



The Moderating Role of Social Approval Perception on the Relationship between the Intention to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Harassment towards Women in the Workplace

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Abstract

The aim of this research was investigating the moderating role of social approval perception on relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment towards women in workplace. The research statistical population included all bank offices, stock exchange, and insurance agencies male employee in Tehran city. The sample consisted 273 individuals whom were selected based on convenience sampling procedure among the population. The research was applied one concerning the object and correlational descriptive with respect to method. The data collected via the implementation of Fitzgerald & et al. Sexual Harassment of Women (1995), Hosseini, Mehdad & Saffarinia Intention to Sexual Harassment (2022) and Hosseini, Mehdad & Saffarinia Social Approval Perception (2022) questionnaires. Data were analyzed by using Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM). The finding showed that there was a significant positive relationship between intention to sexual harassment with sexual harassment of women ($p \leq 0.05$). Moreover, social approval perception could significantly moderate the relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment of women ($p \leq 0.05$). In other words, in men with low social approval perception, the intention to sexual harassment did not lead to sexual harassment of women, but in men with high social approval perception, the intention to sexual harassment led to sexual harassment of women. With considering the moderating role of social approval perception in relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment of women, to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplace, there is a need for cooperation of the organization' members in recognizing sexual harassment of women, intolerance with its occurrence, as well as organizational intervention policies to deal with the transformation of intention in to behavior.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Sexual harassment of women is known as one of the most common experiences of women in their workplace. This phenomenon at work can lead to the reduction of job performance, job withdrawal, decrease of job satisfaction among the harmed women. Sexual harassment can be defined as the infliction of sexual request upon someone without considering their consent. The proposed model of this research was retrieved from the theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behavior. Reviewing the theoretical and research basics, it could be concluded that the issue of sexual harassment of women at the workplace and its harmful and comprehensive consequences is an important social matter, hence more scientific studies seek to indicate the reasons behind it and finding the accurate scientific solutions to avoid it. In this case the aim of this research was investigating the moderating role of social approval perception on relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment towards women in workplace.

Method: The research statistical population included all bank offices, stock exchange, and insurance agencies male employee in Tehran city. To assess the sample volume, Knofczynski & Mundfrom's formula was used in which 10-30 subjects are suggested for each variable. The research under study variables were 8 items and hence, the volume of selected sample sufficed the requirements to carry out the statistical analyses. The sample consisted 273 individuals whom were selected based on convenience sampling procedure among the population. The research was applied one concerning the object and correlational descriptive with respect to method. The data collected via the implementation of Fitzgerald & et al. Sexual Harassment of Women (1995), Hosseini, Mehdad & Saffarinia Intention to Sexual Harassment (2022) and Hosseini, Mehdad & Saffarinia Social Approval Perception (2022) questionnaires. Data were analyzed by using Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM). The participants were assured that the obtained data will remain confidential with the researcher.

Results: The finding showed that there was a significant positive relationship between intention to sexual harassment with sexual harassment of women ($p \leq 0.05$). Moreover, social approval perception could significantly moderate the relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment of women ($p \leq 0.05$). In other words, in men with low social approval perception, the intention to sexual harassment did not lead to sexual harassment of women, but in men with high social approval perception, the intention to sexual harassment led to sexual harassment of women. With considering the moderating role of social approval perception in relationship between intention to sexual harassment and sexual harassment of women, to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplace, there is a need for cooperation of the organization's members in recognizing sexual harassment of women, intolerance with its occurrence, as well as organizational intervention policies to deal with the transformation of intention in to behavior.

Conclusions: Based on the obtained results, it could be inferred that individuals committing sexual harassment of women when they have the intention to do so i.e. the more sexual harassment tendency, the more possibility to commit sexual harassment of women. Also, according to the theory of planned behavior, the individual and situational variables, moderate the relation between intention and behavior. Hence, the variable of



social approval perception as a moderator variable showed that if the colleagues and supervisors were sensitive to negative sexual harassment of women in the workplace, the individuals who were intended to commit sexual harm against the women were less probable to show such behaviors. On the other hand, based on social learning theory, if the acceptance level of organizational climate in a workplace about the sexual harassment of women was high, and it had approved these behaviors so the perpetrators did not get any negative feedback of threat, unpopularity, or dishonor, then this behavior would be strengthened and repeated more.

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