

TO STUDY THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE LOGISTICS SECTOR IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The business world has been growing exponentially since the dawn of time. The first business deals started off as early in the 8th century BC in India where firms called shreni independently entered into contracts and owned properties which also made for them to sue and be sued. Certain things in business never changed. From then onwards the world of trade was made known and taken into practice by numerous entities across the globe and by 1790, an Industrial Revolution was afoot. From thereon after, the business empire continued to progress and evolve with new trends, era and cycle every 50 years (Allen et. al 2017).

Many claims have been put forward as to achieving gender equality and although it is visible that there is a finer representation of females in the economic, healthcare and political sectors in many parts of the world, we are still far from total equality. Gender inequality is the Mr. Hyde in the professional world and a majority of the receiving side comprises females. Whilst countries are doing an excellent job of maximizing female's economic potential, it is also vital to inaugurate precise interventions and policies immersed with gender equality.

Moreover, this study will utilize a number of approaches to determine the amount of sample size needed, the target population, the data collection procedures and once the necessary responses related to both dependent and independent variables are obtained through a structured questionnaire, a set of statistical approaches will be used to assess the data obtained. The sample size decided for this study approximated at 400-the number of respondents and all of whom will be between 20 to 60 age group comprising both men and women serving in the logistics sector within Klang Valley. And finally the implications of the results obtained are discussed.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Gender Inequality in Logistics, Occupational Segregation, Societal Mindset, Harassment, Gender Gap, Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations.

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Gender inequality is the Mr. Hyde in the professional world and a majority of the receiving side comprises females. Many claims have been put forward as to achieving gender equality and although it is visible that there is a finer representation of females in the economic, healthcare and political sectors in many parts of the world, we are still far from total equality. According to a statement released by the Closing the Gender Gap Accelerators (n.d) it will take another approximately 100 years or so for the whole world to achieve gender equality in unison

Whilst some countries are doing an excellent job of maximizing female's economic potential, it is also vital to inaugurate precise interventions and policies immersed with gender equality. The Gender Gap Index & Gender Gap Report (2021) identified 4 key dimensions that contribute to gender disparity which are *economic participation and opportunity, political participation, educational attainment and health and survival and political empowerment*.

Gender equality is not a want or desire but it is a fundamental right which builds a necessary and concrete foundation en route to a prosperous, harmonious and sustainable world and a more credible future. According to a study by the United Nations (n.d), the number of girls going to school have increased, fewer girls are forced into marriage at early ages and a handful of women are in leadership positions and serving in the parliament and fortunately some countries are reforming their legal jurisdiction to advance gender equality. However, they also quoted that the social norms and discriminatory laws in a number of countries remain prevalent and continue to be marginalized at all levels Ghasemi & Zahediasl (2012).

Problem Statement

Gender inequality can be referred to as a form of unequal treatment and biased perception of individuals based on their gender or in the general layman term is known as sexist which carries the same meaning. Gender inequality has been an unresolved issue from the yesteryears because it arises from the differences in socially built gender roles. There are several distinguishable factors that contribute to gender inequality in not only the logistics but several other industries as well and often these factors are intertwined regardless of the industry one is in. The factors can be biased in terms of societal mindset where many consider women to only be housewives, bodily autonomy where the physical strength of a person is tied to their gender, cases of harassment which interlocks with societal mindset and the very basis of occupational segregation by organizations which relates to bodily autonomy as well.

The negative impacts that one suffers stems from the factors that cause gender inequality. This can be one to one, one to many or many to one. The situation and incidents differ. But the very thought of gender inequality causes unrest and makes way for inharmonious instances to take place. As mentioned earlier, the majority on the receiving side of gender inequality are women and this may cause mental breakdowns, anxiety, depressions, low self-esteem and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to investigate the positive relationship between occupational segregation, societal mindset and harassment as the negative impacts of gender inequalities in the logistics sector.

Research Questions

1. Is there a positive relationship between occupational segregation and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector?
2. Is there a positive relationship between societal mindset and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector?
3. Is there a positive relationship between harassment and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector?

Hypotheses

- H₁:** *There is no positive relationship between occupational segregation and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*
- H_{A1}:** *There is a positive relationship between occupational segregation and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*
- H₂:** *There is no positive relationship between societal mindset and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*
- H_{A2}:** *There is a positive relationship between societal mindset and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*
- H₃:** *There is no positive relationship between harassment and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*
- H_{A3}:** *There is a positive relationship between harassment and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*

Significance of Study

The significance of this research is to better comprehend and offer insights for future researchers on the elements that largely contribute to gender inequality especially in the logistics sector and the imperatives of addressing the issue carries a higher margin of impact now more than ever. Furthermore, this paper also serves a purpose in identifying the elements that accords to gender inequality and how they can be plausibly addressed to resolve conflicting matters within the logistics sector. In addition, new researchers, youths, start-ups and also corporate MNCs can take this paper as guidance and as a source to shed light on the issues they are experiencing with regards to gender disparity and curbing them before it wipes them out Zuraimi et al. (2013).

Limitations of Study

Although considered a niche and researchable topic, one of the huge limitations with this research topic is that, the total number of previous or secondary, primary or firsthand research papers are very narrow or less in numbers. Thus the information to be included in the paper can be challenging to be obtained and incorporated without upsetting the components which in one way or another may intertwine with each other in different levels. The findings have the ability to contribute to better comprehension of gender inequality in the logistics sector in Klang Valley although the results were derived from a limited group of participants. In addition, the collected data may not have high reliability and feasibility level in this study due to time constraints and narrowed sample size Heskett (n.d).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Logistics

Logistics can be referred to as a process of planning, executing and controlling a set of procedures for the effective and efficient storage of goods, services and plausible information concerning the point of origin to the point of consumption or the point of destination for the purpose

of observing the customer's requirements. The logistical considerations within an organization is an actively strategic element. Amongst wholesalers and retailers, they surpass transportation and inventory management in pursuit of the most critical elements of success such as location related to their target markets and/or sources of supply. Whilst the thinking of manufacturers are different in certain aspects because their concern lies towards sourcing of raw materials, plant location and customer service standards. Regardless of logistics existence within the logistics industry, logistics exists everywhere and in all organizations Bernardoni (2021). It is common nowadays for organizations to implement a separate department catered only for logistics related activities even in banks, for example, the bank will have to fill up the ATM machines across Malaysia every month which requires a high level of security and detailed plan of transporting the cash and routes. Without individuals with the specific knowledge or expertise in planning and routing, the banks would not be able to carry out their responsibilities respectively. The logistics sector in Malaysia has progressed in recent years, fortified by strong growth coordinators such as excellent logistics infrastructures, surging freight volumes and a rapid systemic growth in e-Commerce tradings (Tan, 2018). Similarly, the recent flow of M&A activity within the logistics sector is said to be driven with a focal point on niche divisions such as cold chains and an objective to achieve substantial network and scale with lesser aim to capitalize on the e-Commerce trend (Tan, 2018).

Gender Inequality

Gender systems are viewed as hierarchical and dichotomous where the systems may present the inequalities of the different dimensions in our daily lives. The Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations (n.d) states that the females represent half percent of the world's population which makes up half excellent potentials but with the presence of gender inequality, the social progress of women remains stagnant and they are underrepresented in multiple levels of political leadership. In addition to that, a vast majority of females with different age ranges are subjected to inordinate share of unpaid labor Breda et al. (2020). The unfair treatment of females begins after their birth and follows suit for the entirety of their livelihood and in certain nations' females are deprived of basic health care and nutritions which eventually puts them at the top of mortality percentile (Why it Matters, n.d). The United Nations (n.d) also presented a fact as per their Goal 5 which is whilst women have made it into important forays of political offices across the globe, their representations in national bodies and parliaments is at 23.7 percent (%) which is still far from parity Definition and Legal Background on Harassment and Abuse (Malaysia). (2001).

Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation is technically referred to as segmenting or classifying employees across occupations based on the demographic characteristics where gender revolves most and in some instances includes ethnicity, racial and/or sexual orientation wise segregation. Based on a statement by Equitable Growth (2017), Harassment. (n.d) occupational segregation also happens when one particular demographic group is underrepresented or overrepresented among different types of job. For example, the American Community Survey (2015) also quoted that in the United States, the labor force is made up of men for up to 53% but only 30% of them hold a job in education, the remaining count of up to 98% of men are associated with the construction jobs. To jump into a more detailed explanation males are high income earners regardless of their education background and skill sets however, on the other hand the work output of females are assessed at a lesser value regardless of the quality of their work Dubey (2020). And as per Levanon et al. (2009),

when the number of females working in a specific field or occupation rises, the wage level in that particular field will fall although in reality they possess exemplary education background and skill sets Hur (n.d).

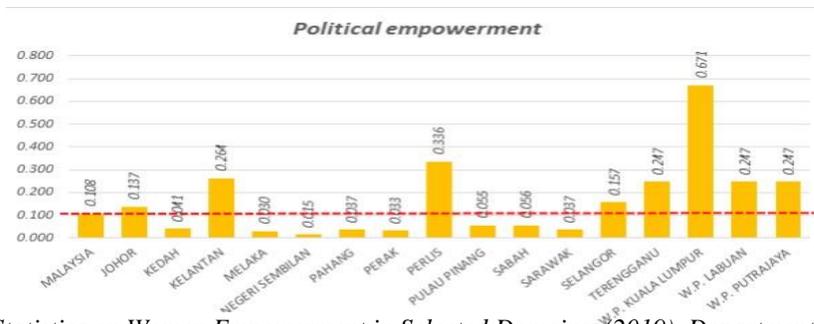
Occupational Segregation in Malaysia

Occupational segregation can be clearly seen in Malaysia as well. According to a statement released by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020) the gender equality level in Malaysia dropped a whopping 70.9% where, the Political Empowerment aspect, one of the 4 factors which is used to measure and produce the Gender Gap Index report to have recorded the lowest result and enlists the scores of 8 of the 13 states Under National Equality Level Inbound Logistics - Glossary of Supply Chain Terms. (n.d) Tourism & Transport. (2008).

The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), has also released several statistical data on “*Women Empowerment in Selected Domains Malaysia (2020)*”. The statistics to be flashed below have been collected by both DOSM and other agencies which are collectively engaging in determining a solution to curb gender inequality in the nation Laws Related to Sexual Harassment. (n.d) Melissa. (2021). Political empowerment is important but the value recorded, 0.108 or 10.8% is a distressing score because that number shows that although women may have exemplary skills and education, they are still straggling behind men in terms of Parliament, Ministerial positions and even as States Elected Representatives (DUN). According to the Chief Statistician of Malaysia’s Department of Statistics, Dato’ Sri Dr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Malaysia ranked the 73rd position in the global gender equality index in 2019 from the initial 63rd position and as of 2021.

And according to the Global Gender Gap Report (2021), Malaysia did not progress well which further sent the country down the charts to the 112th position of 156 countries. The countries scorecard, as per The Star Official (n.d), displays that Malaysia has in fact achieved curbed gender inequality in the health and education sub-indexes but there should be more involvement in both political and economic to fully attain gender equality Petchko (2018).

In a study by Goy & Johnes (2012) they quoted that the males that were attached to a manufacturing company in Kuching, Sarawak received greater returns on their work than the females except those involved in clerical and/or administration work. Furthermore they also mentioned that this type of practices contributes to gender discrimination which has a greater potential to restrict women’s participation in the labour market Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, Malaysia. (2020) shows in Figure 1.



Source: Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains. (2019). Department of Statistics Malaysia

FIGURE 1
POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT SCORE BY STATES

Societal Mindset

How society perceives the value of men and women carries huge ramifications regardless of the arena, be it legal, employment or healthcare. Although improvements can be initiated with proper laws and regulations and systemic changes, push backs are inevitable because gender beliefs run deep. For example, Olsson (2019), stated in her research that men stemming from different countries did not view gender equality as a medium that would put the men on the losing side if both genders became equals whereas in India, this is a norm. Also on the other hand, there are some men who are beginning to grasp the concept of gender equality and starting to accept gender equality as another way of life although they have yet to fully put into practice Malaysia, Well Positioned as a Regional Logistics Hub and Gateway to Asean. (n.d).

According to Konte (2015), half of the global population constitutes women and girls who are inordinately excluded from the majority of decision making processes, within the household females face religious and cultural norms which deprives them of autonomy which directly restrains their access to resources, freedom of movement and social participations, whilst in the labor market, females are mostly deployed to the agricultural and informal industries and although they make an impact in contributing to the nation's GDP, these industries are widely considered as "low added-value" Ministry of Human Resources. (2021) Taherdoost (2016).

Societal Mindset & Gender Inequality in Logistics

Everything is fair and well until we find a setback or loophole to take advantage of. Similarly, gender inequality did not pop up on its own and move its way up the hierarchy instead the agenda was propagated during old times where many perceived that a woman's place is confined within the walls of a place called home where she gets to manage the household. However, we have passed those years with many inventions and progress in terms of infrastructure and bodily autonomy. Still gender inequality is an issue which may take nefarious forms, both in a subtle and crude manner Ombea (2020).

There is more salt to this part of the study. As mentioned earlier, societal mindset is not a natural phenomenon that happens on its own, rather a social view influenced by the very society we live in. According to Farhat (2017), a Chief Equity Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Unilever, she mentions that stereotyping is also another sub-part that influences our independent variable societal mindset and in most cases is agreed upon by the individuals. Farhat (2017) quoted a study commissioned by Unilever in 2017 that a number of 55% of females and 77% of males believed that the males are fit to lead high stake projects *and* that 49% of males and 69% of females are greatly affected by stereotyping in both their personal lives and careers. She also said that based on this study and her personal experience of being subjected to both situations, social norms and stereotyping are shoving gender equality down the ladder big time Hustad et al. (2020).

Harassment

Harassments take many forms and can possibly stay hidden. According to the Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) (2001), harassment can be referred to as an unsolicited conduct that is based off an individual's color, race, religion, sex - inclusive of gender identity and/or sexual orientation, age, nationality and/or genetic conditions Survey finds sexual harassment largely unreported. (2019). Harassment in itself is unlawful where enduring the derogatory conduct becomes a context of continued employment and/or where the conduct becomes ubiquitous or

severe enough to create a workplace environment that any reasonable individual would view as hostile, intimidating and/or abusive (Harassment, n.d).

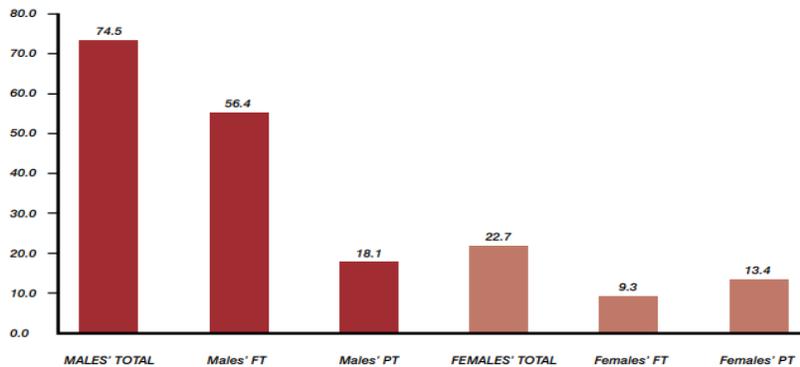
In July 2019, the Joint Action for Gender Equality urged the Malaysian government to establish a precise timeline to review and pass the Sexual Harassment Bill since it was delayed from its initial stages of proposal (Is Malaysia Serious About Sexual Harassment?, 2019). And up until now, as reported by Vanar (2021), the bill is still pending to be passed which increases the risk of women to sexual harassment both within and outside their residences. However, with all this ongoing commotion, a new bill was proposed in the Parliament by a People's Justice Party senator which idealized protecting men from being seduced by a women's attire, actions and words to commit heinous acts such as molestation, incest, rape and etc. Now both these incidents may occur, however, according to a statistical report from our Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) (2019) between years 2000 to 2017 a sum of 1,218 cases of sexual harassment were reported and 79% of the victims were females whereas the remaining 21% comprises male victims Mishra et al. (2019): Shruti. (n.d).

Gender Inequality in Logistics

Logistics is a huge industry. When it began, it was relatively small but over the course of years it rose to a greater magnitude where the sole contribution of the sector to our nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) boosted to 3.8% in year 2019 solely (Malaysia, Well-Positioned as a Regional Logistics Hub and Gateway to Asean, n.d). The Malaysian Investment Development Authority also quoted that the Malaysian trade sector's Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increased notably between years 2013 to 2018 and the transportation sector too experienced a staggering CAGR increase of 3% between years 2013 to 2018 Ho (2019).

According to Stojanovic et al. (2014) it was recorded that in 2011, the average number of women in the workforce within the European Union's transport and logistics industry was only 22% which shared a similarity index with the Republic of Serbia however, in the Republic of Macedonia, the average number of women that made up the transport and logistics workforce was at an all time low of 13% Prof Trochim (n.d). Regardless of how successful the industry and the companies within become, the Transport and Logistics industry across the globe are traditionally noted as a man's world, thus, the number of female employees that share the workforce is lesser Schober et al. (2018).

Inequality and career hurdles for females continue to be a setback within the industry. According to a study conducted by the Women in Supply Chain Executive Committee comprising close to 1000 transportation and logistics professionals, they believed that women faced continuous barriers in terms of growth opportunities both in the social and professional levels. Professionals of both gender, *The Unseen Gender in Transport and Logistics - Making Women Visible*. (2010) women and men within the logistics sector grasp the glass ceiling for women (Johnson et al., 1999). Despite the country's positioning as the first, second or third world, this perceived glass ceiling is visible in places like Australia. Although the logistics sector in Australia consists of females in certain managerial positions, they also recorded that most women in those positions fall behind other industries (Australian Bureau of Statistics and The Organization for Economic Cooperations and Development, 2008).

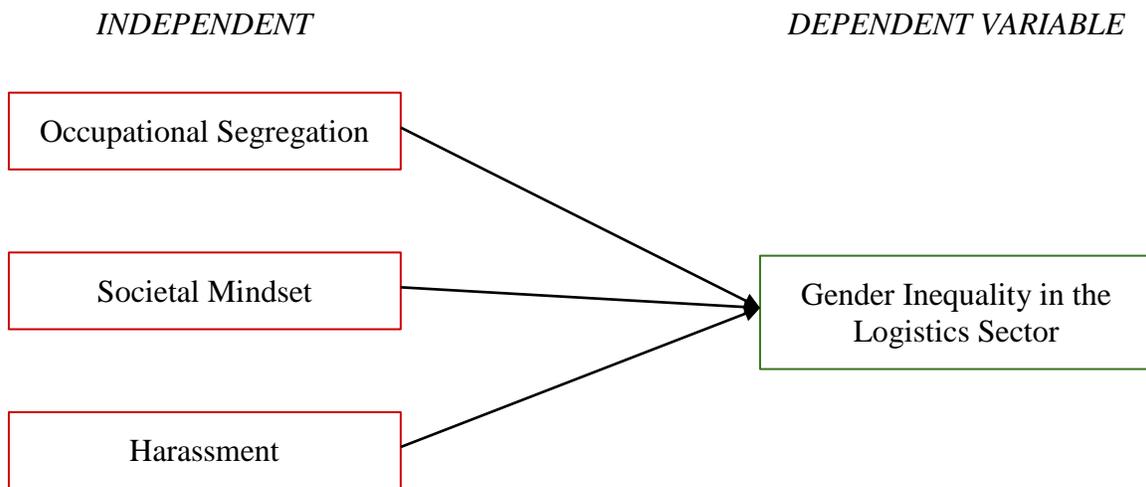


Sources: *The Unseen Gender in Transport & Logistics - Making Women Visible*. (n.d). Women in Supply Chain Executive Committee

FIGURE 2
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BASED ON GENDERS FOR A TERM OF 5 YEARS

The Figure 2 above shows the employment growth statistics by gender from the year 2009. With this, it is evident that the total number of males serving the logistics sector is higher than the number of women in the industry.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Goy & Johnes, 2012 & Edirisinghe, 2018 and Edirisinghe, 2021

FIGURE 3
GENDER LOGISTICS SECTOR

Research Approach

Research approach is referred to as a plan of action used in research papers which covers the initial broad supposition to the intricate details of data collection methods, the analysis and its interpretation (Saunders et al., 2012). There are three types of approaches to research, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. A quantitative approach will be apprehended in this study to further assess the objectives and hypotheses by investigating the relationship among variables. The mentioned variables will be permuted into data formats which can be further examined using the mentioned statistical approaches Meyer (2020) shows in Figure 3.

Sampling Design

Sampling is a rudimentary fraction of research where a number of samples are collected to attain an understanding of a population because the ultimate goal is to gather samples which are able to produce an error-free representation of the target population (Wills et.al, 2020). In addition, the effort put into sampling must be efficient as researchers may face constraints in terms of time and money Middleton (2019).

Target Population & Sample Size

A target population is referred to as the total number of individuals stemming from the original sampling population and most of whom will take part in the study or investigation of variables (McLeod, 2019). The size of the target population should be reliable in order to ensure the statistical analysis derived from the investigation can be utilized. The number of respondents is derived using 2 methods, one would be through a series of statistical calculations and the other method is through the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size for a Finite Population to decide the sampling size because the population size which is (N) is greater than 5000. Hence, for this research, the target population is approximated at 384 number of respondents and all of whom will be between 21 to 60 age group comprising both men and women serving in the logistics sector within Sanat (2017).

Data Collection

The primary data of this paper will be collected through the distributed questionnaires. The questionnaires are outlined and developed by the researcher itself and will take appropriate form and distributed through Google Forms because the advantages are simply great. Adequate segmentation of each variable will impact the conclusion because the final takeaway is derived from the collected information in itself (Datta, 2018). The questionnaire will be segmented into 5 sections, namely A, B, C, D & E which then uses the five-point Likert scales as a measure of responses ranging from *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neutral*, *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* Tierney (2021).

Data Analysis

This is where the responses collected from the respondents will be compiled, analyzed using certain statistical measures which will alongside answer the very reason on why the study is being conducted, the research questions and objective. Data analysis is referred to as a set of systematic procedures of applying logical and/or statistical techniques to describe, demonstrate and evaluate

the data (Calzon, 2021). A statistical software will be used in analyzing the obtained data, namely the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software which is designed to unleash data insights with high accuracy that will contribute to more refined decision makings (IBM SPSS Statistics, n.d). Furthermore, this software is catered for all age groups, thus it is user friendly and establishes interfaces with other databases *How can we redress the gender imbalance in the logistics industry?* (n.d).

Hypotheses Testing

H_{A1}: *There is a positive relationship between occupational segregation and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector.*

We can clearly see that there is a strong association between the independent variable *occupational segregation* and the dependent variable *gender inequality* ($R = 0.568$, $N=400$). The Pearson Correlation analysis footholds that *occupational segregation* has a notably positive relationship with *gender inequality* which transcribes, the more occupational segregation exists and revolves around the logistics sector, the greater it will contribute towards gender inequality in the logistics sector. On that account, HA1 is accepted.

H_{A2}: *There is a positive relationship between societal mindset and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector*

We can also observe that there is a strong relationship between the independent variable *societal mindset* and the dependent variable *gender inequality* ($R = 0.547$, $N = 400$). The Pearson Correlation analysis backs that *societal mindset* has a strikingly positive relationship with *gender inequality* which deciphers the rise of societal mindset among the society which scrutinizes the growth of a specific gender around the logistics sector, the greater it will contribute towards gender inequality in the logistics sector. On that account, HA2 is accepted.

HA3: *There is a positive relationship between harassment and the negative impacts of gender inequality in the logistics sector*

It is also as clear as sky that there is a relatively impregnable relationship between the independent variable *harassment* and the dependent variable *gender inequality* ($R = 0.442$, $N = 400$). The Pearson Correlation analysis pillars *harassment* which has a deduced positive relationship with *gender inequality* which means that the more the number of harassments that occur within the walls of an organization and/or personally when they enter the logistics sector which goes unreported will increase the likelihood of gender inequality in the logistics sector. On that note, HA3 is accepted Malmqvist et al. (2019).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this research points the arrow towards the existence of gender inequality in the logistics sector in Klang Valley. At one point or another, individuals, especially females, have endured at least one form of derogatory treatment from other parties and/or entities which directly links that particular gender to experience gender inequality. Let us take the gender of the respondents for example, 195 of the respondents were females and 205 of the respondents were males and based on the data, we can evidently see that men did not go through any forms of negativity which placed them in a condescending position in terms of occupational segregation,

societal mindset and harassment before entering the industry nor whilst being attached to the industry. However, this was not the case with the females, where almost every 195 of them or an overall 48.8% of the respondents were subjected to gender preferential treatment in the industry where men are highly preferred to dominate the workforce than women.

On a second note, societal mindset plays a key role in obliterating gender inequality and if it's plausible the results will be high up in a positive manner. As addressed previously, societal mindset in this study refers to when an individual or collectively a society's mindset is influenced to believe and practice something which is discriminatory and isolative. The reasons as to why societal mindset has played out in many forms through many households is because certain individuals especially from the earlier years have influenced and taught their kids, students, teams and subordinates from the yesteryears that only men should be the breadwinner whilst the women should stay home, cook, clean and take care of the kids and household and to make matters worse, the females not only did not receive education and fair treatment but they also were not in charge of the financing matters that directly impacts the household. Some of these teachings revolve around many households, some are against it and some aren't but sadly, through personal experience, it will not die down that easily.

Lastly, harassment is a majorly colossal event. One too many times, harassment incidents go unreported, regardless of which setting it takes place in, harassment in any form should always be reported. If an individual is harassed within company grounds, he or she may bring on the issue to their respective Human Resources Department with the alleged perpetrator and lodge a complaint and if harassments occur on public grounds, the individual can bring this matter up to the authorities such as police force and lodge an official police complaint against the harasser. With proper complaints lodged, the issue can be escalated as a criminal and/or sexual/predatory offence where the individual will be booked and given the below sentencing.

Achievements and recognition doesn't find its way through a person's gender but only through their work, passion and contribution to the society, company, industry and country. Restricting the achievement of women from their younger years will lead them into an unstable world where the domination of one gender will keep growing and most importantly the one thing that is a necessity for every one of us to live in harmony may be lost forever, *world peace*.

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