

Gender discrimination and sexual harassment sociology essay

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

' Women in the Fire & Rescue Service -Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment'

Introduction

Define your topic and provide an appropriate context for reviewing the literature; This chapter provides a review of the literature and secondary data that already exists in relation to sexual harassment and discrimination against women in the Fire and Rescue Service. Accordingly this chapter will initially discuss a brief history of women in the service; it will then move onto legislation currently in place against discrimination and sexual harassment. This chapter will also explore previous cases of sexual harassment and discrimination towards women. Finally the chapter will look into the future for women in the fire service. Establish your reasons - i. e. point of view It has been discovered that as many as 85% of women fire fighters have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work, however less than 5% of the victims report it, hopefully this study will deter whether sexual harassment and discrimination is still a large unobserved problem or if modern society has changed its behaviour towards women. Reviewing the literature; Despite common belief, sexual harassment in the work place is more about power and authority than sex. Sexual Harassment is commonly described as a power play that is degrading, humiliating and intimidating to its victim, it is commonly based on aggression and hostility, not sexual desire. Comments from victims who didn't report the harassment said ' they didn't want to be labelled as a trouble maker and didn't feel that a positive outcome was possible', ' they didn't want to be " singled out" further.

Women who have taken their case to court have usually spent years of

<https://assignbuster.com/gender-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-sociology-essay/>

sexual harassment before they have decided to take legal action. Explain the organisation Fire fighting was traditionally a white male profession; therefore fire fighters strongly resisted the introduction of people outside that group, especially women, who did not fit their ideal perception of a fire fighter.'

Diversity in the workplace creates room for new ideas, as well as the possibility of increased conflict.'It has been observed that many women and people of colour leave the Fire Service, frequently in the midst of successful careers, in order to avoid the daily harassment, isolation and scrutiny. In what is already a high stress profession, these added negative factors can take their toll. With the passage of the ' Civil Rights Act of 1964, it became illegal for Fire Services to prevent women from applying for jobs as fire fighters. State the scope of the review There are a large number of studies of sexual harassment and discrimination towards individuals. However, since the focus of this research is on sexual harassment and discrimination towards women, these will not be reviewed in detail and will only be referred to as appropriate. The middle or main body should: organise the literature according to common themes; provide insight into the relation between your chosen topic and the wider subject area e. g. between obesity in children and obesity in general; move from a general, wider view of the literature being reviewed to the specific focus of your research.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment often reflects an abuse of power within an organisation, where members of one group of people yield greater power than others, generally women. It is linked with women's disadvantaged status at work and, more generally, in society. Sexual harassment can take many forms:

<https://assignbuster.com/gender-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-sociology-essay/>

from sexually explicit remarks and banter, to harassment over the telephone and via email, to sexual assault. Studies have found that individuals have different perceptions of sexual harassment. For example, women are more likely than men to label certain behaviours as sexual harassment, similarly non-manual staff compared with manual staff. Behaviour is more likely to be seen as harassment when there is a large power difference between the person being harassed and the person doing the harassing. Sexual discrimination covers four areas: Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of their actual or perceived sex, or because of the sex of someone with whom they associate. Indirect discrimination: can occur where there is a policy, practice or procedures that apply to all workers, but particularly disadvantages workers of a particular sex. For example, a requirement that job applicants must be six feet tall could be met by significantly fewer women than men. Indirect discrimination can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim Harassment: when unwanted conduct related to sex has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual Victimization: unfair treatment of an employee who has made or supported a complaint about sex discrimination.

What is gender discrimination?

Gender discrimination, also known as sexual discrimination, is the practice of letting a person's sex unfairly become a factor when deciding who receives a job, promotion, or other employment benefit. It most often affects women who feel they have been unfairly discriminated against in favour of a man.

<https://assignbuster.com/gender-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-sociology-essay/>

Where is it most likely to occur?

Sexual harassment occurs in all occupations and industries, and organisational culture is key to understanding how and why it occurs in some places and not in others. Sexual harassment, bullying and physical violence can all be seen in terms of 'organisational violation'. This is where the culture of an organisation makes it possible for individual employees to be treated abusively or with disrespect. Hierarchical and managerial powers are central to understanding how such a culture develops and continues. As the climate of disrespect within an organisation worsens, the more likely it is for certain inappropriate behaviour to be taken for granted, leading to the creation of an 'incivility spiral'. This is where discourteous behaviour becomes routine and regarded as normal by employees and employers. Sexual harassment has been found to be more prevalent in certain work situations, for example, in jobs where there is an unequal sex ratio; where there are large power differentials between women and men; during periods of job insecurity; or when a new supervisor or manager is appointed.

What is the impact of sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can have a negative effect on the individual, in both the short and long term. Those who have been harassed may experience illness, humiliation, anger, loss of self confidence and psychological damage. Sexual harassment may also lead to workplace problems such as decreased performance, lower job satisfaction and higher absenteeism. In some cases, it may lead to resignation.

Prevention and Intervention

There are three basic types of intervention that can be implemented by an organisation to prevent or deal with sexual harassment; prevention, responding to sexual harassment where it does occur and follow up in the aftermath of an investigation into a complaint of sexual harassment.

Legislation currently in place against harassment and discrimination

Legal Responses to Sexual Harassment in the UK

Characteristics Features of Sexual Harassment

Experiences of Sexual Harassment

Future research

The conclusion should: summarise the important aspects of the existing body of literature; evaluate the current state of the literature reviewed; identify significant flaws or gaps in existing knowledge; outline areas for future study; link your research to existing knowledge.

Conclusion

This report has identified and reviewed the available literature on sexual harassment to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge.

References and notes

1975, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has used its powers under the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) to support claims of sexual harassment at employment tribunals to develop case law and has raised awareness of the problem through campaigns and lobbying. The Equal Opportunities

Commission (EOC) was established in 1975, and ever since has been apprehensive with sexual harassment in the workplace. The commission has used its abilities under the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) to support many employment tribunal cases and has funded many claims for sexual harassment towards women, to primarily develop current case law and raise awareness of the issue. The emergence of the term 'sexual harassment' can be traced back to the mid 1970's in North America, although in the UK, the first successful case when sexual harassment was argued to be a form of sexual discrimination was in 1986, under the Employment Protection Act (Hodges Aeberhard, 2001). <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/testofcourage/diversity2.html><http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/columnists/article-124076/Why-I-believe-women-brigade-danger.html><http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/takingtheheat/timeline.html> According to <http://www.i-women.org/issues.php?issue=3> Comments from women who were sexually abused Much of the harassment occurred when I was on probation and felt I could not speak out... I did attempt to speak to my officers; all of them shrugged off my appeals for help. I want to keep my job. It's clear that those who seek legal recourse can't come back to work. I didn't want to get someone suspended or fired. I just wanted it to stop. USA Cases <http://firelawblog.com/2012/10/phoenix-sexual-harassment-case-settlement-prompts-call-for-investigation/> simon vs phoenix <http://www.firerescue1.com/fire-department-management/articles/601724-Maine-firefighters-sue-over-sexual-harassment/> paid leave for 1 year post incident http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-05-26/local/35264042_1_female-firefighter-sexual-harassment-

<https://assignbuster.com/gender-discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-sociology-essay/>

fire-department<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1342937/Forced-village-hate-mob-G-string-woman-wins-case-house.html> women caught getting changed<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1814><http://www.answers.com/topic/gender-discrimination><http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/takingtheheat/timeline.html><http://www.iaff.org/hr/diverserecruitment/download/Many%20Women%20Strong.pdf><http://www.fitting-in.com/c/boniwell.htm><http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-16931114>http://www.fbu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/FBU_Flagship_Sum11_LR.pdfhttp://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteerandcareer/career_ff/women.htm#benchmark<http://www.i-women.org/issues.php?issue=9><http://renew.com/general19/zero.htm><http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/6261640.stm><http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/540632/>