

Gender-based Stereotypical Practices in Selected Industries in Metro Cebu

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ABSTRACT

This study made use of qualitative design as a method for describing the practices of selected industries in Metro Cebu and how gender relates to actual performance and productivity in the workplace. The researcher utilized narratives as qualitative data gathered through interviews. Interviews were made with persons who have direct influence on the hiring, promotion, dismissal, and termination (personnel management) of employees, such as the Human Resource Managers or the Company Owners. There were a total of ten (10) key informants for the study. It was found out that gender-based stereotypes, practices, and beliefs are evident in the selected industries in Metro Cebu. Hiring men is best to protect the interests of the respective companies, citing practicality and productivity considerations.

INTRODUCTION

Women have undeniably been accorded to have less status than men in the aspect of strength, knowledge and ability. This common gender-based stereotype is termed as "Anatomy Destiny". Anatomy destiny views gender as a determinant of person's ability. It presupposes that women are less likely to be successful in career and in life because she is weaker, slower and lesser intelligent compared to men. In the contemporary society, concerned groups who resist against the concept of anatomy destiny makes this gender-based stereotype slowly banishing. People have become more gender sensitive and cultural practices are now geared on gender equality and women empowerment.

To advocate gender equality and to further empower women across the societies, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has set legally-binding principles and standards globally. These principles and standards have led to the creation of advocacies and to the passage of policies promoting gender equality among many nations in the world. Gender equality; for example, has become part of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations in consonance to CEDAW's international standards. However, the global paradigm shift on better valuation of women in the society is not totally evident in many countries. Gender-based stereotypes are still embedded on practices at school, in the community and even at work in countries such as the Philippines.

In the Philippines, women are given the unequal and dissimilar priorities and opportunities as of men. Women are now already economically, socially and politically empowered in the Philippine society but the opportunities for them to contribute in nation building is limited. In fact, Filipino-women can evidently enter the world of media, business, sports and even politics but the gender-based stereotypes on hiring, electing, appointing and promoting women limits the opportunity to actively contribute in many industries.

Data from Philippine Statistical Authority revealed that women population is higher than men. Moreover, there are more educated women than men in the Philippines. However, there are more men elected politicians, more hired men-employees and more business men. Although population and literacy rate are higher to women than to men, Philippine society remains men-dominated. For Heilman, M. E. (2012), gender-based stereotypes impede women's advancement in a society because of the rise of gender-based biases, judgments and decisions. Because of this, women remain under-represented in various fields in the Philippine society. These facts are more evident at the workplace.

It has been observed that industries preferred to hire men than women. Company owners and human resource managers explicitly ask for the recruitment and for the endorsement of male applicants. For several occasions, application of women for work is stopped and opportunity to be hired is deprived. This is a real manifestation of gender inequality and indicates gender-based stereotyping at the workplace. Blighted with these scenarios, it is in this light that the researcher endeavours to pursue this study with the purpose of describing gender-based stereotyping at workplace.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of qualitative design as method in describing the belief of selected industries in Metro Cebu on how gender relates to the actual performance and productivity in a workplace. For this, the researchers utilized narratives as qualitative data gathered through interviews. Interviews were made with persons who have direct influence on hiring, promotion, dismissal and termination (personnel management) of employees such as the Human Resource Managers or the Company Owners. The key informants of the interview were selected through purposive sampling. The focus of the researcher is on the common belief and practices which objectively described the gender-stereotypes at the workplace. The gathered data were validated by citing related studies and other references.

The study was conducted in selected industries in Metro Cebu where gender-stereotypical practices at workplace is common based on the observation of the researchers. Private companies, manpower agencies and Non-Government Organizations in Metro Cebu were seen to have gender-based stereotypical practices at workplace. The researcher believed that these gender-based stereotypical belief and practices at the workplace best described how gender affects hiring and promotion opportunities in selected industries in Metro Cebu.

This study utilized interview guide as primary instrument in gathering narratives from key informants identified by the researcher. For this matter, an interview guide was devised by the researcher based from the problems of the study. The interview guide is composed of thirty series of questions formulated in such a way that it can reach data saturation. The copy of interview guide is attached as part of the appendixes (refer on appendix No. 1 in the appendixes). Other instruments used by the researcher were recorder, camera, pen and paper for the success of data gathering.

The respondents of the study are the key informants identified by the researchers for interview. There was a total of ten (10) key informants for the study. The key informants will be composed of the following: four private-company personnel manager, three manpower-agency personnel managers and three NGO personnel managers. Each will be interviewed using the interview guide devised by the researchers. Each key informant has pseudonym for confidentiality of identity. Hence, KI-1, KI-2, KI-3 and KI-4 are the private-company personnel manager; KI-5, KI-6, and KI-7 are manpower-agency personnel managers and KI-8, KI-9, and KI-10 are the NGO personnel managers.

Prior to the actual data gathering procedures by the researchers, an interview guide was constructed (refer on appendix No. 1 in the appendixes). The ten (10) key informants were asked for their available time to conduct the interview. Moreover, the ten (10) key informants were purposively selected by the researchers based on a self-made criterion. A hard copy of interview guide was provided to the key informants so they may constructively be ready on the questions. The confidentiality of the narratives and its contents were explained by the researchers upon giving the hard copy of the interview guide. The researchers waited for the schedule time and place of the requested interview preferred by each key informant.

On the day of the interview, the researchers asked questions based on the interview guide to the key informants. The researchers recorded all the verbal narratives of the key informants using a recorder, a paper and a pen. After, the researchers transcribed the recorded narratives. The researcher used tabular matrix to comprehensively assemble the narratives on each question per key informants. The researchers used pseudonym on the table for confidentiality of identity key informants. On the tabular matrix, KI-1, KI-2, KI-3 and KI-4 were the private-company personnel manager; KI-5, KI-6, and KI-7 were manpower-agency personnel managers and KI-8, KI-9, and KI-10 were the NGO personnel managers. A thematic analysis then been employed to examine the pattern of similarities on the narratives of key informants as seen on the table. The pattern of similarities on the narratives of the respondents was presented on the succeeding pages as findings of the study.

The researchers then draw possible implication out from the findings of the study. After which, the researchers carefully formulate recommendations and conclusions out from the findings of the study. Generating any Gender and Development (GAD) initiative was the tasks of the researchers.

RESULTS

A. Theme 1: Common Gender-Based Stereotypical Practices at the Workplace

Our company rarely hires women. (KI 3).

It must be man. (KI 9).

I entertain male applicants for as always. (KI 10).

Our newly promoted managers are men. (KI 2)

*Based on the monitoring and evaluation results,
men often get the position. (KI 5)*

I keep him because a man better represents my company. (KI 1).

We have never tried a woman, but men best suit on the field work. (KI 9).

B. Theme 2: Difference on Hiring Men than Women

Women employees have many reasons to file for leave. Whenever they are on leave, our daily operations are hampered. This leads to profit loss. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6, KI 7 and KI 9 and KI 10).

Our company avoids expending money covering the maternity leaves of the women employees. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6 and KI 9).

Men perform better on average at certain tasks. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 5 and KI 7).

Heavy work assignments can only be assigned to men. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6).

We commonly hire men because they can be assigned on areas outside the Metro Cebu. (KI 4, KI 5 and KI 6).

DISCUSSION

Common Gender-Based Stereotypical Practices at the Workplace

Gender-based stereotypical practices in the workplace can be viewed in recruitment process, reasons for retention and opportunity for promotion. On this matter, women are denied, underprivileged and are given less opportunities than men. Gender-based stereotype does not acknowledge reasons nor establish rational basis aside from mere identification a person's gender. When asked of the reason why their industry recruited men than women, the key informants revealed:

Our company rarely hires women. (KI 3).

It must be man. (KI 9).

I entertain male applicants for as always. (KI 10).

These utterances boldly show how selected industries in Metro Cebu prefers to hire men than women upon the recruitment process. Companies indicated on job postings and job specification that male applicants are what the company needs for most of the vacated positions. This supports the findings of Dauphinee, T. L. Et. Al. (1997) showing that men are more employable than women. Female applicants who applied and were endorsed are still be accommodated for interview, but the one who will be hired must be of a man. This is how gender-based stereotypical practice hinder women on a recruitment phase. One must take note that there are still few women who can successfully land a position in the industries. Gender-based stereotype in this context does not prohibit entrance of women in the industries but rather slims the probability to be hired and even promoted. It is evident that most of the promoted employees and occupied key positions in a company are men. When asked about this trend, the key informants said:

Our newly promoted managers are men. (KI 2)

Based on the monitoring and evaluation results, men often get the position. (KI 5)

These statements indicate that men have high probability to be promoted because they commonly got good monitoring and evaluation results than women. Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. (2010), discovered that men have high probability (76%) to be promoted than women in a workplace. Accordingly, men would normally score higher on a monitoring result because men are predisposed to be much agile and flexible on manual work than women. Moreover, men normally score higher on an evaluation result because men are never absent to work for monthly gynaecological reasons such as menstruation-associated sickness and dysmenorrhea. Men are also less likely to be late in duty because they have no or they have lesser household liabilities than women.

When asked about retention between men and women employees, key informants revealed said:

I keep him because a man better represents my company. (KI 1).

We have never tried a woman, but men best suit on the field work. (KI 9).

These statements indicate that men are more likely to be retained because of the notion in the Philippine society that men best represent the strength of a company. According to Hayward, M. D., & Grady, W. R. (1986), retention of men is highest in occupations characterized by high levels of manipulative skill. It predisposes that matters on higher level positions in the company is tedious, a scenario where men's mental and physique is required. This gender-based stereotypical practice is the reason why men have higher retention probability compared to women.

Difference on Hiring Men than Women

Selected industries in Metro Cebu believe that there is a big difference on hiring men than women. Hiring men is best to protect the interest of their respective companies. Companies have their reasons alluding practicality and productivity. When asked for the primary reason as to why they prefer to hire men than women, key informants reasoned:

Women employees have many reasons to file for leave. Whenever they are on leave, our daily operations are hampered. This leads to profit loss. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6, KI 7 and KI 9 and KI 10).

Our company avoids expending money covering the maternity leaves of the women employees. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6 and KI 9).

The utterances indicate that hiring men gives them an assurance of continuance of operations. Practically, companies less likely to employ women because of the monthly gynaecological sickness and of the maternity duties of women. These are possible excuses for women employees to leave from work. According to Suk, J. C. (2010) gender stereotypes is gross at workplace due to fears of abuse of sick leaves and maternity leaves. Whenever women-employees are on leave, the company needs to pay for maternity leave and provide other benefits as enshrined on Magna Carta Law for Women. In this scenario, the company's productivity is affected because of official leave of woman-employees yet still need to pay and provide benefits as required by the law. Most of the companies is Metro Cebu avoid this reality by preferably hiring men than women. As the interview continued, other human resources managers revealed:

Men perform better on average at certain tasks. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 5 and KI 7).

Heavy work assignments can only be assigned to men. (KI 1, KI 2, KI 4, KI 6).

The statements specify that the performance of men employees is better compared to women. According to Martell, R. F. (1991), performance ratings accorded men as excellent worker than women. Men are excellent at the workplace because their physique is more apt to do heavy work assignment than women. Men are predisposed to be stronger than women. This notion translates to the practice at the workplace that heavy work assignments cannot be assigned to

women. This is another reason why most of the industries in Metro Cebu prefer to hire men than women.

Moreover, a particular set of key informants revealed that:

We commonly hire men because they can be assigned on areas outside the Metro Cebu. (KI 4, KI 5 and KI 6).

Key informants who are human resources manager from a manpower agency reasoned out that they preferably hire men because it is easier for them to deploy men-employees to areas outside of Metro Cebu. HR managers of manpower agencies chose to hire men than women considering the risk being in a new work environment and the fact that commuting for and from long distances is hazardous and tedious. According to Barbarin, O. A. (2010), risky community provides limited opportunities for women. They believed that men can better handle hazardous and tedious circumstances at work than women. Furthermore, another group of key informants expressed that:

Hiring men is a cost-cutting measure of our company. We can assign two or more jobs to men employees but not to women. (KI 1, KI 2 and KI 3).

These utterances are shared by key informants who are company owners. Assigning two or more jobs to an employee is part of the austerity measures of the company. Instead of hiring two or more personnel to complete the job, company owners hire one man who can accomplish set of tasks. According to Cha, Y. (2013), overwork is an expected norm in many male-dominated occupations. Company owners have a common belief that only men-employees can do several work-load at a time.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender-based stereotypes practices and belief are evident in the selected industries in Metro Cebu. Hiring men is best to protect the interest of the respective companies citing the practicality and productivity considerations. It is in this context that the goal of Gender and Development (GAD) is hard to marry to the industry's goal of generating profit.

It is in this light that the researcher recommends to strengthen Gender and Development (GAD) studies and to promote gender sensitivity initiatives (program, activities, or project) in the industry.

FURTHER STUDY

The paper examines gender-based stereotypical practices of Industries within Metro Cebu only. For further study, topics and concepts on (a) gender-based stereotypical practices from other areas, (b) an analysis of policies on gender and (c) assessment of the common gender-based stereotypical practices.

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