

Effects of gender discrimination and harrasment on motivation



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Gender discrimination and harassment are topics of immense importance as they have been under discussion for over more than a decade, many studies and researches have been conducted to investigate on the different aspects of this topic, to correlate and identify the various variables from within the studies to contribute to the society in a direct or an indirect way. All the studies point out to a healthy working environment for both Men and Women so that they are more motivated producing better results for the companies as a whole. The areas of research on this topic in the past focuses on Law, job satisfaction, employee turnover, organizational costs, social responsibility and corporate culture providing insights into many factors influenced by gender discrimination and harassment. Almost all the studies focus on problem faced by women from within the organization and social external factors involving discrimination and affecting productivity. Relationship between the variables drawn in the previous studies shows the direction of the research and how the factors interrelate with each other.

Studies show that people have protection against this menace of discrimination and harassment but its effectiveness is always challenged and debated for over some time. Law and justice are always closely looked upon when it comes to harassment at work place.

A study " Gender-Based Harassment and the Hostile Work Environment" (Joshua F. Thrope) tests whether non-sexually motivated gender discrimination is as serious a factor in creating a hostile working environment as sexually motivated gender discrimination. Although Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies to all gender-motivated discrimination, in practice many lower federal courts make a distinction between sexually

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motivated gender discrimination and non-sexually motivated gender discrimination (gender-based harassment) in a work environment. This study illustrates a court case of *Dwyer v. Smith* in which a police officer alleged that her co-workers and supervisors engaged in a pattern of abusive conduct that created a hostile working environment. (Thorpe). The failure of the plaintiff to allege a case of sexual harassment proved to be fatal to her case. Sexual harassment is only a part of gender discrimination that female employees face in a hostile work environment. Ridicule, rudeness or insults directed at working women may not be sexually motivated but may still create a hostile working environment. The failure of courts to view gender-based harassment claims as actionable has reduced the availability and deterred the effectiveness of Title VII. The study claims that in order to recognize gender-based discrimination as actionable it must be severe or pervasive or it could be misinterpreted.

Impacts and consequences have been explored in many previous findings and emphasis have been given on the nature and reason of harassment, but from within harassment sexual harassment is the concept which is quite highlighted factor discussed in findings as in,

“ Recent Thinking about Sexual Harassment: A Review Essay” (Elizabeth Anderson) discusses the wrongs of sexual harassment and presents three theories that capture a different aspect of sexual harassment. Dignity theory explains the offensiveness of harassment; autonomy theory deals with the coercive nature of sexual conduct whereas equality theory highlights the group based harms of sexual harassment. This article also gives an example of airlines that expect female flight attendants tolerate customer’s anger, <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-gender-discrimination-and-harrasment-on-motivation/>

rudeness or ogling without any objection and hence, make it difficult for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily. The essay also tries to provide remedies and explains that antidiscrimination law has been quite useful in helping people understand their rights and combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

Most people perceive harassment and gender discrimination as a mentally or physically induced trauma but very few people measure it on the basis of the high costs involved by this practice of harassment and its deeply rooted and ever growing cost is often ignored. One such article:

The study “ Estimating the Organizational Costs of Sexual Harassment: The Case of U. S. Army” (Robert H. Faley, Deborah Erdos Knapp, Gary A, Kustis, Cathy L. Z. Dubois) tested the implication of sexual harassment on the organizational costs. The increasing costs of sexual harassment encouraged organizations to give attention to the issue of sexual harassment. These costs initially included litigation and associated settlements. However, with further research it was found that harassment can lead to an overall decrease in employee motivation towards the job resulting in increases in absences, turnover, and requests for transfers, and use of mental health services, as well as decreases in productivity (Gutek & Koss, 1993; Martindale, 1990; U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981 and 1987). This study states that results indicate that the total annual cost of sexual harassment in the U. S. Army in 1988 was over \$250, 000, 000. This not only brought attention to the organizational costs of sexual harassment and also to the seriousness of the problem as well. However, this study concludes that increase in the proportion of females in the military would increase that part <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-gender-discrimination-and-harrasment-on-motivation/>

of the total costs of harassment associated with females and as a result the cost of sexual harassment may grow even more. Furthermore it implies that losing a higher rank female in the army due to sexual harassment would cost a staggering amount.

Hence sexual harassment continues to be a threat not only to the working individuals but also harms the companies financially.

“ Gender Mainstreaming and Corporate Social Responsibility: Reporting Workplace Issues” (Kate Grosser, Jeremy Moon 2005) focuses on the potential of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to gender equality. The paper states that women are provided equal opportunity in the workplace by the combination of legal compliance, business care and social regulation (Dickens 1999) and the theory of CSR combines all these three notions. This study suggests that a reason for slow progress in reporting gender issues is the lack of platform for gender issues to be discussed. The study highlights the under-representation of women’s issues and has stressed on the need of women representation in company practices, as employees, community members, consumers and investors among other things.

The impact of sexual harassment in a legal profession on job satisfaction is examined in “ The Effects of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction, Earnings, and Turnover among Female Lawyers” (David N. Laband and Bernard F. Lentz). The results from American Bar Association’s National Survey of Career Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction (1990) show that nearly two-thirds of female lawyers in private practice and nearly half of those in corporate or public agency settings reported either experiencing or

observing sexual harassment by male superiors, colleagues, or clients during the two years prior to the survey. The study shows that overall job satisfaction is significantly lower among female lawyers who experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by male superiors and colleagues than among those who did not experience or witness such harassment. According to statistics shown in the study, job satisfaction among female employees is affected more than twice as strongly by sexual harassment than by their annual income. The study also implies that there is a direct relation between sexual harassment and intention to quit current employment. However, the study was limited by the fact that the survey did not refer to the degree of harassment.

“ Implementation Mechanism” (Shamreeza Riaz) discusses the provision of law related to sexual harassment at workplace and the effectiveness of its implementation. This study was conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Interviews were conducted with the work force of organizations, women activists, NGO workers and educational institutions. The writer argues that women participation in the making policies and in decision making can lead to a prosperous nation. However, the true potential of women is hindered due to the difficulties that they face at the work place. The ‘ Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010’ provides the definition and kinds of harassment at the workplace. According to the study, in 20-30% sexual harassment cases, women remain silent because of their dignity and self respect. 70% of the women are victims of physical harassment and verbal and other kinds of harassment. The writer lists the causes of harassment as lack of awareness, misuse of authority, lack of

organizational policy and a male dominant society. The study shows that sexual harassment has very serious consequences resulting in the loss of job, a hostile environment and physical and psychological breakdown while some women are forced to quit their jobs. The International Labour Organization, United Nation on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Beijing program for action Declaration, European Union Legislation and Organization of American State all provide laws aiming to prevent gender discrimination.

The study “ Branded: Corporate Image, Sexual Stereotyping, and the New Face of Capitalism” (Dianne Avery, Marion G. Crain) aims to show how the adoption of sophisticated forms of marketing are distinct from the worker’s physical and mental labour. The study reveals the case of Jespersen v. Harrah’s Operating Co. in which the court rejected a female bartender’s Title VII challenge to the workplace’s policy that women wear makeup, which she found sexually demeaning. Employer’s sophisticated marketing techniques sometimes create a property like interest and employers take advantage of their employees outside of their usual work by forcing them to propagate company brands outside of the workplace.

“ Transforming discriminatory corporate cultures” (Cheryl L. Wade) discusses gender equality in corporate environment. The writer argues that companies can only change if men change. She states that even if men witness discriminatory behaviour or harassment in their workplace, they fail to take necessary action that could promote gender equality. Many male managers may seem to support gender equality but still ignore gender conflicts in the work place. If the CEO of a company strives to bring a culture of gender
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equality then the workers will follow his example. Moreover, the writer states that sometimes women allow sexist comments and jokes to go unnoticed in an attempt to show that they belong to the right workplace. The corporate workplace also seems to work on the expectation that women of colour can be given jobs that are not valued in the corporate context. Hence, such negative stereotypes adversely affect the performance of women in the workplace. As the relationship between management and its employees plays a central role in a companies' success, it is necessary that problems of workplace discrimination be dealt with.

The study " Gender Justice and Its Critics" focuses on the judicial practices and laws on gender discrimination. The article underlines the traditional treatment of women and the current condition of women. Women were victimized by the laws made to protect them by giving decision making powers to the male members. The writer states that in contrast to these laws, the remedial laws such as prohibition of sex-based discrimination in workplace have empowered women to make their own decisions. Laws which tried to prevent discriminatory practices have created distinct profession for men and women. Furthermore, Gender Justice claims that it is not opposed to the needs of working mothers but offers that parental benefits be given to both males and females.

The study " The Price of ' Man' and ' Women': A Hedonic Pricing Model of Avatar Attributes in a Synthetic World" (Edward Castronova 2003) investigates the demand of physical attributes and qualities of the social world. The study examines the computer generated avatars which are both male and female. However, the hedonic price analysis suggests that the <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-gender-discrimination-and-harrasment-on-motivation/>

female avatars are available at a discount and that there is less preference to have a female avatar. As this physical difference is not real in the synthetic world, this reluctance can be explained by the general assumption about the effectiveness of the female avatar. However, the study does not indicate whether this is arises from a prejudice on behalf of the population or simply the numbers indicate that more male players choose male avatars.

They were shortcomings and left out concerns in those previous studies which can be looked upon on the basis of variables and introducing more measurable models which could relate and interlink the variables in appropriate and a strong way.