Gender discrimination and it's impact on employee morale

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## Introduction

This paper examines the issue of gender discrimination faced by working women in Pakistan. It examines the impact of inequality on the careers of women due to gender discrimination in hiring, promotions and provision of facilities. Gender discrimination has a direct effect on the productivity of women in the workplace. Gender inequality is a situation in which people are treated differently based on their gender (Tajabadi, DowlatabadiE, & Mehri, 2014). Prejudice treatment of the companies toward men in the hiring process transmits the influence of gender discrimination. In Pakistan, gender discrimination is common in organizations that impact the development opportunities of women (Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan, 2011). Studies have found gender discrimination has a negative correlation with the productivity of employees (Hadi, 2013). It is argued that "professional and managerial women leaders are seeking opportunities to advance to top functions in their organizations and industries" (Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018). Discrimination in the process of promotions, facilitation and appointments leads to low morale that affects the performance of the female employees adversely. In terms of gender discrimination, Pakistan is ranked seventh in the South Asian continent (Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan, 2011).

## Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine how gender inequality in organizations affects the performance of the discriminated employees. It reveals the negative role played by gender discrimination in the lives of the female employees as they get unequal opportunities or progress compared to the men. The survey of the female workers of the telecommunication organizations of Pakistan depicts the adverse implications of discrimination on their morale, enthusiasm and productivity.

## Statement of the problem

Career growth for women depends on equal opportunities for work, promotions and development programs provided by the organizations. Lack of access to jobs and limited chances of promotions undermine the potential of female employees (Davey, 2017). The majority of the women in the Pakistani organizations spend their time and energy at a mediocre level of jobs that minimize the chances of utilizing their potential capabilities. It is unfair for women to find unequal chances of progress and work in organizations based on gender differences. If they are provided equal opportunities for work, promotions and growth, they would work more efficiently and utilize their talents in the best manner. This study determines how gender discrimination is a negative factor that leads to low morale and enthusiasm among the women resulting in low productivity (Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018). If women are not offered equal opportunities for work, they would be unwilling to give their best to compete with the men in the industries

## Objectives of the study

* To study the impact of gender discrimination on the performance level of female employees.
* To examine how the prevalence of gender discrimination in organizations undermines possibilities for the development and growth of female employees.
* To identify the implications of gender discrimination on the feelings of women.

## Scope of the study

This study targets the telecommunications industry of Pakistan by determining the prevalence of gender discrimination in two leading organizations Telenor and Ufone. The women of these organizations are targeted to explore the reality of gender inequality in hiring, facilitation and promotions and its impacts on the productivity levels.

## Research questions

RQ1: How gender discrimination affects the level of job satisfaction among female employees?

RQ2: How gender discrimination affects the morale and enthusiasm of female employees?

RQ3: How gender discrimination affects the productivity level and performance of female employees?

## Hypotheses

Ho: Gender discrimination reduces the level of job satisfaction among female employees.

H1: Gender discrimination does not reduce the level of job satisfaction among female employees.

Ho: Gender discrimination lowers the morale and enthusiasm of the female employees.

H2: Gender discrimination does not lower the morale and enthusiasm of female employees.

Ho: Gender discrimination lowers the productivity level and performance of female employees.

H3: Gender discrimination does not lower the productivity level and performance of female employees.

## Literature review

Significant literature is present on the topic of gender discrimination and the productivity of employees. Qaisar, Abdul, & Aamer (2011) explored the implications of gender discrimination on the performance of female employees. Data on a Pakistani telecom company Ufone was collected to understand the role of gender discrimination. The findings of this study show discrimination in hiring, promotional processes and facilities are associated with the low performance of employees. These factors also undermine the profitability of the organizations.

Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan (2011) uncovered the impact of gender discrimination on the performance of the employees. Gender discrimination is identified as a negative variable that affects the performance of the workers adversely. This is also against the idea of developing loyalty among employees. When employees feel discriminated against, they are less likely to build loyalty toward the company. Their low morale also results in low profitability of the firms.

Saad (2019) studied the impact of gender discrimination on the behavior of employees. The moderating role of gender inequality is examined and reveals the influence on the performance of the workers. The findings of the study showed high sensitivity levels and negative feelings among workers who experience discrimination. The negative feelings of the workers are associated with their low morale and participation thus leading to low productivity. The results of the study confirm there is a negative correlation between gender discrimination and employee productivity. When employees feel discriminated they are less willing to give their best or actively participate in the performance of the tasks which leads to low efficiency and delays in the completion of tasks.

Khalid and Aroosh (2014) study the role of gender discrimination on employees' morale by performing research in the banking sector. The findings of the study reveal the negative influence of gender inequality and events of discrimination on the performance and morale of the workers. The employees who witness gender discrimination are less likely to show their commitment to work. Adhikari (2014) studies the impact of gender discrimination on the morale and performance of female employees in the IT industry in Lucknow. The findings show women were discriminated that undermined their confidence and level of involvement in the company. The findings show there is a negative role of discrimination in the workplace for female workers. They are unable to give their best or utilize their full potential.

## Research methodology

This study chooses a quantitative research methodology to target the female employees of the selected organizations. A quantitative survey is more useful in stating the responses of the participants in numerical form. The answers to the questions can be presented in an organized manner in tabular and graphical form. A primary survey is used for collecting responses from the participants about gender discrimination.

## Variables

Independent variables

Gender discrimination in hiring is an independent variable that represents the limited opportunities for hiring women. This variable reveals men find better chances of hiring in the recruitment process due to the privileged mindset of the male recruiters. This indicates women are disfavored based on gender which reduces the chances of getting hired (Saad, 2019). Women struggle to find jobs due to the presence of gender discrimination in the hiring practices.

Gender discrimination in promotions represents the unequal approach of the human resource department in promoting male and female employees. This variable determines the perceived sense of prejudice among leaders that influence them to prefer men over women for promotions. Women are discouraged to reach leadership positions due to the discriminatory approach of the male recruiters and leaders (Hadi, 2013). Discrimination in the process of promotions limits the opportunities for growth for female employees.

Gender discrimination in facilitation represents the inequality in the provision of goods and facilities to the employees. Men receive better facilities such as transport compared to the female employees. The presence of gender discrimination in organizations discourages the leaders from offering similar facilities to the women (Tajabadi, DowlatabadiE, & Mehri, 2014).

Dependent variables

Productivity is the dependent variable that is influenced by the independent variables of hiring, promotion and facilitation offered to the women. Productivity represents the level of efficiency that allows employees to complete the tasks within a given period (Kossek & Buzzanell, 2018). Improved productivity means a high level of efficiency that increases the input of the workers leading to the timely completion of the task. Low productivity represents the low participation of the employees resulting in low efficiency. The task takes longer than usual in the process of completion.

## Limitations

There are some limitations of this study as the sample size is small which might be inadequate in representing the concerns of the larger population. Limitations of the funds prevented from conducting this research at a large level.

## Operational framework

Independent variables (discrimination in hiring, discrimination in promotions and discrimination in facilitation) have a negative relationship with the dependent variable (productivity of employees) (Abbas & Hameed, 2011). The schematic diagram of the Gender Discrimination and Employee Productivity Model is used for illustrating the relationship between these variables. The model represents an increase in discrimination across hiring, promotions and facilitation resulting in low productivity. An increase in gender discrimination in these areas leads to reduced productivity. There is a negative impact of any form of gender discrimination on the efficiency and productivity of employees.

Figure 1: Gender Discrimination and Employee Productivity Model

* **Gender discrimination in the Provision of goods and Facilities**

**Employee Performance/ Productivity**

* **Gender discrimination in Hiring**
* **Gender discrimination in Promotion**

## Results

The results of the study are presented based on the survey findings conducted by the employees of the selected organizations in Pakistan. The findings of the survey show majority of the participants (100) were men while 92 were women working in Telenor and Ufone in Islamabad.

Table 1: Frequency distribution

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 100 | 57.6 | 57.6 | 100.0 |
| Female | 92 | 42.4 | 42.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 192 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Figure 2: Gender of respondents

**Y= βo + β1.X1 + β2.X2 + β3.X3**

**Y = Employee Performance/Productivity βo = Constant**

**X1 = Discrimination in Hiring**

**X2 = Discrimination in Promotion**

**X3 = Discrimination in the provision of goods and facilities E = Standard Error**

**Β.1, β.2, β.3 = Coefficients**

Statistical software SPSS is used for the estimation of correlations and regression. Pearson correlation is calculated to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The correlation coefficient ranges between +1 and -1 which explains the degree of linear association between the variables. The present survey evaluates the relationship between discrimination in hiring, promotion and facilitation with productivity level (Table 2).

The significance of the variables is explained at a 95% confidence interval that proves the validity of the results. The correlation coefficient of discrimination in hiring is -0.312 which indicates this variable has a negative relationship with the dependent variable (productivity). When employees face discrimination in hiring, they are less likely to give high productivity. The correlation coefficient of discrimination in promotions is -0.211 (Table 3). The correlation coefficient indicates a negative relationship between gender discrimination in promotions and level of productivity. This means the presence of gender discrimination in promotions results in low productivity of female employees. The correlation coefficient of discrimination in facilitation is -0.113. The findings depict a negative association between gender discrimination in facilitation and the productivity level of the employees. When female employees face discrimination in the goods and facilities, they are less likely to give high productivity.

Table 2: Correlation coefficients

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pear-son Correlation  Sig. (two-tail) Sample 192 | Discrimination in  hiring | Discrimination in  Promotion | Discrimination in  facilities | Employee  Productivity |
| Discrimination in hiring | 1 |  |  |  |
| Discrimination in Promotion | -.311\* | 1 |  |  |
| Discrimination in facilities | -.322\* | .000 | 1 |  |
| Employee Productivity | .-214 | -.071 | -.056 | 1 |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (95%) level (two-tail).

## Regression analysis

Regression analysis is estimated to determine the variance and causal relationship between the variables. The regression results show the independent variables gender discrimination in hiring, gender discrimination in promotions and gender discrimination in facilitation has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable (productivity).

Table 3: coefficients

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | | Un-standardized Co-efficient | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| B | Stand. Error | Beta |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.79 | 1.01 |  | 2.66 | .002 |
| Discrimination in hiring | -.312 | .201 | .321 | 1.91 | .003 |
| Discrimination in Promotion | -.211 | .153 | -.180 | -1.344 | .001 |
| Discrimination in facilities | -.113 | .201 | -.041 | -.219 | .004 |

This relationship is significant at the level of p<0.05. The value of R square is 0.856 which means 85% of the variation in the statistics is explained by the dependent variable (Table 4). The R square is above 70%, which means the variation in the dependent variable (productivity) is explained by the independent variables (discrimination in hiring, discrimination in promotions and discrimination in facilitation). The value of the adjusted R square is 0.841 which represents the positive relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. The value of R ranges between 0-1. The greater value indicates a positive and strong relationship between the variables. The regression results also indicate only 26% of the result of the survey is unexplained.

Table 4: Summary table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
| 1 | .894a | .856 | .841 |

**Table 5: (Analysis of Variance)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 3.91 | 3 | .912 | 1.450 | .000 |
| Residual | 30.818 | 46 | .662 |
| Total | 33.789 | 49 |  |

* 1. Predictors: (Constant), Discrimination in facilities, Discrimination in Promotion,

Discrimination in n hiring

* 1. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

## Discussions

The findings of the survey results obtained from 192 employees indicate there is a negative correlation between gender discrimination in hiring, promotions and facilitation. The responses of the 100 male employees and 92 female employees prove discrimination lowers the level of productivity (Table 2). The findings of his survey are supported by the previous studies as Adhikari (2014) proves there is a negative impact of discrimination on the work performance of female employees. The findings of Saad (2019) also prove discrimination in hiring is one of the negative factors that discourage women from utilizing their skills.

The survey results also prove a negative correlation between gender discrimination in promotions and the productivity of employees. When employees face unequal opportunities for promotions, they are less likely to give their best (Hadi, 2013). These findings are supported by the previous studies as Abbas and Hameed (2011) confirm a significantly negative correlation between gender discrimination and productivity level.

The results also confirm a negative relationship between gender discrimination in facilitation and productivity. Employees agree unequal access to facilities and goods lowers their morale and enthusiasm. The findings of previous studies prove discrimination in facilitation promotes negative feelings among female employees resulting in low performance (Khalid & Aroosh, 2014).

## Conclusion

This study focused on examining the impact of gender discrimination across the areas of hiring, promotions and facilitation on the performance of the female employees. Data were obtained by surveying 192 employees of two telecom companies Telenor and Ufone in Pakistan. The survey results confirm there is a negative relationship between gender discrimination and employees' productivity.

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