Overcoming Human Barrier as a Measure towards Improved Knowledge Management

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Abstract

Knowledge management involves delivering of information to a person or a set of people, which necessitates two or more people communicating directly face to face, indirectly or in a virtual environment. Human barrier in this paper refers to sexual harassment behaviors that are unwanted and unwelcome that occurs in the form of verbal, non verbal, physical and visual actions among workers at workplace. It acts a as communication barrier to knowledge sharing, which works best when the people who generate and exchange knowledge, maintain good relation among workers. In this paper, the findings on sexual harassment perception, experience and complain mechanisms based on quantitative and qualitative study among Malaysian public sector administrators will be discussed in relation to the worker relationship that is needed for the exchange of knowledge in the organization. Finally the paper outlines strategies to overcome sexual harassment at workplace, as knowledge is of little use unless it is distributed, mediated and shared for the benefited of the organization.

Keywords: Knowledge   Management, Communication, Sexual Harassment, Public Administrators and Worker Relations

Introduction

The success of knowledge management implementation is critically dependent on the collaborative nature of the organization's social fabric. In other words managing knowledge in organizations requires managing several processes of knowledge (Ruggles, 1998; Probst et al, 2000; Powers, 1999) such as creation, storage, sharing, evaluating. All this activities needs people to relate with each other verbally, non verbally, visually or physically. These are the same activity involved in the process of communication. Since human beings are naturally communicative, but in the work environment and in the context of promoting research   and   technology   transfer   and development, a number of factors can inhibit communication and knowledge sharing. In other words, the missing link in managing knowledge is human and social factors (Thomas et al, 201:881).

In view of knowledge-sharing communities, are not just about providing access to data and documents; they are about interconnecting the social network of people who produced the knowledge (Seufert et al. 1999). Hence knowledge sharing is a form of communication (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004: 120), as put forth by Seng and his friends (2002) that sharing knowledge can be actualised through personal interaction or information systems. Since communication relies on personal interactions, so there is a dire need of better interpersonal relation and improved communication between the workers.

Knowledge management and communication

Knowledge Management is widely accepted as valuable means for organizations to enhance intellectual capital, encourage innovation and optimize performance. Generally there are two forms of knowledge management. First is management of information which means knowledge or objects that can be identified and handled in information systems and second is the management of people in the organization.

Since communication is the exchange of ideas and information is the essence of how people interface with one another with regard to sharing ideas and working effectively together. Hence though knowledge management is a business management concept, but in implementation it's

a communication issue. This is because according to study by Clark and Rollo (cited in Crawford & Strohkirch, 2006) reveals that the 42% of corporate knowledge is held in employees' minds (i.e. tacit knowledge). So, when one talk about knowledge sharing it is closely related to knowledge donating that also has strong relationship with communication style.

In view of communication it can be seen as one of the biggest enablers for knowledge management in any organization mainly because communication helps create shared meaning, the norms, values and culture of the organization (Wiesenfeld et al, 1998). Further listening, persuading, teaching, learning, presenting, collaborating and coordinating are factors of communication and partnering skills as one of the five competencies in knowledge organizations (Davenport & Harris, 2001: 124).

Hence knowledge is always a human product, if we discount the human factor from knowledge management; all we have left is a software system. So the critical components of a successful knowledge management lies in the sharing of common work problems between members, a membership that sees the clear benefits of sharing knowledge among themselves and that has developed norms of trust reciprocity, and cooperation. This clearly requires good communication which is the basis of good human relations among workers.

What is sexual harassment?

Basically communication involves physical, non verbal, visual and verbal modes of communication. Similarly sexual harassment also occurs through those medium of communication. Actually the issue of sexual harassment may well be one of the most difficult for managers to deal with in their efforts to maximize employee effectiveness (Feary, 1994). As sexual harassment not only involves the relationship of two or more people within a work environment, it also involves the personal interpretation of those involved (OConnell & Korabik, 2000).. Because of the perceived nebulous nature of sexual harassment, it has often been trivialized and ignored as a knowledge management issue.

According to the code of practice on The Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in The Workplace (Kementerian Sumber Manusia, 1999) as outlined by the Malaysian Ministry of Human Resources I sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature having effect of verbal, non verbal, visual, or physical harassment. In specific the first type of sexual harassment is verbal harassment, such as suggestive comments and jokes; persistent invitations or requests for sex, epithets (descriptive name or title), derogatory comments or slurs that are based on sex.

On the other hand non verbal includes, leering or ogling with suggestive overtures, licking lips or holding or eating food provocatively, hand signal or sign language denoting sexual activity, persistent flirting. The more commonly known sexual harassment is physical harassment, such as touching, patting, fondling, deliberately brushing up against someone which also including assault, unnecessary familiarity, impeding or blocking movement or any physical interference with normal work or movement such as when directed at an individual based on sex. Visual harassment includes derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings based on sex.

Further according to the Code of Practice in Malaysia sexual harassment can be divided into two categories, that is sexual coercion ("quid-pro-quo") and sexual annoyance. Sexual coercion is sexual harassment that results in some direct consequence to the victim's employment. It is a trade. When the trade is on the basis of sex, it is illegal. Meanwhile, sexual annoyance is sexually related conduct that is offensive, hostile or intimidating to the recipient, but nonetheless has no direct link to any job benefit ((Kementerian Sumber Manusia, 1999)). A hostile environment exists when an employee's work environment becomes polluted with unwelcome sexual words or conduct. This is actually much more difficult to define due to its subjective nature.

While this definition is also subjective, in that it is essentially the recipient of the behavior, who defines the incident as sexual harassment in accordance with how they perceive it. This means that appraisal of `unwelcome' or of `offensive' or `interfering' must be qualified by individual interpretation of the importance of the

recipient of harassment's evaluation of sexual behavior received at work (Konrad & Gutek, 1986).

Effects of Sexual Harassment on Communication and Knowledge Management

The way of effectively managing knowledge is to translate individual and group knowledge to organizational knowledge (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004: 117). In other word, knowledge sharing depends on the quality of conversations, formally or informally (Davenport & Prusack, 1998). Hence effective communication is essential to the success of any knowledge management program.

This means during knowledge management one has to work in a team. A team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Since knowledge sharing is the process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit and explicit knowledge and jointly create new knowledge (Van den Hooff & de Ridder 2004: 117) thus knowledge transferring between individuals in organizations requires communication (Sveiby, 2000:6).

On the contrary, the presence of sexual harassment will be an obstacale to positive communication. As Terpestra and Baker (1987) argued that the outcomes of Sexual Harassment are not trivial. According to Dansky and Kilpatrick (1996) when investigated the work-related effect of sexual harassment found the existence of negative job ramifications for individuals victims, which include decreased job satisfaction (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; O'Farell & Harlan, 1982), declines in job performance (Crull, 1982; Gutek, 1985; USMSPB, 1981), decreased motivation (Jensen & Gutek, 1982), interrupted careers (Coles, 1986; Livingston, 1982), decreased morale, increased absenteeism (Gosselin, 1986; USMSPB, 1981, 1988 1995), lowered productivity (USMSPB, 1981, 1988), and impaired relationships between co-workers (Di Tomaso, 1989; Gutek, 1985). The psychological and emotional trauma suffered by the person being harassed creates a distracting work environment that affects the competence and productivity of the employees.

In monetary aspect, according to Boston-based sexual-harassment consultant Freda Klein, sexual harassment costs a typical Fortune 500 company $6.7 million a year ($282.53 per employee) in legal costs and other employee-related expenses, including loss of productivity and absenteeism. Du Pont's Hamilton says an investigation alone can cost $20,000 to $30,000. (Laabs, 1995). Hence sexual harassment is organization's resources drain due to it's social and economic cost of sexual harassment (Crull, 1982).

Objective of the paper

The objective of the paper is to bring forth the various forms of sexual harassment behaviors at workplace, to provide information on how sexual harassment can be an obstacle to enhance intellectual capital in an organization. The findings discussed in this paper are based on various studies conducted in public sector organizations (Sabitha, 1998a,b; 1999a,b;2000a,b;2001;2002;2003;2004;2005;2006;2007). Responses from the victims in relation to the gender differences, effects, complaint mechanism will be put forth to increase the understanding on how sexual harassment can act as a barrier to the proper sharing and management of knowledge in the organization.

Method

In all of the studies the samples from public sector workers two instruments were used in this study. The Utara Sexual Harassment Perception Questionnaire – USHPQ (Sabitha, 1989, 2001, 2002, 2005) was used to measure the perception of workers towards sexual harassment. The questionnaire consists of verbal, non-verbal, visual and physical forms of sexual harassment behaviors. This instrument obtained high reliability score when used among public administrators (Sabitha,1999), factory workers (Mazlinda, 1999/2000), and students (Sabitha, 1999). Respondents were asked how each behavior affects them at workplace. Possible responses were varied on a four point scale from one (not disturbing) to four (very disturbing). Meanwhile sex role identity was measured using Attitude towards Women Scale (AWS) that was constructed by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1973) and adopted to Malaysian version.

Findings

The following findings are based on various research that was conducted since 1989. In this

paper communication in knowledge management is approached from sexual harassment point of view. In specific the sexual harassment behavior that acts as a barrier in the success of knowledge management. Findings of the study is put forward in such a way to create an understanding of the meaning of sexual harassment, its subjective nature and the implications of it on the proper management of knowledge in an organization.

1. Perception and Types of Sexual Harassment Communication

Organisational culture recognizing the value of knowledge allows personal contact that leads to capture tacit knowledge and thus it can be transferred (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). In view of personal contact one of the misconceptions towards sexual harassment is the notion that anything goes in the workplace as long as there is no physical contact with another employee. In reality, sexual harassment can result from any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Many types of sexual harassment involve no touching, but they are nevertheless offensive or intimidating to the employees as well as being clearly illegal (Bressler &Thacker, 1993).

As communication involves direct and indirect communication, it can occur in various ways during interpersonal relations between workers. The following examples are among the experiences that portray sexual harassment acts at work, which can affect knowledge sharing in organization (Sabitha, 1999a, 2001a; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2007). The first is the physical harassment, followed by visual, non verbal, verbal and physical harassment at workplace.

Respondent (Physical)
I am afraid to have meetings just with him alone…..he really comes too close for comfort….sometimes there is this accidental brushing during our discussion. I cannot focus on the discussion when he constantly does that to me……

Respondent (visual)
Our work involves a lot of discussion and planning for the organization …so there is a lot of paper work involved and we often have to e-mail messages and things like that.. but I hate opening the e-mail from him….because there is always a catch…I mean that he will send me

pictures or words or anecdotes which are sexually related……I have told him a number of time…but he just smiles and says that I am no fun…..

Respondent Non verbal
He likes to give the "look", the elevator eyes….he sometimes whistles at me while I take things from his office....He loves to stare at me whenever we are working together.......he likes to give me the suggestive smile …not only that sometime he holds on to a pencil and rubs it up and down while staring at me…..

Respondent Verbal
He always likes to call me names like honey, babe, and darling…I told him not to do so….but he just smiles…..He likes to comment my body like sexy, solid….. And he in fact once told me that …..Women suppose to enjoy such attention…if not I am not a true woman…. I tried telling him off…but he says I am too sensitive….he said that how come others are not bothered about it …why should I make a mountain out of a mole?

Respondent (Visual)
She is my boss. About her memos ……I feel ashamed ….because she loves giving the papers which is cut into a form of love or have prints which are very sexually suggestive…sometimes in the form of sexually suggestive cartoons….I cant believe she is doing it to me…sometime she signs off with love…with kisses… and added with strong perfume smell…..so when sometimes I have to bring the notes to meetings and always get the evil look from my friends…as though I am the one doing such things….once she even gave me a red colored underwear present…..i am single so it makes me very difficult to convince who is encouraging the situation…… moreover no one here is getting such attention from her….

Based on the verbatim above, that there is a diverse range of behaviors that make up sexual harassment. Thus awareness on sexual harassment among workers is one way to overcome such misperceptions. Further analysis and interview with respondents showed that, there are a number of reasons respondents fail to label sexual harassment behaviors as sexual harassment. First is due to misunderstanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. This brings us again to the problem of definition of sexual harassment. We have heard that sexual

harassment is also commonly known as a crime of perception, whereby what one-person regards as sexual harassment another may see as inoffensive. Nonetheless a working definition is essential and, in my view it must clearly convey that sexual harassment constitutes actions, which deliberate, persistent, unreciprocated and unwelcome.

2. Credibility of Sexual Harassment Experience

Terpestra and Baker (1986) found that to recognize perception of experience as a factor equal in importance as the actual behaviors which define the experience. This is congruent to findings in one of my study (Sabitha, 2006, Sabitha & Shrrifah, 2004), showed that although 73.3% of the respondents have experienced sexual harassment behaviors but only 6.8% or the respondents label their experience as sexual harassment.

In most cases, sexual harassment does not exist as one isolated incident, but rather is a series of ongoing episodes. In this way, for example, if one worker asked another worker for a date and was denied, it would not be an example of sexual harassment. However, if after being refused, the worker began standing at the other worker's desk daily asking for a date that may begin to approach sexual harassment. The following verbatim of a respondent is intended to show the credibility of the sexual harassment experience.

Respondent
I have been telling him about the way he behaves towards me… in fact I have scolded him to make him realize that I hate that kind of attention…I make it obvious that avoid him whenever he tries to sit or teamwork with me during any discussion or meeting...."
The verbatim above shows how sexual harassment portrays the barriers of advancing knowledge in an organization.

Hence in an organizational setting, determining the credibility of a claim of sexual harassment does not appear to be a simple matter of determining whether the harassing behaviors occurred or not, but also of determining the entire context in which the behaviors occurred and the extent to which the target herself may be seen as culpable (Baugh, 1997). But the general rule is that the behavior is construed as repeated, unwanted and unwelcome.

Another pertinent concern regarding the impact of the finding is as proposed by Felstiner and his colleagues (1980). They mentioned that if behavior which could be objectively labeled as harassing is not identified as such, then sexual behaviors and sexual harassment will continue to be viewed as a `natural' rather than as problematic. Hence as long as this view of sexual harassment persists, sexual harassment itself will persist and will be a deterrent towards sexual harassment.

3. Communicating Knowledge and Attitude towards Women

Knowledge donating can be defined as "communicating to others what one's personal intellectual capital", whereas knowledge collecting is defined as "consulting colleagues in order to get them share their intellectual capital" (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004: 118). Hence the mere presence of sexual harassment can affect the way knowledge is transferred in an organization.

Knowledge management requires good worker relation between men and women. On the contrary, one of the common problems in communication occurs due to misperceptions of sexual harassment between men and women. Past research has found women generally see sexual harassment as a more serious problem than men. This is because attitude towards women can effect how one communicates with each other. Studies have shown that men's behavior towards women as well as their perceptions of and responses to women's actions are mediated by their basic attitudes towards women.

 The following is the verbatim to describe how attitude towards women can prevent knowledge sharing between workers (Sabitha, Sharrifah & Shamsul, 2004).

Respondent (men)
I am only trying to make the place a little bit less serious….and happier.

Respondent (men)
Is just a joke….they (women) are too sensitive…..when we have meetings they cannot expect us to be serious all the time…"

Meanwhile women respond differently to sexual harassment communication. As put forth in the following verbatim,

Respondent (women)
I do not why he has to talk to us that way…..are really uncomfortable ……he has the knowledge and everything….but is the way he disseminates the information that really makes me think twice to go to the meeting….

Overall past studies also indicated that women have broader definitions of sexual harassment than males, have more negative attitudes, are less tolerant and consider teasing, looks, gestures, unnecessary physical contact and remarks to be sexual harassment (Mazer and Percival, 1989). Contrarily, men typically do not find the same behaviors to be offensive and label teasing, looks, gestures and comments as "normal" interactions between males and females (Johnson, Stockdale and Saal, 1991). Females tend to have less tolerant attitudes, have more negative attitudes about sexual harassment, and see it as a more serious problem (McKinney, 1990). Overall attitude towards women do affect the proper sharing of knowledge between men and women at workplace. This surely poses a problem since nearly half of the labor force in Malaysia is made up of women.

4. Procedure and Complaint Mechanism
Most often the victims of sexual harassment choose not to complain. According to one of the research conducted among administrators (Sabitha, 2000b) is there were a number of reasons for victims of harassment did not complain were due to lack of confidence in their system and their complaints were not taken seriously (75%). Among the reasons why the victims decided not to complain was that, they do not trust the organization as being able or willing to deal effectively with harassers and belief that an answer will not be received (16.7%).   They are afraid of various consequences such as that their services will be terminated (5.6), no action taken (40.0), will be laughed at (46.7), may get into more problems (31.3%), peers (13.3 %), or top management may not be pleased with their action (20 %), will be blamed back for the incidence (40 %), labeled as a person causing the disturbance (40%), the harasser will be told to stop harassing (19.3%) or may be transferred to ovoid seeing the harasser (20%), may be transferred because someone disagree with their action (13.3%). Meanwhile

victims who made the complain, were `put off' by the fact that previous cases reported to management were not taken seriously. Among the comments from the women victims were,

Victim1:
"When I complained they said that I am emotionally unstable"

Victim 2:
"I do not want to make any complaint. Or else they will say that I am trying to make a mountain out of a mole. But this is not the first time he has done such awful things to me…. I cannot sleep at night….I have bad dreams and nightmares…I feel miserable…."

Victim 3:
"I do not think it is advisable to make any complaints. First, because no one will believe me. Even if they do, most often than not they will blame us back for what has happened."

There is also an indication that they will not get the support if they complained.

Respondent 1
I do not want to rock the boat…so I just try to ignore whatever his gestures towards me

One point to note is that sexual harassment is not strictly a crime committed by men against women. Men can, and do, get sexually harassed at work (Sabitha, 2004).While this does constitute the majority of complaints, it is not comprehensive (Sabitha, 2006). Co-workers, and even subordinates, may harass. Non employees can sexually harass employees, and customers may also create a hostile environment. Such an environment may prevent the proper communication between workers and lead to failure in the proper management of knowledge in the organization.

5. Effects of Sexual Harassment

Supportive communication has positive impact on knowledge donating and knowledge collecting, which is central condition for successful knowledge sharing (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004: 126). Since organizational communication is considered as the social glue (Greenberg & Baron, 2003:317) the attitude that sexual behavior at work is benign can serve to trivialize sexual harassment, especially since

some individuals view workplace sexual behavior as harmless (Gutek, 1989).

Sexual harassment is devastating, it damages people, destroys careers, and a high costs to organizations. The author's previous study on sexual harassment (Sabitha, 2000; Sabitha, 2001; Sabitha, et al, 2002) found that victims of sexual harassment who reported the incident have faced a number of consequences. Amongst them are being fired or forced to quit jobs, serious damage to the victim's reputation, long term career damage, being transferred to another department with not much opportunity to advance one's career. Respondents indicated (Sabitha & Azmi, 2004) that they suffered most from emotional effects (30.3) and social effects (20.9%). Others implications are in the form of career effects (15.6%), changes in self perception (13.8%) and physical effects (9.9%). Meanwhile, the following findings are among the verbatim regarding the effects on the victims of sexual harassment

Respondent women (Psychological Reactions)

I was very ashamed when it happened to me…..at first I was shocked….then I tried to deny the situation….i had sleepless night.. sometimes I look at myself and start to think whether I was the cost of the problem

Respondent women (Physiological Reactions)

I dread to go to work…even at work I have constant headaches……in fact I lost my appetite to eat and lost a lot of weight recently… most the time I feel like I have no energy left to focus or do proper work……

Respondent women (Physiological Reactions)

I have taken off from work many times… I will purposely take emergency leave or sick leave if I know that I have be with him in the meetings….he is the boss…so he will normally call me after the meeting for further discussion.. which always end up in sexual acts…..i am already applying job to other places….of course he does not know about this…

From the above verbatim on the repercussion of the sexual harassment will surely affect the performance of the workers, and will finally affect the overall productivity of the organization which basically depends on the proper transfer of information in an organization. Hence supportive communication climate is important for knowledge management as it is requires "open exchange of information, accessibility of co-workers, confirming and cooperative interactions and an overall culture of sharing knowledge" (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004: 120).

Overcoming effects of Sexual Harassment on Knowledge Management

Knowledge management process is about sharing, collaboration and making the best possible use of a strategic resource (Bollinger & Smith, 2001). Hence the deleterious effects of sexual harassment can be a major deterrent in the proper advancement of knowledge management in an organization. Thus maintaining a stable workforce has become a critical success factor in sustaining a competitive advantage in knowledge management. The following are some recommendations where that management can take the responsibility of eradicating sexual harassment at workplace.

1. Awareness on Sexual harassment Experience
When dealing with sexual harassment may not be a new phenomenon but few people have a complete grasp of what it means. Even victims 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. It should be noted that sexual harassment normally starts off on a low key with the harasser gauging the response of the victim and the organization.

As a general guideline there are several possible factors for determining whether a work environment is hostile or abusive: (1) the frequency and severity of the conduct; (2) whether the conduct is physically threatening or humiliating, or a mere offensive utterance; (3) whether it unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance; and (4) its impact on the employee's psychological well-being. Public demonstration of commitment to the policy, coupled with the other measures set out in the strategy, should engender confidence in employees and enable them to challenge unwelcome behavior.

2. Knowledge Management and Attitude towards Women

Communication at work involves both men and women. Past study confirmed that gender is one of the strongest predictors of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993). However one major problem in dealing with sexual harassment in organizations is its perceptual nature (Popovich, Licata, Nokovitch, Martelli, Zoloty, 1992) because men and women generally differ in what they perceive to be sexual harassment (Dunwoody-Miller & Gutek, 1985; Riger, 1991). What one dispel as sexual harassment is likely to be considered as an incident by the other.

Training sessions should also focus on men as well as women. (Johnson,1999) The reasons that men are more often the harassers due to the reason that many harassers do not believe they are sexually harassing others. Clearly this indicates a need for awareness training. In fact training program must offer an opportunity for workers and management to examine their own sexist attitudes and recognize behavior, which discriminates women as with any type of training,

Creating awareness among male and female is important, since the recent cultural change gravitates towards increased gender equality (Carelli, 1988). In this way managers and all male and female employees must become aware of the problems inherent in harassment, and must know how to handle it. Further gender equality brings with it the necessity of changing old norms to conform to newly emerging rules of behavior between sexes. This means changing the present norm which is no simple task to accomplish (Coes, 1986). But norms change, though change happen slowly.

3. Circulating Information on Sexual Harassment

In sum sexual harassment is any unwanted or uninvited sexual behavior which is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or friendship (Koen,1990). Since victims fail to label their experiences as sexual harassment, employees should be taught how to recognize the first signs of the sexual harassment process at the workplace. Other than that, the problem was

compounded by their ignorance of the actual definition of sexual harassment in differentiating it from flirting, fun or flattery. This brings us again to the problem of definition of sexual harassment whereby what one person regards as sexual harassment another may see as inoffensive.

Hence information on sexual harassment is one of the ways to deter sexual harassment at workplace (Perry, Kulik & Schmidtke, 1998). It can be done by circulating brochures, posters, staff handbook or the company rule book. It can be also be done during the induction of new employees. Thus new employees could be on their toes and this should ensure that they do not tread on someone's toes with regard to informal work relationships.

4. A Clear Policy from Management

Sexual harassment at work cannot cease simply by telling people it is unacceptable. Keeping in mind that most of the victims do not prefer to bring the case out of the organization, a good in house program to settle harassment cases would be a good alternative to encourage victims to come forward (Keenan, 1990). It is crucial that all employees understand what constitutes sexual harassment and the repercussion for not abiding by the policy. Hence the organization must have specific and enforceable policies concerning sexual harassment.
In short sexual harassment policy should include four main components: a policy statement that is clear, gender sensitive, a complaints procedure, disciplinary rules, and training and communication strategy. If a clear policy exists, and is well promoted, both the person being harassed, and the person considering harassing someone, will know what the individual's rights are - what is acceptable, and what not; also where the person being harassed can complain. This should reduce considerably the likelihood of harassment. Further the existence of such a mechanism can indirectly empower women and reduce the element of abuse and harassment. While providing mechanisms that encourage all complaints to be taken seriously, it helps reduce fears and stress among victims

5. Training
Training employees at all levels of organization concerning the behaviors that constitute sexual harassment is necessary ingredient for sexual

harassment prevention (Risser, 1999). From the findings many are not aware of the meanings and the implications of sexual harassment behaviors on the advancement of knowledge management in an organization. That is failing to educate employees and put in place adequate policies and programs to eliminate harassment and discrimination in the workplace can have serious consequences for agencies (Perry, Kulik, Schmidtke, 1997).

Hence the management should increase the awareness of the workers through proper training. In fact study showed that seventy six percent of the respondents in the 1988 USMSPB survey indicated that training employees would lead to a reduction in the frequency with which sexual harassment occurred (Thacker, 1992). Further findings from past study indicated that employees with less training and experience are more vulnerable to attack than their better-trained colleagues (Balloch et al, 1998). Training employees not only has the advantage of alerting potential harassers to the type of behaviors that will not be condoned   but also removes any confusion about the behaviors the organization will find problematic.

Conclusion

A successful organization requires the existence of good relations among its employees and the people with whom the organization does business. On the contrary sexual harassment creates poor working relationships which can harm the organization, the individuals directly involved, and indirectly, other employees within the organization. Hence workplace harassment issues are not going to go away by themselves, unless employees must all work together to eliminate sexual harassment from the workplace towards advancement of knowledge management in an organization.

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