

The Weight of the World

A research project on overweight women in the workplace

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“ It’s so hard trying to love yourself in a world that doesn’t love you back (...)

You deserve to feel good as hell!”

-Lizzo, 2019

Abstract

Society has been shaped to follow specific standards and rules, especially in the workplace. Expectations in the workplace are becoming more severe and causing significant issues for women that have a fuller figure. Studies have shown that women who are overweight receive fewer promotional opportunities and less pay than women who are of moderate weight. It is a problem in the workplace and should be changed. By looking at videos of women who have been victims of weight discrimination or have seen weight discrimination happen, I will be able to analyze and use that data to back up my research topic. The purpose of my study is to prove how women who are overweight do not get treated well and/or do not receive promotions in the workplace. My research question is: How do heavy women in the workplace get treated differently than the skinnier women in the workplace based on reputation and appearance?

Introduction

Weight is a stigma and has been a way of judging people for a long time. When people are seen as too fat, they are judged negatively. Being fat is sometimes defined as someone is being lazy and not capable of doing things skinny people may be able to do. We view being fat as a way of life and can choose to be fat or not based on our daily routines. Most of the time, society doesn't see obese people as actual human beings, such as a mother, father, or friend, but just as being fat. The term "fat" is thrown around way too much in society, and it is usually said to describe someone negatively. We have stigmatized heavier people and put assumptions on them like they aren't motivated and don't know how to take care of themselves. By using these

negative connotations towards burdensome individuals, it shows a complete lack of respect.

Many officials have categorized obesity, but how does one categorize some as being overweight? Medically, it is a person's BMI (body mass index) that is too high for their weight divided by height squared. This definition is based on genetics and testing, but it does mean these people are not healthy. When talking about medicine, there is usually a cure. However, obesity is not easy to resolve and could sometimes never be "cured." Society has used this medical problem and placed it as a stigma, putting these individuals in a box because it is not the "normal" way one should look.

Being fat can be a boundary in many sociological scenarios. Getting hired or receiving a promotion at a job is very difficult for fat men and women, especially women, because being fat is a label, and women have societal disrespect as is. It seems that skinnier women get away with more and receive more attention than heavier women; a reason is that these women are viewed as unmotivated, lazy, and have a lack of self-care.

When it comes to the interview, these traits mask over the smart a hardworking woman who is inside. Interviews are the first impression one gets while looking for a job. It is the appearance, the way one dress makes a difference; however, it could be challenging to appear professional when some clothing might look sloppy or revealing due to a women's size.

If an overweight woman is lucky enough to be accepted by her skills and education, not her appearance, and gets a job, she might, however, be struggling to

maintain that job or receive additional benefits compared to most of the skinny women working with her.

I will start by explaining bodies in a broad sense of the term. Discussing how they are seen through our eyes. By using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus to explain how habits effect the way we think and act, I will then break down by stating two ways women who are heavier struggle to dress and look professional in the workplace and also the lack of respect and benefits they receive compared to women who do not identify as overweight. I will be citing literature that relates two these topics, creating a literature review. To continue to express my research question I will use the methodology of content analysis and highlight particular videos and court cases. Lastly, I will tie my literature review and data to inform the reader how this is, indeed, a sociological problem occurring today.

Bodies

Bodies. What are they? How should they look? Who influences a person's body today? Bodies have been changed and manipulated in the world at large. A person's body is their physical identification. Since bodies existed, they have been judged and labeled by society.

Female bodies have been the most influenced by society. Bodies of women have always been viewed as the baby maker and sexualized. Today, since technology and media have expanded, it has made it harder for women to be viewed as a "pretty girl" because she not be stick thin, tan, or have stark white teeth. Social media influences the standards women should dress, how fit they are, and the way their makeup is put on. For adolescent girls, this is all they see. They aspire to look like the

Instagram models. They are beginning to fix their bodies so that they can get real-life followers. In the book *The Body Project* by Joan Jacobs Brumberg, she explores the phenomenon of bodies, and the lengths women and men go to "fit" in with society.

Women's bodies are pressurized differently today than years ago. Before WWI, "girls rarely mentioned their bodies in terms of strategies for self-improvement or struggles for personal identity. Becoming a better person meant paying less attention to the self, giving more attention to other (Brumberg, xxi)" The way women looked was not always the importance or worry of living like it is currently. Today, women are interested in themselves more than ever. Body modifications, like nose jobs, implants, and sometimes eating disorders, are all due to societal expectations. In the 20's "slimming" was the craze for college girls, which is when girls would go on crazy diets to stay skinny. Still, we believe that being fat is not healthy. Movies and books portrayed the heavier women as losers and the ones getting bullied instead of being popular and cool. In books like *Grace Harlow* and *Nancy Drew*, fat characters were viewed as a humorous foil to the well-liked smart protagonist who [are] slim (Brumberg, 99). Being fat is a sociological taboo if we believe in these fictional characters. If you have the tiniest piece of extra skin on your body, you are pressured to go to the gym, eat healthily, or not eat anything at all. Interestingly enough, more studies and fat-shaming is geared towards women less than men. It seems to be more socially acceptable for men to be heavy.

Society goes through phases called body panic. The panic is the crave to have perfection on a particular part of the body; to follow new cultural trends. It used to be a fad that overweight women were praised because it showed they had enough

money to eat. Currently, the focus is on having a fit and lean body. We categorize people who do not look healthy and push them further and further out of society. Body panic relies on "healthism"- the idea that the individual is responsible for the self and the nation- to simultaneously displace critiques of the social structure onto individual bodily failures and gender relations, while stigmatizing those who fail to participate and succeed in the existing system (Dworkin and Wachs, p. 104)."

We have made it difficult for women not to feel judged. Since there is a stigma for being fat, there is social pressure in society, specifically for women, causing them to compare themselves with their friends. A person's body image is the first thing people see. Girls feel that eating too much or not being fit makes men less attractive to them. Men shape the controversy of girls being overweight. Being fit and healthy is a sign of self-care. Girls believe men will judge them if they eat too much or not exercise regularly. Catherine Sanderson, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at Amherst College, found that "women who erroneously believe their peers are thinner than they have higher rates of eating disorders (Palmer 2003)." There is a sense of competition for girls to look the most thin without having to exercise.

A person's physique is the most seen part of a person. Without talking or knowing a person, we are being judged. Bodies will always be judged or persuaded by society, it is a habit we have taken control of. Unless everyone agreed to accept people for who they are and what they look like, we will not be able to break this habit. I will be further explaining habits in the next section through the theory of habitus.

Habitus- Professional Dress

Habits come from doing the same practices over and over again. We develop these habits from our lifestyles and surroundings. Pierre Bourdieu, a theorist, created the concept of *habitus*, which is essentially how our doings are influenced by society. This concept revolves around social influences and “property of social agents” (Bourdieu 1991;Yves 2010) Society has been pretty much the same for hundreds of years in terms of the job market. Women were never the bosses or in business, they were usually the ones staying home. This has slightly changed, but it is also very rare to find a woman that is a CEO of a professional company. Men have perceived women as sex objects, pretty and tall for ages.

According to Sandra Mattaus (2017), Bourdieu’s definition of habitus is about the individual not entirely the whole; however the individual creates the whole, making it a way of life. “ An individual or a socialized biological body, or as the social, biologically individuated through incarnation in a body”(Mattaus et.al.2017;Bourdieu, 2000). In other words, individual people make up an entire society. What one person can learn can be exchanged to another, creating a bigger conversation and lesson through society that developed from that one person.

Women are judged on appearance the most in professional businesses with male dominant employees. . The habits of men come from the societal creation of men and how they are taught to treat women and their fantasies. Looking through magazines and watching movies with actresses that look like models create an expectation that believes all women should look like this because of societies pressures. Relating to my argument that women who are overweight and might not look professional based on their size are either not hired or do not get the promotion in the job.

Clothes also have a way of being habitus. According to the job place one might work at or apply to, proper attire is enforced. This is not easy for women who struggle to look professional in that attire.

To most privileged people, they know the way one should dress professionally, because they grew up watching family or friends dress for work or an interview. They also have more options for clothing because of their income. Women who might not be as privileged and may be the first ones working in a professional office, might not know the way they should dress because they did not grow up learning it. The way one dresses reflects the way they were brought up, their community and out of habit.

Habits come and go, but it is important to understand that not every person has the same habits as others because they might have grown up differently. The way one looks could be due to the habits that they gained. In reflection, the process of hiring people based on weight and the way these women are treated in the workplace due to their weight, is a habit, and a habit that needs to change.

Struggling to Get the RIGHT Attention

Dressing to impress is a mindset many successful people have in society. The way one dresses in the workplace puts a status on the individual and the professionalism they deserve. In a professional work setting, people tend to dress more strict and clean than someone working in an artsy, Brooklyn, workplace. Once you enter the office, everyone has the same mindset and everyone should look uniformed. For men it is simple to dress, they just wear suits, however for women, it is more complicated. Women have different options for dressing up for work, they can wear, suits, dress and skirts. Depending on financial status and knowledge, women may also have different ideas for what is right and

wrong to wear for jobs. Not all women look the same in this attire, depending on their weight the clothing may look different.

Weight affects many parts of life, especially someone who is overweight. Getting a job could be difficult for overweight women. The hiring process is the initial level of interaction. More so, an interview is where the employer gets to know the employee personally. Unfortunately, since society has stigmatized overweight individuals and women, the hiring process can be a challenge for an individual who falls into both categories.

Finding the right outfit for a professional business when you are overweight, or not even knowing the difference between casual and business attire could be tricky. It is easier for women who are slim to find the right outfit to wear in the workplace and look professional, but women who are heavier, it is a task and a search to find a skirt or dress that isn't too revealing that can be appropriate for the job. If women do not look professional and clean then the way one looks at them could influence their perception negatively and unprofessional (Cummings and Blum 2015). Some women may not have the knowledge to dress professionally, luckily there are organizations like Dress For Success that help women find professional clothing for interviews and jobs (Saiki, 2013). For the women who do not know about that organization, however, still struggle to find clothing suitable for their body type for business wear.

Goffman's theory of perception of self, relates to impressing others and dressing the part. He gives the analogy that people are actors or performers and then there are audience member, like theater (Goffman, 1922-1982; Lamert, 2018). How one presents their selves is merely due to the social situation they are in. We tend to act certain ways so

we can fit into society and have others like us. One would act differently on an interview than hanging out with friends. Goffman explains that society tends to act differently for each person they meet. Dressing for an interview is like an outfit change in theater, it is an audition to get the part. Unfortunately, Women who are heavier know they are going to be seen as heavy and can infer the judgment they are going to receive. Dressing the right way for an interview could make a difference in the way the employers look at these women.

Body image and the way overweight women get treated based on how they look in a workplace or at a interview is an issue today. The body is the way of seeing someone before even talking to them or getting to know them. Waring argues, “body mediates the relationship between self-identity and social identity, becoming a receptor of discursive practices and a purveyor of social meaning” (Waring 2009). In other words, the way ones body is shaped is natural and pure but depending on the features like deformities or, weight, in this matter, puts that body into a social stigma or identity.

Clothing is one way of expression. Professional clothing however is limited in style and flare. A company like Dress For Success, which provides women with professional attire, helps women of all sizes to find professional outfits. The way one dresses also helps the employer to evaluate confidence and personality. It is known that the way one dresses captures security, values, mental ability and conceptual skill, social status, cosmopolitaness and leadership (Holly;Gilmore, 1973). Therefore, if a women who is already heavy and can not dress appropriately for her interview, has a slim chance she will get hired.

Clearly, weight is a big factor in the workplace. The employers make certain that their employees “fit” into the criteria made for the job. There is a split between skinny

women and heavy women in different fields. Society has made it so, there are specific jobs for women who are heavier than others. Jane Marcellus' article explains body image of women throughout magazines. Although she focuses on magazines, the occupations and looks attached, says a lot. She explains how in the vocational magazine was a tall, skinny, pretty women and in the maid ad was a short, heavier women. She further talks about how more serious and professional jobs, like, lawyers, mayor, engineers were liked to mesomorphs and secretary, clerk and operators were ectomorph (Marcellus 2005) This creates a segregation between fit and not fit women which further emphasis that women who are overweight are less likely to get a job or promotion than fit women.

Women pay the most when it comes to looking good and professional to impress others. When going on job interviews, women make certain they are clean cut and professional to impress the employer. "This effect exists within narrowly defined occupations, and beauty generates both static and dynamic impacts on occupational choice (Biddle and Hamermesh, 1999)." For some jobs, it's all about the looks. Nowhere does it say, a heavy women cant be a model, trainer, nutritionist or flight attendant, it is a lose rule formed by society that certain jobs are conformed for certain body types.

Fatty-fits no Benefits

The way a person looks on the outside should not determine their ability to work in a professional business setting. In major corporations, women who do not look skinny are the ones who usually do not get the attention they deserve. Weight-based identity is a situational threat that is triggered by cues in the environment, such as interviewing for a job (Major 2010). The workplace is an easy target for discriminating women based on

their weight, there are many excuses within the workplace that makes employers feel like it is okay to treat heavier women differently than skinny women.

Fat women are more than almost three times more likely to report discrimination than men (Roehling et al., 2007; Flint et al. 2016). Weight discrimination is highest among race, gender, age, and other discriminations within the workplace. Interestingly enough, weight discrimination is not illegal in 49 states (Martin, 2019). Women around the world, specifically, The United States, are victims of weight discrimination. In many studies, surveys have been taken that show women get discriminated the most based on their weight. A survey with 2,300 participants found that 5 percent of men and 10 percent of women have faced discrimination based on weight (Norton, 2008). Within the workplace skinnier women receive more benefits than heavier women. Promotions and higher pay comes with workers who show outstanding work ethic and determination, and most of those women are not fat. Women who fall in the BMI index, “normal range” than women whom s BMI all in the obese or overweight range received a 15% decreased wage (Phul; Brownell, 2002). Heavy women only receive this treatment because they are stigmatized. Women who are at or below their desired weight receive higher income or an occupational position than women who are overweight. Appearance, especially with weight, has a lot to do with advancing (Haskins and Ransford 1999). This lady was once skinny and got a promotion and now she is heavy and has not been getting anything. It is interesting that we are taught at such a young age not to bully. Employers and coworkers are basically bullying fat women in the office (Phul; Brownell, 2002). Society tries to be accepting of all people, however, it is so difficult to accept someone based on their looks. Many employers want the best of the best for their company, each person they hire is someone

who is an image of the company. With that being said, when critics of society stereotype a community of people, it is carried out and learned from every other participant of society. During the hiring stage, when fat women are assessed the thoughts and connotations of the stigma are in the employers minds due to societal influences.

All of these studies prove that weight discrimination is the top problem in the workplace, but we aren't doing anything about it. The only law that has been passed in the United states that ban any discrimination, including weight is, Michigan. Thinking about how many times women have reported weight discrimination in the workplace, there is only one state that has a law for it. It seems that weight discrimination is only okay, because society believes it can be changed with a little diet and motivation.

Methodology

In order to answer my research question, how do heavy women in the workplace get treated compared to skinny women, I will be using the method of content analysis. I will be using videos from YouTube, that show how overweight women feel in their work environment and the way the stigma of being overweight reflects on different women, rather than men, in the workplace. I am hoping to find the negativity different women in these videos are feeling when in their work environment. Videos that are vaulted within social databases like YouTube, are helpful for research because they are able to provide "home-made" material for projects like mine (Jewitt et al., 2012). I will be also analyzing videos that show how women whom are heavier might have more difficulty dressing for an interview.

YouTube has made an impact on society tremendously. Every since it came out in 2005, it has become a social platform for everyone. It has been used for

educational purposes, religion and social. Today, many adolescents express their emotions and ideas because they believe it will be more effective and watched. Not only is it a social platform, it has built status, the more viewers one video has, the more praise and status is received (Jimenez, Garcid, Cruz, 2016).

This could be a little difficult to find pure footage of women getting treated based on their size, but I am hoping to discover some women talking about their experiences. There are also many “fat bloggers” who talk about their life and being fat, some talk about how they feel they are being discriminated at work. Since I am going to be watching videos, I won’t be getting pure first hand contact. However, along with these videos I will be looking at different court cases about women who have sued companies based on their experience of getting discriminate by their weight. Using videos and blog posts will be beneficial to my research because it is the way people are sharing their stories and feeling because it is an open forum. Court cases will also provide substantial evidence that there is weight discrimination happening in the workplace for women who do not meet weight standards. I am hoping to use content analysis to argue that women are indeed getting treated differently than skinny women at work.

Data and Content

Videos are an exciting way of collecting data. Each video is different, making it easy to compare and contrast. Surprisingly, there weren't many videos on women talking about their workplace discrimination. The videos that were found gave a lot of insight on what comments and behaviors these women received and how they made them feel. I am also including court cases that also back up my research

question, how women in the workplace get treated differently than the skinnier women in the workplace based on reputation and appearance? By using court cases, I will be able to display examples on how this problem for heavy women in the workplace is serious. Both of these methods will be beneficial to backing up my research question, informing us as a society furthermore.

Court Cases

Weight discrimination, is one of the most controversial, prominent problem in society. Weight itself has been the topic of most social discussions forever. Women, specifically, have been monitored for their weight because society has made it that weight equals laziness and lack of motivation. Having the tiniest piece of skin hanging off of her bones makes her unhealthy and not sexy. Not one person is built the same, but society works as a whole and believes everyone should be shaped the same, or else they are looked at as a stigma and not part of the social trend. In relation, society has made it that there are some jobs where weight is enforced for sexual appeal and entertainment purposes. Some of these jobs include, flight attendants, nightclub servers, models and sexist restaurants like Hooters. Unfortunately, it has become so strict and limited and has caused pain and mental distress on women in these fields, causing them to sue these industries.

They Don't Give a Hoot About It

Although weight discrimination is illegal in Michigan, Hooters, doesn't seem to care for it. Hooters, is known for their wings, breasts and legs. It is a restaurant that appeals to men due to the uniforms. A former employer of Hooters, in a Detroit suburb, Cassandra Smith, was told by her employer that she has to be put on "weight

probation” and should join a gym to improve her looks to fit into the required uniform “Smith is 5’8” and weighs 132.5 pounds, down from 145 pounds when she started the job in 2008 (Stempel 2010).” That is below the average weight for a woman that tall. Hooters’ defend by stating she was causing a humiliating and offensive work environment, which later caused her to resign. Stempel then states before Hooters “evaluated” Smith, which makes it sound like they do weight check-ins, which is disturbing on so many levels. If Hooters is known for their big-breasted women, it is interesting that they would want them to be below their average weight. She later states that she lost weight from the time she started at Hooters, causing speculations on why this is a problem now. Mike McNeil, the Vice President of Hooters Inc. stated that they do not ask employees to lose weight and do not have weight requirements, however, they “challenge their employees about their image.” McNeil continued to talk about how Hooters in not the right place for everyone, "upholding an image-standard based on appearance, attitude and fitness is both legal and fair -- it is not unlike the standard used by the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders or the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes (Selweski 2010).” However, as popular as the job might be, being a Hooters Girl is not for everyone." Having said this, points out those Hooters as a whole does not except many women because of their appearance.

This case is a violation of Michigan’s Law of weight discrimination and discrimination of any kind. An enterprise like Hooters is known for their sexy women and their fit women. Having a restaurant like this, creates a sexualized praise towards women, making them feel self conscious and adds on to the social construct of women being objects, rather than smart, workers. It is very disturbing that this is

still a continuous problem in society. Smith also mentioned that the uniforms only came in small, extra small and extra extra small (Stempel 2010). If that is the case, how is Hooters able to be able to go around the law of weight discrimination in Michigan in the first place? Having only three sizes that don't go past size medium is a red flag and bound for excluding women who are a little heavier than their BMI. Hooters lost the case because they violated the Michigan law and also discriminated Smith and made her feel very self conscious and uncomfortable.

Next Stop: Weight Discrimination

American Airlines, one of the most well reputable airlines in the world, in 1988, attempted to push better-paid, older flight attendants into retirement by enforcing a policy requiring weight checks after women who return from unpaid leaves, states Baker. This is a violation against age discrimination and weight. Compared to United, which state, women who are 5'5" can weigh 135 pounds at age and up to 146 at age 55, at American the standard is 126 pounds regardless of the age. Women who sued the airline were older and believed it was an unfair policy.

Ralph D. Fertig, an attorney at the equal Employment Opportunity Commission stated, typically American flight attendants that were on duty were to be weighed if the supervisor thought they were becoming too heavy. Judging and scrutinizing these women for "looking too heavy" is an invasion of these womens' bodies and is humiliating. For the American Airline Inc. to be conducting regular weight check-ins is disturbing. Why would any women, knowing this is the case, work for an employer like that? In Addition, to critical judgment, they are also

conducting weigh-ins for older women, as an excuse to put them on leave and not have to pay them.

Patt Gibbs, 47, the former president of the union that represents the American flight attendants, believes this is an “economic ploy to get rid of senior people.” She was required to be weighed after coming back from an unpaid leave, which was when she was serving as the union president. She gained 29 pounds, which put her above the maximum weight of 126 pounds and the airline put her on mandatory leave until she lost the weight. Gibbs is not the only one who became fed up with this new policy, Sherri Cappello, 46, lost her job at American because she “could not meet the weight standard after a union leave.” She continued by saying some flight attendants retired early because they didn’t want to be on the scale again. This makes my point, women should not have to keep up with this, it is however, a tactic that American is using, that seems to be working. It is not the just way of doing things; it is disgusting and heartbreaking ways of making these women feel awful about themselves. 126 pounds for a 5’5” women of any age is unhealthy.

There was no information on how many flight attendants got fired, however, it is known that 621 flight attendants have faced consequences because they did not meet the weight standards from 1985 to 1988. While this was in the 80’s it is a problem still occurring today. Many airlines still have weight standards because of financial restrictions and other governmental excuses. It is just another industry where weight is looked at as being negative and a disturbance for the face of the company.

What Happens in Vegas is Not What You Think

In 1995, Charlotte Arrowsmith and 11 other cocktail waitresses who worked at The Mirage and Golden Nugget came out and told the press that the former owner, Steve Wynn, created a “hostile work environment” (Radke, 2003) for these women. Its not surprising that women that work in Las Vegas get treated like dirt, they are mainly there to show a pretty, sexy face and body for the casino, to attract more visitors, specifically men. Wynn told these girls that they were not skinny enough to work as waitresses on the floor and if they did not lose weight they would have to be transferred to another position.

These women went to the Equal Opportunity Commission and relied the information on the casinos employment polices including: their weight being a problem and the fact that they had to wear 1 ½ to 3-inch heels. The court stated that they could not do anything about the weight discrimination due to the lack of evidence but could claim there was an unfair work environment. The article did not identify the outcome of the case, however, there was most likely charges pressed on Wynn and his resort. Another incident occurred in July 2000 in the Imperial Palace, six cocktail waitresses were treated unfair because they were pregnant. Two of these women had private attorneys and did not enclose any details, however, the other women receive a total of \$105,000 from Imperial Palace (Radke, 2003). The entertainment industry is a very difficult place to work in, especially for women, having to constantly look a certain way. The pressure of this business causes stress, anxiety and lack of confidence for these women. It is due to the fact that society believes, to be sexy and for men to be compelled to these businesses, women have to be skinny. Las Vegas is a mans fantasy, he wants these tall and fit women because

they don't get that at home, so going on vacation there fulfills their desires and dreams, making the casinos and resorts more money.

It seems that men are the problem here, creating a façade of the perfect women. In industries like these, men are the owners and CEOs, which then, degrades and causes women to get treated poorly if they are too heavy.

Too Fat to Walk the Runway

Finally, but certainly not the last industry where women get treated unfair due to their weight is, modeling. Modeling has been the industry for the prettiest, tallest, skinniest and sexiest women alive. They are known for their extremely strict weight requirements. Because of course, it is modeling, so they need to present the clothing in the most non-realistic way as possible. There are many ways modeling is presented. Unfortunately, if a woman is the slightest out of appearance and weight standard her entire career is in ruins.

The TV show, Holland's Next Top model, the Netherlands version of America's Next Top Model, brings the viewers on a trip where they go through each step of finding the most poised women. The process begins with 20 or so girls and they go through challenges that either gets them eliminated or go through to the next round. The winner receives a modeling contract and prize money. Unhappily, in 2008, the winner, of Holland's Next Top Model, Amanda Marchildon, did not receive her full reward because she was "too fat" says Elite modeling agency. The 6-foot model got dropped from her agency because she went over the maximum measurements to be a model. In Europe the average hip size is 102.9cm and her hips were 92 cm, the agencies' max is 90cm hips. This set off an argument on the ridiculous expectation

that women should have “near-impossible physical standards.” During this case, Marchildon’s lawyer received a comment from Elite saying, “ although she has a nice face, she has a fat arse...and she never had it in her to become a top model because she was unsuitable for catwalk work.” Modeling is the number one industry where they are “aloud” to criticize weight and appearance. Society transformed modeling into the skinny persons job or in this case, the anorexic women’s job. While Marchildon was modeling, her ribs and her bones were noticeable. The picture to the right is Amanda when she was modeling for Elite.

They argue that they need women who are trim and have the required waistline to fit the clothing. Wikke Koostra, a lawyer from Elite argues Elite is known for their couture fashion and that means petite. Petite is something modeling agencies cannot change. (Pidd, 2012). This statement alone proves how the industry is corrupt, to think that fashion is for women who are twigs and have pretty faces. Because of the prerequisites of this company, Marchildon was not given the chance



to walk in fashion shows, but to model for advertisements. She was not treated with respect she deserved and was paid half of what she earned, winning the show. She was told she would receive 75,000 Euros but only received 10,000 Euros. By contacting Tyra Banks, the one who runs the production of Next Top Model, Amanda and her team was hoping to receive a response understanding this situation. Tyra Banks went through some backlash with her modeling career. When she had a bathing suit picture that was not the most model-esk, and receiving negative headlines like, “ America’s Next Top Waddle and “Tyra Porkchop” (Pidd 2012). It is a tough industry

to be in, women are constantly being told they are too fat, too short, all because they live in a spotlight where perfection matters. Amanda's case is not surprising to read about. There is always going to be somebody that gets cut from this type of job because they don't meet the extreme standards of modeling. Maybe there could be a way to change this, change the clothing size! The outcome of this case was not mentioned in this article, if it was any just person that is in charge of the outcome, they should grant her all of the money she was promised.

Weight in these industries is what they revolve around. Whether you are a flight attendant, server, work in Vegas, or a model, there is always going to be some type of comment or concern about weight, whether, it is it is noticeable or not. Jobs that are run by men in these industries tend to sexualize and objectify these women's' bodies for profit. Men are also a part of society which shape the way life is run, making it difficult to accept women who have heavier body types. In each of these cases the women all have average body weight to be healthy, but they all are being told they do not weigh the amount that satisfies the employer or company. To be in fashion, you want to influence people to buy the products, also in Vegas, influence people to come back, gamble more, in Hooters, bring in more customer-men, and flight attendants want passengers to continue flying with the airline. They are customer serve jobs and what are customers? Parts of society and today, to succeed, society wants women to be skinny, rather than heavy. Clearly, this isn't working; more women than ever are being weight discriminated or accused, causing them to sue the companies. The companies are paying more for the cases than what they are bringing in from customers. Heavy women are a part of society as well, but

why are they being targeted? Fat women seem to have an unfair advantage in society than skinny women.

Videos

The first video is titled “You’re Too Fat You’re Fired!” A woman in the UK started a blog series talking about weight and experiences where weight can cause different situations in the workplace and how it can be a disadvantage in society. She shared with her viewers a website that goes through how to deal with work bullying, and specifically bullying revolving around weight. She shares a personal anecdote that was the reason she wanted to talk about this topic. When she started a new job at a council, she walked into the office and the first thing one of her colleagues said was “wow, you would be much more attractive if you weren’t so big.” This came to her as a big shock, without him even saying hello he made such a comment. It continued to the point where she had to make agreements with him, however it didn’t get any better, this resulted with her changing jobs into a new council.

By making this blog she hopes to spread comfort and hope to the other women who have experienced work bullying in some way. They are not the only ones and this is becoming an epidemic with women all over the world. She shares some suggestions on what to do when bullying happens. She advises to talk to HR, have the manager or supervisor mediate conversation between you and the bully, and if it continues to get worse you have an option of going through a lawyer and take legal action. You should track the comments and bullying if you want to go that route so you can have evidence. She is advising the viewers to do something about their bullying because it is not okay, women or anyone else should not be treated

poorly in the work environment, from being an annoyance to someone or being called fat, you are not doing anything wrong, the bully is. This could sometimes affect mental health, causing depression or anxiety, and in this case she advises seeing a therapist.

The second video is called “Paranoid Fat Chick Gets Fired”. This clip is not reality. It is a scene that was created to show an example of a scenario where a boss fires his employee because of her weight. The clip starts with the boss on a treadmill and his employee comes in because the boss needed to speak with her. There are candies on his desk and right when the employee sits down, she begins to eat the treats. Clearly, the eating because of his face expression disturbs him. He tells her that he has to lay some staff off, including her. This startles her and the boss continues by stating, “ think of it as an opportunity to reinvent your self”. She immediately knows she is getting fired because she is fat, he tells her not fired “ making her redundant.” Which is the first red flag. She gives him examples of times when he was judging her because of her weight; she has seen him looking at her “arse”, at the cafeteria “easy on the chips you’re thinking” and shows a clip of him making judgment eyes to her plate of food, and she says he might need to fix the elevator if she gains more weight and goes to another clip of her getting on the elevator with him and he makes an excuse to get off. The boss continues to make excuses that deny that he is doing these acts because of her weight.

(<https://youtu.be/3JSArLocw-Q?list=WL&t=86>) Finally, at the end of the video they both are bickering back and forth about taking the chips off of the menu and adding a salad bar, she says that she eats the salad but prefers the chips and he

bounces back and says “ everyone prefers the chips but chips make you fat!” This proved that he is letting her go due to her weight. Unfortunately, persons of size, more so women, get judged like this in society and the workplace, which is not fair and it makes the person feel self conscious and uncomfortable. This video is a great way to show the realistic problem of fat people being treated poorly in the workplace. Watching this video made me feel sad for this woman. it may be dramatic, however, it happens.

The next video gives another example of fat women getting mistreated in the workplace. Like said earlier, flight attendants have strict codes to follow revolving around appearance, including weight

Aeroflot Airlines is known for their long legged, perfect lipped and manicured stewardess to get the picture I added a link to the beginning of the video showing how the flight attendants look (<https://youtu.be/uJ53PNEGR54?list=WL>). Having to fit this look, they should also maintain a slim figure. Evgenia Magurina, one of the flight attendants for Aroflot had to take stitches out of the uniform in order to fit into it. this was due to her weight gain, which was jeopardizing her job. On the 15th of August she stopped flying internationally because her boss told her “she is fat, ugly and old.” Women working in Aeroflot whom don’t fit into the criteria receive a wage deduction of two dollars an hour. (<https://youtu.be/uJ53PNEGR54?list=WL&t=56>)

Llona Borisova, a member of the flight attendants union states that hundreds of women are being treated poorly because of the weight, like Evgenia, however, they are dealing with it because they need to support their families and children. The

video shows a news council meeting where a representative from Aeroflot, a man named Nikita Krichevsky, commented that it is not hard to lose weight, however if you cant then they should find another job. It is so interesting that a man is talking about these women and speaking about weight and how it is an excuse. He says it is easy; you just have to eat right. It is not easy for everyone to lose weight also, these women aren't even seen as overweight, but to the company standards they are because they don't fit into the uniform. It is evident, to be a flight attendant, for Aeroflot they care about appearance more than anything. They seem to be the "top models" of airlines. Unfortunately, this causes problems when women are being executed because of their appearance.

In each of these videos, these women are treated with minimal respect. Commonly, the men of the workplace are treating them this way. None of these situations are dealt with respect, they are either fired on the spot or the boss refuses to have a discussion or an agreement. It is eye opening to see three different videos of ways that women have been personally executed due to her weight. It is interesting to watch these videos from a women's point of view because in my eyes they don't look fat at all. Society however, continues to put a size limit and picture in men's heads that are seen as overweight because most women in social media and entertainment are underweight and stick thin.

Analysis

While watching these videos and reading the different court cases similar problems and concerns stuck out to me. To start, men seem to be the one's who are in charge or manage these women. In the past men when men were the majority of

corporate run businesses, they set the standard of what beauty is and the expectations of women and all employees. This created a platform for this society today and what is defined as beautiful. Because of this, I think men sexualize these women to get more business, creating a place where women who are heavier than their standards are being penalized. In the court case about Charlotte Arrowsmith, the cocktail waitress at the Wynn hotel, was told by Steve Wynn, the CEO, that she was not skinny enough to work as a cocktail waitress and if she did not lose weight then she would be fired. Most men want to have what they cannot have, meaning in Vegas they come to escape reality and enter sexy heaven. Men seem to want the skinny beautiful girls rather than the shorter chunkier ones. In relation to this case, in the video “paranoid fat chick” her boss, a man, fired her because she was heavy. By showing specific situations like removing the candy and getting off the elevator portrayed how her weight bothered him. Since they are the boss’ in these situations, they act like it is okay for them to treat these women as if they do not have feelings. It is disturbing how men created the societal view of women’s bodies.

In conjunction with that, jobs like modeling and being a flight attendant have used the format of how women should look. Restaurants like Hooters, where the main focus are the skinny waist big breasted waitresses, encounter cases where women are not treated kindly and are required to have a slim figure, like Cassandra Smith. She was told she was too heavy and needed to go join a gym or else she would be fired. Cassandra in fact lost weight while working there and was still considered fat during this case. Just like the Holland’s Next top Model winner, Amanda Marchildon, did not receive all of her prize money and was dropped by her agency to

be in any runway shows because she was overweight. However, pictures prove that she was so thin people could see her ribs. On the other side of the spectrum, as a flight attendant for Aeroflot, Evgenia Magurina had to take stitches out of her uniform because it was getting too small for her size. She was not made for the uniform, which was sized the way the company wanted the ladies to be. There was a penalty for women who weighed too much, which was getting paid two dollars less than the other women who were the right size. Sadly, women who needed to support their family did not complain and kept on being treated like a burden to the company. Commonly, these cases have a toll on these girls' health, mentally and physically. They require them to be below the regular weight for their height, this pressure causes a psychological strain. It is literally "survival of fittest", a competition for who can be the skinniest and most beautiful women for the job. Weight discrimination is a form of bullying because one person does not fit in with the rest.

All of this data contributes to the social problem many women are facing today in the workplace. Each of the cases and videos have similar complaints and common backgrounds for why the company is being sued or the women is being fired. Unfortunately, they all show how women's weight bothers some people and how we as a society developed and continue to grow a difficult space to live for these women.

Conclusion

Bodies are the makeup of our society. Within our society, bodies are labeled for their differences and lack of normality. Sociology has made it so that bodies are the easiest part of a person to criticize. It has also made it that the weight of bodies is

viewed in a way that is negative, specifically for women. People that are bigger than social standards are said to be lazy and unmotivated, which influences their lives in the workplace. It was learned through my research of literature and content analysis that many occupations that are managed by men and revolve around societal satisfaction, like strip clubs, airlines, and modeling agencies, treat their women employees that are "bigger" unfairly. Pierre Bourdieu and Goffman both have theories in which relate to how society acts whether through habits or need to put on "show" for various life encounters. These theories have helped create standards and performances that stigmatize individuals who do not fit into the norms of society. It is easy to say weight discrimination is one of the most sensitive issues we as a whole face today.

Continuing to allow weight discrimination in all states, excluding Michigan, has influenced society to think it is still okay to treat bigger women with minimal respect. With all of the evidence that was presented in this essay and found throughout many readings and court cases, weight discrimination is prevalent and is only going to increase. It starts with society listening to that one person, one brave woman, standing up for her self, to end this problem. Society does not change unless the bodies within society want a change.

In conclusion, there is much evidence that women are struggling with being treated differently in the workplace because of their weight. If we can't change the way we look then the workplace should change the way they treat women and change their policies by not having weight standards. Women are smart,

hardworking, beautiful humans that need to be accepted for who they are as a whole and not judge the way they look on the outside.

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