



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***NEWS COVERAGE, EXPOSURE, KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND  
BEHAVIOR OF PAKISTANI AND MALAYSIAN STUDENTS TOWARDS  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTS IN NEWSPAPERS***

**FATIMA SYEDA HILAL**

**FBMK 2021 43**



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BEHAVIOR OF PAKISTANI AND MALAYSIAN STUDENTS TOWARDS  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTS IN NEWSPAPERS**

By

**FATIMA SYEDA HILAL**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**December 2020**

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## DEDICATION

*This PhD is possible by the grace of ALLAH Almighty; after it is possible by the benevolence of PANJETAN PAK A.S, specially IMAM MEHDI A.S and his follower named as, Syed Jaffar ul Zaman Naqvi (late).*

*This PhD thesis is dedicated to*

*My respected Prof. and mentor Prof. Dr. Ezhar Tamam,*

*My respected and supportive Mam Assoc. Prof. Dr. Akmar Hayati Ahmad Ghazali*

*My parents Syed Asif Hussain Kazmi and Syeda Tatheer Fatima*

*My sister, Syeda Amber Kazmi*

*My daughter Syeda Darood Zahra*

*and My beloved husband Syed Mubbshir Ali Kazmi*

*Thank you for the love and care you showered on me and for being by my side through hard and easy time in life until I reached this path. Thank you for all prayers and numerous sacrifices you made which able me to stand where I stand today. I owe my success to you all. Last but not least, this study is also dedicated to my Non-Profit Organization, named as, "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION".*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**NEWS COVERAGE, EXPOSURE, KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND BEHAVIOR OF PAKISTANI AND MALAYSIAN STUDENTS TOWARDS SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTS IN NEWSPAPERS**

By

**FATIMA SYEDA HILAL**

**December 2020**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Akmar Hayati binti Ahmad Ghazali, PhD**  
**Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication**

Sexual harassment (SH) is not a new issue in Malaysia and Pakistan. There has been no comprehensive investigation on SH reported in the national dailies of both countries in terms of level of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The present study was conducted on the basis of content analysis, examining SH news coverage published in Berita Harian daily of Malaysia and Daily Jang of Pakistan to identify the patterns of SH news coverage. A total of 382 and 384 university students from Malaysia and Pakistan respectively, voluntarily participated in a self-administered survey. The survey was carried out following approval from the respective universities' Research Ethic Committees. The survey examined SH news exposures, levels of SH knowledge, degrees of intolerant attitudes toward SH, and propensity to act against SH among university students in both countries. Knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) and Cultivation Theories, were applied in the study for assessing patterns of coverage. At the conclusion of the study, results showed that both Berita Harian and Daily Jang did not elevate awareness on SH among the survey respondents. SH news in Daily Jang were not prominent, and had no thematic frame or negative direction. Berita Harian had less than 50% SH coverage with thematic frames set in positive direction but had no prominence. The majority of the respondents from both countries had moderate levels of SH news exposure, knowledge, intolerant attitudes toward SH, and propensity to act against SH. Regression analyses on Pakistani respondents revealed that SH news exposure had no significant relationship with intolerant attitude toward SH and the propensity to act against SH but recorded a significant positive relationship with SH knowledge. SH knowledge, in turn, had significant relationships with intolerant attitudes toward SH and propensity to act against SH. The Malaysian respondents revealed that SH news exposure had significant positive relationship with SH knowledge. The results also showed significant relationship with intolerant attitudes towards SH. The present study

provided insights into similarities and differences in the nature of coverage on SH in Malaysia and Pakistan. The study suggested that high exposure to news, high level of knowledge, right attitudes and behavior with respect to SH have yet to become a norm in Malaysian and Pakistani societies. The relationships between knowledge, attitudes and behavior variables appeared to be dependent on the societies' culture.

Key words: sexual harassment, news exposure, knowledge, intolerant attitude and propensity to act against sexual harassment



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**LIPUTAN BERITA, PENDEDAHAN, PENGETAHUAN, SIKAP DAN  
TINGKAH LAKU PELAJAR MALAYSIA DAN PAKISTAN TERHADAP  
LAPORAN AKHBAR MENGENAI GANGUAN SEKSUAL**

Oleh

**FATIMA SYEDA HILAL**

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Gangguan seksual (GS) bukan isu baru di Malaysia dan Pakistan. Tidak ada satu penyelidikan yang menyeluruh mengenai GS yang dilaporkan di akhbar harian nasional di kedua negara dari segi tahap pengetahuan, sikap dan tingkah laku. Kajian ini dijalankan berdasarkan analisis kandungan, meneliti laporan berita mengenai GS yang diterbitkan di akhbar-akhbar harian Berita Harian Malaysia dan Daily Jang Pakistan untuk mengenalpasti corak liputan. Sejumlah 382 dan 384 pelajar universiti masing-masing dari Malaysia dan Pakistan telah terlibat secara sukarela dalam satu survei sendiri. Survei telah dilakukan selepas kelulusan daripada pihak Jawatankuasa Penyelidikan Etika. Survei meneliti pendedahan berita mengenai GS, tahap pengetahuan, tahap sikap tidak bertoleransi terhadap GS, dan kecenderungan untuk bertindak menentang GS di kalangan pelajar universiti kedua negara. Teori pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan (KAP) dan Teori Cultivation telah digunakan dalam penilaian corak liputan. Di akhir kajian, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa Berita Harian dan Daily Jang tidak meningkatkan kesedaran terhadap GS di kalangan responden survei. Berita GS di Daily Jang adalah tidak terserlah, dan tidak mempunyai kerangka tematik atau arah negatif. Berita Harian mempunyai liputan GS kurang daripada 50% dengan kerangka tematik ke arah positif tetapi tidak terserlah. Kebanyakan reponden dari kedua negara mempunyai pendedahan terhadap GS, pengetahuan, sikap tidak bertoleransi, dan kecenderungan untuk bertindak menentang GS adalah pada tahap sederhana. Analisis regresi ke atas responden Pakistan menunjukkan pendedahan kepada berita GS tidak mempunyai pertalian yang ketara dengan sikap tidak bertoleransi terhadap GS dan kecenderungan untuk bertindak menentang GS, tetapi merekodkan hubungan positif yang ketara dengan pengetahuan mengenai GS. Pengetahuan mengenai GS mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan sikap tidak bertoleransi terhadap GS dan kecenderungan untuk bertindak menentang GS. Responden Malaysia

menunjukkan bahawa pendedahan berita GS mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan pengetahuan mengenai GS. Keputusan juga menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dengan sikap tidak bertoleransi terhadap GS. Kajian ini memberi pandangan ke atas persamaan dan perbezaan sifat liputan mengenai GS di Malaysia dan Pakistan. Kajian memberi pandangan bahawa liputan berita yang meluas, tahap pengetahuan yang tinggi, sikap dan tingkah laku yang betul terhadap GS belum menjadi satu norma di kalangan masyarakat di Malaysia dan Pakistan. Hubungan diantara pemboleh ubah pengetahuan, sikap dan tingkah laku bergantung kepada budaya masyarakat setempat.

Kata kunci: Gangguan seksual, pendedahan berita, pengetahuan, sikap tidak bertoleransi dan kecenderungan untuk bertindak terhadap gangguan seksual.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWAM	All Women's Action Society Malaysia
APU	Asia Pacific University, Malaysia
BH	Berita Harian
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DJ	Daily Jang
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunities Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EU	Europe
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ILO	International Labor Organization
LHRLA	Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid
NGO	Non-Profit Organization
OSAGI	Office of Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues
OSAGI	Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues
SH	Sexual Harassment
SMEs	Small Moslem Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
UET	University of Engineering and Technology
UO	University of Oregon
PU	University of the Punjab

UPM	University Putra Malaysia
5W,1H	Who, What, Where, Why, When and How
WAO	Women Aids Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
KAP	Knowledge Attitude Practice



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This present chapter has introduced the topic of the study and divided into four sub-sections. The chapter, while fine-tuning the sexual harassment and its media coverage, provides definitions of key terms used throughout the study, establishing a common framework from the available research literature. It explains the role of news media regarding awareness with a particular mention of knowledge gaps in the Malaysian and Pakistani landscapes. It discusses the SH news agenda and cultivation on the public school of thoughts and behavior. The lack of empirical evidence and focus on assessment and treatment for harassers has been recognized, and several suggestions have been made and proposed for future research and treatment avenues. The chapter also provides the significance of the present study described in four different contexts that included contributions in terms of theoretical, methodological policy, and practical perspectives and summary.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Numerous studies on sexual harassment have focused on causes and consequences, intervention programs drawing policies for victim's justice, and its effects (Mahmood & Ahmad, 2013). Sexual harassment is an age-old problem, In 1993, the World Bank documented that one out of three women had been sexually harassed, assaulted, attacked, mostly by her family or someone she knows at her workplace (Heise, Pitanguy, & Germain, 1994). Globally, at least one in three women was sexually abused in her lifetime (ILO, 2006).

Since the last decades, sexual harassment has always been an uninvited, unpredictable, and non-accidental social problem (Quick & McFadyen, 2017). The court of law has defined legal boundaries of sexual harassment, adjudicate legal disputes between parties and carry out the administration of justice in civil, criminal, and administrative matters under the rule of law. However, the body of existing knowledge on sexual harassment still underscored the idea that it was a highly subjective issue (Gutek B. A., 1995; McKinney, et al., 1995).

Sexual harassment remained a problem even after the implementation of Me Too (or # MeToo) Movement (Quick & McFadyen, 2017). The MeToo Movement was an initiative on sexual harassment awareness and law enforcement campaigns against sexual harassment and sexual assault of women that started in 2006 but it was only accepted and legitimated in 2017.

Sexual harassment is considered a criminal act in many countries of the world, e.g. United States (Brenan, 2019), Canada, Korea, and Hong Kong, and reformed legal action against it (EOC, 2013). Australia (O'Connell, 2018), Egypt (Al-Youm, 2019), Ethiopia (Zewude & Ashine, 2016), Norway (Sivertsen et al., 2019) are also fighting with a common social problem.

However, there are few countries like Yemen (Al-Absi, 2011), Indonesia (ILO, 2019), Turkey (Süral & Kiliçoğlu, 2011), considered sexual harassment as a problem but appeared that there has been no specific law penalizing sexual harassment in.

The above studies suggest that sexual harassment is a universal social problem even in developed or developing Moslem countries, indicating that culture and boundaries did not affect or solve sexual harassment. The problem was not confined to the workplace only, but also in institutions of higher learning, streets, and the internet or at home. The following subsections of the chapter discuss sexual harassment problems in two other Moslem countries, Malaysia and Pakistan.

Malaysia, a Moslem and economically developed country, has been reported not considered developed (Investopedia, 2019) with sexual harassment remained a problem. Over a third of the women population, or approximately 36%, have experienced sexual harassment, compared to one in every six men (Nation, 2019). One victim was so traumatized by her experience that she was afraid of picking up calls on her phone. The effects of sexual harassment not only impacted the victim but also on family, friends, and co-workers. The attitude towards sexual harassment has shed light on the situation when it is a matter of personal security, especially mental, physical, and emotional security (AWAM, 2019).

According to a Statistical Research Department (Department, 2019) survey on the subject at hand conducted in June 2019, about 59% of respondents reported having experienced sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was still viewed as an issue that affected women more than men, with 40 percent of Malaysians believing it to be most stressful. The AWAM reported that the number of reported rape cases in Malaysia was to be around 3,000 every year (AWAM, 2014). This suggests that, during the period of study, on average, eight women were raped daily in the country. Similarly, the Human Rights of Malaysia reported that there were 2045 rape and 1590 sexual harassment cases that occurred in 2015. Malaysian newspapers have reported that sexual harassment of women was perpetrated by their male colleagues. Many of these cases were not reported to the media because of fear of shame and cultural values. The media have been opined to report on issues about violence against women with bias and negativity to exaggerate the news for



their ratings. Over a third of Malaysian women faced sexual harassment, compared to one in six men (Babulal, 2019).

The seriousness of the problem has prompted the Malaysian government to officially launch the Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in 1999. Many workshops and guideline seminars have been held with the objectives of preventing sexual harassment. Likewise, the Human Rights of Malaysia has made amendments to enact stricter laws for punishing perpetrators. Although the Employment Act 1955 has been implemented, the government was still working on overcoming the sexual harassment problem (Ismail, et. al., 2007).

Pakistan is a developing country and has faced similar issues of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment occurred not only in workplaces but everywhere even while crossing a street (Haider & Mashud, 2014). University students were an easier target of sexual harassment (Nauman & Abbasi, 2014). Victims generally knew that they were being sexually harassed but they were not telling because they had no confidence to talk in front of their families or other people about any form of sexual harassment (Sadruddin, 2013). The number of sexual harassment cases in the country was recorded to be on the increase by the day even though there are laws against it (Yousaf & Schmiede, 2016).

According to HRCP (2000) report, Cases of sexual harassment have been recorded to increase during the last decade, with one woman being raped every two hours (Practices, 2018). An empirical analysis of juvenile crimes in Punjab (a state bordering Pakistan) revealed that 14.5% of criminal acts involved Zina, prohibition, abduction, and rape (Taj, 2005). Similarly, the HRCP reported that in 2003, about 70% of women in Pakistan suffered from some forms of violence. More recently, in 2016, the number of cases reported for harassment and female gang rape had increased to 486 and 12,383 respectively. "In Pakistan, harassment is like a white elephant in the room that no one sees," said journalist Shazia Nawaz (Usmani, 2011). The Dawn News reported 176 (58%) sexual harassment cases from January to April 2013. Similarly, 146 (48.7%) was reported by the Express-News during the same period.

The Pakistan Penal code introduced a law on sexual harassment and allegations against perpetrators. However, because of social problems, the women's population did not complain. If there were complaints of sexual harassment, no one had the right to blame her manner of dress and attitude.

The former and late President Zia Ahmad Awan of Karachi-based organization LHRLA stated that sexual harassment did not just mean an act of physical

offense. It comprised any gesture, stare, or remark that made women felt insecure and uncomfortable. The most severe form of sexual harassment included rape, molestation, and incest. According to the HRCP (Asjad, 2004), the incidents of harassment and molestation were being reported at workplaces, public venues, and universities from all over the country. Women were assaulted, raped, and sexually harassed regularly, but they remained silent because of fear, shame, and embarrassment (Anwar, Österman, and Björkqvist, 2019).

In reiteration, sexual harassment victims in both Malaysia and Pakistan, have remained silent and did not react against sexual harassment. They accepted the situation and remained silent because of society and the victim-blaming culture. If every single victim went and reported the incidents, then the report rates could be higher. But, no one stood against this social problem. The tolerance in attitude and non-reacting behavior were, in actuality, giving chances to sexual harassment problem to grow even more. In both countries, many cases of sexual harassment were published in their daily newspapers.

News media has a particular role to affect the public's opinion in any manner (Happer & Philo, 2013). Regarding sexual harassment, news media exposure can educate the public to fight the sexual harassment problem (Aransay, Passot, & Tong, 2015). Awareness or knowledge about sexual harassment is a key weapon to fight because illiteracy and lack of awareness cause sexual harassment (Naveed, Tharani, and Alwani, 2010).

News media, including national newspapers, can be assumed as development or change agents. Media set the agenda and published framed news to achieve specific goals. Therefore, media or national newspapers can set an agenda to cultivate thinking among people against sexual harassment. In these agenda, awareness on sexual harassment crime, definition, legal and constitutional information, prevention measures should be published. Through media agenda setting, society can be reformed and cultures can be changed. While media are giving sexual harassment awareness according to their agendas, media have also been cultivating influence on the public at large. A sexual harassment media coverage affecting public opinion is termed as 'cultivating effect'. It enhances sexual harassment knowledge that can change public attitudes towards sexual harassment. It can also promote preventive behavior against sexual harassment. Through the combination of agenda-setting and cultivating influences, sexual harassment can be curbed from society.

Sexual harassment remains a thorny problem in contemporary society. Society is getting modern day-by-day but people still do not have a good understanding of the subject matter. For example, when someone was starring or committing another form of sexual harassment, the action was not recognized as a crime.

In the ability to address sexual harassment as a crime, the first step is understanding what constitutes sexual harassment. If someone did not know what happened to her or him, then he or she could not identify that as a social criminal offense. Therefore, knowledge of sexual harassment is usually a silent feature.

Along with knowledge, an intolerant attitude is also a factor. Sexual harassment thrives because of the public's negative attitudes towards it. When someone noticed the occurrence of sexual harassment, society and cultural fear built a big wall between the victim and the complainant. Poor knowledge relates to a poor attitude. However, this theoretical linkage could be missing in certain situations such as when the subjective norms on sexual harassment were not in support of individual behavior to report sexual harassment cases to the right authority. Mostly, people did not react appropriately to sexual harassment offenses and this is known as a behavioral issue. Poor sexual harassment knowledge and poor attitude are possible reasons why people failed to respond properly to sexual harassment offenses. In other words, the propensity to act against sexual harassment diminishes due to a lack of knowledge and poor attitudes towards sexual harassment acts.

Knowledge, intolerant attitude, and propensity to act against sexual harassment are all linked together. In addressing the problem, the public's knowledge can build an intolerant attitude and their propensity to act. Good knowledge of the subject matter on hand develops a positive intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment (Svensson, Baer, & Silva 2018). Li et al., (2013) wrote that higher knowledge tended to establish intolerant attitudes and behavior, even though all other variables have relationships with each other. This suggests that good or higher knowledge is required to form an intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment. Once an intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment has formed in a person, he tends to show his thoughts in his behavior. Therefore, it is needless to say that knowledge of sexual harassment knowledge is a variable that helps to cultivate attitudes and behavior. The present study was undertaken to measure the relationships between knowledge on sexual harassment, intolerant attitude, and the propensity to act against sexual harassment among study respondents in both Malaysia and Pakistan.

The pervasiveness of the sexual harassment problem could also be linked to the efficacy of news media in enacting its role in upgrading knowledge, attitudes, and correct behavior. News media provide information and awareness and work as source agents. Sexual harassment news exposure is linked to knowledge on sexual harassment and knowledge can reform intolerant attitudes and hence, the propensity to act against sexual harassment.

Despite recognizing the problem, news media generally have not given much importance to sexual harassment coverage. This is because news media know best on understanding, attitudes, and preventive or corrective behavior. In both Malaysia and Pakistan, the national newspapers were analyzed to check the patterns of sexual harassment news coverage. The news coverage might have goals of social development and might be sexual harassment news exposure that enhances knowledge on sexual harassment, which in turn, helps to develop an intolerant attitude and propensity to act against the evil issue.

The media have also been quoted as not giving much importance and legislation awareness about sexual harassment (Alagappan & Marcian, 2013). They frequently gave coverage on 'classic' sexual harassment and highlights the scandalous issue and openly sexualized behavior (McDonald, 2013). Primarily, news media reports have been on women's issues for the sake of sensationalism (Ahmed, 2014) and portray women in such a way that they become more subjected to physical and symbolic violence (Asif, 2010). The media contents have also been noted to influence the public towards sexual harassment (McDonald, 2012).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The present study is a comparative examination of sexual harassment in two Asian countries, Malaysia and Pakistan. Khalique (2011) conducted a comparative study of both countries in the field of SMEs. The author suggested comparative studies of these two Asian countries for better social relationships. There has been no previous comparative and comprehensive study of the two countries in the area of sexual harassment despite big sexual harassment problems in both Pakistan (Hassan, 2017) and Malaysia (Kleinman, 2017). Against this background, a comparative study was undertaken to compare media coverage patterns and sexual harassment news exposure, sexual harassment knowledge, intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment, and propensity to act against sexual harassment.

In Pakistan, media gave coverage to sexual harassment incidents but there were very few studies with limited empirical research on sexual harassment being covered. According to previous literature, only three studies (M. Asif, 2010; Ahmed, 2014; Agha & Ahmad, 2018) had talked about media coverage of sexual harassment. A content analysis method had been done to measure the frequency of sexual harassment cases published in different national newspapers.

However, these studies (as mentioned above) focused on the violence against women. Sexual harassment is a small part of these studies and there is

needed to do comprehensive content analysis to understand and measure the sexual harassment news coverage patterns.

In addition, one research had done by Saeed (2019) about sexual harassment and the #MeToo movement. The author did a content analysis method of sexual harassment news on social media. The focus of the study was to analyze the sexual harassment tweets of two popular celebrities.

All studies, as discussed above following one pattern to analyze the media coverage of violence against women. The findings emphasized that media is not giving proper attention and coverage to sexual harassment as the frequency of sexual harassment cases are rising. The researchers had suggested analyzing the sexual harassment news content in detail to understand the media strategies to overcome this problem.

It is about to worry that when cases on sexual harassment were going high day by the day and there has been no comprehensive research done to contribute to control this social problem. There is an urgent need to study further, especially in understanding the role of media to set agendas in cultivating the public's perception and behavior. The study is to explore sexual harassment news coverage patterns to recognize media's policies about social development.

Based on the above discussion, these few studies on content analysis of sexual harassment news coverage were not sufficiently comprehensive, leaving a gap in the literature. Previous studies did not focus on the roles of media and agenda setting for sexual harassment news coverage. There has been no study measuring sexual harassment news patterns in Pakistan's national newspaper. To fill this gap in knowledge, the present study was undertaken to explore sexual harassment news patterns in the Pakistani Daily Jang newspaper. A content analysis method is useful to understand the agenda used by the media in terms of sexual harassment coverage. The study was conducted to measure content and structural attributes of sexual harassment news, news frames, news direction, and news tone and to identify the themes used by the media in terms of sexual harassment.

Content analysis is considered essential to understand that while giving sexual harassment news coverage, the media set an agenda on social problems or not. Haider and Mashud (2014) emphasized that media; especially newspaper articles about crimes generally cultivate public opinion, even though exposure to newspapers develops public knowledge, attitude, and practices. The awareness and knowledge about sexual harassment can develop an intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment, which, in turn, can help in the understanding of the issue and the public actions can clean the society from

sexual harassment. Previous studies in Pakistan had done surveys to measure sexual harassment knowledge and public practices against sexual harassment. However, there was no comprehensive study on sexual harassment news exposure, intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment, and propensity to act against sexual harassment.

In 2010, the Pakistani Parliament approved the Harassment Act to protect the rights of women. Subsequently, one pattern has been observed in studies after this harassment act. Studies had discussed workplace harassment and experiences (Ali F. , 2015), the perception, knowledge, and attitude of working women towards Harassment Act 2010 (Mahmood & Ahmad, 2011), elements (Nauman & Abbasi, 2014), differences in perception of sexual harassment impacted productive work environments (Merkin & Shah, 2014), sexual harassment experiences in working environment (Muazzam & Qayyum, 2014). None above studies explored the sexual harassment news exposure and its relation with the public's thoughts, its development of correct behavior, and intolerance against this crime.

The authors had done studies with different theories e.g. socio-cultural theory (Haider & Mashud, 2014), Neo-institutional theory (Ali F. , 2015), illusion model (Nauman & Abbasi, 2014), yet that appears that there is need to study communication theory, cultivation, to explore the relation of sexual harassment news exposure with public's knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

The previous surveys had done in the same pattern to measure the elements, perceptions of sexual harassment in a workplace area. Only one study was done by Haider and Mashud (2014) in educational institutions. The author had discussed sexual harassment as a form of violence that found mostly females reported sexual harassment happened on the street.

All the above studies were about sexual harassment survey but respondents were not students. Only two studies (Haider & Mashud, 2014; Salman, Abdullah & Saleem, 2016) were done among university students.

In addition, Haider and Mashud (2014) used the convenience-sampling method for the survey. With this limitation, the current study surveyed different educational institutes of Lahore, Pakistan.

Only two studies were done on the media coverage of sexual harassment in Malaysia literature. Alagappan and Marican (2013) reported that the local English daily newspapers addressed sexual harassment as only a general issue. A year later, they put forward the issue of sexual harassment legislation in a mainstream newspaper (Alagappan & Marican, 2014).

The above two studies had focused on the content analysis of media coverage of sexual harassment that explored that media has no specific agenda for sexual harassment coverage and dealing as a general issue that happened in the society, not as a problem.

The above-mentioned discussions acknowledged a gap in Malaysian literature in the area of sexual harassment media coverage. Studies undertaken by Alagappar and Marican (2013, 2014) were barely sufficient to enhance knowledge for future researchers. It is important to understand that detailed content analysis can identify the weaknesses of coverage. The findings of the content analysis will help to understand the importance of the media agenda in the development of a society. Besides content analysis, sexual harassment surveys also are important to understand the impact and exposure of sexual harassment news coverage.

The sexual harassment survey (Ismail, Chee, & Bee, 2007; Alagappar & Marican, 2014) has focused on workplace sexual harassment. Only two studies, (Endut et al., 2011; Yee, Alagappar & Ngeow, 2015) had focused on the perception and experiences, understanding of students in university campuses. The researchers revealed that sexual harassment was high in university campuses and experienced victims had more understanding and awareness about sexual harassment behavior.

All the above-mentioned studies worked with different theories e.g. theory of reasoned action and social cognitive theory but no study specifies the media agendas and cultivation by using cultivation and agenda-setting theory.

According to above discussion on sexual harassment indicated that similar as situations in Pakistan, there was no comprehensive study being conducted in Malaysia which measured the levels and relationships of news exposure, knowledge, intolerant attitude and propensity to act against sexual harassment, signaling the seriousness of the situation and requiring attention.

Against the above background, it is crucial to know whether students, on university campuses, have sexual harassment news exposure and knowledge about sexual harassment. It is important that students have an intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment or they take to ignore the problem. It is necessary to know whether students have the propensity to act against sexual harassment or not in both countries, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

It is also important to establish how agenda settings play their important role in the study, how and what agenda was settled by media for the news coverage, how media present the reality of sexual harassment cases, its prevention, tips,

causes, or information about it. At the same time, it is essential to explore the Cultivation Theory as to how media cultivate the public mind and behavior of the public, as it is connected with agenda-setting (Alitavoli & Kaveh, 2018).

There had been no convincing study conducted to understand that sexual harassment news content is essential in the fight against sexual harassment. News content agenda for sexual harassment preventive measures can help stop sexual harassment cases from rising. When a newspaper reader had sexual harassment news exposure, it enhanced his or her sexual harassment knowledge and can develop an intolerance for sexual harassment and a behavioral change such as reporting the incident. This is the research gap the present study aimed to address. It focuses on the agenda-setting of sexual harassment and the cultivation of news exposure, knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

The present study differed from other studies which examined only the content analysis of coverage on violence against women and survey to explore sexual harassment perception, sexual harassment case. In this study, the content analysis included structural and content attributes of news coverage, news frames, and news themes concerning sexual harassment. In the survey phase, the cultivation theory model was adopted. In the model, sexual harassment knowledge was added to understand its relationship with sexual harassment news exposure, intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment, and propensity to act against sexual harassment.

The findings from the present study are essential to understand the importance and role of agenda-setting of sexual harassment news and its cultivation. Media organizations can use the results for awareness, better content, and themes to change the thinking and actions of the public regarding sexual harassment.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions were divided into two phases. RQ1 is derived from agenda setting theory from the content analysis. RQ2 and RQ3 were derived from cultivation theory with the alignment of KAP survey.

1. What are the patterns of sexual harassment coverage in Daily Jang and Berita Harian newspapers?
2. What are the levels of SH news exposure, SH knowledge, intolerant attitude towards SH, and propensity to act against SH?



3. What is the relationship among SH news exposure, and SH knowledge, intolerant attitude towards SH, and propensity to act against SH?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Using content analysis and KAP survey, and drawing on media agenda setting and cultivation function of national newspapers, the general objective of the study was to identify the extent to which Daily Jang and Berita Harian (the two main national dailies in Pakistan and Malaysia respectively) provide significant coverage to sexual harassment news, and its exposure to determine the status of sexual harassment knowledge, intolerant attitudes towards sexual harassment and behavioral reaction to sexual harassment and the interrelationship among the variables surveyed.

The research objectives are:

- Identify the patterns of sexual harassment news coverage in Daily Jang and Berita Harian
- Identify the levels of SH news exposure, SH knowledge, intolerant attitude towards SH, and propensity to act against SH
- Determine and predict the relationships among SH news exposure, and SH knowledge, intolerant attitude towards SH, and propensity to act against SH.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the present study can be observed in four different contexts that include contributions in terms of theory, method, policy, and practical contributions presented as follows:

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Contributions**

This study envisions bridging the literature gap in the literature of media coverage of sexual harassment. The SH news exposure of respondents and knowledge, attitude and behavior statuses on SH are providing evidence-based information in terms of theory in Pakistan and Malaysia. Most studies on media coverage of sexual harassment were on the evaluation of the frequency of sexual harassment news and mostly on surveys about sexual harassment experiences of students. In Malaysia and Pakistan, media coverage on sexual harassment was not prevalent.

This study has explored the media agendas and cultivation in the open model. This study had found the relationships and levels of variables by using this model on Pakistan and the Malaysian population.

Further, this study extends and explored the patterns of SH news coverage and media agendas of Pakistan and Malaysia, which can help further in the understanding of media role in social development. It was hypothesized the relationship of SH news exposure with SH knowledge, intolerant attitude and propensity to act against SH to explore an extension or a further dimension of cultivation theory in SH media coverage in Pakistan and Malaysia.

At the same time, it can suggest relevant insights for future studies under the same approach. Finally, the present study offers a contribution to the body of knowledge in building a new model for the study.

### **1.5.2 Methodological Contributions**

Though Sabri (2017) and Green (2019) had discussed that newspaper exposure of sexual harassment does not affect readers by using cultivation theory. The author's recommendation for dealing with the added variable showed that no study that attempted such methodological possibilities. This study provides a methodological framework with the subject in regression to understand the relationship of variables. The added new variables will enhance the methodology used in previous studies or similar studies in this field by this comprehensive study.

In reality, sexual harassment news content and its exposure cannot understand by just revealing a pattern of sexual harassment news coverage. It cannot help in the prevention of sexual harassment crime. The consumption of SH information and knowledge can help to change the tolerant attitude into intolerant with the correct reaction. However, the combination of content analysis and survey methods, this study renders a comprehensive research methodology on dealing with the subject in Pakistan and Malaysia.

The instruments that were adapted and applied were according to the Malaysian and Pakistani context. This measurement will help further research in the adaptation of instruments regarding exposure, knowledge, attitude, and behavior. Moreover, results from the present study can be employed by the Ministry of Communication and Ministry of Information and Media Development as the basis for reviewing the rules on media frames, media messages, and cultivation to provide active and constructive messages to the public for the development and growth of the country.

The present study contributes to advancing the understanding of coverage patterns of sexual harassment in daily newspapers. This investigation focuses to supply exact proof that will trigger ramifications for stratagem as far as sexual harassment news coverage. It will help to understand the media responsibilities in social development and it will guide researchers to work in this manner.

### **1.5.3 Policy and Practical Contributions**

In the first instance, findings of the study will be useful to both the Malaysian and Pakistani governments for the decrease in sexual harassment crime level. It will enlighten the points that the government should do 'check and balance' on media content because of its cultivation effect. Secondly, the government can spread public service messages through media with social development and crime removal agendas. Such types of content will help to aware public about causes and reasons for sexual harassment that the public should avoid that type of situation that can cause sexual harassment.

Evidence provided by this study hopes to guide media organizations for using such strategies on sexual harassment in terms of the consideration of how sexual harassment content can be interpreted by simple audience/readers. The people of different ages, cultures, religious groups can do different interpretations of sexual harassment news content. Therefore, the news content should be more informative with awareness content about sexual harassment that can easily encode the awareness message to the public of Pakistan and Malaysia.

The results of the study will assure non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and policymakers about the level of sexual harassment knowledge, intolerant attitude, and propensity to act against sexual harassment. These results can guide them in the correct direction of work for sexual harassment awareness. Policymakers can make policies to promote reporting culture and can make laws stricter for perpetrators. Courts and organizations should punish perpetrators to assure the public trust on laws and regulations.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This quantitative study was done with two phases; content analysis and survey. This study assessed the patterns of SH news coverage in Daily Jang and Berita Harian newspapers published in the 2016 year. The whole content analysis procedure was conducted in 2017. Thus, the finding of this snapshot content analysis, by applying agenda setting theory, on the pattern of coverage is only true for the year studied.

The survey was taken place in different colleges and universities of the two countries (Malaysia and Pakistan) city named as Kuala Lumpur and Lahore by convenience sampling method. The sample size was limited to 389 for each country and the total was 778 for both countries. The target population was adult students, aged over 18 years of university and college students. This cross-sectional study investigated the level and relationship among sexual harassment news exposure, sexual harassment knowledge, intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment, and propensity to act against sexual harassment. Thus, the findings were only true for the year 2018 of Pakistani and Malaysian populations. However, the insight on the pattern of sexual harassment news coverage and status of exposure, knowledge, intolerant attitude, and preventive behavior could remain true beyond 2018 if no nationwide rigorous and comprehensive program was in place to curb sexual harassment problems.

Furthermore, the study also explored the insights of respondent's responses on SH knowledge that how much students have understanding to constitute the situations in SH category. The KAP is also applied to investigate the relationship of K-A, A-P and K-P, which interconnected to cultivation theory to fill the research gap by exploring SH news exposure among the Pakistani and Malaysian students. The multiple regression analysis was done to explored that SH news exposure and SH knowledge both are essential for developing intolerant attitude and correct behavior. Although, both countries have different religions and beliefs but the current study was done under the SH law of each country. SH law in each country is same to its citizens which shows homogeneity and the results of study can be generalized for entire Pakistan and Malaysia.

## **1.7 Definitions of Keywords**

In the present study, the conceptual and operational definitions of keywords are presented as follows:

### **1.7.1 Sexual Harassment**

The WHO (2009) defined sexual harassment as a primary form of violence and abuse by individuals in authority such as teachers, enforcement officers, or employers.

### **1.7.2 Sexual Harassment News**

The term 'Sexual Harassment news' was defined as the SH incidents reported or published in the newspaper. The general information about sexual harassment, discussion or guidelines were also reported in the newspapers to aware public. Such SH reports are called SH news in the newspaper.

### **1.7.3 Sexual Harassment News Exposure**

This is defined as the degree to frequency by which individuals read the sexual harassment news in the newspaper (Asp, Pettersson, Sandberg, Kabakyenga, & Agardh, 2014). In this study, it is referred by a composite score of respondent's responses to 5 questions on sexual harassment news exposure.

### **1.7.4 Sexual Harassment Knowledge**

This concept refers to the respondent's knowledge of sexual harassment, an understanding of what behavior constitutes sexual harassment (Gurung, Priyadarshini, & E., 2016). In this study, it is referred by a composite score of respondent's responses to 13 questions on sexual harassment knowledge.

### **1.7.5 Intolerant attitude towards Sexual Harassment**

It refers to the degree of the respondent's intolerance to acts of sexual harassment (Lipschultz & Hilt, 1994). This is measured by the aggregate of a respondent's response to 5 points 9 scale items on intolerant attitude towards sexual harassment.

### **1.7.6 Propensity to Act against Sexual Harassment**

The propensity to act against sexual harassment is a behavioral intention of a bystander and conceptually it is a supportive or helping behavior towards sexual harassment victims (Banyard, Moynihan, & Warner, 2014). In this study, it is measured by the degree of behavioral intention to express disapproval and take appropriate action to fight sexual harassment by the respondent's response to 5 points 12 scale items on the propensity to act against sexual harassment.

## 1.8 Summary

This chapter explained the essence of this study by providing the components in elaborating the topic; news coverage, exposure, knowledge, attitude, and behavior towards sexual harassment in Pakistan and Malaysia. The components were the introduction, background of the study, statement of the research problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, scope, and limitations of the study and definition of keywords. Simultaneously, this chapter also exposed the research gap that the researcher intended to fill.



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## Appendix F

### Notice To Invite Students For The Survey

Dear Students,

I am Hilal Fatima, doing PhD Mass communication from Universiti Putra Malaysia. My research is about sexual harassment and I want to do survey in your university to measure your knowledge about sexual harassment. This survey process will provides you guide line to be aware from sexual harassment. If you read Daily Jang/ Berita Harian newspaper and want to participate voluntarily then please come to main cafeteria tomorrow at afternoon. I will be there with research questionnaires. I shall be very thankful to you.

Regards,  
Hilal Fatima  
(PhD student, UPM)



## BIODATA OF STUDENT

Syeda Hilal Fatima is a Mass communication PhD student at Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. She has obtained Masters in Mass communication, specialized in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. She did Bachelors with dual degree, Bachelors in Art with the Economics, Sociology and Urdu Literature and Bachelors in Education (B.Ed) from the University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan.

Currently, she is working as a visiting faculty at Superior University and teaching subjects, "Theories of Communication and Research Methodology", she is also working as a reviewer in the **AMCAP Journal of Media and Communications Studies** and a founder of a non-profit organization named as "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION" in Pakistan and working as a chairperson that exposed her to many opportunities for growth and knowledge expansion with the serving humanity.

She had started her experience from radio of University of Punjab (PU FM 104.6) as news and program presenter, reporter, newsmaker, news editor. Her career in media industry was begun from Dunya News TV as an intern. Upon joining Dunya News TV, she was given the opportunities to undertake various important tasks such as talk show production, program planning and research. She had worked in News Room on different desks e.g. assignment, news, international and sports, packages and copyediting.

She worked at Pakistan Water and Power Authority as an intern in a press, advertising and protocol department. She took experience with Pakistan no. 1 advertising agency, named as Future Vision and worked in media buying, client services and customer services department. She worked as a Media team member with Chief Minister Youth Mobilization Committee (CMYMC). In addition, she had joined Urban Sourcing recruitment agency as a Recruitment Officer. After this, she had moved to Pakistan no. 1 furniture brand Kalamkaar as a communication and display officer at a fabric department.

Her research interests include news media, print and broadcasting media, journalism and media communication. Her wide experience and intense expansion in media industry, especially news, has sparked her interest to deepen her academic knowledge in this field. She hopes that the combination of the experience she has gained from the industry and knowledge she has acquired from her PhD will enable her to offer meaningful contributions to the nation's development.

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Fatima, H., Ghazali, A. H. A., Waheed, M., & Sern, T. J. (2021). A Conceptual Framework of Sexual Harassments News Exposure's Relationship with Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior in Pakistani and Malaysian Literature. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(15), 43– 60. (Published-ERA Indexed)

Fatima, H., Ghazali, A. H. A., Waheed, M., & Sern, T. J. (2021). A Content Analysis of Sexual Harassment news presented in Daily Jang and Berita Harian newspapers, *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*. (Submitted- SCOPUS Indexed)





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