

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO SEXUAL HARASSMENT: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The prime aim of this study was to find out whether or not there is any relationship between the marital status of women with sexual harassment; and relationship between education level of women and sexual harassment. Quantitative research design was employed in which questionnaire was administered to 148 women of Balochistan. To analyse the data, One-Way ANOVA test was employed in SPSS. The findings revealed that married women reported higher intensity of sexual harassment than single women did. Moreover, women with higher education reported higher sexual harassment. This study can contribute positively towards bringing more sensitized environmental changes regarding sexual harassment. This study has implications on creating awareness among people about a not so talked/ (commonly / ignored) social issue of sexual harassment at work place.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, educational level, marital status

1. INTRODUCTION

Harassment is a kind of violence that is discouraged socially, ethically and is restricted by law. Harassment is an attempt to annoy, disturb, bother, irritate, or to make someone panic, nag, confused by verbal or nonverbal acts; however the perception of harassment is different among different people (Collins & Blodgett, 1981; Gutek, Cohen, & Konrad, 1990; Gervasio & Ruckdeschel, 1992; Kanekar & Dhir, 1993; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Powell, 1986; Stockdale, 1993; Tata, 1993). Harassment could be done from men to women or women to men or to the same sex. Some may consider an act as harassment but the other may not. Abstract

The most sensitizing issue of harassment is Sexual harassment. It is a form of unlawful discrimination based on sex. Sexual harassment is basically a type of harassment but both harassment and sexual harassment are restrained on different continuums. Harassment is any discarded conduct with the purpose of violating the self-respect of a person, and of creating a hostile, intimidating, offensive environment. Whereas "Sexual harassment is any verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of sexual nature that includes sexual remarks, subtle pressure for sexual activity; unnecessary patting or pinching; constant brushing against another person's body; demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment status; and demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promise of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment status" (Fitzgerald, 1990a).

Sexual harassment is mostly faced by women and men are mostly considered as responsible as they are more likely to label a woman's 'friendly' behavior as 'sexy' (Anila, 1998). The women can face sexual harassment anywhere outside their home; particularly at workplace. Sexual harassment has been a part of working life of working women since they offered their services for sale in the market/ work environment (Goodman, 1981, Anila, 1998). It is mostly happened in the situation when male are in majority and are on dominant positions. Male do harass to demean a victim and show their power (Wolshok, 1981; Carothers & Crull, 1984; Berdahl, 2007). Consistent with this view is the fact that, women who confront the male authority / power and dominance are more likely to be targeted for gender harassment. Sexual harassment with working women is a common problem in both public and private sectors (Fitzgerald, 1992).

2. Importance of the research

In spite of the growing literature on sexual harassment globally, different social scientists have defined, analyzed and classified sexual harassment in their own views. Basically, two types of definition for sexual harassment have been developed till date. First is the priori that is known as theoretical definition (Fitzgerald, 1990a) which is based on informal observation (Anila, 1998). Priori is further divided in to two types. Type-I are general statements describing the nature of behaviors and (sometimes) status of relationship involved (Anila 1998). Type-II are to some extent opposite to Type-I they usually describe list of specific action "with no formal explication of the theoretical framework from which such

a list is derived, with a general exception that the behavior is usually described as unwanted by the recipient" (Anila, 1998, p. 09).

Second type of definition is empirical definition where victims are directly asked to describe their experiences regarding harassment (Anila, 1998). These details are then analyzed and classified in general elements. In 1980s, five general categories were established by Till. They are: generalized sexist remarks or behavior; inappropriate and offensive but essentially sanction free sexual advances; solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by promise of rewards; coercion of sexual activity by threats of punishment; and sexual assaults (Till, 1980, pp. 7-8).

2.1 Theories of Sexual Harassment

The researchers and social scientists have their immense attention on 'Sexual Harassment' since its origin. Sexual harassment is an interaction between 'actor' with 'target', also known as interaction of 'perpetrators' with 'victim'. Where harasser is called perpetrators or actor and the harassed is known as target or victim.

Theories regarding sexual harassment appear differently on façade as being a dynamic issue; some explain different levels whereas the others portray diverse layers of sexual harassment. However, not a single theory has covered all the features of sexual harassment. (e.g., Brewer & Berk, 1982; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982; Anila, 1998).

Sexual harassment takes place when women's role is considered as sex object based on her gender; and her role as an employee is neglected.

Harriet Samuels (2003) stated in her paper "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: a feminist analysis of recent developments in the UK" that "Harassment is most likely to occur when a woman is employed in a role normally held by a man as her gender is particularly noticeable and she is treated as a woman first and only secondly in terms of her work". Sexual harassment has been analyzed all over, as the mutual enforcement of two variations 'the sexual' and 'the economic' (MacKinnon, 1979, p.218).

In recent times, sexual harassment has emerged as a serious problem for individuals, organizations and societies (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, Drasgow, 1995). O'Leary-Kelly and Sperry (2000) state that within the organizational sciences, sexual harassment has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. This approach is further illustrated by Lengnick-Hall (1995) who views harassment through different frameworks found in previous literature e.g., Gender Approaches-harassment as a consequence of interactions between different sexes; Role Approaches-harassment caused by different role expectations based on gender; and Power Approaches- harassment caused by organizational power imbalance in an organization. More current approaches view sexual harassment as a form of violence or aggression (see e.g., O' Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, & Griffin, 2000).

One problem about sexual harassment is its sense of perception i.e., male and female view harassment differently. Many studies have highlighted that females have a comparatively broader perspective about sexual harassment as compared to males. Unwanted sexually oriented behavior may be considered as sexual harassment by one person whereas the

similar behavior might be considered as flirtatious rather than perceiving it harassment by the same or to another person (see e.g., Browne, 2006; Kennair & Bendixen, 2011).

2.2 Women in Pakistan

Samiuddin and Khanam(2002) state that Afghans consider home or grave as the best place for a women. The situation is not much different in Pakistan. As per her gender role in the Pakistani society, which is changing with the snail's pace now, women is considered to stay at home. Her role expectations include cooking food, making bread, washing cloths and dishes, pressing cloths, sweeping, and taking care of babies. But revolutionary change that took place in Pakistani society is that a small number of women go outside their homes. They have broken the traditional men made rule and have come out from their traditional roles. They also recognize their existence and importance in the development of their society.

In Pakistan women's increased role has been also confirmed in other studies. Prof. Dr. Qamar Jehan, stated in her PhD thesis that "the central role played by women in the development processes now being increasingly recognized. . . There is a history of institutionalized female subordination in the sub-continent. Women were expected to function within the framework of three obedience's- 'Before marriage, obey your father, after marriage obey your husband, and after your husband dies obey your son" (p. 32-34,50-52,62-69). She also states that "it is equally important to recognize the fact that women in Pakistan occupy an

underprivileged position in society. The majority of Pakistani women lives in rural areas and is illiterate. Usually, they are married off early, bear innumerable children, suffer from anemia, and have little or no control over their lives. Along with their urban counterparts they are viewed not as producers but as dependent consumers.”.... “A family’s honor is viewed as closely linked to women’s chastity. Thus, the slightest misbehavior on the part of a woman is seen as bringing dishonor to the family. Decency and decent behavior thus become identified with women remaining inside their homes. Any woman who moves out is seen as contravening social norms and thus considered available and unprotected.

Several suggestions have been made for eradicating inequality between males and females in Pakistan in the past. Syed N. H. Naqvi suggests that "men and women should work together for the uplift of women as a social, educated and independent being. In Pakistan women are still chained and we should strive together for socio-economic uplift" (Naqvi, p.29).

3. Research Objectives

- To find the relationship between the marital status of the victim and the intensity of the harassment.
- To find the relationship between the education of the victim and the intensity of the harassment.

4. Research Design

This research study employed quantitative method in which close-ended questionnaire was administered to 150 women working in different sectors i.e. Government Secretariat, Non-Government Organizations, and Universities. The participants were from different districts of Balochistan. The participants were especially from the institution where both male and female work together. The reason for selecting such institution was to find-out either working women face sexual harassment or not.

4.1 Data Collection Procedure

Initially the questionnaires were distributed to a total of 280 working women. Where, only 148 questionnaires received as initial sample. Later on, after a screening process all those questionnaires were eliminated from the list that skipped Part I (which contains 16 questions regarding sexual harassment experiences) and the total eliminated questionnaires were 3 in numbers. Because part I is perceived to be an important section of this study. Additionally, as the culture of Balochistan/ Quetta is traditional and generally male cannot directly approach to women and get their responses in such a controversial issue related to their experiences of sexual harassment. Therefore all the questionnaire were provided to the participants in a envelop and it was mentioned in the cover letter of the questionnaire that send back the questionnaire in the sealed envelope so that it will be kept confidential. The reason behind this was to get real response and experiences of the participants. Moreover, Questionnaires were distributed mostly by the females.

4.2 Data Analysis

In order to achieve the objectives of the study cited above, One-Way AONVA was performed in the SPSS (Version, 21).

5. Findings and Discussion

To achieve the first objective of the study cited above, One-Way ANOVA was performed in the SPSS (Version, 21). The results are illustrated in the following Table 1.1:

Table: 1.1

One-Way ANOVA Result for Relationship between the Marital Status of the Victim and the Intensity of the Harassment

Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		F	Sig
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Single	82	1.7226	.70629	.07800	1.5674	1.8778	3.057	.030
Married	58	2.0636	.77512	.10178	1.8598	2.2674		
Widowed	4	1.8750	1.50260	.75130	-.5160	4.2660		
Divorced	4	2.4531	.77455	.38728	1.2206	3.6856		
Total	148	1.8801	.77603	.06379	1.7540	2.0061		

In this section all the participants were distributed according to their marital status, i.e. Single, Married, Widowed, Divorced, to find the relationship with sexual harassment. At first one-way ANOVA test were applied, the all four options were having difference Single (M=1.7, S.D=.70), Married (M=2.0, S.D=.77), Widowed (M=1.8, S.D=1.5), Divorced (M=2.4, S.D=.77). Married and divorced women faced higher sexual harassment. As result shown there is significant relationship between marital status of women and sexual harassment as (F=3.0, $p < .05$).

To achieve the second objective of the study as cited above, One-Way ANOVA, the following Table 1.2 illustrates the results:

Table: 1.2

One-Way ANOVA Results for the Relationship between the Education of the Victim and the Intensity of the Harassment

Education Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		F	Sig
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Middle School	1	1.7500	3.362	.001
Matriculation	3	3.1458	.09547	.05512	2.9087	3.3830		
Junior College	5	1.4250	.4131	.18477	.9120	1.9380		

(FA/ FSc)			6					
Bachelor (BA/ BSc - 2 years)	23	2.0707	.8415 5	.17548	1.7067	2.4346		
Bachelor (BA/BSc/ BBA/ Engineering/ Medicine etc - 4 years program)	10	1.8750	.7811 8	.24703	1.3162	2.4338		
Masters (MA/ MSc)	74	1.6554	.6212 4	.07222	1.5115	1.7993		
M.Phil/ MS	13	2.4615	.8807 6	.24428	1.9293	2.9938		
Ph.D	7	2.2054	.5848 7	.22106	1.6644	2.7463		
Total	13 7	1.8709	.7519 6	.06424	1.7438	1.9979		

One-way test was applied and there was significant relationship seen between education of the victim and sexual harassment as ($F=3.36$, $p<.05$). For instance women with education of Matriculation ($M= 3.14$, $SD=.095$), M.Phil ($M=2.46$, $SD=.88$), and Ph.D ($M=2.20$, $SD=.58$) faced more sexual harassment than women having education FA/ FSc ($M=1.42$,

SD=.41), Masters (M=1.65, SD=.62). But the problem exists here is that Matriculation is only N=3. However M.Phil and Ph.D degree holders were faced higher sexual harassment and they were greater in numbers. That simply shows that higher degree holders face more sexual harassment Please see Appendix B table 4.1 & 4.2. Further, while analyzing it with SSH and HSH; the results shown that there is significant relationship between education of the victim with HSH ($F=3.46, p<.05$). In the SSH; women in all education categories were sexually harassed with little variance. Whereas in HSH; women with education of Matriculation, M.Phil and Ph.D were higher than others.

5.1 Discussions

The first objective aimed at finding the relationship between marital status & sexual harassment. The result shows positive relationship between marital status of the women and sexual harassment which is totally opposite to the previous studies of Gunduz, Sunay, & Koz (2012) and Studd (1996) as they found no relationship between marital status of the women and sexual harassment. In this study Married and divorced women faced more harassment than single and widowed. Due to the extreme values only two options single and married were again analyzed the results again showed positive relationship. Sofola (1990) affirmed that sexual harassment affects both singles and married women which cannot be denied however in this research the ratio of sexual harassment experiences of married women were more than that of single women.

The second objective aimed at finding the relationship between education of the women and intensity of sexual harassment. The result

shows positive relationship between education and sexual harassment in all cases OSH, SSH, HSH. For instance women with higher education i.e. M.Phil and Ph.D degree faced higher sexual harassment than others. It could be due to their sense of recognizing the sexual harassment problems, as discussed in first chapter; the perception of harassment is different among different people (Collins & Blodgett, 1981; Gutek, Cohen, & Konrad, 1990; Gervasio & Ruckdeschel, 1992; Kanekar & Dhir, 1993; Stockdale, 1993; Tata, 1993). In the soft sexual harassment; women in all education categories were sexually harassed with little variance, whereas in hard sexual harassment women with education of Matriculation, M.Phil and Ph.D were higher than others.

6. Conclusion and Implications of the Study

The overall results indicated that married women reported higher intensity of sexual harassment than single women did. Moreover, women with higher education reported higher sexual harassment. This study can contribute positively towards bringing more sensitized environmental changes regarding sexual harassment. It may help in creating awareness among people about a not so talked/(commonly / ignored) social issue of sexual harassment at work place. It would help in highlighting the problems faced by women in the workplace and how it creates hurdle in their progress. This study can be a helpful source for social welfare institutions in general and the ministry of women development in particular for creating awareness among the society and ensuring implementation of the harassment act 2010. The information shared through this study can serve as a guideline for different public and private

sector organizations, in the formulation and implementation of their policies regarding harassment at workplace. This in return can decrease job stress, turnover and dissatisfaction among the female workforce.

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