

Interaction Effect of Gender and Sector on Perceiving the Psychosocial Parameters and Workplace Violence

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Abstract: The world today is going through a wave which is ruthless, restless and has made the younger section of the society suffer from frustration. Globalization has the potentials to transform the workplace into a centre for sexual harassment as satisfaction in workplace has long been associated with some elements of mental health along with the stability of income. Eventually, all pervasive violence breaks out and they remain immune of legal battles. Thus the process of global change results in violence. It has a deep impact on mental health and well being of the people leading to violence and conflict. One gets violent and overpowers to victims when the victim is physically weaker. In the act of violence, people are least aware of the fact that they are committing violence. Both males and females fall prey to this sexual aberration and violence. Therefore, a critical study on violence is required and its awareness is necessary among the people, with this backdrop, the researcher has taken up the present study to understand the interaction effect of gender and sector in perceiving the psychosocial parameters (stress, energy, general health, perceived health, superior support, subordinate level, organization support, work overload, conflict, job demands and CWB) and workplace violence dimensions (bullying, actively hostile behaviour, illegitimate pressure, humiliation and discrimination & sexual harassment) among employees belonging to four different organizations. The findings of the study revealed that both males and females do differ significantly in perceiving psychosocial parameters at their workplaces.

Keywords: Globalization, sexual harassment, discrimination, gender, stress

1. Introduction

According to The Journal of sexual harassment and domestic violence (2004), *Harassment* has to do with any behavior designed to trouble or worry the victim. Of all the harassment, sexual harassment is a common one. It is a syndrome of discrimination and exploitation. It creates a climate of threat, terror and reprisal. Sexual harassment at the workplace is an extension of violence in everyday life. Sexual persecution is a reminder to women that they cannot be themselves and that in a sense they are there for men. Women tolerate and even learn to accept several sexual harassment as a expression of men's sexual desire. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexually determined behavior by any person either individually or in association with other persons, or by any person in authority whether directly or by implication such as-

- Eve-teasing
- Unsavory remarks
- Jokes causing or likely to cause awkwardness or embarrassment
- Forcibly physical touch or molestation
- Unwelcome sexual overtone in any manner such as over telephone
- Displaying pornographic or other derogatory pictures, cartoons, pamphlets or sayings.

Women workers face harassment in the above forms by their male superiors, colleagues, who for the time being is in a position to sexually harass them.

Sexual harassment is offensive, frightening and insulting to women. It has an adverse effect on their mental and physical health.

There are also social contributions that can lead to violence: poverty, hopelessness, isolation and decline of educational system. Additionally mental health problems and other disorders arising from childhood traumatization are significant indicators of a propensity of violence. Finally, the devaluing of life including racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination were values associated with escalating violence. Violence, an act of aggression is the expression of physical force.

The term 'violence' is used for the more extensive forms of aggressive behaviour that are likely to cause significant injuries to the victim. Although violence typically refers to physical aggression, it can also be applied to psychological stress that causes suffering or trauma. Broadly the term 'violence' has been applied to the narrow issue of physically striking an individual (Keempe, 1982) and causing injury (D.Gil, 1970) to the act of striking a person with the intent of causing harm or injury but not actually causing it (Gelles and Strauss,

1979) to acts where there is high potential of causing injury (Strauss, 1980) and to acts where there is no hitting at all such as verbal abuse or psychological and emotional violence.

WHO (1995) has defined violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against oneself or a group of people, that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, deaths, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”.

1.1 Sexual Harassment within the Workplace

Sexual harassment is a common one. It is a syndrome of discrimination and exploitation. It is an offence against the dignity of a human being, which leave a long term impact on the victim and destroy a healthy work environment. Since the first Industrial Revolution, women have always received the cleft end of the stick. In the Indian construction industry, sexual harassment is rampant. On-the-job sexual harassment has been in the spotlight for several years. Although the popular view of sexual harassment is that women have always the victim of sexual harassment is not correct. Men have been the victims of sexual harassment by women. Therefore, the workplace violence is any form of non-consensual verbal or physical actions carried out by one person or the other within the working environment.

The term ‘sexual harassment’ is not easy to define as it may seem. A major obstacle has been drawn to what act actually amount to sexual harassment because men and women tend to have different perspective concerning what constitutes sexual harassment. So, it is imperative for the company to clearly define what comprises sexual harassment.

A more encompassing definition defines sexual harassment as the imposition of any unwanted condition on any person’s employment because of that person’s sex. Under this definition, harassment includes jokes, direct taunting, disruption at work, vandalism or destruction of property and physical attacks. Sexual harassment occurs in a wide variety of forms, including rape, pressure for sexual favors, sexual touching, sexual joking and the display of unwanted sexual material.

Sexual harassment may occur in either two forms: quid pro quo harassment or hostile environment harassment. These forms may be present in the workplace. Quid pro quo harassment occurs when a supervisor of the employer use his position to induce female employee to grant him sexual favors. The essence of a quid pro quo is that the victim must choose between suffering economic disadvantage and enduring sexual advances. Hostile environment harassment occurs when unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature creates a hostile working environment. The essence of a hostile working environment form of harassment is that an individual is forced to work in environments that result in psychological or emotional harm or humiliation. Demands for sexual favors in exchange for continuing employment have long been a common abuse of personal power in the workplace. The young women entrants in the job market are mostly victims of sexual harassment as they are still in the world of fantasy and have not experienced the harsh realities of life. Globalization provides space for a male superior in a modern workplace to impose patriarchy domination on the sub-ordinates. These bosses and managers in new work places exploit the world of fantasy of young women employees by taking advantage of their state of insecurity and then inflict violence on them. The next potential victims are those women who witness rapid modernization at a later stage in their workplace. Women employee of this genre tends to perceives the primary target of retrenchment due to old age, lack of tenacity and competence, fail to acquire the new skills and approaches that their work places demand them. In addition to this, there is hardly any demand for them in the job markets and at the same time a stable and regular earning is a dire need for them and their families. Thus, to compensate their deficiency, they keep up their physical glamour to the expectations of their masters and thus a new patriarchy takes over as a culture and pervades men as well as women. The new corporatism adopt this strategy mainly to re-organize and reinforcement their internal mechanism of power and profit.

Thus, we can say that globalization works more at the psychological level of a person. The present study intends to focus on the effect of the workplace violence on the performance of the employees and to study its relationship with workplace violence parameters and psychosocial parameters. The study thus hypothesized that there will be an interaction effect of gender and sector on psychosocial parameters and on the dimensions of workplace violence.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample Description:

The participants of the present study comprised of employees working in different sectors i.e., law enforcement, hospitals, banks and insurance and corporates located in Vadodara city, Gujarat, India. The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire from the Police Personnel of Vadodara. The participants of the study were DIG, IGP, Police Inspector, Sub-inspector, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Head Constables and

Constables, Police Personnel, Doctors, Nurses, Managerial Staffs, Executives, etc. A total of 550 employees from Vadodara City, were participated in the study. The inclusion criteria for selecting the sample were based upon the employees who have at least 6 months of work experience in the present job. The participants were collected using the stratified random sampling technique. Once the data was collected, it was pooled together and statistical analysis was done for the pooled data.

2.2 Measures

The measures used in the study were workplace Violence Tool, Stress Scale, Job demands scale and workload scale. A Personal Data Sheet was also given to the respondents to provide information on the demographic characteristics of age, gender, educational qualification, work experience, organization, designation, working hours and hierarchical levels.

Workplace Violence Tool

The researcher had developed the workplace violence tool on the basis of the parameters obtained from the pilot study. The data were subjected to data validation and were given to the experts for face validity.

Stress scale:

Stress was measured with a 6 item index ($\alpha = .92$) (Kjellberg & Wadman, 2002), where higher values indicate more stress (e.g. "Have you felt stressed the last week?"). Response alternatives ranged from 0 (not at all) to 5 (a lot). The scale is responded on 6 point rating scale, where 0 means not at all, 1 means hardly, 2 means somewhat, 3 means fairly, 4 means much and 5 means very much.

Workload Scale:

It is a standardized tool to measure how employees felt at work (e.g. "family matters suffer because of your responsibilities at work."). It ranges from never to always; where 1 means never, 2 means seldom, 3 means sometimes, 4 means often and 5 means always.

Job Demands Scale:

It is a standardized tool, adapted from Karasek & Theorell (1990). The scale consists of 7 items and each item has to be responded in 5 point scale, where 1 means never, 2 means seldom, 3 means sometimes, 4 means often and 5 means always. (e.g. "you have to retain your calm when staff members express their stress").

3. Results and Discussions

The data was subjected to SPSS version 20 for statistical analysis. In order to explore (a) interaction effect of gender and organizational sectors on the perception of psychosocial parameters and (b) interaction effect of gender and organizational sectors on the perception of workplace violence dimensions; descriptive statistics, resulting in mean and standard deviation of different variables descriptive statistics and inferential statistics including two-way ANOVA, was performed. The results were further discussed:

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Two-way ANOVA for gender of the employees and organizational sectors on the perception of psychosocial parameters and workplace dimensions

3.1.1.1 Interaction effect of gender and organizational sectors on the perception of psychosocial parameters

In order to study the interaction effect of gender of the employees and organizational sectors in the perception of psychosocial parameters, the data was subjected to 2×4 (gender of the employee \times organizational sectors) analysis of variance. For multiple comparisons of means, Tukey's post-hoc analysis was used.

Table 1. Interactions effect of gender and sector on the perception of psycho social parameters

Variable	Male (407)				Female (143)				F ratio
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
	(finance) (n=124)	(health) (n=77)	(law & order) (n=131)	(corporate) (n=75)	(finance) (n=26)	(health) (n=73)	(law & order) (n=18)	(corporate) (n=26)	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Stress	17.59 ^a (5.20)	20.96 ^b (5.53)	16.79 ^a (5.53)	20.27 ^{ab} (5.68)	16.92 ^a (4.48)	20.15 ^a (5.41)	20.55 ^a (7.09)	18.00 ^a (5.15)	3.89**
Energy	16.79 ^a (4.51)	16.19 ^a (4.75)	18.27 ^b (4.37)	18.03 ^{ab} (5.14)	17.11 ^a (3.54)	17.63 ^a (4.21)	18.27 ^b (4.88)	17.31 ^a (2.97)	1.09
General health	14.63 ^{ab} (3.53)	15.07 ^b (2.74)	13.53 ^a (3.04)	14.69 ^a (3.74)	14.11 ^a (3.76)	14.50 ^a (2.43)	13.55 ^a (4.39)	14.31 ^a (3.56)	.13
Perceived health	3.89 ^{ab} (.79)	4.12 ^a (.65)	3.93 ^a (.91)	4.04 ^a (.70)	3.69 ^a (.73)	4.02 ^a (.74)	3.50 ^a (.98)	3.96 ^b (.73)	.82
Superior support	21.58 ^a (4.73)	21.68 ^a (4.35)	25.32 ^{ab} (3.66)	22.22 ^a (5.13)	23.38 ^a (4.72)	23.03 ^a (4.03)	25.44 ^b (3.27)	23.54 ^a (3.97)	.47
Subordinate support	21.52 ^a (4.54)	22.06 ^a (4.65)	24.71 ^a (4.55)	22.52 ^a (4.80)	22.53 ^{ab} (5.33)	23.44 ^a (4.71)	26.05 ^b (3.03)	23.26 ^a (4.48)	.09
Organization support	24.77 ^a (5.55)	24.87 ^{ab} (4.79)	28.58 ^a (5.07)	25.58 ^a (5.96)	25.73 ^a (5.78)	25.30 ^a (4.31)	29.55 ^b (3.63)	26.88 ^a (5.16)	.84
Work overload	11.58 ^{ab} (3.77)	11.12 ^a (3.08)	12.51 ^b (3.46)	10.12 ^a (3.22)	11.65 ^a (3.65)	11.35 ^a (2.84)	12.11 ^a (2.80)	9.92 ^a (3.09)	.15
Conflict	20.26 ^a (5.86)	19.31 ^a (3.06)	20.83 ^{ab} (5.96)	17.51 ^a (5.48)	18.84 ^a (5.56)	21.00 ^b (4.66)	17.94 ^a (7.18)	18.31 ^a (5.93)	2.9**
Job demands	19.00 ^b (5.45)	18.38 ^a (4.76)	18.53 ^a (5.97)	16.20 ^a (5.76)	16.69 ^a (5.37)	18.89 ^{ab} (4.29)	16.22 ^a (5.93)	18.31 ^a (5.76)	3.2**
CWB	28.44 ^b (9.35)	27.59 ^{ab} (8.48)	24.99 ^a (6.75)	23.76 ^a (7.19)	24.19 ^a (8.23)	25.49 ^a (5.17)	23.00 ^a (4.48)	23.15 ^a (5.95)	.84

**P<0.01, *P<0.5

As seen in the table 4.1, there is a significant differences in the perception of stress conflict and job demands between male and female employees across different organizational sectors (P<0.01).No significant interaction effects was observed in the perception of other psychosocial parameters such as energy, general health, perceived health, organizational resources (superior support, subordinate support and organization support), work overload and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) between male and female employees across the four organizational sectors.

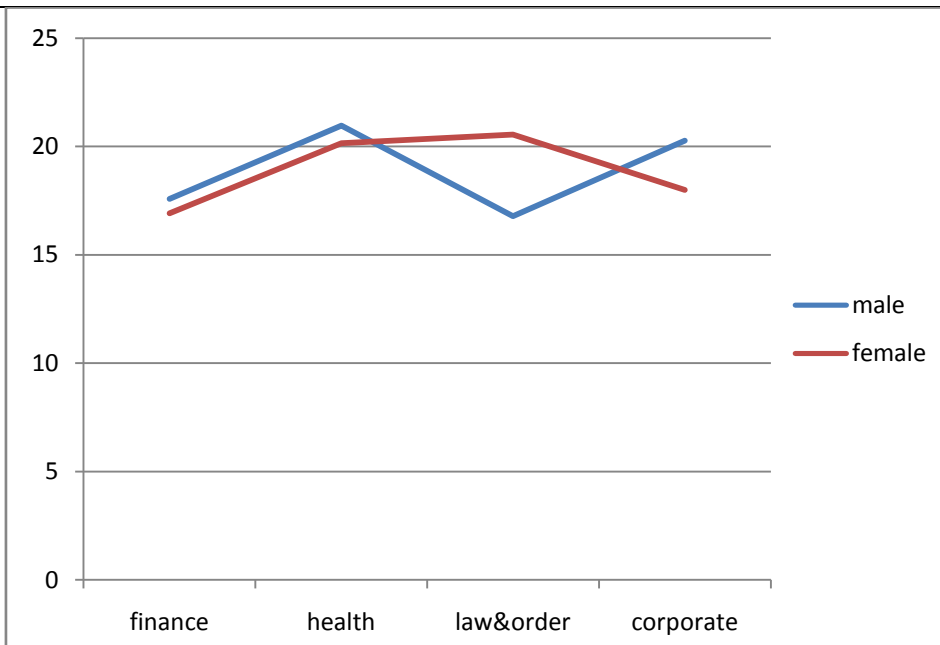


Figure 1: Interaction effect of gender and sector on stress

Table no. 1 and figure 1 shows the interaction effect of gender and sector on the dimension of perceived stress. The figure depicts that in finance and health sector, both male and female employees perceived the same amount of stress. Although, the males mean score shows that male employees perceived nominally higher degree of stress as compared to females. Whereas, in law& order sector, it is seen that female employees shows significantly higher stress as compared to male employees. The case is just the opposite in the case of corporate sector. In corporate sector, male employees perceived significantly higher stress as compared to the female employees.

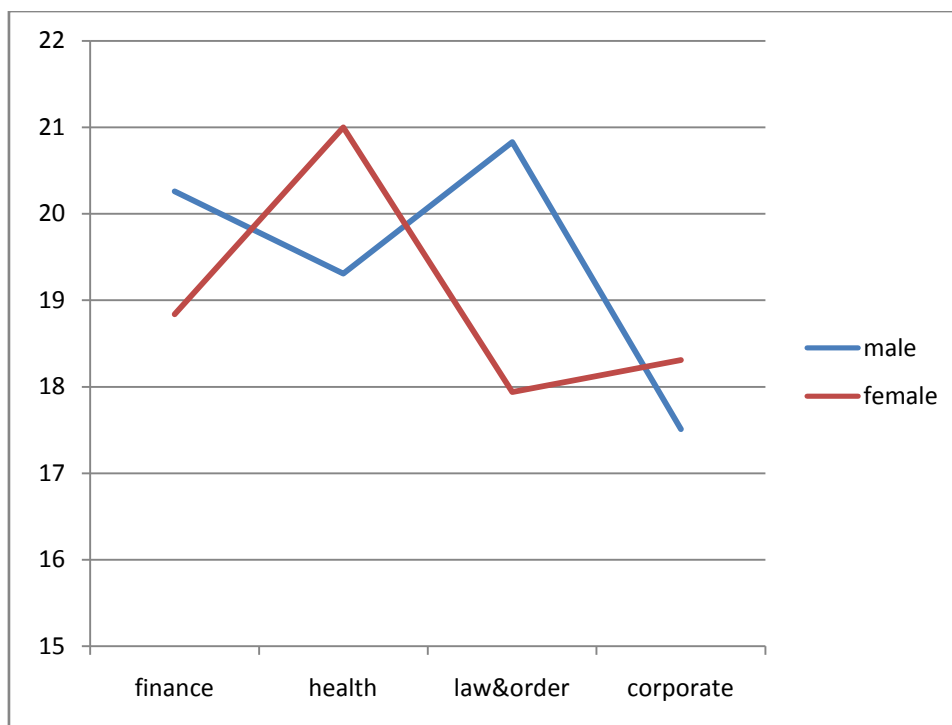


Figure 2: Interaction effect of gender and sector on conflict

The above figure no.2 shows the interaction effect of gender and sector on conflict dimension. The figure depicts that male employees perceived significantly higher conflict than females in law& order sector whereas, in health sector, the case is just the opposite, female employees significantly higher conflict as compared to male employees. Incorporate sector, the mean score shows that male employees perceived nominally higher degree of conflict as compared to female employees. In the case of finance sector, male employees perceived significantly higher degree of conflict as compared to the female employees.

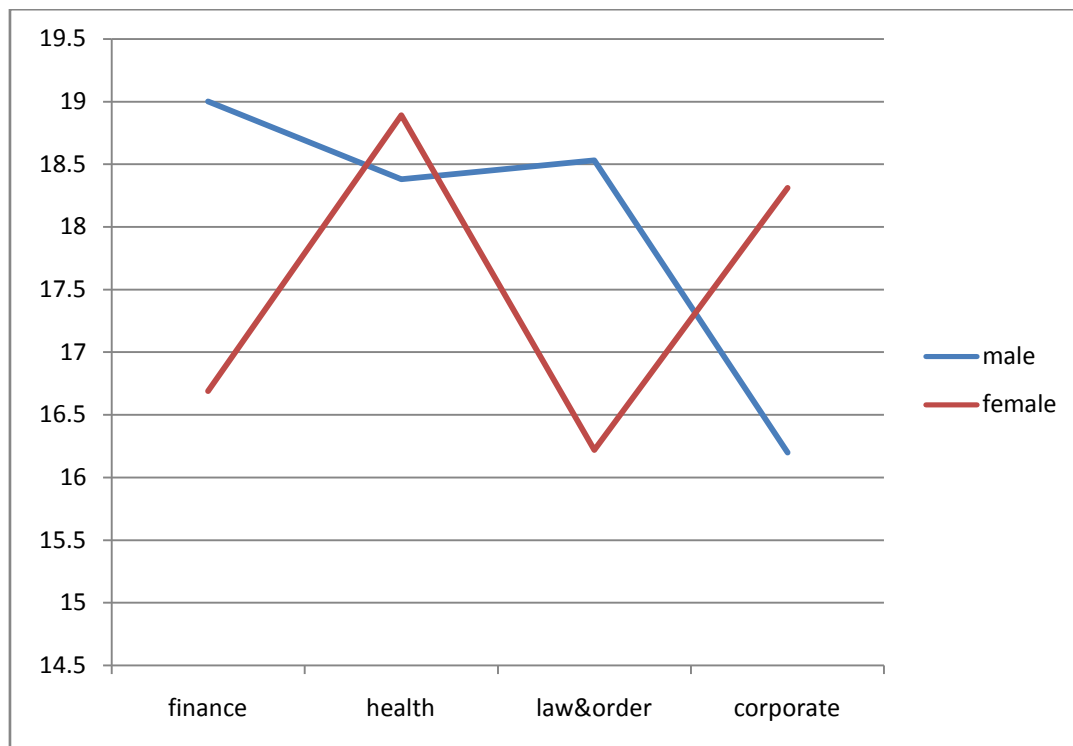


Figure 3: Interaction effect of gender and sector on job demands

As shown in figure no. 3, male employees perceived significantly higher job demands than the females in the finance sector and law& order sectors. However, in the corporate and health sector, it is seen that female employees perceived significantly higher job demands. Although, both male and female employees do differ significantly in the job demands dimension in the case of health sector, but at the same time, it also shows that there is a nominally higher degree of job demands as compared to males.

3.1.1.2 Interaction effect of gender and organizational sectors on the perception of workplace violence dimensions

The data was subjected to 2x4 (gender of the employee x organizational sectors) analysis of variance in order to find out their interaction effect on the perception of workplace violence dimensions.

Table 2. Interaction effect of gender of the employees and the organizational sector on workplace violence dimensions.

Variable	Male (407)				Female (143)				F ratio
	1 (finance) (n=124)	2 (health) (n=77)	3 (law& order) (n=131)	4 (corpor ate) (n=75)	1 (finance) (n=26)	2 (health) (n=73)	3 (law& order) (n=18)	4 (corpor ate) (n=26)	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Bullying	10.98 ^a (3.67)	10.65 ^a (3.63)	11.37 ^a (3.17)	12.96 ^b (2.25)	12.11 ^a (3.30)	12.74 ^a (2.45)	10.83 ^a (4.63)	12.50 ^{ab} (2.72)	3.96**
Actively hostile behavior	72.13 ^a (18.46)	68.77 ^a (19.53)	72.97 ^a (17.59)	80.75 ^{ab} (9.14)	77.77 ^a (17.22)	79.09 ^a (9.69)	75.78 ^a (82.77)	82.77 ^b (3.95)	1.51
Illegitimate pressure	56.63 ^a (14.95)	52.28 ^a (15.36)	55.36 ^a (14.87)	63.27 ^{ab} (7.94)	61.77 ^a (11.43)	58.81 ^a (12.01)	57.00 ^a (16.29)	63.69 ^b (7.94)	1.37
Humiliation	20.16 ^a (5.72)	20.06 ^a (5.67)	21.01 ^a (5.86)	23.25 ^{ab} (2.99)	22.65 ^a (4.65)	21.41 ^a (5.47)	21.16 ^a (6.44)	23.69 ^b (2.74)	.77
Discriminat ion & Sexual harassment	72.67 ^a (19.04)	68.54 ^a (18.96)	74.86 ^a (19.33)	81.51 ^a (7.45)	82.31 ^{ab} (8.77)	79.04 ^a (8.97)	75.88 ^a (21.40)	83.07 ^b (3.22)	2.23

**P<0.01, P<0.05

As seen in the above table 2, there is a significant difference in the perception of workplace bullying and discrimination & sexual harassment dimensions of workplace violence between male and female employees across different organizational sectors (P<0.01). No significant interaction effects of gender of the employees and organizational sectors were observed in the perception of other workplace violence dimensions between male and female employees across different organizational sectors.

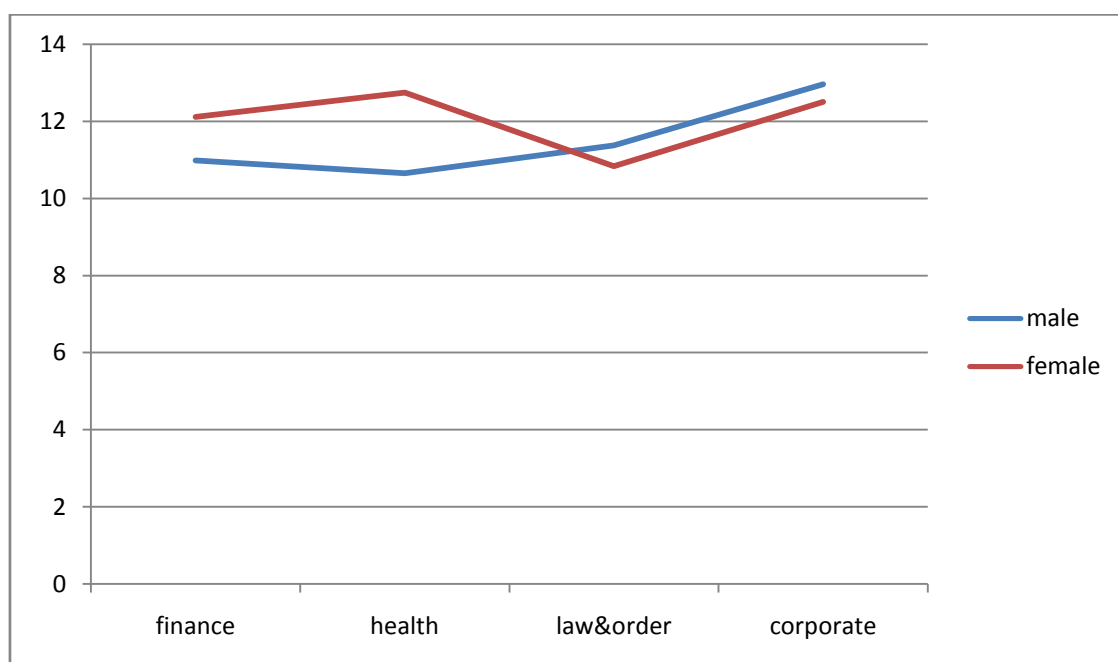


Figure 4: Interaction effect of gender and sector on workplace bullying

Table no. 2 and figure 4 show the interaction effect of gender and sector on the dimension of workplace bullying. The figure depicts that in finance and health sector, female employees experienced significantly higher degree of bullying than males. Whereas, in law& order and corporate sector, the mean score shows that male employees are nominally higher as compared to the female employees. In the case of health sector, it is revealed from the above figure no.4, that female employees experienced significantly higher degree of workplace bullying. The case is just the opposite in the case of law enforcement and corporate sector. In corporate sector, male employees experienced workplace bullying significantly higher compared to the female employees.

4. Findings

- Male and female employees do differ significantly on the perception of psychosocial parameters and workplace violence dimensions. Female employees perceived more stress compared to male employees at their workplace.
- Females are more energetic at their workplace as compared with male counterparts. Male employees perceived their health better as compared to the female employees.
- It is found out that female employees get more organizational support than the male employees.
- Psychosocial parameters such as work overload, conflict, job demands and counterproductive work behaviour, male employees are significantly higher than the female employees.
- Female employees are significantly higher than the male employees in experiencing and perceiving the workplace violence dimensions namely, bullying, actively hostile behaviour, illegitimate pressure, humiliation and Discrimination & sexual harassment in their workplaces.
- The employees belonging to the health sector perceived significantly more stress in comparison to finance, law& order and corporate sector. Stress and violence are increasingly noted in health sector workplaces. Doctors, nurses and social workers are all high on the list of occupations with serious stress levels, while violence in the health sector constitutes almost a quarter of all violence at work.
- The employees of the corporate sector found to be significantly higher in terms of perceiving stress than law enforcement and finance sector, however the reason could be that workers are suffering from the unpleasant and often devastating effects of stress. In corporate sectors, the workers said that job stress makes them less productive which also leads them to severe health problems. Although, it is seen that finance and law & order sectors perceived the same amount of stress, the employees of finance sector perceived nominally higher degree of stress as compared to law & order sector.
- Male and female employees do differ significantly in terms of perceiving stress, conflict and job demands at their workplace. Female employees of the health sector and law enforcement sector are perceived at a higher end on the dimension of stress, conflict and high job demands. The results reveal that female employees of law enforcement sector perceived more stress than male employees.
- The findings also indicate that male and female employees belonging to the law enforcement sector may not experience or deal with stress issues in a similar fashion. Women police experience pressure to work like men. Work roles in the police have often been highly gendered even as women assume full operational duties.

5. Conclusion

The perception of psychosocial parameters and workplace violence dimensions do differ significantly among the male and female employees. Female employees of all the four organizational sectors are found to get more support than their male counterparts, from their respective organizations. Stress has emerged as a significant predictor for all the dimensions of workplace violence and workplace bullying have also emerged as a main source in triggering stress at the workplace thereby affecting an organization's long-term health. It can lead to lowered morale, increased workplace stress and depression, greater employee dissatisfaction and a decrease in productivity which can ultimately lead to higher-than-normal levels of unnecessary staff turnover. The study findings also present a clear picture that stress plays a crucial role in generating violence at the workplace. Therefore, it should be kept mandatory to all the organizational sectors to have a stress-burster sessions/ training, as stress leads an individual to act hostility and other forms of violence. Developing a workplace violence protection programme to prevent the outrageous effects of stress could help the organization in a long term. Last but not the least, employers should take reasonable steps and educate the workforce about possible threats of workplace violence and its outcomes.

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