


Chapter 21

The Role of Haptics in the Sexual Harassment of Women in Corporate Sector

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ABSTRACT

The quintessence of a woman's modesty is her sex. The one, intending to outrage a woman's modesty, be it in her personal life or at her workplace, shall be punished. Fortunately enough, women have a powerful sense of differentiating between the touch that gives solace and the touch that is misleading and is used for sexual stimulation. Haptics plays a vital role in this regard. As the world is being globalized, it is onerous to avoid the chance of crossing the line of acceptability. Even so, it is quite important to learn the proper use of haptics to remain aware of the inappropriate act of touching as well as to avoid awkward and embarrassing occurrences. The chapter attempts to emphasize how the proper use of haptics in the corporate sector can add more productivity to both men and women while at the same time it can also enhance the efficiency of the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Touching, the indispensable Universal behaviour is perhaps the earliest developing and longest lasting of all our senses. The need to touch and to be touched is preponderant in creating a humane bonding. Touch provides a direct contact with the other person. It is the most 'genuine' way to sense the world around us. It is phenomenally effective as

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a form of communication, as the messages are distinctly received without perplexity, resulting in the propensity to convey substantial indications without vocal appendage. Haptics (a Greek word meaning “I touch”) or Haptic communication is a form of touching that outlines our interpersonal relationships and is paramount in conveying physical intimacy. In other words, Haptics is described as the subsystem of non-verbal communication that studies the use of touching behaviours in communication. Science proves that the need for physical contact exists right from birth and is a significant component of our species heritage. British clinician John Bowlby puts forward the evolutionary need for human beings to frame indestructible affectional bonds with other beings. He cites the example of infants who manifest themselves in instinctive actions, promoting physical propinquity, thus escalating the quality of survival (Holmes, 2014). Therefore, there is not a more direct and intimate way to intermingle with our world other than touch. The messages of haptics convey many more things than being merely limited to information about emotion, facial expression, and describing other visual or auditory information like art or music.

Thus, Haptics is a kind of tactic by which human beings communicate via touching that provides information about surfaces and textures. Heslin and Alper classify Haptics communications into five different categories: Functional/Professional, Social/Polite, Acquaintance/Warmth, Love/Intimacy and Sexual (Heslin and Alper, 1983). Haptics can effectively be used, or effectively be misused, depending upon the knowledge of toucher and receiver in a culturally diverse workplace. With the transforming demographics and changing global perspectives, diversity in the gender, race and culture can be noticed in various workplaces. Burwell believes that each culture has its own idiosyncratic way of touching behaviours, which results in the increased sense of miscommunication and sometimes be decoded as assault, because touching is interpreted differently by different people belonging to different cultures. Thus, touching activities which are mutually incompatible or goes beyond the culturally acknowledged boundary result in either an apathetic or an active hostility. Such feelings can often lead to any undesirable impression of a sexual nature that is tied to security and advancement.

OBJECTIVES

The present paper succinctly brings out the role of Haptics among sexually harassed employees in corporate sectors. It also evaluates prominent issues related to the problems of touch, with a predominant emphasis on women in diverse workplaces and provides some ultimate solutions to overcome the problems related to haptics.

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