Creating Safe Educational Environments: Addressing Harassment and Enhancing Female Students' Academic Success in Higher Institutions of AJK: The Role of Psychological Distress as a Moderator

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Abstract

The study investigated how harassment affected female students' academic performance while psychological distress played a moderating role. Individuals from the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will be the unit of analysis and observation in this study. The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's female students were the target demographic. Non-probability sampling was used to acquire the data, which came from about 188 female students who completed questionnaires. The University of Kotli circulated 150 questionnaires, and 125 of those were gathered there. 150 questionnaires were provided to Mirpur University of Sciences and Technology, and 63 of them were really collected there.

Keywords: Verbal and Emotional Harassment, Social Media Harassment, Gesture and Posture Harassment, Academic Performance of Female Students and Psychological Distress

Introduction

Background of the Study

Education is crucial for producing trained labor that promotes economic progress and resolves urgent challenges in a community. Additionally, in order to graduate with high academic standing, students must invest a sizable amount of time in their studies. (Tadese, Yeshaneh, & Mulu, 2022)

Student motivation is a key issue in higher education because of the importance of academic performance in their professional careers. This study aims to identify the factors that affect students' attitudes toward learning as well as what facilitates and impediments the learning process. (afzal, ali, khan, & hamid, 2010)

Every nation's essence is its women, yet because of harassment, women are not protected, not even in the field of education. The government has a responsibility to ensure that female students in educational institutions are in a secure environment. (Munawar, et al., 2020)

Consequently, this study's objective was to assess the factors influencing female students' academic performance in higher education and to offer potential solutions that could aid in enhancing that performance. (Tiruneh & Petros, 2014)

Harassment is when someone is touched or spoken to in an undesired way that makes them feel uncomfortable and unwelcome. The harasser could be a neighbor, a classmate, a teacher, or any member of the family or a close friend. Harassment can refer to a variety of behaviors and occur in a variety of settings, including the home, the workplace, schools,

colleges, and universities, as well as public sidewalks or highways. (Munawar, et al., 2020) There are the following factors of harassment that the female students faces in the higher education;Verbal& Emotional harassment, Social media harassment, Harassment through gesture and postures,

A form of interpersonal aggressiveness is verbal harassment.Verbal abuse results in hardship, anguish, and grief by intimidating or bullying verbal assaults used to shame, harass, humiliate, insult, or threaten others. The purpose of verbal abuse is to hurt and upset the target at all times. The use of abusive language increases over time, as do its variety, frequency, and propensity to escalate into physical violence. (Stark, 2015)

Anyone who sends you rude, threatening, or abusive messages via Facebook, Twitter, or another social networking site may be breaking the law. In social media harassment, The internet is a powerful and useful technology that is used nearly everywhere today. The development of new digital technologies and their reasonably and online communication. Violence against women is a sad reality of the world and represents a widespread violation of human rights. Social media harassment," sometimes known as "online bullying. (Sharma, Shrestha, Shrestha, Shrestha, & Shrestha, 2020)

When topics like rape and pornography are discussed, some female students may feel awkward and like they are somehow to fault because they have personally suffered sexual assault or emotional blackmail as a result of domestic abuse. Between 1991 and 2008, the experience of educating about gender and sexuality, when female students disclosed sensitive and unpleasant information in university seminars, is the basis for this study. (Koster, 2011)

Gesture and posture harassment of women is one of the issues which exists, in different countries with various weaknesses and severity. Verbal harassment and harassment through gestures and postures are very common and the same experience for all women. The presentation of pornographic materials via social media, emails, abusive messages, and crude jokes. Harassment by gesture and posture, or by making sexually suggestive motions with the hands, fingers, legs, or by licking the lips. Most of the time, no one speaks about this harassment and it is not considered serious damage (Filburn, 2013). (Wamiq, Modaber, & Ahmadi, 2023)

There is the another cause of decreasing female students' academic performance by related to these aspects is called psychological distress, when increase of harassment psychological distress must be increases and in this cause academic performance must be

decreases.

This study aimed to evaluate psychological discomfort among female university students and pinpoint their requirements for mental health services. The majority of the troubled female students had mild to moderate levels of anxiety and depression symptoms, which suggests the need for preventative or early intervention approaches. Psychological distress are directly relate to the academic performance of female students. Concern over psychological anguish among university students, especially among young women, is growing. This study focuses on the incidence of psychological discomfort among female university students and their demand for mental health treatments. (Bernhardsdóttir & Vilhjálmsson, 2012)

Problem Statement

There are the main issues discuss in detail bellow to become the barrior increasing the academic success of female students in higher education. When increase harassment in every type of factor student must go on psychological distress and increase of psychological distress affect on the academic performance of the student. There are some kinds of problem we look up, Verbal harassment, Social media harassment, Harassment through gesture and postures, Physical harassment, Emotional harassment ,

A form of interpersonal aggressiveness is verbal harassment. Verbal abuse results in agony, suffering, and sorrow by intimidating or bullying verbal attacks meant to embarrass, harass, insult, or threaten people. The goal of verbal abuse is always to cause the victim harm and anxiety. Over time, verbal abuse tactics increase in severity, frequency, and likelihood, and frequently result in physical assault. (Stark, 2015)

Through Facebook, Twitter, or any other social networking platform, someone may be breaking the law if they send you threatening, abusive, or disrespectful messages. In social media harassment, The internet is a effective and useful technology this is used almost anywhere nowadays. The improvement of new digital technologies and their fairly and on-line communication. Violence against women is a sad truth of the world and represents a good sized violation of human rights. Social media harassment," every so often called "online bullying. (Sharma, Shrestha, Shrestha, Shrestha, & Shrestha, 2020)

Some female students could feel uncomfortable and want to "blame" someone while rape and pornography are being discussed because they have suffered sexual assault, domestic violence, or emotional blackmail. This paper builds on my experience mentoring students on gender and sexuality between 1991 and 2008, a period during which female

students made distressing and vulnerable revelations in university seminars. (Koster, 2011) Gesture and posture harassment of girls is one of the troubles which exists, in specific countries with numerous weaknesses and severity. Verbal harassment and harassment via gestures and postures are very commonplace and the equal enjoy for all girls. Gesture and posture harassment, as well as the display of pornographic content via social media, emails, unpleasant letters, and vulgar jokes. Sexually suggestive motions with the arms, legs, or lips are also prohibited. Most of time, no person speaks approximately this harassment and it isn't always taken into consideration severe harm (Filburn, 2013). (Wamiq, Modaber, & Ahmadi, 2023)

This study's goal was to assess mental distress among female university students and determine how best to meet their requirements for mental health care. Most of the troubled female college students had low to moderate levels of tension and depression symptoms, which highlights the need for preventative or early intervention approaches. Psychological suffering is directly related to how well female kids succeed academically. It is getting harder to diagnose psychological suffering in college students, especially in young women. This study focuses on the prevalence of mental illness and the need for mental health services among female university students. (Bernhardsdóttir & Vilhjálmsson, 2012)

A student who is being harassed may stop participating in any educational occupations. They may decide to skip, drop, or stop attending classes entirely. Anxiety, sadness, insomnia, low self-esteem, disinterest in daily activities, social isolation, and feelings of despair, dread, and/or shame are a few examples of psychological effects. To cope, a number of students turn to drug or alcohol misuse. In extreme circumstances, kids may consider or actually attempt suicide. (Wood, Hoefer, Kerwick, Cardona, & Armendariz, 2018)

Research Objectives

This study's main objective is to determine the prevalence of harassment among female students who experience psychological distress. As the prevalence of harassment rises, so must psychological discomfort, and these two factors have a direct impact on how well female students perform academically. This study looked into the experiences of female students who have been harassed at Herat University. (Wamiq, Modaber, & Ahmadi, 2023)

Psychological distress play an important role to enhance the improving of academic performance of female students. When there is less case of harassment psychological distress are in controlled and when the mentally health of student is stable than academic performance

increase.

1. To investigate link connecting verbal emotional abuse and academic achievement.
2. To determine the link between academic performance and harassment on social media.
3. To investigate the link between academic achievement and harassment as expressed via gesture and posture.
4. To assess how psychological distress modifies the association between harassment and academic performance.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of relationship exist between verbal& emotional harassment and Academic achievement?
2. How do academic success and harassment on social media relate to one another?
3. What is the connection between academic performance and harassment shown via posture and gestures?
4. How does psychological discomfort affect the relationship between harassment and academic achievement?

Importance Of Research

Studying how harassment affects female students' academic performance and how psychological distress modifies that performance is important because it has the potential to provide light on how social media violence affects mental health and educational outcomes.

The results of such a study can also inform workplace policies and practices that aim to prevent violence and support victims in their recovery. It can also raise awareness among educational institutions, policymakers, and the wider community about the need to address emotional and verbal violence and its impact on academic performance and mental health.

Figuring out how to assist female students who have experienced social media violence can be aided by research into consequences of harassment regarding academic performance and the moderating role of work hardship. This may entail putting policies and procedures in place to stop harassment as well as offering resources, such counseling services and academic accommodations, to students who have already been the victims of harassment.

Supporting Theory

This theory suggests that an individual's social identity is a crucial factor in shaping their behavior and attitudes. If a female student is being harassed, it can impact their social identity as a student and their sense of belonging in the academic community. This loss of identity and

belonging can lead to psychological distress, which can negatively impact their academic performance.

This theory suggests that individuals learn by observing and imitating others. If a female student is being harassed, it can impact their perception of what is acceptable behavior, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Additionally, if they observe others being harassed or not receiving support, it can further impact their psychological distress and academic performance.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the consequences of harassment on the academic achievement of female students. According to a study by Cokley et al. (2017), psychological distress acted as a mediating factor between racial and sexual harassment and African American women's academic performance. Related results were made by Martin et al. (2019), who discovered that psychological distress attenuated the negative link between academic achievement of female graduate students and sexual harassment. Another study by Loh et al. (2019) discovered that psychological distress mediated the association link female medical students' academic achievement and the prevalence of sexual harassment.

The goal of this study was to evaluate the factors influencing the academic performance of female students in higher education and to offer workable solutions that might also support the academic performance of female students.. (Tiruneh & Petros, 2014)

According to Eshetu (2002), education is the harmonious development of a person's social, moral, intellectual, and physical faculties in preparation for a life of selfless service. It is a tool that makes it possible for citizens to participate fully in the development process. The educational backgrounds of women also influence their participation in socioeconomic development projects. In addition to providing personal benefits, educating women and girls is essential for society's progress in the fields of human resource development. (2011) Genti and Omoruyi. (Tiruneh & Petros, 2014)

Studies have identified a variety of sexual harassment offenders. According to Sivertsen et al. (2019), the majority of occurrences of harassment were committed by people outside the university, then by other students. Wood et al. (2021) and Clodfelter et al. (2010) found that the harassers were more likely to be male while Cantor et al. (2015) and Kearney and Gilbert (2012) found that the harassers were more likely to be the victims' classmates. According to Parsons and Kelly (2000), graduate or undergraduate students harassed female

graduate students more frequently than they did female undergraduate students. Faculty and staff members harassed female pupils. members at universities, according to Huerta et al. (2006) and Wood et al. (2021).

Furthermore, several studies (Clodfelter et al., 2001; Hill & Silva, 2005) showed that harassment happened in a variety of places, including dorms, classrooms, labs, gyms, outside of class, and lecture halls. There are a variety of educational, psychological, and social repercussions for female students who are subjected to sexual harassment (Glass et al., 2020; Zheng & Shi, 2021; Sojo et al., 2016). People become less confident in their academic abilities and attention as a result. According to Jordan et al. (2014), bullying may cause female pupils to lose interest in their academics and perform poorly in class, which may eventually cause them to leave the university. Female students who experience it experience distress, depression, and a loss of confidence.

According to Quist-Arcton (2003), if the victims' cases are made public, other students may start talking about them, which isolates them. As a result, individuals can give up on their more formal education. According to Mama (2009), and Muasya (2014) Some female students' access to the cafeteria, library, and residence halls as well as their freedom of movement on campus were restricted due to bullying. Other research discovered that subjects had migraines, problems in sleep, and food problems. According to research, female students employed a variety of — external and internal — coping mechanisms to deal with harassment on campuses.

An internal method focuses on controlling the victims' emotions, whereas an external approach employs tactics like confronting the harassers and reporting the harassment (Vohldalová, 2015). Coping strategies were divided into active (direct) and passive (indirect) categories by Sigal et al. in 2003. While passive techniques include actions that are self-focused (such as avoiding eye contact), active responses include tactics that address the offenders (e.g., reacting vocally or violently). According to Vohldalová (2015), students frequently utilized quiet and avoidance of the harasser as coping mechanisms. Popoola (2008) discovered that female pupils dealt with bullying in a number of ways, including avoiding and ignoring the harasser and turning to prayer.

So many topics discussed in the world and harassment is one of them due to its impact on psychological distress. To see how effectively they predicted psychological distress, the various types of sexual harassment and the colleges attended that had a statistically

significant association to psychological distress were added to the model. Accordingly, after adjusting for all other factors, the results of the multivariate logistic regression analysis revealed that female students at the College of Social Science and Law who were neither verbally or physically harassed experienced psychological distress. Verbal abuse did not significantly predict psychological suffering in the final model. The most frequent type of sexual harassment, in contrast to other studies, was verbal. Mohammed, Getachew, and Mohammed (2015).

Theoretical Framework

To draw the prevailing understanding and applicable factors into sharper focus, a theoretical version for The moderating role of psychological distress may be proposed. This model is meant to resource in the elaboration of aspects valuable to the above questions and guides the empirical analysis of the cited issues.

One of the desired consequences of the proposed observe is to degree the relationship among harassment and mental misery and to take a look at how harassment can effect the educational overall performance of woman students and the moderating impact of psychological distress on students mental fitness and reduce their performance. In this recognize, the take a look at objectives to increase a viable predictive model, which will guide a comprehensive take a look at of the conceptually applicable factors within the empirical studies. A range of hypotheses about the connection among the variables are drawn up in the manner of developing the theoretical framework. These hypotheses can be empirically examined. The model and the ensuing propositions and working speculation are all important factors of the take a look at. The proposed theoretical framework posits five variables, which can be labeled as Verbal& Emotional harassment, Social media harassment, Through Gesture and Posture, Psychological distress, Academic performance.

Research Model
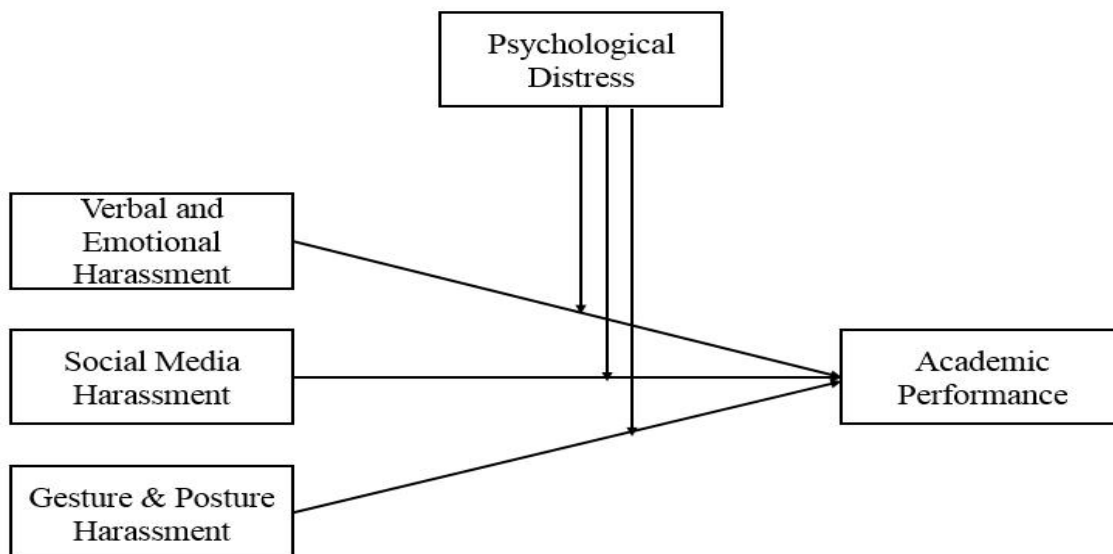
Hypothesis

H1: Verbal and emotional harassment has a considerable negative impact on female students' academic achievement.

H2: The female students' academic performance is significantly impacted by social media harassment.

H3: Harassment by gesture and posture has a strong negative effect on female students' academic performance.

H4: The association between verbal and emotional harassment and female students' academic performance is moderated by psychological discomfort.

H5: The association between social media harassment and female students' academic performance is moderated by psychological distress.

H6: The association between gesture and posture harassment and female students' academic performance is moderated by psychological distress.

Methodology

A research method is the framework of your research. It describes the way you are going to use in exploring your topic. This chapter describe the research technique that will guide this investigation. It emphasizes the research philosophy that governs this investigation. It includes the sample size, data collection tactics, sampling techniques, research design, and methodology for data evaluation. The chapter also discusses validity and reliability of research equipment, as well as variable scale and measurement.

Research Philosophy

A study philosophy known as positivism places a strong emphasis on empirical data, objectivity, and the scientific process. While it has been influential in shaping modern research practices, it also faces criticism regarding reductionism, neglect of subjectivity, and ethical concerns. Researchers should consider the context and nature of their study to determine whether a positivist approach aligns with their research goals and ethical considerations.

Approach

The earlier method is deductive, whereas the latter is inductive. When building new theories and information is of the utmost importance and there is little existing literature and we was used deductive method in our study.

Data Collection

The questionnaire is designed as a Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 to 5. Strongly Agree=5; Agree =4; Neutral=3; Disagree=2; Strongly Disagree=1.

Population

For checking the proposed hypothesis of current research study, the target population was the Universities of Kotli and Mirpur University of Sciences and technology population were assumed 6000 female students.

Sample Size

Sampling category was non probability sampling and Data was collected through questionnaires from almost 188 female students. There were 150 questionnaires distributed at the University of Kotli and 125 were collected from UOK. There were 150 questionnaires distributed at the University of Mirpur and 63 were collected from Must.

Research Design

The study is grounded in a quantitative methodology. This quantitative study involved 188 female students from AJK universities. A questionnaire was distributed to females to collect the data. Regression and co-relation techniques were used to do data statistical analysis. This study was by means of SPSS software.

Unit of Analysis

This study explores the relationship between psychological discomfort and academic performance among female students at AJk's higher education institutions, the data will be collected individually from different respondent. Thus, the unit of analysis and unit of

observation will be individual of University of Ajk. Descriptive analysis and regression and correlation were calculated in this study.

Time Horizon

The data was collected once for this research therefore, it is a one-shot or a cross-sectional study. There were collected within three months.

Results

Introduction

The overview of the data analysis and interpretation is included in the dataanalysis section. The results of the data collection are concluded in thissection. Correlation, descriptive statistics, and the link between the studyvariables make up this section of the current study.

Demographics of the Respondents

Age,qualification and department are among the demographics included in this study in accordance withthe demands of the models. These demographics, frequency distribution are as follows:

Age of the Respondents

There were three classes based on age. The first group of responders consisted of those between the ages of 16 and 20. In this group, 138 respondents participated. The second group consists of 38 respondents and is made up of respondents who are between the age of 21 and 25. There are 12 respondents in the third group, which is made up of respondents between the ages of 26 and 30.

Table 1

	Frequency	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
16-20 Years	138	73.4	73.4
21-25 Years	38	20.2	93.6
26-30 Years	12	6.4	00.0
Total	188	100.0	

Qualification

In qualification, there are three groups. Twenty respondents were Bachelor, made up group one. One hundred fifty-seven respondents make up the second category, which includes respondents who have master's in education. Eleven respondents from the MS group were included.

Table 2

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	20	10.6	10.6
Masters	157	83.5	94.1
M.Phil/MS	11	5.9	100.0
Total	188	100.0	

Department

In the department, there are six groups. Fifty-six respondents, from Business Administration, made up group one. Nineteen respondents made up the second category, which includes respondents from IT & SE. Nine respondents from Banking & Finance were included. Twenty-three respondents were included in the Humanities. Nineteen respondents from Sciences. Sixty-two respondents were from others department; there is the last category of this table.

Table 3

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Business Admin	56	29.8	29.8
IT & SE	19	10.1	39.9
Banking and Finance	9	4.8	44.7
Humanities	23	12.2	56.9
Sciences	19	10.1	67.0
Others	62	33.0	100.0
Total	188	100.0	

Reliability

A reliability study demonstrate the consistency of the various items created to gather the actual data. The number of items related to Verbal and Emotional Harassment, Social Media Harassment, Gesture and Posture Harassment, Academic Performance and Psychological Distress are shown in the table bellow. Five different aspects of Verbal and Emotional Harassment are listed. Five different aspects of Social Media Harassment are listed, five items of Gesture and Posture Harassment, Five different items of Academic Performance and five different items of Psychological Distress are listed. There are 25 items in total. The Cronbach alpha of measurable items Verbal and Emotional Harassment is .91, Indicating that

they are highly consistent, while the Cronbach alpha of measurable items Social Media Harassment is .86 whereas Cronbach's alpha of the items Gesture and Posture Harassment is .89 while the Cronbach alpha of the items of Academic performance is .87 and Psychological Distress is .79.

Table 4

Variable Name	No. of Items	Alpha Reliability
Verbal and Emotional Harassment	5	.91
Social Media Harassment	5	.86
Gesture and Posture Harassment	5	.89
Academic Performance	5	.87
Psychological Distress	5	.79

Descriptive Statistics

In this table interpret that there are 188 numbers of respondents in total. The table show the minimum and maximum value of each variable. Age has a range of values from 1 to 3, with a mean value of 1.32 and a standard deviation of .59. Qualification has a range of values from 1 to 3, with a mean value of 1.95 and a standard deviation of .40. Department has a range of values between 1 and 6, with a mean value of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 2.10. Verbal and Emotional Harassment has a range of values between 1 and 5, with a mean value of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.25. Social Media Harassment has a range from 1 to 5, with a mean value of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 1.22. Gesture and Posture Harassment has a range of values from 1 to 5, with a mean value of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.07. Academic performance ranges from 1.20 to 5, with a mean of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.08 between the minimum and maximum values. The psychological distress scale ranges from 1 to 5, with the mean value being 3.14 and standard deviation of 1.00.

Table 5

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard. Deviation
Age	188	1.00	3.00	1.3298	.59207
Qualification	188	1.00	3.00	1.9521	.40432
Department	188	1.00	6.00	3.6170	2.10478

Verbal& Emotional Harassment	188	1.00	5.00	3.4372	1.25442
Social Media Harassment	188	1.00	5.00	3.1117	1.22630
Gesture & Posture Harassment	188	1.00	5.00	3.7936	1.07313
Academic Performance	188	1.20	5.00	2.8957	1.08868
Psychological Distress	188	1.00	5.00	3.1468	1.00104

Correlation

The linear association/correlation and association between two variables were measured using Pearson correlation. It has a value that falls between -1 and 1. A score of 1 indicates that there is no correlation between two variables that is linearly at all negative.. When two variables are correlated linearly, there is no correlation.. A value of 1 represents the ideal positive linear correlation between any two variables.. Except for psychological distress and verbal and emotional harassment, all the factors are connected with one another and have substantial connections, according to correlation tables. The results show that social media harassment is positively correlated with verbal and emotional harassments, gesture and posture harassment's ispositively correlated with social media harassment's and is also positivelycorrelated with verbal and emotional harassment, academic performance is negatively correlated with verbal and emotional harassment and is also negatively correlated with gesture and posture harassment's. All these values of correlation are significant at 99% confidence interval level whereas the correlation values of academic performance and social media harassment shows that they are significant at 95% confidence interval level. Positive correlation means when one variable increases the other variable which is related with it will also increases. Negative correlation means when one variable increases the other variable which is related with it will decrease.

Table 6

	VE	PD	SM	GP	AP
Verbal & Emotional	1				

Harassment					
Psychological Distress	.285**	1			
Social Media Harassment	.635**	.340**	1		
Gesture & Posture Harassment	.288**	.360**	.429**	1	
Academic Performance	.409**	.516**	.428**	.445**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Linear Regression Analysis

Hypothesis testing

H1: The table depicts the general significance of the model. The P value shows the model fitness because the value of P is smaller than 0.05. the t value is also within the range which is between +2 and -2 so the H1 is accepted. Data analysis revealed that verbal and emotional harassment have negative impact on academic performance because the value of beta is 0.409. The beta value shows that one percent change in independent variable (verbal and emotional harassment) will create 30% negative change in dependent variable (academic performance).

Table 7

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	**Standard Error**	**Beta**		
Verbal & Emotional Harassment	.348	.057	.409	6.115	.000

H2: The table depicts the general significance of the model. The P value shows the model fitness because the value of P is smaller than 0.05. the t value is also within the range which is between +2 and -2 so the H1 is accepted. Data analysis revealed that academic performance is adversely affected by social media harassment. because the value of beta is 0.428. The beta value shows that one percent change in independent variable (social media harassment) will create 16% negative change in dependent variable (academic performance).

Table 8

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
Social Media Harassment	.358	.055	.428	6.462	.000

H3: The table depicts the general significance of the model. The P value shows the model fitness because the value of P is smaller than 0.05. the t value is also within the range which is between +2 and -2 so the H1 is accepted. Data analysis revealed that gesture and posture harassment have a negative impact on academic achievement because the value of beta is 0.445. The beta value shows that one percent change in independent variable (gesture and posture harassment) will create 37% negative change in dependent variable (academic performance) which have higher impact on academic performance as compared to verbal and posture harassment and social media harassment.

Table 9

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
Gesture & Posture Harassment	.449	.066	.445	6.781	.000

Model Summary

R: The correlation coefficient between the predicted values and the actual values of the dependent variable is **0.398.** It indicates a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable.

R Square: The coefficient of determination is **0.158,** meaning that approximately **15.8%** of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the predictor variables.

Adjusted R Square: This value is similar to R Square but adjusted for the number of predictors in the model. It is **0.144**, indicating that around **14.4%** of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the predictors after accounting for the degrees of freedom.

Std. Error of the Estimate: This value represents the standard deviation of the residuals (prediction errors). It is **1.00708,** indicating the average distance between the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable.

Change Statistics: This section shows the change in R Square when additional predictors are added to the model. The F change statistic is **11.510** with a significance value of **0.000,** indicating that the predictors significantly contribute to the model.

Durbin-Watson: This statistic tests for the presence of autocorrelation in the residuals. The value of **0.749** suggests that there is a possibility of positive autocorrelation in the model.

The value of R square is 0.158 which shows variance in variable and F value shows the model fitness.

Table 10

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.398ᵃ	0.158	0.144	1.00708	0.158	11.51	3	184	0	0.749

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gesture &Posture, social media, Verbal &Emotional

b. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Moderation 1

Moderation 1 Model Summary

R: The correlation coefficient between the predicted values and the actual values of the outcome variable (APMean) is 0.3601, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome.

R-sq: The coefficient of determination is 0.1297, suggesting that approximately 12.97% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictors.

MSE: The mean squared error is 1.0483, representing the average squared difference between the predicted and actual values of the outcome variable.

F: The F statistic is 9.1383, with 3 degrees of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of

freedom in the denominator. This indicates that the predictors collectively have a significant effect on the outcome variable, as the p-value is less than 0.05

Table: Moderation: Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.3601	0.1297	1.0483	9.138	3	184	0.00

Model Coefficients:

The intercept (constant) is 2.8765, indicating the estimated mean value of APMean when all predictor variables are zero.

The coefficient for VEmean is -0.2717, indicating that a one-unit increase in VEmean is associated with an average decrease of 0.2717 in APMean. The coefficient for PDMean is 0.1331, suggesting that a one-unit increase in PDMean is associated with an average increase of 0.1331 in APMean. The coefficient for the interaction term Int_1 (VEmean x PDMean) is 0.1184, indicating the change in the slope of the relationship between VEmean and APMean when PDMean increases by one unit.

Table: Moderation: Coefficients

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.8765	0.0753	38.2164	0	2.728	3.025
VEmean	-0.2717	0.0604	-4.5006	0	-0.3908	-0.1526
PDMean	0.1331	0.0755	1.7638	0.0794	-0.0158	0.2819
Int_1	0.1184	0.0579	2.0432	0.0425	0.0041	0.2326

Test of highest order unconditional interaction:

The interaction term X*W (VEmean x PDMean) has an R2-chng value of 0.0197, suggesting that it explains an additional 1.97% of the variance in APMean beyond the main effects.The associated F test statistic is 4.1748, with 1 degree of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of freedom in the denominator. The p-value of0.0425 indicates that the interaction term is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05. Conditional effects of the focal predictor (VEmean) at values of the moderator (PDMean):

Table: Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0197	4.1748	1	184	0.0425

The Conditional Effects

The conditional effects section shows the estimated effects of VEmean on APMean at different levels of PDMean.

At PDMean values of -1.0010, 0, and 1.0010, the estimated effects of VEmean on APMean are -0.3902, -0.2717, and -0.1532, respectively. Overall, the results suggest that the interaction between VEmean and PDMean significantly influences the relationship between VEmean and APMean. The effect of VEmean on APMean depends on the level of PDMean. Additionally, both VEmean and PDMean have independent effects on APMean, as indicated by their respective coefficients.

Focal predict: VEmean (X)

Mod var: PDMean (W)

Table: Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

PDMean	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-1.001	-0.3902	0.0805	-4.8484	0.000	-0.549	-0.2314
0.000	-0.2717	0.0604	-4.5006	0.000	-0.3908	-0.1526
1.001	-0.1532	0.0868	-1.7651	0.0792	-0.3245	0.018

Moderation 2

Moderation 2 Model Summary

R: The correlation coefficient between the predicted values and the actual values of the outcome variable (APMean) is 0..3025, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome.

R-sq: The coefficient of determination is 0.0915, suggesting that approximately 9.15% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictors.

MSE: The mean squared error is 1.0943, representing the average squared difference between the predicted and actual values of the outcome variable.

F: The F statistic is 6.1767, with 3 degrees of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of freedom in the denominator. This indicates that the predictors collectively have a significant effect on the outcome variable, as the p-value is less than 0.05.

Table: Moderation 2: Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.3025	.0915	1.0943	6.1767	3	184	.0005

Model Coefficients

The intercept (constant) is 2.8676, indicating the estimated mean value of APmean when all predictor variables are zero.The coefficient for SM mean is -.1619, indicating that a one-unit increase in SM mean is associated with an average decrease of 16% in APmean. The coefficient for PDmean is 0.1185, suggesting that a one-unit increase in PDmean is associated with an average increase of 11% in APmean. The coefficient for the interaction term Int_1 (SM mean x PD mean) is .1937, indicating the change in the slope of the relationship between SM mean and AP mean when PDmean increases by one unit.

Table: Moderation 2: Coefficients

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.8676	.0768	37.3487	.0000	2.7161	3.0191
SM	-.1619	.0628	-2.5771	.0107	-.2859	-.0380
PD	.1185	.0770	1.5389	.1256	-.0334	.2704
Int_1	.1937	.0592	3.2712	.0013	.0769	.3106

Test of Highest Order Unconditional Interaction

The interaction term X*W (SM mean x PD mean) has an R2-chng value of 0.0528, suggesting that it explains an additional 5.28% of the variance in AP mean beyond the main effects.The associated F test statistic is 10.7007, with 1 degree of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of freedom in the denominator. The p-value of0.0013 indicates that the interaction term is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05. Conditional effects of the focal predictor (SM mean) at values of the moderator (PD mean):

Table: Test(s) of Highest Order Unconditional Interaction(s)

R2-chng		F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0528	10.7007	1	184	0.0013

The Conditional Effects

The conditional effects section shows the estimated effects of SM mean on APmean at different levels of PD mean.At PD mean values of -1.001, 0.000, and 1.001, the estimated effects of SM mean on AP mean are -0.3559, -0.1619, and 0.0320, respectively. Overall, the

results Additionallysuggest that the interaction between SM mean, and PD mean significantly influences the relationship between SM mean and APM mean. The effect of SM mean on APMean depends on the level of PD mean., both SM mean, and PD mean have independent effects on APmean, as indicated by their respective coefficients.

Focal predict: SM mean (X)

Mod var: PD mean (W)

Table: Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

PD	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-1.001	-0.3559	0.869	-4.0956	0.0001	-0.5273	-0.1844
0.000	-0.1619	0.628	-2.5771	0.0107	-0.2859	-0.0380
1.001	0.0320	0.859	0.3727	0.7098	-0.1374	0.2014

Moderation 3

Moderation 3 Model Summary

R: The correlation coefficient between the predicted values and the actual values of the outcome variable (AP mean) is 0.4001, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome.

R-sq: The coefficient of determination is 0.1601, suggesting that approximately 16.01% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictors.

MSE: The mean squared error is 1.0117, representing the average squared difference between the predicted and actual values of the outcome variable.

F: The F statistic is 11.6905, with 3 degrees of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of freedom in the denominator. This indicates that the predictors collectively have a significant effect on the outcome variable, as the p-value is less than 0.05.

Table: Moderation: Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.4001	0.1601	1.0117	11.695	3	184	0.00

Model Coefficients

The intercept (constant) is 2.8936, indicating the estimated mean value of AP mean when all predictor variables are zero. The coefficient for GP mean is -0.3978, indicating that a one-unit increase in GP mean is associated with an average decrease of 0.3978 in AP mean. The coefficient for PD mean is 0.1427, suggesting that a one-unit increase in PD mean is

associated with an average increase of 0.1427 in AP mean. The coefficient for the interaction term Int_1 (GP mean x PD mean) is 0.0158, indicating the change in the slope of the relationship between GP mean and AP mean when PD mean increases by one unit. Covariance matrix of regression parameter estimates: This matrix shows the estimated covariance between the regression coefficients. Each cell represents the covariance between two predictors, with the diagonal cells representing the variance of each predictor.

Table: Moderation 2: Coefficients

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.8936	0.0738	39.183	0.000	2.7479	3.0393
GP	-0.3978	0.0696	-5.7123	0.000	-0.5352	-0.2604
PD	0.1427	0.0743	1.9207	0.0563	-0.0039	0.2892
Int_1	0.0158	0.0629	0.2508	0.8022	-0.1084	0.14

Test of Highest Order Unconditional Interaction

The interaction term X*W (GP mean x PD mean) has an R2-chng value of 0.0003, suggesting that it explains only a negligible amount of additional variance in AP mean beyond the main effects. The associated F test statistic is 0.0629, with 1 degree of freedom in the numerator and 184 degrees of freedom in the denominator. The p-value of 0.8022 indicates that the interaction term is not statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05.

Table: Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

R2-chng		F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.0003	.0629	1	184	.8022

The Conditional Effects

Conditional effects of the focal predictor (GP mean) at values of the moderator (PD mean):At PD mean values of -1.0010, 0, and 1.0010, the estimated effects of GP mean on AP mean are 3.1947, 2.7508, and 2.3069, respectively.

Overall, the results suggest that the interaction between GP mean, and PD mean does not significantly influence the relationship between GP mean and AP mean. The effect of GP means on AP mean does not depend on the level of PD mean. However, both GP mean, and PD mean have independent effects on AP mean, as indicated by their respective coefficients. Focal predict: GP mean (X)

Mod var: PD mean (W)

GP mean	PD mean	AP mean
-1.0731	-1.001	3.1947
0.000	-1.001	2.7508
1.0731	-1.001	2.3069
-1.0731	0.000	3.3205
0.000	0.000	2.8936
1.0731	0.000	2.4667
-1.0731	1.001	3.4464
0.000	1.001	3.0364
1.0731	1.001	2.6265

Discussion and Conclusion

There is a lot of worry about the problem of harassment at educational institutions, especially when it involves female students and male teachers or staff members. Harassment can have severe consequences, not only for the emotional well-being of the affected individuals but also for their academic performance. In this debate, the effect of harassment on female students' academic performance in higher education institutions in AJK is examined, as well as the potential moderating impact of psychological distress in amplifying the negative impacts.

Effects of Harassment on Female Students' Academic Performance

Deterioration in Academic Performance: Female students have been harassed by male teachers or staff members can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and fear, which may significantly impact their ability to concentrate on studies and academic tasks.

Decline in Attendance and Participation: Female students subjected to harassment may avoid attending classes or engaging in academic discussions, affecting their overall participation and academic progress.

Negative Effects on Learning Environment: Harassment can create a hostile learning environment, which may hinder the overall academic experience for both the targeted students and their peers, leading to a decrease in learning outcomes.

Impact on Motivation: Harassment can diminish female students' motivation to excel academically, as they may feel discouraged or undermined by the mistreatment they endure

Psychological Effects: Harassment leads to psychological distress, including anxiety, fear, and diminished self-esteem, all of which can interfere with students' ability to concentrate and engage effectively in their studies.

Decline in Attendance: Harassed female students may avoid attending classes or participating in academic activities, leading to a decline in attendance rates and negatively impacting their overall academic progress.

Negative Learning Environment: Harassment creates a hostile and intimidating atmosphere that affects not only the targeted students but also their peers, resulting in an adverse learning environment that hinders academic outcomes for everyone

Motivation and Self-efficacy: The distress caused by harassment can erode students' motivation to excel academically, causing a decline in self-efficacy and academic performance.

Moderating Role of Psychological Distress

Amplification of Academic Consequences: Psychological distress resulting from harassment can intensify the negative impact on academic performance, making it even more challenging for the affected students to cope with their studies.

Impaired Coping Mechanisms: Psychological distress can hinder effective coping mechanisms, leading to difficulties in managing the stress associated with both harassment and academic responsibilities.

Emotional Well-being and Academic Performance: The degree to which female students' academic performance is impacted may depend on how much psychological discomfort they are experiencing, with higher distress potentially resulting in more significant academic decline.

Conclusion

The effect of harassment on female students' academic performance in higher education institutions in AJK is an issue that needs to be addressed right now. Harassment can result in decreased academic achievement, attendance, and participation, affecting the overall learning environment. The moderating role of psychological distress further exacerbates the negative consequences, underscoring the importance of addressing both harassment and its psychological ramifications. It is crucial for educational institutions to implement comprehensive policies and support systems to prevent harassment, provide a safe environment for all students, and offer appropriate mental health resources to help mitigate

the academic effects of harassment on female students.

To address this issue effectively, higher educational institutions in AJK must implement comprehensive policies to prevent harassment and foster a safe learning environment for all students. Special attention should be given to promoting awareness and providing resources for addressing psychological distress resulting from harassment. By acknowledging and understanding the role of psychological distress as a moderator, educators and administrators can develop targeted interventions and support systems to help harassed female students cope with their academic challenges effectively.

Limitations of the Study

The academic performance of female students is impacted by a variety of factors. In this study harassment is only variable consider. The study focused only female students of higher education of AJK sector Kotli and Mirpur. Research study is a small sample size of 188. Studying only targets the two universities of AJK (MUST & UOK). Convenience sampling was utilized in the study rather than random sampling.

Implications for Future Research

This study is primarily relevant to the higher institutions of AJK (MUST & UOK). Future research is advised to include all AJ&K divisions, according to the study. To further examine the cause and consequences of harassment on academic performance of female students by male teachers and staff members, researcher will expand this study to include additional institutions such as universities, colleges, and small academic institutions of AJ&K. The study advises that other researchers include more harassment factors in this type of study, such as physical harassment, and many more, to make this study more through.

Ultimately, combatting harassment and its detrimental impact on academic performance requires a collective effort from educational authorities, faculty members, students, and society as a whole. Empowering female students and creating an inclusive and respectful educational environment are essential steps toward fostering academic success and personal growth for all students, regardless of their gender.

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