Battling the Threat of Workplace Harassment:
An Appraisal Based on Protection Motivation Theory

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Abstract

This study attempts to look at workplace harassment through an entirely novel lens of protection motivation theory. The theory suggests the appraisal of threat and the coping ability determine an individual's protection behavior. In this study, we have examined how the threat of harassment affects employees' behaviors. This study utilized cross-sectional research design and quantitative information through an online survey using a two-step approach from 563 employees of different organizations worldwide. It analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicated main two constructs, Threat appraisal (perceived severity, perceived vulnerability) and coping appraisal (response efficacy, self-efficacy), were both found to be positively related to the employee's protection intention and behavior. Besides, employee's intention significantly mediated the threat appraisal and coping appraisal with employee's behavior. Overall, results show the importance of protection motivation theory as a significant and influencing factor in workplace harassment, employees' intention, and behavior. Our study offers a novel and new way to look at the phenomenon of workplace harassment and the process of forming protective behavior in a workplace. The theory can be extended to other workplace threats to develop novel and interdisciplinary views by meteorological change as an exploratory and experimental approach.

Keywords: Protection Motivation Theory, Employees Intention and Behavior, Partial Least Square, Physical Harassment

JEL Classification Codes: J83, L2, M1, M16, M19

1. Introduction

The work environment's demands and challenges can hugely affect employees' behaviors and their work efficiency and output (Turnbull, 2016). One of the most essential

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workplace elements is the sense of security. Organizations can achieve high work performance when employees feel secure, satisfied, and self-respected (Potter et al., 2019). Though security is embedded in all aspects of the workplace environment, it is also equally intertwined into personal and social interactions. Employee's interactions affect behaviors in one or another way. Interpersonal trust, friendliness, and manners may result in the organization's progress or decline (Jenkins et al., 2014). According to Naveed and Alwani (2010), if workers are not healthy and happy, both the organization and the worker suffer, and the organization's credibility is affected.

In this study, we explored harassment as a determinant of employee protection behavior. In a diverse workplace, a person may be harassed unexpectedly based on gender, religion, politics, ethnicity, and lingual biases (Khan et al., 2018), so a person may be likewise motivated to appraise and cope with the arising threatening situations at the workplace (Aubé et al., 2014). Workplace harassment is described as any act or threat of physical attack, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior at work. Workplace harassment can take many forms, including workplace

bullying, workplace mobbing, workplace incivility, workplace sabotage, workplace stalking, and others (Ferris et al., 2017).

According to Ramsaroop and Parumasur (2007) harassment, is sexual advancement, demands for sexual favors, and sexually verbal or physical activity that is unwelcome. There are two forms of sexual assault; firstly, Employees are subjected to sexual harassment by colleagues other than managers and supervisors. Secondly, workplace sexual harassment when the boss or supervisor demands or requests sexual favors returns for some job gain. Harassment in the workplace refers to the cruel and abusive treatment of workers and any risk that poses a threat to their health and safety (Vijayasiri, 2008). Because of the victims' silence and indifference, it's difficult to note this problem, making it less of a concern for academics (Kim & Kim, 2020). Workplace violence is an environmental factor that undermines victims' sense of security, and as a result, it has an undeniable impact on their health (Rasool et al., 2020).

The protection motivation theory is concerned with how people deal with and make choices in the presence of potentially harmful or stressful life events. These choices are taken as a means of defending oneself against potential threats (Cornish & Clarke, 2014). The theory seeks to clarify and predict what causes people to change their behaviors. The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) uses a person's fear experience in response to assault threats. The aim of introducing fear is to inspire or encourage people to participate in or adopt certain prescribed behaviors (Norman et al., 2005).

Harassment in the workplace happens regularly all over the world (Krieger et al., 2006). The estimates shows, 50% of U.S. employees face abuse at some point during their careers (Das, 2009), but only a small percentage of victims report it (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). The findings of this study will show the impact of protection motivation on workplace harassment. Employees' ability to perform their duties and feel safe and protected physically allows them to perform their duties and provide services to the best of their ability, thus benefiting the organization's overall development (Chiaburu et al., 2013).

The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) may be exceptionally well suited for understanding and addressing this behavior among the numerous theories commonly used to direct behavior study (Floyd et al., 2000). Rogers (1975) proposed two closely related pathways that connect environmental influences on behavior through a series of cognitive processes. The probability of a risk activity, such as smoking, is determined by the balance between the two assessment pathways (SEYDEL, 2005). The threat assessment pathway weighs the perceived advantages (intrinsic and extrinsic) of maladaptive conduct (e.g., workplace harassment) against the perceived risks (severity and vulnerability).

Individuals should defend themselves from workplace harassment based on four factors, according to the protection motivation theory: the perceived severity of a threatening incident, the perceived probability of occurrence, or vulnerability, the efficacy of the recommended preventive conduct, and an individual's willingness to engage in the recommended preventive behavior (Jenkins et al., 2014). This study aims to examine the impact of protection motivation theory (PMT) on employee intention and behavior and investigate the effect of the antecedent of PMT, that is, physical harassment, on employee's intention and behavior. This research also fills the gap by contributing to and extending the awareness of how PMT can face workplace harassment. This study aims to show how PMT, an empirically validated behavioral theory, can help us better understand a maladjusted workplace.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Protection Motivation Theory

The PMT model was created to predict behavioral change through fear appeals, a type of persuasive communication (Maddux & Rogers, 1983). Consequently, Rogers (1975) devised a sophisticated fear appeals scheme and established main trigger variables that aid in behavior modification. Following Bandura's work on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), Maddux and Rogers (1983) investigated the possibility of incorporating self-efficacy into PMT. Rogers collaborated with Maddux (Maddux & Rogers, 1983) to assess the function of self-efficacy by manipulating self-efficacy with fear appeals. They discovered that self-efficacy influenced behavioral intentions significantly. As a result, self-efficacy was added as a key component of the PMT. Besides, the revised PMT (Maddux & Rogers, 1983) was structured to be a more robust model, with additional variables such as perceived benefits and costs associated with the suggested response.

2.2. Threat Appraisal

Two distinct mechanisms that predict protective actions are threat appraisal and coping appraisal. Threat evaluation refers to an individual's assessment of the degree of noxiousness and probability of threat occurrence following fear appeals contact, which contributes to shaping attitudes about the threat's consequences, interpreted as perceived severity, and ideas about the likelihood of occurrence, characterized as perceived vulnerability (Maddux & Rogers, 1983).

2.3. Coping Appraisal

The coping assessment method examines adaptive responses as well as one's ability to deal with and

escape threats. The cumulative number of the response's effectiveness and self-efficacy appraisals is the coping appraisal (Rogers, 1975). The individual's assessment of the effectiveness of the prescribed behavior's response (i.e., perceived effectiveness of sunscreen in preventing premature aging). The Coping Appraisal often considers perceived self-efficacy in carrying out the prescribed actions (for example, trust in one's ability to use sunscreen consistently) (Kaljee et al., 2005).

2.4. Workplace Harassment

The musculoskeletal injuries and disorders result in higher cardiovascular risk scores among flight logisticians and flight attendants (Gale et al., 2019; Lee, 2018; Pai & Lee, 2011). The new method has proved unsuccessful in preventing workplace harassment (Burke, 2018). Harassment can damage companies by impacting employee morale, efficiency, absenteeism, turnover, organizational engagement, and the employer's external credibility (McDonald et al., 2015).

Employees should have the safety to protect themselves from abusive treatment in the workplace without any gender discrimination, ethnicity, or other distinguishing characteristics (Ehrenreich, 1999). Any kind of discomfort or prejudice in the workplace is branded as an act of harassment now that freedom from violence has been established as a fundamental human right (Zippel, 2006). Second, the problems that arise because of workplace harassment harm the victims. Harassment makes it impossible for victims to succeed in their professions, restricting their skills (Ehrenreich, 1999). As a result, workplace discrimination is a broader term that includes sexual harassment (Medlin, 2012). Victims are exposed to a wide variety of classified into two categories: (1) physical abuse and (2) emotional abuse. (Medlin, 2012).

2.5. Workplace Harassment and Protection Motivation Theory

Rogers (1975) and Maddux and Rogers (1983) Protection Motivation Theory has been a viable theoretical paradigm in health and social psychology, offering an essential social cognitive account of complex protective behavior. Protection motivation derives from a cognitive evaluation of a threatening event as severe and likely to occur, combined with the assumption that a prescribed coping response will effectively prevent the event from occurring according to this theory's fundamental postulate (Milne et al., 2000).

Protection motivation theory has been applied to a variety of fields other than personal physical health science. Since the end of the 2000s, information security researchers have been using protection motivation theory in their study (Anderson & Agarwal, 2010). Therefore, Boss et al. (2015) recently argued the security implementation of

protection motivation theory and fear in two experiments in an organizational security context. Employee's protection motivation is triggered when the threat appraisal and coping appraisal mechanisms are combined, resulting in the required adaptive responses. Protection motivation theory has been demonstrated in various contexts, including health risks, protective behaviors, environmental hazards, other people's wellbeing, and adherence to medical care regimens (Choi, 2020; Floyd et al., 2000).

2.6. Physical Abuse Severity and Intention and Behavior

The degree of physical damage, psychological harm, social risks, economic harm, hazards to others other than oneself, and even threats to other species" are all terms used to describe severity (Rogers, 1975). The more serious a person perceives the severity of the effects of maintaining maladaptive behaviors, the more likely they are likely to adopt prescribed adaptive behaviors. The magnitude of the hazard has substantially impacted following the suggested behaviors (Woon et al., 2005). Workers are likely to view physical violence as a severe threat because it lowers personal expectations, weakening how employees respect integrity, trustworthiness, morality, personal ethics, and civility, all of which affect their conduct.

H1: Physical abuse severity positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

2.7. Physical Abuse Vulnerability and Intention and Behavior

Vulnerability is described as the conditional likelihood that threatened any event that will occur if no adaptive action is performed or any established behavioral disposition is not changed (Rogers, 1975). Individuals' assessments of their likelihood of becoming subjected to an unfavorable danger are linked to their vulnerability expectations (Woon et al., 2005). Similarly, this study claims that employees will seriously consider creating a safe workplace if they feel they are being targeted by a substantial amount of workplace abuse perpetrated by their supervisor, subordinates, or others.

H2: Physical abuse vulnerability positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

2.8. Response Efficacy to Physical Abuse

The expectation that the adaptive solution will work and that taking the recommended preventive action successfully in physically averting an unwanted threat is Physical abuse response efficacy (Floyd et al., 2000; Rogers, 1975). For

example, if a person believes a smoking cessation class is a successful way to quit smoking, they will enroll. Response effectiveness has been shown to have a substantial impact on both self-protective and other-protective intentions (Jocoy & DiBiase, 2006).

H3: Physical abuse response efficacy positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

2.9. Self-Efficacy against Physical Abuse

Powerful, threatening messages have an independent, critical impact on an individual's behaviors, according to reviews of studies on physical violence self-efficacy (Durkin et al., 2012); on cigarette packets, as well as pictorial HWLs Smoking cessation habits are also predicted by higher self-efficacy to quit smoking (Lichtenstein et al., 1986; Sperry & Nicki, 1991), though this association is attenuated when smoking addiction is considered (Borrelli et al., 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 1986; Schnoll et al., 2003; Shiffman et al., 2009).

H4: Self-Efficacy physical abuse positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

2.10. Threat Appraisal

Threat Appraisal Increased fear of potential events is one of the essential antisocial behavior effects (Barling et al., 2009; Leather et al., 1998). Employees' subjective assessments of the level of danger associated with the various antisocial activity are referred to as fears or hazard appraisals. Researchers are interested in threat-appraisal processes for many reasons. First, influences a wide range of mental, attitude, and health responses (Barling et al., 2009). Employees who feel they are at risk of occupational accidents are more likely to engage in workplace safety activities, despite individual variations (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). Second, threat appraisal is subjective, so they may or may not adhere to objective risk levels.

Furthermore, risk analysis reveals that laypeople's risk assessments of the same risks often differ from expert assessments of the same risks (Slovic et al., 1980). Employees may downplay common but less serious threats, such as workplace homicide, or they may overreact to extreme threats with low base rates, such as workplace homicide. Third, the threat-appraisal perspective opens new avenues for thinking about the consequences of antisocial activity exposure. Even though antisocial activity is episodic, the risk can be viewed as a long-term stressor (Barling et al., 2009).

H5: Harassment threat appraisal positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

2.11. Coping Appraisal

The coping appraisal process examines adaptive responses as well as one's ability to deal with and escape threats. The coping assessment is the amount of the prescribed preventive response's effectiveness and self-efficacy, minus any physical or psychological "costs." The coping appraisal is the individual's assessment of the proposed behavior's efficacy as a remedy (Li et al., 2014). Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this study.

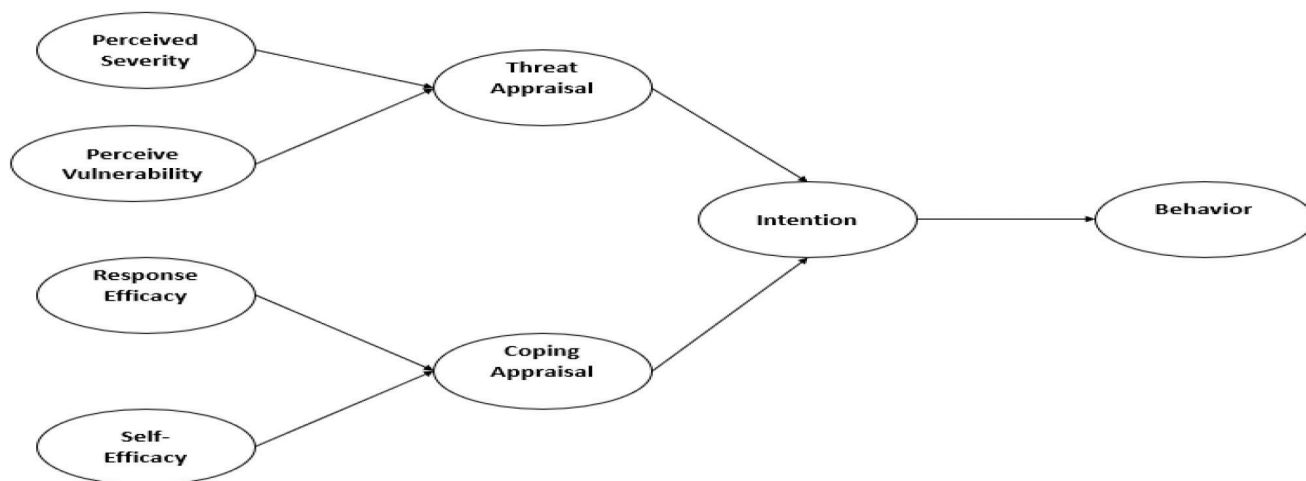*H6: Harassment coping appraisal positively affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Approach and Procedure

This study used a quantitative approach to investigate the maladjusted behaviors of individuals working in a specific workplace and how these behaviors can be appraised as a threat to avoid an inconvenient and uncomfortable work environment and to know how an individual copes with it carefully. Data analysis included the partial least square (PLS) approach which purpose is to predict and understand the role and formation of individual constructs and their relationships among each other" (Chin, 2010).

A survey methodology using a questionnaire has been adopted/adapted to gather the information about the underlying latent constructs suggested in the model. The instruments used in this study to collect the data were divided into two parts; demographics information related to respondents and intended constructs. Validating the questionnaire's clarity, pre-testing and pilot testing were conducted before collecting the final data. Pre-testing helps determine the questionnaire's face validity and helps identify the problems in the questionnaire's language. The data was collected from across the globe through a google form, and 241 respondents have filled the questionnaire. Overall, 563 respondents have filled the questionnaire, of which 322 respondents were across Pakistan.

3.2. Measures and Instrument Development

The data is collected from participants' demographic information's and initial levels of study variables will be measured. Phase II will be undertaken to determine whether the effects of fear appeals are maintained in different career stages. 26-item PMT questionnaire adapted from an existing PMT scale to measure the threat appraisals and coping appraisals and seven items for intention and behavior at workplace harassment. Perceived Vulnerability (PV) and Perceived Severity (PS) by (Sinclair et al., 2002; Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007), Response Efficacy (RE), and Self-Efficacy (SE) by (Witte, 1996; Zhang et al., 2017). The items were tested for factor structure and composition. Perceived Vulnerability (PV) and Perceived Severity (PS) further measure threat appraisal of the employees, and Response Efficacy (RE) and Self-Efficacy (SE) were further measures copping appraisal.

3.3. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling

The Data analysis is performed using SPSS latest version (SPSS-26) to handle the data and analyze preliminary issues in the data, such as descriptive analysis, mean, standard deviation, frequency analysis, and common method biases. Further partial least square structural equation (PLS-SEM) is used to analyze the outer model (Measurement model) assessment for validity and reliability of the sample data and inner model (Structural model) assessment for the hypothesized relationships (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2014). PLS-SEM is used to test the social sciences hypothesis (BILAL et al., 2021; SYED et al., 2021). This study presented harassment with the perceived severity, perceived vulnerability, threat appraisal and response efficacy, self-efficacy, as coping appraisal increases employee intentions and behavior to comply with harassment.

4. Results

4.1. Data Screening

Data screening is required to ensure that information is submitted accurately, free of outliers, and ensure normal distribution (Hair et al., 2006). When the respondents did not address one or more items in the sample, there will be missing data. The provision of missing data research indicates that an Expected Maximization is a useful option for treating missing values compared to other methods with other approaches like one-by-one deletion and mean substitution (Hair Jr & Sarstedt, 2019). Data analysis showed that the data set was free from missing values.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis

The demographic statistics of respondents have been done to get a fundamental examination of the current study. The descriptive analysis aims to provide the interactive pattern of demographic variables provided for the study. A descriptive table (Table 1) is designed for Country name, gender, age, job type, experience, and qualification to better represent responses. The country name construct shows that 241 employees filled the online survey from foreign countries (other than Pakistan), and 322 employees filled the survey from Pakistan.

The gender variable shows 60.2% of the respondents were male, and 39.8 % were female. Of the 51.2 % of respondents' having a permanent job, 31.2% were on a contract basis, and the remaining were 17.6% from another category. The experience variable shows that most of the respondents have work experience between 11 to 15 years (36.6%), and 23.5% have experienced more than 15 years. 60% of respondents have more than ten years of experience, and the other 40% have experienced less than ten years. Final demographic variables (Qualification) show that the master/MPhil level of respondents is more than 75%, which is 160. The overall demographic indicators present very experienced and highly qualified sample respondents.

Table 1: Validity and Reliability (First Order)

Constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Behavior		0.883	0.927	0.810
BEH1	0.865			
BEH2	0.924			
BEH3	0.909			
Intention		0.946	0.961	0.860
INT1	0.927			
INT2	0.934			
INT3	0.937			
INT4	0.912			
Perceived Severity		0.813	0.879	0.709
PSPA1	0.937			
PSPA2	0.839			
PSPA3	0.739			
Perceived Vulnerability		0.837	0.924	0.859
PVPA1	0.937			
PVPA2	0.917			
Response Efficacy		0.797	0.860	0.607
REPA1	0.732			
REPA2	0.865			
REPA4	0.691			
REPA5	0.816			
Self-Efficacy		0.804	0.884	0.718
SEPA1	0.844			
SEPA2	0.877			
SEPA3	0.821			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted.

4.3. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

Tabachnick et al. (2007) suggested before proceeding to reliability and validity specific assumptions about multicollinearity, common bias, and normality assessment while moving to check reliability, validity, and structure directions. This study measurement and structural model were used to assess, evaluate, and report PLS-SEM results (Hair & Ringle, 2011; Sarstedt et al., 2014).

4.4. Measurement Model

In the validation of the measurement model, as shown by Sarstedt et al. (2014) and Henseler et al. (2009), the researcher must test reliability for individual items, internal consistency, content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (ANJUM et al., 2021).

4.5. Reliability of Individual Items

The reliability of individual items can be calculated by evaluating each variable's items (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Studies presented the cutoff for maintaining items by which they recommended that items be retained in the middle of 0.40 and 0.70 (Joseph et al., 2014). Therefore, the outer loadings for the construct perceived severity at first order ranged from 0.739 to 0.937, perceived vulnerability ranges from 0.917 to 0.937, response efficacy ranges from 0.691 to 0.865, and self-efficacy ranges from 0.821 to 0.877.

4.6. Internal Consistency

Measuring the coefficient of composite reliability of latent constructs, Hair and Ringle (2011) indicated a threshold of 0.7 or beyond for measuring the coefficient of composite reliability. Table 2 demonstrates the coefficients of the composite reliability for latent constructs. Perceived severity has a composite reliability coefficient of 0.879, and perceived vulnerability has a composite reliability coefficient of 0.924. The composite reliability for threat appraisal was 0.866.

At second-order threat appraisal, two dimensions having factor loadings of 0.597 and 0.750, coping appraisal ranges from 0.857 to 0.891, and finally PMT as a composite variable ranged from 0.836 to 0.909. furthermore, intention and behavior were measured in the first order, so these constructs range from 0.865 to 0.924 and 0.912 to 0.937, respectively (see Table 2). These results full fill the minimum criteria for individual item reliability.

The construct response efficacy has 0.860, and self-efficacy shows a 0.884 composite reliability coefficient at first order (Table 3). In the second-order, these two constructs measure coping appraisal, which shows a composite reliability coefficient of 0.742. The PMT construct's composite reliability after the two dimensions of threat appraisal and coping appraisal has 0.865 (Table 4). Finally, the behavior and intention are having composite reliability of 0.927 and 0.961.

4.7. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated with the value of the average variance extracted (AVE) proposed by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, AVE's threshold value must

Table 2: Validity and Reliability (Higher Order)

Constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Threat Appraisal		0.722	0.866	0.764
Perceived Severity	0.597			
Perceived Vulnerability	0.750			
Copping Appraisal		0.701	0.742	0.505
Response Efficacy	0.857			
Self-Efficacy	0.891			
PMT		0.729	0.865	0.762
Coping Appraisal	0.909			
Threat Appraisal	0.836			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (First Order)

Fornell & Larcker	BEH	INT	PS	PV	RE	SE
BEH	0.900					
INT	0.442	0.928				
PS	−0.002	0.185	0.842			
PV	0.549	0.224	−0.083	0.927		
RE	0.280	0.541	0.018	0.236	0.779	
SE	0.337	0.615	0.014	0.257	0.529	0.847
HTMT Ratio						
BEH						
INT	0.480					
PS	0.067	0.181				
PV	0.641	0.251	0.118			
RE	0.282	0.566	0.151	0.274		
SE	0.394	0.702	0.062	0.315	0.647	

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (Higher Order)

Fornell & Larcker	BEH	COAP	INT	THAP
BEH	0.900			
COAP	0.355	0.874		
INT	0.442	0.663	0.928	
THAP	0.441	0.240	0.303	0.678
HTMT Ratio				
BEH				
COAP	0.447			
INT	0.480	0.816		
THAP	0.880	0.625	0.728	

be 0.5 or above to demonstrate the cutoff for the convergent validity of a variable (Chin, 1998). The values of AVE have shown in Table 1 illustrate that at the first order and second-order level of analysis, a minimum of 0.50 AVE was reached for all constructs of the present study, this concludes that there is no issue of convergent validity in the analysis (Table 1 & Table 2).

4.8. Discriminant Validity

Umrani et al. (2018) tested discriminant validity on subsequent benchmarks of (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). They proposed that the AVE square root should be greater than the correlation between the variables. Nonetheless, the AVE square root is greater than the correlations between variables at the first order of analysis, as shown in Tables 3 and 4. Therefore, it can be assumed that the analysis indicators have a significant degree of discriminant validity.

Henseler et al. (2009) recommended estimating the discriminant validity by Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). They indicated that the HTMT ratio of less than 0.85 or .90 is deemed acceptable. Tables 3 and 4 show that the latent variables have HTMT scores ranged from 0.062 to 0.88. All the values are less than 0.90, so there is no issue of discriminant validity (Figure 2).

4.9. Assessment of Structural Model

The structure model analysis as the 5,000-sample re-sample bootstrapping procedure with 563 cases was testified as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). Table 5 provide complete evaluations of the structural model. Results

demonstrated a significant relationship between PS and intention by $\beta = 0.178$, $t = 5.18$, $p = 0.000$.

Therefore, this is supporting the H1 to H6 of the study and mediation analysis of intention. The results have shown a positive association between PV and intention by $\beta = 0.056$, $t = 1.55$, $p < 0.06$ as proposed in H2. The p-value indicates the significant partial relationship among the variables, so H2 is also supported at a 10% significance level. All the hypothesis relationships show a significant positive relationship with intention and mediating role of intention between protection motivation theory dimensions and employees' behavior (Table 5).

4.10. Model Prediction

For the assessment of the PLS structural model, Henseler et al. (2009) suggested considering the value of R^2. In PLS Structure equation modeling, the R^2 value of 0.60 is viewed as significant, the value of 0.33 as reasonable, and the value of 0.19 is considered weak (Chin, 1998).

The value for the R^2 was 0.462 for intention and 0.196 for behavior, as shown in Table 6. Following Hair et al. (2013) and Chin (2010), considering the nature of the outcome variable, the present study employed a cross-validated redundancy test Q^2 to assess the predictive validity of the model. Henseler et al. (2009) stated that the research model is deemed to have a predictive relevance in research where the value of Q^2 is greater than zero. Table 6 shows the Q^2 value of 0.394 for intention and 0.154 for behavior, which is greater than zero as stated by the author, indicates that the model has predictive relevance (Figure 3).
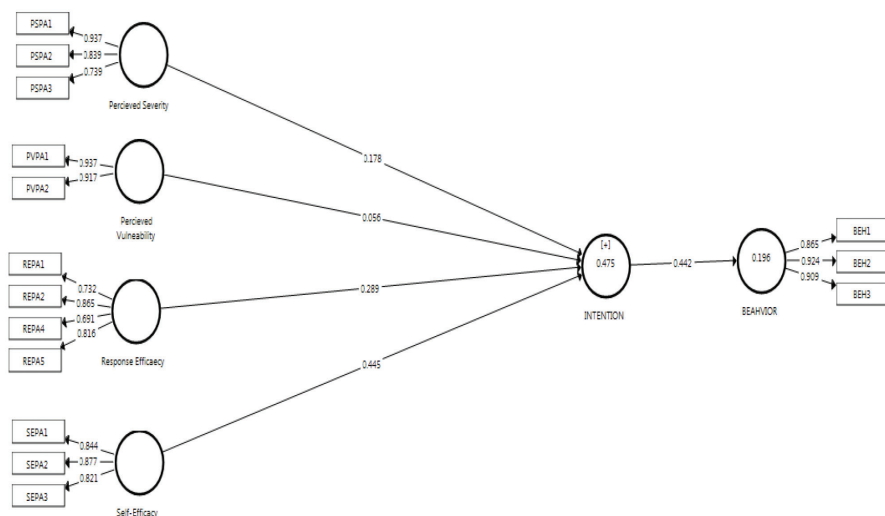

Figure 2: Measurement Model (First Order)

Table 5: Structural Model

Hypothesis	B	S. E	T-Values	P-values	Decision
INT → BEH	0.442	0.033	13.568	0.000	Supported
PS → INT	0.178	0.034	5.185	0.000	Supported
PV → INT	0.056	0.036	1.556	0.060	Partially Supported
RE → INT	0.289	0.037	7.788	0.000	Supported
SE → INT	0.445	0.040	11.253	0.000	Supported
COAP → INT	0.627	0.029	21.349	0.000	Supported
THAP → INT	0.153	0.038	4.058	0.000	Supported
PMT → INTENTION	0.696	0.021	33.379	0.000	Supported
Mediation Analysis					
PS → INT → BEH	0.079	0.016	4.838	0.000	Supported
PV → INT → BEH	0.025	0.017	1.481	0.069	Partially Supported
RE → INT → BEH	0.128	0.018	7.002	0.000	Supported
SE → INT → BEH	0.197	0.022	9.067	0.000	Supported
COAP → INT → BEH	0.277	0.022	12.386	0.000	Supported
THAP → INT → BEH	0.068	0.018	3.707	0.000	Supported
PMT → INT → BEH	0.308	0.025	12.109	0.000	Supported

Note: β: path coefficients; S. E: Standard Error, and decision report the decision rules for acceptance of an alternative hypothesis.

Table 6: Model Fit

Exogenous Constructs	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2	f^2 (Intention)
Behavior	0.196	0.194	0.154	
Intention	0.462	0.460	0.394	0.243
Threat Appraisal				0.041
Coping Appraisal				0.688
Perceived Severity				0.060
Perceived Vulnerability				0.005
Response Efficacy				0.113
Self-Efficacy				0.264
PMT				0.941

Finally, effect size (f^2) shows that PMT is a robust predictor to change the employee's intention in general. Copping appraisal is the second most important predictor to predict the employee's intention compared to threat appraisal. In first-order among the four dimensions of PMT, self-efficacy has 0.264 effect size, which most prominent among the four dimensions, and perceived vulnerability has 0.005 effect size smallest effect size among the dour dimensions.

5. Discussion

To begin, we discovered that all components of the defense motivation theory (threat appraisal and coping appraisal) had a significant effect on employee intention and conduct. Physical Harassment has strong predictive power for changing employee purpose, as well as a mediation impact on changing conduct. According to the findings,
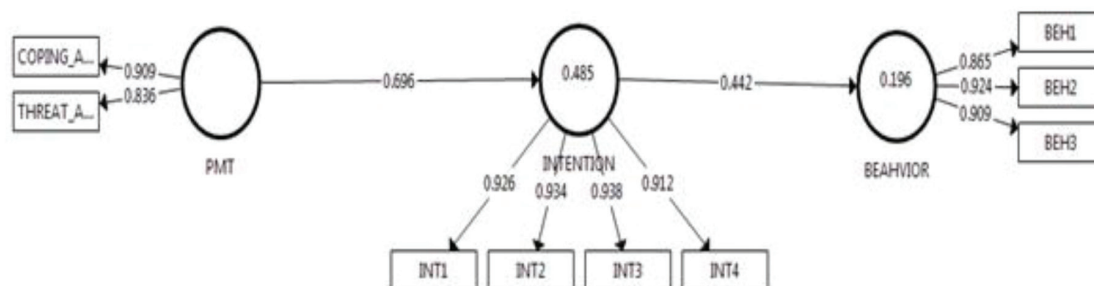
Figure 3: Protection Motivation Theory Model

all protective motivational variables, such as perceived severity, perceived vulnerability, response effectiveness, and self-efficacy, positively influence behavior, according to the findings (Anderson & Agarwal, 2010). While this result is in line with theory (Vance et al., 2012), we were unable to locate any empirical research that investigated the relationship between Physical Harassment, PMT, and the workplace. This suggests that physical abuse has a significant impact on the purpose and actions of employees. It also had a substantial effect on threat perception, self-efficacy, and response efficacy. (Floyd et al., 2000).

Second, the threat's severity had a positive effect on employees' intentions and actions. This is supported by PMT as well as empirical evidence. Herath and Rao (2009) had previously discovered that response efficacy clarified attitude in a related study. Third, employees' purpose and actions were unaffected by vulnerability, meaning that vulnerability does not improve one's willingness to comply. Fourth, employees' purpose and actions are positively influenced by self-efficacy. The seventh finding was that response effectiveness harmed intention.

Furthermore, intention not only mediates the relationship between threat assessment (perceived seriousness, perceived vulnerability) behavior but also between coping appraisal (response efficacy, self-efficacy) intention and behavior (Wu, 2020). Threat assessment is associated with a maladjusted response influenced by perceptions of the threat's intensity and vulnerability. People are more likely to adjust their responses when their perceptions of seriousness and vulnerability are high. On the other hand, coping assessment is related to suggested guidelines. The ability to deal with and prevent threatening behavior is assessed through the coping evaluation process.

Security motivation is often influenced by danger and coping assessments (Putri & Hovav, 2014). The seriousness of the situation and its severity will be determined by the hazard assessment. The coping assessment refers to how one responds to a situation (Mwagwabi, 2015). The coping assessment considers both effectiveness and self-efficacy. The

belief that following advice will eliminate a danger is referred to as efficacy (Woon et al., 2005). Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to carry out the prescribed actions effectively.

6. Conclusion and Limitations

The demanding work environment is a vital issue that affects the employees' work efficiency and output. This study identifies how workplace harassment triggers protection motivation in various organizational environments to achieve their individual as well as overall organizational goals. It has to do with the individual's evaluation of the suggested behavior's effectiveness in averting the threat (i.e., response efficacy) and their perceived capacity to carry out the advocated behavior (i.e., self-efficacy). When high levels of efficacy variables are expected, the probability of enacting adaptive behavior increases.

The person's protection motivation is triggered when the threat appraisal and coping appraisal mechanisms are combined, resulting in the required adaptive responses. Employees are likely to view physical violence as a serious threat because it lowers personal expectations, weakening how employees respect integrity, trustworthiness, morality, personal ethics, and civility, all of which affect their conduct. Employees are worried about their inadequate capacity to detect workplace abuse, which could seriously harm their reputation in society if the harassment were reported. Physical abuse severity positively and significantly affects the intentions/behavior of an individual.

The current study would promote the use of PMT in guiding behavioral research in a variety of workplaces in two dimensions: one is practical, and the other is theoretical. However, further research is required. Individuals should defend themselves from workplace harassment based on four factors, according to the protection motivation theory: the PS of a threatening incident, the PV, the efficacy of the recommended preventive conduct, and an individual's willingness to engage in the recommended preventive behavior (Jenkins et al., 2012).

This research will also shed light on the usefulness of screening methods for identifying unhealthy behavior in the workplace. This research would also suggest that the topics discussed in this study be further explored to fully comprehend the relationships and their effect on employee actions. Self-efficacy and perceived severity, the current study will provide some initial insight into harassing behavior, primarily to raise awareness of such maladjusted manners of employees working in diverse workplaces.

This investigation aims to learn more about the employees' motivations and motives regarding workplace harassment. Staff will benefit because each delegate will have the opportunity to inspire protection and express their recognitions. The inquiry would also benefit the government, as the investigation will be made available to them along with recommendations from the respondents. It would also help them to be more aware of what their employees might be going through. Following that, the inquiry would aid the administration in their efforts and attempts to manage the workers.

Also, components for enhancing self-efficacy will be incorporated into protective behavior experiences in this analysis. This research would help organizations set a concrete target for their workers to discourage harassing behaviors in a variety of settings, including monitoring both physical and emotional actions and providing input on which behaviors should be avoided. The current research will also demonstrate how threat appraisal differentiates behavior with higher perceived intensity associated with harassment.

While this study has many novel results as well as important theoretical and practical implications, its limitations should be highlighted to aid future studies. First, some PMT constructs, such as response cost, were not investigated in this report. Second, to obtain appropriate samples quickly, this study used online survey questionnaires to collect data. While this method has its benefits, the findings could be skewed due to the lack of supervision and respondents' subjectivity. As a result, reliable data should be collected through supervised surveys, interviews, or experiments. Third, we have collected data from the employees working in the service sector only to easily fill the online questionnaire based on harassment topics. Still, in future research, we can include or expand our research to the employees working in other sectors if we collect data by other means like filling questionnaires under our supervision or taking interviews, etc.

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