

The Impact of Perceived Gender Discrimination on Job Performance

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Abstract. In recent years, the gender discrimination faced by female employees throughout their careers has attracted increasing attention. The marginalization and unequal treatment of women in the labor market has become a social reality, and women, especially young women, they have become one of the groups in the labor market that raise social concerns about gender discrimination in the workplace. Therefore, this paper analyses how gender discrimination in the workplace affects female employees' job opportunities, career development, remuneration and psychological well-being, which also has an impact on their work performance. This paper also analyses workplace gender discrimination by referring equity sensitivity theory. It is found that gender discrimination may lead to unequal job opportunities, making women limited in promotion and leadership positions. In addition, employees who suffer from gender discrimination face psychological pressure, which may lead to emotional instability, decreased self-esteem and job satisfaction. Based on the summary and research, this paper proposes solution measures to deal with workplace gender discrimination from the perspectives of society, schools, enterprises and individuals. By delving into the study of workplace gender discrimination, this paper can help society better understand the existence and causes of gender discrimination, which can help promote more targeted policies and practices by governments, organizations and businesses to promote justice and workplace diversity. In addition, this paper suggests that subsequent research could delve deeper into how workplace culture and leadership styles influence gender discrimination, exploring the role of leaders' roles and organizational cultures in shaping gender equality.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, workplace, suggestions and solutions.

1. Introduction

Sex discrimination in the workplace refers to unfavorable differential treatment of individual women or groups of women by their employers because of their sex. It consists of two types: direct discrimination, i.e., deliberate and direct discriminatory behavior. And the second one is indirect discrimination, i.e., indirect and invisible discriminatory behavior influenced by social prejudices and discriminatory behaviors that appear to be neutral but are actually detrimental to women.

Nowadays, as an important part of the social labor force, more and more women are participating in the labor market. However, gender discrimination, whether at the time of recruitment and hiring or gender segregation after hiring, will discourage female groups from working in the workplace and will not only infringe on the right to work of female employees but will also have a negative impact on women's struggle for equal social status.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss workplace gender discrimination and its impact on job performance. After summarize some articles, this paper will verify the direct and indirect nature of workplace gender discrimination. The analysis of specific industries will also verify that female employees will be affected by workplace gender discrimination in their job performance and job promotion. Furthermore, this paper will summarize the research on workplace gender discrimination on job performance and discuss the theories applicable to the problem, on this basis of which it will discuss the ideas and methods to solve the problem of workplace gender discrimination, hoping to serve as a reference.

2. Workplace Gender Discrimination

2.1. Meaning of Workplace Gender Discrimination

Workplace discrimination, unequal treatment at work due to gender or sexual orientation differences, can occur on the basis of many individual characteristics which include sex, nationality, sexual orientation, age, weight, cultural context, handicap, disease and so on [1].

Gender discrimination in the workplace is about treating male and female workers differently on the basis of sex, regardless of their professional qualifications or job requirements. Despite significant case studies of female success stories and legislative protection machinery, workplace gender discrimination still persists. According to an annual survey on the situation of women in the workplace published by Zhaopin.com in China, women's overall income in the workplace is 22% lower than men's and the number of female workers in managerial positions is 14.8% lower than men's [2]. Among them, more than 75.2% of respondents said that in their own companies, the majority of employees above management level are men [2]. According to the model developed by Mohamad, sexist behavior in the workplace can be divided into two categories [1]. On the one hand, there are official and public discriminatory practices. These include two main types: denial of opportunity and economic discrimination, i.e., denial of access to interviews and gender-specific wage differentials. On the other hand, there is unofficial and hidden discrimination. These include two other types: neglect and undervaluing, and segmentation and stereo-typing. In today's work environment, most of the gender discrimination in the workplace falls into this category, which makes it vague and difficult to prove. As a result, such informal and hidden practices in the workplace are also difficult to defend.

2.2. Analysis of Workplace Gender Discrimination

The paper tends to analyze gender discrimination in the Japanese labour market by means of a study from the Japan Household Panel Survey (JHPS) conducted by Keio University. JHPS is a wide-ranging household survey since 2009 on a comprehensive range of topics including employment, income, consumption, family structure, personal attributes, educational background, time allocation and parental life relationships, which includes respondents from all regions of Japan, all age groups and different occupations [3].

On the one hand, from JHPS the impact of gender on employment rates could be analyzed. The results show that 62.44 percent of women are employed, compared with 82.75 percent of men [3]. The share of men in a full-time job is much higher than that of women which is 1.82 times higher, while the proportion of women combining domestic and work duties is much higher than that of men, being 15.97 percent, or 7.83 times higher than that of men, even though the proportion of women in employment is lower. In contrast, the proportion of women who are not employed due to schooling, housework or other commitments is higher than the proportion of men, which is also 2.38 times higher than the proportion of men. On the other hand, in the JHPS 2019 survey data, 64.2 per cent of survey respondents had the type of job of a company employee, of which 66.6 per cent were formally employed and 33.3 per cent were informally employed [3]. The proportion of formally employed female employees is much lower than that of male employees, especially in the case of formal employees with positions and the management of enterprises, where the proportion of male employees is about three times that of female employees. There are two main reasons for this higher proportion of informal employment of women: first, according to the traditional division of labor in the family in Japan, women take on more family responsibilities, and therefore actively choose informal positions that are more flexible in terms of working hours; this kind of informal employment, although chosen on their own initiative, is based on the stereotype of the traditional division of labor between the genders and is a kind of informal and implicit gender discrimination. The second is the possible employment discrimination against women in the Japanese labor market, which is a kind of formal and obvious employment discrimination.

3. The Impact of Gender Discrimination on Job Performance

3.1. The Appliance of Equity Sensitivity

On the link between workplace sexism and job performance, the article can apply the stressor-strain theory [4]. Sexism in the workplace can be considered a stressor, and therefore those exposed to the stressor may experience a number of negative impacts, including reduced job performance. In general, a number of empirical studies support this theory by finding that gender discrimination is associated with higher levels of job stress, job contentment and commitment to the organization compared to other common sources of job stress, such as job conflict [5]. In addition to this, discrimination in the workplace can lead to physical and psychological problems for employees.

If workers feel they are being unjustly treated, they may feel that their rights have been violated. As a result, they may withdraw from the organization. This may manifest itself in reduced performance, increased absenteeism and turnover, behavioral transgressions, and reduced emotional commitment and related behaviors [6]. In addition, attribution theory, which is about the way in which individuals perceive events and how this is connected to their thinking and behavior, suggests that if professional women perceive workplace discrimination to be the result of stable internal dispositions and uncontrollable external causes, they will make less effort and have lower self-esteem. Social Exchange Theory, a notion founded on the understanding that a relationship between two people is established via a cost benefit analysis process. According to it, social exchange is a relationship-based, mutually subjective interaction "between employers and employees", defined as an exchange of socio-economic benefits, of mutual trust and engagement, of long-term worries and indefinite commitments. Individual employees who are being treated fairly are hence more likely to feel a greater sense of obligation to respond to just organizational behavior by doing more work. Conversely, victims of discrimination in the workplace may underperform to counterbalance this exchange. In line with it, previous research has found that female employees may respond to discriminatory organizational treatment through retaliatory measures, such as avoiding work, objecting to managerial instructions, and offering minimum work input [1]. According to the equity theory, employees obtain fair treatment by comparing their inputs with those of their co-workers. When these inputs and outputs are in balance, employees are more or equally likely to produce positive results that bring benefits to the organization. But once discrimination is removed, there may be one or more mechanisms that individuals can use to redress the balance. Where possible, an individual may strive for a higher outcome relative to their inputs, or seek to reduce their inputs for the same outcome.

3.2. Gender discrimination in healthcare profession

Nursing is one of the most gendered professions in the world. Recent campaigning has motivated more males to pursue a career in nursing. For the Australian College of Nursing's 'It's OK to be a Nurse' campaign, for instance, it has actively sought to boost the number of men joining the nursing profession. While more diverse and sustainably recruited nurses are essential, considering the implications of hiring more men into the nursing workforce is also important. Globally, women are under-represented in leadership and management roles in practically all occupations and at all educational levels, including those in which women predominate. Recently, it has been proposed that in a bid to attract more males to the profession of nursing, they should have greater access to higher salaries and more independent and senior positions in nursing. Although, men in the nursing profession are stereotyped as homosexuals and sexual deviants, or as having flunked out of medical school [7].

The idea of prioritizing the success of male nurses and a progressive nursing culture resonated with most participants [7]. Male colleagues were conscious of their gender advantage and most of them accepted that it was unfair to their female colleagues. In the culture of nursing, female participants reported that they had to make a choice between their family life and the promotion of their career. Women's career progression is all limited by their responsibilities to their families and this view was evident in the study. For instance, in the survey conducted by Saleh et al. in Jordan,

women are "obliged" to support their families in parallel to their nursing work, which can have an impact on their work performance [7]. Similarly in a study carried out in New Zealand, in which women stated that family responsibilities affect their capacity to compete for managerial positions [7]. Male nurse managers indicated that their female counterparts worked part-time in order to devote time to their families so as to be able to focus on their careers. For some of the female participants, the added stress of family life was a barrier to gaining post-graduate training to progress on the career ladder. In the study done by van der Heever and van der Merwe, female nurses were required to indicate marital status and dependent status when applying for study leaves, whereas male nurses were not required to do so [8]. It was widely recognized that male nurses had a preferential status in nursing care, largely due to gender expectations. Participants believed that male nurses are treated with the respect and special treatment they deserve simply because they are male. For men, there are fewer workplace rules and regulations and less control over day-to-day tasks. Although these behaviors are subtle and perhaps involuntary, they increase men's power in the organization and therefore increase women's submission.

As a result, the narrative of male success in female-dominated careers has been going on for over three decades. It is therefore essential that greater male representation in nursing does not entrench dominance by patriarchy. Most of the articles in this review have been written from a male perspective. Yet men's views and conceptions of their position and of their authority in the workplace also help to understand women's submission in the workplace. Given the dire global shortage affecting this occupation, establishing a work environment that does not treat women in a discriminatory manner is absolutely critical to improving job satisfaction and maintaining skilled nurses. It is time to challenge restrictive gender roles and hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity.

3.3. The Effect of Sexual Discrimination on Job Satisfaction

The sexual discrimination perceived in workplace can lower workers self-esteem and self-confidence, which therefore could end up with a decrease in job satisfaction and job performance. Job satisfaction and commitment to an organization are two essential factors of employee viewpoints that can be influenced by detected discrimination [9]. Job satisfaction can be outlined as an enjoyable or gratifying emotional condition derived from the assessment of one's occupation or working experiences [10]. And the definition of organizational commitment can be outlined as an individual's feelings about the organization as a whole. The impact of sensed discrimination on work results as well as work performance among 139 Hispanic male and female workers were examined [11]. The study showed that detected discrimination contributed to more work stress and reduced job fulfillment and organizational commitment, exceeding other traditional and usual work stressing factors, for example, role conflict and role vagueness. Likewise, Gutek, Cohen and Tsui suggested from their report that perceived discrimination in the middle of female employees had something to do with lower sense of power and prestige in the career [12].

A validity study that investigates the relationships between workplace sexism and occupation satisfaction within female employees working in male-dominated industries was carried out [12]. There was a total of 190 female participants from a big Australian trade union that symbolized mostly careers that were dominated by men, age ranged from 19 to 60 years old [13]. An online questionnaire survey that included measures of gender discrimination, feelings of belonging in the domain, mental health and work satisfaction was used. Rubin measured organizational sexism and interpersonal sexism by seven and six items correspondingly, which were all predictor variables [13]. A mediator variable was involved, which was sense of belonging, using five items to measure. Mental health issues and work satisfaction were all outcome variables. Four items from Index of Affective Job Satisfaction were used to estimate job fulfillment. Specifically, "I find real enjoyment in my job"; "I like my job better than the average person"; "most days I am enthusiastic about my job"; and "I feel fairly well satisfied with my job". Participants scored on the 7-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

The coefficient of job satisfaction and organizational sexism was -0.31, and the coefficient of job satisfaction and interpersonal sexism was -0.18 [13]. These correlation outcomes suggested that both kinds of sexism, which were organizational sexism and interpersonal sexism, were negatively correlated with feelings of belonging and occupation fulfillment [13]. In other words, the greater extent of discrimination that female workers informed having the last year, the lower job satisfaction they had over the past year. Furthermore, sense of belonging was positively associated with job satisfaction. The pattern of outcomes was corresponding with the foreseen mediation effects.

Therefore, an appropriate explanation of reduced job satisfaction because of sexual discrimination in workplace could be produced. When women are feeling they are being discriminated and treated unfairly, they feel a decrease in sense of belonging and they are being isolated, which will then decrease women's interests, enjoyment and enthusiasm in working and paying less attention. Thus, female employees are less satisfied with their jobs as well as the working environment, and they might feel more distressed and upset, harming their psychological well-being by less self-esteem as well as self-confidence.

4. Suggestions and Solutions for Sexual Discrimination

It is undisputed that gender-based discrimination in workplace is a serious problem, and it is incorrect, the first thing that should be done is to look into the issue more thoroughly, ahead of proposing gender discriminatory policies targeted at guaranteeing gender equilibriums on societal institutions. People should recognize that discrimination is the issue, not the solution [14].

4.1. Society

From the aspect of the society, government should organize and improve the law protection of gender equality and job opportunities. And more strict and rigorous rules and laws should be formulated in order to knock gender discrimination. Not only laws should be created, but also promotion mechanism and evaluation system. These mechanisms and systems should be more fair-and-square, impartial and clear, making sure that all the employees have the same and fair competition environment, and getting promoted or demoted only because of their personal ability.

4.2. School

It is significant to conduct more education and publicity of reducing sexual discrimination, helping people change their perceptions and attitudes toward sexism. Students should have the fine perception that refusing to discriminate others and prevent this phenomenon as more as possible. Schools and medias should both play roles in posting videos and posters to promote peoples awareness and recognition of gender discrimination. Schools could also hold some anti-discrimination programs, awareness-raising and curriculum based activities. The target of this is to prompting students and even the society to say "no" to sexism.

4.3. Enterprise

Both the employers and employees need to realize the importance of reducing and preventing sexual discrimination, so that publicity, education and training are essential. It is crucial for them to understand the harm and unfairness that come from sexism. Like we mentioned before, firms should also formulate just evaluation system, preventing factors like gender having an impact on employees assessments. For employers, companies should provide fair and equal promotion chance for all the employees. Furthermore, education and training needed to be improved, all the workers need to reinforce their professionalism and professional skills in order to enhance their occupational competitiveness and broaden their development space. In addition, efficiency and kind communication and cooperation mechanisms should be constructed among colleagues, so that the efficiency and the quality of work and assignments can be greatly improved, also enhancing the friendships between colleagues.

4.4. Individual

Realizing the negative effects that gender discrimination brings is essential for citizens, and they can establish the correct value and treat others kindly and equally. Also, helping victims in the workplace when they are discriminated or faced harassment.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discussed lot of aspects of perceived sexual discrimination in workplace. This literature review suggested that gender discrimination will result in unequal job opportunities, which is that women may be less likely to get promotion opportunities and leadership, by referring and evaluating the results from the JHPS research of Japanese markets and Korean health industry. Additionally, sexism in workplace might also affect workers psychological well-being. Specifically, lower self-esteem and self-confidence, which will then lead to a decrease in job satisfaction as well as job performance. This paper also suggested some solutions and suggestions to reduce sexual discrimination from various point of view such as society, schools, enterprises and individuals, in order to create a fairer competition environment for all the employees. This literature review gives a complete view of perceived sexism which is beneficial to evaluate and analyze entirely. However, this paper has some limitations. This article conducted a discussion that was quite wide, besides studying the relationship between sexism in male-dominated industry and job satisfaction, it also involved sense of belonging and mental health. Furthermore, there is less knowledge yet in the field of sexual discrimination in female-dominated industries or in industries with an equal amount of both gender, as well as gender discrimination focused on males. Except for sexual discrimination, other studies related to discriminations like racial discrimination, age discrimination can be frequently conducted to analyze their effects to workers, in order to have better and deeper understanding of the perspective of perceived discrimination in workplace.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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