**Equity and Discrimination Effects on Workplace**

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Department of, Name of Institution

Course Code: Course Name

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Assignment Due Date

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**Introduction**

In 2022, it is important for employers to focus on employees’ diversity and inclusivity. However, workplace equity and discrimination has become a heated debate to most employers and employees. Discrimination is the different and unfair treatment to employees based on personal characteristics that impose disadvantaged access. Employees who feel discriminated against have decreased productivity, absenteeism, and increased job turnover. It is against the law to discriminate against employees based on race, gender, age, and disability. However, it is difficult to prove cases of discrimination at work as they are barely recorded, and many employers get away with it. Every workplace should have a means of identifying discrimination and have measures to ensure a discrimination-free workplace. Workplace discrimination presents itself in many forms and affects people across gender, age, disability, race, and generations; it is important that employers put in place policies that identify and protect employees from discrimination.

**Discussion**

**Age Discrimination**

Age discrimination is any form of prejudicial behavior targeting an individual based on their age. For instance, a hiring manager do not offer a role to a candidate despite presenting the necessary qualifications and experiences for reasons of being too old or too young. Such forms of discrimination can occur during the hiring process or office promotions. Age discrimination at the workplace is driven by stereotypical ideologies of personal capabilities and motivations. Age discrimination has a negative impact on the organization as it limits its talent pool. An organization will miss out on high-quality experience from the older employees and energy as well as enthusiasm from the younger candidates. However, age based discrimination is associated with negative beliefs such as young employees are lazy, less reliable, and poorly motivated (Raj, 2022). With such assumptions, younger employees are disadvantaged for training opportunities, work responsibilities, as well as promotions. Moreover, younger employees tend to receive lower wages and benefits compared to older workers and are more at risk of layoffs.

On the other hand, ageism is another common form of age discrimination at the workplace and is the least talked about form of discrimination. Although, older employees are credited with being reliable, loyal, and having stronger work ethics. Older workers face negative stereotypes and are perceived to be less adaptable to new technology, have limited physical capabilities, are limited to technological competence, resistant to change, and less trainable. Older employees are also less likely to be shortlisted for interviews, hired, or promoted in the work place (Raj, 2022). Moreover, when older workers lose their jobs they have slim chances of finding a new job despite their many years of experience at the workplace. Age discrimination has been addressed by the age discrimination in employment act (ADEA) of 1967. The act states that organizations with over 20 employees will not have employment decisions, pay, benefits, and promotion based on employees’ age, but on skills and talent (McAllister, 2019). The act covers employees of 40 years and above, which indicates support against ageism.

**Disability Discrimination**

Disability discrimination in the workplace is prohibited through policies and legislation in most countries. Historically, people with disability are faced with disproportionately high levels of discrimination at the workplace among other social life arenas (Jones et al., 2018). Despite having in place protective legislation disability discrimination and workplace harassment on disability remain relevant among workers with disability compared to those without disability. There are about 470 million individuals worldwide working with some form of disability. Individual disability differs in the nature of impairment and the degree of severity. Disability impact an employee’s status and access to employment in the labor market. People living with disability suffer a common pattern of discrimination such as lower employment rates, they are confronted with the prejudice of productivity. About 60% of people with disability are of working age, yet their unemployment rate is 80-100% higher than people without disability (Jones et al., 2018).

Organizations find the cost of employing people with disability higher that employing people without disability, limiting the chances of employment for people with disability. It is the employers’ responsibility to reasonably protect employees from any form of discrimination. Most people with disability land temporary employment with low wages and the population becomes the least compensated according to wage gap. Persons with disabilities often face barriers such as inaccessible workplaces, discriminatory attitudes, and a lack of accommodation, hindering their ability to thrive professionally. Disability discrimination affects individuals in the workplace, leading to lower wages and limited career advancement opportunities.

**Racial Discrimination**

Racial disparities in wages are another manifestation of discrimination in the workplace. People of color frequently encounter wage gaps and encounter obstacles to advancement, perpetuating systemic inequalities. Implicit bias, unequal access to opportunities, and discriminatory practices contribute to these disparities. Discriminatory practices, such as racial bias in hiring, promotion, and pay decisions, have disadvantaged certain racial groups and contributed to their lower wages compared to their counterparts (Roscigno, 2019). Systemic factors also contribute to racial wage gaps. For example, certain industries and occupations that have higher-paying positions may have historically excluded or marginalized racial minorities, limiting their opportunities for advancement and higher wages.

**Generational Wage Gap**

Generation plays a role on wage gaps. There are four generations in the labor market today; baby boomers, generation x, generation y, and generation z (gen z). Wage gaps based on generational differences is as a result of individuals’ incumbent ages. For instance, generation x earns more than employees in generation due to their different career stages. The baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, and were about 58 to 76 years old in 2022 and are in their retirement phase. Baby boomers are known to maintain the same job for the longest time. About 41% of the baby boomers spend more than 20 years with the same employer and 18% spend even 30 years (Twenge, 2023). They are also willing to work for longer hours compared to other generations and also expect less feedback compared to other generations. They are motivated by the opportunity to create an impact in business. They also delay retirement and remain in the workforce; they prefer being semi-retired rather than leave the workforce.

Gen x on the other hand, is a unique generation representing 33% of the American workforce. They are aged between 42 to 57 years old. It has been one of the most overworked generation. They are in their prime earning age and stepping into leadership roles; holding 51% of leadership positions in the workforce. They make the most money in their careers (Twenge, 2023). Notably, gen x has the most debt, above average house hold sizes, and is taking care of its children as well as its aging parents. They are also expected to stay longer in one employment and only 14% consider resignation and are resilient when adapting to remote work than the millennials.

The millennials are aged 26 to 41 and form 35% of the American workforce in 2022. They have a reputation for changing jobs frequently and are generally less engaged at work compared to baby boomers and the gen x. millennials have less job satisfaction and are looking for work-life balance, learning, and development as well as higher salaries. They are also dealing with a lower level of wealth at their age compared to previous generations; earning 20% less than baby boomers did at the same stage. Gen Z on the other hand, makeup 5% of the American workforce and is aged between 10 to 25% years old. It is a generation that is most racial and ethnically diverse as well as most educated. Moreover, gen z has highly challenged gender binaries and believes it is outdated. They are most likely to face age discrimination at work place compared to other generations (Hatfield & Kejriwal, 2019). They reported the worst COVID employment experience and the cost of living is their highest concern. About 46% of gen z are worried about covering their daily expenditure due to financial insecurities.

**Gender Pay Gap**

For the past two decades the gender wage gap has remained relatively stable in the United States. In the year 1982, women earned 65% of what men earned. Since 2002, women earned 80% of what men earned and recently that has narrowed down to 82% (Meara et al., 2020). As women start their careers with a closer parity to men wages, but with time they lose their ground with age and progress in their careers in a pattern that has been consistent over the years. That continues even where women have better chances to graduate from college than men. Notably, men and women wage gap between those who attend college is not narrower compared to those with no college education.

A major factor that contributes to gender wage gap is parenthood. For instance, women aged 25 to 44 especially those in motherhood are less likely to be in the labor force. Those who are lucky enough to be in the labor force tend to work fewer hours. It is a major factor that can reduce women's earnings. Fathers on the other hand are more likely to be in the labor force and work more hours compared to mothers (Chancel et al., 2022). At times fathers’ benefits from the phenomenon known as the fatherhood wage premium, which widens the gender pay gap. Family needs involving gender roles in the family has also played a major role in gender pay gap and especially due to gender segregation across occupations. Other factors such as gender stereotypes and discrimination also play a bigger role in gender wage gaps.

Moreover, gender wage gap has also been contributed by choices women make for their work-life balance. Men and women have different views contributing to gender wage gap. One of the major factors that women mentions is that they make different choices on work life balance and especially in households with children below 18 years old (Meara et al., 2020). Parental status plays a significant role in influencing wage difference between men and women and between women with children and those with no children. However, some think that gender discrimination plays a significant role in the gender wage gap. About 50% of American adults believe that employers treat women differently and with discrimination compared to men (Jones et al., 2018). Women have different responsibilities in family life and is a major contribution for the gender wage gap.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, equity and discrimination have significant effects on workplace wages, particularly in relation to gender, disability, race, and generation. These factors contribute to disparities in pay and opportunities, highlighting the ongoing challenges that exist in achieving a fair and inclusive work environment. Moreover, disability discrimination affects individuals in the workplace, leading to lower wages and limited career advancement opportunities. Likewise, people of color frequently encounter wage gaps and encounter obstacles to advancement, perpetuating systemic inequalities. The generational divide also influences workplace wages, with younger employees often facing challenges in achieving equal pay and career progression compared to their older counterparts. This is partly due to differences in experience levels and hierarchical structures that favor seniority, potentially marginalizing younger workers. Achieving equity and eliminating discrimination in the workplace requires a multifaceted approach that involves both individual and systemic changes. By recognizing and addressing the effects of discrimination on workplace wages based on gender, disability, race, and generation, we can move closer to creating a more just and inclusive work environment for all.

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