



PERCEIVED SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG FEMALE EMPLOYEES

Tadz Mahal dela Cruz-Nicolas

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7569-5084>

Psychology Department, College of Arts and Sciences, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology,
Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Philippines

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra28618>
DOI No: 10.36713/epra28618

ABSTRACT

This study examines the link between perceived sexual harassment and help-seeking behavior among female employees in diverse organizational settings. A mixed-methods approach was used, surveying 30 women across various industries. Quantitative analysis showed a correlation between perceived harassment and the likelihood of seeking help. Qualitative interviews revealed barriers to help-seeking, including fear of retaliation, stigma, and distrust in organizational support. These findings highlight the importance of mental health programs tailored to the needs of women facing harassment. Recommendations include developing interventions that foster safe reporting environments, improving supervisor training, and creating accessible mental health resources. Addressing these issues can enhance workplace well-being and promote a healthier, more supportive work culture for female employees.

KEYWORDS: Help-Seeking Behavior, Sexual Harassment, Female Employees, Mental Health Program, Organizational Support, Workplace Safety, Intervention Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment in the workplace remains a pervasive issue that significantly affects employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and professional growth. Workplace sexual harassment encompasses a spectrum of unwanted behaviors, including verbal harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and physical contact of a sexual nature (Mun et al., 2024). Despite increasing awareness and the establishment of reporting mechanisms, many female employees continue to experience harassment without seeking formal help, highlighting a critical disconnect between awareness and action. The magnitude of underreporting in workplace sexual harassment is substantially larger than formal statistics suggest. Women frequently underreport incidents due to fear of retaliation, victim-blaming, organizational inaction, and structural power imbalances (Katti, 2025). This study emerged from the researcher's observation of recurring reports of sexual harassment in corporate environments, combined with personal engagement in organizational counseling and employee support initiatives, which revealed that victims often remain silent due to fear, shame, or distrust in institutional processes.

Recent research indicates that workplace sexual harassment is not only prevalent but also multifaceted, encompassing verbal, physical, and psychological forms of misconduct. Studies suggest that awareness of policies and reporting mechanisms alone does not necessarily translate into help-seeking behavior, as personal, social, and organizational barriers often hinder reporting. Wieberneit et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review examining the barriers to reporting, investigating, and prosecuting sexual assault. The review identified several key themes, including a pervasive lack of trust in the criminal justice system, internal responses of victims, and the influence of myths and societal norms surrounding sexual assault. Notably, even when victims are aware of the available reporting mechanisms, their distrust of the system often prevents them from pursuing formal reporting. These findings highlight the complex interplay of systemic and social factors that impede justice for survivors of sexual assault. In particular, perceived severity, type, and frequency of harassment have been examined, yet the connection between these factors and actual help-seeking

remains inconsistent, reflecting a gap between institutional frameworks and employees' lived experiences.

Female employees frequently encounter barriers that prevent them from reporting harassment, including fear of retaliation, professional repercussions, social stigma, and emotional distress. While prior research has explored individual or organizational factors influencing help-seeking, few studies have comprehensively analyzed how perceived harassment—across type, severity, and frequency—directly affects help-seeking behavior. This gap has implications for organizational policy, employee well-being, and the effectiveness of workplace interventions.

This study aims to examine the impact of perceived sexual harassment on help-seeking behavior among female employees, identifying the key factors that facilitate or inhibit reporting. Specifically, it investigates how perceptions of harassment—encompassing type, frequency, severity, and perpetrator characteristics—relate to formal and informal help-seeking decisions, timing of reporting, and confidence in organizational support systems.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theory and practice. By clarifying the relationship between perceived harassment and help-seeking behavior, the research will provide evidence-based insights to improve organizational policies, reporting procedures, and employee support programs. Furthermore, the study addresses a critical knowledge gap in the literature by integrating multiple dimensions of harassment perception with practical behavioral outcomes, offering actionable recommendations for organizations seeking to foster a safe and responsive workplace culture.

Statement of the Problem

- How may the demographic profile of respondents be described in terms of
 - Age
 - Educational Attainment
 - Employment Status
 - Years of Work Experience
 - Industry



2. How may perceived sexual harassment be described in terms of:
- a. Type of Harassment

b. frequency

c. Severity

d. Forms of Harassment

e. Perpetrator
3. How may help-seeking behavior be described in terms of:
- a. Formal

b. Help Sought

c. Source of Help

d. Timing of Help-Seeking

e. Perception of Help Efficacy
4. What are the barriers that prevent female employees from seeking help after experiencing sexual harassment?
- a. Individual Barriers:

i. Fear of retaliation,

ii. shame,

iii. self-blame,

iv. minimizing the experience,

v. awareness of reporting procedures.

b. Organizational Barriers:

i. Distrust

ii. fear of negative consequences from supervisors or coworkers,

iii. Dismissiveness
5. Do the perceive sexual harassment relationship the help seeking behavior?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study seeks to examine the relationship between perceived sexual harassment and help-seeking behavior among female employees, considering both individual and organizational barriers that may hinder reporting. The demographic profile of respondents, including age, educational attainment, employment status, years of work experience, and industry, provides important context, as these factors may influence both the likelihood of experiencing harassment and the tendency to seek help. Perceived sexual harassment is explored in terms of its type, frequency, severity, forms, and the identity of the perpetrator, capturing the scope and nature of the harassment encountered in the workplace. Help-seeking behavior is analyzed through the lens of formal reporting, types of help sought, sources of support, timing of help-seeking, and perceptions of help efficacy, highlighting how employees respond to harassment. The study further considers barriers that prevent female employees from seeking help, categorized into individual barriers—such as fear of retaliation, shame, self-blame, minimizing the experience, and lack of awareness of reporting procedures—and organizational barriers, including distrust, fear of negative consequences from supervisors or coworkers, and dismissiveness of complaints. This framework posits that perceived sexual harassment directly impacts help-seeking behavior, while individual and organizational barriers may moderate this

relationship, potentially inhibiting employees from reporting or seeking support. Overall, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how harassment experiences, personal and workplace factors, and perceived barriers interact to shape help-seeking behavior among female employees.

METHOD

The study employed explanatory mixed-methods design to comprehensively examine the factors influencing help-seeking behaviors among female employees who have experienced workplace sexual harassment in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. The quantitative phase involved 30 purposively selected female employees with firsthand experience of sexual harassment. Data were gathered through a self-constructed and validated questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items (4 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree), which underwent reliability testing to ensure accuracy and consistency of responses. The administration process included distributing the questionnaire to identified participants, collecting completed forms, and encoding the data for statistical analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean with verbal interpretation, and Pearson r correlation to determine demographic patterns, central tendencies, and the relationships between types, frequency, severity, and forms of harassment and help-seeking behaviors.

The second phase of the study utilized a qualitative approach to deepen and contextualize the quantitative findings. Seven participants from the initial sample were selected for in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore areas with notably high or low quantitative results. Interviews were conducted individually in private and secure settings, with responses recorded with participants’ consent, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis. This analytical process involved coding, identifying recurring patterns, and generating themes that captured nuanced experiences, emotions, and perceptions related to workplace sexual harassment.

The chosen methodologies align with the study’s goal of understanding the underlying factors that shape help-seeking behavior among affected female employees. The mixed-methods approach provided both measurable evidence and rich qualitative insights, allowing the quantitative results to establish overall patterns while the qualitative data offered explanations for contradictions, unexpected findings, or weak correlations—particularly those influenced by fear, shame, workplace culture, or distrust in reporting mechanisms. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate due to the sensitivity of the topic, ensuring that only individuals with direct experience contributed to the data. Collectively, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative results yielded a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of workplace sexual harassment, strengthening the study’s implications for policy development and institutional interventions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-24 years old	16.7	16.7
25-34 years old	53.3	53.3
35-44 years old	20.0	20.0
45-54 years old	10.0	10.0
55 years old and above	0	0
Total	30	100



Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	4	13.3
College Graduate	17	56.7
Postgraduate (Master’s, PhD)	9	30.0
Total	30	100
Employment Status		
Full-time	25	83.3
Part-time	1	3.3
Contractual/Project-based	4	13.3
Total	30	100
Years of Work Experience		
Less than 1 year	4	13.3
1-3 years	4	13.3
4-6 years	8	26.7
7-10 years	5	16.7
More than 10 years	9	30.0
Total	30	100
Industry		
Education	9	30.0
Finance/Banking	6	20.0
Retail	2	6.7
Government/Public Sector	12	40.0
Hospital	1	3.3
Total	30	100

The participants were predominantly young to mid-career professionals, with the largest group aged 25–34 (53.3%), mostly college-educated (56.7%) and employed full-time (83.3%). A significant portion had over 10 years of work experience (30.0%), and most worked in the government (40.0%) and education sectors (30.0%). All respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment, yet only 23.3% formally reported it, indicating a substantial gap between victimization and help-seeking. The findings highlight a critical mismatch between experience and reporting of sexual harassment. Although all

participants experienced harassment, the fact that only a small fraction (7 out of 30) formally reported it demonstrates deep-seated challenges in workplace reporting systems. Despite respondents' generally high educational levels and substantial work experience, many still abstained from reporting, suggesting that simply knowing one’s rights may not be enough to overcome workplace pressures or fear of negative consequences. The strong representation of individuals from the government and education sectors may further indicate institutional barriers, such as rigid hierarchies or procedural complexities, which can discourage victims from seeking help.

2. Perceived Sexual Harassment

Table 2. Perceive Sexual Harassment

Type of Harassment (Multiple Response)	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal: Includes comments, jokes, catcalls, sexual advances, or suggestive remarks.	24	80
Non-verbal: Body language, inappropriate gestures, leering, or suggestive stares.	12	40
Physical: Unwanted touching, grabbing, or other forms of physical contact.	8	26.66
Visual: Exposure to explicit images or videos, or inappropriate messages (e.g., emails, texts).	3	10
Cyber: Harassment via digital platforms, such as social media, email, or texting.	5	16.66
Total	30	173.32
Frequency		
Isolated Incident: The harassment occurred only once.	19	63.33
Repeated: The harassment happens regularly or on multiple occasions.	4	13.33
Continuous: Ongoing behavior that is part of a pattern over time.	0	0
Occasional: Happens sporadically but still impacts the individual.	7	23.33
Total	30	100
Severity		
Low: Minor discomfort, e.g., a single inappropriate joke or comment.	21	70
Moderate: Repeated harassment causing discomfort or distress, but without severe consequences.	7	23.33
High: Severe emotional or physical impact, including threats, blackmail, or assault.	0	0
Critical: Harassment that results in long-lasting psychological trauma, job loss, or physical harm.	2	6.66



Total	30	100
Forms of Harassment (Multiple Responses)		
Quid Pro Quo: Where submission to harassment is tied to job benefits (e.g., promotions, salary increases).	11	36.66
Hostile Work Environment: Harassment that creates an intimidating or offensive work environment.	16	53.33
Retaliatory Harassment: Harassment occurring in response to a complaint or report made by the victim.	4	13.33
Gender-based Harassment: Harassment targeting someone based on gender or gender identity.	7	23.33
Total	37	126.65
Perpetrator (Multiple Responses)		
Position of Power: Is the harasser in a superior role (e.g., manager, supervisor)?	13	43.33
Peer/Colleague: Is the harasser at the same organizational level?	13	43.33
Subordinate: Harassment by someone in a lower role or with less power.	2	6.66
Known or Unknown: Is the harasser someone familiar to the victim (colleague) or a stranger?	6	20
Gender of Harasser: Male, female, or other gender identities, which may influence the dynamic.	5	16.66
Group or Individual: Was the harassment carried out by a single person or a group?	3	10
Total	42	140

The findings indicate that verbal harassment is the most prevalent form of workplace misconduct, reported by 80% of respondents, followed by non-verbal (40%), physical (26.66%), and cyber harassment (16.66%), with visual harassment least common (10%). Most incidents were isolated (63.33%) and rated as low severity (70%), though hostile work environment cases (53.33%) and quid pro quo harassment (36.66%) were also reported. Perpetrators were primarily superiors and peers (both 43.33%), while harassment by subordinates or groups was rare.

These results suggest that harassment is widespread yet often subtle and normalized, particularly verbal misconduct, which may be downplayed by victims and contribute to underreporting. The predominance of isolated, low-severity incidents indicates that harassment often occurs opportunistically, while repeated micro-harassments cumulatively create a hostile

work environment. The involvement of both authority figures and peers highlights that harassment is not solely a power-related issue but reflects broader organizational and cultural challenges. Overall, the data underscore the need for preventive measures, robust reporting mechanisms, and continuous education to foster a respectful and safe workplace. The findings indicate that verbal harassment is frequently minimized, which discourages women from coming forward. Additionally, fear of retaliation and the imbalance of power within the workplace often protect perpetrators, preventing victims from reporting incidents. Participants also described experiencing considerable emotional and psychological distress that impacted both their work and personal lives. Furthermore, the absence of organizational support contributes to maintaining a culture of silence (Ahmad, Gul, Rahman, & Din, 2025).

3. Help-Seeking Behavior

Table 3. Formal

Formal	WM	Verbal Description
I would feel more comfortable reporting sexual harassment through official company channels rather than confiding in friends or family.	3.07	Agree
I believe that formal reporting procedures are more effective in addressing sexual harassment than seeking support from personal networks.	3.20	Agree
If I experienced sexual harassment at work, I would prefer to seek help from a designated HR representative rather than discussing it with colleagues.	3.43	Strongly Agree
I trust that my company's official reporting system for sexual harassment would protect my privacy better than confiding in personal contacts.	3.13	Agree
I feel that using formal reporting channels for sexual harassment would lead to more concrete actions than seeking informal support from friends or family.	3.20	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.21	Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00		

The highest rating reflects a strong preference for seeking help from a designated HR representative rather than discussing harassment with colleagues (WM = 3.43, Strongly Agree). This indicates that employees believe formal institutional

mechanisms should be the primary avenue for reporting sexual harassment. Closely following are two statements with equal importance: the perception that formal procedures are more effective (WM = 3.20, Agree) and the belief that formal channels



lead to more concrete actions (WM = 3.20, Agree). These results show that employees expect the company to have functional and reliable reporting systems capable of addressing the issue. Agreement is also seen in the trust given to privacy protection within formal systems (WM = 3.13, Agree), suggesting that employees feel their confidentiality would be better guarded by organizational procedures. The lowest rating, though still positive, is the comfort in reporting through official channels rather than confiding in friends or family (WM = 3.07, Agree), indicating lingering hesitation despite overall trust in formal mechanisms. Taken together, the overall weighted mean of 3.21 (Agree) shows a clear belief that the company should have strong reporting processes—yet the pattern also reflects that employees still do not report incidents, implying the presence of fear, uncertainty, or perceived barriers even with strong agreement toward formal systems.

The results suggest that while employees conceptually trust formal reporting systems and believe they are more effective and secure than informal support, this trust does not automatically translate to actual reporting behavior. Employees may trust formal systems in theory but still doubt their personal safety in using them—an overlooked distinction that explains why standardized trust measures correlate positively with formal systems despite low actual reporting (Han et al., 2020). The strong inclination toward HR assistance reflects expectations that trained personnel can address harassment professionally. The agreement about privacy and concrete actions indicates that employees value structured, confidential processes. However, the lower comfort level, though still agreeable, hints at emotional or psychological barriers that continue to prevent reporting—such as fear of

retaliation, embarrassment, or lack of confidence in how cases are handled in real practice. This gap between positive perceptions and actual reporting behavior suggests that employees believe the company should have effective systems, but may not feel entirely safe or empowered to use them.

Three central qualitative themes emerge from the findings: institutional trust in theory, fear-driven silence, and expectation for organizational responsibility. The theme of institutional trust in theory appears because employees strongly agree with the value, effectiveness, and privacy of formal reporting systems. They intellectually support these systems and believe they are the proper pathway for addressing harassment. However, a contrasting theme—fear-driven silence—emerges when comparing the strong agreement to formal reporting with the reality that many still do not report. This suggests underlying concerns such as fear of repercussions, doubts about fairness, or emotional hesitation that prevent employees from acting on their beliefs. The third theme, expectation for organizational responsibility, is evident in the belief that formal systems should lead to concrete actions. Employees see the company as responsible for providing secure, confidential, and trustworthy channels. Collectively, these themes highlight a workplace where employees recognize the importance of formal reporting systems and expect the organization to uphold them, but emotional and structural barriers may still hinder their willingness to come forward. Fear of retaliation is the main psychological barrier to reporting despite positive views of the system. In emergency medicine, 48% of operating room staff witnessed reporting systems being used for retaliation, bullying, or intimidation (Shinkunas et al., 2025).

Table 4. Help Sought

Help Sought	WM	Verbal Description
When faced with sexual harassment, seeking various forms of assistance is important for my well-being.	3.47	Strongly Agree
I believe that different types of help (such as emotional support, legal advice, and workplace intervention) are equally valuable in addressing sexual harassment.	3.53	Strongly Agree
Seeking help in cases of sexual harassment should be a straightforward and accessible process in the workplace.	3.57	Strongly Agree
The type of assistance I would seek for sexual harassment depends on the severity and nature of the incident.	3.33	Strongly Agree
I feel that organizations should provide multiple channels for seeking help in cases of sexual harassment.	3.50	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.48	Strongly Agree
Legend: 1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74]; 2- Disagree [1.75-2.49]; 3- Agree [2.50-3.24]; 4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The item with the highest weighted mean (WM = 3.57, Strongly Agree) shows that respondents firmly believe that seeking help for sexual harassment should be simple and accessible within the workplace. This indicates a strong expectation for clear, user-friendly reporting systems and immediate support. The second highest score (WM = 3.53, Strongly Agree) reflects strong recognition that multiple types of assistance—emotional, legal, and organizational—are all important in addressing sexual harassment, demonstrating respondents’ awareness that such issues require comprehensive support. Likewise, respondents strongly agree that organizations must provide several avenues for seeking help (WM = 3.50), reinforcing the desire for varied and responsive mechanisms. A slightly lower but still strong agreement (WM = 3.47) indicates that seeking help is essential for their well-being, suggesting that employees acknowledge the personal impact of harassment and

the value of support. The lowest weighted mean (WM = 3.33) still falls within strong agreement, implying that respondents understand that the type of help they seek varies depending on the incident’s severity. Overall, the general mean of 3.48 shows that employees overwhelmingly support having structured, accessible, and diverse forms of assistance for sexual harassment concerns.

The results collectively suggest that respondents highly value organizational systems that make reporting sexual harassment straightforward and supportive. Their strong agreement across all items shows that employees expect companies to be proactive in providing emotional, legal, and procedural assistance. The high ratings also imply that employees recognize the seriousness of sexual harassment and the need for flexible help-seeking options that can be tailored depending on the situation. Although the respondents believe strongly in the



importance of such mechanisms, the findings subtly indicate that while they think the company should have these systems, it is possible that the actual reporting or utilization of such support remains limited or underused. The consistently high level of agreement reflects a workforce that is aware of its rights and support needs, highlighting a gap between expectations and what may currently be practiced or visible in the organization. Research reveals a critical misalignment between what employees expect from harassment reporting systems and what they actually receive (Liu & Su, 2025).

A key emerging theme from the results is the employees' strong desire for accessible, comprehensive, and adaptable support systems for sexual harassment, paired with an implied hesitation or lack of actual reporting behavior. Their strong agreement on the need for multiple help channels and accessible processes indicates a belief that companies must ensure not just awareness but also ease of use and trustworthiness of these

support mechanisms. The most significant finding—centered on the highest weighted mean—shows that employees want a reporting system that is clear and uncomplicated. Yet, the underlying tone across the responses suggests that although employees think such systems should exist, they may not be fully confident that these mechanisms are currently effective, visible, or safe to use. This disconnect hints at a culture where awareness of support is strong, but actual utilization may be limited due to fears of stigma, retaliation, or lack of trust in organizational follow-through. The theme emphasizes the need for companies not only to create support structures but also to communicate, demonstrate, and reinforce their reliability and confidentiality so employees feel empowered to seek help when harassment occurs. When harassment issues do occur, cultural and systemic barriers—including ingrained organizational norms and inadequate procedures—hinder reporting and support-seeking behavior (Borkar et al., 2025).

Table 5. Source of Help

Source of Help	WM	Verbal Description
I believe that formal channels like Human Resources or labor unions are the most appropriate sources for seeking help in cases of workplace sexual harassment.	3.37	Strongly Agree
Confiding with friends and family an essential part of the help-seeking process when dealing with sexual harassment at work.	3.43	Strongly Agree
Professional help, such as therapists or counselors, plays a crucial role in addressing the impacts of workplace sexual harassment.	3.60	Strongly Agree
The choice of where to seek help for sexual harassment should depend on the individual's comfort level and the specific circumstances of the incident.	3.43	Strongly Agree
A combination of formal, informal, and professional sources of help is ideal for effectively addressing workplace sexual harassment.	3.53	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.47	Strongly Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The highest weighted mean (WM = 3.60, Strongly Agree) shows that respondents place the greatest importance on professional help, such as counselors or therapists, indicating strong acknowledgment that workplace sexual harassment has emotional and psychological impacts requiring expert support. This is followed by agreement that a combination of formal, informal, and professional sources is the ideal approach to address harassment cases (WM = 3.53), suggesting that employees believe no single support system is sufficient and that multiple layers of assistance should be available. Two items share the next highest score (WM = 3.43): confiding in friends and family and choosing help sources based on comfort level and situational context. These results imply that personal support networks and individualized decision-making are equally important in the help-seeking process. The lowest weighted mean (WM = 3.37) still reflects strong agreement that formal mechanisms such as HR or labor unions are appropriate channels, but respondents rank these lower than emotional and professional support systems. The overall weighted mean of 3.47, also interpreted as Strongly Agree, demonstrates a consistent expectation that different forms of help must exist within and outside the workplace; however, the pattern hints that despite recognizing these available sources, actual reporting to formal systems may still not be happening.

The findings reveal that respondents understand workplace sexual harassment as an issue requiring diverse, accessible, and supportive resources. Their strongest agreement with professional help suggests that they view harassment not only as a procedural concern but also as an emotional and psychological burden needing specialized intervention. While

sexual harassment affects significant proportions of workforces globally—with prevalence rates ranging from 26% to 44% depending on occupational sector and geographic region (Debnath et al., 2025)—harassment extends beyond sexual forms to include psychological and verbal abuse, discrimination, and bullying (Bunce et al., 2024). The high value placed on combining different help sources further indicates that employees prefer an ecosystem of support rather than a single, rigid reporting path. Their equal emphasis on personal comfort and the role of friends and family shows that help-seeking is deeply influenced by trust and emotional safety. Although formal channels are still accepted as appropriate avenues, the lower ranking suggests that employees may perceive them as less approachable or less effective. Altogether, the results imply that while employees believe organizations should provide strong support systems, these may not be fully trusted or utilized, hinting at a gap between awareness and actual reporting behavior.

A prominent theme emerging from the data is the need for a multi-layered support system that feels safe, flexible, and emotionally responsive, contrasted with employees' hesitation to rely on formal channels. The strongest finding—the high regard for professional psychological support—suggests that employees silently carry emotional distress that they may not feel comfortable disclosing to the organization itself. Meanwhile, their preference for combining formal, informal, and professional sources points to a desire for reassurance, safety, and choice in navigating such sensitive experiences. This pattern subtly indicates that while employees think companies should have strong reporting systems, they may still avoid formally reporting



harassment because of fears such as retaliation, stigma, distrust in HR processes, or doubts about confidentiality. The theme highlights a crucial insight: employees value support, but they value psychological comfort and personal safety even more, and unless companies strengthen trust, transparency, and protection mechanisms, formal reporting will remain underutilized. This underscores the need for organizations to not only establish

procedures but also build a culture where employees genuinely feel safe seeking help. Sexual harassment and assault among military personnel are associated with severe long-term mental health consequences, including depression, PTSD, and suicidal ideation, with the combination of both harassment and assault producing particularly deleterious outcomes (Galovski et al., 2023).

Table 6. Timing of Help-Seeking

Timing of Help-Seeking	WM	Verbal Description
Seeking help immediately after experiencing sexual harassment is crucial for addressing the issue effectively.	3.43	Strongly Agree
The timing of help-seeking for sexual harassment can significantly impact the outcome and available support options.	3.47	Strongly Agree
Delayed help-seeking in cases of sexual harassment is understandable due to various personal and professional factors.	3.10	Agree
The passage of time between experiencing sexual harassment and seeking help does not diminish the importance or validity of the complaint.	3.33	Strongly Agree
Organizational policies should accommodate and support help-seeking for sexual harassment incidents regardless of when they occurred.	3.47	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.36	Strongly Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The highest weighted means (WM = 3.47, Strongly Agree) indicate that respondents strongly believe two things: first, that the timing of help-seeking significantly affects the outcome, and second, that organizational policies should support employees regardless of when the harassment occurred. This reflects an expectation that companies must maintain flexible, responsive, and non-punitive systems for reporting harassment. Close behind, respondents also strongly agree (WM = 3.43) that seeking help immediately is crucial for effectively addressing the issue, suggesting awareness that prompt action may prevent escalation. The next highest score (WM = 3.33, Strongly Agree) highlights that even if help is sought later, the complaint remains valid. This shows a recognition that delayed reporting is still legitimate. The lowest weighted mean (WM = 3.10, Agree) acknowledges that delayed help-seeking is understandable, reflecting the reality that many employees hesitate to report due to fear, uncertainty, or workplace power dynamics. The overall weighted mean of 3.36 (Strongly Agree) reflects a collective belief that while timing matters, employees still expect the company to have supportive mechanisms in place, even though many may still be reluctant to report harassment promptly—or at all.

The results show that respondents highly value strong and flexible organizational systems for managing sexual harassment concerns. The highest ratings indicate that employees understand both the practical and emotional weight of timing: while early reporting is ideal, the organization must still respect and support late disclosures. This suggests that employees believe their workplaces should prioritize responsiveness, fairness, and non-retaliatory practices regardless of when an incident is reported. However, the lower rating for the item about delayed

help-seeking being understandable reveals that although employees recognize the importance of timely action, they also quietly acknowledge personal barriers that prevent them from speaking up immediately. This pattern implies that while employees believe companies should offer robust support, they themselves may still struggle with fears or uncertainties that stop them from reporting harassment as soon as it happens. Research examining organizational silence across diverse contexts reveals that employees harbor concerns about retaliation, career advancement, social exclusion, and personal embarrassment (Gelevardi et al., 2025).

A clear emerging theme is “The Tension Between Expectation and Hesitation.” Respondents strongly agree that help should be sought immediately and that companies should support reporting at any point, signaling high expectations for organizational readiness. Yet the acknowledgment that delayed reporting is understandable exposes an underlying emotional struggle—employees believe timely reporting is important, but they may still feel unsafe, unprepared, or afraid to come forward. This reveals a gap between what employees know should happen and what they feel able to do in real situations. The most significant finding is the high value placed on supportive policies regardless of timing, meaning employees want reassurance that their experiences will be respected even if they cannot report immediately. Such assurance can empower employees to eventually disclose their experiences, knowing they will not be dismissed or penalized for the delay (Ahmad et al., 2025). This suggests a deeper need for organizations to build not only policy but also trust, psychological safety, and a nonjudgmental environment. Without these, employees may continue to delay or avoid reporting harassment despite understanding its importance.



Table 7. Perception of Help Efficacy

Perception of Help Efficacy	WM	Verbal Description
Seeking help for sexual harassment in the workplace generally leads to positive outcomes.	3.17	Agree
The effectiveness of help-seeking in cases of sexual harassment depends largely on the support systems in place within the organization.	3.37	Strongly Agree
Individuals who seek help for sexual harassment are more likely to feel empowered and see positive changes in their work environment.	3.20	Agree
The perceived efficacy of help-seeking influences an individual's willingness to report future incidents of sexual harassment.	3.47	Strongly Agree
Organizations that demonstrate the effectiveness of their sexual harassment support systems encourage more employees to seek help when needed.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.36	Strongly Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The perception of help efficacy is highest for the belief that organizations demonstrating effective sexual harassment support systems encourage more employees to seek help, with a weighted mean of 3.57 (Strongly Agree). This reveals that respondents see organizational performance and visible results as a strong motivator for reporting. The next highest item (WM = 3.47, Strongly Agree) indicates that respondents believe the perceived effectiveness of help-seeking strongly influences willingness to report future incidents, suggesting that employees judge the reporting system based on its outcomes. This is followed by the view that the effectiveness of help-seeking relies heavily on organizational support systems (WM = 3.37, Strongly Agree), showing that employees consider the company’s structure and response mechanisms as central to positive outcomes. Meanwhile, items with lower weighted means—WM = 3.20 and 3.17 (Agree)—indicate that while employees believe help-seeking generally leads to empowerment and positive outcomes, they are less certain about these benefits compared to their expectations of the organization’s role. The overall weighted mean of 3.36 (Strongly Agree) shows that respondents generally have high expectations for organizational support, even though many still do not report harassment, likely due to doubts about whether these systems will work in real-life situations.

The results indicate a strong belief that effective organizational systems directly shape employees’ willingness to report sexual harassment. Respondents clearly see the organization’s response—not merely the act of seeking help—as the deciding factor for whether help-seeking feels useful or safe. The highest ratings show that employees rely heavily on the company to prove that reporting leads to meaningful change. However, the lower ratings for items involving personal outcomes like empowerment or positive change suggest that

employees may not be fully confident that these results actually occur. This pattern means employees think the company should provide strong and effective support, yet at the same time may not fully trust that such systems truly deliver the outcomes they expect. As a result, even if they believe in the importance of help-seeking, they may still hesitate or choose not to report, reflecting a disconnect between expectations and lived experiences. Research indicates that coworker support and organization-based self-esteem are crucial factors that lead to positive impacts on perceived effectiveness of formal reporting (Park, 2021).

A key emerging theme is Reporting Depends on Proven Organizational Support. Respondents strongly emphasize that the effectiveness of help-seeking—and the decision to report—depends on the company’s demonstrated ability to handle sexual harassment cases fairly and effectively. This theme illustrates a central tension: employees believe that companies should have strong systems, but their lower confidence in actual outcomes suggests that many remain uncertain about whether these systems truly work. The most significant qualitative insight is that employees do not merely need policies—they need visible evidence that reporting leads to genuine results. Without this demonstrated effectiveness, employees may continue withholding reports even as they express strong agreement about the importance of help-seeking. This shows that the barrier to reporting is not lack of awareness but lack of trust, highlighting the need for organizations to transform policies into consistently credible and transparent practices. The presence of confidential and accessible reporting systems, coupled with leadership support to follow-up with employees, has been identified as essential for promoting formal reporting of workplace violence and harassment (Lee et al., 2024).

4. Barriers That Prevent Female Employees from Seeking Help After Experiencing Sexual Harassment

1.1. Individual Barriers

Table 8. Fear of retaliation,

Fear of retaliation,	WM	Verbal Description
Fear of retaliation is a significant factor that prevents employees from seeking help for sexual harassment.	3.40	Strongly Agree
The potential for negative career consequences often outweighs the desire to report sexual harassment in the workplace.	3.43	Strongly Agree
Organizations should have strong anti-retaliation policies to encourage help-seeking behavior for sexual harassment.	3.53	Strongly Agree
Concerns about social ostracism or workplace isolation can deter individuals from seeking help for sexual harassment.	3.40	Strongly Agree
The fear of not being believed or taken seriously is a major barrier to reporting sexual harassment and seeking help.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.47	Strongly Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		



The highest weighted mean in this category reflects the belief that the fear of not being believed or taken seriously is a major barrier to reporting sexual harassment (WM 3.57, Strongly Agree). This shows that employees view credibility concerns as the strongest deterrent to seeking help. Following this is the view that organizations should implement strong anti-retaliation policies to support help-seeking behavior (WM 3.53, Strongly Agree), emphasizing employees’ demand for structural protections. The next highest mean expresses that potential negative career consequences often outweigh an individual’s desire to report harassment (WM 3.43, Strongly Agree), highlighting the perceived professional risks involved. Concerns about social ostracism also show a strong deterrent effect (WM 3.40, Strongly Agree), suggesting that workplace relationships and belonging heavily influence reporting decisions. Finally, fear of retaliation as a factor preventing employees from seeking help also holds a strong rating (WM 3.40, Strongly Agree). The overall weighted mean of 3.47 (Strongly Agree) indicates that employees overwhelmingly view retaliation and related fears as substantial barriers to reporting sexual harassment.

The results reveal an environment where employees strongly feel that retaliation—whether professional, social, or emotional—has a decisive influence on their willingness to seek help for sexual harassment. The highest concern centers on the fear of being dismissed or disbelieved, which implies a lack of trust in organizational validation. The strong agreement on the need for robust anti-retaliation policies further underscores a perceived vulnerability within the workplace. These fears are reinforced by the belief that reporting could harm career progression or lead to isolation. Importantly, even though employees express strong concerns about retaliation, the company still did not report or act on the actual incident, which deepens the disconnect between what employee’s need for safety

and what the organization practices. Qualitative themes that likely arise include institutional distrust, fear of punitive consequences, silencing through social pressure, lack of organizational follow-through, and psychological insecurity due to anticipated disbelief. In Cypriot workplaces, the majority of participants (51.1%) who experienced harassment did not report it, with common reasons being concerns that "it won't become an issue," fear of stigmatization, and worries about career impact (Prodromou et al., 2025)

The findings portray a workplace climate where fear of retaliation is deeply embedded in employees’ perceptions of sexual harassment reporting. The uniformly high weighted means suggest not only individual anxieties but also a collective recognition of systemic risks. Despite policies or stated commitments, employees sense that reporting may jeopardize career mobility, disrupt social relationships, or result in them being dismissed or doubted. The company’s failure to report or address the incident that occurred reinforces these fears, signaling to employees that speaking up may lead to negative consequences rather than protection. This contradiction between institutional expectations and lived realities shapes qualitative themes such as organizational silence, perceived punishment for speaking out, fear-based compliance, erosion of trust, and vulnerability created by inconsistent enforcement. The results emphasize that employees want stronger anti-retaliation safeguards not merely in policy form but in actual practice. Without consistent action, transparency, and protection, the fear of retaliation will continue to overshadow employees’ rights to safety and justice in the workplace. Fear of retaliation is particularly significant. Research on sexual harassment in entertainment and other industries demonstrates that over 50% of victims refrain from coming forward due to fears related to workplace dynamics (Samuel-Onkon, 2024).

Table 9. Shame

Shame	WM	Verbal Description
Feelings of shame or embarrassment often prevent individuals from seeking help for sexual harassment experiences.	3.53	Strongly Agree
The stigma associated with being a victim of sexual harassment can be a significant barrier to reporting incidents.	3.43	Strongly Agree
Organizations should actively work to reduce the sense of shame that victims of sexual harassment may feel.	3.60	Strongly Agree
Self-blame is a common reaction to sexual harassment that can hinder help-seeking behavior.	3.37	Strongly Agree
Educating employees about the nature of sexual harassment can help reduce feelings of shame and encourage help-seeking.	3.60	Strongly Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.51	Strongly Agree

Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]

The highest weighted means in this category show strong agreement that organizations should actively work to reduce the sense of shame victims may feel and that educating employees can help decrease shame and encourage help-seeking (both WM 3.60, Strongly Agree). These responses highlight a high level of awareness among employees about the need for organizational support and education. The next highest rating indicates that feelings of shame and embarrassment often prevent individuals from seeking help for sexual harassment (WM 3.53, Strongly Agree), suggesting that emotional barriers are deeply influential. Following this is the view that stigma associated with being a victim serves as a major barrier to reporting incidents (WM 3.43, Strongly Agree), reflecting concern about how victims may be perceived within the workplace. The lowest weighted mean, though still strongly endorsed, is the belief that self-blame is a common reaction that hinders reporting (WM

3.37, Strongly Agree). The overall weighted mean of 3.51 (Strongly Agree) shows a consistent and strong perception that shame is a major obstacle to help-seeking behavior.

The findings suggest that employees widely recognize shame, embarrassment, stigma, and self-blame as powerful deterrents that prevent individuals from reporting sexual harassment or seeking support. The emphasis on organizational responsibility—seen in the highest means—indicates that employees expect the company to take an active role in reducing these barriers. The strong agreement that education can reduce shame implies a belief in prevention not only through rules but through awareness and empowerment. However, despite this understanding of emotional barriers, the organization still did not report or address the actual incident, which reinforces the very feelings of stigma and silence the employees identify. This discrepancy suggests that while workers understand what support



should look like, the organizational environment may still foster shame through inaction. Qualitative themes that may surface include internalized guilt, fear of social judgment, emotional vulnerability, institutional neglect of emotional well-being, and the need for trauma-informed practices. Societal stigma emerged as a major barrier in research on female healthcare workers in India (Islam et al., 2025). In many cultures, sexual harassment—and particularly sexual harassment of women—is associated with shame, honor, and sexual propriety in ways that burden the victim rather than the perpetrator.

The strong agreement across all items demonstrates that shame is viewed as a critical emotional barrier that significantly limits help-seeking behavior in cases of sexual harassment. Employees recognize that victims often struggle with embarrassment, stigma, and self-blame—feelings that can be intensified when organizations fail to act. The company’s failure to report or respond to the incident creates an environment where

silence becomes normalized and victims may feel that coming forward will only magnify their shame. This disconnect between employees’ expectations of organizational involvement and the institution’s actual inaction produces qualitative themes such as reinforced silence, lack of emotional safety, institutional invalidation, psychological isolation, and unaddressed trauma. Although employees clearly believe in the value of education and organizational intervention, the workplace’s failure to demonstrate these values in practice undermines trust and perpetuates emotional barriers. To reduce shame and empower victims, the organization must actively implement educational programs, ensure consistent reporting procedures, and visibly support those who come forward. When organizations are perceived as tolerant of sexual harassment, victims show higher vulnerability to future harassment, increased harassment fatigue, and lower resilience. Formal reporting of sexual harassment is associated with lower victim resilience. (Ford et al., 2021)

Table 10. Self-Blame

Self Blame	WM	Verbal Description
I feel that my own actions or behavior may have contributed to the sexual harassment I experienced at work.	2.43	Disagree
If I had dressed or acted differently, the sexual harassment might not have occurred.	2.30	Disagree
I believe that my inability to handle workplace situations effectively led to the sexual harassment.	2.23	Disagree
I often think that I should have been able to prevent the sexual harassment from happening.	2.70	Agree
My personal weaknesses or flaws are likely reasons why I became a target of sexual harassment.	2.37	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.41	Disagree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The item with the highest weighted mean (WM = 2.70, Agree) indicates that many respondents feel personally responsible for not preventing the sexual harassment, suggesting internalized pressure to control situations beyond their responsibility. The next highest (WM = 2.43, Disagree) reflects that while some employees blame themselves, a majority still reject the idea that their actions directly caused the harassment. This trend continues across items such as thinking that dressing or acting differently would have changed the outcome (WM = 2.30, Disagree), believing that poor handling of workplace situations contributed to the incident (WM = 2.23, Disagree), and attributing the harassment to personal flaws (WM = 2.37, Disagree). These relatively lower means show a pattern of general rejection of self-blame, though not without pockets of internalized guilt. The overall weighted mean of 2.41 (Disagree) demonstrates that respondents largely do not believe they are at fault for the harassment they experienced. However, the one item that reached the “Agree” threshold suggests that self-doubt still lingers, especially regarding perceived failure to prevent the incident.

The results suggest that while employees generally understand that sexual harassment is not their fault, a significant psychological burden persists, primarily reflected in the belief that they “should have prevented it.” This internal conflict may stem from organizational silence, lack of formal reporting mechanisms, or absence of supportive interventions—conditions that leave employees feeling isolated and wondering whether they could have acted differently. Because the company should have reported and addressed the incident but failed to do so, employees may unconsciously adopt responsibility, filling the accountability

void left by the institution. Qualitative responses are likely to reflect themes such as self-doubt, fear of retaliation, normalization of inappropriate behavior, and lack of institutional support, all of which reinforce internalized self-blame even when respondents rationally reject most forms of personal fault. The persistent internal dialogue of self-blame—replaying incidents while blaming oneself for aspects of the experience—creates chronic psychological stress that extends far beyond immediate post-harassment periods (Harbishettar & Math, 2014).

Overall, the findings reveal a complex emotional landscape among employees who experienced sexual harassment. Most participants reject the notion that their clothing, behavior, or personal shortcomings caused the incident, consistent with broader research showing that victims rarely trigger harassment through their actions. However, the highest mean score indicates a strong sense of personal responsibility for not preventing the harassment, which can be interpreted as a coping mechanism in environments where proper reporting systems are weak or absent. The qualitative themes likely revolve around organizational neglect, power imbalance, lack of safe reporting channels, and internal conflicts between rational understanding and emotional burden. When the company fails to report or act on incidents, employees are left without validation, institutional protection, or justice. This promotes an environment where individuals may continue questioning their actions and feeling partially to blame. Thus, although self-blame is generally low, the data suggests that institutional failures indirectly fuel lingering guilt, emphasizing the urgent need for the organization to implement transparent reporting procedures, active follow-up mechanisms, and psychological support.



Table 11. Minimizing The Experience

Minimizing the Experience,	WM	Verbal Description
The sexual harassment I experienced at work was not serious enough to report or seek help for.	2.40	Disagree
I believe that what happened to me is just a normal part of workplace interactions.	2.20	Disagree
Compared to what others might experience, the sexual harassment I faced was not severe enough to make a fuss about.	2.37	Disagree
I often tell myself that the sexual harassment I encountered wasn't a big deal.	2.27	Disagree
The impact of the sexual harassment on my work life is too minor to justify seeking professional help or support.	2.37	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.32	Disagree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

Among the statements on minimizing the experience of sexual harassment, the highest weighted mean appears in the belief that the incident was not serious enough to report or seek help for (WM 2.40, Disagree). Although the general response leans toward disagreement, its position as the highest mean indicates that some respondents still entertained the possibility that the harassment did not warrant formal action. This is followed by two items with equal weighted means (WM 2.37, Disagree), showing that respondents also rejected the idea that the harassment was insignificant when compared to others' experiences and that its impact was too minor to justify seeking professional support. These are closely trailed by the notion of telling oneself that the harassment "was not a big deal" (WM 2.27, Disagree), again reflecting a tendency to downplay but not fully accept this mindset. The lowest weighted mean reflects the belief that harassment is a normal part of workplace interactions (WM 2.20, Disagree), demonstrating a strong rejection of normalization. The overall weighted mean of 2.32 (Disagree) suggests that respondents generally do not minimize the experience, although the closeness of scores shows that some degree of internal rationalization may still occur.

The pattern of responses suggests that employees largely recognize the seriousness of sexual harassment, despite occasional tendencies to downplay their own experience. The fact that the highest mean still remains under the "Disagree" category indicates a healthy level of awareness; however, it also suggests that some individuals may struggle with internal messages that discourage them from acknowledging the full weight of what happened. This internal conflict may stem from a workplace environment where reporting mechanisms are unclear or ineffective. Because the company should have documented, reported, or acted on the incident but failed to do so, employees may interpret the organization's silence as a signal that the

harassment is not a priority or is too minor to address. As a result, some respondents may downplay their emotions to align with perceived organizational expectations. Qualitative themes likely involve feelings of invalidated experiences, institutional neglect, silencing, and self-doubt, suggesting that the absence of organizational response influences employees' personal interpretations of the severity of the incident. Research demonstrates that verbal harassment is often trivialized in workplace settings, with colleagues and sometimes organizational leaders suggesting that women should simply ignore offensive comments or unwanted attention (Ahmad et al., 2025)

The results highlight a workplace culture where employees do not inherently minimize sexual harassment, yet structural or institutional shortcomings subtly influence how they perceive their experience. The consistent disagreement across items indicates a clear understanding that harassment is unacceptable and should not be treated lightly. However, the slight variations in weighted means reveal that some employees may still feel compelled to downplay the incident, possibly due to fear of being dismissed, judged, or ignored. The organization's failure to report or act on the harassment further reinforces this dynamic, contributing to qualitative themes of organizational silence, powerlessness, normalization pressure, and emotional suppression. When a company fails to acknowledge incidents, employees may internally rationalize the event as "not serious enough," even when they know otherwise. This suggests that minimizing the experience is not a natural response but a learned behavior shaped by the absence of institutional accountability. Strengthening reporting procedures, validating employees' experiences, and ensuring company-led documentation and investigation are essential steps to prevent employees from feeling compelled to minimize the harm they experienced.

Table 12. Awareness Of Reporting Procedures.

Awareness of Reporting Procedures.	WM	Verbal Description
I am fully aware of the proper channels for reporting sexual harassment in my workplace.	3.13	Agree
The process for filing a sexual harassment complaint at my company is clear to me.	3.00	Agree
I know exactly who to contact if I need to report an incident of sexual harassment at work.	3.00	Agree
My employer has provided adequate information about how to seek help for sexual harassment.	2.83	Agree
I feel confident in my understanding of the steps involved in reporting sexual harassment at my workplace.	3.00	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.99	Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		



The item with the highest weighted mean indicates that employees report being fully aware of the proper channels for reporting sexual harassment (WM 3.13, Agree), suggesting a strong perception of having accessible reporting pathways. This is followed by three items sharing the same weighted mean (WM 3.00, Agree): clarity of the complaint process, knowledge of the specific personnel to contact, and confidence in understanding the reporting steps. These relatively consistent ratings imply that workers feel generally informed and equipped to navigate the reporting procedures. The lowest weighted mean (WM 2.83, Agree) reflects the belief that adequate information has been provided by the employer about seeking help for sexual harassment. Although still within the “Agree” range, the slightly lower score may indicate that informational dissemination is present but not as comprehensive or accessible as it could be. The overall weighted mean of 2.99 (Agree) shows a strong general awareness of reporting procedures across employees.

Based on the results, employees believe they possess sufficient knowledge of how sexual harassment can be formally reported in the workplace. They appear confident in navigating the reporting channels, indicating that the company has at least introduced policies or orientation materials that explain the reporting structure. However, the slightly lower mean regarding the adequacy of information suggests there may be inconsistencies in communication or reinforcement. Despite respondents’ claims of awareness, the company still did not report or act upon the incident, exposing a disconnect between employees’ knowledge of the process and the organization’s actual implementation of it. Qualitative themes likely point to

perceived procedural clarity but operational failure, policy–practice mismatch, uncertainty about follow-through, and lack of institutional responsiveness. This implies that knowing the process does not guarantee that the organization will uphold its responsibility to formally document, escalate, or intervene when incidents occur.

The findings suggest a workplace environment where reporting procedures are known, yet not effectively executed when sexual harassment occurs. Employees agree that they understand the channels, steps, and people involved in filing a report, which indicates that policies exist on paper. However, the reality that the company failed to report or act on the incident reveals a significant gap between policy design and policy enforcement. This contributes to qualitative themes such as organizational silence, lack of accountability, erosion of trust, and performative compliance, where procedures are acknowledged but not actively practiced. Such disconnect can leave employees doubtful about whether reporting would lead to meaningful action, even if they understand how to initiate the process. The results highlight the need for the organization not only to inform employees about reporting procedures but also to demonstrate through consistent action that complaints are taken seriously, documented, and addressed. Without this alignment, awareness alone cannot protect employees or foster a safe reporting environment. Universities have responded to sexual harassment by putting in place formalized reporting processes through which victims can seek redress. Despite these processes, victims seldom invoke the grievance handling mechanisms that are enshrined in university sexual harassment policies. (Ssali et al., 2021)

1.2. Organizational Barriers

Table 13. Distrust

Distrust	WM	Verbal Description
I believe my organization would handle a sexual harassment complaint fairly and effectively.	2.97	Agree
My workplace has a trustworthy system in place for addressing sexual harassment reports.	3.00	Agree
I am confident that my employer would take appropriate action if I reported sexual harassment.	3.00	Agree
The reporting process for sexual harassment in my organization seems biased or unfair.	2.67	Agree
I trust that my complaint would be taken seriously if I reported sexual harassment at work.	2.93	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.91	Agree
Legend: 1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74]; 2- Disagree [1.75-2.49]; 3- Agree [2.50-3.24]; 4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The highest weighted means appear in the belief that the workplace has a trustworthy system for addressing sexual harassment reports and confidence that the employer would take appropriate action (both WM 3.00, Agree). These responses suggest that employees generally perceive the organization as capable of handling such concerns. Close behind is the belief that the organization would handle complaints fairly and effectively (WM 2.97, Agree), showing slightly less but still positive trust in institutional fairness. The next item, trust that a complaint would be taken seriously, also falls within the agreement range (WM 2.93, Agree), indicating that employees generally expect their reports to be acknowledged. The lowest score (WM 2.67, Agree) pertains to perceptions that the reporting process seems biased or unfair. Although still rated as “Agree,” the lower ranking suggests that some respondents sense potential flaws or inconsistencies in how reports are managed. The overall weighted mean of 2.91 (Agree) reflects a generally positive but not absolute level of trust in the system.

The pattern of means suggests that employees outwardly express trust in the reporting system and institutional action, yet

subtle doubt appears in the item regarding bias or unfairness. On the surface, respondents seem confident that reports would be handled properly, but a deeper look shows inconsistencies: despite their stated trust, the company still did not report or take action on the actual incident, indicating that the trust employees describe may be based on assumptions, policy awareness, or organizational messaging rather than real experience. This gap implies that employees may perceive trustworthiness in theory, but the organization’s failure to act undermines that trust in practice. Qualitative themes likely involve conditional trust, faith in policy but skepticism in execution, fear of institutional favoritism, and belief in systems that do not fully operate as promised.

The results reveal a complex dynamic between employees’ perceived trust in the system and the organization’s actual behavior. While respondents express agreement that the workplace has reliable and fair procedures, the fact that the company failed to report or act on the harassment incident exposes a significant contradiction. Employees may trust the system because policies exist on paper or because of



organizational messaging that promotes fairness, but their real experiences—and the company’s inaction—suggest an underlying weakness in enforcement. The relatively lower agreement score regarding bias or unfairness further signals that employees may sense procedural inconsistencies or worry that outcomes depend on hierarchy, personal relationships, or managerial discretion. Qualitative themes emerging from this inconsistency include organizational silence, misalignment between policy and practice, erosion of credibility, and uncertainty about actual protection despite stated trust. The

overall pattern suggests that while workers believe the reporting system should work, the company’s failure to act shows that institutional trust may be largely symbolic rather than operational. Strengthening accountability, ensuring impartiality, and demonstrating follow-through on reports are crucial to converting theoretical trust into real protective action. While most hospitals have formal policies in place, gaps exist in execution and sensitivity to regional challenges. Enhanced legal training, technological facilitation, and culturally adaptive approaches are essential to improving workplace safety. (Mittal & Kaur, 2025)

Table 14. Fear Of Negative Consequences From Supervisors Or Coworkers,

fear of negative consequences from supervisors or coworkers,	WM	Verbal Description
Reporting sexual harassment could negatively impact my career prospects within the organization.	2.67	Agree
I worry that my coworkers would treat me differently if I reported sexual harassment.	2.47	Disagree
Filing a sexual harassment complaint might damage my professional reputation at work.	2.53	Agree
I fear that my supervisors would view me unfavorably if I sought help for sexual harassment.	2.47	Disagree
Reporting sexual harassment could lead to social isolation or exclusion in my workplace.	2.57	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.54	Agree
Legend:1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74];2- Disagree [1.75-2.49];3- Agree [2.50-3.24],4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The highest weighted mean in this category reflects concern that reporting sexual harassment could negatively affect career prospects (WM 2.67, Agree), indicating that employees perceive career-related repercussions as the most significant risk. This is followed by the belief that reporting could lead to social isolation or exclusion in the workplace (WM 2.57, Agree), revealing worry about interpersonal consequences. The next highest is concern that filing a complaint might harm their professional reputation (WM 2.53, Agree), suggesting some employees fear being labeled or judged for speaking up. Two items fall under the “Disagree” category with matching weighted means (WM 2.47, Disagree): fears of coworkers treating them differently and fears of supervisors viewing them unfavorably. Although these concerns were not strongly endorsed, their values remain close to the midpoint, showing that the possibility of interpersonal or managerial backlash is not fully dismissed. The overall weighted mean of 2.54 (Agree) suggests a general sense that reporting may lead to negative consequences, especially regarding career advancement and workplace inclusion.

The data reveal that while employees may not overwhelmingly fear direct negative treatment from coworkers or supervisors, they still anticipate significant risks tied to reputation, career progression, and social belonging. These findings imply that employees perceive subtle, long-term consequences—such as diminished opportunities or quiet exclusion—as more realistic than overt retaliation. This mindset may be shaped by the company’s failure to report or act on the incident, reinforcing the idea that speaking up does not lead to institutional protection but instead exposes individuals to professional risks. Qualitative themes that likely emerge include

fear of career stagnation, concern about workplace ostracism, silent or indirect retaliation, anxiety over being judged, and organizational neglect. Employees may feel that even if direct punishment does not occur, the lack of company response signals that reporting may jeopardize one’s standing rather than safeguard one’s rights.

The results illustrate a workplace climate where employees perceive meaningful risks associated with reporting sexual harassment, despite not universally fearing explicit retaliation from coworkers or supervisors. The strongest concerns revolve around professional and social consequences rather than direct confrontation, suggesting a culture where retaliation is subtle, unspoken, or systemic. The company’s failure to act on or report the incident reinforces this belief, creating an environment in which employees learn—through observation rather than policy—that speaking up can jeopardize their future opportunities. Qualitative themes such as organizational silence, perceived vulnerability, fear of being sidelined, lack of institutional support, and status-based retaliation emerge from this pattern. Even if employees trust individual colleagues or supervisors to some degree, the broader organizational behavior communicates that reports may not be welcomed. This disconnect highlights the need for clearly enforced anti-retaliation policies, transparent follow-through on complaints, and strong assurances that reporting will not harm employees’ careers or relationships. Without these measures, fear of negative consequences will continue to discourage reporting and perpetuate silence. Only a concerted effort addressing both aspects will sensitize the workforce, support the victims, and prevent sexual harassment. (Jenner et al., 2020)



Table 15. Dismissiveness

Dismissiveness	WM	Verbal Description
I believe my organization takes sexual harassment complaints seriously.	3.00	Agree
My workplace has a history of dismissing or downplaying sexual harassment reports.	2.57	Agree
If I reported sexual harassment, I am confident that my organization would thoroughly investigate the complaint.	2.93	Agree
I feel that victims of sexual harassment in my workplace are often not believed when they come forward.	2.43	Disagree
My organization is likely to take concrete action to address reported incidents of sexual harassment.	3.07	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.80	Agree
Legend: 1-Strongly Disagree [1.00-1.74]; 2- Disagree [1.75-2.49]; 3- Agree [2.50-3.24]; 4- Strongly Agree [3.25-4.00]		

The highest weighted mean reflects the belief that the organization is likely to take concrete action when sexual harassment is reported (WM 3.07, Agree), suggesting that employees perceive the workplace as capable of responding appropriately. This is closely followed by the belief that the organization takes sexual harassment complaints seriously (WM 3.00, Agree). The next item, regarding confidence that the organization would thoroughly investigate a report, also shows strong agreement (WM 2.93, Agree), indicating trust in the investigative process. A lower agreement score appears in the perception that the workplace has a history of dismissing or downplaying complaints (WM 2.57, Agree), showing some employees still sense institutional shortcomings despite the positive ratings. The lowest weighted mean reveals disagreement with the idea that victims are not believed when they come forward (WM 2.43, Disagree), suggesting that employees generally trust that victims will be acknowledged. The overall weighted mean of 2.80 (Agree) shows that employees, in general, do not view the organization as dismissive—although pockets of uncertainty still exist.

The results indicate that employees largely trust the organization’s ability to respond meaningfully to sexual harassment reports. They believe that complaints are taken seriously and would be investigated thoroughly. However, the moderate agreement with the statement that the workplace has a history of dismissing reports indicates that some individuals have witnessed or experienced inconsistencies in the organization’s handling of cases. This creates a subtle tension: while respondents express overall trust, traces of doubt remain, likely shaped by real or observed gaps between policy and implementation. Importantly, even with these perceptions of seriousness and action, the company still failed to report or act on the actual incident, showing that employees’ beliefs may reflect organizational messaging rather than actual practice. Qualitative

themes emerging from this contradiction include perceived procedural legitimacy, policy–practice inconsistency, institutional image management, and selective follow-through. Employees may trust the system in theory but experience or observe lapses in real application.

The findings reveal a workplace environment where employees outwardly perceive the organization as responsive and serious about sexual harassment complaints, yet subtle indications suggest that dismissiveness still exists below the surface. While most respondents agree that the organization would act, investigate, and validate victims, the moderate agreement regarding past dismissal of cases signals that these beliefs may not be fully grounded in lived experience. The company’s failure to report or address the actual incident reinforces this contradiction: although employees believe action would be taken, the organization’s behavior did not reflect these expectations. This discrepancy points to qualitative themes such as institutional inconsistency, symbolic compliance, erosion of credibility, and quiet dismissal masked by strong policies. Employees may therefore perceive a system that appears thorough and serious on paper but falters in practice. The presence of both trust and doubt underscores the need for the organization to demonstrate consistent action, transparent investigations, and accountability measures so that employees’ confidence is based on actual performance rather than assumptions or organizational rhetoric. Agyekum-Mensah (2026) found that 65% of respondents reported a lack of trust in senior management regarding accountability practices, 91% believed inadequate accountability adversely affected health and safety, and 60% perceived existing accountability mechanisms as unfair. The study documented that accountability gaps undermine trust and safety but did not examine anti-retaliation policies as a solution. (Agyekum-Mensah & Agyekum-Mensah, 2026)

5. Relationship Between Perceived Sexual Harassment and Help-Seeking Behavior

	Formal			Help Sought			Timing of Help-Seeking			Source of Help			Perception of Help Efficacy		
	r value	Sig. Value	Interpretation	r value	Sig. Value	Interpretation	r value	Sig. Value	Interpretation	r value	Sig. Value	Interpretation	r value	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Type of Harassment	.147	.437	NS	-.187	.323	NS	-.095	.618	NS	-.242	.197	NS	-.075	.692	NS
Frequency	-.221	.241	NS	-.063	.742	NS	.039	.839	NS	.043	.821	NS	-.007	.970	NS
Severity	-.022	.909	NS	.121	.523	NS	.214	.255	NS	.157	.409	NS	.192	.311	NS
Forms of Harassment	.059	.758	NS	-.046	.809	NS	-.057	.764	NS	-.245	.192	NS	-.078	.682	NS
Perpetrator	-.009	.960	NS	-.161	.396	NS	-.184	.329	NS	-.008	.967	NS	-.130	.492	NS

The correlation matrix shows that none of the harassment-related variables—type, frequency, severity, forms, or perpetrator—demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with any dimension of help-seeking behavior, as all significance



values exceed the threshold for significance ($p > 0.05$). The highest positive correlation appears between severity of harassment and timing of help-seeking ($r = .214$), followed by severity and perception of help efficacy ($r = .192$). Although these correlations are weak and non-significant, they suggest a slight tendency for more severe incidents to influence when individuals seek help and how effective they expect support to be. The next highest correlation involves forms of harassment and perception of help efficacy ($r = -.078$) and type of harassment and perception of help efficacy ($r = -.075$), both indicating negligible inverse relationships. The lowest correlation in the matrix is between frequency of harassment and perception of help efficacy ($r = -.007$), showing virtually no association. Overall, the relationship patterns show consistently weak and statistically unsupported links across all variables examined, reflecting a broad disconnection between harassment experiences and help-seeking outcomes.

The absence of significant correlations implies that variations in harassment experiences do not meaningfully influence whether victims seek formal help, the type of help they seek, when they seek it, or their confidence in the effectiveness of available support systems. This finding suggests that employees' decisions to report or seek help are shaped by factors outside the harassment characteristics themselves. Qualitative evidence in related studies typically points to concerns such as fear of retaliation, shame, organizational silence, distrust in reporting systems, and perceived lack of accountability as more decisive influences on help-seeking behavior. Because the harassment variables alone do not predict help-seeking behavior, this suggests that employees feel constrained by workplace culture and institutional practices—regardless of how severe, frequent, or varied the harassment may be. Such patterns usually reflect workplaces where victims have internalized the belief that reporting will not result in meaningful action or may even worsen their situation.

The results imply a deeper organizational issue: the company appears to lack a supportive and responsive reporting system, leading employees to silence themselves despite differing harassment experiences. The weak correlations, particularly the higher yet still non-significant values associated with severity, hint that even serious cases do not substantially influence help-seeking decisions—suggesting a climate where employees expect dismissal, retaliation, or inaction. This aligns with qualitative themes commonly emerging in employee narratives, such as “fear of consequences,” “not being believed,” “organizational neglect,” and “shame and self-blame.” These themes reflect an environment where organizational culture suppresses reporting behavior rather than enabling it.

The finding that no variable significantly predicts formal reporting or help-seeking also implies that the company may not be fulfilling its responsibility to ensure accessible, safe, and trustworthy reporting processes. Employees may have experienced or witnessed moments when the company should have acted on reported incidents but did not, reinforcing a cycle of silence. Without clear enforcement of policies, transparent investigations, and visible consequences for perpetrators, employees may come to believe that reporting is futile. This could explain why help-seeking behaviors remain unaffected by specific characteristics of harassment—because the organizational response (or lack thereof) overrides all other considerations.

CONCLUSION

1. The significant findings and analysis indicate a pronounced disconnect between the prevalence of sexual harassment and the low rate of formal reporting among

respondents, despite their generally high levels of education, professional experience, and representation in structured institutional settings such as government and education sectors. This pattern suggests that awareness of rights alone does not translate into help-seeking behavior, pointing instead to the influence of organizational barriers, entrenched power dynamics, and fears of retaliation. Overall, the analysis underscores the need for more effective reporting mechanisms and supportive institutional cultures to address the persistent gap between victimization and formal disclosure.

2. The significant findings and analysis reveal that workplace sexual harassment is both prevalent and multifaceted, with verbal misconduct emerging as the most dominant and normalized form. Although many incidents were isolated and perceived as low in severity, the presence of hostile work environment cases and quid pro quo dynamics indicates deeper systemic issues that extend beyond individual episodes. The involvement of both superiors and peers underscores that harassment is influenced not only by power hierarchies but also by broader organizational cultures that permit subtle and opportunistic misconduct. Collectively, the analysis highlights the urgent need for stronger preventive strategies, clearer reporting pathways, and sustained institutional efforts to promote a safe and respectful work environment.
3. The significant findings and analysis collectively demonstrate a consistent pattern: employees strongly value formal, accessible, and multi-layered support systems for addressing workplace sexual harassment, yet substantial hesitation persists in actual reporting behavior. Across all dimensions—help-seeking preferences, sources of assistance, timing, and perceived efficacy—respondents express confidence in the idea of organizational mechanisms but remain uncertain about their real-world effectiveness. This tension reveals deep-seated concerns related to trust, emotional safety, and fear of retaliation, suggesting that the barriers to reporting are not due to lack of awareness but to doubts about institutional follow-through. Overall, the analysis underscores a critical need for organizations to strengthen the credibility, transparency, and responsiveness of their support systems so employees feel genuinely safe and empowered to seek help.
4. The significant findings and analysis collectively demonstrate that female employees face a complex interplay of individual and organizational barriers that profoundly shape their willingness and ability to seek help after experiencing sexual harassment. Individually, fears of retaliation, shame, self-blame, and tendencies to minimize the incident underscore deep emotional and psychological burdens that inhibit reporting. Organizationally, perceptions of procedural clarity coexist with doubts about enforcement, revealing a critical disconnect between policy and practice. Although employees express nominal trust in reporting systems, the company's failure to address the documented incident reinforces institutional silence, erodes credibility, and perpetuates a culture where retaliation—whether subtle or overt—is anticipated. Overall, the synthesis of findings highlights that meaningful improvement requires not only clear policies but consistent institutional action, trauma-informed support, and transparent accountability measures to ensure that employees feel genuinely protected, validated, and empowered to report workplace sexual harassment.
5. The significant findings and analysis reveal that none of



the harassment-related variables—type, frequency, severity, forms, or perpetrator—bear a meaningful or statistically significant relationship to any dimension of help-seeking behavior, underscoring a profound disconnect between victimization and formal reporting. The uniformly weak correlations indicate that variations in harassment experiences do not shape when, how, or whether employees seek assistance, suggesting that help-seeking decisions are driven by broader organizational and cultural factors rather than the characteristics of the incidents themselves. This pattern reflects a workplace climate in which fear, distrust, and perceived institutional inaction overshadow the influence of harassment severity or frequency. Overall, the analysis highlights a critical need for organizational reforms that strengthen trust, transparency, and accountability, as these structural conditions—not the nature of the harassment—appear to be the decisive determinants of employees' willingness to seek help.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the significant findings and analysis, it is recommended that organizations implement a comprehensive, multi-level strategy to address the persistent gap between sexual harassment experiences and help-seeking behavior. First, institutions should strengthen reporting mechanisms by ensuring that procedures are transparent, easily accessible, and accompanied by clear protections against retaliation. Establishing confidential, third-party reporting channels and regularly communicating these options can enhance employees' confidence in the system. Second, organizations must invest in sustained education and capacity-building initiatives, including mandatory training on recognizing harassment, trauma-informed responses, and bystander intervention, to counteract the normalization of verbal and subtle forms of misconduct. Third, leadership accountability must be reinforced through consistent enforcement of policies, prompt investigations, and visible consequences for perpetrators, thereby reducing institutional silence and rebuilding organizational trust. Fourth, mental health and psychosocial support services should be integrated into reporting structures to address the emotional and psychological barriers—such as shame, fear, and self-blame—that discourage employees from seeking help. Finally, organizations should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and systems through anonymous surveys, monitoring of case outcomes, and periodic audits to ensure that reforms are evidence-based, responsive to employee needs, and aligned with best practices in workplace safety and gender-responsive governance.

REFERENCES

1. Agyekum-Mensah, G., & Agyekum-Mensah, D. L. (2026). Critical assessment of workplace accountability in the UK public sector. *Strategy & Leadership*, 1-28. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SL-02-2026-0081>
2. Ahmad, S., Gul, R., Rahman, H. U., & Din, F. U. (2025). Lived Experiences of Workplace Harassment: A Qualitative Study Among Female Employees. *Social Science Review Archives*. <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i1.427>
3. Borkar, A., Aranha, A., & Deshmukh, N. N. (2025). Workplace harassment and gender inequality among female healthcare workers. *Indian Journal of Forensic and Community Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.18231/j.ijfcm.11180.1759297762>
4. Bunce, A., Hashemi, L., Clark, C., Stansfeld, S., Myers, C.-A., & McManus, S. (2024). Prevalence and nature of workplace bullying and harassment and associations with mental health conditions in England: a cross-sectional probability sample survey. *BMC Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-18614-7>
5. Debnath, A., Goel, K., P., A., Shamim, M. A., Satapathy, P., & Gandhi, A. (2025). Workplace sexual harassment and violence among women: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Women & Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03630242.2025.2478378>
6. Ford, J. L., Ivancic, S. R., & Scarduzio, J. A. (2021). Silence, Voice, and Resilience: An Examination of Workplace Sexual Harassment. *Communication Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2021.1953092>
7. Galovski, T., McSweeney, L., Woolley, M. G., Alpert, E., & Nillni, Y. I. (2023). The Relative Impact of Different Types of Military Sexual Trauma on Long-Term PTSD, Depression, and Suicidality. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605231168823>
8. Gelevardi, Z. Y., Anjomshoa, Z., Salajeghe, S., Nazari, A., & Pourrashidi, R. (2025). Examining the Differences and Similarities of Antecedents and Consequences of Organizational Silence in the Supreme Audit Court of Iran: A Study of Six Regions. *Training, Education, and Sustainable Development*. <https://doi.org/10.61838/jtesd.99>
9. Han, Z., Wang, L., & Cui, K. (2020). Trust in stakeholders and social support: risk perception and preparedness by the Wenchuan earthquake survivors. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17477891.2020.1725410>
10. Harbshettar, V., & Math, S. (2014). Violence against women in India: Comprehensive care for survivors. *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/e4ecab454f85885daca0fdb586525fc9eef6f3e>
11. Islam, F., Alvi, Y., Gautam, R., Shaikh, A., Panda, M., Thakur, A., Pathak, R., Sharma, V., & Jiloha, R. (2025). Sexual Harassment among Female Healthcare Workers, its Consequences and Barriers in Seeking Help in India's Health Sector. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.ijcm_225_24
12. Jenner, S., Djermeester, P., & Oertelt-Prigione, S. (2020). Prevention Strategies for Sexual Harassment in Academic Medicine: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520903130>
13. Katti, S. (2025). Workplace Harassment and Coping Strategies among Women Employees. *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i06.61768>
14. Lee, J., Havaei, F., Hirani, S., & Adhami, N. (2024). Nurses' Workplace Violence Reporting Behaviours and Reasons for Not Formally Reporting: A Cross-Sectional Secondary Analysis. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.17639>
15. Liu, P., & Su, N. (2025). Emotional Re-Victimization in the Workplace: The Burden of Concern Reporting Systems. *Symposium on Human-Computer Interaction for Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3729176.3729188>
16. Mittal, A., & Kaur, Dr. G. (2025). A Socio-Legal Study On Sexual Harassment Complaints In Healthcare Institutions: A Case Study Of Hospitals In Punjab. *International Journal of Environmental Science*. <https://doi.org/10.64252/yk61wh75>
17. Mun, Y. C., Hern, C. Y., Othman, W. N. W., Zainudin, Z., & Anuar, M. (2024). Career Issue: Effects of Sexual Harassment towards Individuals in Workplace. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbs/v14-i6/21756>
18. Park, J.-O. (2021). Going beyond the system: The role of trust in coworker support and organization-based self-esteem in dealing with sexual harassment issues. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2021.1905119>
19. Prodromou, A., Christofi, N.-M., & Aristidou, H. (2025). Sexual Harassment at the Workplace - Digging into the Cyprus Reality. *Proceedings of the International Conference on International Business (ICIB) 2023-2024*. <https://doi.org/10.12681/icib.8206>
20. Samuel-Onkon, A. D. (2024). Navigating the Shadows: Understanding and Addressing Sexual Harassment Challenges in



the Entertainment Industry. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajarr/2024/v18i9738>

21. Shinkunas, L., Lieberman, M. T., Corkum, K. S., Perry, T., Dalton, C., Hunter, C. J., & Carlisle, E. M. (2025). "A system...for Retaliation, Bullying [and] Intimidation:" A Survey of Operating Room Employee Perceptions of the Impact of Online Coworker Reporting Systems on Workplace Ethics and Employee Wellness. *Journal of Surgical Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2025.09.078>

22. Ssali, S., Namaganda, A., & Bisaso, R. (2021). EXAMINING THE BARRIERS TO REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN UNIVERSITIES. *International Journal of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0801002>

23. Wieberneit, M., Thal, S., Clare, J., Notebaert, L., & Tubex, H. (2024). *Silenced Survivors: A Systematic Review of the Barriers to Reporting, Investigating, Prosecuting, and Sentencing of Adult Female Rape and Sexual Assault*. SAGE Publishing. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241261404>