

Sexism in the workplace essay

Business



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Discrimination can be expressed in many different ways, which no matter can be very hurtful to a person.

Discrimination itself means making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit (Merriam-Webster). One way of expressing discrimination is denying one a job because of his/her race or gender, or treating others unfairly because of his/her race or gender.

Discrimination can lead to quitting a job, and possibly doing something harmful to oneself or to the aggressor. Different ways of discrimination occurs very often in the workplace. The most common would be, sexism against women; because men are the more dominant figure in today s society they receive more jobs, than do women Sexism is described as “ discrimination or devaluation based on a person’s sex as in restricted job opportunities; especially, such discrimination directed against women. ” (Merriam-Webster) Since the beginning of history, sexism has always been a prominent barrier between sexes.

The notion that women are not on the same level as men has always been in existence. Children learn from their parents and society the conception of “ feminine” and “ masculine. ” (Leon-Guerrero) Much about these conceptions is not biological at all but cultural. Sexism in education is clearly associated with sexism in the workplace.

When women are expected to “ stay in the home,” they are unable to access the necessary educational resources to compete with men in the job market. If by chance they are able to secure a position, women may be less prepared

educationally for the task, and thus draw lower wages. When you think of a CEO of a company or of world political leaders, do you think of a man or of a woman? Many, if not most of us, see these positions as being held by men. There is more sexism in the workplace than we could ever imagine but it is so important for us to be aware of this. Women in the same jobs as men usually earn less, even though these women may have the same or better training, education, and skills. As a general statistic, women make only 60 percent or less than men in comparable positions. Why this disparity? Sociologists speculate that, in some cases, the fact that women often must take time off to have and raise children interrupts their career path.

As much as Americans may hate to admit it, women in the United States still bear the primary responsibilities of childbearing. Conflicting demands may partly explain why married women with children are more likely to leave their jobs than are childless and single women. Also, men are seen as the “chief bread winners,” so the belief is that they should be paid more than women in order to support their families. Whatever the reason is for paying women less than men for equally demanding work is discrimination. One study for example claims that there is a gender gap and that it is worse for women who have achieved high levels of education.

Berg) That is, not only does the study demonstrate that a gender gap exists, but also it claims that education does not help women. “ According to the 2005 survey, women’s wages are in general, notably lower than those of men. Moreover, the gender pay gap widens as educational attainment increases: Women with a high school education earn 81% of what men with an equivalent education average, while women’s pay decreases to 74% of <https://assignbuster.com/sexism-in-the-workplace-essay/>

men what men average when they both hold a degree; the gender pay gap declines even further, to 65%, at post-graduate level” (The Bureau of Labor Statistics). This is one example and there is clearly evidence to back up the claim. In 1975 the equal pay act came into power.

This made it illegal to offer different wages for the same work on the grounds of sex. Men’s full time wages over woman’s fell drastically. The gap has been narrowing ever since. The New Earnings Survey shows that in 1980, men’s pay stood 40% more on average over women’s and in 1992 that gap had narrowed to 25%. Woman in low paid jobs, where before were paid much less than men now have leveled up to the same wage or sometimes higher.

However in highflying jobs there still is a large wage difference. The NES showed that woman’s hourly earnings were on an average 70.9% of men’s in 1990.

The problem being is that since woman go into different areas of work than men it may be very difficult to compare the skills and amount of work they do to claim equal pay. In the 1960’s want ads were universally segregated by sex. There was the “ help wanted-male” and help wanted-female”(Berg) This allowed for no confusion but there were many complaints to the EEOC but they were repeatedly ignored. They agreed to get rid of the ad’s that separated the races, but not the ones separating sex. In the 1960’s one of the few positions that was available for women was in the airlines. They believed that it was the perfect job because it was considered to be the perfect training for marriage. But if the women gained weight or even got married they were fired.

This was because they wanted the women to be young, single and enticing. “Its a sex thing” an airline executive explained the general thinking: “ You put a dog on an airplane and twenty businessmen are sore at you for a month. Women were required to wear girdles to look sexier. They would check if you were wearing your girdle by running a finger on the rear end and if you were not wearing it you were called into the office. These jobs only lasted for about 3 years because of women’s bodies changing and not looking as appealing as they did when they started. (Berg) Women had to settle for jobs that were well below their actual qualifications. Women that had degrees such as mathematics found themselves doing jobs involving kitchen help or invoice clerk.

Berg) Not until 1973 did women have the privilege to entering the forbidden occupations, such as pilots, carpenters, engineers, mail carriers, and orthopedists. For the women that had successful jobs often ran into other problems. Such as the denying of promotions or allowing for overtime.

Another big issue was the rights they had when they had children. The Employment Act 1978 gives women going through pregnancy and child birth the right to have time off with no loss of position. This is only given however to woman who have a career involving full time and continuous employment and stops just 29 weeks after childbirth. Parental leave, flexible hours and care of the child in sickness and health are left for the employer and employee to discuss.

This is a very complex problem because once a child is born it must have the proper care and attention. Nursery provisions for women who want to go

back to work are appalling. Only 2% of work places have nursery facilities and the male dominated government seems to think that the problem doesn't exist! Taking into account that most women would like to have at least one baby, there is going to be a lot of woman in low paid jobs. Even traditional woman's jobs such as nursing do not have a career that can comfortably take on board a woman with her offspring. Since for most women all this is a bit too much they will most certainly turn to part-time employment, which will be punished by lower grading and pay. One of the main things that people think about when you think about sexism in the workplace is the amount of sexual harassment that goes on.

There is two forms of sexual harassment: Quid Pro Quo which is requesting or forcing the personnel for sexual favors usually in order to keep the job, or get promoted. Sometimes, it may occur without economic discharge to the harassed person. (Feminist Majority Foundation) The other form is called, Hostile Work Environment, which is the actions that make it an uncomfortable work environment, such as displaying pornography at work, or telling sexual lewd jokes, or some unlikable touching.

(Feminist Majority Foundation) Also, very important to mention is that the harasser doesn't have to be someone superior, such as supervisor. Also, it can be co-worker or customer too. One of the biggest problems with the sexual harassment is that women become very depressed and sometimes suffer from Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) The issue with this is that most support groups for PTSD are run by men which makes it very difficult for women to attend or feel comfortable opening up what has happened.

(Berg) This obviously changes the way women act and could eventually change their job performance.

Nevertheless, in both types of harassment, the harasser might be male or female. The victim doesn't have to be opposite sex. Yet, the victims are usually in a position to depend on a person who is forcing them. For example, those can be divorced mothers or widows, young people and ethnically diverse. Therefore, it is easier to force them to sexual act in exchange for some prize, such as promotion, or keep the job. (Women, Audience) In recent decades more women have entered the United States workforce. After WWII (from about 1947), about 30 percent of women were employed outside the home; today, at the start of the 21st century, the figure is well over 50 percent. Some estimates approach 75 percent if " part-time" jobs are included.

) Yet women are far from treated equally on the job. Typically, they hold lower-paying, lower-status jobs than men. In fact, women may account for only 25 percent of the upper-level managers in large corporations. And although half of the employees in the largest, most prestigious firms around the United States may be women, perhaps as few as 5 percent or less actually hold senior positions. (Women, Audience) In general, women are under-represented in the higher-status, higher-paying occupations, such as university teaching, law, engineering, and medicine. In contrast, women are over-represented in the lower-paying occupations, such as public-school teaching, nursing, and secretarial work. Clearly, it can be seen that women are getting the same wage as men in low paying jobs since the Sexual

Discrimination act was passed in 1975 but there is still a long way to go until woman in managerial jobs get an equal wage to their counterparts.

With most women wanting babies, and leaving full time work to have a child and probably only taking up part-time work after it is born, it gives directors of companies a very bad opinion of women in powerful jobs as they believe that as soon as the woman has worked her way up she will leave the company due to maternity leave and never be able to keep up the same quality of work as before. Women tend to naturally set obstacles in their own way and it seems that the only way to get a powerful, influential, prestigious job is to never have a baby or never to get married. Which stereotypical thoughts like this are very unfair to women. The law is not much use for women in power as there are so many males above them in any company. The usefulness of the law can be seen however in the fact of precedent where any previous case of a woman taking a company to court for sexual discrimination or equal pay and winning may be considered in a similar court case. I feel a bit torn on this subject because I am a woman it is hard to say I feel that there has to be a difference between the sexes but being the functionalist that I am I also feel that there are certain jobs that do need to be carried out by women.

The functionalist believes that gender inequality is a functional necessity, and that gendered division of labor and gender roles is needed to ensure the stability of society. (Leon-Guerrero) This of course will affect me in the future, but for now I do not see the wage gap with my current job, but since my job can be dangerous at times there are certain things that are carried out by the men instead of us women. " We all can imagine a better, more
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equitable society for women and for men, for our daughters and our sons, than the one we're living in. Now we have to make it happen" (Berg) Works Cited Berg, Barbara J.

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