The Effects of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the institution]

[Date]

The Effects of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

**Introduction**

Sexual Harassment was pervasive in the past as women were treated as objects, but it is shocking to see that nothing changed all these years. Even today, in the workplace thousands of women are facing the problem of sexual harassment, and many of them are unable to take actions due to the threat of job insecurity. In 2018, many employers were exposed by the females on the claims of sexual harassment. Unfortunately, not enough action was taken against them; their job positions were merely changed. The reason for this high rate of sexual harassment is that most of the women do not know what sexual harassment includes. Sexual Harassment is the unwelcome verbal and non-verbal advances that may cause a threat to the individual and makes the work environment hostile and toxic for that employee (Anjum, Ming et al., 2018). *The effects of sexual harassment in the workplace are very harmful to the employee who suffers from this issue.* Sexual harassment is a vast phenomenon that includes a wide range of expressions and acts most employees do not consider a problem and take them lightly which adds to the problem.

**Discussion**

In the current realm, the critical ethical issue corporate world is suffering the most, is the sexual harassment issue in the workplace (Power & Lundsten, 2005). Only a few cases are reported so far in the corporate sector whereas the rest of the cases went unnoticed which boosts the morale of the predator. This boost allows him to make more attempts in the future and the victims ultimately leave the organization making the turnover rate high because of this issue. The effects of this issue cannot be ignored as it causes a disturbance in the life of the victimized individual leading to depression, employee's resignation, low productivity, and unfriendly behavior with other employees, loss in a job, etc. Many victimized employees take the sexual harassment as the only condition of employment in that particular organization and stop complaining. This action leads to the adverse effects on their mental health as the focus shifts from work; disturbances occur mentally as the uninvited pressure increases (Gruenigen & Karlen, 2018).

Although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has defined the phenomenon in great detail to facilitate the employees, the guideline includes uninvited sexual advances, requests for personal favors that are sexual, physical contact with any employee, gazing, passing inappropriate remarks, etc. (Gutek, 2015). But, still many employees are hesitant to report the unethical behavior due to many reasons, and the prevalence of sexual harassment is getting very common in 21st century within the organizations (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2017). A study was conducted assessing the 764 ethical challenges faced by the employees in the workplace in which the respondents reported the sexual harassment as one of the most complex business issues faced frequently in business ethics (Power & Lundsten, 2005).

Unfortunately, sexual harassment has become a requirement for survival in the organizations for many working women. Almost every woman has to face this ethical issue at some point in their professional careers. Some are confident enough to report this issue whereas others opt for leaving the organization to save themselves from the harassing environment (McLaughlin, Uggen & Blackstone, 2017). There was another study undertaken to inspect the effect of sexual harassment for the working women at the start of their careers. The study concluded that sexual harassment leads to high financial stress due to sudden job change significantly affecting women’s career accomplishment (McLaughlin, Uggen & Blackstone, 2017).

This issue is at its peak in the multinational organizations also because the targeted employee is unable to do something about it and is suppressed by the top management (Gutek, 2015). There is a famous example of Ford Motor Company in the recent past related to the sexual harassment issue. The company was involved in several sexual harassment incidents that threw a negative spotlight on the company’s name. One of the prominent cases occurred in 1999 where Ford Motor Company was accused of sexual harassment in the workplace by 600 women (Rosewarne, 2007). The complaints were reported to EEOC and lawsuit was filed. In the EEOC v. Ford Motor Company (Chicago) case, the women were then awarded worth $8 million (Rosewarne, 2007). The company continued to be involved in similar trials and ending up reaching another settlement by EEOC worth $10 million in August 2017 (Susan & Einhorn, 2017). That didn’t stop here, and more cases were highlighted in the same year in December. Although the top management apologized to the public by writing an open letter, Ford still has a long way to go to solve the sexual harassment problem in the future.

**Conclusion**

Sexual harassment is indeed a threating situation for any organization as it not only affects the lives of the victim employees but also damages the organization's reputation in the eyes of the public. This kind of ethical issue should be addressed as early in the workplace as possible. For that, top management has to intervene and play a decisive part in resolving this business ethics issue in their companies. The leadership of every organization should establish a sharp and transparent code of conduct leaving no ambiguity on the professionalism of the employee's behavior. It’s the responsibility of the employer to deal with this issue whenever he is made aware by the other employees and should not take it lightly. On joining, every employee should be provided with a doctrine that promotes no harassment in the workplace by mentioning in detail all the aspects of sexual harassment. Training should also be given to the staff regarding harassment prevention. A proper mechanism should be formed to handle the employee complaints about harassment by listening to both parties and drawing hidden investigation. It is best to keep a comfortable and friendly in the workplace that does not discourage an employee from filing such complaints.

Lessons should be learned from Ford’s ignorance and suppression of all those harassment cases. If the top management had taken severe steps initially, the company would never be again in the highlight.

**References**

Anjum, A., Ming, X., Siddiqi, A. F., & Rasool, S. F. (2018). An Empirical Study Analyzing Job Productivity in Toxic Workplace Environments. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *15*(5), 1035.

EEOC Determination Supports Charges of Sexual Harassment at Two Ford Motor Company Plants in Chicago. (1999, January 6). Business Wire.

Fitzgerald, L. F., & Cortina, L. M. (2017). Sexual harassment in work organizations: a view from the twenty-first century. *APA Handbook of the Psychology of Women. APA. Available at http://www. apa. org/pubs/books/4311534. aspx*.

Gutek, B. A. (2015). Sexual harassment. *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management*, 1-1.

McLaughlin, H., Uggen, C., & Blackstone, A. (2017). The economic and career effects of sexual harassment on working women. *Gender & Society*, *31*(3), 333-358.

Power, S. J., & Lundsten, L. L. (2005). Managerial and other white-collar employees’ perceptions of ethical issues in their workplaces. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *60*(2), 185-193.

Rosewarne, L. (2007, July). Pin-ups in public space: Sexist outdoor advertising as sexual harassment. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 313-325). Pergamon.

Susan, C. & Einhorn, C. (2017). *Ford Apologizes for Sexual Harassment at Chicago Factories*. *Nytimes.com*. Retrieved 11 January 2019, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/21/us/ford-apology-sexual-harassment.html>

Von Gruenigen, V. E., & Karlan, B. Y. (2018). Sexual harassment in the workplace: Its impact on gynecologic oncology and women's health.