A Study on the Current Situation of Gender Inequity Issues of High Board in Chinese Company

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Abstract. This report collects data through questionnaires and interviews based on literature, analyzes the real situation and the reasons behind the current gender problems on the high board of Chinese companies, and put forward better management suggestions for enterprises. The findings revealed that people's stereotypes of females and the prejudice of the corporate humanistic environment against females are the other two reasons that hinder women's promotion. Enterprises can start from these two reasons to improve the management methods of companies.

Keywords: gender inequity · questionnaires · interviews

1 Introduction

As people find that employees' loyalty to the company has a great relationship with CSR, CSR to employees is gradually a concern [21]. However, after investigating the current situation, females are still discriminated against in the workplace [20]. Especially in the high board of enterprises, the proportion of females is far lower than males [25]. Although the positive role of females in the development of enterprises cannot be ignored [8], females will still encounter the shackles of the "glass ceiling" in the workplace [2]. This report will investigate people from different industries and different roles through questionnaires and interviews, further analyze the causes of gender inequality in the high board of Chinese enterprises, and give some appropriate management suggestions.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Current Situation

In the background of the COVID-19, the loyalty of employees to the company largely depends on whether the company has fulfilled CSR for employees [21]. However, some companies don't fulfill CSR, and gender inequality still exists. Nowadays, 60% of bachelor's degrees are awarded to females and 97% of respondents said they had "ambition" in their career [6]. There is enough qualified female with ambition, but the female has

been discriminated against in the workplace in China [20], and the proportion of female managers are still low. China has the fourth-largest female employment rate in the world but there are only 17% of female managers [25]. And there are 81. Males occupy the high board managers in China [23], and only 33% of female managers on FTSE 350 Boards in 2020 [11]. In addition, females are also discriminated against in industries choice [12]. For example, the number of males working in the digital industry is about twice that of females [13]. Of the 150 digital businesses surveyed, only 18 companies have female CEOs [14].

2.2   Reasons for Gender Inequality

"Glass ceiling" is used to describe the invisible bond that women face when they promotion [2]. Firstly, "Same-sex social reproduction". Male managers tend to give more promotion opportunities to male subordinates [16]. Secondly, "Social role conflict". Due to the traditional concept, females are given the responsibility of parenting [17]. It brings more social pressure on females.

2.3   Positive Roles of Females

Although there are few women on high boards of companies, the positive roles of women in the development of enterprises cannot be ignored. Females could improve company CSR situation by increasing gender diversity [9]. If gender equality is achieved, the US corporate economy will increase by $4.3 trillion [6]. Furthermore, the female can enhance the strategic decision [17], and raise awareness of environmental issues, so that company can make sustainable development decisions [11]. In addition, females could make more cautious decisions [8]. More females on high board could decrease securities fraud and increase board monitoring quality [15].

3   Solutions

To make females keep motivated to work, China improves gender equity issues through law [24]. Japan has applied Equal Employment Opportunity Law. Moreover, companies increase female wages and uniform retirement ages [1].

   This report takes constructivism as the basis and based on the literature put forward on the topic and uses the induction method to analyze. Meanwhile, this report uses survey and case study methods. A survey provides real data and data collection is an imperative aspect of the research study. Case studies tend to be more conducive to looking at things from different perspectives. With the development of the Internet, questionnaires become mainstream surveys. It's not limited by time and space and provides anonymous services. In addition, employees and executives from different industries are interviewed. It solves the difficulty of collecting subjective information. This report analyzes further causes of the gender inequity issues on the high board to help Chinese enterprises make suitable management strategies.

4   Methodology

This report uses survey and case study methods. Through the questionnaire and interview, get a comprehensive understanding of the current situation, to critically analyze actuality.

4.1   Polit Study

To make the results not limited by the region, the questionnaire is published on the website, and 477 valid data are obtained. Meanwhile, the questionnaire and interview include people from different jobs and industries (see Figs. 1, 2 and 3), and the distribution of gender and age is relatively balanced.

4.2   Finding and Analysis

As the research goes on, the number of female participants is about 1.6 times that of males, which can be considered that females feel more strongly about gender inequality. In addition, the proportion of participants aged 26–35 is 61%. Most of the people in this age group are faced with job promotion, so they have a better understanding of the survey issues.

Finding 1: the stereotype of female

This report found that stereotype of females is the "most obvious explanation" for female promotion obstacles in the workplace. According to the questionnaire, more than 60% of the respondents who asked about their experiences of gender discrimination said that they had experienced the company giving some important projects to male employees just because they thought men could make better decisions (Fig. 1). However, female executives will bring the company a higher rate of return on cash investment [8]. This contradiction is due to the stereotype that females are too conservative and sensitive to decision-making and lack leadership, which leads to the current gender inequality in the high board of enterprises.

This stereotype exists not only in decision-making ability but also in industry selection. Females are discriminated against in the digital industry, which leads to fewer female managers in these industries [18]. However, according to the industry data collected by questionnaires and interviews, in the education and service industries, females account for a higher proportion of management than males (see Fig. 5). Meanwhile, in Fig. 3, males are far more than females in the IT industry. When interviewers choose employees, they think that males have better skills in digital technology. However, the literature shows that women's proficiency in digital technology maybe 11% higher than men's [18]. Females are generally considered to be more suitable for the education or service industry. It is a stereotype of women's industry choices.

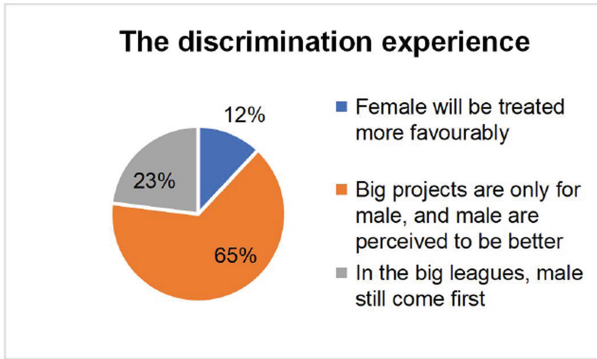Finding 2: Enterprises should improve the humanistic environment

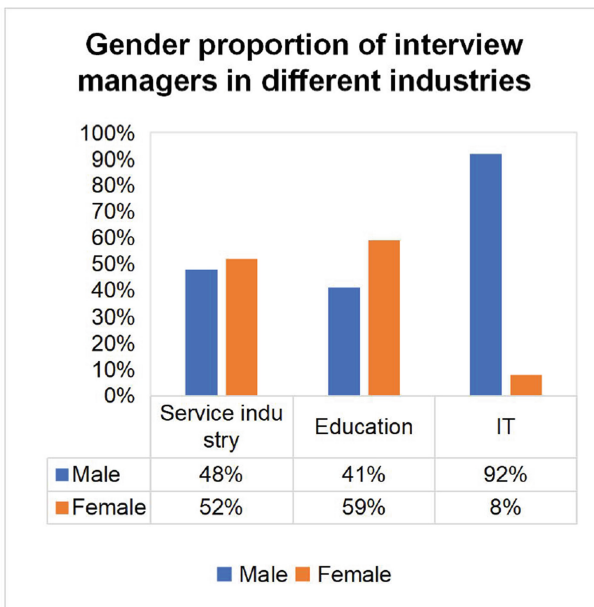**Fig. 1.** The discrimination experience of the questionnaire survey

Fig. 2. Gender proportion of interview managers in different industries

The humanistic environment of enterprises is another major factor affecting women's promotion. Male are more easily get advice from senior leaders, females' lack of guidance will hinder their promotion [6]. Meanwhile, male managers tend to give more promotion opportunities to male subordinates [12]. According to the results of the questionnaire and interview, most female employees are not satisfied with the humanistic environment of the company. We set the Likert scale to survey respondents' satisfaction with the company's humanistic environment. As shown the Fig. 4, numbers 1 to 5 indicate satisfaction. 1 is very dissatisfied, 5 is very satisfied.
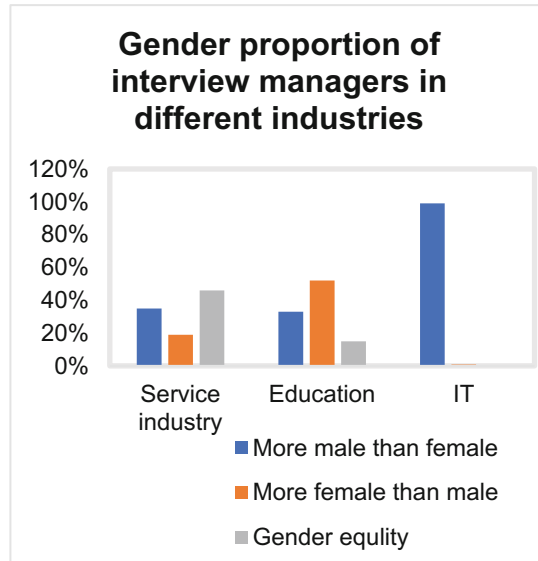
Fig. 3. Gender proportion of interview managers in different industries

Among the 477 respondents, 171 respondents said they were average. There are 312 people with a score below 4 (Fig. 4). In particular, among the 298 female respondents, 231 had a score below 4. It accounts for 70% of the total satisfaction less than 4 points (Fig. 5). It shows that employees' satisfaction with the humanistic environment is related to gender. The current human environment of enterprises makes females unable to get the same guidance and promotion opportunities as males.

Finding 3: New suggestions

Women's satisfaction with the humanistic environment is not high. This report suggests that the company's managers should give more consideration to employees' thoughts when formulating the company's system. Reduce mutual discrimination among employees, and set the same ethical standards for all employees. Establish a harmonious enterprise competition culture, including unconscious bias training, fair employment and promotion of women, and equal access to guidance [6].

In addition, the stereotype of females in today's society limits women's career development. Although this stereotype is difficult to change, enterprises can still set an example to provide fair competition opportunities for females, so that females can gradually get rid of the shackles of stereotypes.

5   Conclusion

The limitations of this report are mainly reflected in the question setting and release form of the questionnaire. We use the concept of "interviewer" to represent "high board", but it
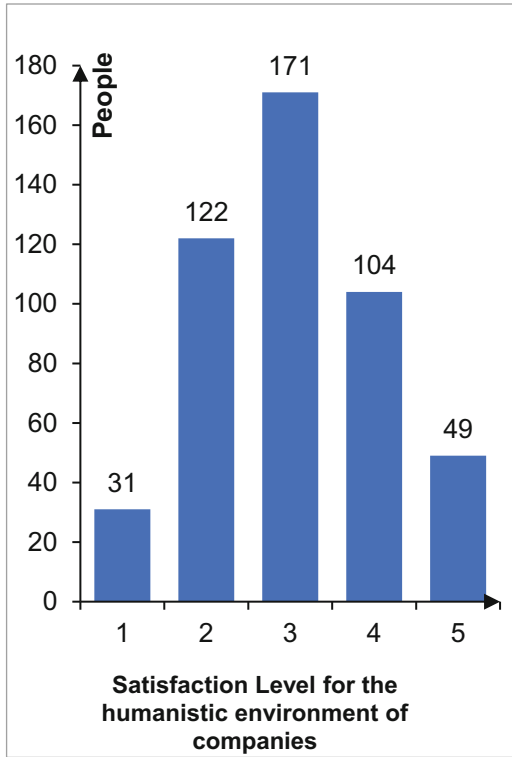
Fig. 4. Satisfaction level for the humanistic environment of companies

may not apply to all situations. In addition, we use the form of a questionnaire published on the website to collect data. Because the main users of the questionnaire website are from big cities, people from remote areas cannot be involved in the survey, which may lead to the data collection is not comprehensive enough. Meanwhile, some users' speed to finishing the questionnaire is too fast which may lead to the bad quality of the answers and data.

Based on the available evidence provided in this study, it appears that in China, females still be discriminated against in career promotion and industry choice, the humanistic environment of most companies hurts women's career development, and the stereotype of females is also the cause of gender inequality in the high board of companies. For business management, although it is difficult to eliminate people's stereotypes of females, enterprises can set an example to provide fair competition opportunities for women, so that women can gradually get rid of the shackles of stereotypes. At the same time, improve the humanistic environment of the enterprise, and reduce mutual discrimination among employees. If enterprises can balance the high gender ratio on the board of directors, they can make better decisions and better fulfill CSR, to enhance loyalty and improve the profits of the enterprise.
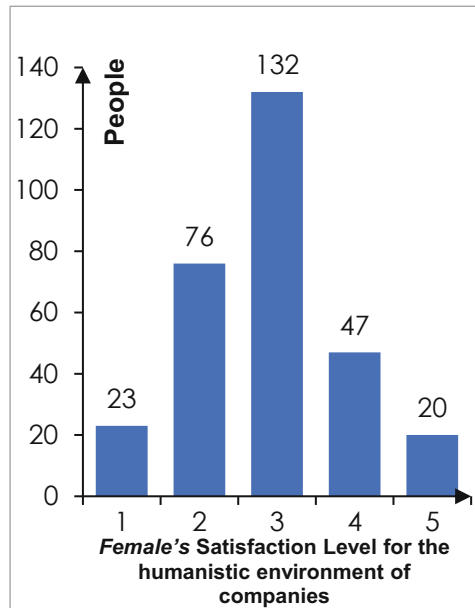
Fig. 5. Female satisfaction level with the humanistic environment of companies

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