

## **Level of Awareness of Women Protection Laws among Public and Private University Teachers in Lahore (Pakistan)**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of the study was to identify the level of awareness of women protection laws at the workplace among university teachers in Lahore (Pakistan). A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. The population is comprised of university teachers of public and private sectors in Lahore— a provincial capital of Pakistan. Using stratified random sampling technique, public universities were considered as one stratum and private universities were taken as other. Randomly, 400 male and female teachers were selected, 200 from public universities and 200 from private universities. The researchers developed a close-ended questionnaire for this research and the same was got validated by experts in the field of assessment and research. The reliability of the pilot study calculated through Cronbach Alpha was 0.84. Data were collected ensuring all ethical considerations. The major finding was that university teachers were significantly aware of women protection laws at the workplace, while female teachers considerably more aware than their male counterparts. Inferential statistics resulted in significant differences on demographic variables. Results of the study might be helpful for future policy decisions on the awareness about these laws.

**Keywords:** women protection laws, awareness, workplace, harassment, university teachers.

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**Introduction**

In this era, it has been observed that sexual harassment is common in educational institutions. Women being physically vulnerable are more prone to face such incidents at educational institutions. Female teachers and students both are equally exposed to sexual harassment (Rydell & Boucher, 2009). At the university level, the interaction with students and teachers is much more as compared to schools and colleges in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has passed many Acts through its National and Provincial assemblies to safeguard the rights of women and for their protection at workplaces. Rudman and Fetterolf (2014) expressed that women at the workplace feel quite unsafe especially because they assume themselves as a sex commodity. Baumeister and Twenge (2012) termed the domination of one gender over the other as a cultural trait. They stressed that any sexual suppression in a country is based on the culture of that land. The harassment of women is almost a cultural thing and cannot be forecasted everywhere. But research shows that even in the developed countries the women are reportedly harassed at workplaces (Fairchild, 2010; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Sharma, 2015; Zarei, Rasolabadi, Gharibi, & Seidi, 2017).

Brown and Dutton (2005) discussed that harassment of women trigger the emotional reaction to fear and job insecurity. Crawford and Popp (2003) articulated that harassment of women has originated from the gender differences. The double standards in terms of gender have resulted as a harassment of women at workplaces. Eagly, Wood, and Diekmann (2000) believe that understanding of social role theory of gender can play a considerable part in diminishing the harassment of women at their workplaces.

In Pakistan, where there are grave issues of low family and personal income, poor living standards, underprivileged financial conditions, imbalance in the demand and supply of workforce and gender imparity, women— skilled or qualified— have to earn a living for themselves and their families. Women have to work in multiple positions, preferable of which are teaching and nursing. The majority of working women belong to these two disciplines. Little research has been conducted in the two sectors about the harassment problems faced by working women at their offices. Zia, Batool, and Yasin (2016) conducted a study on women harassment at media workplaces in the Pakistani context, similarly, Bilal, Wazir, Altaf, and Rasool (2021) studied women harassment and subjective wellbeing in Pakistan on different industry workplaces but no specific study is found in the literature on the education sector.

More recently, there are cases of harassment of female students reported in schools and colleges in Pakistan. The famous chain school systems and colleges have been put under question marks for not providing women protection against harassment. This research identified the level of awareness of university teachers about women protection laws against harassment at workplace because, the university teachers are

socially and politically more aware than the school and college students, therefore, the study was directed towards assessing teachers' awareness level of the laws.

## **Women Protection Laws**

Women protection laws are developed from time to time keeping in view the situation of the country. Following constitutional rights of women are there in the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 ensures.

*Article 25 clause (1)* of the constitution declares the citizens of Pakistan as equal in the light of the law and by law reserves the right of similar protection.

*Article 25 clause (2)* refers to the law of no discrimination in its citizens based on their gender.

*Article 25 clause (3)* is a provision of laws especially for the ignored and marginalized women and children of Pakistan.

*Article 34* is especially for women to ensure their full participation in all segments concerning Pakistan.

Other than that the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment also provides extra resources to the provinces to ensure women protection and empowerment. Many organizations are working in Pakistan that claim to protect women against any harassment at workplace. Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) is an alliance at a national level that kept raising significant voices against women harassment. Due to their persistent efforts, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act in 2010. Based on that act, the province of Punjab also took initiative in this direction and came up with a similar act. The Punjab Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2012

Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan in terms of population, has a large segment of working women. This amendment act hallmarks the efforts towards the protection of women. The highlighting characteristic of this act is its efficient complaint system. The complaint system listens, summons the accused and gives the verdict within days. There is a penalty for the guilty person of harassment under section 4 of this act.

## **International Commitments of Pakistan**

Pakistan is also a member and signatory of several following international conventions and commitments for the said purpose.

### ***Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

Pakistan has signed this declaration in 1948, being a member of the United Nations. This declaration ensures the rights of every human being.

### ***Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women***

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Pakistan joined this summit in 1985 and committed to working on the advancement of women.

### **ICPD, ICESCR and ICCPR**

Pakistan is a signatory of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). All these global programs have pertinent articles for women and gender parity.

#### ***Vienna Declaration***

In 1993, Pakistan recognized that "women's rights are human rights" in the Vienna Declaration.

#### ***Beijing Declaration***

In 1995, Pakistan was amongst the countries in the Beijing Declaration and Platform in their 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women. It demanded the development, rights and peace of all women around the world.

### **CEDAW**

In 1996, Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. United Nations Women in Pakistan is also helping Pakistan in reporting and other mechanisms. Hence, based on the need for research on this topic, the present research was carried out. The study could be significant in adding knowledge in the body of literature about the level of awareness of university teachers about women protection laws at the workplace. Further studies and plans of action can be devised based on the findings of this study. This study might be effective in spreading awareness on the women protection laws in universities of Pakistan. The results of this research might encourage similar researches at school and college levels. Henceforth, the current study is undertaken.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were as under.

1. To know the level of awareness of women protection laws among teachers of public and private universities.
2. To identify the differences in the level of awareness of women protection laws among university teachers based on the demographic variables.

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## **Research Questions**

1. Is there any significant level of awareness of women protection laws among university teachers?
2. Is there any difference in the level of awareness of women protection laws among university teachers based on the demographic variables (age, gender, experience, qualification and university type)?

## **Delimitation**

The study was delimited to male and female university teachers only of Public and private sector universities of Lahore.

## **Research Design**

This research used a quantitative descriptive survey research design. Reverse.

## **Population**

The population of this study was male and female teachers working in public and private sector universities in Lahore. The population of the study included teachers from 22 universities in Lahore (HEC, 2020).

## **Sampling Design**

A stratified random sampling technique was used in this research. The entire population of this research was divided into two strata: public and private sector universities. Five universities were randomly selected from each stratum through the lottery method. From five public sectors and five private sector universities 400 male and female university teachers were randomly selected. Out of them, 100 male and 100 female teachers were from public sector universities and 100 male and 100 female teachers were from private sector universities.

## **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire was developed for this study. Close-ended items were made after a review of the literature. The items were gauged on a five point Likert type scale having values from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Initially, there were 49 items in the questionnaire, along with the demographic information.

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**Validity**

Content validity of this questionnaire was ascertained through the evidence of expert opinion. The instrument along with the objectives of the study was shared with the five university teacher educators from the area of assessment and research. According to the expert opinion on the questionnaire, few items were deleted and a few were slightly modified. The validated questionnaire had 42 items.

**Reliability**

A pilot study of the instrument was conducted to see the internal consistency of the items. The questionnaire was administered to 35 university teachers other than the actual sample. The Reliability of the instrument was found as 0.84 through coefficient of Cronbach alpha, which is considered good for survey-type studies. A few items were not taking consistent responses. The language of the items was reviewed and altered. As a result, the final questionnaire had 38 items. Later on, the researchers personally collected the data. It took almost 5 months to complete the data collection for this study.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researchers got consent from the concerned heads of the universities before the administration of the tool. The respondents were informed about the objectives of the study and it was ensured to them that the data thus generated will be used only for these research their participation in the research was voluntary.

**Results**

This section provides the results of a) demographic, b) descriptive and c) inferential statistical analysis.

**a) Demographic Analysis**

Demographic analysis of the sample revealed that the sample was equally distributed in terms of male and female university teachers. The age categories were divided into 25-35 years, 36 to 45 years, 46 to 55 years and 56 and above. In this sample, the majority of the teachers were belonging to the age category of 36-45 years of age. They were 122 in number. Then 111 teachers were belonging to the age group of 46-55 years, 25-35 years' category had 93 teachers and 56 and above category reported 74 teachers. There were 212 single university teachers in the sample and 188 married teachers. This sample consisted of the majority of assistant professors; they were 180 in

the sample whereas, associate professors were 120 and lecturers were 100. As in qualification of the respondents, there were 94 PhDs and 46 PhD scholars who responded to the questionnaires. There were 83 MPhil and 95 MPhil scholars and about 82 respondents had MA/ MSc qualification. In the experience category, 130 respondents had 3 to 10 years of experience, 124 respondents had 11-17 years of experience, 80 respondents were having 1 to 2 years of experience and 66 respondents were having experience of 18 years and above. Other descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in the tables below.

### **a) Descriptive Analysis**

In the descriptive analysis, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 38 items of the questionnaire. The mean score of 3.0 and above was taken as a cut off point for all the positive items. The items having a mean score of 3.0 and above were considered as in agreement by the respondents. All items were showing mean score of above 3.0 which meant that the sample of this study were well aware of the women harassment laws at their workplaces.

The item 'many women often take precautionary measures to ensure their safety in your institute' showed the highest descriptive statistics ( $M= 3.59$ ,  $SD= 1.19$ ). The item 'women face many problems while working in shift duty' was reporting the lowest descriptive values ( $M= 3.06$ ,  $SD= 1.39$ ). All items of the questionnaire were merged as a variable and the reported descriptive statistics for the sum of the questionnaire was ( $M= 3.34$ ,  $SD= 0.27$ ). The mean score was well above 3.0 which meant that the responses of the respondents were in agreement with the items. The items of the questionnaire were merged into five factors: awareness about laws; implementation of laws; equal opportunity for women; laws at your institution; and mannerism.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive analysis of factors of questionnaire*

Factors	N	M	SD
Awareness about Laws	9	3.36	1.19
Implementation of Laws	9	3.38	1.18
Equal Opportunity for Women	7	3.36	1.21
Laws at your Institution	7	3.32	1.23
Mannerism	6	3.34	1.23

Table 1 represents the descriptive analysis of these factors. It can be seen in the table that all factors had a mean score of above 3.0 which is interpreted as responses in agreement.

## b) Inferential Analysis

The inferential analysis is presented below from table 2 to table 8.

**Table 2**

*Independent sample t-test on the overall sum of items in terms of gender*

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t value	p
Male	200	3.30	.267	398	-2.105	.036
Female	200	3.37	.268			

In Table 2, an independent sample t-test was applied to see the significant differences in the opinions of male and female respondents of the study. It was seen that there was a significant mean difference in the opinion of male and female university teachers on the awareness of women protection laws at workplace. The results were significant at p-value less than 0.05. The mean score of female teachers was significantly more ( $M= 3.37$ ,  $SD= 0.268$ ) than that of male teachers ( $M= 3.30$ ,  $SD= 0.267$ ). It meant that women were more aware of these laws.

**Table 3**

*Independent sample t-test on the overall sum of items in terms of marital status*

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t value	p
Single	212	3.32	.259	398	-1.925	.055
Married	188	3.37	.273			

In Table 3, an independent sample t-test was applied to see the significant differences in the opinions of single and married respondents of the study. No significant mean differences were seen in the opinions of university teachers on women protection laws at workplace in terms of the marital status of the teachers.

**Table 4**

*One-way ANOVA on the overall sum of all items concerning the number of publications of the faculty members*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.085	2	.042	.595	.552
Female	28.270	397	.071		
Total	28.354	399			

Table 4 depicts one-way ANOVA on the opinions of university teachers about women protection laws at the workplace in terms of the number of research articles they

had published. The results showed no significant mean differences based on the different number of publications.

**Table 5**

*One-way ANOVA on the overall sum of all items concerning the age of the faculty members*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.135	3	.045	.632	.595
Female	28.219	396	.071		
Total	28.354	399			

Table 5 illustrates one-way ANOVA on the opinions of university teachers about women protection laws at workplace in terms of the different age categories of the teachers. The results showed no significant mean differences based on the different age groups of the university teachers.

**Table 6**

*One-way ANOVA on the overall sum of all items concerning the designation of the faculty members*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.070	2	.035	.489	.614
Female	28.285	397	.071		
Total	28.354	399			

Table 6 represents one-way ANOVA on the opinions of university teachers about women protection laws at workplace in terms of the designation of the university teachers. The results showed no significant mean differences on the basis of different designations of the university teachers.

**Table 7**

*One-way ANOVA on the overall sum of all items concerning the qualification of the faculty members*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.645	4	.161	2.300	.058
Female	27.709	395	.070		
Total	28.354	399			

Table 7 exemplifies one-way ANOVA on the opinions of university teachers about women protection laws at the workplace in terms of the qualification of the

university teachers. The results showed no significant mean differences based on the different qualification categories of the university teachers.

**Table 8**

*One-way ANOVA on the overall sum of all items concerning the experience of the faculty members*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.178	3	.059	.834	.476
Female	28.176	396	.071		
Total	28.354	399			

Table 8 describes that one-way ANOVA was applied to the opinions of university teachers about women protection laws at the workplace in terms of the experience of the university teachers. The results showed no significant mean differences based on the different experience years of the university teachers.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The first objective of this research was to “know the level of awareness of women protection laws among teachers of public and private universities.” A research question, “*Is there any significant level of awareness of women protection laws among university teachers?*” was designed to attain this research objective. This research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was revealed that female and male teachers working in private and public universities of Lahore were aware of women’s protection laws at the workplace. Rydell and Boucher (2009) conducted a research study to explore the awareness of employees about women’s protection laws in an organization at Miami. They found that employees were well aware of women’s protection laws at workplace as well as outside of the organization. These findings are in line with the present study. In America and other developed nations, the role of women in society is largely equal to that of men, but in Pakistani society and other third world countries this ratio varies and women are exposed to the workplaces at a relatively much lesser rate. Therefore, the level of awareness about women protection laws might differ in different sectors. The awareness level in this study is significantly positive could be attributed to the sample level i.e. the university faculty. The role of media in spreading awareness is not discussed in this research which remains a limitation of this study. In this manner, the first objective of this study was achieved.

The second objective was formulated to identify the differences in the level of awareness of women protection laws based on the demographic variables (age, experience, qualification, gender, marital status and designation) among university teachers. The research question was developed with these six demographic variables to

achieve this objective. Each demographic variable analysis is discussed and presented separately below for a clear understanding.

### **Age**

One Way ANOVA was used to analyze the data. There was no significant difference in the level of awareness about women protection laws among university teachers based on their age. Fairchild (2010) explored the “context effects on women’s perceptions of stranger harassment” in State University of New Jersey, USA. She found that university teachers were aware of women’s rights at the workplace but there existed no significant difference in their perception based on their age and ranks. These findings also align with current findings.

### **Experience**

The results achieved through one-way ANOVA showed that university teachers had no difference in the level of awareness about women protection laws based on the experience. Fairchild and Rudman (2008) conducted a research study on “everyday stranger harassment and women’s objectification.” The findings of their study revealed that women were harassed inside as well as outside of the workplace. The newly inducted women and the women working in the organization earlier had observed the same kind of harassment at the workplace and outside of the organization. It also means that the participants of the study irrespective of their experience in the organizations were of the same view. Current research’s findings correspond to that of (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008).

### **Academic Qualification**

It was revealed after applying one-way ANOVA that university teachers had no difference in the level of awareness about women protection laws based on their academic qualification. Fetterolf and Rudman (2014) conducted a study on “gender inequality in the home and outside: The role of relative income, supports for traditional gender roles, and perceived entitlement.” They concluded many findings regarding women harassment. One of the main findings of their study was that women having degrees in different disciplines were equally harassed. Therefore, the study conducted by Fetterolf and Rudman (2014) confirmed the findings of this research.

### **Gender**

An independent sample t-test was applied to analyze the fourth research question. Findings elaborated that male and female teachers had a difference in the level

of awareness about women protection laws. This means that the perception of male teachers was different as compared to female teachers about women protection laws. Sharma (2015) explored the research problem on “violence against women: Where are the solutions?” The study concluded that the female participants were more vocal about the harassment of the women than male co-workers. Female respondents were in favour of that government should take concrete steps to stop harassment of women at the job. Male respondents have their opinion that if the government formed any legislation regarding violence against women then these kinds of laws are often misused. The findings of Sharma (2015) are in line with the findings of current research. However, the responses based on gender are subject to the sample of the study. Any other sample may agree with or not, as it is a cultural and/contextual issue. This is also related to the sensitivity of the respondents as well.

### **Marital Status**

It was observed that university teachers had the same level of awareness about women protection laws based on their marital status. Zarei, Rasolabadi, Gharibi, and Seidi (2017) conducted a study on “the prevalence of violence against women and some related factors in Iran.” One of their key findings discussed women harassment. They compared the perception of married and unmarried women. They found that both the type of women (married and unmarried) were harassed at the workplace and outside of their homes approximately once in their lives. Therefore, these findings match with present research findings.

### **Designation**

The findings revealed that university teachers had the same level of awareness about women protection laws among university teachers based on their designation. Khan and Hussain (2008) explored the research problem related to violence against women in Pakistan. All respondents of their study were of the view that women working in different organizations at a different level were harassed in some way or the other. Therefore, the findings of Khan and Hussain (2008) are in conformance with current research findings. Henceforth, all demographic variables have been discussed and as a result, objective two was also achieved.

### **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended for every institution to have some women safety and protection measures on their campuses. The availability of any such forums for complaints is necessary.

2. The need for training related to women harassment and protection laws is also recommended by the researchers.
3. Awareness seminars should be conducted and character-building societies shall play their active role in universities in combating and eliminating the menace of women harassment from educational institutions.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

Similar studies should be conducted on school and college levels to assess the awareness level. Qualitative research designs could be used for an in-depth case study of any institution. Especially after the covid-19 outbreak when online mode of education has appeared the study needs to be done on electronic mode of sexual harassment.

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