Intention to report sexual harassment – Using the Theory of Reasoned Action

Ponmalar N Alagappar,
Department of Administration Studies,
Faculty of Economics and Administration,
University of Malaya, Malaysia.
Email: ponmalar.a@um.edu.my

Sabitha Marican,
Department of Administration Studies,
Faculty of Economics and Administration,
University of Malaya, Malaysia.
Email: sabithaum@gmail.com

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Abstract

Sexual harassment is becoming an issue that many companies in Malaysia are experiencing regularly. In Malaysia, the victims of sexual harassment face distressing constraints in reporting sexual harassment because there is no clear well communicated sexual harassment policy and legal redress mechanisms in majority of the companies in Malaysia. There is also gross understatement of sexual harassment cases reported in Malaysia, only 1% of the victim lodge a police report or with the Labour Department that they have been abused at their workplace. This would translate to the fact that women are targets of sexual harassment, yet only a few decide to report or "blow the whistle" on their experience. This study utilizes constructs and relationships from the theory of reasoned action, in an effort to prove its effectives in predicting intention to report sexual harassment. In particular, this study looks at perception and organizational climate as independent variables that may influence the intention to report.

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Key words: *Sexual harassment, Perception of Sexual Harassment, Climate for sexual harassment and Theory of Reasoned Action*
JEL Classification: C 19, G13, G 14

1. Introduction

According to Mohd Nazri and Lee (2005) the rates of occurrence of sexual harassment in Malaysia does not differ too much from the situation found in the United States. Empirical research on sexual harassment in the past years have also indicated that up to 70% of the women have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment at work (Lim, 2008; Mohd Nazri, Lee & Chen, 2007; Mohd Nazri & Lee, 2005; Sabitha, 2008, 2005, 2001; Lekha et al., 2003; Zarizana, 2003). Recently, it has been highlighted in a local newspaper (Hariyati, 2010) that 10% of the women in Malaysia are suffering from physical harassment, another 10% in the form of verbal harassment, and 80% in the form of non-verbal harassment such as hand signal, lips licking, blowing kisses, winkling and ogling.

Unlike rape and domestic violence, sexual harassment has only recently been articulated and recognized as a social problem. Despite the fact that up to 47.3% of the workforce is now female, sexual harassment is still not recognized as a serious issue it is frequently downplayed and treated as a joke (Gomez, 2009 & Zariana, 2003).

Recognising that sexual harassment is a widespread problem, the Ministry of Human Resource, Malaysia launched The Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in August, 1999, which was the first official definitive document that addressed the problem of sexual harassment in Malaysia, however, the Code of Practice does not have any legal cognizance ("Malaysia in urgent", 2005), and problems existed within the Code of Practice itself (Loh, 2008).

Amendments were then made to the Employment Act (EA) 1955 to give the Code of Practice that much needed legal cognizance to enable the victims to seek legal redress (Vasudevan, 2007) and making sexual harassment an offence punishable by law, (Sonia, 2008) came into force in April, 2012 (Balasubramaniam, 2012). However, there were limited exceptions in the EA, it only applies to the private sector in Peninsular Malaysia, covers only strict employer-employee relationships whereas, in reality today's workplace includes workers such as contract workers, consultants and trainees who may not be protected under the act (Loh, 2008); tended to restrict the sexual harassment incidents to those in the workplace, places too much power in the hands of the employer whether to open an inquiry into a complaint and does not provide a right to appeal on the outcome of a decision of an employer (Sonia, 2014).

According to Zarizana Abdul Aziz, Chairperson of the Joint Action Group Against Violence Against Women – Sexual Harassment (JAG- SH) only with a legislation, in place, can it effectively prevent sexual harassment (De Lima, 2003). The legislation would cover different scenarios in which harassment could occur, provide victims with access to independent legal

dispute resolutions, including special grievance mechanisms, in a safe and supportive environment, so that the facts may be ascertained and the harasser disciplined, if necessary (Lai, 2007).

Almost 99% of the victim do not report the incidents of sexual harassment due to lack of sexual harassment policy, failure to resolve the complaint, fear of dismissal, don't know how or don't even realize that they are being harassed (Loh, 2009; Gomez, 2009; Phuah, 2008; Selvarani & Tan, 2007). Furthermore, most Malaysians, think sexual harassment is only physical and does not include verbal comments and sounds, gestures or "visual" such as obscene pictures, and that sexual harassment can happen only to younger women and subordinates (Cruez, 2009& Sabitha, 2008). Addtionally, Malaysia traditionally still follows a patriarchal culture (Sabitha, 2008). These cultural values tend to form powerful behavioural norms   and strong organizational climate that perpetuates sexual harassment (Sakallı-Uğurlu et al., 2010 & Sabitha, 2008).

Table 1: Sexual Harassment Cases Reported and Resolved by the Labour Department, Malaysia

Sexual Harassment Cases Reported and Resolved by the Labour Department, Malaysia	
Year	No. of Cases
1999	29
2000	61
2001	46
2002	21
2003	16
2004	19
2005	12
2006	23
2007	9
2008	19
2009	22
2010	20
Total	297

The decision to report sexual harassment appears to be a complex and difficult despite the extent of the victimization, only a few decide to report or blow the whistle on their experience (Gomez, 2009; Cruez, 2009; Sabitha & Nasrudin, 2007; Sabitha, 2001, 2005, 2008; Roziah et al., 2006; Sabitha & Azmi Shaari, 2004) (Table 1). This is also supported by studies that whistle-blowing action is not a popular means of reporting wrong-doing in Malaysian organizations (Nadzri, Galbreath & Evans, 2011; Sabitha, 2008; Ngui, 2005). If the victims do not report their

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experience with sexual harassment, the offender cannot be apprehended and/or punished, and the behaviour is likely to continue (Brooks & Perot, 1991).

2. Objective of Study

The objectives of this research was to ascertain if the theory of reasoned action is an effective theoretical framework in predicting the intention to report sexual harassment and to identify if perception and organizational climate influences the respondent intention to report sexual harassment.

3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study utilizes constructs and relationships from the theory of reasoned action (attitudes, subjective norms, intentions, and actions) by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) (Figure 1) to develop theoretical propositions regarding intention to report sexual harassment. According to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), the immediate determinant of behavior is the intention to perform the behavior (Byrne & Arias, 2004).

Prior literature focused on and tested behavioural intention rather than actual behaviour as the dependent variable, given the argument of the existence of a strong relationship between intention and actual behaviour, and the inherent difficulties of accessing and measuring actual behaviours (Carpenter & Reimers, 2005 and Devonish et al., 2010). Due to the nature of the act of sexual harassment itself, not many are willing to disclose the fact that they have been harassed, this is evident in the number of reported cases, and therefore the intention to report was used as the dependent variable (Chiu, 2003; Victor et al., 1993).

The TRA has received support from empirical studies in many behavioural domains (Byrne & Arias, 2004). Strube (1988) included TRA in his discussion of the four theoretical models that could be applied to the decision to leave an abusive relationship. Brooks & Perot (1991) had also proposed the TRA in predicting reporting of sexual harassment. Recently, Richardson, Wang & Hall (2012) study on blowing the whistle against Greek hazing using TRA as a framework for reporting intentions proved the applicability of the TRA model to whistle-blowing scenario.

Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action

Attitudes towards behaviour
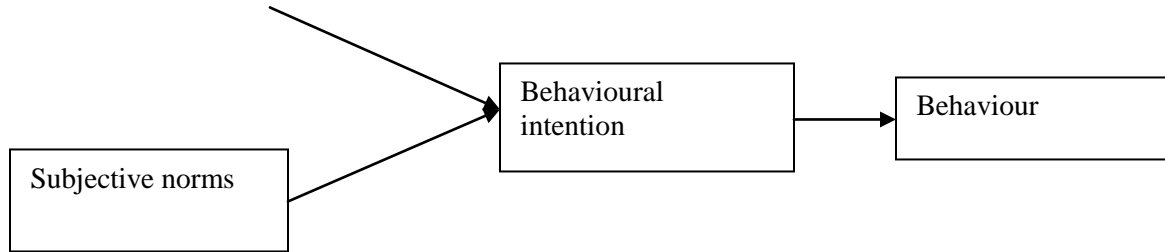
Attitude towards the behavior is defined as the person's feeling of favourableness or unfavourableness toward the behavior in question (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).   Attitude toward the behavior is determined by behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations.   In general, a person develops attitudes based on the beliefs he or she has about the behaviour under consideration by associating that behaviour with certain consequences (Ponnu, Naidu & Zamri, 2008). The second antecedent refers to subjective norms - the perception that important others are expecting or otherwise pressuring the person to perform or not to perform the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Subjective norm refers to the influence of one's peers, family and referent others in performing the behaviour (Ajzen, 2002).

4. Factors related to underreporting of sexual harassment in organizations

A variety of individuals and organizational factors have been associated with reporting sexual harassment. Most factors influencing reporting behaviour have produced mixed results (Vijayasiri, 2008; Bergman et al., 2002; Knapp et al., 1999; Adams-Roy & Barling, 1998). Only severity and frequency of sexually harassing behaviour and climate of an organization have been found to be reliable predictors of women's decision to report sexual harassment (Willness, Steel and Lee, 2007; Bergman et al., 2002; Hulin et al., 1996; Brooks & Perot, 1991)

4.1 Perception of sexual harassment

One factor related to reporting sexual harassment is perception of sexual harassment - the psychological process of naming an experience as sexual harassment. The appraisal of what is "unwelcome" or "offensive", and/or "interfering" behaviour must be qualified by individual interpretation. What one person defines as sexual harassment, another person may not, and thus to determine whether an incident is sexual harassment or not, it is influenced by the perception of the individual on the matter (Kamal & Asnarulkhadi, 2011; Li & Wong, 2005).

This phenomenon has led some to focus on the gap between objective and subjective perceptions of harassment or the likelihood respondents will label their experiences as sexual harassment (Welsh et. al, 2006). Subjectively perceived and labelled sexual harassment relies on an individual's interpretation of an event, while objectively defined sexual harassment occurs whenever an event takes place and is noticed by others (Bowes-Sperry & Tata, 1999). The

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discrepancy between perception and labeling is largely also due to the ambiguous nature of harassing behaviour (Weiss & Lalonde, 2001).

Cruez, (2009) in her article, reported that many victims do not complain because sometimes the victims don't realize they are being harassed, indicating a low awareness on what constitutes sexual harassment (Lekha et al., 2003; Azizi et al., 2001). Victims of sexual harassment also have trouble distinguishing harassment from an apparently normal gesture of affection in its initial stage, for the line that separates friendly teasing from mild sexual harassment is not always visible (Sabitha & Siti Alida, 2008). This is supported by Roziah et al., (2006) study that some forms of sexual harassment may be facilitated through a misunderstanding or misperceptions of sexual intentions.

Furthermore, ambiguity and the intangibility of sexual harassment can cause some victims not to report due to their desire to protect their professional relationship with the harasser or in order to maintain their own reputation within an organization (Keyton & Menzie, 2007). Weiss and Lalonde (2001) study on responses to sexual harassment proved that unambiguous situations let to more assertive responding such as reporting the behaviour than ambiguous conditions.

Generally, studies in the West and Malaysia have studied perception of sexual harassment has a dependent variable. Very few studies in the West have studied at perception of sexual harassment as the independent variable to reporting of sexual harassment (Kalof et.al, 2001, Weiss & Lalonde, 2001; Timmerman & Bajema, 2000). Only one study in Malaysia had studied perception of sexual harassment as the independent variable in relation to knowledge management (Sabitha & Siti Alida, 2008). This study looks at perception of sexual harassment as an independent variable to reporting sexual harassment.

4.2 Climate for sexual harassment

Another factor relating to reporting of sexual harassment is climate of an organization. Willness, Steel and Lee (2007) study on the meta-analysis of organizational climate had proved that, sexual harassment climate has been the best single predictor of sexual harassment in organizations, therefore, it is critical to consider the role organization plays in terms of influencing, or perhaps discouraging reporting (Halbesleben, 2009; Bergmen et al., 2002; Welsh & Gurber, 1999; Fitzgerald, Gelfand & Drasgow, 1995; Pryor, 1995). Pryor's (in Hunter Williams, Fitzgerald and Drasgow, 2009) study had emphasized that the offenders/perpetrators proclivity towards sexual harassment is facilitated or inhibited by organizational factors. Given the difficulty of changing personal characteristics and the evidence that organizational factors shape individual behaviour, organizational factors appear to provide more promising targets for intervention (Hunter Williams, Fitzgerald and Drasgow, 2009).

Sexual harassment is commonly considered as an organizational stressor and psychological climate specifically suggests that climate may play a role after sexual harassment is experienced – not just as an antecedent but as part of the process invoked by the experience i.e. throughout the process of reaction to and coping with the harassment (Keyton et al. 2001; Hulin et al., 1996). However, organizational climate does not directly affect reporting; but it does influence reporting and its outcomes through sexual harassment history, frequency of sexual harassment, policies and procedures, organizational ethics and organizational minimization of reporting, retaliation and procedural satisfaction (Bergman et al., 2002).

It appears that the existence of a social climate that is permissive of sexual harassment may be necessary condition for such behaviors to occur. In a strong anti-harassment climate, it is clear to all employees that sexual harassment is inconceivable (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004); research has shown that climates lax towards sexual harassment are associated with higher overall sexual harassment rates because individuals with a proclivity to harass are freer to do so when the climate tolerates sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, 1999).

Previous studies in Malaysia have shown that, the organization climate and the individual's perception of the expected outcomes of reporting may influence the reporting behavior of that individual (Sabitha & Sharifah, 2008; Sabitha & Azmi Shaari, 2004). Roziah et al. (2006) study of Malaysian public administrators found that the male respondents showed a low awareness towards psychological (47.8%) and visual (37.3%) sexual harassment respectively. According to Roziah et al. (2006), this may be depended on the culture of the organization and intensity of relationship between the people in the organization. This is supported by Kamal & Asnarulkhadi (2011) study (on employees of public universities) where men regardless of their background will have the propensity to sexually harass given the conducive environment in both the social and organizational context within an academic setting. Rohani (2005) also found in her study that opportunities are the key to the occurrences of sexual harassment.

For example, if the people in the organization often use symbolic sexual meaning/words as jokes and kidding, then the people in the organization will accept the behavior, though it clearly carries sexual interpretations (Roziah et al., 2006). Mohd & Lee (2005) found that the process of socialization that comprises of informal channel of communication and interaction in the organization would inevitably make its members always vulnerable to being sexually harassed.

To date, only few researchers have comprehensively explored the impact of organizational climate on reporting of sexual harassment with the last study being done by Salin(2009); Vijayasiri(2008); Hertzog, Wright & Beat(2008); Bergman et al. (2002); Offermann &

Malamut(2002). This study focuses on climate for sexual harassment as an independent variable to intention to report sexual harassment.

The dependent variable of this study, the intention to report, refers to the individual's probability of actually engaging in reporting the act. The two dimensions that determine the reporting intention are perception of sexual harassment (an attitude) and climate for sexual harassment (subjective norm) (Figure 2). Foulis & McCabe (1997) and McCabe & Hardman (2005) study on factors that affect attitudes and perception of sexual harassment found that the respondents perceptions of sexual harassment significantly predict attitudes to sexual harassment. In this study, it is predicted that the respondent will hold stronger intention to end the sexually harassing behaviour if they held unfavourable attitudes towards sexual harassment and believe that others will support them in reporting sexual harassment.

Figure 2: Research Model based on Theory of Reasoned Action.
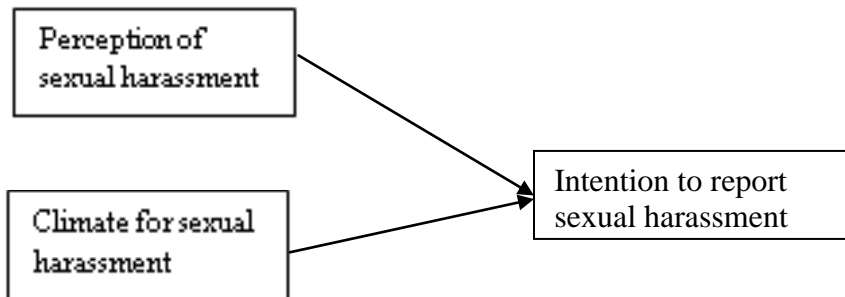
5. Methodology

5.1 Questionnaire Design

All the measures used in this study are from previous studies that have showed appropriate reliability and validity. Perception of Sexual Harassment was assessed using The Utara Sexual Harassment Perception Questionnaire (USHPQ) by Sabitha (1999); it has been adapted to the Malaysian culture, with a high reliability and has been applied widely among different professions (Sabitha & Siti Alida, 2008).

USHPQ encompasses of 22 items, pertaining to the four categories of sexual harassment – verbal, non-verbal/gestural, visual and physical harassment. Examples of item include "Standing too close till you feel uncomfortable", "Jokes/teasing, stories, and using language of sexual nature" and "Claim of sexual favours through pressure or threat". The participants were asked to what extent the various statements had affected their feelings. The respondents answered on 3-point scale ranging from "not disturbed" to "very disturbed". Higher scores indicate that the list of behavior is disturbing, lower scores indicate that the list of behavior is not disturbing.

Climate for sexual harassment was measured using the Psychological Climate for Sexual Harassment Questionnaire which was adapted from Estrada et.al. (2011) 10 items were used to measure the respondents perception of organizational practices related to sexual harassment. The questionnaire was adapted to suit the construct measured. Examples of items include "Does not tolerate sexual harassment" and "Takes sexual harassment complaints seriously" Participants responded to a 4-point response scale (1 = "Completely False" to 4 = "Completely True"). Negatively worded items were reverse scored. Higher scores are indicative of a climate that does not tolerate sexual harassment. Lower scores are indicative of a climate that tolerates sexual harassment.

Intention to report sexual harassment which was adapted from Brooks & Perot (1991), 4 items was used to measure intention to report sexual harassment. Examples of the items were: "I'll report the experiences to friends, relatives, or colleague" and "I'll report the behavior to a university official, e.g. dean", Participants were asked on their general reaction towards sexual harassment by agreeing or disagreeing with the statements. The response was measured using a four-point scale in which the answers range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Higher score indicate high intention to report and lower scores indicate low intention to report.

In this study, the questionnaire was translated from English (source version) into Bahasa Malaysia (the target version), expect for USHPQ which was designed in Bahasa Malaysia. To ensure each items in the questionnaire can be easily understood and answered by the respondents, all items in the questionnaire were checked for its accuracy of language used. This was done by conducting a "Language Check Test".

5.2 Data Collection

A pre-test was conducted to ascertain whether items in the questionnaire are clear and acceptable by respondents and to refine the procedures pertaining to instruments administration. The results obtained were utilised to establish the reliability and validity of the instruments used and to test the possible relationship between the variables.

The samples for the study were both female academic and non-academic staff from two public universities. Recruitment was done through snowball technique; the participants were all volunteers and were not given any inducements for their participation in the study. A recent study by Hutagalung & Ishak (2012) found that majority of women employees i.e. clerk; tutor, lecturers and professors in three public universities had experienced sexual harassments at a moderate level.

For the pre-test based on Field (2009) sample size, 110 questionnaires were distributed but only 82 questionnaires were useable and complete. According to Rohana et al. (2009), the low

response rate among Malaysian respondents could be due to culture as people are not comfortable in discussing their emotions openly.

The results and findings of the pilot study are discussed here. Data collected was processed and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$

6. Results

The profile of the respondents of the pilot study comprised of almost all Malays 75.6%, Chinese 13.4% and Indians 11%. Respondent were asked to provide information about their age, marital status, academic qualification and years employed (Table 2). Most of them were employed between 6 to 10 years (61.0%), followed by 3 to 5 years (25.6%) and 1 to 2 years (11.4%) and within the age group of 30-39 (46.3%), 40-49 (30.5%), 20-29 (22%). Majority of the respondents were married 68% and single 26.8%.

Table 2: Profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Race	Malay	62	75.6
	Chinese	11	13.4
	Indian	9	11.0
Age	20-29	18	22
	30-39	38	46.3
	40-49	25	30.5
	>50	1	1.2
Marital Status	Single	22	26.8
	Married	56	68.3
	Divorced	2	2.4
	Widowed	2	2.4
Academic Qualification	Degree	58	70.7
	Masters	24	29.3
Years Employed	1 to 2 years	11	11.4
	3 to 5 years	21	25.6
	6 to 10 years	50	61.0

Cornbach's alpha coefficients were computed to ascertain reliability of the scale. Cronbach's alpha for the 10-Item climate for sexual harassment questionnaire was .85. Although this can be considered adequate for research purpose, a closer examination of the questionnaire item-total statistics indicated that alpha would increase to .89 if item 10 was removed. This item asked whether "filing a sexual harassment complaint at my organization is risky", was negatively correlated with 4 items in the questionnaire and did not seem to fit well with the other items in the

questionnaire. It had a relatively weak correlation with the sum of other nine item (r=.170) and Cronbach's alpha for the scale improves markedly from.85 to .89 when this item was ignored. We believe this question was not discriminating well and needed to be reworded. This item was dropped from the questionnaire and in all subsequently analyses.

Cronbach's alpha for the 22-item perception of sexual harassment questionnaire was .83. An examination of the questionnaire Item-total statistics indicated that item 2 and 8 did not seem to fit well with the other item in the questionnaire. These items asked whether "rubbing/brushing your body" and "Being requested to stay back or work late, just to be together even if there is no work to be done", was negatively correlated with 15 items and 12 items respectively in the questionnaire.   It had a relatively weak correlation with the sum of other 20 items (r=.103) for item 2 and (r=.037) for item 8 and Cronbach's alpha for the scale improved from.83 to .84 when item 2 and 8 was ignored. These two questions were probably ambiguous for substantial portion of the respondents and needed to be reworded and were dropped from the questionnaire and in all subsequently analyses.

Cronbach's alpha for the 4 item intention to report sexual harassment questionnaire was .89. An examination of questionnaire Item-total statistics indicated that all the items in the questionnaire had a strong correlation with each other (R=>.629). In conclusion, the result concluded that the measurement scales used were stable to measure the constructs.

For factor analysis to be conducted, assessing the suitability of the available data is important. It is generally recommended that larger sample offer greater ability to generalize compared to smaller samples. As the sample was only 82, another alternative would be ratio of cases to item, the requirement 10 cases for each item in the questionnaire (Nunnally, 1978); however the sample of study still fell short of the minimum requirement, a limitation of the study.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to validate the assumption of normality in the data, a significant result was obtained (sig value of .001) which indicated absence of normality in the dataset, another limitation of the study. The value of the 5% trimmed mean and the original mean were very similar, for perception of sexual harassment was 54.23 and 53.96 and for climate for sexual harassment was 28.39 and 28.46 as such the outlying cases were retained.

A non-parametric test i.e. Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was used to test for possible correlations between the independent and dependent variables (Pallant, 2005). In Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (rho), value are from -1 to +1may be computed, the size of the absolute value, sign notwithstanding, indicates the strength of the relationship (Pallant, 2005) The following hypotheses were tested, one, perception of sexual harassment has no significant relationship to intention to report sexual harassment. Spearman's rho indicated there was no

correlation between perception of sexual harassment and intention to report sexual harassment [r= -0.67, p=.552, two tailed, N=82] thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The second hypothesis was climate for sexual harassment has no significant relationship to intention to report sexual harassment. There was weak to moderate positive correlation between climate for sexual harassment and intention to report sexual harassment, which was statistically significant at 0.05 level[r=.224, p=0.043, two tailed, N=82], thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

To estimate the proportion of variance in intention to report sexual harassment that can be accounted for by perception of sexual harassment and climate for sexual harassment, a standard multiple regression analysis (MRA) needed to be performed, the small sample size and the absence of normality in the data, conducting a MRA was not possible.

7. Discussion

The present study sought to test TRA's capacity to predict the intention to report by academic and non-academic respondents faced with a sexual harassment incident at the workplace. The present study could make contributions in a number of areas. First, it examines the applicability of the TRA model to whistle-blowing scenarios (Richardson, Wang & Hall, 2013). Based on the TRA model, it was hypothesized that women's intention to report sexual harassment would be predicted by their perception and climate for sexual harassment. The results showed that the explanatory power of the TRA was not as high as expected but it still adds to the understanding of what drives the employees to report (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2009). This shows that the TRA has considerable potential as a parsimonious general theory (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2009) for explaining intention to report sexual harassment. One possible explanation is that the small sample size perhaps curbed the generalizability of the study. Two, the finding may be related to the demographic make-up of this sample itself (Byrne & Arias, 2004). Perhaps, in this sample perception and organizational climate appeared to be relatively minor to the intention to report or not to report. Thirdly, for most women, the intention to report is ongoing process and the predictive strength of attitudes and subjective norms may fluctuate at different points in this process (Byrne & Arias, 2004).

However, the preliminary findings does demonstrates that respondents are more likely to have intention to report if they feel that they have a work climate that encourages reporting. Employees learn via observation, modelling and other standard acquisition processes that reflect organizational reality to some degree and the likely consequences of a specific behaviour (Hulin, Fitzgerald & Drasgow, 1996). The climate of an organization may impact an employees' willingness to provide accurate behavioural cues concerning how they actually feel about the harassment (Halbesleben, 2009). In general, Malaysians tend to be less individualistic than

people in the Western culture, their behaviour are probably more influenced by other people's value and point of view (Li, et al., 2010).

As pointed out by Keyton and Menzie (2007) situating potentially sexually harassing comments within a work environment allows the harasser to possibly escape retribution because the presence of the organizational climate "legitimizes" the harassment. That is, a subordinate might feel pressure to comply with or to not report their harassing supervisor because the work environment has effectively set them up to follow directives from that same supervisor, the interpersonal and work relationships are at stake when faced with a potential incident of sexual harassment are a serious consideration for many victims (Keyton & Menzie , 2007).

Studies in Malaysia by Sabitha (2001, 2005 & 2008) of government/public organizations have found that to effectively remove sexual harassment from the workplace requires action against both individuals' incidents and those existing practices and attitude at work which foster sexual harassment.   Management can play a major role in managing sexual harassment at the workplace by acting as a role model in providing a climate that discourages sexual harassment (Sabitha & Sharifah, 2008).

Employers have a moral obligation to maintain a workplace free of sexual harassment. For example, organizational support for reporting inhibit retaliation; that is, the more support a victim receives from important others in the organization (e.g. management); the less retaliation victim experiences (Near & Miceli, 1986). Such support would include attempts to substantiate the report of sexual harassment and to remedy substantiated situations (Bergman et al., 2002). Mohd Nazri & Lee (2005) and Mohd Nazri, Lee & Chan (2007) study proposed that creating a positive climate is conducive for the positive morale of workers. Organizations with a strong anti-sexual harassment climate would be sending strong messages on the intolerance of sexual harassment among its employees.

Responding to harassment is a matter of organizational discipline, with the aim of modifying harasser behavior, protecting the target and deterring other organizational members from engaging in similar conduct (Salin, 2009). As such, when the supportiveness from the organizations leaders and workgroup are missing and not directly stated or felt, it would make it difficult for the victim to report.

Perception of sexual harassment is a factor in the formation of behavioral intention towards identifying the behaviour as sexual harassment because it is an integral component of an individual's attitude towards sexual harassment (Ajzen, 1991). Though, majority of respondents did recognize the list of behaviours as sexual harassment, the mean score was high (M=53.96, SD= 4.84), however, perception did not predict intention to report sexual harassment.

Prior studies have suggested that TPB model in predicting people's intention in non- English speaking, more collectivistic countries, found that the attitude-intentions relationship is likely to be less influential and the subjective norm- intentions relationship is more likely to be more influential than what is commonly found in individualistic countries (Quintal et al. 2010). In explanation, people from collectivist countries are generally seen as more mature when they put aside their personal feelings, attitudes and beliefs and act in socially appropriate manner, whereas people from individualist countries generally seen as more mature when they act in a manner consistent with their personal feelings, attitudes and beliefs (Triandis, 1995).

Another possible explanation in Donny (2002) study on support staff of a public university in Malaysia found that majority of the support staff recognized most behaviors as sexual harassment but did not find the threat of sexual harassment as serious. Bursik & Gefter (2011) study in an academic setting found that sexual harassment had become a common part of the cultural landscape; as a result woman may identify the behavior as sexual harassment but not as wrong or inappropriate.

This was also supported by Ilies et al. (2003) study that though women employed in the academia actually reported a higher average incidence sexual harassment than women employed in the private sector and the government but, when they were asked whether they have been sexually harassed, they reported less incidents of sexual harassment (in accordance to their own definition).

 Another possible reason could be that this is most likely due to the interplay between individual and organizational predictors. The preliminary findings had demonstrates that respondents are more likely to have the intention to report if they feel that have a work climate that is supportive and encourages reporting. As such, adequacy of encouragement concerns the degree to which there is a feeling that there is a sufficient degree of supportiveness from the organizations leaders for the employees to speak out and report sexual harassment when appropriate (Keenan, 1990).

8. Conclusion

The study attempted to explore the validity of TRA which is widely accepted as a general framework for predicting behavioral intention but rarely used in measuring intention to report sexual harassment. In spite of the limitations of the dataset and the inadequacy of TRA in explaining intention to report sexual harassment, the results have some important conclusions. Finding of this study seem to imply that the choice of remaining silent versus reporting is a function of personal as well as organizational variable.

The most important aspect of a sexual harassment policy is a firm and continued commitment from the management to encourage the creation of an open culture which has preventive measures (Fauzie & Marja, 2010). The management should pay increased attention in creating an awareness of sexual harassment thru specific training and prevention programmes i.e. the option and choices must be made available to the victim of sexual harassment by the organization. This requires a clearly defined provision which regards to actions that amount to sexual harassment and also, ensure that the policy is well displayed and widely circulated amongst the employees. Thus, implementations of grievance and prevention policies appear to be an important part of reporting sexual harassment (Hunter Williams, Fitzgerald & Drasgow, 1999; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Grasgow, 1996).

9. Limitation of the Study and Future Direction

The findings, however, need to be considered in the light of certain limitations. The finding of this study is part of a bigger study which is currently being done.

The primary limitation is that the sample size is not large enough i.e. 82. As such it is not representative of women's as a whole, with a bigger sample, the path analysis can be run to look at the interrelationships between the variables. In particular, it can be used to test either the degree of fit between a theoretical model and the actual data or to look at the path coefficients that relate the different variables together, or both of these at the same time. Future research should include construct validity testing of the scales would help identify likely post hoc explanations for this particular results (Li et al., 2010)

An important outcome to note here is the possibility that organizational climate could be the moderating variable in intention to report sexual harassment.

Another limitation pertains to the data collection procedure. Recruitment was done through a snowball technique; it may be subjected to biasness. Also the issue of social desirability bias – the respondents tend to portray themselves in a more socially favorable light rather than being honest.

This study was conducted exclusively on women but on the same note research has also shown that men are also victim of sexual harassment and latest statistics show that almost 15% of the men have been harassed.

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