores, among others.

Besides this, gender inequality continues to influence social and economic results in Brazil, where besides having less participation in the labor market, women often end up earning less to perform the same activities as men (WORLD BANK, 2022).

The Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2019, p.3) adds that although the difference between the male and female participation rate is falling, it remains quite substantial, where numerous factors can be listed as possible causes of such inequality, such as discrimination in the labor market, which ends up discouraging women from wanting to participate in such a market, and cultural norms, which define a role for women as the primary caregiver of children.

Such information makes more than evident the broad usefulness and relevance of in-depth studies about the interaction of women with the labor market. With such information and concepts in mind, the present work has as its theme the difficulties faced by women in the labor market, focusing on the identification and systematic survey of causes and possible solutions for such problems and difficulties, based on the knowledge developed during the course and on previously conducted studies related to the labor market and the evolution of female participation in it, as well as on a case study, using a questionnaire.

2 OBJECTIVES

As stated by Gonçalves (2008), objectives represent the purpose of a scientific study, i.e., the goal that one intends to achieve through the research design, and its clear definition greatly helps in making decisions concerning the methodological aspects of the research, after all, it is paramount to know what one wants to do, to then decide how to proceed to reach the desired results. This chapter will present in a concise, yet comprehensive way, the objectives that guided the development of this work, divided into general objectives and specific objectives.

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Tumelero (2017) points out that the general objective is nothing more than the element that synthesizes and presents the central idea of the academic work. This work has as its general objective to identify the main problems and difficulties experienced by women in the labor market, thus being able, through systematic review, to point out the causes and possible improvements or solutions to such problems, using as a basis studies, research on the subject found in the literature in physical and digital media and application of a questionnaire.



2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives describe the punctual objectives that the research project will develop in stages aiming to reach the general objective, thus constituting a decomposition or stratification of the general objective (PRAÇA, 2015). Moretti (2022) adds that such objectives are directly connected to particular situations and seek to confirm hypotheses. The specific objectives pursued by this work consist of:

- Explain the concept of the labor market and how it works;
- Identify the main difficulties faced by women in the marketplace;
- Identify the possible reasons for such difficulties;
- Compare the results of the case study with the theoretical survey;
- Point out potential improvements or solutions to the problems identified.

3 METHODOLOGY

As stated by Tumelero (2019) the research methodology is nothing more than the description of the research process of the work. That is, the definition of which procedures will be used for data collection and analysis. Oliveira (2011) adds that when one talks about method, one seeks to expose the reasons why the researcher chose certain paths over others.

Prodanov and Freias (2013, p.24) complement this by stating that based on the conception that method is a procedure that aims at a certain end and that the purpose of science is the search for knowledge, one can state that the scientific method itself is nothing more than a systematic conglomerate of certain procedures used specifically for the purpose of attaining knowledge.

As to the nature of its objectives, the present study fits into the explanatory genre, given the nature and complexity of the chosen theme. The main concern of explanatory research is to identify the factors that determine or contribute to the occurrence of phenomena, and this is the type of research that deepens the knowledge of reality, explaining why things happen (GIL, 2002, p.42).

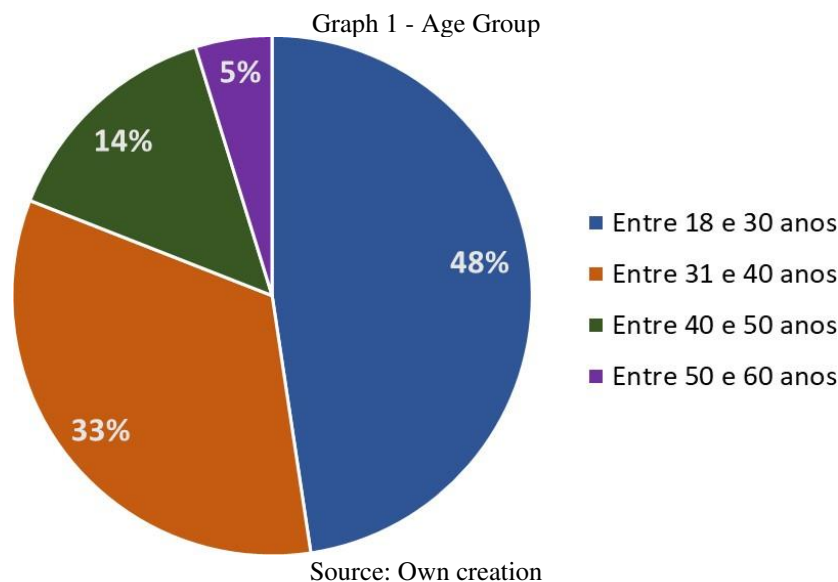
As for the technical procedures used, this research fits into the bibliographic genre, which, according to Gil (2002, p.44), is developed based on previously prepared material, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles, as well as journals, periodicals, newspapers, bulletins, monographs, dissertations, theses, cartographic material, the Internet, etc. (PRODANOV; FREITAS, 2013, p.54).

Sousa, Oliveira and Alves (2021, p.67) add that bibliographic research is a fundamental step in all scientific work that will influence all stages of research, providing the theoretical foundation on which the work will be based. The materials used (in Portuguese and as of the year 2000) were books, scientific articles, surveys and articles published on the internet.

Furthermore, this work can also be classified as a case study that, as stated by Prodanov and Freitas (2013, p.60), consists of the collection and analysis of information about a particular individual, group or community, in order to study various aspects according to the research subject. To this end, we used a questionnaire prepared by Bastos and Pereira (2017), with minor changes, seeking to adapt it adequately to the desired objectives.

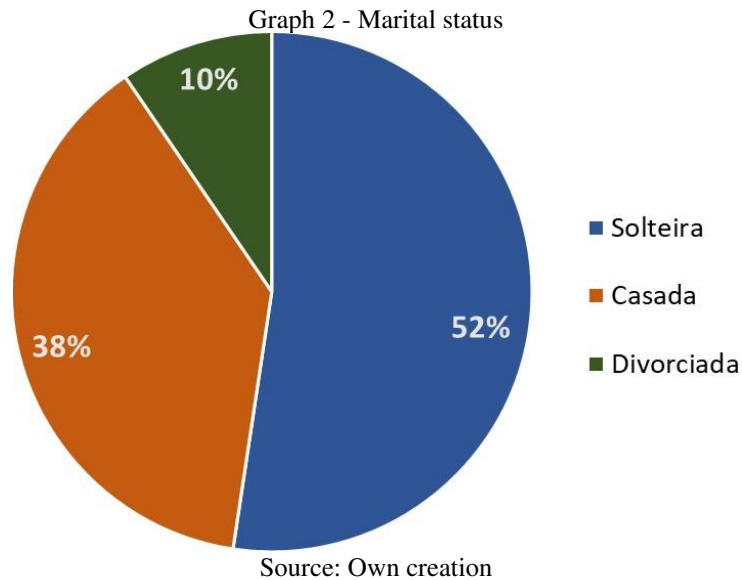
This questionnaire (Appendix A), had a total of 4 closed questions, where the respondents were asked about aspects related to the labor market and women, taking into account their perceptions and experiences.

As for the sample used, the questionnaire was applied to a total of 21 women, between 21 and 54 years of age, living in the city of Catanduva-SP, between September 12, 2022 and September 30, 2022. Of the 21 respondents, 10 were between 18 and 30 years old, totaling 48% of the sample, 7 were between 31 and 40 years old, totaling 33% of the sample, 3 were between 40 and 50 years old, totaling 14% of the sample and only one respondent was between 50 and 60 years old (Graphic 1).

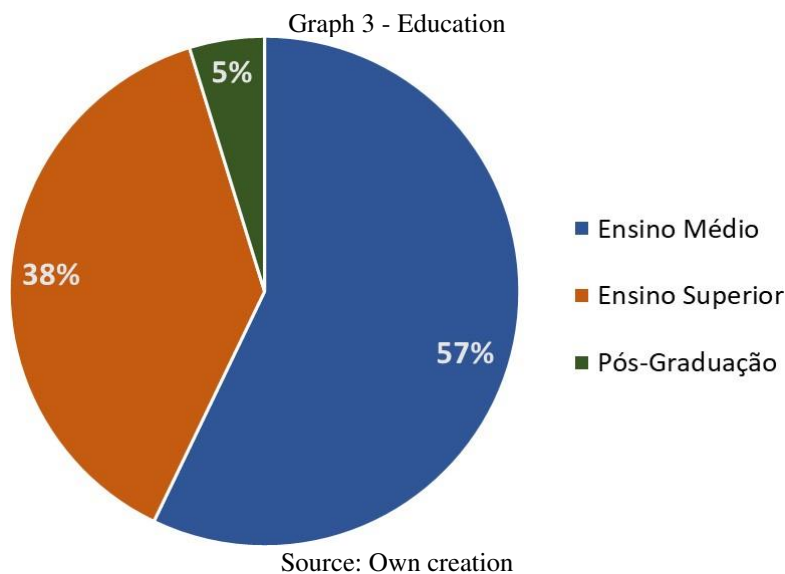


The respondents were also asked about their current marital status, taking into account that this aspect, due to its particularities, can influence how they perceive and interact with the labor market. 11 respondents said they were single at the time of the questionnaire, totaling 52% of the

sample, 8 respondents said they were married, totaling 38% of the sample, and 2 respondents said they were divorced, totaling 10% of the sample. Such information about the marital status of the respondents can be visually observed in Graph 2.



As for the respondents' level of education, 12 stated they had completed high school, 8 stated they had completed higher education, and only 1 respondent stated she had taken a post-graduate course. This information can be seen in Graph 3.



4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is absolutely no doubt that one of the most preponderant and transformative factors that permeates human societies is work. Andrade et. al (2018, p.319) state quite forcefully that



human work consists of an extremely complex and multifaceted activity, and can thus be explained and defined in several different ways, being influenced by various factors and contexts.

The definition presented by Borges et. al (2019, p.1) explains such concept in a concise and direct way, stating that work is nothing more than the intrinsically complex mechanism by which each individual uses in a practical way his knowledge, efforts, experiences, and skills, thus characterizing a mutual exchange of efforts, where the main goal is the satisfaction of the needs of an individual or group.

The labor market, on the other hand, consists of the "system" in which the various agents involved in the processes of supply and demand of the labor force act and interact, thus referring to job offers or work made available by organizations in a given place and time, suffering instability resulting from factors such as the number of companies in a given region and their demand, generating availability of vacancies and job opportunities (CARVALHO, 2008).

Colcerniani, D'Ávilla Neto and Cavas (2016, p.172) point out that women's work was throughout history imbued with prejudices and distorted value judgments, where women would be delegated jobs that, even productive, are related to motherhood and other typical of the "female world", according to a stereotypical view, thus resulting in precarious and worse paid jobs when compared to men.

Probst (2003, p.2) states that women's work started to be boosted by the World Wars, where they ended up taking over the family business and some positions held by men in the labor market, while men left such positions vacant to go to the battle charters.

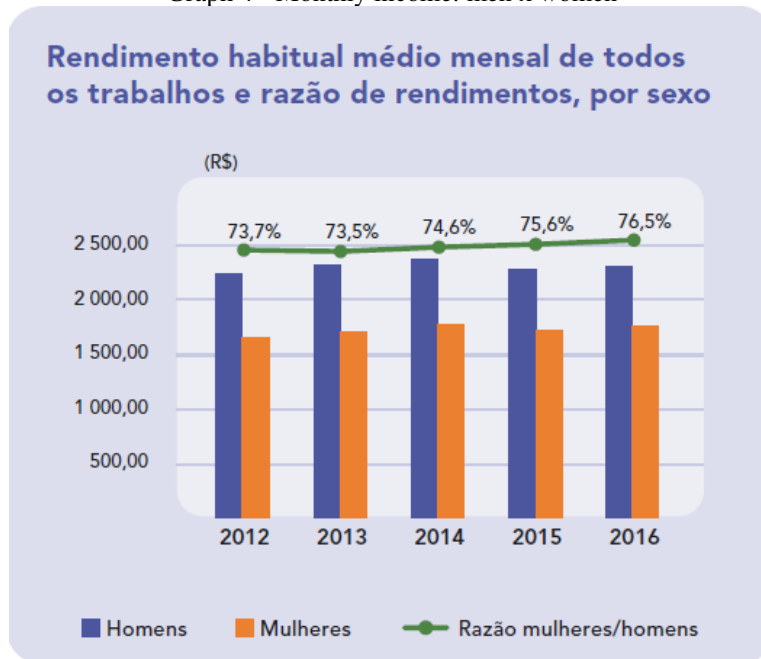
Querino, Domingues and Luz (2012, p.2), point out that it is possible to observe a truly significant increase in the participation of women in the labor market since the nineteenth century, being a result of the poignant expansion of the industrial sector. However, the female insertion in the labor market was subjected to great resistance and prejudice, which still today directly affect women in the labor market.

Martins (2015) adds that such women were subjected to strenuous services, with working days that reached up to 16 hours, with low wages and terrible working conditions. At that time, there was no legislation or mechanism to protect women or women's work, which ended up making such degrading conditions possible.

Although advances have been made, inequality between men and women in the labor market is still very present and evident. Such inequalities can be systematically observed in a survey conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2018), where it was found that women continue to receive about $\frac{3}{4}$ of what men do, performing similar functions.

One of the factors that intensifies this phenomenon lies in the fact that responsibilities for household and child care fall on women, often leading them to work part-time, making the income gap even more significant (IBGE, 2018). Chart 4 makes the observation of such disparity simple to identify, showing that, despite the slight improvement, there is still much to be done regarding equal pay between men and women performing similar functions.

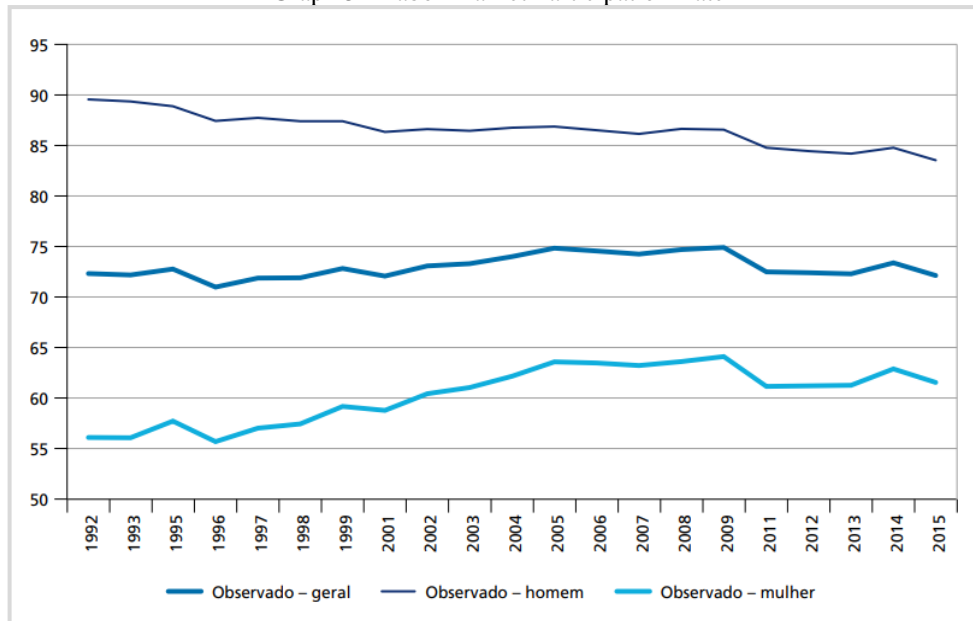
Graph 4 - Monthly income: men x women



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2018)

The Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2019) presents data that corroborates such information by pointing out that although it is possible to observe an evolution over the years, there is still considerable disparity between men and women regarding the labor market, which can be seen in Chart 5, which explains the evolution of the participation of men and women in the labor market from 1992 to 2015.

Graph 5 - Labor Market Participation Rate

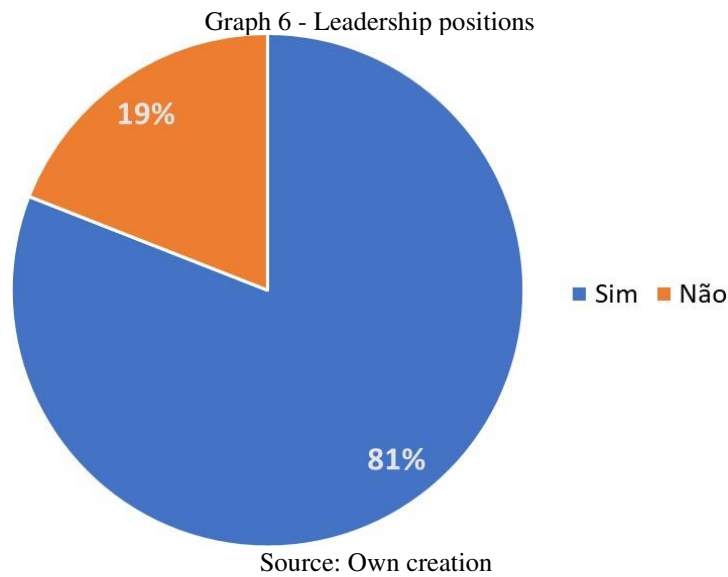


Source: Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2019)

The Brazil Human Rights Fund (2021) also points out that wage inequality can be considered one of the main obstacles women face in the labor market, along with the low representation of women in leadership positions. The wage inequality between men and women in Brazil was also evident in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report, where the country was among the last positions in the international equal pay ranking.

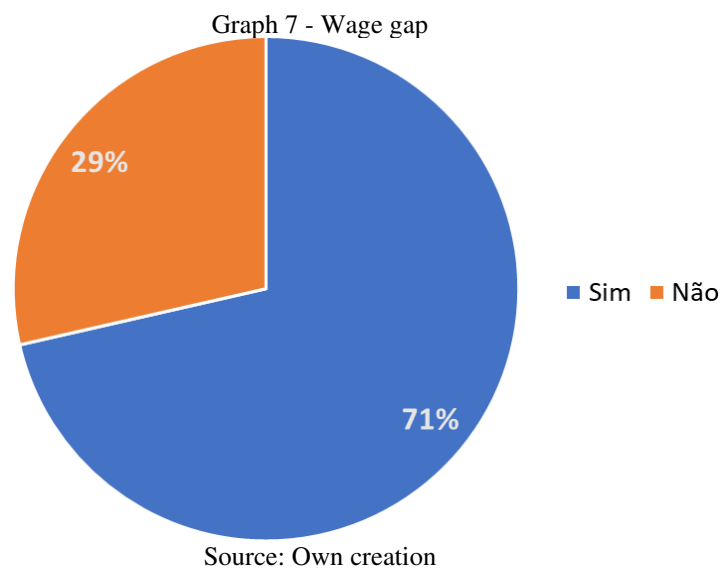
Another very relevant factor refers to the relationship between the level of education of men and women and their placement in the labor market, where according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2018), women have a wide educational advantage, where 21.5% of them between 25 and 44 years old have higher education, more than 5 percentage points more than men.

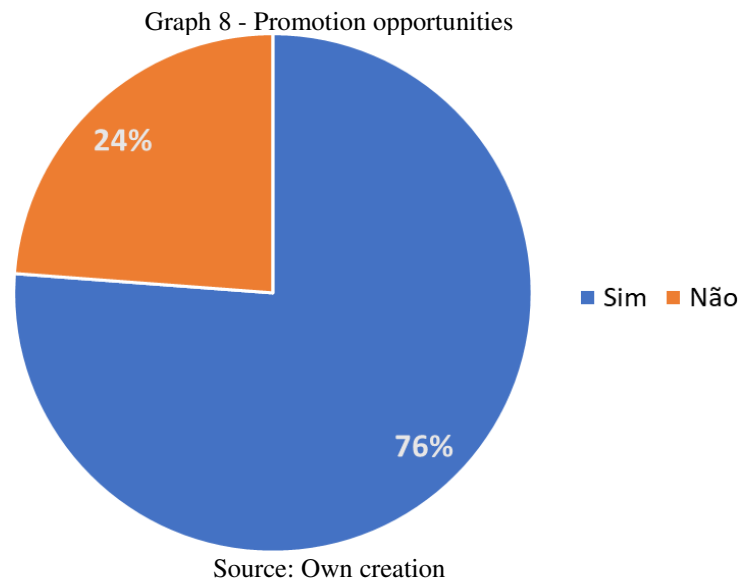
After the application of the questionnaires, they were collected and tabulated, aiming to identify the convergences and divergences between the theoretical survey and the vision and experiences of the respondents. When asked if the number of women in leadership positions is still much lower than the number of men, 17 said yes, totaling 81% of the sample, and 4 answered negatively, totaling 19% of the sample. These results can be seen more clearly in Graph 6.



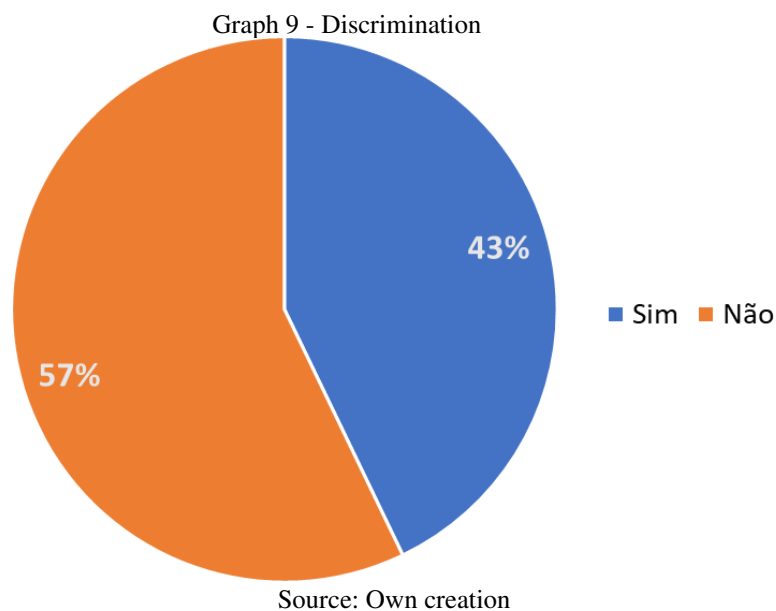
When asked about the wage gap between men and women performing the same functions, 15 respondents, totaling 71% of the sample, said they still believe it is possible to find this type of disparity in the labor market, while 6 respondents, totaling 29% of the sample, said they do not believe in such a phenomenon (Such information can be seen in Graph 7 on the next page)

A similar result was obtained when the respondents were asked if there is priority in promoting men over women, where 16 women, totaling 76% of the sample, said they believed this phenomenon occurs, while 5 women, totaling 24%, said they did not believe that men are favored with regard to promotion opportunities in organizations (Graph 8).





When asked whether they have ever suffered any kind of gender discrimination in the workplace, 9 respondents, totaling 43% of the sample, said they had never suffered such discrimination, while 12 respondents, totaling 57% of the sample, said they had already suffered some kind of gender discrimination in the workplace. This information can be seen in Graph 9.



Such results made it quite evident that the perception of the respondents regarding the labor market and its interaction with women converges directly with the theoretical basis raised in the preparation of the theoretical foundation of this work, where the disparity between men and women, despite improving over time, remains quite considerable, making it extremely difficult for women to enter the labor market, as well as their growth and rise to leadership positions.



5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After the development of all the stages of the study, it was possible to observe quite clearly that the dilemmas faced by women in the labor market have their roots in several very old paradigms, which still have great influence on how women are seen today. This phenomenon is quite evident in the way women are still considered as the main responsible for the care of the home and raising the children, while men would assume the role of breadwinners.

Such a view ends up limiting women's choices, often preventing them from reaching their true professional potential. In addition, women who do enter the job market end up facing several challenges, such as lower wages, few opportunities for promotion, and discrimination based on their gender. The present work made it possible to compare the data and information found in articles and research on the subject and the questionnaire applied, where it was possible to observe that the perception of the women who participated in the research coincides with the theoretical survey carried out.

However, it was also possible to observe that the debate and visibility about women and the labor market has been gaining more and more attention and prominence, thus enabling faster and more significant improvements in the future. It was also clear the fundamental role that education plays in overcoming prejudices and paradigms, enabling women to fight for their rights and equal working conditions.



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