

Depression, Harassment and Gender as Determinants of Absenteeism

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Abstract: *Absenteeism has emerged as a critical indicator of individual well-being and institutional effectiveness, particularly within educational and organizational settings. Defined as the habitual non-attendance at work or school without valid justification, absenteeism reflects deeper psychosocial and structural issues that merit rigorous investigation. This research uses theoretical review to analysis connection between depression, harassment, gender, and absenteeism. This research presents that depression, harassment, and gender significantly influence absenteeism through complex interconnected mechanisms. Absenteeism should be recognized as an aspect related to performance.*

Abstrak: *Absensi telah muncul sebagai indikator kritis kesejahteraan individu dan efektivitas institusi, terutama dalam lingkungan pendidikan dan organisasi. Didefinisikan sebagai ketidakhadiran yang berulang di tempat kerja atau sekolah tanpa alasan yang sah, absensi mencerminkan masalah psikososial dan struktural yang mendalam yang memerlukan penyelidikan yang mendalam. Penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan teoretis untuk menganalisis hubungan antara depresi, pelecehan, gender, dan absensi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa depresi, pelecehan, dan gender secara signifikan mempengaruhi absensi melalui mekanisme yang saling terhubung secara kompleks. Absensi seharusnya diakui sebagai aspek yang terkait dengan kinerja.*

Keywords : *Depression, Harassment, Gender, Absenteeism, Work*

INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism has emerged as a critical indicator of individual well-being and institutional effectiveness, particularly within educational and organizational settings (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). Defined as the habitual non-attendance at work or school without valid justification, absenteeism reflects deeper psychosocial and structural issues that merit rigorous investigation (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). Among the myriad factors influencing absenteeism, depression, harassment, and gender have consistently surfaced as significant predictors across diverse populations and contexts (Kearney et al., 2023).

Depression, a prevalent mental health disorder characterized by persistent sadness, loss of interest, and cognitive impairments, has been strongly linked to absenteeism in both academic and professional environments (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). Individuals experiencing depressive symptoms often struggle with motivation, concentration, and energy levels, which directly impact their ability to attend and perform

in structured settings (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). In educational institutions, students with persistent depression are more likely to miss classes, disengage from academic responsibilities, and exhibit lower overall performance (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). Similarly, in workplace contexts, employees with depression report higher rates of sick leave and reduced productivity, contributing to organizational inefficiencies (Kearney et al., 2023).

Harassment, encompassing verbal, physical, and psychological abuse, also plays a pivotal role in absenteeism dynamics. Victims of harassment often experience heightened stress, anxiety, and fear, which can lead to avoidance behaviors such as skipping school or work (Kearney et al., 2023). In academic settings, harassment from peers or authority figures can erode a student's sense of safety and belonging, prompting frequent absences and eventual withdrawal (Kearney et al., 2023). In professional environments, workplace bullying and harassment have been shown to correlate with increased absenteeism, as employees seek to escape hostile conditions (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). The psychological toll of harassment often intersects with depressive symptoms, compounding the likelihood of absentee behavior (Abu Ruz et al., 2018).

Gender, as a socio-cultural construct, further complicates the absenteeism equation (Kearney et al., 2023). Research indicates that gender differences influence how individuals experience and respond to depression and harassment, thereby affecting absenteeism patterns (Kearney et al., 2023). For instance, women are statistically more likely to report depressive symptoms and harassment, which may result in higher absenteeism rates compared to men (Kearney et al., 2023). However, societal expectations and stigma may discourage men from acknowledging mental health struggles or harassment experiences, potentially leading to underreported absenteeism (Kearney et al., 2023). Gendered norms also shape institutional responses to absenteeism, with implications for policy and support mechanisms (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022).

The interplay between depression, harassment, and gender underscores the multifactorial nature of absenteeism (Abu Ruz et al., 2018; Akkus & Çinkir, 2022; Kearney et al., 2023). These variables do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact in complex ways that reflect broader socio-emotional and structural realities (Kearney et al., 2023). For example, a female student experiencing harassment may develop depressive symptoms, which in turn increase her likelihood of absenteeism (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). Conversely, a male employee facing workplace bullying may suppress emotional responses due to gender norms, yet still exhibit absentee behavior as a coping mechanism (Kearney et al., 2023). Understanding these interconnections is essential for developing targeted interventions that address the root causes of absenteeism (Abu Ruz et al., 2018).

Moreover, absenteeism serves as an early warning signal for deeper systemic issues within institutions (Kearney et al., 2023). High absenteeism rates can indicate poor mental health support,

ineffective anti-harassment policies, and gender-insensitive practices (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). By examining absenteeism through the lenses of depression, harassment, and gender, researchers and practitioners can uncover hidden vulnerabilities and design holistic strategies for improvement (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). This approach aligns with contemporary calls for inclusive, trauma-informed, and equity-driven frameworks in education and employment (Kearney et al., 2023).

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform policy, practice, and future scholarship (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). By positioning absenteeism as a dependent variable influenced by depression, harassment, and gender, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of human behavior in institutional contexts (Abu Ruz et al., 2018). It also highlights the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, drawing insights from psychology, sociology, gender studies, and organizational theory (Kearney et al., 2023). Ultimately, addressing absenteeism requires a comprehensive strategy that integrates mental health support, anti-harassment measures, and gender-sensitive policies (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022).

This research article will explore the extent to which depression, harassment, and gender predict absenteeism, using quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the complexity of these relationships (Abu Ruz et al., 2018; Akkus & Çinkir, 2022; Kearney et al., 2023). It will also examine how institutional responses mediate these effects, offering recommendations for policy and practice (Kearney et al., 2023). Through this investigation, the study aims to advance theoretical models of absenteeism and contribute to the development of more supportive and inclusive environments (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022).

Absenteeism research identifies multiple drivers including health conditions, workplace policies, and socioeconomic factors, with comprehensive reviews documenting how measurement approaches and conceptual definitions vary across studies and affect comparability of findings (Mullen & Rennane, 2017). Empirical studies show that absenteeism rates differ by occupation and industry and that presenteeism often imposes equal or greater productivity costs than absence, prompting calls for integrated approaches that consider both phenomena when estimating worker-related burdens (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). Recent systematic reviews synthesize determinants and outcomes of absence behavior and emphasize gaps in longitudinal evidence linking short-term absence patterns to long-term employment outcomes and disability program entry, highlighting the need for standardized metrics and mixed-methods research to clarify causal pathways (Čikeš et al., 2018).

Research on gender in scholarly production and workplace outcomes reveals persistent disparities in citations and professional recognition, with meta-analyses and field-specific studies documenting a measurable gender citation gap that operates through author, editorial, and network processes (Wu, 2024). Investigations into journal policies and submission guidelines show growing attention to gender

representation in citations yet point to inconsistent adoption of guidance across journals and disciplines, which sustains unequal visibility for women scholars despite awareness campaigns and policy proposals (Bekmuratovna R et al., 2025). Analyses of citation patterns across high-impact journals demonstrate that gender disparities extend into medical and scientific publishing, with quantitative evidence that articles authored by women receive fewer citations on average than those authored by men and that these differences have career-stage and discipline-specific moderators (Chatterjee & Werner, 2021).

Contemporary literature reviews characterize depression as a multifactorial disorder shaped by biological, psychological, and social determinants, with comprehensive syntheses highlighting gene environment interactions, life-course risk factors, and sociocultural moderators that influence prevalence and course (Remes et al., 2021). Longitudinal reviews underscore the heterogeneity of depressive trajectories and the importance of long-term cohort studies for distinguishing transient from recurrent depressive episodes while also identifying methodological challenges such as measurement inconsistency and attrition bias in tracking outcomes over time (de Sousa et al., 2025). The broader depression literature further emphasizes the economic and occupational consequences of depressive disorders, documenting elevated absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased disability risk that interact with workplace stressors and access to mental health resources, thereby linking clinical epidemiology to organizational outcomes (Lu et al., 2021).

Literature on harassment and sexual harassment in educational and workplace settings consolidates theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence showing high prevalence, varied manifestations, and significant psychosocial and academic or occupational consequences for targets, with systematic text-mining reviews mapping conceptual domains and measurement approaches across disciplines (Karami et al., 2021). Reviews focused on schools and institutions summarize risk factors, the impact of harassment on school climate and learning outcomes, and the uneven effectiveness of anti-bullying and anti-harassment programs, with policy analyses stressing the necessity of bias-aware interventions and legal accountability frameworks to protect vulnerable groups (Gretchen Brion-Meisels et al., 2024). Theoretical syntheses of sexual harassment scholarship trace conceptual evolution from individual pathology models toward structural and intersectional frameworks, arguing for integrated methodologies that combine qualitative depth with quantitative prevalence estimates to better inform prevention and remediation strategies (Cuenca-Piqueras et al., 2023).

METHOD

A theoretical literature review was undertaken to satisfy the study's aims and objectives, and a conceptual framework to guide subsequent research is proposed. Previous methodological approaches

employed by scholars were outlined, drawing on the work of previous researchers (Torkayesh et al., 2023; Vasiljeva et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the current research, authors consider absenteeism as dependent variable that affected by depression, harrasment, and gender. The conceptual model of the research is given at the Figure 1.

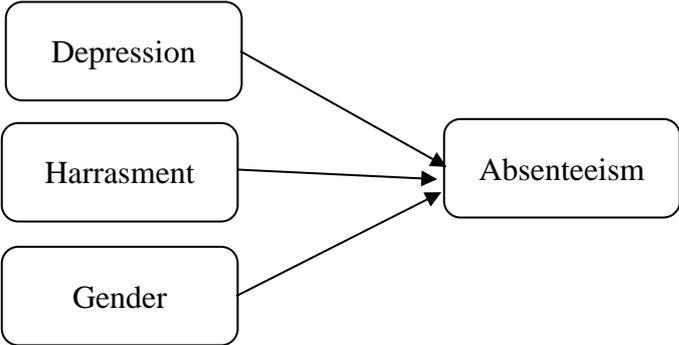


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

Absenteeism functions as a key indicator of workforce health and organizational functioning, and empirical reviews highlight its sensitivity to individual mental health status, particularly depressive symptoms that increase both the frequency and duration of work absence (Mullen & Rennane, 2017). Longitudinal evidence indicates that depressive disorders predict subsequent trajectories of repeated short-term and longer-term absenteeism, suggesting a causal pathway from sustained psychological distress to impaired work attendance (Kearney et al., 2023). Exposure to workplace harassment, including gender-based and sexual harassment, has been prospectively associated with elevated rates of sickness absence and withdrawal from work roles, indicating that hostile work environments independently contribute to absentee behavior beyond clinical symptomatology (Blindow et al., 2024).

Depression and harassment interact synergistically, such that targets of harassment who develop depressive symptoms exhibit compounded risk for prolonged absence and reduced return-to-work rates compared with non-targeted peers with similar symptom severity (Blindow et al., 2024). Gender moderates these relationships, with evidence that women and men experience and report both harassment and depressive responses differently, producing distinct patterns of absenteeism across occupational sectors and employment grades (Kearney et al., 2023). In sectors with higher female representation, organisational stressors and role overload may amplify the translation of depressive

symptoms into absentee spells, whereas in male-dominated contexts stigma and underreporting can mask psychological distress until absenteeism becomes acute (Mullen & Rennane, 2017).

Intersectional analyses further reveal that gender interacts with other social axes such as age, socioeconomic status, and job type to shape vulnerability to harassment, the likelihood of depressive sequelae, and consequent absence trajectories (Blindow et al., 2024). Workplace policies that fail to address harassment robustly tend to sustain environments where depression-mediated absenteeism persists, indicating that prevention of harassment is a necessary component of strategies aiming to reduce mental-health-related absence (Blindow et al., 2024). Intervention studies show that integrated approaches combining mental health treatment with organisational measures to reduce harassment and improve psychosocial working conditions yield larger reductions in absenteeism than clinical treatment alone (Kearney et al., 2023).

Measurement work in the absenteeism literature cautions that observed gender differences in absence may partly reflect differential help-seeking, reporting practices, and coding in administrative data, underscoring the need for mixed-methods research that captures subjective experiences alongside objective absence records (Mullen & Rennane, 2017). From a policy perspective, employer investment in anti-harassment training, confidential reporting channels, and accessible mental health supports is associated with lower incidence of depression-related absenteeism and improved return-to-work outcomes (Blindow et al., 2024). Future research should prioritise longitudinal, multi-level designs that explicitly model harassment exposure, depressive symptom trajectories, and gendered pathways to absenteeism to inform targeted organisational interventions and equitable occupational health policies (Kearney et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This research presents that depression, harassment, and gender significantly influence absenteeism through complex interconnected mechanisms. Absenteeism should be recognized as an aspect related to performance, and therefore empirical research on this concept is needed.

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