

Equal treatment regardless of gender – report on a survey of the University of Warsaw community.

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Introduction

The aim of the survey conducted among students and employees of the University of Warsaw was to analyse the perceived prevalence of various forms of gender inequality. The survey focused on types of inequality, their frequency, situational context, responses to them, and perceived institutional norms. Our goal was also to examine the links between unequal treatment and mental well-being and well-being in the workplace. The purpose of formulating such a diagnosis was to more effectively prevent unequal treatment in the future, define areas that require special attention, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. This knowledge may be helpful in determining the directions for developing the University of Warsaw's equality policy.

The following research questions were asked:

1. What personal experiences of unequal treatment in the university environment do students and employees of the University of Warsaw have?
2. How do they perceive the prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment in the university environment?
3. What is the perceived context of unequal treatment, who perpetrates it, who is most often affected by it, and in what situations does it occur?
4. What are the most common reactions of those around to unequal treatment?
5. What are the perceived institutional norms and organisational culture in the context of unequal treatment?
6. How does unequal treatment relate to the mental well-being, well-being in the workplace, stress and health of students and employees at the University of Warsaw?

Study participants

The majority of study participants ($N = 10,907$) were students from various faculties (8,876 people, 83.5%). The study also included academic and teaching staff (this category included both those working in academic and teaching positions, as well as those working strictly in academic or strictly in teaching positions, a total of 628 people, 5.9% of the entire sample), doctoral students (519, 4.9%) and other employees (608, 5.7%). In the group of other UW employees, apart from administration (352, 3.3%), there is a significant group of service employees (113), technical employees (41) and library employees (59), as well as various professional categories with smaller

numbers (e.g. programmers, editors, etc.). To enable statistical analysis of their responses, these categories are treated collectively and appear in the report as *other employees*. As many as 58.9% of all questionnaires were incomplete. The large number of questionnaires abandoned before the end of the survey may have been due to its length and the low motivation of participants to take part in the survey.

Among those who started participating in the survey, there were 6,958 women (63.8%), 3,824 men (34.8%) and 125 people (1.1%) who selected "other" in response to the question about gender. Women account for 64.1% of the student group, 56% of the doctoral student group, and 56% of the research and teaching group.

- 61.2%, and among other employees - 72.5% of the sample. The average age of students in the study was 22.5 years ($SD=4.7$), doctoral students was 29 years ($SD= 5.8$), research and teaching staff was 44.4 years ($SD = 10.4$), and other employees was 42.5 years ($SD = 11.3$).

Procedure

The survey was organised by the University of Warsaw Equality Office in cooperation with the Centre for Research on Prejudice at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Warsaw. It was conducted in the summer semester of the 2018/2019 academic year (February-March), predominantly online, using the ANKIETER system. Invitations to participate in the survey were distributed by email and through the university's USOS WEB system. A small proportion of the questionnaires (1%) were completed in paper form, as not all employees have access to the same IT systems.

The study used a proprietary questionnaire consisting of several thematic blocks. The introductory section, which collected demographic data, was followed by a block of questions related to unequal treatment. It asked about the frequency of various forms of unequal treatment, the characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim, responses to the situations mentioned, and perceptions of institutional norms. The last part of the questionnaire concerned quality of life, including health and mental well-being as variables that may be related to the experience of unequal treatment. At the end of the study, participants had the opportunity to add their comments and describe experiences of unequal treatment other than those covered in the questionnaire in an open-ended form.

Prevalence of different forms of unequal treatment

The main part of the questionnaire began with brief instructions for respondents to consider 1) whether **they had experienced** ambiguous, unpleasant and inappropriate situations at university in the last two years, or 2) whether **they had heard** that such situations had happened to someone else or **witnessed** an incident in the context described. The respondents were then asked to respond to 15 and 16 examples of unequal treatment, presented in two consecutive blocks. These examples were arranged from the relatively least to the most serious offences. All were generated on the basis of materials from previous studies conducted at other universities (including in other countries) and a pilot study conducted at three faculties of the University of Warsaw in 2018. Respondents indicated whether a given situation had occurred once, several times, or not at all⁽¹⁾.

Chart 1 shows the percentages of respondents who have personally experienced a specific form of unequal treatment. The two types of affirmative answers, "Yes, once" and "Yes, several times," were counted together. We can see that the largest number of respondents (42%; 3,675 people) indicated that they had experienced comments or jokes about positive or negative character traits, referring to beliefs about what women and men are stereotypically like. In second place were comments or jokes with sexual undertones (31%; 2,751 people), and in third place were better or worse evaluation or treatment based on gender (26%; 2,263 people). The remaining situations were experienced by less than 1/5 of respondents.

Chart 2 shows the percentage of respondents who have heard about or witnessed the behaviour described. The three most frequently cited forms of inequality

¹ Of the 10,907 respondents who started filling out the survey, between 8,790 and 8,739 people answered the block of questions about their own experiences of unequal treatment, and in the next block of questions about whether anyone had heard about or witnessed these situations, between 6,993 and 6,938 people responded, depending on the statement. When looking at the charts, it should therefore be remembered that the percentages presented refer to how many people responded to a given statement in these two sections, and not to the initial sample size.

The responses were the same as in the case of the respondents' own experiences: comments or jokes perpetuating stereotypes about women and men (40%; 2,776 people), comments or jokes with sexual undertones (31%; 2,184 people), and better or worse evaluation or treatment based on gender (28%; 1,970 people). Twenty percent of respondents had heard about or witnessed someone being addressed in an inappropriately familiar manner and receiving inappropriate comments about their clothing or appearance.

The most serious forms of unequal treatment, such as sexual propositions, negative comments about sexual orientation and violation of physical integrity, were experienced by 3% (277 people), 4% (376 people) and 8% (734 people) of respondents, respectively, and 6% (384 people) and 11% (734–763 people) of respondents had heard about or witnessed them.

In summary, we note that **the most common form of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw is verbal communication in the form of comments or jokes.**

Personal experiences

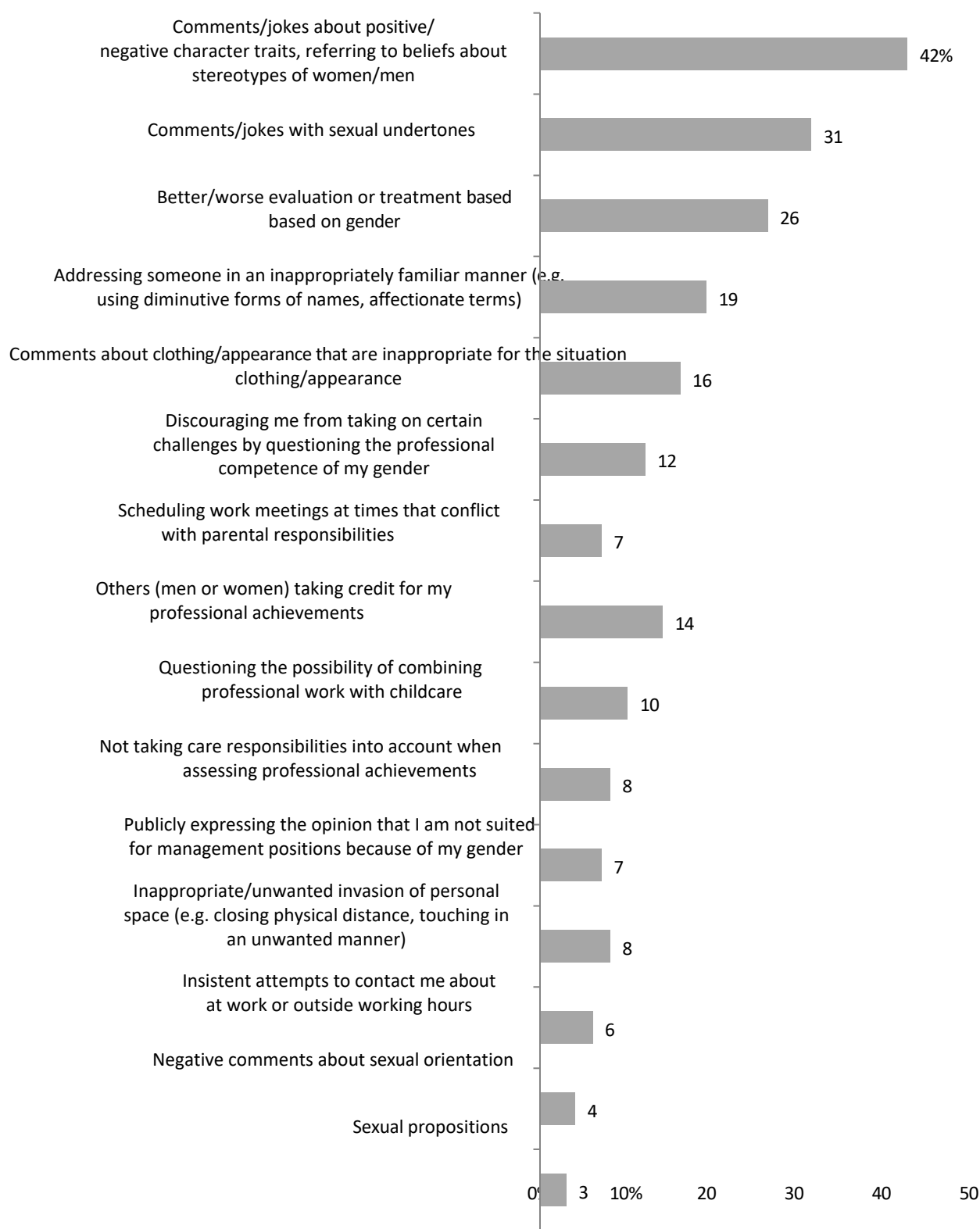


Chart 1. Have you experienced any of the following situations? Frequency of responses.

Hearing about/witnessing

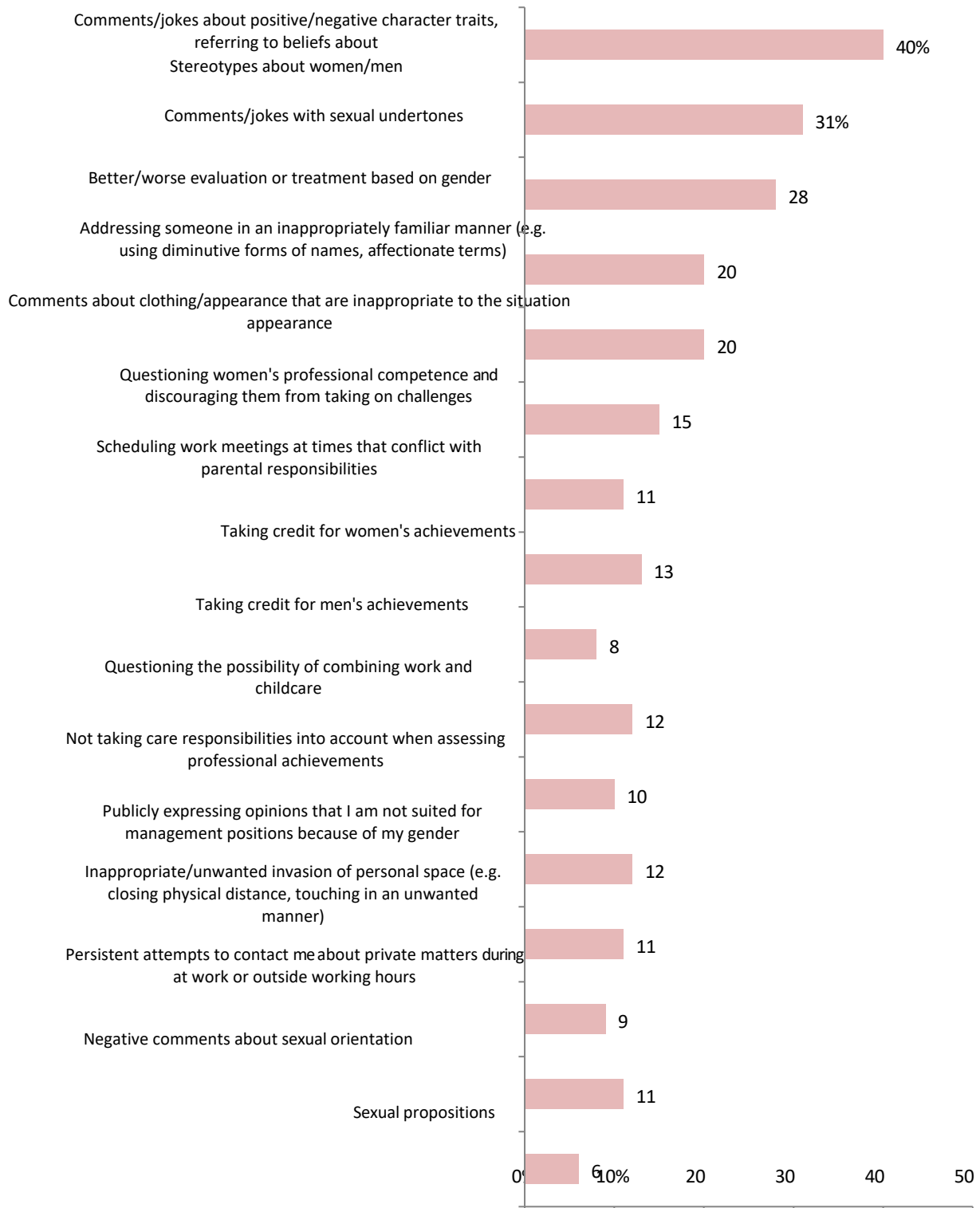


Chart 2. Have you witnessed or heard about the situation described above at the University of Warsaw?
Frequency of responses.

Results for professional groups

The next step in analysing the prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw was to examine how this issue affects four main professional groups, namely students, doctoral students, academic and teaching staff, and other employees. The largest group of respondents were students – between 7,277 and 7,238 people (depending on the statement) answered the questions in the two blocks currently under discussion. followed by researchers and teaching staff – between 574 and 567 people, other employees – between 505 and 495 people, and finally doctoral students – between 436 and 431 people. These differences in the size of the individual groups should be borne in mind when looking at the charts below.

Chart 3 shows that the most common form of unequal treatment was identical for all groups. Comments or jokes about the positive and negative characteristics stereotypically attributed to women and men were experienced by 42% of students (3,062 people), 41% of doctoral students (179 people), 42% of research and teaching staff (242 people) and 38% of other employees (189 people). Next, students and doctoral students experienced comments or jokes with sexual undertones (32%; 2,314 people and 28%; 121 people) and better or worse evaluation or treatment based on gender (26%; 1,853 people and 29%; 124 people).

The experiences of employees were slightly different. Academic and teaching staff ranked inappropriate familiar expressions second (34%; 192 people), while other employees ranked other people taking credit for their achievements second (35%; 174 people). In third place, academic and teaching staff mentioned the failure to take care responsibilities into account when assessing professional achievements (33%; 188 people), while other staff mentioned comments or jokes with sexual undertones (30%; 147 people). Approximately one-third of academic and teaching staff also experienced comments or jokes with sexual undertones, meetings scheduled at times that conflicted with parental responsibilities, and others taking credit for their achievements. Approximately one-quarter of other employees experienced better or worse evaluation or treatment based on gender and being addressed in an inappropriately familiar manner.

When it comes to whether someone has heard of or witnessed any form of unequal treatment (see Chart 4), comments or jokes referring to stereotypical characteristics of men and women were mentioned by the largest number of people in each group – 39% of students (2,223 people), 43% of doctoral students (164 people), 45% of research and teaching staff, and 34% of other employees. Both students and doctoral students ranked comments or jokes with sexual undertones second (31%; 1,738 people and 37%; 139 people), and better or worse evaluation or treatment based on gender third (28%; 1,560 people and 35%; 131 people). More than one-third of doctoral students had also heard of someone being addressed using inappropriately familiar terms or had witnessed such behaviour.

Academic and teaching staff have repeatedly heard or witnessed comments and jokes with sexual undertones, inappropriate familiarity in addressing others, and scheduling meetings at times that conflict with parental responsibilities (36% each; 192, 190 and 190 people). More than one-third of them also mentioned that caregiving responsibilities were not taken into account when assessing professional achievements. Other employees pointed to comments or jokes with sexual undertones (27%; 115 people) and the appropriation of women's achievements by other women or men (25%; 108 people).

Finally, we can conclude that the picture of various forms of inequality that emerges in the case of students and doctoral students mirrors that discussed earlier for the University of Warsaw as a whole. Both groups most often encounter discriminatory verbal messages, and this applies to their own experiences as well as their knowledge of the unequal treatment of third parties. Meanwhile, employees experience, hear about and witness situations that go beyond the verbal sphere. These situations systematically affect areas of professional life, such as denying someone their merits or conflicts between professional and private life, for example due to work organisation that is inadequate to the needs.

Results for professional groups: Personal experiences

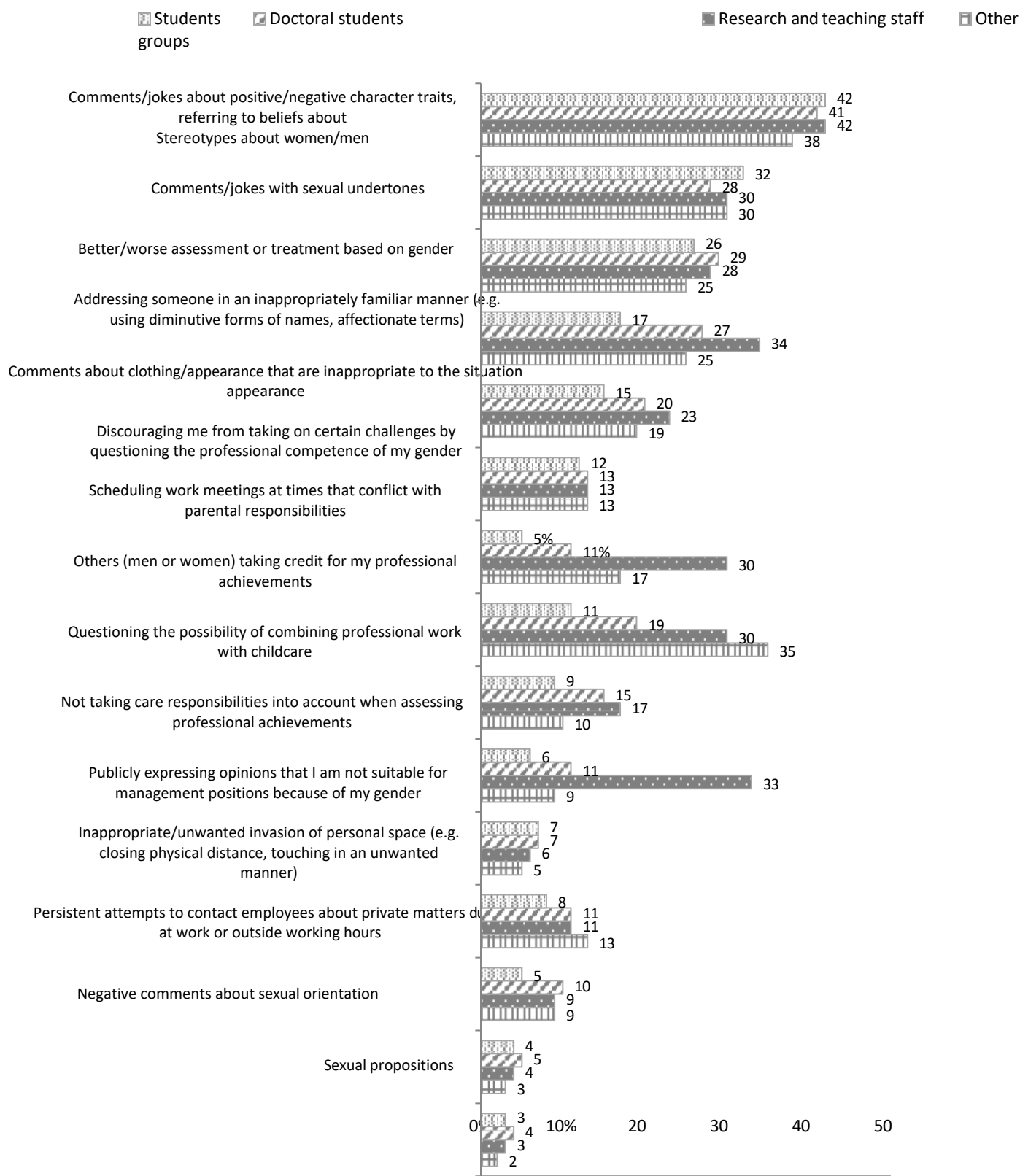


Chart 3. Have you experienced the behaviours listed? Frequency of responses broken down by four occupational groups.

Results for professional groups: Hearing about/witnessing

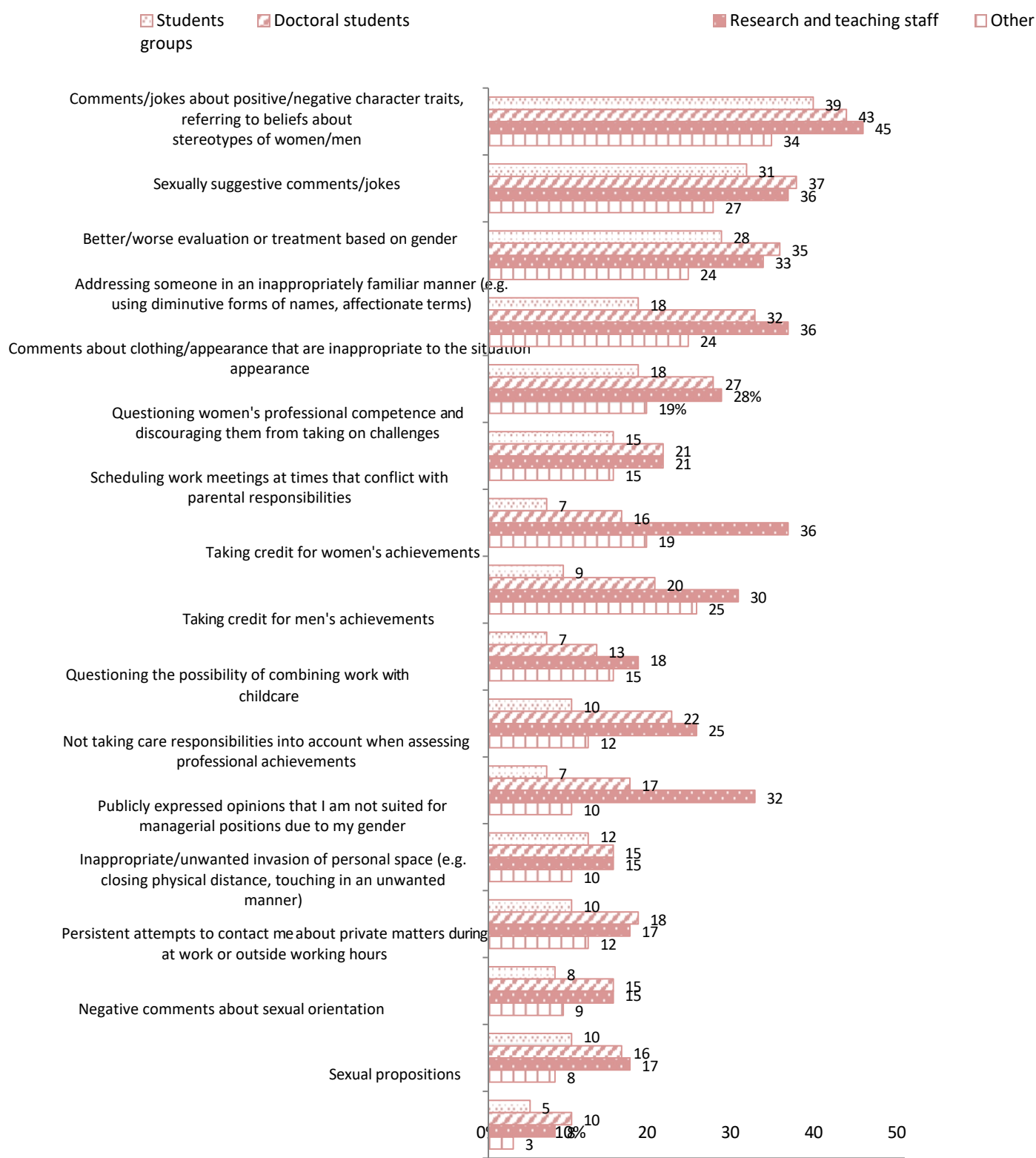


Chart 4. Have you witnessed or heard about the situation described above at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses broken down into four main professional groups.

Perpetrators, victims and situational context of unequal treatment

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the contexts in which unequal treatment most often occurs at the University of Warsaw. The factors that we considered key to describing these contexts were presented in a block of questions where respondents described examples of unequal treatment. We asked them to indicate the gender of the perpetrator and the victim, their positions and the professional relationship between them. We also asked where the unequal treatment took place.

Gender and cases of unequal treatment

The experiences reported by the participants in our study show that **men were more likely to engage in unequal treatment than women** (see Chart 5). 76% of respondents had experienced unequal treatment by men, either directly or indirectly (including 54% who admitted that this had happened several times). When asked about female perpetrators, 55% of respondents admitted that they had experienced unequal treatment from them at least once, either directly or indirectly (including 31% of participants who admitted that this had happened several times).

In the reported cases of unequal treatment, **women were most often identified as the victims (82%)**. However, this does not mean that respondents did not report unequal treatment towards men – 55% of respondents had experienced or heard of such cases (see Chart 5).

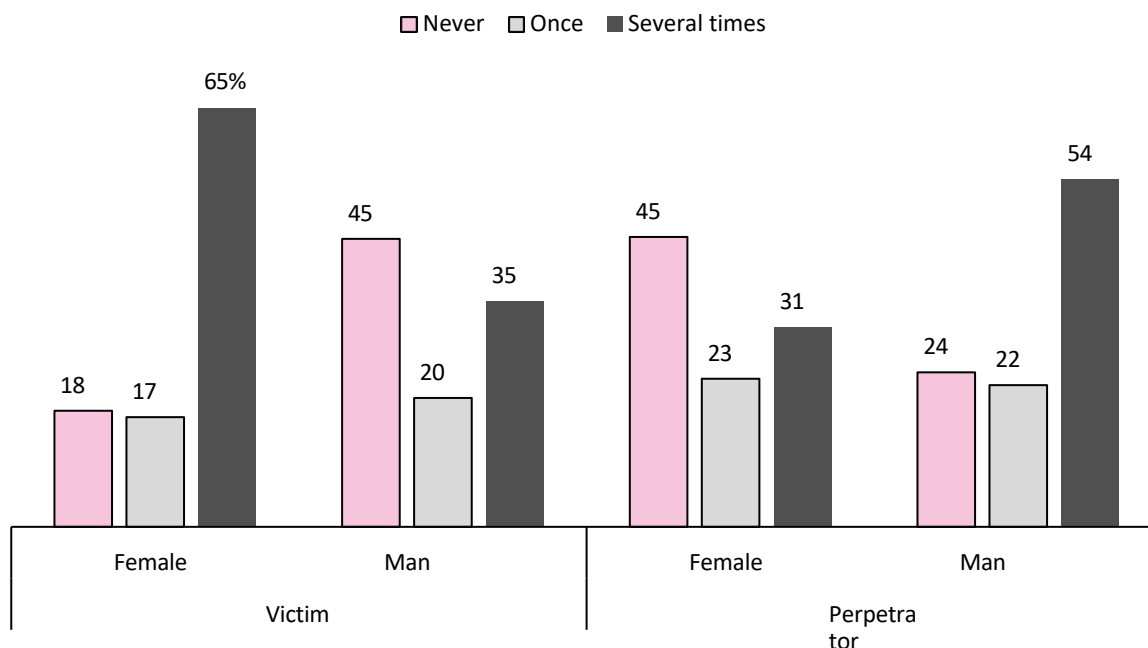


Chart 5. Gender of perpetrators and victims of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw. Frequency of responses

Did members of different professional groups within the University of Warsaw differ in their responses regarding the gender of victims and perpetrators of unequal treatment? In most cases, the perspectives of students, doctoral students and employees of the University of Warsaw turned out to be quite similar. All groups reported cases of female victims more often than male victims. Similarly, all professional groups indicated male perpetrators more often than female perpetrators, although it is worth noting that this difference was smallest among those we classified as other staff members.

The position of perpetrators and victims of unequal treatment

We asked respondents to describe the position of perpetrators

and experiencing unequal treatment in the examples of events they reported (see Charts 6-7)

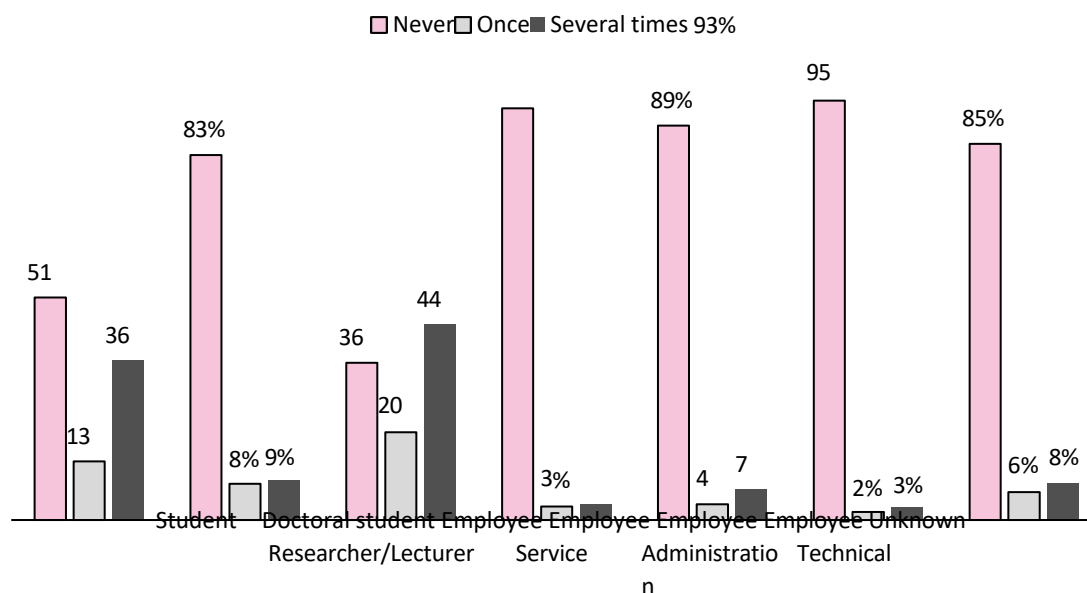


Chart 6. Who is responsible for unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses.

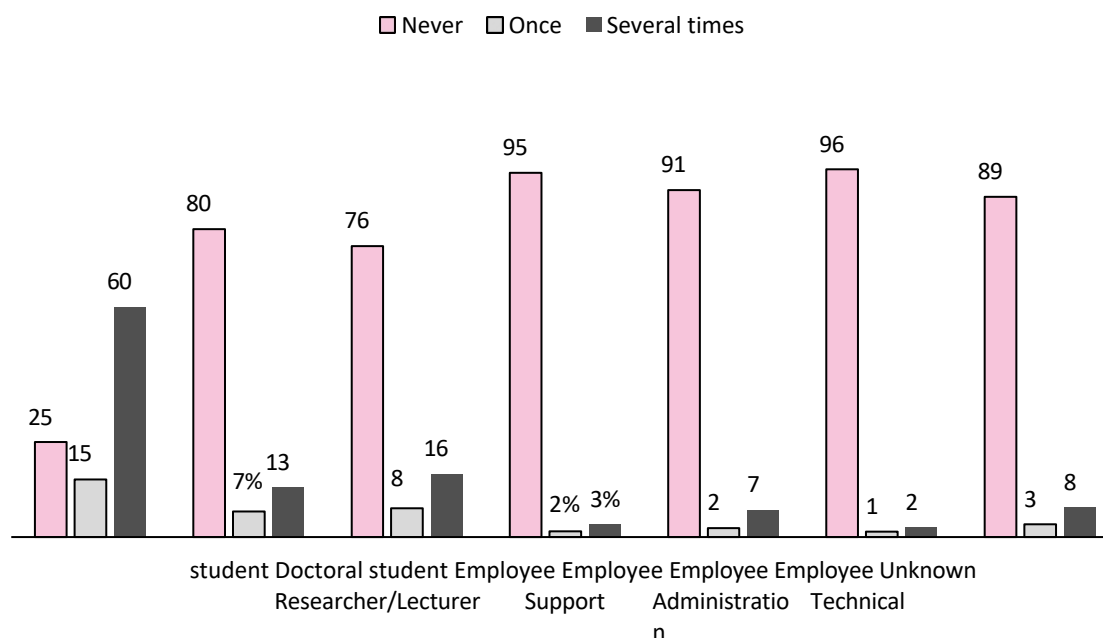


Chart 7. Who experiences unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses.

The distributions of responses presented in Charts 6-7 indicate that students experience unequal treatment particularly often, and that the perpetrators are other students or academic and teaching staff. However, an analysis of the responses broken down by professional group shows that this perspective is characteristic primarily of the students themselves, who are the most numerous in our sample and therefore have the greatest impact on the overall results (cf. Figures 8-9). The responses of other groups (non-students) are dominated by reports of unequal treatment by academic and teaching staff. In addition, other employees also frequently reported unequal treatment by the administration. Each group – students, doctoral students, academic and teaching staff, and other employees – reported primarily situations in which the victim belonged to their own professional group. The exception are doctoral students, who reported situations in which doctoral students and students suffered equally often. It is worth considering the consequences of a lack of knowledge about unequal treatment of people outside one's own professional group, such as feelings of alienation and difficulty in seeking support from people outside one's own group (cf. DeSouza, Wesselmann, Ispas, 2017).

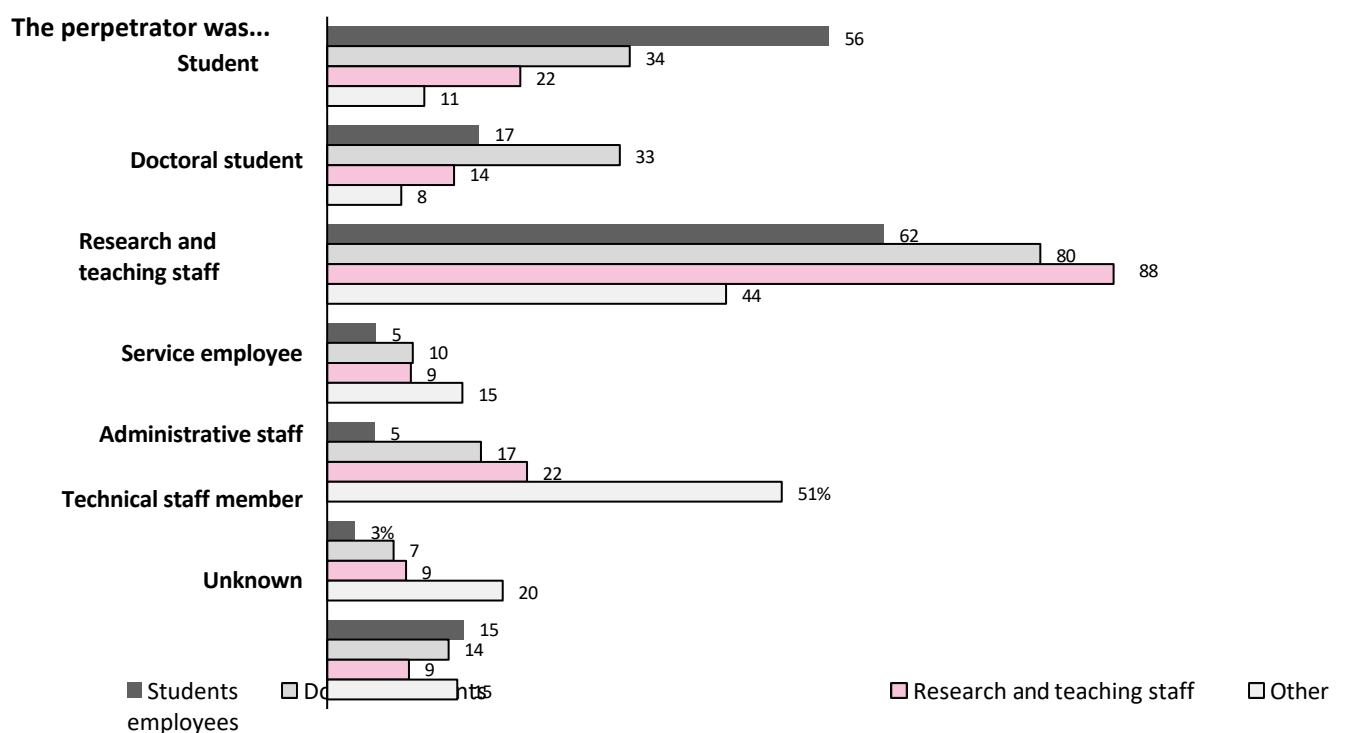


Chart 8. Perpetrators of unequal treatment – responses of individual groups of employees and students. The bars show the total percentage of responses: "once" and "several times".

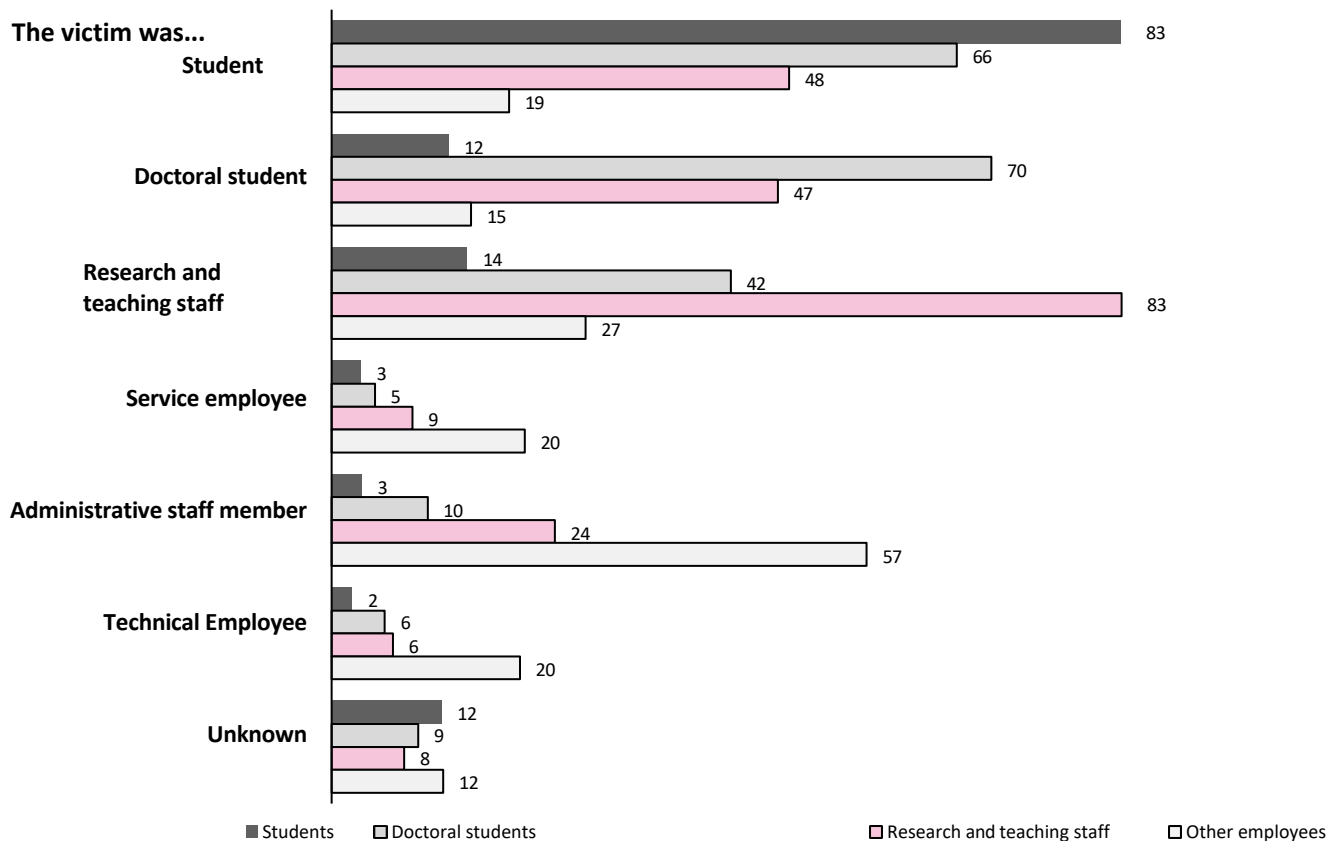


Chart 9. Victims of unequal treatment – responses of individual groups of employees and students. The bars show the total percentage of responses: "once" and "several times".

The following questions referred to the relative status of persons engaging in unequal treatment (cf. Chart 9). If the victim was an employee or doctoral student, the response menu allowed for the selection of one of the following options describing the status of the perpetrator:

- immediate superior
- a person higher up in the university hierarchy but not a direct superior
- a person in a similar position
- a person in a lower position
- none of the above

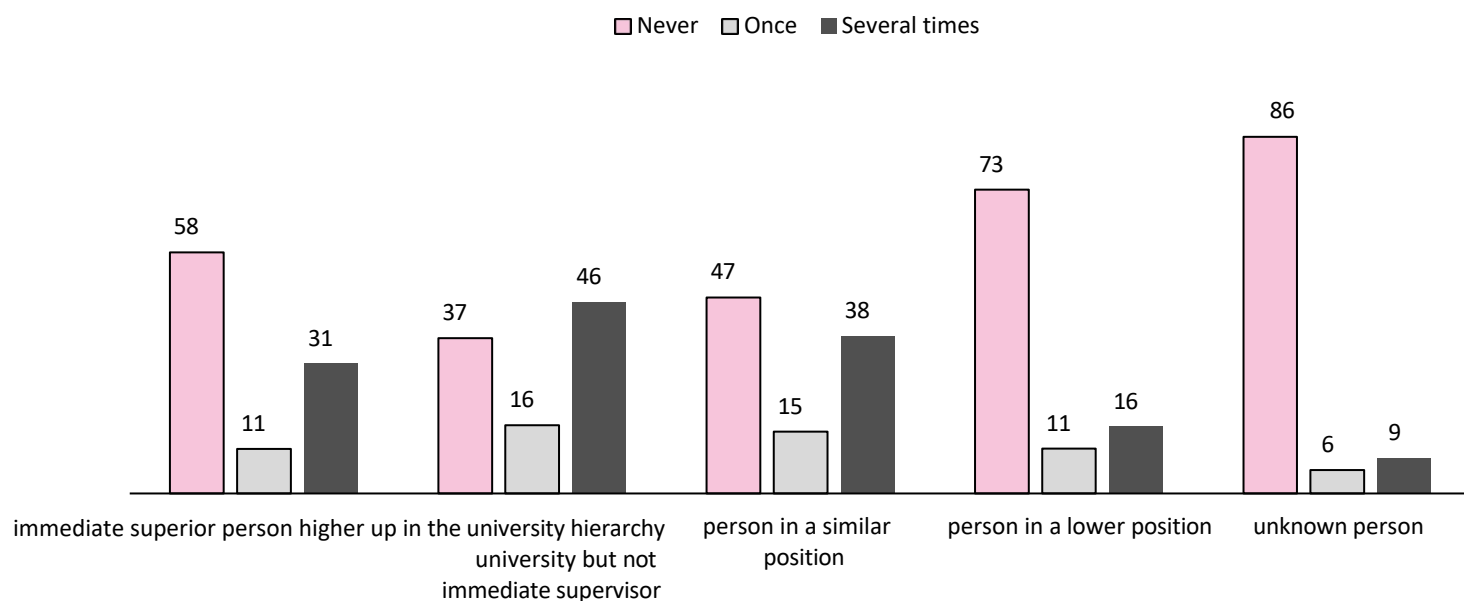


Chart 9. Who was the person responsible for the unequal treatment of the victim? Frequency of responses from UW employees.

The results show that employees and doctoral students most often experience unequal treatment from persons of higher status and those occupying a similar position in the university hierarchy. In turn, every third respondent experienced unequal treatment from their immediate superior (directly or indirectly – as a witness or from hearsay).

Students described the relative relationship between the victim and the perpetrator by selecting options from the following list:

- Supervisor
- Lecturer whose classes I attend
- Employee with whom I am conducting a research project
- Employee with whom I have never had close contact
- Unknown person

The students' responses show that they most often encountered unequal treatment from the lecturers whose classes they attended (see Chart 10). It is worth noting that questions about unequal treatment by a supervisor or

employee(s) with whom the student is carrying out a research project may be underestimated, as not all students have a supervisor and only a few participate in research projects.

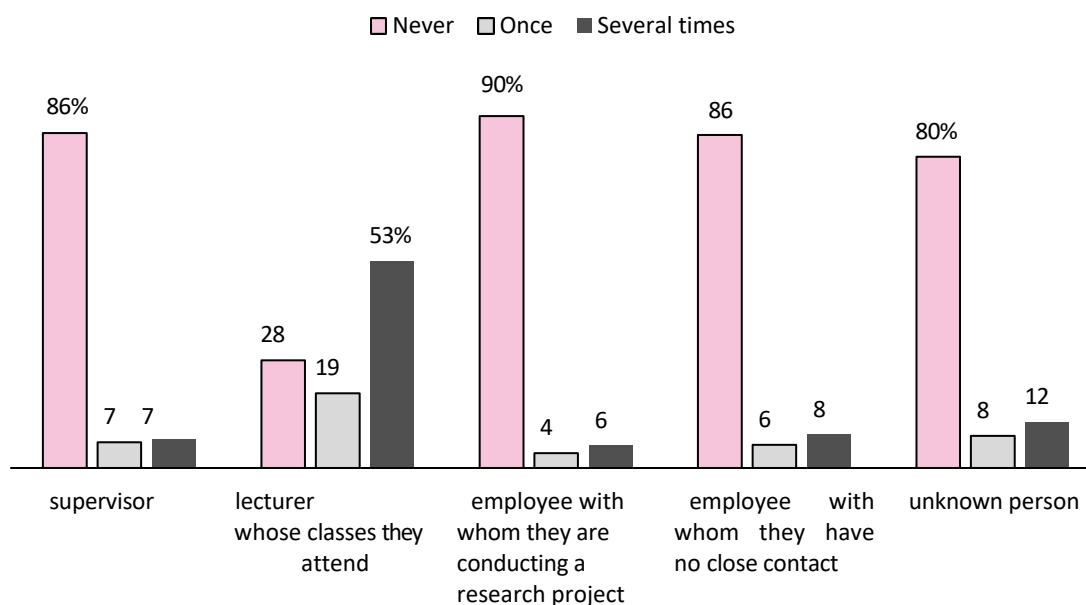


Chart 10. Who was the person who treated the victim unfairly? Frequency of responses from UW students.

Context of unequal treatment

Are there places at the university where employees and students may be particularly vulnerable to unequal treatment? When describing selected acts of unequal treatment, the respondents indicated where in their department or in what situation they occurred (see Chart 11). The response menu allowed for the selection of one of seven predefined answers:

- classes
- exams
- office hours
- office (other than the office during office hours)
- university-related trip
- corridor, cafeteria
- space in front of the faculty

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide their own answers outside of the list.

In the case of questions about situational context, the aggregate results may be misleading, as it is obvious that certain groups of respondents (e.g. students) have more to do with certain contexts (e.g. classes, exams) than others (e.g. administrative staff). Therefore, we present the results immediately broken down by professional category, omitting the aggregate response rates.

Students report the most cases of unequal treatment in the context of classes; they also relatively often point to it in front of the faculty building, in the corridor or in the cafeteria.

Research and teaching staff and other UW employees notice unequal treatment in other places – primarily in offices. Like students, they also relatively often reported cases of unequal treatment in front of the faculty building, in the corridor or in the cafeteria.

The distribution of responses provided by doctoral students is similar to those received from students – they also indicate classes, corridors and the cafeteria as the most common contexts for unequal treatment. Unlike students, but similar to employees, doctoral students relatively often indicate unequal treatment in offices.

Among the open-ended responses, unequal treatment in email correspondence and during meetings is mentioned relatively often. It is also worth noting that **many open-ended responses describe situations that cannot be classified as manifestations of unequal treatment. This indicates a need to educate the UW community about the differences between unequal treatment and other unpleasant experiences related to work/study.**

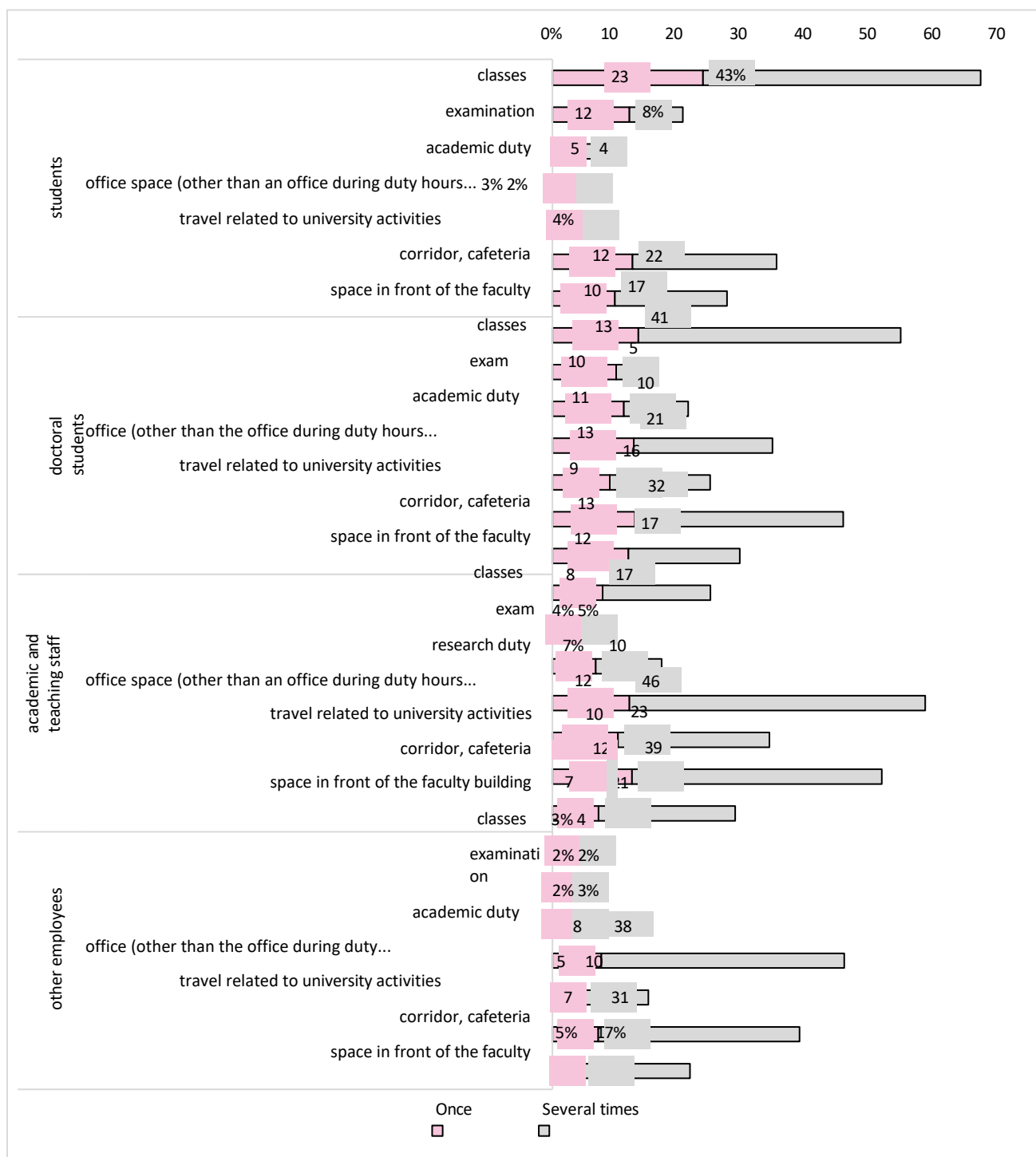


Chart 11. **Where/in what situation did the unequal treatment occur?** Frequency of responses of individual professional groups.

Responding to cases of unequal treatment

The description of an organisation's anti-discrimination culture is based not only on information about discriminatory behaviour, or the lack thereof, but also on information about the reactions of the organisation's members to such behaviour. Such information not only provides an answer to what descriptive norms prevail in the organisation, but also indicates proscriptive and prescriptive norms, i.e. those that describe what behaviours to avoid and what behaviours to pursue. In this context, common reactions such as expressing outrage or criticism in response to discriminatory behaviour indicate the existence of a proscriptive norm. On the other hand, consistently reporting all cases of unequal treatment may indicate the existence of a prescriptive norm.

The survey examined how often people working or studying at the University of Warsaw respond to gender inequality, what their responses are, and what may be the reasons for their lack of response. It was decided to look not only at personal responses, but also at those that can be observed in the environment. Questions about reactions were asked only to those who indicated that they had witnessed or been victims of one or more acts of unequal treatment. First, these events were recalled, then the respondent was asked whether they "tried to counteract the situation in any way" (with the options of answering yes or no) or, in the case of multiple events, whether "in the situations recalled": *I never reacted; I reacted less often than I did react; I reacted as often as I did not react; I reacted more often than I did not react; I always reacted*. For those who indicated that they had witnessed only one event, for the sake of simplicity in describing the results, the responses were coded as "Never" in the case of no reaction, or "Always" in the case of a reaction.

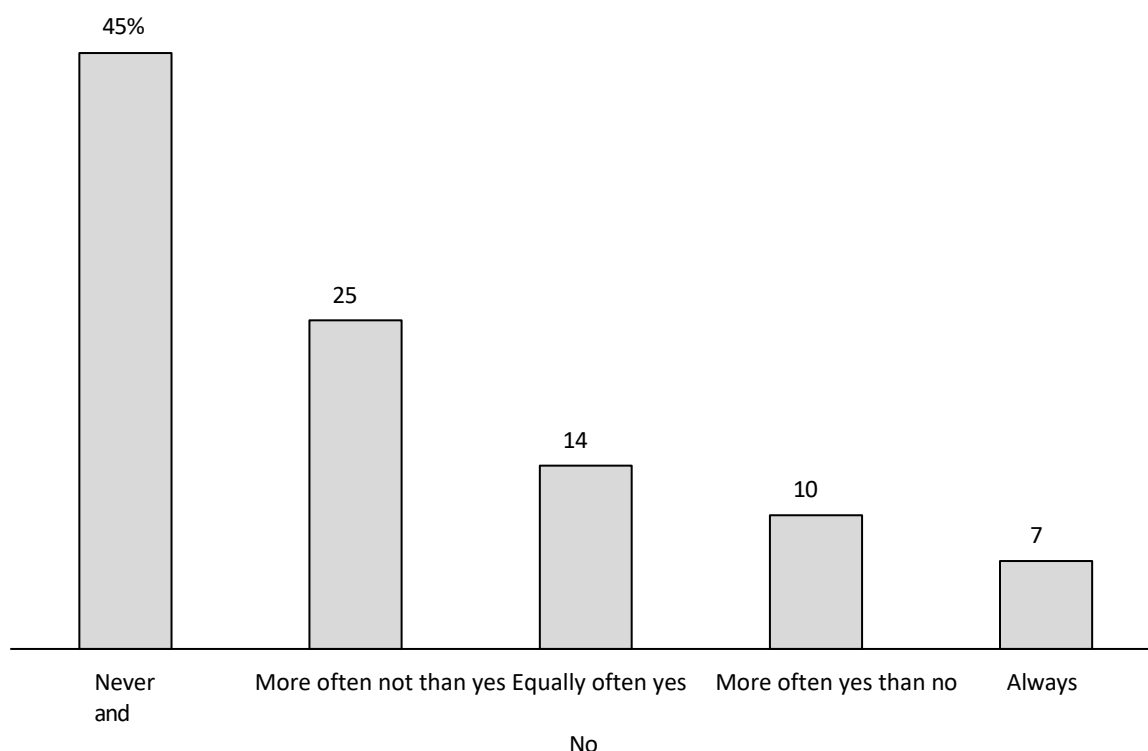


Chart 12. Frequency of responding to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses.

The summary of responses is presented in Chart 12. It shows that the vast majority of acts of unequal treatment are not met with any response. Almost 70% of respondents indicated that they never reacted to such behaviour or more often did not react than did react. Only 17% of respondents indicated that they always or in most cases reacted to unequal treatment.

An additional analysis examined the frequency of responses among different professional groups at the University of Warsaw: students, doctoral students, research and teaching staff, and other employees (see Chart 13).

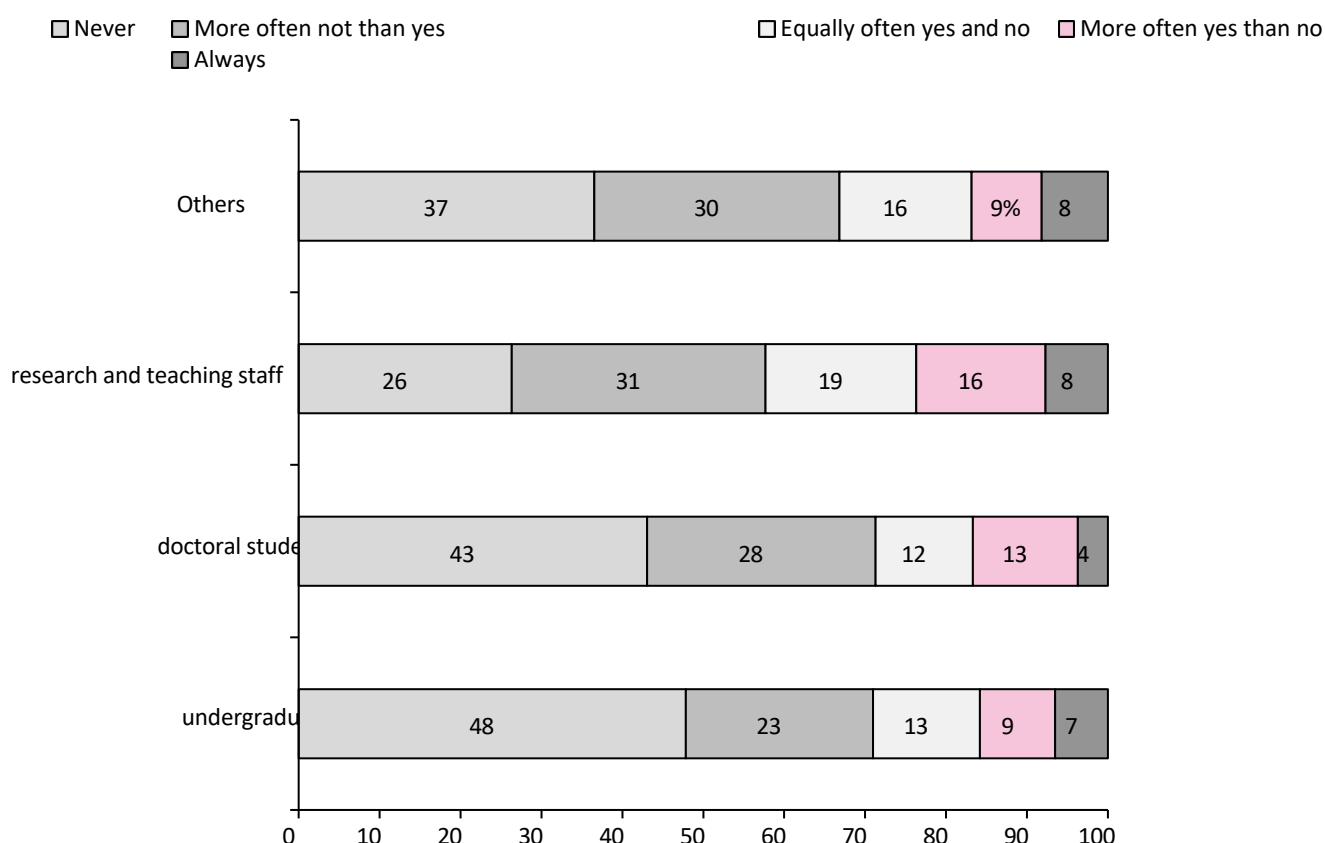


Chart 13. Frequency of reactions to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses from individual occupational groups

Failure to respond to acts of unequal treatment proved to be most common among students (48%) and doctoral students (43%). Among academic and teaching staff, 26% never responded to such behaviour, while among other employees, 37% never responded. At the same time, academic and teaching staff proved to be the group that most often reacted to unequal treatment: 24% reacted always or in most cases. The noticeable disparities can be explained by several factors. Firstly, the average age of academic and teaching staff and other employees is significantly higher than that of students and doctoral students. Secondly, academic and teaching staff and other employees have a higher status within their units, greater perceived job security, and greater overall prestige of their positions. Thirdly, academic and teaching staff and other employees may potentially be covered by a wider range of training courses that address the issues of mutual respect and avoiding discrimination.

Types of responses to unequal treatment

Those who indicated that they had taken at least one action in response to unequal treatment were asked to classify it into one of four possible categories: *confronting the perpetrator*; *approaching the victim/attempting to provide support*; *reporting the incident to the appropriate persons at the university headquarters*; or *reporting the incident to the appropriate persons at the faculty*. Respondents could indicate more than one type of response. The frequency of each response is shown in Figure 14.

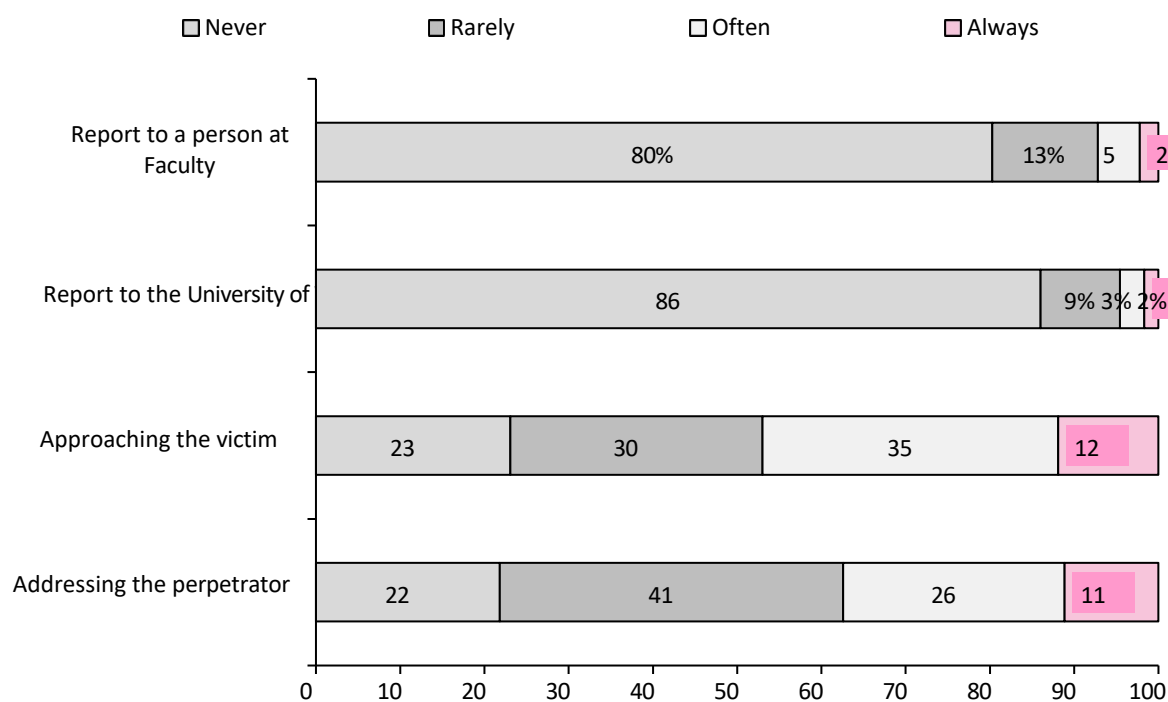


Chart 14. **Ways of responding to unequal treatment.** Frequency of responses.

Among those who reacted to unequal treatment, the most common type of reaction was to approach the victim and try to offer support (47% declared that they always or often reacted in this way). Another common response was to draw the perpetrator's attention to the situation (37% responded this way often or always). On the other hand, reporting unequal treatment to the University of Warsaw headquarters (86% never responded this way) or to the faculty (80% never made such a report) turned out to be a very rare type of response. **This result indicates the potential difficulties that the authorities of the University of Warsaw may have in assessing the prevalence of unequal treatment. Such incidents rarely elicit a response, and when witnesses or victims do respond,**

it is very rare for that response to be based on the University authorities. As a result, only a small percentage of cases that bear the hallmarks of discrimination may reach the central authorities of the University of Warsaw and the faculty authorities.

As part of an additional analysis, the frequency of different types of reactions in individual professional groups at the University of Warsaw was examined (see Chart 15). In almost all of the groups surveyed, the percentage of people reporting cases of unequal treatment to the University of Warsaw headquarters or to people in the faculty was similarly low (between 79% and 87% never reacted in this way). The exception was academic and teaching staff, among whom the percentage of people reporting cases of unequal treatment to the relevant persons at the faculty was the highest (32% declared that they had reacted in this way at least once). The percentages of people who reacted by drawing the perpetrator's attention to the issue and attempting to support the victim were similar in almost all groups. In this case, however, the exception was people categorised as other employees. In this group, almost 40% declared that they had never addressed the perpetrator of unequal treatment, while 47% declared that they had never reacted by attempting to support the victim.

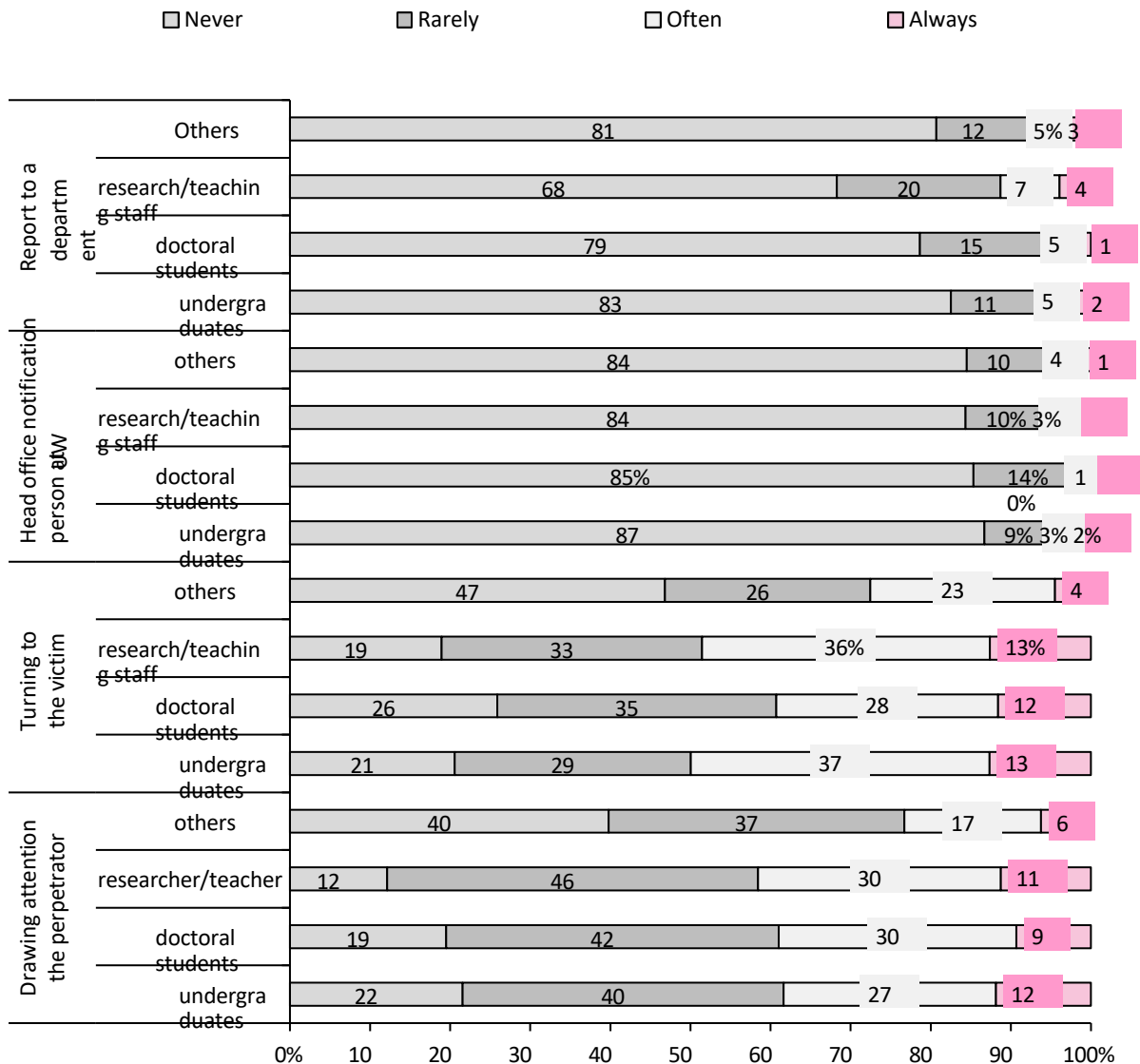


Chart 15. Ways of responding to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses of individual professional groups.

Reasons for not responding to unequal treatment

People who declared that they did not respond to all cases of unequal treatment were asked about the reasons for their lack of response. The response options included several possible reasons: *fear*; *considering the matter trivial*; *lack of knowledge about how to respond*; *another person's prior response*; or *waiting for another person to respond* (see Chart 16). Respondents could indicate one or more reasons for not responding, and in the case of

they witnessed or were victims of multiple discriminatory incidents, they could specify how often each of these reasons contributed to their lack of response.

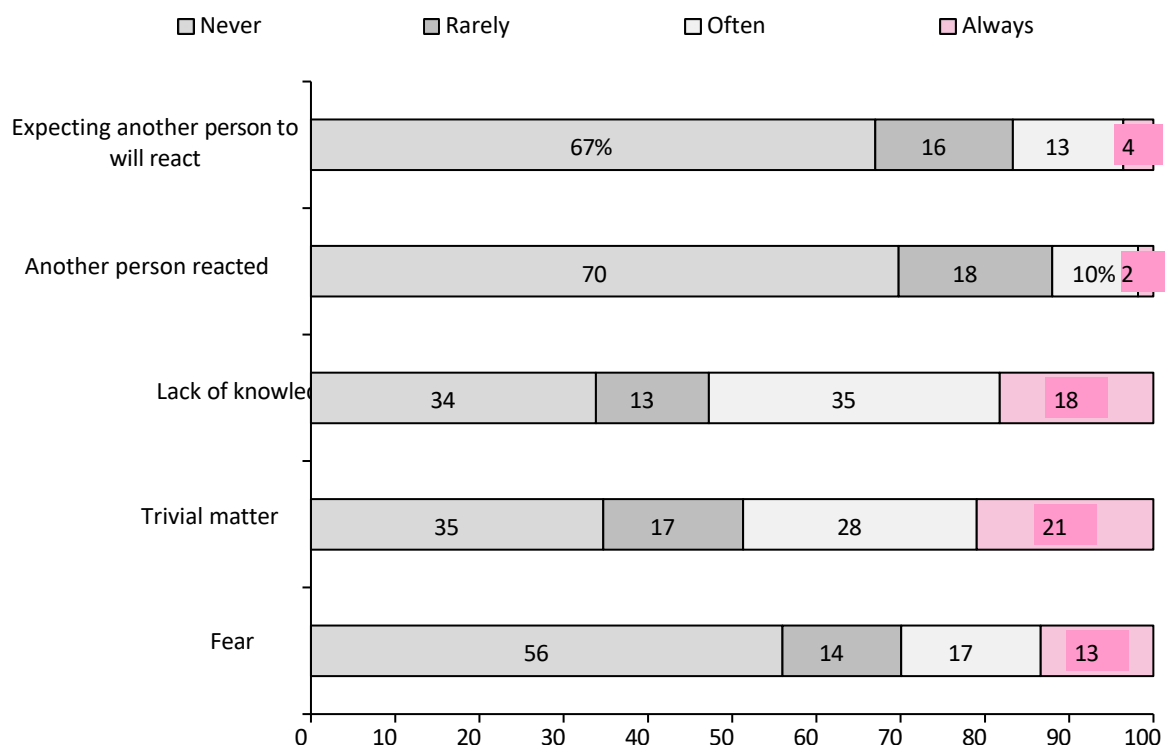


Chart 16. Reasons for not responding to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses.

The most frequently cited reason for not responding was a lack of knowledge about how to behave in a given situation (53% of respondents indicated this reason as always or often occurring). An equally common reason for not reacting was considering the matter too trivial and not requiring intervention (49% of respondents indicated this reason *always* or *often*). These two results can help to determine the direction of further actions to reduce unequal treatment. Firstly, they indicate the need for training on how to counteract unequal treatment. Secondly, they point to the need for additional education on anti-discrimination standards and to indicate that some behaviours may only appear trivial at first glance. It should also be noted that almost 30% of respondents indicated a lack of response due to fear of consequences. By its very nature, a university is a highly hierarchical institution. Therefore, fear of drawing attention to a person of higher status seems natural. Further training should take this factor into account

factor. It also seems necessary for the university authorities to make a strong statement that such behaviour is not acceptable, regardless of the position held.

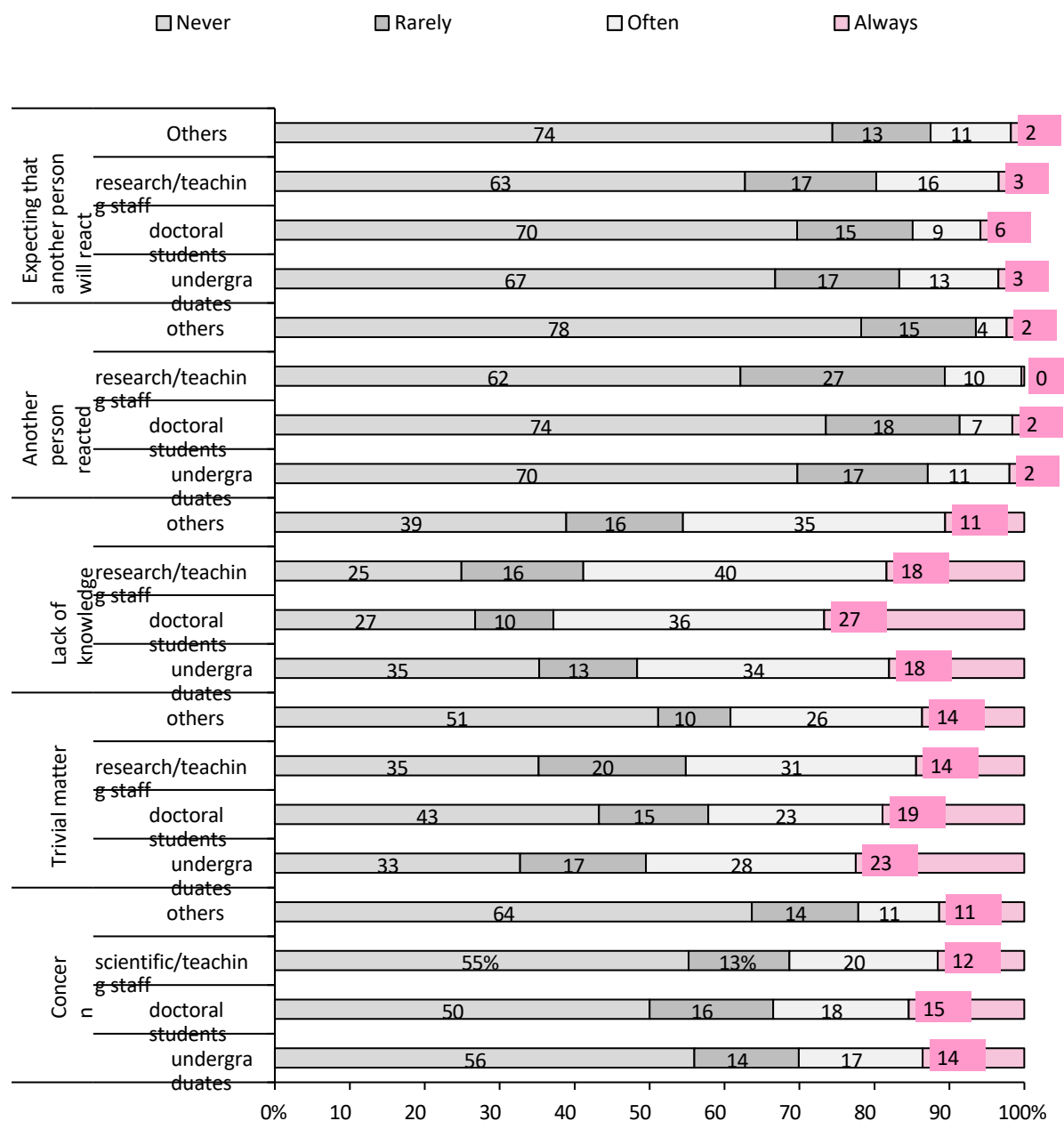


Chart 17. Reasons for not responding to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses of individual groups.

The reasons for not responding to cases of unequal treatment were analysed again broken down by individual occupational groups (see Chart 17). Among almost all groups

Between 31% and 33% of respondents indicated that their lack of response was due to fear. The exception was the remaining employees, among whom 22% indicated fear as the reason that always or almost always prevented them from reacting. Considering the matter trivial was the most common reason for not reacting in the group of students (51% of students indicated that this factor prevented them from reacting always or often). On the other hand, triviality was the least frequently cited factor preventing a reaction among other employees (40% of other employees indicated that this was always or often the reason for not reacting). Lack of knowledge about how to behave was most often cited by doctoral students (63% of people in this group indicated that this was always or often the reason). On the other hand, the lack of knowledge was least often cited as a reason by people in the category of other employees (46% indicated that this was often or always the reason). All professional groups similarly rarely indicated that another person's reaction was the reason for their own lack of reaction (70 to 78% indicated that this was never the reason). The exception in this case were academic and teaching staff, where 62% indicated that the reaction of others was never the reason for their lack of reaction, and 38% indicated that at least once the reaction of others prevented them from intervening. In all groups, the expectation that someone else would react was rarely cited as a reason for not reacting (between 67% and 74% of respondents stated that this had never been a reason for not reacting).

Reactions of others in the environment

People who reported experiencing or witnessing unequal treatment and also indicated that other people were involved in the incident were asked about the reaction of others to the behaviour in question. They were asked how often third parties reacted to unequal treatment (*Never reacted; Reacted less often than they did not react; They reacted as often as they did not react; They reacted more often than they did not react; They always reacted*). The percentages of responses are shown in Chart 18.

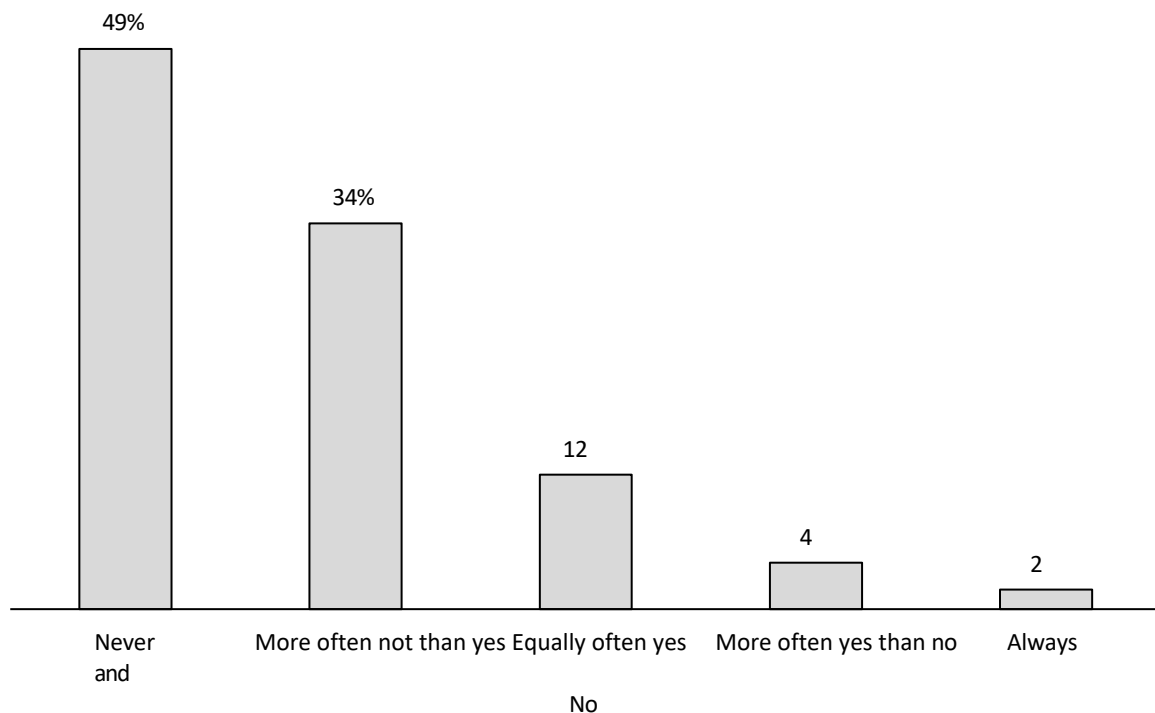


Chart 18. Observed frequency of other people's reactions to unequal treatment. Frequency of responses.

Analysis of the distribution of responses indicates that, according to participants, third parties most often did not react to acts of unequal treatment (83% indicated that third parties never reacted or did not react in most situations). Only 6% of respondents observed that acts of unequal treatment were met with a reaction from other people.

Respondents were also asked about the observed reactions of other people. As with the questions about their own reactions, four categories of possible responses were presented: *confronting the perpetrator*; *approaching the victim/attempting to provide support*; *reporting the incident to university authorities*; or *reporting the incident to faculty members*. Respondents could select more than one type of response and, in the case of witnessing or being a victim of multiple incidents, indicate the frequency of different categories of responses. The frequency of responses is shown in Figure 19.

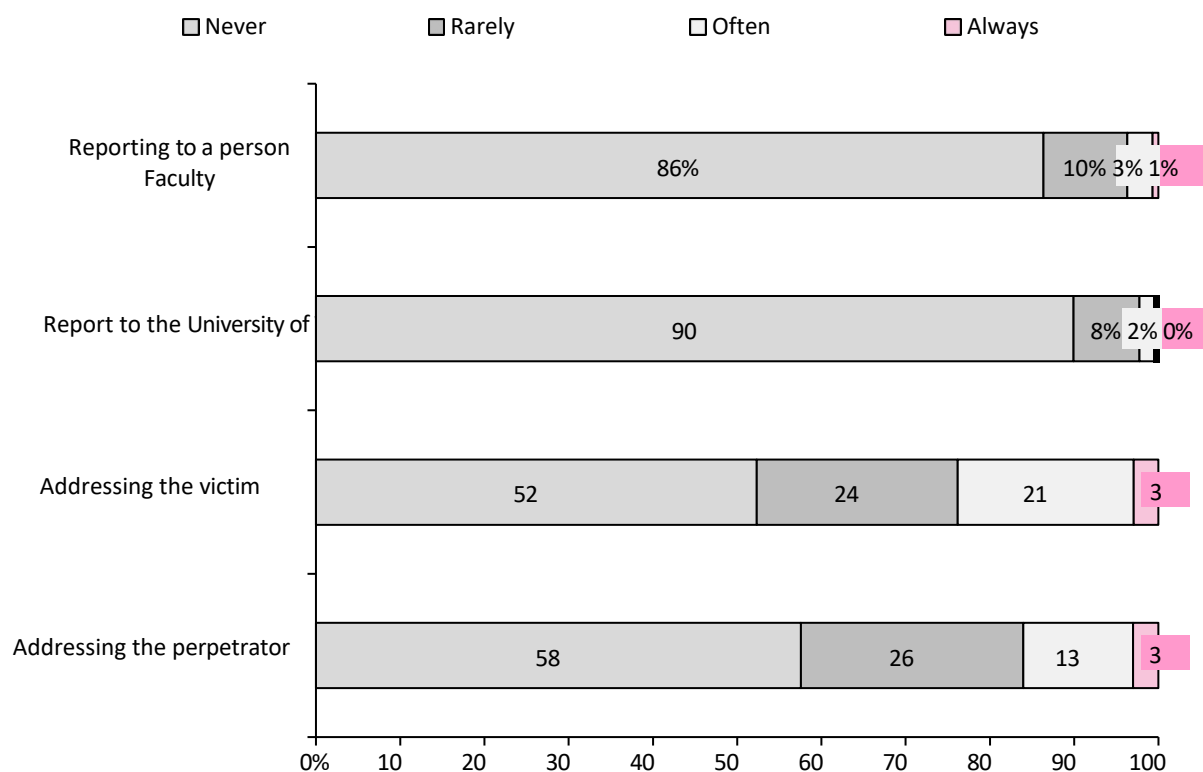


Chart 19. **Observed reactions of others to cases of unequal treatment.** Frequency of responses.

The observed frequencies of other people's reactions turned out to be consistent with the respondents' own declared reactions. The most frequently indicated reaction of other people was to approach the victim and offer support (24% indicated that they observed this reaction of others often or always), as well as to draw the perpetrator's attention to the situation (16% indicated that they observed this reaction of others often or always). The least frequently observed reactions were reporting the incident to the university administration (90% never observed such a reaction) or to the faculty (86% never observed such a reaction). However, it should be noted that these percentages only apply to observed reactions to cases of unequal treatment. It is therefore possible that other people reacted, but the participants in the study were not aware of this (for example, other people may have taken the perpetrator aside to talk to them or written an anonymous report to someone at the faculty).

Reactions of others and own reactions

In the last part of the analyses presented in this section, we decided to examine whether there is a correlation between the frequency of reactions to unequal treatment of others and the frequency of one's own reactions to such behaviour. On the one hand, observing that other people react to unequal treatment may relieve one of the responsibility to react: people who often observe others' reactions to unequal treatment are less likely to react themselves in similar situations. In this case, a negative correlation between the frequency of others' reactions and the frequency of one's own reactions to unequal treatment can be expected. On the other hand, observing others' reactions to unequal treatment may model specific types of behaviour and lead to the formation of prescriptive norms about how a person associated with the UW should behave in certain situations. If this is the case, people who frequently observe others' reactions to unequal treatment will also be more likely to react to similar behaviour; the correlation between the frequency of others' reactions and the frequency of one's own reactions will be positive.

The analyses clearly showed a positive correlation between the frequency of observing others' reactions and one's own reactions, $r^2(2442) = 0.40$, $p^3 < 0.001$. **The more often participants observed others' reactions to unequal treatment, the more often they themselves undertook similar reactions.** This relationship indicates the important role of prescriptive norms and social behaviour modelling.

² Correlation (r) is a measure of the relationship between two quantitative variables – it indicates the "sign" and strength of the relationship. A positive correlation means that high values of one variable are accompanied by high values of the other. A negative correlation means that high values of one variable are accompanied by low values of the other. It takes values from -1 (strong negative relationship) to 1 (strong positive relationship). A value of 0 indicates no relationship between the variables.

³ The level of statistical significance (p) refers to the result of the correlation analysis. The lower the value (p), the greater the level of confidence we have in the results obtained. If the value (p) is very small, instead of the exact value, information is provided that the value is less than one thousandth $p < 0.001$.

Perceived institutional norms

In the first part of this report, we presented the frequency of various types of behaviour that we classified as examples of unequal treatment. In the current section of questions, we wanted to find out how respondents perceive institutional norms, i.e. how, in their opinion, the institution where they work/study responds to acts of unequal treatment listed in the list we prepared. We also asked whether women or men are more often victims of particular types of unequal treatment.

Perceived norms of responding to unequal treatment

The respondents once again reviewed the list of acts of unequal treatment prepared by us (see the chapter *on the prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment*). We asked them to specify for each of them how it is perceived in their department, choosing an answer from the following options:

- it is recognised as a problem and efforts are made to resolve it
- it is recognised as a problem, but I do not see any attempts to solve it
- it is presented as normal
- I have not encountered this phenomenon
- I know nothing about how such phenomena are dealt with

As shown in Chart 20, **most respondents declared that they had not encountered the phenomena we listed. Another clear trend concerned the respondents' declared ignorance – for each question, nearly a quarter of respondents (20-24%) declared that they knew nothing about how such phenomena were dealt with in their unit.**

Among the generally rarely reported behaviours of inequality, the most common were comments or jokes about stereotypes of both women and men, as well as comments with sexual undertones, better or worse assessment or treatment based on gender, addressing others in an inappropriately familiar manner, comments about clothing or appearance that are inappropriate to the situation, and questioning women's professional competence and discouraging them from taking on

more difficult challenges. In almost all cases, respondents believed that the situations mentioned were considered a problem in their departments and were usually addressed, while less often they were considered a problem but no attempts were made to resolve them. In the case of comments, jokes and inappropriate familiarity, 7 to 14% of respondents declared that such situations were considered normal in their department. In other cases, it was 6% or less.

As can be seen, the problems encountered were mainly various types of comments and jokes. The rarest were persistent attempts to make contact in private matters and sexual propositions. Inappropriate or unwanted violations of personal space, such as closing physical distance or touching in an unwanted manner, also occurred rarely. **Even if sexual propositions and similar situations were not frequent, it is worth noting that 5-8% of respondents stated that their department was not attempting to resolve this problem or that such behaviour was presented as normal. With such serious phenomena, it is difficult to downplay even such a small percentage of responses.**

- ☐ ... are recognised as a problem and efforts are being made to resolve them.
 ☐ ... are recognised as a problem, but I do not see any attempts to solve them.
 ☐ ... are presented as normal.
 ☐ I have not encountered this phenomenon.
 ☐ I know nothing about how to deal with this type of behaviour.

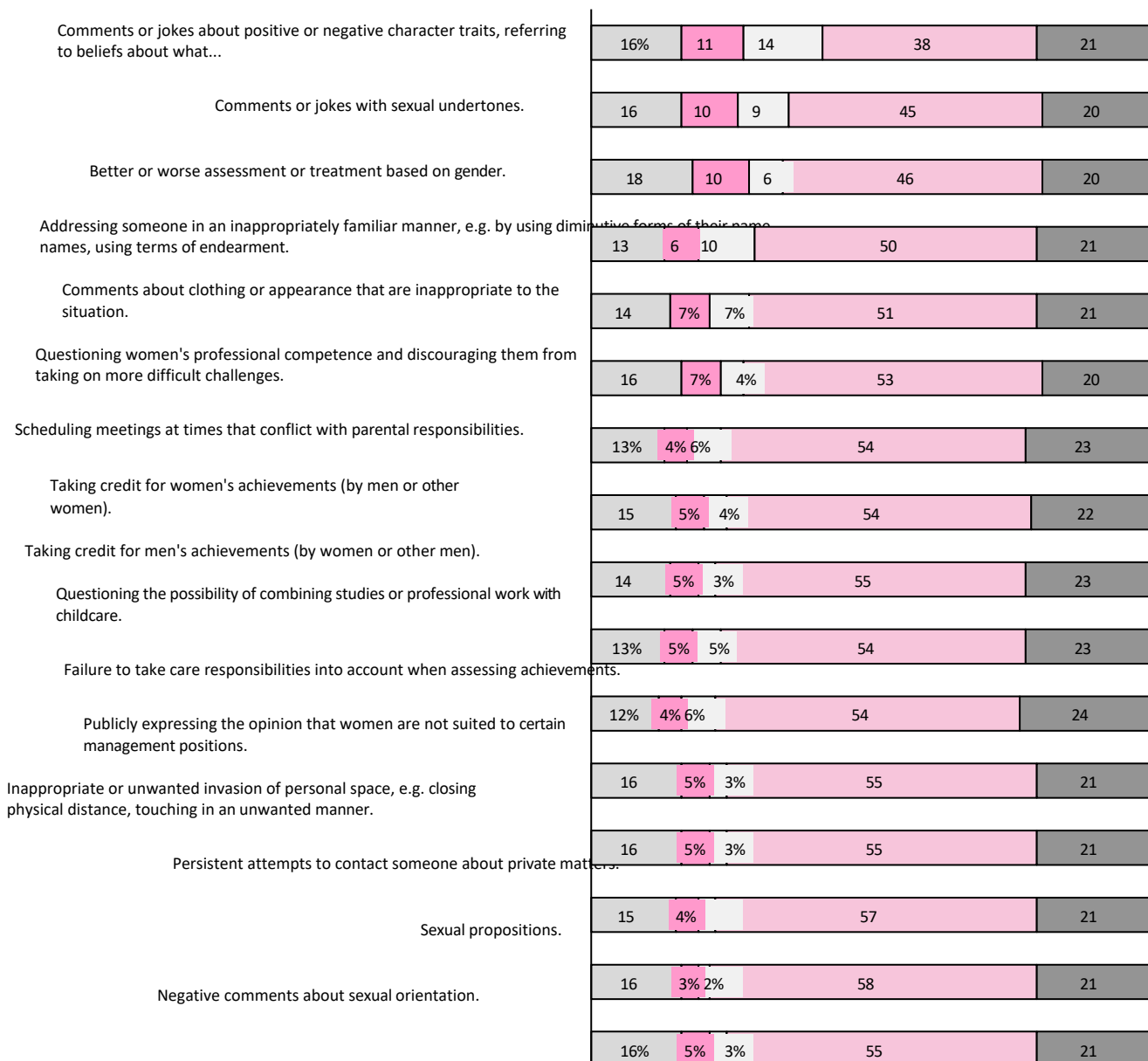


Chart 20. What reactions do the phenomena listed below elicit in your department?

Frequency of responses.



- ☐ ... are recognised as a problem and efforts are being made to solve them.
- ☐ ... are recognised as a problem, but I do not see any attempts to solve them.
- ☐ ... are presented as normal.
- ☐ I have not encountered this phenomenon.
- ☐ I do not know anything about how such phenomena are dealt with.

Chart 21. What reactions do the phenomena listed below provoke at your faculty?

Frequency of responses from students and doctoral students.

An analysis of responses broken down by professional group (see Charts 21-22) reveals interesting differences between them. **Students were most likely to believe that the phenomena we mentioned are considered a problem in their departments and that efforts are being made to resolve them.** Such responses were less common among doctoral students and even less common among

employees. For example, according to students, the most frequently reported comments and jokes with stereotypical content are usually considered a problem and efforts are made to resolve them, while all other groups indicated that the dominant reaction was that *they were presented as normal*. The next most frequent in the aggregate results were comments or jokes with sexual undertones, most often reported by doctoral students, slightly less often by academic and teaching staff and students. Of these three professional groups, students declared the greatest knowledge of how such behaviour might be responded to by the institution, and the most frequently indicated response was to recognise the situation as a problem and seek solutions. One in four doctoral students and academic/teaching staff were unsure whether such comments would be considered a problem in their unit. However, among the solutions indicated, we did not observe a clear dominance of the most desirable one.

The reactions of institutions to situations that most clearly violate the culture of equality at the University of Warsaw – sexual propositions and violations of personal space – also proved to be unknown to a significant proportion of respondents. It is worth noting that in this case, too, students were less likely to indicate a lack of knowledge about the institution's response to such phenomena (20%) than other respondents, especially doctoral students (29-24%) and academic and teaching staff (27%). Among students, 4-8% indicate that the institution's response to such behaviour would differ from the desired one – it would consist in considering the situation normal or recognising it as a problem without seeking a solution. Among doctoral students and academic and teaching staff, this percentage is 6-13%. Other employees were less likely to encounter this type of behaviour.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING STAFF

OTHER EMPLOYEES

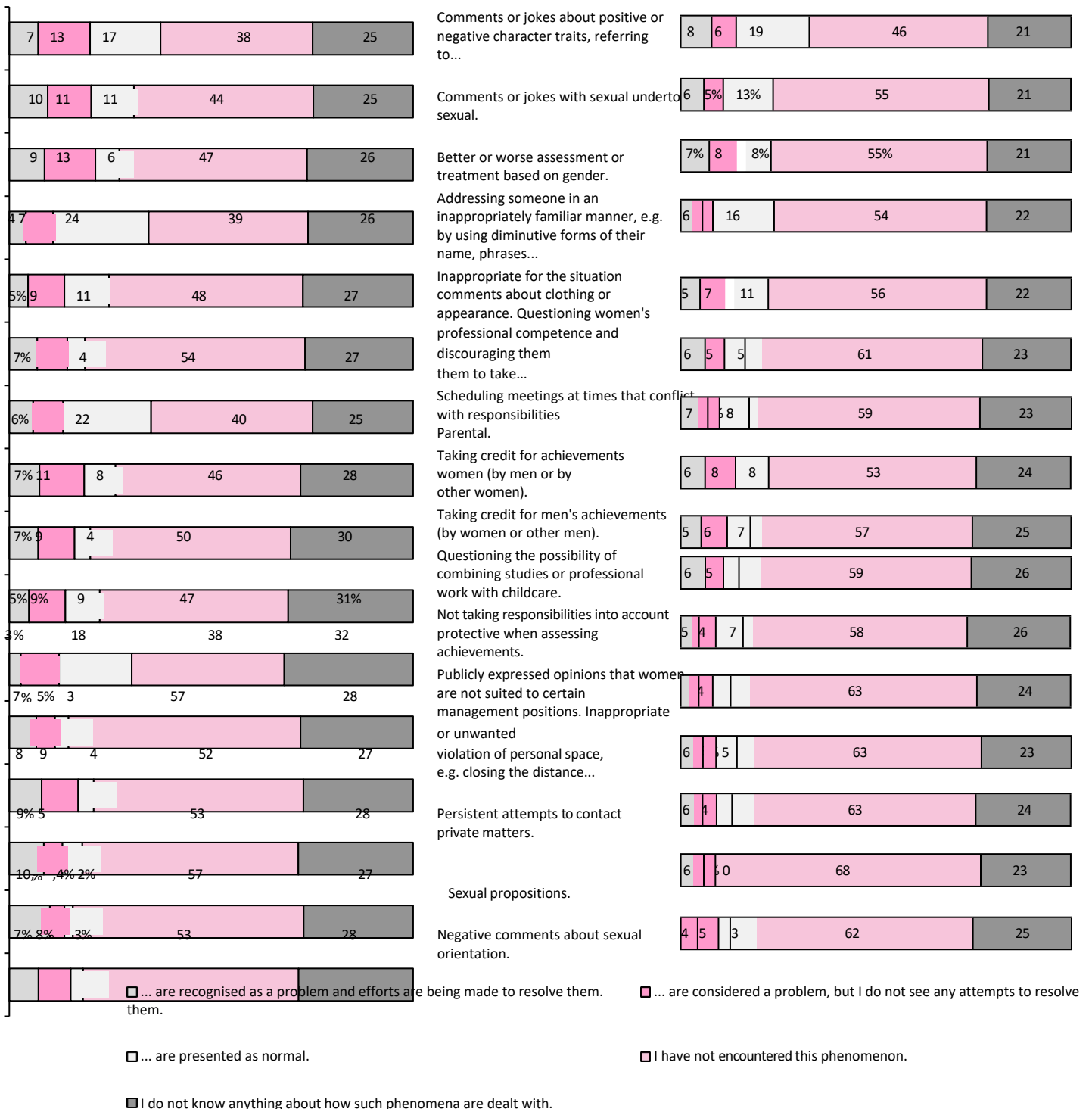


Chart 22. What reactions do the phenomena listed below elicit at your faculty?

Frequency of responses from academic and teaching staff and other employees.

Unequal treatment of women vs. men

In the next question, respondents were presented with a list of situations and asked to indicate whether they affected men or women more often in their department. Responses were given on the following scale:

- 1 - definitely more often men
- 2 - slightly more often men
- 3 - equally often for both genders
- 4 - slightly more often women
- 5 - definitely more often women

In addition to calculating the average responses, we checked whether they differed statistically from the middle of the scale, i.e. from response 3, which means that the phenomenon occurs with similar frequency for both genders.

As shown in Chart 23, the following situations were perceived as affecting women more often than men employed/studying at the University of Warsaw:

- Questioning skills and knowledge on the basis of gender.
- Questioning career development opportunities based on gender.
- Comments about a person's personal life.
- Dressing in a certain way for examinations/important presentations for fear of being assessed less favourably otherwise.
- Questioning their professional competence because of a different, e.g. less confrontational, manner of speaking and self-presentation.
- Performing laborious but less prestigious tasks (e.g. organisational).
- Better treatment due to gender.
- Better grades due to gender.
- Fewer opportunities for an academic career/good academic performance if they have children.
- Postponing the decision to start a family due to work/study requirements.
- Experiencing difficulties in personal life due to work/study requirements.

It is easy to see that all these situations imply a negative experience for the person concerned. In the study, all of them were indicated as occurring significantly more often to women (compared to the middle of the scale).

Situations that more often involve men are listed below:

- Lecturers treating students as experts.
- Lecturers singling out students.
- Taking the floor in discussions during classes, academic meetings or conferences.
- Encouragement to take on managerial roles in units (department, institute, faculty).
- Encouraging them to take on managerial roles in research projects.
- Faster promotion.

This list consists of situations implying positive experiences related to various forms of recognition by third parties – lecturers or employers. All these experiences were perceived as occurring significantly more often for men (compared to the middle of the scale).

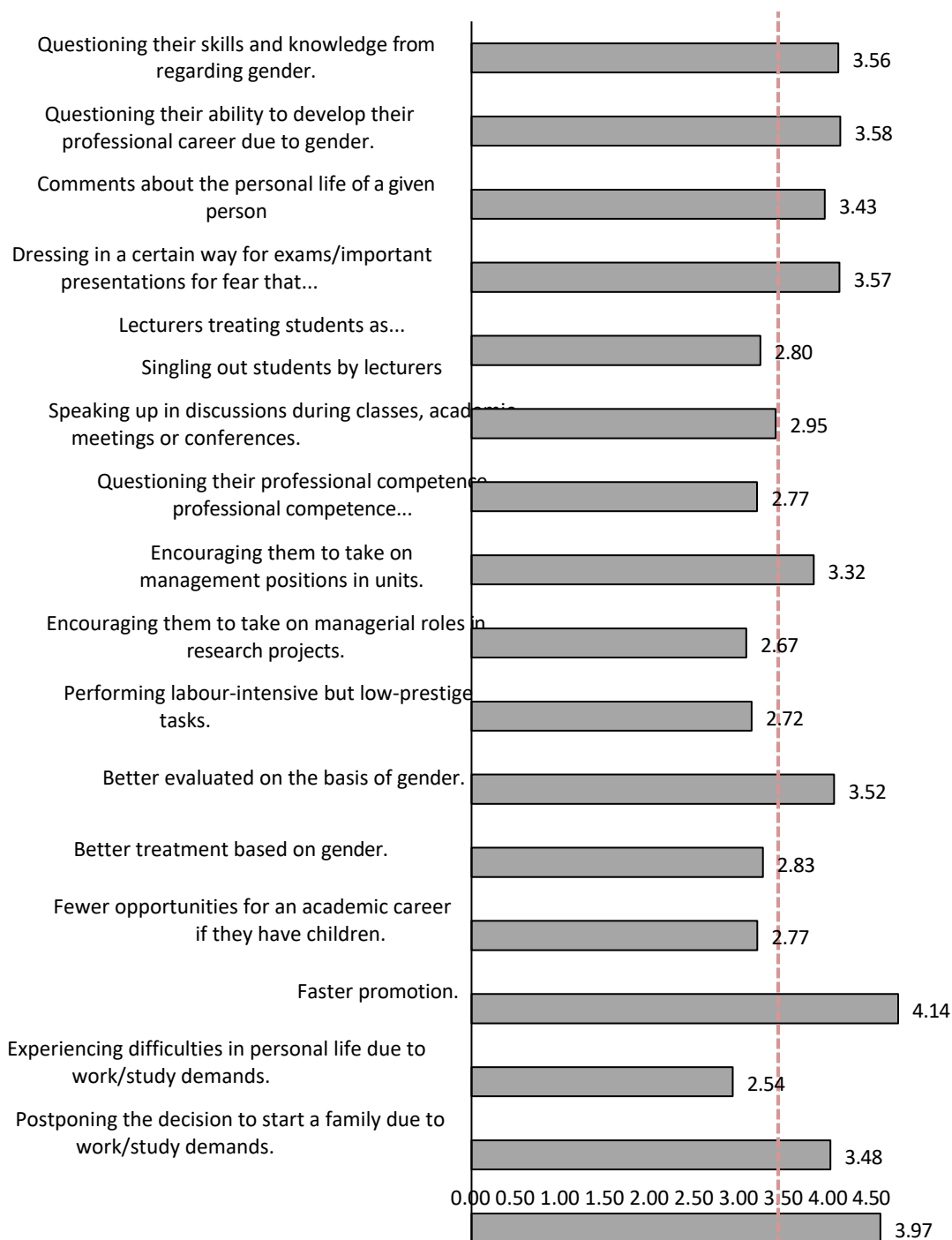


Chart 23. In your department, do the situations described above affect men or women more often?

Frequency of responses.

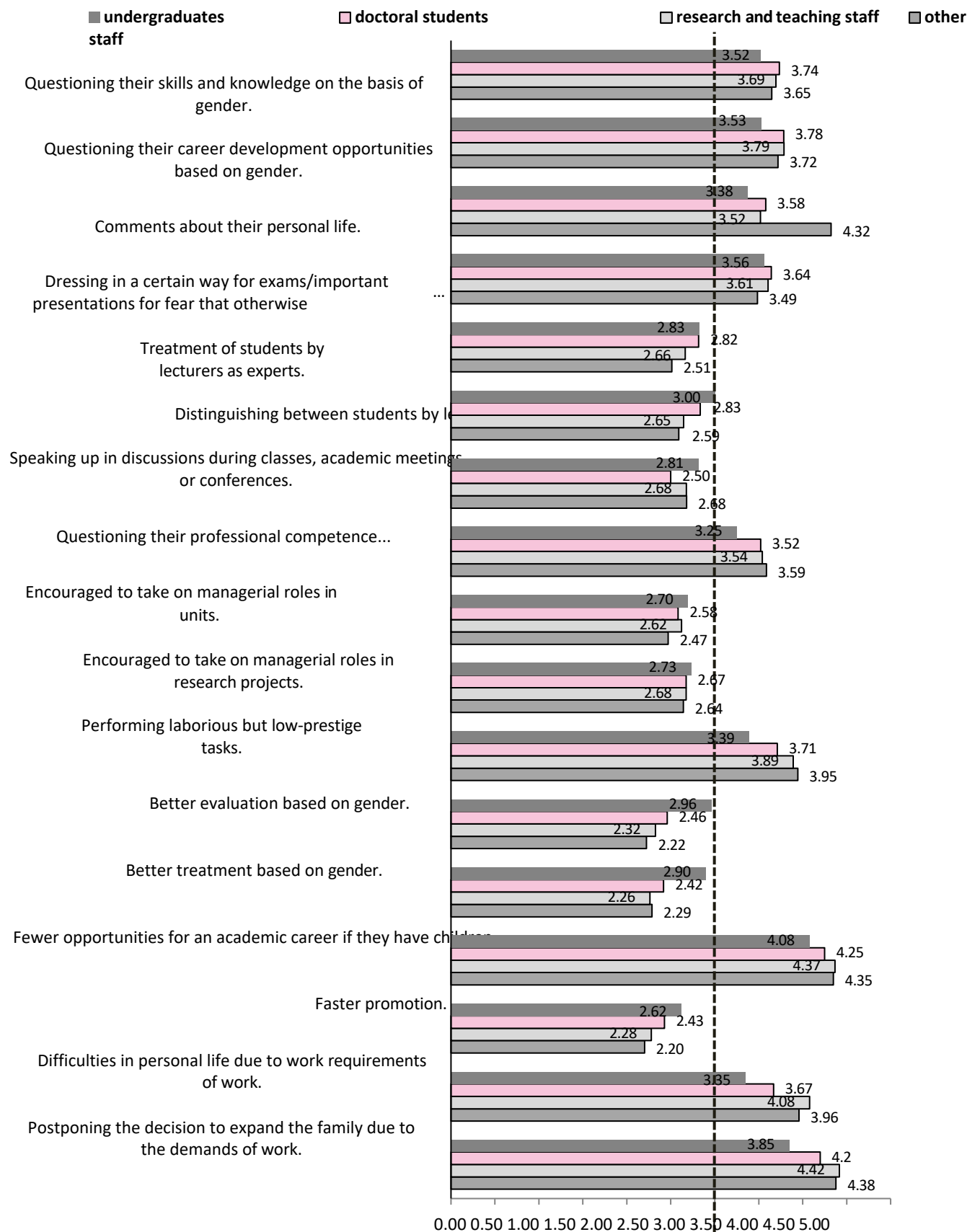


Chart 24. In your department, do the situations described above affect men or women more often?

Frequency of responses broken down by professional groups.

An analysis of the results broken down by professional groups (Chart 24) shows that students, doctoral students and employees see the situation of women and men at the University of Warsaw in a similar way. The averages for professional groups, similar to those calculated for the aggregate data (see Chart 23), deviated significantly from the middle of the scale in the directions described above. The exception was two questions concerning better assessment and distinction of male and female students on the basis of gender. Students indicated that both of these behaviours apply equally to women and men. In the case of the second question (recognition based on gender), doctoral students also gave the same answer.

Unequal treatment and well-being

In the last study, we explored how unequal treatment is linked to the mental well-being and well-being in the workplace of students and employees of the University of Warsaw. Well-being is understood here as the absence of problems related to anxiety, fatigue, uncertainty about the future, insomnia, depression and similar issues, both in general and specifically in the context of the workplace.

Respondents answered questions in this section on the following measures:

- life satisfaction scale (SWLS, *Satisfaction With Life Scale*, scale reliability 0.89)
- abbreviated version of *Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale* (3 items: *I consider myself to be at least as valuable as other people; I consider myself to have many positive qualities; I like myself*, scale reliability 0.9)
- a shortened scale of general mental well-being, based on the GHQ (*General Health Questionnaire*), respondents answered questions about how often they had experienced problems such as anxiety, insomnia, fatigue and depression in the last year (scale range from 1 – not at all, 4 – very often, scale reliability 0.78)
- an original scale of mental well-being at work, based on existing theories of well-being at work, respondents answered 4 questions about how often they had been bothered by the following problems: *Constant thinking about studies/work, uncertainty about professional future, feeling of lack of support in studies/work, difficulties in balancing professional and private life* (scale range from 1 – not at all, 4 – very often, scale reliability 0.76).
- Stress in the workplace: *How much stress do you feel due to your studies/work?* (scale range 0–11)
- General health: *How would you rate your overall health?* (scale range 0–11).

Characteristics of well-being in individual groups.

Both in the entire study group and in individual occupational subgroups, men and women did not differ significantly in terms of their declared level of self-esteem and general life satisfaction. However, differences between the groups are evident in terms of general mental wellbeing and mental wellbeing related to the workplace.

Students ($M^4 = 2.49$; $SD = 0.83$; $MD = 0.31$; $p < 0.001$), doctoral students ($M = 2.5$; $SD = 0.85$; $MD = 0.26$; $p < 0.001$) and academic and teaching staff ($M = 2.51$; $SD = 0.82$; $MD = 0.29$; $p < 0.001$) reported lower overall mental well-being than other employees ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 0.90$). Only in this group did men and women not differ in terms of well-being. In contrast, male students, doctoral students, and research and teaching staff reported significantly higher well-being than female students, doctoral students, and research and teaching staff, respectively. Statistical information on the differences between women and men in the groups described is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences in mental wellbeing between men and women in individual groups covered by the study.						
Group	Women		Men		Difference in averages	Significance of difference of averages
	Average	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
male and female students	2.36	0.80	2.73	0.83	-0.37	< 0.001
doctoral students and female doctoral students	2.39	0.82	2.77	0.84	-0.38	< 0.001
researchers and teaching staff	2.38	0.77	2.72	0.86	-0.34	< 0.001
Others employees	2.75	0.89	2.95	0.93	-0.20	insignificant ⁵

⁴ In the following description, the symbols used mean: (M) mean for the group, (SD) standard deviation for the group, i.e. a measure showing how varied the results are within the group, (MD) the difference between the means of the two groups being compared, (p) the level of statistical significance relating to the difference between the groups. The lower the value (p), the greater the level of confidence we have in the results obtained. If the p -value is very small, instead of the exact value, information is provided that the value is less than one thousandth $p < 0.001$. A confidence level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted as the criterion for statistical significance. (⁵) If the value (p) obtained during the analysis was greater than the accepted confidence level (0.05), there is no basis for concluding that the compared groups differ from each other or that the observed relationship is not a coincidence. In this case, it was described as "insignificant".

A similar pattern of results was found for the category of well-being at work. It was highest in the group of other employees ($M = 2.97$; $SD = 0.86$), slightly lower for students ($M = 2.62$; $SD = 0.83$), and lowest in the group of doctoral students ($M = 2.43$; $SD = 0.89$), and research and teaching staff ($M = 2.40$; $SD = 0.90$). Other employees reported higher well-being than students ($MD = 0.36$; $p < 0.001$), doctoral students ($MD = 0.55$; $p < 0.001$), and research and teaching staff ($MD = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$). On average, students had lower well-being than other employees, but higher than research and teaching staff ($MD = 0.19$, $p = 0.001$) and doctoral students ($MD = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$).

Once again, male students, doctoral students, and academic and teaching staff reported significantly higher well-being at their place of study/work than female students, doctoral students, and academic and teaching staff, respectively. Across the entire study group, female doctoral students and female academic and teaching staff reported the lowest well-being at work. Statistical information on the differences between women and men in the groups described is presented in Table 2.

Differences in mental wellbeing at work between men and women in individual groups covered by the study.						
Group	Women		Men		Difference in Averages	Significance of the difference between means
	Mean	Deviation Standard	Mean	Deviation Standard		
male and female students	2.51	0.83	2.80	0.81	-0.29	< 0.001
doctoral students	2.21	0.86	2.72	0.87	-0.51	< 0.001
researchers and teaching staff	2.22	0.83	2.69	0.93	-0.47	< 0.001
Others employees	2.93	0.91	3.09	0.88	-0.16	insignificant

These results are as interesting as they are difficult to interpret. It is commonly assumed that women's lower scores on mental stress scales may be due to greater social acceptance of women talking about such difficulties. However, this interpretation is contradicted in the current study by the fact that in terms of general self-assessment or satisfaction with use, women did not score lower than men in any of the groups. What

more, in both well-being scales in the group of other employees, there was no difference between the sexes at all. This indicates that **the difference in the reported psychological burden, both in general and in the context of work, to the detriment of female researchers and teachers, doctoral students and students, cannot be simply explained by women's greater tendency to admit to difficulties.**

One possible explanation is that women working in science, unlike female administrative staff, perform a social role that is inconsistent with gender stereotypes and may incur greater emotional costs as a result. It may be (subjectively or objectively) more difficult for them to maintain this role, and the work environment may be (subjectively or objectively) less friendly to them. Another explanation is related to the greater burden of non-work responsibilities on women. It cannot be ruled out that the actual or perceived level of workload at work and, at the same time, the opportunities for recognition, support, promotion and stable prospects differ for male and female doctoral students and men and women in academic positions. In any case, these results indicate a need for greater institutional support for female lecturers, researchers and doctoral students, as these groups subjectively find it most difficult in the university environment and have the lowest levels of well-being.

In order to deepen understanding of the results obtained ⁶) and uncertainty about their professional future (effect size $\eta^2 = 0.069$), while female research and teaching staff reported more fatigue than male staff in their group (effect size 0.088, which is the largest difference among all reported differences) and also greater uncertainty about their professional future than men in their group (effect size $\eta^2 = 0.056$). These differences may provide guidance for further research to explain the differences in mental well-being in general and in the context of work to the detriment of female doctoral students and female research and teaching staff.

⁶ In the above analysis, the effect size is the chi-square statistic. This measure can be understood as the percentage of variance in one trait (e.g., well-being) explained by another (e.g., gender) and can be compared directly between groups.

Relationships of treatment between and experiences

For the purposes of this analysis, a composite index was created from the questions about experiences of unequal treatment analysed in the second chapter of this report. This index is the average number of "yes" answers to questions about personal experiences of various forms of unequal treatment, ranging from frequent and minor ones such as jokes to serious ones such as violations of personal space or sexual advances. A high score on this index means that the person answered "yes" (*once or several times*) to a greater number of questions about such experiences and therefore had many different experiences of unequal treatment.

Across the entire sample, more frequent experiences of unequal treatment were not associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction, but were associated with lower psychological well-being (correlation⁷ non-parametric $\rho = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$) and, more strongly, with lower psychological well-being in the workplace (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.33$, $p < 0.001$). This relationship was found in the group of students: for general well-being (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.23$, $p < 0.001$) and well-being in the workplace (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.24$, $p < 0.001$), doctoral students: for general well-being (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.23$, $p < 0.001$) and for well-being in the workplace (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.31$, $p < 0.001$). It was stronger in the group of research staff, both in terms of general mental wellbeing (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.30$, $p < 0.001$) and wellbeing at work (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, it was strongest in the group of other employees: for overall well-being (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and well-being at work (non-parametric correlation $\rho = -0.44$, $p < 0.001$).

The above data show that people who report more diverse experiences of unequal treatment also report lower mental well-being, especially in relation to the workplace. The internal validity of these results is supported by the fact that

⁷ Correlation (ρ) is a measure of the relationship between two quantitative variables – it indicates the "sign" and strength of the relationship. A positive correlation means that high values of one variable are accompanied by high values of the other. A negative correlation means that high values of one variable are accompanied by low values of the other. It takes values from -1 (strong negative relationship) to 1 (strong positive relationship). A value of 0 indicates no relationship between the variables.

These relationships are stronger in professional groups more closely associated with a single work environment, i.e. groups of employees, especially administrative staff, than in student and doctoral groups. Furthermore, it has been shown that unequal treatment was more strongly associated with well-being in the workplace than with well-being in more general terms. The nature of the data collected and the nature of the analysis carried out (the data is declarative and the analysis is correlational) do not allow us to conclude that the relationship between unequal treatment and well-being is causal. However, the results obtained may provide an indication of the area of risk.

Summary

A total of 10,907 students and employees of the University of Warsaw took part in the reported study. The data was collected in February and March 2019. The main objective of the study was to examine the perceived prevalence of gender inequality at the University of Warsaw. The analysis also examined the contexts in which inequality occurred, ways of responding to it, and perceived norms in this area.

Prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment. The most prevalent form of unequal treatment turned out to be comments or jokes referring to stereotypes and with sexual undertones, as well as better or worse treatment based on gender.

Behaviours that were indicated by several percent of respondents also included inappropriate familiarity, inappropriate comments about clothing and appearance, attributing the achievements of one gender to oneself, and questioning the competence of one gender. Respondents also pointed to questioning the possibility of combining professional work with childcare, failure to take care responsibilities into account in the assessment of achievements, and work organisation that conflicts with parental responsibilities. In the group of employees, unlike doctoral students and students, situations related to the professional sphere were reported more often, for example, related to taking credit away from someone or conflicts between professional and private life.

Behaviour related to sexuality and very serious behaviour were reported least frequently. Inappropriate violations of personal space, persistent attempts to contact someone about private matters, negative comments about sexual orientation and sexual propositions were reported by a small percentage of respondents.

Perpetrators and victims. Participants more often identified men than women as perpetrators, and women more often than men as victims. In terms of status, people with higher or equal status were most often identified as perpetrators, and people with lower status were least often identified as perpetrators.

Reaction. Participants commonly reported a lack of reaction to unequal treatment on the part of witnesses. If third parties do react, it is usually by addressing the victim or perpetrator directly, while it is very rare for such behaviour to be reported to those responsible, both in their own department and to the University of Warsaw headquarters.

Institutional norms. Respondents often believed that situations of unequal treatment were recognised as a problem in their departments and that efforts were made to resolve them, and less often that they were recognised as a problem but no attempts were made to resolve them. Importantly, in the case of serious violations, few people believed that they were normalised and that no attempts were made to resolve them. Declared knowledge of response norms was more common among students than among doctoral students and staff. The responses of institutions to situations that most clearly violate the UW's culture of equality – sexual propositions and violations of personal space – were unknown to a significant proportion of respondents.

Perceived treatment of women and men. The following situations, among others, were perceived as affecting women more often than men employed/studying at the University of Warsaw: questioning skills and knowledge on the basis of gender, questioning career development opportunities on the basis of gender, comments about a person's personal life, dressing in a certain way for exams/important presentations for fear otherwise being graded lower, questioning professional competence due to a different, e.g. less confrontational, manner of expression and self-presentation, performing laborious but less prestigious tasks (e.g. organisational), and having fewer opportunities for an academic career/good academic performance if they have children. The following situations were indicated as more common for men: treatment of students by lecturers as experts, singling out students by lecturers, speaking up in discussions during classes, academic meetings or conferences, encouragement to take on managerial positions in units (department, institute, faculty), encouragement to take on managerial roles in research projects, faster promotion.

Mental well-being and its relationship to unequal treatment. The lowest mental well-being and well-being in the workplace was reported by female doctoral students and female academic and teaching staff – it was significantly lower than the well-being of male doctoral students and employees of the University of Warsaw (both academic and teaching staff, as well as others). Female doctoral students pointed to a lack of

support and uncertainty about their professional future as problems that tormented them. Female research and teaching staff indicated much more often than men in their professional group that they were bothered by exhaustion and uncertainty about their own professional future. The situation of women working in science is more stressful for them than for men, which is why these groups (research and teaching staff and doctoral students) may be at risk of burnout, depression and anxiety.

Experiences of unequal treatment co-occurred with generally poorer mental well-being, especially that related to the workplace, in all groups surveyed. This relationship was stronger in the group of people permanently associated with the University of Warsaw, employees (teaching, research and other staff) than in student groups.

The need for education. It is also worth noting that ignorance about desirable responses, norms and institutional procedures in the context of equal treatment is common. The University of Warsaw should therefore not only pursue an active policy of preventing unequal treatment, but also communicate it clearly to everyone, especially employees.

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