

Implementation of a Gender Approach and Socially Oriented HR Branding Practices in the Business Engineering System: International Legal and Marketing Aspects in the Context of Digitalization

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Keywords: Corporate Sustainability, Digital Business Transformation, Employee Engagement, Gender Equity Indicators, Inclusive Labor Relations, International Labor Standards, Marketing Engineering, Responsible Employer Image, Social Innovation, Strategic HR Management.

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to develop an interdisciplinary mechanism for implementing gender-sensitive and socially responsible HR branding within the business engineering system of modern companies. The study aims to integrate gender equality principles, international legal standards, and sustainable development criteria into corporate HR models in the context of digital transformation. The research is based on qualitative content analysis, comparative analysis of international practices, statistical examination of gender indicators (WEF, Eurostat, UN Women) and theoretical modeling. These methods enabled the authors to identify structural components of inclusive HR branding and design a multi-level framework for sustainable labor relations. The study systematizes key elements of gender-sensitive HR branding, develops a visualized model of sustainable employee-employer relations, and identifies critical gender disparities that influence HR decision-making. The findings demonstrate that integrating gender equality, CSR principles, and marketing engineering tools enhances workforce engagement, strengthens employer attractiveness, and improves organizational resilience. The paper offers a unified model that embeds gender indicators into HR branding and business engineering processes, providing an operational structure for transforming corporate governance in line with international legal and ethical standards. The results can be applied by companies to optimize recruitment, employee development, career management, and outplacement processes through gender-sensitive and socially responsible HR practices. The proposed mechanism supports evidence-based HR decisions and contributes to the formation of an inclusive and competitive employer brand.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of global digital transformation and the growing importance of ethical governance, the integration of gender-sensitive and socially responsible practices into human resource branding has emerged as a critical challenge and opportunity for modern organizations. As companies navigate the complexities of employer reputation, workforce sustainability, and stakeholder engagement, the alignment of HR strategies with gender equality principles and corporate social responsibility frameworks becomes not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is positioned at the intersection of gender studies, human resource management, business engineering, and international law. It draws on diverse interdisciplinary sources to address the pressing need for inclusive and evidence-based HR models that promote long-term employee engagement, gender equity, and organizational resilience. Recent literature suggests divergent approaches to integrating gender dimensions in the workplace (from focusing on intersectionality and identity politics to embedding statistical indicators and legal norms within management systems) and this

diversity of perspectives reflects a wider debate on whether gender equality should be treated as a regulatory requirement or a voluntary ethical commitment.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study integrates different scientific methods, each serving a specific research objective within the interdisciplinary examination of gender-sensitive and socially responsible HR branding. Qualitative content analysis was applied to systematize conceptual approaches to gender equality, CSR and HR branding and to reveal their intersections in the context of digital transformation. Comparative analysis enabled the assessment of international legal standards, cross-country gender disparities and corporate practices, thereby identifying structural differences and best practices relevant for integrating gender principles into business engineering systems. Statistical evaluation of gender indicators derived from WEF, Eurostat, UN Women and national datasets was used to quantify existing inequalities and substantiate the necessity of evidence-based HR decision-making. Theoretical modeling facilitated the development of a multi-level mechanism for structuring sustainable labor relations and operationalizing gender-sensitive HR branding within corporate governance frameworks. Together, these methods ensured a comprehensive and analytically grounded exploration of the research problem.

4 MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTING A GENDER APPROACH AND SOCIALLY ORIENTED HR BRANDING PRACTICES IN THE BUSINESS ENGINEERING SYSTEM

The analysis of sources dedicated to the gender approach is conceptually essential for providing a scholarly foundation for the study of inclusive practices in human resource management and employer branding, as they outline intercultural and intersectional dimensions of gender identity that enable the rethinking of corporate policies through the lens of social justice, equal access, and non-discrimination [1], [2].

The integration of social responsibility into business practices is a fundamental component of the sustainable development strategy of modern companies, particularly in the context of digital transformation, as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of CSR approaches as a key element in risk management, corporate reputation and stakeholder trust [3], [4].

Research dedicated to employer branding represents contemporary concepts of human capital management as a strategic asset that directly influences a company's competitiveness in the digital age, allowing for the observation of the evolution of employer branding from traditional recruitment to a systemic strategy for shaping an attractive, responsible, and gender-sensitive employer image [5], [6].

The ability to integrate gender, ethical, and employer branding principles into the business engineering system requires an interdisciplinary approach, as confirmed by the analyzed works of contemporary researchers in this field. These studies highlight the potential of business engineering as a tool for structural transformation of organizations, enabling the effective implementation of socially responsible practices through digital solutions, business process re-engineering and marketing optimization [7]-[9].

The analysis of sources devoted to gender statistics and indicators, as well as international legal norms regulating gender issues in the labor sphere, is methodologically justified and critically important for building an evidence-based foundation for the study of socially responsible HR practices and the implementation of the gender approach within the business engineering system. The effective realization of an inclusive HR strategy depends on the use of valid, methodologically sound indicators that reveal not only formal but also structural barriers to resource access [10], [11].

4.1 Modelling of the Structure and Key Aspects of Forming Sustainable Corporate Relationships Within the Personnel Marketing System

In our opinion, the implementation of a gender approach and socially responsible HR branding practices within the business engineering system of a modern company should include the development of sustainable relationships in the corporate personnel marketing system and encompass the following key directions:

- the integration of visual models of structural components and the analysis of the features of forming long-term employment relationships under the conditions of digital transformation of corporate interactions;
 - a multi-faceted characterization of sustainable employee relations as an intangible marketing asset, taking into account international legal norms and gender criteria;
 - the development of a concept of the employee's professional life cycle in terms of the calendar duration of their life. The synchronization of this cycle with the internal life cycle of a specific company and the comprehensive set of its marketing efforts should form the foundation for an integrated impact aimed at creating and nurturing long-term relationships with employees as a strategically valuable marketing asset;
 - the optimization of marketing processes for the formation and evolution of sustainable relationships between the company and its personnel in the context of digitalization and global competition for talent in the labor market;
- the study of the specifics of outplacement within the HR branding system aimed at maintaining long-term employment relationships with an emphasis on gender equality;
 - the development of a methodological approach for the quantitative assessment of the effects arising from the development of strategic relationships between the company and its employees, considering international legal and marketing contexts.

The visual modeling of the structure and key aspects of forming sustainable corporate relationships within the personnel marketing system is presented in Figure 1. The initial level, which ensures the effectiveness of interaction between the company and the employee and creates the prerequisites for the long-term nature of their relationship, is the employee's performance of basic labor functions in exchange for agreed remuneration. It is important to note that, at this stage, the gender approach implies equal access to employment opportunities and a fair remuneration system for individuals of all genders.

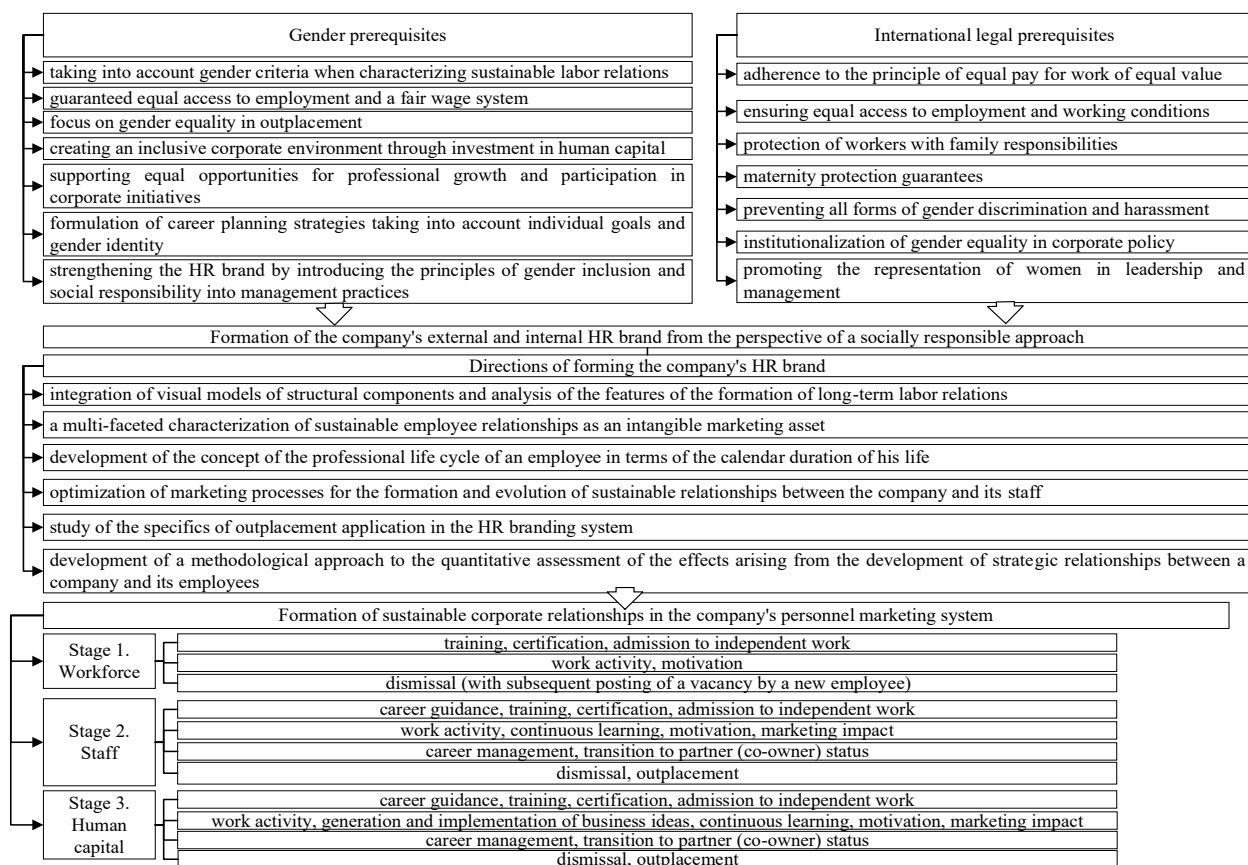


Figure 1: Mechanism for implementing a gender approach and socially responsible HR branding practices in the business engineering system.

4.2 Analysis of Gender Statistics and Indicators in the Context of Research on Socially Responsible HR Branding Practices in the Business Engineering System

Gender statistics and indicators are an integral part of the gender approach throughout the entire policy cycle. First, they provide information for the policymaking process and ensure that interventions address the different needs and priorities of women and men. Second, they measure changes in the relationships between women and men over time in a particular policy area, program, or activity, as well as changes in the status or position of women and men. Third, they are an essential component of monitoring and evaluating the implementation and outcomes of policies, programs, and projects. Thus, gender statistics are intended to "reflect differences and inequalities in the status of women and men in all areas of life" [12]. By providing evidence on gender equality and gender gaps in key areas, they help make gender inequality visible – which, in turn, can be used in designing policies aimed at eliminating the identified disparities. They help identify data relevant to the lives of women and men and to the key areas of policy development.

The Global Gender Gap Index [13] provides an annual assessment of the status and progression of gender parity across four fundamental domains (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment). Established in 2006, it remains the most enduring index for monitoring the long-term advancements of various economies in bridging these disparities.

In 2024, the global gender gap index for all 146 countries analyzed in report indicates that 68.5% of the gap has been closed. Compared to the consistent

sample of 143 countries assessed in the previous edition, the overall gender gap has narrowed by an additional 0.1 percentage point, increasing from 68.5% to 68.6%. Similarly, for the 101 countries that have been continuously monitored from 2006 to 2024, the gap has also improved by 0.1 percentage point, reaching a closure level of 68.6%.

European economies account for seven of the top ten positions in The Global Gender Gap Index ranking [13].

Ukraine's performance in the Global Gender Gap Index 2024 reflects a multifaceted trajectory of gender parity, characterized by notable advancements in educational attainment and economic participation yet hindered by persistent disparities in political representation. With an overall index score of 0.722 and a ranking of 63rd globally, Ukraine surpasses the global average of 0.685 but lags behind European counterparts, where the regional average is 0.750 (Fig. 2).

2024 represents a critical juncture for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the trajectory of global development cooperation. With merely six years remaining until the 2030 target, the pace of progress - particularly in advancing gender equality - remains insufficient. The Summit of the Future, alongside the forthcoming thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, offers a vital opportunity to reaffirm international commitments to accelerating gender equality and the protection of women's rights.

The digital ecosystem continues to be predominantly shaped by young white men, with women remaining significantly underrepresented in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. Within the European Union, women constitute only 19% of ICT specialists, accounting for a mere 2% of total EU employment, in contrast to 7% for men (Fig. 3) [16].

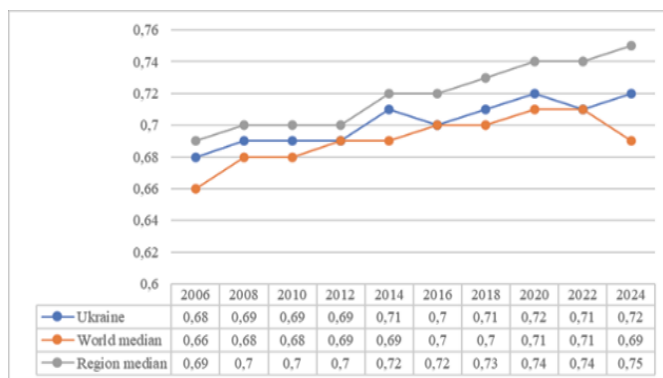


Figure 2: Benchmark of Ukraine Global Gender Gap Index with world and region median, 2006-2024, score [13].

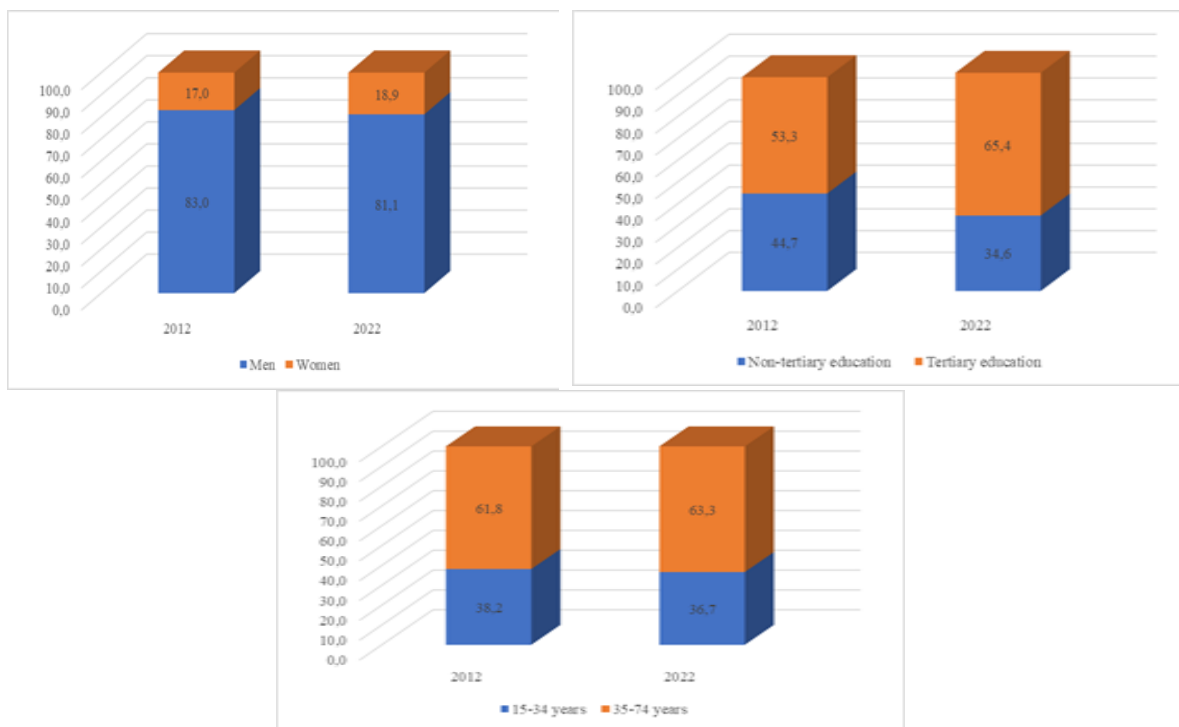


Figure 3: Distribution of persons employed as ICT specialists by sex, education attainment level and age, EU, 2012 and 2022, % [16].

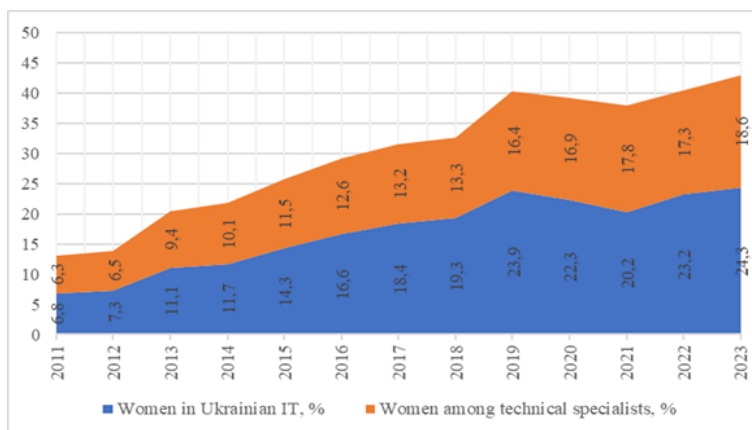


Figure 4: Dynamics of changes in the share of women in the Ukrainian IT sector, 2011-2023, % [14].

The representation of women in ICT varies across Central European nations, with Austria reporting 19%, Czechia 11%, Poland 17%, and Slovakia 15%. These figures may decline further when disaggregated to exclude non-technical roles such as human resources, marketing, and project management. Notably, women employed in ICT earn, on average, 19% less than their male counterparts, surpassing the EU-wide gender pay gap of 13%. In the Central European countries this wage disparity is

even more pronounced, ranging between 20% and 30%.

The gender structure of Ukraine’s IT industry demonstrates a steady trend toward increasing the share of women within the professional community. At the end of 2011, women’s representation in the information technology sector did not exceed 7%. However, between 2012 and 2018, this figure gradually increased by several percentage points each year (Fig. 4) [14].

An analysis of the gender structure of employment in the Ukrainian IT sector reveals a stable trend toward the professional diversification of women across various fields within the industry. The highest level of female representation is observed in the field of quality assurance (QA engineers), accounting for 28% of all women in the industry, followed by software development, where 19% of women are employed. Overall, 66% of women work in technical roles, while 34% are engaged in non-technical specializations. This indicates a consistent pattern of gender-based professional segmentation since 2016, as the share of women in non-technical roles was lower prior to that period [14]. In our view, maintaining such a balance could serve as an indicator of the effectiveness of implementing a gender-sensitive approach in the HR policies of IT companies, contributing to equal opportunities for women in the high-tech sector. At the same time, it is already evident that there is a noticeably high level of corporate social responsibility in the field of IT product development, reflected in the growth of inclusive corporate environments. This enhances the attractiveness of companies to female professionals across different profiles and, in turn, supports the formation of a sustainable HR brand.

4.3 International Legal Aspects of Research on Socially Responsible HR Branding Practices in the Business Engineering System

The issue of gender equality in labor relations is of great importance and should encompass principles such as equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in employment, equal pay for equal work, improved work-life balance for employees, and equal treatment in hiring practices. At the current stage of economic development, men and women are formally equal in rights, yet the quality of employment remains unequal. Gender inequality in the labor market is, on the one hand, a consequence of social development, and on the other hand, one of the root causes of many problems that affect the functioning of the labor market [15]. Therefore, the gender approach is a vital component of comprehensive research into labor market issues, as it allows for the identification of mechanisms, causes, and consequences of gender inequality in employment.

For example, employment levels across EU countries vary significantly. In 2018, the highest levels of female employment were traditionally observed in Sweden (76.0%), the Netherlands

(72.8%), Denmark (72.6%), Germany (72.1%), Lithuania (71.6%), Estonia (71.4%), and Finland (70.6%). The lowest levels were recorded in Italy (49.5%) and Greece (45.3%). Unemployment rates also differ significantly by gender. The largest gender disparities in unemployment were seen in Greece (24.2% for women versus 15.4% for men) and Spain (17.0% for women and 13.7% for men), where female unemployment exceeded male unemployment. Conversely, in Ireland and Lithuania, male unemployment was higher than female unemployment. Gender pay differentiation across the EU averages 16.1%, but gender pay gaps vary considerably among member states. While the gender pay gap has generally narrowed across the EU over the past decade, in some countries it continues to widen, despite improvements in women's employment levels, increased job opportunities, and higher education attainment. The largest gender pay gap is observed in Estonia (25.6%), while the smallest is in Romania (3.5%) [16].

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, women make up approximately 47% of the global workforce. However, in many countries, women still face barriers to accessing equal opportunities. In Ukraine, the female employment rate increased to 51% in 2023, compared to 43% in 2021. Nonetheless, the gender pay gap widened, with women's average earnings amounting to only 69% of men's wages. In 2023, the global unemployment rate stood at 5.1%, with a projected increase to 5.2% in 2024, driven by labor market challenges in developed countries. The global gender pay gap also remains a significant issue: on average, women earn 20% less than men. In Europe, for instance, it is estimated that gender pay parity will take another 67 years to achieve, while in North America it will take 95 years. As of 2023, Ukraine's gender pay gap was 18.6%, but the government has set a target to reduce it to 13.6% by 2030 [17].

The uneven distribution can also be explained by the so-called compensation gap. Compared to other professions, women are more likely to accept jobs that are less physically demanding, have shorter work cycles, and offer certain social support (such as childcare). Women tend to have higher expectations regarding working conditions and benefits, but unlike men, they are generally less inclined to work overtime. Summarizing these factors, it is worth noting that women's human capital is considered to be lower than that of men. Therefore, according to human capital theory, the remuneration for women's work tends to be lower than that for men's work.

As for international organizations, they identify gender issues as one of the priorities of human development, which is reflected in their strategies. They also view gender equality as a resource for socio-economic development. Accordingly, the key features of international and European legislation aimed at eliminating gender discrimination and promoting the principle of equal treatment include: special measures to promote equality between women and men and prohibit direct and indirect discrimination; the prohibition of victimization, harassment, and sexual harassment; compensation for damages and sanctions for unlawful actions; the adoption of specific legislation on gender equality; the establishment of relevant institutions to protect both women and men; and the integration of the gender dimension into the formulation and implementation of public policy. The gender dimension plays an essential role in shaping and implementing public policy. The principles of gender equality and non-discrimination must be applied not only at the level of state governance but also across other levels. In particular, gender issues should be integrated into organizational policies, and appropriate procedures should be established to prevent discrimination and ensure equal access to resources and power for both women and men.

The ILO considers it extremely important to raise awareness of the legal aspects of gender equality in the world of work. Social and lasting peace can only be built on the foundation of social justice. This principle is proclaimed in the preamble to the ILO Constitution of 1919. Even at that time, immediately following World War I, the protection of women and the principles of equal remuneration for work of equal value were recognized as areas requiring urgent action. In 1944, the Declaration of Philadelphia was adopted at the International Labour Conference, and it is now an annex to the ILO Constitution. The declaration states that “all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity.” It further emphasizes that “poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.” The rights of working women are an integral part of the values, principles, and objectives that define the ILO’s mandate, which is aimed at promoting social justice and decent work – fairly paid, productive employment carried out in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity. Labor standards address the issue of gender equality in various ways. Some are gender-specific, explicitly calling for gender equality

or the elimination of discrimination against women or men, such as the Equal Remuneration Convention (1951, No. 100), the Maternity Protection Convention (2000, No. 183), the Termination of Employment Convention (1982, No. 158), and the Employment Policy Convention (1964, No. 122). Other standards are gender-sensitive – their provisions take into account the needs of both women and men, even if not explicitly stated. Examples include the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (1981, No. 156), the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999, No. 182), the Part-Time Work Convention (1994, No. 175), the Home Work Convention (1996, No. 177), as well as several others that address working conditions such as safety, protection, and transportation. The fundamental Convention No. 111 encompasses both of these groups, as it is aimed at preventing discrimination and ensuring gender equality, while not being limited to gender discrimination alone. A third group of conventions contains technically neutral standards, which reveal gender-specific dimensions in practice – for example, in the collection and use of statistical data. These conventions cover issues such as wage payment, occupational accidents and injuries, working time, and social protection. The ILO has identified four conventions as key instruments for achieving gender equality in the world of work: the Equal Remuneration Convention (1951, No. 100); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958, No. 111); the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (1981, No. 156); and the Maternity Protection Convention (2000, No. 183) [18].

Focusing on the words of the ILO Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo, among the numerous challenges that persist is the fact that, on average, women still earn 20 percent less than their male colleagues. The central message of the 111th International Labour Conference, held on June 5, 2023, was reflected in his statement: “Social justice must be made a global priority” [19].

The agenda included a position on achieving equality between women and men in the workplace, which was at the core of the General Survey conducted by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Standards. As part of this review, the Committee of Experts’ Report on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations was presented (Achieving gender equality at work). According to the document, over the past 25 years, the global momentum toward gender equality has grown at an unprecedented scale. The adoption of the Beijing Declaration in 1995 and its review in 2020 have

significantly increased interest in advancing gender equality [20].

In 2021, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women called on governments to take action to eliminate the root causes of gender inequality and the barriers to women's full and equal participation. This was to be achieved through the expansion of women's economic opportunities and their right to work, the elimination of occupational segregation, and related measures.

The last century has been marked by tremendous progress for women, who in many countries have gained greater access to equal opportunities and improved treatment in the workplace. Women are increasingly entering sectors and leadership positions that were once considered "male-dominated." Maternity protection measures are becoming more widespread across many countries, and efforts are being made to support the balance between work and family responsibilities. The promotion of gender equality includes actions to ensure access and equality in education, training, and employment; the empowerment and economic autonomy of women; the prevention of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence such as domestic abuse and sexual harassment; maternity protection; and the advancement of women to leadership positions and their representation in government bodies [21].

5 CONCLUSIONS

Ensuring gender equality in labor relations is a key factor in shaping a socially responsible HR brand and developing sustainable business engineering models in the context of digital transformation. The gender approach in HR policy encompasses a wide range of objectives aimed at achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the labor market, including the elimination of discrimination, the overcoming of gender stereotypes, the provision of equal pay for work of equal value, and the creation of conditions for balancing professional activities with family responsibilities.

The implementation of gender-sensitive strategies in HR management contributes to increased labor productivity, the strengthening of corporate culture, the formation of long-term employment relationships, and the enhancement of employer reputation. Priority areas in this field include ensuring equal access to employment and career advancement, introducing transparent pay mechanisms based on the principle of equal remuneration, developing flexible forms of employment, supporting parenthood, preventing

sexual harassment, promoting women's leadership, and ensuring gender balance in senior management bodies.

Thus, adherence to gender equality principles and the implementation of socially responsible HR practices are not only an ethical imperative but also a strategic necessity for organizations striving for sustainable development, innovation, and compliance with international legal standards. The systemic integration of the gender approach into HR branding ensures the creation of an inclusive corporate environment and enhances business competitiveness at both national and international levels.

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