

https://dspace.org/

Women's views on the causes and consequences of sexual harassment.

Kariaga, Patricia

2010-11-15
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8873

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Abstract

Despite the high prevalence of sexual harassment and the important role which occupational social workers can play in this area, few of these professionals are directly involved in this area at various workplaces in Zimbabwe, where the rate of human rights abuses affecting not just women but the entire population is very high.

The aims of this study were to investigate what female employees in the three international banks situated in Harare's CBD (Barclays, Standard Chattered and Stanbic) view as the causes and consequences of sexual harassment and to find out the differences and similarities in their views on the causes and consequences of sexual harassment at the three banks.

An interview schedule was administered personally by the researcher to 63 respondents working at Stanbic, Barclays and Standard Chattered Banks. Questions pertaining to women's views and their experiences of sexual harassment were asked using a guideline from the Multi-Perspective Framework of sexual harassment by Tata and Bowes-Sperry in Powell (1999).

Results indicated that there was a high prevalence of sexually harassing behaviour. Culture and tradition were found to be the major causes of sexual harassment at the workplace while the main consequence of sexual harassment was found to be the integration of women and men at the workplace. Women may have over time been gravely affected by sexual harassment as close to a fifth of the participants had to receive counselling from the volunteer social worker after their interviews.

Results also indicated that the most sexual harassment occurred at Stanbic bank where there was no sexual harassment policy in place indicating the relevance of sexual harassment policies for any organisation. Both Standard Chattered and Barclays banks, despite having clear policies on sexual harassment, had not trained their employees on these policies. It was also discovered that women were not aware of the existence of sexual harassment policies in banks where they were in place. In addition, they were not aware of the National Law on sexual harassment or its existence, emphasising the importance of appropriate government and non-governmental bodies training the nation on gender sensitive laws.

The intention of the research was to help address policy shortfalls in the banks and enhance knowledge on sexual harassment among employees.