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WHISTLEBLOWING IN PUBLIC SECTOR. DOES TRUST MATTER? A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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Abstract:

Malaysia's performance in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) underwent substantial changes, with a primary decline from 2018 to 2022. This highlights the presence of integrity and ethical concerns, particularly corruption and fraudulent behaviour displayed by Malaysian government officials, which is highly worrying. In an effort to combat this issue, the government has implemented the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) and the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010, as whistleblowing is one of the most effective tools for eradicating misbehaviour. However, statistics indicate that whistleblowing rates in Malaysia are continuing to decline. Whistleblowing refers to the act of revealing unethical conduct occurring within an organisation. Whistleblowing is a highly risky behaviour that necessitates intricate decision-making processes. Consequently, there are numerous individual factors that can assist an individual in resolving this dilemma. There is a dearth of research on the methods for promoting whistleblowing among public sector employees in Malaysia. Therefore, this conceptual paper seeks to analyse prior literature in order to identify the elements that influence whistleblowing intentions. The results of this study indicate that the individual factors of public service motivation, self-efficacy, and empathy play a crucial role in determining the whistleblowing intention. Moreover, it has been revealed that trust in an organization may function as a moderating element that influences whistleblowing. This suggests that the government administration should implement strategies to promote individual factors, such as cultivating a sense of public service motivation, strengthening self-efficacy

and empathy, and fostering trust among employees. These initiatives will help to increase whistleblowing rates and achieve the NACP's goal of creating a nation free from corruption while also improving Malaysia's performance in the CPI. Moreover, this study offers valuable insights to enrich the existing body of knowledge in the field of whistleblowing studies by investigating the impact of trust as a moderating factor on whistleblowing intention.

Keywords:

Whistleblowing, Public Sector, Public Service Motivation, Self-Efficacy, Empathy, Trust

Introduction

Organisations strive to operate with professionalism, integrity, and competence in order to ensure their optimal performance when conducting business and engaging in activities. Unethical behaviour hinders and restricts the efficiency of organisations worldwide, especially public institutions. Given its responsibility for supervising and distributing public monies, the public sector is frequently linked with apprehensions over integrity, corruption, and other types of inappropriate behaviour (Potipiroon & Wongpreedee, 2021). According to Transparency International (2023), Malaysia experienced significant changes, primarily a downturn from 2018 to 2022. This demonstrates the existence of issues of integrity and ethical conduct, specifically the widespread corruption and deceptive behaviour exhibited by government officials in Malaysia, which is deeply concerning and alarming. Corruption and illegal conduct continue to hamper businesses' ability to achieve their goals. This is supported by Mustapha et al. (2024), which asserted that in both developed and emerging countries, misconduct and fraudulent endeavors impede long-term economic and social developments. To mitigate the potential for more detrimental outcomes for the public, the organisation, and individuals, it is imperative to immediately eradicate unethical conduct and corruption (Smaili, 2023).

Therefore, whistleblowing is advocated as a method to eradicate various types of misconduct that take place within the company (Md. Lazim et al., 2022). Whistleblowing, according to Near and Miceli (1985), is when individuals who are or have been employed by an organisation reveal information about unethical, immoral, or improper practices to individuals or organisations that can take appropriate action, resulting in the issue being resolved by management. In Malaysia, the government has responded to unethical behaviour by implementing the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) in 2019 and enacting the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010. These measures aim to combat corruption and unethical conduct by encouraging individuals to report such activities through whistleblowing. However, only a few individuals have the necessary confidence to be a whistleblowers due to the possible threats involved. Whistleblowers are frequently treated poorly in some work environments. Individuals who reveal disruptive conduct will be categorised as troublemakers and may encounter a range of risks, including employment termination, being added to a blacklist, detention, legal consequences, or, in the most severe cases, physical assault or even homicide (Zainol et al., 2018).

Despite the government's efforts to address corruption and unethical behaviour, the enforcement of the WPA 2010 has been shown to be ineffective (Wong & Chang, 2023). Statistics obtained from the Legal Affairs Division's official website, Prime Minister's

Department, provide evidence of Malaysia's inadequate implementation of the WPA 2010. According to the Legal Affairs Division (2024), the number of reports received under the WPA 2010 has experienced a substantial drop, from 12,572 in 2015 to 2,443 in 2019. In addition, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has reported that the frequency of corruption and inadequate service-related reports has declined. The MACC (2024) recorded 1,804 cases in 2022 and 1,550 in 2023. It is evident that the number of individuals who disclose wrongdoing is decreasing in Malaysia.

Before deciding whether to disclose, persons would assess the prospective positive and negative aspects. Due to the potential danger and damage, a significant amount of research has been conducted to identify the factors that may motivate and encourage individuals to participate in whistleblowing. Consequently, the likelihood of public sector employees disclosing misconduct can be influenced by a variety of prospective factors (Abdullah Sani et al., 2022). Consequently, the study will provide academicians with valuable insights into the theory of prosocial behaviour by outlining the individual elements that determine the whistleblowing intentions of public sector employees in Malaysia. Additionally, this investigation enhances the current body of knowledge by investigating the influence of trust as a moderating role on whistleblowing intention. From a managerial standpoint, this research will assist the management of the public sector in the development of a strategic whistleblower blueprint to combat corruption and illicit conduct within the public sector by taking into consideration the elements described in this study.

Literature Review

This part discussed related determinant factors that might drive the whistleblowing intention, which include public service motivation, self-efficacy, empathy, and trust.

Whistleblowing Intention

The global organisation continues to encounter substantial obstacles in its capacity to effectively and efficiently oversee its operations due to inappropriate conduct and malfeasance. Therefore, it is essential for management to carefully supervise the organization's activities. It is imperative for them to detect any occurrences of inappropriate conduct within the organisation and immediately initiate measures to address the situation. The knowledge and observations shared by employees within an organisation are crucial for detecting unlawful actions that may go unnoticed by the supervisory system (Apaza & Chang, 2020). Employees are the most reliable and trustworthy source for identifying instances of fraud due to their comprehension of the organization's operations and regulations and their affiliation with the organisation (Mustapha et al., 2024). Hence, Md. Lazim et al. (2022) indicate that whistleblowing is often regarded as an effective strategy for eliminating illegal activity within an organisation. Whistleblowing, as described by Near and Miceli (1985), is when individuals who are or were part of an organisation disclose information concerning illegal, unethical, or illegitimate actions that fall under the responsibility of their employers. This information is shared with individuals or organisations that have the power to take the necessary steps. The organisation can leverage internal employee information as a valuable asset for detecting inappropriate activity, given that these employees are actively engaged in the organization's day-to-day operations. Moreover, whistleblowing acts as a deterrent against the escalation of misbehaviour, fraud, or illegal activities within the organisation. It also helps to reduce the possible risk and financial burden faced by the organization and its stakeholders (Smaili, 2023). Alleyne et al. (2017) have shown that recent research in the field of whistleblowing has started

to give greater attention to whistleblowing intentions as the most effective way to investigate whistleblowing within organisations. This is due to the fact that the information provided by the whistleblower is highly sensitive and challenging to acquire. Hence, Rustiarini and Sunarsih (2017) have defined whistleblowing intention as the probability that an individual will opt to disclose observed malfeasance.

Contributing Factors of Whistleblowing

Public Service Motivation

Perry and Wise (1990) defined public service motivation as an individual's tendency to react to public institution- and organisation-based reasons. It drives people to do vital public service (Brewer & Selden 1998, p. 417). On the other hand, Ripoll and Schott (2023) describe public service motivation as a self-concept imbued with public significance that motivates individuals to apply their established beliefs in diverse decision-making contexts. Kim et al. (2013) suggest that self-sacrifice, compassion, attraction to public participation, and commitment to public values underpin the four subdimensions of public service motivation (Ripoll & Schott, 2023). These four subdimensions cover a wide range of ways people can help others and society. Firstly, self-sacrifice is a key component of public service motivation, which is based on pro-social principles. It is a willingness to make meaningful contributions to society and satisfy the objectives of others, even if it means enduring personal losses or making sacrifices (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010). Secondly, compassion is rooted in identification or affective motivations and involves placing a high importance on the well-being of others, particularly focussing on their wants and the nature of their challenges. Thirdly, the concept of attraction to public participation refers to the extent to which individuals are motivated by practical or logical reasons to contribute to the overall well-being of society by engaging in activities that include the public policy process or other initiatives. Finally, commitment to public values refers to the extent to which a person's devotion to public service is determined by the internalisation of specific public values and the benefit of society as a whole, along with value-based or normative motivations. This served as evidence that they genuinely appreciate meaningful public service.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1983) defines self-efficacy as the self-assessment of an individual's capacity to effectively organise and execute a variety of cognitive, social, and behavioural abilities in the presence of prospective circumstances. As per Eshun et al. (2023), it is argued that self-efficacy is an important changeable factor of human behaviour. In accordance with Tuan Mansor et al. (2022), self-efficacy is the assessment of an individual's own abilities or capabilities to effectively complete a specific task. It denotes an individual's belief regarding the moral or ethical nature of an object, its rightness or erroneousness, and its capacity to fulfil a particular obligation. Self-efficacy is a critical factor in the daily lives of individuals, as it influences the actions they will take to accomplish an objective as well as their judgement of the obstacles they will encounter. Stenmark et al. (2021) assert that an individual's response to new duties, objectives, and challenges is contingent upon their level of self-efficacy. Therefore, individuals who have a high level of self-efficacy have a firm conviction in their ability to efficiently organise and accomplish tasks that are essential for attaining positive results in a variety of contexts and complexity levels. People who have a high level of self-efficacy are less likely to give up when faced with hurdles. Instead, they persist in their efforts because of their stronger determination.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to comprehend the necessities of others, as per Abdullah Sani et al. (2022). They asserted that it can be characterised as a psychological mechanism that enables individuals to empathise with and imagine the emotional experiences of others in order to assist those who are in trouble. Additionally, Wilson and Nelson (2020) offer a brief overview of empathy as the ability to comprehend and engage in the feelings of others. Empathy is the capacity to comprehend and participate in the emotions and experiences of other person from their point of view. According to Brown (2020), empathy is divided into two main categories: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy involves adopting the perspective of another individual and comprehending their thought processes, while affective empathy entails mirroring the emotional state of the individual in order to comprehend their emotions. According to Lee (2021), empathy is not simply an emotional response, but rather a cognitive and experiential mechanism for understanding and engaging with the emotions of others. Individuals are urged to behave once they have understood the sentiments of another person. Consequently, empathy is fundamental in the process of converting observation into action (Guariglia, 2023). Furthermore, Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) propose that empathy may motivate behavioural responses that are designed to protect and assist individuals in vulnerable situations (Pfattheicher et al., 2022). These responses are associated with positive moral sentiments that are consistent with the welfare of others. Santalla-Banderali and Malave (2022) have observed that empathy is positively correlated with the intention to behave ethically, while it is negatively correlated with the potential to make unethical decisions. Kleinlogel and Dietz (2013) emphasised that empathy has the ability to improve ethical decision-making by promoting a susceptibility to altruistic and prosocial behaviours. Individuals who exhibit a strong sense of empathy engage in behaviours that minimise shared discomfort and promote shared positive emotions, which allows them to experience the emotions of others.

Trust

According to De Janasz et al. (2014), trust is frequently described as the conviction that another individual is reliable or trustworthy. Alternatively, trust may be explained as a positive expectation or confidence pertaining the policies, behaviours, and statements of others (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Furthermore, Rousseau et al. (1998) determined that, despite certain points of variations, there appeared to be a consensus on certain basic elements that define the concept of trust: (1) Assuming confident anticipations of others; and (2) being willing to rely on another person or become vulnerable. As a result, trust may be defined as a psychological state that is defined by a desire to disclose one's flaws in return for positive predictions about another person's intentions or actions. In addition, Arisi-Nwugballa et al. (2023) defined trust in management as workers belief in their employers' integrity, their anticipation of reliable and dependable treatment, their conviction in their employers' credibility and truthfulness, their perception of their employers' sincere motives and intentions, and their evaluation of their employers' transparency and honesty. Consequently, the development of trust in management nurtures more robust relationships between staff members and upper management. Conversely, when trust is misplaced, the individual who invests trust is susceptible to the risks of betrayal and greater psychological distress. In the context of organisations, this concept, referred to as the "psychological contract," affects employees' assessments of employer's actions in the future, their views of previous supervisory behavioural patterns, and their convictions regarding the underlying reasons behind such behaviour (Wang et al., 2018). The psychological contract between an individual and another party is determined by their perceptions of the parameters of a reciprocal exchange agreement (Rousseau, 1989).

Gaps in the Literature

After conducting a literature review, it has been identified that there is insufficient knowledge in the field of whistleblowing intentions in Malaysia. Considering an increasing emphasis on whistleblowing research among auditors and accountants, there is an insufficient comprehension of how to foster whistleblowing intentions among public sector workforce in Malaysia (Mohd Zeamlee et al., 2022). This is supported by the research conducted by Nordin et al. (2021), who claim that the current corpus of literature on whistleblowing in Malaysia's public sector is insufficient. Considering an increasing emphasis on whistleblowing research among auditors and accountants, there is an insufficient comprehension of how to foster whistleblowing within Malaysian public sector (Mohd Zeamlee et al., 2022). Furthermore, Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) argue that in order to identify the elements influencing whistleblowing intention, it is necessary to continuously investigate other variables that are associated with the ethical decision-making of the organisation. They suggest that several more factors may affect the propensity of public sector workers to reveal improper behaviour.

Previous researchers have claimed that there is a dearth of research on the subject matter, which makes it advantageous to examine the relationship between public service motivation (Prysmakova & Evans, 2022), self-efficacy (Nicholls et al., 2021), empathy (Santalla-Banderali & Malave, 2022), and the intention to blow the whistle. Research has demonstrated that there are inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between these variables and the inclination to engage in whistleblowing. Therefore, it is imperative to incorporate a moderating factor into the study to explain the contradictory findings shown in previous research (Aguinis et al., 2017; Halimi et al., 2022; Capell et al., 2016). Many previous researchers have used trust as a mediator (Dahinine et al., 2023). However, only a few studies have investigated the role of trust as a moderator (Dahinine et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2018). Previous studies on different types of disclosure, such as whistleblowing and deviant behaviour (Arisi-Nwugballa et al., 2023), knowledge management (Dahinine et al., 2023), and knowledge sharing (Abdi, 2023) have suggested that trust plays a significantly moderate the connection between individual factors (Capell et al., 2016) that determine disclosure.

Theory of Prosocial Behaviour

Prosocial behaviour, as defined by Brief and Motowidlo (1986), refers to the actions or behaviours of a member towards another person or organisation with whom they have an affiliation, aimed at promoting well-being. Previous research on whistleblowing has extensively utilised the theory of prosocial behaviour, as whistleblowing is considered a manifestation of prosocial behaviour (Nawawi & Salin, 2018). The behaviour of whistleblowers is characterised by a combination of self-centred reasons (egoistic) and selfless goals (altruistic) (Dozier & Miceli, 1985). The person who exhibits this behaviour aims to fulfil their own motivation while also benefiting others. The primary objective of whistleblowing is to eliminate the inappropriate and wrongful behaviour that occur inside organisations. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) describe this theory as comprising individual factors, which are elements that are derived from the individual, and contextual factors, which are derived from the institutional, organisational, and environmental factors.

Proposed Research Framework

This study's theoretical framework was established through a review of the previous research. This research consists of three independent variables, one moderating variable, and one dependent variable. The study utilises public service motivation, self-efficacy, and empathy as

independent variables, trust as the moderating variable, and whistleblowing intention as the dependent variable. The relationship between the independent variables and whistleblowing intention was motivated by prior researchers, as elucidated in the previous section, which focuses on the contributing factors that influence whistleblowing intention. Furthermore, the study conducted by Arisi-Nwugballa et al. (2023), Dahinine et al. (2023), and Abdi (2023) serves as an inspiration for the moderating impact of trust in the relationship between the independent variables and whistleblowing intention. Therefore, Figure 1 depicts the research framework used for this study.
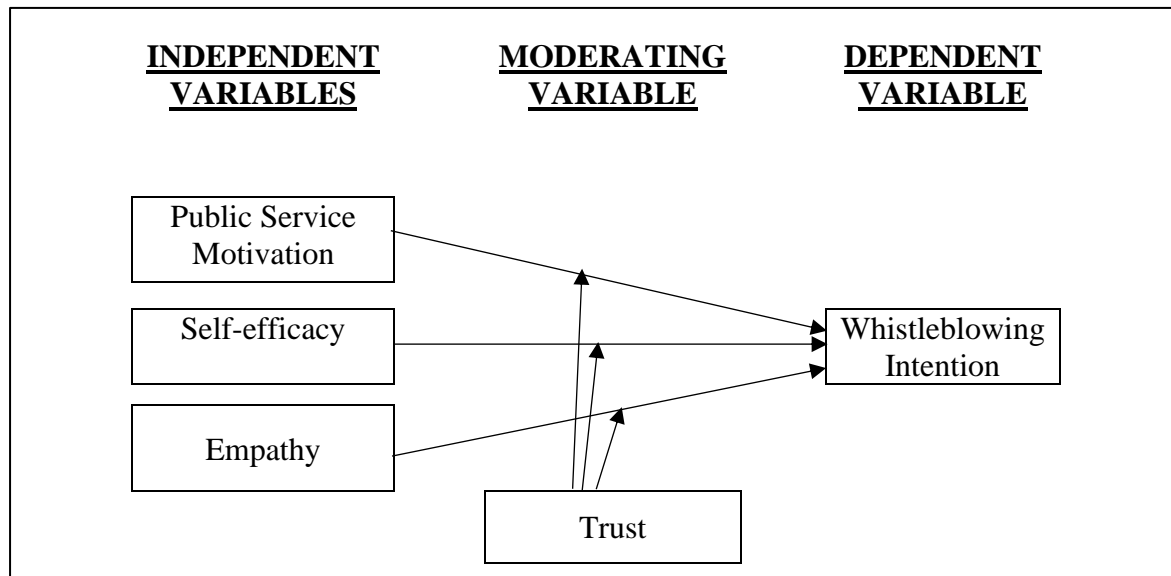
Figure 1: Research Framework

Research Methodology
This research entails a detailed review of prior literature to explore the relationship between individual factors and whistleblowing intention. In order to achieve this objective, an extensive review of relevant literature and prior researches is conducted, collecting material from reputable academic journals, books, conference proceedings, reports, and websites. The following sections offer an overview of relevant studies organized by individual determinants (public service motivation, self-efficacy, empathy and trust) and the relationship between these components and whistleblowing. The research findings are summarised and discussed in the final remarks.

Discussions

Public Service Motivation and Whistleblowing
Prior research has discovered that public service motivation has an essential effect on people's intentions to engage in whistleblowing. It has been established that activating public service motivation can contribute to a higher possibility of reporting cases of improper behaviour. Latan et al. (2021) posit that an individual's public service motivation may influence the act of whistleblowing, which may urge them to take action upon observing malfeasance. Prior study has been conducted by Tavarez et al. (2024) among federal civil servants in Brazil and Latan et al. (2022) in the United States and Indonesia, specifically in the field of whistleblowing. The

results of both studies indicate that whistleblowing intention is significantly and positively influenced by public service motivation.

The sub-dimensions of public service motivation that were previously discussed suggest that there is a strong correlation between public service motivation and whistleblowing. Latan et al. (2022) indicate that whistleblowers often undertake personal losses for the public interest, which is the greater benefit of society, despite the potential for retaliation. Individuals with an altruistic personality have a greater capacity to manage the psychological hurdles related to whistleblowing, such as perceived threats and hazards. Lee et al. (2023) assert that the intrinsic motivation of individuals who prioritise the public interest over their own personal interests is indicated by the subdimensions of commitment to public value and attraction to public service. Employees who possess a high level of public service motivation will perceive it as their obligation to prevent corruption within the nation.

Self-efficacy and Whistleblowing
In the daily lives of individuals, self-efficacy is an essential aspect of self-knowledge. The selection of the steps necessary to achieve an objective is significantly influenced by the self-efficacy of an individual, which includes the estimation of potential incidents (Maria et al., 2021). In the context of whistleblowing, Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) characterised self-efficacy as an evaluation of the capabilities of individuals that motivate them to report malfeasance. Fitri (2022) assert that individuals who have a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to disclose misconduct with confidence, as they have a strong belief in their ability to do so. In the event that an individual encounters unethical behaviour and misconduct in their workplace, they have the discretion to either disclose the misconduct to the authorized person in the company or remain silent. At this point, self-efficacy is a key factor in defining an individual's decision-making processes. The distinction between individuals with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy has a substantial impact on the decision to engage in whistleblowing. Specifically, in whistleblowing, the empirical studies conducted by Wahyu and Maharani (2023) and Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) confirmed that self-efficacy is a significant contributor to whistleblowing intention.

Individuals formulate their comprehension of personal self-efficacy by carefully considering four distinct criteria, as per Bandura (1977). First, past performance or mastery experience. Mastery experiences are formed from firsthand personal experiences that are usually connected to an individual's own accomplishments and areas of competence (Abdullah Sani et al., 2020). The whistleblower's subsequent decision-making process will be influenced by the results of their previous whistleblowing endeavours. Subsequently, there is social observation and vicarious experience. When presented with situations of inappropriate conduct within a company, witnessing other's whistleblowing actions, as well as the ensuing consequences of reports, can have a important effect on an person's future decision-making process. Third, verbal persuasion or communicative persuasion. Abdullah Sani et al. (2020) have discovered that a person without previous experience in a certain activity often show doubt about their ability in that field. Consequently, the beliefs of individuals regarding their own performance or competence may be influenced by positive or negative feedback from their colleagues, managers, friends, or when it comes to completing a specific task. A person may become persuaded of their ability to complete a task, which may cause them to put more effort after obtaining a positive evaluation and prudent motivation (Gist, 1987). Finally, there are

physiological and affective states in which an individual's emotions, such as feelings of fear and enjoyment, may influence their whistleblowing act (Bellibas et al., 2022).

Empathy and Whistleblowing

Empathy plays a critical role in the conversion of perception into action (Guariglia, 2023). Vahed et al. (2024) have posited that empathy is a multifaceted psychological phenomenon that is defined by the capacity to naturally adopt the psychological perspective of others and the inclination to feel sympathy and concern for them. Empathy embraces an essential significance in shaping the ethical decision-making process of human beings, especially in comprehending the underlying reasons for pursuing prosocial behaviour, as per Abdullah Sani et al. (2022). For instance, this scenario arises when law enforcement officials engage in unlawful actions by allowing the importation of illegal items, such as illegal drugs, into their nation with no carrying out any kind of inspection. The officials with higher levels of empathy may perceive drugs as a hazard to their respective countries. In order to protect nations from the negative repercussions of drug abuse, they will disclose this illicit activity as a result of their recognition that drugs are a potential danger to nations and contribute to an increase in crime rates. Hildebrand and Shawver (2016) indicate that individuals with a higher degree of empathy endeavour to understand the requirements of others and to empathise with their viewpoint. According to them, they would disclose any unethical behaviour they encountered out of concern for the potential negative repercussions on the public.

In the whistleblowing context, the empirical studies conducted by Guariglia (2023) and Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) confirmed that empathy is a significant contributor to whistleblowing intention. The ultimate objective of whistleblowing in the public sector, which is in alignment with the altruistic motivation that underpins prosocial behaviour, is not limited to the benefit of the general public and nations; it can also provide benefits to those who are employed by the public sector organisation. Empathy is invariably associated with the managerial staff in public sector organisations, particularly in relation to the report recipient (Ozdowski, 2020; Abdullah Sani et al., 2020). Ozdowski (2020) emphasises the significance of trustworthiness for the recipient of a report in the context of disclosure. This is due to the possibility that a whistleblower may experience fear or a lack of confidence in the reporting process, which may result in their decision to remain silent in the future. According to Abdullah Sani et al. (2020), whistleblowers necessitate both substantial protection and comprehension from upper management. The concept of a positive relationship is predicated on the notion that individuals depend on empathy for their survival. This is because individuals who exhibit empathy are more likely to be considered trustworthy and included in collective endeavours (Mohd Sharip et al., 2023).

Trust and Whistleblowing

In response to the pervasive discouragement of whistleblowing within a company, employees frequently exhibit deviant behaviour or remain silent (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). This is due to the possibility of retaliatory actions from management or colleagues in the event that unethical practices are disclosed. In organisations where there is a high level of trust, the worker is obligated to disclose any misconduct within the company, rather than facing a moral dilemma. This is due to the perception that such actions would be welcomed and effectively investigated. Studies have demonstrated that whistleblowing is more feasible in work settings when employees have trust and assurance that management would effectively address their worries (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). An atmosphere marked by trust fosters a

secure and encouraging culture, enabling individuals to freely reveal without fear and demonstrate a higher degree of care for the company and its staff members (Wang et al., 2020). Employees evaluate workplace conditions by considering the potential risks and the repercussions of speaking up or taking action. Being ready to take on risks is the fundamental characteristic of trust. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) define 'trust' as persons being willing to expose themselves to possible damage or bad repercussions from the other party, even if their own interests are placed at risk. Prior research has demonstrated that trust is a critical factor in determining whistleblower intention (Sancar, 2023; Yang & Xu, 2020).

According to Arisi-Nwugballa et al. (2023), the extent to which employees are confident that reporting malfeasance will result in disciplinary measures against the perpetrators is indicative of their trust in management. If employees are under the impression that reporting misconduct will not result in retaliatory actions and sanctions, they are likely to be more inclined to blow the whistle. It is important to acknowledge that trust relies on a person's previous experiences. A company that continuously degrades the integrity of its investigation, eliminates people who report misconduct, dishonourably alleviates them as persona non grata in the company, and destroys their reputation will eventually undermine confidence and lead to the silence of information about further wrongdoings. Employees will exhibit a sincere interest in the future and prosperity of their organisation when trust is widespread and pervasive. As a result, they will implement proactive strategies to improve organisational performance by eliminating any instances of malfeasance that occur within their workplace, and vice versa.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of prior whistleblowing studies, it has been evidenced that the individual factors of public service motivation (Tavarez et al., 2024; Latan et al., 2022), self-efficacy (Maharani, 2023; Abdullah Sani et al., 2022), and empathy (Guariglia, 2023; Abdullah Sani et al., 2022) play an important role in influencing the whistleblowing intention. Furthermore, it is established that trust in an organisation has the capacity to serve as a moderating factor affecting whistleblowing. This indicates that the government administration should adopt strategies to encourage individual factors, such as fostering public service motivation, enhancing self-efficacy and empathy, and promoting trust among employees. These initiatives seek to inspire employees to come forward and report any misconduct occurring within their organisation. An increase in whistleblowing rates indirectly supports the government's goal of achieving a corruption-free nation as outlined in the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) and the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) of 2010. Additionally, it can enhance Malaysia's performance in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Furthermore, this study offers essential insights to academics regarding the theory of prosocial behaviour. It does so by identifying the individual features, such as public service motivation, self-efficacy, and empathy, that influence whistleblowing intentions. Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing information by examining the influence of trust as a moderating factor on the intention to blow the whistle.

This study is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of previous scholarly works. Hence, it is recommended that future studies do empirical investigations to assess this study framework among Malaysian public sector. This is due to the assertion made by Nordin et al. (2021) that the current body of literature on whistleblowing in the public sector of Malaysia is insufficient. Additionally, it is recommended to investigate additional individual and contextual factors that may impact the intention to blow the whistle, as Abdullah Sani et al. (2022) have asserted that

ongoing exploration is necessary to study the factors that influence whistleblowing. Consequently, it is beneficial to conduct additional research and studies to ascertain the factors that drive the intention of public sector employees in Malaysia to disclose information. Future research findings may be integrated into the whistleblowing strategy to address corruption and unethical conduct within public sector organisations.

Acknowledgements

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