



European
Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

Title: Gender in Research: Lexicon

Subtitle: WP5, UNIBA

The document contains basic terminology related to the gender dimension in research. The list may be useful for individuals interested in the topic or members of other projects with a similar focus.

Main description: The lexicon summons the basic concepts related to identifying gender dimension in research. It also establishes a common understanding of the concepts to identify the gender dimension in research within the EQUAL4EUROPE consortium. The content of the list is partly based on lexicons of other projects and initiatives with similar objectives (PLOTINA, GARCIA, Gendered Innovations, etc.). The concepts were selected on the basis of their wide use across different scientific communities and their relevance to the EQUAL4EUROPE project.

List of the most relevant concepts

1. Sex and gender

- “Sex” is a biological quality or classification of sexually-reproducing organisms, generally female, male, and/or intersex, according to functions that derive from the chromosomal complement, reproductive organs, or specific hormones or environmental factors that affect the expression of phenotypic traits that are strongly associated with females or males within a given species.
- “Gender” functions in different ways. It refers to cultural and social attitudes that together shape and sanction “feminine” and “masculine” behaviours, products, technologies, environments, and knowledges. “Feminine” and “masculine” describe attitudes and behaviours on a continuum of gender identities. Gender does not necessarily match sex.
- “Gender” denotes multidimensional and changing understandings of what it means to be a man or a woman within particular social settings. “Sex”, by contrast, functions within gender studies to designate less malleable aspects of biology.

2. Sex/gender analysis

- sex/gender analysis is an umbrella term for the entire research cycle
- it includes the integration of sex/gender issues from the setting of the research priorities through developing methodologies, gathering and analysing data to evaluating and reporting results and transferring them to markets

3. Methods for Sex and Gender Analysis

- sex and gender can influence all stages of research or development processes, from strategic considerations for establishing priorities and building theory to more routine tasks of formulating questions, designing methodologies, and interpreting data
- many pitfalls can be avoided—and new ideas or opportunities identified—by designing sex and gender analysis into research from the start
- sex and gender analysis work alongside other methodologies in a field to provide yet further “controls” (or filters for bias) providing critical rigor in science, medicine, and engineering research, policy, and practice

4. Sex and Gender intersecting factors

- sex and gender also intersect in important ways with a variety of other factors
- these factors or variables can be biological, socio-cultural, or psychological aspects of users, customers, experimental subjects, or cells
- the factors include but are not limited to age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, geographical location, etc.

5. Intersectionality

- overlapping or intersecting forms of discrimination related to gender, sex, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, sexuality, geographic location, etc.
- researchers and engineers should not consider gender in isolation (gender identities, norms and relations both shape and are shaped by other social attributes)

6. Gender Mainstreaming

- globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality
- involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects

7. Gender dimension in research

- gender dimension in research/in research content is an umbrella term for integrating sex- and/or gender-based analysis in research. In some projects only a sex analysis is relevant to the research problem (e.g. preclinical studies on cells and tissues, and in animals in many cases, given that an over-reliance on male animals, and neglect of attention to the sex of cells, can lead to neglect of key sex differences that should be guiding clinical studies, and ultimately, clinical practice. In some other cases, only a gender analysis is necessary (mainly in studies where biological differences do not play a role), and in some cases both sex- and gender analysis is relevant.
- integrating sex and gender analysis into all phases of basic and applied research—from setting priorities, to funding decisions, to establishing project objectives and methodologies, to data gathering, analyzing results, and evaluation

8. Gender-sensitive research

- takes into account differences between men and women in all aspects of research (from an initial idea, the formulation of research questions, objectives and methodologies to outcomes and presentation of results)
- gender is consistently taken into account during the research cycle

9. Gender-specific research

- focuses on gender itself as the subject matter
- the field of study to which gender and gender relations are central is usually described as “gender studies” rather than “women’s studies” (which reflects an historical shift as well as the growth of empirical research in the field)

10. Gender-aware research

- demonstrates knowledge of women’s and men’s needs, interests and assets
- collects sex disaggregated data but does not set out to analyze the underlying inequalities between men and women

11. Gender transformative research

- accounts for gender differences and inequalities from the start
- designs a sound research plan to address these differences
- sets out to transform the relationships between men and women that produce inequalities

12. Gender-blind research

- does not take gender into account
- is based on the often incorrect assumption that potential differences between men and women are irrelevant to the research at hand

13. Gender bias

- an often unintentional and implicit differentiation between men and women
- reflects traditional images of masculinity and femininity
- creates hierarchy between genders which influences both the participation of men and women in research (hence the underrepresentation of women) and the validity of research
- an example of gender bias in research is research that focuses on the experience and point of view of either men or women, while presenting the results as universally valid

14. Integrating Gender Analysis into Research (IGAR)

Also known as “incorporating the gender dimension into research content”), IGAR refers to the use of sex- and/or gender-based analysis in all the phases of the research cycle.

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Gender inequalities, however, are based in the structural gendered division of labour and power and are crucial to understand and take into account the different interests, needs, behaviours, roles, stereotypes, constraints, etc. of women and men regarding their access to resources, power, positions, activities, etc. Study results may then affect the social and economic relationships between these groups, for instance, reduce the existing gender inequalities by means of developing new tools aimed to detect and prevent gender-based violence.

And in other cases, both sex and gender interact in a particular study. In some instances sex and gender cannot be distinguished, as for example in studies of nutrition or exercise, where hormonal, physiological, and cultural factors can influence the likelihood of disease. Therefore, as a concept, “IGAR” also covers the inclusion of sex analysis (not only gender), and is used as such in the present report.

15. Integrating Gender Analysis into University Curricula (IGAUC)

IGAUC is based on effectively integrating the gender analysis into all contents and information passed in the higher education process to future active social agents, professionals and future researchers. Specifically has to do with guiding students to develop skills aimed at Integrating the Gender Analysis into Research (IGAR).

It includes issues such as learning to identify gender-biases in research, and to adequately apply IGAR methods in knowledge production and transfer. Higher Education Institutions play a fundamental part in reducing and eventually eliminating the “gender gap in science content”. Universities are then crucial to avoid generating and transmitting knowledge which is gender-biased, and which does not integrate appropriately the needs of both men and women, thus perpetuating an unequal system of generation of scientific knowledge.

IGAUC refers to a specific area within the gender dimension/approach in university curricula. The later also includes other issues such as inclusive teaching methods, making female scientists visible, non-sexist use of language and images, questioning gender professional stereotypes and roles, etc.