SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING: AN ANALYSIS

By

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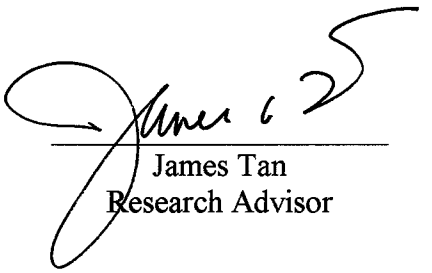

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ABSTRACT

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For the present study, literature from 1994 to 2004 that were based on sexual harassment training effectiveness was reviewed. An analysis was conducted to determine the overall effectiveness of sexual harassment training. It was found that sexual harassment training is effective according to the standards of the 6 studies identified.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Sexual harassment is a problem that has been within the business world for many years, however until the mid 1980's it seemed to be unknown as a problem to the general public. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2004), the total number of sexual harassment cases reported to the EEOC in 1985 was only 9. Between 1985 and 1999, that number grew by over 500 percent to a total of 4,783 cases reported in 1999 (EEOC, 2004). Furthermore, that number nearly tripled between the years of 1999 to 2002. The total number of cases that were reported in 2002 was 14,396 (EEOC, 2004).

With the numbers increasing at an exponential rate, the cost to businesses is also on the rise. Costs involved in sexual harassment incidence include, but are not limited to, costs due to turnover that occurs because of the sexual harassment, as well as simple lost productivity due to the unsupportive work environment. Another major cost to businesses is lawsuits that involve private businesses for not protecting the rights of individuals who become the victims of sexual harassment. According to the EEOC Sexual Harassment Charges Chart, in 2002, lawsuits involving businesses and sexual harassment awarded victims over $50 million in settlements. Other costs that are being accumulated due to sexual harassment are those that involve the sexual harassment training that occurs within businesses that they include for their workers due to the problems of sexual harassment. This cost not only includes that of training techniques which range from 49 dollars per employee to almost a thousand dollars to purchase training materials, but also the lost man hours that are spent on this extra training that takes away from each worker's productivity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to take previous studies conducted on sexual harassment training and determine if this training is effective as a method of reducing the occurrences of sexual harassment in the workplace. By looking at current trends that are occurring in the training methods of sexual harassment training, it will be determined whether or not these trends are effective in their methods. By doing this analysis it will also help to determine which methods are more affective in comparison to other methods. Once this has been determined, a suggestion of better methods can be made, and a suggestion of the most cost effective methods will also be determined.

Definition of Terms

Sexual Harassment. According to the United States Federal Law, and Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia (2004), "sexual harassment is unwanted verbal or physical behavior of sexual nature that occurs in the workplace or in an educational setting under certain conditions". For the purpose of this study, sexual harassment has been defined to include any physical advances in a sexual manner, receiving sexual favors for keeping or obtaining a position in the work environment (Quid pro quo; see following definition), or verbal sexual advances. The verbal sexual advances include pressing for dates outside of the office setting while in the work environment.

According to Gutek (1985), sexual harassment categories can include the following: insulting comments, insulting looks and gestures, sexual touching, and expected sexual activity as part of a job. According to Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis (1989) and Fitzgerald and Ormerod (1991), three factors make up sexual harassment: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.

Quid Pro Quo. The term quid refers to getting something in return for another. In the context of sexual harassment, the term quid pro quo refers to getting sexual favors in return for keeping a job, getting a promotion or any means of implying that these favors are necessary within the work environment.

Hostile work environment. According to the Conditions of Work Digest (1992), the hostile work environment that is created be sexual harassment can also be compared to the hostile work environments that have issues such as noise pollution and/or very dirty conditions (p.14). The Conditions of Work Digest (1992) defines a hostile work environment as an environment where the sexual harassment creates a "hostile, abusive, or offensive work environment for its victims" (p. 14).

Limitations

Due to time constraints, a full meta-analysis was unable to be done due to the access to the necessary software. The study was also only conducted on those journal articles published before March of 2004, which excluded any studies that were published between March and June of 2004 due to other time constraints.

Methodology

The journal articles that were used was decided based on the criterion of which studies included numerical data that determined training effectiveness. Those studies that were included in the analysis had methods of training including video, lectures with discussions, videos paired with discussions, reading material and previous unidentified training. Methods of selection are described later.

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual harassment has become more recognized over the last two decades. The 1980s is when sexual harassment was first identified and one of the earliest cases of the hostile work environment theory of sexual harassment made it to the Supreme Court, which was *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson* (1986). From then to today, there has been a steady growth in the number of cases of charges filed for sexual harassment (EEOC, 2004). In a study by Fitzgerald and Shullman (1993), after analyzing past studies they found that the best method for identifying sexual harassment was by gender harassment, sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention. They found that those three measures account for approximately 50% of the variance of the measure, however two additional definitions are identified by individuals when determining if sexual harassment has occurred; sexual bribery and sexual imposition (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993).

An example of one case where the court found the employer in the wrong in dealing with quid pro quo sexual harassment is that of *Champion v. Nationwide Security Incorporated* (1996). In this case, the male supervisor of the female plaintiff initially offered her security within her job if she had sex with him. After her refusal and later on that day, while he and the subordinate were alone, he raped her. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff stating that the supervisor used his authority to conduct the rape and quid pro quo sexual harassment advances.

Another example where quid pro quo occurred is in the case of *Martin v. Cavalier Hotel* (1995). In this case the general manager of hotel had made sexual advances against the hotel accountant stating that she play along or lose her job. He sexually assaulted her and eventually raped her forcing her to quit. The plaintiff suffers from depression, extreme weight loss, and posttraumatic stress disorder and suffers from nightmares and insomnia due to the sexual assaults

and harassment she received while under the general managers supervision. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination covered under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended prohibits employers from discriminating against workers with respect to compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Employers may not exact sexual contact in exchange for compensation or advancement...nor may they subject workers to intimidating, hostile or offensive working environments because of their gender" (Weiner & Russell, 1998). Cases that are lost in court have added up to an average of $79,500 with a range of $25,000 to $129,855 in the years from 1990 to 1996 according to Newman (1995).

One example of a court case that showed that sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination is that of *Meritor Savings v. Vinson* in 1986. In that case, Mechelle Vinson sued the vice president of the bank for sexual harassment and won. The argument was not a case where the plaintiff was asked to perform sexual favors to keep her job, but that the sexual harassment created a hostile working environment for the plaintiff. In this case, the guidelines issued by the EEOC specified that sexual harassment leading to non-economic injury, or injury that is not a result of quid pro quo was a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII and this was proven to be a case where the sexual harassment led to disparate treatment. It was this court case that determined that employers are responsible for managers and those in supervisory positions if they conduct sexual harassment.

Another case where sexual harassment has used against a company is that of *Burlington v. Ellerth* in 1998. This was a case where quid pro quo was attempted; however it was never followed through because Ellerth received a promotion and always turned down any advances

made by the supervisor that she was being harassed by. The courts did not rule in favor of the plaintiff according to the quid pro quo charges, however they did rule in favor of the plaintiff in regards to the responsibility of a company's employees in higher power positions. This case and also the case of *Faragher v. Boca Raton* (1998) redefined how liable a company is for those that they put into positions of power. Both of these trials ruled that employers have a responsibility to anticipate how an employee is going to behave when put into positions of power.

One case where sexual harassment had occurred according to the individual who received the harassment but did not award the plaintiff is that of Oncale v. Sundowner (1996). In this case, Oncale had been harassed by other men, which included threats of rape, however the courts did not protect same sex harassment, stating that same sex harassment is not covered under Title VII. They did not consider this to be harassment based on the gender of the individual in this case as well as the case of Garcia v. Elf Atochem (1994) (Weiner & Russell, 1998). They ruled this way because they stated that this could be considered "general teasing or roughhousing", such as when a football coach smacks his player's buttocks as they enter the field. The courts determined that this is not to be considered harassment unless a "reasonable" person would feel that this conduct is harassing (Weiner & Russell, 1998). Oncale won in 1998.

There have been many studies done on sexual harassment in the workplace. Many studies focus on individual's abilities to recognize when sexual harassment is occurring. For example, in a study conducted by Wilkerson (1999), participants were exposed to two types of scenarios in videos depicting cases of sexual harassment, one being more severe, and the other being less severe. It was found that when employees were exposed to two sexual harassment scenarios they were only able to recognize the more severe cases. This shows that when there is a fine line in a sexual harassment case, and the behavior is not obvious it may have an effect on whether or not a

victim may report it, as well as if others in the workplace support the victim in the case that they do report it. This study also found that front-end supervisors were less likely to recognize sexual harassment than upper management. It was hypothesized that this may be true because front-end supervisors are exposed to many more work behaviors on a regular basis, which in turn can make them less sensitive to harassment that may be occurring.

Another study conducted by Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) focused on these sensitivity issues in regard to sexual harassment in the workplace. They focused on gender differences in how sensitive women versus men are when they are categorizing the severity of sexual harassment with and without sexual harassment training. When looking at men specifically, they found that those who had training were much more likely to consider remarks, gestures, touching and pressure to date outside of work as being sexually harassing than those men who had not had the training.

The previously mentioned studies have the focused of how individuals feel when exposed to sexual harassment, but fewer studies have focused on what can be done to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the first place. This is why the focus of this study is on the effectiveness of sexual harassment training. It is detrimental to businesses to learn which methods are the best when it comes to sexual harassment training, and whether these methods are affective at all.

Organizations have many options when deciding on methods to use for sexual harassment training. One method that is used includes videos that show scenes of different severity of sexual harassment that need to be identified by the learner, while other videos identify and define sexual harassment. Another method that is used is cd-rom, in which the individual goes through different modules that define sexual harassment and give examples of sexually harassing

behavior. Seminars are another form of training that includes many forms of media to be used by the instructor to educate.

More interactive methods include group discussions in which a facilitator discusses what sexual harassment is with a group of individuals and makes contributions to clear up any misconstrued information about the topic. This method can also be combined with other forms of media such as videos and articles, which can be used to prompt discussions by showing examples of behaviors that are considered to be harassment versus behaviors that are acceptable in the workplace. Another section that can be added to the interactive forms is role-playing, where individuals from the group of learners act out behaviors. This can be combined with discussion to get an understanding of behaviors that are displayed in sexually harassing situations. Any of these methods may allow for a quiz to be given to assess what each individual received from the training.

This study will use previous research to determine the effectiveness of some of these methods of sexual harassment training.

Sexual harassment training

Many methods have been used to train individuals when addressing the topic of sexual harassment. Some forms are used much more often than others due to cost effectiveness, but whether these methods are effective is part of what this study is going answer.

One training method that is often used is the video training method. Videos can consist of the definition of sexual harassment as well as examples of sexual harassment. According to Meyer (1992), these training videos can be effective tools because they can show subtle acts of sexual harassment that may be difficult to explain directly to students. The video training method can be seen as useful due to the cost effectiveness of it. Once a company has purchased the

video, it can be reused multiple times, which reduces the need for actual personnel to conduct training. One negative aspect of this method of training is that it is a very hands-off approach that may be perceived as "unimportant" to the student because the training video may be shown and then never discussed. Pairing the video with discussion can eliminate this problem. By reiterating the information learned on the video, and discussing it, the subject matter can be remembered more easily. Repetition is one of the most basic ways to get someone to learn something.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

For the present study, literature from 1994 to 2004 that were based on sexual harassment training effectiveness was reviewed. We considered these dates to be the most significant when looking at sexual harassment training because sexual harassment was first really identified in the late 1980s, and most studies that focus on actual training manipulation began in the early to mid 1990s.

The initial research that was conducted focused on many media, including journals, dissertations, the Internet, books, training guides and court cases to gather information for a review of the literature before the process of narrowing down to the appropriate articles occurred for analysis. This extensive literature search was conducted through the search of data bases and internet search engines including but not limited to PsycLIT/PsycINFO and Google internet search using the following key words: *sexual harassment, sexual harassment training, training effectiveness, sexual harassment cases, sexual harassment training effectiveness, and training methods*. The abstracts for the journal articles were obtained to pre-screen for appropriate content (i.e., studies that determined if sexual harassment training was effective or not that had numerical data for results) along with a decision to retain only articles in the English language and only court cases that were the result of sexual harassment resulted in an initial list of 82 articles, papers and government websites. Each of these was reviewed for consideration to be included in the meta-analysis.

Inclusion Criteria/Selection and Description

The review process was to narrow down the articles of studies to the ones that contained quantitative measurements which was critical because of the quantitative and statistical nature of

this study. Because of the need for quantitative data, this part of the literature study was focused on journal articles, dissertations and theses that were related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of sexual harassment training. The quantitative measurements that were looked for were – F, t, and r, all of which were then converted into d for the purpose of analysis to find the weighted effect size.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by translating F, t, and r into d. Once this was completed, we computed the weighted-d values.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if sexual harassment training is effective by analyzing six previous studies. After translating *F*, *t*, and *r* into *d*, the results of d from each study were combined and divided by the total number of participants to get the results of the weighted effect size which was $d = 1.75$. Table 1 shows the values for d translated from each study that was used for the criterion, as well as the number of participants that each study had which were used to find the weighted effect size.

The weighted effect size showed that sexual harassment training had an effect on learning about sexual harassment, reactions and attitudes towards sexual harassment, and some behaviors of sexual harassment.

When learning was the method of measuring success of sexual harassment training, it was determined by ones ability to identify when sexual harassment was occurring based on the experimenter's definition of sexual harassment in scenarios on video as well as the subjects ability to correctly rate the intensity of sexual harassment in the scenarios also in the video (Blakely, Blakely and Moorman; 1998; Moyer and Nath 1998; Wilkerson 1999).

Reactions and attitudes were measured by looking at tolerance by having subjects taking the sexual harassment attitudes scale which would show a difference between trained and non-trained subjects attitudes towards sexual harassment itself (Kearney, Rochlen and King 2004).

One set of behaviors was measured by the "Liklihood to Sexually Harass Scale". This was done on both subjects who had and had not received sexual harassment training (Perry, Kulik and Schmidt 1998; Robb and Doverspike 2001). Another set of behaviors were measured

by the ratings done by observers of subjects interactions with members of the opposite sex while they are in a position of authority (Robb and Doverspike 2001). In this case, one subject was given another individual (subject) to train in some area such as teaching them a sport. The subject who was doing the training was either exposed to a sexual harassment training video before they did the training, or they were not. Then while they were the trainer of the other subject, they were observed for number of touches they used during the training. The raters then added up number of touches and had a cutoff limit for those that exceeded the "appropriate" number to be conducted.

Table 1

Results from Translating –F, t, and r into d

Study data was retrieved from	Sample weighted	N
*Blakely, Blakely &	62.48	176
Moorman (1998)	20.77	176
*Moyer & Nath (1998)	45.96	60
	161.40	60
	22.68	60
*Robb & Doverspike (2001)	-24.3	90
	-36.9	90
*Perry, Kulik & Schmidtke	10.19	36
(1998)	-10.91	36
	9.43	36
	-20.99	36
	-12.42	36
*Kearney, Rochlen & King	48.22	98
(2004)	54.39	98
	66.35	98
*Wilkerson (1999)	616.31	118
	Total= 1012.66	**Total N= 578**

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if sexual harassment training is effective by analyzing six previous studies. After using specific criteria to decide which studies should be included in the analysis, *F, t,* and *r* were translated into *d.* Once the data for d were found, all were totaled and divided by the total number of participants from all of the studies that were decided to be fit for this analysis which in turn gave us the effect size for sexual harassment training effectiveness. As was found, $d = 1.75$. This data suggests that sexual harassment training is effective for the purposes of teaching individuals about sexual harassment.

Limitations

Data was analyzed by translating *F, t,* and *r* into *d.* Once this was completed, d values for each study were then added together and divided by the total number of participants from all studies included for the analysis to get a weighted effect size. Another limitation that this study failed to correct for is that the studies used for the analysis measured sexual harassment training effectiveness mostly as being the results of learning, reactions and attitudes towards sexual harassment, and very minimally actually looked at the behavior of harassment itself.

Conclusions

When looking at previous research, many studies have found sexual harassment training to be effective. In the current study, it was also found that sexual harassment training is effective. This study doe not prove that sexual harassment training is effective in the long run. Thus training effect behavior, attitudes, reactions and learning in the short run, but not necessarily reduce the number of sexual harassment occurrences in the long run.

Recommendations

Future studies should focus on the long run effects of sexual harassment training and whether or not the training reduces the number of cases reported, thus reducing the actual number of occurrences of sexual harassment. This would be a better way to determine the lasting effects of this type of training.

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