

Measuring an Interaction of Sexual Harassment and Employee Job Satisfaction

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: January 3, 2019
Revised: February 15, 2019
Accepted: March 16, 2019

Keywords:

Sexual Harassment,
Job Satisfaction,
Gender Harassment,
Sexual Coercion,
Unwanted Sexual Attention

Conflict of Interest:

None

Funding:

None

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment is an ongoing issue which unlikely to be reported by the employees who experienced. The sexual provocation towards employees is likely to be happened at the workplace despite the gender is. Previous studies revealed that, women in automotive industry are more likely to expose and experience sexual harassment as the proportion of women are less in this industry. This paper aims to investigate sexual harassment relation with employee job satisfaction. Questionnaires were distributed to employee in automotive industry in Malaysia. A total of 204 usable questionnaires were analysed. The findings indicated that sexual harassment is partially significant with employee job satisfaction. The result could assist the company in drafting policies in an organization aiming at minimizing the occurrence of sexual harassment in workplace environment.

1. Introduction

Recently, sexual harassment is a serious concern by most of the people around the globe. According to World of Labour (2015), there are 75 countries that legally against and prohibits sexual harassment in their country (Hersch, 2015). While in Malaysia, in year 2002, Women's Development Collective found that 35% respondents in their study had experienced sexual harassment. Sexual harassment at working environment is exceptionally unsafe, restrictive, and lengthy which giving a real reason for work environment strain and work disappointment (Sabitha, Norul Huda, & Roza, 2013). Hutagalung and Ishak, (2012) contended that, sexual harassment is typically regarded as all manifestations of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, verbal or physical. The Malaysian Code of Practice (1999) deliberately characterizes sexual provocation as any unwanted direct of a sexual nature that may be assumed by; (i) as a circumstance on one's administration, (ii) as an offence or disrespect, or (iii) as a danger to one's well-being.

Job satisfaction is an essential element to study as its significance not only physically but also to the well-being of employees. Previous authors (Alagappan, Lean, David, Ishak, & Ngeow, 2011; Kenny, Samah, & Othman, 2011; Sabitha & Asmak, 2012) studied the relationship between sexual harassment and working environment in Malaysia but it was not known if there was a connection between sexual harassment variables and employee job satisfaction. Based on Chan, Lam, Chow and Cheung (2008), job dissatisfaction may lead to psychological distress.

In a similar vein, Hutagalung and Ishak, (2012) contended that sexual harassment contributed to lower level job satisfaction that leads to employee's work stress. Additionally, sexual harassment adversely affects

employee job satisfaction (Bond, Punnett, Pyle, Cazeca, & Cooperman, 2004; L. Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997; Frone, 2000; Whealin, Davies, Shaffer, Jackson, & Love, 2002).

Automotive industry is one of the main contributors to Malaysia economics. Though, there are very limited studies on sexual harassments in Malaysia focusing on the automotive industry. However, a study found that women were sexually harassed in this industry because of the real concern on the proportion numbers of women less than men in assembly line (Housch & Collins, 1993). Therefore, it indicated that, there is a higher tendency of sexual harassment occurred in automotive industry.

1.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is an unwanted behaviour occurred without an approval of the receiver (Kenny et al., 2011). Ismail, Lee, and Chan (2007) inspected the elements that induce sexual provocation at Malaysian working environment. Despite the fact that sexual provocation might include either men or ladies as the exploited person, men have rarely been sexually harassed. According to Harvell (2007), any invasive gestures, unpleasant languages and any exchanges for sexual favour such promotions or better privileges are parts of sexual harassment. This issues becomes a contractual term for granting any benefits by individuals either been done explicitly or implicitly (Sabitha, Asmak, & Nur Sabrina, 2011). In Malaysia, sexual harassment was described as uninvited behaviour led to a sexual orientation by oral, gestures, visually or psychologically which impacted receiver well-being. (Ministry of Human Resources, 1999).

Sexual harassment is an issue that likely practiced at workplaces (Pradhan-malla, 2005; Sabitha & Asmak, 2012). Hutagalung and Ishak (2012) noted that, recently this phenomenon has turned into a world issue and becoming common issue in all sectors and industries (Sadrudin, 2013). People also had seen the sexual harassment as an issue (Bingham & Scherer, 1993) that influences associations (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993).

1.2 Gender Harassment

Gender discrimination refers to any actions that prioritize work or giving unfair treatment based on gender (Carr et al., 2012). In line with Leskinen, Rabelo, & Cortina (2015), the researchers mentioned that most psychological researchers agreed that gender harassment is the utmost type of sexual harassment experienced by women. Moreover, gender harassment also defined as a behaviour that implicates the display of teasing, intimidating and humiliating toward women (O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Yusuf, 2010). The scholars also agreed that sexual harassment is prone to ladies due to most women typically have lower position in an organization and the proportion number of women are lower than men. Nevertheless, Compton (2007) argued that sexual harassment does not have to be from opposite sex from the harasser.

However, despite that woman is likely to experience this harassment, the occurrence of sexual harassment to both men and women will lead a hostile work environment. (Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007; Connell & Korabik, 2000). In addition, most of the researchers found that men also experienced sexual harassment and gender harassment. (Rabelo, et. al, 2015).

1.3 Sexual Coercion

Leskinen et al. (2015) defined sexual coercion as actions that take place when the harasser offers inducement or job-related threats; such job dismissal in order to force the victim in establishing a sexual relationship. Connell and Korabik (2000) agreed that any direct or indirect sexual bribes that relates to job or individual benefits are part of sexual coercion.

The sexual coercion can be in many forms such as social desire, attacks, violation and distortion that threaten a person involuntarily involved in sexual relations (Erulkar, 2004). However, sexual coercion has been reported relatively rare occurrence compared to other form of sexual harassment. (Connell & Korabik, 2000; Hogh, Conway, Clausen, Madsen, & Burr, 2016).

1.4 Unwanted Sexual Attention

Richman et al. (1999) stressed that unwanted sexual attention involved undesirable touching and asking for dates continually. Jackson and Newman (2004) gauged that ladies are less averse to show receipt of undesirable sexual excitement as their proportion of male, and they are more inclined to demonstrate its (Bashir et al., 2013). Newman et al. (2003) inferred that undesirable sexual attention is more inclined towards high-wage labourers. Pradhan-malla (2005) investigated those inequalities between men and women has brought women to be forced in dealing with unwanted sexual attention. Furthermore, this issue also has dispirited women to be competing for power.

Holland et al. (2016) also pointed that unwanted sexual attention take place when the harasser makes unwelcome or offensive sexual nature by touching or intended to establish romantic relationships especially with their co-workers. Whealin et al. (2002) also mentioned that unwanted sexual attention includes an uninvited verbal statement, motions, and other noncontact conducts made with respect to one's sexuality and

physical presence. Additionally, Corr and Jackson (2001) argued that unwanted sexual attention not only by the unpleasant touching, but might involves spoken words or stares which might negatively affects the victim's work environment. According to Hogh et al. (2016) unwanted sexual attention can be from many sources such as colleagues, managers, customers and subordinated.

In Malaysia, a study by Ismail et al. (2007) revealed that disregard of their academic background; Malays implied this issue more seriously than other ethnic. Moreover, it revealed that sexual harassment occurred due to unprofessional working environment.

1.5 Employee Job Satisfaction

The crucial element of a successful organization is their employees. Job satisfaction is an essential element as it positively related with job performance. (Hira & Waqas, 2012; Shmailan, 2016) Job satisfaction is defined as the indicator on how much employees like their job and influenced by one's job performance (Millán, Hessels, Thurik, & Aguado, 2013). Furthermore, Fu and Deshpande (2014) described job satisfaction as a pleasant and positive feelings as the outcome of employee's job appraisal. While other researchers mentioned that work environment also contributed to employee satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction is a capacity of the degree to which individual's needs are fulfilled in a job (Togia, Koustelios, & Tsigilis, 2004).

In a similar vein, Norizan (2012) stated that job satisfaction has been an essential theme throughout the years. The pleasure of employees often associated with the remuneration and their genuine commitment in completing tasks (Fatt, Khin, & Heng, 2010). However, Akpofure, Ikhifa, Imide, & Okokoyo (2006) agreed that job satisfaction is associated with job accomplishment, constructive work values and how well the employees are inspired with their job and the task given.

Sexual harassment has been an issue that leads to employee's job dissatisfaction. Many studies found that sexual harassment show negative impact to job satisfaction. (Long et al., 2016; Merkin, 2008) As supported by Chan et al. (2008), sexual harassment not only reduce the level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job performance, but it also induced the victim to will experience psychological distress.

3. Method

This study was conducted by collecting empirical evidence through self-reported questionnaire. For the questions relating to sexual harassment, the questionnaire was adopted from Fitzgerald et al. (1988) which consisted of 21 items. However, for questions relating to employee job satisfaction, it was adopted from Taylor (1972) with 7 items. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part was associated to the respondent's demographic profiles, the second part is related to the sexual harassment and the third part is questions related to employee job satisfaction. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to employee in automotive industry in North Region of Malaysia and in total 204 questionnaires were returned making for 68 % useable response rate.

All the variables were measured by turning the data collected from the survey into IBM SPSS version 24.0 and subsequently were analysed through descriptive method and Pearson Correlation analysis. Before that, reliability test was done to check the consistency of the questionnaire.

3. Results and Discussion

As clearly demonstrated in Table 1, this survey was dominated by female with 69% and male of 31%. The highest percentage of respondents aged between 20 to 25 years old with 34% followed by age between 26 to 30 years and 31 to 35 with 23% respectively. Moreover 12% of the respondents aged between 36 to 40 years and the remaining respondents aged between 41 to 45 and above have a similar percentage of 4%.

Majority of respondents are Malay (91%), followed by Chinese (5%) and Indian (3%) while 1% are from other races in Malaysia. As for academic qualification, there are 60% of respondents with SPM qualification, 21% of respondents holding a diploma, 14% STPM qualification, only 4% of the respondents are university graduate while only 1% having a master's degree. The highest percentages of respondents are married (52.5%) while 42% are single. The remaining 5% respondents are separated and divorced.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	63	31
	Female	141	69
Age	20-25	69	34
	26-30	47	23
	31-35	46	23
	36-40	25	12
	41-45	9	4
	46 and above	8	4
Race	Malay	185	91
	Indian	6	3
	Chinese	10	5
	Others	3	1
Academic qualifications	SPM	122	60
	STPM	28	14
	Diploma	43	21
	Degree	10	4
	Master	1	1
Status	Single	91	42
	Married	107	53
	Divorced	1	1
	Separated	5	4

3.1 Reliability Test

In order to establish the consistency reliability of the independent variables and dependent variable, the Cronbach's Alpha value was obtained. All these variables can be referred to the Table 2. The reading for Cronbach's alpha for gender harassment is 0.887, sexual coercion is 0.948, unwanted sexual attention is 0.948, and the coefficient reliability for job satisfaction is 0.948. This shows that all variables exceeded the recommended level of 0.7 (George & Mallery, 2005).

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Item
Sexual Harassment Variables	0.961	21
<i>Gender Harassment</i>	0.887	7
<i>Sexual Coercion</i>	0.903	8
<i>Unwanted Sexual Attention</i>	0.948	6
Job Satisfaction	0.948	7

The effect sexual harassment with employee job satisfaction as in Table 3 is partially supported the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Further, the result of this research show that sexual harassment in general and gender harassment has negatively related to the employee job satisfaction with correlation coefficient $r=-0.143$ and $r=-0.147$ respectively and there were significant at $p=0.01$ level.

Based on the Table 4 below, since 73% of respondents were uncertain and unacquainted about the existence of the sexual harassment policy, this therefore exhibited a smaller effect on the correlation. However, there is considerable empirical evidence supporting these relationships (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Willness et al., 2007) as the victims of sexual harassment report lower job satisfaction. Furthermore, (Cortina, 2001) reported that gender harassment from the subordinates and superiors were related to employee job satisfaction.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

		SH	GH	SC	USA	JS
SH	Pearson Correlation	1	.916**	.920**	.960**	-.143*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.041
	N	204	204	204	204	204
GH	Pearson Correlation	.916**	1	.720**	.860**	-.147*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.036
	N	204	204	204	204	204
SC	Pearson Correlation	.920**	.720**	1	.830**	-.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.083
	N	204	204	204	204	204
USA	Pearson Correlation	.960**	.860**	.830**	1	-.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.057
	N	204	204	204	204	204
JS	Pearson Correlation	-.143*	-.147*	-.122	-.133	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.036	.083	.057	
	N	204	204	204	204	204

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Meanwhile, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual attention have no significant relationship with employee job satisfaction with correlation coefficient ($r=-0.122$ and $r=-0.133$). This is also consistence with previous studies by Parker and Griffin (2002) and Antecol and Cobb-Clark, (2001).

Table 4. Policy of Sexual Harassment

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	55	27	27
No	111	54.4	54.4
Don't Know	38	18.6	18.6
Total	204	100	100

The findings of this research found that there is a relationship between sexual harassment and employee job satisfaction. It shows that employees with experiences in sexual harassment are likely to feel bothered in their workplace affecting their job satisfaction. This findings was in line with the previous research conducted by (Long et al., 2016; Chan et al., 2008; Swarnalatha, 2013)

The management should emphasize more on sexual harassment issue in gaining more knowledge about individual who being harassed to achieve the goals by considering own strength and weaknesses safety policy in organization. As evident in Table 3, most of the employees were not aware on the sexual harassment policy by respective companies. Hence, companies are encouraged to be alert to this issue that might limit the employee's performance and limits their productivity level especially towards manufacturing workers. Moreover, the results of this study will serve as a guideline to improve safety, quality of work and job satisfaction of employee in company.

It is proposed for the future research that studies on men and women should be discussed separately for each gender. More insights on the effects of sexual harassment should be taken into consideration in future. In addition, the sample size should be extended and the population of other parts of region should be expanded.

Furthermore, the variable of employee job performance also should be explored in the future in order to gain more complete understanding regarding the relationship between sexual harassment and employee job satisfaction. Researcher also can extend this research by just choosing sample with respondents that experienced sexual harassment as to gain more exploratory outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the relationship between sexual harassment (with three elements: gender harassment, sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention) and employee job satisfaction in automotive industries in North region of Malaysia. The previous studies shown sexual harassment has negative correlation with job satisfaction. It shows that an employee that experienced sexual harassment will have an adverse effect on their job performance.

From this study, the data was collected and analysed from both genders in which the highest percentage is female respondents. However, from the results, only sexual harassment and gender harassment has negative relationships with job satisfaction. In addition, this study found that sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention has no significant relationships with job satisfaction. It is also found that most of the employees are not aware and not informed with regard to the policy of sexual harassment.

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