

CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance

Series editors

Samuel O. Idowu, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

René Schmidpeter, Cologne Business School, Germany

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/11565>

Christina Keinert-Kisin

Corporate Social Responsibility and Discrimination

Gender Bias in Personnel Selection

 Springer

Christina Keinert-Kisin
University of Vienna
Vienna
Austria

ISSN 2196-7075 ISSN 2196-7083 (electronic)
CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance
ISBN 978-3-319-29156-7 ISBN 978-3-319-29158-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-29158-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016934627

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2016

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG Switzerland

Preface

Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in private as well as public sectors. Popular explanations include the following: Women choose to focus on family rather than work responsibilities and therefore have their careers stagger with motherhood. There are not enough (sufficiently) qualified women in the talent pipeline to choose from—implying once these numbers will have risen, women in leadership will increase proportionately. Women are held back by stereotypes and socialization and do not assert themselves enough in the workplace. Women are discriminated against, if not explicitly at least implicitly, as their talent and suitability are overlooked due to gender bias.

The first three of these explanations focus on women’s deficits (or career-adverse behaviors). They are not empirically supported: Statistically, the talent pipeline has been “feminized” as women have been earning secondary and tertiary degrees at rates equal to or greater than men in Western countries for at least two decades. Still, the substantial increase of women with relevant education and mid-level leadership experience on the supply side has not resulted in proportionate increases of women in top positions. Qualified women are childless at rates much higher than average female populations. Women managers without children were found to experience significantly worse career development than male peers (with or without children) for many industries. Particularly often cited reasons for a gender achievement gap in leadership hence fail to explain the phenomenon. The focus of this analysis is on the working of gender stereotypes, in the concrete in talent assessment, as well as on organizational context factors that allow for gender bias to thrive.

To understand the impact of stereotypes in the organizational context, this author conducted a personnel selection experiment for a “masculine” typed profession. Women (and men) who asserted themselves as highly qualified, and disposed of desired professional and personal traits for the “masculine” typed profession, were presented to participants from the respective field under controlled conditions. So long as experimental recruiters were unaware of applicant gender, women were accurately identified as qualified talent and selected for a job interview. Once

recruiters recognized applicants also by gender, women faced significantly worsened chances to be selected compared with a gender-blind setting. Worse, selection arguments made it clear women's personal and functional qualities became overlooked once they were identified as women. Highly qualified women not only lost out to equally but under some conditions also to *worse* qualified male competitors. Team "fit" in a demographically homogeneous organizational context was also studied. Participants in the experiment were found to overwhelmingly apply "fit" as a criterion of demographic similarity to existing team members, not as a measure of actual qualification or social similarity (expressed via adapted, "masculine" behavior by both men and women). An organizational culture requesting compliance with binding equal opportunity laws was not able to moderate recruiters' bias and discrimination against qualified women in recruitment.

Establishing current organizational reality is not meritocratic in nature based on these empirical results, and women who "have what it takes" still suffer disadvantage by their gender alone, the issue of workplace discrimination is reframed as a matter of economic, legal, and ethical responsibility to implement equal opportunity. Concrete suggestions are presented for organizational practice as well as for policy makers with a view to lessen gender discrimination in personnel selection processes. Such reform would hold the potential to benefit also members of other marginalized social groups by weakening arbitrary, socially unjust, biased talent selection and thus ultimately strengthen a culture of meritocracy.

Vienna, Austria

Christina Keinert-Kisin

Acknowledgments

This work was defended as a doctoral thesis at University of Vienna, Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics, under the supervision of Prof. Josef Windsperger and evaluated by Prof. Sabine Koeszegi and Prof. Oliver Fabel. Sincerest gratitude is owed to the academic attendance to this project, most importantly to Prof. Windsperger, who allowed for the freedom to develop the main ideas of this research project. Thank you for more than 10 years of academic mentorship!

The doctoral project was in part funded by Vienna University of Technology under the umbrella of its Leaky Pipeline project fund. Invaluable institutional support for the study was provided by Vice Rector Dr. Gerhard Schimak. Thanks is owed also to the Deans of the three schools that participated in the experiment, Prof. Bernhard Geringer, Prof. Josef Eberhardsteiner, and Prof. Johannes Fröhlich. Gratitude is owed to the many senior researchers in the three disciplines at VUT and other universities, who were consulted to ensure the soundness of this research design and kindly enriched this work with their expert opinions.

The Economic Chamber Vienna kindly provided funding of this research project in the form of its Science Award 2010.

The Austrian Federal Chancellery kindly awarded this work its Johanna Dohnal Award for achievements for gender equality in 2011.

The Labour Chamber Upper Austria kindly awarded the doctoral work its Science Award in 2013.

Last, but most importantly, I owe deepest gratitude to my family—especially my parents Maria and Heinz, husband Ümit, and sister Elisabeth—for their persistent support. This work could not have been realized without your encouragement!

Contents

| | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2 | Persistence of Gender Discrimination in the Workplace | 7 |
| 2.1 | Terms and Definitions | 7 |
| 2.2 | Numbers and Developments | 10 |
| 2.2.1 | Women in Education and Academia | 10 |
| 2.2.2 | Women as Top Executives | 12 |
| 2.2.3 | Women on Corporate Boards | 15 |
| 2.3 | Gender Discrimination: Explanations in Economics | 17 |
| 2.3.1 | Rationalization of Differential Treatment: Taste for Discrimination | 17 |
| 2.3.2 | Rationalization of Differential Treatment: Gendered Reproductive Roles | 20 |
| 2.3.3 | Rationalization of Differential Treatment: Rational Bias | 24 |
| 2.3.4 | Rationalization of the Status Quo: Pipeline Theory | 25 |
| 2.4 | Lessons from Economic Theory | 26 |
| 3 | Corporate Social Responsibility: A Theoretical Overview | 27 |
| 3.1 | Social Claims Towards Private Business: A Debate of Historical Dimension | 27 |
| 3.2 | The Scope of Corporate Social Responsibility: Definitions and Perspectives | 30 |
| 3.3 | Carroll: Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibilities | 35 |
| 4 | Topical Approach: Gender Discrimination as CSR Problem | 39 |
| 4.1 | Corporate Economic Responsibility for Equal Opportunity | 40 |
| 4.1.1 | The Relatively Best Candidate for the Job | 40 |
| 4.1.2 | Diversity: A Potential Source of Competitive Advantage | 50 |
| 4.1.3 | Stakeholder Management | 65 |
| 4.1.4 | The Business Case for Equal Opportunity | 73 |

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.2 | Corporate Legal Responsibility for Non-discrimination | 74 |
| 4.2.1 | European Union Law: An Anti-discrimination Framework | 75 |
| 4.2.2 | Non-discrimination from a Human Rights Perspective | 109 |
| 4.2.3 | The Legal Case for Non-discrimination | 112 |
| 4.3 | Corporate Ethical Responsibility for Equal Treatment | 113 |
| 4.3.1 | Aristotle: Ethics of Justice | 114 |
| 4.3.2 | Enlightenment: Ethics of Rights | 115 |
| 4.3.3 | Corporate Ethics | 117 |
| 4.3.4 | The Moral Case for Equality | 120 |
| 4.4 | Conclusion: Gender Discrimination as CSR Failure | 121 |
| 5 | Persistence of Discrimination as CSR Failure | 123 |
| 5.1 | Non-actualization of Economic Responsibility | 123 |
| 5.1.1 | Gender Bias | 124 |
| 5.1.2 | Decision-Maker Self-Interest | 133 |
| 5.2 | Non-actualization of Legal Responsibility | 142 |
| 5.3 | Non-actualization of Ethical Responsibility | 144 |
| 5.4 | “Trouble Spots” for Organizational Gender Discrimination | 144 |
| 6 | Empirical Study: Discrimination in Personnel Selection? | 147 |
| 6.1 | Pre-study: Organizational Job Advertising Practice | 149 |
| 6.1.1 | Purpose and Design | 149 |
| 6.1.2 | Content Analysis of “Real” Job Advertisements | 150 |
| 6.1.3 | Pre-study Results | 152 |
| 6.2 | Personnel Selection Experiment | 155 |
| 6.2.1 | Experimental Design | 156 |
| 6.2.2 | The Sample | 164 |
| 6.2.3 | Analysis of Employer Preferences: Ranked Selection Decisions | 165 |
| 6.2.4 | Selection Arguments: Qualitative Study | 171 |
| 7 | Lessons to Learn for Organizational Practice | 183 |
| | Acronyms | 193 |
| | Appendix A | 195 |
| | Appendix B | 199 |
| | Appendix C | 203 |
| | References | 209 |

List of Illustrations

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Illustration 3.1 | Carroll’s (modified) pyramid of corporate social responsibilities | 36 |
| Illustration 4.1 | Pyramid of CSR of non-discrimination on grounds of gender | 121 |
| Illustration 5.1 | “Trouble spots” of CSR failure to prevent gender discrimination within organizations | 145 |
| Illustration 6.1 | Manipulation of applicants’ curriculum vitae—distinctive features and similarities | 162 |
| Illustration 6.2 | Paired comparison patterns on preference scales by experimental treatment | 168 |