

# ASSOCIATION BETWEEN WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION IN NEPALESE COMMERCIAL BANKS

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## ABSTRACT

*Workplace harassment is a common issue in the present context. It can cause severe effects on an employee's life, family, and career. The study examined workplace harassment and its effect on job satisfaction in the banking sector of Nepal. The evidences confirm that Verbal harassment, Physical harassment, and Mental harassment have negative and significant impact on Job satisfaction. It further confirms that Verbal harassment, Physical harassment, and Mental harassment have positive and significant impact among themselves. Such harassments have affected the assistant and junior level officers resulting to low job satisfaction at their workplace.*

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment, Mental Harassment, Frequency and Intensity, Commercial Bank

## 1. Introduction

Workplace harassment is an undesirable conduct from any related person at work that belittles a person (Moran, 2014). It is a serious problem in Nepal as well as worldwide. Numerous studies in the international front have clearly shown the severe consequences suffered by victims of harassment, academic studies are comparatively not available (Moran, 2014). Workplace harassment is a form of repeated, mean, insulting, intentional or non-intentional behaviours that a victim perceives as intentional acts to harm, control, or drive them from the workplace. Although the Government of Nepal discourages harassment and other forms of violence, we can find no legislation that has been passed to prevent such acts at the workplace. No laws are in place against psychological violence in the workplace. The

emphasis of the study helps us understand the behaviours that cause aggression, conflict, and violence toward another co-worker those of which can be identified as harassment; and its consequent effect on the victim.

Workplace harassment constitutes a problem of many organisations today, irrespective of size and sector. This anti-social behaviour confronts organisations operating in developed and developing countries alike with the consequences well documented in the scholarly literature. At the individual level, harassment may lead to suicidal tendency, loss of self-respect, and self-image, high stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, phobias, sleep disturbances, increased depression unhappiness, anxiety, withdrawal, and undue cautiousness, thereby affecting job performance. At the organisational level, it

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adversely affects employee commitment, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover (Ikanyan & Aondover, 2013). Research about the concept of workplace harassment has been carried out in different countries with similar words like “mobbing” and “harassment” used by different researchers to describe the concept. The findings from results have indicated that a negative job-related outcome of harassment influences negative impact on job satisfaction (Long, Tan, & Ismail, 2016). The former work related harassment includes the behaviours as giving unreasonable deadline or unmanageable workloads. Person related harassment consists of such behaviours as making insulting remarks, teasing, spreading gossip and playing practical jokes (Einarsen, 2005). According to American Psychological Association (2005), the definition of a typical bully is a person whom exhibits “aggressive behaviour” that is intended to cause harm or distress, occurs repeatedly over time, and occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power or strength.

In an environment where there are many definitions of job satisfaction in the literature, the following definition has been regarded as a standard, and is therefore adopted also in this study: “A pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. Arguably the most widely researched topic in behavioural sciences job satisfaction is the rallying point of several theories and models explaining individual attitudes and behaviour. More so, job satisfaction research has practical applications for the enhancement of individual lives as well as organisational effectiveness (Judge & Klinger, 2016). Although there are several criteria of job satisfaction in the literature, we adopt the notion, that the job satisfaction is comprised by two dimensions, namely the intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction. On the other hand, the job performance is a consequence related to the organisational context and depends on many factors in the

institution (Mete & Sokmen, 2016).

Workplace harassment is a common topic in present context. There are many cases of serious workplace harassment where the victim cannot get any relief because society has not deemed it a serious problem (Moran, 2014). It can cause severe effects on an employee’s life, family, and career. Most of the employees are unaware of the harassment that is happening to them in the workplace; and the ones who are aware prefer not to report or talk about it (Chance, 2017). Even if they report, they are afraid that the society does not count them as harassment. The main reasons behind their silence are the fear and the ignorance of society. It is difficult to develop rules against workplace harassment. A victim has to prove the harassment that has occurred and their consequent problems created by the offender’s conduct. It is difficult to contain workplace harassment due to the reason that the harassment usually takes place privately, mostly out of sight of supervisors and co-workers (Chance, 2017). General harassment is far more widespread than other negative behaviours covered by legislation, such as sexual harassment. Although the offenders are difficult to spot or get rid of, negativity that surrounds them can spread through the entire organisation; it makes workplace harassment a serious problem and an important concern to the organisation and the society (Hogan, 2017). These incidents might be directly or indirectly causing several effects on employees’ productivity (Merkin & Shah, 2014). Even though several studies were conducted regarding the workplace harassment, these are mostly related to the situation in the European countries. The present study not only overcomes these methodological deficiencies, but also provides the basis for comparing the findings obtained in a different culture, thereby filling the wide research gap in this field.

This research aims to analyse the different harassment experienced at workplaces and their association with and consequent effects

on the employees' job satisfaction. To achieve the main objective, the specific objectives are, "To identify the different types of harassment experienced at workplace", "To analyse the frequency and intensity of harassment experienced at workplace", and "To assess the relationship between harassment incidents and the employee's job satisfaction".

The study was designed on a framework that covers the organisational and leadership theories. Harassment at work is not only about aggressive behaviour. Harassment behaviours can destroy a target's health, ability to work, emotional well-being, self-worth, and financial condition (Heathfield, 2016 ). Workplace offenders and bullies have a strong negative impact on the business for which they work. When a harassment atmosphere begins to spread through an organisation, morale is destroyed and productivity is affected. The workplace harassment often contains distorted personality types that seem to have just one purpose: to find somebody else to attack, belittle, criticise, and destroy. Many leaders and managers either fail to recognize the problem or they are themselves the problem.

This study provides a quantitative analysis specifically designed to show that the targets of harassment behaviour develop low morale, which in turn affects job satisfaction of the employee. The survey will also ask whether there might have been benefits to the harassing behaviour. To overcome such a limitation, data on reported harassment and aggression will be requested anonymously from members of different commercial banks.

This study elaborates more regarding the employee workplace harassment behaviour. The study helps to make present and future generations aware of the workplace harassment issues and suggests the ways of preventing them. Data from this research provide the occurrence of the mistreatment of employees and how it affects their job satisfaction.

Although no legislation specifically prohibits the general harassment behaviour, employers have legal obligations to protect the physical and mental health of their employees.

Different authors have different definitions and theories regarding job satisfaction. Kaliski (2007) defines job satisfaction as a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally directly linked to work productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job that one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for their efforts. It further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfillment.

Brikend (2011) states that "When talking about factors of job satisfaction the fact that they can also cause job dissatisfaction must be kept in mind." According to Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1964), employees in their work environment are under the influence of factors that cause both job satisfaction (motivators) and factors that cause job dissatisfaction (hygiene factors).

Dharejo, Baloch, Jariko, and Jhatial (2017) considers Theory X and Theory Y proposed by Douglas McGregor, where that a negative person comes under the Theory X in which employees dislike work, will avoid responsibilities are irresponsible, and require close supervision to do their jobs and must be punished; which generally leads to lower job satisfaction of the employees. Positive persons come under Theory Y in which employees enjoy, like to work, committed towards their work, creative, able to fulfil responsibilities, exercise self-control and self-direction in the search of organisational objectives, have a will to achieve targets without the threat of punishment; which leads to higher job satisfaction among the employees.

## 2. Research Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study was to obtain statistical, quantitative results from a selected sample. In this study, survey answers were used to measure the relationship between workplace harassment and job satisfaction. It shows us how the research was conducted and the procedures followed in order to collect, process, and analyse the data to reach the conclusion. The study has adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The purpose of this research design seeks to determine an association between workplace harassment and job satisfaction. The research is based on descriptive and causal research to analyse the primary data. Descriptive statistical tools, correlation and regression, Cronbach's alpha, frequency, mean, standard deviation, validity, and reliability analysis were performed on the data gathered through the relevant sources taken as a sample of the study. Causal research was conducted to understand the causes and effects of variables to determine the nature of the relationship between the causal variables and the effect that are to be predicted.

The data collected for the analysis of the research were based on the primary data collected through a questionnaire survey that consisted of Likert scale method questions as well as other close ended questions. First, a pilot test of the structured survey questionnaire was conducted on potential respondents to ensure ease and to test the questions from the questionnaire and the overall process for the time the survey would take to complete, the ease of use, and the relevance of the questions. Upon completion of the pilot study, a final study of the respondents was conducted.

There are 28 commercial banks in Nepal, out of which 13 commercial banks have been chosen as sample enterprises for carrying out the present study. As per the data collected from the Human Resource Department of 13 banks, there are total of 5,910 employees at the assistant level and junior officer level who

are more prone and vulnerable to workplace harassment. With the 5,910 employees as the known population, the sample size can be determined by using the Yamane (1967)'s formula. If Yamane's formula in the known population of 5,910 is considered with a 5 per cent margin of error and 95 per cent confidence interval, the sample size is calculated as below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{N}{1 + 5910 * (0.05)^2} = 374$$

where,

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error

Therefore, the number of data samples collected for the study is 426, using random sampling for data collection.

### Research Model

As per the study-objectives, a regression-based model has been developed; where the dependent variable "job satisfaction" depends on the occurrence of independent variables; namely; verbal harassment, physical harassment and mental harassment.

Since,

$$Y_1 = a_1 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e_1$$

Therefore, Model 1 is:

$$JS = a_1 + \beta_1 VH + \beta_2 PH + \beta_3 MH + e_1$$

Where,

JS = Job satisfaction

a<sub>1</sub> = Constant

VH = Verbal harassment

PH = Physical harassment

MH = Mental harassment

e<sub>1</sub> = error

### 3. Research Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between verbal harassment and employee's Job satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub> : There is a significant relationship between physical harassment and

H<sub>3</sub> : There is a significant relationship between mental harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

H<sub>4</sub> : There is a significant relationship between frequency of harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

H<sub>5</sub> : There is a significant relationship between intensity of harassment and employee's job satisfaction.

#### 4. Results and discussion

##### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Among the 426 responses collected during the research, the table below summarizes the demographic data of the respondents.

**Table 1**

*Respondents' Profile*

	No. of Respondents	Per Cent (%)
<b>Age</b>		
Below 26	150	35.2
27 - 34	182	42.7
35 - 42	68	16.0
Above 43	26	6.1
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	208	48.8
Female	218	51.2

**Table 1 (continued)**

	No. of Respondents	Per Cent (%)
<b>Birthplace</b>		
Kathmandu Valley	324	76.1
Out of Kathmandu Valley	94	22.1
India and foreign countries	8	1.9
<b>Organizational level</b>		
Assistant level	322	75.6
Junior Officer/Officer level	104	24.4
<b>Education</b>		
High School	36	8.5
Bachelors	194	45.5
Masters	192	45.1
MPhil & above	2	.5
Other	2	.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Note.</b> Researcher's Survey, 2018		

#### Descriptive Analysis

This part explains the descriptive analysis of the data collected from the respondents through

the questionnaires during the research process. Descriptive analysis explains the data with the help of statistical tools and measures which



contain mean, standard deviation including maximum and minimum values.

In descriptive analysis, the dependent variable Job Satisfaction among existing employees within different commercial banks in Nepal has been measured through three dimensions, i.e., verbal, physical, and mental harassment.

These values of the three dimensions help to analyse the data with respect to frequencies and aggregation relating to research questions and variables. For this purpose, ‘Five Point Likert Scale’ questions were asked to the respondents which is scaled from 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics of Verbal Harassment*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gossips and rumours	3.51	1.23
Insulting comments	2.69	1.36
Unnecessary shouting and anger	3.11	1.32
Teased and irritated	2.90	1.33
Indecent and uncomfortable flirting	2.40	1.34
Offensive and hurting	3.34	1.25

*Note.* Based on researcher’s calculations from Survey, 2018

**Result** The table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of Verbal Harassment. Gossips and rumours, Unnecessary shouting and anger, and Offensive and hurting have the mean values more than 3, i.e., 3.51, 3.11, and 3.34 respectively, while Insulting comments, Teased and irritated, and Indecent and uncomfortable

flirting have mean of 2.69, 2.90, and 2.40 respectively. It suggests that the respondents have faced gossips, rumours, shouting, and anger more than other verbal harassment incidents. Offensive and hurting has the mean of 3.34, which means that the verbal harassment incidents faced by the respondents are mostly offensive and hurting.

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive Statistics of Physical Harassment*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Finger-pointing and blocking the way	2.10	1.19
Pushing or getting too close	1.97	1.15
Physical abuse or threats	1.76	1.06
Unnecessary staring	2.62	1.48
Uncomfortably touched	2.12	1.25
Physically uncomfortable and hurting	2.51	1.37

*Note.* Based on researcher’s calculations from Survey, 2018

**Result** The table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of Physical Harassment. Unnecessary staring, and Physically uncomfortable and hurting have the mean of 2.62 and 2.51 respectively which means that the respondents

have sometimes faced unnecessary staring at their workplace from their seniors, colleagues or visitors. It also indicates that such incidents are usually physically uncomfortable and hurting to them. Similarly Finger-pointing and

blocking the way, Pushing or getting too close, Physical abuse or threats, and Uncomfortably touched have mean value less than 2.5 i.e.

2.10, 1.97, 1.76, and 2.12 respectively, which suggests that the respondents have not faced such means of significant physical harassment.

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

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hints or signals	2.68	1.48
Ignored, or treated roughly	2.54	1.44
Pressurized	3.67	1.25
Blamed	2.89	1.32
Unnecessary controlling	3.44	1.37
Rejected from rights	3.16	1.50
Mentally hurting and disturbing	3.56	1.39

Note. Based on researcher’s calculations from Survey, 2018

**Result** The table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of Mental Harassment. Pressurized has the mean value of 3.67 which means that the respondents have been pressurized to do their job faster than what is possible. Hints or signals, Ignored or treated roughly, Blamed, Unnecessary controlling, and Rejected from rights have mean of 2.68, 2.54, 2.89, 3.44, and 3.16 respectively, which means that the respondents have sometimes received hints or signals from others that they should quit their job, been ignored or treated roughly by seniors and colleagues, been blamed for something wrong at their job, been controlled

by supervisor or colleagues, and been rejected from their rights like sick leave, holiday, lunch/tiffin time at their workplace. Similarly, Mentally hurting and disturbing has mean of 3.56 which means that the mental harassments incidents faced by the respondents are mostly mentally hurting and disturbing.

**Correlations Analysis**

To measure the extent of the relationship between independent and dependent variable, Pearson’s correlation has been used. The correlation measures the strengths of the linear relationship between variables. The study is disclosed in the following 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	.579** (.000)	1		
Mental Harassment	.671** (.000)	.582** (.000)	1	
Job Satisfaction	-.304** (.000)	-.161** (.001)	-.375** (.000)	1

Note. Based on researcher’s calculations from Survey, 2018

**Result** Table 5 shows that the independent variables, i.e., Verbal harassment, Physical harassment, and Mental harassment have negative and significant correlation with the dependent variable i.e. Job satisfaction with p value of 0.000, 0.001, and 0.000 respectively. The table shows not only a significant correlation between independent and dependent variables, but also a significant correlation between the independent variables. Among the independent variables, the correlation between verbal and physical harassment is positive and significant with p value of 0.000, verbal and mental harassment is also positive and significant with p value of 0.000, and physical and mental harassment is also positive and

significant with p value of 0.000.

This implies that while the harassment incidents have a significant but negative impact on job satisfaction, they have a significant and positive impact between themselves; which means that the occurrence of either of the harassment incidents among verbal, physical, and mental encourages the occurrence of the other.

**Regression Analysis**

To estimate the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable, Regression analysis has been used which is shown in the following table.

**Table 6**

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

Model: $JS = a_1 + \beta_1 VH + \beta_2 PH + \beta_3 MH + e_1$	
Constant	19.65 (.000)
<b>Factors</b>	
Verbal Harassment	-2.179 (.030)
Physical Harassment	2.74 (.030)
Mental Harassment	-5.586 (.000)
F-Test	25.854 (.000)
R-square	.155
Adjusted R-square	.149

*Note.* Based on researcher’s calculations from Survey, 2018

The findings of the study from table 6 indicate that F-Test regression model is fit on the data since the F value 25.854 is statistically significant with p-value of 0.000. The table shows the regression analysis of dependent variable i.e. Job satisfaction on the independent variables, i.e., Verbal harassment, physical

harassment, and mental harassment. Since the p value of Verbal harassment, physical harassment, and mental harassment are below 0.05, i.e., 0.03, 0.00, and 0.00 respectively, it is confirmed that there is significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.



## 5. Conclusion

Based on the empirical data the study confirmed that the independent variables, verbal harassment, physical harassment, and mental harassment have a significant and negative correlation with the dependent variable, i.e., job satisfaction in the context of Nepal. Earlier studies also confirm that that any form of harassment has a negative effect on the victim's health and performance, it is further elaborated and explained from this study by showing the relationship between various kinds of workplace harassment and the employee's job satisfaction in the commercial banks of Nepal.

The study showed that the frequency and intensity of the physical form of workplace harassment is rare in the Nepalese commercial banks, mental harassment is the most frequent and intense followed by verbal harassment. It further shows that both male and female employees of assistant and junior officer/officer level at the commercial banks in Nepal have a constant low job satisfaction as a consequence of the harassment experienced at their workplace.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it is highly recommended that there should be proper law (both legal and organizational) against any form of workplace harassment and bullying that causes an adverse effect on the victim's physical, mental, and emotional health. Work environment should be closely monitored by the responsible authority in order to prevent the harassment incidents occurring at workplaces. Although these kinds of direct and indirect harassment incidents are usually overlooked by the people, they play a massive role in the victim's life. Therefore, in order to avoid any potential serious harm caused by such harassment incidents, all the employees should be aware and educated about

the different forms of harassment, victims and witnesses should take proper steps to stand up against such acts and inform the authority immediately, and the authority should take serious action against such acts.

This study includes the demographic representation including age, gender, ethnicity, education, and organizational level of the employees working in Nepalese commercial banks; which can be used as a reference for any kind of further studies related to employees of Nepalese commercial banks. It also gives insight and explains about the work environment, job satisfaction, different types harassment incidents in general and also inside the workplace, and their consequent effects on employee's job satisfaction. Therefore, it can also be used as a base reference for further studies related to the workplace, any kind of harassment in general or inside workplaces, studies related to job satisfaction, and the studies that intend to evaluate the relationship between harassment and job satisfaction. Further, this study represents the use of research tools like primary data collection through questionnaire survey that consists of Likert Scale, pilot testing, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. So, any research studies that intend to conduct survey at workplaces related to harassment at workplace, job satisfaction, or both can refer to this study; also, other research studies that intend to calculate mean, standard deviation, regression analysis or correlation analysis among their variables can also use this study for their research methodology reference.

Job satisfaction is only one of the various possible independent variables caused by harassment, which can also take place in various other forms and places. So, this study can be considered as groundwork for different other future studies related to several variables including harassment and job satisfaction. Since, harassment and job satisfaction are vast topics with numerous causes, factors,

and effects; this study can be regarded as a preliminary step for further studies in the future.

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