Workplace Harassment and Intention to Leave in Nepalese Organisations: *A Mediating Role of Psychological Stress*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the impact of workplace harassment on intention to leave where psychological stress as mediator was used to examine its intensity on the relationship between workplace harassment and intention to leave. Convenience and snowball sampling technique was adopted to select the employees working in different sectors situated within the Kathmandu Valley. Regression Analysis from Hayes macro process was conducted from the responses of 199 respondents to generate the results of mediation effect. The findings indicate that workplace harassment has a positive significant impact on employee's intention to leave. In addition, it was found that the psychological stress mediates the relationship between workplace harassment and intention to leave. Future studies can be conducted through qualitative methods among the employees of different sectors or specific industries for in-depth analysis of the harassment and its consequences the employees are facing.

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Any undesirable behaviour caused based on race, colour, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information is referred as harassment, a widely prevalent phenomenon inside or outside workplace (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n. d.). According to the U.S. EEOC (n. d.) harassment is illegal in situations either where it becomes a requirement for employment to put up with the offensive behaviour or when it is severe or pervasive enough to produce an environment that a reasonable person

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would perceive as intimidating, hostile, or abusive. There is never a justification for harassment, yet frequently the person harassing someone with eve teasing or name-calling is unaware that his or her actions fall under the definition of harassment (U.S EEOC, n. d). The reasons for this in Nepal are lack of knowledge and education system regarding what harassment is and the stereotypical culture in which we live.

While many employees may face harassment outside workplace such as domestic violence or while commuting to and from work, the fact that they may be a victim of harassment within their workplace is not hidden. In the organization, harassment refers to insulting or abusive behaviour or even physical assault directed either to an individual or a group of employees (Williams & Kliener, 2001). Despite all the work that has been done in this field yet, researchers believe that it is still not efficient and effective enough to understand and resolve a complicated and deep-rooted problem like this one (Fitzgerald, 2017). Workplace harassment is an unwanted behaviour from any person that belittles the other person (Moran, 2014). People who experience this kind of treatment may become demoralised and lose their sense of self. They frequently experience interruptions as a result, which makes them difficult to focus on their work (Yeh et al., 2020). A resignation may result from inconsistent timekeeping, rising absenteeism, a lack of commitment, and poor performance that directly influence the effectiveness and performance of the organisation. Previous studies indicates that workplace bullying is related with psychological distress like stress and anxiety (Ciby & Raya, 2014; Namie, 2007; Qureshi et al., 2014). Additionally, those who suffered from bullying in the workplace were more prone to risk of mental ill-being (Berthelsen et al., 2011; Magee et al., 2014). Similarly, workplace bullying increases the level of harm that ultimately affects the victims' daily functioning and thus wanted to leave the organisation (Volk et al., 2014; Srivastava & Agrawal, 2020).

Rayner and Cooper (1997) stated that employees decided to leave their organisations because of bullying, a type of workplace harassment. Social exclusion, rumours, and gossip are a few examples of indirect forms of aggression, while public humiliation, verbal abuse, and accusations are examples of direct forms of aggression (O'Moore et al., 1998). Verbal abuse is mostly encountered by medical staffs rather than physical violence (Yeh et al., 2020). Because of this, workplace bullying is now a big problem for firms, which ultimately encourages employees to quit their jobs. According to ILO (2004), private firm, government, domestic work sphere, hotel and restaurant are other areas where sexual harassment are highly prevalent. Further, it is highlighted that the effects of sexual harassment on both employee and employers are manifold encompassing wide range of social, cultural and economic aspects. Moreover, it negatively affects the victims' health leading to both physical and psychological disruptions.

Along with other types of harassment sexual harassment is the most under researched area in Nepal. According to ILO (2004), victims of sexual harassment goes through emotional stress, humiliation, anxiety, depression, anger, powerlessness, fatigue and physical illnesses. As a result, they may lose their interest towards their job or feeling compelled to resign. The sufferings of the victim can have a direct effect on the enterprises as sexual harassment practices can create tension in the workplace, inefficiency in teamwork, reduced work performance, absenteeism, and decreased the overall productivity. As Baidar (2021) reveals in that a marketing executive had to resign from her job as her boss showed inappropriate behaviour towards her without her consent. Further, the author mentions about an employee suffering from mental harassment due to overload of work, underpayment, rudely addressed, and severely mistreated during their internship.

As per Chaudhuri (2006), majority of women respondents didn't want to complain regarding the harassment they are facing to their supervisors or the management opting to deal it on their own. Yeh et al. (2020) also stated that nursing staffs are familiar and have greater potential to deal with the workplace violence. However, newly appointed nurses refrained from reporting due to fear of facing harassments again and risk of losing their employment, lack of confidence in the complaint's mechanism, potentiality of defamation or threats from the perpetrators and other similar reasons.

The study shows that despite respondent facing excessive stress at their workplace they still fear of losing their job.

The prevalence of workplace harassment in worldwide and in Nepal is seen in different forms including both mental and physical. There is no doubt that women face more violence and harassment in their lifetime than male. The population of Kathmandu is rapidly growing with migration, modernisation and urbanisation. Nevertheless, the deep-rooted stereotypes are still the cause of multiple forms of harassment in and around the workplace. Those forms could be physical assault, sexual, psychological, economic violence as well as caste-based discrimination-related affecting employees at different level. These harassments can occur anywhere and at any time affecting the employee's performance resulting in firing, higher rate of turnover and unemployment. For instance, evidence from US findings indicates that sexual harassment increases turnover intentions at work (Rosen & Martin, 1998).

The pressure of work and the possibility of harassment can occur anywhere in wide spectrum of sector and the prevailing issues in Nepal are seen mostly everywhere. The forms of harassment can occur from verbal, physical, bullying, sexual leading to psychological harassment and severe consequences on the victim. Since, the serious consequences of harassment could affect psychological health, physical health and work/social life. Employers are also hesitant to open about the harassments

they face, especially when it is related to sexual or psychological harassments, due to fear of losing their job and other ramifications. There are fewer studies in Nepal related to workplace harassment. Previous studies have been conducted in analysing the nature, extent, existence of sexual harassment (Gurubacharya, 2000; ILO, 2004). The study on the prevailing different forms of harassment occurring at workplace and employees' intention to leave has not been yet conducted. There is a need for more than descriptive research, research that focuses on different harassments and their impact on employee's intention to leave due to excessive psychological stress, a common phenomenon that is prevalent across world, and especially in Nepal. So, this study tries to incorporate different forms of harassment and its impact on employee's stress and the propensity to leave. Further, the study aims in creating awareness about harassment at workplace and that it is not limited to sexual assaults, quid pro quo or physical assaults, but also includes bullying through verbally, discrimination, insults as well as economic harm that creates serious consequences such as psychological stress leading to depressions or probably unemployment (intention to leave).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the review of literature concerning the study topic.

Workplace Harassment

The term "workplace harassment" generated after the first feminist movement in late 1970s, there has been plenty of work on this issue since then. Prior to the 1970s, this term was ambiguous, and unwelcome and gender-based behaviours and remarks were considered acceptable. Up until a local US court judge discovered a case in which a woman faced severe personal repercussions and was not shielded by corporate protection rules after being harassed and fired from her job in 1974 (Yamada, 2011). The detrimental effects of harassment on workplaces, people, and the environment were not deemed significant enough to consider (Fitzgerald et al., 1997).

Workplace harassment issues has been a growing concern that has received significant attention from both nationally and internationally. Various international efforts have been taken to reduce the workplace harassment worldwide. It is vital to emphasize that any aggressive or abusive behaviour cannot be tolerated that can lead to mental health problems of employees. Workplace harassment is any uninvited verbal, written or physical actions that demonstrates unfriendliness towards a person based on gender, origin, affiliation or religion creating unpleasant working environment that ultimately effects the employees' performance in the organisation and damages brand image (Einarsen et al., 2003). Such mental strains result in anxiety, low morale, poor performance and organisational breakdown (Teasdale, 2006).

Harassment have greater potential to destroy a victim's health, working ability, emotional well-being, self-esteem, and financial stability as well

(Heathfield, 2016). When a culture of harassment begins in organisation, morale is undermined, and productivity is hampered. The workplace harassment often involves people with distorted personalities whose sole purpose is to attack, belittle, criticise, and destroy others. Many managers and leaders either fail to see the issue or are the issue themselves. Employees that are harassed may develop severe mental and physical health issues, which may have a negative impact on their work environment and personal lives (Sthapit, 2010; Sthapit, 2011a; Sthapit, 2011b).

Workplace Harassment and Intention to Leave

Djurkovic et al. (2004) studied that there is a positive relationship between workplace bullying and intention to quit. In addition to this, Sims and Sun (2012) studied that bullied is positively correlated with higher intention to quit the organisation that endures over time. Moreover, results also showed that the odds of sexually harassed employees having turnover intentions are 1.63 times greater than for employees not experiencing sexual harassment (Merkin, 2008). Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H_1: Workplace harassment has a significant impact on intention to leave.

Workplace Harassment and Psychological Stress

Magee et al. (2014) argued that people who are subjected to workplace bullying are more likely to suffer from or be at greater risk of mental health deterioration. Likewise, Qureshi et al. (2014) emphasised that long-term bullying in the workplace have detrimental effect on person's physical and mental health. It is believed that the victim's frequent or prolonged exposure to bullying will have a bad effect on their sense of justice and fairness, which will then lead to a sense of loss and have a poor influence on their mental health (Nielsen et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is found that individuals who experience or witness workplace bullying will have lower mental health than those who do not (Magee et al., 2014). Thus, the authors hypothesised that:

H_2: Workplace harassment has a significant impact on psychological stress.

Psychological Stress and Intention to Leave

Suarthana and Riana (2016) discovered that higher levels of stress and anxiety among the workforce increases desire to leave the company. Young workers who are under stress are more likely to consider leaving their jobs (Zhang et al., 2014). These studies additionally claimed that younger workers might not be able to handle the stress generated by their workplace. However, Wu et al. (2012) revealed that, regardless of age, employees who encountered workplace stress would frequently result in attrition. Hence, the association between stress and turnover occurs across all age groups, rather than just among younger employees. Thus, the hypothesised statement states that:

H_3: Psychological stress has significant impact on intention to leave.

Psychological Stress, Workplace Harassment, and Intention to Leave

Organisations suffer from the employees' turnover due to heightened stress brought on by workplace sexual harassment. It has been demonstrated that workplace stress increases absenteeism and employees' intents to change occupations (Cortina et al., 2001; Gupta & Beehr, 1979). 75 percent of operating room nurses expressed psychological distress as a result of their low pay, excessive workloads, and harassment by surgeons. Because of the surgeons' personal grievances, nurses claimed that they were overworked, which also resulted in physical and mental disorders which ultimately increases the turnover intention (Munthali et al., 2008). Thus, the hypothesised statement states that:

H_4: Psychological stress mediates the relationship between workplace harassment and intention to leave.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study has implemented a casual comparative research design under quantitative research method to analyse the cause-and-effect relationship between independent and dependent variables. This study is based on primary survey where the population are the employees working in different sectors like Banking, education, health, IT, and other sectors like NGOs and INGOs located within the Kathmandu valley. Convenience sampling method was adopted where the respondents who are easily available were approached for data collection. Similarly, snowball sampling technique was also used where data were collected based on the referrals from those participants who were conveniently accessible. A sample of 281 respondents were collected from the major four industries in the Kathmandu Valley. However, 82 respondents were only aware of different forms of harassment. So, the usable sample size for the further analysis was maintained to 199 i.e. employees who faced harassment in their workplace. Hair et al. (1979) recommended that minimum of 100 to 200 observations is often appropriate for the data analysis.

Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis in order to analyse the relationship between each variable, and the mediating effect of psychological stress. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the participants' demographic information and average scores of all variables. In addition, Pearson correlation matrix was used to examine relationship between the variables.

This research article adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of respondents. The information provided by participants was solely used for research purposes and was not utilised for personal or unauthorised purposes.

Instrumentation of Data

The items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. For measuring the workplace harassment, 25 items was adopted from (Einarsen et al., 2009;

Table 1
Normality and Reliability Test

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk Test		Cronbach Alpha
	Statistic	Sig.	
Workplace Harassment	0.845	0.275	0.941
Psychological Stress	0.849	0.326	0.945
Intention to Leave	0.859	0.387	0.912

Note. From Survey 2022

Table 2
Homoscedasticity Test

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances	
F (1, 181)	2.301
P-value	0.132

Dependent Variable. Intention to Leave
Note. From Survey 2022

ILO, 2004). As for measuring intention to leave, 4 items were adopted from Mobley et al.(1979). Items for workplace harassment and intention to leave were rated as 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. And for psychological stress, the items from (Cohen, 1994). The questionnaire consists of 10 items which are rated on a five- point Likert scale, i.e., 1 = Never, 2 = Almost never, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Fairly often, 5 = Very often.

Data Analysis and Discussion

First cronbach alpha were determined to check the internal consistency of each item under the variables where Shapiro Wilk test was conducted for normality and homoscedasticity test was run to ensure the statistical analysis are valid or not. After that, result section begins with the descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis.

The result of Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicates that variables of this study are not significantly different from a normal distribution since p-values 0.275, 0.326, 0.387 are greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, it can be concluded that data of workplace harassment, psychological stress, and intention to leave are normally distributed.

The study used Cronbach's alpha for reliability test. The values are 0.941, 0.945 and 0.912 for workplace harassment, psychological stress and intention to leave respectively. This indicates that the instrument used for this study is considered reliable as the Cronbach alpha values are above the standard score of 0.70.

Table 2 shows the result of homoscedasticity test based on the Levene's test. The result signifies that

Table 3
Analysis by Awareness of Harassment

	Frequency	Percent
Physical Harassment	247	15.6%
Psychological Harassment	258	16.3%
Sexual Harassment	250	15.8%
Bullying	245	15.5%
Online/cyberbullying Harassment	220	13.9%
Economic Harassment	192	12.1%
Abusive Practices	169	10.7%

Note. From Survey 2022

Table 4
Analysis of Harassment Faced

Harassment Faced	Frequency	Percent
Physical Harassment	15	4.2%
Psychological Harassment	123	34.3%
Sexual Harassment	30	8.4%
Bullying	36	10.0%
Online/cyberbullying Harassment	18	5.0%
Economic Harassment	87	24.2%
Abusive Practices	50	13.9%

Note. From Survey 2022

the data is homoscedastic as the null hypothesis is accepted, i.e., p-value greater than significance level 0.05.

Descriptive Analysis

The results of the study have been presented and discussed below:

Table 3 represents the awareness level of respondents on different form of harassment. Among total respondent of 281, the highest heard form of workplace harassment was found to be psychological harassment with 16.3 percent. Similarly, sexual harassment,

physical harassment and bullying were also heard by 15, 15.6 and 15.5 percent of the respondents respectively. Moreover, online/cyberbullying harassment were heard by 13.9 percent of the sample size, whereas economic harassment and abusive practices were heard only by 12.1 and 10.7 percent, respectively.

Although respondents are aware of different kind of harassment prevailing, all of them didn't face such behaviours in their organisation. From this section henceforth, displays analysis of demographic profile of respondents who

encountered different forms of workplace harassment at some point in their life. The total number of respondents who have experienced harassments were 199 out of 281.

Table 4 represents the different types of harassment faced by the employees in Nepalese organisations. It can be observed that psychological harassment is the most faced harassment with 34.3 percent which indicates that respondents mostly experience mental mistreatment in their workplace. With slight difference, 24.2 percent of total respondents feel that they face economic harassment which emphasises financial or economic inequality or mistreatment. Likewise, abusive practices, bullying, sexual, online/cyberbullying, and physical harassment are experienced lower in comparison to psychological and economic harassment.

Table 5 presents the demographic profile of respondents. The table reports higher proportion of female respondents than male since about 61.3 percent of total respondents represents female. Similarly, majority of respondents belonged to the younger age group

Table 5
Frequency Analysis

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	77	38.7
Female	122	61.3
Age Group		
Below 20	3	1.5
20-30	131	65.8
31-40	56	28.1
Above 40	9	4.5
Employed Status		
Employed	182	91.5
Self-employed	6	3.0
Intern	11	5.5
Industry Sector		
Banking Sector	56	28.1
Education Sector	49	24.6
Health Sector	39	19.6
IT Sector	38	19.1
Others	17	8.5
Total	199	100.0

Note. From Survey 2022

Table 6
Analysis of Harassment Faced in Different Sectors

	Banking	Education	Health	IT	Others	Total
Physical Harassment	2 13.30%	5 33.30%	3 20%	4 26.70%	1 6.70%	15 100%
Psychological Harassment	44 35.80%	31 25.20%	23 18.70%	14 11.40%	11 8.90%	123 100%
Sexual Harassment	8 26.70%	8 26.70%	7 23.30%	5 16.70%	2 6.70%	30 100%
Bullying Harassment	9 25%	7 19.40%	10 27.80%	5 13.90%	5 13.90%	36 100%
Online/Cyber Bullying	6 33.3%	5 27.8%	2 11.1%	3 16.7%	2 11.1%	18 100%
Economic Harassment	17 19.5%	24 27.6%	19 21.8%	25 28.7%	2 2.3%	87 100%
Abusive Practices	13 26%	11 22%	15 30%	7 14%	4 8%	50 100%

Note. From Survey 2022

i.e. between 20-30 with 65.8 percent, followed by age group of 31-40 with 28.1 percent. The participants from the age group of below 20 and above 40 are comparatively lower. Furthermore, almost 91.5 percent were employed, 5.5 percent were intern and only 3 percent were self-employed working in banking, education, health, IT and other sectors which included various organisations ranging from INGOs/NGOs, automobile, hospitality and insurance companies.

Table 4.6 presents different forms of harassment faced by the respondents of different sectors. The highest number of physical harassments was seen on education sector with a total number of 5 respondents. Similarly, out of a total of 123 respondents who faced psychological harassment, the highest number of 44 was found working in banking sector. In case of sexual harassment, the highest was 8 which was found in both banking and education sectors. Moreover, it was found that 6 employees working in the banking sector admitted facing online/cyberbullying. The respondents working in IT sector faced more economic harassment compared to other sectors, while the respondents working in health sector had higher frequency facing both bullying harassment and abusive practices.

Moreover, it can be observed that banking sector has more cases of harassment as 99 responses are reported here followed by education, health, information technology sector.

Workplace Harassment

Table 4.7 illustrates mean and standard deviation of all 25 items of workplace

harassment. Here, one item, i.e., "demanded excessive work hours without sufficient compensation" has the highest mean of 3.37, which indicates that respondents feel that they do not receive sufficient compensation for excessive works.

Similarly, the least mean was found to be 1.68 indicating respondents disagree that they receive threats of violence / physical abuse in their organisation. In addition to that, the standard deviation of all 25 items were found out to be approximately around the value of 1,

Table 7
Analysis of Workplace Harassment

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Treated differently	1	5	2.24	1.371
Received threats of violence/physical abuse	1	5	1.68	0.967
Humiliated or ridiculed	1	5	2.12	1.324
Hints given on quitting job	1	5	2.12	1.375
Reminded of past errors and mistakes	1	5	2.57	1.502
Been target of spontaneous anger	1	5	2.28	1.467
Faced intimidating behaviour	1	5	2.05	1.264
Ignored or faced hostile reaction	1	5	2.14	1.355
Received unwanted, offensive emails or messages	1	5	1.88	1.305
Inappropriate advances online	1	5	1.84	1.110
Unwelcome and unnecessary physical touch	1	5	1.87	1.288
Inappropriate sexual invitations	1	5	1.75	1.191
Excessively monitored by supervisors	1	5	2.75	1.468
Faced situations of supervisors/colleagues gesturing a sexual connotation	1	5	1.78	1.210
Ordered to work below level of competence	1	5	2.67	1.544
Heard Gossip and rumours about oneself	1	5	2.29	1.454
Ignored or excluded by supervisors and colleagues	1	5	2.56	1.475
Received insulting or offensive remarks	1	5	2.08	1.363
Persistent criticism of work and effort	1	5	2.45	1.441
Opinions and views are ignored	1	5	2.61	1.445
Unreasonable and impossible targets or deadlines given	1	5	2.35	1.452
Subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	1	5	2.01	1.287
Pressure not to claim something(holidays)	1	5	2.26	1.411
Faced delay in payments	1	5	2.76	1.592
Demanded excessive work hours without sufficient compensation	1	5	3.37	1.618

Note. From Survey 2022

Table 8
Analysis of Psychological Stress

Items	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have been upset because something happened unexpectedly	1	5	3.30	1.104
I have felt that I was unable to control important things in life	1	5	3.05	1.088
I have felt nervous and stressed	1	5	3.40	1.210
I have not confident about my ability to handle personal problems	1	5	2.97	1.029
I have often felt that things were going my way	1	5	2.62	1.144
I have found that I could not cope up with things that I had to do	1	5	2.94	1.074
I have often been able to control irritations in my life	1	5	2.45	1.153
I often felt that I was on top of things	1	5	2.94	1.011
I often have been angered because of things that were outside my control	1	5	3.19	1.133
I have often felt difficulties were piling so high that I could not overcome them	1	5	3.06	1.131

Note. From Survey 2022

specifying that there's not high deviation among the responses but and do vary between the respondents.

Psychological Stress

Table 4.8 illustrates mean and standard deviation of 10 items of psychological stress. The highest mean of 3.40 was found for the item "I have felt nervous and stressed", which indicates that respondents felt nervous and stressed due to harassment in their workplace. While lowest mean value 2.45 reports that respondents have neutral feeling regarding ability to control irritations in their life. Also, all 10 items had their standard deviation the value of 1, that means it shows less variance among responses of all respondents.

Intention to Leave

Table 9 exhibits four items representing the dependent variable "intention to leave". The items were measured through a five-point Likert scale, where 5 represents strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = agree and 1 represents strongly disagree. All four items are seen to have an average mean more than 3 point.

The highest mean of 3.63 for item "I have a desire to leave my current job" shows that respondents facing workplace harassment do have a desire to leave their current job. The mean score of other items indicate that the respondents have yet to decide on thinking to quit, planning to quit and search other job alternatives. Additionally, the standard deviation of all four items is approximately 1 showing quite a variance among responses of all respondents.

Correlation Analysis

Table 10 presents the degree of relationship between independent, mediating, and dependent variable.

Table 10 shows the correlation between average value of independent, mediating, and dependent variables. The Pearson's Correlation Coefficients [r] are obtained from bivariate Pearson's Correlation analysis. All the values of the analysis are significant with p-value of less than 0.05.

The independent variable workplace harassment (WPH) has a positive but weak correlation with the dependent variable, i.e., intention to leave. The r value between them is 0.235 indicating increase in workplace harassment increases the intention to leave. Likewise, there is a positive moderate correlation of independent variable (WPH) with the mediating variable psychological stress (PS) since the r value is 0.454, indicating moderate association between the variables.

Similarly, the relationship between mediating and dependent variable has moderate positive correlation with r value of 0.440.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis has been carried out to analyse the impact of one variable on another and also to test the hypothesis of the study. Mediating effect of psychological stress has also been measured in this section. The results have been elucidated below:

Table 11 shows the impact of workplace harassment on psychological stress. The regression coefficient for Workplace harassment is reported to be 0.463 with p-value less than 0.05 indicating positive significant impact of workplace

Table 9
Analysis of Intention to Leave

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am thinking of quitting the current job	1	5	3.32	1.416
I am planning to leave	1	5	3.14	1.417
I am searching for an alternative job	1	5	3.50	1.463
I have a desire to leave my current job	1	5	3.63	1.439

Note. From Survey 2022

Table 10
Correlation Analysis

Variables	Workplace Harassment	Psychological Stress	Intention to Leave
Workplace Harassment	1	.454**	.235**
Psychological Stress		1	.440**
Intention to Leave			1

Note. From Survey 2022
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11

Analysis between Workplace Harassment and Intention to Leave

	Coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.946	0.1569	12.3998	0.000	1.6365	2.2554
WPH	0.463	0.0647	7.1605	0.000	0.3355	0.5905
R-Square	0.2065					
F-value	51.2731					
P-value	0.000					

Outcome Variable: Psychological Stress
Note. From Survey 2022

Table 12

Analysis of Workplace Harassment and Psychological Stress on Intention to Leave

	Coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.4839	0.2977	4.984	0.000	0.8967	2.0711
WPH	0.0637	0.1032	0.6171	0.5379	-0.1399	0.2672
PS	0.5913	0.1013	5.8373	0.000	0.3915	0.7911
R-Square	0.1952					
F-value	23.7746					
P-value	0.000					

Outcome Variable. Intention to Leave
Note. From Survey 2022

harassment on psychological stress, supporting H_2.

Similarly, R-square of 0.2065 represents 20.65 percent change in psychological stress is being accounted by workplace harassment.

Table 12 illustrates the coefficient of psychological stress is 0.5913 with p-value 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance supporting H_3 i.e. Psychological stress has a significant impact on intention to leave. However, direct effect of workplace harassment on intention to leave shows insignificant that means the H_1 is not supported (p-value>0.05). Similarly, R^2 of 0.1952 also indicates only 19.52 percent variation in intention to leave can be explained by psychological stress.

Table 13 revealed an insignificant direct effect of workplace harassment on intention to leave (b=0.063, p>0.05). However, the indirect effect of workplace harassment on intention to leave in presence of mediator psychological stress was found significant as zero doesn't exist in between the lower limit

confidence interval and upper limit confidence limit. Hence, psychological stress fully mediated the relationship between workplace harassment and intention to leave, supporting H$_4$.

Discussion: This study aimed to analyse the impact of workplace harassment on intention to leave along with the mediating effect of psychological stress. The results demonstrated a significant impact of workplace harassment on psychological stress which indicates that employees who experience harassment in their workplace tend to have the mental disturbance. This finding supports with study of Grynderup et al. (2016) and Hoel et al.(2010) where they have claimed that bullying, a kind of harassment is linked to high level of stress. Further, the results of this study revealed a significant impact of employee's psychological stress on intention to leave their organisation which implies that employees experiencing psychological stress are more expect to leave their working place. In align with this finding, Suarthana and Riana (2016) discovered higher level of stress and anxiety among the workforce increased one's desire to leave the company. Likewise, Nepalese studies (Sthapit, 2010; Sthapit, 2011a; Sthapit, 2011b) stated that employees that are harassed may develop severe mental and physical health issues, which may have a negative impact on their work environment and personal lives. Similarly, in the research conducted by (Pandey, 2020) in banking sector concluded that workplace bullying has a positive link with job stress, indicating that when bullying in the workplace increases or reduces, so does job stress.

However, this study does not exhibit the direct effect of workplace harassment on intention to leave which suggests that there is no direct impact of harassment on intention to leave rather the relationship is mediated by psychological stress. It further indicates that psychological stress serves as a way through which workplace harassment influences turnover intention of employees. This finding is consistent with earlier researches where, Hogh et al. (2011) claimed that individuals mostly faced psychological harassment and abusive work practices that leads to take the decision of turnover in order to cope with circumstances, abusive conduct, or to stop being harassed (Berthelsen et al., 2011). Similarly, Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2012) found that 40.4 percent of the teachers considered leaving their profession and 38.2 percent of them experienced high level of stress. Another study by Yeh et al. (2020) claimed that when work violence are experienced, it reduces self-confidence which easily cause employee to exhibit counterproductive work behaviour like reduction of quality of work, absenteeism and turnover intention.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Workplace harassment is a serious issue that can have a significant negative effect on individuals and organisations. It has been observed as well as known from past researches that workplace

harassments can have a detrimental impact on an individual's psychological well-being and inturn cause anxiety, depression or job dissatisfaction. When an individual experience persistent harassment it can create a toxic work environment and increases the individual's propensity to leave.

This study covered four major industry sectors, all these sectors had proportionate results indicating presence of some forms of harassment and respondents' higher propensity to leave. There were also higher percentage of employees facing psychological harassment and economic harassment, alongside presence of abusive practices. The reason for this could be the supremacy of supervisors or employers wanting to dominate or demean their employees. Similarly, the rise in inflation has led to surge in each commodity and every mechanism that a common man requires to live a normal life. However, organisation has not been able to address lower salaries or provide non-financial rewards that could boost employee's performance. Moreover, from the study it can also assume that the sector of banking, education, health and IT have not put serious thought in creating a workplace harassment policies and guidelines.

This study deepens the understanding of the detrimental effects of workplace harassment on intention to leave. The findings, in particular, shed light on the additional role that stress plays in the adverse effect of workplace harassment on employees' intentions to quit in the organisations situated in Kathmandu Valley. The current study's findings helps to realise that stress has a significant impact, and it does play a role in mediating the link between workplace harassment and intention to leave. According to the findings of the current study, it is crucial to concentrate on preventive measures rather than only treating the immediate effects of workplace harassment, such as psychological stress.

The findings of the research highlight the need of organisations to review and strengthen their policies and practices related to workplace harassment. Moreover, the research underscores the importance of employees' well-being and retention for organisational success. Organisations shall take workplace harassment seriously because it has a significant negative impact on both the organisation and the targeted victim, particularly when it is associated with intention to leave the organisation. The findings of this study could indicate what forms of harassment were more prevailing and that need attention in order to assist organisations that are seeing an increase in employee attrition as a result of harassment at work.

A company that has implemented preventative measures against workplace harassment may also try to lower the level of stress and anxiety. In light of the fact that the current findings offer early evidence that an intervention to reduce stress and anxiety may have favourable effects on reducing intention

to leave. The findings indicate that stress may be more important in mediating the link between workplace harassment and intention to leave. Therefore, by lowering stress levels, an organisation can lessen the effect of workplace harassment on the desire to leave. Organisations shall train staff in stress management or management techniques to lessen the impact of bullying at work on employees' intentions to leave. It will be less likely that the victims will quit their jobs if they can manage their distress.

Moreover, the current research study is quantitative in nature. Future studies can be conducted through qualitative method among the employees of different sectors or any specific industry for in-depth understanding of the harassment that the employees are facing. While the current research focuses on the negative outcomes of the study, future studies could explore protective factors such as social support or organisational interventions that mitigate the effects of harassment on psychological stress and intention to leave. Different forms of harassment were considered in this research, however, differential factors on psychological stress and intention to leave can be a new area for future studies.

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