



Gender Differences in Perceptions of Sexual Harassment among Students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

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Abstract

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based violence that includes unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal actions of a sexual nature. It can occur in various settings. Forms of harassment include physical contact, verbal remarks, inappropriate comments, the display of pornographic materials, and unwanted sexual attention. Most affected are women, especially younger, unmarried women, with a lower level of education, as well as women in certain personal or professional circumstances.

The aim of the study was to examine students' perceptions and attitudes of the severity of various forms and the presence of sexual harassment, incidence in different settings, circumstances, as well as the personal experiences of sexual harassment. Respondents completed an online questionnaire distributed via social media in 2024., and the sample included students at undergraduate, graduate, and integrated levels at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split (N = 114).

The results showed gender differences in perceptions of verbal and non-verbal forms of sexual harassment, with young women perceiving both forms more seriously compared to young men. Differences were also observed regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment in different settings, with young women perceiving streets, public transportation, and nightclubs/bars as places in which it occurs the most. Their attitudes also differed regarding suitable punishment for the sexual perpetrators. Young women thought that sexual perpetrators should get harsher punishment compared to young men.

Keywords: students' perceptions, sexual harassment, gender differences

1. Definitions and forms of sexual harassment

Sexual violence encompasses any sexual act or attempt to engage in a sexual act, as well as unwanted sexual remarks, advances, or acts of trafficking, all directed at a person's sexuality through coercion, regardless of the perpetrator's relationship to the victim or the setting, whether at home, work, or elsewhere. It is commonly categorized into three types: sexual violence involving intercourse (rape), contact sexual violence (such as unwanted touching without intercourse), and non-contact sexual violence (such as threats of sexual harm, exhibitionism, or verbal sexual harassment) (World Health Organization, 2014). The proposed definition of sexual violence by the European Institute for Gender Equality (2017) describes it as any sexual act performed without consent, including rape and sexual assault. Based on an analysis of European, international, and national definitions, the glossary emphasizes key components from member states, the Istanbul Convention, and the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes. It highlights that sexual violence infringes upon rights to sexual freedom, autonomy, integrity, and security, which are closely linked to reproductive rights such as the freedom to decide on childbearing and contraception (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017). After reviewing various studies about sexual violence, Borić offers her definition in the Glossary of Gender Terminology aligned with European Union standards. She identifies sexual violence as the most prevalent form of gender-based violence, encompassing a wide range of abuses. These include sexual harassment, forced sexual acts, rape, incest, sexual slavery, prostitution, violations of women's sexual integrity, forced pregnancy, denial of access to contraception, and other forms of unwelcome sexual conduct (Borić, 2007).

Sexual harassment encompasses any unwanted sexual or gender-based behaviour, intentionally repeated, that humiliates, shames, or intimidates the person experiencing it and harms their dignity. It has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment (Čikić et al., 2023; Barr, 1993; Maretić, 2001; Borić, 2007). Sexual harassment includes three different forms: unwanted physical, verbal, and non-verbal sexual actions (Maretić, 2001, Čikić et al., 2023). European Institute for Gender Equality (2016) also defined those three main forms. Physical sexual harassment includes unwanted contact such as touching, pinching, assault, and forcing a sexual intercourse. Verbal includes crude remarks, obscene phone calls or calls with implicit sexual meanings, insulting comments, inappropriate jokes, unwelcome courtship, suggestive comments, and pressure to engage in sexual intercourse. Non-verbal sexual harassment refers to physical gestures, staring, following, displaying pornographic or sexually suggestive images, objects, or materials (Maretić, 2001; Borić, 2007). Both men and women can be subjected to this form of harassment, although most cases involve men harassing women. Sexual harassment is an integral part of the broader issue of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence against women, which occurs in society at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels (Borić, 2007, p. 87). On a societal level, sexual harassment increases dependency on men, decreases women's participation in the public sphere, and deepens discrimination (Bowman, 1993, pp. 340-342).

1.1 Sexual harassment: different environments, circumstances and reactions

Sexual harassment is a serious issue that can manifest in various settings, each with its own specific characteristics and challenges. This section will focus on environments where sexual harassment occurs, different circumstances or factors that contribute to the risk of sexual harassment, and emotional and physical reactions of the victims to sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in the workplace encompasses a wide range of situations and relationships within an organization. Typically, individuals who sexually harass at work are those in positions of authority and power, usually superiors in the hierarchy, and their behaviour is directed toward those who are subordinate in the chain (Maretić, 2001). According to The Advocates for Human Rights (2010) it does not have to occur only between individuals with a superior-subordinate relationship, but also among colleagues at the same hierarchical level within the organization, where one person has more power than the other. Several common elements define sexual harassment in the workplace worldwide. It must occur in the workplace or its environment, be linked to a person's gender or sex, be unwanted, unwelcome, and unreciprocated (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2010). Finally, it must impact the terms of employment (*quid pro quo*) or the work environment itself (creating a hostile work environment and atmosphere) (Rotundo et al., 2001; Borić, 2007; Maretić, 2001). These issues have a significant economic factor, as victims, fearing the loss of their job, often endure prolonged sexual harassment (Borić, 2007; Maretić, 2001).

Sexual harassment in the academic environment is defined as any unwanted comment or behaviour directed toward a person working or studying at the same institution, expressed through words or actions that have a sexual connotation or discrimination (Resanović, 2021, pp. 7-8). It is an environment where the hierarchy of power is strongly present, whether based on the relationships between professors and students, teaching and non-teaching staff, men and women, older and younger colleagues, or higher and lower years of study (Čikić, 2023, p. 400). In the academic context, the specific problem is sexual coercion, a particular form of sexual harassment where sexual harassment is imposed as a condition for obtaining rights or advancement. This happens when a teacher or employee demands sexual services from students. Since the person requesting this has a more powerful position, they threaten harm or sanctions if the service is refused (Resanović, 2021; Benson & Thomson, 1982; Maretić, 2001). Victims can be students, professors, or other staff, but female students are the most vulnerable (Maretić, 2001; Dziech & Weiner, 1990).

Harassment on the street is described as a phenomenon that includes various forms of abuse, bullying, and irritation in public places, facilitated by the presence of public communication. This harassment includes unwanted words and actions by men that invasively intrude into the physical and emotional space of unknown women in a manner that is rude, intimidating, offensive, or creepy. Specific forms of this behaviour may include pinching, hitting, slapping, making offensive comments, vulgar expressions, degrading innuendos, and inappropriate staring and following (Gardner, 1995). One form of sexual harassment in public spaces is in public transport. Sexual harassment on public transport often goes unnoticed, perhaps due to the prioritization of other, more serious sexual offenses (Tanasković & Račeta, 2007, p. 25).

Sexual harassment is increasingly evident on the internet. The internet, with the possibility of anonymity, enables both constructive and destructive behaviours. Online sexual harassment often manifests as gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention, including offensive messages, threats, sending erotic images without consent, and sexual comments. Research shows that a significant number of women have experienced online sexual harassment, with serious emotional consequences such as eating disorders, sleep problems, depression, and suicidal tendencies (Barak, 2005, pp. 78-86). Women are the most common victims, although men and children can also be affected (Barak, 2005; Rangaswami & Gevargiz, 2021).

In terms of circumstances and factors contributing to the risk of sexual harassment, unmarried or divorced women, those with lower education levels, women in temporary jobs, or those in minority positions within male-dominated organizations are at higher risk. These categories also include "weak" and "vulnerable" women, as well as "strong" and "independent" women

(Maass et al., 2014; Horvat & Perasović Cigrovski, 2014). In communities undergoing changes in clothing and gender relations, men often misinterpret women's clothing as justification for harassment. Provocative clothing is often linked to an increased risk of assault, leading to false conclusions about the victim's blame (Johnson & Workman, 2009). Sexual harassment can be motivated by three factors: sexual desire, the need for power, and the defence of gender identity. First, harassment may stem from seeking sexual arousal or pleasure. Second, it may be driven by a desire to dominate women or victims in general. Third, it may serve to strengthen or defend male gender identity when it is threatened (Maass et al., 2014, p. 327).

Knapp et al. (1997) introduced a two-dimensional model of victim responses to sexual harassment, which includes the direction of the response (toward oneself or the perpetrator) and the seeking of external help (or the lack thereof). This creates four categories: self-directed responses without external help, those requesting legal support, and responses directed toward the perpetrator, with or without seeking intervention. Although responses seeking external help are often more effective, they are rarely chosen due to fear of retaliation (Knapp et al., 1997, pp. 690-692). Sexual harassment and violence are serious social problems that, despite their prevalence, often remain unreported. Victims face obstacles such as re-living the trauma, fear of consequences, stigmatization, and feelings of guilt, which discourage them from reporting (Balenović et al., 2000, pp. 815-816).

1.1.1 Research review: perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a serious social problem that is relatively under-researched, especially when it comes to perceptions of this phenomenon, which are crucial for understanding individual reactions. This section of the paper examines the issue through two dimensions – personal experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment.

The perception of sexual harassment has been systematically studied since the 1980s. Packer's (1986) research on street harassment in New York found that women viewed it more negatively, experienced greater discomfort, and believed harassers had malicious intentions, while men rated harassment as more frequent but downplayed its seriousness, contributing to its normalization. Similarly, Balenović et al. (2000) revealed gender differences in the perception of sexual harassment based on the victim's gender and their reaction through hypothetical scenarios of sexual harassment. Women reacted more negatively, especially when the victim was female, and advocated stricter penalties, while men often felt indifferent. Popovice et al. (1996) explored the role of physical attractiveness in the perception of sexual harassment. Students evaluated incidents of sexual harassment involving victims and harassers with varying levels of physical attractiveness. The results showed how physical attractiveness biases perceptions of harassment, showing that men rated incidents as less serious, verbal harassment as less negative than physical, and attractive harassers and victims as less culpable, with attractive victims sometimes even blamed. These studies highlight women's stronger emotional responses (anger and discomfort) and men's tendency to minimize, normalize or downplay harassment.

Following studies examined knowledge and awareness of sexual harassment in academic settings. Čikić et al. (2023) analysed sexual harassment in academic settings from the perspective of students at the University of Novi Sad. Selimović and Tomić Selimović (2022) studied the perception and experiences of university staff regarding gender-based violence and discrimination at universities in four countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. Female students in Čikić et al.'s (2023) study indicated that they were well-acquainted with the concepts of sexual harassment and coercion, but often used the term “sexual violence” due to its prevalence in public discourse, while women in academic staff

roles in Selimović and Tomić Selimović's (2022) research demonstrated greater understanding of sexism and gender-based violence and were more likely to recognize inequality. Hagerlid et al. (2024) study aimed at understanding challenges in identifying sexual harassment among university students in five European countries (Belgium, Croatia, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden). This study showed that notions students had about sexual harassment were different from their experiences. Students expressed difficulties in distinguishing acceptable behaviour from sexual harassment and as well in encountering various definitions and regulations of sexual harassment.

Autonomni ženski centar (2018) conducted research in Novi Sad, Niš, and Belgrade aimed to determine the percentage of young people who have experienced sexual harassment and their perceptions of the phenomenon. The results showed that more than a tenth of the participants reported experiences with unwanted sexual messages, personal space, inappropriate comments, and initiating conversations about sexual topics, while more than half of them experienced the use of inappropriate nicknames and received a phone call or message with sexual connotation. Most of the participants considered phone calls or messages with sexual connotations to be a form of sexual harassment. Ženska soba (2007) conducted a study at the University of Zagreb about various areas of sexual rights, including experiences of sexual violence and harassment, with a focus on gender differences. The findings revealed that over half of the female students and about a quarter of the male students had experienced unwanted comments, whereas around one-third of the female students and just over one-tenth of the male students had experienced forced touching. The most common perpetrators of harassment were strangers, while public spaces such as streets and cafés were the most common places of harassment. Gender differences were significant in terms of the types of violence and perpetrators.

Tanasković and Račeta (2007) conducted a study on sexual harassment of women in public spaces such as public transport in Belgrade. They found that most young women had such experiences, especially when traveling alone. The most common forms of harassment included touching and physical contact, while more than half of the women felt anger and around a third of them shame and helplessness. Studies suggest that young women experience particularly high rates of sexual harassment. Rangaswami and Gevargiz (2021) examined experiences of online sexual harassment among female students at Santa Clara University. The results showed that more than half of the respondents had experienced some form of online sexual harassment, and a similar proportion had witnessed such incidents. According to the research of Čikić et al. (2023), most women had witnessed sexual harassment in an academic environment, while some also highlight their own unpleasant experiences. The perpetrators, according to their statements, are both academic staff and fellow students. They also stated that universities provided insufficient protection against harassment. Additionally, research of Selimović and Tomić Selimović (2022) showed that women had significantly more experiences of gender-based violence and harassment, with the most common forms being sexually suggestive comments and inappropriate staring.

2. Methodology

One of the requisites for reporting instances of sexual harassment is recognizing what is acceptable and what is not, and this requires overcoming challenges in identifying sexual harassment (Hagerlid et al., 2024). The general objectives of the research were to assess the familiarity of students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split with the concept of sexual harassment, the severity of different forms, and the incidence of sexual harassment in different settings, as well as to examine their attitudes regarding circumstances

of sexual harassment and personal experiences with different forms of sexual harassment. Specific research goals were to examine the differences between students – young women and men studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. According to some previous research that indicated gender differences in perception and experiences of sexual harassment (Packer, 1986; Balenović et al., 1999; Hagerlid et al., 2024), the following research hypotheses have been defined:

[H1] Young women assess verbal forms of sexual harassment more seriously than young men.

[H2] Young men are more likely to estimate that women experience sexual harassment in public spaces than young women.

[H3] Young women believe that perpetrators of sexual harassment should receive a harsher punishment unlike young men.

A convenience sampling method was used. It was planned to collect 10% of undergraduate students and 10% of graduate students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. However, due to the low turnout among students, it was not possible to achieve an even representation of groups, so the sample included 8% of all students (N=114). A survey questionnaire was used as a measuring instrument. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, designed and based on relevant literature. The online version of the questionnaire, created using a Google forms, was set up and distributed via the Instagram story of the Student Union of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split (@szffst) during July and August 2024. Research received the approval of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split, which confirmed that the research meets all ethical standards and regulations related to the protection of participants' anonymity, privacy, and the protection of their rights.

The first part of the questionnaire was related to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, including gender, level of study, and the departments. The second part examined the perception of sexual harassment through familiarity with the term on a scale from "unfamiliarity with the term" to "complete understanding and recognition of all forms in different situations" and severity of the various forms of sexual harassment (Maretić, 2001), which were itemized descriptively and measured on a scale from "not at all serious" to "very serious": (1) unwanted physical contact, such as touching, stroking, or pinching; (2) unpleasant flirting and suggestive remarks (offensive comments related to sex/gender, sexual jokes, comments on appearance or clothing); (3) displaying pornographic and sexually suggestive photographs, objects, or written material; sending unwanted messages; inadmissible recording with a mobile phone. The third part of the questionnaire examined attitudes about the incidence of sexual harassment in different settings measured on a scale from "never" to "always"; the circumstances through a series of statements measured on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"; emotional reactions of victims, also measured on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"; and punishment for offenders ("no punishment", "reprimand", "fine" and "imprisonment"). The last question was about personal experience with different forms of sexual harassment with "yes" or "no" answers. The question referred to their experiences in general, regardless of settings.

3. Results

The study included 57.9% of women and 42.1% of men studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. Most of the participants were at the undergraduate level (63.2%), then graduate level (25.4%), and integrated undergraduate and graduate studies (11.4%). Students from the Department of Croatian Language and Literature

participated in the largest distributions (20.2%), followed by students from the Department of English Language and Literature (18.4%) and the Department of Sociology (17.5%). Less represented were students from the Department of Psychology (7%) and from the Department of Pre-school Education (5.3%).

When it comes to knowing the concept of sexual harassment, 51.8% of participants estimated that they had a good insight of what sexual harassment represents and that they can recognize most of its forms. In smaller distributions, 24.6% of participants estimated that they know what sexual harassment entails and can recognize all its forms, while 23.7% estimated that they have basic knowledge but lack knowledge about many forms of sexual harassment. None of the participants responded that they did not know what it represented or that they had only heard of sexual harassment.

Regarding the severity of physical, verbal, and nonverbal forms of sexual harassment, the majority of participants consider undesirable physical contact, such as touching, stroking, or pinching (70.2%) and displaying pornographic and sexually suggestive photographs, objects, or written material and sending unwanted messages and inadmissible recording with a mobile phone (87%), to be very serious forms of sexual harassment. On the other hand, regarding the verbal forms of sexual harassment, ambivalence has been observed. About half of the participants (49.1%) believe that verbal forms of harassment, such as unpleasant flirting and suggestive remarks (offensive comments related to sex/gender, sexual jokes, comments on appearance or clothing), are somewhat serious, while the other half (48.3%) believe that they are very serious.

The first hypothesis [H1] that *young women assess verbal forms of sexual harassment more seriously than young men* was tested with the Mann-Whitney U test. The test showed statistically significant differences in the assessments of the severity of the verbal and non-verbal forms of sexual harassment. Young women perceived verbal and non-verbal forms of sexual harassment more seriously than young men.

Table 1: Results of the Mann-Whitney test differences in the assessments of the severity of verbal and non-verbal forms of sexual harassment among women (66) and men (48)

Verbal forms	Mean Rank	U	Z	p
Women	69,34	802.500	-5.114	<.001
Men	41,22			
Non-verbal forms	Mean Rank	U	Z	p
Women	61,87	1295,500	-2,908	0,004
Men	51,49			

According to participants, sexual harassment mostly occurs in nightclubs/bars (often – 41.2%; always – 56.2%) and on the internet (often – 48.2%; always – 46.5%). Public places such as streets or public transportation were also considered settings where sexual harassment occurs (sometimes – 38.6%; often – 39.5%) as well as workplaces (sometimes – 52.6%; often – 33.3%). In the case of educational institutions, students have estimated that sexual harassment sometimes occurs in those settings (45.5%).

The second hypothesis [H2] that *young men are more likely to estimate that women experience sexual harassment in public spaces than young women* was tested with the Mann-Whitney U test. The test showed statistically significant differences in the assessments of the incidence of sexual harassment in different settings. This hypothesis was rejected because the test showed that young women perceived that sexual harassment occurs in nightclubs and bars as well as on streets and public transportation to a greater extent than young men.

Table 2: Results of the Mann-Whitney test differences in the assessments of the incidence of sexual harassments in different settings among women (66) and men (48)

Nightclubs/bars	Mean Rank	Z	U	p
Women	65,39	-3,442	1063,500	0.001
Men	46,66			
Streets and public transportation	Mean Rank	Z	U	p
Women	70,10	-5.094	752.500	<.001
Men	40,18			

When it comes to assessing the circumstances in which sexual harassment occurs, i.e., some risk factors, students strongly agreed that alcohol and/or drug consumption increases a woman's vulnerability to sexual harassment (57.0%) and that women (49.1%) are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment. They agreed that young women (50.0%) are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment. On the other hand, they strongly disagreed that the way a woman dresses can be a justification for sexual harassment (70.2%). Participants were mostly hesitant that women who had already been victims of sexual harassment in the past (63.2%) and that women with lower incomes (35.9%) are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment, as well as that women in most cases know their sexual harassers (42.1%).

Students strongly agreed that recording without consent during sexual intercourse is humiliating for a woman (85.1%), that women feel anger when a man sends her unwanted messages of a sexual nature (50.8%), that a woman feels fear when a man approaches her in a nightclub and starts touching her (49.1%), and that a woman's self-confidence decreases when a man inappropriately comments on her appearance (38.6%). They agreed that women feel offended when a man honks and whistles at her in the street (43.9%). On the other hand, they were hesitant that women feel uncomfortable when a man approaches her in a bar and comments on her appearance (43.9%).

According to the results, the majority of participants (72.8%) thought that imprisonment is the most appropriate punishment for sexual harassment. A quarter of them (22.8%) thought that a fine is an appropriate punishment, while only 4.4% thought that a warning would be a sufficient punishment. None of the students who participated in the study thought that a sexual harasser should go unpunished. The majority of participants (64.9%) had experience with unwanted physical contact such as touching, stroking, and pinching. A similar number of participants (64.1%) had experience with unpleasant flirting and suggestive remarks. A smaller percentage of participants (34.2%) had experience with highlighting pornographic and sexually suggestive material or sending spam messages.

The third hypothesis [H3] that *young women believe that perpetrators of sexual harassment should receive a harsher punishment unlike young men*, which was tested with the Mann-Whitney U test. The test showed statistically significant differences in attitudes about suitable punishment for the sexual perpetrators. Young women considered stricter punishment more appropriate compared to young men.

Table 3: Results of the Mann-Whitney U test of differences in the attitudes about punishment for sexual perpetrators (N=114)

Suitable punishment	Mean Rank	Z	U	p
Women	65,33	-3,824	1067,000	<.001
Men	46,73			

4. Conclusion

About half of the students who participated in this study thought that they had a good insight into what sexual harassment represents and could recognize most of its forms. Quarter of

them thought that they knew what sexual harassment entails and could recognize all of its forms. Although most of them recognized the seriousness of physical (unwanted physical contact) and non-verbal (displaying pornographic and sexually suggestive photographs, objects, or written material and sending unwanted messages and inadmissible recordings with a mobile phone) forms of sexual harassment, uncertainties in comprehension have been noticed when asked about verbal forms (unpleasant flirting and suggestive remarks) of sexual harassment. This could be interpreted in terms of challenges students faced when they needed to evaluate what is (un)acceptable behaviour, whereby their own experiences of sexual harassment were often associated with the extent of explicitness (Hagerlid et al., 2024). Verbal forms of sexual harassment were perceived more seriously among young women than young men, as well as non-verbal forms of sexual harassment. The results are in line with previous research, according to which women showed greater sensitivity in assessing sexual harassment, while men often downplayed the severity of these situations (Balenočić et al., 2000; Selimović & Tomić Selimović, 2022), as well as assessed verbal harassment as less serious than physical harassment (Popovice et al., 1996).

Young women who participated in this study were more supportive of tougher penalties for perpetrators of sexual harassment than young men. These findings are in accordance with research of Balenočić et al. (2000), which showed that women preferred a more rigorous approach to punishments, while men often choose milder sanctions. According to students' opinions, sexual harassment mostly occurs in nightclubs, bars, and on the internet. Previous research showed that public spaces were the most common places of harassment (Ženska soba 2007) and that women (students) experienced different forms of sexual harassment that are prevalent online (Rangaswami & Gevargiz, 2021). Closely related to this, differences in perceptions were observed in the sense that women perceived nightclubs and bars, as well as public spaces (streets and public transportation), to a greater extent as environments in which sexual harassment occurs. Tanasković and Račeta (2007) stated that previous research data showed the high frequency of harassment in public places and that it can include a range of different conducts, so these issues need to be researched more systematically.

More than half of the participants in this study experienced some forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted physical contact (touching, stroking, pinching) and unpleasant flirting and suggestive remarks (offensive comments related to sex/gender, sexual jokes, comments on appearance or clothing). What we considered important to point out is that the students who participated in the research experienced verbal forms of sexual harassment, although they did not assess these behaviours as serious as physical (or non-verbal) forms of sexual harassment. According to studies, students' notions about sexual harassment included descriptions of physical harassment, which were different from their experiences of verbal harassment many of them had (Hagerlid et al., 2024). Additionally, previous studies reported sexually suggestive unwanted comments as the most frequent forms of sexual harassment (Ženska soba, 2007; Selimović & Tomić Selimović, 2022). In research conducted by Ženska soba (2007), students had experienced forced touching as well, while women experienced unwanted comments and forced touching to a greater extent.

One of the limitations of this research is the use of a convenience sample and the fact that the distribution of students from different departments at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split was not proportional. For instance, German language students comprise 12.3% of the survey sample, despite representing only 6.79% of the faculty population. Similarly, sociology students account for 17.5% of the sample but make up just 8.95% of the faculty cohort. In contrast, pre-school education students constitute only 5.3% of the sample, whereas they represent 18.7% of the faculty population. These distributions limited the possibilities to compare students' perceptions and attitudes from different study

programs. We also recommend that future research on this subject include students from other faculties at the University of Split. Nevertheless, research findings confirmed previous insights that indicated the need for more systematic (formal as well as informal) education for students (Čikić et al., 2023). The research can be used in planning additional activities for students to be more informed about sexual harassment. Organized lectures, roundtables/debates, and workshops could address students' attitudes and perceptions of sexual harassment by including specific topics such as gender, the concept of consent, and specific forms of sexual harassment (e.g., verbal).

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