

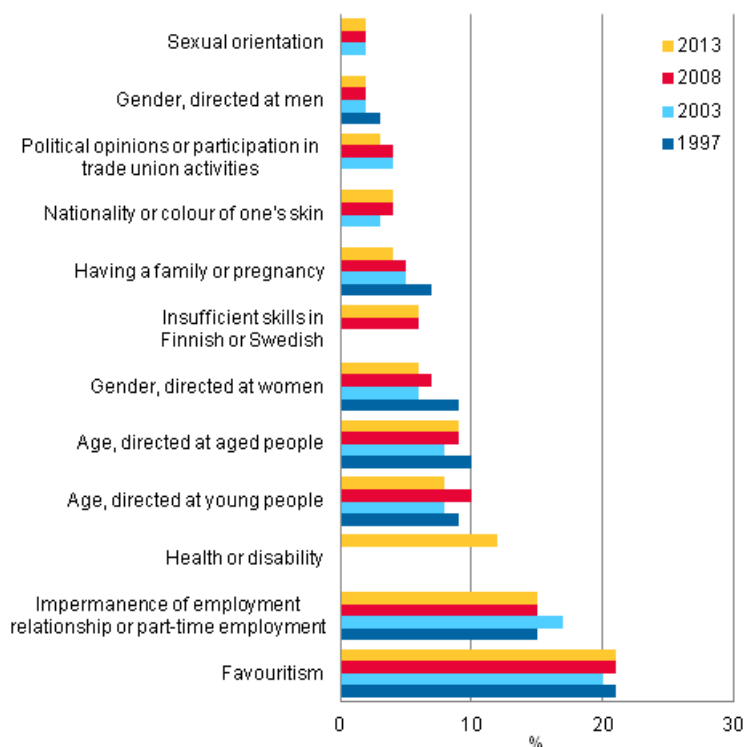
# Quality of Work Life Survey 2013

*Young people experience more age discrimination at work than before*

## Young people experience more age discrimination at work than before

The preliminary results of Statistics Finland's Quality of Work Life Survey 2013 draw a cautiously positive picture of decreased gender-related discrimination at workplaces. Women's personal experiences of discrimination have decreased in the 2000s, particularly in terms of remuneration. The personal experiences of persons aged over 50 of age discrimination at workplaces have also decreased. On the other hand, an increasing number of employees aged under 30 are experiencing that they are treated unequally due to their young age.

**Figure 1. Share of employees that have observed unequal treatment or discrimination at their workplace (%), by grounds for discrimination**



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Gender-based discrimination directed at women has decreased over the past some 15 years according to both female and male employees. According to the Quality of Work Life Survey 2013, this type of discrimination had been detected at the workplace by six per cent of employees, while the corresponding figure in 1997 was nine per cent. Also, clearly less discrimination based on a person having a family or being pregnant is found today (4%) than in 1997 (7%).

Most commonly, employees have noticed unequal treatment or discrimination based on favouritism, which is reported by one-fifth (21%) of employees. The second most common (15%) form of discrimination was based on the impermanence of the employment relationship or on part-time employment. In these terms, the situation has remained almost unchanged since 1997. The third most common form of detected discrimination was based on health or disability (12%), which was inquired in this form for the first time only in 2013.

Nearly one-tenth of employees have observed age discrimination towards aged people (9%) at their workplace, but nearly as many have also detected age discrimination directed at young people (8%). The share of these observations has only contracted marginally from 1997.

Six per cent of all employees have noticed discrimination based on insufficient skills in the national language and four per cent have detected discrimination based on nationality or the colour of one's skin. Only little gender discrimination directed at men (2%) and discrimination based on political opinion or participation in trade union activities (3%) is observed in Finnish workplaces, as well as discrimination based on sexual orientation (2%). Women have noticed various forms of discrimination more frequently than men.

**Table 1. Share of employees that have observed unequal treatment or discrimination at their workplace (%), by gender and grounds for discrimination**

		1997	2003	2008	2013
Favouritism	Women	23	24	25	24
	Men	18	16	17	17
Impermanence of employment relationship or part-time employment	Women	16	21	19	19
	Men	13	11	11	11
Health or disability	Women	..	..	..	14
	Men	..	..	..	9
Age, directed at young people	Women	8	8	10	8
	Men	11	9	10	8
Age, directed at aged people	Women	11	10	11	10
	Men	10	6	8	7
Gender, directed at women	Women	12	9	9	8
	Men	6	3	4	3
Insufficient skills in Finnish or Swedish	Women	..	..	6	7
	Men	..	..	5	5
Having a family or pregnancy	Women	10	7	7	6
	Men	3	3	2	3
Nationality or colour of one's skin	Women	..	4	5	3
	Men	..	3	3	4
Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	Women	..	3	4	3
	Men	..	4	4	4
Gender, directed at men	Women	3	2	1	2
	Men	3	2	3	2
Sexual orientation	Women	..	3	2	1
	Men	..	2	3	2

Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

### *Young people experience more age discrimination than aged people*

Persons that have observed discrimination in their workplace are further asked whether they have personally experienced discrimination or unequal treatment. The share of women who have experienced gender discrimination themselves (4%) has decreased by one percentage point from the late 1990s (5%). During the entire survey period, a couple of per cent of male employees have personally experienced discrimination directed at men.

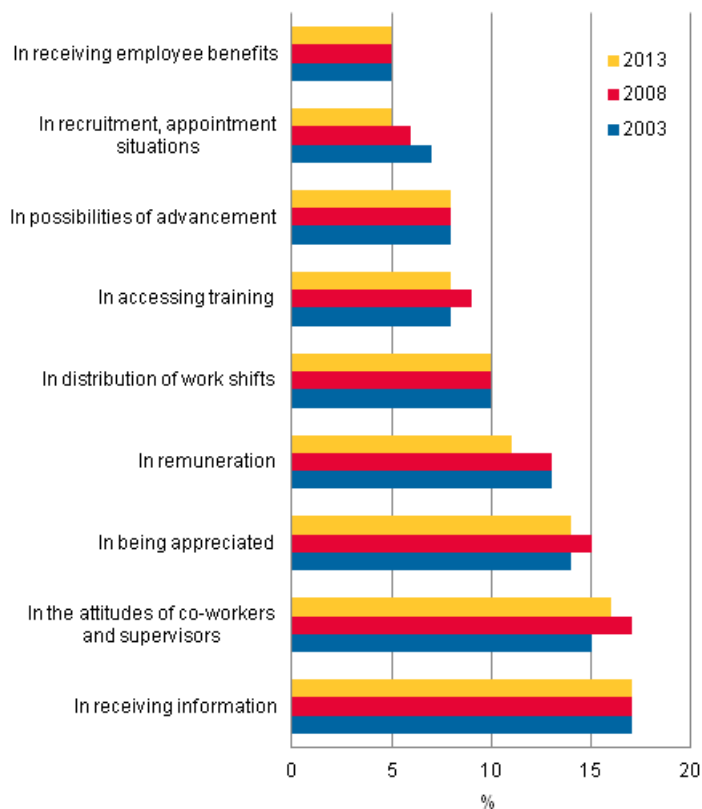
Two per cent of all employees have experienced age discrimination directed at young people and two per cent age discrimination directed at aged people. Examined by age group, it is interesting that among aged people, personal experiences of discrimination directed at old age have decreased but age discrimination experienced by young people has actually increased. Of persons aged under 30, six per cent (women 5%, men 7%) reported that they had experienced discrimination directed at their young age in 1997, while in 2013 the corresponding share had increased to eight per cent (women 10%, men 5%). Correspondingly, of employees aged over 50, seven per cent (women 8%, men 6%) reported that they had experienced discrimination directed at their old age in 1997, but only four per cent (women 5%, men 2%) in 2013.

### *Discrimination most common in acquisition of information*

Employees' personal experiences of discrimination are usually connected with receiving information (17%) and the attitudes of co-workers and supervisors (16%). People also quite often experience discrimination in being appreciated (14%). The change has been very low in this regard in the 2000s. By

contrast, the discrimination experienced in remuneration has diminished by a couple of percentage points since 2008. This is especially visible for women, among whom the share has decreased from 15 to 12 per cent in ten years. Women report having experienced discrimination more often in all inquired situations than men.

**Figure 2. Has personally experienced unequal treatment or discrimination in the past five years at the workplace. Share (%) of employees by discrimination situation**



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

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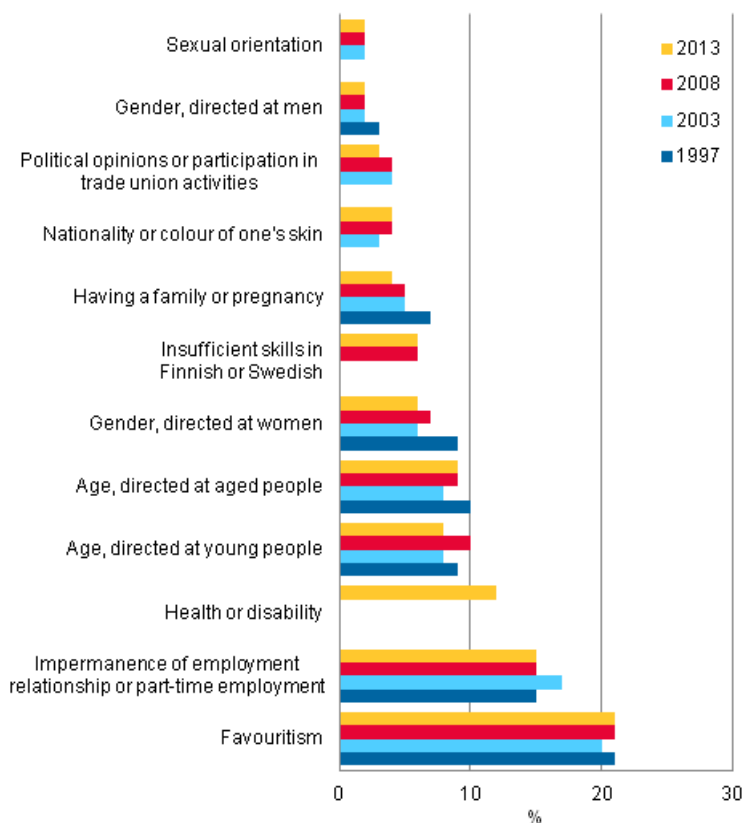
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# 1. Discrimination at workplaces

Gender-based discrimination directed at women has, according to observations made by employees, decreased over the past good 15 years at Finnish workplaces. There are also fewer observations of discrimination based on having a family or being pregnant than in the late 1990s. Even though age discrimination is usually discussed as a problem among the ageing population, age discrimination directed at young age is observed at workplaces nearly as often as age discrimination towards ageing people. Employees aged under 30 report that they have experienced unequal treatment or discrimination based on their age even more often than employees aged over 50. These data derive from the preliminary data of the Quality of Work Life Survey 2013.

According to Statistics Finland's Quality of Work Life Survey 2013, employees have noticed most commonly unequal treatment or discrimination based on favouritism at workplaces, which is reported by one-fifth (21%) of employees. The second most common (15%) form of discrimination was based on the impermanence of the employment relationship or on part-time employment. In these terms, the situation has remained almost unchanged since 1997. The third most common form of detected discrimination was based on health or disability (12%), which was inquired in this form for the first time only in 2013.

**Figure 1. Share of employees that have observed unequal treatment or discrimination at their workplace (%), by grounds for discrimination**



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Nearly one-tenth of employees have observed age discrimination towards aged people (9%) at their workplace, but nearly as many have also detected age discrimination directed at young people (8%). The share of these observations has contracted only marginally from 1997.

By contrast, gender-based discrimination directed at women has decreased over the past some 15 years according to both female and male employees. This type of discrimination has been detected at the workplace by six per cent of employees in 2013, while the corresponding figure in 1997 was nine per cent.

Also, clearly less discrimination based on a person having a family or being pregnant is found today (4%) than in 1997 (7%).

Six per cent of all employees have observed discrimination based on insufficient skills in the national language and four per cent have noticed discrimination based on nationality or the colour of one's skin. However, the shares are nine and six per cent among employees who have workers of foreign background at their workplace. Only little gender discrimination directed at men (2%) and discrimination based on political opinion or participation in trade union activities (3%) is observed in Finnish workplaces, as well as discrimination based on sexual orientation (2%). Women have noticed various forms of discrimination more frequently than men.

**Table 1. Share of employees that have observed unequal treatment or discrimination at their workplace (%), by gender and grounds for discrimination**

		1997	2003	2008	2013
Favouritism	Women	23	24	25	24
	Men	18	16	17	17
Impermanence of employment relationship or part-time employment	Women	16	21	19	19
	Men	13	11	11	11
Health or disability	Women	..	..	..	14
	Men	..	..	..	9
Age, directed at young people	Women	8	8	10	8
	Men	11	9	10	8
Age, directed at aged people	Women	11	10	11	10
	Men	10	6	8	7
Gender, directed at women	Women	12	9	9	8
	Men	6	3	4	3
Insufficient skills in Finnish or Swedish	Women	..	..	6	7
	Men	..	..	5	5
Having a family or pregnancy	Women	10	7	7	6
	Men	3	3	2	3
Nationality or colour of one's skin	Women	..	4	5	3
	Men	..	3	3	4
Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	Women	..	3	4	3
	Men	..	4	4	4
Gender, directed at men	Women	3	2	1	2
	Men	3	2	3	2
Sexual orientation	Women	..	3	2	1
	Men	..	2	3	2

Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Less discrimination is usually observed in smaller workplaces of under ten employees than in larger workplaces. The connection between the size of the workplace and observation of discrimination is most clearly visible in discrimination directed at women, age discrimination directed at aged people and discrimination based on favouritism. They all become more commonplace the larger the workplace is. There are some sector-specific differences in observing discrimination depending on the reason for discrimination. Age discrimination directed at ageing people and gender-based discrimination directed at women have been detected most in the central government sector (excl. universities), as has discrimination based on political opinion or participation in trade union activities. The difference is particularly high in discrimination based on favouritism: one-third (33%) of central government sector employees have noticed such discrimination, while only around one-fifth in the local government sector (22%) and in the private sector (19%) have detected such discrimination.

In local government sector workplaces more discrimination based on having a family or being pregnant and based on health or disability has been detected than elsewhere. Discrimination based on the type of employment relationship is nearly two times as common in the central and local government sectors than in the private sector. On the other hand, there are no differences between the sectors when it comes to discrimination based on nationality or the colour of one's skin, nor in discrimination directed at young people.

When interpreting the results of the Quality of Work Life Survey it should be noted that they concern employees' observations of discrimination at their workplaces. Employees do not necessarily observe discrimination that takes place when recruiting new employees; if discrimination occurs already at this stage there will not be workers belonging to a certain minority that could be discriminated against at the workplace.

### ***1.1. Personal experiences of discrimination***

Persons that have observed discrimination in their workplace are further asked whether they have personally experienced discrimination or unequal treatment. A total of eight per cent of all employees have experienced discrimination based on favouritism: 11 per cent of women and six per cent of men. The proportions are the same as in 2008. Compared to 1997, the proportion has decreased by one percentage point for men and increased by three percentage points for women.

Three per cent of all employees interviewed in 2013 (women 4%, men 1%) have experienced discrimination based on the impermanence of the employment relationship or on part-time employment. The shares are naturally higher for persons working in fixed-term or part-time employment relationships. Nine per cent of fixed-term employees (women 13%, men 3%) and seven per cent of part-time employees (women 9%, men 2%) report that they have experienced discrimination based on the impermanence of their employment relationship or on part-time employment.

Two per cent of all employees have experienced age discrimination directed at young people and two per cent age discrimination towards aged people. Examined by age group, it is interesting that among aged people personal experiences of discrimination directed at old age have decreased but age discrimination experienced by young people has actually increased. Of persons aged under 30, six per cent (women 5%, men 7%) reported that they had experienced discrimination directed at their young age in 1997, while in 2013 the corresponding share had increased to eight per cent (women 10%, men 5%). Correspondingly, of employees aged over 50, seven per cent (women 8%, men 6%) reported that they had experienced discrimination directed at their old age in 1997, but only four per cent (women 5%, men 2%) in 2013.

The share of women who have experienced gender discrimination themselves (4%) has decreased by one percentage point from the late 1990s (5%). During the entire survey period, around two per cent of male employees have personally experienced discrimination directed at men and around two per cent of all employees have experienced discrimination based on having a family or being pregnant or based on political opinion or participation in trade union activities.

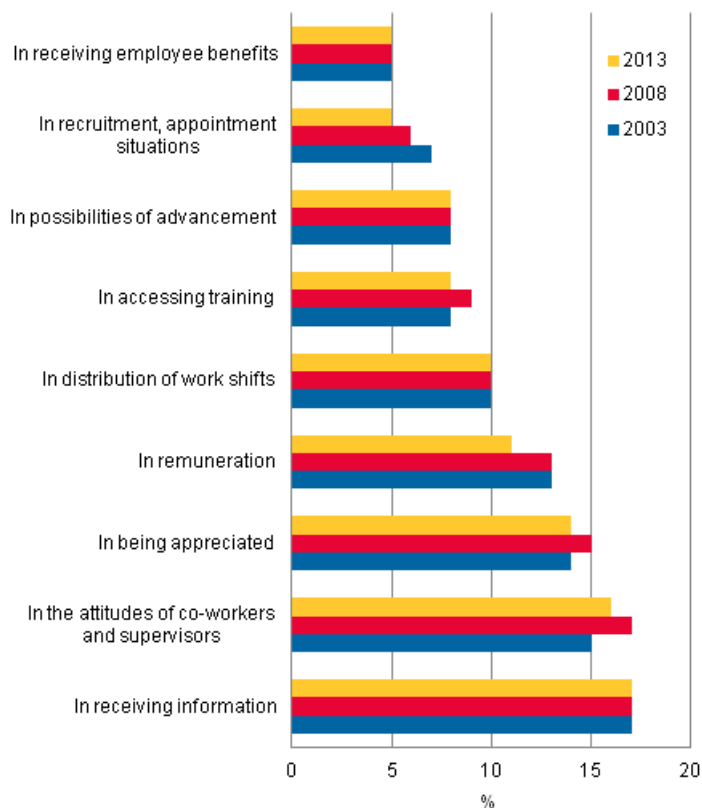
### ***1.2. Discrimination situations***

The Quality of Work Life Survey also asks about situations in which the respondent has experienced unequal treatment or discrimination in the past five years at his or her current workplace.

These situations are usually connected with receiving information (17%) and the attitudes of co-workers and supervisors (16%). People also quite often experience discrimination in being appreciated (14%). The change has been very low in this regard in the 2000s. By contrast, the discrimination experienced in remuneration has diminished by a couple of percentage points since 2008. This is especially visible for women, among whom the share has decreased from 15 to 12 per cent in ten years. Women report having experienced discrimination more often in all inquired situations than men.



**Figure 2. Has personally experienced unequal treatment or discrimination in the past five years at the workplace. Share (%) of employees by discrimination situation**



Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

**Table 2. Has personally experienced unequal treatment or discrimination in the past five years at the workplace. Share (%) of employees by discrimination situation**

		2003	2008	2013
In receiving information	Women	20	20	19
	Men	14	14	14
In the attitudes of co-workers and supervisors	Women	20	21	19
	Men	10	12	12
In being appreciated	Women	17	19	17
	Men	11	10	10
In remuneration	Women	15	14	12
	Men	11	11	9
In distribution of work shifts	Women	13	13	12
	Men	7	7	7
In accessing training	Women	10	11	10
	Men	6	6	5
In possibilities of advancement	Women	9	9	8
	Men	6	7	7
In recruitment, appointment situations	Women	8	7	6
	Men	6	5	3
In receiving employee benefits	Women	6	7	6
	Men	4	4	5

Source: Quality of Work Life Surveys 2003, 2008 and 2013, Statistics Finland

Private sector employees have experienced least discrimination in specific situations. Employees in the central government sector (excl. universities) have more experiences of discrimination in possibilities of advancement, being appreciated, remuneration and in recruitment and appointment situations than in other workplaces. People working in the local government sector report unequal treatment in acquisition of information, accessing training and distribution of work and shifts more often than people working in other sectors.

In the Quality of Work Life Survey 2013, respondents were asked whether they felt they belonged to some minority. The employees who felt they belonged to some ethnic minority reported experiencing more unequal treatment or discrimination than other employees, especially when it comes to being appreciated (21% vs. 14%), accessing training (15% vs. 8%), and possibilities of advancement (18% vs. 8%). They had also experienced somewhat more discrimination in terms of the attitudes of co-workers and supervisors (20% vs. 16%). In other situations (remuneration, distribution of work or shifts, receiving information, employee benefits), persons belonging to an ethnic minority do not feel they have experienced discrimination any more often than other employees. There are, however, only 61 persons in the survey that identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority so the results can only be seen as indicative.

### ***1.3. Reasons for discrimination in different situations***

In the Quality of Work Life Survey 2013, persons who had experienced unequal treatment or discrimination in different situations were further asked what in their opinion has been the reason for the discrimination in the situation in question. The respondent was able to select several options.

Appendix table 1 shows the share of employees among all employees who have reported experiencing unequal treatment or discrimination in a specific situation based on a particular reason. Only the reasons for discrimination where the share of employees having experienced discrimination in a particular situation exceeds 0.5 per cent of all employees are listed as a basis for discrimination in the table.

Appendix table 1 shows that unequal treatment in receiving information and in attitudes based on favouritism is the most common (5%) form of discrimination among all employees. In addition, five per cent of women have experienced unequal treatment based on their gender in receiving appreciation and four per cent in both remuneration and attitudes.

Viewing age discrimination by target group sheds more light on the subject. Employees under the age of 30 have experienced unequal treatment based on their young age in receiving appreciation (8%) and in attitudes (8%) even more commonly than people aged over 50 have experienced discrimination in similar situations based on their age (3% and 2%). Among young employees, four per cent feel they have suffered from their age in distribution of work or shifts, while the corresponding share for persons aged over 50 is one per cent. Three per cent of young people feel they have been treated unequally in possibilities of advancement due to their age, two per cent for persons aged over 50. Three per cent of young people have experienced discrimination in remuneration and receiving information, two per cent in employee benefits and one per cent in accessing training and in recruitment and appointment situations. In all of these situations, the share of persons aged over 50 who have experienced discrimination based on their age is one per cent.

As a closer examination of age discrimination shows, it is somewhat problematic to study personal experiences of discrimination using the type of data as in the Quality of Work Life Survey. In practice, you can only experience discrimination based on a particular reason if you belong to the group that could potentially be discriminated against based on the reason in question. For instance, only disabled persons can experience discrimination based on a disability. Thus, the prevalence of personal experiences of discrimination among employees partially reflects the proportional share of the different target groups among employees and how well the sample survey manages to reach the various target groups. In addition, it should be noted that the Quality of Work Life Survey has in principle only been directed at respondents who have been able to handle the approximately one-hour long interview in Finnish or Swedish: employees with immigrant background are underrepresented in the sample.

Unequal treatment and discrimination, especially when experienced personally, is a challenging survey subject. The topic can be sensitive for many respondents. Interpretations of what unequal treatment is in

different situations or on what the experienced inequity has been based can also vary between respondents and at different times. The respondent is not always able to specify the reason for the discrimination he or she has experienced, as the percentage shares in Appendix table 1 under "Other reason or hard to specify" indicates. Regardless of this, the Quality of Work Life Survey can be considered a relatively reliable tool for measuring the experiences of employees in terms of discrimination as well: the sample is large, the response rate is high, the questions have remained virtually unchanged for as long as 15 years and the survey is conducted with a reliable face-to-face interview method.

The results of the Quality of Work Life Survey draw a cautiously optimistic picture of a decrease in gender-related discrimination in working life in the 2000s. It is also positive that the appreciation of ageing employees in working life does not seem to have weakened, although this survey does not include discrimination of ageing people in recruitment. The results regarding age discrimination show that we should also turn our eyes to what type of treatment young people face at workplaces when talking about age discrimination.

## Appendix tables

**Appendix table 1. Share (%) of employees who have experienced discrimination based on different reasons by the discrimination situation**

		Total	Women	Men
		%	%	%
Recruitment or appointment situation	Favouritism	2	3	1
	Gender, woman	1	1	..
	Young age	..	..	..
	Old age	..	1	..
	Type of employment relationship	1	1	..
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	1	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	1	1	1
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Remuneration	Favouritism	3	3	3
	Gender, woman	2	4	..
	Young age	1	1	1
	Old age	..	..	..
	Type of employment relationship	1	1	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	4	4	4
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Appreciation	Favouritism	5	6	4
	Gender, woman	3	5	..
	Young age	2	3	2
	Old age	1	2	1
	Type of employment relationship	1	2	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	1	1	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	4	5	4
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Advancement opportunities	Favouritism	3	3	3
	Gender, woman	2	3	..
	Young age	1	1	1
	Old age	1	1	..
	Type of employment relationship	1	1	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	2	2	2
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..

		Total	Women	Men
		%	%	%
Distribution of work or shifts	Favouritism	3	5	2
	Gender, woman	1	2	..
	Young age	1	1	1
	Old age	..	..	..
	Type of employment relationship	2	2	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	1	1	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	3	3	3
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Accessing training	Favouritism	2	2	1
	Gender, woman	1	1	..
	Young age	..	1	..
	Old age	1	1	..
	Type of employment relationship	2	3	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	3	3	2
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Acquisition of information	Favouritism	5	5	4
	Gender, woman	2	3	1
	Young age	1	1	1
	Old age	..	1	1
	Type of employment relationship	2	3	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	8	8	7
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	1
Employee benefits	Favouritism	1	2	1
	Gender, woman	1	1	..
	Young age	..	..	1
	Old age	..	..	..
	Type of employment relationship	1	2	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	..	..
	Health or disability	..	..	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	2	2	2
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..
Attitudes	Favouritism	5	6	4
	Gender, woman	1	4	1
	Young age	2	3	2
	Old age	1	1	..
	Type of employment relationship	1	2	1
	Having a family or pregnancy	..	1	..
	Health or disability	1	1	..
	Other reason or hard to specify	5	6	4
	Political opinions or participation in trade union activities	..	..	..

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Source: Quality of Work Life Survey, Statistics Finland