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The challenges faced by female expatriates in a workplace

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Abstract: The number of expatriate women around the world has been hindering compared to males. It is also found that higher levels of stress, anxiety, and workplace discrimination, such as sexual harassment, are experienced more by women compared to men. Therefore, it is important to offer possible interventions for creating a safe and friendly working environment for workers of both genders by examining the root causes of such cases. The goal of this paper is to analyze prior studies to identify factors contributing to challenges faced by female expatriates in the workplace

Key words: _women in the workplace, gender discrimination, sexual harassment._

Introduction

Despite experiencing a marginal increase over the past few decades, the number of female expatriates is disproportionately low (Hutchings and Michailova, 2017). The main reason why organizations in Western industrialized countries hesitate to deploy women is that female expatriates facing prejudice and negative stereotypes in host countries lead to their discrimination and reduced performance (Vander Boon, 2003). This is particularly relevant to challenges in parts of the world, such as Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, where discrimination against women ranges from marginalization of the job market (e.g., China) to gender discrimination in the workplace.

However, previous studies have shown conflicting results on the spread of discrimination against female expatriates, and some studies have shown that women have no disadvantages (Traavik and Richardsen, 2010) and others (Adler, 1984, 1987). Certain factors, such as stereotypes related to becoming a female expatriate were even considered very effective. In terms of generalizability, most of these studies were small sample sizes (N < 100), use of single country data, or qualitative characteristics. One study examined the interaction between institutional-level gender discrimination across 25 host countries and the cases sexual harassment experienced by female residents in the workplace to address some of these discrepancies and provide more generalizable findings. In addition, the impact of workplace sexual harassment on job satisfaction is reviewed-pivotal predictors of important task-related outcomes such as performance or withdrawal intention (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005).

Gender and workplace discrimination

There is clear evidence in the literature that women are more likely to be subject to sexual harassment in the workplace than men. The social structural cause lies in the distribution of unfair resources between men and women and the misconnection of gender, which suggests that women are inferior and of lower value than men (Peters, O'Connor and Rudolf, 1980). This macroscopic level of belief will be established in individual-level interactions that are more vulnerable and more likely to discriminate women. With regard to the context of deportation, similar mechanisms are assumed and concluded that women are most likely victims, if sexual harassment occurs.

Although, some studies have found that women do not experience gender-related disadvantages during deportation (Adler, 1987; Varma et al., 2006).

Institutional-level mitigation of gender discrimination

High levels of discrimination against women refuse or limit women's education, assets, resources, fair legal treatment, physical integrity, and overall inhibition of women's social empowerment (OECD Center for

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Development, 2014). Institutional discrimination of women is often strongly linked to the enactment of cultural practices such as religious norms, such as Shariah, women's decision-making rights, subordination rights to men, and denial of labor rights. Similarly, women's property ownership is restricted in many countries and women are denied land acquisition in 102 countries (OECD Center for Development, 2014). In addition, in many countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, or Nigeria, civil liberties, such as political voices, are limited to women (OECD Development Center, 2014). Also, in some countries around the world, such as Egypt and Afghanistan, women suffer from limited physical integrity that limits control of the body and promotes gender-based violence.

Looking at the literature on sexual harassment in the workplace in the family environment, Raver and Nishii (2010) report that high levels of sexual harassment had a great negative impact on commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Moreover, women who were conscious of gender disadvantages had lower self-esteem (Brancombe, 1998). Respondents also reported negative effects on their psychological well-being (Schmitt, Brancombe, Postmes, 2003). In general, there is clear evidence that sexual harassment typically evokes a negative emotional response (Schmitt et al., 2003). Since job satisfaction can be viewed as a positive emotional state (Lock, 1976), people who experience sexual harassment at work can react on an emotional level, for instance with a decrease in job satisfaction.

Moreover, studies in the domestic context have revealed that individuals respond frustratedly to inhibitory conditions in the workplace (Peters, O'Connor and Rudolf, 1980). The experience of sexual harassment at work can be seen as a "banned condition," and it is understandable that an individual is frustrated when he or she is the target of bullying. In this regard, studies in the field of diversity have found that conflicts between socially beneficial individuals (in this case, white males) and disadvantaged groups lead to frustration among less privileged individuals (Cox and Blake, 1991). In most cases, the majority of sexual harassment in the workplace occur in men. As a result, gender-based intergroup conflict and being the subject of bullying behavior that conveys what one of them is considered inferior will result in increased frustration among female victims of bullying.

Stress as a mediator in frustration with job satisfaction

Living abroad can be seen as a stressful effort. Stress occurs when individuals value their relationship with the environment for their well-being (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Consequently, depending on the specific situation and environment abroad, some foreigners are more exposed to stress and others are less stressed. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that stress is a rubric of many variables and processes and leads to different related results. While certain stressors generally lead to stress, it is needed to be distinguished between different types of stress. In a study, researchers focused on the general job stress of foreigners. Studies have found that more important tasks lead to more general stress.

In the long run, however, stress can be a burden. The study found that certain stressors could increase the negative effects of stress on behavior, etc. Whenever a person is stressed, various consequences and other relationships in his or her life can be affected by that stress. For instance, stress from terrorism reduces the favorable attitude toward the host country's locals. Conversely, support within the organization will be beneficial to reduce stress, and this low level of stress leads to positive results such as well-being (Bader and Schuster, 2015). It is argued that the relationship between frustration and job satisfaction mentioned above is affected by general stress. The effect of frustration on job satisfaction should be emphasized by the general stress level of overseas expatriates because the negative effects will be much more harmful.

Conclusion

In conclusion, better communication of company values and beliefs as well as broader education can yield productive results, especially in countries with very high institutional discrimination. Such means may include field trips or repatriation as well as training and seminars. Similarly, an entity may try to develop a comprehensive organizational environment in which individuals learn to appreciate the value of differences (Nishii, 2013). Thus, working in an inclusive environment can create more opportunities to cooperate and get to know each other – a pivotal predictor of demographically reducing fault lines between different individuals. Good starting points and guidelines can be found in literature focusing on the specificity of establishing an inclusive climate in different cultural contexts (Stoermer, A.K. Bader and Froese, 2016).

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