Gender Inequality in Workplace: A Perspective of Gender Narrative

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Abstract: The prejudice and discrimination toward femininity lasted from the ancient world to today's workplace. Women frequently faced judgments, with a particular focus on anti-feminity, this study explores the gender differences in career expectations, the unequal distribution of career opportunities, and disparities in unemployment rates which all contribute to this pervasive imbalance. Firstly, this research investigates how societal norms and stereotypes shape gendered career expectations. By analyzing the pressures that steer individuals towards specific career paths, it becomes evident that femininity was often marginalized, leading to limited career choices for women. Secondly, this research examines the unequal distribution of career opportunities, revealing how institutional and structural factors perpetuate gender disparities. The scarcity of women in leadership positions and male-dominated industries further entrenches the absence of femininity within workplace narratives. Lastly, the study uncovers the gender-based disparities in unemployment rates, highlighting the systemic biases that hinder women's access to stable employment, particularly during economic downturns.

Keywords: Gender inequality, discrimination, stereotype, workplace

1. Introduction

With the growth of industrialization and the wider liberation of social thinking at the start of the 20th century. The fact of women being discriminated against in political and economic activity infuriated left-wing feminist activists. In order to fight for women's rights, they organized protests, called on women employees to participate, and started having wider discussions about gender equality. This establishes the foundation of the empowerment of women, as it has effectively improved their political and economic status. As a result, they are gaining the same hiring privileges as males in many nations and taking on more parts at work. However, back in current time, women were still experiencing extreme backlash under the implicit prejudice in the workplace, experiencing unfair treatment. This situation emphasizes the importance of providing equality in the working environment, as a matter of creating justice and societal satisfaction. From the beginning of the first societal analysis, researchers have documented the cultural devaluation of femininity and its impact on experiencing discrimination, while examining femininity as the main component of stereotypical judgments [1]. This is further exaggerated in workplace conditions, as researchers carried on highlighting the structural barriers and explicit prejudice that form the lag of women behind men [2]. Furthermore, this evokes our consideration of the connection between the pressure from society and the trait of

anti-femininity appearing inside the workplace. To discover the inner cause of this kind of oppression and what the society should do to resolve it.

The purpose of this research was to reveal how feminity was weakened in workplace and encourage the readers to preserve the shrink of the place for women. Moving forward, from both perspectives of family and society, this study reviews the differences in social judgment, severe neglect, and oppression women face inside and outside of the workplace.

2. Gender Differences in Career Expectation

Society's perceptions of what roles are suitable for different genders have evolved, yet disparities persist. This section will delve into three crucial aspects of gender differences in career expectations includes employers' expectations of roles for different genders, colleagues' expectations, and judgments regarding gender in the workplace, and the broader societal expectations that shape the division of labor based on gender.

2.1. The Employers' Expectations of Roles in Different Genders

Employers' expectations together mold the working environment for everyone inside it, especially playing a pivotal role in shaping differences between different genders, contributing significantly to the perpetuation of historical gender biases in the workplace [3]. Throughout history, certain jobs and industries have been rigidly associated with specific genders, leading to entrenched and often unconscious biases in hiring practices. Different gender was inclined to be restricted to specific roles in the workplace. Despite significant strides made to combat gender discrimination in recent years, gender-based expectations from employers continue to exert a powerful influence on professional opportunities. In the context of a head-to-head competition between a man and a woman for the same leadership role, even when both possess equivalent qualifications and abilities, employers may exhibit a bias favoring the male candidate [3]. These deeply ingrained gender expectations extend their reach into the career trajectories of individuals, manifesting in profound ways. Women, for instance, may find themselves discouraged from actively pursuing leadership roles due to the pervasive perception of bias, thereby undermining their long-term career prospects, and limiting their professional growth [3]. Employers often have biased for both genders. For women, there's often concerns about their maternity leave. For men, the employer may consider them as rude and impetuous. Furthermore, men who aspire to work in fields traditionally dominated by women, such as nursing or teaching, often encounter the brunt of stereotypes and biases, hindering their career progress and creating unnecessary obstacles [4]. In this intricate interplay of gender expectations and professional life, employers wield considerable influence, inadvertently perpetuating societal stereotypes and reinforcing the need for continued efforts to break down these gender-related barriers.

2.2. Colleagues' Expectations and Judgments for Different Genders in Workplace

In the complex social landscape of the workplace, colleagues' expectations and judgments could significantly impact an individual's career. Gender stereotypes and biases regarding traditional roles can profoundly influence how coworkers perceive and interact with each other [5]. In this intricate web of preconceived notions, individuals may find themselves evaluated based on their conformity or non-conformity to these gendered expectations. For instance, colleagues may assign different values and attributes to employees of different genders, creating a nuanced and often unequal work environment. Men who prioritize work-life balance, a characteristic traditionally associated with femininity, may face unexpected judgments or resistance from their peers, reflecting the broader societal expectations that have long downplayed the importance of work-life balance for men [5]. On the other hand, women who assertively pursue leadership roles, typically perceived as masculine,

may encounter skepticism or resistance, as their ambitions may challenge conventional gender norms [3]. These biases and stereotypes can foster a hostile or unwelcoming environment for people who don't fit the mold of conventional gender expectations, repeating the notion that femininity has no place in leadership or work-life balance discussions. Consequently, such dynamics contribute to a lack of diversity in leadership and across industries, limiting opportunities for individuals to reach their full career potential. To create more inclusive and equitable workplaces, it is essential to challenge and dismantle these deeply ingrained gender biases and expectations, recognizing that individuals of all genders can excel in diverse roles and contribute to the workplace in multifaceted ways.

2.3. Expectation of Different Genders in the Social Division of Labor

Expectations of different genders in the social division of labor extend far beyond the workplace, permeating into the very fabric of societies and communities, and perpetuating the absence of femininity narrative [5]. Cultural norms and traditions have long dictated the roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals based on their gender, often constraining their career choices and opportunities. These deeply ingrained societal expectations can have profound implications for individuals' professional journeys. For instance, women are frequently burdened with the societal expectation to assume the primary caregiving role within families, a role that often necessitates career interruptions and may severely limit career growth potential. This narrative of women as primary caregivers not only sidelines their professional aspirations but also reinforces the notion that femininity is incompatible with ambitious career pursuits.

Conversely, men may encounter resistance and bias when choosing careers in fields traditionally associated with women, such as nursing or elementary education. These choices are sometimes viewed as unconventional or even emasculating, as they challenge traditional gender norms that associate masculinity with certain professions. This resistance further underscores the absence of a femininity narrative, as it implies that femininity or feminine roles are deemed less valuable or prestigious.

Moreover, the pressure to conform to these gendered expectations often leads to internal conflicts, forcing individuals to navigate the intricate balance between their personal aspirations and societal norms. To address these challenges and promote greater gender equity, it is imperative to challenge and reshape these expectations, recognizing that femininity, in all its diverse forms, has a legitimate and vital place in every aspect of society, including the social division of labor.

3. Gender differences in career opportunities

3.1. Gender Inequality in the Distribution of Career Opportunities

The uneven distribution of career progression opportunities is one of the most salient signs of gender inequality in the workplace, a stark reflection of the absence of a femininity narrative in employment contexts. Despite their abilities and achievements, women frequently face barriers on the road to promotion. The term "glass ceiling," which implies an invisible obstacle preventing women from rising to top leadership roles inside organizations, is frequently used to describe this phenomenon.

Statistical data further underscores the severity of this issue. According to a report by the Pew Research Center, women hold only 29% of executive positions in S&P 500 companies, highlighting the underrepresentation of women in top leadership roles. This underrepresentation perpetuates the gender inequality in the highest echelons of corporate leadership.

Another critical aspect of this inequality is its impact on recruitment conditions. Recruitment processes may be influenced by traditional gender expectations, women relatively retired earlier than men. This untimely loss of working opportunity can result in the loss of independency, and state the

point that women are being overlooked or underestimated during their working period, reinforcing the glass ceiling effect.

Various factors contribute to this glaring disparity. Biases, both implicit and explicit, can significantly affect decision-making processes during promotions and leadership appointments [3]. The absence of a femininity narrative that values feminine leadership qualities, such as empathy and collaboration, contributes to these biases, making it harder for women to be considered for leadership roles. Stereotypes about women's leadership abilities, such as the perception that they are less assertive or less suited for leadership roles, can further hinder their career progression [3].

3.2. Gender Differences in Unemployment Rates

Gender disparities in unemployment rates also reveal the differences in career opportunities, highlighting the absence of a femininity consideration in employment contexts. Women often experience higher rates of unemployment compared to men, and this imbalance can be attributed to various factors.

Statistical data underscores the severity of this issue. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate for women over the age of 25 was 6.7% as of 2020, while it was 6.3% for adult men [6]. This persistent disparity reveals the challenges women face in accessing and maintaining employment opportunities.

Occupational segregation, when women are overrepresented in fields and occupations that are more vulnerable to economic fluctuations, is a crucial factor causing these differences [6]. This segregation further perpetuates the absence of a femininity narrative in employment contexts, as it limits women's choices and exposes them to greater economic instability. Sectors that traditionally employ more women, such as retail and hospitality, often experience higher turnover rates and are more susceptible to layoffs during economic downturns.

3.3. Unequal Pay for Equal Work in Different Genders

The gender pay gap is a well-documented and persistent issue in the realm of career opportunities. Despite decades of advocacy and legal efforts to address this problem, women still get paid less than males in works of equal value. Statistical data further emphasizes the extent of this issue; as the global gender pay gap remains at 16%, meaning that on average, women make only 84 cents for every dollar earned by men for comparable work, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021.

The high concentration of women in lower-paying profession sectors is one of the main causes of uneven pay [7]. This segregation persists due to historical gender norms and biases that limit the career choices available to women, reinforcing the absence of a femininity narrative in employment. Moreover, even within the same professions, women may face disparities; for example, in STEM fields, women often earn less than their male counterparts for similar roles [8].

Additionally, men are also less likely to bargain for better pay and perks than males., partly due to societal expectations and fear of backlash, it may discourage them from pursuing salary negotiations that could bridge the pay gap.

4. The lack of feminity in the workplace

The workplace is often perceived as a space where certain attributes and behaviors associated with masculinity are prioritized, while femininity may be marginalized or even penalized. This dynamic not only perpetuates gender stereotypes but also creates an environment where individuals, for example for men who like to express their feminity, may feel pressured to conform to traditionally masculine traits and behaviors. This section explores the issue of the lack of femininity in the

workplace, focusing on the dominance of masculinity, bias against femininity, and the broader implications for workplace culture.

4.1.   The Dominace of Masculinity in the Workplace

Traditionally, many workplaces have been structured around attributes and behaviors often associated with masculinity, such as assertiveness, competitiveness, and emotional restraint. These traits have been valorized as signs of leadership and competence, leading to the marginalization of feminine qualities such as empathy, collaboration, and emotional expression.

In addition, the dominance of masculinity in the workplace can manifest in various ways, reinforcing the absence of a femininity narrative and reinforcing gender inequalities. For example, assertive communication styles are often favored over more cooperative approaches, creating an environment where those who exhibit traditionally masculine communication styles are perceived as more authoritative [9]. Leadership styles that prioritize control and hierarchy may overshadow those that emphasize inclusivity and consensus-building [3]. This bias towards masculinity not only diminishes the visibility of feminine leadership styles but also impacts career opportunities, as individuals who do not conform to these norms may be overlooked for promotions and leadership positions.

Furthermore, this dominance of masculinity can perpetuate a workplace culture that women suffer through despise. The absence of a feminine narrative in decision-making processes can limit the perspectives and ideas brought to the table, bringing enclosure to mindsets. The result is often a homogenous and less innovative work environment, where the contributions of those who possess feminine qualities are undervalued [6].

To address these challenges. organizations must actively acknowledge and value both masculine and feminine qualities in their employees. Encouraging diverse leadership styles, communication approaches, and ways of problem-solving can help break down the dominance of masculinity and foster an environment where individuals can thrive regardless of their gender or the presence of traditionally masculine or feminine qualities.

4.2.   Bias Against Feminity in the Workplace

Bias against femininity in the workplace can take several forms, ranging from subtle microaggressions to overt discrimination [3]. Women, in particular, may be subjected to bias when they exhibit behaviors or qualities associated with femininity. You can't to pay overmuch effort on your appearance, you can't express your weakness. Especially, for these vulnerability or emotions, as they may be perceived as less competent, despite evidence to the contrary [10]. Tough as man, act like a man, be a man. The unacceptable femininity in the workplace contributes to the bias, as it reinforces that the emotions were less valued or incompatible with professional success.

The absence of a femininity narrative that celebrates diversity and inclusion further enhances this bias.

4.3.   Biased Gender narratice has Broaden negative effect on Workplace Culture

The lack of femininity in the workplace has profound implications for workplace culture, where people's inner self was leashed by restrictions. When certain attributes and behaviors are favored over others, the over praised of masculinity can create an environment that is less inclusive and diverse. This can stifle creativity, hinder collaboration, and limit the innovation potential.

Furthermore, the pressure for everyone to conform to masculine norms can take a toll on individuals' well-being. Employees may feel the need to suppress their authentic selves, trusting the terms that women need to act like man, leading to stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction. This

can have negative effects on mental health and overall job performance. More importantly, it creates severe difficulties for them to embrace them self.

5. Conclusions

This research illuminates how gender inequality manifests in workplace narratives, ultimately emphasizing the urgent need to challenge and transform these narratives to be more inclusive of femininity. It thoughtfully discusses three differences between genders inside workplace collaboration. This includes the different treatment in career expectations, such as the choice of roles in work and the colleague's view of others. Adding on to that, this also includes inequality between different gender, when they encounter same career path, such as the unfair payment and opportunities. Moreover, this research then judges the lack of feminity in workplace, by specifically claim about the overmuch masculinity and the bias feminity faced. In the future, research on anti-femininity in the workplace will continue to progress inside the deepening social conflict throughout the formation of feminism within a society. With specific analysis on the data of women of at work, introduce forms to them to collect information for empirical research. After receiving a better understanding of women's condition at work, the research may change its focus toward the women in the rural area. Who's been forced to play the role as housewife and challenged by unemployment, while suffered from the tilted basic rights.

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