

Abstract

Survey of Gender-Based Harassment in the Workplace and Policy Implications

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The Korean anti-discrimination law, which regulates gender discrimination and sexual harassment, is limited in that it excludes everyday incidents that happen to women in the workplace, pressure about masculinity or femininity, and disparaging expressions about gender. Since verbal expressions are not handled in employment rulings, it is difficult to include them as

gender discrimination in employment, and precedent and decision, or the effect, has been that if there is no sexual intent, it is not considered to be sexual harassment. However, the experience of female workers has been that of enduring the sexist speech and actions which are prevalent in organizations on an everyday basis, even before they encounter severe incidents of sexual harassment or discrimination in personnel management. The belief that "the workplace is not a place where women should be, and that the roles of kindness, cuteness, and assistance are more important than their ability to work" inevitably has a negative impact on the working experience of female employees. In addition, sexist beliefs about women existing for sex and being in charge of caretaking, rather than being viewed as co-workers, provide fuel for sexual harassment and employment discrimination.

This study sought to identify the current situation of the degree and impact of sexist speech and behavior in the workplace in the face of a lack of domestic investigation and research and sought to find measures to supplement disciplinary measures in legal systems.

Based on survey questions and results of research already conducted in South Korea and other countries and the FGI, 10 detailed types of sexist speech and behavior were selected, and then people were asked whether or not they had experienced these. The results showed that women had a higher rate of experience with sexist speech and behavior than men. The types with the greatest gender differences in rates of experience were the types regarding stereotypes about working ability and exclusion from work. In addition, when asked about their experience with sexist speech and behavior as perpetrators, men were relatively higher than women, and the ratio was not low. It

was confirmed that the level of awareness about sexist speech and behavior in the workplace was low.

It was found that the experience of witnessing sexist speech and behavior also negatively affects trust in the company. Respondents who experienced sexist speech and behavior in a former workplace were asked if the experience influenced their move, and 53.1% said yes. More women than men said that the experience influenced their move, and the rate was highest among women aged 20–35 years.

We defined people as a victim of sexual harassment if during the past year, they experienced even 1 of the 10 sexist types of speech and behavior and they felt "uncomfortable or insulted, so enduring the workplace was difficult, or wanted to escape from work." Differing from previous domestic surveys, this study is significant in that it measured the power of sexual harassment by investigating the negative effects of sexist speech and behavior on the workplace environment. According to this definition, the result of the analysis was that the ratio of victims is 35.7 percent, with women and men at 42.2 percent and 29.1 percent, respectively, confirming gender differences. More than 40 percent of women feel that their working environment is hindered by sexist speech and behavior. In addition, the results of the evaluation of organizational culture were analyzed, and it was confirmed that the victim's level of consent was higher than that of non-victims, so that there is a considerable degree of correlation between sexist speech and actions and negative organizational culture in the workplace.

It was confirmed in the results that the experience of being victimized by sexual harassment in the workplace has a very definite impact on the level of immersion in the organization, the

level of immersion in work, and the level of satisfaction with work. This shows that sexual harassment is not just a problem of courtesy in the workplace, but a factor that can affect the productivity of the organization.

The study's fact-finding survey and the results of research that was done previously in other countries confirmed that sexual harassment cannot be seen as a one-time happening or as the behavioral deviation of only a few members. Sexual harassment is a gender-based pattern in which women have an overall higher rate of victimization experiences, regardless of the workplace's size and nature, industry, or employment patterns. During the course of research, we heard a case in which only women were ordered to clean up desks in the office, even though they were of the same rank as men, and when one resisted this practice, she was accused of having an inconsiderate attitude and not working. In this case, the female worker was criticized for "not working," even though cleaning desks was not her original job, and she was evaluated as a "selfish" employee who did not perform her given duties. If these kinds of experiences continue to accumulate, they will naturally have a negative effect on women's willingness to continue to work in the labor market. An interesting point in the survey results is that the difference between male and female responses widen in response to the question about whether experiences with sexist speech and behavior undermine the working environment. In Korea's authoritarian corporate culture, men also experience sexist speech and behavior, but this impacts women more in the working environment. In fact, there was a clear difference between those who experienced sexual harassment and those who did not in terms of immersion in the organization, immersion in work, and the level of satisfaction with

work.

This kind of reality is about sexual harassment, and the face of it is sexist speech and behavior.

It shows the need to clarify the point that sexual harassment is an illegal act that violates women's right to work and their personal rights. About 70 percent of respondents who participated in the survey said that sexual harassment should be banned at work, and that it constitutes gender discrimination. Regarding this part, it can be confirmed that there is minimum social consensus that disparaging, insulting, excluding, and stigmatizing words and actions on the grounds of gender should not be allowed. The fact that legislative and judicial precedents of other countries such as the US, the UK, and France regulate sexual harassment as a type of gender discrimination also implies what Korea's anti-discrimination law has omitted. [End]

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