

HARASSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION: INSIGHTS FROM THE APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of workplace harassment on employee turnover intention in the apparel industry of Western Province, Sri Lanka. Further, this research aims to address the gap in addressing workplace harassment without a sexual perspective and in considering both male and female employees working in the apparel industry. Drawing on the literature, a conceptual framework was developed with workplace harassment as the independent variable, assessed through verbal, psychological, and physical harassment. The study population included employees in the apparel sector in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, where the data were collected using a structured questionnaire from a sample of 384 employees selected through stratified sampling from several selected apparel companies and conducting the research using a quantitative approach. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23 using different analytical methods, namely, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. According to the findings, 313 of the initial 384 respondents completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 81%. The findings indicated that a significant proportion of respondents (82.7 %) reported experiencing verbal harassment, while 16.9% reported psychological harassment. The correlation coefficients revealed statistically significant positive relationships between employee turnover intentions and each form of workplace harassment. The Cronbach's alpha values used to analyze the reliability and obtained for Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Work Environment, and the overall Employee Turnover Intention surpass the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, suggesting acceptable internal consistency. Regression analysis highlighted that the R² value was 0.213, indicating that approximately 21.3% of the variance in employee turnover intention could be explained by the combined influence of verbal, psychological, and physical harassment. Additionally, verbal harassment, psychological harassment, and physical harassment all had statistically significant positive impacts on employee turnover intention. Accordingly, this study concluded that workplace harassment significantly impacts employee turnover intention in the apparel sector of Western Province, Sri Lanka. The findings underscore the need for organizations to address and mitigate workplace harassment to reduce employee turnover rates by implementing comprehensive anti-harassment policies and conducting regular training and awareness programs to educate employees and management.

Keywords: Apparel industry-Sri Lanka, employee turnover intention, workplace harassment