

DOES GENDER DISCRIMINATION AFFECT TURNOVER INTENTION? EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM ACADEMIA IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Gender discrimination has widely been accepted as social characteristics that affects human behavior. Its intensity differs with change in culture, socio-economic conditions of the people and the type of interaction that people come across. The main objective of this study is to look into its impact on turnover intention among the faculty members in Pakistan. Data was collected from 310 faculty members working in five universities of Peshawar, Pakistan. Results show that gender discrimination has a significant positive relationship with faculty turnover intention. Regression analysis shows that 36 percent variance in members' turnover intention can be attributed to gender discrimination.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Turnover intention, faculty members, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of discrimination has its roots in the field of sociology. It is defined as treating a person or a certain group based on class or category irrespective of merit and justice in various areas of life (Dipboye and Colella 2005; ILO 2007). Understanding how much discrimination affects different individual outcomes is a good indication to know the strength of the concept of discrimination as a destructive aspect of an individual's experience. Perceived discrimination is related to an individual's perception about the treatment of organization. It occurs when an individual feels that his/her organization is not treating him/her fairly because of his or her gender or group membership (Mirage 1994; Sanchez and Brock 1996). Moreover, when individuals perceive such kind of mistreatment based on their gender or group membership, they become dissatisfied and a sense of discontent develops which can result in negative work-related behaviors (Channar 2010).

Discrimination in workplace is defined as "unfair and negative treatment of workers or job applicants based on personal attributes that are irrelevant to job performance" (Chung 2001). According to International Labor Organization (2007), gender discrimination is the act of treating people differently and less favorably because of their sex irrespective of their merit or the requirements of the job. Gender based discrimination in the workplace starts from women's entry into labor market which was once considered a male domain. Today's workplace gender discrimination is just a new shape of the old form of gender discrimination which has prevailed much longer than the era of industrial capitalism (Abbas, Hameed, and Waheed 2011).

According to Channar *et al.* (2011), women face a number of disadvantages in their workplaces such as lesser wages, fewer promotional chances and limited access to positions of authority, despite of compatible competence and experience. Gender equality, gender equity, sexual equality, or gender egalitarianism is the belief in the equality of the gender or the sexes. In more simple words, gender equality mean to refrain from any act that grants or denies opportunities, privileges or reward to a

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person on the basis of his/her sex (Shah, Habib, and Aamir 2010).

The subject of gender equality or gender discrimination is not only a social or ethical problem but also a legal issue and has become a global concern (Shah, Habib, and Aamir 2010). This has repeatedly been highlighted by the United Nations in its conferences held from 1975 to 1985. Furthermore, in recognition of the continuous gender inequalities in the world, the United Nations General Assembly passed a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on December 18, 1979 in New York (Kibwana 1995; Weiss 2012). Under this convention, member countries agreed to take all necessary actions to eradicate all types of discrimination against women especially in the field of employment to ensure the same rights, based on equality among the sexes. Equal opportunity laws aim to create a 'level playing field', so that people are employed, paid, trained and promoted only because of their skills, abilities and how they do their job (Channar 2010; Kazi 2011; Kibwana 1995).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the fact that gender discrimination and its relationship with different outcomes has been extensively studied in last two decades. Most of these researches are conducted in industrial organizational settings (Channar, Abbassi, and Ujan 2011; Ellen, Grant-Vallone, and Donaldson 2001; Foley, Hang-yue, and Loi 2004; Kazi 2011; Okpara 2006; Özer and Günlük 2010; Sanchez and Brock 1996). Little attention has been given to academic settings (Tsai 2012). Therefore, the current research was undertaken to fill this gap. This study has examined the relationship of gender discrimination with turnover intention within an academic setting.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To critically evaluate the concept of gender discrimination and turnover intention
- To examine the relationship between gender discrimination and turnover intention among the faculty members in Pakistani universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discrimination in workplace is defined as “unfair and negative treatment of workers or job applicants based on personal attributes that are irrelevant to job performance” (Chung 2001, , p. 34). According to (ILO 2007), gender discrimination is the act of treating people differently and less favorably because of their sex, irrespective of their merits or the requirements of the job. A similar definition is provided by Gutek *et al.* (1996). According to them, discrimination appears when employment decisions like hiring, performance evaluation, tasks and roles assignment, promotion, or wage allocation are based on an individual's personal characteristics such as age, race, appearance, sex or skin color rather than on performance and merit. On a more detailed and personal level, gender discrimination is believed to happen when decisions regarding human resources are based on an individual's gender, and associated characteristics, irrespective of the individual's qualification or job performance (Gutek, Cohen, and Tsui 1996; Ngo, Tang, and Au 2002). Similarly, perceived gender

discrimination is defined as an individual's perception that he or she is dealt differently or less favorably at workplace due to his or her gender. Both men and women can perceive discrimination on the basis of their own gender (Cameron 2001; Gutek, Cohen, and Tsui 1996). But, normally, women perceive much gender discrimination upon them than their men colleagues at the workplace (Gutek, Cohen, and Tsui 1996). Furthermore, when individuals perceive gender discrimination, they believe that members of their sex are systematically deprived at the workplace as compared to members of the other gender (Cameron 2001). This perception of discrimination on one side create negative feelings among employees, while on the other side it affect equal opportunity laws and ultimately affect the financial performance of organization (Foster 1999).

TURNOVER INTENTION

From organizational perspective, attaining and retaining high-quality employees is more crucial today than ever before (Ciftcioglu 2010). A number of factors like globalization and technological advancement have made it necessary for an organization to acquire and retain high-quality human capital (Iyigun and Tamer 2012). Moreover, the cost associated with turnover (Hinkin and Tracey 2000) as well as labor shortages in critical industries (Liu, Liu, and Hu 2010) have increased the importance of retaining key employees for organizational success. To cater to this issue, policy makers have devised and implemented a number of human resources policies and practices to actively reduce possible turnover (Fulmer, Gerhart, and Scott 2003; Hom, Roberson, and Ellis 2008; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod 2001).

Price (2001) has identified two types of turnover, involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary turnover occurs when employer removes a person from his or her job, while, voluntary turnover is when the employee himself/herself leaves the job (Hom, Roberson, and Ellis 2008). Voluntary turnover is considered more harmful for the organization and occurs more frequently than involuntary turnover. Maqbool *et al.* (2012) describe that the majority 60 percent to 70 percent of employees' turnover is voluntary.

Turnover intention is the cognitive process intervening between an individual's attitude regarding a job and the stay or leave decision (Iyigun and Tamer 2012; Mobley 1977). (Hom and Griffeth 1994) mentioned three factors which lead to withdrawal of the cognition process i.e. (a) to think about leaving the present job; (b) to find other suitable job somewhere else; and (c) to quit. Most of the academic scholars hold a common opinion about the turnover intention (Griffeth and Hom 1995; Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner 2000; Sadozai et al. 2013). According to them, turnover intention refers to an individual's perceived probability of quitting his/her organization, or the willingness of an individual to voluntarily permanently withdraw from the organization.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND JOB-RELATED OUTCOMES

Early studies on discrimination within organizational context have mainly focused either on the extent of discrimination or on its consequences for structural outcomes like differentials in employment opportunities, wages and promotions (Abbas, Hameed, and Waheed 2011; Belfield 2005; Channar 2010; Harris, Lievens, and Van Hoye 2004; Kahn and Crosby 1985; Yasin, Chaudhry, and Afzal

2010). (Abbas, Hameed, and Waheed 2011; Belfield 2005; Channar 2010; Harris, Lievens, and Van Hove 2004; Kahn and Crosby 1985; Yasin, Chaudhry, and Afzal 2010). The reactions of individuals to discrimination (behavioral outcomes) have received relatively less attention (Ozer and Gunluk 2010). The consequences of gender discrimination can be extended beyond individual's lack of access to formal and informal resources. Many individuals who think they have experienced discrimination, or have seen colleagues affected by it, show less engagement in their work (Abbas, Hameed, and Waheed 2011; Foley, Hang-Yue, and Wong 2005).

According to (Foley, Hang-yue, and Loi 2004) when individual perceives that his/her gender is used as the basis of discrimination within organization, he/she will show a low level of organizational commitment and will be likely to intend to leave his/her organization. Similar evidence can be found to support the view that women who suffer discrimination and harassment may also suffer career and job loss and a number of physical and psychological effects (Fitzgerald et al. 1997; Hulin, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow 1996; Saunders, Huynh, and Goodman-Delahunty 2007). Increased turnover of valuable employees, litigation expenses, damage awards if found liable and negative image that may result a number of irreparable losses, are some of the outcomes for organizations in which gender discrimination occurs (Channar, Abbassi, and Ujan 2011; Shah, Habib, and Aamir 2010).

Such view continues to be influential as Iyigun and Idil (2012) describe that fairness and equity at workplace have a significant effect on behaviors of the employees. As such the researcher believes that employees will be satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations if they are treated fairly by their organizations without any discrimination and if they experience or perceive discrimination regarding wages and future opportunities for promotion, they will more like to think of leaving their organizations. Based on this discussion, the researcher hypothesized that

H1: Gender discrimination is positively associated with turnover intention

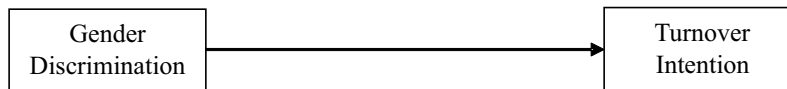


Figure1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Being quantitative in nature, survey method was used for data collection. Researchers have adopted already valid and reliable questionnaires. For gender discrimination researchers have five items questionnaire developed by Scmitt *et al.* (2002) and for turnover intention the researcher have adopted eight items questionnaire developed by Lee (2008). Due to similarity in nature and functions, data was collected only from five (5) public sector universities of Peshawar Division, Pakistan i.e. University of Peshawar, University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, Agriculture University, Khyber Medical University and Islamia College University Peshawar. Questionnaires were circulated among academic staff i.e. Lecturers, Assistant Professors and Associate Professors. A sample of 310 faculty members were selected using (Krejcie and Morgan 1970) method. Out of which two hundred and twenty four (224) questionnaires were returned which shows 72.25% return rate. Six questionnaires were disposed off because they contained incomplete information. The data was analyzed in trough

SPSS software version 19.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To facilitate the interpretation of the data following demographic items were included in the questionnaire (Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency Table of the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Professor	25	11.5
Associate Professor	34	15.6
Assistant Professor	68	31.2
Lecturer	91	41.7
Total	218	100.0
Male	155	71.1
Female	63	28.9
Total	218	100.0

Table 1 provides information regarding the demographic profile of the respondents. Based on the available demographic information of the respondents, are lecturers with a percentage of 41.7 followed by assistant professors 31.2 percent, associated professors 15.6 percent and professors 11.5 percent respectively. As far the gender of the respondents is concerned, the data showed that number of male respondents to be much higher as compared to female respondents. Table 1 shows that male respondents comprise a valid percentage of 71.1, while female respondents only represent 28.9 percent of the total respondents.

Reliability

Table 2: provides reliability of the instruments used in this study.

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
Gender Discrimination	0.79
Turnover Intention	0.82

For measuring the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for both the instruments and the values were found 0.79 gender discrimination and 0.82 for turnover Intention. According to Sekaran (2003) the acceptable range for the value of Cronbach's Alpha is equal or above 0.70.

CORRELATION TEST

Table 3: Relationship between Gender Discrimination and Turnover Intention (N=218)

		AveHGD	AveTOI
AveGD	Pearson Correlation	1.00	
AveTOI	Pearson Correlation	.607**	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows Pearson correlation test results which applied to check the relationship between gender discrimination and turnover intention. Table 4 shows that there is statistically a significant positive relationship between gender discrimination and turnover intention ($r = 0.607$, $p < 0.000$). Therefore, H1 is accepted.

MODEL SUMMARY

Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Dimension	1	.607 ^a	0.368	0.365	0.461

a. Predictors: (Constant), GD

Table shows the R Square value .37 that indicates that 37% of the variance in turnover intention can be accounted for by gender discrimination.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.736	1	26.736	125.742	.000 ^a
	Residual	45.927	216	0.213		
	Total	72.663	217			

a. Predictors: (Constant), GD

b. Dependent Variable: TOI

Coefficients^a

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.631	0.175		9.326	0.00
	AveHGD	0.543	0.048	0.607	11.213	0.00

a. Dependent Variable: TOI

The value of Beta in table indicates that procedural justice has 54 % impact on turnover intention of the faculty members.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that gender discrimination is positively associated with turnover intention among the faculty members in Pakistani universities. This association provides the explanation that when individual experience or perceive gender discrimination within their organizations, they become more likely to leave their organizations. Results of the current study are consistent with previous studies (Channar, Abbassi, and Ujan 2011; Foley, Hang-yue, and Loi 2004; Kelan 2009; Ozer and Gunluk 2010; Stroh, Brett, and Reilly 1996) which provide that when individuals experience or perceive gender discrimination within their organizations, they show a low level of organizational commitment and are more likely to leave their organizations. The management is strongly recommended to reduce gender discrimination to decrease turnover intention.

FUTURE RESEARCH

First, this study provides a conceptual framework to the body of literature regarding employee work attitudes and behaviors by incorporating the constructs of gender discrimination and turnover intention into one research framework. Future research should examine the effect of gender discrimination and its dimensions on other behavioral outcomes for which theoretical foundation is also available. Second, as the present study is quantitative in nature, therefore, a qualitative study with the same variables is also recommended to get more subtle findings. Third, as this study is cross-sectional in design, while, according to Farkas and Tetrick (1989) and Foley *et al.*, (2005) a longitudinal research design may better assess individuals' intentions to leave or remain with an organization. Therefore, it is recommended that future research should be carried out using longitudinal research design.

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