

Sociolinguistics: Education, Women, Beauty, Discrimination & Exploitation: Investigating the Ugly Reality

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Abstract

In this article, we tried to highlight the current employment of educated women in private sectors especially language institutes and travel agencies. Qualitative in-depth interviews were used as the instrument to investigate women's attitudes and perceptions of job opportunities in private sectors. Sense Relation Network (SRN) method was used to complement the interviews. Each interview was recorded for the data analysis stage. We sought to investigate to what extent educational level is a significant criterion in providing women with job opportunities. We also considered the influence of beauty and the value it had for employers in private language institutes. An analysis of the survey reveals three major results; 1) educational level of women plays a less significant role in providing job opportunities for women in private sectors, 2) facial and physical beauty do exert a significant influence on the relationship between education and job opportunities, 3) The employment of beautiful women acts against them in the long run in a way that they are viewed just as toys and not as educated human beings. So, the study shows that education is marginalized and lookism has been put on the top of the agenda for the employers. Some probable solutions are suggested by the participants to diminish the maltreatment of women and discrimination against them.

Keywords: Discrimination; Equal Opportunity Climate; Sexual Harassment; Sex Discrimination; Job Opportunities

1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Literacy and education are important factors to determine the socio-economic growth of individuals. To put it differently, educational levels are a principal determinant of adult outcomes. As UNESCO' Declaration Note poses, "*education should be a gateway to a fuller participation in social, cultural, political and economic life... it must be relevant to people's socio-economic and cultural contexts*" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 7 cited in Maruatona, 2004). Popular conceptions hold that literacy and education have effects on people's life; therefore they provide those who become literate and educated with improved job opportunities and empowerment (Barttlet, 2008). But, in reality, this is not the case in private sectors; in this regard, physical appearance has turned out to be very important for employers. In other words, nowadays employers may prioritize beauty over education in private organizations. That's why gorgeous and attractive women are highly preferred over the unattractive. The current study takes this touchy issue under close scrutiny and explores how education is marginalized by gorgeousness and beauty for women working in *Air Line Agencies* or those working as secretaries or receptionists in private sectors. To put it differently, how women's identity is exploited, leading to their employment based on physical/sexual traits rather than education, expertise and valuable personality traits.

1.2. Significance of the study

A number of groups are reported to be affected by labor market discrimination: women, ethnic and national minorities, disabled workers, as well as religious and sexual minorities have been observed to face unfavorable labor market outcomes (Antecol, Barcus & Cobb-Clark, 2009). Previous studies on discrimination, however, neglected the role of beauty and gorgeousness leading to discrimination and exploitation in private workplaces. The current study posits that the employer's top priority is to find beautiful women to attract more customers; it's in this sense that women's *identity* is exploited and they just play instrumental roles in our society. In other words, we are seeking to discern whether education is the most essential ingredient for moving women forward and providing them with better job positions in private sectors; Moreover, it aims to discern to what extent education may be marginalized and give its place to beauty. Further, it tries to identify the hidden ideologies behind the employment of gorgeous women for low-paid jobs in private sectors; last but not least, it seeks to investigate who is in charge regarding this chaotic situation in our private sectors (women, the society, the government or the employers) and how we can deal with this touchy issue in our society.

1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The researcher may pose the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between education and job opportunities for women in private sectors?
- 2) Does beauty, as an independent variable, exert influence on the above-mentioned relationship?
- 3) Are beauty and gorgeousness always regarded as advantageous for women or they may place them as the disadvantaged?
- 4) What are the hidden ideologies behind the employment of beautiful women in private institutes?

The above-mentioned research questions are reworded to make the following null and directional hypotheses:

- 1) There is no significant relationship between education and job opportunities for women in private sectors.
- 2) Beauty does not exert influence on the relationship between education and job opportunities for women in private sectors.
- 3) Beauty and gorgeousness are always regarded as advantageous for women and they may not place them as the disadvantaged.

1.4. Definition of key Terms

In order to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation, the key terms of the study are clearly defined in the following:

a) Discrimination: Economists define discrimination as "valuation in the labor market of workers' characteristics, such as race and gender, not related to their on-the-job productivity" (Arrow, 1998 as cited in Drydakis, 2009). In another definition, Francois (1998) posits a firm is said to be a discriminator if it strictly prefers to hire members of one sex over members of the other. If a firm is indifferent between women and men it is said to be a non discriminator.

b) Equal Opportunity Climate: Dansby & Landis (1991) have conceptualized equal opportunity climate (EOC) as "the expectation by individuals that opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards will be accorded on the basis of a person's abilities, efforts and contributions, and not on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin" (cited in Estrada & Harbke, 2008).

c) Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is "discrimination based on sex within the social meaning of sex, as the concept is socially incarnated in sex roles". (Antecol, Barcus & Cobb-Clark, 2009).

d) Sex Discrimination: sex discrimination is defined as "that portion of the gender gap in aggregate employment outcomes that is not attributable to productivity differentials and has largely been concerned with understanding how these disparities can best be measured" (Petersen & Togstad, 2006).

e) Job Opportunities: Job opportunities are defined as "the volume of job openings potentially accessible to individuals with given skills and other desired characteristics" (Kriesi, Buchmann & Sacchi, 2010).

1.5. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study:

The current study, like any other study, suffers from some limitations: the small sample size does not make our results applicable to other contexts.

Moreover, adopting a judgment sampling, we will not be able to generalize the obtained outcomes to different age groups. In other words, as most of the girls participating in the study aged between 19 to 24, it's not advised to generalize the obtained results to other age groups. All in all, the perceptions released here are unique to *Payame Nour University* students.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Discussing available literature on gender discrimination in workplaces

In the following lines, we consider how workplaces have become gendered; to put it differently, we discuss how gender and racial status, age, etc. are contributed to having employers exercising double standards in workplaces. It will become clear for you that it's no longer your proficiency and capability determining your suitability for a job but your gender and racial status all make decisions about it.

The fact that female jobs are on average less productive and therefore paid less than male jobs is not specific to this study. Petit (2007) conducted a study on gender discrimination in France seeking to investigate the effect of age and family constraints on the gender gap in access to job interviews. It was made clear that employers' beliefs about stereotyped female characteristics or abilities and the probability of female career interruption may be different depending on whether female job applicants are young or old. Regarding family constraints, he jumped to conclusion that employers usually may expect that a woman with several children may be less available and less productive than a man in the same situation. The reason lies in the fact that women are more involved in childcare than men. So, women with children may be less successful than men in getting jobs needing more availability. Therefore the study concluded that female positions are less productive than male ones. That's why empirical studies on French data find that a large part of the gender wage gap is explained by the fact that women are over-represented in part-time jobs.

Petit (2007) later on makes remarks about job opportunity access for women and men:

"In contemporary labor markets, discrimination rarely takes the form of women being paid less than men in the same jobs at the same establishments, but is manifest in men having better access to higher paying jobs within an occupation type, even when traditional labor market characteristics are controlled for." (Petit, 2007)

Malveaux (1999) does a research on women of color to discern how color may create discrimination in workplaces. She argues that there are stark differences in the unemployment rates of women. The unemployment rate of Hispanic women, as she poses, has been about twice that of white women, and has been even higher for African American women. She then continues that white women usually occupy better positions than women of color; for example, smaller proportion of white women than women of color is found among operators and laborers. Finally she enumerates the reasons why this is the case for women of color. To put it differently, there are two prominent factors that contribute to lower wages of women, particularly women of color; first of all, women of color tend to be more heavily represented in lower paying jobs and secondly they are more likely to be in part-time and have considerably higher unemployment rates than white women.

Penzhorn (2005) points to undesirable situation in South Africa for women. She maintains that Women have been significantly disadvantaged. She believes that Colonial conquest and sexual division of labor are two reasons why women are deprived of having access to means of production and economic independency. Little research has been done to examine discrimination against gays and lesbians in labor market. Weichselbaumer (2003) achieves outcomes signifying lower incomes for gays but higher incomes for lesbians. She continues that Lesbians are documented as often behaving in more manly ways and being more masculine, i.e. more dominant, autonomous, assertive and detached than heterosexual women. It has been argued that since employers adhere to the ideal of masculinity which is associated with labor market success, lesbians might be financially rewarded in contrast to heterosexual women (Weichselbaumer, 2003). She then continues that lesbians and gays, however, choose not to reveal their sexual orientation on the job to avoid employment discrimination and pass as heterosexuals. Paraponaris, Teyssier and Ventelou (2010) even considered how health may create discrimination against French. They argue that despite protective labor law and favorable health insurance arrangements, French cancer survivors continue to experience problems to stay in or to return to the labor force. Considering how discrimination may work in favor of white people and against people of color, Bendick, Rodriguez and Jayaraman (2010) discuss employment discrimination in restaurants.

They consider restaurant employment, the experiences of low-skill and immigrant workers in those jobs, and the hypothesis of employment discrimination against persons of color. They finally argue that although restaurants offer large numbers of "entry-level" jobs, those positions typically provide "low wages, few fringe benefits, little job security, and sometimes employee abuse ranging from violations of wages and hours laws to racial or sexual harassment" (Bendick, Rodriguez and Jayaraman, 2010). In their investigations, race and ethnicity was clearly the trigger for the discriminatory treatment toward people of color. To put it differently, they discuss that racial discrimination toward people of color is resulted from two basic sources: Restaurant employers might reject job applicants of color not because the employer expects their job performance to be inferior but because their race/ethnicity would be inconsistent with an atmosphere of upper-class exclusivity the restaurant offers its customers. Another interpretation emphasizes efforts by white male employees to maintain "social closure" – that is, to preserve their "in-group" privilege and social comfort against any "out-groups" seeking their scarce, well-paid jobs (Bendick, Rodriguez and Jayaraman, 2010). This is exactly what social psychologists refer to "*employers' stereotypical attitudes*" which means that employers discriminate when stereotypes about applicants' race/ethnic group distort the employers' assessments of applicants' individual qualifications. To exemplify clearly, Employers who hire both whites and persons of color may still treat them differently after hiring. For example, white restaurant servers might be offered more work shifts per week or opportunities to advance to supervisory or management positions.

In another study investigating employment discrimination, French and Strachan (2009) sought to identify the approaches undertaken in implementing equal employment opportunity in transport industry in Australia. They propose that employment discrimination in Australia is usually resulted from the western economics; they go further and argue that women continue to be underrepresented in non-traditional industries and occupations and this occupational segregation has consequences for women. Consequently it has been identified as the principal cause of the wages gap between men and women in western economies. In Australia, the transport industry has historically been male-dominated leading to employing more than 60% men. French and Strachan (2009), later on, refer to the *Opportunity Act* whose principal goal was to eliminate discrimination and provide equal opportunity for women and 'the principle that employment for women should be dealt with on the basis of merit' rather than gender. Liff (1999, as cited in French and Strachan, 2009)) also identifies the need for social regulation in addition to legal regulation through consultation with employees and their unions as an important further requirement in equity management to ensure employee needs are included on the equity agenda.

Estrada & Harbke (2008) intended to identify gender and ethnic differences in perceptions of equal opportunity climate and job outcomes in US Army personnel. They hypothesized that gender and ethnic group membership would influence perceptions of the equal opportunity climate. They further postulated that gender and ethnic group membership would moderate the relationship between equal opportunity climate perceptions and ratings of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and workgroup effectiveness (Estrada & Harbke, 2008). Results obtained from military personnel have shown that white men rate equal opportunity climate more positively than women and ethnic minorities. Moreover, women experience higher levels of harassment and discrimination than men. Therefore their study indicated that women and ethnic minorities do not experience the same opportunities as white men. In another study aiming to investigate sex discrimination in workplaces, Pema & Mehay (2010) distinguish between two types of jobs. "Type-A jobs that require extensive firm-specific training and type-B jobs that do not require as much training or job attachment". Type-A jobs offer better promotion prospects and higher pay than type-B jobs. They argue that women are usually hired in type-B jobs, earning less money than men.

Francois (1998) in his paper "*gender discrimination without gender difference*" provides an explanation for the continued existence of gender discrimination in competitive labor markets and analyzes the effects of policies designed to alleviate it. His concluding remarks point to the fact that women consistently earn less than men. Mora & Carbonel (2009) carried out a study on job satisfaction gender gap among young recent university graduates. They concluded that women on average "earn less than men, are less often self-employed, have a larger chance to have a fixed term contract (instead of a permanent one), work in smaller establishments, are more often found in low-level qualified occupations" (Mora & Carbonel, 2009). A group of scientists, Goldsmith, Sedo, Darity & Hamilton (2004), dealt with workers' perception of a "good job" and how discrimination could affect their attitudes. They pose that a person searching for a good job will have an a priori cognition about how they will be treated by their employers. If a person expects to be "treated fairly" they anticipate being offered a good job, one that compensates them adequately for the skills they bring to the firm.

To put it differently, a "good job" from the workers' perspective is one where monetary and non-monetary compensation are at least equivalent to their perceived value as an employee. Therefore employees form a prior attitudes toward the job and any discrimination practice on the part of employers that can affect their emotions and attitudes (Goldsmith, Sedo, Darity & Hamilton, 2004). In a theoretical study, Hayesa, Bartleb & Major (2002) posed "*climate for opportunity*" model. The core of the model addresses the complex manner in which environmental factors, experiences, values, and cognitions create perceptions about fair treatment in the workplace. In order to devalue the discrimination practices on the part of employers, they pose that *equal employment opportunity* states that "an employer has committed an unlawful practice if he/she discriminates against any individual on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, or national origin". Therefore climate for opportunity is individual's overall perception of the fairness of the organization in terms of the management processes used to allocate opportunities, including interpersonal treatment, and the distribution of opportunities in the organizational context. Critical to this definition, as posed by the abovementioned scientists, are individuals' perceptions of environmental factors and personal values. To understand how climate for opportunity is assessed requires an understanding of how individuals perceive their environment (Hayesa, Bartleb & Major, 2002).

It's furthermore discussed that dimensions of climate for opportunity range from positive to negative; in other words, a negative climate for opportunity exists when employees perceive that the organizational management practices are unfair. Conversely, a positive climate for opportunity exists when employees perceive opportunity based processes and allocations are fair. Mouw (2002) discuss racial differences in the effects of job contacts. He poses that there are two models of discrimination for labor market; the first model is "outright discrimination" that is a taste for one racial group over another and "statistical discrimination" that bases its root on real or imagined stereotypes about group differences. Mouw (2002) then continues that both types have consequences for the use of contacts. First, the presence of a taste for racial discrimination among employers, evident either in an outright reluctance to hire black workers or in discriminatory treatment of black workers they do hire, points to one reason. In their article, "*sex discrimination in hiring*", Petersen & Togstad (2006) argue that there are many sources of gender gap in employment caused by potentially discriminatory actions by employers: in wages for the same job, in hiring, in promotion, and in how wages are set for different kinds of work. As they point out, hiring is one important mechanism that may create sex segregation in occupations and firms where men and women tend to work in different occupations and firms. Segregation rather than unequal pay for the same work for the same employer is likely the central cause for the gender wage gap (Petersen & Togstad, 2006).

Focusing on appointments where both men and women applied for the same position, they discovered that sexuality may sometimes be an asset from which women can enjoy benefits. In their study, they found that women have a higher probability of getting an offer: 1 out of 7 women whereas only 1 out of 10 men receive an offer when they compete for the same jobs. Exploring the relationship between sex harassment and sex discrimination, Antecol, Barcus & Cobb-Clark (2009) maintain that workplaces are rarely gender-neutral. They add that women frequently find that they are paid less, are promoted less often, and receive less training than their male colleagues. They continue that reports of sexual harassment are also common with many working women experiencing sexual harassment at some point in their careers. They consider sex discrimination as the main stumbling block to reaching equality and fairness in workplaces. To put it differently, sex discrimination is "that portion of the gender gap in aggregate employment outcomes that is not attributable to productivity differentials and have largely been concerned with understanding how these disparities can best be measured" (Antecol, Barcus & Cobb-Clark, 2009).

Carrying out a study on gays, Drydakis (2009) examined the possible discrimination faced by gay men compared to heterosexuals when applying for jobs in Greek private sectors. The obtained results led to the observation that gay men faced a significantly lower chance of receiving an invitation for an interview. Similarly, it was shown that gay men are paid less than similarly qualified straight men. Drydakis (2009) maintains that "homosexuality" is a characteristic that results in biased evaluations of competence; once the status becomes evident to employers, applicants become labeled as outsiders and expectations and assumptions are associated with the individuals that finally result in discrimination practices on the part of employers. That's why in workplaces gay men usually try to avoid discrimination by passing for non-gay due to fear that their employment would be in jeopardy if it became known that they were gay (Drydakis, 2009). Kriesi, Buchmannb & Sacchi (2010) examined variation in job opportunities for men and women in the occupationally segmented and highly gender-segregated Swiss labor market.

They discuss that job opportunities strongly depend on occupational credentials whereas educational attainment plays a minor part. Age and cohort effects, according to them, are found mainly for women. These findings imply that in occupationally segmented and sex-segregated labor markets in Switzerland, occupational credentials and sex serve as employers' primary ranking criteria. They further continue that in Switzerland, a large proportion of women work in a few female-typed and highly female-dominated occupations in health care and social work, teaching, sales and in clerical jobs. Men, on the other hand, are allocated to a much wider range of male-dominated and integrated occupations (Kriesi, Buchmann & Sacchi, 2010).

Finally, Dohertya & Manfredi (2001) investigated women's employment in Italian and UK hotels. They came to findings that there are three main categories of female occupation; the first one is the occupation which is contingently gendered; to put it differently, the employer seeks cheap labor and it happens to be female. The second one is sex-typed that is to say sexual attractiveness is sought by employers as a desired attribute and finally one which is patriarchally prescribed like caring for others and serving food. They add that senior management posts in hotel industry fall into this category implying women's exclusion from some occupations which are prescribed as suitable just for men. (Dohertya & Manfredi, 2001).

2.2. A brief literature review on the importance of literacy and education as gateways to empowerment & employment

According to Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP):

"There is a strong and well demonstrated relationship between low levels of literacy or English language competence and high levels of unemployment and other forms of social disadvantage"
(DEET 1991a: 1, cited in Maruatona, 2007).

Previous studies have represented a powerful and dominant voice on the relationship between literacy skills and aspects of employment. It is believed that education is an investment which will lead to greater economic productivity.

In his article, *literacy and power*, Wedin (2008) explains how education and literacy can be gateways to obtaining power in different social strata. He further argues that it is commonly presumed to be a positive relationship between literacy and power. To put it differently, individuals who are educated are expected to acquire more power than those who are not. He later on continues that even literacy and education may become tools for exerting discrimination and putting others in oppression (Wedin, 2008).

Puchner (2003), adopting a critical literacy perspective, releases the same ideas as Wedin (2004). He postulates that literacy power can be regarded as a tool to dominate subordinate groups. He then argues that different ways in which literacy is transmitted and acquired in different contexts have implications for how power is exercised and by whom (Puchner, 2003). He adds that a major goal of most women's literacy programs is to bring about better socio-economic conditions for women. Finally he asserts that literacy does play an important role in bringing about positive change for women. As Black (2001) argues literacy skills are usually viewed as a set of technical skills which, once acquired, usually lead to positive employment outcomes. This model of literacy has been termed "autonomous" because literacy is considered a cognitive skill relatively autonomous of social context. In many studies based on this model the literacy levels of particular groups of people are measured using a range of indicators, and usually higher literacy levels are found to correlate with higher income/status jobs, and the reverse is the case for lower literacy levels.

Investigating challenges to literacy and education women encounter in Africa, Penzhorn (2005) argues that girls are often disadvantaged in the area of access to education and training due to early pregnancy, household work and sexual abuse. She admits that female illiteracy is a reality in South Africa and is to a great extent the result of traditional attitudes about women's domestic role in society. Highlighting the blatant discrimination against women, Penzhorn (2005) asserts that women are disadvantaged by the social justice system. Even though sexism is outlawed by the constitution, many instances of inequality and discrimination are still found in African countries against women. Asiedu & Folmer (2007) carried out a study in Ghana and sought to investigate the effects of privatization on job satisfaction. They elaborate on education as the building block in successful job carriers. They maintain that education is an important individual characteristic that affects one's job satisfaction.

Particularly, education is likely "to increase productivity, to stimulate innovative behavior, and to facilitate the adoption and the use of new technologies and procedures which are all likely to contribute to job satisfaction". Moreover, the level of education attained is expected to increase one's job search qualifications and make it easier to attain more responsibilities which are also assumed to positively impact on job satisfaction (Asiedu & Folmer, 2007). Bartlett (2008) holds that literacy has some kind of effect and it provides those who become literate with improved job prospects and empowerment. He also suggests that literacy provides individuals with better employment opportunities. He argues that literacy provides certain "affordances" or "potentialities".

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Twenty four students participated in the current study; they were from different majors including TEFL, English translation, computer engineering, agriculture, economics, law, accounting, psychology and management. A variety of majors was selected to make our results much more comprehensive. The participants were between 19 to 24 years old. It's worth to mention that they all studied at *Payame Nour University*.

3.2. Instrumentation:

As the nature of the current study demanded, we designed qualitative methods for data collection; using in-depth interviews, we decided to investigate women's attitudes and perceptions of job opportunities in private sectors especially language institutes and travel agencies. *Sense Relation Network (SRN)* method was used to complement the interviews. Each interview was recorded for the data analysis stage. Moreover, ethical issues were considered; all participants gave the green light to record their voices as they were being interviewed.

3.3. Procedure:

Adopting a *judgment sampling*, we sought to find a homogeneous sample whose members belonged to a certain social community and could fulfill certain roles; using the *Sense Relation Network (SRN)* method, we provided the interviewees with the questions we aimed to achieve their answers. To have participants feel relaxed and confident enough, they were given the questions in advance. They were given enough time to read them and when ready, answer them. This method also provided us with the opportunity to have participants talk in depth without them feeling anxious (Llamas, Mullany, & Stockwell, 2007). Using a tape recorder, we then asked questions and recorded their perceptions regarding the current status of job opportunities for women in private sectors, the type of jobs, the role of education and beauty.

4. Results and Discussion

In the following lines, we will analyze the obtained outcomes from the interviews. All twenty four girls taking part in our study, elaborated on the issue under investigation and condemned women's exploitation and manipulation in private workplaces. They all posited that employers discriminate against women; they further claimed that most of the employers had hidden, nasty ideologies behind women's employment in private sectors. The hidden ideologies ranged from women's manipulation for gaining customers' attraction to sexual harassment in workplaces. Below we discuss their ideas succinctly. *Noushin*, a twenty four year old girl whose major is accounting, posits that women are usually employed in low-paid jobs in private sectors. She argues that women are usually hired in positions as secretaries, business visitors or advertisers. She continues that employers almost favor gorgeous and beautiful girls in those positions. She further claims that employers have nasty ideologies behind the employment process. Make-up and dressing highly influence their employment process. *Noushin* talks about her own experience as accountant in private sectors. She argues that "my employer usually changes her secretaries five times a year. The reason is definitely clear. As his sexual appetite is satisfied, he changes them looking for a new case".

When asked who is responsible for the current situation she postulates that "the responsibility falls on the society in general. And it is you and me, employers, women, etc. that form the society. She adds that we as members of this society should change our mentality toward this touchy issue. We should never welcome employers' nasty ideologies about women; we should all respect their dignity and pride". All in all, educational status gives its place to gorgeousness and beauty in private sectors providing the beautiful with better job opportunities. *Elnaz*, an accountant like *Noushin*, refers to marital status as a very important criterion. She poses that employers usually seek for single applicants. Again, nasty ideologies are clear behind their employment processes.

She postulates that girls employed as secretaries primarily function as mistresses. She found the government responsible for the current situation and added that governments should keep private sectors under surveillance to safeguard women with job security. Generally speaking, she found no room left for education in private sectors and put emphasis on applicants' beauty and gorgeousness. *Faranak*, a twenty year old student studying economics, put the education in margins. She added that employers in private sectors are not looking for educated women but gorgeous ones. She found the government in charge. She argued that "poverty is an influential factor forcing women to work in undesirable situations. Women are made to accept the nasty requests posed forward by employers just to meet their family needs". *Aida*, a law student, criticized the current situation in private sectors regarding women's employment as secretaries, accountants, etc and further castigated women in general. "We are all living in an Islamic country" she said. "Iranian women should not imitate sexual roles played by western women" she continues. She later said that women should aim to prioritize their education letting no employer misuse their gender in workplaces.

Donya who majored in translation studies lashed out at employers' hidden and nasty ideologies in employment processes in private sectors. She then referred to *Hejab* as a debilitating factor for employment. "They never employ *Mohajabeh* women" she asserted. She angrily criticized the preference of employers for gorgeous women rather than educated ones. She explained about her own experience of discrimination: "my friend and I went to work as teachers in private institutes. My friend's knowledge of English surpassed mine but as she was not beautiful, the employer preferred my beauty over her knowledge and expertise". That's how education and expertise have given their room to beauty and gorgeousness.

Morvarid, who was studying agricultural engineering, castigated harshly employers' hidden and nasty ideologies regarding women's employment in private sectors. She, however, claimed that "beauty is an asset and something quite essential for gaining customers' attraction. But the fact is that it has marginalized education and expertise in private sectors". She further pointed to the instrumental roles played by gorgeous women in those positions and argued that gorgeous women should never let vicious employers misuse their beauty and exploit their identity. As it takes too much space to analyze all the twenty four interviews, we suffice it to say that the abovementioned cases can be regarded as true representatives of the whole sample. They succinctly cover the ideas put forward in all twenty four cases. All in all, below we provide you with a comprehensive summary of the results:

- ✓ All the participants revealed that there is no significant relationship between education and job opportunities for women in private sectors. In other words, educational degrees play secondary roles for women's employment in private sectors. When asked to express the proportions, they devoted 80 to 90 percent to beauty and just 10 to 20 percent to educational levels.
- ✓ Beauty was revealed to be put on the top of the agenda in private sectors. They also expressed that wearing a lot of make-up or deviating from religious norms provides you with better job opportunities; this sort of personality is highly welcomed by the employers.
- ✓ Although job applications prominently ask for women than men, most of the jobs proposed are low-paid jobs, putting women in less prestigious positions like receptionists, secretaries ...
- ✓ *Hejab* was considered to be a preventive factor, mostly depriving the *Mohajabeh* (those women covering their bodies and hair) of having job opportunities in private sectors. To put it differently, less religious women have better job opportunities than more religious ones who are not welcomed in private workplaces.
- ✓ Employers were accused of misusing women as instruments to attract more customers; this instrumental usage was condemned by all participants in the study.
- ✓ Beauty is not always an asset for women; in the current study, it was revealed that beauty makes women to be looked down as just instruments to fulfill mundane functions. Employers were claimed to misuse women's beauty for different toxic purposes.
- ✓ A lot of participants claimed that *secretaries* are not just secretaries. They play different functions, *mistresses* for example.
- ✓ Some of the participants expressed their sorrow for the fake independence women may adopt; although women may claim independence economically as they earn money, said some participants, but they are treated as slaves by the employers!
- ✓ Different participants put the blame for this chaotic situation on different individuals and organs; the employers, the women themselves, the society and even the government, were all revealed to be responsible for the current chaotic situation.

All in all, considering the questions we posed at the beginning of the study, the first hypothesis is supported. To put it differently, educational level plays less significant role in providing job opportunities for women in private sectors. The second hypothesis, however, is rejected. In other words, beauty and gorgeousness do exert influence on the relationship between education and job opportunities. They crucially marginalize education in private sectors. To put it differently, it is beauty that is highly welcomed and prioritized by vicious employers in private sectors. Considering the third question, we can pose that beauty and gorgeousness are not always regarded as asset for women. The results showed that these eye catching terms in the surface structure, may turn out to be vicious in the deep structure and work as instrumental tools to exercise discrimination against women. The outcomes obtained from the data analysis implied that although beautiful women have better opportunities to gain jobs in private sectors, they are usually misused sexually and their identity as a human is downgraded. Finally employers, women themselves, society and government all are responsible for the current situation in private sectors.

The issue of harassment and exploitation of women is an ignored issue in some western countries. However, one expects a safe atmosphere in Islamic countries like Iran whose laws strictly prohibits the maltreatment and abuse of women. Employers should purify themselves from vicious intentions toward women and further try to respect their identity as a human. Women, on the other hand, should never downgrade and devalue their modesty and dignity and never let employers misuse their beauty. The society in general consists of individual people; we should all change our mentality and value others just for humanistic traits. And finally the government should keep the private sectors under surveillance to avoid any inhumane behavior towards women in workplaces.

5. Conclusion

The current study tried to shed light on the current employment of women in private sectors; using in-depth interviews, it sought to investigate to what extent educational levels played important roles in providing women with job opportunities. It also considered the influence of beauty and the value it had for employers in private institutes. It was revealed that educational levels are marginalized, giving their place to beauty and gorgeousness in private sectors. In other words, lookism has been put on the top of the agenda for the employers. To solve this chaotic situation, authorities and individuals should cooperate; our government should do their best to keep the private employers under corrective observations obliging them to hire people according to their knowledge and abilities not based on their facial and physical attractiveness. Regarding the society in general, people of walks of life should revise their mentality about women and their functions in our society. Last but not least, employers of private sectors should respect women, their identity and their glory. They should try to put much emphasis on the educational level rather than beauty in the employment process. Furthermore, they should not treat women as just instruments to attract customers. Overall, the current study showed that eradicating discrimination and exploitation against women requires that different parts of society to collaborate to revitalize their mentality toward women so that women are employed based on expertise and valuable personality traits rather than gorgeousness and beauty.

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