



Sexual Harassment in the Public Places of Pakistan: Gender of Perpetrators, Gender Differences and City Differences Among Victims

Shumaila Imtiaz¹ · Anila Kamal¹

Accepted: 19 March 2021 / Published online: 31 March 2021

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2021

Abstract

Sexual harassment in public places of Pakistan is a social problem. In Pakistan, a good number of studies have been conducted on sexual harassment of women; however, they are based in educational institutes and the workplace settings. This research examined the gender and city-wise difference among the victims of sexual harassment. The sample was 452 victims (197 men and 255 women) with age ranging from 16 to 40 ($M=22.29$, $SD=3.83$) collected from different public places of three major cities of Pakistan including Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore. The results indicated that women fall victims of sexual harassment more as compared to men. Results also indicated that men are the major perpetrators of committing sexual harassment. This study also reinforces the idea that men also experienced sexual harassment in public places of Pakistan and further research is needed to explore the experiences of sexual harassment.

Keywords Sexual harassment · Public place · Experiences · Gender · Perpetrators

Introduction

Sexual harassment is one of the growing public debates from the last few decades around the world. It has significant and widespread impacts, both on individuals and on society (Rezvani et al. 2020). Sexual harassment is a prevailing and forefront discussion in the field of sexuality research and, currently, it is at the center of debates in major social movements, professional society, and all other disciplines (Dzau and Johnson 2018). There is strong evidence from official reports and research studies that sexual harassment is a global phenomenon which is increasing day by day (United Nation 2015). It is extremely difficult to achieve the comprehensive

✉ Shumaila Imtiaz
shumailamphil18@nip.edu.pk

¹ Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan

definition of the term "sexual harassment." Researchers, lawyers, academician, and policymakers around the world have not agreed on a single definition to this extent (Pina et al. 2009). Despite the broad array of approaches that define sexual harassment, many researchers believe it is a psychological experience based on sexual unwanted touch, disrespectful comments, and threatening for sexual favors (Topa et al. 2008).

Sexual harassment in public places reduces the freedom of an individual to enjoy social life, and can negatively affect feelings of safety in public places. Being sexually harassed can be degrading, humiliating, and harmful experience in itself, but the effects are damaging more widely as it can shatter one's confidence to roam freely in public places. Furthermore, victims usually do not know their perpetrators and it mostly happens in public places where harasser can easily touch or catcall. These kinds of incidents make public places unsafe and uncomfortable for victims. Most of the women avoid frequently going to public places after experiencing sexual harassment (see also, Lahsaeizadeh and Yousefinejad 2012).

The United Nations (1995) organized the fourth world conference with an agenda to discuss issues related to women. It suggested that an overwhelming number of women who go out of their homes for work or other reasons get abused at different places like streets, public transport, or workplace. In this conference, Pakistan was represented by the Prime Minister of that time, Benazir Bhutto, where she discussed the violence against women in detail. The report was solely based on observation and no descriptive data was present in written format.

Anila (1995) in a qualitative study found that sexual harassment is the least spoken phenomenon in Pakistan and although it is very common nevertheless, it is difficult to find victims who can freely discuss and share their experiences of sexual harassment (see also, Kamal et al. 2002). Initially, it was strenuous to study this phenomenon in Pakistan. The first-ever scale developed in Pakistan was the Sexual Harassment Attribution Questionnaire (Kamal et al. 1991). It was developed to explore the attribution of responsibility of sexual harassment events. Later, Tariq and Kamal (1997) developed the Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire, based on the types of sexual harassment given by Gelfand et al. (1995). It has three subscales; gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Gender harassment comprises derogatory comments on another gender such as calling with dirty names and cracking jokes to demean other gender. Unwanted sexual attention implies the degradation of women on an individual basis and anything unwanted by another person like unwanted touching, staring and trying to kiss or rape another person. Sexual coercion means direct demand or demand for the job or school-related sexual acts; this aspect aligns with the *quid pro quo* legal definition of sexual harassment (e.g., promotion or a better grade) (Gelfand et al. 1995). Moreover, Tariq and Kamal (1997) reported that the prevalence of gender harassment is more than unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion is the least prevalent form of sexual harassment experienced by women at their workplaces. It can be inferred that sexual harassment is a major social problem in Pakistan that needs to be addressed (Anwar et al. 2019). According to a news report, 85 percent of women experience harassment routinely in various public places, especially on public transport, and even though there is a law in place to protect them, women are afraid to report such cases,

making harassment a taboo subject in society. The problem seems to be much larger and much more deep-rooted (The News 2020). The men's experience of sexual harassment in public places of Pakistan has never been explored.

The impact of experiencing harassment is that women are blamed for being sexually harassed, like wearing inappropriate clothing (Bongiorno et al. 2020). Consequently, young women need to adjust their clothes and actions to enter public areas comfortably; however, men have more access to public places than women. Women reported that street harassment is just one indication of male dominance in the country. In Tunisia, according to Jessa (2017) women have shown that their mental capabilities and their freedom is being compromised not only in the public space but also everywhere due to sexual harassment. Besides, the women proposed numerous possible motives for carrying out street harassment, including a man's education, his class, his area, and broader cultural differences between men and women.

In most studies, the perpetrators of sexual harassment against women are men (Ayres et al. 2009). In a variety of countries such as the USA (Fairchild and Rudman 2008); Iran (Lahsaiezadeh and Yousefinejad 2012); India (Dhillon and Bakaya 2014); Pakistan (Anwar et al. 2019) sexual harassment in public places is very common. Most studies conducted in Pakistan are related to workplaces. Anila (1998) also reported a high prevalence of harassment among working women. Tara and Ahsan (2020) suggested that sexual harassment is a positive predictor of aggression in Pakistani working women and most likely the harasser were men, for instance boss, other working staff. According to Bhatti et al. (2020), female athletes revealed that there is a high prevalence of sexual harassment and their perpetrators are men (coach and other staff members). Iqbal and Kamal (2001) also reported a high prevalence of sexual harassment of women working in airlines. Not a single study reported the prevalence of the sexual harassment experiences of men and women in Pakistan.

A study found 25% of women and 7% of men were sexually assaulted at some stage of life by close-knit offenders (Andersson et al. 2020). Previous literature indicates that, perpetrators are probably men (EC–European Commission 1998; Ménard et al. 2010). Research on women sexual assault perpetrators is still emerging (Greathouse et al. 2015). Moreover, studies demonstrated that a substantial amount of women are victimized by men. Despite that, 43% of men sampled had reported experiencing a coercive incident. In Pakistan, Shaikh (1996) found that 68 nurses reported a 13.2% and 72% rate of physical harassment and verbal harassment respectively, of female nurses by male physicians. A similar kind of harassment has been reported in a cross-cultural study with doctors and nurses of the USA and Pakistan. Results indicated that women from the USA experience more sexual harassment than nurses and doctors of Pakistan. It also indicated that Pakistani women mostly employ avoidance coping (Kamal 2005).

Ahmed et al. (2019) collected data at Rawalpindi city parks and public places, such as restaurants, where women are harassed frequently by men. In a survey, it was reported that every one out of four Pakistani urban women were harassed on their way back home, workplace, and marketplace by men (Gallup 2017). Moreover, women are judged negatively by society for sexual victimization by claiming that if a man harasses them, they are doing something to provoke them (Anila 1995).

Studying the problem of sexual harassment in public places is important for two reasons. Firstly, sexual harassment in public places is more prevalent than sexual harassment in workplaces and educational institutes and secondly, there are comparatively fewer researches that explored this (Fairchild and Rudman 2008). Sexual harassment is widespread in the streets and can be experienced everywhere, and reporting by male victims is very scarce (Hlavka, 2017).

Overall, this research aims to have a deeper understanding of the sexual harassment experiences of men and women. Owing to the lack of previous research that incorporates only women victims this research bridges the gap between previous and existing literature by incorporating men victims and also exploring the frequency of episodes of harassment in the public places of Pakistan.

The Current Study

The purpose of the following research is to add the limited literature present on sexual harassment of men and women in the public places of Pakistan and to examine the gender differences among victims of sexual harassment at public places and across cities of Pakistan. Karachi is a metropolitan city with a population of 14.91 million, Lahore 11.31 million, and Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan with a population of 1.05 million. Another objective of this study was to estimate the frequency of episodes of harassment from the reports of victims. This study adds to the literature by providing the comparison of men and women victims on the scale of the Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire (SHEQ).

Hypothesis 1: Women will experience more sexual harassment in comparison to men in the public places of Pakistan.

Hypothesis 2: Men will be the major perpetrators as compared to women.

Hypothesis 3: Sexual coercion will be the least prevalent form of harassment as compared to other types of harassment.

Method

Participants

The sample comprised of 452 victims (men = 197, women = 255). The sample selection criteria included individuals who experienced sexual harassment in the past six months and who were willing to report their harassment experiences. The convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data from different public places with age ranging from 16 to 40 years ($M=22.29$, $SD=3.83$). To collect the data, three major cities of Pakistan were selected which are Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore. Between January and March 2019, the researcher traveled to collect the data

from three populated cities and administered the questionnaire in universities, parks, bus stands, and shopping centers. All respondents were asked not to write their names and feel free to ask any questions after reading the questionnaires. They were given the right to leave at any point during questionnaire administration.

Measures

Public Place Harassment

Public place sexual harassment was assessed by a question from victims with yes/no answer to the question, "In the past six months, at what public places you have been harassed". The response alternatives given to them were parks, universities, shopping centers, streets, and transport areas, other than public places. The respondents were allowed to check multiple places if they were harassed at more than one public place.

Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire

Sexual harassment experiences were assessed by the Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire (SHEQ) (Tariq and Kamal 1997) in Pakistan. Originally the scale comprised of 35 items and was meant for workplaces. Later it was modified for educational institutes (Anwaar 2013). In the current study, it was modified for the context of public places. It has three subscales, (1) Gender Harassment subscale. There are seven items, and the score range is 7–28 with an alpha reliability of (0.64). (2) Unwanted Sexual Attention subscale. There are 21 items and the score range is 21–84 with an alpha reliability of (0.83). (3) Sexual Coercion Subscale, there are seven items and the score range is 7–28 with an alpha reliability of (0.76). In the present study, this questionnaire was modified by dropping 2 items of scale which was more relevant to workplaces (item no 27 and 33). Item no 27 belongs to the subscale of Sexual Coercion and item no 33 belongs to the subscale of Unwanted Sexual Attention. After removing 2 items from SHEQ 33 items remained. 6 items in the subscale of Sexual Coercion score ranged 6–24 and 20 items in the subscale of Unwanted Sexual Attention score ranged from 20–80. In the modification, under every item, an option was added mentioning who was the harasser (1) men (2) women (3) both men and women (4) no harassment. If respondents experienced a particular kind of harassment, they were asked to report who was the perpetrator. This modification of the scale was done for finding the frequency of perpetrators on each item.

Procedure

Public places like the library, university, transport area, parks, educational institutes, and markets were approached to collect the data. The individuals approached for filling the questionnaires felt reserved and many of them reported that they have experienced sexual harassment but they will not fill the questionnaire while others agreed

after rapport building and understanding the concept of research. After taking their consent, instructions were given to fill the questionnaire. Furthermore, they were also informed about their right to withdraw at any time without telling the reason. The response rates collected from the three big cities are Islamabad 50.5%, Karachi 73.5%, and Lahore 83.5%. Data was collected from 700 participants, out of these 700 questionnaires, only 452 questionnaires were filled completely; so overall, the response rate was 64%. In the end, every respondent was debriefed and was thanked for their cooperation.

Statistical Analysis

To test the hypothesis and assess the data, a bar diagram was plotted to see the prevalence of men and women sexual harassment experiences at public places and to see the prevalence of sexual harassment experiences across the three cities. We next used chi-square, to explore the significance of the difference in the frequency of perpetrators.

Results

Gender Differences in Sexual Harassment

In response to the public place harassment question, from the group of 452 individuals, 49% of women sample which comprised of 125 individuals, and 16.5% of men which comprised of 33 individuals reported sexual harassment on streets while 39.6% of women and 34.5% men reported harassment in the transport area, while 19.2% women and 32.4% men experienced sexual harassment at the public places within the university. There was less reporting in the case of parks only 13.7% of women and 11.1% of men reported they faced harassment in the park. Women respondents reported their experiences at more than one public place and mentioned they frequently faced sexual harassment incidents (Fig. 1).

Figure 2 illustrates sexual harassment incidents in three cities of Pakistan i.e. Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. Overall, street harassment and harassment at shopping centers is more prevalent in Karachi. However, sexual harassment in the transport area is more prevalent in Lahore. Respondents from Islamabad faced less harassment incidents in comparison to Lahore and Karachi.

Sexual Harassment Experiences of Men and Women Victims by Men, by Women, by Both and Having No Harassment Experiences Were Explored

2×4 Chi-square analysis was performed to check the frequency of perpetrators on all three subscales of sexual harassment i.e. gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. These were the categories of 2×4 chi-square Victims (2) men, women; Perpetrators (4) men, women, both, no perpetrator (No



Fig. 1 Frequency of gender differences in sexual harassment experiences at a public place

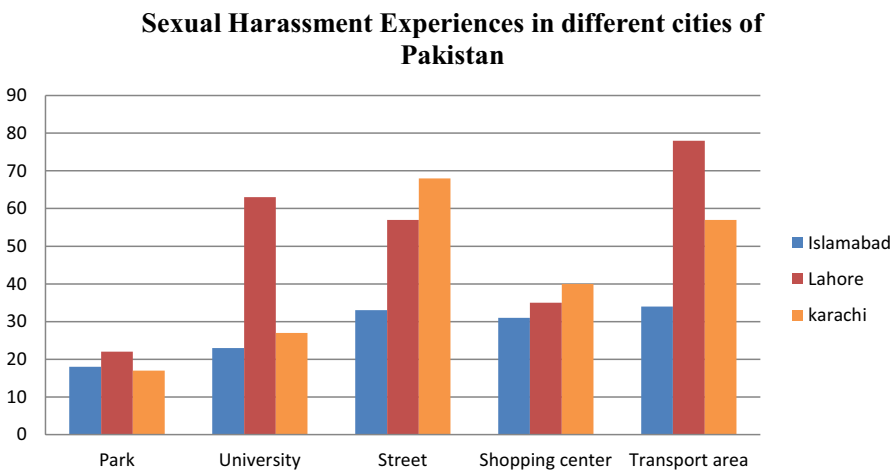


Fig. 2 Frequency of city differences in sexual harassment experiences at a public place

harassment). Significant differences were found in each item depicting a different kind of sexual harassment.

It was hypothesized that men would be the major perpetrators of sexual harassment. Table 1 depicts the gender harassment perpetrators of men and women. The results indicated that men are more involved in the gender harassment phenomenon in comparison to women. Chi-square also revealed the significance and explained the difference in each group. It should be noted that in every cell chi-square detected the difference ($p < 0.01$). On item one; men to men victimization of dirty jokes is

Table 1 Gender harassment experiences of men and women victims by men, women, both and no harassment ($N=452$)

Type of harassment Gender harassment Item	Perpetrators					χ^2	P value
	Victims	Men <i>f</i>	Women <i>f</i>	Both <i>f</i>	No harassment <i>f</i>		
Dirty jokes	Men	75	20	67	35	22.21	.00**
	Women	72	38	57	88		
Starring	Men	35	45	50	67	123.75	.00**
	Women	171	5	34	45		
Admired your dress	Men	33	41	100	23	8.90	.03*
	Women	67	36	115	37		
Show pornographic material	Men	46	22	28	101	31.56	.00**
	Women	37	9	16	193		
Humming filthy songs	Men	69	25	29	74	29.65	.00**
	Women	131	5	22	97		
Admired your face or hair	Men	27	44	73	53	29.62	.00**
	Women	88	28	82	57		
Tried to talk about vulgar movie or program	Men	49	29	39	80	27.37	.00**
	Women	49	21	22	163		

f=frequency ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

more frequent. Moreover, for women victims, Men to women harassment is more frequent. On item 2 Stare at you with dirty looks, men are the major perpetrators of women and women are the major perpetrators of men. On item 3 both men and women are the perpetrators. There were larger numbers of victims that marked no to pornographic material and talked about vulgar movies as it rarely occurs in public places. On item humming filthy songs, men to men and men to women harassment was more in number. Participants also reported that both men and women harassed them largely while admiring a dress. On item admired your face or hair men are the major perpetrators of women.

The results given in Table 2 are part of the subscale of the Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire named unwanted sexual attention and it suggests a significant difference in each group. Out of the 20 questions, 11 unwanted sexual questions reported that, the opposite gender is the perpetrator. In Eight questions, men were more frequent perpetrators of both genders which showed men being major perpetrators of unwanted sexual attention in public places of Pakistan. Over all, ten items predicted that men to women and women to men victimization is more frequent. On item three, for men victims, both men and women are the major perpetrators. For women victims, men are the major perpetrators. On item four, tried to flirt with you, men to women and women to men victimization are more frequent. On items 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20 men are the major perpetrators for both men and women victims. Similarly, a large number of participants reported no unwanted sexual attention in public places. Rape is a major question in which almost the majority said no sexual harassment in public places of Pakistan (Table 3).

Table 2 Unwanted sexual attention experiences of men and women victims by men, women, both and no harassment (N=452)

Type of harassment Unwanted sexual attention Item	Perpetrators					χ^2	P value
	Victims	Men f	Women f	Both f	No harassment f		
Appreciated your body/figure	Men	35	46	75	41	33.67	.00***
	Women	69	23	68	95		
Tried to make you sit with him/her	Men	39	50	33	75	53.35	.00***
	Women	99	15	19	122		
Invited for an outing or going to a restaurant with him/her to eat	Men	47	37	61	52	57.74	.00***
	Women	95	7	40	113		
Flirt	Men	40	69	37	51	150.15	.00***
	Women	180	6	12	57		
Offered lift in a car	Men	74	23	23	77	35.18	.00***
	Women	125	2	12	116		
Tried to give you a card	Men	31	24	21	121	23.96	.00***
	Women	59	7	12	171		
Sexting /flirting on call	Men	39	47	35	76	61.07	.00***
	Women	93	9	20	133		
Took interest in your personal life	Men	26	39	24	108	46.58	.00***
	Women	74	7	21	153		
Talk about sexual life	Men	41	48	39	69	65.73	.00***
	Women	62	15	14	164		
Tried to probe your sexual life	Men	28	28	26	115	25.07	.00***
	Women	51	10	15	179		
Collided with you while passing by	Men	44	55	54	44	91.26	.00***
	Women	155	8	52	40		
Touch your hand intentionally while giving something	Men	33	54	36	74	118.23	.00***
	Women	162	8	22	63		

Table 2 (continued)

Type of harassment Unwanted sexual attention Item	Perpetrators						χ^2	P value
	Victims	Men f	Women f	Both f	No harassment f			
Calling you darling, sweetheart, etc	Men	48	50	47	70	52.85	.00**	
	Women	60	17	31	124			
Put his hand on your shoulder or back	Men	48	32	38	79	37.60	.00**	
	Women	60	27	10	158			
Love letter	Men	18	62	14	103	91.84	.00**	
	Women	69	5	8	173			
Body touch while working	Men	34	50	34	79	59.38	.00**	
	Women	77	10	22	146			
Bad talk/ sexual talk	Men	49	42	39	67	53.38	.00**	
	Women	98	10	21	125			
Pat on our shoulder while praising	Men	51	33	33	80	33.88	.00**	
	Women	61	14	18	162			
Tried to kiss you	Men	28	61	24	84	80.10	.00**	
	Women	44	15	5	189			
Tried to rape you	Men	21	17	11	148	19.70	.00**	
	Women	22	3	6	224			

f = frequency ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 3 Sexual coercion of men and women victims by men, women, both and no harassment (N = 452)

Type of harassment Sexual coercion Item	Perpetrators						χ^2	P value
	Victims	Men f	Women f	Both f	No harassment f			
Delayed your work so that you go to him/her again and again	Men	34	32	21	110	29.31	.00**	
	Women	68	9	14	164			
Assured you some benefit if you could fulfill immoral demands	Men	29	18	16	134	7.94	.04*	
	Women	43	10	12	190			
Threatened you for romantic ties	Men	28	20	11	138	15.43	.00**	
	Women	39	6	7	203			
Tried to defame you for not fulfilling his/her demands	Men	28	31	13	125	35.82	.00**	
	Women	45	7	3	200			
Forced you for immoral demands by exploiting your hardships	Men	23	23	8	143	18.75	.00**	
	Women	37	5	8	205			
Threatened you for physical/sexual relationship	Men	23	21	13	140	28.44	.00**	
	Women	26	3	5	221			

f = frequency ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Consistent with hypothesis 4, this table explains that the majority of victims marked no sexual coercion in public places. Over all, four items predicted that men are the major perpetrators. On item 4, 5 men to women and women to men harassment is more frequent. Results also showed that most of the perpetrators were men and they targeted both genders. Except in the defamation where the majority of men victims said they were defamed by the women perpetrators for not fulfilling their wishes.

Discussion

The study's primary aim was to find out the gender of perpetrators and it was hypothesized that men would be the major perpetrators for three kinds of sexual harassment. The study also aimed to find out the gender and city-wise differences among victims. The past six months' criterion was set so that respondents can recall their incidents and fill the questionnaire accordingly. The findings of the current study confirmed the first hypothesis which stated women experience more sexual harassment in comparison to men. The frequencies of sexual harassment experiences were described by a bar diagram which showed a difference between men and women in public places. The observed number of men and women victims of sexual harassment in public places showed that women are more sexually harassed in parks, streets, shopping centers, and transport areas in comparison to men. These findings are consistent with those of Gardner et al. (2017) in indicating a high prevalence of sexual harassment in public transport. Moreover, research indicated that women experienced more frequent sexual harassment and our results are consistent with previous results (Black et al. 2014). Besides, another study showed 11 to 73% of women are exposed to sexual harassment and 3 to 26% of men encountered sexual harassment in their higher education. Exposure to sexual harassment is generally highest for female students (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020). The general assumption of people is that women are more vulnerable to sexual victimization but results showed that men are also vulnerable and sexually harassed in educational institutes. This study contributes in terms of having a comparative analysis of men's and women's experiences of different types of sexual harassment.

A finding from the current study showed that street harassment is more prevalent in Karachi, which is consistent with a previous study (Ali and Naz 2016). According to Ahmed et al. (2019), street harassment is a very common phenomenon occurring in Pakistan and victims avoid reporting and confronting the perpetrators. Moreover, results showed that in Lahore, sexual harassment is more prevalent in the transport area, and educational institutes. There is also evidence that sexual harassment is prevalent in public transport of Lahore city and the reason behind this is that the middle class and low-income class use public transport more to reach their workplaces or educational institutes.

The findings of the present research revealed that Gender harassment is the most prevalent form of sexual harassment. Results showed both men and women are the perpetrators of gender harassment and may also get involved in sexual victimization but men are the major perpetrator of both men and women. Consistent with previous

results, women consider dirty jokes as part of sexual harassment whether it comes from the same-sex or opposite-sex (Biber et al. 2002). Another study indicated that women are more sensitive towards a perception of sexual harassment in comparison to men and consider staring, dirty jokes, and admiration of dress as sexual harassment (Ekore 2012). The results of the present study showed that men are considered to be the perpetrators of gender harassment more as compared to women. Furthermore, it also indicated that almost half of the victims had not encountered a perpetrator who showed or discussed pornographic material with victims in public places.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) also stated that gender harassment is the most prevalent form of sexual harassment by naming crude terms to the opposite gender or same-sex gender. Consequently, there is a different motivation behind unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion while gender harassment is all because of putting down victims and making them feel powerless. Men to men sexual harassment is also reported in the present study with many reasons behind it. The patriarchal basis of our society and no availability of women at times of sexual frustration is one of them. This phenomenon is also underreported because of men's gender role of being masculine in Pakistan. Men do not want to report the incidents of harassment for the sake of their ego as they do not want to show themselves as weak by admitting (Anila 1995). As in Pakistani society, people are ready to believe in men to women sexual harassment but it's difficult to digest the concept of men to men and women to men sexual harassment in Pakistan.

Men and women responded differently to each question and they had different perpetrators on each incident of sexual harassment. Results showed that on eleven items such as appreciated your body figure, flirt, took interest in your personal life, men to women and women to men sexual harassment is more in number compared to other groups. Moreover, on eight items such as offered lift in a car, probe your sexual life, collided while passing by, men perpetrators scored the most in comparison to other groups. Item three of unwanted sexual attention which is invited for an outing, the answers revealed both men and women are the perpetrators and victimized men and women. Results of chi-square showed significant differences in each group and it also indicated that women to women harassment is also reported but is less in number as compared to other groups. The study suggests that since the events of sexual harassment are increasing day by day and it's high time to plan prevention strategies. The government should play an active role to resolve the issues which hinder the freedom of an individual to roam freely and safely in public places across the country. Results also revealed that men are major perpetrators of touching, kissing, and raping the victim in public places. Although the victims reported less number of rape and kissing incidents in public places, for all reported events, all the perpetrators were men who sexually harassed other individuals.

The findings of the present study have revealed sexual coercion is the least prevalent form of sexual harassment in public places and most victims faced a mild form of sexual coercion consistent with previous literature (Bendixen and Kennair 2008). It was hypothesized that there will be more men perpetrators than women who involve in unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion and harassed men and women to show their dominancy. Results revealed that men are more involved in sexual harassment which is consistent with previous studies (Ménard et al. 2010). Besides, men who

are harassed prefer to show their masculinity and dominancy over the victim so that perpetrator can influence and increase fear among the victim (Pryor and Stoller 1994). Recently there has been little recognition of sexual assault perpetrated by adult men against other adult men. Relatively few studies have examined the issue, and much of the early research on men to men sexual assault simply described the incidents (Saunders and Senn 2009). The current study is the first of its kind in Pakistan as it has explored the men to men as well as women to men sexual harassment in Pakistan.

Limitations

The sample size was small and it was collected from three cities that do not represent the overall population of Pakistan. The response rate from the three cities were Islamabad 50.5%, Karachi 73.5%, and Lahore 83.5% which indicates that people are more interested to report their experiences and a larger sample collected is needed. The response rate of Islamabad was less than expected as the majority of people living in Islamabad were not much open. Nevertheless, it is possible that due to urbanization in Lahore and Karachi people were comfortable talking about their experiences. Furthermore, the sample included all those individuals who have mild to moderate sexual harassment in the past six months which can be differentiated in future researches.

Conclusion

The existing literature indicated the existence of research on women's sexual harassment and less work on men's sexual harassment. The findings of the current study indicated that men also experience sexual harassment in public places. This study highlighted the fact that, although women are more victims of sexual harassment and men are more perpetrators, women to women, men to men, and women to men harassment should also be researched in future studies.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of APA.

Human and Animal Rights This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

References

- Ahmed, B., Yousaf, F. N., & Asif, U. E. R. (2019). Combating street harassment: A challenge for Pakistan. *Women and Criminal Justice, 0*, 1–11.
- Ali, S. M. A., & Naz, N. (2016). Experiencing street harassment and fear of victimization. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 55*(1), 41–51.
- Andersson, T., Pettersson, R., & Jacobsson, M. (2020). Women and men sexually violated by closely related perpetrators over a lifespan. Prevalence, revictimization, and association to adverse childhood conditions and experiences. *Children and Youth Services Review, 113*, 104897.
- Anila. (1995). Sexual harassment: Myths versus women's reality. *Personality Study and Group Behavior, 15*, 47–54.
- Anila (1998) *Sexual Harassment at workplaces and coping strategies employed by women* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). National Institute of Psychology. Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.
- Anwaar M. (2013). *Sexual harassment experiences, perception and belief in sexual harassment myths among university students*. Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation. National Institute of Psychology, Islamabad.
- Anwar, F., Österman, K., & Björkqvist, K. (2019). Three types of sexual harassment of females in public places in Pakistan. *Çağdaş Tıp Dergisi, 9*(1), 65–73.
- Ayres, M. M., Friedman, C. K., & Leaper, C. (2009). Individual and situational factors related to young women's likelihood of confronting sexism in their everyday lives. *Sex Roles, 61*(7–8), 449–460.
- Bendixen, M., & Kennair, L. E. O. (2008). Seksuell trakassering blant elever og ansatte i videregående skole: En resultatrapport [Sexual harassment among students and staff in high school: a result report]. *Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)*.
- Bhatti, S., Khan, S. U., & Bashir, M. (2020). Prevalence of Molestation among Male Coaches towards Female Athletes in Different Sports at Public Sector Universities Sindh, Pakistan. *Sir Syed Journal of Education and Social Research, 3*(1), 139–145.
- Biber, J. K., Doverspike, D., Baznik, D., Cober, A., & Ritter, B. A. (2002). Sexual harassment in online communications: Effects of gender and discourse medium. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior, 5*(1), 33–42.
- Bondestam, F., & Lundqvist, M. (2020). Sexual harassment in higher education—A systematic review. *European Journal of Higher Education, 10*(4), 1–23.
- Bongiorno, R., Langbroek, C., Bain, P. G., Ting, M., & Ryan, M. K. (2020). Why women are blamed for being sexually harassed: The effects of empathy for female victims and male perpetrators. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 44*(1), 11–27.
- Dhillon, M., & Bakaya, S. (2014). Street harassment: A qualitative study of the experiences of young women in Delhi. *SAGE Open, 4*(3), 1–11.
- Dzau, V. J., & Johnson, P. A. (2018). Ending sexual harassment in academic medicine. *The New England Journal of Medicine, 379*(17), 1589.
- EC–European Commission. (1998). *Sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union*. Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs.
- Ekore, J. O. (2012). Gender differences in perception of sexual harassment among university students. *Gender and Behaviour, 10*(1), 4358–4369.
- Fairchild, K., & Rudman, L. A. (2008). Everyday stranger harassment and women's objectification. *Social Justice Research, 21*(3), 338–357.
- Gallup, P. (2017). Gallup Pakistan. Retrieved from Gallup Pakistan: Pakistan foremost social research lab: <https://gallup.com.pk/street-harassment-every-1-in-4-urban-pakistani-woman-says-she-has-been-stalked-by-men-on-her-way-to-home-office-or-the-market/>
- Gardner, N., Cui, J., & Coiacetto, E. (2017). Harassment on public transport and its impacts on women's travel behaviour. *Australian Planner, 54*(1), 8–15.
- Gelfand, M. J., Fitzgerald, L. F., & Drasgow, F. (1995). The structure of sexual harassment: A confirmatory analysis across cultures and settings. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 47*(2), 164–177.
- Greathouse, S. M., Saunders, J. M., Matthews, M., Keller, K. M., & Miller, L. L. (2015). *A review of the literature on sexual assault perpetrator characteristics and behaviors*. Rand Corporation.
- Hlavka, H. R. (2017). Speaking of stigma and the silence of shame: Young men and sexual victimization. *Men and Masculinities, 20*(4), 482–505.
- Iqbal, S., & Kamal, A. (2001). Sexual harassment experience of the women working in an airline. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, 27*(1–2), 109–120.

- Jessa, A. (2017). Staring down street harassment: Women's perspectives of street harassment in Tunisia. Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. 2668. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2668.
- Kamal, A. (2005). Sexual harassment experiences and coping strategies employed by doctors and nurses: A cross-cultural comparison. Research Report Post Doctoral Fellowship. Pakistan: Higher Education Commission.
- Kamal, A., Ansari, Z. A., & Tariq, N. (1991). Development of an indigenous sexual harassment attribution questionnaire for Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 6(1–2), 55–68.
- Kamal, A., Hassan, S., & Khalil, A. (2002). Sexual harassment at workplace: Five women workers experiences. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 17(1–2), 29–42.
- Lahsaiezadeh, A., & Yousefinejad, E. (2012). Social aspects of women's experiences of sexual harassment in public places in Iran. *Sexuality and Culture*, 16(1), 17–37.
- Ménard, K. S., Shoss, N. E., & Pincus, A. L. (2010). Attachment and personality predicts engagement in sexual harassment by male and female college students. *Violence and Victims*, 25(6), 770–786.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). *Sexual harassment of women: climate, culture, and consequences in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine*. National Academies Press.
- pc of Women Face Harassment in Public Places. (2018). *The News*, Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/292466-85pc-of-women-face-harassment-in-public-places>.
- Pina, A., Gannon, T. A., & Saunders, B. (2009). An overview of the literature on sexual harassment: Perpetrator, theory, and treatment issues. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 14(2), 126–138.
- Pryor, J. B., & Stoller, L. (1994). Sexual cognition processes in men who are high in the likelihood to sexually harass. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 163–169.
- Rezvani, S., Mahdaviipoor, A., & Monib, A. (2020). Sexual violence against women in Iran and Afghanistan legal system: From Sexual Harassment to rape. *Journal of Law Research*, 23(91), 351–376.
- Saunders, K. A., & Senn, C. Y. (2009). Should I confront him? Men's reactions to hypothetical confrontations of peer sexual harassment. *Sex Roles*, 61(5–6), 399–415.
- Shaikh, M. A. (1996). Harassment in medical profession: Myth or reality in Pakistan. *Journal-Pakistan Medical Association*, 46, 131–131.
- Tara, U., & Ahsan, S. (2020). Cognitive hardness as a moderator in the relationship between generalized workplace harassment and anger among working women in Pakistan. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 30(8), 971–988.
- Tariq, N., & Kamal, A. (1997). Sexual harassment experience questionnaire for workplaces of Pakistan: Development and validation. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 12, 1–20.
- Topa, G., Morales, J. F., & Depolo, M. (2008). Perceived Sexual Harassment at work: Meta analysis and structural model of antecedents and consequences. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 11(1), 207–218.
- United Nations. (1995). *Proceedings of the fourth world conference on women in Beijing, China*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf>.
- United Nations. (2015). *The world's women; trends and statistics*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, 139–144. Retrieved from https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/worldswomen2015_report.pdf.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.