

Knowledge and Experience of Sexual Harassment among Zagazig University Female Students

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Abstract

Background: Sexual harassment is an alarming trend that has increased in recent years in Egypt. **The aim** of this research was to evaluate the level of knowledge and experience of sexual harassment among Zagazig University female students. **Subjects and Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out. **Setting:** The research was conducted in the College of Commerce, veterinary College and the College of Nursing, Zagazig University/Egypt. Simple random sample of 968 students was surveyed between beginnings of October 2020 to end of February 2021. **The study tools** were Tool I. A self-administered questionnaire, it was used to record socio-demographic characteristics, questions to assess the prevalence of past exposures to sexual harassment and their frequencies, moreover, items covering all forms of sexual harassment, location, whom to blame for harassment, impacts, response to sexual harassment, reasons for not asking help from the police force and causes for harassing a female. Tool II. Questions intended to assess females' awareness about sexual harassment. **Results:** The prevalence of sexual harassment among students was 87.7% and they were exposed to all different forms of harassment, staring or leering 439 (51.7%) having the highest form. Transports have the highest location 553(65.1%) and the highest impact of sexual harassment was feeling stressed and confused 464 (54.7%). As well, the major harassment response chosen was keeping silence 500 (51.7%). Furthermore, the reasons for harassing a female were weakness of religious faith 658 (68.0%). Additionally, 69.7% of subjects are having poor knowledge level on definition, forms, and correct dealing measures with the offender doing harassment and laws in Egypt. **Conclusion:** The prevalence of sexual harassment among students was high. Additionally, the prevalence of knowledge among subjects was very low regarding SH. **Recommendations.** The researchers recommend that Egypt support anti-harassment awareness program aimed at female university students in particular, as well as remedial actions and legislation against sexual harassment.

Key words: Knowledge, Sexual Harassment. Female, Students.

Introduction:

In Egypt, sexual harassment (SH) is a societal issue that endangers social security and stability. Based on the UN Women (**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, 2015**), SH is “any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another”. As well, sexual harassment is “every statement or action of a sexual nature or obtaining sexual advantages or for the purpose of retaliation or domination over the victim. Verbal harassment (e.g. offensive or suggestive remarks), non-verbal or gestural harassment (e.g. leering or ogling with suggestive overtones), visual harassment (e.g. showing pornographic materials), psychological harassment (e.g. unwanted social invitations), and physical harassment are all forms of SH (e.g. inappropriate touching) (**Shaw et al., 2018**).

The majority of female victims (61.6%) stated harassment occurred at all times. Furthermore, university students harassed 43.6 percent of female victims, while microbus and taxi drivers harassed the rest (27.8 percent). These results were also found in another Egyptian study (**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2015**), 61.9 % of women reported being harassed by school or university students, with drivers coming in second. In contrast, **the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights' (2012) (ECWR)** research showed that the majority of harassers were drivers, followed by students. Furthermore, more than half of the harassed girls (54.1%) said that the harasser was between the ages of 19 and 24 (**Desouky&Marawan, 2013**).

Women's fear of violence in the case of sexual harassment limits their mobility and usage of public places, thus preventing them from fully exercising a variety of human rights (**Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2010**). The ECWR's research also discovered physical consequences for harassed females, such as headaches, insomnia, and unpleasant nightmares. **Desouky and Marawan (2013)** found that female participants had a strong feeling of wrath, anxiety, pain, humiliation (along with shame, bewilderment, and sadness), in addition to the documented social consequences. These adverse consequences on victims have also been shown in many research conducted around the globe. For instance, in the United States of America, 90–95 percent of sexually harassed women suffer from anxiety, sadness, migraines, sleep problems, weight loss or gain, nausea, and diminished self-esteem (**Shaw et al., 2018**).

Schools and associated groups should provide a variety of events (such as seminars and parent-child camps) to educate parents about sexual harassment concerns. Activity kits may also be used to teach parents about sexual harassment at home (**Hendriks et al., 2012**). However, the government's responsibilities should include frequent collaboration with relevant groups to conduct large-scale research on sexual harassment. Additionally, the government should develop program on sex/gender education for mass media distribution. Training packages may be created to assist parents and instructors. Students seldom seek help from teaching staff/social workers at schools and universities, according to survey results. It is suggested that hotlines and email accounts be established to allow students to seek assistance anonymously (**Equal Opportunities Commission, 2013**).

The nurse has been characterized as having a distinct and complete role within the framework of the SH counseling team. Nurses may have several non-traditional roles in assisting sexual assault victims in their rehabilitation. They may serve as crisis intervention counselors, victim advocates with law enforcement and medical professionals, and educators with the victim's significant other as well as with legal, medical, and mental health personnel with whom the victim may engage. The nurse, by responding holistically to the victim and performing many atypical tasks, may assist the victim in navigating the systems involved in her treatment. By doing so, the nurse ensures continuity of care and helps the victim's recovery from sexual assault trauma by streamlining the treatment process (Ross et al., 2019).

Significance of the study:

- Sexual harassment has been acknowledged as an issue in the workplace, on university campuses, and in educational institutions, as well as on streets and public transportation for many years. Every two minutes, someone in the United States of America is sexually harassed (Desouky & Marawan, 2013). Now, street harassment is a common occurrence in Egypt, affecting women from a range of origins, situations, and social contexts on a near-daily basis (Ilahi, 2008). As a result, Egypt is currently rated second in the world for sexual harassment, behind only Afghanistan. In 2008, the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR) conducted a survey of over 1,000 women in Cairo, Giza, and Qalubiya, and discovered that 83 percent of Egyptian females have encountered SH in their lifetime, 46 percent reported experiencing SH on a daily basis, and that 99.3 percent of Egyptian women have encountered some form of SH (United Nations

Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2013). As a result, SH has become a rising public concern in Egypt, with neither good evaluation nor effective remedies. In the same way, there is a lack of knowledge about sexual harassment among the Egyptian public particularly female students. This lack of awareness goes back to several sources; including, the family, the culture, the educational systems and the media. On one hand, each one of those mediums plays a significant role in addressing sexual harassment in the Egyptian citizen. On the other hand, the government role in diminishing sexual harassment using these mediums is minimal (Ebaid, 2013). Thus, more current research on individuals of various ages and on the situation at Zagazig University are required for this study.

Aim of the Study:

The present study aimed to evaluate the level of knowledge and experience of sexual harassment among Zagazig University female students. This can be accomplished through the following objectives, namely:

1. Identifying the prevalence of sexual harassment and their frequencies.
2. Verifying the prevalence of the respondents' awareness of sexual harassment.
3. Specifying the different forms of sexual harassment.
4. Describe the most significant places where harassment occurs, impact, and responses and solutions to eliminate sexual harassment in Egypt.

Research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of past exposures to sexual harassment and its frequency?

2. What is the prevalence of the respondents' awareness of sexual harassment?
3. What are the different forms of sexual harassment?
4. What are the most significant places where harassment occurs, impacts, responses and solutions to eliminate sexual harassment in Egypt?

Subjects and Methods

Study design

A descriptive design was used.

Setting:

The research was conducted in the College of Commerce, Vet College and the College of Nursing, Zagazig University/Egypt. Zagazig University was founded in 1970, contributing to Egypt's resurgence and worldwide leadership in education. Agriculture, nursing, commerce, veterinary medicine, human medicine, education, and science are all offered at the institution. Zagazig is a city in Lower Egypt. It is situated in the eastern portion of the Nile delta and serves as the seat of the Sharqia Governorate. It is projected to have a population of about 319,707.

Sample size calculation and technique

Employing literature data from **Gurung et al. (2020)**, to estimate the sample size with precision/absolute error of 5% and type 1 error of 5%. Sample size = $[(Z_{1-\alpha/2})^2 \cdot P(1-P)]/d^2$, where, $Z_{1-\alpha/2}$ at 5% type 1 error ($p < 0.05$) is 1.96, P is the expected proportion in population based on previous studies and d is the absolute error or precision. Therefore, sample size = $[(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.824) \cdot (1-0.824)]/(0.024)^2 = 967.2$. Based on the formula, the sample size required for the study is 968 students.

Researchers explored the knowledge of SH among students from three colleges in Zagazig University (randomly chosen through sealed envelope method); the College of Commerce (the number of students were 26692), the Vet college (the number of students were 2400) and the College of Nursing (number of students was 2821). Based on these numbers, the sample size was distributed among the colleges as follows: 809 consecutive students from college of Commerce, 86 consecutive students from college of nursing and 73 consecutive students from College of Vet.

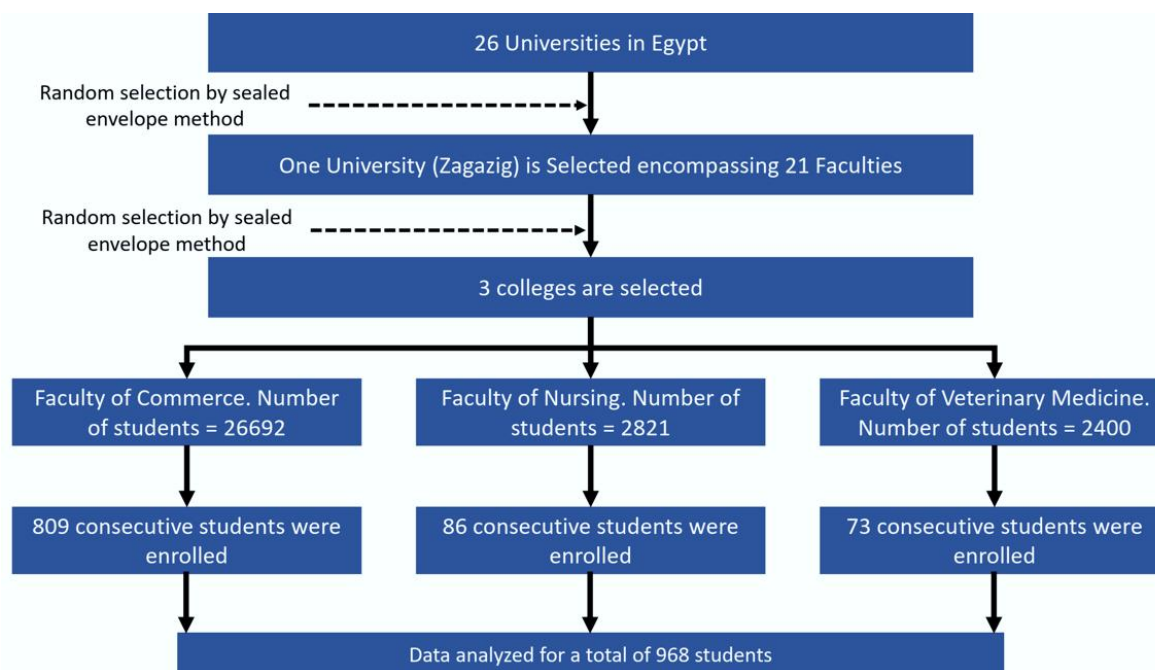


Figure (1):

Tools for data collection: Two questionnaires were used to collect the necessary data for reaching the research objectives.

Tool I: A self-administered questionnaire to assess exposure to sexual harassment. It was developed by the researchers following a thorough examination of current literature and is divided into four sections as follows:

Part 1: This was for collection of demographic characteristics of participants such as, age, education, occupation, residence, marital status, and income. It also covered the source knowledge about sexual harassment.

Part II. This part was adopted by the Sexual Harassment questionnaire (2020), in order to identify the prevalence of sexual harassment and their frequencies. Also specifying the different forms of sexual harassment during the past year, without your consent as unwanted physical contact. In addition, ask about the most

significant places where harassment occurs. As well, relationship with sexual harassers, also female feel needed support or help with this and who supporter. Furthermore, this part asks about to have been pushed to do something different because harassment and previously heard about telephone number.

Part III. This part assessed the impacts of harassment on the harassed females. Also, this part included 7 questions about responses towards sexual harassment. Also, asked about the details of the reasons for not asking help from the police force. Moreover, this part included 6 questions about reasons for harassing a female from her point of view.

Part IV. This part was included to identify suggested solutions raised by the university female respondents.

Tool II. A self-administered questionnaire intended to assess females' awareness about sexual harassment. It consisted of a series of questions, covering the following

areas of awareness: meaning, types, laws and policies, and corrective measures.

Scoring system:

Knowledge of the studied women was estimated by 4 questions, the first questions about definition of sexual harassment and its correct answer scored 2, incomplete answer scored 1 in not correct scored 0. Second question about the type of harassment, complete answer scored 8 and incorrect scored 0 and the investigated subject obtain marks from 0 to 8 according to her answer. The third question about correct dealing measures with the offender doing harassment, and the investigated subject obtains marks from 0 to 5 according to her answer. The last about rules and laws in Egypt against the subject doing harassment, its correct answer scored 2, incomplete correct scored 1 and incorrect scored 0. The total knowledge score is 17. The level of knowledge was classified into: poor < 50.0%, fair 50.0 - <75.0% and good \geq 75.0%.

Administrative and ethical considerations:

Official permissions were acquired from the Ethics Committee of Zagazig University's Faculty of Nursing and from the dean of the College of Nursing, where the research was conducted. All responding students who completed their questionnaires were considered to have given verbal permission.

Content Validity and Reliability

Validation of data collecting methods was conducted by five specialists from the Departments of Community Health Nursing, Community Medicine, and Pediatrics at Zagazig University's Faculty of Nursing and Faculty of Medicine, respectively. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to determine the reliability of

the suggested tools, which resulted in 0.75 and 0.89 for tools (I) and (II), respectively.

Pilot study:

Prior to conducting the main research, a pilot study with 10% from total study sample, 100 students was conducted to verify the tools' reliability and the study's practicality. The piloted students and employees were excluded from the main study sample.

Fieldwork

Upon securing all official permissions, the process of data collection was started from beginning of October 2020 to end of February 2021. In this study data were collected using a pre-designed questionnaire as a study tool. Two surveys were performed, the first on a sample of female University students. The researchers met with the female student individually, explained to them the study aim and procedures, and invited them to participate. Those who gave their oral consents were interviewed using the two data collection tools. All principles and ethical foundations of scientific research were applied in the study.

Statistical analysis:

The study data were coded, revised and analyzed statistically by SPSS software ver. 21. Data were expressed as frequencies and percentages (for nonparametric data) and mean \pm SD (for parametric data). Chi square (χ^2) was applied to compare categorical variables and was substituted by Fisher-exact-test (FET) or Monte-Carlo Exact test if the expected value of any cell <5. Differences was reported as significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results:

Table (1) shows that from a total of 968 participants, more than half of them

resided 575 (59.4%) belonged to the age group of 20 – 21 years, 603 (62.3%) were rural areas, 165 (17.0%) were married, 509 (52.6%) had sufficient income.

Figure (1) illustrates that the prevalence of experiencing sexual harassment among the students was 87.7%, and only 12.3% didn't any harassment.

Table (2) describes that for 260 (30.6%) of participants harassment occurs 2-4 times, in the last years followed by only once for 252 (29.7%), 5-10 times for 133 (15.7%), and for 91 (10.7%) monthly. Furthermore, the table shows the forms of

harassment, staring or leering was for 439 (51.7%) having the highest type, followed by unwanted comment on dress or appearance 348 (41.0%), and invasion of personal space 285 (33.6%). Regarding the most significant places where harassment is common, transports have the highest location 553 (65.1%), followed by the street 520 (61.2%), and school/university 64 (7.5%). Additionally, offender of the harasser was stranger for 702 (82.7%) as the highest, and the least representing equal minority were brother, cousin, neighbor 3(0.4%).

Table (1): Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Studied Group (968)

Characters	No.	%
Age (years)		
• 18 – 19	152	15.7
• 20 – 21	575	59.4
• >21	241	24.9
• Mean \pm SD	20.5 \pm 1.1	
Residence		
• Rural	603	62.3
• Urban	365	37.7
Marital status		
• Single	803	83.0
• Married	165	17.0
Income		
• Insufficient	378	39.0
• Sufficient	509	52.6
• Sufficient and save	81	8.4

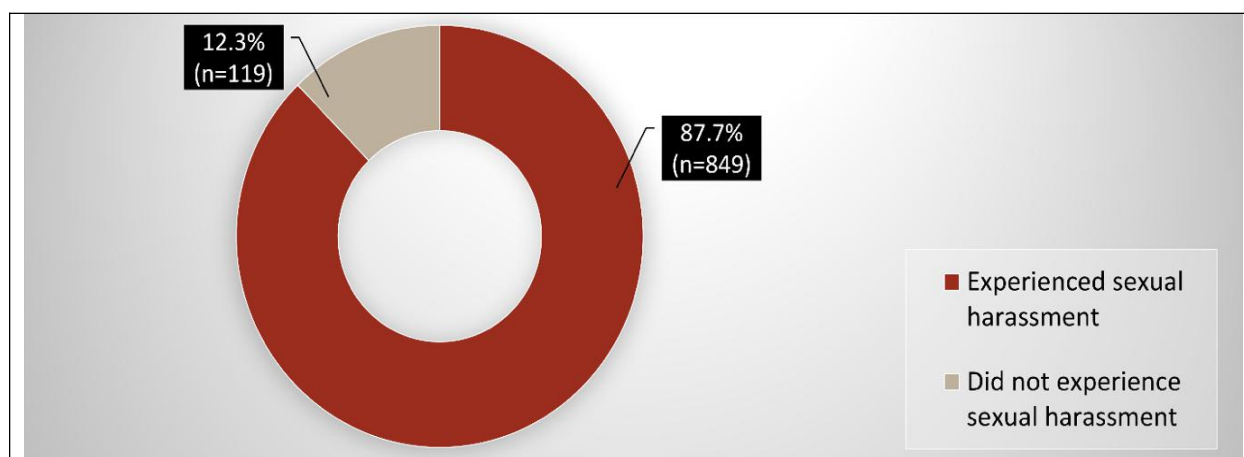


Figure 1. Prevalence of Experiencing SH among the Students (n=968)

Table (2): Exposure to Sexual Harassment (n=849)

Items	No.	%
How many (in last year)?		
• Daily	49	5.8
• Weekly	64	7.5
• Monthly	91	10.7
• Only once	252	29.7
• 2-4 times	260	30.6
• 5-10 times	133	15.7
Forms of harassment*		
• Unwanted physical contact	244	28.7
• Suggestive remarks	207	24.4
• Jokes of sexual nature	160	18.8
• Display of sexual offensive material in public place	83	9.8
• Unwanted comment on dress or appearance	348	41.0
• Invasion of personal space	285	33.6
• Staring or leering	439	51.7
• Intimidating presence e.g., following at close proximity	143	16.8
Place of SH*		
• Work	61	7.2
• School/University	64	7.5
• Transport	553	65.1
• Street	520	61.2
• Shop	50	5.9
• Building	28	3.3
• Home	11	1.3

Who is the offender?*		
• Friend	22	2.6
• Faculty	11	1.3
• Classmate	50	5.9
• Stranger	702	82.7
• Service provider	160	18.8
• Employer	77	9.1
• Brother	3	0.4
• Cousin	3	0.4
• Coworker	11	1.3
• Neighbor	3	0.4
Need support (n=849)		
• Yes	638	75.1
• No	132	15.5
• Not sure	79	9.3

* Answers are not mutually exclusive

Table (2 continued): Exposure to Sexual Harassment

Items	No.	%
Who supported you? (n=638)		
• Myself	3	0.4
• Friends	293	34.1
• Family	232	27.3
• Police	37	4.4
• People in the street	177	20.8
• Non	107	12.6
Have been pushed to do something different because harassment? (n=849)		
• Yes	393	46.3
• No	328	38.6
• Not sure	128	15.1
Previously heard about telephone number for help of SH (n=968)		
• Yes	127	13.1
• No	797	82.3
• Not sure	44	4.5

Table (2) continued) displays that exposure to sexual harassment, regarding the support of harassment, 638 (75.1%) of participants need support. In the same way, the highest support harassment was for friends' 293 (34.1%), followed by family 232 (27.3%) and people in the street 177(20.8%). Also, 393 (46.3%) have been pushed to do something different because of harassment, additionally, 797 (82.3%) did not hear about telephone number help of sexual harassment.

Table (3) portrays that the impacts of sexual harassment were feeling stressed and confused 464 (54.7), feeling angry 456

(53.7%), and feeling afraid or scare 445 (52.4%). As well, the harassments chosen the responses were keep silent 500 (51.7%), tell family members 357 (36.9%), tell classmates/friends 255 (26.3%), and the least response was know the people around them 19 (2.0). Moreover, the reasons for not asking help from the police force were feared for reputation 500 (51.7%), and there were no witnesses 316 (32.6%). Additionally, the reasons for harassing a female were weakness of religious faith 658 (68.0%), watching foreign porn programs 542 (56.0%), and obscene calls via mobile phones 514 (53.1%).

Table (4) shows that the mean score of knowledge about sexual harassment among the studied group was 10.27 ± 4.47 .

Figure (2) illustrates distribution of studied subjects according to their source of information about SH; it is observed that the most source of information about SH was self-experience and then internet (82.30% & 70.6%) of the studied subjects respectively.

Table (3): Impacts and Response to Sexual Harassment (350)

Items	No.	%
Impacts (n=849)?		
• Feeling helpless	390	45.9
• Sleep disturbances	224	26.4
• Can't talk well with others	135	15.9
• Feeling stressed and confused	464	54.7
• Cannot study well	147	17.3
• Feeling angry	456	53.7
• Cannot concentrate in daily life	293	34.5
• Feeling afraid or scare	445	52.4
• Eating disorders	121	14.3
• Being less sure of yourself or less confident	194	22.9
• Feeling depressed	216	25.4
If you are exposed to sexual harassment, what is your response (n=968)		
• Keep silent	500	51.7
• Tell family members	357	36.9
• Call the police	241	24.9
• Tell classmates/friends	255	26.3
• Tell seniors in school	106	11.0

Figure (3) illustrates that 69.7% among the subjects have poor knowledge, while 27.7% are knowledge having fair and only 2.6% had good knowledge.

Table (5) describes the relationships between knowledge level and characteristics of the studied group. There were highly statistically significant differences between the sexual harassment and the age with older age group >21, and married, (P=.001).

• I know the people around me	19	2.0
• Quarrel with the harasser immediately	28	2.9
Reasons for not asking help from the police force (n=968)		
• I feared for my reputation	500	51.7
• It was late at night	152	15.7
• I was scared of my parents and that they would not believe me	174	18.0
• I thought there was no text in the law to penalize harass	265	27.4
• There were no witnesses	316	32.6
• I was also scared from harassment by policemen	197	20.4
Reasons for not asking help from the police force Reasons for harassing a female (n=968)		
• Watching foreign porn programs	542	56.0
• Obscene calls via mobile phones	514	53.1
• The immoral behavior of girls (the way the girl talks, walks and looks)	274	28.3
• Weakness of religious faith	658	68.0
• Not investing properly in leisure time	417	43.1
• Obscene clips sent via mobile phones	393	40.6

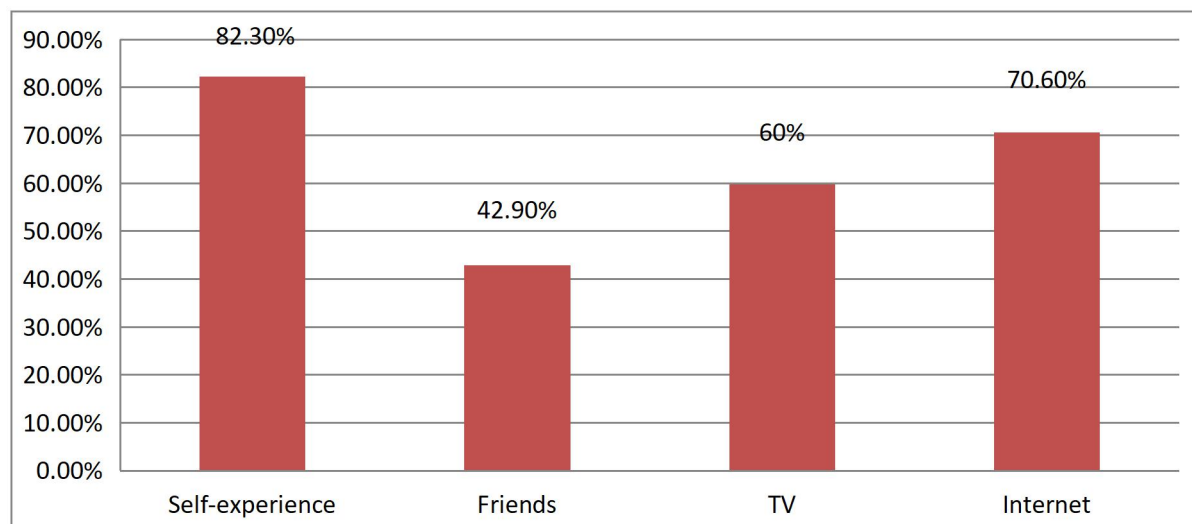


Figure (2): Sources of Knowledge (n=968)

Table (4): Average Score of Knowledge about Sexual Harassment among Studied Group (350):

Items	Value
Maximum score	25.0
Measured minimum to maximum score	0.0 -23.0
Mean ± SD	10.27 ± 4.47
Median	10.0

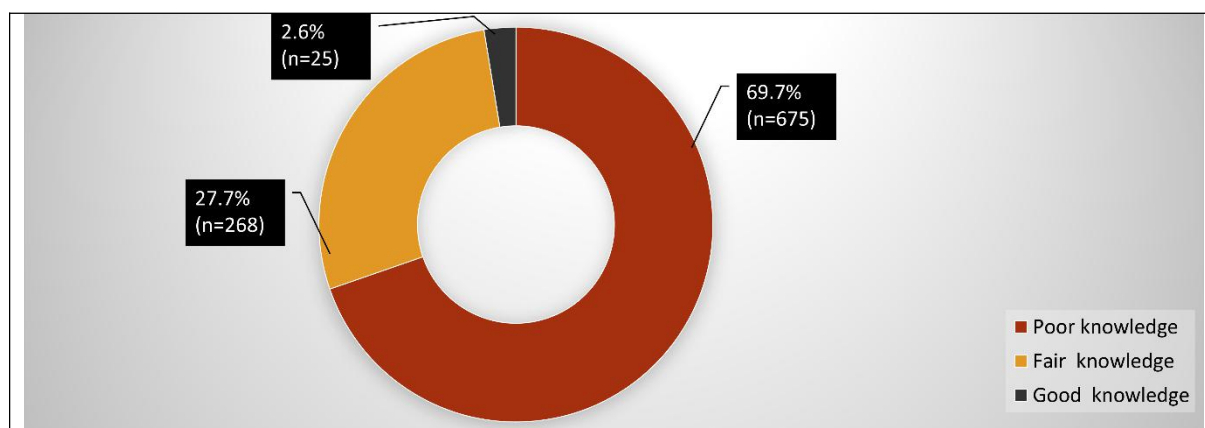


Figure (3): Knowledge among Female Students about Sexual Harassment

Table (6) shows relationships between prevalence of harassment and characteristics of the studied group. There are highly statistically differences between prevalence of harassment and characteristics of the studied group (age

with older age group >21, and married, ($p=0.001$).

Table (7) displays the suggested solutions for the problem of sexual harassment from the point of view of the studied females, the first suggestions was

increasing the penalties stipulated in the law 923 (95.4%), followed by a requirement for obtaining or renewing licenses of private television channels to be accompanied by allocating certain times to raise awareness of the new anti-harassment law 899 (92.9%), and giving the heads of neighborhoods and villages

the right to take measures related to their neighborhoods and villages according to the social nature and traditions in each neighborhood or village 800 (82.6%). The last suggestion was studying the psychology of the harasser and his motivation for prevention and treatment 86 (8.9%).

Table (5): Relationship between knowledge level and characteristics of the studied group (n=968)

Characteristics	No.	Sexual Harassment				Chi square test	
		Yes (n=849)		No (n=119)		X ²	p
		n	%	n	%		
Age (years)							
18 – 19	152	141	16.6	11	9.2		
20 – 21	575	554	65.3	21	17.6		
>21	241	154	18.1	87	73.1	170.101	<0.001*
Residence							
Rural	603	537	63.3	66	55.5		
Urban	365	312	36.7	53	44.5	2.696	0.101
Marital Status							
Single	803	706	83.2	77	64.7		
Married	165	143	16.8	42	35.3	22.984	<0.001*
Income							
Insufficient	378	336	39.6	42	35.3		
Sufficient	509	444	52.3	65	54.6		
Sufficient and save	81	69	8.1	12	10.1	1.072	0.584

Table (6): Relationship between Prevalence of Harassment and Characteristics of the Studied Group (n=350)

Characteristics	No.	Knowledge Level				Chi square test	
		Poor (n=675)		Fair/Good (n=293)		X ²	p
		n	%	n	%		
Age (years)							
18 – 19	152	128	19.0	24	8.2		
20 – 21	575	465	68.9	110	37.5		
>21	241	82	12.1	159	54.3	194.471	<0.001*
Residence							
Rural	603	411	60.9	192	65.5		
Urban	365	264	39.1	101	34.5	1.873	0.171
Marital Status							
Single	803	607	89.9	196	66.9		
Married	165	68	10.1	97	33.1	76.648	<0.001*
Income							
Insufficient	378	277	41.0	101	34.5		
Sufficient	509	339	50.2	170	58.0		
Sufficient and save	81	59	8.7	22	7.5	4.989	0.083

Table (7): Suggested Solutions for the Problem of Sexual Harassment from the Point of view of the Studied Female Students

Suggested solutions	No	%
Drafting new legislation that combines the articles of the Penal Code and the Child Law into a unified law on sexual harassment	785	81.1
Imposing an immediate financial penalty on the harasser once he is arrested	713	73.7
Increasing the penalties stipulated in the law.	923	95.4
Displaying a program on the State television showing photos of those convicted in harassment cases.	755	78.0
A requirement for obtaining or renewing licenses of private television channels to accompanied by allocating certain times to raise awareness of the new anti-harassment law.	899	92.9
Using government institutions and the private sector to put up clear and concise anti-harassment posters.	553	57.1
Motivating civil associations to carry out awareness campaigns on an annual basis in cooperation with other associations which adopt awareness on SH	708	73.1
Giving the heads of neighborhoods and villages the right to take measures related to their neighborhoods and villages according to the social nature and traditions in each neighborhood or village.	800	82.6
Studying the psychology of the harasser and his motivation for prevention and treatment	86	8.9

Discussion:

A total of 968 subjects contributed in the present study. Most of them belonged to the age group of 20 – 21years, reside rural areas and had sufficient income. As well, the highest sources of knowledge of sexual harassment are self-experience, followed by more than two thirds was the internet. The best self-experience of the female contributors would be credited to their real practice. A similar result is that of **Desouky and Marawan (2013)**, in **Menoufiya University, Egypt** which mentioned that the internet was the source of knowledge for 69.5% of female. However, these findings were in disagreement with that of **Hassan et al. (2017)**, in **Egypt**, which found that these internet and social networking sites topped the list of sources that are through it (73.98%). The difference in sources of knowledge could be due to the differences in geographical locations.

In the current study, during the past year, the findings indicated that the prevalence of sexual harassment among students was high. Additionally, no one reported being a victim of sexual assault. This may be because harassment against women is pervasive in Egypt, since women are unable to freely roam the streets, contributing to the poisoned media and pornographic sites that have ruined young. These findings were lower than results from **Menoufiya University, Egypt** by **Desouky and Marawan (2013)** who found that 95.5% of females were experienced various types of SH even though 95.5%. Another study in Egypt reported a percent of 96.5% of women were experienced SH (**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2015**). Similarly, results from other foreign countries as **Pakistan (Qureishi et al., 2005)** **India, (Indian Centre for Equity and Inclusion, 2009)**; **Turkey(Hunter, 2012)** revealed that the prevalence rate

was high reaching 96%, 95%, 93% respectively. Also, it was greater than study consequences from by **Gharbya Governorate** (53.4%) (**The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), 2012**), Additionally, it is greater than the prevalence rates in other international nations such as Poland, New-York City, London, and Canada, where the prevalence rate was 86 percent. (**Livingston et al., 2012**), 85%, (**Roszak and Gober, 2012**), 80% (**Ross et al., 2000**), and 43% (**Ending Violence Against Women Coalition, 2014**) respectively. In the same way, these results were similar with that of **Ahmed (2014)** in **Colombia**, which found that sexual harassment occurs at the university with a rate of (44.2%). Additionally, it is greater than the prevalence rate reported in research from Yemen, where the prevalence rate was 90% 23. This high incidence of SH persists, as shown by research showing that single women are more likely to be subjected to all forms of harassment (**Parish et al., 2005**). The difference in the percentages of sexual harassment could be due to the differences in geographical location and sample size.

The majority of students who encountered SH in the current research indicated that their harassers were strangers, followed by service providers and employers. These findings contrast with that of **Desouky and Marawan (2013)** in Menoufiya University, Egypt discovered that 97% of them believe harassers are male/female/friends, followed by classmates (21%), and friends (14 percent). The difference in the percentage of sexual harassment could be due to the differences in geographical area.

Throughout the last year, students have been subjected to various forms of sexual harassment without their consent, with incidents occurring 2-4 times, 5-10 times, and daily; the most common forms of sexual harassment are staring or leering, followed by unwanted comment on dress

or appearance, invasion of personal space, and unwanted physical contact. However, for minorities of them these were other forms as exposure to suggestive remarks, jokes of sexual nature, display of sexual offensive material in public place, and intimidating presence e.g, following at close proximity. This may be a result of sexual suppression brought on by postponing marriage to fulfil sexual desire, as well as to pass the time and build self-confidence. These results were supported by that of a study carried by **Hassan et al. (2017)**, in **Egypt**, found that staring or leering (70.85%) was followed by female tracking (25.56%). These findings contrast with those of The Equal Opportunities Commission (2013), which stated that, "Pulled the clothing (88 percent), made sexual gestures/movements (80 percent), and wrote sexual messages/graffiti about you in public areas in school/faculty" (79 percent), made sexual jokes about you" (24 percent), talked about sex constantly in your presence (19 percent), and continuously made suggestions, propositions, or demands to you" (16 percent). In comparison to other countries, the prevalence of various forms of harassment is lower in the current study than in a study conducted in Pennsylvania, where 95% of the women surveyed reported being the target of leering, 82 percent reported being the target of vulgar gestures, and 57% reported being touched or grabbed sexually. (**National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011)** in a study entitled Working together to prevent sexual violence. Inappropriate contact was also shown to be more prevalent in research conducted in Istanbul, where 46 percent of female participants were subjected to sexual touches (**Hunter, 2012**). This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes (**Raes, 2012; U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012**).

These previous findings corroborated those of **Desouky and Marawan (2013)** from Menoufiya University in Egypt, who discovered that female participants reported experiencing looking up and down, 354 (66.5 percent) reported inappropriate staring at their bodies, and 226 (42.5 percent) reported that the harasser stood close or leaned over them, 182 (34.2 percent) reported inappropriate touching, and 228 (42.8 percent) reported stalking. Additionally, 422 (79.3 percent) of participants reported being exposed to noises such as whistling, hissing, and kissing sounds; 130 (24.4 percent) reported being exposed to sexual comments about their physical appearance; 110 (20.7 percent) reported being exposed to dirty jokes told by the harasser; and 78 (14.7 percent) reported experiencing sexual jokes or stories with multiple meanings. The difference in the percentage of sexual harassment could be due to the differences in culture.

Considering place of harassment, in the present study, sexual harassment primarily occurs in transport, followed by street and in school (including university campus). This may be because sexual harassment on public transit is much more prevalent among female students who live alone and travel more often at night. Additionally, owing to social, cultural, and even political reasons, it remains a quiet problem in society. As a result, the harasser has a chance to harass girls/women on public transit. This finding's in agreement with that of **Hassan et al. (2017)**, in Egypt, who found that the transportation occupied the forefront of places (98.63%), followed by street (86.43%). Similarly, these results matched with **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2015)**, which mentioned that, the vast majority (90 percent) cited such incidents inside buses/mini-buses. These findings are also consistent with earlier Egyptian research, which showed that more than 80% of women experienced

sexual harassment on the street and on public transit. These results contradict with those of **The Equal Opportunities Commission (2013)**, who found that sexual harassment happens mainly at schools (including university campuses) (49%), with most occurrences occurring in the classroom (25 percent). Following that, it happens on the street (11% of the time) or on public transportation vehicles (8 percent). This is also consistent with findings from surveys conducted in other countries, where most sexual harassment incidents occurred on public transportation, in public spaces, and in public locations (**Indian Centre for Equity and Inclusion, 2009; Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2012**).

Regarding the knowledge level of harassment, in the present study, more than one quarter has fair knowledge while minority of them had good knowledge and more than two thirds of the sample had poor knowledge. This may be because participants need training to improve their understanding of sexual harassment, which can be given in a methodical way during regular sessions. This will increase students' and faculty members' knowledge of sexual harassment and gender equality. Additionally, schools must create effective and stringent processes for reporting sexual harassment occurrences so that complaints may be addressed appropriately. It is preferable to do it methodically in the classroom. Personal development, life education, and even liberal studies classes may all be utilized to educate students about sexual harassment.

These study findings contrast with those of **Gurung et al. (2020)**, in India, who found most students 336 (82.4%) had moderate knowledge, 54 (13.2%) had good knowledge and 18 (4.4%) had poor knowledge. These results matched with that of **Desouky and Marawan (2013)**, in Menoufiya University, Egypt, which clarified that of females had good

knowledge scores was detected was (83%). Another research showed that female pupils scored higher on knowledge tests (**The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Department of Special Education and Counseling of The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2013**). The difference in knowledge level could be due to the differences in sample size.

The effect of SH on victim students manifested as dread of violence in the form of tension and confusion, anger, anxiety or fear, helplessness, and a diminished sense of self or confidence. Additionally, less than one fifth reacts by can't talk well with others, cannot study well, and eating disorders. This might be due to that most of students are from rural areas. Furthermore, despite political advancements, women continue to be expected to fulfil duties dictated by traditional, cultural, and religious beliefs.

As a result, the psychological consequences of harassment may impact a woman's career, preventing her from achieving success and happiness. These results are consistent with those of **The Equal Opportunities Commission (2013)** at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, who discovered that most women reported feeling "angry" (40 percent), "fearful or frightened" (38 percent), and "unable to connect effectively to others" (36 percent). However, fewer respondents express concern about how the condition would impact their everyday lives, such as "sleep difficulties" (7%) and "eating disorders" (10 percent). In the same context, the effect of SH on victim women's fear of violence manifests as sexual harassment, which restricts their mobility, their use of public places, and, as a consequence, their full enjoyment of a variety of human rights (**Action Aid International Women and The City II, 2013**).

Physical symptoms like as headaches, trouble sleeping, and unpleasant nightmares were also seen in harassed females, in addition to

psychological symptoms such as intense wrath, anxiety, discomfort, humiliation, shame, bewilderment, and despair). Additionally, female individuals reported experiencing negative social consequences (**Desouky&Marawan, 2013**). According to the same source, harassed victims in a Turkish research experienced emotions of irritation, anger, contempt, and fear, as well as detrimental impacts on everyday activities, social contacts, and public life (**Hunter, 2012**).

Consider the reactions of the sexually harassed participants in the current study: slightly more than half chose to remain quiet, more than a third informed family members, and almost a quarter called the police and informed classmates/friends. Fewer replies were received by informing seniors at school that they should immediately confront the harasser. This may be because most students come from rural regions and are fearful about their reputation. These results corroborate those of **The Equal Opportunities Commission (2013)**, who discovered that the most common reactions of sexually harassed students are "remain quiet" (58 percent) and quarrelling with the harassers (51%), followed by "inform classmates/friends" (39 percent) and "call the police" (34 percent).

In the current study, the reasons for harassment of women from their own words were weakness of religious faith, followed by watching foreign pornprograms, obscene calls via mobile phones, and not investing properly in leisure time. These findings are in agreement with that of **The UN Women (2014)**, who found other reason for SH as foreign pornographic programs (97.2%), watching sex magazines (97%), watching erotic movies (96.6%), watching sex education movies (96.7%), and obscene clips sent via cellular phones (96.2%). This was also matched with **Hassan et al. (2017)** in **Egypt**, who highlighted that the percentage of causes leading to sexual

harassment ranges according to the opinions of the total sample ranges between (88.69%, and 65.66), where it came in first place weak religious and moral scruples among young people and in the second place the wrong family for the boy and girl and lack of supervision, while it came in the last order mixing of the sexes in places of education and work.

In the present study, the highest solutions proposed by female respondents to address sexual harassment were increasing the penalties stipulated in the law. This requires passing or renewing licenses for private television channels, be accompanied by allocating certain times to raise awareness of the new anti-harassment law, giving the heads of neighborhoods and villages the right to take measures related to their neighborhoods and villages according to the social nature and traditions in each neighborhood or village. This requires also drafting new legislation that combines the articles of the penal code and the child law into a unified law on sexual harassment. These findings matched with that of **The UN Women (2014)**, which found other solutions proposed to address SH as; enacting laws with severe penalization 95%, overcoming the existing lack of security in general (94.2%), activate the existing legislations and their implementations (93.4%), addressing the display of obscene pictures and program in television (93.2%), and immediately addressing the issue through the police officers on the streets (92%).

Conclusion

The prevalence of sexual harassment was high among students and for most of them, it occurred 2-4 times the last year. In addition, staring or leering has the highest form, followed by unwanted comment on dress or appearance. Transports have the highest location, followed by the street. The prevalence of knowledge among female students was

very low regarding SH, and the highest source of knowledge was self-experience. Additionally, the highest employment of the offender was stranger or service provider. The highest impacts of sexual harassment were feeling stressed and confused, next feeling angry and the majority of harassments as response keep silent. Moreover, the reason for not asking help from the police force was feared for reputation. Furthermore, the reasons for harassing a female were due to weakness of religious faith. Increasing the penalties stipulated in the law was suggested by the highest number of female students as a solution for the problem of sexual harassment. The relationships between prevalence of harassment and student characteristics were significantly higher with age and marital status ($P < 0.01$).

Recommendations:

1. Passing a new law criminalizing female sexual harassment, stipulating deterrent penalties for the harasser.
2. The most important approach is raising the religious awareness through mosques and churches to treat females in all public places with the same respect as mothers or sisters.
3. Egypt support anti-harassment knowledge program aimed at female university students in particular, as well as remedial actions and legislation against sexual harassment.
4. Further studies should have a role to encourage studies on forms, causes, solutions of this problem, and their impacts on the individual and the society.

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