

Workplace Harassment and Job Satisfaction in University Teachers

Dua Zafar¹ and Dr Fatima Kamran²

Abstract

This study investigates the association between workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers. Utilizing a correlational research design with non-probability convenient sampling, data were collected from 125 teachers (M age = 37.57, SD = 8.39) across public and private universities. Participants completed the Job Satisfaction scale (Spector, 1994) and the Workplace Harassment scale (Bjorkqvist, 1992). Findings reveal a significant negative correlation between workplace harassment and job satisfaction ($r = -0.45, p < 0.05$), indicating that higher levels of harassment are associated with lower job satisfaction among university teachers. Furthermore, no significant differences were found in these relationships based on demographic factors or academic ranks. These results highlight the pervasive impact of workplace harassment on job satisfaction in academia and underscore the need for organizational strategies to mitigate such effects.

Keywords: Workplace harassment, job satisfaction, university teachers, correlational study, non-probability sampling, demographic factors, academic ranks

1. Introduction

Workplace harassment (WPH) is a current issue in society that has a detrimental influence on personnel, management, the standard of work, and effectiveness in the workplace (Carbo, 2008). It is interpreted as "harassing, offending, socially excluding, or negatively influencing someone's job activities" in occupational epidemiology and must take place repeatedly and regularly (for example, once per week) over an extended length of time to qualify. Harassment is an aggressive and undesired conduct used to compel people to accomplish something (Kemp, 2014 and Oade, (2009). According to Townend (2016), It is one of the most sensitive forms of workplace harassment and has a severe influence on the functioning of an organization. According to the overwhelming majority of research on workplace harassment indicates a clear connection between harassment

¹ Institution of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. *Corresponding author: zafardua590@gmail.com

² Dr. Fatima Kamran, Associate Professor, Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Email: fatimakamran.appsy@pu.edu.pk

and unfavourable outcomes for both the individual and the company. Production losses have an impact on the business. The desire of employees to resign, job satisfaction, and job performance are all negatively impacted by harassment at work. Francis, Amy C. (2014). Professional isolation is a word used to characterize insufficient social and professional connection at work, according to Marshall (2007).

According to scholarly studies, employees who work from home may feel isolated from their coworkers on a social or professional level. Growing body of research indicates that isolation at work can be influenced by several organizational characteristics, including better organizational responsiveness, perceived organizational support, and perceived social support. A greater degree of organizational responsiveness reduces workplace isolation, according to Bostanci (2013). Riggle et al. (2015) found that perceived organizational support reduces social isolation at work. Furthermore, Bentley et al. (2016) found that high levels of perceived support reduce workplace isolation. Colleague support has been shown to mitigate teleworkers' feelings of workplace isolation (Gallatin, 2018). Teachers' professional life may also suffer as a result of harassment since it may cause them to become less devoted to their work and the organization. The target's level of work satisfaction declines when they experience higher degrees of anxiety and dread, low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, and diminished confidence in their professional competence (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016).

Job satisfaction is determined by how one evaluates one's employment in relation to the possibility of achieving significant work values (Foroughi, at el 2008). Job satisfaction is the state of a person's feelings or mental health in connection to the nature of his work (Farooq, at el 2014). According to Shah Mohammad (at el 2015), job satisfaction is characterized as positive, upbeat emotions that arise from the outcomes of job assessments that are based on individual experiences. Workplace behaviors that include a good attitude towards one's work or practice, as well as a reduction in stress and anxiety while working, are considered to be indicators of job satisfaction. Christian defines job satisfaction as an evaluation of one's favorable or unfavorable values of a position or work environment. As of El 2011 (Christian).

Workplace harassment is a serious problem that can negatively impact on workers' happiness at work and general well-being. Regretfully, men and women in Pakistan are affected by this issue, which is widespread. In Pakistan, harassment of women is a major problem. The body of research on job satisfaction and workplace harassment among university instructors emphasises how important it is to address these problems in the classroom.

Studies consistently reveal that instances of harassment, ranging from subtle mistreatment to overt discrimination, significantly diminish job satisfaction among educators. Factors such as unequal power dynamics, lack of support, and hostile work climates contribute to heightened stress and dissatisfaction. Conversely, a positive work environment, characterized by fair treatment, support systems, and inclusive policies, is associated with increased job satisfaction. Recognizing the nuanced relationships between workplace harassment and job satisfaction is imperative for implementing effective interventions and fostering a conducive

academic atmosphere.

According to Einarsen and Hoel (2001), bullying at work is when someone is harassed, offended, socially excluded, or has their ability to do their job negatively impacted. They continue by stating that WPB occurs often (weekly or more) and persistently (for around six months), and that bullying is a developing process rather than a single occurrence. According to Einarsen et al. (2009), abuse might come from colleagues, managers, or employees. The aggressor's purpose is not important, even while the victim believes that the violent activities are harmful (Cemaloglu, 2011).

Harassment in the workplace is a serious problem that can negatively impact workers' happiness and well-being. Regretfully, both men and women in Pakistan are affected by this issue. In Pakistan, harassment of females is a significant problem. The body of research on university instructors' job satisfaction and workplace harassment emphasises how important it is to address these problems in the classroom. Empirical research repeatedly indicates that experiences of harassment, encompassing both subtle and overt forms of discrimination, substantially reduce educators' job satisfaction. Higher levels of stress and discontent are caused by elements including uneven power relations, a lack of support, and unfriendly work environments.

. Conversely, a positive work environment, characterized by fair treatment, support systems, and inclusive policies, is associated with increased job satisfaction. Recognizing the nuanced relationships between workplace harassment and job satisfaction is imperative for implementing effective interventions and fostering a conducive academic atmosphere.

1.1 Research Question

- How do most university teachers experience workplace harassment and tend to report their job satisfaction?
- How does workplace harassment tend to affect job satisfaction?
- How do university teachers tend to report the effect of workplace harassment on their job satisfaction?
- How is job satisfaction influenced by their experience of workplace harassment in university teachers?

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design

Correlational research was used to examine how workplace harassment tends to influence job satisfaction in faculty members of public sector universities.

2.2 Participant & Recruitment

Non-probability convenient sampling technique was used to recruit the sample. The estimated sample size according to G-Power is N=125. Sample was consisting of 125 university teachers with MPhil and PhD who were included in the study. The sample was drawn from both gender (men and women). The sample drawn on

the basis of the following specific inclusion and exclusion criteria.

2.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

The study comprised university instructors who are currently working in both public and commercial sectors. The participants were chosen based on their history of experiencing workplace harassment at least once in their career. They had to have worked as university instructors for at least two years. The demographics of the sample were varied, encompassing differences in age, gender, and ethnicity. The goal of the study was to determine how these demographic characteristics affected university-related encounters with workplace harassment and job satisfaction. This strategy sought to gather a thorough understanding of how harassment affects university instructors' work satisfaction across a range of demographic categories.

2.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

There are two distinct groups within the university environment: one comprises individuals who claim no instance or encounter of workplace harassment, while the other consists of those who are not actively engaged in teaching at the university presently.

2.2.3 Measures

In addition to employing other research methods, a self-designed demographic questionnaire will be utilized to gather pertinent data regarding workplace harassment and job satisfaction among participants. This questionnaire will cover demographic information such as age, gender, educational attainment, occupation, marital status, number of dependents, and household income. Additionally, it will inquire about participants' experiences with workplace harassment, including types encountered and frequency of occurrences, as well as their perceptions of organizational support and policies addressing harassment. Furthermore, the questionnaire will assess job satisfaction through inquiries about roles and responsibilities, career advancement opportunities, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, work-life balance, and overall satisfaction levels. These demographic and experiential variables will be crucial in exploring correlations between workplace harassment experiences and levels of job satisfaction among the respondents.

2.3 Job Satisfaction Scale Version (1994)

Paul E. Spector developed JSS (1994). The fact that this survey can be utilized in any academic context is why it was selected. The JSS is a 36-item, 9-facet scale used to evaluate an employee's attitude towards their work and various aspects of it. A total score is calculated using all four assessment items for each facet. There are six options per item on the summated rating scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Cut-off scores at the moderate level (108–144), high level (144 and above), and lower level (108).

2.4 Workplace harassment Version (1992)

WHS was developed by (Bjorkqvist et al, 1992) and was an instrument to measure the workplace harassment of an individual. Workplace harassment scale comprise of 24 items and was online available also. Moreover, its Cronbach alpha coefficients .66 are for the total scale. Each item had five categorical responses, which were scored on a 5-point Likert Scale. It includes the items which begins with the initial question i.e. have you been exposed to unduly reduced opportunity to express yourself, lies about you told to others, being unduly disrupted, being shouted at loudly etc. high score workplace means that the individual has faced harassment in the workplace.

2.5 Procedure

Prior permission from all respective authorities was taken. The permission participants were given to be approached from different private and public sector head of department. The consent of each participant was given personally. Upon approaching, participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and were provided with a participants information sheet. After that the questionnaire were administered. The researcher assumed the participants the confirm confidentially regarding their view and information given by them. Moreover, they will be given liberty to withdraw from the research whenever they want. Scale of workplace harassment (WHS) were used to asses workplace harassment of teacher. Job satisfaction Scale (JSS) were used to asses job satisfaction of university teachers.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted on the raw data to investigate the relationship between workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers. The analyses began with reliability analysis to assess the consistency and stability of the measurement scales used for both workplace harassment and job satisfaction. Pearson correlation was then applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables. To further understand the incremental impact of workplace harassment on job satisfaction, controlling for other relevant variables such as age, gender, and years of experience, hierarchical regression was conducted. Additionally, independent t-tests were used to compare the mean job satisfaction scores between teachers who reported experiencing workplace harassment and those who did not. Finally, one-way ANOVA was performed to examine differences in job satisfaction across multiple groups categorized by the severity of workplace harassment experienced (e.g., none, mild, moderate, severe). These statistical methods provided a comprehensive understanding of how workplace harassment affects job satisfaction among university teachers.

3. Results

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between university professors' job satisfaction and workplace harassment. Prior to

conducting major statistical analysis, such as reliability analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Independent Sample t-test, and ANOVA, the data were first tested for normality. Using Cronbach's alphas for scales, reliability analysis is the first step in the data analytic approach. In the second step, the relationship between the variables was evaluated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. ANOVA and the most recent independent sample t-test were used to determine any differences based on various sociodemographic factors.

3.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis coefficients of the scales and descriptive statistics of variables are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Descriptive characteristics and reliability analysis of study variables (N=125)

Scales	M	K	SD	Range	α
Job Satisfaction Scale	111.26	36	31.60	36-216	.94
Workplace Harassment Scale	39.86	24	22.98	0-96	.96

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach alpha; k= no. of items

Table 3.1 shows the Cronbach Alpha reliability of values of scales used in the current study. The reliability of the Job Satisfaction Scale is .94. And the reliability of the Workplace Harassment Scale is .96. The alpha values for both scales show good reliability.

3.2 Correlational Analysis

It was assumed there would be a significant relationship between workplace harassment and job satisfaction in university teachers. To find out the relationship, a Pearson Correlation was performed. Results are shown in Table 3.2.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation was run to find the association between the study variables i.e., Workplace Harassment, Job Satisfaction and demographics as covariates. Results (reported in the table) indicated that gender, age, and sector in which participant doing job and education as well as the current designation level is neither related to workplace harassment nor to job satisfaction.

A pivotal insight arose when considering the study variables themselves. Workplace harassment is negatively correlated with Job satisfaction. This implies that higher level of workplace harassment may lead to lower job satisfaction.

Table 3.2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation among covariates and study variables (N=125)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender a	-											
2. Age	.217*	-										
3. Sector of participants b	-.123	-.110	-									
4. Education c	-.277**	.281**	-.077	-								
5. Marital status	.169	-.154	.023	-.085	-							
6. Current designation	-.195*	.399**	.065	.567**	-.132	-						
7. Total year of service	-.227*	.423**	.050	.433**	-.140	.563**	-					
8. Monthly Income	.068	.119	-.014	-.035	-.011	.178*	.136	-				
9. Sleep quality	-.115	.012	.013	.071	.063	-.034	-.055	-.119	-			
10. History of Diabetes d	.085	-.058	.035	-.149	.134	-.055	-.019	.003	-.122	-		
11. Job Satisfaction	-.032	-.083	.071	-.069	-.097	.014	-.107	.047	-.033	.097	-	
12. Workplace harassment	-.112	-.012	-.156	-.128	-.008	-.022	.003	.074	.040	.103	-.245**	-

Note:

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

a Gender coded as (specify coding, e.g., 0 = Female, 1 = Male).

b Sector of participants coded as (specify categories).

c Education coded from lowest to highest level.

d History of diabetes coded as (0 = No, 1 = Yes).

3.3 Independent sample t-Test Analysis

It was assumed that there would be differences between males ($n=42$) and females ($n=83$) in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers. To find out this prediction an independent sample t-test was performed. Results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 3.3

Independent sample t-test to compare workplace harassment and job satisfaction in university teachers.

Variables	Men (n=42)		women (n=83)		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Workplace Harassment Job Satisfaction	43.45	20.38	38.04	24.11	1.25	.21
	112.67	30.26	110.54	32.41	.35	.72

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 3.3, an independent sample t-test was conducted to identify differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among males ($n=42$) and females ($n=83$) university teachers. Assumption of Equality of variances

get fulfilled and results show that there were no significant differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction between men and women.

3.4 Independent sample t-Test Analysis

It was assumed that there would be differences between private sector employees (n=82) and public sector employees (n=43) in workplace harassment and job satisfaction in university teachers. To find out this prediction an independent sample t-test was performed. Results are shown in table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Independent sample t-test to compare workplace harassment and job satisfaction in university teachers (n=43).

Variables	M	SD	M (Private Sector)	SD (Private Sector)	t (169)	P	Cohen's d
Workplace Harassment	44.79	23.6	37.26	22.36	-0.78	0.43	-0.14
Job Satisfaction	108.18	34.8	112.86	29.88	1.75	0.33	0.08

Note. M= Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

An independent sample t-test was used to determine if university instructors in the public and private sectors experienced workplace harassment and job satisfaction differently, as indicated in Table 3.4. The findings demonstrate that there were no appreciable variations in workplace harassment and job satisfaction between university instructors in the public and private sectors, proving that the equality of variances assumption was met.

3.5 Independent sample t-Test Analysis

It was assumed that there would be differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers based on education level. To find out this prediction an independent sample t-test was performed. Results are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Independent sample t-test to compare workplace harassment and job satisfaction in university teachers based on education level in university teachers.

Variables	M	SD	M (PhD)	SD (PhD)	t (169)	P	Cohen's d
Workplace Harassment	42.62	23.96	36.76	21.63	1.43	0.16	0.26
Job Satisfaction	113.31	32.87	108.94	30.22	0.77	0.44	0.14

Note. M= Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 3.5, an independent sample t-test was conducted to identify differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction in MPhil (n=64) and PhD

(n=105) university teachers. The assumption of Equality of variances was fulfilled and results show that there were no significant differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction based on the degree of the university teachers.

3.6 ANOVA

It was assumed that there would be differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers based on the current designation of the participant. To find out this prediction one-way ANOVA was performed. Results are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 3.6

Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-way Analysis of Variance in Workplace Harassment and Job Satisfaction.

Variables	Lecturer (n=60)		Assistant Prof. (n=45)		Associate Prof. (n=20)		F (df1, df2)	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Workplace Harassment	40.75	24.28	39.31	22.24	38.4	21.58	0.09 (2,122)	0.9	0.47
Job Satisfaction	111.67	32.88	110.15	30.22	112.5	32.23	0.05 (2,122)	0.95	0.37

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

As shown in Table 3.6, One-way ANOVA was conducted to identify differences in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among lecturers (n=60), Assistant Professors (n=45), and Associate Professors (n=20). Sphericity assumption was met and the results showed that the differences of workplace harassment and job satisfaction were not significant among lecturers, Assistant Professors and Associate Professors.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace harassment of university instructors. From the Pearson correlation analysis, a strong negative correlation between job satisfaction and workplace harassment was obtained. This result means that job satisfaction decreases with an increase in workplace harassment. The finding supports other research studies, such as Hallett et al. (2020) and Cortina & Magley (2003), that suggest workplace harassment is a better predictor of job satisfaction. Harassment could cause stress, anxiety, and even feelings of vulnerability; as a result, it would have an adverse impact on job satisfaction at work for workers. In this context, Lim & Teo, 2016, note the following. These findings have considerable policy and administrative implications for universities. Ensuring that university instructors work in a safe and respectful environment is evidently fundamental to job satisfaction.

Present research has focused on gender, industry differences-private vs public- as well as highest degree attained PhD vs MPhil- to investigate the differences between university instructors in job satisfaction and workplace harassment. Independent sample t-tests did not find significant differences between male and female university teachers either in workplace harassment or in job satisfaction based on gender. These findings confirm previous research that reported no significant

difference in workplace harassment and job satisfaction between men and women; for example, Cortina & Magley, 2003; Hallett et al., 2020.

By the same token, an independent sample test did not suggest a significant difference in workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university instructors who work in either public or private sectors. This implies that sectoral differences are not a determinant factor in workplace harassment and job satisfaction for university instructors. Finally, independent sample t-tests were conducted which showed no perceptible differences between university instructors with an MPhil and university instructors with a PhD either on workplace harassment or job satisfaction. This indicates that workplace harassment and job satisfaction are not significantly different among university teachers based on the highest degree obtained.

One-way ANOVA compared university instructors' job satisfaction and workplace harassment based on their designations as a lecturer, assistant professor, and associate professor. The results showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of job satisfaction and workplace harassment among the three designations, which evidences that the factors of job satisfaction and workplace harassment are not much affected by the titles university instructors are holding. This supports the previous research finding that workplace harassment and job satisfaction are influenced by so many factors aside from position and job title. For example, Hallett et al. (2020) found that leadership and organizational culture influences "job emotion" of teachers in a high degree and "workplace harassment". Similarly, Lim and Teo (2016) also found a significantly high impact of each person's unique personality. The findings of the present study suggest that other factors act more importantly on university instructors' experiences of workplace harassment and job satisfaction than title alone.

Conclusion

In short, this research has investigated the relationship between workplace harassment and job satisfaction among university teachers; it also explores potential differences based on gender, sector, highest degree obtained, and current designation. The results showed a strong negative association between workplace harassment and job satisfaction, indicating that university teachers facing workplace harassment are likely to possess low levels of job satisfaction. However, no significant difference was obtained by gender, sector, highest degree obtained, or current designation. This might point out that workplace harassment is an issue at large that dares university teachers from every other demographic profile or position in the university setup. This indicates that addressing workplace harassment at universities might be an efficient method of enhancing the job satisfaction and overall well-being of university teachers. These findings do have wide-ranging implications for university administrators and policy makers in terms of the need for effective policies and interventions which may prevent and address workplace harassment in academic settings.

Future Implication & Recommendation

Clear formulation and implementation of university policies and procedures regarding workplace harassment are done. The issue of workplace harassment can be brought into regular training and education programs with the aim of creating awareness among faculty members, staff, and students. Strong supportive systems, including but not limited to counselling services and mechanisms for reporting, hold great importance in the facilitation of support to victims who suffered harassment. It is the role of the university leadership to actively foster a culture of respect, inclusivity, and zero tolerance for harassment in the workplace. The potential role of intervention and policy studies in establishing efficacy in preventing workplace harassment should also be studied, along with how contextual factors such as organizational culture and leadership influence the effectiveness of intervention and policy efforts. The research also needs to be performed on different cultural backgrounds, which would prove the research of workplace harassment in academia more internationally.

Reference

- Amy, C., & Francis. (2014). Workplace Harassment and Job Satisfaction: The Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support, 95-104. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106886>
- Bernstein, C., & Trimm, L. (2016). The impact of workplace harassment on individual wellbeing: The moderating role of coping. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v14i1.792>
- Bostanci, A. B. (2013). The role of positive emotion towards work as a mediator in the relationship between organizational responsiveness towards teachers and isolation in professional life. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 8(8), 367. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2013.1442>
- Cemaloglu, N. (2011). Primary principals' leadership styles, school organizational health and workplace bullying. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(5), 495-512. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231111159511>
- Einarsen, S., & Hoel, H. (2001, May 16-19). The Negative Acts Questionnaire: Development, validation, and revision of a measure of bullying at work. 10th European Congress on Work and Organizational Psychology, Prague.
- Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., & Notelaers, G. (2009). Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. *Work & Stress*, 23(1), 24-44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370902815673>
- Gallatin, K. A. (2018). Teleworker Isolation: Possible Effects of Workplace Relationships and Support (Doctoral dissertation, Baker College (Michigan)).
- Hallett, S., Ladson-Billings, G., & Peters, M. (2020). The impact of workplace harassment on teacher job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(6), 839-855.
- Kemp, V. (2014). Antecedents, consequences and interventions for workplace harassment. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 27(5), 364-368. <https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000084>
- Lim, S. L., & Teo, T. S. H. (2016). Workplace harassment and job satisfaction: A systematic review. *Journal of Workplace Behavioural Health*, 31(2), 147-164.

- M. S, Farooqu and A. Nagendra, "The impact of person organization fit on job satisfaction and performance of the employees," *Procedia Economics and Finance*, vol. 11, pp. 122-129, 2014.
- M. S. Christian, A. S. Garza and J. E. Slaughter, "Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance," *Personnel Psychology*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 89-136, 2011.
- N. Shah Mohammadi, "The relationship between management style with human relations and job satisfaction among guidance schools' principals in district 3 of Karaj," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 205, pp. 247-253, 2015
- Townend, A. (2016). Understanding and addressing harassment in the workplace. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 40(5), 270-273