

Exploring Workplace Harassment Experiences in University Teachers: A Qualitative Inquiry into Workplace Harassment

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Abstract

Workplace harassment negatively impacts job performance, health, and psychological well-being of the victims. Harassment often comes from individuals in positions of power or peers. Academia has been slow to address this issue due to sociocultural biases and concerns about reputation. This study examined women university teachers' perceptions and experiences of three forms of harassment: discriminatory, personal, and verbal. Using a thematic analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve women teachers at a public sector university in Lahore. Criterion sampling strategy was used. Only those women who had already registered their complaints with the institutional harassment committee were contacted and made part of the study after taking consent from them. Those women who left their jobs after registering the complaints were excluded. Participants were asked to describe their experiences of being harassed and how it has affected their lives. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using deductive thematic analysis. The emerging themes included job dissatisfaction, insecurity, helplessness, low work motivation, psychological distress, anger, and lack of trust in administration. The findings of the qualitative study revealed that workplace harassment caused extreme distress, leading to deterioration in job performance, relationships, health, and well-being. Factors discouraging victims from reporting included legal loopholes, ineffective solutions, and lack of awareness. Barriers in law implementation need revisiting to facilitate access and action against harassment for academicians. The study emphasizes promoting a safe and respectful workplace environment that fosters gender equality, dignity, and respect.

Key Words: Workplace Harassment, Lived Experiences, Physical & Psychological Impact, University Teachers, Gender Dynamics

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Introduction

Over the past decade, workplace harassment has emerged as a pivotal concern in organizational research due to its profound implications for employee well-being and productivity. This issue becomes particularly significant in Pakistan, where cultural and societal standards frequently exacerbate its ramifications. Its negative impact on performance, coupled with its ability to emotionally and psychologically burden employees, has been consistently highlighted in both national and international literature (Bashir & Nadeem, 2019; Clark & Springer, 2007; Dogru, 2022). Despite the ubiquitous nature of it, workplace harassment is significantly underreported, particularly among women, making it difficult to address and mitigate its adverse consequences effectively. This study seeks to underscore the often-overlooked experiences and perspectives on workplace harassment, especially in the academic sector.

The complexities of workplace harassment in educational institutions are intrinsically linked to larger societal developments, such as evolving academic environments and expanding power structures. As diversity gains importance, the complexities of harassment dynamics increase, making it even more important to cultivate equitable and inclusive cultures. This study focuses on university instructors, specifically women in leadership positions, to understand how harassment intersects with gender and authority. By using a multifaceted strategy, this study hopes to go beyond traditional narratives and investigate the interrelated elements that contribute to workplace harassment.

Workplace harassment encompasses a number of adverse behaviors beyond the realm of sexual assault, such as verbal abuse, threats, bullying, and financial exploitation. These behaviors endanger employees' physical and mental well-being at all levels of the organization. The International Labour Organization (2022) underlines the imperative need of nations creating safe workplaces; but, in reality, protecting against harassment remains a significant challenge. Women, in particular, face heightened obstacles to reporting events owing to cultural prejudice and shame, fear of reprisal, and legal inefficiencies, making it difficult to document, address, or rectify such incidences (Renate Van Osten, 2013).

In educational settings, gender imbalances exacerbate the problem even further. According to Husu (2001), there is a notable gender imbalance at universities in both Asian and Western countries, especially in scientific fields. Women are still underrepresented in technological fields, despite the fact that they are increasingly working in professions like social work, health sciences, and the education of teachers. The male-dominated landscape of academia perpetuated working conditions that frequently encourage harassment. Research by Bildt (2005) and Berdahl (2007) reveals

that these imbalances correlate with a higher prevalence of harassment directed at women, which undermines their contributions and professional standing.

As previously outlined, indicators of workplace harassment encompasses a wide range of aggressive behaviors, especially when it comes to instructors. According to Anand (2017), these include physical violence, verbal threats, insults, disrespect, insulting statements, bullying, cyberbullying, theft or damage to personal property, and disobedience to teacher instructions. Additional examples include deliberate sabotage, persistent harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse, and physical attacks (Ceballos & Carvalho, 2021).

Literature underscores the intrinsic link between gender discrimination and workplace harassment in educational settings. Institutions must take a balanced approach in addressing these interconnected concerns in order to attain genuine equity. This entails deliberate efforts to dismantle gender disparities and the hostile environments they often foster. Promoting diversity in academic disciplines and leadership roles not only narrows gender gaps but also cultivates harmonious and inclusive academic communities.

In Pakistan, cultural conventions and ingrained gender roles continue to provide considerable barriers for women venturing into professional domains. Despite women progressively breaking out from conventional household limitations (Ali & Gavino, 2008), lingering societal stereotypes and cultural hurdles hinder their advancement. Nonetheless, women's workforce participation has steadily increased, from 13.2% in 1990 to 22.4% in 2017 (International Labour Organisation, 2017). However, this incidence remains disproportionately low when compared to other South Asian countries. Although women make about half of Pakistan's population, they only account for roughly one-fourth of the workforce (McKinsey & Company, 2018). This inequality represents a major untapped pool of human capital, restricting not only women's socioeconomic standing but also national economic progress.

Among the legislative measures addressing these challenges, the "Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010)" provides a foundational framework for protecting women in professional settings. Harassment is defined in this Act as any uninvited sexual approaches, solicitations for sexual favors, sexually explicit verbal or written messages, or behaviors that sexually degrade someone. It also includes actions that disrupt work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, as well as retributive actions against those who refuse to cooperate with such advances (The Gazette of Pakistan, 2010).

While sexual harassment is the most widely reported kind of workplace abuse, other types of harassment, albeit less conspicuous, are nevertheless prevalent. These kinds are frequently seen as less severe and hence go undetected. The research's primary objective is to explore the multifaceted experiences of workplace harassment

among university educators, with a particular emphasis on academic women in leadership roles.

Literature Review

The extensive body of research underscores the pressing issue of workplace abuse, emphasizing its pervasiveness and the inadequacy of existing interventions to prevent it (Okechukwu et al., 2014; Burke & Cooper, 2018). Victims often encounter substantial difficulty in coping with the aftermath of such tragedies, compounded by minimal support from therapists or their employers. Studies reveal that workplace abuse leaves enduring psychological scars, frequently manifesting as depressive symptoms that impede various facets of life and job advancement (Houle et al., 2011). Harassment experienced early in one's career is particularly insidious, as it often has profound and long-lasting repercussions on mental health.

The adverse effects of workplace abuse extend beyond individual well-being, significantly impacting organizational dynamics. It erodes employee morale, diminishes productivity, increases absenteeism, amplifies turnover rates and weakens organizational commitment—ultimately tarnishing an employer's external reputation (McDonald et al., 2015). These repercussions are especially pronounced among educators, who grapple with intense psychological job expectations and verbal and nonverbal harassment. These conditions jeopardize their overall well-being and impair their ability to perform their professional responsibilities effectively (Ballard et al., 2006; Griffiths & Powell, 2012).

Research consistently links workplace harassment to a cascade of adverse mental health outcomes, including sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, PTSD symptoms, and pervasive psychological distress (Gunnarsdottir et al., 2006; Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2016). Moreover, the impact is not confined to psychological well-being; it also increases susceptibility to cardiovascular diseases and physical injuries, underscoring the intertwined nature of mental and physical health consequences (Lee et al., 2008; Lecca et al., 2018).

The deleterious effects of workplace harassment on productivity and team morale are equally well-documented (Knepp, 2012). These findings resonate deeply with the experiences of academic women in leadership positions in the university setting, as highlighted in our research. The documented connections between workplace harassment and its influence on mental health align with the difficulties encountered by participants in this study. These people endure a variety of challenges, ranging from mental anguish to poor work performance, indicating the multifaceted nature of harassment's effects.

By analyzing the perspectives and experiences of academic women leaders who have been directly affected by workplace harassment, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of these connections. Through a combination of qualitative and

quantitative methodologies, the research aims to explore the psychological consequences of harassment on these women, examining how such impacts manifest in their overall well-being and professional contributions.

In conclusion, the vast body of existing research provides a solid foundation for contextualizing the setting and objectives of this research. The findings of previous studies align with the narratives of academic women leaders, highlighting the critical importance of this research in putting light on the intricate interplay between workplace harassment and its far-reaching implications. This exploration not only contributes to academic discourse but also underscores the imperative for targeted interventions to mitigate these challenges.

Theoretical Framework

Labour Process Theory (LPT), drawing from Marx's view of historical materialism, delves into the nature of work, particularly the conflicting relationship between employers and employees influenced by capitalism. Harry Braverman (1974) built on this idea, emphasizing the exploitation of labor for profit purposes. In today's workplaces, new management strategies like performance assessments and team-oriented tasks have surfaced to increase control over employees, often worsening working conditions. In this framework, workplace harassment can be seen as a control mechanism, consistent with LPT's notion of managerial tactics intended to stabilize the labor force. Viewed through this lens, harassment transcends individual experiences and can be rooted in organizational structures and systems that bolster control. For women university educators, harassment can be viewed as a means to exert control, stifle opposition, and preserve a system of hierarchy. This theoretical perspective aids in understanding how harassment, especially in academic contexts, might serve the interests of employers by reinforcing their authority over staff while reducing their independence and heightening their susceptibility. Integrating Labor Process Theory with critical realism, which considers both local and global factors, offers a deeper insight into the connection between workplace harassment, gendered labor dynamics, and institutional authority in the neo-Fordist era.

Objectives

1. To explore the specific challenges faced by academic women in leadership roles, particularly concerning workplace harassment.
2. To analyze how workplace harassment intersects with gender dynamics and leadership roles in academic settings.
3. To amplify the voices of marginalized groups, emphasizing their experiences with workplace harassment.
4. To contribute to the development of informed interventions and policies addressing workplace harassment in academia.
5. To foster the creation of safer, more inclusive, and equitable academic environments by investigating workplace harassment through multiple

perspectives.

Method

To gain an in-depth understanding of the data, the present study employed qualitative research design which is an approach that is best suited when rooting for a deeper understanding of the discipline (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). The design is pertinent when the aim is to understand experiences and perspectives as relatable to the present study which intends to focus on women in academia, experiencing workplace harassment. To analyze that data, thematic analysis was used to reveal important patterns within gathered data, expanding discussions and providing more than just a summary of the main ideas. This deductive method fosters deep comprehension of shared assumptions, experiences, and perceptions (Creswell et al., 2007). The aim of our study aligns with Creswell's **deductive approach** to research, as outlined in his 2007 framework, which begins with an established theory or conceptual framework and uses this foundation to guide the investigation. In this study, based we start with existing theories on **workplace harassment** and its **psychological effects**, particularly in the context of academic women leaders, which serves as the theoretical framework guiding our research. We then develop specific research questions based on this theory to test and explore its relevance and application within our target population. By employing a **deductive approach**, our study seeks to verify whether the theoretical relationships between harassment, mental health, and professional outcomes hold true for academic women in leadership roles, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data. This approach ensures that our research is grounded in existing theory while contributing to the validation or refinement of that theory in a specific context. and is most compatible with investigations focusing on subjective experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially the data was familiarized for a complete and comprehensive view following by identification of the units of the texts. Similar expression was placed together to form sub-themes which were then clustered under the main themes. It was the utmost effort to remain faithful to the participants expression for which the quotes have been illustrated in Table 1.

The contextual effects of workplace harassment on perceptions, experiences, and cultural norms are consistent with qualitative approaches (Madill et al., 2000). These complex interactions are documented in our data collection, which reflects individual stories and real-life encounters in an institutional setting. This qualitative alignment creates a seamless narrative by connecting the methodological approach and the theme focus of our research. Participants Snowball Sampling approach was used with the purpose to recruit participants who fulfilled the research objectives. This sampling method employed resonating that helps in identifying criterion that meets a specific particularity (Elmusharaf, 2016). For instance, in the present study, it intended to view that despite the common indifference, workplace harassment severely effects employed women (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020) therefore the study's participants were women who were serving as a teacher in public universities. N=12 female teachers

were selected from public sector universities in Lahore, Pakistan in order to achieve sample homogeneity. Only those teachers who had already reported complaints of any form of harassment may it be physical, psychological or sexual in nature as defined earlier in the Gazette of Pakistan, to the institutional harassment committee were contacted and included in the study after acquiring consent from them. Women who resigned or were forced to resign from their jobs as a result of filing complaints or harassment were not included. The following table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1
Descriptives Characteristics of Participants

P. I.D.	Age	Education	Marital Status	Family System	No. of Children	Working Experience (Years)	Family Income (Monthly Rs.)
1	40	Ph.D.	Married	Nuclear	4	8	200,000
2	34	MPhil	Married	Nuclear	2	4	180,000
3	37	MPhil	Married	Nuclear	3	3	170,000
4	38	MS	Married	Nuclear	2	7	100,000
5	33	MPhil	Married	Nuclear	2	5	95,000
6	29	MPhil	Unmarried	Joint	-	3	185,000
7	32	MPhil	Unmarried	Nuclear	-	6	200,000
8	28	MPhil	Married	Joint	3	5	120,000
9	36	MS	Unmarried	Nuclear	-	4	135,000
10	38	MPhil	Married	Nuclear	1	4	100,000
11	41	Ph.D.	Married	Joint	2	7	90,000
12	29	MPhil	Unmarried	Joint	-	3	175,000

In the above table, the two distinct family systems are mentioned. The nuclear family structure is known to be a smaller, independent family unit consisting of parents and children, with more individualistic decision-making and fewer extended family members living together while joint family system refers to multi-generational household with close relationships, shared resources, and collective decision-making.

Participants Recruitment and Procedure

The semi structured interviews were carried out with selected participants using Intensity Sampling: that involves information-rich cases. Each participant was interviewed only once, using McCracken's guidelines (1988) in order to minimize the harm to participants' mental health as it can be tormenting to recall the information again and again. Participants' interview conversations were categorized using a thorough interview framework, which served as the basis for later theme analysis. The interviewing process was built on a thorough analysis of the literature that includes inquiries on participants'

perceptions and experiences of workplace harassment (Ferris, 2002). Interview protocol included questions such as how women perceive workplace harassment as an ice breaker to encourage communication on the topic, what sort of harassment has been experienced to identify the types of harassment occurring in academic settings followed by questions on what, why, when, how and what and lastly the impact the workplace harassment had on the lives of women was explored.

The interview guide was examined by three academics and two qualitative researchers to ensure its accuracy. The questions were piloted and then included in interview guide. For the pilot test, three faculty members were initially interviewed; after receiving an adequate response, the remaining participants were questioned. No time limit was set for the interviews that ranged from 20 to 40 minutes. The participants understood the questions well and shared their experiences with ease in detail.

Ethical Consideration

Participants were treated in accordance with the American Psychological Association's code of ethics as follows:

- The consent was taken from the participants, and they were given the right to withdraw from participation and terminate at any point of the study if they wanted.
- There has been absolutely no harm inflicted on participants.
- Priority was given to treating research subjects with dignity.
- Before the study began, the subjects gave their full consent.
- The confidentiality of research participants was protected

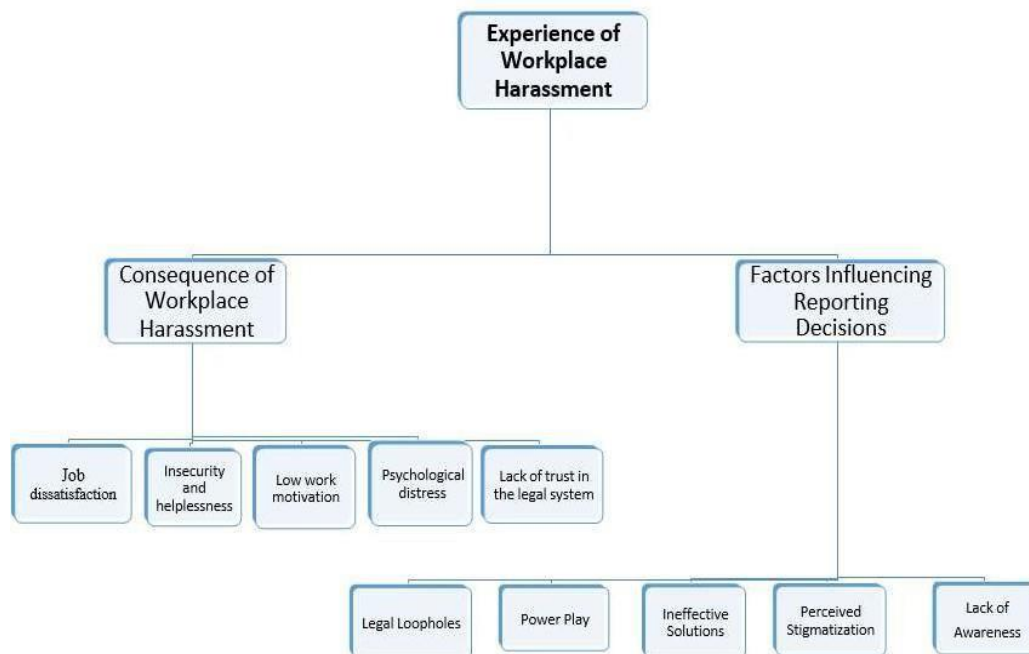


Figure 1: Graphic representation of the themes and sub-themes

Table 1: Table: Themes, Subthemes, and Verbatim Accounts

Theme	Sub-Theme	Explanation	Verbatim
Theme 1: Consequences of Workplace Harassment	Job Dissatisfaction	Continuous harassment through sarcastic comments and derogatory remarks by superiors led to frustration, unhappiness, and reduced engagement with work. Participants reported declining job satisfaction due to persistent mistreatment.	“The constant harassment made me quite unhappy with my job. My motivation, involvement, and general contentment with my work were impacted” (P1).
			“I feel frustrated and dissatisfied with my job because of the constant harassment I face on a daily basis” (P4).
Theme 1	Insecurity and Helplessness	Ongoing harassment created feelings of insecurity about career prospects and helplessness in effecting change. Participants felt powerless due to lack of effective mechanisms to address the issue.	“The harassment produced a continual feeling of uncertainty and powerlessness. I felt insecure about my professional future and helpless to make a difference” (P3).
			“I feel powerless and helpless because there seems to be no effective way to address the harassment and protect myself” (P7).
Theme 1	Low Work Motivation	Persistent mistreatment led to a loss of motivation, reduced productivity, and diminished passion for professional excellence.	“The harassment sapped my motivation to work. In such a harsh environment, it was hard to muster the motivation and desire to perform effectively” (P2).
			“The harassment has drained my motivation to perform well in my job” (P3).
Theme 1	Psychological Distress	Harassment caused severe emotional strain, including anxiety, depression, fear, and difficulty concentrating, affecting both personal wellbeing and professional	“The harassment significantly increased my psychological distress. I struggled with anxiety, despair, and a pervasive sense of terror” (P7).

		performance.	“The constant harassment has taken a toll on my mental health” (P2).
Theme 1	Lack of Faith in the Administration	Participants expressed anger and mistrust toward the administration due to perceived inaction and ineffective handling of harassment complaints.	“I felt intense rage towards my harassers as well as at the administration for not taking the matter seriously” (P5).
			“I’m angry at the perpetrators and also angry at the administration” (P4).
Theme 2: Factors Influencing Reporting Decisions	Legal Loopholes	Fear of biased decisions, favoritism, and legal gaps discouraged reporting. Participants believed harassers could exploit loopholes to escape accountability.	“The existence of legal loopholes made me cautious to report” (P12).
Theme 2	Ineffective Solutions	Past experiences of weak administrative responses led to skepticism about reporting outcomes and fear of retaliation.	“I had seen other instances where the administration’s responses were ineffectual” (P4).
			“I didn’t report the harassment because I was afraid of retaliation” (P8).
Theme 2	Lack of Awareness	Limited understanding of harassment, reporting procedures, and consequences discouraged action and reporting.	“There was a pervasive lack of knowledge concerning workplace harassment and its repercussions” (P3).

Theme 2	Power Play	Abuse of authority by individuals in power created fear, silencing victims and damaging psychological safety in the workplace.	"I fear retaliation as my harasser was someone in position" (P10).
			"Why would anyone listen to me? It would only affect my job" (P3).
Theme 2	Perceived Stigmatization	Fear of social labeling, character judgment, and family backlash discouraged women from reporting harassment, especially sexual harassment.	"I want to complain, but what will people say about me? People will only question my character" (P6).

Discussion

Workplace harassment is experienced in different ways and thus affects individuals with diverse psychological consequences. The professional environment plays a significant role on job satisfaction, general well-being, and commercial relationships in academic settings. Therefore, qualitative study aimed to explore the experiences of university faculty members with workplace harassment. The emerging themes reflect the immense impact of workplace harassment, as participants expressed extreme discontent and distress consequently reporting lower job satisfaction. Recent studies have reported that harassment at work negatively affects job satisfaction (such as Bowling & Beehr, 2006). These findings accentuate the multifaceted nature of workplace harassment and its pervasive ramifications for both individuals and institutions.

Moreover, the research illuminated the deleterious effects of workplace harassment on participants' motivation and productivity. Many reported a diminished inclination to work efficiently, aligning with research demonstrating that harassment erodes employee motivation (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Participants also described waning enthusiasm for their roles due to persistent mistreatment and insufficient institutional intervention. This underscores the imperative for organizations to proactively address workplace harassment proactively to sustain employee engagement and bolster overall performance. Without such interventions, organizations risk a precipitous decline in employee engagement, leading to far-reaching repercussions for institutional success.

Secondly, recurring themes among participants revolved around profound insecurity and a sense of disempowerment. Many voiced apprehensions regarding their professional futures and a pervasive sense of helplessness in instigating change,

stemming from relentless harassment. This resonates with research by Namie and Namie (2009), which revealed that workplace harassment erodes employees' perceptions of security and autonomy.

Thirdly, participants expressed feeling entrapped in a setting where their concerns were systematically disregarded, resulting in a decreased sense of professional agency. These findings highlight the paramount importance of cultivating a secure atmosphere in which employees may report harassment without fear of reprisal. Furthermore, organizations must recognize that such a culture is crucial not only for employee well-being but also for sustaining a productive and harmonious workplace.

The psychological toll of workplace harassment was evident in the intense discomfort reported by participants including trepidation, hopelessness, and an inherent feeling of fear. These findings corroborate Nielsen and Einarsen's (2018) research, which links workplace harassment to deleterious psychological effects. Moreover, the participants' testimonies gave a vivid portrayal of the emotional trauma inflicted by harassment, with some reporting persistent insomnia and constant surveillance. These results underline the importance of prioritizing employee mental health and well-being by having robust anti-harassment measures and accessible support networks, like counseling services and stress management programs.

Expressions of hostility towards both harassers and the administration were widespread, with participants voicing a distrust in the institution's ability to adequately address harassment complaints. This aligns with research demonstrating that employees' reporting behavior is influenced by their perceptions of organizational responses (Raver & Nishii, 2010). Participants voiced frustration with navigating bureaucratic procedures that often appeared to safeguard the institution rather than the victim. The findings highlight the necessity of swift and efficient organizational responses to harassment complaints in fostering trust and accountability. Institutions must address complaints with transparency and impartiality to restore confidence and affirm their commitment to employee welfare.

Fear of potential legal repercussions compelled participants to exercise caution and exhibit reluctance in reporting harassment. This finding accords with research that emphasizes the importance of whistleblower protections (Miceli & Near, 1984). Participants expressed apprehension about being ostracized or facing career setbacks as significant barriers to reporting. Strengthening statutory safeguards for those who report harassment is critical to encouraging reporting and successfully addressing workplace misconduct. Furthermore, legal reforms must be complemented by robust internal controls to ensure employees have confidence that reporting will not result in punitive actions, but rather in substantive and corrective measures.

A lack of awareness and comprehension regarding workplace harassment was another key issue identified by participants. This study, in conjunction with Hershcovis and Barling (2010), emphasizes the need for awareness campaigns and educational initiatives to avoid harassment and encourage reporting. Participants said that many coworkers were

insufficiently educated of what constituted harassment, allowing unacceptable actions to continue unaddressed. By fostering greater awareness, organizations can empower employees to recognize and report harassment more effectively. Additionally, educational programs should incorporate leadership training to ensure proactive recognition and response to harassment.

The study sought the perspectives and personal experiences of female faculty members at public institutions, focusing on their perceptions and interactions with workplace harassment. In line with prior research on psychological distress among educators (Altmiller, 2012; El Hachi, 2020; Holt, 2018), participants frequently described feelings of humiliation, shame, and profound emotional pain. Their accounts revealed various forms of disrespectful behavior, including character assassination, degradation, and other types of harassment. Furthermore, participants recounted instances where their professional reputations were deliberately tarnished, exacerbating their emotional suffering.

Nauman, Malik, and Jalil (2019) found that workplace harassment had substantial adverse effects on employees' professional and psychological well-being. They used a recurring mediation approach in a developing country. The outcomes of this study illustrate that workplace harassment has a significant influence on overall well-being and working conduct. Participants' stories illustrated how harassment not only affected their professional lives but also spilled over into their personal lives, affecting relationships and overall life satisfaction.

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that workplace harassment jeopardizes the safety and well-being of educators, leading to psychological distress, diminished motivation, compromised job performance, and erosion of trust (Vie et al., 2011). Despite the extensively documented negative consequences of harassment, such as heightened job stress, mental health disorders, depression, emotional exhaustion, aggression, and decreased organizational behaviors (Jenkins et al., 2011; Finne et al., 2011; Varhama & Björkqvist, 2004; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Vega & Comer, 2005; Naseer et al., 2018; Raja et al., 2017; Litzky et al., 2006), this analysis provides new insights. It highlights the intricate position of women in Pakistani academia and stresses that harassment may originate from both male and female perpetrators.

Participants discussed the unique challenges that women confront in a patriarchal academic context, where cultural norms and gender dynamics frequently impede the reporting and resolution of harassment incidents. This nuanced perspective highlights the importance of specialized initiatives to address the unique obstacles that women face in academia. To design effective solutions that promote workplace equality and respect, such interventions must consider cultural and socioeconomic circumstances.

The findings of this research underscore the urgent need for institutions to foster a supportive and transparent environment where harassment complaints are taken seriously and addressed promptly. Strengthening organizational policies, enhancing awareness through educational initiatives, and providing accessible support systems such as counseling services are critical steps toward mitigating the adverse effects of harassment.

Conclusion

When harassment at work is persistent, it could become violent. Institutional authorities must assess the prevalence of workplace harassment. If these actions are to be expected, universities must have empowerment programs in place to assist faculty and staff personnel in dealing with and controlling these actions before they get out of control. When considering the common elements of workplace harassment, the majority of the personnel in the organization might share a similar perception of this concept.

An operational definition of workplace harassment must therefore be founded on trustworthy context-based research on people in different organizations. It has been demonstrated that the majority of female faculty members who experienced harassment at work had psychological discomfort. The fact that individuals perpetrate violent acts against female teachers presents serious issues for educational institutions. The results of the study and the related literature are consistent with the assertion that there are a number of probable explanations for the growth in workplace harassment, including disrespectful behavior.

Techniques for reducing workplace harassment and promoting civility and mutual respect can be used in conjunction with classroom management techniques. Management needs to be vigilant for abusive behavior on their campuses and search for creative, effective solutions. This study has a strong emphasis on encouraging a secure and respected work environment that promotes gender equality, respect, and dignity.

Implications

This study can help educators to recognize the problems experienced by educators and implement solutions that eliminate harassment within workplaces. Institutions must provide seminars for professional growth that could aid in faculty well-being. To accomplish this, conduct seminars or workshops on bullying, rudeness, and harassment that also include the institutional policies that may regulate these behaviors. Universities ought to have policies that permit faculty members to voice complaints without fear of repercussions. Faculty members could benefit from advanced social skill training or coaching programs that give them more confidence to whistle blow on the wrong doers in any organization as victims rarely have the courage to disclose the victimizer and the cycle of harassment continues. Moreover, regular assessment and follow ups on harassment in the educational system can make it easy for employees to put forth their concerns without fearing more harassment in future.

Therefore, this research can be a base provider to develop such measures identifying the types of harassment in the existing culture and also in taking practical steps towards its applicability in various academic settings.

Limitations and Recommendations

Our qualitative study provides important insights into how female university lecturers perceive and experience workplace harassment. The complex nature of harassment and its effects within the academic context is made clear by these findings. It is

important to recognize the limits of our study, though. The generalizability of our findings may be constrained by the particular demographics of our individuals. Additionally, biases or the omission of some information may have an impact on participants' responses, which could undermine the objectivity of the results.

Moving forward, we advise that future investigations examine workplace harassment from the views of both students and teachers in order to cover a wider range of viewpoints. This holistic strategy would offer a more thorough comprehension of the problem and its ramifications. We also recommend that researchers consider using a mixed-method approach to the investigation of workplace harassment. The depth and breadth of insights could be increased by the integration of quantitative data, allowing for a more complex analysis of this urgent issue.

Future research can expand on the findings of our study and add to our understanding of workplace harassment by addressing these issues and promoting a safer and more equal environment for all members of the academic community.

Data Availability Statement

The original contributions presented are included in the study. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This research is following all the ethical standards. Written informed consent was taken from the participants about the anonymous publications of their verbatims such that their identity will remain concealed. Participants were not harmed in any form.

Conflict of Interest.

There is no conflict of interests.

Ethical Approval

The ethical approval has been obtained by the Institutes Review Board.

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