Direct and indirect effects of workplace sexual harassment on the productivity of victims and witnesses: The preventive role of equitable management a

This research demonstrates the impact of equitable management as a protective factor against workplace sexual harassment (WSH) and its consequences on labor productivity. It also shows that there are invisible costs for colleagues who witness WSH, through counterproductive behaviors, such as sabotage or production deviance, with an indirect decrease in labor productivity. We used a structured questionnaire that was answered by 827 women from 37 small, medium, and large private companies in the Lima Metropolitan Area, Peru. We designed a conceptual model and tested it using structural covariance equations. We found that equitable management is a preventative factor for WSH. Equitable management not only decreases the probability of the occurrence of WSH by 2.2 times but also—if it exists—reduces its pernicious impact on productivity through various indirect effects. Equitable management can reduce the labor productivity costs caused by WSH by 4.6 times.



Heliyon 9 (2023) e21896

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Heliyon

journal homepage: www.cell.com/heliyon

Direct and indirect effects of workplace sexual harassment on the productivity of victims and witnesses: The preventive role of equitable management

Arístides A. Vara-Horna , Alberto Díaz-Rosillo , Zaida Asencios-Gonzalez ,
Liliana Quipuzco-Chicata

Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Human Resources San Martín de Porres University, Peru

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Workplace sexual harassment
Productivity
Absence
Equitable management
Silence
Labor productivity

ABSTRACT

This research demonstrates the impact of equitable management as a protective factor against workplace sexual harassment (WSH) and its consequences on labor productivity. It also shows that there are invisible costs for colleagues who witness WSH, through counterproductive behaviors, such as sabotage or production deviances, with an indirect decrease in labor productivity. The study was conducted in a sample of 1,000 employees from 20 public, private, national, and large private companies in the Lima Metropolitan Area, Peru. We designed a conceptual model and tested it using structural covariance equations. The results indicate that 33.5 % of women have been victims of sexual harassment at work, while 24.1 % of men have done it. Also, 54 % of women have supported co-workers who were victims of WSH. Being sexually harassed at work decreases labor productivity by 43.6 % and increases the intention to desert the company by 35.2 %. Witnessing WSH increases the intention to sleep out by 31.3 % and increases counterproductive behaviors by 39.6 %. We found that equitable management is a preventive factor for WSH and its consequences, reducing the probability of victimization by 4.6 times and by 3.1 times for abus—if it exists—reduces its pernicious impact on productivity through various indirect effects. Equitable management can reduce the labor productivity costs caused by WSH by 4.6 times.

1. Introduction

Workplace sexual harassment (WSH) is one of the most prevalent forms of gender violence at work. A meta-analysis based on 55 probability samples finds that—on average—50 % of women report having experienced potentially harassing behavior, and 24 % report having experienced WSH at work [1]. WSH is not an isolated incident but rather a pattern of behaviors. WSH has three essential dimensions: sexual coercion, which consists of implicit or explicit promises or threats conditioned on "sexual favors"; unwanted sexual attention, which consists of unwanted verbal or physical sexual advances that can be offensive and intimidating; and gender harassment, which involves verbal and non-verbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or subordinate status based on gender [2].

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: avara@usmp.pe (A.A. Vara-Horna), adiazr1@usmp.pe (A. Díaz-Rosillo), zasencios@usmp.pe (Z. Asencios-Gonzalez), lquipuzcoch@usmp.pe (L. Quipuzco-Chicata).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e21896
Received 5 March 2023; Received in revised form 22 October 2023; Accepted 14 October 2023
Available online 20 October 2023
2405-8440/© 2023 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Download (2023, pdf, 799,9 KB)

Revision #3
Created 7 July 2025 16:44:41 by Karen López
Updated 7 July 2025 22:13:12 by Karen López