

Good example of women discrimination in the workplace; organizational research pr...

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Commitment - Saudi Arabia

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Introduction

In December 2010, Arab revolution was accidentally started by Mohamed Bouazizi. Bouazizi worked as fruits and vegetables seller in his town, illegally. One day, a police officer stopped him and confiscated his cart as a weekly usual; this was not a big deal for him. Mohamed tried hard to get his cart back, and he managed to do it. Several minutes later, the same police officer returned, angry and full of hatred, slapped Mohamed and asked other policemen to kick him- for no reason. Bouazizi was furious. He could not control his anger, not because of the slap, but because the police officer was a woman. A popular proverb still circulates in Mohamed's town "if a woman hits you, you should wear a dress- like her". Bouazizi could not go back to his family, out of shame for having been slapped by a woman. So, he decided to light himself on fire and end his life. Many questions were asked after the dreadful event: what if the police officer was a man? Would Bouazizi have done the same?

During the revolution, many citizens raised their voice against the policewoman, saying that she should not be allowed to keep her job, since (they believe) women are not strong enough to control emotions or handle stressful positions. To confirm this belief; the investigators asked the policemen who worked in the same office whether they would do the same as her or not; they found that 88% of them would not do the same (the rest said they did not know). Another question was asked to the same group: whether women are able to deal with stressful positions; most of them said "

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no, regardless of their abilities and skills". This shows how the level of gender discrimination in the workplace is still high, especially in homogeneous cultures such as Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, focusing on women discrimination shed the light on the organizational behavior to deal with human behavior in organizations. To clarify, gender discrimination in Saudi Arabia tends to be more directed towards women than men, because it is a county mostly dominated by men. Women in Saudi Arabia have the right to work, but the main goal is to work together to meet the goal of the company- not to look for gender differences which eventually lead to misunderstanding, conflict and discrimination among employees. Employers have a responsibility to their workers (especially women), to protect them from discrimination and unfair treatment in the workplace.

Additionally, more than half of the male population in Saudi Arabia relies on stereotypes, showing a high correlation with women discrimination.

Stereotypes, in general, assign people to groups in order to allow others to assume to know how to act; then, people can escape the tediousness of having to learn about others as individuals. The problem with women discrimination is stereotyping; men do not spend their time learning more about female abilities or skills. Most stereotypes are inaccurate, and using them can detrimentally affects people's judgment in organizations. For example, women who cover their face are not able to communicate with men in a free manner.

Theatrical Framework

Different studies in the United States show that there are dimensions of gender discrimination that affect gender performance and productivity in workplace. However, in Saudi Arabia, gender discrimination has a strong relationship with hiring, since women there are treated differently. Cultural norms, the Islamic religion, masculine viewpoint and tradition are factors that lead companies to develop, design, determine and limit job opportunities for women. In the past, women in Saudi Arabia were only able to work at schools- no more than that. Recently, more jobs opportunities have been added, but there is still strong discrimination, especially under positions dominated by males.

Furthermore, an empirical research conducted in Pakistan by Hameed and Waheed (2011), shows that there is gender discrimination in workplace within these facilities (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). The study shed the light on three different types of companies; the ones dominated by men, the ones dominated by women and the ones with balanced domination of men and women. The conclusion is that gender discrimination exists with the opposite gender: women discrimination in companies dominated by men and vice versa.

Another study, conducted in Pakistan by Imamand et al. (2013), tried to approve the presence of gender discrimination and glass ceiling in the organization (Imam& Shah, 2013). The dependent variables were organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction; gender discrimination was an independent variable. The findings showed that there was a positive relationship between the dependent and

independent variables. However, gender-biased work environment and male stereotypes are present among the workforce, while female employees show decreasing organizational commitment.

On the other hand, Fisher, Boyle and Fulop (2010) investigated the relationship between gender and workplace commitment in the United States (Fisher, Boyle&Fulop, 2010). Showing that gender has no relationship with organizational commitment- regardless of a worker being male or female- they conclusion could not be classified as a measurement of the organizational commitment (Fisher, Boyle&Fulop, 2010). They approved that the lack of understanding of performance, promotion and management could affect the balance in organizational commitment for both genders (Fisher, Boyle&Fulop, 2010). This shows how homogeneous and heterogeneous countries change the final results of the study.

Following one study framework, the aim was to validate gender discrimination and harassment in Saudi Arabia, focusing on the female side.

H1: Women discrimination has a positive association with harassment in workplace.

H2: Women discrimination has a positive association with stereotypes in workplace.

Finally, because there is no prior organizational research study conducted in Saudi Arabia, a research question was set in order to determine the relationship between women discrimination, and harassment and stereotypes in this particular study:

RQ: What is the relationship between women discrimination and harassment and stereotypes in workplace in Saudi Arabia?

Methodology

Respondents

The sample consisted of 200 women. Respondents varied in age from 20 to 60, with an average age of 31 years ($SD = 5.1$). Most respondents (88%) were employed for more than 2 years. The large majority of female respondents (63%) worked in departments dominated by men.

Procedures

The questionnaire surveys were distributed by communication office employees to workers in the sampled teams, with the approval of their supervisors. Surveys were anonymous, and were returned in sealed envelopes to the communication office via team leaders or the in-plant mail system.

Measures

Survey questions for this study were adapted from previously validated research on gender discrimination. A five-point Likert scale response set was utilized for each item. The dependent variables were perceived as departments dominated by men and positions equal to men.

Positions equal to men. To assess the validity of discrimination in Saudi Arabia, the items used to measure the dependent variables were submitted to a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. Three factors emerged with women discrimination: comparing pay for the same

work, promotions, and opportunities for advancement at work. Women were answering open-end questions to express their experiences and measure how they were treated when working in positions equal to men.

Result

Both hypotheses were supported by the study. Woman discrimination has high association with organizational commitment in workplace. Respondents who worked under departments dominated by men exhibit less organizational commitment. Regardless of gender- culture, tradition, personal character and religion dominate the respondents' actions in Saudi Arabia. Thus, respondents with introvert personality on the Likert-type scale exhibit lower organizational commitment if they worked under men. They also tend to receive more discrimination than others.

However, respondents with dependable and strong personalities show high organizational commitment if they work in positions equal to men. The discrimination level is too low compared with those who work under men. Respondents seem to care less of discrimination, since they reach their goal and feel equal to men; their skills and abilities are not underestimated as with the other group- the ones working under men. With equality, the productivity and performance are raised, which reflects the commitment in an organization.

Discussion:

Employees (male or female) refer to personal skills and abilities to complete duties and responsibilities needed to achieve the objective of an organization. Achieving the organizational objective leads employees

increased performance, productivity and high organizational commitment. However, within women discrimination in the workplace, organizational commitment shows negative correlation in both situations. The graph summary shows the significant relationship between women discrimination and organizational commitment. All hypotheses proved and claimed a significant association and relationship between women discrimination and organizational commitment.

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