

## Demographic Determinants of Sexual Harassment in Police Women

Mueen Abid\*, Saima Riaz, and Maryam Riaz

University of Gujrat, Gujrat

The present study aims at exploring the demographic determinants of sexual harassment in Police Women because this population is repressed and overlooked in exploring the sensitive issue of sexual harassment with particular reference to Pakistan. It was a cross-sectional study in which 191 police women personnel (age range = 15-65) were recruited from Gujrat and Gujranwala districts. A sexual harassment experience questionnaire was used to measure sexual harassment (Kamal & Tariq, 1997). A self-constructed demographic sheet was used to collect information regarding various demographic variables. One-Way ANOVA and Neural network analysis was carried out by using SPSS 21. The current study's findings revealed significant predictive relation of demographic variables (job status, age, education, and duration of job) with sexual harassment. The findings illustrated that the most important predictor of sexual harassment among police women was age 0.473 (100% normalized importance) followed by education 0.348 (73.5% normalized importance), duration of job 0.114 (24.1% normalized importance), and job status .065% (13.7% normalized importance). All four variables were contributing to the level of sexual harassment among police women. The findings of the current study can be helpful for policymakers in terms of new knowledge and statistical data to prevent this population from experiencing sexual assault.

*Keywords:* police women; demographic variables; sexual harassment; One-Way ANOVA; neural network analysis

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted and undesirable sexual irritation faced by people all over the world, but not discussed openly (Burn, 2019). World Health Organization (2012) reported that in several countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Thailand, the former state union of Serbia and Montenegro, and the United Republic of Tanzania, approximately 1 in every 5 women may experience sexual harassment at the workplace, whereas every 3<sup>rd</sup> teenage girl experiences unwanted sexual behavior forcefully. Furthermore, it was identified that sexual harassment has adverse effects on the physical and psychological health of victims, and unfairly affects and disturbs the overall productivity of an institute by causing a devastating, violent and invasive work environment (Burn, 2019). Further, sexual provocation at any workplace is an obstacle in the way of achieving the organizational goal and stimulating a peaceful work environment for the workers (McCann, 2005). Sexual harassment is documented as a practice of discrimination on the basis of gender and, therefore, is opposed to the belief in equality between men and women (Numhauser-Henning & Laulom, 2012).

According to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2018), sexual harassment is intensely deep-rooted in our society and influences the survival of many innocent women and girls. Such types of sexual conduct are commonly committed in public places and male dominated professions such as public transportation, saloons, workplaces, gardens, and roads. Sexual harassment and threat to the well-being of working females and girls is a severe violation of human rights, values, and norms. The administration of different countries has taken several steps in order to solve the issue of viciousness against females. A crucial component of such an initiative is a comprehensive investigation and identification of females' experience of harassment, along with its determinants, and its effects on their psychological health (Müller et al., 2007). Therefore, the present study was planned to explore the sexual harassment

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\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mr. Mueen Abid, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan. Email: [mueen.abid.uog@gmail.com](mailto:mueen.abid.uog@gmail.com)

experiences of women in the police department. This issue is overlooked and under-reported all over the world, especially in developing countries and particularly in Pakistan. Studies that have inspected harassment among police personnel have indicated that female workers experienced more instances of harassment than their male counterparts (Lonsway et al., 2013; DeHaas et al., 2009; Somvadee & Morash, 2008; Thompson et al., 2006). These events ranged from being just touched in a manner that made someone uncomfortable, to being earshot of dirty jokes and stories, to being sexually victimized on account of being a woman. Fitzgerald et al. (1999) suggested that many difficulties that females confronted were due to hostility towards them in the workplace, and not of a sexual nature. Rabe-Hemp (2007) indicated that 100% of the females in law enforcement whom, she had interviewed and investigated, had experienced some kind of sexual harassment at some stage throughout their job career. Interestingly, Rabe-Hemp (2007) further suggested that females who changed their departments were harassed again at their new workplace.

Similarly, Burke and Mikkelsen (2004) explored that female police officers reported more incidents of sexual harassment, and those women who reported higher levels of sexual harassment, also indicated lower job satisfaction. Consequently, sexual harassment negatively affects job satisfaction, retention, mental health, and physical health of the victims (DeHaas et al., 2009). Paludi (1996) and Kalof et al. (2001) have identified, that in police departments, females are more prone to sexual harassment, are more persuaded to tag even hidden types of sexual conduct, and their descriptions are typically broader than males.

According to many researchers, females who experienced sexual harassment reported diverse negative consequences such as lower job satisfaction, worse physical and psychological health, less commitment to organizational goals, higher absenteeism, and higher chances of quitting jobs (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Willness et al., 2007). Similarly, Zandonda (2011) investigated the effects and prevalence of Sexual Harassment among 160 working females from Nodla and Zambia's public and private workplaces. Their results indicated that 69% of respondents were reporting issues related to sexual harassment, and 75% employees claimed that there was no organizational policy to stop this harassing behavior. Findings also demonstrated a clinically significant level of depression and stress among victims. They reported lower levels of motivation and very poor psychological wellbeing.

Since sexual harassment prevails in workplaces, it is very significant and necessary to explore its determinants to concerned the complete picture. Various studies have explored critical part of socio-demographic characteristics in the prevalence of sexual harassment. Judicibus and McCabe (2001) examined the association between demographic characteristics and sexual harassment. Results showed that gender, age, and employee rank had a significant relationship with sexual harassment. They also found that female employees faced more sexual harassment related issues than male employees. Evidence disclosed that sexual harassment related problems are not limited to females, men also experienced such type of issues, but the prevalence of sexual violence was higher in females than males (Konik & Cortina, 2008). Similarly, another study highlighted that participants with a higher level of education usually showed a low level of sexual harassment, as their social influence increased with higher education (Nieminen et al., 2008). Schat et al. (2006) investigated a predictive association between age and sexual harassment which revealed, that young employees are more likely to experience sexual harassment at their workplace than older employees. Furthermore, sexual harassment is mostly committed by men. Additionally, a study on association between age and level of sexual harassment recognized a strong negative association between age and sexual

harassment. In other words, the level of sexual harassment decreased with the increase in the respondent's age (Ohse & Stockdale, 2008).

Sexual harassment related problems are not openly discussed and usually repressed. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, limited researches are conducted which indicates a great need to collect more empirical evidences (Pina et al., 2009). Although sexual harassment is prevalent in Pakistan there is still a lack of research in this domain, particularly in the context of different workplaces. One research by AASHA (Alliance against Sexual Harassment) in 2002 provides statistical information on Sexual Harassment amongst domestic workers. This report indicates that nearly 80% of the women workers in the country are being sexually harassed in workplaces in both public organizations and private sectors (AASHA, 2002). Sadruddin, (2013) conducted another phenomenological study to explore the level of sexual harassment and its impact on victims in Pakistani workplaces. The population of the study consisted of all the public and private organizations in Karachi, where females were working. The sample of the study consisted of 200 females (N=200). The outcome indicates that sexual harassment is consistently experienced at the workplace in Pakistan and has impacted work performance and the overall wellbeing of females. Sexual harassment typically occurs in different forms such as verbal and physical exploitation, mental torture and intimidation. This is the major cause of prevalence of stress, depression and anxiety and other types of psychological ailment.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the predictive relationship of different demographic variables (age, education, job status and duration of job) with sexual harassment amongst police women. This research is considered very significant as it draws attention to and addresses a serious issue of sexual harassment of female workers in the police department in Pakistani culture, which is usually repressed and denied. Further, only a few studies have been conducted in jail setting to explore this phenomenon, which indicates a huge research gap. It is critically worthwhile to explore the degree of sexual harassment and its association with different demographic variables amongst female workers, in order to create new knowledge and statistical data, which will be helpful for policy makers.

### **Method**

A cross-sectional study design was used in the current study to collect data and to make inferences about a population of interest (universe) at one point in time. Cross-sectional have been described as snapshots of the populations about which they gather data (Lavrakas, 2012). Sample of the study comprised 191 police women recruited from Gujrat and Gujranwala police departments, where, Gujrat and Gujranwala districts contained 78 (41%) and 113 (59%) working women respectively (age range = 15-65, mean age = 28.27, 40%, SD = 6.835). Census sampling technique was employed to select the the study sample.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Profile of Participants*

Variable	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage
Age	15-25	66	33.5%
	25-35	100	51%
	35-45	12	6.1%
	45-55	12	6.1%
	55-65	01	.5%
Education	Metric	56	28.6%
	Intermediate	78	39.8%
	Bachelor	45	23.5%
	Master	10	5.1%
Status of Job	Assistant Sub-Inspector	01	.5%
	Head Constable	19	9.7%
	Constable	160	81.6%
	Sub-Inspector	11	5.6%
Duration of Job	1-5 Year	142	74.3%
	6-10 Year	22	11.5%
	11-15 Year	08	4.1 %
	16-20 Year	07	3.6 %
	21-25 Year	05	2.6 %
	26-30 Year	03	1.5%
	31-35 Year	04	2%

*Note.* (N=191)

Table 1 specifies the frequencies and percentages of demographic features (age, education, job status and duration of job) of participants (N=191). It shows that most of the participants belonged to the age range of 25-35 years (f=100, %=51) and the rest of participants belonged to other above said age categories. With regards to education, most of the respondents (f=78, %=37.8) scored on intermediate level of education whereas, 45 respondents (23.5%) scored on bachelor level of education and 10 participants (5%) showed master level of education, respectively. Furthermore, 160 (81.6%) participants were working as a lady constable (LC) (160, 81.6%) 11 (5.6%) sub inspector, 19 (9.7%) as head constable and 1 (5%) as assistant sub inspector respectively. On the other hand, data related to categories of job duration illustrates that 142 participants are working in the police department between 1 to 5 year which is the lowest job duration, while 22 participants are working between 6 to 10 years, 08 participants are working between 11 to 15 years, 07 participants are working between 16 to 20 years, 05 participants are working between 21-25 years, 03 participants are working from 26-30 and 04 participants are working from 31-35 years (highest job duration category) respectively.

### Assessment Measures

A demographic information sheet was used for inquiry about the related information about age, education, job status and duration of job of police women. For the assessment of

sexual harassment, Urdu version sexual harassment experienced questionnaire was applied to identify level of sexual harassment among female workers in police department, established by (Kamal & Tariq, 1997). It contains 35 items measuring three dimensions (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention & sexual coercion) of sexual harassment related behaviors faced by women at different workstations in Pakistan. It is a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4. The lowest level of sexual harassment was depicted by the participant's score of 35 whereas the highest score was 140. Cronbach's alpha value .95 indicated high internal consistency of scale in current study. Reliability reported by the author was .94.

### **Procedure**

Due to the sensitivity of the study, formal permission was obtained from concerned authorities and informed consent was signed by research participants. After explaining the nature and purpose of the study, one demographical questionnaire and one standardized questionnaire were handed to the respondents. Every participant was given the necessary information about how to fill out the questionnaire. They were free to express and convey their opinions. As sexual harassment is a very sensitive topic, it was assured to the respondents that their participation was voluntary and obtained information would be kept confidential and used only for research. At the end, respondents were acknowledged for their participation and cooperation. Data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0). Analysis of the study comprised two parts, descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data. While inferential statistics such as reliability analysis, neural network and one-way ANOVA was used to explore key findings. Neural network was implemented to check prediction, classification and importance of each demographic feature to determine sexual harassment. As Hastie et al. (2009) defined neural network as the most powerful and a common practice to identify complex predictive relationship and important classification of different constructs. Further, Neural Network analyses frequently reproduce outcomes in a unique way and recognize influential features not perceived by regression models (Beseler & Stallone, 2020). One-way ANOVA was used to check mean differences in different demographics regarding sexual harassment, whereas Cronbach's alpha was computed to explore the reliability of sexual harassment experienced scale in current study. The ethical consideration of the study was that the study was approved by Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB), University of Gujrat, Pakistan. All recommendations of the board were assimilated in this investigation. Consent was taken from the authorities of police department from where sample was to be drawn. Respondents were informed about the objective, importance, and voluntary participation in the study. Moreover, they were assured of their right to leave the study procedure at any point in time without hesitation. Confidentiality and privacy of data were also assured to the participants.

**Results**

Table 2 shows the Cronbach alpha calculated for the sexual harassment experienced questionnaire.

**Table 2**  
*Reliability of Sexual Harassment Experienced Questionnaire*

Measurement	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scores	Kurtosis	Skewness
Sexual Harassment Experienced Questionnaire	35	.78		-.818	.015

*Note.* (N=191)

Cronbach's alpha was computed to find the reliability of the scale. Reliability scores of .78 revealed high internal consistency of scale in the current study.

**Table 3**  
*Cronbach's Alpha of Subscales of Sexual Harassment Experienced Questionnaire*

Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha	Scores	Intercorrelation
Gender Harassment	.62		.56
Unwanted Sexual Attention	.57		.44
Sexual Coercion	.69		.57

*Note.* (N=191)

The above table represented Cronbach's Alpha Scores and inter-correlation of three subscales of the sexual harassment experienced questionnaire. Results revealed the high inter-correlation of subscales in the current study.

**Table 4**  
*Model Summary*

Cross Entropy Error		Percent Incorrect Predictions	
Training	Testing	Training	Testing
74.333	31.400	21.3%	21.0%

*Note.* (N=191)

Cross-entropy determines the disparity among variables and the extent to which the variables are dissimilar to each other (Jabłońska, & Zajdel, 2020) As depicted in the above table training for the cross entropy error was equal to 74.333 (a sample size at 127 with 67.2% sample size) and in testing cross entropy error was 31.400 with (a sample size at 62 with 32.8% sample size). The percent incorrect predications of training set were 21.3% whereas in testing the percentage was 21.0%. If the percent of incorrect predictions are constant in the training and testing it gives the confidence about the model as correct. In case of current research, the difference is very small for training and testing.

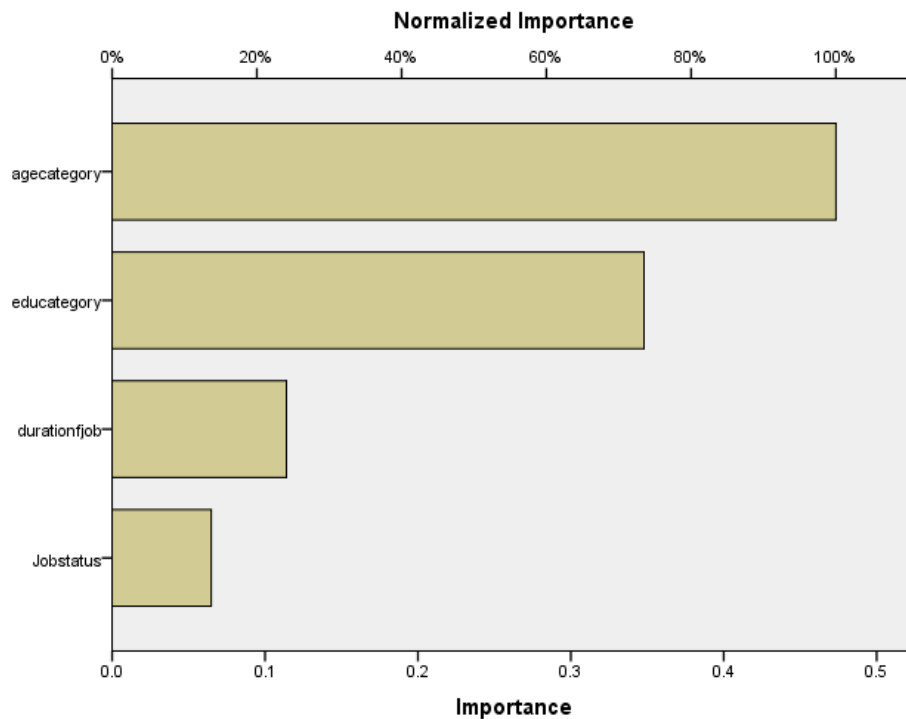
**Table 5**  
*Predictive Importance of Independent Factors*

Sr#	Variables	Importance	Normalized Importance
1	Job status	.065	13.7%
2	Age	.473	100%

3	Education	.348	73.5%
4	Duration of job	.114	24.1%

Note. (N=191)

The neural network model gives information about the importance of prediction of demographic factors for sexual harassment. The result indicated that the most important predictor of sexual harassment in police women was age 0.473 (100% normalized importance), next was education 0.348 (73.5% normalized importance), duration of job 0.114 (24.1% normalized importance) and job status .065% (13.7% normalized importance). All the four variables were contributing to the level of sexual harassment among police women. The importance can be seen in Figure 1.



In result, a comprehensible neural network model appeared that elucidated the importance of independent variables for sexual harassment among police women. The chart of importance shows that the results were dominated by age, followed by education, duration of the job, and job status.

**Table 6**  
ANOVA of Sexual Harassment and Demographics (age, education, duration of job & job status) in Police Women

Sexual Harassment	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	3.91	3	1.30	5.06	.002
Within Groups	48.17	187	0.26		
Total	52.08	190			

Note. (N=191); MS = mean square; SS = sum of square;  $p < .05$

Above table depicted a statistically significant difference among group means of demographics as determined by one-way ANOVA.

### **Discussion**

Sexual persecution has risen to the forefront in the preceding two years as a problem that deserves larger devotion both in reports of public policy restructuring and educational investigation. Even though sexual provocation has been found to damagingly influence job gratification, work environment and mental health, there are very few studies about the particular means in which different demographics characteristics in executive positions influence the technique in which sexual pestering is professed. As females continue to rise to administrative positions, a faster inspection of both boss and subservient gender with respect to harassment penalties is necessary (Gilbert, 2005). All over the world every third woman is confronting sexual viciousness from a spouse, or from other individuals. A bitter fact is that at least 2.6 billion females are living in nations where sexual viciousness by the husband is still not deliberated as delinquency (UN Women Annual Report 2018–2019, n.d). Pakistan's religious, financial, social and cultural paradigms are remarkably different from Western society (Syed, 2008). To give respect, and equal human rights to women are undoubtedly stated in the Islamic religion and the constitution of Pakistan. Nonetheless, Pakistan remains a country where male dominance is extremely etched in all areas, making it problematic for women to achieve human rights (Akhtar & Métraux, 2013).

Literature on sexual harassment depicts that women employed in male dominant professions (e.g., police department) are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than other females (Willness et al., 2007). Houle et al. (2011) identified that sexual harassment is a stressor at the workplace. Females tend to experience a higher level of sexual harassment than males. Further, sexual harassment related issues have strong negative relationship to the overall organizational functioning and psychological wellbeing of employees.

The present study aimed to identify the role of various demographics as determinants of sexual harassment, and it was identified that age, education, job status and duration of job play an important part in sexual harassment of police women. Previous studies also confirmed the findings of the current study.

Odu and Olusegun (2012) conducted a study on 1200 sexually harassed and sexually coerced females from different workplaces. Findings of demographic linkage revealed age range, and marital status have significant association with sexual coercion. Furthermore, a higher level of sexual harassment was identified among unmarried and young ladies compared to married and older women. And it was also identified that all the females working at higher ranks are unlikely to experience sexual harassment whereas the level of sexual harassment was higher among women working at subordinate positions. Similarly, Sheets (2007) found a strong association between age and sexual violence among working women. Findings indicated that unmarried and young women are at high risk to experience sexual harassment related problems rather than married and older women. Furthermore, employers with lower level of education and working at lower job positions seem at a greater risk of being harassed as compared to their counter parts (Odu & Olusegun, 2012).

Covington, (1998) investigated that most mistreated, misunderstood and undetected population are women who are in prison. These women have no physical or mental security. They are sexually victimized women. The mentioned study also identified that women working



in police department are also sexually harassed. But sexual misconduct is high amongst women who are young, less educated and working at lower positions.

In Pakistan, little literature is available regarding sexual harassment, particularly about females working in police department. Issues related to sexual harassment are creating undesirable work atmosphere and diverse types of problems such as stress, depression, anxiety, and aggressive attitude. This research is very essential as it explores that demographic variables such as age, education, job status, and duration of a job are important determining factors of sexual harassment among female workers. Further, this study points to the need to provide adequate awareness about sexual harassment to young women employees with a low level of education and those who are working as junior staff so that, the workplace environment could be protected for females.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

The findings of the current research are valid for the targeted population of Gujrat and Gujranwala districts. However, these conclusions cannot be generalized to other district jails that are situated in different geographical areas because this phenomenon can be quite different in other places. Due to the sensitivity of the study topic, it was very hard to obtain information on the sexual harassment questionnaire. Further, it was difficult to get permission from jail administrations to conduct this type of research on female workers and this might affect the accurate reporting of the respondents. The suggestion is that a study on sexual harassment may be conducted on a large and diverse type of sample to increase the generalize ability of the research findings.

### **Implications**

Despite having limitations, the present study provides sufficient support for the implications of further research on sexual harassment. Moreover, it provides a piece of evidence to reconsider the strategies usually used for the prevention of sexual harassment among females in the police department. As the police department is a male dominant workplace where sexual harassment related issues are not openly discussed. So the result of this study may be helpful for policymakers and the administration of the police department to get knowledge and stop this problem. The findings of this study may also be helpful for the higher authorities to design some preventive programs to create awareness among people. These programs would facilitate people to tackle sexual harassment related issues and insecurities.

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