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Exploring the Impact of the Two-Child Policy on Women's Employment Situation in Television Drama 'Two-Child Era'

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Abstract: This paper examines the impact of China's two-child policy on women's employment rights through the lens of the television drama "Two-Child Era". While the policy has successfully addressed the problem of an ageing population, it has also intensified gender discrimination in the workplace. The drama depicts the challenges faced by Jin Cancan, a working mother who decides to have a second child in compliance with the national policy. The conflict between her family responsibilities and professional duties highlights the difficulties women encounter when seeking to return to the workplace. Using literature analysis and content analysis methods, this paper investigates the influence of the two-child policy on women's employment rights, identifies the causes of gender discrimination in the workplace, and proposes countermeasures to mitigate its negative impact. The study suggests that eliminating gender discrimination requires comprehensive approaches that address legal provisions, policy formulation, and cultural transformation. The paper also concludes that empowering women through education and training can be crucial as well in overcoming societal stereotypes and promoting gender equality.

Keywords: "Two-Child Era", two-child policy, employment situation

1. Introduction

In order to address the issue of an ageing population, China implemented the universal two-child policy in October 2015, which allows couples to have two children. In a recent move, the Chinese government announced a new three-child policy on May 31, 2021, allowing couples to have up to three children. The three-child policy is an additional effort to address China's ageing demographic. Furthermore, on March 5, 2022, China increased supportive measures connected to the three-child policy in order to lessen the burden of family raising. Following the adoption of these new laws, women experienced evident gender discrimination in the workplace [1]. Many studies have demonstrated that women confront evident gender discrimination in the workplace, particularly in the field of female reproduction. [2]. However, most of the existing research is based on the existing survey data from the perspective of sociology or policies, and there are only a few pieces of research on relevant film and television works. Currently, most realistic themes portrayed in film and television productions, such as family ethics and women's careers, are derived from real life and

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reflect on the current social situations, which is worthy of concern. In recent years, an increasing number of Chinese films and television programs have featured storylines of second and third children.

The television drama "Two-Child Era" is based on the time when China introduced a new policy allowing couples to have a second child. The show gained popularity and made an impact after its broadcast. The lead character, Jin Cancan, represents a married woman of childbearing age who decides to have a second child in compliance with the national policy. To ensure a better quality of life for her second-child family, she also takes up the role of a working woman. The show portrays the social and family dynamics in China during the implementation of the two-child policy, as well as the challenges and opportunities it presents to women and families. In the workplace, as a pregnant woman, Jin Cancan is often discriminated against by her clients, and the arrival of her second child aggravates the conflict between her and her family. This essay will discuss the impact of the "two-child" policy on women's employment situation in the television drama "Two-Child Era". The TV series is worth studying because of its relevant and influential content, which addresses the contemporary state of women's lives.

This article will use the method of literature analysis and content analysis to study the situation of women in the television drama "Two-Child Era", the impact of the "two-child" policy on women's employment situation, study the causes and find the countermeasures to deal with the impact.

2. Background Information

"Two-Child Era" mainly tells the story of the female protagonist Jin Cancan giving birth to her second child. The drama has many episodes about women having a second child and having conflicts with various roles, including family and career. Taking the family conflict as an example, at the beginning of the play, after Jin Cancan knows she is pregnant with her second child, she is sent to the hospital by her mother for an abortion after the mother learns that she is pregnant with her second child. This is because the mother believes the family's financial condition is insufficient to bear the responsibility of raising two children. This also reflects the current problem of the cost of childbirth. Moreover, Jin Cancan's parents-in-law hope Jin can give birth to a second child, which can be related to the tradition that in China, the husband's parents are usually more interested in having more than one offspring due to the idea of passing on the family name to the next generation. Conflicts within the family also arise because of the conflicting ideas of the couple's parents in the drama. In addition, Jin quit her job immediately after she became pregnant. However, Jin's mother does not want her daughter to give up her career and become a housewife from the point of view of financial independence. At the end of the story, Jin runs a supermarket with her friends and manages to share family responsibilities. However, until then, she had been torn between staying home full-time with her children and going back to work. This torn also reflects the current two-dimensional dilemma of women: it is difficult to have both a career and a family. Furthermore, at work, Jin, as a designer, is also suspected by clients because she is pregnant or the mother of two children. This might be because, as a pregnant woman, Jin has difficulties sustaining her energy level for extended periods and, as a result, makes it hard to complete important chores. These episodes in the TV drama "Two-Child Era" are enough to prove that while the two-child policy has its benefits, it has also had a negative impact on women and families who comply with the policy, especially working women. Their family relationship and workplace stress have been negatively affected, no matter the extent of the injuries.

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3. Causes of Gender Discrimination Against Women in Employment by the Two-Child Policy

3.1. The Social Division of Labour Caused by Traditional Concepts

The long-term traditional Chinese value has led to discrimination against women in the workplace. For centuries, the thoughts that men take on the responsibility of working in the family, while the job of women is to raise children, have greatly influenced the social division of labour. Although democracy, openness and gender equality are advocated in the new era, ideological changes are not achieved overnight. In reality, the status of women is lower than that of men, and the probability of gender and age discrimination encountered by women when applying for jobs is basically higher than that of men [3]. Society criticises typically married women for choosing to focus on career development and not to give birth to children as the culture regards childbirth as the main job of women, which hinders women's promotion despite the fact that they may have a higher level of education and experience than male employees. Even in the play, Jin Cancan leaves her job because she is pregnant, following the traditional concept of the social division of labour.

3.2. The Impact on the Company's Costs

Although married women choose not to have children under the two-child policy, the family and society will still put pressure on women on the basis of the policy, so women will have to choose between occupation and childbirth. Even if women return to the workplace after childcare, firms may not give them equal job opportunities in most cases because maternity leave increases the cost of firms. This discrimination will have a negative impact on women. Firms of profit may need to adopt corresponding strategies to avoid certain negative effects or burdens on firms caused by childbirth, such as reducing women's income and not allowing maternity leave to compensate for losses [4]. However, on the other hand, male employees with plans of childbirth should also bear the responsibility of childcare, and their dispersion of energy due to childcare will also affect their productivity, but firms rarely include this cost. By contrast, they will only reduce the operating costs by limiting the work interests of women, and this can be regarded as a stereotype of women that they are born to take on the responsibility of childbirth and upbringing, while men can focus on work.

3.3. The Limitation of the Two-Child Policy

The main purpose of the two-child policy is to cope with the ageing population, improve the fertility rate and alleviate the labour force problem, while the continuous decline in the fertility rate in recent years reflects the limitations of the two-child policy. Although China has initially formed a legal normative system to guarantee women's equal employment rights, so far, there is no special anti-employment discrimination law. Without a specific law, it can be hard to prevent the emergence of gender discrimination in employment from the source. China's current relevant laws and regulations have a certain generality, which means there are no specific punishment measures for discriminators, only theoretical guidance [5-7].

4. Suggestions

4.1. Social Reframing

From a societal standpoint, society must support good ideas, reduce gender prejudices, impact family groups and school education, and instil gender equity and open philosophy in children. First and foremost, while it is indisputable that men usually work outside to make money, the family idea of providers and women as caregivers who prepare at home and care for children continues to influence

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people's understanding of the societal division of labour. Humans, however, do not have distinct rights based on gender, according to the legislation. In terms of employment privileges, males and women have equal rights. They should have the same chances, treatment, and duties. Only by strengthening men's family obligations, sharing family responsibilities, and lowering women's labour load can women feel comfortable entering the workplace and ensuring work efficiency. In "Two-Child Era", the heroine eventually gained her family's support and shared the family load fairly before going to work [7].

Women's "obligation" in the process of having a second child should not be emphasised, nor should women's work be pitted against having a second child. In order to create a good social atmosphere for protecting women's employment rights, it is necessary to emphasise the important role of women engaged in production work in promoting social development and continuously improving women's social status and support for women's participation in social work. A positive social environment can successfully decrease employment discrimination, help ensure that women receive equal and friendly treatment during the job search process, genuinely protect women's employment rights, and support the two-child period [7-8].

4.2. Improving Relevant Laws and Regulations

Despite the presence of laws and regulations to preserve women's freedom to work, workplace gender discrimination persists, which is due, in part, to the difficulties in putting basic legal rules and general obligation norms into effect. As a result, the government must reconsider the present legislative framework in order to ensure more effective implementation and enforcement of rules aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination in the workplace [9]. To begin, an "Anti-Discrimination Law" should be drafted to clarify the concept of employment discrimination and to specify important contents, such as the burden of proof and legal liability to be borne after the occurrence of employment discrimination, in order to eliminate gender discrimination in employment. At the moment, China's current laws do not explicitly specify the obligation and punishment of enterprises in terms of gender discrimination in employment, and the law does not serve as an effective deterrent to the problem of gender discrimination in employment [9]. It will successfully control gender discrimination in employment and ensure women's job rights if it is clarified in the Anti-Discrimination Law that the legal liability court of enterprises can have a legal foundation in dealing with pertinent cases.

Second, improve the maternity insurance system for female workers by providing more maternity subsidies in addition to the same maternity allowance as one child; at the same time, maternity leave will be extended so that women can have more time to care for their second child and coordinate the life of raising two children, allowing them to continue their career more effectively. Finally, paternity leave for men who have a second child should be increased appropriately so that men can participate in the process of raising children, reduce the parenting burden on women, and return to the workplace faster to continue their careers.

4.3. Self-improvement of Women

To re-enter the labour market, women must constantly improve, constantly self-learn, whether during pregnancy or at other times, strive to constantly improve themselves, and enhance self-value, only with strong skills and rich experience, in order to occupy a place in the competitive labour market. When the protagonist in Age of Two Children faced the setback of re-employment, she did not stay despondent. Instead, she attempted to better herself and demonstrated herself through self-improvement, and she was successful. Furthermore, enterprises should recognise the benefits of women's work, identify the strengths of female workers, support the growth of both parties and create

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a win-win scenario in order to decrease the atmosphere of social discrimination against women's employment [10].

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the defence and realisation of women's rights and interests are crucial to building a civilised and evolved society. Equal employment opportunities not only safeguard individuals but also provide a path towards achieving fairness, justice, and a harmonious community. To ensure the successful implementation of the two-child policy, it is imperative to guarantee the smooth implementation of female employees' job rights. This requires the elimination of gender discrimination against female workers in employment and the development of reasonable organisational policies and cultural practices. The government must take a comprehensive approach to address gender discrimination, focusing on legal provisions, policy formulation, and cultural transformation. Only by taking these steps can we effectively ensure female workers' equitable job rights and move towards a more just and equal society. Furthermore, women should focus on self-improvement in order to return to the workplace and change the societal stereotype of female employees.

This paper examines the impact of the two-child policy on women, particularly the negative impact, through the lens of the television drama "Two-Child Era" and proposes relevant solutions to improve the current situation of employment discrimination against women as the multiple-child era approaches. Despite considerable analysis, the lack of statistical analysis implies that this research has apparent shortcomings. It is intended that future studies will thoroughly examine women's issues in cinema and television. For example, the frequency of women's dilemmas can be counted, and the audience's and the film's concerns can be identified.

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