



Gender Inequality and Workplace Health: Assessing Discrimination among Female State Government Officials

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KEYWORDS

Discrimination Against Female; Discrimination Inclination; Female State Government Officials; Level Of Discrimination.

ABSTRACT:

The problem of discrimination against women in the workplace is still an ongoing issue in Malaysia. The opportunity for women to make a paradigm shift in developing their careers in terms of decision making, career development opportunities and promotion may therefore encounter various problems. It is interesting to find out whether discrimination against female employees also occurs in the state government offices in the district of Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The aim of this study is to analyze the extent of discrimination against female government employees in the workplace in Kelantan, Malaysia. The research utilized quantitative design methods based on descriptive analysis through structured and unstructured interviews and observations conducted in this study with 262 respondents in the state of Kelantan. Data obtained from the structured interviews were analyzed descriptively and using multiple regression analysis, while observations were analyzed by incorporating field notes and visual images. The results show that the extent of discrimination against female civil servants is at a medium level. Four factors influence discrimination against female civil servants in this study, namely situational factors, socialization factors, attitudes and income level. This study suggests that the low level of education of government officials working in Kota Bharu district makes them (employees) more likely to discriminate against female employees.

1. Introduction

The term 'discrimination' means unfair and harmful treatment of people because of their group membership (Curry, Jiobu and Schwirian, 2005). Barbara Marliene Scott and Mary Ann Schwartz (2000) also stated that discrimination is an unfair act or practice by an individual, group, or subpopulation of individuals that denies other individuals, groups, or subpopulations of individuals access to valuable resources. According to Mooney, Knox and Schacht (1997), discrimination refers to behavior that results in unequal treatment of a person or individual. Discrimination and prejudice do not necessarily occur simultaneously in stratification. There are people who are prejudiced but do not discriminate. There are also people who discriminate but are not prejudiced.

Discrimination is more common in developing countries where women are denied the right to attain higher education, which ultimately affects the difference in wages or salaries compared to men (Sultana and Erlina, 2012). However, the study by Ahmed and Maitra (2011) shows that discrimination also occurs in underdeveloped countries. For example, it is reported that female workers in Bangladesh receive lower wages than male workers. The same happens in Malaysia. For example, a study by Noorazeela, Rahmah and Noorasiah (2016) found that male workers' wages are higher than female workers' wages. In addition to wage disparities, female workers also face other forms of discrimination, such as sexual harassment, gender-based workplace segregation, discrimination in hiring and promotion (Zaiton and Nooraini, 2015; Bhatt, 2005). Discrimination in employment can also lead to deteriorating job performance, which affects the intention of female



employees who are victims of discrimination to continue working in the organization (Tesfaye, 2010).

In general, the labor market in Malaysia is dominated by male workers. However, this dominance masks an increasing participation of female workers, especially in the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing is also the sector with the highest rate of unfilled vacancies (43%) compared to the agricultural sector (23%) and the service sector (19%) (Kementerian Sumber Manusia, 2006). In addition, the turnover rate of employees in the manufacturing sector, particularly among production workers, is also high due to the relatively high rate of voluntary redundancies (Siti Fardaniah, 2009). The lower labor force participation of women is due to various factors such as family responsibilities (Jalihah, 2004), the stereotypical view that women are not qualified for managerial roles in companies (Eagly and Carli, 2003), and wage discrimination where female workers earn more compared to male workers (Kementerian Sumber Manusia, 2008; Noorazeela, Rahmah and Noorasiah, 2016; Zaiton and Nooraini, 2015; Rahmah and Idris, 2012).

The government has made various efforts to curb discrimination against women in the workplace through the National Women's Policy by recognizing the great contribution of women in the development of the country. Therefore, the government always encourages the participation of women in the national development process by providing them wide opportunities to access social, economic and political spheres. Several institutions have been established to integrate women into the mainstream of development. In continuation of this government's efforts, the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWID) was established in the Prime Minister's Department in 1976 to implement an overall action plan for women in national development. Although the government has made various efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, discrimination still occurs. An example of a recent case (2020) is the case of a female flight attendant who was fired for being overweight, highlighting discrimination against women in the workplace (Source: MAS discriminates, fires flight attendant for being 'fat', 2020). This incident is another case of discrimination against women in the workplace that is still occurring.

While there are previous studies examining discrimination against women in the workplace in Malaysia, most of these studies focus more on gender discrimination with the intention of female employees to remain employed, wage differentials by gender and employer discrimination and the gender income gap (for example, Nurasmiza's study, 2020; Rahmah, Zulkifly and Syazwani, 2013; Nurfatin Irdina and Noriza, 2021). Aspects of factors affecting discrimination against women such as age, (2) duration of marriage, (3) number of children, (4) situational factors, (5) socialization factors, (6) attitude, (7) duration of education, (8) duration of employment, and (9) total income were not examined in their study. All elements that influence discriminatory behavior are examined in this study. In addition, although there are previous studies that demonstrate the relationship between gender discrimination in the employment of civil servants (e.g. the study by Syaza Farhana et al., 2019), the researcher noted that there are not many previous studies in the Malaysian context that examine workplace discrimination against women among state government officials. This study was conducted to analyze the extent of discrimination against female government employees and to identify the factors that influence discrimination against female government employees in the workplace in Kelantan, Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory of conflict. This theory was further developed by Karl Heinrich Marx. According to conflict theory, society is always in a state of flux because its members react to the existence of inequality and social conflict (Tischler, 1996). A conflict is a direct and deliberate opposition between individuals or groups in order to achieve common goals (Ting, 1979). Stratification or social order is also referred to as stratification. The pattern is the division of society into a hierarchy of unequal positions in terms of power, property, social valuation and psychological satisfaction (Tumin, 1967). Social stratification can also be defined as a pattern of emphasizing the distribution of different privileges. According to this definition, social stratification is a generally accepted pattern. It is accepted to determine a person's social position in the social structure of society. This social stratification includes a system of distribution of different privileges. This is because in every society there are groups or circles that receive more goods, services, power and



emotional satisfaction than others (Norazit, 1989). For Ting (1979), social stratification is seen as a process of individual differentiation in society that results in the emergence of a hierarchy. This emerging hierarchy consists of levels or strata with different positions.

While class refers to a form of social stratification. How do classes exist? Classes emerge on the basis of different positions and roles that individuals occupy in activities that bring results to society (Tumin, 1967). Class membership and the relationships between classes are determined by economic considerations. According to Karl Marx, class exists through a person's or their family's control over the production system and wealth. (Norazit, 1989). According to Norazit, this concept is closely linked not only to a person's economic position, but also to the individual's relationship to society. It can be shown in terms of controlling and being controlled. Therefore, a class cannot exist on its own. Instead, it should be continuously connected to other classes. The class structure must consist of a ruling class and a dominated class.

For Haralambos and Heald (1980), the acquisition of power by the ruling class begins with the desire for and control over the production system. This class begins to exploit and oppress the dominated class. Therefore, there is a need-based conflict between the ruling class and the dominated class. Conflict theorists believe that the social order that emerges is the result of the actions of groups that dominate and control resources such as power, wealth and prestige (Rosazman Hussin and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, 2001). Capitalist society consists of two opposing groups or classes, namely the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx's concept of class emphasizes two elements in particular, namely (1) that class must be seen in the context of the production process and (2) that class is the most powerful social group active in society (Ting, 1979). Another definition by Marx states that class can also exist through the control of a person or their family over the production system and wealth. This concept is closely related not only to a person's economic position, but also to the individual's relationship to society (Norazit, 1989). Karl Marx saw class in its relation to the causes of production. He divided society into two main hostile classes, namely (1) the oppressors, who control the means of production, and (2) the oppressed. The class that is more powerful and controls the means of production is the bourgeoisie or capitalist class. The underprivileged, powerless

and oppressed class, on the other hand, is the proletariat or working class. Therefore, Marx emphasized that the conflict between these two classes arises from the relations of production (Ting, 1979).

Based on this conflict theory, members of the ruling class and the dominated class respond to the presence of social inequality and conflict in their social stratification (Tischler, 1996). Power refers to the ability of a person or group to achieve, control, and influence the behavior of others. Power holders also have certain resources at their disposal to control others and follow their will. The resources consist of social relationships and the individual's position in society or group (Ting, 1979). Power is also defined as the ability to force someone to obey one's will. It is an unequal social resource in most group and community relationships. Some individuals and groups have greater power in the decision-making process (Hess, Markson and Stein, 1988). Norazit (1989) defines power as the ability of an individual or group to control the behavior of others in order to elicit a desired response. For Bierstedt (1970), power is a latent force because it exists but cannot be seen or felt with the naked eye.

Prestige or dignity shows respect and involves respectful behavior (Tumin, 1967). Prestige also has the same meaning as status. Status is the position of a person or a family in the social structure of society. Status shows the difference between social positions. Each social position and the difference can be seen relatively, i.e. a person's status is seen as high or low when compared to the position of others. This also explains his relationship to other people who have a different status. By and large, a person's status is determined by wealth, income, ability, skills and education (Norazit, 1989). Therefore, people who aspire to a higher status will do their best to associate with people who have a higher status than them (Tumin, 1967). The third social resource, property, refers to goods acquired and collected by a person during their lifetime for use or to pass on to their children (Norazit, 1989). Economic background plays an important role in determining a person's social class. This ruling class basically owns the wealth and controls the production system. Hence the emergence of status and dignity. The ruling class also controls the lives, morals, customs and intellectuals of the ruled class. According to Marx, all state laws, art and literature, science and philosophy fight for the interests of the ruling class.



The class concept also emphasizes two important ideas, namely (1) class consciousness and (2) class conflict (Norazit, 1989).

This dominant group will always use coercion, force and persuasion so that the subordinate group is always under its control. Due to the existence of elements of coercion, force and persuasion in social control, the subordinate group began to rebel and resist the power of the dominant group (Rosazman and Balakrishnan, 2001). Marx (1976) in his magnum opus, *Das Kapital*, states that the conflict is between the working class and the capitalist class. According to Marx, capitalism is a social relation that exists in the production system. The relationship of the production system is the basis for the emergence of social classes in the capitalist economic system, namely the emergence of the bourgeoisie, which is the most powerful economic group, and the proletariat, the working class (Norazit, 1989). The conflict of interests between these two distinct classes has driven structural change in society (Rosazman and Balakrishnan, 2001).

The characteristics of conflict theory that can be applied in the context of the topic of this study are the conflict between the working class and the capitalist class. Discrimination is a form of oppression by superiors against subordinates. It occurs in the workplace primarily in the context of promotions, career development opportunities, major departmental decisions, workload, performance evaluation, and employee hiring and selection. The working class in this study is female workers who are expected to be discriminated against in the workplace. The capitalist class is the top management level of an organization or workplace where women work. The top management of this department is expected to give preference to male workers over female workers in the employment sector. Therefore, the characteristics of this conflict theory are suitable to explain why discrimination against women in the workplace occurs in this study.

Women and Discrimination

Discrimination usually occurs in developing countries where there are many women. For example, they are denied the right to receive higher education, which affects the difference in wages or salaries compared to men (Sultana and Erlina, 2012). So far, there are many researchers who have addressed the issue of discrimination against women in the workplace, such as Rahmah, Zulkifly

and Syazwani (2013), Nurasmiza, Rabeatul Husna and Salwa (2020), Muhammad Farhan, Rabeatul Husna and Nurul Labanihuda (2020), Russen, Dawson and Madera (2020) and Mohammad, Md. Al-Amin and Sajun (2022).

The gender wage gap and employer discrimination in the information and communication technology sector by Rahmah, Zulkifly and Syazwani (2013) aims to analyze the gender wage gap in the modern private sector in Malaysia. The results of the study show that education, training, place of study and race have a significant impact on the wages of men and women. However, the wage gap analysis shows that the gender wage gap due to employer bias against women or labeled as a discriminatory factor is quite high, reaching almost 80 percent (Rahmah, Zulkifly and Syazwani, 2013).

Nurasmiza, Rabeatul Husna and Salwa (2020) investigated the relationship between gender discrimination against female employees and the intention to remain employed in the organization. The results of the study show that female production employees receive less pay and allowances than male production employees. This is one of the aspects that need to be addressed by the factory to ensure equal treatment of male and female workers, especially for equal performance. This unfair treatment between genders can lead to dissatisfaction and subsequently influence employees' desire to leave the company (Nurasmiza, Rabeatul Husna and Salwa, 2020). Muhammad Farhan, Rabeatul Husna and Nurul Labanihuda (2020) investigated religious discrimination against Muslim workers. The results show that the extent of religious discrimination is low. Moreover, male employees are more likely to be affected by religious discrimination than female employees. As far as employers are concerned, non-Muslim employers are more likely to discriminate against Muslims than Muslim employers.

Gender discrimination and fairness in the promotion process of hotel workers in the United States is the topic of a study by Russen, Dawson and Madera (2020). Their study aims to examine hotel managers' perspectives on the promotion process of hotel employees based on the gender of the promoted employee, their perceptions of organizational equity, and perceptions of gender discrimination against women. The results suggest that procedural and distributive justice mediate the effect of the gender of the promoted employee on



perceived gender discrimination against women. Perceptions of anti-male bias were found to moderate the relationship between the gender of the promoted employee and distributive justice, demonstrating higher levels of perceived fairness within the organization when a woman is promoted, especially when low levels of anti-male bias exist (Russen, Dawson and Madera, 2020).

Bullying, sexual harassment and workplace discrimination in the banking industry in Bangladesh is conducted by Mohammad, Md. Al-Amin and Sajun (2022). The study was conducted to determine the relationship between workplace bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and career failure among female employees in the private banking sector. Their study found that the measured independent variable such as workplace bullying was statistically significantly correlated with career failure among female employees. Therefore, the study concluded that a minimum level of workplace bullying is still prevalent in our banking industry, which is considered a strong cause of career failure among female employees (Mohammad, Md. Al-Amin and Sajun, 2022). There is a large body of research dealing with discrimination against women in the workplace, e.g. wage differentials according to gender and discrimination by the employer, the relationship between discrimination against female employees and the intention to stay in the company, religious discrimination against Muslim employees, gender discrimination and equity in the promotion process of hotel workers and workplace bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination in the banking industry. Therefore, it is coincidental that this study was conducted to determine the extent of discrimination against women in the workplace.

Research Method

The study area for this study is in Kota Bharu district, Kelantan. Kota Baharu District, Kelantan was chosen as the study area because this district was also chosen because it is the largest and main district that houses most of the main offices of the Kelantan state government. In addition, why this study was conducted in Kelantan is based on the state of Kelantan which is governed by a government that applies elements of Islam in the administration that may influence the behavior of "discrimination" against female. Since this study is related to discrimination against female, the selection of the state of Kelantan as the study area is felt to be appropriate. Kota Bharu district was chosen because many women in this district are

involved in the employment sector compared to other districts (Nor Aini, 1994). In this district, especially in the city of Kota Bharu there are many women who work which makes it possible to study this discrimination.

In order to complete the study, a quantitative approach, particularly a descriptive quantitative design based on questionnaires through structured interview techniques and observation of respondents were carried out. Descriptive quantitative design is an explanation made based on the research problem through the description of trends or requirements regarding the relationships that exist in all the variables used (Creswell, 2012).

The population in this study consists of state government officials (state-based) who work in state government offices in the Kota Bharu district totaling 5449 people. This study does not involve federal government officials (federal-based). However, there is a possibility that there are federal government officials who are seconded to serve in agencies under the state government during the study. These individuals are also considered part of the study population. Therefore, the population in this study includes state government officials or any federal officials who at the time of the study were serving in state government offices in the Kota Bharu district from the lowest level to the highest level. In the Kota Bharu district there are 45 government offices. Of these, 15 were selected as the unit of analysis for this study. The selection of this unit of analysis is done randomly through a simple roll of paper. Since there are 45 state government departments in this district, 45 rolls of paper have been prepared, each with a number representing the name of each department in the list obtained. In the context of this study, the number of all state government offices in the Kota Bharu district, is considered to be 15, so the study population consists of all state government officials in these 15 government offices. Therefore, the total number of state government officials in the 15 offices based in Kota Bharu district, Kelantan is 5449 people. Based on the total population obtained, a sampling frame was completed. This sampling frame contains all the names and addresses of the population. Based on the sampling frame, the selection of the study sample was done using a simple random sampling technique. Since the number of state government officials varies from one office to another, the number of samples selected also varies. The respondents or sample in this study total of 262 people. Most statisticians



agree that 30 sample respondents are the minimum number required to conduct a meaningful statistical analysis (Bailey, 1987). According to Bailey, researchers often use a minimum sample of 100 respondents. Therefore, in a quantitative study, a sample of 30 people is considered sufficient. This is also stated by Royse (2004) that the determination of the sample size is related to the objective of the study, financial factors, personnel resources and the amount of time available to conduct research.

The structured interview method is conducted face-to-face with the study respondents. Identified research respondents will be asked various questions that have been set in the questionnaire. This structured interview was conducted on 262 respondents who were state government officials in 15 offices based in Kota Bharu district, Kelantan. In addition, unstructured interviews were also used in this study. They were conducted by the researcher with a number of respondents after the structured interview. When the respondents answered the questions in the structured interview, the researcher had additional questions that he thought were appropriate to ask the respondent but they were not part of the structured interview question. This unstructured interview process was conducted before, during or after the structured interview.

The information collected through this structured interview includes the socio-demographics of the study respondents and subjective information. The socio-demographic information asked included gender, age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, length of marriage, number of children, education level, length of employment, job grade and total income. Subjective information covers situational factors, socialization factors, knowledge, attitudes and discriminatory tendencies. Observational data was collected through participant observation on 262 study respondents. The researcher was directly involved in the study environment, interacting with other members who were part of the study sample to collect data. The researcher could be in two participant observation situations, either known or unknown to the study members (Sabitha, 2006). The aspect observed in all study respondents was the tendency of discrimination among the state government officials who were part of the study.

Interview results were analyzed using descriptive analysis and multiple regression techniques. Descriptive analysis was employed to examine the

socio-demographics of the study respondents, including characteristics such as age and marital status as well as subjective information like situational factors, socialization factors, knowledge, attitudes and discrimination tendencies. This technique summarizes data obtained from study respondents to explain the information. Descriptive analysis in this study involved gathering information in terms of amounts and percentages. The collected through observation methods was analyzed using field notes and visual images. The multiple regression technique was utilized to determine the impact of all selected variables on the level of discrimination tendency among the identified respondents.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the study found that the socio-demographic profile of the respondents based on gender and age showed that the majority of state government officials analyzed in this study consisted of female state government officials and were in the age category of 40 years and older. This means that only a small proportion of state government officials are in the age category of 19 years and younger. Based on the ethnic category, all the officers who are respondents in this study are from Malay ethnicity. In terms of religion, because all the study respondents are from Malay ethnicity, the religion of the respondents in the context of this study is Islam only. Regarding the respondents' marital status and duration, the majority of state government officials are in the married category, while the highest duration of marriage among the respondents is between 10-18 years and 19-27 years. In addition to the socio-demographic profile of gender and age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, and duration, the socio-demographic profile of the respondents' education level shows that the majority of female entrepreneurs are at the STPM/Certificate/Diploma and SPM education levels, while a small part is at the Degree and Master's education levels. The duration and grade of employment found that the majority of state government officials had served for 10 years or less compared to a small proportion of 31 years or more. The majority of respondents studied in this study consisted of grade N17. The total income profile of the respondents shows that most of the state government officials found in this study have an income of RM2,500 and below, while a small proportion of state government officials have a total income between RM2,500-



RM5,000 and RM5,000-RM7,500. The number of children owned by the respondents shows that most of them have 4 children or fewer. There are only a small number of state government officials who have between 5-8 children and 9 or more.

Based on the findings of the study, there are three levels of discrimination against females in the workplace among state government officials: low, medium, and high. However, the study's findings show that the tendency to discriminate is at a moderate level. The level of discrimination against females in the workplace is determined by the mean score and the standard deviation based on 29 items formed in the questionnaire.

The results of the multiple regression analysis found that four factors influence the tendency to discriminate against females in the workplace, namely situational factors, socialization factors, attitude, and total income. These four factors were found to have a positive influence on the level of discrimination against females in this study. In the context of factors that influence discrimination tendencies, situational factors were found to have a positive relationship. This indicates that the longer state government officials are exposed to situational factors, the higher the tendency of discrimination against females shown by them. The socialization factor also has a positive and

significant relationship with the tendency to discriminate, which means that the longer state government officials are socialized in the family circle, the higher their tendency to discriminate against females at work. Attitude factors also have a positive and significant relationship with discrimination tendencies. This shows that the higher their attitude towards discriminatory tendencies, the more inclined they will be towards discriminating against females. The total income factor also has a positive and significant relationship with discrimination tendencies. This means that the higher the amount of income of state government officials, the higher the level of discrimination shown by them against females.

The Level of Discrimination in General

To analyze the level of discrimination against females in the workplace, whether low, moderate, or high, respondents with a mean score of 29-67 were considered to have a low level of discrimination. Respondents scoring between 68-106 were identified as having a moderate level of discrimination, while those scoring between 107-145 were categorized as having high levels of discrimination. The distribution of the level of discrimination against females in the state government is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Discrimination Level in General

Level	Total	Percentage
Low (28-67)	85	32.4
Moderate (68-106)	158	60.3
High (173-235)	19	7.3
Total	261	100.0

Source: Fieldwork on July-September (2011)

Through the categorization of the level of discrimination against female state government officials, the state government officials who obtained the highest level of score were at the medium level, totaling 158 people (60.3 percent), followed by state government officials at the low level, totaling 85 people (32.4 percent). As for the lower level, there are only 19 people (7.3 percent) state government officials, which is the lowest level. Based on this distribution, it shows that most of the state government officials who were studied obtained a moderate level. Indirectly, the officials in the agency may have discriminated, but they themselves may not be aware of the action. This means that discrimination against females in the

workplace is not a significant issue that can affect the quality of service of female officers in the Kota Bharu district. Therefore, female officers in the Kota Bharu district can be said to receive equal treatment as male officers in terms of promotion, career development opportunities, important departmental decision-making, workload, performance evaluation, and staff recruitment and selection. Accordingly, there is no question whether male officers get more places and priority in promotion or various other forms of discrimination in their organizations.



The Relationship Between Influential Factors and Discrimination Against Female State Government Officials in the Workplace

The regression analysis of influencing factors on discrimination against female state government officials using the enter method regression technique is shown in Table 2. The factors considered include age, duration of marriage, number of children, situational factors, socialization factors, attitude, education level,

duration of employment, and total income. The R² value in this regression analysis is 0.328, indicating that the variables included in the model account for 33.0% of the variation in discrimination against females at work. The remaining 67.0% is attributed to other factors not examined in this study. The findings of the regression analysis present the model equations, resulting in Equation (1) shown below.

$$Y = 35.608 + 1.324 X_1 + 1.124 X_2 + 0.973 X_3 - 0.002 X_4 + e \quad (1)$$

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Influential Factors With the Discrimination Against Female State Government Officials (Enter Method)

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)	35.608	5.511	6.461	0.000	
Situational Factors	1.324	0.358	+0.241	3.695	0.000
Socialization Factors	1.124	0.470	+0.167	2.391	0.018
Attitude	0.973	0.193	+0.312	5.034	0.000
Total Income	-0.002	0.001	-0.108	-1.958	0.051

Notes: The Dependent Variable: Discrimination Tendency; F = 28.375; P = 0.000; R² = 0.340; R² = 0.328

Source: Field work on July-September (2011).

4. Discussion

The discussion in this section focuses on the level of discrimination against female state government officials by categorizing it into three levels: low, moderate, and high. Additionally, the discussion also focuses on the regression analysis of factors influencing discrimination against female state government officials in the workplace.

The Level of Discrimination Against Female State Government Officials Generally

The level of discrimination against female state government officials, generally, shows that most of them experience a moderate level compared to a small number experiencing a high level. Women's involvement, according to the items analyzed, shows that a large proportion, compared to a small proportion, do not agree with the tendency of discrimination shown against female workers in the workplace.

The Relationship Between Influential Factors and Discrimination Against Female State Government Officials in the Workplace

This section discusses four influential factors that have a significant relationship with the discrimination against female state government officials at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. The four factors are situational factors, socialization factors,

attitude and total income. Situational factors are factors in the workplace that are expected to influence the level of discriminatory tendencies towards women. These factors are wide and varied. In this study, this situational factor refers to five situations, namely, (1) giving importance to family over career, (2) being more careful when doing work, (3) not being flexible when making a decision, (4) being more concerned with emotions and, (5) the issue of diverse women's roles. These five conditions may increase the level of discrimination, or may also decrease the level of discrimination against female. In relation to this situational factor, this study presents the following hypotheses:

Ho4 There is no significant relationship between situational factors and the level of discrimination against female in the workplace.

The results of the analysis show that the coefficient $\beta = +0.241$, and the significant value of T is 0.000. This indicates that situational factors have a significant influence on the tendency to discriminate against females in the workplace. A positive relationship implies that as the independent variable increases, there will be a tendency for the value of the dependent variable to also increase. This suggests that if the coefficient of situational factors increases, the level of



discrimination against females in the workplace in the context of this study will also increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between situational factors and the level of discrimination against females in the workplace is rejected. On the other hand, situational factors in this study were found to have a significant positive influence on the level of discrimination against females in the workplace. The positive relationship obtained from the regression analysis in this study indicates that there is a tendency for the five situational factors used in this study to increase the level of discrimination against females in the workplace.

The results of this analysis were found to be in line with the study conducted by Zaharah Hassan (2004). He studied the behavior and leadership style of female academic leaders and found that all the respondents exhibited leadership behavior that focused more on tasks and followers, depending on the situation. This shows that female leadership behavior is interrelated with situational factors with female employees and is the most influential factor on female leadership in the decision-making process. Therefore, it becomes a factor in how the initial seeds of discrimination against females in the workplace in the context of this study occur.

From unstructured interviews with several respondents, many reasons were found that could be used to explain why such a relationship could occur. One of the reasons is that women are more emotional and inflexible in making decisions. Women in general tend to be more emotional than men. They also, as told by one of the respondents, prefer to make decisions inflexibly. Another reason is that female workers are said to be more family oriented. They also have many other roles to play apart from their role as employees. This also makes them discriminated in their careers. Based on the observation of female state government officials, it also shows that they are more concerned with family aspects than with their careers. This causes a tendency for women not to be given opportunities in terms of promotion and career development opportunities because it is feared that female employees are not able to perform the tasks given better because they are more concerned with family than career. This response is labeled against female workers based on female workers prioritizing family aspects rather than careers. These are the things that make situational factors increase the level of discrimination against female in the workplace.

The socialization factor in this study is the nurturing factor in the family, which involves four aspects: (1) the family that cares about the son, (2) other family members who influence other members, (3) the attitude of the parents towards the children, and (4) men's teachings are more important than women's. In the context of socialization factors, this study posits the following hypothesis:

Ho5 There is no significant relationship between socialization factors and the level of discrimination against female in the workplace.

The results of the analysis show that the coefficient $\beta = +0.167$, and the significant value of T is 0.018. This indicates that socialization factors have a significant influence on the tendency to discriminate against females in the workplace. The positive relationship can be explained by the increasing value of the independent variable, which suggests that the tendency value of the dependent variable will also increase. This means that if the coefficient of the socialization factor increases, then the level of discrimination against females in the workplace in the context of this study will also increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between socialization factors and the level of discrimination against females in the workplace is unacceptable. On the other hand, the socialization factor mentioned in this discrimination study proved to have a significant positive influence on the tendency to discriminate against females in the workplace.

The positive relationship found in this study implies that increasing the four factors used to describe the socialization factor will lead to a higher level of discrimination against females. For example, if a family prioritizes boys and the parenting pattern in a family also emphasizes boys, individuals raised in such families are more likely to discriminate against females. This aligns with Yaacob Harun's (1991) view that in Malay society, women are not as free as men due to their responsibilities in managing domestic affairs. This common perception among Malays reflects the belief that "no matter how successful a daughter is in life, her place is still in the kitchen." This highlights the inseparability of domestic responsibilities from women. One reason for the positive relationship in this study, as mentioned by a respondent, is that employees from families favoring sons over daughters are more inclined to



discriminate against females in the workplace. This underscores the significant influence of family on a child's behavior as an adult. A child raised with certain attitudes towards specific aspects is likely to carry those attitudes into adulthood and act in accordance with the beliefs instilled by their family, including discrimination against females.

Attitude often describes the feeling of liking or disliking something. Attitudes in this study are measured based on eight indicators, and respondents are asked to respond using a 5-point scale, from (1) Strongly Disagree (SD) to (5) Strongly Agree (SA). An example of an attitude indicator used in this study is "I like that women are discriminated against at work". The results of the study show that the higher the respondent's score from the eight indicators, the higher the level of discrimination against female in the workplace. This study presents a hypothesis related to this attitude factor as follows:

Ho6 There is no significant relationship between the attitude factor and the level of discrimination against female in the workplace.

The results of the analysis show that the coefficient $\beta = +0.312$, and the significant value of T is 0.000. This indicates that attitude factors have a significant influence on the tendency to discriminate against females in the workplace. A positive relationship means that if the value of the independent variable increases, there will be a tendency for the value of the dependent variable to also increase. This suggests that if the coefficient of the attitude factor increases, it will cause the level of discrimination against female in the context of this study to also increase. The relationship of the attitude factor explains that the longer a state government official is on duty, there is a behavioral tendency to discriminate, and the higher the state government official has a tendency to discriminate against females in his workplace. Therefore, the null hypothesis that was expressed and stated that there is no significant relationship between the attitude factor and the level of discrimination against females in the workplace cannot be accepted. This illustrates that the attitude factor has a significant positive influence on the level of discrimination against females in the workplace.

In addition, there are also respondents who state that women only deserve to be led instead of leading. This kind of opinion is also in line with Mazidah Zakaria (1980) who stated that indeed

women need to be led and not lead and they have to sacrifice their own interests for the happiness of others, especially their husbands and children. On the other hand, a superior man is a man who is brave, aggressive, responsible, rational and not controlled by emotions. Therefore, men are given the hope and responsibility to protect women, be their leaders, teach them and make any decisions for them (Fatimah Abdullah, 1985). Based on this past study, it can be concluded that men are indeed made leaders and women are the led group. As such, it is likely to cause discriminatory behavior among male employees over female employees based on this assumption.

The discussion related to the total income factor in this study is based on the following hypothesis:

Ho9 There is no significant relationship between the total income factor and the level of discrimination against female at work.

The results of the analysis show the coefficient $\beta = -0.108$, and the significant value of T is 0.051. This indicates that the total income factor has a significant influence on the tendency to discriminate against female in the workplace. A negative relationship implies that if the value of the independent variable decreases, there will be a tendency for the value of the dependent variable to also decrease. This suggests that if the coefficient of the total income factor decreases, it will lead to a lower level of discrimination against female in the workplace. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the total income factor and the level of discrimination against female in the workplace is not supported. Conversely, total income has a significant negative impact on the level of discrimination against female in the workplace.

The influence of the total income factor is also in line with the study conducted by Rashila Ramli (2008) who asserts that there is still a wide gap between the income capacity of male and female workers in the employment sector. Based on unstructured interviews with several respondents, there are also several reasons why this relationship occurs. One of them said it all starts with the education factor again. If the employee has a low level of education then the job status based on their job grade is also in the low job grade category. This shows that the amount of income that will be earned by an employee with a low level of education is not much. This is where incidents of



discrimination against female arise. A low amount of income is likely to lead to discrimination among employees.

5. Conclusion

This article discusses the level of discrimination against female state government officials in the workplace in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The discussion shows that the level of discrimination against female state government officials is moderate, as female officers in the Kota Bharu district receive equal treatment to male officers in terms of promotion, career development opportunities, important departmental decision-making, workload, performance evaluation and staff recruitment and selection. Therefore, there is no question of whether male officers receive more opportunities for promotion or face other forms of discrimination in their organizations.

Through the findings of the study, it is proven that the tendency of discrimination against women in the workplace exists but at a level that is not very strong, or is at a moderate level. This study also found that discrimination exists due to four factors, namely, (1) situational factors, (2) socialization factors, (3) attitudes and, (4) total income. The findings of the study are based on the factors that influence the tendency to discriminate against women in the workplace, namely situational factors, socialization factors, attitudes and total income. All of these factors were found to have a positive influence on situational factors, socialization factors and attitudes while total income had a negative influence on discrimination tendencies. This means that the higher the score obtained by each respondent on those factors, the higher their tendency to discriminate against women will be. Therefore, these factors, if examined more finely, are differentiating factors for power, prestige and property that can be the cause of conflict. The unequal ownership of these resources creates a tendency towards conflict, which in this study is a tendency to discriminate against women in the workplace.

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