Sexual Harassment Avoidance Patterns among Female University Students

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Abstract

Background: sexual harassment is unwanted or unwelcome, and which has the purpose or effect of being intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive (American psychological Association, 2016). Avoidance is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment. **Aim:** was to assess sexual harassment avoidance patterns among female university students. **Research question:** What are the sexual harassment avoidance patterns among female university students? **Study design:** a descriptive study design was utilized to conduct this study. **Setting:** this study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing and Faculty of Arts, at Ain Shams University. **Subjects:** Simple random sample of 367 students admitted to previously mentioned setting was recruited for conducting this study. **Data collection tools:** it was developed by the researcher, data was collected through an online questionnaire: (1) Socio-demographic Interview tool, (2) Sexual Harassment circumstances checklist and (3) Avoidance patterns of sexual harassment questionnaire. **Results:** The study revealed that approximately one third of the studied students have rarely used the sexual harassment avoidance patterns, more than two thirds of the studied students were rarely using sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding protection and self-defense, one third of them were rarely using sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding different social situations, while more than half of them always use sexual harassment avoidance patterns with regards to social media and technology. **Conclusion:** Overall, one third of the female university students have rarely used sexual harassment avoidance patterns. Most of the students would not be able to recognize threat and would not be able to use patterns to avoid sexual harassment. **Recommendations:** establishing programs for raising awareness about sexual harassment avoidance patterns and concepts and its different forms in educational organizations, universities, schools and activating and applying the complaint mechanism.

Keywords: Awareness, female university students, avoidance patterns, sexual harassment, self-protection, self-defense, sexual violence.

Introduction:

Females are subjected to daily sexual harassment in the streets, public transport, shops, markets, schools. Universities, clubs, tourist spots and the workplace. There are no official figures on sexual harassment and since most cases go unreported, it is difficult to evaluate its prevalence with accuracy (*FIDH-International Federation for Human Rights, 2014*).

These avoidance patterns could be learned either from circumstances surrounding young female adults or by some organized training. There are two patterns to deal with of sexual harassment, (1) Avoidance: the avoidance strategy may prevent about 75% of cases of harassment and its position without any minor problems. (2) Confrontation: there is no one scenario fit for all positions, but the scenario is shaped by the nature of the person and the nature of the circumstances. So, it will be better to use first pattern (*Mohanan, K. Gupta, S. and Sagar, R. 2017*).

Using avoidance patterns for prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment in institutional settings. Institutions begin taking steps to prevent sexual harassment, because of that, some researchers have started examining sexual violence in public spaces and transit environments as a particular hindrance to women's mobility (*Ceccato, V., Näsman, P. & Langefors, L., 2020*).

Significance of the study

World Health Organization (2018) published that 1 in 3 women around the world have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner is one that is widely cited today. Whilst this is a worldwide figure, there is variation in the prevalence of violence seen within and between communities, countries and regions.

As well as, violence against women can be described as violation against human right and the a form of discrimination against females and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that lead to physical, sexual, psychological and economic harm or suffering to women. It includes threats of which act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or even in private life *(UNFPA, 2015)*

Young women were especially at high risk,, Some research findings showing that the group between 16-20 is the most vulnerable to harassment, a percentage: (96.81) percent, followed by the age group over twenty years old, reaching: (23.69%) percentage as for minors under 16 years of age, the rate is: (5.62%), and they are all large. percentages, Women in society are targeted in the street *(ECWR, 2008).*

The present study aimed to:

Assess sexual patterns harassment avoidance among university students, through assessing: usage of sexual harassment avoidance patterns of among university students.

Research Question

What are sexual harassment avoidance patterns among university students?

Subjects and Methods
1-Technical design:

The technical design includes the research design, research setting, subjects and tools for data collection.

(A) Research design:

A descriptive research design was utilized in this study.

(B) Setting:

This study was conducted in Faculty of Nursing and Faculty of Arts, at Ain Shams University. The faculties program consists of four academic years.

(C) Subject:

A simple random sample has recruited for this study of 367 students, who agreed to participate in the study and fulfilled the inclusion criteria.

(D) Tools for data collection:

The data were collected through online questionnaire including the following tools:

(1) Socio-demographic Interview tool:

Included data related to socio-demographic characteristics.

(2) Sexual harassment circumstances sheet:

It includes data related to students awareness about Sexual harassment, It consists of 11 items.

(3) Avoidance patterns of sexual harassment Questionnaire:

It includes data related assessing sexual harassment avoidance patterns, classified into 6 sub-categories. The total items are 55 included the sub-items for the last Two items of the scale.

❖ Scoring system:

The total number of questions was 55 questions, the items are rated on 3 items Likert scale ranging from rarely (0) to Always (2). The higher the score, the total score of the scale ranges from 55-110 with lower scores indicating the rarely use of the avoidance patterns awareness and higher scores indicating using the avoidance patterns in regular basis.

It was considered that:
A) (Zero: 55) rarely usage of avoidance patterns,
B) (56: 110) using the avoidance patterns in regular basis.

2-Operational design:
A- Preparatory phase:
It included reviewing of related literature, and theoretical knowledge of various aspects of the study using books, articles, internet, periodicals and magazines to develop data collection tools.

B- Reliability and validity:
Testing validity:
To achieve the criteria of trustworthiness of the data collection tools in this study, the tools were tested and evaluated for their face and content validity and reliability by jury group consisting of (5) experts from nursing field with different specialties were represented in the group such as psychiatric/Mental health nursing, community nursing and Medical surgical nursing. To ascertain relevance, clarity and completeness of the tools, experts elicited responses were either agree or disagree for the face validity and content reliability and comments, The required corrections and modifications were done and the researcher revised each tool and modified some statements under supervision of the researcher supervisors

Testing reliability:
Of proposed tools was done by Cronbach alpha test.

A pilot study: a pilot study was carried out on 37 students (10%) from Faculty of Nursing and faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University, applicability of tools and time needed to fill each tool. Some modifications on tools were done based on pilot study. The students who included in the pilot study were excluded from the main study group.

C.   Field work
The study was conducted in Faculty of Nursing and faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University, Cairo governorate. An approval was obtained from a letter that was issued from Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, explaining the study aim to obtain the permission and cooperation. Data were collected from) August 16, 2020 till February 20, 2021). The questionnaire conducted online through Google forms platform because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The data were collected according to the availability of the students. The workdays were according to the student availability online. Also working hours were according to the student availability online.

The developed tools were designed by the researcher based on reviewing of the international and national related literature concerned the study topic.

3- Administrative design:
An official letter requesting permission to conduct the study was obtained from both the dean of Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University to the dean of Faculty of Arts, Ain shams university, this letter included the aim of the study and a photocopy from data collection tools in order to getting the permission and help for data collection.

Ethical consideration

- The research approval was obtained from the ethical committee at Faculty of Nursing of Ain Shams University before conducting the study.
- The researcher clarified the aim of the study to students included in the study.
- The researcher assured to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of subjects' data included in the study.
- Participants were informed that they are allowed to choose to participate or not in the study and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Ethics, values, culture and beliefs were respected.

4- Statistical design:
Statistical data entry and analysis were done by using computer software for excel program and statistical package for social science (SPSS) program, version 20.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA). Quantitative data were expressed as mean± standard deviation (SD). Qualitative data were expressed as frequency and percentage.

The observed differences and associations were considered as follows:
P > 0.05 Non significant (NS)
P < 0.05 Significant (S)

P < 0.01 Highly significant (HS)

Results:

Table (1): Regarding the college: the study showed the highest percentages of female university students were from faculty of Arts, This may be due to the large number of students in faculty of Arts, Moreover,

Regarding the age: almost the whole sample were in the age group of (< 19 years to >24) the study results are consistent with the previous study results, that found the individuals of age group 12 -34 years are at the greatest risk of being sexually harassed which means that the students are at the greatest threat for being the victims. And when they harassed sexually, they may face adverse effects such as depression, anxiety disorder, substance abuse, low self-esteem, poor academic performance, etc.

Table (2): The sample were exposed to sexual harassment around Three quarters from the studied sample, regarding the exposure in all kinds of public transportation 124 (33.7%), followed by sexual harassment in the Street 113(30.7%), regarding to shopping places were 37 (14.3%), Public parks and cafes 27(10.4%)and other places 108(29.4%).

Table (3): shows the percentages of the studied sample were 227(61.8%) exposed to sexual harassment in any time, followed by 23(6.2%) in Noon time, in addition to 18 (6,9%) said it was in early morning and 18 (6,9%) at evening and 12 (3.2%) were harassed in the late night.

Table (4): shows the percentages of the studied sample regarding the education or qualification of the harasser, 63(17.1) were didn't know the education of the harasser, followed by 43(13.3%) the uneducated harassers.

Table (5): shows the percentages of the studied sample regarding the profession of the harasser, 204 (5755.5%) were didn't know the occupation of the harassers, while 34(9.3%) were Microbus drivers.

Table (6): regarding to seeking help to get rid of the consequences of sexual harassment**,** the majority of the studied (37.3%) didn't seek help, while (15.0%) of them had sought peer to peer support.

Table (7): the studied students regarding usage of sexual harassment avoidance patterns, the majority of the studied students (70,3%) rarely used the avoidance patterns regarding protection and self-defense, (62.1%) were regularly using avoidance patterns through the use of social media and technology, followed by (55.3%) of them who were always using avoidance patterns regarding general appearance, in addition to (45.5%) who were regularly using avoidance patterns regarding means of transportation while (32.7%) said they rarely used the avoidance patterns regarding different social situations.

Table (8): shows that there is a highly significant relation between the studied sample have been exposed to sexual harassment and their colleges, school year and living in socio-demographic characteristics with a p value was <0.001*.

Table (9): shows there is highly statistical significant relation between the studied sample were exposed to sexual harassment and places (shopping,…..) at p-value was <0.05*.

Table (10): shows a highly statistically significant between exposure to sexual harassment and any time and Noon time when p-value was <0.001*, so the table shows statistically significant between exposure to sexual harassment in early morning, evening and Late night when p-value was <0.05*.

Table(11): shows a highly statistically significant between exposure to sexual harassment with salesman, Worker, a driver of a minibus, Teacher/Professor and I do not know when p-value was <0.001*, also the table shows statistically significant between exposure to sexual harassment with G a co-worker and manager when p-value was <0.05*

Table (12): shows highly statistically significant between exposure to sexually

harassed with a relative, an acquaintance and unknown stranger when p-value was <0.001*.

exposure to sexually harassed with a neighbors when p-value was <0.05*.

Show statistically significant between

Table (1): Distribution of Socio-demographic data of the studied sample (n=367).

Socio-demographic data	N	%
College		
College of Arts	201	54.8
Faculty of Nursing	166	45.2
Age		
<17 to >19 years	21	5.7
< 19 years to >24 years	346	94.3
School year		
The first year	110	30.0
The second	89	24.3
The third	36	9.8
The fourth	132	36.0
Living		
Urban	279	76.0
Rural	88	24.0
Accommodation: (with whom you are staying)		
Parents/relatives/husband	347	94.6
Alone	2	0.5
With friends	18	4.9
Social status		
Single	338	92.1
Married	26	7.1
Widow	1	0.3
Divorced	2	0.5
General appearance		
Hijab (Partial veil)	308	83.9
Without hijab	42	11.4
Niqab (Full face veil)	17	4.6

Table (2): Distribution of the studied sample according to the places where students exposed to sexual harassment (n=367).

The places where students exposed to sexual harassment	Have you ever been sexually harassed					
	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
Street						
Yes	113	43.6	0	0.0	68.082	<0.001*
No	146	56.4	108	100.0		
All kinds of public transportation						
Yes	124	47.9	0	0.0	78.092	<0.001*
No	135	52.1	108	100.0		
Shopping places						
Yes	37	14.3	0	0.0	17.158	<0.001*
No	222	85.7	108	100.0		
Educational places						
Yes	15	5.8	0	0.0	6.521	0.011*
No	244	94.2	108	100.0		
Public parks and cafes						
Yes	27	10.4	0	0.0	12.153	<0.001*
No	232	89.6	108	100.0		
Other places						
Yes	108	41.7	0	0.0	63.814	<0.001*
No	151	58.3	108	100.0		

Table (3): Distribution of the studied sample according to their previous experiences regarding the times (n=367).

The times the students were most to be sexually harassed	Have you ever been sexually harassed					
	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
Any time						
Yes	227	87.6	0	0.0	248.135	<0.001*
No	32	12.4	108	100.0		
Early morning						
Yes	18	6.9	0	0.0	7.893	0.005*
No	241	93.1	108	100.0		
Noon time						
Yes	23	8.9	0	0.0	10.232	<0.001*
No	236	91.1	108	100.0		
Evening						
Yes	18	6.9	0	0.0	7.893	0.005*
No	241	93.1	108	100.0		
Late night						
Yes	12	4.6	0	0.0	5.173	0.023*
No	247	95.4	108	100.0		

Table (4): Distribution of the studied sample according to their previous experiences, regarding the education or qualification of the harasser (n=367).

Education or qualification of the harasser	Have you ever been sexually harassed					
	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
University						
Yes	40	15.4	0	0.0	18.720	<0.001*
No	219	84.6	108	100.0		
Preparatory or intermediate education						
Yes	43	16.6	0	0.0	20.310	<0.001*
No	216	83.4	108	100.0		
Uneducated						
Yes	49	18.9	0	0.0	23.581	<0.001*
No	210	81.1	108	100.0		
Graduated with postgraduate studies						
Yes	18	6.9	0	0.0	7.893	0.005*
No	241	93.1	108	100.0		
I do not know						
Yes	196	75.7	0	0.0	175.408	<0.001*
No	63	24.3	108	100.0		

Table (5): Distribution of the studied sample according to their previous experiences, regarding the profession of the harasser (n=367).

Based on your previous experiences, what is the profession of the harasser	N	%
Salesman	33	9.0
Worker	36	9.8
A driver of a minibus	34	9.3
A co-worker	19	5.2
Manager	15	4.1
Teacher/Professor	26	7.1
I do not know	212	57.8

Table (6): Distribution of the studied sample regarding to the seek help to get rid of the consequences of sexual harassment (n=367)

Ways of help	N	%
Family support	50	13.6
Peer and peer support	55	15.0
Psychological support by specialists	6	1.6
Medical support (for physical illnesses)	21	5.7
I didn't ask for help	137	37.3

Table (7): The studied students regarding usage of sexual harassment avoidance patterns: (n=367)

Sexual Harassment Avoidance Patterns	Always N	Always %	Sometimes N	Sometimes %	Rarely N	Rarely %	Mean	SD
Sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding street	**165**	**45.0**	**122**	**33.2**	**80**	**21.8**	**2.23**	**0.70**
1. Sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding transportations	165	45	119	32.4	83	22.6	2.23	0.74
2. Sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding general appearance	203	55.3	89	24.3	75	20.4	2.35	0.78
3. Different social situations regarding Sexual harassment avoidance patterns	150	40.9	97	26.4	120	32.7	2.08	0.79
4. Sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding social media and technology	228	62.1	76	20.7	63	17.2	2.45	0.73
5. Sexual harassment avoidance patterns regarding protection and self-defense	64	17.4	45	12.3	258	70.3	1.46	0.74
Sample average	**163**	**44.4**	**91**	**24.8**	**113**	**30.8**	**2.13**	**0.75**

Table (8): Relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of the studied students and exposure to sexual harassment (n=367).

Items	Have you ever been sexually harassed				Chi-square	
	Yes		No		X²	P-value
	N	%	N	%		
Faculty						
Faculty of Arts	169	65.3	32	29.6	39.040	<0.001*
Faculty of Nursing	90	34.7	76	70.4		
Age						
17 to 18 years old	11	4.2	10	9.3	3.549	0.060
From 19 years to 24 years old	248	95.8	98	90.7		
Academic year						
The first year	48	18.5	62	57.4		
The second	67	25.9	22	20.4	58.514	<0.001*
The third	29	11.2	7	6.5		
The fourth	115	44.4	17	15.7		
Residential area						
Urban	211	81.5	68	63.0	14.317	<0.001*
Rural	48	18.5	40	37.0		
Accommodation: (with whom you are staying)						
Parents/relatives/husband	243	93.8	104	96.3		
Alone	2	0.8	0	0.0	1.333	0.513
with friends	14	5.4	4	3.7		
Social status						
Single	233	90.0	105	97.2		
Married	23	8.9	3	2.8	5.694	0.127
Widow	1	0.4	0	0.0		
Divorced	2	0.8	0	0.0		
General appearance						
Hijab (Partial veil)	211	81.5	97	89.8		
Without hijab	36	13.9	6	5.6	5.270	0.072
Niqab (Full face veil)	12	4.6	5	4.6		

Table (9): Relationship between the places and the exposure to sexual harassment among the studied sample (n=367).

Places	Have you ever been sexually harassed					
	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
Street						
Yes	113	43.6	0	0.0	68.082	<0.001*
No	146	56.4	108	100.0		
All kinds of public transportation						
Yes	124	47.9	0	0.0	78.092	<0.001*
No	135	52.1	108	100.0		
Shopping places						
Yes	37	14.3	0	0.0	17.158	<0.001*
No	222	85.7	108	100.0		
Educational places						
Yes	15	5.8	0	0.0	6.521	**0.011***
No	244	94.2	108	100.0		
Public parks and cafes						
Yes	27	10.4	0	0.0	12.153	<0.001*
No	232	89.6	108	100.0		
Other places						
Yes	108	41.7	0	0.0	63.814	<0.001*
No	151	58.3	108	100.0		

Table (10): Relationship between the exposure sexual harassment among studied students and times when they exposed to sexual harassment (n=367).

Items	Have you ever been sexually harassed					
	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
Any time						
Yes	227	87.6	0	0.0	248.135	<0.001*
No	32	12.4	108	100.0		
Early morning						
Yes	18	6.9	0	0.0	7.893	0.005*
No	241	93.1	108	100.0		
Noon time						
Yes	23	8.9	0	0.0	10.232	<0.001*
No	236	91.1	108	100.0		
Evening						
Yes	18	6.9	0	0.0	7.893	0.005*
No	241	93.1	108	100.0		
Late night						
Yes	12	4.6	0	0.0	5.173	0.023*
No	247	95.4	108	100.0		

Table (11): Relationship between the profession of the harasser and exposure to sexual harassment: (n=367).

Items	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
Salesman						
Yes	33	12.7	0	0.0	15.120	<0.001*
No	226	87.3	108	100.0		
Worker						
Yes	36	13.9	0	0.0	16.644	<0.001*
No	223	86.1	108	100.0		
A driver of a minibus						
Yes	34	13.1	0	0.0	15.625	<0.001*
No	225	86.9	108	100.0		
A co-worker						
Yes	19	7.3	0	0.0	8.355	0.004*
No	240	92.7	108	100.0		
Manager						
Yes	15	5.8	0	0.0	6.521	0.011*
No	244	94.2	108	100.0		
Teacher/Professor						
Yes	26	10.0	0	0.0	11.668	<0.001*
No	233	90.0	108	100.0		
I do not know						
Yes	212	81.9	0	0.0	209.312	<0.001*
No	47	18.1	108	100.0		

Table (12): Relationship between the sexual harassment among studied students and their social relationship with the harassers (n=367)

Items	Yes		No		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X²	P-value
A relative						
Yes	36	13.9	0	0.0	16.644	<0.001*
No	223	86.1	108	100.0		
A neighbor						
Yes	13	5.0	0	0.0	5.620	0.018*
No	246	95.0	108	100.0		
An acquaintance						
Yes	34	13.1	0	0.0	15.625	<0.001*
No	225	86.9	108	100.0		
Unknown stranger						
Yes	246	95.0	0	0.0	311.128	<0.001*
No	13	5.0	108	100.0		

Discussion:

That the majority of the studied students were from the Faculty of Arts (54.8%), with the age from 17 to 24 years. Also, around one-third of them were in the fourth academic year. These results may be attributed to the absorptive capacity of students in the Faculty of Arts, compared to the Faculty of Nursing. Moreover, the high level of understanding of the concept of sexual harassment and forms of sexual harassment increases the older they get.

These current results were consistent with a study developed by *Gurung, A., Priyadarshini, S., Margaret, B., (2016),* entitled "Perception of Sexual Harassment among the Undergraduate Students" in Manipal, India. This stated that the individuals of age group 12 -34 years are at the greatest risk of being sexually harassed, which means that

students face the greatest threat for being the victims

Regarding the previous exposure to sexual harassment: were (70.6%) from the studied sample have been sexually harassed.

Regarding the time: The current study showed that more than three-quarters of the studied students were exposed to sexual harassment during any time of the day. These current study results are similar to those of *El-Sayed, D. & Marwan, H., (2020),* Their results showed that more than half of the female victims said that harassment took place at all times of the day.

Regarding the sexual harassment forms The current study showed that large number of the participants had been sexually harassed verbally and the majority of total studied students that they faced all forms of sexual harassment. These results suggest there is a high prevalence of sexual harassment. The study results were consistent with those of a study by *El-Deeb, B. (2013),* entitled "Ways and Methods to Eliminate sexual harassment in Egypt." They stated that different forms of verbal harassment were recurrent types of sexual harassment that was performed daily.

Regarding the education or qualifications of the harassers: Regarding exposure to sexual harassment, the current study results showed that around three-quarters of the studied students had been exposed to sexual harassment. This might be due to the low educational level of the perpetrators. The current study results are similar to those of a study by *El-Sayed, D. & Marwan, H. (2020)* entitled "Assessing the Awareness and Experience of sexual harassment among Menoufiya University Students." Their results showed there was high exposure to sexual harassment among the students.

Regarding the profession of the harasser: The current study results showed that more than half of the studied students did not know the occupation of the harassers, while about one-tenth were subjected to sexual harassment by salesmen and another tenth were

harassed by microbus drivers. These results might be attributed to the fact that female students are targets for all types of male harassers regardless of their profession. These results agreed with results of an *Hassan, R. & Shoukry, A. (2008)* study entitled "Clouds in Egypt's Sky: Sexual Harassment from Verbal Harassment to Rape." These results indicated that most of the harassers were microbus and taxi drivers.

Regarding the relationship between the students and the harasser: approximately three-quarters of the studied students were harassed by strangers, followed by relatives. The present study results were similar to those of a study by *Wael, R., (2018)* entitled "#First Time I was Harassed Hashtag Testimonies of Child-Sexual Violence." The results of this study indicated that harassers and perpetrators of other forms of sexual violence can be individuals or groups of men and/or women. The harasser can be a stranger or someone who is known, such as an employer, employee, co-worker, customer, passerby, relative, family member, or guest.

Regarding the age of the harasser: more than one quarter of the studied students answered that the harassers were 22–30 years old. Quarter of them were 31–45 years old. The current study results agreed with those of a *IDRC - International Development Research Centre, (2016)* study entitled "Sexual Harassment in Greater Cairo: Effectiveness of Crowd sourced Data." Their results revealed that, in less than two-quarters of the reports to the HarassMap in 2014, the harassers were children under the age of puberty.

Regarding to The consequences of being harassed: approximately half of the studied students had psychological issues as a consequence of sexual harassment. These results are in harmony with those of a study by *The Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention (CVAVP), (2019),* which stated that being sexually harassed can impact one's psychological health, physical well-being, and vocational development and can cause depression, anxiety, shock, denial, confusion, feelings of being powerless, anger, fear, frustration, irritability, shame, self-

consciousness, low self-esteem, insecurity, embarrassment, feelings of betrayal, guilt, self-blame, and isolation.

Regarding to the seek help to get rid of the consequences of sexual harassment: more than one-third of the studied students did not seek help. Moreover, three-quarters of situations of sexual harassment were committed by someone the victim knew. These results suggest that the main reason females do not take an action or speak out after an incident is the shock of such unexpected danger, which paralyzed them after being assaulted or harassed. Also, the pressure to be polite is an ingrained response, and it makes speaking up about an assault or harassment very difficult

Regarding Sexual Harassment avoidance patterns: These results revealed that less than half of the studied students had always use sexual harassment avoidance patterns. One-third of them had sometimes use the sexual harassment avoidance pattern. Less than a quarter of them reported rarely use of sexual harassment avoidance patterns. These results might be attributed to the fact that street harassment severely restricts the physical and geographical mobility of women. It not only diminishes a woman's feelings of safety and comfort in public places but also restricts her freedom of movement, depriving her of liberty and security in the public sphere. Women assess their surroundings, restrict choices of clothing, wear headphones, choose to exercise inside, and avoid certain places or routes as proactive measures to reduce the chance of being harassed. This also leads to a decrease in the quality of life, contributing to avoidant behaviors.

Regarding sexual harassment avoidance patterns related to general appearance, the present study results showed that more than half of the studied students were using avoidance patterns related to general appearance to avoid sexual harassment often. There is a large proportion of females who use different ways to protect themselves, for instance, wearing a *hijab*. They also deliberately wear loose clothing to avoid being sexually harassed. Some of them avoided wearing makeup and perfumes and putting on brightly colored clothes to avoid being sexually harassed. This might explain how females in the Arab region feel their movements are restricted. This might also lead to mixing religious and cultural norms. The *hijab* is mainly a religious choice, not cultural.

Regarding Sexual harassment avoidance patterns in relation to social media and technology, our results revealed that approximately two-thirds of the studied students used an avoidance pattern, while the remaining students sometimes and rarely use the sexual harassment avoidance patterns. These results might be due to the students' and teachers' fear and insecurity based on the high prevalence of sexual crimes online. Aggressors and harassers exist on social media platforms. Anyone can create an account with a fake (anonymous) name to abuse and exploit immature and inexperienced girls.

Regarding sexual harassment avoidance patterns related to protection and self-defense, the current study results showed that approximately three-quarters of the studied students had rarely use it, including self-defense and protection by carrying pins, sharp instruments, an electric taser, or a pepper spray to protect themselves. Attending cultural seminars or lectures related to sexual harassment, learning a self-defense sport to defend themselves in the event of sexual harassment, and participating in any awareness, protection programs, or initiatives related to sexual harassment were reported avoidance patterns. These results might explain the low awareness regarding self-defense and protection. This might be the reason why some victims surrender and become accustomed to sexual harassment, which leads to a lack of response or self-defense.

In summary, the results could be concluded that were One-third of the studied sample rarely use the avoidance patterns of sexual harassment, most of the students would not be able to recognize threat and would not be able to use strategies to avoid harassment.

Conclusion:

The current study concluded that the most of the studied sample under the study always use of the sexual harassment avoidance patterns were around half of them, in addition to around quarter of them sometimes use the sexual harassment avoidance patterns, and one third of them rarely use it because of they not be able to recognize threat and would not be able to use avoidance patterns to avoid sexual harassment. There is need for creating awareness about how to recognize harassment and anticipate danger, in time so as to plan for avoidance patterns and protection strategies.

Recommendations:

In the light of the study results, the following is recommended:

1. Raise awareness of the females and parents through conducting Anti–sexual harassment training, applying anti- harassment awareness campaigns to raise the awareness of females on definition, forms and laws of sexual harassment, speaking up due to the stigma or social and cultural norms, The media has a big role of change this image and clarify the difference between the victim and survivor through the media.
2. Make the entire academic community responsible for reducing and preventing sexual harassment through applying awareness, protection programs in all educational stages from school to the university and adopting clear antiharassment policies and procedures is part of changing the normative contexts that support sexual harassment.
3. Revising that the legal and regulatory framework facilitates the work of civil society organizations rather than restricting and criminalizing them.

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