

Effect of gender stereotype on promotion sociology essay



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Walter Lipman (1992) applied the word “stereotyping” to perception.

Stereotyping refers to the generalization of the characteristics of all members belonging to a certain group. In other words Stereotyping can be defined as “the tendency to perceive another person as belonging to a single class or category.”

Stereotype: Generalizing people based on similar characteristics in one group is called stereotyping. Stereotypes are standardized conceptions of groups. Such as, all females are talkative.

Prejudice: This is the attitude displayed towards the members of some group just because they belong to that group. The main difference is that the attitude is showed by the person who is prejudiced whereas stereotype is just generalizing.

Discrimination: It involves the actual behaviors towards a group; for instance, stopping a female to work, just because she is a female. If she actually gets fired or does not get a job based on the gender, then it is discrimination. (Friedman, 2007)

Stereotypes can be either positive (e. g. “Black men are good at basketball”) or negative (“women are bad drivers”). But most stereotypes tend to make us feel superior in some way to the person or group being stereotyped. Stereotypes ignore the uniqueness of individuals by painting all members of a group with the same brush. Some stereotypes include Gender, race, ethnicity, race etc. (Friedman, 2007)

Gender Stereotypes: A gender stereotype consists of beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of men or women. Gender roles are defined by behaviors, but gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity. The concepts of gender role and gender stereotype tend to be related. When people associate a pattern of behavior with either women or men, they may overlook individual variations and exceptions and come to believe that the behavior is inevitably associated with one gender but not the other. Therefore, gender roles furnish the material for gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are very influential; they affect conceptualizations of women and men and establish social categories for gender. These categories represent what people think, and even when beliefs vary from reality, the beliefs can be very powerful forces in judgments of self and others, as the headline story for this chapter showed. Therefore, the history, structure, and function of stereotypes are important topics in understanding the impact of gender on people's lives.

Organization

The company selected for the research is Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), which was created under an Ordinance in 1961, to undertake comprehensive exploratory program and promote Pakistan's oil and gas prospects. In 1997, it was converted into a Public Limited Company and is now governed by the Companies Ordinance Act 1984. OGDCL's head office is in Islamabad. The promotion criterion in every department of OGDCL is as follows:

There should be a vacant post in the channel of hierarchy

There should be no disciplinary action against the individual

There should be no case pending on the individual

The individual should have spent 3-5 years in his existing grade

Performance rating should be ' Good', ' Very Good' or ' Outstanding', individual having rating below ' Good' will not be eligible for promotion.

The individual should meet the required qualification and experience for that job.

The percentage evaluation of basic promotion criteria has been shown in Table 1. 0 in Appendix – A. The promotion within any department is processed through certain steps. The flow chart for promotional process has been shown in Appendix – B.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether gender stereotype effects promotion of female employees in organizations. To test the hypothesis, Oil and Gas Development Company Limited is chosen. This study is conducted to find the reasons women being promoted less as compared to men. It will also highlight the reasons behind gender discrimination in organizations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Heilman, (2001) proposed that gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about both what women are like (descriptive) and how they

should behave (prescriptive) can result in devaluation of their performance, denial of credit to them for their successes, or their penalization for being competent. Research has shown that despite producing the identical work product, a woman's work is often regarded as inferior. In fact, there have been many investigations in organizational psychology that attest to the fact that unless the quality of the work product is incontrovertible, women's accomplishments are undervalued as compared to those of men.

Stereotypes form an image of a certain type of people due to conventional image in society, their opinions, beliefs or appearances. Due to this conception, stereotype treats all those who fit the criteria in the same way. Gender stereotype treats people according to his/her image of that gender. A stereotype that obstructs women's career advancement in the workplace are of the opinion that women's role is to supplement man's work. Women are supposed to take care whereas men take the charge (Dodds, 2006).

Gender identity theory:

Gender identity theory was presented by Sigmund Freud (Bland, 2003) believing that gender identity develops during phallic stage of development, a person's inner feeling of being male or female, usually developed during early childhood as a result of parental rearing practices and social influences and strengthened during puberty (Hetherington, 1965). Gender role is defined as the behaviors, expectations and general functions defined by society as masculine or feminine, which are embodied in the behavior of the individual male or female and culturally regarded as appropriate male and female.

Theories about gender identity:

Psycho dynamic theories

Psychoanalytic: emphasizes inner psychic conflict of children instead of external pressure e. g. Freudian concept of Oedipal conflict (Mitchell & Black, 1995)

Cognitive-developmental: emphasizes stages of mental development. E. g. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory states that " children are almost inevitably led by their own cognitive processing to choose gender as an organizing principle of social rule that governs their own and their peers' behavior (McManus, 1999).

External theories: emphasizes on what culture does to individuals

Socialization or social learning theory: emphasizes the difference of different learning environment especially of children but sometimes adults as well

Imitation of models and examples they see in society

Response to rewards for gender appropriate behavior and criticism or punishment for gender inappropriate behavior(from peers as well as adults) (McManus, 1999)

Gender-schema theory: merges cognitive- development and social learning theory. Schema are internal cognitive networks (shaped by socialization) that organize and guide individual social perception, gender schema are cognitive networks associated with concept of masculine and feminine. High

gender schema individual tend to organize many of their thoughts, perceptions and evaluation according to gender stereotype and symbols.

Research shows that three years old child have already begun figurative or metaphorical meaning of gender (McManus, 1999)

Social - structural or situational theories; emphasizes structural constraint on children and adults (fact that men and women are different and unequal positions in social structures)

Conscious discrimination

Unconscious discrimination: people may not be aware that they are discriminating or being discriminated against- it is quite difficult to approve discrimination has occurred (McManus, 1999).

Identity construction theory: emphasizes individual personal and conscious commitment to a self-image of self. Cassell (1996) says that women generally lack traits of leader, as they endorse values like relentless, cooperative, and dependent. According to Loden (1985) they lack the need for control. Due to the kind and selfless nature of women, they are unable to make a good manager.

Ornstein (1997) talks about two major modes of consciousness: analytical and holistic. Analytical is to view each aspect of the situation. All parts of the situation are considered in sequence, whereas, holistic means seeing the whole situation at once. Analytical suits men better and holistic suits women better.

Any female co-worker is left alone in the business network as well as social network. It is difficult to overcome this 'old-boy network'. However, since globalization is at its peak now so, businesses who adapt global leadership theory are able to break the 'old-boy network'.

As the "Doctrine of two spheres" by Lewin says that men and women diverge in interests. Men have their separate areas of interest and women there. Men are supposed to do manly outside works and women stay at home and manage it.

Deficit theory

Deficit theory says that female deficit characteristics disallow them to play traditional masculine roles. Changing global scenario has also influenced the acceptance of females as economic partners but still they have largely been forgotten as associates of the economic decision making process.

Their work recognition is negligible while their participation is encouraged in the labor force as females are considered more suitable for supporting staff.

In Developing countries like Pakistan male managers perceive females as weak creature, less capacitated to handle stress at workplace (Akram, Padda, Khan, & Husnain, 2011).

Stereotypes are said to have a traditional image toward a certain object, person or phenomenon etc. and these beliefs, about characteristics of man and women are permanent and are proved to be resistant to change.

According to Dodge, Gilroy & Fenzel, 1995; Leutow, Garovich, & Leutow, 1995) Male and females are thought to be different both in terms of achievement-oriented traits referred as agentic and in terms of social-and-service oriented traits referred as communal.

Bakan (1966) said males are characterized by aggressive, forceful, Independent and decisive traits whereas females are characterized as kind, helpful, sympathetic and concerned for others

Heilman, Block, & Martell, (1995) during study they found female managers efficient and more decisive than general females but still they were rated lower than their counterparts. It was only when female managers were considered as highly successful that this gender difference in trait characterization was found to abate. But, increased presence of female in the workforce and their assumptions of new roles do not appear to preclude gender-stereotype perceptions.

According to Medline E. Heilman (2001) Gender stereotype can hinder females from going up the ladder as the executive level jobs are always considered to be masculine. It means these jobs are considered for people who are tough, authoritative with more decisive powers and more achievement oriented which are considered male characteristics. So the top level job description is invariably defined as masculine based upon factors like work domain and specific area of management. Certain findings and research indicate that a description of a good manager is attributed by Masculinity.

Queen bee syndrome: designed by G. L Staives in 1973 describes women in position authority who views and treats subordinates more critically if they are female. This has been documented by several studies. In another study scientist from university of Toronto speculate that queen bee syndrome maybe the reason women find it more stressful to work with a women manger. No difference was found in stress level of male workers

Women carving out a career in a male-dominated environment might expect there is one thing guaranteed to work in their favor - a female boss. But surprisingly it is more likely to wreck a woman's promotion prospects. Instead, women who do break through the glass ceiling are more likely to help out their male subordinates than female ones. Research shows men who report to a female manager get much more mentoring and support than their female colleagues.

In business environment a queen bee may also refer to women in upper management who advanced in ranks without the help of any type of affirmative action plans. Many of these women tend to be politically conservative. They chose not to publicly identify with feminism. They often see others usually young women as competitors and will refuse to help them advance within the company preferring to mentor a male instead of a female employee. Some queen bees may actively take steps in hindering women's advancement as they see her as a direct competitor.

The findings, published in the journal Social Science Research, add to previous evidence that the so-called Queen Bee syndrome can be a major obstacle to women climbing the managerial ladder (Weiss, 2009).

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Hiring and promotion decisions in an organization are based on test scores, credentials and seniority. However, in some cases it is based on subjective criteria such as an interviewer's impression that the employee is fit for job or not and manager's/ supervisor's recommendation. Objective criteria show less gender discrimination. If selection is based on validated tests of cognitive abilities then it shows that usually men and women are hired at the same ratio. Subjective criteria show a significant difference in the ratio of male promotion against female promotions. (Cleveland, Stockdale, Murphy, & Gutek, 2000).

The most common stereotype about women are that they are less efficient and have inferior negotiation ability. Stereotypes in organizations disregard women and do not consider them worthy of a higher position in the organizational hierarchy (Galinsky & Thompson, 2002).

Managing diversity in workplaces requires middle and top management to create an environment where all employees can succeed and grow. Even if the organization succeeds in hiring non-prejudiced managers, stereotype in the broader society will still exist. Every job and employee are ranked by others. If it is judged by a stereotype, the evaluation will be clouded by gender discrimination. As a result, women will not be given certain type of tasks such as related to Mathematics because they are thought to perform poorly in Mathematics. Stereotypes are unwilling to rethink their attitude towards others,. They justify their prejudice and prevent people of stereotyped groups from succeeding in activities and fields (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research study aims to find the how gender stereotype effect promotions in an organization. This effect of gender stereotype has only been observed for the female employees working in the organization. Generally, it is perceived that women are more affected by the gender stereotypes in any organization.

In order to understand the relationship of gender stereotype and promotion, variables have been defined. Variables are qualitative. Variables are categorized into independent and dependent variables (Kumar, 2005).

Promotions

(Dependent Variable)

Gender Stereotype

(Independent Variable)

Gender Stereotype is the independent variable and promotion is dependent variable. However independent factor is not completely independent, there are many sub factors that affect gender stereotype. Similarly promotion of employees is not solely dependent on stereotyping.

Gender stereotyping reflects behaviors and beliefs, gender role attitude and judgment of abilities. Several factors considered as a stereotype in typical organizations have been observed. For example, people especially males in the organizations think that women are not capable of making effective decisions so that's why they are not promoted to higher levels of

management. Similarly, women are not considered good in team-work, analytical skills, openness, etc.

The hypotheses have been developed as follows:

H0: Gender Stereotype effect promotion of women in organizations.

H1: Gender Stereotypes don't effect promotion of women in organizations.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose of Study:

Both dependent and Independent variables are known, and the purpose of research is to explain the factors which affect the dependent variable. The research is thus descriptive in nature.

Research Approach:

There are approaches for the research; one is deductive (testing theory) and inductive (building theory). This research is based on deductive approach in which reasoning is processed through general statement. A theory is confirmed through hypothesis; which is proved true through observations. The theory is proven by statistical estimation made by outcome-oriented questioned asked from sample population.

Type of Investigation:

As the purpose is identification of the relationship between dependent and independent variables, this a correlation study which attempts to describe the relationship between variables.

Extent of Interference

The research study is correlation and has been conducted in natural environment. The researcher interference has been minimal.

Unit of Analysis:

The study is based on gender stereotype among organizational employees. For this purpose the units of analysis are “ Individual females” working in OGDCL regardless of the gender.

Time Horizon:

As the data have been collected just for one time, this is a cross-sectional study.

Sampling & Sampling Procedure

The research has been conducted in “ OGDCL” head office. Respondents under the main focus of research were employees from different cadres of the organization which can represent the whole organization. Thus, Non-Probability “ Convenience” Sampling has been adopted for the sample selection. Convenient sampling was used to identify the sample easily available to provide relevant information. Number of employees selected are 18.

Data Collection:

The methodology used for collection of data from giving sample was through “ semi-structured interviews”. Saunders et al., (2009) explain that in Semi-structured interviews the research will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview. The order

of questions may be varied depending on the flow of the conversation.

During the interviews for research, along with changing the sequence of questions based on conversation, additional questions were also asked to probe further into the issue. These interview conversations were recorded and then narrated for analysis. A copy of the interview questions has been attached in the appendix-c.

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was developed on the basis of topic of research. First and foremost, the questions revolve around gender discrimination. They were designed in such a way that they can provide substantial and meaningful data. The questions were not general, they were company specific.

Data collection procedure

Data was collected by using interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were scheduled with the selected sample of employees from different departments. The employees were selected from seven different departments and designations to collect a reliable data. Questionnaires were distributed among employees of different departments. Purpose of the study was also explained to them.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS & RESULTS

Most employees of OGDCL find the working environment of the organization to be comfortable and non-threatening. 38. 8% employees find the working environment to be very comfortable to work. According to the analysis, 72.

2% employees agree that they have equal chance of career development in OGDCL regardless of their gender. But, 27.7% are of the opinion that male and female staff does not have equal chance for the growth of their career due to discrimination.

This might be due to dissatisfaction of employees about their performance evaluation. Only 61.11% employees from sample population were familiar with the criteria on the basis of which their performance is measure.

Whereas, only 16.6% are of the opinion that they are satisfied with the performance evaluation criteria of their organization. However, 77.7% employees of sample population responded that promotions in OGDCL is based on test scores, seniority and credentials. Trainings play a very essential role in the progress of any employee's career. 50% of the sample population agreed that OGDCL provide equal training opportunities to both male and female whereas 27.7% employees said that they neither agree nor disagree to this statement and 22.2% employees disagreed.

Motivation is very essential for efficient performance of the employees.

When employees their feedback, they try to improve performance because feedback tells them what they did right and what went wrong. According to the research, 44.4% sample population said that feedback of their performance is shared with them to increase motivation but 38.9% say that no feedback is provided.

Due to absence of feedback, employees do not believe that the employee who is promoted is promoted on the basis of his or her performance. Survey also shows that 38.8% employee say that male employees openly show

their disliking for female employees who promoted. Also, 38. 8% employees believe that male employees do not behave in this manner. Though, significant percentage (22. 2%) of employees neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

In this male-dominated society, it is seems very difficult for male employees to work with female employees as their superiors or boss. Research shows that 33. 3% employees believe that rate of promotion of women in their company is as compared to men whereas 55. 5% employees think otherwise.

83. 3% employees believe that OGDCL provide a very favorable environment for female employees to progress in their field of work. Half of sample population also says that managers support female employees who are competent and promote on the basis of their capability and skills. Research also shows that 38. 8% employees agree and the same percentage disagree to the statement the men do not hesitate to show their disliking if a female employee is promoted instead of male employee.

50% employees showed neutral response when asked about employees refusing to take orders from a female boss. On the contrary, 61. 15% of the sample population says that female boss or supervisor is more respected by her employees than the male supervisor. They also believe OGDCL does not have gender discrimination issues.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The gender gap exists in the corporate world and women suffer from gender-based stereotypes. Based the theoretical framework, research and analysis we conclude that gender stereotype regarding females does exist to some extent. It's due to implicit stereotypes that employees step in the work force with a mindset that a man is always the one who leads. (For instance, a child learns from childhood that father is the head of the house, or elder brother does most of the decision) The interview session and observation concludes that females do fall victim to gender stereotyping in regards to promotion. Although such cases are not on the record, however, many facts were collected through research that males are promoted more vs. females because they are thought to be more analytical and task oriented as opposed to females who are considered to be intuitive, communal, and collaborative. Due to the male dominated work environment, females face hurdles in their promotion. They need to be prominent and break into the old-boy network, in order to take a step closer to their promotion.

Recommendations:

In order to have a positive productive environment at workplace, there must be an equal status for women and men. Therefore, they both work towards achieving goals of the company rather than focusing on how not to be stereotyped. Following are the suggestions:

Device a fair performance analysis method for employees

Encourage female employees with supportive environment

Take action against complains of gender discrimination

Provide feedback to employees after performance evaluation

Supportive Environment for females

Diversity training is precisely the type of intervention and conscious effort needed to promote changes in gender stereotypes. Not only did diversity education lead to a decrease in directly reported, explicit stereotypes are thought to be more stable and enduring associations because they have been learned through years of environmental influences (kawakami & Dovidio, 2001). If such associations can be unlearned through diversity training then it is possible that gender stereotypes may be changing as a result of direct interventions.

In 1990's the corporate world started using diversity training in order for a better acceptance of women and minorities in the work place. (Erick Erickson). It basically includes lectures, videos, role-playing games, etc. Diversity training should be a permanent part of the corporation. OGDCL should also implement such measures through which stereotyping against women is eradicated. The top management needs to be the part of these activities and training so the the employees take this matter seriously.

Training and Development sessions:

Training and Development sessions should be held regardless of any managerial responsibilities. These sessions could be helpful for OGDCL's staff in changing perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that are learned through prior learning or through external cultural aspects.

T&D sessions are collaborative, thus it involves team tasks. Working in teams would make employees learn how not to be biased towards women. Employees would acknowledge females and their knowledge of staff in their field of work. These sessions do not only discuss gender stereotyping, but additional tools are also discussed so that employees learn about overall a positive work environment. Additional tools could be communication skills, listening skills, etc.

It is imperative for the host of T&D sessions to create a positive first impression of the sessions. According to a study, the initial impact of the first five minutes will tend to remain throughout the training session. The whole session will go positively if the first five minutes turned out to be a positive influence and vice versa. (Michael Moskowitz). First impressions are created the first time, thus there is no second chance to it, and thus OGDCL must choose a trainee thoughtfully and wisely.

Breaking the ice between employees

We really need to educate employees that a woman can be a better leader. All the employees who were interviewed, at different levels at different designations, shared the view that they would prefer to have a male boss. This would fall under “breaking the ice”. Breaking the ice implies getting to know each other in a better way. The focus is to give the opportunity to the employees to get to know each other and to break down interpersonal communication barriers, and eventually accept each other on the designations or to-be designations. This could be enhanced by describing each other’s qualities and positive traits that each employee carries.

Hopefully, this leads to a positive outcome and employees learn that technical skills can place men and women on an equal footing

Women need to display an attitude of ‘ I don’t care’. Women need to realize that being women it is strength. They should go with a ‘ go to hell’ attitude. Women should take it as a war if needed in situations of stereotypes. They should learn how to be daring enough to take a step for themselves. But then, the argument arises as this is east and priorities are set forth based on culture, religion, prior learning etc. in order to incorporate that attitude we have got to do tutorials on women too so they should know how to stand up for themselves. Thus, career oriented women should be daring enough to fight when they fall victim to gender stereotyping.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

There should be adequate gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation. This implies that employees should practically apply all the learned behaviors, through sessions and tutorials, to the corporate world. In order to be sure that they are incorporating the positive attitude there should be a proper monitoring and evaluation. For instance, employees could be evaluated through tests. A sample test could be if a picture of women is shown then do employees click the ‘ strong’ button or the ‘ weak’ button vs. if a picture of a man is shown then do they click the ‘ strong’ button or the ‘ weak’ button? Usually people tend to hit a weak button when shown a picture of a female.

Furthermore, there should be an evaluation as well on regular basis after some time intervals to see if there has been improvement in the attitude, behavior, and perceptions.

“ When a man finds a job, his problems end. When a woman finds a job, her problems start”