



Gender, Nationality, and Religion: The Impact of Perceived Discrimination on Performance

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Abstract:

Diversity refers to a group of workers that work together in a company and are varied in terms of gender, age, color, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic level, education, family status, lifestyle, personality, sexual orientation, language, mental and physical ability. Employees suffer when they are discriminated against because of their differences. This article examines three types of discrimination based on gender, nationality, and religion diversity in the workplace, as well as their impact on employees. A detailed analysis of the literature is conducted to better understand the tripartite biases and their impact on employee performance. Unstructured interviews were also done to investigate the dynamics that arise when three biases overlap.

Keywords: *Gender, Nationality, Religion, Perceived Discrimination, Performance, Workplace Dynamics, Intersectionality, Discrimination Impact*

1. Introduction

Discrimination has always been a feature of global social systems, particularly in workplace dynamics where diversity is frequently mishandled. Diversity, defined as differences in gender, age, color, ethnicity, and other aspects, can lead to discriminatory behaviors if companies fail to acknowledge and accept these distinctions (Nicholas, 2000; D'Netto et al., 2000). This study focuses on three major types of discrimination: gender, nationality, and religion. Gender discrimination refers to adverse treatment based on gender, which limits professional growth chances. Nationality discrimination results from biased treatment based on an employee's ethnic or national origin, whereas religious discrimination targets people based on their beliefs and practices. Despite previous research focusing on single components of prejudice (e.g., Hussain & Jones, 2019), this study aims to fill a vital vacuum by investigating the intersectional consequences of these three dimensions on disadvantaged groups, notably Muslim migrant women. The study's goal is to examine how different types of discrimination affect employees' mental health and performance, as well as to understand the dynamics that arise when these prejudices converge.

2. Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between Discrimination Based on Gender/Nationality/Religion and Its Effects on Employees.
2. To develop a research model for future research.

3. Review of literature

3.1 Discrimination Based on Gender and Its Effects on Employees

Gender discrimination continues to be a significant issue in the workplace, affecting women's career advancement and overall well-being. Historical movements advocating for women's rights in the 19th and early 20th centuries paved the way for increased educational access and social reforms (Bernard,

1966). Despite these advancements, the employment landscape reflects ongoing disparities. The International Labor Organization (ILOSTAT) reported that female employment in key industries worldwide decreased from 18.245% in 2005 to 15.045% in 2018. This decline underscores troubling trends in gender equality, especially in countries like Australia and the UK, while nations such as India and Vietnam saw increases, highlighting the complexities of gender dynamics.

Kuchynka et al. (2018) distinguishes between hostile and benevolent sexism, both of which impact women's workplace experiences. Hostile sexism involves overtly negative attitudes toward women, diminishing their contributions and attributing success to male colleagues. In contrast, benevolent sexism appears positive but reinforces traditional gender roles through a paternalistic lens. Both forms contribute to a toxic work environment that undermines women's performance and morale.

Koenig et al. (2011) argue that male-dominated workplaces perpetuate masculine traits associated with successful managers. Glick et al. (2018) highlight how these entrenched norms create barriers to achieving gender parity. Acker (2008) emphasizes that the traits deemed successful in academia are often masculine, which reinforces biases against women in leadership.

Wynn and Correll (2018) identified several unconscious biases that impede women's advancement. These include higher performance standards for women, shifting evaluation criteria during hiring and promotions, and narrow definitions of effective leadership that favor traditionally masculine traits. Women displaying decisive and independent traits often face backlash for contradicting societal norms. Additionally, working mothers are frequently perceived as less competitive, resulting in wage disparities and reduced opportunities for advancement.

The evaluation process further complicates women's career trajectories. Heilman (2001) notes that despite equal competence, women face bias in performance evaluations, hindering their advancement compared to male colleagues. Women who diverge from traditional expectations often endure social disapproval, adversely affecting their professional growth.

The glass ceiling illustrates the barriers women face in reaching top positions. Severe (2016) notes that women experience this barrier more acutely than men, constrained by gender stereotypes that limit their access to upper-echelon roles. Ibarra et al. (2013) identify unconscious discrimination as a persistent issue in hiring and evaluations, perpetuating the gender gap.

Interestingly, Kaushik et al. (2014) found that perceptions of gender discrimination vary between male and female employees, with women more likely to recognize stereotypes. This disconnect is exacerbated by the prevalence of sexual harassment in companies with fewer female employees, deterring women from pursuing leadership roles.

4. Discrimination based on nationality and its effect on employees

Intropunitive and extra-punitive responses represent two distinct ways individuals react to discrimination in the workplace. Intropunitive responses are characterized by self-blame and internalized feelings of low self-esteem. Employees exhibiting these responses may not only blame themselves but also feel guilt or shame associated with their group identity. This internal struggle can significantly harm their psychological well-being, leading to heightened anxiety and depression, ultimately diminishing their work performance and engagement.

In contrast, extra-punitive responses involve directing feelings of anger and hostility outward, particularly towards the dominant group. Individuals who adopt this stance may express loyalty to their own group, fostering an "us vs. them" mentality. While this response can create a sense of

solidarity among marginalized employees, it may also escalate tensions within the workplace and perpetuate a cycle of resentment and conflict. Both types of responses can negatively impact an employee's physical and mental health, diverting their focus from productive work to navigating the challenges of seeking acceptance and recognition in a discriminatory environment.

Furthermore, the effects of biased Behavior extend beyond the immediate victims of discrimination. Observers and colleagues who witness discriminatory actions can also suffer negative consequences, including decreased morale and impaired psychological well-being. The stress and discomfort experienced by bystanders often manifest in reduced productivity and engagement, creating a toxic workplace culture that affects everyone. Research indicates that acknowledgment of discrimination in the workplace correlates with negative outcomes not only for the victims but also for witnesses, leading to broader implications for organizational health and performance (Low et al., 2007; Enokson, 2016; Stone & Carlisle, 2018).

5. Discrimination based on religion and its effect on employees

Discrimination based on religion presents significant challenges for employees, leading to adverse effects on their well-being and job performance. Ghumman et al. (2013) defines religious harassment as situations where employees are pressured to conform to others' beliefs or abandon their own as a condition of employment. Such harassment fosters a hostile work environment, significantly impacting employees' psychological health and job satisfaction.

Research indicates a troubling increase in religious harassment, particularly affecting Muslim employees. Deschenaux (2011) highlights that Muslims often encounter workplace discrimination, with Malos (2010) noting that visibly Muslim women face reduced job offers, especially in roles requiring public interaction. A survey by Padela et al. (2015) found that 24% of American Muslims experienced frequent religious discrimination throughout their careers, while 14% faced such discrimination in their current jobs. The study also revealed a correlation between the importance of religion in one's life and the perception of discrimination.

Wright et al. (2013) examined hiring practices and found that Muslims received one-third fewer callbacks than applicants without expressed religious affiliation in New England. This suggests that in areas where religious identity is often overlooked, individuals who openly identify with their faith may face heightened discrimination. Similarly, Scheitle and Eckland (2018) found that U.S. scientists who are more religiously expressive experience discrimination, particularly among Protestants, Muslims, Jews, and Catholics.

The consequences of religious discrimination extend beyond individual experiences, adversely affecting job satisfaction and turnover rates. Nunez-Smith et al. (2009) reported that religious bias contributes to 7% of job turnover, with 24% of employees stating that their career advancement suffers due to discrimination. This unpredictability can diminish motivation and productivity.

However, accommodating religious practices can enhance employees' well-being, as noted by Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008). While some regions report minimal religious conflict (Rao, 2012), issues like traditional attire and holiday observances still require careful management.

6. Proposed Model (Research Framework)

Based on above review of literature which assess the relationship between affect of gender/nationality/religion-based discrimination the proposed research framework has been developed (Figure 1), which assess the relationship between the affect of discrimination on employee performance considering demographic factors like Gender, nationality and Religion.

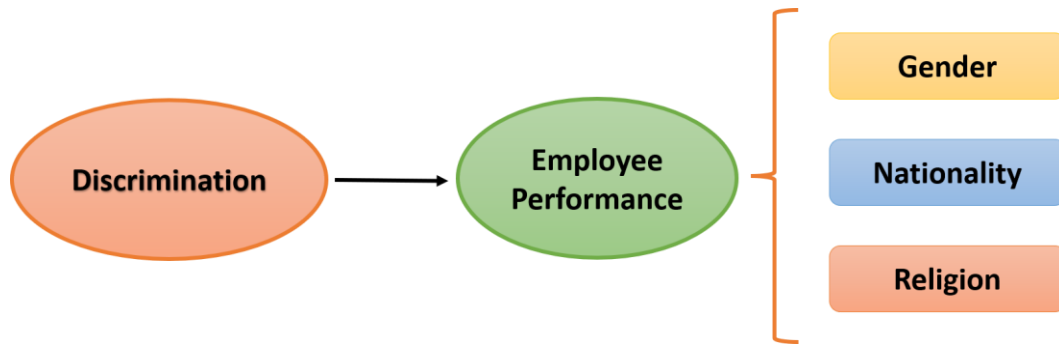


Figure 1. The proposed research framework

7. Conclusion

This study underscores the detrimental impacts of gender, nationality, and religious discrimination in the workplace, revealing how these biases affect employee performance and well-being. Discrimination manifests in various forms, creating hostile environments that lead to reduced job satisfaction, higher turnover rates, and diminished morale among employees. The intersection of these biases particularly affects marginalized groups, such as Muslim migrant women, highlighting the need for organizations to recognize and address these complex dynamics. By fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity, companies can enhance employee engagement and productivity while promoting mental health and well-being.

8. Future Directions

Future research should focus on developed comprehensive framework (Figure 1) that address the interplay of various discrimination types in the workplace. Longitudinal studies could explore the long-term effects of such biases on career progression and mental health among diverse employee groups. Additionally, examining effective strategies for implementing diversity training and inclusive policies can provide practical solutions for organizations. Collaborating with organizations to gather real-time data on discrimination experiences will further enrich understanding and facilitate the development of targeted interventions to combat workplace discrimination effectively.

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