

BARRIERS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF WOMEN WORKING IN HOTEL INDUSTRY- A STUDY OF SELECTED HOTELS IN GREATER KUMASI

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ABSTRACT

If women are given the opportunity to succeed and sustain the world through education and employment, as well as by challenging social preconceptions that limit them in some professions, they may play a crucial part in its development. Gender differences in employment and academic promotions occur, and structural hurdles prohibit women from pursuing their ideal careers. The aim of the study was to explore the Barriers and coping strategies of women working in hotel industry in Greater Kumasi. A descriptive survey design was used in this study. The study population comprised selected women working in the hospitality industry in the study site. A sample size of 234 respondents was involved in the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every respondent has an equal chance of being included in the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data from respondents. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Windows version 20, was used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire. The results of the survey shown that women want to succeed in their careers but are constrained by the following significant factors: Women are prevented from occupying important decision-making positions by a variety of factors, including gender roles, work-family responsibilities, individual factors, the perception of women as managers, a male-dominated environment, organizational structures, a culture of sexual harassment, and serious cultural and social barriers. The study recommends that the human resources division should make rules to combat and assure the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination against women employed in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Working women, Barriers, sexual Harassment, Discrimination, coping strategies

INTRODUCTION

Customer demand trends in hotels and restaurants necessitate working conditions that are usually described as unsocial and irregular working hours in the form of split shifts, weekend shifts,

night shifts, or work during holiday times. These working conditions put stress on employees with family responsibilities, particularly on female employees who bear the majority of the responsibility for caring for children, the elderly and domestic duties (Wirth, 2004). The majority of the activities done in hotels and restaurants is physically demanding and may include extended periods of standing, a lot of walking (sometimes in uncomfortably tight shoes for women), carrying (heavy) items, repetitive motions, working in awkward positions, and stair climbing. As a result, there is a heavy workload and high levels of stress brought on by time constraints and continuous customer contacts (Baum, 2013). Due to a variety of obvious and subtle obstacles, female hotel staff do not always perform as well as their male counterparts. These obstacles include being a mother, prejudice, and sexual harassment (Pinar et al, 2011).

Sexual harassment is not basing a person's employment status on whether or not they accept or reject sexual approaches. Provocatively glancing at someone all the time and making unpleasant comments about them are examples of sexual harassment (Woods & Kavanaugh, 2004). Sexual harassment at work is illegal on the grounds of sex, gender, or sexual orientation and is considered an unjust form of discrimination. One of the most enduring and serious issues facing women at work is sexual harassment, which has been acknowledged (Fitzgerald & Betz, 2003; Gutek, 2005). It minimizes the skills of women and hinders their professional development (Gilbert, Hallett & Eldridge, 2004). Nieva and Gutek (2001) assert that there are immediate and long-term effects of sexual harassment on women. Females may temporarily lose their confidence and leave their employment. Although the majority of organizations are sympathetic to females who are sexually harassed, obtaining tangible proof of the harassment is difficult and difficult (Gilbert, et al., 2004). One of the main causes is that harassers are typically members of management who are more powerful than the victim because women hold less authority in businesses (Prekel, 2000). Even though male and female ideas of their societal roles can partially account for this situation, these roles have undergone tremendous shift in recent years. Social attitudes and patterns of male and female labor force participation have been evolving progressively to reflect these challenges of sexual harassment (Wirth, 2004).

Another issue that affects women working in the hotel sector is discrimination. The fundamental reason for discrimination is strongly held beliefs about the social roles and abilities of men and women. Instead of viewing women as a disadvantaged group, it becomes clear that everyone has different rights to use resources, career opportunities, and positions when one compares the effective roles that males and females do. The price of gender inequality includes the fact that women are "packed" into a small number of positions with fewer responsibilities and/or lower income, or are forced to work part-time where there are fewer growth opportunities for growth.

The fact that many corporate executives and managers, almost all of whom are men, claim that women have not made much progress because they lack the necessary educational backgrounds, skills, and job experiences is another issue that women in the hospitality sector must deal with. Instead of seeing prejudice, these leaders see the gradual advancement of women as an objective truth (Fernandez, 2013). Despite the fact that most young men and women are promoted based on performance, there is still a gender disparity in the rate of promotions, and women are

disadvantaged (Cobb & Dunlop, 2009). Women continue to be overrepresented in traditional occupations including technical, sales, and administrative support positions (Bowler, 2009). According to Adler and Israel (2012) and Morison et al., (2012), participating in hard assignments, taking part in social events, and networking professionally boosts visibility." Complex factors, including preparation for entering the workforce, hiring, placement, the attitude of the glass ceiling, social obligations, stigmatization, and stereotypical thinking while at work, are to blame for this situation.

To balance these conflicting demands, women might either act like "superwomen" or find other solutions to the overburden at work or at home (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2005). Burnout and the potential end of their business objectives are risks for women who feel overburdened by the responsibilities they must bear (Easton, 2007). Using contemporary Canadian data on men and women of prime age, Easton (2007) discovered that women's longer hours of unpaid employment linked to their reporting more stress than men. Stress may be a hefty price to pay for success as a super mom at work in terms of juggling work and family (Easton, 2007). If not managed properly, this stress could have a terrible impact on their jobs and even their roles and responsibilities to their families. In addition to this, women also experience the phenomenon of guilt, which includes a general sense of obligation, particularly towards their children, and a sense of failure of responsibility that comes when they lack control over the demands made on them from various sectors of life.

Women who combine paid work and family responsibilities may experience both benefits and drawbacks, according to Moen (2012). She comes to the conclusion that a variety of factors in women's lives, including the nature of their work, the nature of their family roles, including the number and age of children, and the degree to which they perceive themselves as captives or committed to their work and family roles, determine whether having multiple roles is positive or negative for them. According to Malone (2008), the rise of women in professional and managerial roles, their pursuit of higher education, and their propensity to establish and uphold a marriage and family life have all contributed to the performance of multiple roles. It can be challenging, time-consuming, and occasionally impossible to try to juggle the demands of many responsibilities while still managing to meet work expectations, time constraints, family duties, and social obligations. To deal with the tension, women employ organizational and time management techniques. The aim of the study was to examine Barriers and coping strategies of women working in hotel industry in Greater Kumasi.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive design. This allows researchers to gauge the population size of specific groups and mitigates the negative impacts of having participants participate twice (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The population was made up women working in the selected hospitality industry in Greater Kumasi. Two hundred thirty-four (234) working women from the Greater Kumasi hotel sector make up the study's sample size. This study employed a simple random sampling technique to sample 194 working women to the questionnaire. This gave the

participants equal chance of being included in the study. For the study, information was gathered through a questionnaire that was created and distributed. For the analysis, the completed questionnaires were also obtained. There were closed-ended Likert scale questions on the survey. Twenty working women in the hospitality industry who were conveniently chosen from the study area pre-tested the questionnaires to evaluate the items' validity and reliability (Dillman, 2005).

The pre-test questionnaire was amended after receiving comments from those groups, taking it into consideration. To ensure that the information-gathering approach was carried out correctly, all questionnaires collected were subjected to the assessment process. To evaluate whether a completed questionnaire could be used, it was examined. The information acquired from the questionnaire was coded and entered into the Windows version 20 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), where it was analyzed to produce the descriptive and inferential statistics. Respondents in this study voluntarily participated despite having the option to opt-out of the survey. Protection of the private information provided by respondents, their anonymity, and their responses were also noted. Therefore, a clear explanation of the study's justification and the kind of permission was given.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic information of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demography of respondents. Out of the number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire, 20 (10.31%) were below the age of 20, 30 (15.98%) were between the ages of 25 -30 years, 60 (30.93%) between the ages of 35-40 years, 44 (22.16%) between the ages of 45-50 years, 24 (22.16%) were between the ages of 55 to 60, while the working women who were above 60 years recorded the least percentage (8.25%). The findings of the study indicate that the participants were mature and have more working experience in the industry. Table 1 shows that 119 (61.00%) of the women were married while 76 (39%) were single at the time of the data collection.

Table 1: Demographic information of Respondents

Age range of the respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
Below 20 years	20	10.31
25-30 years	30	15.98
35-40 years	60	30.93
45-50 years	44	22.16
55-60 years	24	12.37
More than 60 years	16	8.25
Total	194	100
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	119	61.00
Single	76	39.00
Total	194	100

Barriers confronting working women in the work environment

Table 2 represents data on the barriers women in the hospitality industry face when discharging their duties. 170 (87.62%) of the respondents said they rely on family members for support while they work through difficulties, 3 (1.55%) of the respondents disagreed, while 21(10.82%) were not sure. On whether women participating in high-profile decision-making roles are constrained by cultural and social norms, 140 (72.16%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 41 (21.13%) were not sure while 3 (1.55%) of the respondents disagreed.

This result supports Manu's (2014) claim that Ghana's patriarchal society traditionally subjected women to oppression and dominance. The socialization process, which included their initiation rites, taught women to accept their place. In addition to respecting their elders, they were trained to be submissive wives and sisters. A man could wed multiple women, it was explained to them. In addition, 139 respondents (71.65) agreed that serious cultural and social barriers prevent women from holding major positions of decision-making; 42 respondents (21.65%) were unsure; and 13 respondents, or 6.7 percent, disagreed. This finding is consistent with Oppong's (2013) findings, which showed that severe cultural and societal barriers severely restrict the participation of women in positions of prominence where important decisions are made. Furthermore, this result goes against Arendall's (2007) assertion that a child's wellbeing is dependent on ongoing contact with the mother. As a result, moms are significant members of their families since they play a crucial role in raising children.

Regarding whether women face a wide range of challenges as they attempt to improve their quality of life, the quality of their family's lives, and the economics of other nations through their employment, 170 (87.62%) of the respondents were of the view that they go through a lot of challenges should they want to improve their lives, 20 (10.30%) of the respondents were not sure, whereas 4(2.06%) disagreed with the statement. This is in line with Eswari's (2009) assertion that women face a wide range of challenges when working to improve their quality of life, the quality of their family's lives, and ultimately the economics of different nations. Parents must ensure that their children receive a foundational education in addition to meeting their fundamental requirements for things like food, clothing, and shelter (Laird, 2011). Hoghughi (2004) further emphasized the need for women and children to participate in activities that will advance their intellectual and educational development because doing so will help them comprehend situations and successfully handle difficulties. As a result, parents should make sure this is done.

On whether women working in service industries give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects, 170 (87.62%) to this statement, 15 (7.73%) of the respondents were not sure while 9 (4.63%), of the respondents were unsure. This result shared the same viewpoint as Eswari, 2009, who claimed that women working in certain industries, such as construction, brick kilns, and electronics, experience gynecological problems, miscarriages, premature births, barrenness, and giving birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects.

Sexual harassment is a significant issue that affects working women, according to the majority of respondents (90%), Table 2. 8.5% of respondents disagreed with this statement and 1.5% were unsure. This result is in line with Eswari's (2009) assertion that sexual harassment is yet another significant issue that working women must deal with. Numerous working women experience sexual harassment at work at some point, whether they are employed in the organized or unorganized sector, as low-skilled workers with little education or as highly compensated executives with advanced degrees. Usually, this comes from other male workers or their superiors.

Table 2: Barriers confronting working women in the work environment

Statement	Agree f (%)	Not sure f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Total f (%)
1. Women in Ghana experience tyranny and dominance at the hands of the patriarchal society.	170 (87.62)	21 (10.82)	3 (1.55)	194 (100)
3. The participation of women in high-profile decision-making roles is severely constrained by cultural and social norms.	140 (72.16)	41 (21.13)	13 (6.70)	194 (100)
3. Women face a wide range of challenges as they attempt to improve their quality of life, the quality of their family's lives, and the economics of other nations through their employment.	170 (87.62)	20 (10.30)	4 (2.06)	194 (100)
4. Women working in service industries give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects.	170 (87.62)	15 (7.73)	9 (4.63)	194 (100)
5. women are sexually harassed in their work places	90% 167	8.5% 16	1.5% 3	100 186

Coping mechanisms adopted by women in the hospitality industry

All of the respondents agreed that the coping strategy used by women in the hotel business is to hire nannies and housekeepers to take care of household duties when working women go to work. 193 (99.48%) of the respondents said they rely on family members for support while they work through difficulties, with 0.52% disagreeing. Additionally, 189 (97.42%) of the respondents agreed that in order to overcome these obstacles, working women needed to have a positive working relationship between their superiors and subordinates. Three respondents (1.55%) disagreed, and 2 (1.03%) were unsure. Moreover, 184 (94.85%) respondents agreed that working women must marry and have children later in life, while 6 respondents (3.09%) were unsure and 4 (2.06%) respondents disagreed. The study's findings also indicate that 167 respondents, or 86.09 percent, agreed that family planning and delaying childbearing are good

ways to reduce working respondents' stress, while 21 (10.82%) respondents were unsure and 6 (3.09%) disagreed. Further, 193 (99.48%) respondents of the sample, agreed that working women need to increase their confidence in their ability to perform better than males, with only 0.52% disagreeing. In addition, every respondent concurred that working women should be persistent and determined if they want to succeed in the hospitality sector. Also, 192 (98.97%) respondents agreed that working women should be self-motivated, disciplined, committed to their jobs, and hardworking, while 2 (1.03%) respondents were unsure. According to the study's respondents, every respondent believed that working women should pursue higher education and grow in knowledge, self-awareness, and independence.

According to Jayakody et al. (2013), mothers who are content with their families are less likely to get childcare support from others. Some extended family members live close by, so parents opt to use them to assist with daily tasks. Hoffman and Youngblade (2009) discovered that when kids go to their grandmother's house to wait for their parents to get home from work, the kids are put to bed before their mother or father arrives to fetch them up. These grandparents regularly watch the kids after school and spend time with them. Hoffman and Youngblade (2009) discovered that when moms are working, husbands or fathers are slightly more involved in conventional feminine jobs and childcare activities. This is taking into account the responsibilities that the husband and wife play. Additionally, it was evident that children of working mothers contributed more to domestic chores than did children of stay-at-home mothers, which supported their findings.

Hakim (2016) claims that adaptable women are the majority of women, prefer to balance work and family obligations, and will be the group most interested in programs that promote work-life balance and family-friendly employment advantages. Despite a huge increase in women entering professional and managerial positions over the past three decades, work-centered women are still in the minority. Even though many of these women are married, they are willing to prioritize their careers in the same way that men do, fitting their family obligations around their professional obligations. Family- and home-centered women are largely unnoticed in the workplace in the West and prefer to put their families first until they get married. Unless there are serious financial issues in the household, they stay away from paid job after marriage.

Table 3: The coping mechanisms adopted by women in the hospitality industry

Statement	Agree f(%)	Not sure f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Total f(%)
1. Seeking the assistance of house helps and baby sitters to cater for house chores while working women go to work	194 (100)	-	-	194 (100)
2. Support from relatives	193 (99.48)	1 (0.52)	-	194 (100)
3. Working women to build a good rapport between subordinates and their bosses	189 (97.42)	3 (1.55)	2 (1.03)	194 (100)

4. Marrying and giving birth later in life	184 (94.85)	6 (3.09)	4 (2.06)	194 (100)
5. Family planning and reduction in child birth	167 (86.09)	21 (10.82)	6 (3.09)	194 (100)
6. Working women to build their confidence that they can do better than men	193 (99.48)	1 (0.52)	-	194 (100)
7. Working women should be determined and persevere to succeed in the hospitality industry	194 (100)	-	-	194 (100)
8. Working women should be self-motivated, disciplined, committed to work and hard working	192 (98.97)	2 (1.03)	-	194 (100)
9. Working women to pursue higher education and become knowledgeable, self-conscious and independent.	194 (100)	-	-	194 (100)

CONCLUSION

The study found that women working in the hospitality sector confront issues such unequal remuneration and training opportunities within their firms. The results of the survey shown that women want to succeed in their careers but are constrained by the following significant factors: Women are prevented from occupying important decision-making positions by a variety of factors, including gender roles, work-family responsibilities, individual factors, the perception of women as managers, a male-dominated environment, organizational structures, a culture of sexual harassment, and serious cultural and social barriers. The study's findings indicated that women in the hospitality industry use a variety of coping mechanisms to lessen the difficulties they encounter at work, including hiring housekeepers and babysitters to take care of household duties while they are at work, receiving support from family members, marrying and having children later in life, practicing family planning to reduce the number of births, and strengthening their confidence level. The study recommends that the human resources division should make rules to combat and assure the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination against women employed in the hospitality sector.

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