

## **CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS AND DISTRIBUTION**

### **5.1 Exclusionary Practice in Job Advertisements**

None of the job advertisements containing gender exclusionary expressions provides explanations or valid reasons for the gender preference listed in the requirements of the jobs advertised. This is because of the expectation that the readers or job seekers are able to understand the reasons behind such a limitation or exclusion based on their social understanding and stereotyped perceptions on gender-based job suitability. However, it is found that almost 70 percent of job advertisements (with gender preference) used as samples for this study are advertisements that do not require high academic qualifications and skills as most of them do not specifically specify the academic qualifications needed. This is in accordance with studies conducted by Kuhn and Shen (2009) and Kuhn and Shen (2010) where they found that jobs with gender specifications are usually jobs that require low skills and academic qualifications.

The sample advertisements shown in Figure 1 show that the reference to the requirements needed for the post advertised is usually written in bullet forms and in simple sentences to show exactly what the prospective employers (or the advertisers) want or expect from the job applicants. Therefore, job seekers are expected to understand these expectations when they read the list of requirements before they make a decision to apply for the positions advertised. However, due to the simplicity of job advertisements, no explanation can be seen in the advertisements shown, concerning the reason for the gender selection and preference for the positions advertised.

We are a medical company and is seeking a suitable candidate for:

## SALES EXECUTIVE

(Chinese Male Only.)

- Able to work independently
- Willing to travel outstation
- Mature & able to interact with people at all levels
- Possess good interpersonal skill
- Possess own transport.

Interested candidates, please call us or fax to:

**Seri Medik Sdn. Bhd.**  
**Wisma Charles Wembley, No.10A,**  
**Jalan Pangkor, Off Jalan Tun Razak,**  
**50400 Kuala Lumpur.**  
**Tel: 03-40436340 / 40436341**  
**Fax: 03-40435314**  
**e-mail: serimedik@gmail.com**

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 16.03.2010)

**RAY TECH**  
 Window Tinting Specialist  
 03-291 6682

## Tinting Specialist

1. **Female Indoor sales**  
RM1,500 - RM 5,000
2. **Female Sales Executive**  
RM 2,000 - RM 5,000
  - Possess own transport
  - Preferably with experience in sales & marketing
3. **Technician**

Base at Serdang, kuchai, glenmarie and pj

**James 012-291 6682**  
**Nick 012-307 2278**

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 01.03.2010)

## IMMEDIATE VACANCIES

### ADMIN EXECUTIVES

(RM 2,300-RM 3,000)

**REQUIREMENTS**

- ✓ Degree / diploma holder in any field
- ✓ Preferable age below 30
- ✓ Fresh graduates are welcome
- ✓ Self confident, aggressive & team player

### RECEPTIONIST

(RM 800 - RM 1,200)

**REQUIREMENTS**

- ✓ SPM and above
- ✓ Age below 25
- ✓ Female only
- ✓ Presentable outlook

**BENEFITS**

- Weekdays work only
- Working hours 9am-6pm
- Career development
- Bonus & annual leave
- Nearby public transports

INTERESTED CANDIDATES PLEASE CALL  
 03-2166 1366 (MISS MARIA/PN. AISYAH)

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 15.09.2010)

**Svenson™**  
 A member of Global Beauty International

## SALES CONSULTANT

Opportunity to earn RM4000 & above  
 (Based in Mid Valley / KL / Subang)

- Female or male, aged between 20-35 years
- Minimum SPM holders
- Able to speak in English, Malay & Chinese
- With sales experience
- Sundays & Public Holidays Off
- With hairdressing experience is an added advantage
- Training will be provided

## FRONT DESK

Opportunity to earn RM2500 & above  
 (Based in Subang)

- Minimum SPM holders
- Female only, with pleasant disposition and good complexion
- Possess excellent telephone etiquette and PR skills
- Fluent in English, Bahasa Malaysia and major Chinese dialects
- Experience in the telemarketing and service industry will be an added advantage

**Successful applicant will be offered:**

- Attractive basic salary + commission scheme
- Medical + dental benefit
- Good Career advancement
- Specialized Training

Please call or e-mail with detailed resume and a recent passport-sized photograph (n,r) to:  
**Tel: 03-2295 9139 / 2295 9188**  
**E-mail: glim@svensonhair.com.my**

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 30.09.2010)

**Figure 5.1: Examples of job advertisements listing the job scope and requirements in bullet forms and simple sentences**

As mentioned by Cook (2001), readers will be able to read advertisements and connect or relate all the features found in the advertisement as well as with their surroundings, and the people who produce those advertisements. Therefore, even though the advertisements listed other requirements to be fulfilled, job seekers will still look at the gender preference listed

and relate that particular requirement with other texts available such as the title of the position and nature of the job advertised in order to understand the need to fulfil such requirement to be able to apply for the position. They will also relate it with their surroundings by relating the gender preference to the situations in the society including the typical gender stereotypes shared and believed by the society. Eventually, they will not be interested in applying for the position since they know they cannot fulfil the gender requirement and they are able to understand that the position is not suitable for them as it has been explicitly stated in the gender preference of the job advertisement. This is because when the gender requirement is explicitly mentioned in the advertisement and once job seekers realize this, they might lose interest in applying. Therefore, job seekers are indirectly influenced and persuaded to withdraw themselves from applying for the vacancy advertised.

In his study, Muhammad Shahriar Haque (2005) suggests that obligational expressions such as “must be”, “preferably”, “only” or “should have” are used in advertisements in order to specify the requirements for the job clearly and explicitly. It makes it easier for the job seekers to go through the advertisement and understand the requirements needed for the jobs if they wish to apply for the vacancies.

In addition, it also makes easier for the advertisers to avoid unqualified applicants from applying for the vacancies advertised. Therefore, many job advertisements list the gender preference by using obligatory expressions to make it clear that the advertisers want only applicants belonging to a specific gender to apply for the positions advertised. This practice of including mandatory expressions which makes the criteria for the selection more specific as specified in the advertisements in figure5. 2.

Newly established Art Studio for Kids in Putrajaya, offering creative art education to children is looking for able minded individuals to expand state/nation-wide. Dynamic individuals are invited to grow with us as :

**OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR-INSTRUCTOR**

- STPM/Diploma – computer literate
- Self-independent with good inter-personal skills and pleasant personality
- Minimum 1 year experience as office administrator or teacher
- Female only

**MARKETING EXECUTIVE**

- STPM/Diploma – computer literate
- Self-independent with good inter-personal skills and pleasant personality
- Experienced in marketing children educational programs will be an added advantage
- Posses own transport

Interested candidates to email your detailed resume to [artkidstudio@gmail.com](mailto:artkidstudio@gmail.com) or send to

PO BOX 116  
PEJABAT POS  
43007 KAJANG

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 05.02.2010)

**GENERAL CLERK**

**Requirements :**

- ~ Malay female only.
- ~ Min SPM qualification.
- ~ Able to speak and write Bahasa Malaysia & English.
- ~ Computer literate.

**Location at Sri Gombak.**

Interested candidates please call : 03-7885 8112  
or fax your resume to : 03-7885 8109  
email: [m1sb82@gmail.com](mailto:m1sb82@gmail.com)

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 30.09.2010)

**Figure 5.2: Examples of job advertisements with gender requirement using the obligatory expression ‘only’ (Female only)**

Since one of the requirements consists of gender preference, it somehow reflects the exclusivity of a specific gender marking with particular reference to certain positions in a company or organisation. This practice of specifying explicitly the gender of the preferable candidates for a position seems to benefit only the advertisers or the employers. This is because they can exclude applications received from any other gender that they do not prefer for the advertised vacancies. Consequently, other job seekers with suitable academic qualifications, skills and experience are automatically excluded because they do not fulfil the gender requirement asked for.

As mentioned earlier, women are usually associated with administrative and teaching jobs and in the advertisement shown in Figure 5.3, the advertiser wants a female office administrator-instructor and so, preference for female applicants is listed as part of the requirements needed. This usually happens because the advertisers know that they have the power to decide on which gender they think is more suitable for the positions advertised. As given in the advertisement, the position for Office Administrator-Instructor is specifically reserved by the advertiser for female applicants and this is the case with

reference to many other administrative positions preferred by employers to be taken up by women as discussed in Bertrand and Mullainathan (2003). This gender exclusionary practice is an example of the unequal treatment shown between genders in terms of employment opportunity which marginalizes a particular gender in getting their rights fulfilled with reference to equal employment opportunity.

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 28.09.2010)

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 05.03.2010)

**Figure 5.3: Example of job advertisement with gender requirement preferring female for administration position.**

Another example of the use of obligatory expression in job advertisement can be seen in Figure 5.4;

(Source: The Star Classified pullout from The Star, dated 12.03.2010)

**Figure 5.4: Example of job advertisement with gender requirement using the obligatory expression 'Preferably'**

Since the gender preference is mentioned in the advertisement, it may discourage potential candidates from applying for the position because they know pretty well that they cannot fulfil one of the criteria needed for the job simply because they can never control or change their gender. Applicants, who do not come under the gender preferred category in the job advertisement, may even lose interest to read the rest of the advertisement, and look for other job advertisements. As a result, potential applicants are discouraged to apply for jobs that they are actually (academically and professionally) qualified for and they will also feel that one of their basic rights for equal employment opportunity has been denied for them.

This kind of exclusionary practice in job advertisement is still found in the Malaysian newspapers. Despite the interest shown in the promotion of equality, the observation and analysis of this study proves that exclusion in job advertisements is still being practiced through the use of exclusionary expressions in job advertisements. This can further complicate the issue of gender segregation in the Malaysian workplace as there is no uniform procedure followed in the inclusion of gender specification in job advertisements published in newspapers.

## **5.2 The Use of Exclusionary Expressions in Job Advertisements: Analysis of its Influence/Impact**

Section B of the questionnaire includes questions administered to identify job seekers' general perceptions and opinions on the issue of gender segregation at workplace. Questions were administered in order to know whether or not, the respondents are aware of the issue of gender segregation at workplace.

Questions 1 and 2 in Section B were administered in order to get respondents' perceptions and beliefs in gender segregation at workplace. Both the questions are aimed at knowing

whether university graduates, who are the potential job seekers, are aware of the issue of gender segregation at workplace and still believe that certain jobs are suitable only for a specific gender.

Out of the 96 respondents, 58% of them answered *yes* to question 1, 20% answered *no* and the remaining answered *not sure* to question 1. However for question 2, 55% of respondents answered *yes*, 22% answered *no* and another 23% answered *not sure*.

Table 5.3 shows the distribution of answers for questions 1 and 2 in the questionnaire.

**Table 5.3: Distribution of Answers for Questions 1 and 2**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
1. Do you think gender segregation at workplace still exist?	58%	20%	22%
2. Should men and women choose to work in different fields and places that are suitable to their roles in the society?	60%	22%	18%

The high percentage of respondents answering ‘yes’ to both the questions shows that job seekers are aware of the issue of gender segregation at workplace. Furthermore, they also believe that men and women should choose different type of jobs according to their roles and expectations in society. The percentage of respondents answering *not sure* to both of the questions is also almost the same, showing that quite a number of job seekers are still uncertain about the issue of gender segregation at workplace and they are not sure of the way society’s perception should shape one’s view about the suitability of a job.

Question 3 in Section B of the survey asks about the job seekers’ view on taking up jobs in areas that are dominated by the opposite gender. The result for question 3 in the survey shows that the stereotypical perceptions on gendered job is still prevalent since 61% of

respondents answered *no* and the remaining answered *yes* and none answered *not sure*. The reason for their choice of not to choose a job in a field dominated by the other gender could be varied such as the fear of being bullied, looked down or discriminated by their own colleagues. However, the number of respondents who refuse to take up jobs that are traditionally dominated by the other gender illustrates that the society has prescribed that men and women have to play different roles and thus, they should conform to the society's expectation by taking up jobs that are traditionally meant for men and women respectively.

Questions 4 and 5 of the questionnaire are aimed at identifying job seekers' awareness of the discriminatory practice in job advertisements that exclude a specific gender for a particular position advertised. The distributions of answers for both questions are:

**Table 5.4: Distribution of Answers for Questions 4 and 5**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
4. Are you aware that some job advertisements in newspapers listed gender as part of the requirement to apply for the vacancies?	99%	0%	1%
5. Do you consider it as discrimination when you see job advertisements listing gender preference as part of the requirement?	98%	1%	1%

Almost all of the respondents reported that they are aware of the practice of gender exclusion in job advertisements and they also think that it is unfair for both men and women. Although job seekers are aware of this kind of practice and consider it as a discriminating factor, gender exclusion in job advertisements continues to be in practice publicly. This simply shows the lack of implementation and protection for job seekers by the authority as mentioned by Muhammad Shahriar Haque (2005). In addition, this scenario also indirectly reflects the acceptance of the public and their compliance towards the stereotypical "societal gender rules" that seems to be unfair.



The findings of the survey shows that 89% job seekers choose not to apply for jobs as they do not fulfill the gender requirement as mentioned by them in their responses for question 6 in Section B. Analysis of the responses for all questions (iii) in section C of the questionnaire, which is; “Will you still apply for this position if you have the suitable academic qualifications, working experiences and are physically fit?” also reveals that factors such as academic background, working experience and physical ability do not encourage job seekers to apply for jobs if the vacancies advertised call only for a specific gender to apply by using exclusionary expressions like “female only” , “male only”, “preferably male” or “female preferred”. As mentioned by Muhammad Shahriar Haque (2005), including gender as part of job requirements makes gender relatively more important than academic qualification and experience. Thus, this can discourage job seekers from applying for positions for which they are academically qualified as they do not fulfill the gender requirement.

In Section C, respondents were asked to respond to excerpts of job advertisements taken from an English national newspaper. The excerpts were job advertisements with gender exclusionary expressions such as “female only”, “male preferred” and “preferably male” or “preferably female”.

Analysis of the responses for question 1 in section C reveals that all respondents answered that the jobs advertised are more suitable for applicants who conform to the gender requirement listed in the job advertisements.

Question 1 in section C asked; “1. Who do you think this position is more suitable to? Male of female applicants?”. The responses of all the respondents are either male or female applicants based on the gender requirement listed in the advertisements.

If the advertisement mentions “female only”, then the answer is that the job is more suitable for female applicants and vice versa. This is not surprising since the analysis presented in section B claims that although these jobs seekers are aware of the listing of gender as a pre-requisite to apply for the job is discriminatory, the practice is considered acceptable and conform to the gender division in job market by choosing not to apply for a job if they do not fulfill the gender requirement listed in the job advertisements. This is in line with the study of Bem and Bem (1973) where it was found that job advertisements which openly targeted towards one sex (by clearly pointing out that they need a male or female worker in the advertisements) made members of the other sex less interested in pursuing the job advertised.

The job seekers’ inclination to answer question 1 in section C of the questionnaire can be seen in their response for question 2 where 94% of them stated that the reason they think the job would better suit applicants (with gender preference as marked in the advertisement) because of the presence of gender exclusionary expressions included in the list of requirements. This has proved that the employers have the power to use language to implicitly exclude a specific gender from applying for the position they advertised as claimed by Muhammad Shahriar Haque (2005).

It is also worth noticing that the responses given for questions (ii) in Section C are mostly conforming to the stereotypical gender roles prescribed in the society. The question is; “What is the expression(s) in the excerpt that makes you say so? (refer to your answer in

the question above)” and answers given are mostly related to match the societal gender roles and expectations based on the gender suitability of the position. For example, if they answered that the position is more suitable for men, apart from answering that the advertiser wants a male worker as explicitly stated in the list of requirements, it is also listed that applicants *should be willing to travel extensively and work offshore*. On the other hand, if the job is said to be more suitable for women, apart from responding by giving a reason just because it is mentioned in the requirement that women are preferable, they also mentioned that the advertisement asked for someone who are *registered with the Malaysian Nursing Board*. Hence, the idea is that the advertisement is targeting for a female applicant since the person should be a registered nurse, a job that is mostly associated with women.

Based on the survey, the expressions present in the job advertisements (used in the study) that job seekers try to relate and associate with potential male and female job applicants are:

**Table 5.5: Expressions in the advertisements leading to perceptions of gendered-job suitability**

<b>Expressions in the advertisement associated with male applicants</b>	<b>Expressions in the advertisement associated with female applicants</b>
Computer literate	Possess a flair for writing
Willing to travel extensively and work offshore on flexible working duration	Able to edit pre-school and primary English
Attend to equipment breakdown and prepare for repair and modification to the equipment	Candidates should be of good personality, meticulous, organized and creative
Recruit, train, motivate and supervise Retail Associates to increase sales and improve efficiency	Other related administrative and clerical duties
Aggressive, energetic and highly motivated with the determination to succeed	Registered with the Malaysian Nursing Board
Able to prepare technical proposal for bids	Good communication skill

**Table 5.5, continued**

	Ensure excellent service standards in terms of product presentation, display, maintenance and customer service
	Able to write articles specializing in health and beauty for general public
	Working with children ages 18 months to 6 years
	With pleasant disposition and good complexion
	Possess excellent telephone etiquette and PR skills
	Must enjoy working with children
	Full of initiative, creative

This part of the survey further reveals that job seekers are actually influenced by the common perception of gender suitability of jobs and the expressions created by advertisers (as found in the advertisements) do influence their judgment when choosing jobs. This is where implicit expressions are used by advertisers to mention the gender preference of the desired job candidates (to fill the positions advertised). Therefore, advertisers are able to use this as a way to filter and shortlist applicants who are less desirable in terms of gender because they know that job seekers, like all others in the society, are still very much influenced by the view that men and women should be working in areas that are most suitable according to their gender.

In addition, most respondents try to link expressions that deal with typical masculine qualities like “willing to travel”, “aggressive” and “computer literate” as referring to potential male applicants. At the same time, feminine qualities like “able to work with children”, “organized” “beautiful” and “good in communication” are linked with potential female applicants. This shows that the choice of language used in advertisements can actually influence the perception of gender suitability in employment.

In order to further examine the influence of word choice used in job advertisements in shaping the idea of gender suitability in employment, the expressions found in the advertisements were generalized into qualities such as nurtural, organizational, communicative, administrative, technical, flexible, leadership and creative.

**Table 5.6: Expressions used in the advertisements and the qualities that they reflect**

<b>Expressions Used</b>	<b>General Qualities/skills</b>
Preferably with Montessori education	Nurtural
Working with children ages 18 months to 6 years	Nurtural
Able to edit pre-school and primary English	Organizational
Candidates should be of good personality, meticulous, organized and creative	Communicative and Organizational
Other related administrative and clerical duties	Administrative
Computer literate	Technical
Willing to travel extensively and work offshore on flexible working duration	Flexible
Attend to equipment breakdown and prepare for repair and modification to the equipment	Technical
Registered with the Malaysian Nursing Board	Nurtural
Good Communication skill	Communicative
Able to prepare technical proposal for bids	Technical
Aggressive, energetic and highly motivated with the determination to succeed	Leadership
Ensure excellent service standards in terms of product presentation, display, maintenance and customer service	Organizational and communicative
Recruit, train, motivate and supervise Retail Associates to increase sales and improve efficiency	Leadership
Able to write articles specializing in health and beauty for general public	Organizational
Possess excellent telephone etiquette and PR skills	Administrative and communicative
Dynamic and committed to meet target sales	Leadership and flexible
Willing to travel outstation	Flexible
With pleasant disposition and good complexion	Creative
Full of initiative, creative	Creative
Must enjoy working with children	Nurtural
Possess a flair for writing	creative

Jobs that involve technical knowledge, physical strength and leadership ability found in the requirement lists seem to influence the respondents to think that they are more suitable to be taken up by male job seekers while the listed requirements such as nurturing, administering, planning and organizing skills are considered to be more suitable for female applicants. Nor Aini Idris (2003) found that women usually associate themselves with household task and childcare responsibilities which make them have lesser acceptance towards other physical demanding activities, and this kind of lower acceptance is due to many physical strengths and outdoor activities needed to hinder them from doing their task as the care taker and nurturer of the family. A survey conducted in 2006 by Delaney Ditchfield (a recruitment agency in the UK) found that 53% of men and 66% of women in the survey believe women are found to be suitable in dealing with other people and they are more organized than men. Thus, it shows that society's perception on gender suitability does influence job seekers when choosing a career after graduating since men will tend to look for jobs in areas linked with masculine qualities and women will tend to look for jobs in areas mostly related to feminine qualities.

Another study by Thom, Pickering, and Thompson (2002) states that technical professions do not appeal to women, generally because it is considered as a male-dominated job and this shows another reason for women's consideration to choose jobs that are traditionally dominated by women. They mention on some of the social factors of concern in entering a technical field which include discrimination, prejudice, male domination and work time schedule. An article by Kossuth and Leger-Hornby (2004) refers to a study conducted by The EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) where it is stated that the long working hours normally associated with those working in the technical professions is a

concern for women. This is one of the reasons why women are not usually attracted to work in technical fields because they also have obligations at home towards their family such as taking care of their children and performing different kinds of household chores. This also applies in Malaysia where long working hours for women is a concern since many women do have the responsibility to take care of the family and house. Thus, as Aminah Ahmad (1998) reports, there is now a call for employers in Malaysia to provide suitable facilities to help women who have to work long hours or at night. As there are not many facilities suitable for women who work for long hours, they find it difficult or inconvenient to take up jobs that involve long working hours. In other words, they are less flexible in terms of duration of the working hours and location as compared to men. Therefore, when female job seekers found words and expressions suggesting flexibility with time and location in job advertisements, they most likely try to avoid it and consider such advertisements as targeting only male job seekers.