

# THE EFFECT OF DISCRIMINATION ON JOB PERFORMANCE AND JOB SATISFACTION

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Being a Dissertation presented in part requirement for Bachelor's or Art (Honours) at the Wolverhampton Business School, University of Wolverhampton

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November 2010

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## Acknowledgements

Thanks Ms. Rebecca Kihlman and Mr. Keaney for supervising my thesis.

1. This research study has not been previously submitted to any University or similar institution for academic assessment, and the result of this study is due to my own personal research studies without help, but I have acknowledged literature references that were used within the text and in a separate list.
  
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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	6
Introduction.....	8
Literature review .....	10
Gender versus Sex.....	10
Gender roles .....	10
Gender based discrimination.....	11
Types of discrimination .....	12
Direct discrimination .....	12
Indirect discrimination .....	13
Measures to protect employees .....	16
Gender inequality in the work place: Current situation .....	18
Methodology .....	22
Theories of individual job satisfaction and performance .....	22
Theory one: Satisfaction causes performance.....	22
Theory two: Performance causes Satisfaction .....	23
Theory three: Moderator Approach .....	24
Reasons for keeping employees satisfied.....	27
Recommendation .....	30
Positive action.....	30
Creating career development opportunities .....	31
Management Commitment .....	33
Eliminating pay gaps based solely on gender .....	33
Enhancing long-term worker performance .....	34

Conclusion ..... 35

Bibliography ..... 38

## **Abstract**

Discrimination is one of the most controversial phenomena to challenge the Human Resources (HR) function in the work place. It has been discussed in depth by sociologists, politicians and lawyers and remains a topical issue. Despite advances gender discrimination still persists, and continues to be experienced by women in the contemporary work space.

**Purpose-** As job satisfaction has been shown to directly affect business performance, there has been increased interest in how job satisfaction can be improved through effective human resource management. Therefore, this study will attempt to discover the empirical factors that could determine the satisfaction levels of workers in the UK, and this research will also examine whether the gender of workers determines any differences in the levels of satisfaction.

**Methodology-** this study uses theories to compare job satisfaction and performance. The major determinant being gender equality and focusing on whether there is correlation between equality and job satisfaction.

**Findings-** even though job satisfaction and equal treatment of women and men does not necessarily bring about better performance and productivity; however the reverse affects the work environment negatively. Keeping employees satisfied is one method of keeping companies productive. Moreover motivating workers with more responsibility and challenge makes workplaces healthier.

**Research limitations-** this research focuses on the UK job market; however it a vital issue to extend this to other countries and in better detail.

**Practical implications-** This study intends to present understanding of those variables that are likely to determine the satisfaction of women employees, and the author hopes that company managers will find these findings valuable to adopt opportunities to motivate workers more effectively to raise their levels of satisfaction and commitment.

**Original value-** this study offers findings that are valuable and original as the focus will examine whether the gender of workers could determine their job satisfaction, and how this influences the productivity and performance of organisations.

## Introduction

Working women in the UK face several unique obstacles when attempting to fulfil their professional career goals. In addition to the problems caused by everyday sexism, there are specific issues regarding the perception of women's intrinsic competence levels and suitability to the work tasks, the "risk" or actuality of pregnancy, and the demands upon working mothers, who are often regarded as the primary care-givers. As a result, women have faced a range of formal obstacles in addition to the cultural and attitudinal variety: limits on the range of posts deemed suitable, lower pay for the same grade of work, and the "glass ceiling" preventing promotion beyond a certain level.

The main focus of the dissertation is to assess whether increased efficiency can be achieved if there is equality in the work space and thereby increased profitability. The hypothesis hereby being that companies who fully realise the potential of their workforce, not only benefit from the reduced cost of recruiting new personnel, but also motivate their own workforce to maximise their potential.

This dissertation uses secondary research methods of gathering information from sex discrimination laws in the UK, relevant electronic resources and books, journals and reviews on women psychology, human resources, leadership and change management to support the arguments and give weight to the reliability of the work; statistical data and analysis is also included to illustrate important aspects of the issue of discrimination, job satisfaction and its relation to gender productivity and performance.

The UK is the main focus of this study, as the aforementioned problems persist to a greater extent in the work place when compared to other European and developing countries (Accenture, 2006, p.13) (OECD, 2008).

This study will first discuss the basic concepts to be used throughout this work; accordingly, what gender is, in addition to the definition of gender roles, as well as discrimination and types discrimination. As the focus of the work is to prove that equality has a direct relationship with productivity and satisfaction, various theories in this correlation is discussed. The need to tie all the theoretical discussions to practice, leads to looking at the same in relation to the practical realities of the UK.

After studying the theories and current situation of the UK, the research recommends possible solutions to minimise or in the long run fully eliminate the workplace gender discrimination.

A conclusion will be drawn as to whether attainment or lack of equality in the workplace has an impact on the satisfaction of employees and the resulting productivity.

## **Literature review**

This section establishes background for the study. It starts with the definition of gender and sex, what gender roles are and their implication to society, what sex discrimination at workplace are, what determine the equality or likeness of work, the laws to avoid sex based discrimination and ultimately it explains with examples the current situation in the UK.

## **Gender versus Sex**

‘Gender’, normally confused with ‘sex’, may be defined as how the roles and relations between women and men have been socially constructed (Eldis, 2009). However, gender affiliation and identity is strongly influenced and formed by cultural values, social interaction and family, but sex is phenomenon that is biologically determined, and would describe the physical parts on an individual, such as composition, body structure, facial hair and genitalia (Bryson, 1999, p.38).

Therefore, males and females are separated by their biological characteristics known as sex. Sex is biological and permanent, while gender is social and temporary, changing with the culture and attitude of the society (Bryson, 1999, p.38).

## **Gender roles**

Traditionally, the dos and don'ts of both sexes are assigned by society. This is what is referred to as gender roles. Owing to the unfairly non-proportional division, women tend to work longer and more fragmented days than men. The roles that are assigned to women are usually divided into three; known as reproductive role, productive role and community management roles.

Reproductive role is an unwelcome implication of the naturally given ability of women to bear children, which is physically impossible for the man. However, along comes rearing the child and all other household responsibilities (Kabeer, 1994, p.275), which the man is not expected and in some societies not even allowed to participate in. The second role given to women is

related to the work place in cases where women, on top of the burdensome reproductive role have the time, qualification and approval by society to go to work. Here, women are not allowed, again, by an unseen code, to participate in all job types. On the contrary, some jobs are considered women's jobs by the society; these are normally labour intensive and low-income jobs like cleaning. The deprivation of women does not end there; she will also have to participate in community management roles. Community management roles are those chores that are considered necessary for a community to co-exist, these can be planning weddings, arranging funeral and neighbourhood gatherings, whereby some social activities are planned and implemented for all to enjoy, but for women to work harder every day (Kabeer, 1994, p.275). These are key roles that bring any social group together. Men however are not expected to part take in the work since they are set aside for women. Worse still is the fact that the work of women is neither recognized nor appreciated.

Furthermore, men's activities are regarded as more important than women's, quite irrespective of what those activities are; men may be involved in activities of hunting, weaving or cooking, and if accepted as appropriate by society, then both women and men consider these activities to be important, but these same activities are perceived as of less importance when women perform them (Richards, 1980, p.157). This also demonstrates that the inequality of work is reinforced by both men and women alike.

### **Gender based discrimination**

Over a long historical period, the contribution of women to society beyond the home has been determined by social attitudes that predominate in society as being generally peripheral (Richards, 1980, p.32). Therefore, women had no legal identity, and were generally perceived as dependent and inferior to men. From the 18th Century, the legal entity of a woman after marriage

was suspended or consolidated within that of the husband, who would have been regarded as the protector of their wife (Wilson, 1980, p.18). This historic recognition that males in society were more important than females presented a strong emphasis; this has inevitably turned to discrimination against women at work place. These deeply held views have made the transition to an equal society difficult. Gender discrimination manifests itself in several different ways in every step of the employment process.

### **Types of discrimination**

Most misunderstandings arise from the assumption that discrimination only includes the obvious 'direct' type of discrimination that can be detected as such immediately. However, the truth remains that most discrimination against women are of a non-obvious subtle type that are often unrecognized by most people. This may be one of the reasons why discrimination against women has not been prevented so far. In this part, I will discuss the different types of discrimination so as to identify the hidden culprits behind the current state of women's rights.

### **Direct discrimination**

This is more or less an obvious form of discrimination, which is easily detectable at first sight. An example of this may be some internal or external job advertisements that state that only a specific gender, in this case men, can be considered as candidates (Willey, 2000, p.137). This is direct discrimination that is explicit and is not related to a candidate's potential, ability or merit (Willey, 2000, p.137). The intention of the employer is assumed in such cases of glaring direct discrimination, as the victim does not have to furnish any type of evidence to support one's claim, as it cannot be justified. The SDA, discrimination law of the UK, for example, has two fundamental elements for a woman to claim direct discrimination (Ross, 2008, p.589). The first is that there must be a less favourable treatment of the woman in comparison to the man, given

that all other qualifications are equal. Secondly, this differential treatment occurs merely because of her sex or marital status.

This type of discrimination is relatively easy to prove, and there can be a hypothetical comparison of the treatment of one individual with another individual of the opposite sex. The main concern of the woman is to be able to show that a man was in fact treated more favourably than she was (Ross, 2008, p.589); this can be in promotion or being hired. A useful test is the "but for" test: would the woman have been treated the same way in the course of her employment "but for" the fact that she was a woman (Willey, 2000, p.138)? This test determines whether gender based criterion had been applied and if the woman was rejected due to her gender, but other issues, such as confusion, purpose, motive and intentions that are often adopted vaguely, are avoided.

### **Indirect discrimination**

On the surface, this type of discrimination might seem nonexistent; or is harder to prove. Indirect sex discrimination takes place when a requirement or condition is applied equally to men and women; however the condition has the effect that in practice it disadvantages a much larger proportion of one sex than the other to a position of disadvantage, because they find it harder to fulfil the requirement or condition, and it cannot be justified on grounds other than sex (Ross, 2008, p.590). Whilst the direct discrimination provisions cover clear and blatant unfair discrimination against women, those relating to indirect discrimination are designed to tackle the less obvious and presumably unintentional discriminatory treatment that might arise in the course of employment. Since this is a complicated type of discrimination, one will need to consider the following four-stage process; requirement or condition, disproportionate effect, detriment and finally justification.

Requirement or condition - the employer must have made a stipulation that only employees that can work two shifts can apply for the promotion, which could be deemed discriminatory to women as most have a family (children and household chores related to rearing children) to take care of after work (Willey, 2000, p.139). Employers can also put age barriers in recruitment that may indirectly discriminate against women who have taken time out of employment to raise children (Willey, 2000, p.139). Objectivity in recruitment decision-making is reduced when criteria, such as age guides and age bands are adopted, as these limit organisational efficiency, waste the potential skills of workers and harm individuals. Imposing length of service requirement might have the same effect on female workers (Willey, 2000, p.139). According general statistical evidence by Labour Force Survey in 1992, only 24 per cent of women have worked for one year for their current employer. The number is more than doubled or 59 per cent to be accurate; when it comes to men who have worked for their current employer for more than two years (Willey, 2000, p.139).

Indirect discrimination can be claimed on this basis. Mobility conditions indirectly discriminates against women who have family commitments and less likely to be able to comply than men (Willey, 2000, p.139). Another requirement or condition that lead to indirect discrimination is; if a job that can be undertaken on a part-time basis imposes a requirement to be able to work full-time. This mostly discriminates against mothers who are unable to avail themselves; however they could take up a part-time job to be up-to-date with the job market for when they are able to return to work on a full-time basis (Willey, 2000, p.139).

Disproportionate effect - it should be established that the requirement, whatever it may be, indirectly discriminates against a larger proportion of women than men (Ross, 2008, p.590).

There are three aspects of this: pool of comparison, the proportion of women and the ability to comply. A problem arises for a person who wants to sue their employer, who selects what they as an applicant reasonably believes to be an appropriate pool, may be different from what the court of law considers to be pool of comparison (Willey, 2000, p.140). This may cause the application to fail. The next step is to submit an established data of labour market statistics, an example is shown below on figure 3. The purpose of submitting this document is to demonstrate the proportion of women who are said to have suffered. Finally, the ability to comply in practice, i.e., it should not be said that a person can do something merely because it is theoretically possible for them to do so; it is necessary to prove whether he/she could do so in practice (Willey, 2000, p.140).

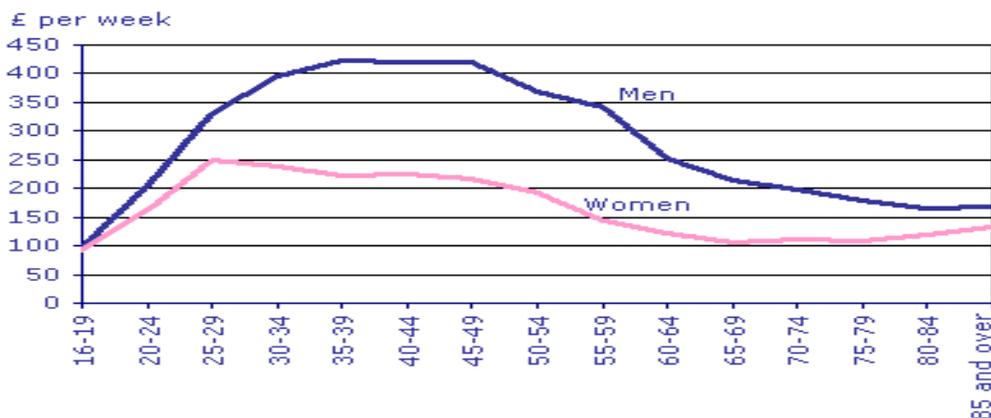


Figure 1, Individual incomes 2003/4 *Source: (Office for National Statistics, 2010)*

Detriment - a woman must demonstrate not only that she cannot comply with the requirement or condition, but also that this is to her disadvantage and that she is a real victim of the alleged discrimination (Ross, 2008, p.590). It must be shown that the effect is disadvantageous to the employment of the particular woman/applicant at the time; for example an application for

employment is not considered, failure to hear of job vacancies because they were inadequately advertised (advertising the job vacancy in a male magazine), or receiving lower pay or less favourable benefits or working condition. The major question in this case is to the detriment of those unable to comply and is the person alleging detriment unable to comply?

Justification - the employer must be able to justify the existence of such a requirement (Ross, 2008, p.593). In 2000, the SDA regulation was amended to shift burden of proof from employee to employer. There were two fundamental elements that were changed; first the burden of proof has shifted from the complainant to the respondent, who must show that no discrimination occurred (Ross, 2008, p.593). Second, the definition of indirect discrimination has widened from application of practice, criterion or provision that is to the disadvantage of a considerably large proportion of women than men (Willey, 2000, p.141). This shifts the pressure of having to prove the most intangible claim to the responsible person in charge.

### **Measures to protect employees**

To avoid workplace discrimination that exist currently, the UK has introduced various laws including SDA 1975 (Sex Discrimination Act), Pregnancy Discrimination Act 1978, Equal Pay Act 1970 and most recently the Equality Act 2010, introduced in October 2010. In addition to these, the UN human rights commission created the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women). The meaning and how these affect the professional life of women is discussed below.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) protects individuals against discrimination in employment based on their sex. Sexual harassment at the workplace, which is described as any unwelcomed non-verbal, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (Ross, 2008, p.616). An

(UN, 2009) applicant or employee cannot be discriminated against on the basis of sex at any stage of the employment process or afterwards, as a condition or privilege of employment (Willey, 2000, p.126).

It is stated in the Equal Pay Act (1970) that the value of work is equal and that the amount earned by women and men should also be equal. The following section discusses the measures of equal value of work established by the Equal Pay Act.

First, one can compare the likeness of the work, the second question is whether the work is considered equivalent, and lastly, the equality of the value of work has to be looked into (Willey, 2000, p.135). To explain, the work types are considered as if they are the same or broadly similar and the difference, if any, has no practical significance as to the term and condition of employment. Secondly, they are considered equivalent if the value in terms of demand made on a worker; skills the position required, and measure of evaluation are equal. Thirdly, the value of the work has to be rated; however should there be no existing evaluation methods to cover both jobs, an independent expert will be assigned by the employment tribunal to assess the value (Willey, 2000, p.137). The equal value provision was enacted under the Equal Pay Amendment regulations in 1983 and came into force in 1984 (Willey, 2000, p.134).

The government's Equality Bill was pending till 2010 when it finally received Royal Assent and became Equality Act 2010, however since it is not yet in force (UK Parliament, 2010), it did little other than to consolidate into one Act all existing laws relating to employment in a simplified and unified manner. The government envisaged the main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 would come into force in October 2010; however public sector equality and other provisions will be delayed until April 2011 (UK Parliament, 2010). Large companies have a duty

of responsibility to ensure pay disparities between women and men are published for their workforce, but there is no obligation on a legal basis and this is not applicable to all UK businesses (Fawcett Closing the inequality gap Women, 2009). What seems to be obvious is that in order to achieve equal pay there needs to be a legal requirement for the publication of all employees' salaries on a gender basis by all organisations each year (Fawcett Closing the inequality gap Women, 2009). However this will also be a problem, as the place of women in the work place is fragile, which makes them reluctant to challenge job sharing, flexible working hours and sexual harassment; therefore, the workplace environment is likely to have a continuing culture of sex discrimination.

The other proposed change in the Equality bill is that when two candidates are being selected who are equally qualified, the employers have the right to adopt positive action<sup>1</sup> (Fawcett Closing the inequality gap Women, 2009). The intention of this change was to prevent under-represented groups being automatically selected, as the overriding principle of selecting candidates on merit should remain, but demonstrated that the previous legal position had changed significantly (Fawcett Closing the inequality gap Women, 2009).

### **Gender inequality in the work place: Current situation**

The glass ceiling is a well established term used to explain the promotion gap that discriminates against women (Phelps, 1972; Kahn and Crosby, 1985; Madden, 1985; Drazin and Auster, 1987; Gutek et al., 1996; Reskin and Kalleberg, 1995). Bias in evaluating candidates is often used to promote differences in gender, and this bias generally is in favour of men rather than women (Nieva and Gutek, 1980). Nevertheless, some research studies have challenged the view that sex

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<sup>1</sup> The objective explained in more depth in the recommendation section of this study.

discrimination is responsible for promoting differences in gender selection (Tsui and Gutek, 1984; O'Neill, 1985; Swim et al., 1989); however, discrimination in promoting differences in gender selection is identified by many more research studies (Clayton and Crosby, 1992; Crosby, 1982; 1984; Kahn and Crosby, 1985; Roper, 1980).

A few examples can be mentioned from recent publication in the Daily Mail newspaper in 2008 from women in senior positions like Fay Weldon, Lorraine Heffessey and Ruth Badger who argue their different views.

Feminist Fay Weldon disagrees partially with the concept; she argues the glass ceiling only exists for mothers, as they become anxious to leave their children to go to work. For this reason they do not bother applying for higher position jobs or competing for more responsibility, as that would involve them in longer hours at work (Weldon, 2008). Others like Lorraine Heffessey, chief executive of Talkback THAMES, one of the largest TV programme production companies, agrees strongly with the existence of the glass ceiling, as she was the first female BBC controller in 2000 (Heffessey, 2008). She said denial is the way to go, as the whole system is run more or less by men. In the third group Ruth Badger, runner-up on the second season of the UK Apprentice TV programme, who denies the existence of the glass ceiling workplace, and believes diligent women who work hard are compensated with promotion and can go as high as men on the company ladder (Badger, 2008). She argues her experience is a good example that this claim is rather imaginary.

The existence of the glass ceiling studied by Accenture on six selected countries shows that the UK has the highest barriers imposed by the society; the study states this is an indication that the

government has not been working well when it comes to this issue. The main reasons for the glass ceiling problem are family responsibility and the gender role that dictates the woman's place in the society (Bryson, 1999, p.5).

The other form in which inequality manifests itself is Sexual harassment (Ross, 2008, p.616).

There has been and there still is several cases of this issue in the, a known case that has been discussed widely is the case of the waitress Ilaria Signoriello, 26 Versus Mr Penati, executive chef at Harry's Bar in Mayfair, central London (Duff, 2006). The result of an employment tribunal criticised the arrogant and bullying approach adopted by the chef and the waitress was awarded a settlement of £124,000 for unfair dismissal and sexual discrimination (Duff, 2006).

The third form of manifestation of inequality is victimisation, when employees exercise their legal rights or use complain procedures and are subsequently treated differently (CompactLaw, n.d). A woman can be victimised for exercising her rights in protecting herself against any type of discrimination. Victimisation can be in the form of refusal of a reference to a prospective employer after leaving a previous work place, or it can be in the case of Coot Versus Granada Hospitality Ltd C-185/97, ECJ, full detail of the case can be see (EUR-Lex, 1998), where the employer dismissed its employee for pregnancy and refused to give a reference to an employment agency (Willey, 2000, p.142).

Women who have a family and children remain in a potentially difficult situation and the Fawcett Society found that in the UK, around 30,000 women each year lose their jobs because they become pregnant (CEDAW, 2008, p.12). In 2007, the government reversed its earlier intention to extend leave for maternity to one year. In 2009, the government offered a chance for

fathers to be entitled to paternity leave paid for three months after their child became six months old, as long as the mother returned to her former workplace (BBC News, 2009).

In a report by the OECD in 2007, the UK was criticised for creating benefit traps for women and described as the worst cases identified, such as the loss of around 101.3% of wages when a single mother restarts her employment related to relinquished payouts of benefits, childcare costs and extra tax (CEDAW, 2008, p.12). Jean Phillippe Cotis, the OECD's chief economist stated: "Quite simply, it's not really rewarding to re-enter the workforce if you are either a lone parent or a second earner. We are basically forbidding a lot of women from going back into work" (OECD, 2008).

The last form of inequality that this study will discuss is the gender pay gap in the UK. Gender differences in earnings, however, can be considered as the end result experience of sex discrimination. Several research studies have examined the differences in the participation and promotion of women and men (Blau, 1984; Reskin and Hartmann, 1986; Reskin and Roos, 1990; Groshen, 1991; MacPherson and Hirsch, 1995).

As the study by the Equal Opportunity Commission states, jobs are devalued when perceived as traditionally female, because to undertake the same job as men, women are paid less, which on average amounts to around 17% less than men (CEDAW, 2008, p.11). The CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) Report 2008 for the UK argues that the equal pay audit tool has to be put in place to identify any gender pay gaps and develop a plan of action to remove any barriers and obstacles to the gender pay gap (CEDAW, 2008, p.11).

The recent study, by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), demonstrates that female managers' pay rose by 2.8 per cent, which is 0.5 per cent more than men managers' in the past 12 months (Shackle, 2010). Nevertheless, women still earned on average £10,000 less than their male counterparts. If change continues at this rate, it will take 57 years to close the gap (Shackle, 2010).

## **Methodology**

### **Theories of individual job satisfaction and performance**

As mentioned in the introduction of this work, the main focus is to furnish evidence proving that workplace equality for both genders has a direct relationship with satisfaction, and the resulting productivity increasing the profitability of a company. Satisfaction and performance are human resource concepts with different theories portraying their relationships. This section will discuss the theories in general, after which the more specific relationship that equality has with the same will be dealt with.

#### **Theory one: Satisfaction causes performance**

As the name of the theory implies, this viewpoint states that individual satisfaction of employees increases their performance level and thereby furnishes more productivity (Vroom, 1964, p181). There are however varying reviews on the validity of this theory. Victor Vroom, a professor of management argued that there is an imaginary relationship between satisfaction and increased performance. He based this conclusion on 20 studies from 1949 to 1963 in which he tried to demonstrate that the two concepts had a solid relationship, and found a low correlation between performance criterion employed and satisfaction (Vroom, 1964). Similar findings were presented

by Brayfield and Crockett who in 1955 basing their conclusion on a more extensive literature review of more than 50 studies, which challenged the assumption that satisfaction causes performance (Brayfield and Crockett, 1955, p.421). They stated that “in the absence of more convincing evidence than is now at hand with regards to beneficial effects of job performance on high morale, we are led to the conclusion that we might better forego publicizing the alleged effects.”

The above however cannot be a basis for concluding that the satisfaction causes performance theory is a farce (Organ, 1977, P.46). On the contrary, in more recent research by Organ in his article ‘A Reappraisal and Reinterpretation of the Satisfaction Causes Performance Hypothesis’ it was proved that the former reviews did not appropriately interpret the data used in the studies. He based his arguments on the Social Exchange theory, which proposed that a suitable form of recognition could be productivity or performance for an organisation that is exchanged for employees' satisfaction gained from their job (Vroom, 1964 and Organ, 1977).

### **Theory two: Performance causes Satisfaction**

The basic idea reflected in this theory is that there is a relationship between individual performance and satisfaction. This goes against the conclusion drawn by Vroom, Brayfield and Crockett that the relationship is imaginary rather than real (Lawler and Porter, 1967). The proponents of this view, Lawler and Porter however introduced some differences in the causal relationship of the two concepts. They stated, unlike the satisfaction causes performance theory, that instead of satisfaction bringing about productivity, it is the employees’ performance level that influences satisfaction. They introduced the idea of rewards given due to high performance as a major contributor to satisfaction thereby reversing the causal relationship.

It is wise to note here that after evaluating the studies discrediting the causal relationship between performance and satisfaction, Lawler and Porter have shown that the low statistical findings do not show that there is no relationship between the two, but rather that the relationship is a low but positive one (Lawler and Porter, 1967).

### **Theory three: Moderator Approach**

This theory does not present an idea that is completely novel from the first two described above. It is not very different from the Lawler –Porter approach, as it states that the relationship between performance and satisfaction is not free from outside influences. Reward has been used as the major moderator in the former theory and while this is recognized by this view, it extenuates the influence of external factors even more. Variables such as self-esteem (Jacobs & Solomon, 1977), level of supervision (Slocum, 1971) and difficulty of tasks and production pressure (Ewen, 1973) were adopted to moderate satisfaction and performance. Again, this theory does not dismiss that a causal relationship exists between performance and satisfaction, but rather introduces more extrinsic factors that would influence the results.

The three theories discussed above reflect a range of ideas relating performance and satisfaction. However, as this study emphasises repeatedly, none of them rejects that there is a solid relationship between the two concepts. Though this has been rejected by Vroom and Brayfield and Crockett based on more than 70 studies combined, it was proved by Lawler and Porter, and later by Organ, that the conclusions drawn cannot be said to deny any causal link between satisfaction and performance.

The purpose of discussing these theories however has a more specific end: linking the impact of equality in the workplace on the satisfaction of employees and their performance. It is difficult to

assess this relationship based only on one of the theories as they all have pros and cons.

However, as all these theories accept the direct causal link between performance and satisfaction, the only issue left to connect the dots is to identify the position that equality has in this relation.

Discrimination and its meaning have been widely discussed in this work. Unequal treatment of women in the work place has also been dealt with in previous sections. Such inequalities in the work space manifest themselves in various forms such as the glass ceilings, victimization and the like which will be broadly discussed below. These manifestations will undeniably have a direct effect on the satisfaction of the women employees who are being treated unfairly. The performance level of such employees is also directly challenged, as they are not allowed to fully exploit the resources of the organization. Not only this, they are also barred from climbing the organizational ladder. A combination of these factors will decrease the performance and satisfaction of the women who are half of the work force, thereby influencing productivity.

The link between workforce satisfaction and financial performance was simplified by a research by Cornell University's Centre for Advanced Human Resource Studies (Bernhardt, Donthu, & Kennett, 2000) and (Anderson et al., 1994), which found that business of a store would be increased substantially when employees who felt satisfied demonstrated this through better service, and this would lead to customers being more satisfied (Jake & Lee, 2010, P.3). An important point that was noted in this research, and that this study agrees with, is that equality and its relationship with satisfaction and performance is not always a positive one (Jake & Lee, 2010, P.2). To explain, it cannot be claimed that gender equality in the work place will guarantee employee satisfaction and the resulting performance, as several variables have unexpected outcomes (Jake & Lee, 2010, Fig correlation with workforce satisfaction). However this study is

conducted to prove that inequality or discrimination of any kind will guarantee that employees will be unsatisfied and the resulting performance will be negatively affected. This can be seen in light of the ‘moderators’ idea presented in the Moderator theory, as equality is just one of the yardsticks that controls the performance and satisfaction, but not the only one.

The Cornell research has simplified the relationship between satisfaction, performance and productivity in the following figure.

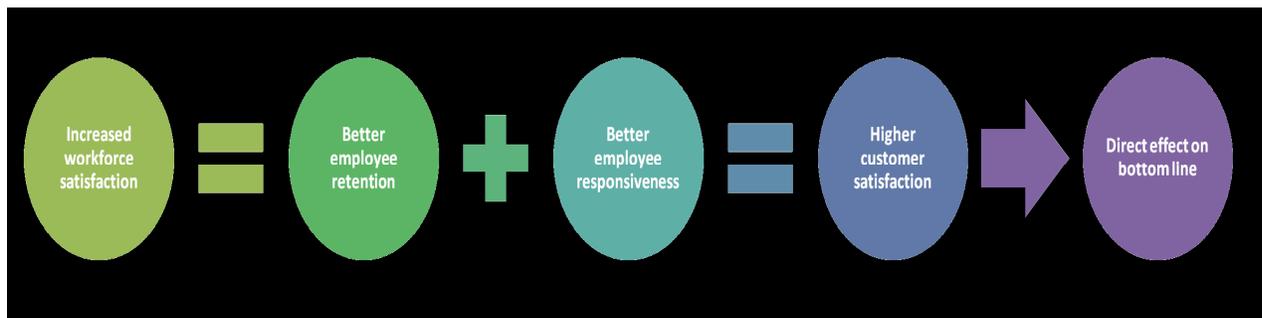


Figure 2. Performance and job satisfaction Source: Cornell centre for advance HR studies (Jake & Lee, 2010, P.3)

The relationship portrayed in the figure is essentially that better employee satisfaction will result in better employee retention and responsiveness, which increases customer satisfaction, as well as performance and productivity (Jake & Lee, 2010, P.3). Here, an important question remains unanswered: what is increased workforce satisfaction? It cannot be denied that bonuses, raises and other incentives are often used by employers as positive reinforcement (Jake & Lee, 2010, P.2) and (Bernhardt, Donthu & Kennett, 2000). Though the mind boggles with the endless possibilities of how employees can be satisfied, an obvious example is equality, as a work place without discrimination will create a positive and healthy working environment, which has a positive impact on the level of employee satisfaction (Hearn & Parkin, 1983, Vol. 4, P221). If

this logic is followed then, it will clearly indicate that one method of measuring employees' satisfaction would be attaining equality.

This suggests that when the workplace environment demonstrates discrimination, the satisfaction of the workers will be influenced negatively, which will also negatively influence the productivity of the organisation through poorer performance by the workers that are affected by this discrimination (David, 2006). This will cause dissatisfaction amongst customers, which would frustrate the employer and cause a vicious circle of dissatisfaction and lack of productivity (David, 2006).

### **Reasons for keeping employees satisfied**

The main reason for a business to operate is to yield profit to its owners by satisfying its customers (Dijulius, 2008). In order to meet the end result of a business objective, it is important to keep the work place as conducive as possible, and free from any bias that would lead to unequal opportunity for the workforce.

According to Brief (1998, p.91), the conditions and events experienced by workers in their jobs produces job satisfaction, so "If a person's work is interesting, her pay is fair, her promotional opportunities are good, her supervisor is supportive, and her co-workers are friendly, then a situational approach leads one to predict she is satisfied with her job".

Therefore, an organisation could gain benefits from ensuring workers have job satisfaction, such as improved morale of workers, better punctuality, and fewer issues of termination, turnover, absenteeism, grievances and complaints. In addition, when workers remain healthy their job satisfaction increases, and this has been a valuable indicator of lower job turnover. According to Brown (1996), productivity and job satisfaction have little correlation, although a baseline

approach is taken by some organisations that identify that customers will only be satisfied if employees are satisfied.

James Harwood, from Woodbury University suggests that an organisation can be helped to achieve its purpose when employees are satisfied.

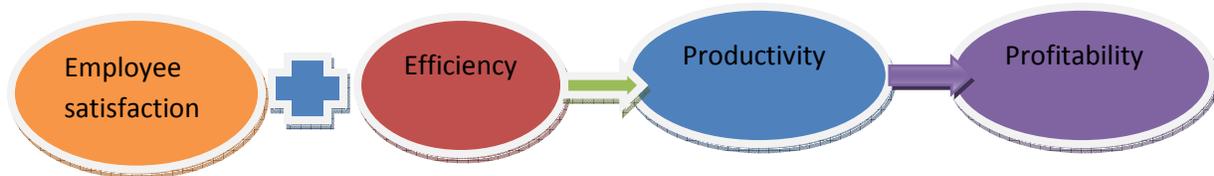


Figure 3. Effects of satisfaction

Several scholars argue there are several determinants to ensure employee job satisfaction (Lawler and Porter, 1967); however, there is a mistaken belief of some managers that improved satisfaction levels of workers are achieved by more money (David, 2006). Whilst it can be argued that for most people, money is an important factor of satisfaction, there are other factors that are also likely to determine whether a worker is satisfied. These factors would include the organisation's final output, a connection of the worker with the job, long-term performance and productivity of workers, equality, personal development, feeling part of a team for important issues and working effectively with other workers (David, 2006).

Factors that affect employee satisfaction for men and women are slightly different, as the study by Zaragoza University states a number of findings on the correlation of gender difference and job satisfaction. Significant examples of factors that positively influence women's job satisfaction include the economic element of the job, job conditions and opportunities for personal development (Oshagbemi, 2000). These major factors have more relevance to women,

as there are clear implications of discrimination in the work place, as described in the current situation section of this study.

Since human behaviour is difficult, formulating factors that will apply to men and women, is impossible (Slocum, 1971). However, companies should act ethically in order to take advantage of the talent at their disposal. Talent that is not used or used less efficiently is a loss to the company. This is because the potential that is not utilised would have been used to produce a better result; hence more profit to the company (Tsui and Gutek, 1984; O'Neill, 1985; Swim et al., 1989). Employers that do not give enough challenge and responsibility to their workers are likely to experience significant turnover, as workers are dissatisfied with the work condition (Slocum, 1971). This creates a lose-lose situation for both managers and employees.

Turnover is expensive for companies for both separation and replacement expenses. The turnover costs for an employee paid on an hourly basis is estimated to be around 30% of the annual salary, and for professionals this cost increases to around 150% of the annual salary (Lermusiaux, 2005). Turnover is responsible for lower morale and decreased perception of job security, as organisational stability and expertise are lost. Employers are generally advised to improve employee satisfaction in an effort to decrease turnover, as there is a negative relation between turnover and job satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000). Research indicates that this can be achieved by valuing the needs of employees, enhancing incentives and improving the relationship of managers with workers (James, 2005). In addition, job satisfaction related negatively to burnout and perceived stress (Blegen, 1993). Stress is also positively correlated with viral infections, coronary heart disease, turnover and absenteeism (Griffeth and Hom, 1995), so effective managers need to decrease stress by improving job satisfaction and vice versa.

## **Recommendation**

This section will deal with providing possible enhancement of job satisfaction for women to maximise their performance and hence their productivity to reduce costs of recruiting new staff members and increase profitability of a company through equal treatment of employees.

## **Positive action**

Positive discrimination may be defined as giving favourable treatment to one individual based on an individual's sexual orientation, marital status, age, race or sex (Willey, 2000, p.143). This type of discrimination is not allowed by the UK sex discrimination legislation (Gilhooley, 2008).

However, positive action as opposed to positive discrimination, is permitted in limited forms within the legislation defining discrimination (Willey, 2000, p.143). Therefore, organisations can encourage individuals from under-represented groups to apply for jobs, as well as providing access to disadvantaged groups for its facilities.

To explain how this can be properly implemented, there are four categories of positive action measures.

First is access to employment that is a particularly important dimension to equal opportunities that is concerned with the career progression of women, on top of the initial recruitment process.

In this context, a company can set a quota for the number of women to be recruited (Willey, 2000, p.145).

The second is family-friendly measures, which are set to assist and encourage women to return to work and to remain in employment despite having children (Willey, 2000, p.145). These measures benefit working women and avoid the glass ceiling on their career. This will actually

create a win-win situation for all parties involved, as the company will also benefit, because it will not lose its qualified employee that knows the organisational culture and how things operate in the company. The government also benefits since less unemployment benefit would be paid out. This would make the woman motivated to work and become more productive as security, one of the basic human needs, is fulfilled.

The third category, access to training is also vital to all parties, as a more knowledgeable person will be more productive and also ready for job promotion when opportunity presents itself (Willey, 2000, p.146).

The fourth type of positive action is organisational and cultural change, which is strategic and more difficult to implement, as it combines the aforementioned three measures (Willey, 2000, p.146). It requires the commitment of the entire organisation, as it involves a detailed examination of existing structures and practices (Willey, 2000, p.146). Basically, this aims to change the way the company operates to bring about a more understanding and positive work environment.

Positive action, although allowed by the law in a limited way and stated in the equal opportunity commission code of practice, is opposed by the UK government as it disagrees with its operation in the workplace, as it was denied when proposed in the equality bill section of the Equality Act 2010 (UK Parliament, 2010).

### **Creating career development opportunities**

Each company needs to consider whether the phenomenon of the glass ceiling is evident within their workforce, and human resource managers need to proactively overcome this issue if this is exposed. Therefore, to overcome the barriers presented by the glass ceiling, Heffessey (2008)

suggests a variety of action that should be taken, although the list is not described as exhaustive, but rather a starting point for managers to expand further.

The first step is to determine and fully understand the company's norms, values and culture (Heffessey, 2008), but senior management needs to be fully committed to implementing change for this to be successful. Therefore, the management's knowledge of issues that promote career development for women, as well as for men, is a key element for organisational change to take place (Heffessey, 2008). In order to achieve this, companies can start with:

Determine whether human resource practices and policies are inclusive and fair, particularly for affirmative action plans, history of senior positions appointments, recruitment practices and pay differences.

Investigate the informal culture of the organisation, such as behaviour, norms and traditions that are subtle and are discriminatory against women.

Learn about workers' perceptions of the culture of the organisation, and the differences revealed by the responses of women and men, intentions of leaving their job and expectations of their career from focus groups and surveys.

Recognise the weaknesses of an organisation's programmes and policies, as well as its strengths, and investigate those practices that help women to advance in the workforce so that they can be identified clearly.

## **Management Commitment**

Senior management needs to be committed to the policy of talent management, so that senior positions are filled by the most talented candidate that might include women.

Senior management needs to communicate to all workers that diversity is a key element to measure the organisation's success, which includes recognising women will occupy senior positions.

Line managers need to be trained, so that they are more aware and have a greater understanding of the barriers that can prevent women's advancement by incorporating performance goals for them to achieve and improve their accountability for this issue.

### **Eliminating pay gaps based solely on gender**

Research findings into individual's perceptions of whether they are treated fairly at work have asserted that these lead to varying levels of satisfaction, so that workers often compare their own work outputs to those of others by measuring their comparative input and effort (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2007). If an individual worker recognises that other workers have similar rewards for working less, the worker's satisfaction will be affected negatively. Therefore, an employer's duty, according to these studies, is to seek to understand his/her workers' perceptions of fairness and to seek to interact with these employees in a way that helps them to feel treated equitably.

Part-time workers are often excluded from bonus systems or performance pay schemes (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2007). They may be formally excluded, or performance targets may be impossible for a part-time worker to achieve (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2007). Women who engage themselves in part-time work in order to keep updated with the job market can be easily discouraged unless

this pay disparity is avoided. As described by the OECD director, the situation in the UK for gender discrimination in the workplace in the current situation needs attention.

### **Enhancing long-term worker performance**

Turnover is taking the lion's share of profitability of companies; thus companies should consider keeping their trained employees satisfied and committed to the goal of mutual progress. This can be achieved by using certain motivational schemes, but this does not necessarily imply financial aspects of motivational systems, but also psychological satisfaction for their workers.

The factors of motivation for men and women are different and companies should take that in to account. One aspect of this motivational scheme for women is being treated equally with their male co-workers, promotion and equal pay, as these are the main points where women are discriminated against at their workplace.

## Conclusion

This work has been engaged in finding out the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance on one the hand, and equality in the work place on the other. The first task however was to find out the meaning of gender roles and its implications in the workplace, taking the UK as a case study.

Subsequent to studying the current situation of the UK, the issue of equality in the workplace is still a concept well documented however with little practical application. Women face a large amount of discrimination not only in their public lives, which is inclusive of the workplace, but also in their private lives in the home. All these factors which have been consolidated over centuries' worth of cultural beliefs and practices have had one major impact on women; women not only face discrimination, but also tackling this problem is given less practical attention.

The above dissatisfaction however should not be taken lightly, as it has noticeable implications on the performance of the employees and their productivity. Since this is so, there will be a vicious circle of lack of efficient workforces, which will have a direct impact on the profitability of companies. Consequently, it should be given due consideration to the issue of unequal opportunity to women in the workplace that not only robs them of their job satisfaction and better performance, but also makes a very noticeable reduction in companies' profitability.

The above conclusion is one of many implications; in this work however, it is looked at from a human resources perspective. The first place to look when dealing with employee satisfaction and performance are the theories of satisfaction-performance relationship, which are based on decades' worth of research and work. The three theories of satisfaction-performance theories demonstrate the relationship between the two is low; however, all three prove this with a

different moderator. However, one consistent factor is that satisfaction and performance do indeed have a causal relationship. None of these theories take gender differences in moderator into consideration.

Women who are discriminated against in the work place will be dissatisfied employees. The main reason they are barred from climbing the company ladder is determined by several factors, such as the glass ceiling and companies failing to fully utilise their women employees' talent. Therefore, there is scope to improve further. Therefore, the first business implication that is derived from this study is the need to implement business policies directed at obtaining greater personnel satisfaction, which may mean that workers' productivity will be improved, and the costs of recruitment and training new workers will be reduced.

As a result of improved understanding and knowledge of the factors that lead to workers' satisfaction, managers have the opportunity to encourage workers to be more motivated and committed.

As the analysis of this study shows, there are no differences in the perceptions of men and women as regards the dimensions that make up job satisfaction; however, when these dimensions are analysed in greater depth, differences are exposed in their impact on satisfaction related to gender. Women are more motivated and committed to a company if there is better personal development within the job, better conditions and are compensated equally as their male colleagues.

The above are conclusions made which have been found to be convincing to bring about change for women. The issue of equality is normally not an issue of interest to the male dominated companies. However this work sufficiently shows that denying the right to equality of women in

the work place has negative consequences on the productivity of the workers and the profitability of the company.

Equality in the workplace should be given better attention. The slow pace to this change may cost companies a considerable number of productive employees. When turnover is high, the amount to replace trained work force is expensive and a cost that can be used to generate profit is lost.

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