

Addressing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination: Strategies for Creating Inclusive Environments in Construction Engineering

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Abstract

This research examines the pervasive issues of workplace harassment and discrimination within the field of construction engineering and proposes strategies to foster inclusive, construction engineering continues to grapple with systemic biases, unequal treatment, and hostile work environment. By analyzing current literature, case studies, and industry practices, this study identifies key challenges faced by marginalized groups, including women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals, in the construction engineering sector. Moreover, it explores the detrimental effects of harassment and discrimination on individuals, teams, and organizational culture, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues proactively. Drawing upon best practices from other industries and empirical evidence, this research offers practical recommendations for creating inclusive workplace in construction engineering, such as implementing comprehensive diversity training programs, establishing transparent reporting mechanisms, promoting diverse leadership representation, and fostering a culture of respect and accountability. By adopting these strategies, construction engineering organization can mitigate the negative impacts of harassment and discrimination, cultivate diverse talent pipelines, enhance employee well-being, and ultimately, drive innovation and productivity in the industry.

Keywords: Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, Construction Engineering, Inclusive Environment Systemic Biases, Unequal Treatment, Hostile Work Environment, Marginalized Groups, Women, Minorities, LGBTQ+, Organizational Culture, Diversity Training Programs, Reporting Mechanisms, Diverse Leadership Representation, Respect and Accountability, Employee Well-Being, Talent Pipelines, Innovation, Productivity.

1. Introduction

In the realm of construction engineering, the issue of workplace harassment and discrimination persists despite strides made in promoting diversity and inclusion. While many industries have made progress in fostering equitable work environments, construction engineering continues to grapple with systemic biases, unequal treatment, and hostile atmospheres. This research aims to delve into this pervasive problem, offering insights into the challenges faced by marginalized groups within the sector, including women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. The field of construction engineering plays a crucial role in shaping our built environment, yet it has long grappled with issues of workplace harassment and discrimination, posing significant

challenges to the creation of inclusive environments. Despite strides made in promoting diversity and inclusion across various industries, construction engineering continues to confront systemic biases, unequal treatment, and hostile work environments that particularly affect marginalized groups such as women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals [1-3].

2. Background

The field of construction engineering plays a crucial role in shaping our built environment, yet it has long grappled with issues of workplace harassment and discrimination, posing significant challenges to the creation of inclusive environments. Despite strides made in promoting diversity and inclusion across various industries, construction engineering

continues to confront systemic biases, unequal treatment, and hostile work environments that particularly affect marginalized groups such as women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Ultimately, the goal is not only to mitigate the negative impacts of harassment and discrimination but also to harness the full potential of diverse talent in driving innovation, productivity, and sustainable growth within the construction engineering industry. Through comprehensive diversity training, transparent reporting mechanisms, diverse leadership representation, and a culture of respect and accountability, organizations can pave the way for a more equitable and thriving construction engineering.

3. Research Methodology

Literature Review: Gather scholarly articles, books, reports, and other relevant sources to understand the challenges faced by marginalized groups in the industry.

Case Studies: Utilize case studies to provide real-world context and insights into workplace dynamics in construction engineering. Examine specific instances of harassment and discrimination, as well as successful diversity initiatives, to extract valuable lessons and best practices.

Empirical Data Analysis: Analyzes quantitative data to assess the prevalence and impact of workplace harassment and discrimination. Identify correlations between factors such as demographic characteristics, organizational culture, and experiences of harassment.

Data Triangulation: Cross-reference information obtained from the literature review, case studies, and empirical data analysis to strengthen research outcomes.

4. Literature Review

Workplace harassment and discrimination encompass various behaviours and actions that undermine the dignity and rights of individuals in the workplace. Harassment involves unwelcome conduct that is based on race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Discrimination refers to the unfair treatment of employees based on these same protected characteristics.

4.1 Sorts of Badgering

Sexual Badgering: Undesirable sexual propels, demands for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical badgering of a sexual nature. This could incorporate unwelcome sexual propels, unseemly comments, and quid master quo scenarios where work benefits are conditioned on sexual favours. (Fitzgerald et al., 1997) **Racial Badgering:** Hostile comments or activities coordinated at an person based on their race or ethnicity. Illustrations incorporate racial slurs, jokes, and other deprecatory comments. (Cortina, 2001) **Bullying:** Reharsed, preposterous activities coordinated towards an representative that are aiming to threaten, debase, or mortify. Work environment bullying can show as verbal manhandle, work attack, or social separation. (Einarsen et al., 2003) **Threatening Work Environment:** A circumstance where badgering is so extreme or unavoidable that it makes a threatening, threatening, or damaging work environment. This sort of environment can be made by steady badgering that meddling with an employee's work execution or makes a undermining work climate. (Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 1998)

4.2 Sorts of Separation

Coordinate Segregation: Plain, unequal treatment of people based on secured characteristics. For occasion, denying a advancement to an representative exclusively since of their sexual orientation. (Dipboye & Colella, 2005) **Backhanded Separation:** Approaches or hones that show up unbiased but have a unbalanced negative affect on a specific gather. An case would be a tallness prerequisite that by implication separates against ladies and certain ethnic bunches. (Bielby, 2000) **Systemic Segregation:** Oppressive hones, arrangements, or strategies that are inserted in organizational culture or operations. This incorporates organization predispositions that favour certain bunches over others. (Reskin, 2000)

4.3 Factual Information on Badgering and Segregation in Development Designing

The development designing industry has generally been male-dominated, driving to a better predominance of certain sorts of badgering and separation. Considers demonstrate that:

- A noteworthy rate of ladies in development report encountering sexual badgering, with

gauges extending from 60% to 80% depending on the ponder and area. (Francis, 2017)

- Racial and ethnic minorities in development too confront higher rates of badgering and segregation compared to their white partners. For occurrence, African American and Hispanic laborers report higher occasions of racial slurs and unfair treatment [4-7]. (Brunette, 2004)
- Reports of bullying and unfriendly work situations are too predominant, with numerous representatives encountering or seeing such behaviours on a customary premise. (Gillen et al., 2017)

4.4 Legitimate Systems and Administrative Measures

Different lawful systems and administrative benchmarks are in put to combat working environment badgering and separation: Title VII of the Respectful Rights Act of 1964: Disallows work separation based on race, colour, religion, sex, and national beginning. (U.S. Rise to Business Opportunity Commission, n.d.) The Americans with Inabilities Act (ADA): Ensures people with inabilities from separation within the working environment. (ADA National Organize, 2020) The Rise to Work Opportunity Commission (EEOC): Implements government laws forbidding work separation. (U.S. Rise to Work Opportunity Commission, n.d) Word related Security and Wellbeing Organization (OSHA): Guarantees secure and solid working conditions, which incorporates assurance from work environment viciousness and badgering. (U.S. Division of Labour, n.d.) State and Neighbourhood Laws: Numerous states and regions have extra assurances and prerequisites for bosses to address working environment badgering and separation. (National Conference of State Councils, 2019) Comparative Examine of Best Hones in Different Business: To create viable methodologies for tending to working environment badgering and separation in development building, it is valuable to look at best hones from other businesses: Tech Industry: Activities such as differing qualities preparing, mentorship programs, and mysterious announcing instruments have been compelling in diminishing badgering and separation. For occasion, Google has actualized comprehensive differences

programs that have appeared quantifiable enhancements. (Dastin, 2018) Healthcare: Comprehensive anti-harassment arrangements, normal preparing sessions, and back bunches for influenced representatives offer assistance make comprehensive situations. The Mayo Clinic, for illustration, has created vigorous approaches and back frameworks to address these issues [8-12]. (MayoClinic, 2020) Fund: Usage of strict anti-discrimination arrangements, differences contracting hones, and zero-tolerance approaches to badgering have appeared positive comes about. Companies like Goldman Sachs have been at the cutting edge of actualizing such measures. (Goldman Sachs, 2019) Instruction: Advancement of secure spaces, peer back systems, and continuous instruction on separation and badgering issues contribute to more secure, more comprehensive situations. Colleges such as Stanford have actualized broad programs to back differing qualities and consideration. (Stanford College, 2021)

5. Current State of Inclusivity in Construction Engineering

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and the global environment is appreciating equality more than ever. Revisiting certain laws, such as those governing the Disabled (amended in India from 1995 to 2016), the Sexual Harassment Act of 2013, and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) rights in the workplace, as well as equal employment opportunity policies, has been a global focus. With governments taking strong steps to enforce inclusion through the acceptance of disability, gender equality, and LGBTQ policies without social taboo, there has been a significant impact on the private sector as well. Today, diversity in the customer base and employee base is inevitable. There is nothing produced solely for a single country's consumption. Researchers have increasingly focused on how diversity can be leveraged for improved and enhanced organizational performance [13-17]. (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2021)

6. Barriers To Inclusivity in Construction Engineering

Women's encounters with sexual badgering were dissected with three sorts of factors: word related and work environment sex proportions, organizational arrangements and strategies for

managing with sexual badgering issues, and women's social status (age and conjugal status). Relapse investigations uncovered that degree of contact with men was key indicator of rate of badgering, number of diverse sorts of badgering, sexual comments, sexual categorical comments, and sexual materials. Sex prevalence was noteworthy indicator of physical dangers and sexual materials. Educational strategies were less effective than proactive strategies in diminishing episodes of sexual badgering. The examinations bolster two generalizations. The "contact hypothesis" tried and confirmed by Gutek and her colleagues gives a substantive understanding of our finding on work environment and word related numerical prevalence. Moment, organizations that take an assortment of steps to address sexual badgering are more well-suited to be fruitful in abridging the issue than those depending primarily on "get out the word" procedures. (Gruber, 1998)

7. Strategies of Addressing Harassment and Discrimination

7.1 Prevention Strategies

Policy Development and Implementation: Develop comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies. Clearly define what constitutes harassment and discrimination, including examples. Ensure policies are easily accessible and communicated to all employees. (Dobbin et al., 2007)

Training and Education: Conduct regular training sessions on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Educate employees and management on recognizing and preventing harassment and discrimination. Provide specific training on handling complaints and supporting affected employees. (Salin, 2003)

Creating a Respectful Work Environment: Promote a culture of respect and inclusion through leadership and organizational values. Encourage open communication and dialogue about diversity and inclusion [18-22]. Implement team-building activities that foster mutual respect and understanding. (Navarro-Astor et al., 2017)

7.2 Intervention Strategies

Effective Reporting Mechanisms: Establish clear and confidential reporting procedures for employees to report harassment and discrimination. Ensure multiple reporting channels (e.g., HR, anonymous hotlines) are available. Provide assurance that

complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. (Banu & Rasheedha Banu, 2018)

Immediate Response and Investigation: Respond promptly to complaints with a thorough and impartial investigation. Ensure that the investigation process is transparent and respects the privacy of all parties involved. Take appropriate disciplinary action if harassment or discrimination is confirmed. (Husam et al., 2024)

Support for Victims: Offer support services for victims, such as counseling and legal assistance. Provide accommodations if needed, such as changes in work assignments or schedules. Regularly check in with victims to ensure their well-being and address any ongoing concerns. (Galea et al., 2015)

8. Creating Inclusive Environment

Creating an inclusive environment in the construction engineering sector involves tailored strategies to address the unique challenges and opportunities within this industry. Here are some strategies based on addressing workplace harassment and discrimination to foster inclusivity:

8.1 Policy and Procedure Development

Comprehensive Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policies: Develop and implement clear policies that define harassment and discrimination, with specific examples relevant to the construction engineering context. Ensure these policies are easily accessible to all employees, including those in the field and on-site locations. (Shore et al., 2018)

8.2 Training and Education

Regular Training Sessions: Conduct regular training sessions focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, tailored to the construction engineering sector. Include practical scenarios and role-playing exercises to help employees recognize and respond to harassment and discrimination in real-world situations. Provide specific training for supervisors and managers on how to handle complaints and support affected employees. (Colgan et al., 2007)

8.2.1 Creating a Respectful Work Culture

Promoting Respect and Inclusion: Foster a culture of respect and inclusion through leadership and organizational values. Encourage open communication and dialogue about diversity and inclusion, especially in team meetings and project

kick-offs Recognize and celebrate diversity within the workforce through events and initiatives.(Bowen et al., 2014)

8.2.2 Effective Reporting Mechanisms

Clear and Confidential Reporting Procedures: Establish multiple reporting channels (e.g., HR, anonymous hotlines, on-site representatives) to ensure employees can report incidents comfortably. Ensure that reporting procedures are communicated clearly to all employees, including those on-site and in remote locations.(Banu & Rasheedha Banu, 2018)

9. Recommendation and Future Direction

9.1 Implement Comprehensive Training Programs

Recommendation: Develop and deliver comprehensive training programs focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) tailored for the construction industry. These programs should cover recognizing and addressing harassment and discrimination, promoting bystander intervention, and fostering respectful communication.(Galea et al., 2015)

9.2 Future Direction

Mandatory Annual Training: Ensure that DEI training is mandatory for all employees and updated annually to reflect new policies and social changes.

Interactive Modules: Utilize interactive training modules that include real-life scenarios and role-playing exercises to enhance engagement and retention.

Feedback Mechanisms: Incorporate feedback mechanisms to continuously improve training content and delivery based on participant experiences and suggestions.(Navarro-Astor et al., 2017)

9.3 Establish Clear Policies and Reporting Mechanisms

Recommendation: Create clear, accessible policies that define harassment and discrimination, outline the consequences for such behaviour, and detail the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints. **Future Direction:** **Anonymous Reporting Systems:** Implement anonymous reporting systems to encourage individuals to report incidents without fear of retaliation. **Third-Party Oversight:** Consider involving third-party organizations to oversee the reporting and investigation process to ensure impartiality and fairness. **Policy Review Committees:**

Form committees to regularly review and update policies to keep them relevant and effective.(Husam et al., 2024)

10. Data Analysis

The analysis is centered on assessing employee satisfaction regarding their company's work environment and policies, with a particular focus on how well these measures address workplace harassment and discrimination. This evaluation aims to gather insights from employees in the construction engineering sector to understand their perceptions and experiences. The data collection will involve surveys and interviews to gauge the effectiveness of current strategies in creating inclusive and respectful workplaces, identifying areas for improvement, and developing recommendations for enhancing organizational policies and practices to combat harassment and discrimination, shown in Figure 1.

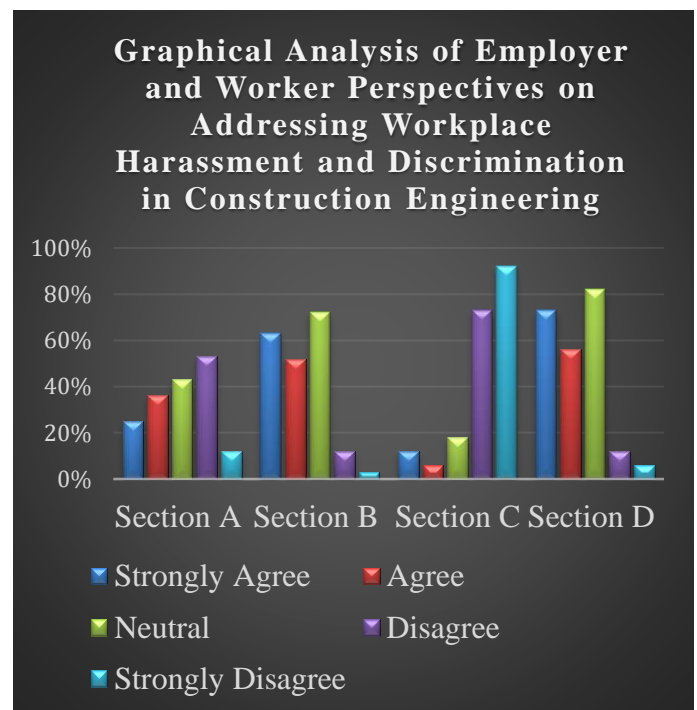


Figure 1 Graphical Analysis of Employer and Worker Perspectives on Addressing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination in Construction Engineering

Section A: Demographics

Section B: Workplace Environment

Section C: Company Policies and Training

Section D: Strategies Improvement

Conclusion

Our comprehensive information investigation uncovers a critical hole within the development industry's endeavors to watch, address, and moderate badgering and separation. In spite of the unavoidable nature of these issues over different parts and levels inside the industry, there remains a need of vigorous mechanisms and proactive techniques to make comprehensive work situations. The discoveries show that badgering and segregation show in various shapes, counting sex inclination, racial separation, and unjustifiable treatment based on sexual introduction, age, and inability. These negative behaviors not as it were affecting the well-being and efficiency of influenced people but to prevent the by and large advance and notoriety of the industry. To address these challenges, it is vital for development designing organizations to execute a multifaceted approach: Arrangement Advancement and Authorization: Build up clear, comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-discrimination approaches that layout unsatisfactory practices and the results for infringement. Frequently survey and upgrade these approaches to guarantee they stay important and compelling. Preparing and Mindfulness Programs: Conduct required preparing sessions for all representatives, counting administration, to raise mindfulness around badgering and segregation. These programs ought to teach staff on recognizing, anticipating, and reacting to such issues. Detailing Instruments and Bolster Frameworks: Make secret and available announcing channels for victims and witnesses of badgering and separation. Guarantee there are bolster frameworks input, such as directing administrations and legitimate help, to help influenced people. Comprehensive Enlisting and Advancement Hones: Advance differences and consideration through equitable hiring, advancement, and stipend hones. Energize assorted representation at all organizational levels, particularly in authority parts. Normal Observing and Assessment: Actualize customary reviews and overviews to screen the work environment environment and evaluate the adequacy of anti-harassment and segregation activities. Utilize the discoveries to create ceaseless enhancements. Cultivating an Comprehensive Culture: Energize a culture of regard and incorporation where all workers

feel esteemed and upheld. Recognize and celebrate differing qualities as a quality that contributes to development and development. In conclusion, tending to working environment badgering and separation in development designing requires a maintained commitment to cultivating an comprehensive environment. By executing comprehensive techniques and keeping up a proactive position, the industry can make a more secure, more impartial working environment for all workers. This not as it were upgrades person well-being but too drives organizational victory and strength in an progressively different and competitive showcase.

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