

# **Ways of Overcoming Gender Stereotype Barriers in the Automobile Sector in Sri Lanka (With Special Reference to the Vehicle Services Sector of Diesel and Motor Engineering PLC)**

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This study presents a sociological analysis of employment choices of females relating to the automobile sector through a case study of low female employment in the vehicle services sector of Diesel and Motor Engineering PLC (DIMO). The research problem of the study was focused on why there is a low female employment within the vehicle services sector of DIMO. The objectives of the study were to examine the impact of gender stereotyping on low female employment in the vehicle services sector of DIMO and to examine the steps that can be taken to minimize it. A conceptual framework was developed to understand the relationship between low female employment and gender stereotyping. The sample size was determined as 100 and simple random sampling method was used to select it. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through simple observations, questionnaires, semi structured interviews and participant observation. The study analysed how gender stereotyping impacts the employment choices of individuals. It was found that socially, employments are labelled as either “Masculine Jobs” or “Feminine Jobs” based on their nature. It influences the employment choices of individuals creating a “Stereotype Threat” which discourages them from entering into gender labelled jobs. This ideology heavily impacts the female employment in the vehicle services sector of DIMO as this sector is labelled as “Masculine only”. Gender stereotyping also shapes the competence of individuals while limiting their real potential. Finally, the study shows changing the perception about the vehicle services sector has a probability of increasing female employment in it. Hence it was concluded that DIMO should take initiatives in situations where it interacts with its potential employees such as career fairs, job advertisements, DIMO’s web page, DIMO’s social media platforms, internship programs, the DIMO’s automobile training school and DIMO’s Learning Management System.

*Keywords:* Competence, Gender perception, Female employee, Gender stereotyping, Stereotype threat