



A META ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES AND RESULTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON MEN AND WOMEN’S HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



ABSTRACT

The study’s main aim was to investigate whether sexual harassment (SH) is linked to mental and physical health of men and women and to investigate the potential moderating effects of gender on the association between health and sexual harassment. We researched whether women were more often disturbed by sexual harassment compared to men, and whether victim who reported being troubled by the harassment experience more health issues than the unbothered ones. The difference between bothered and unbothered victims is essential because appraisal in sexual harassment research is needed.

INTRODUCTION

Given that sexual harassment is a prevalent and costly, this study is important for organizations in West Virginia to know more about the primary causes of this phenomenon and its effects on its employees. Finding the root cause and ways to deal with sexual harassment will not only save an organization’s image and keep it away from litigation but it will also foster a healthy work environment for its workers and attract more employees from the region and across the country. In todays business world, sexual harassment guidelines and complaint policies are typical structures of the human resource field. Fitzgerald et al. (1995); Wayte et al. (2002) state that approximately 5%-30% of Americans who go through sexual harassment report to the managers and less than 1% take legal action. The U.S EEOC states that roughly one third of the 90,000 cases reported in 2015 comprised of sexual harassment and that this number was too low to be true and that 75% of the cases go unreported in total (Golshan, 2017). However, lately there have been more people encouraging others to do it and not to suffer in silence (Charlesworth, McDonald and Cerise 2011). Despite all the research covering sexual harassment, there lacks a wide range of theories regarding it. Sexual harassment in the workplace is known to cause harmful health effects on its victims such as psychological issues like anxiety, stress, depression, which lead to low productivity and decline in work performance (Adams, 1998; Baba et al; 1998).

Researchers continue to analyze sexual harassment within a wide organizational structure.

HYPOTHESIS

- **Hypothesis 1.** Sexual Harassment is negatively related to both men’s and women’s health(physical and mental).
- **Hypothesis 2.** Men are less bothered by sexual harassment compared to women.
- **Hypothesis 3.** More health problems are experienced by victims who feel bothered by sexual harassment compared to unbothered ones.

METHOD

To further develop and understand the study, meta-analysis has been applied since it is able to translate most statistical outcomes into a common metric, which can then be accumulated to provide a more precise illustration of Sexual harassment. Sexual harassment and physical health were entered in the targeted meta.

4 meta-analyses focused on physical and metal issues.

- Mean= 0.171 (Mean r (z-to-r).
- 95% Conf Upper (z-to-r)
- 95% Conf Lower (z-to-r)
- Number of Effect Size= 5
- # Samples=3, #No articles=2

RESULTS

Condition by exposure		Female		Male	
	Total n*	Frequency	%	Total n*	Frequency
Depression					
No SH	914	121	13.2	1,173	128
SH	1,061	220	20.7	407	86
Somatic Symptoms					
No SH	923	365	39.5	1,188	445
SH	1,089	579	53.2	414	239
Medical Conditions					
No SH	921	241	26.2	1,187	481
SH only	1,091	388	36.6	413	214
Current PTSD					
No SH	—	—	—	—	—
SH	1,023	21	2.1	379	12
Lifetime PTSD					
NO SH	—	—	—	—	—
SH	1,023	83	8.1	379	22

DISCUSSION

In the present research, we hypothesized that SH is negatively associated with physical and mental health of both men and women. Moreover, we investigated the possible moderating effects of gender on the association between health and SH. It seemed that the harassment was negatively related to both women’s and men's health. Despite being more bothered by SH, women did not have more mental and physical issues than men. Interpreting the results, it should be indicated that men were less sexually harassed compared to females therefore, the total effect of this type of harassment is larger for women . Results also showed that more health problems were reported among the victims who feel bothered by SH behavior. Conversely, in other studies conducted by researchers Parker and Griffin (2002), that women seemed to be more affected than men.

IMPLICATION

The results of our study propose that the effects of sexual harassment are very powerful for both men and women, and both the bothered and unbothered victims report health issues. Moreover, more health problems were reported by the bothered victims compared to the unbothered. These results indicate that policies against sexual harassment should not only be aimed at women but also at men. For instance, education, which employers are obliged to provide in the workplace, should inform employees about the potential risks and consequences of harassment both for women and men. It should also be stressed that sexual harassment should be taken seriously, even when it seems harmless and victims do not feel bothered about it.

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