

POWER HARASSMENT IN TEACHING ENVIRONMENTS: SHEDDING LIGHT ON FACULTY DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores power harassment in teaching environments, focusing on its various manifestations, including verbal abuse, authority exploitation, and hostile work environments. It highlights how power differentials in academic hierarchies can exacerbate the prevalence and impact of harassment, perpetuating unequal power dynamics and undermining educators' well-being. The paper also discusses the broader consequences of power harassment on faculty members, academic departments, and the educational community, including job satisfaction, mental health, professional development, and retention of talented educators. It also highlights how power harassment can hinder collaboration, innovation, and academic excellence. Key factors contributing to power harassment in teaching environments include institutional cultures, gender dynamics, and lack of effective reporting and accountability mechanisms. The paper proposes strategies and interventions to address power harassment, including awareness-raising campaigns, policy reforms, bystander intervention training, confidential reporting mechanisms, and leadership development programs promoting ethical conduct, conflict resolution skills, and respectful workplace cultures. In conclusion, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of power dynamics within educational institutions and emphasizes the need for proactive measures to combat power harassment. By shedding light on faculty dynamics and advocating for systemic change, it aims to foster a more equitable and supportive environment for all members of the teaching community.

Keywords: power harassment, power dynamics, policy reforms, workplace culture, faculty dynamics

1. INTRODUCTION

The term *harassment* is often divided into physical and psychological forms; sexual harassment and workplace violence are examples of the former type, while the latter includes non-physical mistreatment, for example bullying or mobbing- Österman, C., & Boström, M. (2022). Power harassment is a significant issue in the educational sector, where power dynamics significantly influence interactions. There are three key themes: loss of legitimate power, coercive power, and structural power. It suggested a "power cycle" in bullying episodes, beginning with a manager's loss of power, lack of organizational support, and staff members' perception of illegitimacy- Eileen Patterson et. al 2018. Bullying in the workplace, often tacitly accepted by the organization's leadership, can create an environment of psychological threat that diminishes corporate productivity and inhibits individual and group commitment Vega, G., & Comer, D. R. (2005). This study aims to explore the complexities of faculty dynamics and the mechanisms that perpetuate power harassment within educational institutions. Power harassment, which involves the misuse of authority to intimidate, manipulates, or coerces others, can manifest in various forms, from subtle micro aggressions to overt acts of bullying. Despite its prevalence, power harassment in teaching environments is often overlooked or normalized, leading to a culture of silence and impunity. Bullying at work refers to repeated actions and practices directed at one or more workers, either deliberately or unconsciously, that cause humiliation, offense, and distress, interfere with work performance, and create an unpleasant working environment (Einarsen and Raknes 1997) Understanding power dynamics within educational institutions is crucial for fostering healthier and more equitable learning environments. A comprehensive analysis of power structures, interpersonal relationships, and institutional norms will provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. Power harassment can erode trust, stifle creativity, and hinder academic progress.

Ultimately, this research aspires to spark meaningful dialogue and drive positive change within academia. By raising awareness, promoting accountability, and advocating for systemic reforms, we can strive towards creating teaching environments where power is wielded responsibly, and all members feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive. Through collective action and a commitment to fostering a culture of dignity and mutual respect, we can dismantle the barriers that perpetuate power harassment and cultivate a more inclusive and supportive educational community.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To understand the patterns of power harassment and faculty dynamics.
- To find the factors that contribute to the power harassment in a teaching environment.
- To identify the strategies for prevention and intervention.
- To promote awareness and advocacy.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- ❖ Fernand(2017)International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering, and Technology, 6(7), 14361 -14369. .An overview of sexual harassment of women at workplace in India: The National Crime Records Bureau has reported a significant increase in cases of assault on women to indicate their modesty. This is due to various factors such as male dominance, inferior job positions, higher education, and fewer job opportunities, which result in violations of their basic immunities at the workplace. The number of assault cases on women with the intent to outrage their modesty has risen significantly over the past half-decade, reaching 82235 in 2014 and 187 in 2015. The percentage variation in 2015 over 2014 is 0.2 percent. The highest number of assault cases was reported in Maharashtra (11,713), followed by Madhya Pradesh (8,049 cases) and Uttar Pradesh (7,885 cases). Delhi UT had the highest crime rate of assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty cases (57.8) compared to the national average of 13.6. Out of 82,422 assault cases, 24,041 were registered under sexual harassment (sec.354A IPC) in 2015. Organizations should train employees on sexual harassment and its legal implications, and organize seminars, workshops, and mock drills to educate employees. Women should be given maximum job opportunities and promotion slots to avoid emotional tracking. Internal complaints committees and grievance cells should be established in all organizations to monitor cases of sexual harassment. Legal awareness programs should be organized by each department to familiarize women employees with their rights and privileges.
- ❖ Einarsen, S., & Raknes, B. I. (1997). *Violence and Victims*, 12(3), 247-263. A study of 460 Norwegian marine engineering workers found that aggression and harassment are significant issues in the workplace. Weekly, 7% of men reported being subjected to ridicule, verbal abuse, rumors, and devaluing efforts. As many as 22% experienced these acts monthly. Consistent and systematically occurring harassment can significantly impair psychological health and job satisfaction. Exposure to harassment also correlates with dissatisfaction with co-worker interaction.
- ❖ Roselin, V. N., Charan, J. K., & Moniga, S. (2023). This article examines the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 in India, highlighting the main laws and obligations of employers. It discusses the options available to victims, such as reporting incidents, seeking legal assistance, and protection from reprisals. The article emphasizes the importance of a strong legislative framework, awareness-raising, encouraging work conditions, and efficient law enforcement in the fight against harassment. The article also provides a sociological overview of workplace harassment, examining its effects on individuals and organizations, UK legislation, theoretical frameworks, and challenges in academic and professional responses to harassment claims.
- ❖ Ulfat Nazir (2021) The Central University of Kashmir suggests organizations adopt a clan culture to reduce workplace bullying and turnover intentions. This culture is more flexible and less rigid than the hierarchy culture, which emphasizes formal procedures. The study found that employees from all genders and sectors have experienced workplace bullying, but they have not formally reported it. To address this issue, central legislation is suggested, along with awareness programs, socialization programs, and incentives for managers, an internal complaints committee, and training programs for employees.
- ❖ Rama Shankar Yadav and Sanket Dash (2021), a study involving 151 Indian school teachers found that workplace bullying leads to turnover intention, with work alienation partially mediating this effect. Unmarried male teachers were more bullied. The study suggests school administration can reduce bullying by identifying at-risk individuals and creating a supportive work environment while explaining the psychological mechanisms behind turnover intention.
- ❖ Mentor Isufaj (2022) Bullying in the workplace is a significant issue, causing job loss, increased absences, and resignation. In Albania, 47% of respondents report bullying situations have started in recent years, indicating a

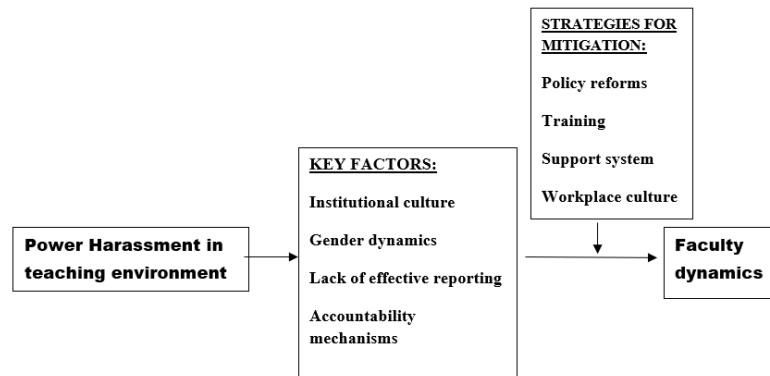
- growing trend to raise awareness. In contrast, European countries have higher percentages of bullying due to competition, while in Albania, it is committed by direct superiors. Most Albanian employees are unaware of organizational regulations and norms, and human resources often fail to address the issue during on boarding. Addressing this issue requires the attention and effort of many actors.
- ❖ **George, A. S. (2023)** Toxicity (2023) Toxicity within side the Workplace: The Silent Killer of Careers and Lives. This study explores workplace toxicity, a global issue causing poor performance, high turnover rates, and decreased productivity. Factors include bullying, harassment, discrimination, and communication issues. The research survey report provides insights for managers, employees, and organizations seeking a healthy work environment.
 - ❖ **Diez-Canseco, F., Toyama, M., Hidalgo-Padilla, L., & Bird, V. J. (2022)** This paper examines the effectiveness of policies and interventions to prevent workplace sexual harassment (SHWP) and its potential impact on depression prevention. It highlights the negative effects on victims and economic outcomes, and the limited evidence on the potential impact of worker knowledge and attitudes.- International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,
 - ❖ **Jenner, S. C., Djermester, P., & Oertelt-Prigione, S. (2022)** the study explores sexual harassment prevention strategies in academic medicine from employees' perspectives, focusing on global issues like gendered discrimination. It emphasizes the importance of individualized and system-wide measures, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to address global issues and combat sexual harassment.- Journal of interpersonal violence, 37(5-6), NP2490-NP2515
 - ❖ **Ferris, P. A., Deakin, R., & Mathieson, S. (2021).** The article reviews best practices and research on workplace bullying policies, highlighting their importance in promoting dignity and inclusion at work. It highlights that while WPB policies are crucial, they may not be legally prescribed in many countries, requiring further study and implementation through complaints and court cases.
 - ❖ **Robotham, K., & Cortina, L. (2021).** They explore whether, despite corporate policies designed to stop identity-based harassment, a respectful environment can lessen incidences of this kind. According to the study, sex and ethnic harassment are significantly predicted by a respectful work environment, indicating that traditional preventive measures are essential for averting these kinds of situations - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal, 40(4), 410-429.
 - ❖ **Burr, C., & Wyatt, A. (2021).** Investigation of workplace bullying and harassment complaints. Dignity and Inclusion at Work, 147-180. Drawing on an international study of literature and experience in managing workplace bullying and harassment complaints, this chapter offers an overview of the emerging principles and methods of complaint inquiry in Canadian and Australian workplaces. By pointing out problems and offering questions for additional analysis and investigation by investigators and academics, the writers hope to improve complaint investigation and advance fundamental ideas.
 - ❖ **Nickerson, A. B. (2019).** Preventing and intervening with bullying in schools: A framework for evidence-based practice. School Mental Health, 11(1), 15-28. He discussed the prevention and intervention of bullying at various developmental stages - preschool, elementary, middle, and high school is examined in this research. It outlines a multi-tiered structure that emphasizes the function of school mental health specialists and includes both targeted interventions and universal prevention.
 - ❖ **Tomkowicz, S. M., & Fiorentino, S. R. (2017).** Status-blind harassment and the Faragher Model: a comprehensive managerial response to workplace bullying, they focused on the pervasive issue of health risk factors and morbidity, the study on workplace harassment among US adults proposes a Faragher approach that incorporates claims of status-blind harassment without a comprehensive statutory or regulatory mandate, thereby redefining managerial and legal responses. Regardless of a worker's legally protected status, businesses must develop proactive policies and training to avoid harassment and respond to complaints to apply a status-blind Faragher approach to workplace bullying. - Southern Law Journal, 27(1)

Statement of the problem:

Power harassment in teaching environments, particularly in academic institutions, is a significant issue that can negatively impact the mental health, productivity, and career satisfaction of faculty members. This behavior can manifest in various forms, such as verbal abuse, unreasonable demands, exclusion from important discussions, or retaliation for expressing concerns. The prevalence of power harassment in educational settings can have far-reaching implications, as it can undermine academic freedom and integrity, leading to a toxic workplace culture that inhibits

open communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students, who are often keen observers of faculty interactions, may also be indirectly affected by these dynamics, as power harassment can undermine the values of academic freedom and integrity, ultimately affecting the quality of education. The hierarchical structure of academic institutions often creates an environment where victims feel unable to report power harassment without fear of retaliation, leading to underreporting of incidents and a lack of accountability for perpetrators. This study aims to investigate the prevalence, underlying causes, and potential solutions of power harassment in teaching environments, identifying strategies to foster a more respectful, inclusive, and productive academic environment.

Conceptual Framework:



Power Harassment in teaching Environment:

Power harassment in a teaching setting refers to the misuse of authority by educators or administrators to mistreat, intimidate, or unfairly manipulate students, teachers, or staff members.

Forms of harassment:

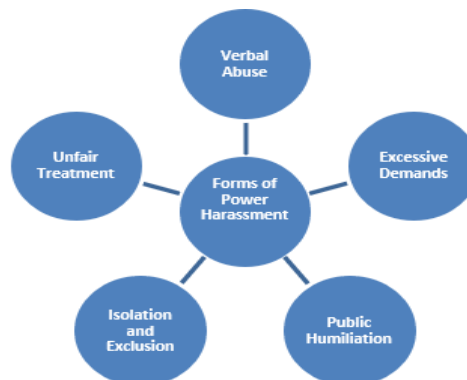


Figure:-1 discusses the negative behavior of individuals who insult, belittling, and assigning unreasonable tasks without proper justification. It also highlights the negative consequences of such behavior, such as imposing strict deadlines without adequate support, critiquing others, sharing embarrassing information, showing favoritism in grading, denying help requests, and intentionally excluding others from group activities or discussions.

Impact of Power Harassment:



Figure: 2 discuss about harassment causes anxiety, depression, stress, job dissatisfaction, and decreased productivity in the workplace. It also creates a hostile environment, leading to increased absenteeism and increased sick leave.

Key factors of power harassment in teaching Environment:

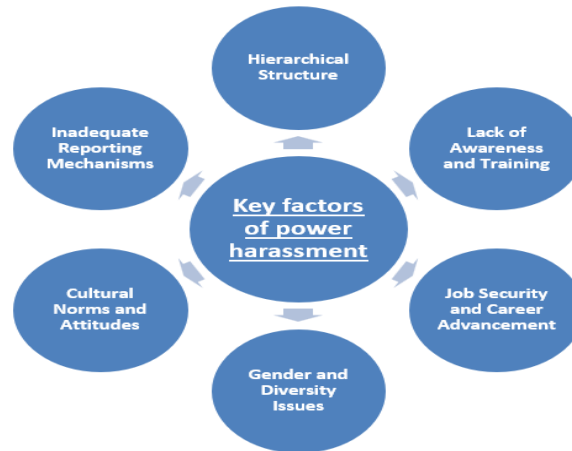


Figure 3 : Academic hierarchy often leads to a power imbalance, allowing higher-ups to exert excessive influence over subordinates, making it challenging for victims to report harassment without fear of retaliation.

The competitive nature of academia, where tenure, funding, and career progression are highly sought after, can lead to an environment conducive to power harassment. Inadequate training on recognizing and addressing harassment can create a culture where inappropriate behavior is tolerated or overlooked, leaving staff and students unprepared. Reporting harassment can be hindered by poorly designed mechanisms, bureaucratic obstacles, and lack of confidentiality. Cultural norms that encourage aggressive or authoritarian behavior can perpetuate power harassment, especially in environments where deference to authority is strong. Therefore, victims should be aware of these barriers to reporting harassment.

Strategies for mitigation:



Figure 4 :-The institution should establish clear anti-harassment policies, conduct regular training on recognizing, preventing, and responding to harassment, establish confidential reporting channels, provide support services like counseling and advocacy, foster an inclusive work culture, and hold perpetrators accountable through transparent disciplinary processes. This will ensure victims feel safe and supported, fostering a respectful work environment.

4. SUGGESTIONS

- Smyth, P. (2021). An institutional approach to harassment. *CJC open*, 3(12), S118-S129 - The institution has implemented a structured response to harassment, including explicit expectations for behavior, outlining types of harassment, and integrating psychological safety priorities. Leaders are trained in psychological safety, workplace wellness, and harassment interventions, and guiding them through coaching and reporting. Tools are provided for members to deal with harassment situations, either directly or through reporting. The institution is also aware of unique aspects of racial, sexual, and online harassment. This iterative process improvement aims to effectively address harassment in all learning and working environments.
- Österman, C., & Boström, M. (2022)-Managers and officers on board must be provided with sufficient resources, tools, and time to actively work on reducing workplace bullying and harassment.

- Dr. T. Shila (2023) - Organizations should establish comprehensive anti-harassment policies that clearly define unacceptable behavior and consequences for engaging in such behavior. These policies should be communicated to all employees and regular training sessions should be conducted to ensure everyone understands their rights and responsibilities. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the workplace culture, fostering an environment that values respect, inclusivity, and diversity. Regular training sessions on workplace harassment can increase awareness and educate employees on identifying and preventing such behavior. Establishing confidential and easily accessible reporting mechanisms for incidents of harassment and ensuring whistleblower protection can encourage reporting without fear of negative consequences. Thorough investigations should be conducted when incidents are reported, sending a strong message that harassment will not be tolerated.

5. CONCLUSION

Power harassment in teaching environments is a significant issue that impacts faculty members' well-being and the quality of education. It manifests in various forms, such as verbal abuse, unreasonable demands, isolation, and unfair evaluation practices. This can lead to severe psychological and physical stress, impacting professional performance and personal lives. The hierarchical nature of academic institutions exacerbates power harassment, as senior faculty members misuse their authority over junior colleagues, adjuncts, or students. This power imbalance fosters a culture of fear and compliance, discouraging victims from reporting incidents due to fear of retaliation or professional repercussions. The competitive nature of academia and pressure to secure tenure, funding, and publications can make it difficult for victims to speak out. To address power harassment, institutions must develop comprehensive anti-harassment policies, implement training programs, establish independent bodies to investigate allegations, and create a supportive culture. This includes encouraging open dialogue, promoting transparency in decision-making processes, and supporting victims through counseling services and peer support groups. Leadership must take a proactive stance in recognizing and addressing power harassment, demonstrating a commitment to upholding respect and equity values.

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