# Job Satisfaction and Workplace Harassment: An Investigation in the Nepalese Development Banking Sector

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## Abstract

In today's context, workplace harassment has become a widespread issue, and its repercussions extend to an employee's personal life, family, and career. The principal objective of this research endeavor was to examine the occurrence of workplace harassment and the resultant consequences for job satisfaction in the banking sector of Nepal. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that various forms of harassment including verbal, physical, and psychological have a substantial and statistically significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees. Furthermore, this study establishes that these forms of harassment-verbal, physical, and mental – are positively and significantly correlated with one another. Sadly, it is evident that these types of harassment disproportionately affect assistant and junior-level officers, leading to a notable reduction in job satisfaction within their workplace.

**Keywords:** Job Contentment, Oral abuse, Physical Mistreatment, Psychological Torment, Banking Industry

## I. Introduction

In the global landscape, the menace of workplace harassment looms large, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in Nepal, where it operates largely unchecked due to an absence of formal legislations targeting this issue. While the repercussions of such activities are severe and far-reaching, existing research, especially within Nepal, barely scratches the surface of this pervasive problem (Moran, 2014). This kind of harassment manifests through consistent offensive behaviors, both intentional and otherwise, perceived by the victims as purposeful attempts to inflict harm or evict them from their professional settings, necessitating urgent attention and interventions. Regardless of their scale and domain, organizations worldwide are grappling with this socio-professional issue, the ramifications of which are extensively chronicled in academic literature. On a personal level, victims might find themselves grappling with a host of psychological ailments ranging from suicidal thoughts to depression, anxiety, and a decline in self-esteem, eventually leading to diminished performance at work. Organizations, on the flip side, witness a detrimental effect on facets like employee allegiance, job gratification, and an increase in absenteeism and attrition rates, which are worrisome indicators of a deteriorating work environment (Ikyanyon &

Aondover, 2013; Long, Tan, & Ismail, 2016). Existing studies, employing terminology such as "mobbing" synonymously with "harassment", characterize it through various ill-treatment forms including unreasonable task deadlines to personal derogatory remarks and gossip-spreading (Einarsen, 2005).

## II. Review of Literature

According to the American Psychological Association (2005), a typical harasser can be described as an individual who consistently engages in aggressive behaviours with the intention of causing distress or harm. These actions often occur in environments where there is a noticeable power imbalance. In the midst of varying interpretations, this study aligns with a widely accepted definition of job satisfaction, considering it a positive emotional response born from one's job appraisal or associated experiences, serving as the nucleus for numerous theoretical discussions surrounding individual attitudes and work behaviours. This area not only provides a fertile ground for academic discourse but has actionable implications to augment individual well-being and organizational productivity (Judge & Klinger, 2016). Embracing a dualistic view, this study interprets job satisfaction as an entity influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic facets, where job performance is intricately linked to myriad factors within an organizational setting (Mete & Sokmen, 2016). Despite its prevalence, workplace harassment frequently goes unreported, a consequence of societal negligence and the looming fear victims harbour regarding potential backlash post-disclosure (Moran, 2014; Chance, 2017). Crafting regulations to curb this issue seems arduous, given the secluded nature of these incidents, often eluding the eyes of supervisors and colleagues. This issue, arguably more pervasive than others addressed by existing legislations, fosters a hostile work environment, hampering employee productivity substantially (Chance, 2017; Hogan, 2017; Merkin & Shah, 2014). While a majority of existing studies are Euro-centric, this research endeavors to fill a significant gap, offering a fresh perspective from a distinct cultural backdrop, thus broadening the scope of the discourse in this domain.

The focus of this investigation is to dissect varying experiences of harassment in workplaces and understand their ramifications on the job satisfaction of employees. The research delineates specific objectives: identifying assorted types of workplace harassment, examining the rate and intensity of these occurrences, and probing the interrelation between harassment incidents and levels of job satisfaction among employees. Centered on the principles of organizational and leadership theories, this investigation posits that harassment in professional settings encompasses more than just aggressive actions. It involves behaviors that can ravage an individual's mental and physical health, their professional competency, and financial stability, cultivating a toxic and detrimental atmosphere (Heathfield, 2016). It's vital to note that this pervasive issue not only disrupts morale but has wider implications for organizational productivity. However, this phenomenon often goes unnoticed or is even accepted by the management staff. Embarking on a quantitative pathway, this study aims to demonstrate that victims of harassment face a deterioration of morale, thereby affecting their job satisfaction adversely. Furthermore, the research seeks to explore any potential

positive angles of harassing behaviours, soliciting anonymous input from employees across various commercial banks to create a rounded perspective on the issue. In addition, the research casts a spotlight on the dynamics of harassment behaviours at work, with the intention to sensitize both current and future generations to the severity of these problems and propose preventive strategies. The data gathered aims to capture instances of employee ill-treatment and its influence on their job contentment levels. Despite the lack of explicit legal prohibitions against general harassment behaviour, the onus remains on employers to safeguard the physical and mental health of their personnel. Expounding on the concept of job satisfaction, there exists a multitude of perspectives and definitions from different scholars. According to Kaliski (2007), job satisfaction embodies an employee's sense of accomplishment and success in their role, directly influencing both their productivity and personal welfare. It implies a scenario where an employee is happy and enthusiastic about their work, resulting in a fulfilling professional life. Yet, as noted by Brikend (2011), it's essential to consider that factors fostering job satisfaction can concurrently engender job dissatisfaction. This duality is reflected in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1964), which posits that employees are influenced by factors that either promote satisfaction (motivators) or cause dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). Dharejo et al. (2017) provide additional information regarding the perspectives that McGregor's Theories X and Y present. Pessimistic in nature, Theory X posits that employees have a tendency to evade responsibilities and demand excessive oversight, leading to diminished levels of job satisfaction. Conversely, Theory Y illustrates a more positive approach where employees are passionate about their work, exhibit responsibility and creativity, ultimately fostering a higher degree of job satisfaction.

## III. Research Methodology

This study, grounded in quantitative research, is focused on acquiring concrete, numerical outcomes from a specifically chosen segment, with an emphasis on examining the correlation between incidents of harassment at the workplace and the levels of job satisfaction. This study employs a rigorous methodology to examine the relationship between workplace harassment and job satisfaction, utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative frameworks. The initiative behind this research format is to unveil the underlying associations between workplace mistreatment and employee satisfaction levels. It embodies a structural blueprint that guides the collection, handling, and interpretation of data, steering towards conclusive findings. The research, rooted in both descriptive and causal explorations, delves into the analysis of primary data to unravel the complex interrelationships between the variables involved. To do this, a range of statistical techniques were used on the selected data, such as regression and correlation analyses, Cronbach's alpha, frequency analytics, mean calculations, standard deviation evaluations, and validity and reliability assessments. This, in turn, allowed for a meticulous dissection of the causal factors and their subsequent implications, paving the way for predictions based on the causal variables delineated in the study. The study relied on primary data collected via a questionnaire survey that included a range of closed-ended questions and Likert scale evaluations. To kick

start this process, a preliminary evaluation involving a survey questionnaire was orchestrated amongst a pool of prospective respondents, a move aimed at validating the efficacy and relevance of the questions, as well as estimating the prospective duration for survey completion. Following the fruitful culmination of this pilot phase, the primary study was launched, focusing on the designated respondents. In the context of Nepal, there exists a network of 17 development banks, from which a selection of 17 has been earmarked to serve as foundational subjects for this current research. Based on the information curated from the Human Resource Departments across these 17 banking entities, it has been discerned that a total of more than 2,500 individuals, positioned at the assistant and junior officer echelons, find themselves more susceptible to experiencing workplace harassment. This collective group thus forms the nucleus population for this study. To ascertain a representative sample size from this established population pool, the study turns to the application of the Yamane (1967) formula, allowing for a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence threshold. This mathematical method for determining the precise sample size is described below:

$n = N/1 + N(e)^2 = N/1 + 2500 * (0.05)^2 = 400$

Where,

       n = Sample size

       N = Population size

       e = Margin of error

Therefore, the number of data samples collected for the study is 400, using random sampling for data collection.

## Research Model

In alignment with the research goals, a model leveraging regression analysis has been formulated. In this setup, the dependent entity, which is "job satisfaction", is influenced by various independent factors such as verbal harassment, physical harassment, and mental harassment.

$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$

Therefore, Model 1 is:

JS      $= a + \beta_1 VH + \beta_2 PH + \beta_3 MH + e$

Where,

JS      = Job satisfaction

a      = Constant

VH      = Verbal harassment

PH      = Physical harassment

MH      = Mental harassment

e      = error

## Research Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between verbal harassment and employee's Job satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant relationship between physical harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant relationship between mental harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant relationship between frequency of harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

H5: There is a significant relationship between intensity of harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

## Conceptual Framework

**Independent Variable**                                              **Dependent Variable**

| Verbal Harassment |

| Physical harassment |

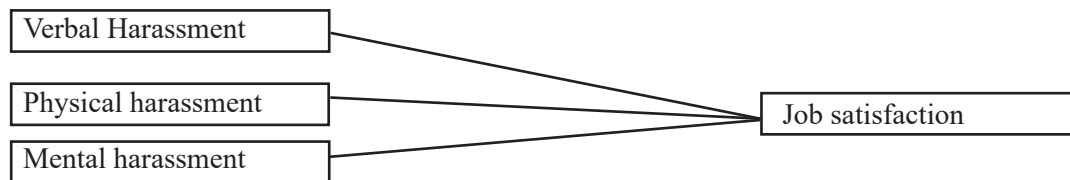| Mental harassment |

| Job satisfaction |

*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

## IV. Results and Discussion

### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Among the 400 responses collected during the research, the table below summarizes the demographic data of the respondents.

**Table 1**

*Respondents' Profile*

|  | **No. of Respondents** | **Percent (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Age** |  |  |
| Below 25 | 120 | 30.0 |
| 26 - 34 | 190 | 47.5 |
| 35 - 42 | 70 | 17.5 |
| Above 43 | 20 | 5 |
| **Gender** |  |  |
| Male | 190 | 47.5 |
| Female | 210 | 52.5 |

| | No. of Respondents | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Birthplace** | | |
| Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City | 250 | 62.5 |
| Out of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City | 100 | 25.0 |
| India and foreign countries | 50 | 12.5 |
| **Organizational level** | | |
| Assistant level | 300 | 75 |
| Junior Officer/Officer level | 100 | 25 |
| **Education** | | |
| High School | 25 | 6.25 |
| Bachelors | 185 | 46.25 |
| Masters | 185 | 46.25 |
| MPhil & above | 2 | .5 |
| Other | 3 | .75 |
| **Total** | **400** | **100** |
| **Source:** Survey, 2023 | | |

## Descriptive Analysis

In this segment, the evaluative breakdown of the information accrued from the survey participants is elucidated through the questionnaires utilized during the investigation stage. This evaluative process sheds light on the data by employing statistical methodologies and calculations, including mean and standard deviation, along with the pinpointing of upper and lower values. Within this evaluative frame, the dependent entity, namely Job Satisfaction present amidst the incumbent workforce within diverse commercial banking establishments in Nepal, is scrutinized through three distinct angles – verbal, physical, and mental harassment. The metrics from these three dimensions assist in dissecting the data concerning the frequencies and accumulation pertinent to the research queries and variables. To facilitate this, queries structured on a 'Five-Point Likert Scale' were presented to the respondents, where the scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with intermediary values denoting varying levels of agreement or neutrality.

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics of Verbal Harassment

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Whispers and Speculations | 3.49 | 1.22 |
| Derogatory Remarks | 2.70 | 1.40 |
| Excessive Yelling and Irritation | 3.20 | 1.34 |
| Mocked and Aggravated | 2.88 | 1.35 |
| Inappropriate and Discomforting Advances | 2.39 | 1.36 |
| Derogatory and Harmful | 3.36 | 1.26 |

Table 2 delineates the descriptive statistics pertaining to verbal harassment. It can be observed that the incidents involving gossip and rumors, unnecessary shouting, and anger are reported more frequently, with respective mean values of 3.49, 3.20, and 3.36. On the other hand, demeaning remarks, instances of teasing and irritation, and inappropriate flirtations have lower mean values, noted as 2.70, 2.88, and 2.39, respectively. This data indicates that participants primarily encounter verbal harassment in the form of offensive and hurtful gossip, rumors, and expressions of anger, with a notable mean value of 3.36 for offensive and hurtful incidents.

**Table 3**
Descriptive Statistics of Physical Harassment

|  | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| Accusatory Gestures and Obstruction | 2.12 | 1.21 |
| Physical Intrusiveness or Invading Personal Space | 1.98 | 1.20 |
| Bodily Harm or Intimidation | 1.80 | 1.10 |
| Inappropriate Gazes | 2.59 | 1.50 |
| Inappropriate Physical Contact | 2.30 | 1.30 |
| Physical Discomfort and Harm | 2.49 | 1.40 |

The data illustrated in Table 3 reveals the facets of physical harassment experienced by the respondents. It is noted that behaviors such as unwarranted staring and actions causing physical discomfort and harm are somewhat common, with mean values of 2.59 and 2.49, implying that respondents occasionally encounter such actions in the workplace, primarily from higher-ups, peers, or visitors. These episodes tend to be both physically distressing and injurious. Conversely, actions denoted by finger-pointing, obstructing one's path, invasive proximity, explicit threats or physical abuse, and inappropriate touching are less prevalent, as reflected by their sub-2.5 mean values (2.12, 1.98, 1.80, and 2.30 respectively), signifying a lesser extent of these forms of physical harassment within the respondent group's experiences.

**Table 4**
*Descriptive Statistics of Mental Harassment*

|  | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| Subtle Indications or Cues | 2.70 | 1.47 |
| Neglected or Handled Harshly | 2.56 | 1.40 |
| Subjected to High Stress | 3.70 | 1.20 |
| Held Responsible | 2.90 | 1.35 |
| Excessive Micromanagement | 3.45 | 1.40 |
| Denial of Entitlements | 3.20 | 1.49 |
| Psychological Distress and Harm | 3.60 | 1.40 |

The findings depicted in Table 4 delve into the nature and frequency of mental harassment witnessed by the participants. A prominent feature is the heightened pressure they experience, as captured by a mean value of 3.70, indicating a trend where respondents are frequently urged to complete tasks at an unrealistic pace. Additionally, respondents periodically grapple with subtle coercive suggestions to resign, a rough or indifferent attitude from peers or superiors, being held accountable for missteps, excessive oversight by supervisors or colleagues, and denial of certain privileges such as time-off for illness or breaks, as represented by respective mean scores of 2.70, 2.56, 2.90, 3.45, and 3.20. Moreover, a significant portion of these incidents are characterized by deep psychological distress and agitation, demonstrated by a mean score of 3.60, which underscores the predominance of mentally disruptive and hurtful experiences in their work setting.

## Correlation Analysis

In order to ascertain the degree of association between the dependent and independent variables, the Pearson's correlation methodology is utilized. This statistical tool gauges the intensity of the linear linkage between distinct variables. The details of this analytical process are revealed in the subsequent table:

**Table 5:**

*Correlation Analysis between Job Satisfaction and Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment and Mental Harassment*

| | Verbal Harassment | Physical Harassment | Mental Harassment | Job Satisfaction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verbal Harassment | 1 | | | |
| Physical Harassment | .580** (.000) | 1 | | |
| Mental Harassment | .710** (.000) | .584** (.000) | 1 | |
| Job Satisfaction | -.315** (.000) | -.210** (.001) | -.380** (.000) | 1 |

According to the results presented in Table 5, it is apparent that there is a marked and negative correlation between the independent variables (verbal, physical, and mental harassment) and the dependent variable, job satisfaction, demonstrated by p-values of 0.000, 0.001, and 0.000 respectively. This data not only substantiates a considerable link between the independent and dependent variables but also between the independent variables themselves. Analyzing the independent entities, it emerges that the relationships between verbal and physical harassment, verbal and mental harassment, as well as physical and mental harassment, are both positive and significant, each displaying a p-value of 0.000. This data suggests a significant negative influence of the harassment scenarios on job satisfaction. Furthermore, it highlights a positive and substantial interrelation amongst the independent variables, indicating that the manifestation of one form of harassment - be it verbal, physical, or mental - potentially fosters the onset of others.

## Regression Analysis

To ascertain the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable, regression analysis was employed, as depicted in the ensuing table.

**Table 6**

*Regression Analysis of Job Satisfaction on Verbal, Physical, and Mental Harassment*

| Model: $JS = a + \beta_1 VH + \beta_2 PH + \beta_3 MH + e$ | |
|---|---|
| Constant | 20.15 (.000) |
| **Factors** | |
| Verbal Harassment | -2.180 (.029) |
| Physical Harassment | 2.65 (.029) |
| Mental Harassment | -5.615 (.000) |
| F-Test | 26.125 (.000) |
| R-square | .260 |
| Adjusted R-square | .2544 |

Table 6 offers significant insights regarding the F-Test regression model's appropriateness for the given data. This assertion is supported by the statistically significant F value of 26.125 and the corresponding p-value of 0.000. The outcomes of a regression analysis conducted on the dependent variable, job satisfaction, in relation to the independent variables (verbal, physical, and mental harassment), are displayed in the table below. A noteworthy correlation exists between the dependent and independent variables, as indicated by the p-values of 0.00, 0.029, and 0.00, respectively, for verbal, physical, and mental harassment, all of which fall below the significance level of 0.05.

## V. Conclusion

Based on the gathered data, the research affirms that in the context of Nepal, there exists a notable and negative association between the independent variables - namely verbal, physical, and mental harassment - and the dependent variable, which is job satisfaction. This finding aligns with prior research which underscores the adverse repercussions of any harassment type on an individual's health and efficacy. This study takes a step further, delineating the specific relationships between different forms of workplace harassment and the level of job satisfaction among employees in Nepal's development banking sector. Moreover, the study highlights that the physical form of

workplace harassment is relatively infrequent in Nepalese development banks compared to the prevalent and intense occurrences of mental harassment, followed closely by verbal harassment. The data also underscores that both male and female employees at the assistant and junior officer or officer ranks within Nepalese development banks face a sustained decline in job satisfaction, a direct outcome of the harassment incidents they experience in their workplaces.

## VI. Recommendations

In light of the conclusions drawn from the research, it is emphatically suggested that comprehensive laws- both at legal and organizational levels - be enacted to curb all forms of workplace harassment and bullying, which markedly impair the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of victims. It is imperative for governing bodies to vigilantly oversee workplace environments to avert instances of harassment. Even though such incidents, both direct and indirect, often go unnoticed by many, they significantly affect the lives of the victims. Hence, it is vital to foster awareness and education among employees regarding the various manifestations of harassment. Equipping both victims and witnesses with the knowledge and courage to confront these issues and promptly notify the authorities is essential. Stern actions by authorities against perpetrators must be a non-negotiable standard. This research, encompassing demographic data such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, and organizational hierarchy of personnel in Nepalese development banks, stands as a valuable reference for subsequent studies focusing on this workforce. It not only sheds light on workplace atmospheres and job satisfaction but also broadly addresses different kinds of harassment occurrences and their subsequent impact on employee satisfaction. As a fundamental resource, this study can spearhead future explorations into workplace dynamics, various harassment types, and their relation to job satisfaction. Additionally, the study delineates the application of research tools like primary data collection via surveys incorporating Likert Scales, pilot testing, and statistical analyses like mean, standard deviation, regression, and correlation analysis. Consequently, it serves as a rich methodological reference for studies venturing into themes of workplace harassment and job satisfaction. Moreover, this study is foundational, paving the way for expansive future investigations into the multifaceted relationship between harassment and job satisfaction, which extends into various forms and settings. Recognizing harassment and job satisfaction as complex, wide-ranging topics with numerous influences and outcomes, this research marks a preliminary yet significant stride towards comprehensive future studies in this domain.

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