

Gendered labor critical thinking example

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Culture encompasses all spheres of life. It constitutes the building blocks of what a society subscribes to in terms of norms, morals, values, customs, attitudes and beliefs. All these social and cultural factors shape our world views and forms our belief systems as individuals, which, in turn, motivate our behavior. Culture affects our perception of occupations as much as our biological make up does. Due to the cultural diversity that exists between the occupational beliefs of different individuals, it is necessary for employers to understand the concept of occupation equity. This refers to the variability that exist between the standards of occupations across different populations.

A good grasp of the concept of occupation equity means that an employer is capable of dealing with his/her employees despite any differences accruing from their cultural background. Cultural competency, within the context of occupation, refers to the ability to provide tailor-made employment solutions that cater to the varying socio-cultural needs of individuals regardless of their gender predispositions. It is a strategy through which the quality of labor provided can be improved, and the number of women's participation in occupational positions, in the industry increased. Cultural competence equips one with the skills needed to deal with the different cultural orientations that exist in the world today. Culture is hence a significant factor in ascertaining occupational segregation and gendered division of labor. Studies on gender reveal a huge difference and disadvantage for women concerning the wage received. Today, unequal distribution across and within occupational hierarchies is observed between men and women. The segregation severely affects earnings and wage differentials especially in managerial positions (Blau & Kahn, 2003). Most women still work in jobs that

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are typically regarded as women jobs. Segregation in occupation may take the form of vertical segregation or horizontal segregation. This implies that men work at higher hierarchical levels as opposed to women. Men tend to occupy higher positions in management. Horizontal segregation refers to a situation whereby only a small number of women work in jobs that are regarded as typical male jobs. Managerial positions reveal various inconsistencies in gender specific occupational differences. These inconsistencies depend on certain factors that are culturally acquainted. The size of the venture, sector in the economy and the type of industry all affect gender division of labor trends. Women more often than not head small firms with limited operations. Moreover, the largest women workforce is more oriented to humanities and social sciences industries.

Gender prescribes socially constructed roles to individuals regarding how they are expected to behave as male or female. These roles provide the reference point for individuals, whether male or female on what the society expects from them. Although, gender roles are unique to different cultures, some themes are considered universal as they are manifested in a number of cultures. During our ancestral days, when gender roles were established, it was conceptualized that, unlike women, men are better adapted to carry out some activities. Despite these presumptions, cross-cultural evaluations showing what masculinity and femininity vary widely (Blau & Kahn, 2003).

Despite this intervention, parents take upon them the responsibility of socializing boys and girls differently hence a reflection of the gendered division and occupational segregation of labor in the modern world.

In most cultures, gender roles are closely related to biological differences and the domestic sphere. Therefore, gender encompasses culturally learned

distinctions between male and female influencing how they think, interact with others and positions they occupy in the society. Typically, culture depicts the status of a woman as a wife, partner and a mother despite their contribution as breadwinners (Hughes & Kroehler, 2002). Culture plays a distinctive role in labor inequalities, discrimination and bias in social acculturation.

Acculturation and socialization in the society influence labor patterns in women. Variables emanating from culture and gender exist. It is necessary to evaluate these variables because of their input to the disparities existing in the division of labor. In developing countries, education is preserved for men hence the level of illiteracy among women is very high. In order to be competent in an occupation, education provides an individual with the necessary knowledge to accomplish a task comprehensively (Calhoun, Light, & Keller, 1994). From the premise above it is obvious that the unemployment rate among women is generally higher compared to men due to lack of education and the basic skill requirements to engage in a preferred profession. The status of women in the society is low as embellished by cultural socialization. Lack of jobs reflects on the health and well-being of an individual. Poverty levels amongst women are definitely higher than that of men. The variables above engender results in unequal distribution of available resources and occupational segregation in the labor force.

Most women end up working in the informal sectors of the economy especially in agriculture and housekeeping. These occupations demand intensive labor inputs despite their meager rations in salary. Acculturation depicts gender roles as pre constituted where men and women are not symmetrical. The man is perceived as the patriarch while the woman is

subordinate and inferior because her duties are restricted to the kitchen while those of a man in the workplace whether formal or informal.

A devaluation approach toward gender and occupational differences suggests that depending on the job and gender predispositions the jobs associated with women are paid less than those of men. Culture is largely to blame for this phenomenon. In the contemporary society, men are perceived as breadwinners meaning that their responsibility is largely determined by the salary accrued in paid jobs unlike women who are custodians of housework, which is typically unpaid. The breadwinner model ascribes individuals to occupational segregation due to their internalized perceptions of preferences for special jobs. *Vis a Vis* discriminatory practice in labor divisions. The internalization of gender specific roles is perfected through the interaction process. To reduce the complexities of information obtained through daily interaction, individuals make biased assumptions about gender roles and occupational responsibilities. The assumptions constitute the basis of gender stereotypes shaped through cultural perceptions regarding what constitutes a male or a female. Individuals tend to approach the specific abilities of men and women in a dualistic perspective based on acculturation and predetermined gender roles. Moreover, expectations regarding the level of performance differ based on gender resulting in occupational differences between men and women.

Preferences in the labor market occur due to socialization and social constructs in the community. Earlier, we established that acculturation forms the basis of interactions among individuals and family in different social institutions and contexts (Hughes & Kroehler, 2002). Job preferences reflect gender based stereotypes that engender occupational preferences. A society

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categorizes its members based on their sex orientation. Personality traits are inferred from the individual's sex too. These inferences are used as proxies in the labor market, to determine productivity when the gender of the worker is unknown.

Common inferences include; women are better at teaching, or men at driving. Moreover, women are regarded unreliable and less productive than their male counterparts, which give rise to occupational segregation. Gender based stereotypes act as formal barriers preventing women from indulging in certain occupations. However, in developed economies, gender based discrimination practices are not enforceable because women are more empowered than in the past. Although placid forms of bias against women still exist, they occur less commonly today due to the incorporation of anti-discriminatory legislation.

Although some forms of gender stereotypes may be unknown to both men and women, they can potentially reduce the chances of women to obtain lucrative employment opportunities. Deliberation on gender equality when assigning jobs is considered, in today's contemporary society. In developing countries, campaigns geared towards educating women and the importance therein have taken the center stage. Moreover, the immediate family members and the nation as a whole enjoy the benefits of educating women. Educated women who venture into career occupations provide healthy competition to men if they are afforded the same opportunities. Even though acculturation may take, time to diffuse and encompass a holistic attitude towards gender equality, interventions and deliberations to stress the importance of educating the girl child are important. Moreover, education is the main determinant and a causal agent to alleviating occupational

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segregation and gender divisions of labor. With a formal education, women are capable of shifting from informal jobs having no income to formal jobs with competitive salaries and allowances. This would result to a better social status for women.

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