

A Design of Narrative Inquiry Work Session on Occupational Sexism in the Hospitality

Industry

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Abstract

Occupational sexism has recently gained more attention, and people are beginning to realize how it negatively impacts women in various ways. Despite efforts made by governmental organizations and companies to address gender inequity in the workplace through laws and staff policies, occupational sexism still disproportionately affects women, even in industries where women are the primary workforce, such as the hospitality industry.

To contribute to addressing workplace sexism, specifically in the hospitality industry, this project explores how the widespread male supremacy ideology and the failure of many companies to treat administrative regulations seriously prevent governmental policies and administrative regulations from effectively overturning occupational gender injustice. Through the analysis, the challenges for many to identify and admit occupational sexism and why women in the industry still prefer to remain silent or laugh off when confronting gender injustices will be demonstrated.

Based on the illustration of how current efforts like laws and organizational regulations fail to tackle occupational sexism, this project proposes an online narrative inquiry work session as a potential solution to address gender injustice in workplaces. Using Zheng's 5Ps model (2017), this work session will invite participants to analyze stories about women facing occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.

The analysis of the stories aims to propel participants to avoid acting in sexist ways, inspire them to develop allyship with women facing occupational sexism, educate female participants about resisting gender injustice, and encourage participants to keep sharing

stories to educate more people in disparate industries about challenging workplace sexism.

With collective efforts, occupational sexism will be more likely solved.

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Part One: Introduction

A British Columbia (BC) Tourism and Hospitality Conference was held on International Women's Day in 2022. During the meeting, a keynote speaker named Sharma, who previously served as a BC resort CEO, invited all female attendants to stand up to celebrate the special day. Then, he told them to “go clean some rooms and do some dishes.’ And he laughed at that” (Potenteau & Davidson, 2022, para. 3).

While most attendants decided not to argue with Sharma about his inappropriate language to protect themselves from trouble, Notman—a female manager who attended this conference— described what happened in a post on her LinkedIn page to challenge Sharma's sexist language. This LinkedIn post went viral online, prompting numerous women working in the hospitality industry to share their experiences of confronting occupational sexism with Notman. These stories shared demonstrated that many women frequently react to occupational gender inequity by either staying silent or awkwardly laughing it off to keep themselves safe (Notman, 2022). Notman's post also inspired Sharma's previous employees to share Sharma's continuous “pattern[s] of inappropriate behaviour and language” towards female employees during his time working as a resort general manager (Empey, 2022, para. 4). However, neither Sharma nor the resort management team formally identified, admitted, or apologized for Sharma's sexist actions despite being requested by staff several times (Empey, 2022). In addition, Notman's post also attracted and encouraged people from different industries to show their determination to challenge sexism. Not long after receiving these messages, Notman posted on her LinkedIn page again to indicate that she decided to write a book, aiming to call out more people to contribute to undermining sexism.

While working in the hospitality industry, I have witnessed and experienced workplace sexism multiple times. For instance, I have seen my manager demoted after returning from her maternity leave, heard sexist jokes from hotel employees, and read articles discussing examples of how occupational sexism in the serving industry disproportionately affects women. Due to the frequency of gender injustice occurring in the hospitality industry, and because of my hope that women can be treated equally in workplaces, I have always wanted to do something to improve the situation. However, despite the fact that countless women like Notman have stepped up to speak out and challenge sexism, I still did not know what I can do when occupational sexism happens to me or those around me because I wanted to stay out of trouble, such as potential retaliation. In addition, I was aware that one individual's effort can hardly change the long-term gender issues rooted in this patriarchal society. Therefore, when experiencing or witnessing workplace sexism, I always stayed quiet or awkwardly laughed it off, like most women who shared their experiences of confronting workplace sexism with Notman have chosen to do.

Nevertheless, Sharma's sexist language and behaviours at the BC Tourism and Hospitality Conference and the resort he previously worked at demonstrated that when occupational sexism cannot be challenged and stopped, it may worsen by not only happening at one organization but also at more influential platforms. Therefore, actions and solutions contesting workplace sexism in the hospitality industry are urgently in demand.

Although I used to be unclear about what I could do to contribute to overturning occupational gender inequality in the industry I work for, what happened in Notman's story provided me with an idea. In Notman's story, her post educated many people about the

significance of identifying and challenging gender injustice and encouraged numerous women working in the hospitality industry, including Sharma's previous employees, to share their experiences of confronting workplace sexism with her. These stories, in turn, inspired Notman to write a book to support more women facing occupational gender inequity issues and to have more people involved in solving the issues cooperatively. The effectiveness of narrative sharing motivated me to use narratives to challenge occupational gender inequity in the serving industry. Specifically, I design an online narrative inquiry work session to contribute to developing more gender-equitable workplaces in the hospitality industry.

1.1 Context of the Project

According to Liu et al. (2021) and Nair (2022), occupational sexism is any injustice that happens towards someone in the workplace because of their gender (i.e., the devaluation of women). Given the increasing pursuit of gender equity and equality worldwide, occupational sexism has attracted more attention, and more people have realized how this gender issue adversely affects women's physical and mental health, work performance, job evaluations, and job satisfaction (Borrel et al., 2010; Ineson et al., 2013; Tabassum & Nayak et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021).

Through a better understanding of why occupational sexism is detrimental to women, scholars like Ineson et al. (2013) have claimed that it is necessary to create a healthy work environment in which women will not be judged or underestimated because of their gender. Therefore, various efforts have been made to develop more gender-equitable workplaces. For instance, many governmental organizations around the world, like those in Canada, have required companies to protect women by enacting laws and policies, including legislations

ensuring equal pay and promotion opportunities between men and women (Federal Gender Equality Laws in Canada, 2022). Companies, like Holiday Inn (2018), have also supported the development of sexism-free workplaces by clearly indicating in staff manuals that they consider workplace sexism a form of misconduct and employ a “zero-tolerance policy” towards it (p. 20). As a result of these endeavours, many people think that workplace sexism must have been solved. As Gill (2014) demonstrated, it is common to hear a repudiation of sexism and the belief that all sexism-related “battles have been won” already (p. 524).

Nevertheless, the countless direct messages that Notman received about confronting workplace sexism illustrated that occupational sexism, as a long-standing and insidious issue, has not been addressed and still occurs frequently.

So why have decades of efforts from governmental organizations and companies not adequately addressed occupational sexism yet? With this question in mind while researching and recalling what I have experienced, witnessed, and heard during my work in the hospitality industry, I realized that most of the efforts made are based on what authorities assumed to be important. Regrettably, there is relatively limited research trying to tackle the problem with the consideration of questions that people actually have when dealing with occupational sexism, such as the following: 1) why many people, like Sharma and the management team in the resort he used to work at, could not identify nor admit occupational sexism, and 2) why a multitude of women working in the serving industry still prefer to stay silent or laugh off workplace gender inequity. With the failure to consider these factors when attempting to tackle occupational sexism, efforts, like the laws and policies enacted by governmental organizations and companies, are of little avail, causing workplace gender

inequity to be perpetuated. As a woman, I know that the occupational sexism that affected the female conference attendees and the women who shared personal stories about workplace sexism with Notman will be what other females and I experience sooner or later. My years of work experience in hotels enables me to see how workplace gender inequity has continuously affected women in this field; therefore, I chose occupational sexism in the hospitality industry as my research topic. The sources I used for the analysis include academic research and discussions in the field of social science, adult education, politics, and tourism and hospitality. I also include real cases from newsletters and social media posts to support my investigation.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

This project aims to analyze why recognizing occupational sexism in the serving industry is still challenging, and why many women working in this field still prefer to stay silent or laugh off occupational gender equity issues rather than speak up and directly contest the injustice. Grounded in the analysis of these two barriers that impede the success of many existing efforts, I develop an online narrative inquiry work session. This work session aims to use narratives about workplace sexism in the hospitality industry from public sources to inspire scholars and policymakers to be aware of and to contend with the challenges for many people to identify, commit, and challenge workplace sexism. With the awareness and the intention of making changes, authorities will be more likely to offer more effective and practical support to contribute to tackling occupational gender inequity. The narratives provided in the session will also educate female employees on overcoming the challenges they face, and show both female and male staff how to perform adequately and offer support

when gender injustice occurs in workplace. With the power of narratives, this work session will also encourage participants to share their personal experiences of dealing with occupational sexism after the session to educate more people about what roles they need to play to address workplace gender injustice, not only in the hospitality industry, but in every other field.

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In chapter two, I start by analyzing the theoretical framework this project draws from. Specifically, I focus on some main discussions of feminist theories, such as the discussion of workplace gender equity in the second wave of feminism, the significance of listening to marginalized women's voices, and why engaging males is needed to pursue gender parity.

Following the theoretical framework, I review relevant literature on the topic of workplace sexism in the hospitality industry. First, I synthesize current scholarship to demonstrate the manifestations of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. Second, I concentrate on governmental policies and arguments about male supremacy ideology to analyze how widespread belief in gender imparity prevents many policies from effectively eliminating gender injustice in workplaces. I also articulate how the failure of companies to treat administrative regulations seriously perpetuates gender inequity in companies, although almost every company within the hospitality industry has clear staff manuals showing the determination to eradicate occupational sexism. Through the analysis, I dig into the difficulties for many people to identify and commit occupational sexism, and for many women to overturn the gender injustice they confront. Following my investigation of the

causes of these difficulties, I discuss why there is an urgent demand for a more transformative method to explore answers for addressing workplace sexism in the hospitality industry.

1.4 Methodology

Based on the literature review and by seeing the power of personal narratives in challenging gender inequity from Notman's story, I design an online narrative inquiry work session as the potential solution. In Part Three, I first define narrative inquiry, discuss the importance of involving personal narratives in research and interpret why narrative inquiry fits my topic. Following articles about designing work sessions, like the "Workshop Designing Timeline" and "Workshop Designing Checklist" from Carleton College (n.d.) and Zheng's (2017) 5Ps model, I then delineate the design into three steps: preparation, procedure, and evaluation of the workshop.

1.5 Importance and Significance

Freire (1970) discussed that it is necessary to learn from an oppressed group about their experiences when attempting to tackle issues for them because no one else is more prepared to understand the adverse impacts of these issues. In other words, the best sources to refer to when exploring challenges and seeking remedies are the firsthand experiences of those who have confronted the problems, for instance, the stories shared by problem experiencers in public sources.

Taking this understanding as a starting place, the stories of women who have experienced occupational sexism are effective educational instruments to inform participants about how to recognize and combat workplace gender inequity (McKillop, 2005). The characters in the narratives then become educators rather than analyzed objects. In addition,

through analyzing these stories, participants will be more likely to problematize workplace sexism, align with the women in the stories, leading participants to see the urgency of taking action. Moreover, by valorizing the provided narratives, participants will acknowledge that these stories are the “soil in which learning is grounded” and thereby realize that their personal experiences of confronting and handling workplace sexism are also valuable for dismantling the gender issue (Plantenga, 2012, p. 33). For this reason, this work session will encourage participants to share their stories with people around them after the session to educate more people about the existence and adverse impacts of workplace sexism toward women in the hospitality industry and what kinds of support are needed to tackle this problem. Finally, workplace sexism manifests similarly in every industry. The share of the stories analyzed in the work session and participants’ own experiences will also educate people in other fields about how to undermine workplace sexism, accelerating the pursuit of occupational gender justice for every woman.

Part Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter, I include two parts: theoretical framework and literature review. In the theoretical framework, I focus on feminist theories by elaborating some main arguments and explaining how these concepts guide me to analyze my topic of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. For the literature review section, I first draw on numerous sources to illustrate the manifestations of workplace gender injustice in the service industry. Following this illustration, I concentrate on governmental policies and discussions about male supremacy to explore how widespread beliefs of gender imparity impedes many governmental organizations' policies from eradicating workplace gender injustice. I also refer to several hotels' staff manuals and literature about corporate decisions to investigate how the failure of many companies to treat administrative regulations seriously perpetuates gender inequity in workplaces. Through analyzing the literature, I delineate why identifying, committing, and contesting occupational sexism are still challenging for many people. Based on the analysis of the failure to dismantle occupational sexism in the hospitality industry, I then explain the urgent demand for a more transformative way that aims to contribute to developing sexism-free workplaces by improving more people's consciousness of recognizing, admitting, and combating the gender issue.

2.1 Theoretical frameworks – Feminist Theories

Although feminist theories have countless definitions, they collectively emphasize the identification of "injustices and oppressions" in general (Barton, 2006, as cited in Batliwala, 2013, p. 184) and aim to facilitate "the development of more inclusive [and] holistic" circumstances and the undermining of inequity (p. 184). Because of the patriarchal society

which foregrounds male privilege, establishing gender equity has always been one of the main goals during four waves of feminism. For instance, one of the focuses of the second wave is to challenge both direct and indirect oppressions that women face, including seeking equity for working women by pushing legislation for equal pay and employment opportunities (Britannica, n.d.). Because of this focus on the second wave of feminism, a multitude of scholars and leaders have analyzed occupational sexism and attempted to seek ways to tackle it according to feminist theories (Gill, 2014; Gill et al., 2017; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021).

Moreover, Ferguson (2017) emphasized that one of the features of feminist theories is that, when dealing with gender issues for women, it is imperative to analyze the problem from the women's points of view, for instance, by investigating their narratives. By understanding these women's sexist experiences, feminist scholars would be more likely to address gender injustice by generating "both a critique [. . . to] challenge the dominant gender [. . .] imaginaries, and a vision of a better world [. . . which] calls for respect and justice" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 276). Therefore, in terms of analyzing and addressing occupational sexism, this paper is based on not only academic concepts but also women's perspectives and experiences on workplace gender inequity.

Furthermore, after years of referring to feminist theories to chase gender justice, researchers have also recognized that "feminist theory is not only about women" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 270), and that gender inequity is not only a women's issue (Amaya et al., 2019). In accordance with Ferguson and Amaya et al., Peretz (2019) argued that men should also be guided by feminist theories to be "in partnership with and accountable to women and

women's groups" (p. 500). Accordingly, the analysis in this project also attempts to involve men in dismantling workplace gender injustice.

The pursuits of equity forwarded in feminist theories and the second wave of feminism correspond with this paper's purpose—to dismantle the prevalent occupational gender injustice in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this project draws from feminist theories. Moreover, based on the arguments of some main features of feminist theories, the analysis is grounded in women's perspectives regarding occupational sexism and tend to seek a way to engage males to contribute to overturning gender injustice.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Manifestations of Sexism in the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry has created countless job opportunities worldwide. Women are the main contributors in this industry as they “make up nearly 70% of the workforce” (Baum & Cheung, 2015, p. 5). Despite women’s considerable contributions, Sharma’s previous staff’s experience and many studies proved that women continuously confront occupational sexism in this industry. Led by multiple scholars, workplace sexism, as oppression, manifests in both blatant and subtle ways (Krolikowski, 2011; Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, I analyze the various manifestations of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry using these two categories.

Blatant Occupational Sexism in the Hospitality Industry

Blatant discrimination is the obvious prejudiced behaviours exerted on those whose social identities are less privileged, including “physical violence, verbal and nonverbal threats, inappropriate jokes and unreasonable refusal towards disadvantaged groups” (Liu et

al., 2021, p. 1028). Although the frequency of blatant discrimination has reduced as a reflection of the propelling of equity, these behaviours continue to belittle the non-dominant groups by “express[ing] attitudes about the[ir] inferiority” (Krolikowski, 2011, p. 5).

Many studies indicated that occupational gender discrimination in the hospitality industry also manifests in blatant ways (Ineson et al., 2013; Krolikowski, 2011). For instance, in Ineson et al.’s global case study about workplace sexism in the hospitality industry (2013), the blatant sexism showed as physical and verbal threats toward women. In this scenario, a pub manager who violently threw plates at all and only women working in the bar and frequently threatened to “sack” them (Ineson et al., 2013, p. 5). This pub manager’s physical violence and verbal threats toward female staff indicated his lack of respect for women, regardless of how much these female staff contributed to this pub (Ineson et al., 2013). These obvious sexist behaviours also caused low satisfaction among the female staff in this pub due to the female employees’ constant concerns about getting hurt or unemployed. Accordingly, a multitude of female staff affected self-question and underestimate themselves (Ineson et al., 2013).

In addition to verbal and physical threats, blatant sexism manifests in inappropriate comments frequently. According to Sharma’s previous employee, one of Sharma’s sexist behaviours in the resort was to encourage staff to overcome difficulties by using vulgar jokes. In a staff meeting, he said, “Sometimes you get raped. You just have to lay down, take it and enjoy it” (Empey, 2022, para. 7). Although Sharma’s previous staff indicated that this comment was meant to motivate staff, this comment demonstrated Sharma’s sexist mind and lack of respect for women. Consequently, many female employees in this resort were greatly

concerned about the gender imparity of their working environment after the meeting.

Because none of the threats or jokes in these two examples are ethical or a reflection of female employees' competency, there is always a "feeling of anger and frustration in the victim" (Ineson et al., 2013, p. 5).

Subtle Occupational Sexism in the Hospitality Industry

Compared to blatant discrimination, subtle discrimination is "less visible [and] more ambiguous," yet it happens more frequently (Van Laer and Janssens, 2011, as cited in Liu et al., 2021). Typical manifestations of subtle discrimination include "undervaluing or neglecting, unequal information sharing" (Brown and Osman, 2017, as cited in Liu et al., 2021). These manifestations also apply to occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. For instance, in Ineson et al.'s case study (2013), a male bar supervisor believed that women are only capable of doing "menial tasks" rather than anything with "a great amount of responsibility" (Ineson et al., 2013, p. 5). According to Morrison and Morrison (2002), subtle discrimination is often considered nonprejudiced because it is frequently intertwined with widespread social norms. Because of the involvement of social norms of male supremacy, the manager's "very archaic mind frame" is insidious (Ineson et al., 2013, p. 5), leading to more difficulties in calling for gender justice in the bar (Krolikowski, 2011). As a result, female staff in this bar got continuously underestimated even though they were more experienced. In contrast, male staff who were less experienced got promoted and assigned more valuable work opportunities (Ineson et al., 2013).

Subtle occupational sexism in the hospitality industry also includes gender microaggression. Gender microaggression is the "intentional or unintentional actions or

behaviors that exclude, demean, insult, oppress, or otherwise express hostility or indifference toward women” (Basford et al., 2013, p. 341). Fatima (2017) indicated that women who undergo gender microaggression might experience challenges when “determin[ing] whether the feedback they receive is based upon their personal deservingness or if it is discrimination against them” due to their gender (p. 147). Therefore, although Gilbert et al. (1998) investigated that working women in the hospitality industry are frequently undervalued and receive fewer interviews and job offers in high-priced restaurants, the recruitment managers and people around these women would, intentionally and unintentionally, fail to understand that sexism is at play. Instead, “ostensibly nonprejudiced reasons,” like the women’s performance in the interview and lack of previous related achievements and experiences, may be used to repudiate these women’s gender-led injustice experiences (Krolikowski, 2011, p. 5). Because of the failure of many people to see the issue in the same way, these women see and to problematize these women’s predicaments, these women may be unable to describe to others their experience of confronting occupational sexism and doubt their own capabilities (Fatima, 2017). In other words, subtle occupational sexism, which involves gender microaggression, will invalidate the victims’ struggles (Basford et al., 2013).

Because of the subtle occupational sexism, women working in the hospitality industry frequently feel inadequate and frustrated and lose multiple career development chances, even though this unfairness only relates to their gender rather than what they could contribute to the organization.

2.2.2 Laws and Male Supremacy

To eliminate the adverse impacts of occupational sexism, governmental organizations

worldwide have enacted countless laws to restrain companies' inappropriate behaviours regarding gender equity. For example, to pursue gender equity in workplaces, the Canadian Gender Equality Rights (2022) regulate companies in the entire country to offer equal pay and utilize the same standards to evaluate males and females during recruitment and promotion. Government of Canada (2022) also listed that employers should assess workplace sexism risks and eliminate these potential detrimental impacts on women. Moreover, employers are requested to attend all occupational sexism-related training to ensure the staff understands how to behave, identify, and overturn workplace gender injustice (Government of Canada, 2022). These policies ensuring gender equity are repeated in many different governmental documents, such as the Employment Equity Act, the Pay Equity Act, the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act, and the Canada Labour Code, emphasizing the government's determination to pursue gender equity in workplaces (Federal Gender Equality Laws in Canada, 2022).

In addition to the support from the federal level, provincial and city government's websites also include policies, aiming to better oversee and regulate companies in the entire country (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.). For instance, when a company is reported to fail to develop a sexism-free workplace in Ontario, local related departments, like Commission, Tribunal and courts, could get involved more effectively to inspect the issue and protect women's rights in workplaces (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Other than the laws regulating companies' and employers' behaviours for offering a gender-equitable work environment, there are multiple documents on the government's official website for educating the public to recognize organizational sexism and guiding

women to report gender inequity issues and reach for support if needed (British Columbia, 2016). Therefore, when occupational sexism occurs, more people will be able to identify the problem, and more women will know how to react.

According to studies around the world, fewer employees will experience workplace gender inequity if countries actively enforce more stable occupation sexism-related labour legislation and provide abundant educational resources (Triana et al., 2018). Moreover, according to Triana et al. (2018), these governmental organizations' measures shape employees' recognition of fair and acceptable treatment and lead to employees' higher expectations of working in a gender-equitable work environment. For instance, the equal employment policies in Canada led more women to feel more competent and expect to work in traditional men's positions (Beaton & Tougas, 1997; Triana et al., 2018). Because of the higher expectation of gender justice in workplaces, employees' reactions to workplace sexism are stronger, accelerating the dismantling of the issue (Triana et al., 2018). In other words, the governmental organizations' support through legislation and educational documents significantly contributes to developing sexism-free workplaces.

Nevertheless, even in countries which have relatively "robust [and] gender-sensitive labor legislation[s]" (Triana, 2018, p. 2420) and invested a lot in the support for women to resist gender-led injustice in workplaces, occupational sexism still happens frequently due to reasons like the normalization of male supremacy.

The patriarchal society keeps emphasizing its belief in male supremacy. For example, males are always described as decision-makers and successful leaders, whereas women are consistently underestimated as "childbearers" and home carers only (Baum & Cheung, 2015;

Gill, 2014, p. 510). These gender stereotypes exist in education systems and traditions in many countries and communities, typecasting women and men into specific work and domestic roles and brainwashing many in public to believe that men are more competent than women to do significant tasks (Baum & Cheung, 2015). As a result of the continuous brainwashing of male supremacy, gender inequity is primarily normalized and thereby ignored. Consequently, combating occupational sexism is more challenging, mitigating governmental organizational support's efficacy. In the following paragraphs, I elaborate on how the widespread male supremacy belief prevents occupational sexism in the hospitality industry from eradicating by creating more difficulties in committing and resisting the problem, and impedes many governmental organizations' efforts from being effective.

When White et al. (2005) interviewed employees about gender equity within the hotel they work for, one of the prevailing answers from the interviewees regarding the dominance of women in the housekeeping department was that “it’s always women, cause it’s that sort of job” (p. 8). The logic behind this interviewee’s response is that women are more suitable to do unskilled tasks, like room cleaning, while men are meant to do more valuable tasks. Similar logic also applies to the scenario in which female staff were given fewer valuable opportunities, such as getting promoted, compared to their less experienced male colleagues, solely because of the male supervisor’s belief that women can only do “menial tasks” (Ineson et al., 2013, p. 5). Although the sexist mindsets of the interviewee and the bar supervisor were clearly at play, and despite the fact that workplace sexism caused by this kind of mindset is not rare in the hospitality industry, not everyone can identify the injustice. Multiple scholars articulated that when a group is “socially acceptable to hold prejudices

against” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 77), discrimination will be hard to observe, especially if it appears subtly (Liu et al., 2021). In other words, because of the continuous brainwashing of male supremacy, it is acceptable to discriminate against women. Accordingly, although governmental organizations clearly state that companies should develop sexism-free workplaces and multiple educational resources are available on governmental websites for people to learn about recognizing workplace gender injustice, many company managers normalize sexist behaviours as nonoffensive norms. Consequently, these managers would not realize that these behaviours are against gender-parity-related legislations, such as using different standards to evaluate males’ and females’ competency and thereby do it unintentionally.

Nevertheless, the male supremacy belief not only leads many company leaders to be sexist performers but also persuades many women to accept the issue, even though many of these women are continuously affected by workplace sexism (Gill et al., 2017). In other words, many people, both sexists and victims, fail to problematize occupational sexism. Many of these people believe that sexism-related problems have been solved (Gill, 2014). This belief resonates with one of the main arguments of postfeminism that McRobbie (2004) highlighted:

“[Postfeminism] positively draws on and invokes feminism as that which can be taken into account, to suggest that equality has been achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasize that it is no longer needed, it is a spent force” (p. 255).

Consequently, many who are brainwashed to believe that sexism no longer exists and

that no further efforts are needed to address the issue consider that we are currently living in a postfeminist era. Therefore, when sexism happens, they would repudiate sexism in multiple ways, like seeing sexism as a joke (Gill, 2014; White et al., 2005) and attributing sexism to individual choices (Gill, 2014; Scharff, 2019)

It is prevalent to see people deem sexist language a joke to indicate that no offence is intended (Gill et al., 2017). For example, many believed that Sharma's sexist comments at both the conference and the hotel he previously worked at were jokes, thereby trying to minimize the negative impacts of his behaviours (Baumgardner, 2022). Nevertheless, these so-called jokes evoked frustration and anger among conference attendants and resort staff (Empey, 2022). As White et al. (2005) articulated, these jokes do not prove that sexism is not at play or alleviate the adverse impacts. On the contrary, the joke is only an excuse to "cover [the] crudity" of occupational sexism but create more obstacles to challenge organizational gender injustice (White et al., 2005, p. 7). For instance, although many women fail to problematize gender inequity in workplaces, others who successfully identify the issue and would like to chase gender parity would be described as "over-sensitive" and their challenging of the sexist behaviours would not be given enough attention (White et al., 2005, p. 7). Therefore, speaking up the occupational sexism becomes more difficult, although governmental organizations provide educational documents to encourage women to report the gender injustice they confront in workplaces.

Furthermore, ascribing sexism to individual choice (individualism) is also prevalent. Gill et al. (2017) discussed that when sexism happened, many uncoupled personal experiences from the broader gender inequity issue. In accordance with Gill et al.'s discussion, Scharff

(2019) found from a group of girls around their twenties based in London that gender injustice always calls “on individuals to take responsibility” (p. 6). In other words, when a woman confronts occupational sexism, many believe it must be because of herself. For example, a woman is not given equal career development opportunities compared to those given to her male colleagues must be her poor performance or experience. Nonetheless, the case Ineson et al. (2013) analyzed in which valuable tasks were given to male staff who are less experienced than many female employees explained that individualism is just another way to invisibilize occupational sexism and its harmful impacts. Although this scenario demonstrates that using individualism to deny occupational sexism and the following impacts is untenable, occupational sexism becomes unspeakable and cannot be directly challenged when “gender is consistently taken out of the equation” (Gill et al., 2017, p. 235). Consequently, similar to seeing sexism as jokes, ascribing sexism to individualism creates more challenges for the women who realize the issue and want to overturn this problematic gender injustice, although there is support from governmental organizations, like educational documents online.

Because of the brainwashing of male supremacy, many company leaders become sexists without even noticing, and many women are persuaded to normalize gender inequity, although many legislations clearly state what behaviours are considered sexist and should be avoided in organizations and despite that many educational resources are available on government websites to inform people on identifying occupational sexism. Moreover, many who fail to problematize gender injustice in workplaces repudiate the issue's existence. Nevertheless, there are still many women who identify the gender unfairness and want to

contribute to dismantling the issue. However, the repudiations cause more difficulties for those women who want to challenge occupational sexism by blaming the issues on them: being over-sensitive and causing the problems themselves. Therefore, the women who eventually decide to combat occupational sexism and raise the problem become the problem itself (Ng, 2015). In other words, the repudiations push these women to accept the normalization of male supremacy and gender inequity (Gill et al., 2017). Consequently, "gender inequality [in the hospitality industry becomes . . .] if not unspeakable, then, extremely difficult to voice" (Gill, 2014, p. 511). Accordingly, although there are multiple kinds of support from governmental organizations to encourage women to report occupational sexism, the possibility of being pinpointed as the issue prevents many women, who recognize this gender issue and would like to revolt, from challenging gender inequity in workplaces. To sum up, leading by the normalization of male supremacy, many sexists are unable to identify occupational sexism. In addition, many women chose to stay silent or laugh the occupational sexism off rather than speak up about the gender injustice they confront in workplaces is either because of the failure to problematize occupational sexism or the awareness that they would be considered the problem and that their resistance would not be treated seriously.

2.2.3 Business Preventative Measures

Led by governments' appeals to developing gender-equitable workplaces, many companies, including those in the hospitality industry, have set organizational policies. For instance, Holiday Inn shows in its staff manual its determination to develop an equitable work environment for its employees to grow and glow. The manual stated that the company

employed a “zero-tolerance policy” towards workplace sexism (Holiday Inn, 2018, p. 20). To do so, Holiday Inn demands employers to “be responsible for enacting preventative measures to ensure a fair and equitable workplace” and actively address the gender unfairness reported by inspecting the situation, communicating with the victims and the offending parties, and providing employees with proper education and resources about occupational sexism (Holiday Inn, 2018, p. 11). If the employers’ mediation fails to improve the offending parties’ behaviour, actions like warnings, demotions, suspension, and termination of employment will be taken. The company manual also provides a guide about what employees should do when confronting workplace sexism, such as reporting to the management team and filing a complaint.

What Holiday Inn does to ensure gender parity is not rare in the hospitality industry and can be seen in almost every hotel or hotel management company, such as Marriott International.

Marriott International’s staff manual indicated that it strives to eliminate “workforce discrimination,” like workplace sexism, “to [provide] equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and a constructive working environment for all associates” (Marriott International, 2013, p. 36). Similar to Holiday Inn, Marriott International articulates in its staff manual that “disciplinary action, up to and including termination” will be subjected to discriminators after investigation (Marriott International, 2013, p. 4). Marriott International also provides a guide for the potential occupational sexism victims about what to do and whom to talk to when confronting workplace gender imparity. In addition, Marriott International highlights the potentiality of retaliation against those who reported workplace

discrimination and encourages those affected to ask for support according to the contact information in the manual (Marriott International, 2013).

According to Gilbert et al. (1998), the policies and disciplines aiming to develop sexism-free workplaces regulate employees' behaviours and propel management to offer equal career development opportunities for male and female employees. Moreover, the guides improve employees' confidence in reporting occupational sexism. Collaboratively, the policies, disciplines, and guides ensure that claims related to occupational sexism will be treated seriously and that "immediate corrective action [will be] taken against the perpetrator(s) of sexual harassment" (Gilbert et al., 1998, p. 52). In other words, these companies' actions become the "preventive measures" of occupational sexism and an effective tool to challenge workplace gender injustice (Gilbert et al., 1998, p. 52). Therefore, according to Lu and Kleiner (2001), "adopting and implementing [these measures] are perhaps the best ways for a firm" to develop gender-equitable workplaces for employees.

Despite the fact that these measures undoubtedly contribute to addressing occupational sexism, Gilbert et al. (1998) argued that these measures alone could not wholly address occupational sexism. Multiple scholars, like White et al. (2017) and Stamarski & Hing (2015), agreed and illustrated that the reason that these measures fail to thoroughly tackle workplace sexism is that many companies do not treat these measures seriously enough.

Although hotels around the world generally have written policies, clear disciplines, and guides to ensure occupational gender equity, these measures "have not generally been [. . .] given priority or prominence in a significant number of workplaces" in the hospitality industry (White et al., 2017, p. 9). Accordingly, in White et al.'s (2017) survey regarding

equal opportunities between genders in hotels in Northwest Wales and Southeast Wales, 25% of hotel staff responded that they were unaware of the contents or even the existence of their hotels' gender equity-related preventative measures. Because these measures are not employees' "topic[s] of conversation" to seek personal behavioural improvements and contribute to developing sexism-free workplaces, many staff were unlikely to know what behaviours are against the administrative regulations. For those who successfully identify the issue, they may not know how to report workplace gender injustice (White et al., 2017, p. 9). Therefore, 77% of the interviewees "perceived there to be no gender-related problems in the workplace," although multiple respondents stated numerous sexist incidents that occurred in the hotels (White et al., 2017, p. 7). Moreover, Stamarski & Hing (2015) articulated that "an organization's culture will provide its members with a collective imaginary for how to behave" (p. 23). Based on this concept, when a company does not mainstream its policies and disciplines to regulate its staff's behaviours and require them to be responsible for their sexist actions, nor publicize its guides to educate staff to identify and call out gender injustice, sexist actions would unlikely be admitted, because these inappropriate behaviours would not be recognized or reported by most colleagues or cared for by the company. Consequently, many of the preventative measures will not make a huge difference.

In addition to the failure to mainstream the preventative measures, another manifestation of not taking these measures seriously is the contradiction between the measures and companies' decisions. One of the contradictions is using different standards to evaluate males and females for recruitment and promotion. As Baum and Cheung (2015) discussed, sexism is hidden in "all stages of the recruitment and promotion/opportunity cycle," notwithstanding

the countless gender equity policies in many companies aiming to develop sexism-free workplaces (p. 12). Many studies argued that one of the reasons for the contradiction is money. According to White et al. (2017), “where progress had been made on [equal opportunities between genders,] it had sometimes been costly for [. . .] management who took [. . .] discrimination and related inappropriate behaviour seriously” (p. 7). For example, although companies around the world have staff manuals and guides to ensure equal conditions between males and females for recruitment and promotion, it is common to see women get passed up because of reasons related to their gender, like their pregnancy status (International Labour Conference, 2007; Salihu et al., 2012). In accordance with this perception, Latino Justice reported a female hotel housekeeper who was refused a promotion because of her pregnancy (Perez, 2020). Resonating with White et al.’s (2017) analysis that dealing with workplace sexism is costly, Salihu et al. (2012) argued that the reason companies, like the hotel in the report, refused to hire or promote pregnant women is to save cost. Hiring and promoting pregnant women represent a higher cost for companies in terms of statutory maternity pay as well as an additional expense in recruiting and training new temporary staff to cover the pregnant women’s work during the maternity leave. Therefore, the hotel leaders did not take any actions regarding the pregnant housekeeper’s “repeated request” to be given equal opportunities for promotion, despite the hotel’s behaviours toward the pregnant housekeeper against the hotel’s determination to eliminate workplace sexism noted in the organizational preventative measures (Perez, 2020, para. 3). In other words, when ensuring gender parity in workplaces increases companies’ expenditure, saving costs becomes the priority for many companies, notwithstanding developing sexism-free

workplaces is explicitly promised in these organizations' policies and educational tools.

Consequently, many of these companies refuse to take action to correct their sexist decisions, and the women who are affected and those who identify the problem and would like to resist may not get the formal responses.

Other than using different standards to evaluate males and females for recruitment and promotion, another contradiction between organizational decisions and preventative measures is the development of retaliation-free workplaces. Although many companies, like Marriott International Inc., have policies aiming to create workplaces where employees can report workplace sexism without concern about retaliation, many employees continuously hesitate to report the injustice they face because of the potential cost they need to pay. Various studies have indicated that people who are oppressed in the workplace always fear “retaliation, where employers or individuals respond to reports of discrimination or mistreatment by further punishing or marginalizing the victim” (Zheng, 2020, p. 3). This resonating understanding also applies to gender equity issues in the hospitality industry. In Sharma's story, his previous employee, who asked for the resort's accountability for Sharma's sexist comment, was threatened with losing her job if she continued to ask for a formal response from the resort management team (Empey, 2022). As a result, the fear of losing the job prevented this employee and many of her peers from further stepping in and speaking up about the occupational sexism they confronted. Similarly, White et al. (2017) described a scenario in which a woman was isolated solely because of her gender in a male-dominated hotel kitchen, but the management team did not take action to stop the issue. During the interview, when asked if anyone challenged the isolation in the kitchen, one of the respondents answered that

there was no challenge “if they want to keep their job” (White et al., 2017, p. 11). Because the challenge would bring potential punishments to the male kitchen staff and highlight the contradiction between the management team’s behaviours and policies, the kitchen staff and the management team would further isolate the woman or exert other forms of retaliation on those who attempted to challenge the occupational sexism. In other words, although a retaliation-free workplace culture is promised in many companies’ organizational preventative measures, this determination remains in the measures rather than reflected in reality. As a result, the potential personal costs prevent many women who are affected want to resist from further challenging occupational sexism.

Due to the failure of many companies to mainstream the staff manuals and guides, which aim to oversee staff’s behaviours and educate staff about how to identify and react to occupational sexism, many people would be unable to recognize or report the workplace gender injustice they confront. Nonetheless, there are still many women who successfully recognize workplace gender injustice and want to contribute to tackling the issue. However, overturning workplace gender inequity is also difficult, because companies’ cost is more like a priority than the development of sexism-free workplaces in many organizations, and because these women may experience retaliations for their resistance. In other words, regardless of the lack of awareness of organizational preventative measures or the conflict between the preventative measures and organizational decisions, a company’s failure to take the preventative measures seriously will lead many women to either fail to recognize and problematize occupational sexism or unable to challenge the issue. According to Stamarski & Hing (2015), if the companies’ efforts remain superficial by enacting but not mainstreaming

nor obeying the determination in the measures, many women would not even imagine resisting the unfairness they face. Consequently, many women's choices when facing occupational sexism will still be silence or awkward laughing-off. As White et al. (2017) discussed, "[e]mployee quiescence may be maintained, despite the rhetoric about the advance of [organizational egalitarianism in terms of gender equity]" (p. 11).

2.2.4 The Demand for a More Transformative Method

With the governmental organizations' policies and companies' preventative measures, many believe that occupational sexism in the hospitality industry should have been easily solved long ago, or at the very least, women should be aware of how to mitigate the adverse effects of the issue. Nevertheless, the analysis based on various concepts and examples demonstrates that the widespread male supremacy belief and the failure of many companies to treat the organizational preventative measures seriously weaken the efficacy of governmental organizations' and companies' efforts. Accordingly, many sexist individuals and organizations either fail to problematize their sexist behaviours and attitudes or refuse to commit. Similarly, many women either fail to be aware of the gender-led unjust happening to them and those around them or are unable to challenge occupational sexism. Consequently, occupational sexism in the service industry continues to contribute to gender imparity in ways such as worsening the "gender wage gap (e.g., Peterson and Morgan, 1995), the dearth of women in leadership (Eagly [&] Carli, 2007), and the longer time required for women (vs. men) to advance in their careers (Blau [&] DeVaro, 2007)" (as cited in Stamariski & Son Hing, 2015, p. 1). As a result, many workplaces became more inhospitable for women, and the "lower socio-economic status" of women and "conventional gender relations" got

reinforced (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015, p. 13).

In addition, according to Holland (1996) and Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), through recruitment, promotion, and retention, only staff whose values are “congruent with the values in his or her work environment” are likely to stay in a company (as cited in Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015, p. 15). Contrarily, the staff with different beliefs would leave or be forced to leave because they are unfit, even though they could be more valuable to the organization. In one of the scenarios Ineson et al. (2013) analyzed, a female employee who was unsatisfied with her sexist manager’s behaviours and the company’s indifferent attitude resigned despite being offered a promotion. Therefore, if sexism cannot be wholly dismantled or is not given enough attention, the company will need to face the loss of talented and capable employees. Thus, for women to have a better socio-economic status and for companies to keep valuable staff, a more effective transformative method to solve workplace sexism in the hospitality industry is urgently in demand.

Based on the analysis of the mitigated efficacy of many governmental organizations’ policies and companies’ preventative measures, the new method must be grounded on the challenges women face when attempting to combat the gender inequity they face, for instance, the failure to identify the occupational sexism, the potentiality of being pinpointed as the issue, the possibility of not being taken seriously, and the fear of retaliation. In addition, workplace sexism is not just a women’s issue (Amaya et al., 2019) since sexists’ and bystanders’ unawareness and repudiation also contribute to the difficulties of undermining workplace sexism. In accordance with Amaya’s argument, van Zomeren et al. (2008) articulated that collective actions are more likely to “prompt a desire for wide scale”

(as cited in Starnarski & Hing, 2015, p. 24). Therefore, the transformative method needs to focus on educating not only women about how to overcome the challenges of combating workplace sexism but also everyone else about how to avoid being sexist and contribute to tackling the gender inequity issue collaboratively.

Based on these requirements, in the following chapter, I analyze narrative inquiry as my research method, which can potentially be the transformative method to address occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.

Part Three - Methodology

This chapter discusses an online narrative inquiry work session as a potentially more effective transformational method to tackle occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. Drawing from numerous studies, I first disclose why storytelling, specifically narrative inquiry, would be a good fit for my topic. Following the explanation, I delineate the design of the online narrative inquiry work session. At the end of the chapter, I analyze the project's significance.

3.1 Storytelling

Stories are a universal form of communication. They are usually rooted in life experiences and cognitions of “the people around us and the world we live in” (McKillop, 2005, p. 5; Polletta et al., 2011). Through sharing and listening to stories, people better comprehend society and the lived experiences of others and themselves (Lewis, 2014). Therefore, scholars like Hall and Tandon (2017) considered storytelling as a way for knowledge to be “created and represented” (p. 13). Consequently, storytelling has been considered a powerful educational tool in many ancient cultures, such as Indigenous and Asian cultures. In recent years, storytelling has also been frequently used in research, especially in projects discussing the demand of radical overhauls to address social issues (Polletta et al., 2011). One of the ways of using storytelling in research is through narrative inquiry.

3.2 Narrative Inquiry

A narrative is the story of several events in chronological order that aims to pinpoint an idea (Labov and Walesky, 1967, as cited in Polletta et al., 2011). Narrative inquiry is the

analysis of an individual's or a small group's stories to reveal their life experience and unique perspectives (Deakin University, 2022). The personal experiences recorded to analyze a social issue often include both the course of events and the storytellers' emotions. For instance, in the stories that Grant and Calleja (2018) collected from eight Canadian women who experienced occupational sexism, while narrating the procedure of confronting and attempting to challenge gender injustice, storytellers' feelings – such as frustration, anger, hopelessness, and fear – were also depicted. Polletta et al. (2011) argued that these emotions included in narratives enable audiences, including researchers, to empathize with story characters. Polletta et al. (2011) also demonstrated that these emotional resonations call for audiences' "collective interest and actions" to seek solutions for the same issue that both story characters and audiences face (p. 113).

In addition, these storytellers are experiencers who are intricately connected to their stories' social and cultural contexts. In other words, these narrators are more professional in their stories than many authorities. Accordingly, personal narrative sharing is a democratic way to generate and disseminate knowledge, rather than a privilege for elites only (Deakin University, 2022; Polletta et al., 2011; Higgins & Brush, 2006; Butterwick, 2021), enabling everyone's voices, including those of non-authorities or even marginalized groups, to be heard. Therefore, using narrative inquiry as a research methodology to analyze social issues empowers the less-privileged groups and valorizes their intelligence to generate new knowledge. Furthermore, learning through personal stories enables researchers and other audiences to know about the "in-depth details [... of a current or historic social phenomenon] not elsewhere recorded," and thereby come up with more effective solutions to address

different issues (Deakin University, 2022). Therefore, narrative inquiry is often used to seek remedies of intractable social issues, for instance occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.

3.3 Why Choose Narrative Inquiry

Although efforts have been made for decades to address occupational sexism in the service industry, this gender inequity issue continues to affect women adversely. As discussed in the literature review, the failure to address this issue is because many of the current efforts were made based on what authorities believed as important rather than on what is actually needed by those confronting the problem. Freire (1970) articulated that it is necessary to learn from groups about their experiences when attempting to tackle their issues because no one else is better prepared to understand the issues and their adverse impacts. In other words, the best sources to refer to when exploring challenges and seeking remedies for workplace gender inequity in the hospitality industry are the firsthand experiences of those who have confronted the problems. Therefore, to effectively address occupational sexism, I plan an online narrative inquiry work session which highlights a number of women's narratives of confronting workplace gender inequity in the hospitality industry collected from public sources for participants to analyze.

3.4 Design of Online Narrative Inquiry Work Session

Based on Zheng's (2017) method framework, I use the 5Ps model to organize the workshop by separately elaborating the purpose, people, place, problem-solving, and process. Because there are few studies or examples of online narrative inquiry work sessions for solving workplace sexism, I referred to general studies about narrative inquiry and work

session organizing, attempting to plan a suitable online work session to address occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.

3.4.1 Purpose

The first P of the 5Ps model is the purpose of the project. Maheshwari (2012) suggested that work sessions without specific objectives are a waste of time. Therefore, it is imperative to have explicit purposes to direct the design of the work session. Through inviting participants to analyze various narratives about occupational sexism in the hospitality industry, this online narrative inquiry work session will attempt to tackle occupational sexism in the hospitality industry through four detailed goals.

As Sensoy and Di Angelo (2012) indicated, the first step to challenging injustice is to be able to identify it. Therefore, the first goal is to educate more people to recognize occupational sexism in the hospitality industry through analyzing the stories provided. Consequently, more people would be aware of normalized gender inequity.

Secondly, this work session aims to inform female employees in the hospitality industry about how to resist future gender injustice. By investigating the narratives, female participants could learn whether the female characters in the stories effectively addressed gender inequity or perpetuated the status quo, and thereby decide if they need to learn from the female characters or to avoid doing the same thing.

The third goal is to appeal authorities, such as policymakers, business elites, and scholars, to offer practical advice. By discussing stories about women confronting occupational sexism, regardless of whether the issue was successfully addressed in the narratives, authorities would recognize what support is needed for women to challenge

gender injustice. Grounded in these understandings, authorities are more likely to provide effective suggestions and contribute to dismantling occupational sexism in ways that women need when confronting occupational sexism in the hospitality industry— for instance, ensuring a safe environment for women to resist workplace gender inequity without concern of retaliation.

The last goal is to encourage participants to develop allyship, so that even they are bystanders, they could also step in and support the females affected by workplace sexism. As Polletta et al. (2011) argued, narratives generate empathy which calls for transformative changes. In addition, the stories equip participants with the knowledge, "skills, and moral courage required" to recognize and name occupational sexism (Reynolds, 2013 p. 56). Through the narratives provided and with the necessities and the empathy for female characters who experienced gender inequity, participants are encouraged to take actions for future occupational sexism happen around them. Moreover, as NG (2015) indicated, everyone is interconnected. Therefore, what the participants are inspired to do in the future not only support the females around them who confront occupational sexism in the service industry, but also contribute to developing a gender-equitable work environment for themselves and their loved ones.

To sum up, this online narrative inquiry work session aims to educate participants about the adverse impacts of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry and inspire more people to understand their roles in challenging the gender injustice issue and pursuing gender equity in the service industry.

3.4.2 People

According to Maheshwari (2012), it is important to know who is directly related to the objective and thereby should be invited. Because of the purpose of the work session, the target participants will be female employees in the hospitality industry, authorities – policymakers and business leaders – and others who would like to contribute to developing sexism-free workplaces in the service industry.

Other than who should be invited, the participant group size should also be decided. Because there are not many online narrative inquiry work sessions about occupational sexism in the hospitality industry that I can refer to, I will start by planning a small group of participants with around 8 to 10 people. With this small group of participants, I will be able to facilitate the work session more smoothly. Yet, if there is a demand for more work sessions in the future, the group size will be expanded based on feedback and the evaluation of the first work session.

3.4.3 Place

The work session will be held on Zoom because of several reasons.

Firstly, Zoom enables its users to record online meetings. Therefore, with the participants informed consent and permission, I can record the work session and post it online to share with everyone who cannot participate in the work session or would like to review the discussion in the work session later. The recording will therefore become a shared reference for everyone who wants to contribute to pursuing gender equity in the service industry is necessary.

Besides having the recording function, Zoom also supports small group discussions by allowing hosts to invite participants into different breakout rooms. According to Harvard

Kennedy School (n.d.) and Johnson et al. (2014), small group discussions enable participants to comprehend materials better and remember the discussion longer. Moreover, this function also allows hosts to enter each breakout room, enabling facilitators to inspire each group's conversation and intervene if any emergency situations occur. Consequently, including small group discussions will not only lead participants to a deep analysis of the narratives, but also enable hosts to run the work session smoothly.

Lastly, Zoom provides a whiteboard, enabling all participants to share their ideas in various ways, like words and charts, facilitating better communication among attendees. Therefore, at the end of the work session, participants will collectively finish a digital takeaway with everything they consider significant.

Because of the recording, the breakout room, and the whiteboard function, using Zoom will facilitate the proceeding of the work session, provide participants and others who cannot attend the work session with a comfortable learning opportunity, and encourage participants to have deep discussions regarding the narratives.

3.4.4 Problem-Solving (Potential Problems)

There are four problems that I may face during the online narrative inquiry work session. The first one is the participants' energy. Analyzing personal narratives regarding gender injustice is mentally and physically exhausting, especially over a prolonged period. Moreover, according to the University of North Californiad (n.d.), concentration levels reduce after hours of work or study. Therefore, the work session will include a 15-minute break after the small group discussion to allow all attendees to relax and thus increase productivity and engagement.

The second potential issue is discord among participants (Huffer, 2016). Because of the participants' varying experiences with occupational sexism in the hospitality industry, they may have disparate standpoints during the discussion. To avoid conflicts which will be detrimental to participation, a respectful and peaceful environment that is free of conflicts is crucial for participation. Therefore, I will draw on Seidl and Guérard (2015) to make clear in the introduction that participants must pay attention to their language and tone during conversations and encourage the participants to see this as a "communal commitment" (p. 20). In case the commitment is broken during the discussion, I will step in to remind participants to watch their actions. I will also pay more attention to involved participants during the rest of the session to avoid further conflicts or even safety issues after the session.

The third possible problem is the participants' emotions. As Zheng (2017) elucidated, participants' feelings will be a factor causing some potential extreme emotional responses, especially if participants or their loved ones have previously experienced or witnessed occupational sexism. Moreover, because the work session will be online, it is impossible to recognize every participant's emotional state through their body language over the screen. Therefore, I will "note the emotional aspects of [participants'] engagement" by keeping an eye on their facial expressions and checking in with them from time to time (Butterwick, 2021, p. 131). At the beginning of the work session, I will also ask them how they communicate that they are feeling triggered and how others can best support them. This information will be noted on the whiteboard to remind us to provide the care required immediately and collaboratively. In case participants feel triggered after the work session, I will also put my contact information on the whiteboard for them to reach out for emotional

support. Based on the supports they required, I will be more prepared to appease them, even after the work session.

The last possible issue is participation. The online narrative inquiry work session will rely heavily on the participants' interactions. However, as Butterwick (2021) indicated, participants will often refuse to participate if they are unfamiliar with the activity, causing low engagement levels or even prolonged silence. To avoid this situation, I will refer to Audebert's (2022) suggestion to "solicit your teams" before the work session by sending the agenda to participants several days in advance (p. 2). By doing so, participants will have adequate time to think about the topic and be able to contribute valuable insights during the work session.

3.4.5 Process

Referring to Łysakowski (2022), Zheng (2017), and the Workshops Designing Timeline and Checklist from Carleton College (n.d.), the process of the work session will include three steps: preparation, process, and evaluation.

Preparation

This step will include material preparation. Because this is an online work session, most of the functions and tools required are provided by the online meeting platform. Nonetheless, to allow participants to familiarize themselves with the work session plan in advance, I will prepare a detailed agenda before inviting them. The agenda will include details such as schedule for the day, purposes of the work session, expected communal commitments, and discussion questions.

I will also collect narratives about occupational sexism in the hospitality industry from

public sources, such as newspapers, blogs, and studies. Victims' actions in these stories will be diverse—some resist workplace gender injustice in the hospitality industry, while others prefer to stay quiet. The stories' endings will also be different, in that some characters successfully undermine workplace gender inequity, while other characters find themselves with a very different outcome. In addition, supports available for the victims in the stories will also be different. These diversities will inspire discussion about how women should react when confronting workplace sexism in the hospitality industry and what others should do to mitigate the adverse impacts of occupational sexism on women.

Procedure

Introduction

Before beginning the work session, I will let participants know that it will be recorded and posted online as a shared resource. In addition, I will welcome participants and introduce myself as the host and session facilitator. I will also invite participants to introduce themselves by answering several questions (See Appendix 1). The detailed introduction will enable participants to get to know each other and have more intimate relationships, which is beneficial for later discussions.

After everyone's self-introduction, I will illustrate the purpose of the work session. I will also share how reading Notman's story and the experience of Sharma's former employee regarding occupational sexism in the hospitality industry led me to realize the urgent need for a transformative method to address the gender issue. Moreover, I will briefly share my findings based on literature review about the failure of many governmental policies and corporate preventative measures to tackle occupational sexism. Through sharing, I will also

demonstrate the power of narrative inquiry and how we will use it in discussions to achieve the goals of the work session.

Given this work session relies heavily on participants' engagement, I will call for participants' commitment on developing a respectful environment. I will also provide trigger warnings for the narratives and following discussion and check with participants about what kinds of support they wish to receive if they are triggered and how they convey that they need emotional support.

Discussion

After the introduction, I will separate participants into two to three groups. Each group will receive a story (one from Appendix 3) for discussion and a list of questions (See Appendix 1) to inspire their conversation. Nevertheless, these questions are only recommendations. If participants have other thoughts to share, they are welcome to expand the question list in the pursuit of more insightful conversations.

After participants return from their group discussion, a representative from each group will share the story they discussed and a summary of their conversation. The rest of the group members are welcome to add to what was shared and ask questions. During this report back, I will invite participants to write what they think is significant on the shared whiteboard. These notes can be their understandings or others' statements, and participants are encouraged to explain why the note is meaningful to them.

Through narrative inquiry—the analysis of stories and participation in discussions—attendees will be more familiar with the various manifestations and adverse impacts of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. Participants will also have a better

comprehension of the roles they should play in tackling gender injustice issues in the service industry based on the challenges for workplace sexism to be identified, admitted, and eliminated.

Finishing

Following the discussion, participants will be invited to share what they learnt from this work session, what they plan to do in the future to address occupational sexism in the hospitality industry, and their thoughts on the usage of narrative inquiry in this work session. Participants will also be encouraged to continue sharing the stories provided in the work session and their personal experiences with gender inequity in the service industry with others. By doing so, more people will problematize occupational sexism and make efforts to mitigate the issue.

Evaluation

According to Maheshwari (2012), the only way to evaluate the work session is to have a follow-up plan. Therefore, I will send a follow-up questionnaire (See Appendix 2) to all participants via email to ask for feedback. This questionnaire will be sent at the end of the work session and will include both open- and closed-ended questions, aiming to collect more comprehensive suggestions (Maxinity, n.d.). Based on these reflections, I will know which parts of the work session require improvement and which worked well. In addition, the evaluation will reflect if there is a demand for more work sessions and if the participant group size should be expanded in the future.

3.5 Significance of the Project

Freire (1970) considered traditional education “banking education”, which emphasizes the top-down dimension of power by transmitting knowledge from educators, who are often known for their social status and educational backgrounds, to students. Nevertheless, the single way of knowledge transmission in this educational pattern prevents students from actively engaging in the educational process and critically assessing what they are learning. Moreover, students are often required to learn from educators without questioning, even though the knowledge may not be authentic.

Through research and analysis, I realized that banking education not only exists in classrooms but also in how authorities, like governmental organizations and company management teams, have tried to dismantle issues of gender inequity in the hospitality industry. For example, these authorities are educators who transmit knowledge about solving occupational sexism by enacting laws and organizational preventative measures, although the knowledge is based on their assumptions of what is in demand to address occupational sexism in the hospitality industry rather than what people actually need when confronting these problems. The people who are supposed to understand and use the policies and preventive measures to confront workplace sexism are students in the banking education pattern. Nevertheless, resonating with Freire (1970), due to the social status and educational background of the rule makers, students often fail to evaluate or argue with the educators about whether the male supremacy social structure and the failure of companies to take preventive measures seriously will mitigate the result of governmental organizations and company management teams’ supports in solving the gender issue. Due to the failure to

consider students' demands and engage students in the educational process, the banking education pattern showing in the efforts to undermine occupational gender inequity in the hospitality industry is not as effective as expected. Therefore, I see the importance of involving a different educational method in the design of the work session. Specifically, the work session will focus on having problem experiencers act as educators and engage students in the learning process and critical discussions.

As mentioned before, no one is more knowledgeable in the field of occupational sexism than the women who have experienced it; therefore, these women will be educators in the work session to offer authentic knowledge about workplace gender inequity. Moreover, researchers of the Pathways of Women's Empowerment programme argued that it is necessary to empower women to share their reflections on confronting and resisting gender-led injustice to address occupational sexism (Cornwall, 2016). Accordingly, to ensure the most authentic information and empower women to share their experiences, this online narrative inquiry work session will valorize the women who have faced and attempted to address gender inequity in the service industry. This work session will also offer a platform for women to be seen and heard as experts, regardless of their social status and educational backgrounds, rather than as analyzed objects. In other words, through narrative inquiry, this work session will provide a democratic way for occupational gender injustice victims to generate knowledge based on their experiences (Polletta et al., 2011).

In addition, this work session will also encourage participants, who are often seen as students, to undermine the traditional banking education system by encouraging them to participate in the educational process. Specifically, based on the questions provided,

participants will be invited to argue whether the story characters make the correct decisions when confronting occupational gender injustice, discuss what is in demand, and analyze whether the current supports from governmental organizations and company management teams are effective. Through active and critical discussion, participants will be more likely to problematize the socially accepted assumptions and stereotypes of women, identify the challenges in addressing workplace gender inequity, and better recognize what must be done to fight this injustice. Moreover, participants will empathize with the women in the stories and are thereby more likely to take action and make changes (Polletta et al., 2011), enhancing the work session's effectiveness in solving workplace gender inequity (Cornwall, 2016). Therefore, based on the stories and discussions, this work session will enable participants to have more profound dialogues about occupational sexism, accelerating the pace of dismantling gender imparity in the service industry (Butterwick, 2021).

By focusing on the authenticity of the educators' information and the participants' engagement and critical thinking, participants will be more likely to have an accurate and deep understanding of how to recognize and challenge occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. In other words, this work session will mitigate the adverse impacts of workplace gender inequity more effectively than the traditional banking education pattern used to solve the problem.

Furthermore, by learning from the stories of women who have experienced workplace sexism, participants can see that their personal experiences with workplace sexism are also the soil in which others' learning can be grounded (Plantenga, 2012). For this reason, participants are encouraged to share their personal stories with others after the session. By

doing so, more people could recognize gender injustice occurring around them and what roles they should play in addressing workplace sexism in the service industry. In addition, workplace sexism manifests similarly in every industry (Stamarski & Hing, 2015; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021), such as the pay gap, glass ceiling, and pregnancy discrimination, and it continues to be detrimental to women. Therefore, sharing personal stories regarding workplace sexism will educate people not only about occupational gender inequity in the service industry but also about how to challenge gender injustice in other fields. By circulating the stories, more people will realize how they could contribute to mitigating this issue. With a collective effort to address occupational sexism, gender equity in every workplace is more likely to be achieved.

Moreover, I will continue to focus on women's challenges when confronting gender injustice in workplaces, regardless of their work fields, and keep collecting related stories after the session. Therefore, whenever there is a demand for subsequent work sessions, I will be prepared to help more people and continue to contribute to addressing occupational sexism.

3.6 Conclusion

The online narrative inquiry work session could be an important step in addressing occupational sexism in the hospitality industry. Through this work session, females who are victims of workplace gender discrimination will be empowered as experts, and participants can learn how to recognize workplace gender injustice and build support against the issue. Moreover, this work session propels participants to employ the same methodology used at the event—educate through stories. As a result, more people will be involved in contributing to

the pursuit of gender justice, not only in the hospitality industry, but in every field.

Consequently, gender equity is more likely to be achieved.

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Appendix 1: Online Narrative Inquiry Work Session Agenda

Activity	Details
1 pm – 1:45 pm Introduction	
Welcome participants	Let participants know that the work session will be recorded
Introduce myself	
Invite participants to self-introduce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to be called? • What is your pronunciation? • Where are you coming from? • Why are you interested in this topic? • What do you expect to learn by the end of the work session?
Purpose of the work session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable more people to identify occupational sexism in the service industry. • Educate female employees in the service industry about resisting workplace sexism. • Appeal authorities to offer more practical support. • To develop bystanders' allyship.
Personal experience & power of narrative inquiry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why I decided to hold this work session. • Share my findings about the failure of many governmental organizations' policies and companies' preventative measures to tackle occupational sexism. • choose narrative inquiry in this work session.
Things you need to know and share before start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need your active participation. • Please be respectful to and supportive of each other. • There are potential triggers. • Please let us know what kinds of support you need when you got triggered?
1:45 pm – 2:30 pm Small Group Discussion	
Separate participants into four groups to discuss the story provided based on the question list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • How does workplace sexism manifest in the story? • Who exhibited sexist behaviours? Who is/are victim(s)? • What did the victim(s)/survivor(s) feel? • What are the impacts of what happened? • Who contributed to the problem? • Were there any supports provided? From whom?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the victim(s)/survivor(s) resisted, what did they do? What are the outcomes for those who resisted? Did gender inequity successfully get addressed in the story? • What held the victim(s)/survivor(s) back if they did not resist? • What should have been done? (Please discuss from multiple perspectives: sexists, companies, colleagues, management, victims, governments, etc.) • What did you learn from these stories?
<p>2:30 pm – 2:40 pm Coffee Break</p>	
<p>2:40 pm – 3:15 pm Larger discussion</p>	
<p>Participants return from small groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member from each group to share the story they analyzed and provide a detailed summary of their discussion. • Other participants are welcome to ask questions and make comments. • Shared whiteboard is available for participants to take notes in forms of words, charts, and tables. • Participants are encouraged to explain why the notes they took are significant for both themselves and others. • Participants are encouraged to see the power of narrative inquiry.
<p>3:15 pm – 3:45 pm Finishing</p>	
<p>Invite participants to share feedback, and encourage them to valorize and use narrative inquiry as a tool to tackle occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your takeaways? - What do you think about the use of narrative inquiry? - What will you do in the future to contribute to addressing occupational sexism in the hospitality industry? - Do you think sharing the stories analyzed in this session is a good way to contribute to addressing the gender inequity issue in the service industry? Why? What about sharing your personal experiences of dealing with this issue?

Appendix 2: Evaluation Questionnaire

Your feedback is important to me and can help me to improve for future work sessions.

I. Please kindly choose the most suitable number (1- Highly disagree; 5- Highly agree).

1. The instruction is clear.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The stories provided are representative of occupational sexism in the hospitality industry.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The questions provided lead to deeper discussions.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I better understand occupational sexism in the hospitality industry after the work session.

1 2 3 4 5

5. This work session reaches the four goals. (1. Identify the issue. 2. Know how to resist. 3. Appeal authorities. 4. Encourage allyship)

1 2 3 4 5

6. Narrative inquiry is a good way to address occupational sexism.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The work session is well-paced and organized.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I want to participate in subsequent sessions in the future.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I will recommend this work session to my family and friends.

1 2 3 4 5

II. Please kindly answer the following questions in a few sentences.

1. How would you like to rate this work session overall?

2. What will you do in the future if you witness or experience occupational sexism in the future?

3. What are some areas that I should pay more attention to?

Appendix 3: Stories for analysis

Story 1: Unequal Evaluation Standards Between Males and Females

“I was bartending with another male bartender when a group of older men approached us and asked what bourbon we had. I began to speak and one of the guests said, ‘That’s cute, but I didn’t ask for vodka. Can *he* tell me about whiskey?’ I was shocked. I had trained the other bartender on spirits and was being dismissed because I was a female. I think in that guest’s mind, being a woman meant I could not possibly be intelligent enough to assist him because whiskey is a stereotypically masculine spirit. That experience drove me to learn even more so that future guests wouldn’t be able to argue my knowledge base. Being young and female—and a bartender—is difficult. I get asked often, ‘Are you old enough to serve me that?’ For a long time, it hurt and I felt belittled. But I have become more confident as a bartender because I know that I start off one step behind some of my peers, so I have to be the best at what I do.” — *Anna Pereda, senior food & beverage manager at The Adolphus*

(Kramer, 2018)

<https://www.foodandwine.com/news/bartenders-stories-gender-discrimination-at-work>

Story 2: Pay Inequity in the Service Industry

Since I graduated from university with a BA in 2012, I have worked a number of low-paying, precarious service industry jobs, usually three at a time, to be able to support myself (barely). For about a year and a half, I worked at a locally-owned vegetarian restaurant, which is known around the city for having rather outspoken, good environmental politics.

During that time, I was promoted to Weekend Manager, which dramatically increased my responsibilities, stress level and in turn left me as the one to blame for anything being wrong. A pay increase of one dollar extra an hour (above minimum wage) was agreed upon.

However, two months later, I still did not have the raise, so I confronted my boss (the owner) and asked for back pay. He said he couldn't afford more than a \$0.75 raise and refused the back pay. I had no choice but to agree.

I found out a short while later, when it was casually mentioned, that a male co-worker made \$2.00 more an hour than I did when I was management and he was not.

I feel as a young woman trying to enter the professional workforce, I am constantly having to turn my head and ignore sexist comments and acts when they are committed, which in some of my jobs has been every shift.

I am working now for much less pay as a childcare provider and am much happier, albeit still in a precarious position financially.

(Ponting, 2015)

<https://www.rankandfile.ca/stories-of-sexism-in-the-workplace/>

Story 3: Sexual Harassment

The truth is that the service industry, especially the hotels, are extremely tough physically and mentally, more so, for women. And, extremely sexist.

[. . .]

Of course, in most companies the policies are written down, guidelines in place and a clear course of action stipulated in case of any such incident being reported. So yes, the measures are in place at the policy level. And yet, the employees –bosses, colleagues, juniors – working there disrespect them, as a result outrightly flouting the policies and guidelines by their everyday actions. The women keep quiet. What else can they do?! Because, hey, it's no big deal and it was just harmless flirting.

I have been at the receiving end of such despicable behaviour and such trivialising remarks. Detractors, naysayers, misogynists often ask, "Why she didn't speak up then?" They may put the same question to me too.

Yes, I didn't speak up then. Truth is, even now when I am safe, in a place where my perpetrators cannot harm me, I am still scared to come out and name them publicly. Not because I don't want to ruin their careers or their lives but because I am scared that I will be the one who will be hauled over coals. My actions would be scrutinized, and I would be faulted. Or targeted like Tanushree Dutta. Or questioned and ridiculed like Jwala Gutta. Or banned by social media apps like Twitter and Facebook.

I have forgotten how many times I've had to ward off unwanted attention from colleagues and guests – only because a woman in the hotel industry is thought to be an easy lay. And we, women in hotels, don't even talk to each other about it because it's expected and

hence, normal.

[. . .]

Like, how as a young, inexperienced industrial trainee, when I complained about a sexual harassment incident, I was told by my then supervisor that, 'Prevention is better than cure.' No action was ever taken, the complaint was not even reported.

Like, how the next time, I personally reported the incident to the department head (to ensure that stronger action was taken) but received a backlash from his friends who ridiculed me for taking too seriously a trivial incident and blamed me for causing the guy to almost lose his job.

[. . .]

Like, when I knew that a certain person was a perverted jackass and still agreed to work under him anyway, only because I wanted to progress in my career. That was my fault.

Like, how this man, my boss, would stare down my chest, several times in a short conversation, enough number of times to make me check my button placket. Like, how I buttoned up my shirt till I felt it choking me, and still allowed him to make me feel like I was naked. I should have dressed up better still.

Like, how an interviewer once commented, "the Front Office department requires women to conform to a certain weight and figure. Don't you think you are unfit for this role?" It was my fault that I didn't agree with her comments and said my skills are what made me better equipped for my job.

Like, how male clients flirted shamelessly, despite knowing it was most unethical and unprofessional on their part to do so. Like, how I would subtly keep trying to drive the

conversation back to what it should have been – a business dealing within two companies instead of a personal interaction between two individuals.

[. . .]

I hope the skeletons of the hospitality and hotel industry too come tumbling out soon. I stand on the sidelines waiting to shame them when it happens. There's a lot I want to say.

Some of it goes back a few years and some a few decades.

I am speaking up, less than I want to, more than I would have. I am speaking up today, not because I feel ready but because I believe there are enough people to hold me and wipe away the hot tears that well in my eyes. I am not speaking up today because I still don't have enough courage. I wish I did, though.

'Someday... I will!' I promise myself and go back to supporting those who do.

(Vir, 2018)

<https://www.womensweb.in/2018/10/sexism-and-sexual-harassment-in-hotel-hospitality-industry-oct18wk1mc/>