

# HARASSMENT OF FEMALE STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY (FIELD STUDY)

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## Abstract:

Harassment is a sensitive issue that is closely linked to customs, traditions, practices, the personality of individuals and their freedoms. This is particularly relevant in societies where the culture is supposed to be based on modesty, respect and rejection of negative behaviour.

The aim of this study is to shed light on the phenomenon of harassment of female students at university or on campus, focusing on its causes, prevention methods and forms. It will also address the aspects of deterrence and punishment. This will be achieved by first distributing a series of electronic questionnaires to female university students (purposive sample) who have experienced harassment at least once. Subsequently, in a second stage, the questionnaires will be transcribed into statistical tables, sociologically read and analysed (process of analysing field results and sample characteristics). Finally, a general conclusion will be drawn in a third stage.

**Keywords:** Harassment; Women; University; Social values.

## 1-Introduction:

Harassment is a social and ethical problem that has been known since ancient times. Today, it is widespread in various Arab and global societies and threatens the safety of individuals in moral, psychological and physical terms. Harassment takes various forms, such as the use of inappropriate and disrespectful language, the mention of sexual phrases and words, the sending of sexual text messages, the exchange of indecent sexual images, and sexual behaviour such as touching the buttocks or other parts of the body or exposing oneself.

Algerian society is not immune to these practices, as women face different forms of sexual harassment (verbal or physical) in different places. This harassment threatens their psychological and social well-being. On the one hand, we observe silence due to the male-dominated culture in our society, which tends to stigmatise women. This culture has led some women who have experienced sexual harassment to refrain from complaining, especially given the difficulty of proving such harassment and the fear of damaging their reputation and dignity. This has led some women to prefer silence and discretion, despite the existence of deterrent laws aimed at preventing harassment and protecting women.

In our field study, we will look at the reasons behind the phenomenon of harassment of women, explore common types of harassment, and discuss preventive measures against this phenomenon, especially among university youth - the focus of our study. We will also examine the negative impact on the psychological well-being of women who have experienced harassment, as they may lose confidence in both individuals and society, which has not adequately condemned such behaviour. In addition, we will shed light on the phenomenon of sexual harassment by providing a theoretical analytical approach from psychological and social perspectives.

## **2- Importance and aims of the study:**

Our study is of great importance because of the nature of the subject matter, which is considered taboo and forbidden in many conservative Algerian families. Moreover, the approach adopted in this context constitutes a security crime punishable by law, as it threatens women's security and the stability of society. It is also a social phenomenon that violates customs, traditions, norms and religion. This phenomenon is approached from a social and psychological perspective.

It should be noted that the increase in some forms of harassment (such as street harassment) in universities compared to previous years has prompted us to address this issue through study and analysis. There are ideologies based on the condemnation and social control of women's bodies.

What distinguishes this study from others is our focus on harassment against female university students and within the university campus, and our attempt to understand the reasons and circumstances that have led to its prevalence among university students, who are expected to have a decent level of education and culture compared to other social groups.

This study aims to achieve a number of theoretical and practical objectives, which can be summarised as follows:

- To shed light on the concept and nature of harassment, particularly against women.
- To address the reasons for the emergence of certain forms of harassment against women in universities, as well as the types of harassment prevalent in Algerian society in general and among university students in particular.
- To reveal the important consequences associated with sexual harassment behaviour against women in light of the characteristics and features of the Algerian social structure and cultural patterns, which include the binary (male/female) and its division based on the gender binary (power/weakness).
- The aim of this study is to determine the extent of the phenomenon of sexual harassment, its causes and forms, and whether there are disciplinary and deterrent measures against harassers, all from the perspective of female university students.

## **3-Problem statement and hypotheses:**

It is difficult to find a specific and comprehensive definition of sexual harassment, because it is a concept that is difficult to measure due to the variation of symbols and the identification of behaviours, regardless of their desirability, based on the nature of society, culture and religious considerations that play an important role in shaping these definitions.

Extracting the concept of symbolic power from the field of sexual harassment and transforming it into a symbolic capital that depends on individual behaviour according to a set of interrelated conditions thus achieves what Pierre Bourdieu called the "circle of legitimacy". This circle is defined within the institution of symbolic rituals (forms of sexual harassment) and the legitimacy of those in power (the harasser = man/dominant) and the complicity of the oppressed (the harassed = woman/subordinate). Thus, our approach to sexual harassment in its various forms is seen not only as a social problem related to social construction, but also as a social behaviour. Education implicitly shapes perceptions of gender by imposing conflicting roles and positions. (Samia Naaman Jassous, 2003, p. 23)

Most attempts to rationalise these inequalities are based on biological differences and the role of sex/gender in the reproductive process. The high incidence of sexual harassment is due to the

complicity of the harasser and the increase in silence and cover-up, especially when this phenomenon infiltrates the elite "university" environment, reducing female students and employees to silent, unthinking bodies, which intensifies its danger. This is where the concept of "omerta" is embodied.

On the basis of the above, we have formulated the following questions:

- \* What are the causes of the phenomenon of harassment of women in the university environment?
- \* How can women avoid harassment in the university environment?
- \* What are the most common types of harassment experienced by women in the university environment?

#### **Hypotheses:**

In order to answer these questions, we formulated the following hypotheses:

- The lack of safety and deterrence is a major cause of women being harassed in the university environment.
- Women can avoid harassment in the university environment by dressing modestly.
- Verbal harassment is one of the most common forms of harassment experienced by women in the university environment.

#### **4-Study concepts:**

##### **Harassment:**

**Language:** Harassment is the act of annoying or irritating someone, causing them distress. The term 'harassment' covers both verbal and physical acts and replaces terms such as aggression, irritation or minor assault. The linguistic meanings of harassment in both languages agree in combining the meanings of verbal and physical actions. Some scholars argue that harassment refers only to verbal acts without physical acts, which fall under the category of sexual assault. The term itself differs from gentle flirtation as it tends to be vulgar, explicit and has sexual connotations. (Ibrahim Anas et al, 2000, p. 144)

**Terminology:** It refers to any unwanted words or actions of a sexual nature that violate someone's body, privacy or feelings, causing discomfort, threat, insecurity, fear, lack of respect, intimidation, humiliation, insult or injury. (unicef.org)

Sexual harassment refers to any words or actions with sexual connotations directed at another person that cause harm. It is a deliberate and intentional act perpetrated by a person with sexual tendencies or desires using various methods, such as verbal, visual or symbolic, and may even involve direct physical contact, such as touching or close proximity, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.

**Procedurally,** harassment is an unwanted act, which may be of a sexual nature, experienced by female students at university campuses. It includes a range of actions, offences and harassment, whether mild or severe, which may include verbal innuendo or sexual acts, and which may occur once or be repeated.

##### **Academic environment:**

The university is defined as "an educational and cultural institution that includes a group of students and competent staff, along with advanced scientific facilities, working to disseminate knowledge and information through theoretical and field research" (Mohammed Al-Saleh Marmoul, 1979, p. 63) (Ali Helmi, 1971, p. 245).

As for the academic environment, it refers to "the physical space where university facilities exist,

including libraries, offices, supervisory departments, lecture halls, research and experimental laboratories, and university campuses" (Hassan Shahata and Zeinab El-Najjar, 2003, p. 52).

The academic environment is a community made up of students, teachers and staff in a particular university. It is characterised by social, cultural and academic interactions among its members and aims to achieve intellectual and academic development for students and society. The academic environment is influenced by social values and changes, it shapes social behaviour and defines the mechanisms of interaction between its components.

Procedurally, the academic environment is the place where students who have obtained their baccalaureate or equivalent certificate study, including female students who have experienced harassment by males at least once.

#### **Female students:**

Female students are those girls who study at university. The term "student" in Arabic refers to a person seeking knowledge and is usually used to refer to students at both secondary and higher education levels. The plural form of "student" is "students" and is also used to refer to student unions or organisations established in universities or colleges to provide facilities for students (Ma'jam al-Ma'ani, 2018).

In English, the term "student" is used to refer to anyone studying at a university or college, while "pupil" refers to a person studying at school (Cambridge dictionary, 2018).

According to Algerian legislation, the term (student) applies to anyone enrolled in an institution of higher education, including universities, schools and institutes.

The concept of student in the traditional scientific perspective is a "group or segment of intellectuals in society as a whole, as hundreds and thousands of young people revolve around educational institutions" (Mohamed Ali Mohammed, 1991, p. 26). Procedurally, a (female student) is a woman whose qualifications allowed her to move from secondary school to university by passing the baccalaureate exam. She is currently studying at the university and has experienced harassment by men on campus.

#### **Previous studies:**

##### **A-Foreign studies:**

##### **-Study by Bell W. Dzeiech, 2004:**

The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of sexual harassment in universities and workplaces. In a survey of over 2000 university students, it was found that 3% of women reported experiencing sexual harassment. In addition, only 3 out of 25 female graduate students reported being forced to engage in sexual activity with male faculty members or being threatened with disclosure within the university (Bell W. Dzeiech, 2004, p. 25).

##### **-Study by Loren E. McMaster, 2004:**

The purpose of this study was to identify the causes and mechanisms of sexual violence among college students. The sample comprehensively indicated that most participants acknowledged the existence of peer sexual violence and the occurrence of peer sexual violence incidents during the academic year. The results also showed that 48% of participants reported the occurrence of sexual assault and sexual violence (Loren E. McMaster, 2004, p. 14).

##### **-Study by Mickson H. Kayuni, 2009:**

This study referred to a research report by the American Association of Universities on the Survey of Educational Institutions, where approximately 62% of college students surveyed in May 2005

reported experiencing sexual harassment. Most students experienced various forms of non-contact sexual harassment, such as unwanted advances, sexual jokes and gestures.

The study emphasised that sexual harassment was prevalent in both the public and private sectors, but was more common in larger private schools and colleges. The report indicated that the incidence of sexual harassment was 39% in student hostels, 37% off campus and 20% in classrooms and lecture halls (Mickson H. Kayuni, 2009, p. 58).

### **B-Arabic Studies:**

#### **-Study by Rasha Nahad Mohammed Hussein, 2008:**

This study aimed to explain the phenomenon of sexual harassment and was conducted on a sample of 2,500 Egyptian and foreign women. The study found that women between the ages of 19 and 25 were the most vulnerable to sexual harassment. The general appearance of women was identified as an important factor contributing to harassment. The study also found that women who experienced sexual harassment suffered psychological and social consequences. The majority of the research participants, 91.3% of foreigners, 83.5% of Egyptians and 78.7% of men, confirmed the increasing prevalence of sexual harassment in recent times.

The study recommended raising awareness of the concept of sexual harassment and intensifying social, psychological, legal and economic studies and research to examine the problem from different perspectives. It also emphasised the need for training for police officers on how to deal with cases of sexual harassment, increased security presence, accelerated processing of violations, support for victims, the establishment of offices to receive complaints of sexual harassment, and the importance of solidarity among civil society institutions to develop a strategy to combat this phenomenon. It was also suggested that a law be enacted to define and criminalise sexual harassment, and that security officers on the streets be given judicial powers (Rasha Nahad Mohammed Hussein, 2008, p. 76).

#### **-Study by Mahmoud Fathi Mohamed, 2010:**

The aim of this study was to identify the factors that contribute to the phenomenon of sexual harassment and the role of education in dealing with it. The study sample consisted of 351 fourth-year female students at Fayoum University. The researcher developed a scale to measure the factors that contribute to sexual harassment. The study found several results, including the presence of factors related to the students themselves, such as wearing provocative make-up, wearing transparent clothes, and abandoning customs and traditions, among others. There were also media-related factors, such as watching sexually explicit films and visiting pornographic websites. Economic factors contributing to sexual harassment included excessive dowry demands and widespread unemployment (Mahmoud Fathi Mohamed, 2010, pp. 1-50).

### **5-1 Comments on the previous studies:**

The previous studies discussed several concepts and issues related to harassment, including:

1. Violence experienced by parents in childhood may be a direct cause of harassment of children.
2. Harassment in general and sexual harassment in particular result in various psychological pressures on the victim.
3. Sexual disorders are one of the consequences of experiencing sexual harassment.
4. The power imbalance between men and women is central to the process of harassment.
5. Most previous studies have used descriptive-analytical methods, content analysis through interviews, and some have used case studies.

6. The forms of sexual harassment experienced by women vary and include physical contact, touching and sexual jokes.

7. The majority of previous studies and research have confirmed that sexual harassment causes physical, health and psychological harm. However, the statistical prevalence of this type of psychological and physical harm is not determined because it contradicts moral and religious values as it is considered taboo.

8. Previous studies have emphasised that the lack of reporting by female victims and the assurance given to harassers that they will not be punished encourages further harassment.

### **6-Theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of sexual harassment:**

Theoretical approaches serve as a guide in defining the characteristics of any phenomenon studied in sociology. Therefore, any sociological study must have a theoretical framework that is in line with known ideologies and the social interactive context. When examining the theoretical approaches to sexual harassment, there is a mixture of ideological and gender biases with scientific and cultural common interpretations.

#### **Psychological theories:**

##### **Learned helplessness and victimisation theory:**

Both Seligman and Peterson suggest that there is a balance between learned helplessness in its original state and responses to victimisation. In both cases, a negative, uncontrollable event precedes a situation in which the person has little or no control. In both scenarios, the individual believes that they have no control over what will happen to them in the future. For example, in the case of sexual harassment, once a person is labelled as a victim, it triggers feelings of helplessness, weakness and vulnerability towards such events. People who experience learned helplessness and victimisation show symptoms of depression or deficits related to learned helplessness in a variety of situations beyond the initial ones that caused the helplessness. For example, after experiencing sexual harassment, a woman may show generalised negative behaviour (such as paralysis), while men may have difficulty finding solutions in various aspects of their lives.

The two researchers also argue that both phenomena are characterised by the individual's reaction of helplessness or depression, which arises from the belief that future events are uncontrollable. For example, the victim believes that they have no behavioural repertoire to find solutions to various negative events that may happen to them in this state. As a result, they feel helpless and develop symptoms of depression. There are also individual differences in how people respond to negative events, and the researchers suggest that repeated victimisation creates a tendency towards stability and containment in the victim.

There is a strong relationship between self-blame and depression in victims of sexual harassment. The individual's perception of the event is also related to their ability to control and cope with it. In addition, the individual's interpretation and expectations contribute to coping with the event. According to Seligman and Peterson, the inability to control and cope leads to learned helplessness. (Lydia Souldard, 1996, pp. 66-69)

From this theory we can deduce that when a victim of sexual harassment believes in their inability to confront, control and cope with the situation and expects the worst outcome, it leads to vulnerability and subsequent manifestation of psychological disorders. Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between self-blame and depression among victims of sexual harassment, and there are individual differences in response to victimisation, resulting in varying degrees of depression.

### **Attribution Theory:**

is a theory inspired by the theory of learned helplessness, using the term "attribution" instead of learned helplessness. This theory focuses on the psychological effects (emotions, feelings, expectations, behaviours) acquired by an individual in a particular situation. Both Kelley and Michèle argue that victims seek to understand the nature of the processes that lead to the formation of attributions. Attributions can be related to desired and undesired life events, as individuals attribute what happens to them to what they observe around them. For example, the media coverage of a sexual harassment trial involving the victim may influence the viewer's perception of the event. Proponents of this approach believe that the objective perception of the causes of the events they witness, whether as ordinary observers, actors or victims of a situation or context related to compatibility, has four dimensions, called attribution dimensions: locus of causality (internal/external), stability (stable/unstable), controllability (controllable/uncontrollable), and scope (global/specific). The cause is chosen to explain an event inside or outside the person.

Furthermore, proponents of this theory believe that the experience of an unwanted or negative event causes temporary depressive symptoms in individuals. For some it leads to chronic symptoms, while for others it does not. The way in which events are perceived has a psychological impact on individuals; those who tend to interpret events in terms of stable and global internal causes are more susceptible to depressive symptoms. Blaming oneself for sexual harassment can lead to depression. (Lydia Soulard, 1996, p. 50)

In conclusion, according to this theory, an individual's perception of an event can interfere with their ability to cope, which is called attribution. They assume that what they observe will happen to them, and attribution has four dimensions. According to proponents of this theory, the occurrence of an unwanted event causes depression, the severity of which varies from person to person. In addition, the individual's perception of the event has a psychological impact, as negative perceptions and self-blame can lead to depression.

### **Social theories: Organisational Perspective**

Proponents of this perspective focus on forms of sexual harassment that occur within work organisations. They argue that the most common and severe forms of sexual harassment occur within the workplace and attribute this to various organisational factors that contribute to power differentials between individuals. These factors play a crucial role in the emergence of sexual harassment behaviours and actions against women. Proponents of this perspective identify several key factors, including:

- The hierarchical nature of positions within work organisations.
- The gender ratio within the organisation, i.e. the proportion of men to women.
- The professional standards and legal regulations that govern the organisation of work.
- Inadequate legal measures taken by the organisation to address and prevent sexual harassment behaviour.

Proponents of this perspective emphasise that sexual harassment in the workplace violates women's rights and has social, psychological and economic consequences. They argue that such forms of harassment can create a psychological conflict for women, who are faced with the dilemma of rejecting harassment while at the same time fearing possible job loss. Women often experience mistreatment at work or risk dismissal if they refuse advances, especially if they come from their supervisors or managers. If the harassment comes from a colleague, it can lead to neglect,

avoidance, absenteeism and ultimately termination of employment.

In summary, the organisational perspective focuses specifically on sexual harassment in the workplace and neglects harassment in other settings such as transport, streets and universities. It highlights the interaction between men and women as an underlying factor and emphasises the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, suggesting that prior familiarity between the two facilitates harassment. However, this perspective does not provide an explanation for sexual harassment behaviour within work organisations.

**The socio-cultural perspective:**

The socio-cultural perspective embodies the feminist view of sexual harassment as an act resulting from patriarchal systems of male dominance. This dominance enables men to exercise sexual power with affirmation and to maintain this male control, power and constant reproduction, as Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron have noted: "We study the social conditions for the possibility of exercising power". However, Bourdieu also noted that this power only exists in a state of neglect of its hidden assumptions, ongoing laws and silent backgrounds that serve as guarantors of its achievement and prerequisites for its possibility (Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, 2007, p. 55).

Proponents of this perspective link sexual harassment to processes of normalisation, emphasising that the latter supports acts of sexual harassment through its reliance on gender. Gendered processes of social normalisation create and perpetuate the reinforcement of perceptions, primarily by exempting the majority of perpetrators, 'harassers', as men and positioning women as the majority of targets of harassment. These traditional gendered social processes not only teach women to ignore acts of sexual harassment by men, but also to avoid confrontational resistance. In addition, the gendered culture of society warns women of the many social and psychological risks that can result from resisting acts of harassment and harassers. Proponents of this perspective stress that in many societies sexual harassment is not an individual problem but a general social problem that occurs in all institutions of society (Mediha Ahmed Abada and Khaled Kazem Abu Doha, 2009, p. 230)

It is clear that this perspective interprets sexual harassment as a result of patriarchal systems of male dominance, where men use their sexual power over women to assert their existence. Power and its exercise are seen as the basis of sexual harassment. In addition, factors such as gender, class and social status have an impact on sexual harassment. Proponents of this perspective emphasise that sexual harassment is not an individual problem but a social problem that occurs in all institutions of society. Furthermore, existing gender differences in social and cultural status contribute to the spread of sexual harassment.

**The gender role perspective:** emerged as an attempt to reconcile the ideas of the proponents of the previous perspectives. Proponents of the gender role perspective argue that sexual harassment is a result of the dominance of gender roles over other roles (such as work roles). They argue that men interact with women solely through the lens of gender roles in any interactive situation. They link different forms of violence against women to representations of women in the social and cultural structure, which are dominated by the sexual gaze and male dominance. These representations are seen as natural rather than historical constructs, deeply rooted in the minds of individuals within society. The focus is on the ownership of the female body and the embodiment of the objective ideology, which is a shared unconscious of all Mediterranean societies, as explained by Bourdieu's

concept of tribal tradition, in which men claim to have a "narcissistic" and "cosmological Andrew-centric" perspective.

Women are seen as sexual objects, which is the basic component within this image.

Even if another image of different roles comes to mind, the focus remains on the woman's sexual role and this does not prevent her from being subjected to sexual harassment.

Regardless of the power and authority she has or the position she holds, a woman can still be sexually harassed. For example, even if she is a female boss with significant achievements, she can still be subjected to any form of sexual harassment by her subordinates (Yas'ad Lubna, 2011, p. 96). This perspective interprets sexual harassment on the basis of men's sexual gaze towards women, viewing women as sexual objects. According to this perspective, a woman's strength, power or position does not protect her from experiencing sexual harassment. Even if she is in a high-ranking position, such as a female CEO, she may still be subjected to various forms of sexual harassment by her subordinates.

### **7-Forms of sexual harassment:**

There are many forms of sexual harassment, and this variation stems from the nature of the act itself, as it can take different forms depending on the social, organisational and cultural contexts of individuals and communities. The main forms include:

#### **Verbal sexual behaviour:**

This includes comments, language, sexual jokes, innuendo, explicit sexual talk, and making derogatory remarks about individuals by mocking their body parts or using popular or literary metaphors. This form is common.

#### **Non-verbal sexual behaviour:**

This includes aggressive or suggestive sexual expressions such as winking, lip biting and leering, and focusing one's gaze on a person's physical attributes.

#### **Physical sexual behaviour:**

This includes various behaviours ranging from touching, pinching, kissing and fondling to hugging or embracing a person's body. (Yas'ad Lubna, 2011, p. 71)

According to Michael Démon, the forms of sexual harassment differ according to the form and nature of the act. He identified the following behaviours

- **Non-verbal sexual comments:** Such as winking and leering.
- **Verbal sexual comments:** Such as sexual jokes and explicit language.
- **Physical sexual behaviour:** Involving touching.

Mary France classified and identified the forms of sexual harassment as: seductive behaviour, sexual blackmail, expression of unwanted sexual interest, sexual imposition and direct sexual assault.

Jocelyn Handy, on the other hand, identified two main forms of harassment:

- **Overt sexual harassment:** In this form, men explicitly request sexual favours from specific women.
- **Coercive sexual harassment:** In this form, certain men commit acts of mild sexual harassment against girls, workers or students with the intention of intimidating, coercing or harassing them, not necessarily for the purpose of sexual gratification itself. (Yas'ad Lubna, 2011, p. 71)

Furthermore, some researchers have categorised sexual harassment within the legal system into two forms:

- **Gender stereotyping:** This form refers to the slower and less harmful forms of sexual harassment, which includes various comments made by men to women based on their appearance and body type.

- Gender control: This form includes comments, degrading actions, explicit verbal or physical sexual demands that are rooted in a man's power, dominance or authority over women, whether socially, administratively or academically.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the American Association of University Professors have broadly divided sexual harassment into two forms:

**-Provocative sexual harassment:**

In this form, a person uses their organisational power over a subordinate (employee, worker, student) to force them to engage in sexual activity. This form of harassment involves a relationship between the parties, such as a superior-subordinate relationship or an equal status relationship. There may be a pre-existing acquaintance between the parties. The woman's response to the harassment may result in her receiving compensation or rewards if she complies, or various forms of punishment if she refuses.

**-Environmental sexual harassment:**

This form of harassment refers to the persistent and ongoing sexual advances that women experience in a social setting or place where they are frequently present. It includes sexual comments or unwanted sexual attention. In this form, there may not necessarily be direct interaction between the harasser and the woman, and she may not be forced to submit to such behaviour unless she chooses to do so.

Amal Salem Al-Awaida classified the forms of sexual harassment as follows:

- Intentional unwanted sexual touching and inappropriate physical proximity.
- Comments, gestures or remarks related to sex, body, appearance or intentional verbal transgressions.
- Obscene phone calls, emails or messages.
- Harassment accompanied by threats.
- Displaying advertisements, cartoons, drawings, photographs or internet images that are sexually suggestive.
- Questions or references to the protected person's private life.
- Constant invitations to social activities that are considered inappropriate.
- Jokes or suggestions with sexual implications.
- Glances that indicate suspicious invitations.

The presentation of the above forms shows that the nature of sexual harassment varies according to the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and the place where it occurs. There are places where the harasser can only use signals, gestures and looks, while in other places he can use verbal expressions or physical contact.

In cases where the victim is far away from the harasser, the harasser may use phone calls and social media. The nature of sexual harassment also varies depending on the harasser's knowledge of the victim and the relationships and interests they share.

It can also vary according to the social class of both the perpetrator and the victim (e.g. the perpetrator is wealthy and the victim is poor) and their respective occupations (e.g. the perpetrator is a supervisor and the victim is a subordinate, or the perpetrator is a professor and the victim is a

student).

### 8- The methodology used:

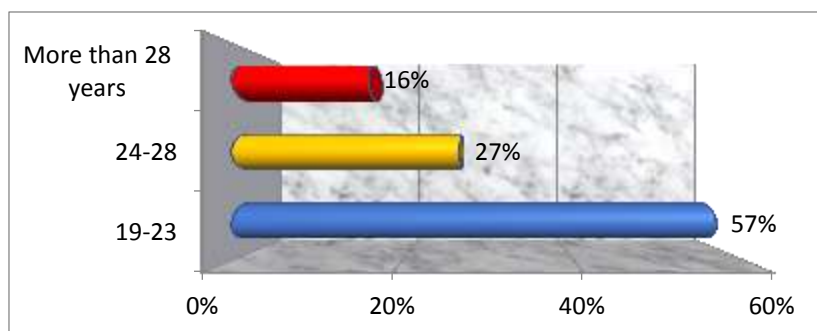
In this study, we relied on the descriptive-analytical methodology to analyse the field data. In order to interpret the data, the researcher had to use the qualitative methodology as it was more appropriate for our study. We aim to establish the relationship and qualitative characteristics between variables because "the aim of statistics is to test the validity of hypotheses and verify the relationship between variables and to clarify the qualitative characteristics between variables, in terms of representing data and organising it in composite tables based on finding the relationship between two or more variables, whether the relationship is direct or inverse" (Ghareeb, Mohammed Sayed Ahmed, 1993, p. 415).

### 9- The sample:

In this study, we selected a purposive sample as it is the most appropriate for such studies. We distributed electronic questionnaires to a group of female university students using "Google Forms". Upon retrieval, we obtained 30 completed questionnaires in the initial phase. We then sorted and transcribed the data into statistical tables, followed by statistical analysis and sociological interpretation. Finally, we formulated the results of the study.

#### 9-1 Sample characteristics:

**Figure 1** shows the sample characteristics in terms of age.

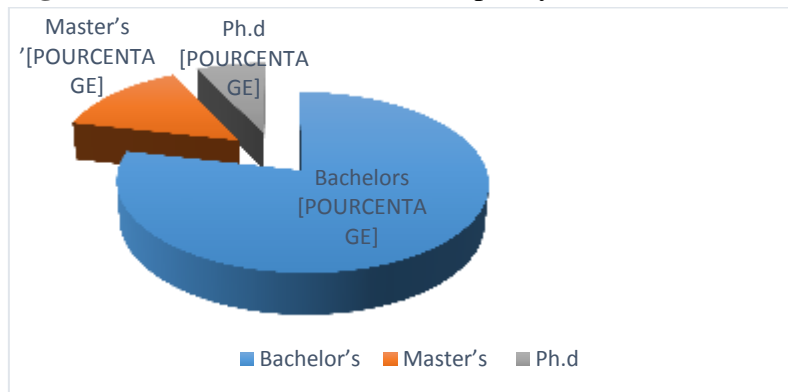


**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS programme.

Based on the data in Figure 1 regarding the distribution of participants by age, it can be observed that the majority of participants, equivalent to 57%, fall within the age range of 19-23 years. This is followed by 27% of students aged between 24 and 28 years. Finally, the smallest percentage, 16%, is made up of students over the age of 28.

Based on the statistics in this figure, we can conclude that the phenomenon of harassment among female students is more prevalent among undergraduate students (years 1, 2 and 3) compared to others, as we will see in the following figure.

**Figure 2:** Characteristics of the sample by level of education.

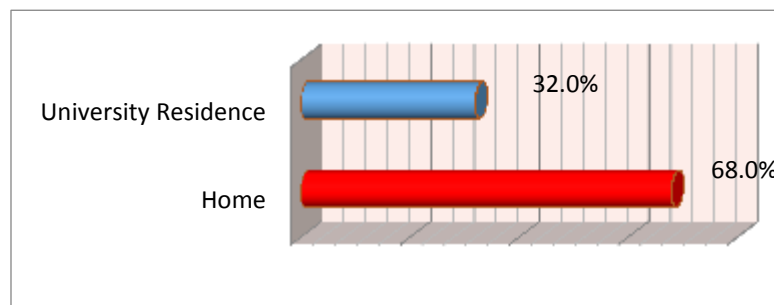


**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the SPSS programme.

Based on the data in Figure 2 regarding the distribution of participants according to their level of education, it can be seen that the majority of participants, 79%, are undergraduate students. They are followed by 14% of the participants who are pursuing a Master's degree, and finally the smallest percentage, 7%, refers to students enrolled in a doctoral programme.

We can conclude that female undergraduate students, who make up the majority of the sample, are more vulnerable to harassment than others. This may be due to their young age and lack of experience in dealing with harassers. They may feel afraid, or it may be because they are perceived as easy targets by deviant harassers.

**Figure 3:** Sample characteristics by place of residence.



**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

Based on the data in Figure 3 regarding the distribution of participants according to the variable of place of residence, it can be observed that the majority of participants, 68%, live at home. On the other hand, 32% of the participants live in university halls of residence.

We can conclude that the harassers are not interested in where the student lives. What matters to them is her age (preferably young and easier to exploit), as we have seen in the previous figures regarding the sample participants.

**9-2 Analysis of field results:****Table 1:** Reasons for women's exposure to harassment in the academic environment

Reasons why women are likely to experience harassment in the university environment	Frequency	Percentage
Weak Ethical Values(Dress style,Provocative walkin ,Mixing ,Raising voice while speaking)	05	12.5%
Weak Religious Incentive ( Substance abuse or alcohol consumption)	11	27.5%
Absence or Weak Administrative Oversight	22	55%
Early Arrival or Late Stay at the University	02	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

Based on the data in Table 1, which shows the distribution of respondents according to the reasons for women's exposure to harassment in the academic environment, we can see that the majority of respondents, accounting for 55%, believe that the main reason for women's exposure to harassment is the absence or weakness of administrative supervision. This is followed by 27.5% of female students who believe that the main reason for women's exposure to harassment is the lack of religious values (young people using drugs or alcohol, which drives them to harassment). Then we find a percentage of 12.5% who attribute women's exposure to harassment to weak moral values (dressing provocatively, mixing with the opposite sex, speaking loudly), and finally we find a percentage of 5% of female students who believe that the reason for their exposure to harassment is arriving early or staying late at the university when there are fewer students and security personnel, allowing the harasser to act without witnesses.

According to the responses of female students who have experienced harassment, the absence or weakness of administrative supervision, i.e. the absence of security personnel in universities and possibly some collusion with students, as many female students have informed us, is the main reason for women's exposure to harassment in the academic environment. On the other hand, the lack of action by the administration in response to complaints, or its disregard for the issue, is what we will see in the following table.

Note: The fact that the number of repetitions exceeds the sample size of 30 is due to the multiple choice nature of the question.

**Table 2:** Filing a Complaint with the University Administration After Experiencing Harassment

Making a complaint to the university administration after experiencing harassment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	33.3%
No	20	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

Looking at the data in Table 2, which shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they filed a complaint with the university administration after experiencing harassment, we can see that the majority of respondents, 66.7%, did not file a complaint with the university administration after experiencing harassment. On the other hand, 33.3% of respondents filed a complaint with the

university administration after experiencing harassment.

From the results of this table, it is clear that there is a lack of reporting culture, which can be attributed to three factors: fear of retaliation from the harasser, fear of social judgement and bringing shame on the family, or ignorance of rights, laws and sanctions, as well as doubts about the fairness of the administration. This is explored further in the following table.

In addition, there is an important point that we discussed in Figures 1 and 2, which relates to the age of the respondents.

**Table 3:** Punishing the Perpetrator(s) After Filing the Complaint.

Punishing the offender(s) after the complaint has been made	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	04	40%
No	06	60%
<b>Total</b>	10	100%

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

From the data in Table 3, which shows the distribution of respondents according to the punishment of the perpetrator(s) after a complaint was filed, we can see that the majority of respondents, 60% and including 6 students, report that the university administration did not provide them with justice after they experienced harassment and filed a complaint. On the other hand, 40% of the respondents, including 4 students, stated that the university administration punished the harassers after the students filed a complaint.

From our analysis of Table 3, we can conclude that the deterrence and punishment of the harasser acts as a deterrent for others, thus allowing us to control the phenomenon through this aspect. This is the main reason for the recent increase and the same reason why the sampled students do not complain to the administration if there is no deterrent.

The lack of complaints by two thirds of the sample can be attributed to the fact that the majority of perpetrators or harassers have not been punished. In such cases, the harm to the victim increases and the reporting culture decreases, as there is a high probability that the harasser will escape accountability and may even try to retaliate verbally against the victim.

Note: The number of replications (10) is smaller than the sample size (30) because not all students made a complaint.

**Table 4:** Modest Dress Code Prevents Harassment of Female Students.

Modest dress code prevents harassment of female students.	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	86.7%
No	04	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	30	100%

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

From the data in Table 4, which shows the distribution of respondents according to whether modest clothing prevents harassment, we can see that the majority of respondents, 86.7%, agree that modest clothing plays an important role in preventing harassment. On the other hand, 13.3% of students believe that modest clothing does not play a role in preventing harassment.

There is no doubt that clothing that emphasises a woman's features can arouse the desire and lust of

a harasser, because he is an individual who lacks morals and is deviant. This drives them to commit their acts without considering the consequences, which could lead to imprisonment.

**Table 5:** Type of Harassment Experienced.

Type of Harassment Experienced	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal	19	46.3%
Gestures and Signals	04	9.7%
Explicit or Lewd Comments	07	17%
Stalking and Pursuit	11	27%
<b>Total</b>	41	100%

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

From the data in Table 5, which shows the distribution of respondents according to the type of harassment they experienced, we can see that the majority of respondents, 46.3%, experienced verbal harassment. This was followed by 27% of students who experienced stalking and following, and 17% of students who experienced explicit and offensive comments or actions. Finally, 9.7% of the students were confronted with suggestive gestures and signals.

From this table we can see that verbal harassment is the most common type of harassment, as it is widespread among young people in public spaces and has also found its way into the university environment. In fact, some students informed me that even some female professors were not exempt from verbal harassment within the university premises.

Note: The number of repetitions exceeds the sample size (30) due to the multiple responses to this question.

**Table 6:** Verbal Harassment is the Most Common.

Verbal harassment is the most common.	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	63.3%
No	11	36.7%
<b>Total</b>	30	100%

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS outputs.

Looking at the data in Table 6, which shows the distribution of respondents according to their belief that verbal harassment is most common, we can see that the majority of respondents, 63.3%, agree that verbal harassment is most common. This is in contrast to 36.7% of female students who disagree that verbal harassment is most common.

We find that this table supports the result of the previous table and confirms the theory that verbal harassment is most common among the sampled female students. It is also the most common among young people, even outside university, and it is steadily increasing, becoming more common in cities.

**10-General conclusion:**

Based on the data obtained, we can conclude that all the hypotheses proposed have been confirmed in their different dimensions. The lack of security and deterrence at the level of the university administration is an important reason for women to be subjected to harassment in the university environment, as shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The hypothesis that women avoid harassment by dressing modestly is also confirmed by Table 4. The last hypothesis, that verbal harassment is one of the most common types of harassment experienced by women in the university environment, is

also supported by Tables 5 and 6.

Sexual harassment is a form of violence imposed on women that has painful social and psychological consequences in their daily lives. Addressing the issue of sexual harassment of women is one aspect of combating violence against women. The escalation and prevalence of sexual harassment in Arab countries, including Algerian society, has exposed women to various forms of sexual harassment, whether verbal or even physical, in different places. This harassment has threatened their psychological and social well-being.

The extent and complexity of this negative phenomenon is exacerbated by the extreme silence surrounding its reality, due to the dominant male culture in our society. This culture has led many women who have experienced sexual harassment to refrain from filing complaints against their harassers, in particular because of the difficulty of proving the occurrence of sexual harassment, on the one hand, and the fear of compromising their honour and reputation, on the other. As a result, many women choose to remain silent and hide their experiences.

### **11-Conclusion:**

There are several methods women can use to protect themselves from harassment, depending on the severity of the harassment. In the case of verbal harassment, a woman can avoid engaging with the harasser or pretend to be on the phone to divert attention. This can be used if she is being followed in the street. In extreme cases, she can shout or carry a whistle in her pocket and use it when she is being harassed. It is important not to be afraid or panic and not to respond to the harasser's advances and provocations. It is advisable to dress modestly.

Deterrence mechanisms should be activated through strict enforcement of laws and strong action against those who perpetrate such heinous acts. Civil society institutions should also take action to raise awareness, especially among children, adolescents and young people, in order to reduce the prevalence of this phenomenon and possibly eliminate it in the future.

### **12-List of references:**

\* Omertà is an Italian code of silence and honour, particularly emphasised in southern Italy, which emphasises silence when questioned by authorities or strangers. It also includes non-cooperation with authorities, government or strangers, especially during criminal investigations, and disregard and avoidance of involvement in the illegal activities of others.

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