

Factors Contribute Sexual Harassment Among Male Employees in Hospitality Industry

Mohd Syaquif Yasin Kamaruddin, Mohd Nazimi Had Nordin,
Afiqah Farwizah binti Abekan, Fathin Hanani Mohd Mortadza,
Mohd Zulhilmi Suhaimi

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor, Malaysia
Corresponding Authors Email: zulhilmi9756@uitm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i11/15637> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i11/15637

Published Date: 13 November 2022

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between behaviour and habit factor, passive leadership factor, and hostility factor and to determine the strongest factors of sexual harassment in restaurant industry among employee. More than 100 sets of questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the targeted respondents that currently working or did not that has an experience in the hospitality industry. After that, the SPSS software was used to examine those data which were gathered and also to generate the final result. The result shows that there are correlations between sexual harassment of the employees in the hospitality industry and with other three independent variables (behaviour and habit factor, passive leadership factor, and hostility factor). The findings, limitations of the study, implications of the study and recommendations of this study will be discussed.

Keywords: Sexual Harassment, Behavior, Hostility Factor

Introduction

Sexual harassment has often been mentioned as a key issue in the hotel industry. Working in the hospitality industry often involves an employee with a number of different people in the course of delivering service (Eller, 1990). It is a common issue that has been heard and seen by women when it goes to sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. In the eyes of society, it looks normal when women joke around with men about sexual jokes such as "Nice Shape" or "Nice muscle" which they think would not give any effect towards the victim. Sexual harassment is more prevalent in hospitality than elsewhere, where it is not only physical, but sexual harassment can occur verbally and visually. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2001b, p. 8) defined sexual harassment as sexual behaviour using physical, verbal or visual, which means it is unwelcome or offensive and either it is repeated or has no sign that it has a detrimental effect on another person. The issue of sexual harassment in hospitality industry among workers, especially male workers, need to be emphasized among the public so that they will become aware of this issue. It is not only women who become the

victim of sexual harassment, but it also happens to men. Using a case study approach, this study wants to identify the factors that are influencing sexual harassment in the hospitality industry among workers, especially male workers, and the importance of identifying the perception of factors for the public in the future so that they are able to take it seriously with this issue where sexual harassment is able to give a big impact towards the victim.

In certain work conditions, sexual harassment is revealed to be more prevalent for instance where there is a sex ratio imbalance where male-dominated environment and the large power gap between women and men. Although, the incidence of sexual harassment might happen to women or men but studies show that women are more vulnerable and at risk of sexual harassment. As reported in the local Malay newspaper recently, it was highlighted that 10% of the women in Malaysia suffer from sexual harassment in the form of threats. Another 10% experienced misconduct in the form of verbal harassment, while the remaining 80% were exposed to non-verbal harassment such as hand signals, lip licking, blowing kisses, winking and ogling (Ariffin, 2010).

Therefore, to overcome this issue, studies need to underline the employees' safety from sexual harassment towards male workers in the hospitality industry. As regards to the problem, this study aims to explore the relationship between several factors such as behaviour and habit factor, passive leadership factor and hostility factor with the male employee as the sexual harassment victim in this hospitality industry that has always been ignored and did not take it as a serious matter by the public where for them it is only a joke when it goes to women and men when communicating with each other.

Literature Review

Sexual Harassment

According to Sabitha (2008), sexual harassment is an unwelcome behaviour or sexual nature which is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating and may affect an employee's work performance, health, career or livelihood. This definition applies to both gender and addresses the effects of sexual harassment on the victims. Sexual harassment has often been mentioned as a key issue in the hotel industry. Sexual harassment is a major concern facing the hospitality industry, and the increasing number of sexual harassment lawsuits are being filed (Agrusa et al., 2000). Close relationships between employees and customers, also as between employees working in close physical proximity, seem to be the trait of harassment in hospitality. This situation happens perhaps given certain characteristics for instance uncertainty of hospitality service, the surroundings of work itself, the unusual hours and the interaction of persons in the delivery service.

Working in the hospitality industry often involves an employee with a number of different people in the course of delivering service (Eller, 1990). Sexual harassment has been recognized as a phenomenon disturbing the members' well-being of an organization since the 1900s. For the past two decades, it has become a universal issue and increased significantly (Hajdin, 2002; Crouch, 2001). Even though the occurrence of sexual harassment reported in Malaysia is limited, the cases are quite common in the United States of America (USA).

The Balanced Scorecard: An Overview

Sexual harassment will also occur by the customer. Customer sexual harassment is based on their behaviour or ethics. Recent research has found that sexual harassment from customers

occurs more frequently and explained significant incremental validity in outcomes beyond intra-organizational harassment (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007; Morganson & Major, 2008). For example, 86% of participants reported being sexually harassed by customers compared to 40-68% of workers who reported 6 intra-organizational harassment (Gettman & Gelfand, 2007). Sexually harassing behaviour can be either direct (targeted individual) or ambient (a general level of sexual harassment in an environment) and is harmful in both cases. Behaviour is the way one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. Victims are more likely to be targeted by harassers who are in a position of power and authority (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor & Strack, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1999). In support of the power and dependency framework in a customer or client context, Gettman and Gelfand (2007) found that perceived client power significantly predicted customer sexual harassment (CSH). Customers tend to do sexual harassment with and without intention towards the employees. Similarly, Fines et al (1999) found a significant positive relationship between a customer or client's coercive and reward power and client's sexual harassment of women employees. It also happens towards male employees as the victim of sexual harassment. Employees need to know their limits when communicating with the customer to avoid being the victim.

The following is one explanation for why people may become addicted to pornography. A person with this habit usually hard to get rid of the dirty habit because of the addiction. They tend to imagine something that they should not have done. Women and porn are not words you often hear together because pornography has been viewed as primarily a "men's" issue for a long time. Unfortunately, times have changed. Today, more and more women are indulging in "adult" entertainment, unaware of its devastating damage to the mind, body, and soul. According to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Research, about half (49 percent) of young adult women agree that viewing pornography is an acceptable way of expressing one's sexuality. By frequently watching pornography, it may lead to sexual harassment towards men where the women tend to imagine the shape or muscle of a man.

Passive Leadership Factors

Passive leadership is characterised by avoiding decisions, not responding to problems, failing to follow up, hesitating to take action, and being absent when needed (Bass, 1990; Kelloway et al., 2005). Prior research has conceptualised passive leadership as comprising elements from passive management by exception leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership (e.g. Holtz and Harold, 2013; Kelloway et al., 2005), both of which are ineffective (DeRue et al., 2011). MBEP leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership are highly correlated and demonstrate similar relationships with outcome variables (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Hinkin and Schriesheim, 2008). Thus, the study combines MBEP leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership into passive leadership. Moreover, leaders may act in a manner consistent with transformational leadership in some situations (e.g. productivity-related issues) and with passive leadership in others (e.g. harassment-related issues). Therefore, transformational and contingent reward leaderships were controlled to examine if passive leadership may have unique effects beyond those 8 attributable to a lack of transformational and contingent reward leadership skills. Passive leadership will be positively associated with observed hostility.

Although the appointment of a person to a manager position evokes legitimate expectations such as clarifying purposes and means and arbitrating disagreements for employees, passive managers fail to meet those expectations by avoiding decision making and the responsibilities

associated with their position (Bass, 1990). As a result, passive leaders may promote conflicting goals among employees and increase work stress through role conflict, role ambiguity, and interpersonal conflicts (Kelloway et al., 2005), which are key factors causing hostile treatment towards others (Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Einarsen et al., 1994). When sexual harassment occurs among the employees, the leader will not take action and be serious about the issue, which can make the issue become bigger and sexual harassment will be seen as a normal thing and just a joke happen in the workplace among the employees. With no any action taken, sexual harassment will be more occur among them. Evidence suggests that experiencing passive leadership by one's immediate superior is positively related to work stress and interpersonal conflicts (Hauge et al., 2007; Skogstad et al., 2007). Because passive leaders are not likely to intervene, despite the primary duty of a manager to handle interpersonal conflicts (Bass, 1990), unresolved escalated conflict among co-workers will lead to increased levels of hostility among organisational members (Liefoghe and Davey, 2001).

Hostility Factors

Hostility poses a threat to targeted individuals' well-being that is manifested as increased psychological distress (e.g. anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion) and decreased work attitudes (e.g. organisational commitment, job satisfaction) and task performance (Porath and Erez, 2007; Tepper et al., 2015). The detrimental effects of hostility do not limit to targeted victims. Evidence suggests that merely observing uncivil treatment at work also negatively affects the observers' occupational and physical well-being (Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2004; Harris et al., 2013). Extending the stream of research on vicarious experiences of hostility, this study proposes that when employees observe hostile interactions among coworkers in the organisation, incidents of sexual harassment are also likely to increase. This is explained by the 9 theories of the incivility spiral (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). According to this theory, mild violations of norms for respect – incivility – can turn into increasingly intense aggressive behaviours through a tit-for-tat exchange (i.e. incivility spiral). The theory further suggests that hostile social exchanges between co-workers may be observed and modelled by a third party, which is likely to initiate an incivility spiral with another person (i.e. secondary spiral). Particularly, when a victim of incivility perceives an identity threat or a loss of face, this will prompt a more intense response with intent to harm the perpetrator, causing an exchange of increasingly hostile behaviours. For instance, when employees experience incivility such as public ridicule, they may feel that their social identity has been damaged or threatened and thus may seek revenge (Aquino and Douglas, 2003; Bies and Tripp, 2005).

As an attempt to revenge, some people might try to trample the status challenge by sexually harassing the other party because the desire to maintain a valued social status is a common underlying motivation for both incivility and sexual harassment (Andersson and Pearson, 1999; Berdahl, 2007). Thus, incivility and sexual harassment often co-occur within the same employees' experiences (Barling et al., 2001; Lim and Cortina, 2005). Sexual harassment often occurs in a larger context of generalised mistreatment embedded in the organisational culture (Lim and Cortina, 2005; O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2009) because organisations tolerate one form of interpersonal mistreatment are likely to tolerate others (Barling et al., 2001). Put differently, incivility observations indicate a hostile workplace climate in that they represent the extent to which mistreatment of others in the organisation is normative (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Therefore, the study predicts that in organisations where hostile interactions are prevalent, employees are also more likely to be exposed to sexual harassment.

Study Framework

Based on the argument of various scholars in literature, the hypotheses are formulated as below.

H1: There is a relationship between the behaviour and habit factor and sexual harassment.

H2: There is a relationship between the passive leadership factor and sexual harassment.

H3: There is a relationship between the hostility factor and sexual harassment.

Methodology

Approach, Sampling and Instrumentation

In this study, the target population of this research is male workers who are working in the food and beverage section. The respondents are selected regardless of gender, age and races. However, it is impossible to run the study research that needs to cover the whole Malaysia because of the population is too big, which it is required a big sample size and researcher's time and budget constraints. Therefore, the total for this study is 300 respondents which makes it acceptable to complete the study. This is because we want to avoid any invalid respondents after completing the survey and will try to gain as many respondents as we can. The unit of analysis in this research is male employees in the food and beverage industry.

The instrument for this study is to concentrate on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was appropriated to society sitting tight at the platform and using google docs. A good questionnaire must be designed appropriately and properly to get a results. The questionnaire should not be biased as the research will focus on male employees in a hotel industry. Along these lines, to make sure that the objective of this study is achieved, Likert scale will be used to gather the data and information. The respondent needs to rate on 5 scales, beginning with 5 strongly agree, 4-agree 3-uncertain, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly agree. The questionnaire consists of five major sections.

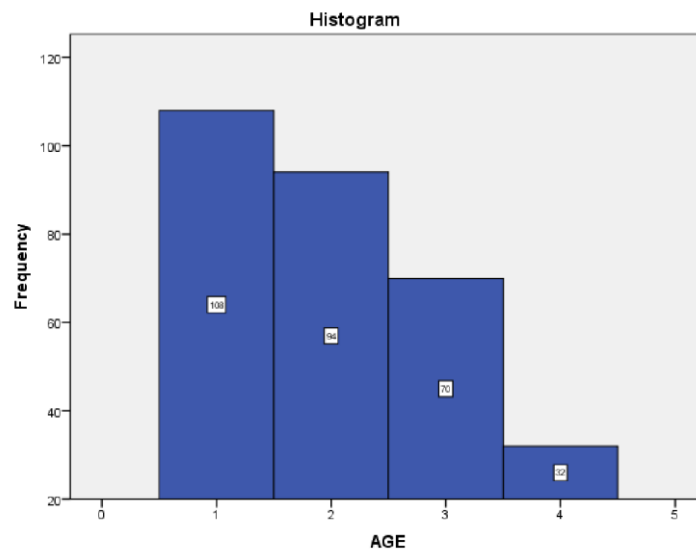
The data for this study was collected by using a survey questionnaire. A cover letter will be attached to the questionnaire in order to provide an understanding for the purpose of the study being conducted to the respondents. The questionnaire will then be distributed online after getting permission to the selected passengers. The respondents are given unlimited time to complete the questionnaires. After all the data had been collected, the researcher analysed it using the SPSS software to get the result of the study.

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

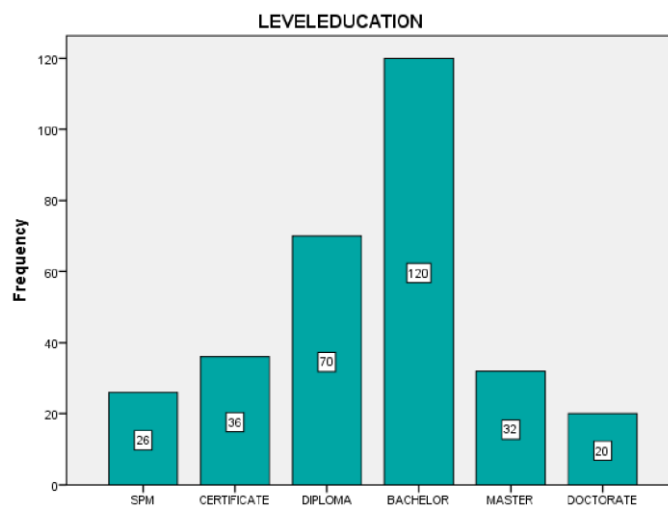
Figure 1 illustrate that the highest percentage for age is 35.5% equals 108 respondents. The 108 respondents are the highest number for the age between 18-25 years old. The least number of age group is 40 and above with 10.5% which equals 32 people out of the 304 respondents. While the rest comprises of age 26-34 years old with a 30.9% which equals 94 respondents. Finally, 70 respondents with age of 35-40 with 23.0%.

Figure 1: Age



According to the final result, the highest level of education of the respondent on participating in this survey is Bachelor with 39.5% which equals with 120 respondents. The least number of respondents is from Doctorate with 6.6% which equals to 20 respondents. The second highest level education is a diploma with 70 respondents that brings 23.0%. The level education of master are recorded to be 32 respondents with 10.5% that participate in the survey, while 26 respondents with SPM level education with 8.6% and 36 respondents from Certificate level education with 11.8%.

Figure 2: Level of Education



Inferential Analysis

Table 1

Co-efficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.709	.125	13.693	.000	1.463	1.955	
BEHAVIOUR	.055	.050	.111	1.086	.278	-.044	.154	
PASSIVE LEADERSHIP	-.053	.061	-.107	-.863	.389	-.173	.068	
HOSTILITY	-.009	.053	-.017	-.160	.873	-.113	.096	
a. Dependent Variable: SEXUAL HARASSMENT								

This study confirms the relationship between behaviour and habit factor and sexual harassment. Behaviour and habit factor scored ($r = 0.111$) which indicates there is a very weak positive linear relationship between the behaviour and habit factor and sexual harassment among the male employees in the hospitality industry. On the other hand, we confirms the relationship between passive leadership factors and sexual harassment. Passive leadership factor scored ($r = -0.107$) which indicates there is a negative weak linear relationship between the passive leadership factor and sexual harassment among the male employees in hospitality industry. Lastly, this study confirms the relationship between the hostility factor and sexual harassment. Hostility factor scored. Based on the hypotheses above, the strongest relationship between the behaviour and habit factor and sexual harassment. Behaviour and habit factor scored ($r = 0.111$) which indicates there is a weak positive linear relationship between hostility factor and sexual harassment among the male employees in the hospitality industry and the highest compared with other factors.

Conclusion

As we all know and think that sexual harassment only occurred to females. Katherine (1997) claimed that sexual harassment is something that men do to women. However now in 2020, even women can do sexual harassment towards men. Compared to women, when sexual harassment happened to a man, usually no serious action will be taken as people have this kind of mind set that sexual harassment will not happen to a man and a man can take care of themselves just because they are male. Furthermore, we need to make awareness regarding sexual harassment to men. Let it be fair and square to both genders when it comes to sexual harassment. Some men may know how to protect themselves when this thing happened to them, but some may not know and will not seek for help. Also, people need to be more serious especially employer when they received a report regarding sexual harassment. Regardless whether it happens to a man or woman, they need to take serious action so that the employees will feel that they are important and feel safe.

We learned that sexual harassment among male employees is not a common things in the world and most of the article that we have been through are more focus to sexual harassment

towards female. Most of the male victims decided to remain silent instead of reporting it because they might get critics or just overreact. In this case study, we were able to identify which of the factor was more influential that can contribute to sexual harassment which is habit and behaviour factor. It is not because of the victim's cloth, body size or shape. It is because of their own unstoppable bad behaviour. This is refer to both genders. In addition, we have learned that some gesture or signal that people normally do such as rubbing their hands behind someone's back or touching other's waist are also implied as sexual harassment if the victims felt dangerous or uncomfortable. Some people thought that it was a normal friendly thing to do which is not.

In a nutshell, the result of the survey did answer all of the objective questions and improve the element discussed in previous studies. We have also learnt a lot about sexual harassment regarding both genders but more focus to males. It is important for all of people to play their roles when they see this kind of thing. Every gender deserves the same treatment.

References

- Agrusa, J., Tanner, J., & Coats, W. (2000). Perceptions of restaurant employees in Asia Pacific on sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 5(2), 29-44.
- Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. (1999). Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace. *Academy of management review*, 24(3), 452-471.
- Aquino, K., & Douglas, S. (2003). Identity threat and antisocial behavior in organizations: The moderating effects of individual differences, aggressive modeling, and hierarchical status. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 90(1), 195-208.;
- Bargh, J. A., Raymond, P., Pryor, J. B., & Strack, F. (1995). Attractiveness of the underling: An automatic power→ sex association and its consequences for sexual harassment and aggression. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 68(5), 768.;
- Barling, J., Rogers, A. G., & Kelloway, E. K. (2001). Behind closed doors: in-home workers' experience of sexual harassment and workplace violence. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 6(3), 255.
- Berdahl, J. L. (2007). Harassment based on sex: Protecting social status in the context of gender hierarchy. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 641-658.
- Bies, R. J., & Tripp, T. M. (2005). The Study of Revenge in the Workplace: Conceptual, Ideological, and Empirical Issues.
- Bowling, N. A., & Beehr, T. A. (2006). Workplace harassment from the victim's perspective: a theoretical model and meta-analysis. *Journal of applied psychology*, 91(5), 998.
- Derue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Wellman, N. E., & Humphrey, S. E. (2011). Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Personnel psychology*, 64(1), 7-52.
- Einarsen, S., Raknes, B. R. I., & Matthiesen, S. B. (1994). Bullying and harassment at work and their relationships to work environment quality: An exploratory study. *European journal of work and organizational psychology*, 4(4), 381-401.
- Fine, L. M., Shepherd, C. D., & Josephs, S. L. (1999). Insights into sexual harassment of salespeople by customers: The role of gender and customer power. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 19(2), 19-34.

- Fitzgerald, L. F., Magley, V. J., Drasgow, F., & Waldo, C. R. (1999). Measuring sexual harassment in the military: the sexual experiences questionnaire (SEQ—DoD). *Military Psychology, 11*(3), 243-263.
- Gettman, H. J., & Gelfand, M. J. (2007). When the customer shouldn't be king: antecedents and consequences of sexual harassment by clients and customers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(3), 757.
- Hajdin, M. (2002). *The law of sexual harassment: a critique*. Susquehanna University Press.
- Harris, A. (2013). Distributed leadership: Friend or foe?. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*(5), 545-554.
- Johan Hauge, L., Skogstad, A., & Einarsen, S. (2007). Relationships between stressful work environments and bullying: Results of a large representative study. *Work & stress, 21*(3), 220-242.
- Hinkin, T. R., & Schriesheim, C. A. (2008). A theoretical and empirical examination of the transactional and non-leadership dimensions of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). *The Leadership Quarterly, 19*(5), 501-513.
- Holtz, B. C., & Harold, C. M. (2013). Effects of leadership consideration and structure on employee perceptions of justice and counterproductive work behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 34*(4), 492-519.
- Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of applied psychology, 89*(5), 755.
- Kelloway, E. K., Sivanathan, N., Francis, L., & Barling, J. (2005). Poor leadership. *Handbook of work stress, 89-112*.
- Liefooghe, A. P., & Mac Davey, K. (2001). Accounts of workplace bullying: The role of the organization. *European journal of work and organizational psychology, 10*(4), 375-392.
- Lim, S., & Cortina, L. M. (2005). Interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace: the interface and impact of general incivility and sexual harassment. *Journal of applied psychology, 90*(3), 483.
- Miner-Rubino, K., & Cortina, L. M. (2004). Working in a context of hostility toward women: implications for employees' well-being. *Journal of occupational health psychology, 9*(2), 107.
- Morganson, V. J., & Major, D. A. (2008). *Exploring the theoretical and empirical significance of sexual harassment from third parties*. San Francisco: Paper presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology
- O'Leary-Kelly, A. M., Bowes-Sperry, L., Bates, C. A., & Lean, E. R. (2009). Sexual harassment at work: A decade (plus) of progress. *Journal of Management, 35*(3), 503-536.
- Porath, C. L., & Erez, A. (2007). Does rudeness really matter? The effects of rudeness on task performance and helpfulness. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(5), 1181-1197.
- Sabitha, M. (2008). 'Misbehaviors at Present and Future Workplace: Issues and Challenges for Public Sector Management, Public Service of Malaysia', *Journal of Psychology, vol.3*, pp. 111-131.
- Skogstad, A., Einarsen, S., Torsheim, T., Aasland, M. S., & Hetland, H. (2007). The destructiveness of laissez-faire leadership behavior. *Journal of occupational health psychology, 12*(1), 80.