

ANALYTICAL STUDY ON WHISTLE-BLOWING BEHAVIOR ACCORDING TO AGE AND GENDER

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Abstract

Whistle-Blowing is often assumed to be a pro-social behavior as it is a part of an effort to eliminate corruption. It is in the interest of the public to give whistle-blowers legal protection so that they can speak out if they find malpractice in an organization. Whistle Blower Protection Act 2011 is one such initiative. But these policies are just the first step and not a panacea for all ethical dilemmas faced by the whistleblowers. This paper examines factors influencing whistle-blowing, using survey data collected by the authors. Seven factors have been tested in this study using three research hypotheses. Several tests from SPSS have been applied and it was concluded that there is a significant impact of factors on the decision to blow the whistle and fear of retaliation more negatively affect women than men and it was also shown that health issues as a factor of whistleblowing more negatively affect Upper Age group than Lower & Middle Age Group.

Keywords: Whistleblowing, Gender, Age, Legal protection,retaliation.

1. Introduction

The term whistle-blowing is derived from the word "whistle" which is used by the referee to denote foul in the game, whistle-blowing occurs when workers report things that aren't right, are illegal, or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties. Whistle-blowing is generally explained as "making a disclosure that is in the public interest". Whistle-blowing has been defined as "the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action" (Near & Miceli, 1985: 4).

Certain factors have an impact on the environment stimulating whistle-blowing. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study these factors which hinder this desirable practice. Factors affecting whistleblowing can be studied in a better manner by dividing them into three heads:

- **Factors related to the wrongdoer**
 - Fear of Retaliation
 - Fear of alienation from peers
- **Factors related to organization and nation**
 - Climate of organization
 - Law Protection provided by the nation
- **Factors related to the whistleblower**
 - Job Level

- Tenure
- Organizational Commitment
- **Fear of Retaliation-** Term retaliation often refers to a counter-attack or an action taken to take revenge. Fear of retaliation by the mighty wrongdoers affects the decision to blow the whistle.
- **Fear of Alienation from peers-** Alienation is the state of being emotionally isolated. Fear and doubt of alienation from peers after blowing the whistle might reduce the potential of whistleblowing
- **The climate of the Organisation-** Congenial climate of the organization creates a positive and open environment in the organization facilitating the culture of whistleblowing against wrongdoers
- **Law Protection provided by the nation-** Whistleblowing is encouraged by protecting the blowers both at the organization and national level by framing various policies and acts. Whistle Blowing Act 2011 is one such initiative.
- **Job Level-** This refers to the position a person occupies in the organizational hierarchy. If the prospective blower is occupying a powerful position in the organization, the chances of exposure for wrongdoing increase.
- **Tenure-** This refers to the period during which something is possessed. Employees who have long stayed in the organization are more likely to blow whistle.
- **Organizational Commitment-** It refers to the individual's psychological attachment to the organization. It is found that members with high organizational commitment will be more likely to blow the whistle.

2. Research Methodology

- Method of data Collection- **Primary Data (Questionnaire)**
Sample size- **30**
Females – 14, Males- 16
Lower & Middle Age Group (20-49 years) - 20
Upper Age Group (50 and above) - 10
- **Research and Statistical Hypotheses:**

For present study, researcher has made three research hypotheses, which are as follows:

2.1. **There is a difference in factors considered by a whistleblower.**

H_o : There is no difference in the factors considered by a whistleblower.

H_A : There is a difference in the factors considered by a whistleblower.

2.2. **Fear of Retaliation more negatively affects women than men.**

H_o : Average Fear of Retaliation in males = Average Fear of Retaliation in females

H_A : Average Fear of Retaliation in males = Average Fear of Retaliation in females

2.3. **Health Issues as a factor of whistleblowing more negatively affect upper age group than lower and middle age group.**

H_o : Health issues as a factor of whistleblowing equally affect upper

age group than the lower and middle age group

H_A : Health issues as a factor of whistleblowing more negatively affect Upper age group than the lower and middle age group

3. Statistical tools used:

- Cochran's Q Test
- Test of Homogeneity of Variances – Levene's Statistic
- One Way ANOVA
- Descriptive Statistic (Mean)
- Means Plot
- Two Independent Sample Test – Mann-Whitney Test
- Clustered Bar Graph

4. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Analysis of Research Hypothesis 1 :

The first hypothesis was to test whether there is a difference in the factors affecting whistle-blowing. Since the nature of data is nominal with more than two related samples, Cochran's Q Test is applied.

Test Statistics

N	30
Cochran's Q	42.565 ^a
df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 1 is treated as a success.

As can be seen from the table above, **P-Value < 0.05**, thus Null Hypothesis is **rejected** and we conclude that there is a difference in the factors affecting whistleblower.

Now the question arises which factor is considered to be most important and which one is the least and for this descriptive table shown below can be checked. As shown in the mean column, **Self-Conscience** which

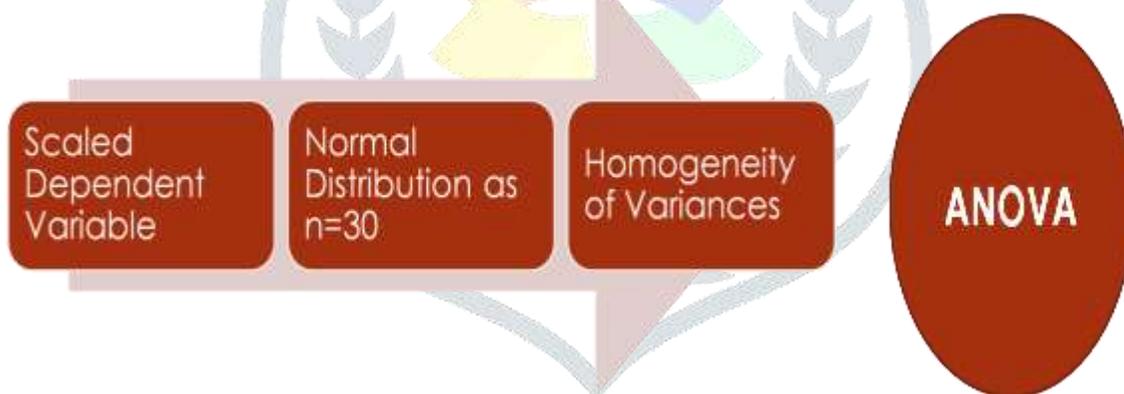
Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Summated scale

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.313	1	28	.262

As shown in the table above P-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

All the assumptions for applying ANOVA are satisfied. And the results show that the P-value < 0.05 (see table below). Thus Null Hypothesis is rejected which concludes that fear of retaliation is more amongst women than men.



Descriptives

Summated scale

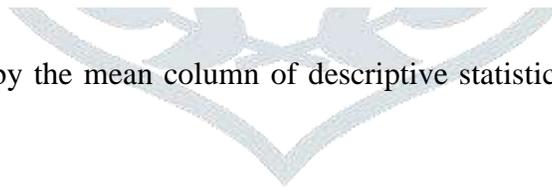
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	16	7.75	4.297	1.074	5.46	10.04	3	15
Female	14	11.29	3.646	.975	9.18	13.39	4	15
Total	30	9.40	4.328	.790	7.78	11.02	3	15

ANOVA

Summated scale

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	93.343	1	93.343	5.810	.023
Within Groups	449.857	28	16.066		
Total	543.200	29			

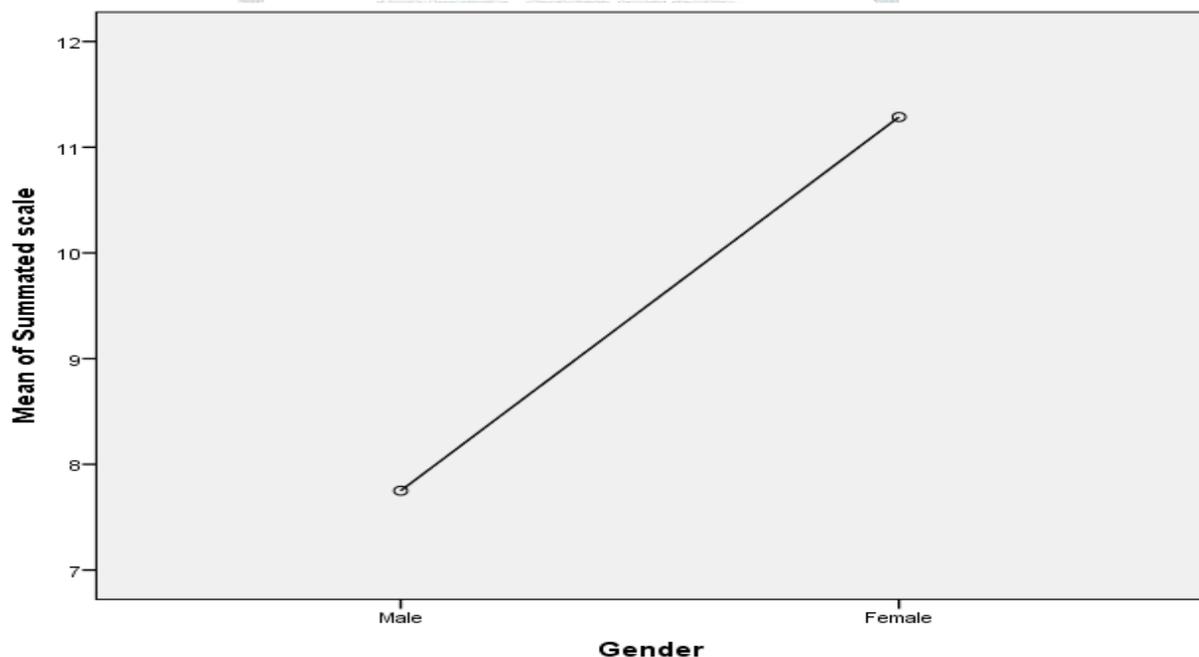
This is also evidenced by the mean column of descriptive statistics and means plot graph, shown below:



Descriptives

Summated scale

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					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
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ANOVA table also gives one more important information of how much variation is explained by Gender as given by the value of R square.

R Square: Explained variation/ Total Variation

$$= 93.343 / 543.2 = \mathbf{0.172}$$

17.2% of the variation in fear of retaliation is explained by gender.

ANOVA

Summated scale

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Between Groups	93.343	1	93.343	5.810	.023
Within Groups	449.857	28	16.066		
Total	543.200	29			

Analysis of Research Hypothesis 3 :

The third Research Hypothesis was to test whether health issues as a factor of whistleblowing more negatively affect the upper age group than the lower and middle age group.

Age in our questionnaire was an open-ended question that was transformed to ordinal data by recoding it into two categories

- Upper Age Group = Greater than 50
- Lower and middle Age Group = 20-49

To link health issue with age, both being ordinal, two independent sample test and specifically Man Whitney test is applied. The health issue is a testing variable and age is the grouping variable.



Test Statistics^a

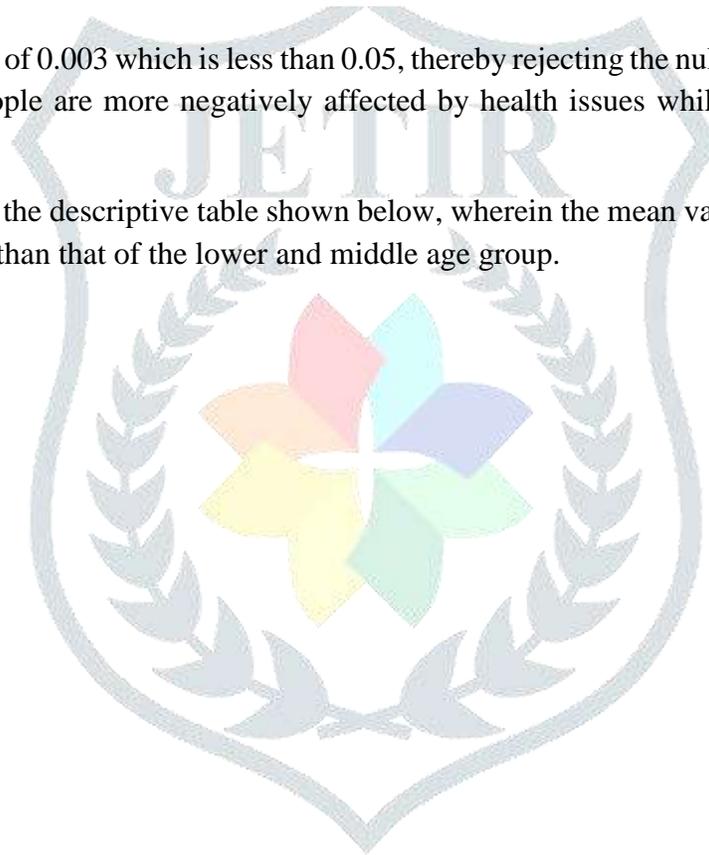
	Health Issues
Mann-Whitney U	35.500
Wilcoxon W	245.500
Z	-2.964
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.003 ^b

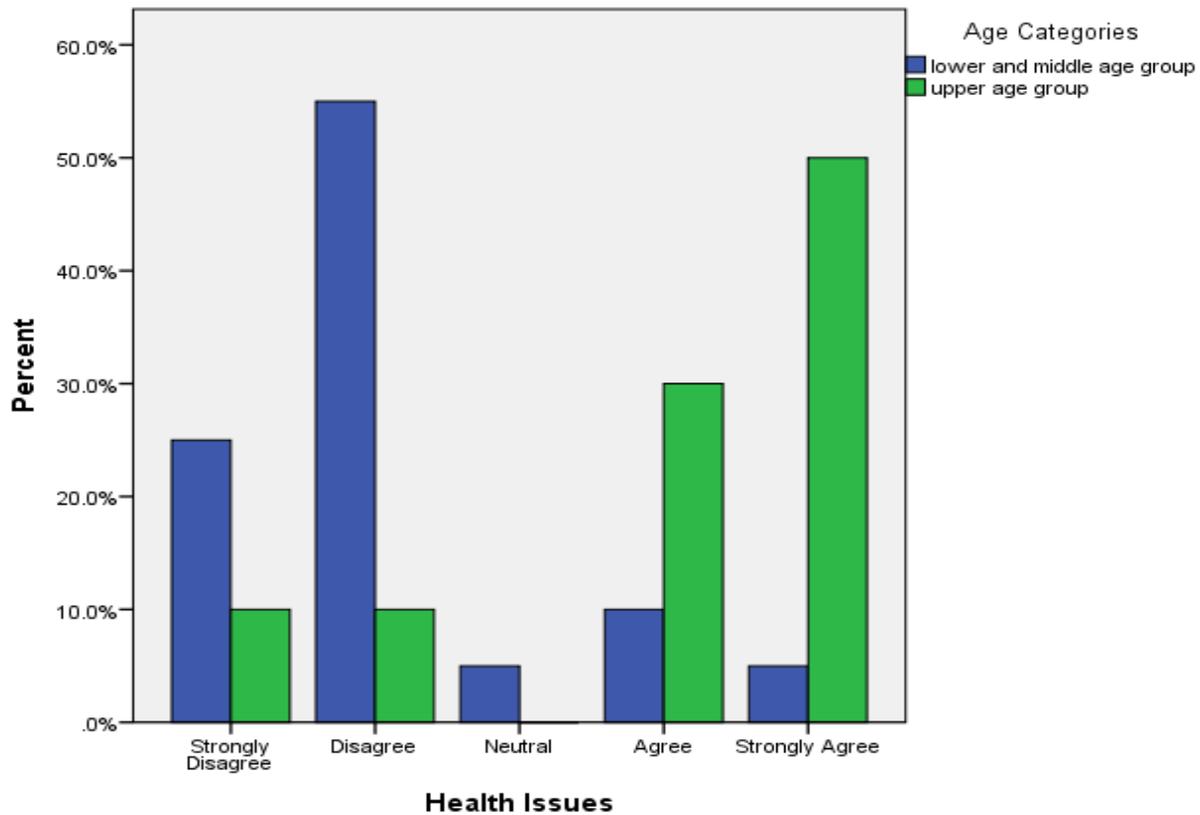
a. Grouping Variable: Age Categories

b. Not corrected for ties.

The test yielded a P-value of 0.003 which is less than 0.05, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting that upper age group people are more negatively affected by health issues while in dilemma to blow the whistle.

This is also evidenced by the descriptive table shown below, wherein the mean value of the upper age group is 21.95, which is higher than that of the lower and middle age group.





Ranks

Age Categories		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Health Issues	1	20	12.28	245.50
	2	10	21.95	219.50
Total		30		

To

substantiate the result with the graph shown below, it can be seen that lower and middle age group people represented by blue color are high on strongly disagree and disagree side while upper age group is high on agree and strongly agree with side.

5. Conclusion

The Potential explanation of why some report on organizational wrongdoing, whereas others do not, are considered in the study. It was found that the majority of respondents believe that a general sense of morality was the most important factor to encourage whistleblowing, with law protection as the second; it was also found that fear of retaliation is more amongst women than men and it impacts the

decision to blow whistle negatively. Moreover, health concerns more negatively impact the whistle-blowing decision of people in the age group of 50 and above.

This paper will enable policymakers to anticipate and predict whistle-blowing behavior according to age and gender, and also design such policies that encourage whistle-blowing.

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