

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG EMPLOYEES OF AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRIES IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Workplace harassment affects both men and women in every walk of life, in every level of employment. This research paper documents the range of harassment behaviors men and women experience when they enter the workplace. For some men the harassment is verbal abuse and retaliation in nature and for some women the harassment includes sexual in nature and some may experience abusive workplace situations that are based on their race, class, disability, sexual orientation and language. This research paper identifies the range of workplace harassment that men and women experience and to examine the effects of their experiences in automotive industry in India. This research paper also shows the recommendations for reducing the risk of harassment and for providing employees with support and legal remedies if they are harassed. The purpose of this research is to prevent employees from losing their life and to stop the daily harm being done to employees through workplace harassment.

KEYWORDS:

Workplace Harassment, Job satisfaction, Job stress, Automotive industries, India.

INTRODUCTION

Employees experience a wide range of harassment behaviors when they enter the workplace. Employees experience harassment and violence in the workplace based on multiple grounds. The type of atmosphere that employer provide for employees is important to their physical and emotional well-being. Unfortunately an employee can ruin the job satisfaction of a fellow worker with rude and harassing behaviors. A harasser can engage in mildly annoying behavior that impairs the others concentration or he can perform extremely obnoxious actions that create anxiety and threatens the safety of the other person. Workplace harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

Workplace harassment involves behaviors that contribute to a hostile work environment. Workplace harassment must include discrimination based on a protected class status such as race, religion, disability [1]. Harassment refers to vexatious behavior experienced as a result of one or more personal attributes, many of which are covered by Title VII of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act and they defined Workplace Harassment as "Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, and that (i) has the purpose or the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an

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individual's employment opportunities.

GENDER AND ETHNIC HARASSMENT

Gender Harassment has been treated as one aspect of sexual harassment [2], but unlike sexual coercion or unwanted sexual attention, it “conveys hostility devoid of any explicit sexual motive” [3]. Evidence has consistently shown that gender harassment occurs more frequently than attempts to garner sexual cooperation, and when sexualized forms of harassment do occur, they are nearly always coupled with gender harassment [4]. Ethnic harassment encompasses both hostile comments about target individual's ethnic group and exclusion of the target from work-related or social interactions because of the individual's ethnicity [5].

Various research reports that examined women's versus men's sexual harassment experiences indicates (a) non-significant gender differences in frequency rates in some settings [6], (b) parallel factor structures for GH measures for both genders [7], and (c) gender similarities in the fit of models examining the antecedents and consequences of harassment [8].

VERBAL ABUSE

The most frequent type of rude and harassing behavior that occurs on the job is verbal in nature. Snide, sarcastic or degrading remarks are rude and, if frequent can constitute harassment. Shouting and the use of expletives are forms of verbal abuse. Any consistent verbal dialogue that affects a person's ability to work in a peaceful environment is rude and harassing. Ongoing verbal tirades by one employee against another worker require HR manager's intervention. The HR manager has to be on guard for these behaviors so that he can warn, counsel and sanction offenders.

VERBAL ABUSE BY EMPLOYERS

Verbal abuse at the workplace can be classified as subtle abuse and overt abuse. Overt verbal abuse is when the employer insults the other person by shouting, name calling, threatening, using derogatory language, etc. The employer may pick out mistakes and criticize the individual in front of the other employees. Subtle verbal abuse is when the employer criticizes or passes sarcastic remarks without yelling or shouting. The employer may give his employee a cold treatment, while being nice and jovial with others. The employer may also try to avoid the employee, when he tries to discuss issues and problems. Since this happens in a private setting, there will be no witnesses and no other employee will trust what the abused employee is saying and this makes him to reduce his self esteem. The abused employee has no other option than leaving the organization and makes him dissatisfied in his job.

RETALIATION

Employee retaliation against another worker constitutes harassment. This can involve a supervisor and a staff member, or can be one employee retaliating against a peer. A supervisor who changes an employee's work schedule to antagonize the employee can be accused of harassment. The manager of a company must have to determine the validity of any alleged retaliatory behavior and correct the situation. Keep a record of the incident and warn the perpetrator that this type of behavior in the future will result in suspension or other serious disciplinary action.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment at the workplace is rampant but no one talks about it. Sexual harassment can range from obscene jokes and remarks to inappropriate touching and physical molestation. Sexual harassment in the workplace harms the target of mistreatment. 17% of working women in major cities of India have admitted to it. However most the harassment was not physical. A survey done by Oxfam India and the social and rural research institute in 2011-2012 showed that high incidence of sexual harassment taking place in both organized and unorganized sectors and women are facing incidents that are non physical. Violence against women is a human rights violation- be it domestic violence within homes or sexual harassment at workplace. Sexual harassment often reflects an abuse of power within an organization, where members of one group of people yield greater power than others, generally women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

All forms of workplace harassment are detrimental to employee's well-being. Indeed one of the most consistent findings from literature is that harassment represents a potent interpersonal stressor (Fitzgerald et al, 1997; Keashly, 1998) and as such it produces strain outcomes such as poor job attitudes like dissatisfaction and negative job-related behaviors like withdrawal, as well as poor psychological and physical health like anxiety, depression, neck strain, dissatisfaction. There are competing theories regarding the exact processes through which occupational stressors result in strain outcomes, but common to these theories is the understanding that stressors produce immediate psychological responses which may result in long term strain [9]. This theoretical foundation has been useful for describing the underlying processes and diverse range of outcomes experienced by targets of harassment. Harassment at work has been claimed to be more crippling and devastating problem for employees than all other work-related stressors together [10]. Another factor called mobbing is commonly used to describe all situations where a worker, supervisor or a manager is systematically, repeatedly mistreated and repeatedly mistreated by fellow workers. It results in low morale, increased absenteeism, and decreased productivity and loss of key individuals. By using the term mobbing, harassment at work has been given a wider implication than those normally presented with sexual harassment. A hostile work environment, in which insulting or offensive remarks, persistent criticism, personal abuse and threats prevail, is a reality for many employees in both public and private organizations [11]. Harassment combine to influence targets emerges from the clinical literature on major life stressors. [12] Theorized that the negative impact of life stressors is addictive. Some events may be more detrimental than others (e.g., death of a friend vs. financial troubles), but it is possible to determine the level of expected psychological strain by assessing how many life stressors an individual has experienced in the recent past [13]. The greater the number of severe life stressors that one has recently experienced, the greater is the negative impact on ones psychological and physical health. A number of organizational studies have supported this additive conceptualization of aversive events [14]; [15]; [16]; [17]. This additive effect suggests that when targets experience different forms of harassment, each new type of harassment adds to the target individual's level of negative strain outcomes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study the relationship between gender harassment and organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
To study the relationship between ethnic harassment and organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
To study the relationship between sexual harassment and organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
Research has shown that each place of workplace harassment predicts target strain outcomes as expected, including poor job attitudes, high levels of work withdrawal, turnover intentions, mental health symptoms, and high levels of physical symptoms or somatic complaints [18]; These relationships have supported for Gender Harassment in both meta-analytic and descriptive reviews [19]. There is comparatively a less research on ethnic harassment at work, yet the existing results are similar. The set of hypothesis of the research work are as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Gender Harassment is negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intentions and depression.

Hypothesis 2: Ethnic Harassment is negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intentions and depression.

Hypothesis 3: sexual Harassment is negatively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intentions and depression.

METHODOLOGY AND MEASURES

The present study was conducted on sample of 290 employees of first line of management in the automotive industries and 240 employees completed the survey. Data were given in the form of questionnaire and were distributed to the employees. Based on our literature review, the research framework is presented.

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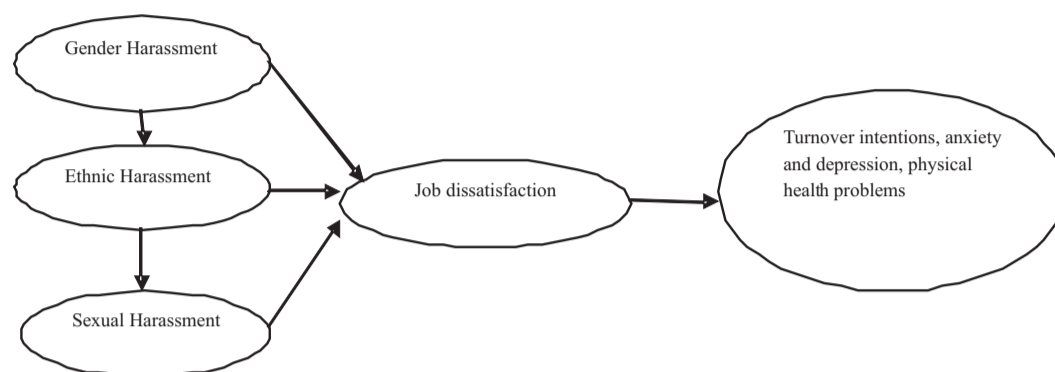


Fig.1 Research Framework

The survey contained a variety of questions regarding the organization, work environment, employee relations and job attitudes. To assess ethnic harassment a six item scale from Ethnic Harassment Experiences scale, which asks participants to indicate how frequently they have experienced verbal harassing and exclusionary forms of ethnic harassment on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). The organizational commitment questionnaire assessed commitment. Participants respond to the 15 items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

To assess job satisfaction, the job descriptive index instrument consists of affective adjectives that describe several domains of one's job. Participants indicate whether the adjectives describes their job (i.e., "yes"; coded as 3), does not describe their job (i.e., "no"; coded as 0), or whether they are not sure (i.e., "?"; coded as 1). The two-item measure of turnover intentions was derived from [20]. Employees indicated how often they did the following on a scale ranging from 0 to 7. Thinking about quitting your job and explore other job opportunities by checking job listings or want ads.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 are tested regarding the relationships between ethnic harassment, gender harassment and target individuals turnover intentions and depression, for these regressions, the gender and racial minority status were treated as covariates; gender did not account for significant variance in any of the dependent variables; and racial minority status only significantly predicted job satisfaction. Regression analysis for hypothesis 1 shows that ethnic harassment was negatively related to commitment ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = .26, p < .01$) and positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .14, p < .05$). Consistent with the model hypothesis 2 was also negatively related to organizational commitment ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = -.22, p < .01$) and positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .24, p < .01$). Sexual harassment is related to the same set of outcomes, commitment ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$), job satisfaction ($\beta = -.29, p < .01$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = .27, p < .01$). Additional analysis were conducted to determine whether gender interacted with gender harassment to predict outcomes and all of the results were non significant. Thus the relationship between ethnic harassment and gender harassment were not qualified by race or gender. Table.1 and Table.2 shows the descriptive and regression of the research work.

Table.1.Descriptive statistics and correlation

Scale	M	SD	Factor loading
EH	1.15	0.35	.83
GH	1.23	0.39	.85
SH	3.46	1.02	.86
JS	116.2	30.14	.94
OC	1.17	1.63	.82
TI	1.36	0.48	.64

Table.2 Regression coefficients

	Organizational commitment	Job satisfaction	Turnover intentions
Variable	β	ΔF	ΔR^2
Demographics		0.98	.01
Gender	.00	-.01	
Racial Minority	-.09	-.02	
Sexual Harassment	-.19**	6.71**	.08

DISCUSSION

In this study it is established that ethnic harassment and gender harassment independently predicted organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The results evidenced the strong support for the inurnment effect, which emerged for the two or three outcomes. The limitations of the study include the data were cross sectional and all data came from a single source which raises concern about common method variance. Further studies should have more concentrate on the sexual harassment against the employees and the physiological and psychological well being of the employees. More samples should have to be taken for the future study of the research to give more strength for the research work.

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