

Business academic skills essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



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Assessment Question: Using three ethical principles of the Global Business Standards Codex, evaluate the employment practices of Wal-Mart.

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Walmart is the world's largest corporation and is a dominant force in the retail industry as it has consistently been in Fortune 500's top two companies over the past several years. Walmart employs over 2.1 million full time employees though has been considered to be unethical to these employees in relation to the Global Business Standards Codex. The codex is <https://assignbuster.com/business-academic-skills-essay-sample/>

a set of ethical principles for which business should be conducted. It is through the employment practices utilized by Walmart which are negative overall in comparison to the Global Business Standards Codex. Walmart has been seen to have breached the codex principles of dignity, transparency and fairness through workplace and sex discrimination; informal forms of promotion and wage differentiation between male and female employees.

Firstly, workplace discrimination is deemed as unethical in employment and is an infringement on the dignity principle. Walmart has infringed on this principle as they have frequently discriminated against their female employees through non detrimental methods of sex discrimination (Fishman 2006). Bensen and Kimmel (2006) confirmed that the range of discrimination experienced by female employees was from as simple as name calling by colleagues and management, to reduced opportunities to gain a promotion or attain a managerial position solely based on their gender. Statements and research demonstrated that these forms of sex discrimination were common among multiple Walmart stores in the United States of America (Bensen & Kimmel 2006; Fishman 2006). The dignity principle as stated by Stanwick and Stanwick (2009) declared that employees must respect the dignity of all persons, and also support the improvement of human progression within a company, hence any form of humiliation is considered a violation of the dignity principle. Therefore Walmart's' practice of discrimination significantly compromised female employees' equality and ability to progress within the company.

In addition Walmart continues to extensively discriminate against female employees through management. Sex discrimination is regularly apparent through Walmart's management, who tend to shield and support women in the company while management vigorously discourages females from searching for promotions (Bensen & Kimmel 2006; Fishman 2006).

Walmart's management had focused on the demands and stress of the available position in order to create incentives for woman to remain in their current post (Spangler, Britt & Parks 2008; Bensen & Kimmel 2006). As such this limited the career prospects accessible to woman as management were seen to have been concerned with their wellbeing in gaining such a position. This practice particularly decreased female employees' capacity to advance within Walmart.

Furthermore the occurrence of sex based discrimination against females has seen Walmart put priority on their male employees to receive promotions and management positions. Males historically were valued as greater leaders than females as men encompassed characteristics which enabled them to produce favourable outcomes for business (Johnson 2009). This is supported as a majority of global corporations have only up to 32 percent of their management positions occupied by female employees compared to 37 percent at Walmart (Johnson 2009; Brunn 2006). Despite this the American average for management positions held by females was 43 percent in 2008 (Johnson 2009). The global comparison revealed Walmart had provided greater opportunities for females to progress into higher management positions in contrast to other international corporations. Though domestically, Walmart does not offer the same standard for women to

advance and therefore restricted female employees capability to develop within the company.

Secondly, Walmart disclosed information about vacant management positions in an informal manner which breached the transparency principle. Senior managers would rarely place available management positions on the bulletin board for all employees to apply, though instead would rather use word of mouth to communicate if positions were vacant (Boris 2005).

Managers tended to approach mainly male employees and offer them the management positions. Management believed more male employees had the required skills to perform this role. However other employees were not given the opportunity to apply for such positions, even though most had greater experience (Spangler, Britt & Parks 2008; Boris 2005). Management did not behave in an open manner with all employees. This could result in discrimination as management made judgements based on personal belief instead of using the correct process to acquire the most qualified candidate for the position.

This practice is criticised because it is deceptive behaviour to not notify employees appropriately of available positions and is a violation of the transparency principle. In contrast, Walmart acted reasonably towards all employees by paying fair wages. When compared to other organisations domestically within the retail industry Walmart provided competitive wages (Hemphill 2008; Tilly 2007). These wages represented basic low skilled employee labour, which Walmart rewarded with fair pay (Hemphill 2008). Internationally as well Walmart employees are paid considerable wages

compared to local the retail market (Tilly 2007). Walmart has operated appropriately within the fairness principle as their employees had a significant investment with Walmart and were reimbursed fairly.

Finally wage differentiation between males and females is judged as unethical in employment as it is an infraction on the fairness principle. The fairness principle states that any person with considerable dealings with an organisation should be compensated fairly, therefore the distribution of limited resources should be shared adequately (Stanwick & Stanwick 2009). Walmart's female employees have been faced with unequal pay in comparison with their male equivalent. Despite having similar experience and range of skills female employees had been disregarded for promotions (Bianco 2006). Women received from 1100 dollars in hourly rate up to 14000 dollars in salaries less than their male counterparts (Spangler, Britt & Parks 2008).

Males continued to have higher income than females. Even though male and female employees had similar responsibility it was defended that males were the main form of income for their families and females would only subsidise their family income, hence males received promotions more readily (Boris 2005; Bianco 2006). The mistreatment of such practice does not account for Walmart employees who are single mothers. This can result in these employees to attain a second job in order to maintain the appropriate standard of living. Thus wage differentiation is of concern to female employees as they are likely to receive lower wages compared to their male

equivalent. Consequently by this practice Walmart does not treat its female employees fairly.

On the whole, Walmart behaves unethically through its employee practices in comparison to the Global Business Standards Codex. Walmart has violated the dignity, transparency and fairness principles which has been represented through its workplace and sex discrimination from management; reduced formal approaches to promotion and unfair wage segregation between employees. Such behaviour places ethical dilemmas on Walmart's employment practices.

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