IMPROVING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Co-funded by the European Union

Discrimination in a University Context: Summary Report

Work Package 2 - Activity 2.1

EQUNI project

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1 Introduction

This report presents the results of research on discrimination. The study surveyed and interviewed students, staff, and administrators. The findings uncover the extent and types of discrimination faced by different groups within the TUL community, University of Algarve and University of Groningen. This information will be used to create strategies that make higher education a more inclusive and equitable place for all.

According to Gordon Allport (1954) (cited in Mummendey & Otten, 1998), discrimination is treating people differently due to social or natural categories, and this may lead to unequal treatment and opportunities. It intersects varying types; from evident acts to microaggressions that are covert and affects different groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, among others.

Favouritism towards an ingroup and hate of outgroups constitute one way in which discrimination can be expressed. This may also include favouring or disfavouring certain groups because of stereotypes that have been internalized. Another type of bias that should be taken into account is positive discrimination aimed at rectifying societal imbalances.

Understanding why discrimination occurs involves exploring various psychological and sociological theories. These range from individual frustrations and fears to societal dynamics such as intergroup competition and system justification. Common themes emerge, highlighting the role of group identity, perceived threats, and the need for social unity. Perception plays a crucial role in discrimination, with targets often seen as threats or inferior due to biases and social beliefs. Individuals may justify discriminatory behaviours to protect their group identity or maintain existing social hierarchies.

In summary, discrimination is complex and multifaceted, influenced by individual and societal factors. Recognizing its various forms and underlying mechanisms is essential for fostering inclusive environments and combating prejudice within our communities.

The general objective of this work package is to improve skills and competencies of students, academic teachers and staff of European universities in the field of emotional management and shaping attitudes of openness and tolerance.

We aim to create an environment where everyone feels included and treated fairly. We want to give students, teachers, and staff at all our partner institutions the tools they need to succeed. We believe that it's important for everyone to understand their emotions and how they affect their relationships with others. We also want to make sure that everyone is aware of different types of discrimination and how to prevent it from happening. To achieve our goals, we're working on developing programs and activities that will help people develop their emotional intelligence and anti-discrimination skills. We hope that by doing this, we can create a university community that is more respectful and welcoming to everyone.

We aim to give everyone more chances to learn, grow, and develop in the areas of emotional intelligence, open-mindedness, and tolerance. We offer opportunities for people to get better at and think more broadly about these important topics by giving them access to unique and helpful extracurricular activities. We think it's very important for people to participate in activities that help them manage their emotions and fight prejudice.

Additionally, we aspire to establish institutional support systems for implementing policies, practices, and instruments that promote emotional intelligence and combat discrimination. By providing guidance and resources, we aim to enhance our institutions' ability to maintain principles of equality and fairness throughout university life. Finally, fostering teamwork and knowledge exchange among collaborating institutions is crucial. By fostering cross-border partnerships and sharing insights, we aim to make use of collective knowledge and make changes in the domains of emotional intelligence and anti-discrimination.

The structure of this document is as follows. This document provides descriptions of the phenomenon of discrimination. It promotes an understanding of personal needs and emotions. It cultivates Emotional Intelligence, with emphasis on empathy. Subsequently, a detailed report of the procedure, including the identification of target groups in academic level, measures utilized, and analysis, is presented. Following this, the report explains various types of discrimination scenarios within relationships.

2 Research on discrimination and emotional intelligence

2.1 Literature review

Discrimination stands as one of the most common forms of human rights violations (Council of Europe Portal, 2024). The concept started to be widespread in science, policies, and public opinion around the year 1980, but in a very limited way until 1990. The interest became more visible in research and gained more public interest in 2000, with the Race Equality Directive, implemented by European Union, a principle that refers the "*equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin*." (Fibbi, Midtbøen & Simon, 2021). Since then, discrimination has been a general preoccupation for all institutions that aim to equal rights and opportunities. However, to be able to make an intervention to tackle discrimination, we should first address what discrimination is.

What is discrimination?

Gordon Allport, in 1954, and his groundbreaking work on *The nature of prejudice* shed light on the importance of the phenomenon of discrimination. By a textbook definition, any conduct based on distinctions made according to social or natural categories, unrelated to the merit or abilities of individuals, or their individual behaviour should be classified as discrimination (Mummendey & Otten, 1998).

According to this definition, we discriminate along factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, or other societal classifications, leading to differential treatment and unequal opportunities for certain groups. As defined here, discrimination seems to be solely supported by the way targets are perceived. From an intra-personal perspective, the target may be perceived as an object of aggression resulting from individual and social frustrations of the discriminator; the target may also be perceived as a potential carrier of threats, such as diseases, leading to discriminatory attitudes as means of protecting the ingroup.

However, discrimination holds a behavioural dimension. It involves treating members of the outgroup differently compared to how we treat those who belong to our own group. This differential treatment is inherently negative since it results in a disadvantage for the outgroup. This disadvantage is manifested primarily through favouritism towards members of our own groups and, secondly, through disparagement and hostile acts towards members of groups to which we do not belong (Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2019). These negative actions can be expressed in various ways and contexts, ranging from overt and explicit forms, to institutional or structural expressions, as well as through microaggressions or less explicit means that diminish or humiliate others (Demirtaş-Madran, 2020). However, while favouring the ingroup does not have a primary intention to ill-treat the outgroup, the second form of discrimination against the groups we don't belong has the intent to persecute and harm outgroup members, usually resulting in a more extreme and aggressive form of actions. A third expression can be assumed as preference for the outgroup (outgroup favouritism), usually observed within low social status groups, which due to internalized negative stereotypes tend to reject the ingroup.

However, alongside this common understanding of the term, discrimination can also be advantageous to outgroups. In this case, it is referred to as positive discrimination. Practices of positive discrimination have been developed with the purpose of "correcting" existing social inequalities between groups (Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2019). Several theories have emerged to explain why we discriminate.

How do we discriminate?

For Gordon Allport discrimination – a behaviour – is conducted upon stereotypes and prejudices towards a specific group. Stereotypes are mainly cognitive representations of a group, while prejudice is a negative evaluation of the characteristics associated to the group. As we stereotype, we tend to consider that all individuals possess those characteristics. This definition lies in an individual-level explanation of why we discriminate (Fibbi et al., 2021).

The interpersonal-intergroup continuum, as proposed by Tajfel in 1978 (see Brown, 2020), suggests that individuals can perceive themselves as both independent actors and group members. When identifying with a group, individuals engage with their social identities, leading to cognitive, evaluative, and affective effects on their self-concepts. People generally strive for positive distinctiveness in their interactions with other groups, particularly seeking to view themselves in a positive light. The pursuit of distinctiveness varies among socially 'superior' and 'inferior' groups, influenced by factors such as group boundary permeability, social system stability, and perceived status relations legitimacy (Brown, 2020). Social Identity Theory places in this evaluation of ingroup/outgroup the principle for discrimination.

The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) and the Behaviour from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes (BIAS) Map offer profound insights into these dynamics.

The SCM posits that intergroup stereotypes are structured along two primary dimensions: warmth and competence. These dimensions give rise to main effects that can be summarized as follows (Fiske, 2015):

- Groups perceived as high in warmth and competence, typically viewed as prototypical ingroups like the middle class, tend to evoke feelings of pride and admiration.

- Groups seen as low in both warmth and competence, often regarded as societal outcasts such as homeless individuals, tend to elicit reactions of contempt and disgust.

- Groups that are perceived as low in warmth but high in competence, which include successful outsiders like wealthy individuals, are commonly associated with feelings of envy and jealousy.

- Groups considered high in warmth but low in competence, including those seen as benign subordinates such as elderly or disabled people, tend to arouse emotions of pity and sympathy.

These hypotheses suggest that different combinations of warmth and competence result in specific emotional responses toward various social groups.

The BIAS Map extends the SCM framework to explore how stereotypes and emotions translate into discriminatory actions. It suggests that the primary dimension of warmth predicts active behavioural responses, both positive (helping and protecting for high warmth) and negative (attacking and harming for low warmth). The secondary dimension of competence is linked to more passive behaviours, with positive associations for high competence and neglect for low competence (Cuddy et al., 2007).

The behavioural tendencies reported by study participants reveal different patterns of discrimination:

- Groups associated with high warmth and competence are more likely to receive help and social association.

- Groups characterized by low warmth and competence often face both active harm and passive neglect, a pattern frequently directed at homeless individuals.

- The successful outsiders who may be passively associated with but also actively harmed represent a complex dynamic where envy can lead to aggression, especially during times of social unrest.

- Groups that evoke pity may receive active help but also suffer from passive neglect, which can lead to institutionalization (Bye & Herrebrøden, 2018; Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske, 2015). This suggests that the connection between intergroup stereotypes, emotions, and subsequent behaviours is strong and immediate. Emotional prejudices seem to be powerful predictors of discriminatory behaviour.

There should be noticed that these processes occur within organizations and societal structures that help to perpetuate and give context to these individual approaches.

As considered by Fibbi et al. (2021), organizational culture impacts on discrimination, thru organization's norms, values, and practices that can either promote diversity and inclusion or perpetuate exclusion and inequality. A good example of what happens within organizations is the Gatekeeping Theory. This refers to the process of controlling information as it moves through a gate or filter. The concept can be applied broadly to how information, ideas, and even people are allowed to pass through various "gates" in society, controlled by "gatekeepers." These gatekeepers can be individuals, groups, or institutions that have the power to decide what information is disseminated, who gets access to resources, or who is allowed to participate in certain activities or social circles. The relation between gatekeeping theory and discrimination emerges when the process of gatekeeping is influenced by biases, stereotypes, or discriminatory practices. Gatekeepers, whether consciously or unconsciously, may use their power to favour certain groups over others, based on race, gender, ethnicity, social class, or other characteristics. This can lead to systemic discrimination, where certain individuals or groups are systematically excluded from opportunities, resources, or platforms based on prejudiced criteria.

The same authors suggest the existence of a systemic roots of discrimination. Institutional racism (or sexism, ableism, etc.) would be a key concept, illustrating how discrimination is embedded in the laws, policies, and practices of societal institutions, often in subtle and unconscious ways. The theory of structural functionalism might be applied to understand how discrimination serves certain social functions, perpetuating the status quo and maintaining the dominance of certain groups. Additionally, intersectionality emphasizes how various forms of identity and disadvantage intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination and marginalization.

Discrimination and emotions

As stated previously, BIAS map draws a theoretical framework that systematically links behavioural tendencies toward social groups to the contents of stereotypes and emotions about those groups. The BIAS map suggests that our affective responses (like warmth or contempt) and the stereotypes we hold (such as competence or incompetence) directly influence our behaviours towards different groups. These behaviours can range from active facilitation (helping) to active harm (attacking), and from passive facilitation (association) to passive harm (neglect) (Cuddy et al., 2007).

Talaska et al. (2008) conducted a study to examine the role of emotional prejudices versus stereotypes and beliefs in predicting racial discrimination. They advocate that previous research has heavily focused on stereotypes and other cognitive beliefs as the main drivers of discrimination, however they defend emotional prejudices serve as a more direct predictor of discriminatory behaviour. The authors propose that understanding the emotional dimensions of prejudice could offer deeper insights into the mechanisms that legitimize racial discrimination.

For this purpose, the authors conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 57 studies that measured racial attitudes (including beliefs, stereotypes, emotional prejudices, and overall evaluations) and racial discrimination. They observed that individuals' general attitudes towards race can be linked to their discriminatory behaviours, but emotional prejudices were twice as closely related to racial discrimination as stereotypes and beliefs, suggesting that emotions play a significantly stronger role in driving discriminatory actions. Likewise, emotional prejudices are closely related to both observed and self-reported discrimination, while stereotypes and beliefs are primarily related only to self-reported discrimination. This distinction underscores the direct impact of emotional prejudices on discriminatory behaviours, beyond what individuals may self-report.

In the same year, Iyer & Leach (2008) did a review paper focusing on the importance of emotions in inter-group relations. They defend the idea that emotional responses serve as precursors to inter-group dynamics, where affective states such as fear, disgust, empathy, and admiration toward out-group members are precipitated by various stimuli. These could be societal norms, media portrayals, and personal or vicarious experiences. The valence and intensity of these emotions are critical in shaping individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward out-group members.

Emotions significantly mediate behavioural outcomes in inter-group contexts. Negative emotions, such as fear or contempt, can lead to avoidance behaviours, discriminatory actions, or even aggression toward out-group members. This behavioural manifestation of emotion is a key component in the operationalization of discrimination.

Also, individuals often employ cognitive rationalizations to justify their emotionally driven discriminatory behaviours. This process involves constructing a narrative that positions the out-group as a legitimate threat or inferior, thereby legitimizing prejudicial actions as protective or necessary measures. This rationalization process is underpinned by cognitive dissonance theory, which suggests that individuals seek to align their beliefs and behaviours to reduce psychological discomfort.

The interplay between emotions and discrimination can be conceptualized as a cyclical feedback loop. Discriminatory behaviours elicit emotional responses from those targeted, such as anger, sadness, or fear. These emotions can, in turn, influence their perceptions and behaviours toward the in-group, potentially exacerbating inter-group tensions and further discrimination.

Iyer & Leach finally suggest that addressing the emotional underpinnings of discrimination offers a pathway for mitigating inter-group tensions. Interventions aimed at fostering positive emotions such as empathy and compassion between groups can attenuate prejudicial attitudes and behaviours. Techniques may include inter-group contact, which reduces prejudice through increased familiarity and empathy, and perspective-taking exercises, which enhance empathetic understanding and reduce emotional biases.

Emotional intelligence (EI)

Generally, emotional intelligence refers to the ability related to the understanding, use, and management of emotion as it pertains to oneself and others. It involves accurately perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Conceptually, individuals who are emotionally intelligent should be able to recognize their own emotional states and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, understand emotional variations, and manage emotions to achieve positive outcomes.

The term was firstly use by Salovey and Mayer in their paper Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1989) where they proposed a model that identified emotional intelligence as a form of social intelligence. However, it was David Goleman that popularized the concept of emotional intelligence with his 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. We will further analyze different theoretical frameworks on EI.

The ability model

Salovey e Mayer (1989-1990) define emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive and understand emotions as well as using them to assist thought, and promote emotional and intellectual growth, thus integrating the notion that emotions enhance cognitive abilities and that one engages in intelligent contemplation regarding emotions.

The authors proposed a Four Branch Model, that divides EI into Emotional Perception, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Understanding and Emotional Regulation (Mayer et al., 2016). These four branches grow on complexity, that means, we start developing emotional intelligence more basic abilities as perceiving emotions, but some abilities keep emerging as we mature our adult personality. This is rather important in terms of conceptualizing the possibility of interventions and improvements of EI abilities.

The first branch, about perceiving emotions, is the most basic one, and it concerns the accuracy with which individuals identify emotions and emotional content. We learn how to accurately express our emotions and identify them, not only in ourselves, but also in other people, based on language, sound, appearance, and even the way other people behave. With this ability we became able to differentiate between honest versus dishonest expressions of feelings.

The second branch refers to the emotion's facilitation of thinking. Emotions play a role in directing our attention towards significant changes in ourselves and others. They can analyze "on demand" to be better understood, contributing to the exploration of multiple perspectives, and helping individuals to consider other's points of view. The facilitation of thinking makes us able to produce emotions to connect with the emotions of someone else, contributing for our empathic responses.

The third branch relates to the ability to understand and comprehend the meaning and relations between emotions. Early in life, we learn to connect situations in life to diverse emotions, creating emotional reasoning, which makes us able to label emotions and recognize, not only the relations among them, but also the way we transit between them. With time, we learn to understand more complex feelings, even contradictory emotions like simultaneous love and hate, and to reason about the progression of feelings in interpersonal relationships. We also became able to better understand what situations cause what emotions, and how the other person might feel under certain situations, increasing our empathy.

The fourth and more complex branch, concerns the regulation of emotions. As we grow, we start to understand that emotions can teach us something, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant lessons, and that they ca be separated from behaviours, giving us the possibility of engaging or detach from an emotion depending on how that will help us in that specific situation. As time goes by, we also learn to understand, in ourselves and in others, how clear, typical, influential, or reasonable each emotion is, enabling us to better evaluate and manage them, by moderating negative emotions and enhancing pleasant ones, without repressing nor exaggerating them.

The trait model

Proposed by Petrides and Furnham, trait EI (or trait emotional self-efficacy) focuses on individuals' self-perceptions of their emotional abilities (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). This model is grounded in personality research and suggests that EI can be understood as a collection of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies.

Petrides and Furnham looked at the complexities of measuring emotional intelligence (EI), distinguishing between two key approaches: trait EI and ability EI. The former, as defined by the authors, encompasses behavioural dispositions and self-perceived abilities, typically assessed through self-report measures. The latter, on the other hand, involves actual abilities and should be evaluated via maximum-performance tests rather than self-reporting. This distinction is crucial as it implies that trait EI should be studied within a personality framework, given its association with behavioural tendencies and self-perceptions, whereas ability EI aligns more closely with psychometric intelligence, potentially correlating with cognitive ability, particularly general intelligence (g), and personality dimensions with an affective emphasis, such as Extraversion and Neuroticism. The authors underscore the importance of this differentiation for theoretical clarity and for organizing the expansive literature on EI.

The mixed models of EI

The mixed models of EI could be defined as a comprehensive framework that integrates a variety of skills and competencies related to understanding, using, and managing emotions in oneself and others. It is called "mixed" because it combines aspects of traditional psychological theories of intelligence with non-cognitive competencies and skills.

The Bar-On model (Bar-On, 1997, 2006) posits that emotional-social intelligence is a multi-component construct that influences our potential to be effective in dealing with environmental demands and pressures. Emotional-social intelligence according to Bar-On is not an innate ability but rather a set of competencies and skills that can be developed over time. The model is grounded in the idea that emotional and social competencies are interlinked and contribute to our overall well-being and performance.

The model identifies five key components of emotional-social intelligence:

Intrapersonal: This component includes self-awareness and self-expression, such as emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-regard. It emphasizes the importance of understanding and managing one's own emotions.

Interpersonal: This area focuses on the ability to understand and interact effectively with others. It includes empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship skills.

Stress Management: This component addresses how individuals manage and cope with stress. It includes stress tolerance and impulse control, highlighting the ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without "falling apart."

Adaptability: This area involves problem-solving, reality-testing, and flexibility. It underscores the importance of being able to adjust one's emotions and behaviours to changing situations.

General Mood: The final component is concerned with the overall outlook on life, including optimism and happiness. It reflects the general sense of contentment and a positive attitude towards life.

Although this model proved to be useful as a framework to define EI as mixed construct, Goleman's work was determinant to prove the model's practical importance.

Another mixed model is Goleman's model of EI (Goleman, 1995). This model is articulated around five main domains, each encompassing a set of related competencies. The first proposed domain is Self-Awareness. Involves understanding one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values, and goals, and their impact on others. It includes competencies such as emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. Self-awareness is foundational in EI, as it underpins the development of other emotional intelligence competencies.

Self-Regulation involves managing or redirecting one's disruptive emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances. Key competencies include self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation. Self-regulation allows individuals to think before acting and to express their emotions in appropriate ways.

Goleman defines a 3rd domain concerning Motivation in terms of emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. Competencies in this domain include achievement drive, commitment, initiative, and optimism. A high level of motivation contributes to an individual's capacity to strive for excellence, overcome obstacles, and pursue goals with energy and persistence.

Empathy refers to the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people and to treat them according to their emotional reactions. Competencies include understanding others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness. Empathy is crucial for effective interpersonal relationships and is particularly important for those in leadership or roles that require managing others.

Finally, Social Skills concerns about the adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. Social skills enable individuals to manage relationships, build networks, and find common ground with others. Key competencies include influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration, and cooperation.

A key insight from Goleman's work is that unlike IQ, which tends to remain static throughout one's life, the competencies and skills associated with emotional intelligence can be developed and enhanced over time. This has led to the creation of training programs and interventions aimed at increasing EI competencies in individuals and organizations.

How to use Emotional Intelligence to approach Discrimination?

To this point, we have declared that discrimination is recognized as one of the most prevalent forms of human rights violations, which manifests in various forms, from overt acts of hostility to subtle microaggressions, and it is underpinned by psychological processes such as stereotyping and prejudice, which are cognitive and affective responses towards different social groups. While it may be assumed that individuals engaging in these behaviours fully understand their actions, it's important to explore how emotional intelligence can help reduce discrimination, especially in relation to the automatic nature of stereotype and prejudice processes.

Automatic processes are essential to understanding many aspects of human behaviour, including intergroup conflicts such as stereotypes and prejudice. These processes are characterized by four main attributes: lack of awareness, efficiency, unintentionality, and uncontrollability (Lima & Vala, 2004).

There are three ways in which a person can be unaware during an automatic process: 1. The person may be unconscious of the stimulus that triggers the process; 2. The person may be unaware of how the stimulus is interpreted and categorized. This is often seen in the automatic activation of stereotypes, where individuals unknowingly apply generalized beliefs to members of a particular group; 3. The person may be unaware of the determinants of their judgments and affective states. For example, during impression formation tasks, people might not realize the underlying factors influencing their opinions and feelings about others.

Automatic processes are efficient because they require minimal attentional resources. This means that individuals can process information quickly and effortlessly, which is crucial for managing the vast amount of information we encounter daily.

These processes often begin without a conscious and voluntary decision. For instance, someone might automatically categorize another person based on race or gender without intending to do so. Once initiated, automatic processes can be difficult to manage or stop. This uncontrollability means that even when individuals are aware of their biases, they might still find it challenging to change their automatic responses.

Automatic processes significantly contribute to intergroup conflicts, particularly through the mechanisms of stereotypes and prejudice. The automatic activation of stereotypes occurs without conscious awareness. This influences how individuals interpret and categorize people from different groups, often leading to biased perceptions and interactions. Unconscious determinants of judgments and affective states can result in prejudiced attitudes and behaviours. Even when people believe they are being fair, these automatic processes can lead to biased treatment of outgroup members.

However, we should distinguish the automatic activation and the controllable application of these processes. According to Devine (1989; 2012) stereotype's automatic activation is a habit acquired along life and could be inhibited, in essence that automatic stereotyping does not imply inevitable inferiorization of minority groups. In her 2012 paper, Devine discusses a multifaceted intervention designed to produce long-term reductions in implicit racial bias. The intervention is based on the idea that implicit bias functions like a habit that can be broken through a combination of awareness, concern about the effects of bias, and the application of strategies to reduce it. In a 12-week longitudinal study, participants received the intervention over stereotype awareness and counter-stereotype imaging, they learned how to obtain and elicit more information about individuals rather than supporting the assessments on group-based attributes, they had training on perspective taking thru closeness and taking the perspective of a stereotyped group member, and engaging in positive interactions with out-group members. These strategies showed significant reductions in implicit racial bias, particularly those who were concerned about discrimination and reported using the strategies. The study highlights the potential of this approach to mitigate persistent and unintentional forms of discrimination.

The intervention purposed by Devine seems to relate closely to emotional intelligence competencies, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. It emphasizes the importance of becoming aware of implicit biases, which is a form of self-awareness. Recognizing that these biases exist and understanding how they influence behaviour is the first step in managing them. Also, self-Regulation implies the ability to manage and regulate one's emotions and impulses. The intervention's strategies, such as stereotype awareness and counter-stereotype imaging, help individuals regulate their automatic responses. By learning to control these automatic stereotypes, individuals practice self-regulation, a core component of EI.

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. The intervention's focus on perspective-taking and engaging in positive interactions with out-group members fosters empathy. By taking the perspective of a stereotyped group member, individuals can better understand their experiences and emotions, which can reduce bias and promote more empathetic interactions. EI also includes the ability to manage relationships effectively. The intervention encourages positive interactions with out-group members, which can improve social skills and lead to more harmonious and equitable relationships. Developing these skills can help individuals navigate social complexities and reduce unintentional discrimination.

Finally, a key aspect of EI is the intrinsic motivation to achieve goals and improve oneself. The study found that participants who were concerned about discrimination and motivated to use the strategies showed significant reductions in implicit racial bias. This highlights the role of motivation in driving the effort to change habitual behaviours and improve emotional intelligence.

Other studies, have used similar premises. Hill and Augoustinos (2001) describe the impact of an anti-racist education program to reduce prejudice against aboriginal Australians. The program, based upon psychoeducation, prejudice and stereotype awareness and intergroup contact, increased awareness and understanding of discrimination against this group, with positive effect in short-term measures. However, long-term stereotype and prejudice returned to baseline assessment.

Forscher et al., (2017) discuss an intervention called "prejudice habit-breaking," which aims to reduce implicit bias and increase awareness of racial discrimination. The intervention is based on the prejudice habit model and was tested in a study with 292 participants, with a very similar approach to Devine (2012). The results showed that the intervention increased concern about discrimination and the tendency to label biases as wrong. However, there was no significant reduction in implicit bias compared to the control group, two years later, intervention participants were more likely to speak out against an essay advocating racial stereotypes.

More recently, FitzGerald et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of interventions designed to reduce implicit prejudices and implicit stereotypes in real-world contexts. The review focuses on studies using the Implicit Association Test (IAT) or similar methods, conducted on adults between May 2005 and April 2015.

Some techniques, such as exposure to counter-stereotypical exemplars, were found to be promising in reducing implicit biases. Other effective interventions included intentional strategies to overcome biases, evaluative conditioning, identifying the self with the outgroup, and inducing emotions. However, they observed that techniques such as engaging with others' perspectives were less effective, particularly in the short term.

In conclusion, we might state that leveraging emotional intelligence to address discrimination involves increasing awareness of implicit biases, regulating automatic responses, fostering empathy through perspective-taking, improving social skills through positive interactions, and maintaining motivation to drive change. These strategies can help mitigate the automatic processes that contribute to stereotypes and prejudice, promoting more equitable and inclusive behaviours.

3 Research method

It has been decided to look into diversity-related issues using survey, archival data and focus groups / collectivator groups / interviews as well as desktop research.

3.1 Survey

The survey was conducted to gather quantitative data on discrimination. It was designed to examine instances of discrimination within university settings, providing detailed descriptions and quantifiable data to better understand the prevalence and nature of discriminatory practices. The questionnaires differed between the universities due to language, specific circumstances, and existing surveys on this topic. In total, we received 927 responses.

Apparently, the findings will not be universally applicable to all universities, but they offer a reliable glimpse into common discriminatory situations among different stakeholders in higher education.

From the ***University of Algarve*** the response rate was: 326 [173 Students, 96 Teacher/Researcher/Fellowship, 45 Staff, 1 Missing] out of a total population of 9,235 individuals. 10 discontinued before completing it.

Lifetime day-to-day discrimination [Intersectional Discrimination Index – day-to-day form (InDI-D)] was used as a general measure for discrimination, and its instructions were adapted to ask for these situations specifically in an academic context. Items were coded as 1 for yes versus 0 for no. If respondents completed at least 80% of items, missing item values were imputed to “no/never”; if not, sum scores were not calculated (Scheim & Bauer, 2019).

Discrimination measures: The first measure aimed at assessing the prevalence of discrimination asked participants if they had ever felt they had been discriminated against in a university context. The response options of yes, no, or I don't know were analyzed. Participants who responded "yes" to the previous question were asked to describe the situation in which they had experienced discrimination and, at the same time, to describe the feelings that these situations provoked in them.

The ***Lodz University of Technology*** extended the questionnaire developed by the University of Algarve with two additional sections:

- Witnessing discrimination. An objective measure of discrimination was used, where participants were asked whether they had ever witnessed discrimination in a university environment. Participants were also requested to describe the situation(s) of witnessing discrimination and the emotional impact they caused. Both questions were qualitative, allowing participants to provide descriptions of varying levels of detail according to their personal discretion.
- Counteracting discrimination. The respondents who reported that they had either experienced or witnessed discrimination were asked if they had ever made any attempt to counteract the discriminatory situation and, if not, to indicate the reasons for their lack of response.

In the introduction, the survey questionnaire presented the definition of discrimination in order to familiarize participants with this issue before inquiring about their experiences at the university. The first stage of the survey was conducted between 27 June and 12 July 2023 (survey conducted simultaneously online and on paper in English). The second stage took place between 20 and 30 October (survey conducted online in Polish).

The response rate to the questionnaire stood at approximately 3.3%, with 442 responses (435 valid ones) from a total population of 13370 individuals. For the regular students the response rate was only 1.7%, and for Erasmus students – 25.4%, for the academic staff - 8.2% and for the administrative staff - 6%.

Out of the 442 individuals who initiated the questionnaire, 7 discontinued before completion, giving in total 435 valid answers collected.

The survey was conducted in three groups of the academic community:

- students of all programmes and cycles of studies with an approximate total of 10,500 individuals (including Erasmus exchange students with an approximate total of 280 individuals),
- administrative staff with an approximate total of 1,400 individuals,
- academic staff/teachers with an approximate total of 1,190 individuals.

Figure 1. Respondents' profile

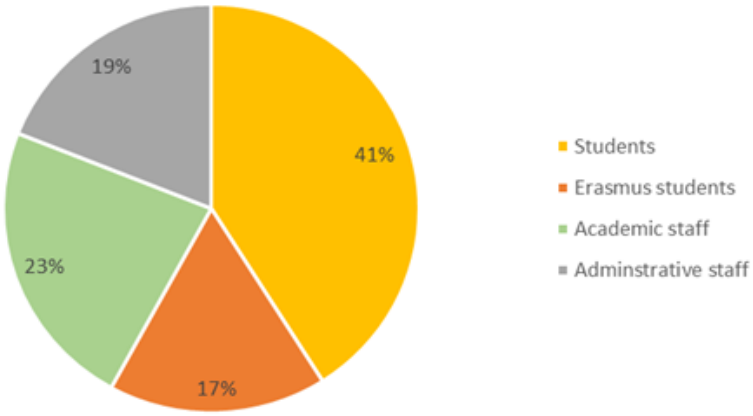


Figure 1 presents the distribution of participants across different categories, students are the most numerous group of participants, accounting for almost 60% of all respondents. 79% of all respondents were Polish and 21% were of other nationality. In terms of gender identification, 51% of the participants identified themselves as women. The youngest respondent was 17 years old, and the oldest one - 68.

Students

Most of the respondents, 253 individuals (58% of the sample), fell into this category. Out of the 10,500 regular students, 179 took part in the questionnaire and out of 280 Erasmus students, 74 participated. Therefore, the student group represents approximately 2.4% of the total student population (1.7% for regular students and 26.4% for Erasmus students). The age range of students varied from 17 to 27 years. In terms of gender identification, approximately 43.5% of them identified themselves as women. Regarding experiences of discrimination, 49 individuals (19.4%) reported that they had been discriminated against in academic context. Additionally, 26 participants (10.3%) expressed uncertainty about whether they had ever experienced discrimination, while 178 individuals (70.3%) stated that they had never been the subject of any form of discrimination.

Academic staff

Academic staff constitutes 23% of the survey sample. Out of the 1,190 individuals in this group, 98 participated in the questionnaire, representing approximately 8.2% of the total population in this category. The age range of academic staff varied from 27 to 68 years. In terms of gender identification, approximately 42.9% of them identified themselves as women. Regarding experiences of discrimination, 40 individuals (40.8%) reported that they had been discriminated against in academic context. Additionally, nine participants (9.2%) expressed uncertainty about whether they had ever experienced discrimination, and 49 individuals (50%) stated that they had never been the subject of any form of discrimination.

Administrative staff

In terms of respondents' role at the university, 84 participants (19% of the sample) categorized themselves as administrative staff. Considering the total number of administrative staff at TUL which is 1,400 it makes a response rate of 6% in this group. The age of academic staff spanned from 23 to 68 years. In terms of gender identification, 85.7% identified as women. Regarding experiences of discrimination, 27 individuals (32.2%) reported that they had personally faced instances of discrimination. Additionally, 8 participants (9.5%) expressed uncertainty about experiencing discrimination, while 49 individuals (58.3%) affirmed never being subjected to any form of discrimination.

The main objective of the survey was to identify and describe situations in which students and university staff may have experienced discrimination, specifically to: 1) characterize the prevalence of discrimination in a university context as reported by students, administrative staff, and academic staff and 2) to identify the most common types of discrimination and typical scenarios in which it may occur. These scenarios will be used to develop educational materials and trainings aimed at identifying the sources of prejudice and understanding one's own emotions and those of others.

For the ***University of Groningen*** the survey revealed differences. It aimed to collect perceptions on diversity, inclusion, and social safety from a significant number of FEB staff members, allowing all members to share anonymous feedback on these topics. It was designed to get a good understanding of how FEB staff members feel about diversity, inclusion, and safety. Even though there were some challenges, the survey still gave us valuable insights into these issues.

Given the nature of clusters identified by the respondents, and using insights from similar surveys conducted at other universities and academic research, the university of Groningen presents results by gender (male vs. female), nationality (Dutch vs. international), and career stage (full professor vs. non-full professor). In addition, it also presents results for administrative staff.

The survey used a mix of fixed-choice (closed-ended) and open-ended questions. Most questions used a 7-point Likert scale. Participants could choose to give feedback anonymously.

The response rate: Of the 281 individuals who started the questionnaire, 159 completed it, resulting in a 57% completion rate.

The participants came from different departments, age groups, job titles, and nationalities, including PhD students, academic staff, administrators and the researchers examined the responses based on four factors: gender, nationality, career stage, and administrative staff status.

3.2 Archival data

Some archival data were used to supplement survey findings. The archival data included reports, connection/communication with other departments. TUL conducted a desktop research on analogous research endeavours at other Polish universities

All available reports from the ***University of Groningen*** that address discrimination and inclusion, have been used in the research. Additionally, interactions with the Diversity & Inclusion Officer and HR Senior Advisor have provided access to specific scenarios and further supporting documents.

The main focus was to examine if there are consistent variations among staff members in terms of salary levels, scales, and career progression. Moreover, an empirical analysis was conducted to understand the factors influencing salary levels and changes, considering various demographic characteristics of staff members.

Using the data from the HR department generates a total sample of 633 staff members. Slightly more than half of them are male (341). This balance at the level of the Faculty as a whole disappears when looking at specific subgroups.

First, the gender balance varies strongly between Academic and Administrative Staff. Females numerically dominate Administrative staff by a ratio of 3:1. In contrast, males make up about 70% of all Academic Staff (288 out of 409 Academic Staff members). Second, zooming in on Academic Staff, there is a distribution of males and females that also differs strongly between positions. The numerical dominance of males increases with seniority. The ratio of males to females rises from 2.5:1 at the Assistant Professor 2 level to 22:1 at the Professor 1 level. At present, there clearly is a gender pay gap.

Controlling for nationality, age, function, tenure and department, we find that gender is a significant explanatory variable of both salary scales and salary levels among Academic Staff, with males earning more than females. With regard to salary progression, however, there is some evidence for a bias towards males in a multivariate setting, reversing the earlier result. All else equal, evidence points to gender divergence in pay and salary progression, rather than convergence.

A gender gap is not only visible in HR data, but also in the staff's assessment of the FEB diversity performance. We observe significantly different perceptions between gender categories .

Due to privacy regulations and various logistical challenges, the ***University of Algarve*** encountered difficulties in acquiring this information.

As for ***Lodz University of Technology***, they did a desktop research comparing their results with two other Polish universities (see more in the appendix). Comparing the result of desktop research, gender was also the most frequently mentioned by the students of Jagiellonian University as well as by the students and PhD students of University of Szczecin. Additionally, academic and administrative staff of University of Szczecin perceived job position as the primary cause of unequal treatment. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender and job position issues require, in general, special attention in the Polish context.

3.3 Focus groups

To gather qualitative insights, we conducted focus groups/ interviews/ collective interviews.

The ***University of Groningen*** conducted in-depth individual interviews with 27 faculty members carried out by an external organization, Bezemer & Schubad and (4) focus group discussions with members of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color) community. When drafting the recommendations based on the findings, it was made a distinction with respect to non-discriminatory practices, accountability practices and resource practices (Leslie, 2019).

The ***University of Algarve*** tried to incorporate some interviews but there were challenges in people's approach**.**

The ***Lodz University of Technology*** conducted ten interviews between 22 November and 15 December 2023. They were deliberately scheduled after the preliminary analysis of the survey results to be able to address the initial observations and results and to facilitate a more profound analysis of the instances of discrimination within the university setting. Three students, three teachers/academic staff, and four administrative employees were interviewed, each of them during a separate meeting. Those who were interviewed included:

- 1 representative of the Committee for Good Academic Practice,
- 1 Vice-Dean for Student Affairs,
- 2 persons from the Office for People with Disabilities,
- 1 student with special needs,
- 2 representatives from the Human Capital Management Centre,
- 1 Gender Equality Officer,
- 2 representatives of Student Self-government.

The interviewees initially responded to questions from the survey questionnaire, followed by a brief overview of the primary survey results. Subsequently, they were invited to share their insights and comments on the findings. Their comments served as the starting point for a more extensive discussion on discrimination at the university. The most important conclusions from the interviews are presented below.

4 Findings per relationship type

4.1 Student <--> Student

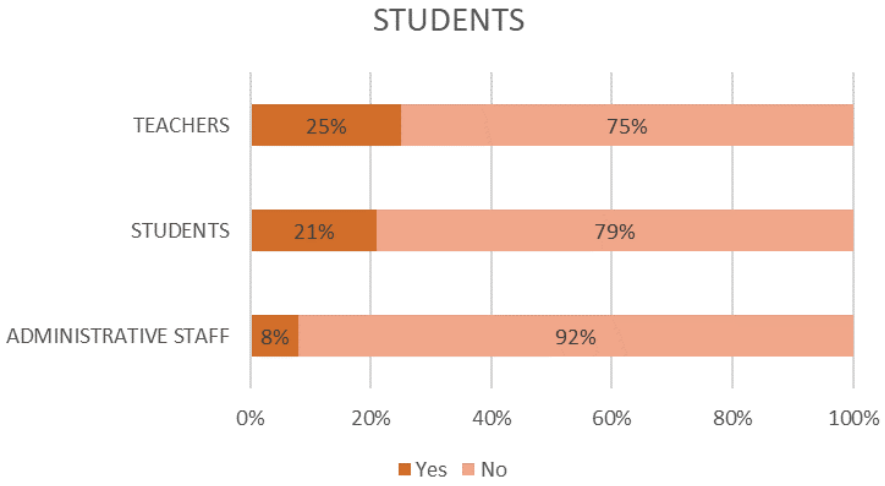
University of Algarve

Students were the target in most cases (61.84%), with 6.58% experiencing discrimination from their peers. Discrimination among students encompasses various forms, such as nationality-based biases, age-related prejudices, and instances of moral harassment. Students often report feeling excluded, diminished, and overwhelmed due to these discriminatory behaviours. These experiences highlight the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes based on factors like nationality and age within student communities, leading to feelings of indignation, sadness, and exclusion.

Lodz University of Technology

A considerable portion (21%) of students reported experiencing discrimination from their peers. This discrimination encompasses various forms, including nationality-based biases and personal context. Only three students mention gender (which is the most prevalent category of discrimination in the survey) as a reason for discrimination in Student <--> Student relations. The remaining single indications are related to financial status, psychological harassment, gender non-conforming status and mental health issues. Nevertheless, in the open question, students rarely describe discrimination experienced from their peers. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the interviews - students seldom identify their colleagues as perpetrators of discrimination. Students often express feelings of exclusion, diminishment, and overwhelm due to these discriminatory behaviours. These experiences shed light on the pervasive nature of discriminatory attitudes within student communities, leading to feelings of indignation, sadness, and exclusion.

Figure 2. Students' declarations indicating the source of discrimination



University of Groningen

Issues between student-student relationships often arise **during group work**, where several problems occur. When decisions and arrangements need to be made about group work the burden of the work is divided unequally.

First, a general pattern is that Dutch-male students take on a leading role, but the burden of the work does not end up on their plate.

Second, connected to the unequal division of work is the application of quality criteria, which are done based on a masculine and heteronormative framework in which assertive, direct, directive and linear thinking are seen as signs of quality. This leads to a subordinate position of students who do not conform to this framework of communication, which often are non-EU female students. Non-EU female students can come from a culture where more indirect and avoided communication is norm. As a result, non-EU female students will be assessed based on the heteronormative and assertive communication framework and seen/evaluated as less or in- competent.

Theoretically/conceptually, this related to the idea of the normative centre of schooling. The curriculum (in the broadest sense) carries more than just content, but also entails a transmission of worldviews from the dominant culture. The normative centre of schooling is the person that is implicitly behind the curriculum: who is represented and who is seen as the norm. This is often a person who is white, able, male, middle-class, straight (etc.). This also carries a strong message about what is seen as the standard, and therefore also carries a lot of biases, expectations and stereotypes of who it is that succeeds and who is seen as unlikely to succeed. The closer you are to the normative standards of schooling the more you will be seen as someone who can succeed, both in university and in society. The less you align with the normative centre of schooling the more likely the expectation is applied to you that you will be less likely to succeed.

4.2 Teacher <--> Teacher

University of Algarve

Most teachers are discriminated from other teachers (21.053 % out of 28.947 %). Discrimination within the teacher community manifests through moral harassment, differential treatment, and issues related to hierarchy. Teachers report feelings of injustice, discomfort, and humiliation as a result of discriminatory behaviours from their colleagues. The presence of moral harassment, differential treatment based on various factors, and hierarchical issues underscores the need for addressing discriminatory practices within the teacher community, fostering a more supportive and inclusive work environment.

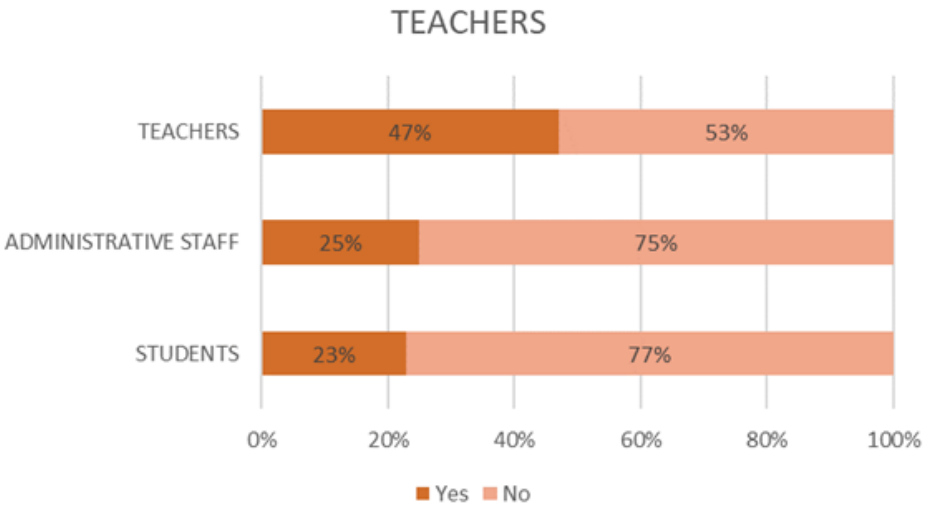
Lodz University of Technology

Teachers at the Lodz University of Technology (TUL) frequently face discrimination from their colleagues within the academic community, with a striking 47% reporting such experiences. Hierarchy/position is the most prevalent category. This aspect is predominantly raised by MA or PhD academic staff who declare that they were treated by professors as inferior and less capable. Respondents mention also experiencing discrimination based on age. In most instances, this involves discrimination against older individuals, particularly in terms of reluctance to invest in persons approaching retirement age. On the other hand, the compe-

tence of young people is also questioned but such instances are reported much less frequently. Respondents also cite instances of psychological harassment occurring among teachers, as well as occurrences of gender-based discrimination.

Long-term employees at TUL assert that there used to be more instances of discrimination, suggesting that generational shifts have contributed to positive changes. A decade ago, discrimination against female employees was prevalent, but with the departure of the older staff and greater societal awareness, some of these issues have naturally diminished. According to the interviewees, the younger generation is notably more open-minded, tolerant, and understanding. Its presence in the university brings positive changes that contribute to the ongoing efforts against discrimination.

Figure 3. Academic staff/teachers' declarations indicating the source of discrimination



University of Groningen

Several issues are reported in report for the relationship between teacher-teacher at the UG. Issues within the teacher-teacher relationships at the University of Groningen (UG) encompass several key areas. Firstly, there are concerns regarding psychological safety, with reports of bullying, social isolation, and verbal aggression among staff members. Secondly, gender imbalances at the top levels of the faculty are seen as significant barriers for female staff, perpetuating stereotypes and biases related to traditional gender roles. Thirdly, nationality-based disparities exist in promotion decisions and performance evaluations, with international staff facing greater challenges due to perceived arbitrariness and favouritism.

Additionally, hierarchy and seniority issues hinder open communication and feedback channels, with perceived "old boys" networks limiting opportunities for junior staff. Overall, the application of quality standards tends to favour those who conform to traditional communication norms and the implicit norms of academic leadership, perpetuating biases related to gender, skin colour, nationality, and years of service.

4.3 Administrative staff <--> Administrative staff

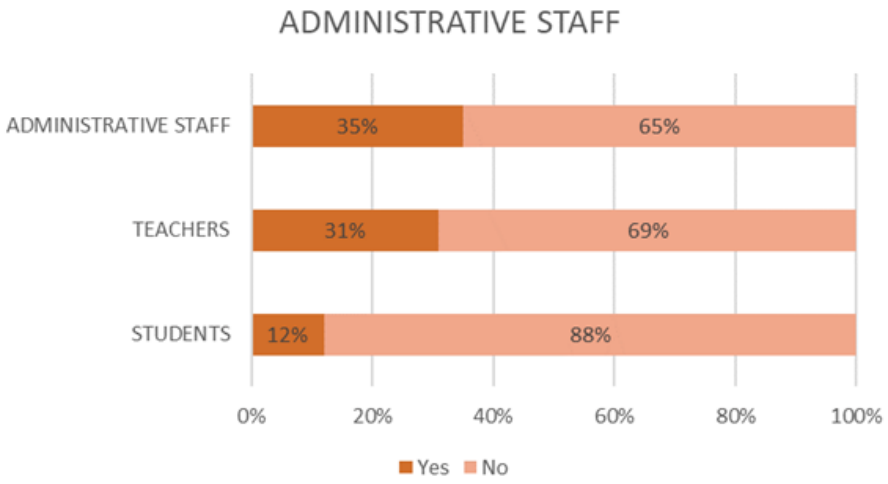
University of Algarve

Most of the non- teaching staff are discriminated against by teachers and in the survey there is a high undefined percentage of people who discriminate against them.

Lodz University of Technology

Discrimination against administrative staff by other administrative staff is a visible concern, with a reported incidence rate of 35%. The vast majority of the cases described by respondents involve position-related discrimination and favouritism or depreciation. Respondents complain about not being treated equally in terms of duties or financial conditions and being differentiated based on age (job seniority) or private preferences of their superiors. They also mention instances where promotion pathways were blocked.

Figure 4. Administrative staff on the source of the discrimination they face in university



University of Groningen

Although detailed statistics on discrimination among administrative staff at the University of Groningen are not available, it's important to acknowledge broader challenges within support staff interactions. Administrative personnel, along with other support staff, frequently face intimidation, bullying, and power abuse, often stemming from academic staff or individuals in higher positions. These behaviours, influenced by hierarchical structures, may unfairly target women and can take the form of arrogant attitudes or bias against female leadership.

4.4 Student <--> Teacher

University of Algarve

34.21% of discrimination from this group originated at teachers or faculty members. Discrimination experienced by students from teachers includes moral harassment, differential treatment, and hazing. Students report feelings of exploitation, humiliation, and powerlessness as a result of these discriminatory behaviours. Instances of moral harassment, differential treatment, and hazing by teachers contribute to negative emotional experiences and perceptions of injustice among students.

Lodz University of Technology

Students often experience discrimination from academic staff, with a reported rate of 25%. Conversely, academic staff members also face discrimination from students, at a similar rate (23%). Female students are particularly targeted by professors based on their gender; often enduring jokes made at their expense. They frequently encounter discriminatory comments perpetuating their limited autonomy and agency or suggesting that they are intellectually inferior to male students. Female students also raise concerns about hearing sexist comments and feeling that male instructors treated them with excessive leniency, or, in some cases, exhibited a lack of interest in their academic progress during classes. Meanwhile, male students express concerns about facing greater demands compared to their female peers.

Nationality is also mentioned frequently by students as a reason for discrimination experienced from teachers. They complain about being treated as if they did not have enough knowledge or were not willing to learn. Erasmus students raise also concerns about the insufficient availability of educational materials in English, which they also perceive as discrimination. Discrimination based on appearance and mental health issues is also reported. The remaining single indications are related to religion or personal beliefs. According to the students interviewed, discrimination is not rooted in malicious intent. Rather, it arises from a lack of understanding or empathy and awareness, where individuals may not realize that certain comments and behaviours can be discriminatory.

Although a large group of teachers participating in the survey declare that they were discriminated against by students, hardly any indicates a specific situation in the open question. Therefore, it is not possible to define the reasons or forms of discriminatory behaviour teacher experience from students.

University of Groningen

Several issues have been reported for the student-teacher relationship at the UG.

First, students indicate that there are discriminatory examples used by teachers. For example, students report on teachers that use racist, sexist or heteronormative examples in the classroom. In addition, complaints are made that the curriculum is Eurocentric/ Americentric and therefore not inclusive.

Second, the application of quality standards is reported to be arbitrary. The framework for quality standards is seen by those who apply it as something to enable them to determine whether someone fits the quality standards. However, the framework itself is something that can include (implicit) biases, leading to exclusion when it is applied. For example, again the framework of communication as described above can lead to teachers assessing students who do not conform to the assertive, direct, and directive style of communication as less/not qualified. Within the assessment, language barriers also play a role.

4.5 Student <--> Administrative staff

University of Algarve

Low percentage 1.316 % out of 61.842 %. Discrimination experienced by students from administrative staff primarily includes age-related differential treatment. Students report feelings of injustice, powerlessness, and sadness as a result of these discriminatory behaviours. Instances of age-related differential treatment by administrative staff contribute to negative emotional experiences and perceptions of unfair treatment among students.

Lodz University of Technology

At the university, it's reported that students rarely face discrimination from administrative staff, with 8% of students experiencing such treatment. Conversely, administrative staff members experience discrimination from students, with a reported rate of 12%. Unfortunately, only a few respondents described a specific situation where discrimination took place, it was based on gender. Female administrative staff complained that they were treated by students as less competent than male employees.

University of Groningen

Insufficient data is available regarding discrimination between students and administrative staff at the University of Groningen. However, it's essential to acknowledge potential challenges that may arise in interactions between international students and administrative staff. International students may experience loneliness and cultural misunderstandings, leading to unintended perceptions of inappropriate behaviour when attempting to connect with Dutch counterparts.

4.6 Teacher <--> Administrative staff

University of Algarve

At the University of Algarve, there are no reported cases of discrimination between teachers and administrative staff. However, in instances where discrimination occurs within this dynamic, it typically involves experiences of hazing and hierarchical issues. Teachers often express feelings of humiliation, revolt, and exploitation in response to discriminatory behaviour from administrative staff members.

Lodz University of Technology

Administrative staff frequently encounter discrimination from teachers, with an incidence rate of 31%. Conversely, academic staff members also experience discrimination from administrative staff, with a reported rate of 25%. The former complain about discrimination related to hierarchy and being treated by teachers as inferior or less competent employees. Gender-based discriminatory behaviour is also mentioned by a few respondents. Teachers, on the other hand, although they declare that they were discriminated against by administrative staff, do not provide specific examples of such discriminatory behaviour.

The emotional responses to discrimination reveal a profound impact such experiences have on individuals. Anger, sadness, humiliation, feeling undervalued or demotivated emerge as prevalent emotional reactions, highlighting a significant harm caused by discriminatory incidents. Additionally, the feeling of humiliation denotes the detrimental impact that instances of discrimination can have on an individual's self-esteem and dignity. In consequence, all these negative feelings indicated by respondents encountering discrimination may impede their personal development, and/or may have damaging impact on individuals' self-perception and confidence. Similar emotional responses are mentioned within Teacher<--> Teacher scenario.

There is limited information on discrimination between teachers and administrative staff at the University of Groningen. Nonetheless, it's crucial to recognize the broader issues of intimidation and abuse of power reported by support staff, particularly in interactions with academic staff. Instances of bullying and threats, often stemming from hierarchical dynamics, may disproportionately affect support staff, including administrative personnel.

5 Selection of scenario's

5.1 Criteria

The synthesis of empirical findings reveals the multifaceted nature of discrimination in academic communities. By addressing underlying issues related to workload distribution, gender bias, cultural norms, hierarchical dynamics, and inclusivity challenges, universities can aim for creating more equitable and supportive environments for all members of the academic community. More specifically:

Gender Bias: Gender bias is a pervasive issue affecting multiple dimensions of academic life. Within teacher-teacher relationships, incidents of bullying, gender biases, and hierarchical tensions were frequently reported, highlighting systemic gender inequalities that hinder career advancement and perpetuate discriminatory practices.

Cultural and Communication Norms: Cultural and communication norms play a significant role in shaping discriminatory experiences within academic settings. Non-EU female students, for example, may face challenges due to cultural differences in communication styles, leading to perceptions of incompetence and exclusion.

Inclusivity Challenges: International students and staff members often face challenges related to inclusivity, cultural misunderstandings, and loneliness. These challenges may stem from cultural differences and perceptions of inappropriate behaviour, highlighting the importance of promoting cross-cultural understanding and fostering inclusive environments.

Unequal Workload Distribution: Across different relationships within academic communities, unequal workload distribution emerges as a common issue. For instance, examples of discriminatory workload allocation were reported among student-student and teacher-teacher relationships, leading to feelings of marginalization and inequity.

Hierarchical Dynamics: Hierarchical dynamics exacerbate discriminatory practices, particularly among administrative staff and between teachers and administrative personnel. Instances of intimidation, bullying, and abuse of power were reported, underscoring the need to address power differentials and foster more collaborative and respectful workplace cultures.

By identifying patterns and prevalent forms of discrimination, we can prioritize scenarios that are representative of broader issues within university relationships. This ensures that selected scenarios are relevant and reflective of the diverse experiences of individuals within academic environments.

5.2 Selection

Scenario	Summarized Findings	Emotional Intelligence	Game Setting	Time Limits	Sensitivity	Participants Number
Student <--> Student	Discrimination among peers, unequal workload distribution	✔	✔	✔	✔	Medium-High
Teacher <--> Teacher	Incidents of bullying, gender biases, hierarchy issues	✔	✔	✔	✔	Medium-High
Administrative Staff <--> Admin. Staff	Discrimination within staff, hierarchical tensions	✔	✔	✔	✔	Medium-High
Student <--> Teacher	Discriminatory teaching practices, biased assessment	✔	✔	✔	✔	Medium-High
Student <--> Admin. Staff	Low incidence of discrimination, need for inclusivity	✔	✔	✔	✔	Low-Medium
Teacher <--> Admin. Staff	Discrimination from academic staff towards admin staff	✔	✔	✔	✔	Medium-High

6 Conclusion

The survey responses offered valuable insights into instances of discrimination experienced by students, administrative staff, and academic staff. Those findings emphasized the importance of addressing discrimination in academic contexts, as a significant percentage of respondents reported such experiences.

Furthermore, the data showed variations in the prevalence of discrimination among different groups, including differences based on gender, nationality, and career stage. Additionally, the qualitative data obtained from focus groups and interviews helped us understand better the discrimination in the academic environment. These insights, combined with the survey findings, offer a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by university stakeholders in combating discrimination.

In conclusion, this research emphasizes the urgency of implementing measures to promote emotional intelligence and counteract discrimination within university settings. By using the findings from this study, universities can develop specific plans to foster inclusive environments where all members of the community feel respected.

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