

Unveiling Gendered Hate: The Emotional Impact of Sexual Harassment Severity

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Abstract

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue impacting individuals worldwide, with women being the primary targets. With this study, we aim to investigate gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment and their influence on hate feelings towards the transgressor. Drawing from prior research, we anticipated gender differences in both severity attributions and hate responses to sexual harassment, alongside an interaction between severity and gender on hate feelings. To test this, we recruited a sample of 220 adults and presented them with a scenario depicting sexual harassment in the workplace. Participants provided responses regarding their perceptions of severity and hate feelings towards the transgressor. Results show that women attributed significantly higher severity to sexual harassment than men, and that perceived severity of the transgression significantly predicted hate feelings towards the transgressor. However, gender differences in hate feelings towards the transgressor and the interaction between severity and gender were not significant. Our discussion delved into the implications of these results, highlighting the nuanced nature of hate feelings towards sexual harassers, and emphasizing the need for interventions that challenge traditional gender norms and encourage proactive responses to sexual harassment.

Keywords: hate, severity, sexual harassment, gender differences, moral transgressions

Unveiling Gendered Hate: The Emotional Impact of Sexual Harassment Severity

Worldwide, everyday, sexual harassment impacts the lives of many individuals, both within professional settings and informal social environments (Galdi et al., 2014). While people of all gender identities can be targets of sexual harassment, women constitute the majority of victims, with 50% of women in the EU experiencing at least one instance of sexual harassment from the age of 15 onwards (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2014). Conversely, men are frequently identified as the primary perpetrators of sexual harassment (Bongiorno et al., 2020). What is more, while women appear to characterize a broader range of behaviors as harassing (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005), and rate them more severely (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013), men exhibit greater acceptance and tolerance towards behaviors they perceive as sexual harassment (Duncan et al., 2019). Although the prevalence and negative consequences of sexual harassment have been investigated in depth, there is little known about the emotional content when encountering such a situation (Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007). In current psychology literature, hate as an emotion remains an under researched concept (Fischer et al., 2018), especially towards the transgressors in instances of sexual harassment, where it may be expected. Considering the above-mentioned impact of sexual harassment and the way it is negatively appraised, specifically by women, the current research aims to investigate how the perceived severity of the transgression varies between women and men in cases of sexual harassment, and to determine the impact of this variation on the intensity of hate feelings experienced towards the transgressor.

Sexual harassment

Despite the continuous debate in literature for a proper definition of sexual harassment, several authors describe it as unsolicited sexual attention that may result in perceived harm or adverse consequences for the target (Dahlqvist et al., 2016). Sexual

harassment can be split into gender harassment, unwelcome sexual attention and sexual coercion (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Gender harassment is the most common type of sexual harassment, and it involves pervasive behaviors that aim to create an environment of hostility, degradation, and intimidation, specifically targeting women (Guizzo & Cadinu, 2020). This form of harassment includes offensive verbal and nonverbal actions, such as epithets, slurs, sexist jokes, and the exchange of pornographic material. Sexual coercion, the most severe manifestation of sexual harassment, transpires in situations of power disparity where authority uses power to secure sexual favors (Herrera et al., 2018), often through tactics like blackmail or bribes (Guizzo & Cadinu, 2020). Finally, unwanted sexual attention is among the most overt forms of sexual harassment, and it entails actions that are perceived as intrusive and unwelcome without any reciprocal desire from the target (Herrera et al., 2018).

Research conducted in mainly high-income settings reveals that individuals reporting either workplace sexual harassment and sexual harassment in higher education commonly experience psychological effects, including anxiety, anger, stress, as well as physical symptoms such as weight loss, and fatigue (Ranganathan et al., 2021). However, a lot of sexual harassment survivors choose not to report their experiences due to fears of facing repercussions such as job loss or strained relationships, concerns about potential retaliation from the harasser, and doubts regarding the effectiveness of any actions taken to address the issue further (Park et al., 2013). Thus, considering how prevalent and detrimental sexual harassment is to both mental and physical health, it deserves thorough consideration to further determine how attitudes and feelings shape the reactions and appraisals of men and women.

Gender Differences in Sexual Harassment

Throughout adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood, women commonly report experiencing sexual harassment more frequently than men (Duncan et al., 2019). Previous prevalence studies have indicated that perpetrators are typically male (Burn, 2019; Bongiorno

et al., 2020). Scholars argue that the reason for this predominant scenario of sexual harassment is rooted in sexism and the power that the patriarchal systems have over women in social, economic, and political dimensions (Sakallı-Uğurlu et al., 2010).

Culture has a great impact on people's ideas of what sexual harassment is, as ethics, values, and norms shape perceptions of society members (Adikaram, 2016). From a sociocultural gender perspective, "sexual harassment is a consequence of gender role socialization processes" that endorse male dominance, the sexual objectification of women, and societal acceptance of violence against women (Burn, 2019). Sexual harassment may be driven by hegemonic masculinity norms, which encompass power over women, dominance, antipathy towards queer people, and a focus on sexual conquest. Thus, a culture that promotes traditional attitudes regarding gender equality is more likely to endorse and normalize sexual harassment behaviors (Kessler et al., 2021), and this might lead to differences in the perception of the severity of sexual harassment between men and women.

In general, women are more inclined than men to interpret ambiguous behavior as sexually harassing (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005) and attribute more severity to sexually harassing behaviors (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013). It is important to note, however, that women residing in societies with less gender egalitarianism and more traditional values tend to perceive social-sexual behavior as less harassing compared to women in societies characterized by greater gender equality and less traditionality (Toker, 2016). When it comes to men, previous research found that they perceive less behaviors as sexually harassing in comparison to women, and that men rate sexually harassing behaviors less severely than their female counterparts (Malone & McHugh, 2021). This is accentuated for men who adopt traditional masculine gender roles (Russell & Trigg, 2004) which sustain gender inequality and serve to validate their societal dominance (Kruger et al., 2023).

In essence, women are generally the victims of sexual harassment (Duncan et al., 2019), and men are generally the perpetrators (Burn, 2019; Bongiorno et al., 2020), findings which reflect broader sociocultural norms and power dynamics, where men hold positions of authority and women are subjected to objectification and exploitation (Burn, 2019). Moreover, although dependent on cultural values, sexual harassment is evaluated more drastically by women (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013), and women are more likely than men to recognize and label a diverse range of behaviors as harassing (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013). Therefore, this nuanced perception of sexual harassment may have broader implications for how women feel towards sexual harassers. Based on this, in the present study we expect that women will attribute higher severity to sexual harassment compared to men.

Hate

Although emotions such as dislike, anger, or contempt have been thoroughly investigated throughout the decades, hate remains an under researched concept in current psychology literature (Fischer et al., 2018). Hate has been characterized as a strong, intense, and enduring emotional reaction or sentiment, often stemming from extreme transgressions, where the goal is to harm or eliminate the perceived threat physically, symbolically, or socially (Fischer et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2022). Fischer et al. (2018) note that there is an important distinction between intergroup hate and interpersonal hate: intergroup hate refers to the development of hatred between different societal or cultural groups; interpersonal hate, on the other hand, is directed towards specific individuals and may result from direct personal interactions. The current research will be focusing on the concept of interpersonal hate, specifically in the context of moral violations, like sexual harassment.

It has been theorized that hatred, viewed as an emotional disposition, is associated with negative evaluations elicited by moral transgressions (Pretus et al., 2019). Moral values

serve as guides for determining the "good," or "just," course of action people should take (Ellemers et al., 2019). They lay a crucial role in shaping the self and have significant influence over an individual's life and society at large (Pretus et al., 2019). When others cross boundaries of morality, people react with moral outrage, which is usually characterized by primary emotions such as anger and disgust (Fan et al., 2024). However, some research suggests that the emotion underlying outrage depends on the content of a moral violation (Molho et al., 2017). Sexual harassment is considered part of these moral transgressions, typically motivated by hostility towards women as a subordinate out-group (Page et al., 2015). In recent years, the primary focus of sexual harassment research has been on the behavioral reactions of targets, rather than their emotional responses (Wright & Fitzgerald, 2007). Thus, it is important to investigate how people, including third-party observers, react emotionally to sexual harassment and the transgressors involved, as this has been severely neglected. Since hate is a strong emotional reaction to perceived moral violations, in this study we expect that the attributed severity to the transgression will predict stronger hate feelings towards the transgressors, especially among women, as argued above.

By and large, the current paper aims to explore the relationship between perceived severity of transgression, gender differences, and hate feelings towards the transgressor in cases of sexual harassment. The main research question of this study is concerned with assessing how the perceived severity of sexual harassment differs between women and men, and to what extent this difference influences the intensity of hate feelings towards the transgressor. Based on previous research that women and men perceive sexual harassment differently (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005), with women evaluating it more severely (Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013), and people generally experiencing negative emotions towards behaviors they consider moral violations (Fan et al., 2024) such as sexual harassment, we hypothesize the following: (1) women attribute more severity to the transgression than

men; (2) people who evaluate sexual harassment as more severe experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor; (3) women experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor than men; and accordingly (4) women evaluate sexual harassment as more severe than men and therefore experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor.

Method

Participants

Based on a priori power analysis for a larger project, we recruited a random sample of healthy adults ($N = 269$) from the United States through the online research platform Prolific. The pilot data ($N = 31$) and participants who either failed both attention check questions ($N = 4$) or submitted an incomplete survey ($N = 14$) were excluded from further analyses. After exclusion a total sample of $N = 220$ remained, where 48.6% were male, 48.2% were female, and 3.2% identified as “Other”. For this project, the 7 participants identifying as “Other” were excluded from the data analysis. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 77 ($M = 42.6$, $SD = 14.6$). The majority of our sample was white (56.8%) and had obtained an undergraduate degree (39.4%).

Instruments

Participants completed a survey designed using Qualtrics and realized on Prolific. A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection on a small convenience sample via Qualtrics, to check the functionality of the survey, to gather general feedback, and to make adjustments as needed. Based on this feedback, minor changes were made to the phrasing of the vignettes and the presentation of the scale points. The responses from the pilot study were not included in the main study, and these participants were not paid.

Vignettes and Measures

The survey employed a scenario, or vignette, describing a transgression in about 6-8 sentences. This scenario drew inspiration from real-life news headlines, depicting a

transgressor engaging in an act of sexual harassment. More specifically, the sexual harassment took the form of inappropriate behavior within the workplace (see Appendix A for the complete vignette). The transgressor in the vignette was male reflecting the statistical reality that men are often the typical perpetrators in cases of sexual harassment (Burn, 2019; Bongiorno et al., 2020). After the vignette, the participants were asked to rate their own perceived severity of the transgression on a 7-point Likert scale: from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*).

Hate. Hate was measured in this study using an adaptation of the Passionate Hate Scale, originally developed by Zeki and Romaya (2008). It was based on the Triangular theory of hate (Sternberg, 2004). Accordingly, this measure involved three subscales: contempt, anger, and disgust. Each subscale comprised four items each (12 items in total), operationalized as statements which reflect the participant's feelings towards the transgressor. Examples of statements were 'I really despise this person' (contempt), 'I cannot control my anger towards this person' (anger), and 'This person is really disgusting' (disgust). Answers were rated on a Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The scale yielded an average hate score between 1 and 7; certain items were reverse-coded as needed. Two attention checks were included within the scale, where the participant was asked to select a specific answer. The Passionate Hate Scale showed good reliability ($\alpha = .93$), an also excellent convergent validity (Martínez et al., 2022).

Procedure

This study was part of a larger project. The data collection of the main project took place on the 3rd of April 2024 via Prolific. Before completing the online questionnaire, participants read a short overview of the general nature of the study and the survey, including instructions. Giving informed consent was needed to confirm anonymous participation and proceed with the survey. Following this, the respondents were exposed to the vignette

depicting the sexual harassment scenario. After reading the vignette, they had to answer dependent measures described above in relation to the vignette. At the end of the study, the respondents provided sociodemographic information. Finally, they read a debriefing form describing the aim and the content of the study further and received the contact details of the researcher. The survey took on average 14 minutes and 23 seconds to complete, and each person was paid 2.30 USD for their participation. Ethical approval for this cross-sectional study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences at the University of Groningen prior to data collection.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were run using Jamovi (Version 2.5). To test the first hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted with severity as the outcome variable and gender as the grouping variable. We evaluated gender differences in severity attributed to sexual harassment by comparing the mean severity ratings between male and female participants. To test the other three hypotheses outlined in this study, a multiple regression model was constructed with hate as the dependent variable (DV), gender as the first independent variable (IV1), and severity as the second independent variable (IV2). The regression model included main effects for gender and severity, as well as their interaction term to examine potential moderation effects on hate. For the second hypothesis, we assessed whether perceived severity of sexual harassment predicts hate feelings towards the transgressor by examining the regression coefficient and significance level for severity. For the third hypothesis, we investigated gender differences in hate feelings towards the transgressor by analyzing the regression coefficient and significance level for gender. Finally, for the last hypothesis, we explored the interaction effect between gender and perceived severity on hate feelings by examining the interaction term's coefficient and significance level to see if women, compared to men, evaluate sexual harassment as more severe and

subsequently experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor. A significance level of .05 was selected for the analysis.

Results

Assumptions Check

Prior to analyzing the data, the statistical assumptions were tested, as suggested by Ernst and Albers (2017). A multiple regression analysis with gender and severity as the predictor variables and hate as the dependent variable was carried out. A linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables was indicated by visually examining the scatterplots (see Appendix B). The Q-Q plot from the regression analysis revealed that the residuals of the dependent variable were normally distributed, with points mostly aligned near the line (see Appendix C). Homogeneity of variance was confirmed, with Levene's test result of $F(1, 211) = 0.678, p = 0.411$. Tests conducted to assess whether the data satisfied the collinearity assumption revealed that multicollinearity was not an issue ($VIF = 1.06$). Outliers were not excluded from the data analysis.

Descriptives

According to the descriptive statistics, the mean hate score attributed to the transgressor involved in sexual harassment was $M = 5.61$ ($SD = 0.850$), while the severity mean was $M = 6.41$ ($SD = 0.921$). Further analysis by gender indicated that men reported a mean hate score of $M = 5.47$ ($SD = 0.88$) and a severity mean of $M = 6.20$ ($SD = 1.06$). Women reported a mean hate score of $M = 5.76$ ($SD = 0.80$) and a severity mean of $M = 6.63$ ($SD = 0.70$).

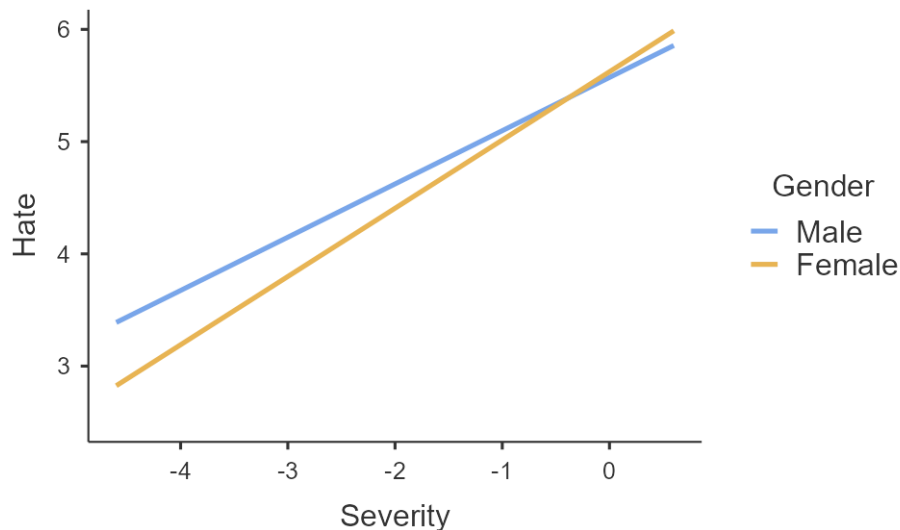
Regression Analysis

To test the first hypothesis, which posits that women attribute more severity to sexual harassment than men, an independent samples t-test was conducted comparing the severity ratings between men ($M = 6.20, SD = 1.06$) and women ($M = 6.63, SD = 0.70$). The results

indicated that women rated the severity of sexual harassment significantly higher than men, $t(211) = -3.55, p < 0.001$, supporting our hypothesis. For the other three hypotheses, a multiple regression was conducted, with severity and gender (0 = male, 1 = female) as the predictors, and hate as the dependent variable. Overall, the utility of the predictive model was significant, $F(3, 209) = 33.570, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.325$. For the second hypothesis, which is that people who evaluate sexual harassment as more severe experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor, the results showed a statistically significant main effect of severity on hate ($F(1, 209) = 84.06$), suggesting that higher perceived severity leads to stronger hate, $\beta = 0.59, t(209) = 9.17, p < 0.001$, which supports the hypothesis. For the third hypothesis, which is that women experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor than men, it was found that gender is not a significant predictor of hate, $F(1, 209) = 0.26, p = 0.613$. Thus, there is no difference between men and women in how much they hate the sexual harasser. For the fourth and final hypothesis, which is that women evaluate sexual harassment as more severe than men and therefore experience stronger hate feelings towards the transgressor, the interaction effect between severity and gender was found to not be statistically significant, $F(1, 209) = 1.28, p = 0.259$. Together, these results indicate that the perceived severity of the transgression predicts hate feelings towards the transgressor by itself independently of the gender of the observer (Results are summarized in Figure 1).

Figure 1

Hate Towards the Sexual Harasser Predicted by the Perceived Severity of the Transgression by Gender



Note. The plot illustrates the relationship between severity and hate feelings towards the sexual transgressor, stratified by gender. Parallel lines indicate that there is no interaction effect between gender and severity.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate how perceived severity of sexual harassment differs between women and men and how this variation influences the intensity of hate feelings towards the transgressor. Specifically, the study sought to examine whether women attribute higher severity to sexual harassment compared to men, and whether this increased severity leads to stronger hate feelings towards the harasser.

The first key finding of this study is that, as hypothesized, women rated the severity of sexual harassment significantly higher than men. Then, the attributed severity of sexual harassment was found to be a significant predictor of hate feelings towards the transgressor. Individuals who evaluated the harassment as more severe reported stronger hate feelings, regardless of their gender. However, contrary to our third hypothesis, there was no significant difference between men and women in hate feelings towards the transgressor. This indicates that, although women rate the severity of sexual harassment higher, both genders experience similar levels of hate when they perceive the harassment as severe. Finally, the interaction

effect between severity and gender on hate feelings was not statistically significant, meaning that women's higher ratings of severity do not translate into a greater discrepancy in hate feelings compared to men.

Implications

First, in line with our hypothesis, women were found to attribute higher severity to sexual harassment compared to men. This result supports prior research suggesting that women, as more frequent targets of sexual harassment (Duncan et al., 2019), are more able to recognize and evaluate such behaviors as severe (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005; Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013). This gender gap in perceptions of sexual harassment may be influenced by differing understandings of gender among men and women. Those who endorse traditional gender roles are more likely to hold tolerant views of sexual harassment (Flood & Pease, 2009). For men especially, sexist, patriarchal, and sexually hostile attitudes are associated with increased permissiveness of sexual harassment of women, argue Flood & Pease (2009). Thus, these judgments are deeply influenced by broader norms of gender and sexuality. From a young age, societal norms and expectations about gender are ingrained into individuals, shaping their understanding of their roles in society and influencing their behavior (Hoominfar, 2019). Traditional gender roles often depict men as dominant and assertive, and women as passive and submissive (Siegel & Meunier, 2019). These norms can influence perceptions of sexual harassment in several ways. Men who internalize traditional masculine norms may view certain sexual harassing behaviors as acceptable expressions of masculinity (Russell & Trigg, 2004), which can lead to a diminished perception of the severity of these actions. Moreover, women, having been socialized to be vigilant about these threats (Almanza Avendaño et al., 2022), are more likely to identify behaviors that constitute sexual harassment and are more likely to evaluate them as severe.

Second, results reveal that perceived severity of sexual harassment serves as a significant predictor of hate feelings towards the transgressor, irrespective of the individual's gender. This finding resonates with existing research on moral violations. Moral values hold a central place in the self and have strong impacts on individuals (Pretus et al., 2019). Once moral rules are transgressed, people react with moral outrage, characterized by emotions like anger and disgust (Fan et al., 2024). Hate has been previously conceptualized as a multifaceted emotional response, encompassing elements of anger, contempt, and disgust in varying degrees (Martínez et al., 2022). This complex nature of hate suggests that it can emerge as a response to severe moral transgressions, with the intention of eliminating the target (Fischer et al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2022). Moreover, hate is linked to morality through negative moral appraisals, which involve judging a person's actions or character as morally wrong, deficient, or evil, argue Pretus et al. (2019). Moral values become a lens through which individuals evaluate actions, leading to stronger emotional responses when those values are violated. In the context of sexual harassment, which is considered a moral transgression (Page et al., 2015), individuals appear to feel more hate the more severe they perceive the behavior to be. This implies that hate towards the transgressor in cases of sexual harassment is not simply a spontaneous reaction but is deeply rooted in the moral evaluation of the transgression and its perceived severity.

Third, interestingly, despite differing severity ratings, men and women do not differ in their hate feelings towards the transgressor, which adds nuance to our understanding of emotional responses to sexual harassment. This deviation from our hypothesis may be explained by the nature of the vignette used in this study, which depicts a quid pro quo sexual harassment situation. Quid pro quo, or “this for that,” sexual harassment involves demands for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit or to avoid some detriment in the workplace (Cedeno, 2024). Past research has shown that men and women tend to judge these types of

situations similarly, as these are perceived as extreme crossings of personal and professional boundaries, especially when the transgressor is a man of higher status (Russell & Trigg, 2004). Such scenarios may elicit strong negative reactions from both genders, possibly due to their overtly exploitative nature, leading to similar levels of hate towards the transgressor. Moreover, considering that our sample is based in the U.S., an individualistic society with fewer conservative ideologies linked to traditional gender role beliefs and patriarchal views (Qin et al., 2024), it is likely that the relatively progressive societal norms regarding gender equality and sexual harassment in the U.S. contribute to these shared emotional responses among men and women.

Lastly, the absence of a statistically significant interaction effect between severity and gender on hate implies that the impact of severity on hate feelings remains consistent across both men and women, with no significant differences observed in how individuals of different genders hate sexual harassers. This may indicate a level of universality in the emotional response to sexual harassment, challenging the prevailing belief that women are inherently more emotional than men (Gard & Kring, 2007). Still, past studies reveal that women report more intense feelings than men, particularly for negative emotions (Deng et al., 2016). Considering that hate is conceptualized as an intense and lasting negative emotional reaction (Fischer et al., 2018), it is surprising that no significant gender differences were observed in hate towards the harasser. Moreover, given the context of the study, which centers on a scenario depicting harassment against a woman, we anticipated that such an experience would evoke more profound emotional reactions among women, who are disproportionately targeted by sexual harassment (Duncan et al., 2019) and who typically perceive sexual harassment as more severe (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005; Russell & Trigg, 2004; Bitton & Shaul, 2013). However, the lack of a significant difference in hate feelings between genders suggests that factors beyond gender alone contribute to the emotional reaction to sexual harassment.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications. The result that women attribute higher severity to sexual harassment than men emphasizes the need to combat traditional masculinity norms and stop the normalization of sexual harassment in society through sexual violence prevention programs (Burn, 2019). Programs aimed at preventing sexual violence among men often focus on challenging these norms and fostering empathy by helping men understand harassment from the victim's perspective, notes Burn (2019). Further, since men reported similar levels of hate as women towards sexual harassers, it would be important to see if this similarity in emotional response translates into real-life behaviors of intervention, considering that women still attributed more severity to the behavior. Although men express strong negative emotions toward harassers, their actions in real-world situations might not align with their emotions. Moral emotions, such as hate, are powerful motivators for behavior (Teper et al., 2015). Teper et al. (2015) further argue that these emotions evolved to promote behavior that is beneficial in the long term, such as acting against perceived injustices. However, most research on moral emotions has focused on hypothetical scenarios rather than real-life actions (e.g., Greene et al., 2001). Thus, further research is needed to bridge the gap in understanding how these emotions translate into actual behavior. What is more, interventions should not only foster negative emotions towards harassment but also create environments that encourage proactive behaviors, such as bystander intervention programs promoting norms that oppose harassment and efforts to intervene (Burn, 2019).

Strengths and Limitations

The current study possesses several strengths. First, a large sample of 220 participants was collected through Prolific, ensuring a good representation of the adult population and improving the generalizability of our findings (Andrade, 2020). The size of the sample was determined based on a power analysis, to guarantee that the study is adequately powered to

detect meaningful effects (Kemal, 2020). Second, the vignette used in the survey was designed based on a pilot study, which helped refine the scenario and ensure that it is clear and realistic (St Marie et al., 2021). Third, the measures employed in the study were validated instruments, such as the Passionate Hate Scale, with good reliability and excellent convergent validity (Martínez et al., 2022), which strengthens the accuracy of the findings (Mohajan, 2017). Lastly, the study's novel approach to examining gender differences in hate feelings towards sexual harassers adds a fresh perspective to the existing literature, potentially guiding future research and interventions in this field.

Despite the strengths of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, our sample was predominantly Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD), which limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts (Rad et al., 2018). Second, our study did not include nonbinary participants or those of other gender identities, focusing solely on the gender binary. This is a significant limitation as nonbinary individuals may experience higher levels of minority stress and increased sensitivity to recognizing and reporting sexual harassment (Heino et al., 2021). Historically, psychological research has often neglected the inclusion of nonbinary individuals, largely due to gender measurement practices that focus on binary concepts (Cameron & Stinson, 2019). Using binary-centric measures perpetuates a distorted portrayal of gender, disregarding the real-life experiences of nonbinary individuals (Schudson & Morgenroth, 2022). This exclusion also hinders scientific progress (Hyde et al., 2019). Including nonbinary individuals in future studies is crucial for capturing a more accurate portrayal of gender and its impact on perceptions of sexual harassment. Finally, the reliance on self-report measures, which involve participants directly reporting their subjective experience (Rosenman et al., 2011), may introduce bias. Participants might underreport or overreport their feelings and attitudes due to response tendencies such as fence sitting, yea-saying, acquiescence bias, or social desirability

bias. Future studies could incorporate additional methodologies, such as behavioral observations or physiological measures, to provide a more nuanced understanding of participants' attitudes and emotional responses to sexual harassment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study provides important insights into gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment. We found that women attribute more severity to the transgression than men, consistent with previous research, and a possible reflection of their frequent victimization and increased awareness of such behaviors. Furthermore, the perceived severity of the transgression significantly predicts hate feelings towards the transgressor for both genders, implying that the moral evaluation of the act plays a crucial role in shaping emotional responses. However, we found no differences in hate feelings towards the transgressor between men and women. This could be attributed to the nature of the vignette used in the study. Moreover, the analysis of the interaction between severity and gender on hate feelings did not reveal any significant results, indicating a potential universality in the reaction to severe moral transgressions such as sexual harassment. These results underscore the importance of addressing traditional gender norms and fostering environments that encourage proactive responses to sexual harassment. Additionally, our study highlights the need for further research to explore how these emotions translate into real-life actions and to include nonbinary individuals for more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in the context of sexual harassment.

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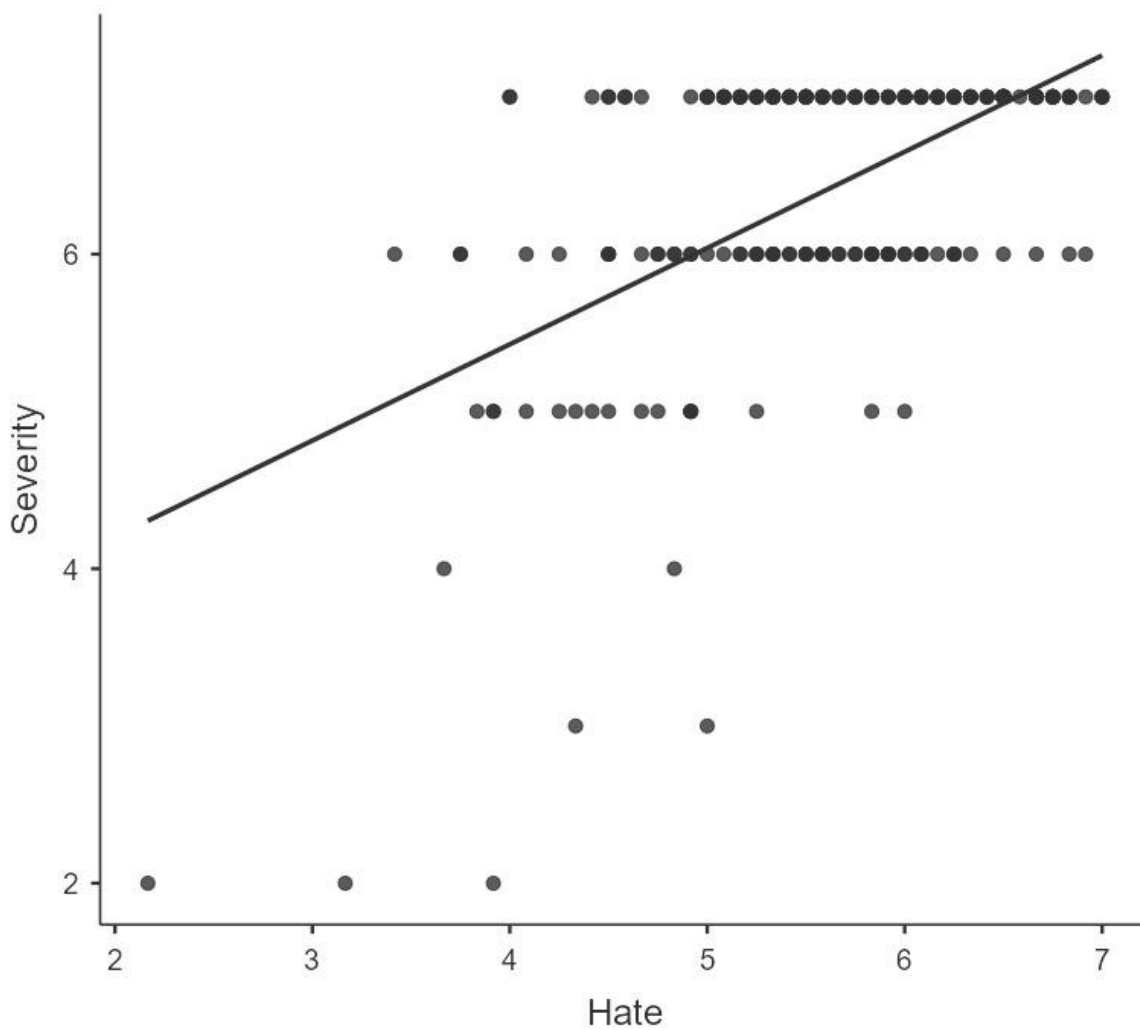
Appendix A

Vignette Depicting Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The manager of a small company has been inappropriately approaching his female employees. One day, he asks one of them to stay after work to help him with a project. While working on the tasks, he makes inappropriate comments about her appearance and touches her thigh. After she refuses, he insists and tries to kiss her. She resists again and claims to be feeling uncomfortable and that she wants to leave. He replies that if she leaves now, she better not come the next day because she will lose her job.

Appendix B

Scatterplot of Reported Hate as Predicted by Reported Severity



Appendix C

Q-Q Plot of Reported Hate as Predicted by Reported Severity

