

GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK

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Abstract: This paper explores the influence of gender diversity at work through a number of specific illustrations as well as approaches and analysis of gender equality in the world. Using liberal and radical approach which are the most prominent and effective approaches, this paper finds that gender equality has a positive impact on quality improvement practices and performance at work. The reality of maintaining and improving gender diversity positively affects an organisation's performance.

These findings can be useful for both researchers and managers about literature review, especially developing countries such as Vietnam. For further work, this research may be expand to include countries with gender inequalities in the workplace and it may include more humanities.

Keywords: Gender equality; gender diversity; workplace.

Introduction

Managing diversity plays an essential role in developing and improving an efficient working environment and a successful business. Diverse management covers a wide-ranging topic that managers need to consider including gender equality; race and ethnicity; age diversity; disabled persons, religious diversity and sexual minorities in the workplace. In the aspect of gender equality, today's workplace is a place full of diversity in culture and gender, hence grievances and contradictions arise and require managers to have methods of resolving and effectively managing gender equality (Prause & Mujitaba, 2015). In this paper gender equality at work is analysed and clarified through typical theories and prominent examples of corporations in different countries and regions around the world.

Literature review

Gender diversity

Gender equality could be seen throughout the understanding of gender diversity. Moreover, the development of gender diversity is an essential need for many companies in all over the world to develop organisational strategies in a clear and favourable way (Virick & Greer, 2012).

In general, diversity can be identified as recognising, accepting, appreciating differences in people's age, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental capabilities and community support status. Nowadays, the diversity in the workplace is shaping up to be an important point to note and concern for companies. On the other hand, Roh and Kim (2016) argue that diversity has gone beyond traditional importance for equal chance and discrimination and moved to highlight the diversity in case of business. They also stress that managing the diversity of the workforce is one of

the main business requirements of every organisations. However, diversity in organisations is limited and mostly concentrate on its impact on a company's performance, focusing on top management, cultural and diversity and gender (Diaz-Garcia et al., 2013). Moreover, ethnic groups are not generalised in all countries, which also explains why women play an important role in the development of gender diversity and gender equality in the workplace.

In a research on business for gender diversity, of Roh and Kim (2016) focus on the wide relationship between gender diversity and organisational performance much more than consider gender equality as a part of gender diversity. In considering specifically on women' role in gender diversity, Dymond (2014) supply a fact that women are supposed to be placed on "male role" and work as "male way". Hence, this should lead to the result of 'healthy organisation' whereas women' matters are required to be reported.

In conclusion, a study of gender diversity in Holland and Denmark is supposed to be accomplish research of gender diversity in general, in which, they imply on the substantial positive influence of diversity in organisational performance by adapting data from Western countries.

Gender equality

Fuchs (2013) states that gender equality is a core value of modernity and democracy and it is increasingly well-developed in most countries of the world. Elwer et al. (2013) believe that gender equality is complex and includes many aspects of gender relatives in the division of work, reaction, power, symbolism and decision-making. To achieve those things, workplace must become more inclusive to increase representation and participation of women in organisation.

In the traditional way, Wu and Cheng (2016) demonstrate that all workers will be encouraged to contribute and develop gender equality and promote the growth of the company for greater equality between male and female workers in the same industry. It will lead to a more harmonious and effective working environment. Moreover, proportion of women and men being equal in the workplace indicates that the general requirements for work recognise both the potential of women and men. In fact, Fuchs (2013) believes that the European Union's policy on gender equality and anti-discrimination is one of the most advanced and well-defined policies, as well as directives for the implementation of this law provide a unified legal basis compared to member states. Besides, gender equality is evident in employing skilled and knowledgeable women. For instance, the current survey of female labour force participation reflects the failure of the Australian labour market that the lack of women in senior positions and situations, the low participation rates of women aged 25-44 and the high percentage of women working part-time. In case of Australian businesses, which are required to report not only to shareholders, employees and others about the development of the organisation in implementing gender equality in a serious way, but also build a knowledge base on a cyclical basis in order to allow organisations to know how they compare to others in their own field (Gaze, 2014).

By recognising the importance of gender equality at work, the Chilean government has enacted legislation to ensure equal pay between men and women (Wu &

Cheng, 2016). Labour market in Sweden shows that only about 10 percent of workers have stable jobs in which women and men are represented. Sweden has a lot of support from the government to promote gender equality in working life with discriminatory behaviour that requires every employer with more than 25 employees to have a gender equality plan to prevent gender discrimination and promote gender equality (Prugl & True, 2014). Therefore, the proportion of women working is growing up from the early 21st century to recent years in the public sectors, private and overall are 16.11, 24.78 and 18.95 percentage respectively.

Nevertheless, in some organisations there still exist models of gender relations. These may result in inequalities between women and men in various forms such as discrimination which related to opportunity, access to services and benefit sharing (Fernando, 2012 & Elwer et al., 2013). Indeed, Mayes and Pini (2014) point out that in some places including Australia, arguments about economic competence continue to be mobilised as a basis and strategy focused on gender inequalities in workplace. This is especially evident in the highly paid and enriched Australian mining industry in which women have long been and continue to be under-represented and disadvantaged.

On the other hand, social barriers to fairness are made up of gender inequalities. Statistics show that in Europe, many women have a high school diploma which are more than men, but they earn only 84% of their income compared to men (Elwer et al., 2013). In Sweden, after adjusting for age, education, working time, occupation, women earned 92 percent of the money earned by men (Prugl & True, 2014). In fact, based on his own survey about the gender equality in Indian companies, if an organisation does not have enough women in the right amount to make a business decision, it will lead to the result for this organisation losing its special femininity. Because women tend to be sensitive to the environment around them, women can understand the details of the workplace environment and can understand even deeper.

In addition of policies to promote gender equality such as fair pay, public payment policies between men and women, the size of the company as well as its ranks and types of employees also greatly influences gender equality in the workplace. This view is fully supported by the specific survey that the majority of employees in Chile (80%) are male, suggesting that inequality in the workplace of the country remains high (Wu & Cheng, 2016). For large companies with more than 50 employees, there is only better gender equality between low skilled employees to improve productivity.

Gender stereotype

One of the factors influencing gender equality is the gender stereotype. According to Kaushik et al. (2014), gender stereotypes are defined as a set of beliefs about the supposed qualities of women and men. They also state that the leaders are usually men because they are supposed to be strong while women are thought weak, and passive. In general, Syed and Ozbilgin (2015) demonstrate that gender stereotypes have been implemented in the role of women over the years and the actions of others have influenced the progress of women in the workplace, this has led to issues such as the gender pay gap. For example, in a survey conducted by Indian management students, the role of men is the main income earner, the strongest, the security services provider, the entrepreneur and the responsible person. While women's roles are understood as

housewives, carers, emotion, reproduction. It can be seen that women are still viewed as moderately and negatively than men. In fact, socially and traditionally, there is a difference in the perceptions of a number of people about watching a working woman compared to a man. Multicultural research in 25 nations shows that in all nation's women are defined as sentimental, passive, and irrational (Kaushik et al., 2014). It can be seen that women are often ignored when it comes to men, even though women's abilities meet the needs of work and progress in an organisation (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015). In Vietnam, according to International Labour Organization (ilo.org), women are supposed to have less income than men, and their hazardous employed conditions are affected. This condition seems to remain for twenty years from 2000, which during 1993 to 2002, after Doi Moi (The economy revolution in Vietnam). Though the disintegration investigation recommends that the handling outcome is moderately steady transversely the provisional income circulation and slight indication of a consequence is perceived for Vietnamese women in the income pay area (Pham, T. H., & Reilly, B., 2007).

In terms of employment, 83% of working-age women are employed. Women are represented in almost every State administrative agency and SOEs where 68.7% of the public servants and 30% of employers are female. They also participate in numerous political and social organisations, accounting for 30% of these organisations' executive members at different levels (The Universal Periodic Review, 2009). Women's urban unemployment rate decreased from 6.98% to 6.14%, compared to a decrease in the overall urban unemployment rate from 6.28% in 2003 to 5.31% in 2008. During the same period, some 5,326 persons received vocational training, 33% of whom were women. However, women are not always competing on a level playing field. Among other things, they lack access to the same opportunities for skills training, and face discrimination in recruitment. Furthermore, ethnic minority (Vietnam is a country of diverse nationalities with 54 ethnic groups. The *Viet (Kinh)* people account for 87% of the country's population and mainly inhabit the Red River Delta, the central coastal delta, the Mekong Delta and major cities. The other 53 ethnic minority groups, totalling over 8 million people, are scattered over mountain areas (covering two-thirds of the country's territory) spreading from the North to the South) women and girls lag behind ethnic minority men and Kinh women in accessing health and education services and economic opportunities (The World Bank, ADB, DFID and CIDA, 2006).

Gender pay gap

In the aspect of 'gender pay gap', it is the difference in income between men and women in the workplace. It can be seen that women and men who have the same status and power show that they have similar education and that the wages between men and women are equal (Wu & Cheng, 2016). According to Han (2016), the wage gap in men remains at 25%, in which the gap in women's wages is a prominent issue in European society. This issue is also one of the top three priority areas of action against gender inequalities in EU Member States. There are other ways to combat gender gaps beyond legal and strategic litigation, such as collective bargaining and anti-discrimination agencies.

According to Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2013), there are six reasons for the gender pay gap in Australia and the world in general including: Gender discrimination; Career breaks; Industrial segregation; Occupational segregation;

Undervaluation of women’s skills and payment setting methods. All these factors revolve around women’s daily work and personal life as well as women’s workforce skills are often undervalued as they perform numerous roles of individual and caring customers in the Australian context (Chang et al., 2014). Women’ wages are also affected by payment setting systems, as in many situations that women in industries or professions have to depend on awards, so they are not in a position to negotiate with employers. For instance, the gender gap in inequality shown in average for full-time starting salaries of female college graduates does not change at A \$ 50,000. While for men, this figure increased to A \$ 55,000 in 2012 from A \$ 52,000 last year in Australia (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013). While the law requires equality in payment between men and women for jobs of equal value. In practice, survey data have shown a big gap in income between men and women in different types of enterprises as well as in different economic sectors. The Surveys on Household Living Standards in 2006 demonstrates that men’s income is about 1.3 times that of women. In Vietnam, according to Hong Vo et al., 2019, the period from 2004-2016 designates that there has been a reducing of gender pay gap. Thus, there is a recommendation of completing the management’s procedures to supply more occupations that appropriate to Vietnamese women.

Table 1: Gap in Pay between Men and Women in Vietnam

(in thousand VND)

	Overall	Men	Women	Differentials (times)
1. By types of ownership				
Individual household	861	958	694	1.44
State owned sector	1417	1466	1353	1.10
Collective sector	963	967	956	1.01
Private sector	1312	1454	1102	1.32
Foreign invested sector	1512	1908	1250	1.53
2. By economic sector				
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	744	802	644	1.25
Mining	1740	1843	1292	1.43
Processing industry	1091	1250	937	1.33
Other services	1386	1653	1159	1.43

Source: Surveys on Household Living Standards 2006

Classical theories of gender segregation

Gender segregation

Gender could be understood as a social structure constructed by the given original sex (Gedro, 2014). From this definition, Gedro questions of the inequality of being a woman in a relationship with men. The issue of Gender segregation, therefore, exist in almost occupations. It has been studied in ‘reproduction of roles, identities and occupations’ (Jafree et al., 2015, p. 983), or explained on working segregation as social significant forms of differences in gender and race.

Classical theories

Theories should be used to implicate gender segregation, which contributes the understanding of gender equality in the workplace.

There are various classic theories such as: Marxist theory, Radical feminist theory (Patriarchal domination theory), Dual systems theory, and Post-structuralist theory (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015). These theories have had a profound impact on pointing out the causes of gender segregation at work. Whereas Marxist theory focuses on analysing the segregation in gender in the force of labour from capitalist system, Radical feminist theory deliberates patriarchy system as the base of domination in the workplace.

According to Vidal et al. (2015), Marxism proposes perception of the dynamic development of capitalism. As such, Marxism supplies an interdisciplinary methodology that powers over economic relations, in which, it provides analysis of class. Although Marxist feminist determination is women's freedom, Marxist theory does not consider women as a class (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015). Therefore, instead of seeking the relations of gender and gender segregation, Marxists focus on the conflict of capitalism and labour and maintains gender inequality as the result. Moreover, production and reproduction are considered to be Marxist subjects, which Marxism begins with. The term of 'production' is also identified by Marx and Engels (1996), in which they consider collective characteristics of productive activity and the fundament of producing as a living demand. Hence, Marxist feminist method argues two structural paradoxes between forces, production and social classes. In the aspect of capitalism, Marxist theory is argued that it has ignored childcare and mothering. Therefore, it should be ineffective in the process of reorganisation employment. Consequently, Marxist theory reveals how gender inequalities are exploited by capitalists and points out a complicated interaction of class in not only gender but also in race and nationality (Vidal et al., 2015).

Radical feminist theory (Patriarchy theory) has a different cause of gender segregation in employment: The Patriarchy. Patriarchy could be seen as a social structural system where men dominate women (Yamak et al., 2016). Thus, the ideology of Patriarchy has been constant in working places and domestic life, which is considered to have strong influence in gender equality. It also identifies women as a class, which is different from the concept of class in Marxist theory. Bika (2012) believes that patriarchy is used as system control, in which father regulations are legitimate in domestic life. In patriarchy system, women are seen as incomplete men. Radical feminist theory considers women in a system that 'men have power over them' (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015, p. 113), in which, women are required to be in conjunction with family and caring responsibilities. This can lead to the disadvantage of women in employment. Hence, Radical feminist theory organises a structure for the practice of Human Resource Development throughout its respond to what is privileged and what is oppressed (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014).

As a combination of the above theories, a status of women in the workplace is seen in Dual systems theory, in which, both capitalist system and patriarchy take part in gender segregation. The new term of 'capital patriarchy': "the dual role of the capitalist system and patriarchy in producing and sustaining gender segregation in the labour force" is created as an advance in research of gender inequalities (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015).

Different from considering 'class' as the cause of segmentation, Feminist Post-Structuralist theory uses dominant discourse to analyse for the societal influences on

women' position and gender segregation. According to Post-Structuralist theory, Fotaki (2013) discusses Foucauldian perspective as a realistic structure of disciplining women in the workplace. On the other hand, commercial discourses are used to contribute gender segregation in business. Marlow (2012) also uses Post structuralist theory in criticising for feminist development and challenging the concept of female essentialism. However, as basing on discourse, this theory seems to disregard the maintenance of inequality in employment.

Another classic theory of gender segregation that should be studied is Human Capital theory, which insists on differences in human capital possessed by individuals. Schatzel (2012) considers that both economic and individuals achieve benefits by investing people. The structure of Human Capital theory is pointed out in the mechanism of increasing skills and education, rewarding higher productivity and getting higher earning as a result (Bae 2014). According to Coff and Reffie (2015) and Delery and Roumpi (2017), the stability of specific human capital is a foundation for continuous comparative benefit. However, Human Capital theory also implies on the differences in treatment of employment between men and women while the skilled employment is supposed to employ men 10 times than women. Hence, the payment for women is lower than for men. The determination on labour demand and its supply also places Human Capital theory in criticising. Those mentioned theories of gender segregation have not been known in Vietnamese ideologies about women' positions and development. Feminist theories in society have not been applied in reality even some parts of consciousness of women' positions are gradually provided and required to be changed in working places (conferring to Hong Vo, D., Van, L. T. H., Tran, D. B., Vu, T. N., & Ho, C. M., 2019).

Methodology

There are many methods to promote gender equality in the workplace. In their own study, Syed and Ozbilgin (2015) offer four typical approaches: liberal approaches, radical approaches, transformational approaches and multi-level approaches. Especially, liberal and radical approaches are two of the most prominent approaches because they are applied primarily in top management and economic countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

Liberal approaches

The liberal approach is the most commonly used method in western countries (Styhre, 2014). This approach aims to maintain equity in organisations. Therefore, organisations have adopted this approach as a goal to eliminate and prevent cross-country and gender discrimination at workplace through the policies and practices of each organisation (Conley & Page, 2017). Moreover, men and woman are treated equally in the workplace as well as their positions should be fair as their level of knowledge is similar. In other words, this approach is characterised by the concept of creating a 'level playing field' where failure to realise equality is the result of social barriers (Conley & Page, 2017). This liberal approach to equality predominates in the UK, which includes most of the UK government's social policy and laws. However, Conley and Page (2017) point out that the first losses of the British government's financial austerity and 30 years

of public service. Thus, the British government has compulsory financial pressure on gender equality or through inequality in the payment of pensions, the loss of a woman's employment, or cut off the benefits that women depend on. In a Western focus on gender equality in the workplace, Durbin et al. (2017) believe that these countries may face some problems and challenges when they want to expand their business to countries in other continents. For instance, in the West, Muslims are considered to have a different approach to the Western liberal approach to equality and gender equality in the workplace.

Radical approaches

In contrast to liberal approaches, the radical approaches are identified as the difference between dominant groups, such as the middle class, whites, healthy men with women, ethnic minorities, and the disable. This approach is fully supported by Conley and Page (2017) that the radical approaches are recognised that equality policies only succeed when the results are more equitable. However, this can only happen and be achieved when the imbalance of power is challenged and negotiated. On the other hand, the radical approach has targets to make women's positions better to fit them in men and focus more on morality (Wetlesen, 2013). However, in the context of reality, the difference between a liberal approach and a radical approach is often not really clear.

Discussion

Research on gender equality in the workplace has contributed to reinforcing the perception of the importance of diversity in the workplace. This issue is focused and analysed through theoretical, applied and practical aspects of companies in different countries around the world. It can be seen that Western countries have performed more effectively at workplace gender equality than in other continents due to cultural diversity as well as legal policies on gender equality is paid more attention. Classical theories on gender differences are also mentioned in detail. However, depending on the different times and situations, there will be different ways of applying it. Especially, women in the East have met more challenges according to their traditional ideologies and cultural perspectives (Chris Rowley et al., 2010). This also applies in Vietnam - part of "rice-dominated landscape in the Mekong delta", where women are underrepresented in upper management level (Le et al., 2010). In summary, managing gender diversity and especially gender equality in the working environment is an opportunity as well as a challenge for managers. If it is possible to do well and achieve consensus within the organisation, then surely the development effect of the organisation will be massive. To achieve such success, managers must put in place long-term policies and plans to implement gender equality in the workplace in a holistic manner.

Recommendation

Firms across countries should report the percentage of female workers in the entire organisation, such as senior executives and the board of directors, and address the issue in the annual reports.

Companies also reinforce awareness of the importance of gender equality to all employees in the organisation through meetings or employee training. Therefore, it will

enhance the spirit of mutual respect regardless of whether men or women. In Australia, these plans have also been put in place by some companies and have been as effective as expected (Ferraro, 2011).

To achieve good results in gender equality in the workplace, companies should introduce a diversified policy and publicly disclose it in a summary form to employees can easily grasp the information. They can also work out gender equality policies in the workplace through the selection of the right elements in classical theories or through appropriate organisational approaches.

Governments of countries should also soon come up with laws and policies on gender equality in labour, limiting inequalities and conflicts between men and women to contribute to maintaining equal relations in the workforce.

Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of gender equality at work through review of current gender equality in companies in several countries around the world in terms of gender stereotype, gender pay gap. By using a number of classic theories and prominent approaches to analyse, this paper shows that typical developing countries are currently using popular and effective approaches as well as difficulties that method brings. Research on this topic also finds that the more the society is growing, the more gender diversity will increase. Governments and companies need to have laws and policies to maintain gender equality at work in order to maintain stability and to develop benefits for the companies and the nations. It also shows that the responsibility of the manager is essential for maintaining and developing gender equality in the organisation and working environment.

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TÓM TẮT

BÌNH ĐẲNG GIỚI TẠI NƠI LÀM VIỆC

Thế giới đang trong thời kỳ hội nhập toàn cầu và phát triển bền vững. Các phong cách quản lý ảnh hưởng rất lớn đến sự phát triển và hiệu quả làm việc của tổ chức. Trong đó, quản lý đa dạng luôn là một vấn đề được quan tâm ở hầu hết các tổ chức và doanh nghiệp trên toàn thế giới. Nhìn chung, quản lý sự đa dạng đóng một vai trò thiết yếu trong việc phát triển và cải thiện môi trường làm việc hiệu quả và kinh doanh thành công. Quản lý đa dạng bao gồm nhiều chủ đề: bình đẳng giới, chủng tộc và dân tộc, đa dạng độ tuổi, người khuyết tật, đa dạng tôn giáo và dân tộc thiểu số tại nơi làm việc (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015). Vấn đề về bình đẳng giới cũng luôn là một đề tài nóng khi một số ngành nghề hay tổ chức vẫn còn những định kiến về giới trong môi trường làm việc. Bài viết này được phân tích dựa trên phương pháp tiếp cận tự do và cấp tiến trong bình đẳng giới thông qua những tổng quan về lý thuyết.

Từ khoá: Bình đẳng giới; nơi làm việc; sự đa dạng; tiếp cận.