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- Author (s):** Faiz Younas, Smavia Mahmood, Shazia Qayyum
- Affiliation (s):** University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
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Relationship between Sexist Attitudes and Sexual Harassment: Investigating the Mediating Role of Authoritarianism

Faiz Younas, Smavia Mahmood, and Shazia Qayyum*

Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the inter-relational dynamics between ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, and attitudes towards sexual harassment in young adult men. It was hypothesized that a) there would be correlations between the study variables, b) both ambivalent sexism and authoritarianism would predict sexual harassment attitudes and c) authoritarianism would mediate between ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes. Following APA-mandated research ethics, a sample of 239 young adult men ($M_{age} = 24.34$, $SD_{age} = 2.97$) was conveniently recruited and assessed through the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, the Aggression-Submission-Conventionalism Scale, and the Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale. Findings indicated that while sexual harassment attitudes were found to be negatively related to ambivalent sexism, they had a positive relationship with authoritarianism. Further, authoritarianism appeared to predict sexual harassment attitudes and also emerged as a partial mediator between ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes. The findings of this research offer considerable implications for academicians, researchers, gender experts and policymakers as it provides them with the latest empirical and apt results.

Keywords: ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, sexual harassment, young adult men

Introduction

Gender disparity in Pakistan is evident through its global rank (placed at 141 out of 142 nations) in terms of political participation and economic possibilities for women (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). Sexual harassment is a significant social issue that is frequently seen as a form of discrimination against women (Russell & Oswald, 2016). Social ideologies supporting gender disparities as well as the legalization of male-on-female violence, perpetuate inequality

*Corresponding Author: shazia.appsy@pu.edu.pk

(Agadullina et al., [2022](#)). In Pakistan, men unquestionably have more power over women (Bukhari, [2013](#)), resulting in women being undervalued and more susceptible to violence. (Hadi, [2017](#)). According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18 (National Institute of Population Studies [NIPS], [2019](#)), 23% of ever-married women (15-49 years) report having experienced physical violence, 26% emotional violence, and 5% sexual violence at the hands of husbands or intimate partners (UN Women, [2023](#)). Looking at workplace harassment, it has been found that more than 90% of working women, in both private and public sectors, acknowledge being harassed, yet more than 50% do not know that harassment at the workplace is a crime and only 17% of women reported such incidents to their organization's inquiry committees (UN Women, [2023](#)). According to the majority of earlier research, its mostly men who sexually harass women (Imtiaz & Kamal, [2021](#)). Tara and Ahsan ([2020](#)), for instance, proposed that sexual harassment is a positive predictor of violence in Pakistani working women, and that men such as bosses or coworkers were the most frequent harassers. Similarly, women athletes reported experiencing significant rate of sexual harassment from their male coaches and other staff members (Bhatti et al., [2020](#)). Unfortunately, after being subjected to harassment, it's the women who are held responsible with their attire cited as a contributing factor (Bongiorno et al., [2019](#)). This was the reason that prompted the investigation about the possible inter-relational dynamics between ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism and sexual harassment attitudes in young men.

Ambivalent Sexism

According to the Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, [1996](#)), two fundamental processes define how men and women relate to one another. On one hand, these relationships may appear to be in conflict because men want to defend their high status from female invasion. Women and men, on the other hand, are dependent on one another in personal relationships and must keep close connections. The two complementary types of sexist attitudes represented by these processes are benevolent sexism and hostile sexism.

Hostile sexism is the idea that women pose a danger to society's gender hierarchy by attempting to dominate and control men in private and public. These views assert that women are attempting to take men's authority through deceptive means (Owen & Wei, [2020](#)). Whereas benevolent sexism

is a subjectively positive attitude which includes the idea that males should take care of and protect women since they are weak and defenseless despite having pleasant, warm qualities (Cross & Overall, [2018](#)). Because of this, it promotes traditional female roles that conform to gender stereotypes, such as housewives (Barreto & Doyle, [2023](#)). Despite the apparent conflict between hostile and benevolent sexism, they are interrelated and both support the higher status of men in society, maintaining gender inequality (Sibley & Overall, [2011](#)). Benevolent sexism, represented by paternalism, promotes women's established gender roles and suppresses their urge to challenge the status quo (Cross & Overall, [2018](#)). Hostile sexism, which likewise aims to protect the status quo, comes into play when women attempt to achieve more power and social position (Connor et al., [2017](#)). The study discussed here takes into account a hypothesis that sexism, when combined with other factors known to affect sexual harassment attitudes, authoritarianism, and a deeper personality trait, increases the chance of sexual harassment.

Authoritarianism

According to Whitley and Lee ([2000](#)), authoritarianism is characterized by great regard for people in positions of authority, adherence to established values, and animosity toward outsiders when the higher authority fosters this enmity. Authoritarianism is common among male and female college freshmen (Walby, [2023](#)). All institutional realms of the economics, politics, civil society, and violence, as well as the interactions between them, exhibit authoritarianism (Walby, [2023](#)). Sexual harassment is a form of authoritarian aggression that targets women and can be categorized under the more general category of sexual aggression (Kaul, [2021](#)). Studies have found authoritarianism as a predictor of both physically and sexually violent actions (Walby, [2023](#)) and it is a predictor of both sexually aggressive conduct and physical violence (Yamawaki et al., [2022](#)). Therefore, we predicted that a high degree of self-reported authoritarianism would be a good indicator of the possibility of sexual harassment attitudes in men.

Sexual Harassment

Every culture has defined sexual harassment differently depending on the level of how the act is viewed (Espelage et al., [2016](#)). It is the willful, persistent, and unwanted use of language, non-verbal cues, or physical contact that is sexually explicit. The majority of victims of sexual

harassment are women (Sarwar, [2022](#)). That is mostly caused by two elements: structural and cultural. First, the culture of our society frequently encourages males to be forceful and to regard women in a sexual sense. As a result, social interactions between men and women can easily be infused with sexual implications. The structural cause is the secondary factor. Due to the gendered nature of the workplace and educational system, where men frequently hold positions of authority over women, sexual harassment of women occurs (Hadi, [2017](#)). Everywhere women go in Pakistan, from their houses and colonies to public transportation, from school to career centres, from the office to the mall, they face harassment (Sarwar, [2022](#)). Recently, social psychologists have developed an interest in understanding the actions of male sexual harassers (Young & Hegarty, [2019](#)). According to Fiske and Glick ([1995](#)), there are two "core" forms of harassment: hostile (mainly reflecting a desire for male dominance) and benevolent (characterized by a sincere desire for lifelong heterosexual companionship). In light of this perspective, the current study looks for authoritarianism and ambivalent sexism as predictors of sexual harassment.

Literature Review

Reidy et al. ([2014](#)) argue that men who feel that their masculinity is under threat may be influenced by restrictive gender role norms to act in ways that they think show their manliness, such as acting aggressively leading to sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct can take many different forms due to the severity of ambivalent sexism (Diehl et al., [2018](#)). For instance, male self-reported propensity to engage in sexual harassment at work is predicted by aggressive sexism, endorsement of the rape myth, and authoritarianism (Blumell, [2018](#)). Similar research has indicated that men's propensity to acquaintance rape and for blaming sexual assault victims is predicted by both hostile and benevolent sexism (Barreto & Doyle, [2023](#)). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that hostile sexism predicts several forms of sexual harassment, including gender-based harassment and sexual coercion intention (Guizzo & Cadinu, [2021](#)). Moreover, male participants who experienced more hostile sexism also had a higher propensity to engage in sexual harassment (Hill & Marshall, [2018](#)). By promoting objectification and depriving women of their distinctively human emotions, hostile sexism is also connected to sexual assault against women (Barreto & Doyle, [2023](#)).

Studies have also found a link between authoritarianism and ambivalent sexism (Austin & Jackson, [2019](#)). For example, according to Radke et al.

(2018), authoritarianism and sexism, especially benevolent sexism, go hand in hand. People who have high levels of authoritarianism may hold sexist views because they believe that men should safeguard women in the world and that gender equality threatens the established order (de Geus et al., 2022). In addition, ambivalent sexism is predicted by right-wing authoritarianism and religious beliefs, low openness and agreeableness, as well as male gender and low education level (Hellmer et al., 2018). Moreover, a study by Manoussaki and Hayne (2019) showed that authoritarianism is linked to aggressive attitudes toward perceived out-groups, predicts prejudice against women in particular, as well as benevolent sexism and sexual violence. Similarly, according to Osborne et al. (2023), authoritarianism predicts men's benevolent sexism (subjectively favourable sentiments toward women who adhere to traditional gender roles that support their disadvantaged status).

Furthermore, a correlation between sexism and authoritarianism and demographic factors including family system and social status has also been shown by studies. According to previous research, victim was blamed more when the aggressor was from a low social class and when the participants had high scores in right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance (Canto et al., 2021). Moreover, higher levels of social dominance are more likely to endorse prejudicial attitudes toward transgender people because they want to maintain the privileged social status of their in-group (i.e., cis-gender people) (Ching et al., 2020). It was also seen that families with authoritarian parenting style positively predicted intimate terrorism victimization, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism (Pickett, 2023). Numerous research discovered that men's sexual aggressiveness toward women was predicted by hostile sexism in a variety of circumstances, including romantic relationships (Cross et al., 2019), their propensity to tell jokes about women (Diehl et al., 2018), and online games (Tang et al., 2019).

A review of literature indicates sparse evidence on men's attitudes about sexual harassment of women or the causes of these attitudes. Researchers have found that many aspects of sexism, including the drive to dominate sexually and the belief in male superiority, are strong predictors of sexual harassment (Begany & Milburn, 2002). The literature on sexual harassment, ambivalent sexism, and authoritarianism are thus integrated in this study by taking authoritarianism into account as a potential mediator between these

concepts. Hence, this study aimed to gather data from young adult men to explore various factors influencing their attitudes towards sexual harassment. By analyzing the collected data, we intended to identify patterns, linkages, and underlying beliefs that shape these attitudes.

In the present study, we hypothesized that (a) there is likely a strong link between ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, and sexual harassment attitudes, (b) authoritarianism is likely to mediate the relationship between ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes, (c) there would likely be demographic differences (e.g. family system, social status) in the study variables.

Method

Participants and Procedure

After obtaining institutional approval and permission of the authors for their scales, a total of 239 young adult men ($M = 24.34$, $SD = 2.97$) were recruited using non-probability convenient sampling from several cities of Punjab, Pakistan through an online survey after observing and maintaining all ethical considerations. Descriptive analysis of socio-demographic factors revealed that most of the participants (48%) were middle born, (88%) belonged to middle socioeconomic status and (60%) joint families. Moreover, 61% reported been employed and about 76% were unmarried. All analyses were run on SPSS version 22 and findings are interpreted in the light of available literature.

Assessment Tools

Sociodemographic Information Sheet

It included basic personal information like age, socioeconomic status, birth order, employment and marital status and family system.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)

The ASI (Glick & Fiske, [1996](#)) comprised two subscales and a total of 22 items (6 items are reverse coded). Responses were scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) on a 5-point rating scale. The hostile sexism scale comprises 11 items, while the benevolent sexism scale also consists of 11 items. For example, 'women exaggerate problems they have at work', 'women should be cherished and protected by men'. Glick and Fiske (1996) indicated high internal consistency of .92 for overall scale.

Aggression-Submission-Conventionalism Scale (ASCS)

Authoritarianism was measured by the Aggression-Submission-Conventionalism Scale (ASCS; Dunwoody & Funke, [2016](#)). Evaluation ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) on a 5-point rating scale. It comprises three subscales (each having 6 items) and a total of 18 items, out of which 9 items are reverse-coded. For example, “Strong force is necessary against threatening groups”, “We should believe what our leaders tell us” and “Traditions are the foundation of a healthy society and should be respected”. Dunwoody and Funke (2016) tested the scale on three different samples and reported alpha indices for the Aggression subscale .80, .81 and .86 respectively. Similarly, the alpha values for the Conventionalism subscale across the three samples were .66, .66 and .79 respectively. Lastly, the internal consistency values for the Submission subscale were .75, .71 and .72 respectively.

Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale (SHAS)

The Sexual Harassment Attitude Scale (SHAS; Mazer & Percival, [1989](#)) was used to assess participants’ attitude regarding sexual harassment. There are 19 questions on the survey. The responses are rated on a 5-point scale: 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. Sample items include statements such as, “A lot of what people call sexual harassment is just normal flirtation between men and women” and “One of the problems with sexual harassment is that some women can’t take a joke.” Higher scores indicate more acceptance and tolerance of sexual harassment and less agreement with contemporary feminist descriptions about its causes. This scale has a high internal reliability value of .87 (Mazer & Percival, 1989).

Results

Results were generated by running reliability analysis, correlation and prediction analyses on SPSS and showed that an alpha reliability of .76 for ambivalent sexism inventory scale, .71 for the overall aggression-submission-conventionalism scale and .81 for the sexual harassment attitude scale respectively.

Table 1
Interrelationships between Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.AS	74.39	10.32	-	-.05	.61**	.87**	.86**	.14	-.06	-.20*
2.BS	34.34	5.51		-	.46**	-.20*	.60**	.28**	.26**	-.33*
3.HS	50.82	5.22			-	.00	.53**	.20*	.05	.29**
4.Auth.	37.55	5.76				-	-.07	.49**	.65**	.56**
5.Agg.	15.94	3.13					-	.01	-.09	.04
6.Sub.	19.28	2.94						-	-.03	.23**
7.Con.	19.44	3.41							-	.17*
8.SH	56.24	10.09								-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. AS = Ambivalent Sexism; BS = Benevolent Sexism; HS = Hostile Sexism; Auth. = Authoritarianism; Agg.= Aggression; Sub.= Submission; Con. = Conventionalism; SHA = Sexual Harassment Attitude

Table 1 revealed that ambivalent sexism was positively related to authoritarianism and had a negative relationship with sexual harassment attitudes. Moreover, benevolent sexism had a positive relationship with aggression and submission and negative relationship with conventionalism, sexual harassment attitudes and authoritarianism. Further, hostile sexism was positively linked with submission, aggression, ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes.

Table 2
Subscales of Ambivalent Sexism and Authoritarianism Predicting Sexual Harassment Attitude

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Constant	64.80	3.94	16.46	.000	[57.01, 72.58]
Ambivalent Sexism	-.28	.58	-.49	.628	[-1.44, .87]
Benevolent Sexism	.50	.62	.81	.418	[-.72, 1.73]
Hostile Sexism	1.21	.62	1.96	.052	[-.01, 2.43]
Authoritarianism	-2.25	.62	-3.61	.000	[-3.48, -1.02]
Aggression	3.03	.68	4.45	.000	[1.68, 4.38]
Submission	1.59	.66	2.40	.018	[.28, 2.90]
Conventionalism	1.36	.58	2.36	.020	[.22, 2.50]

In Table 2, the R^2 value of .57 revealed that the predictors described a 57% variance in sexual harassment attitudes with $F(7, 132) = 24.67$, $p < .001$ which meant that authoritarianism negatively predicted sexual harassment attitudes ($\beta = -.36$, $p < .001$), while its subscales aggression,

submission and conventionalism; all positively predicted sexual harassment attitudes ($\beta = -.94, p < .001$), ($\beta = .46, p < .05$) and ($\beta = .46, p < .05$) respectively. Meanwhile, ambivalent sexism had a non-significant effect on sexual harassment attitudes ($\beta = .63, p > .05$).

Table 3

Mediation Analysis through Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	95% <i>CI</i>
Step 1				.37	.37***	
Ambivalent Sexism	.59***	.07	.61***			[.46, .72]
Step 2				.40	.03**	
Ambivalent Sexism	.58***	.07	.60***			[.46, .71]
Authoritarianism	-.33**	.13	-.17**			[-.58, -.07]

Note. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

In step 1, ambivalent sexism explained a 37% variance in sexual harassment attitudes with $F(1, 138) = 79.80, p < .001$. The results revealed that ambivalent sexism positively predicted sexual harassment attitudes ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). In Step 2, the ambivalent sexism and authoritarianism explained 40% variance in sexual harassment attitudes with $F(2, 137) = 44.74, p < .001$. The ΔR^2 value of .03 revealed that 3% change in variance of step 1 and step 2 with $\Delta F(1, 137) = 6.50, p < .05$. The β of ambivalent sexism reduced from step 1 to step 2 but remained significant which confirmed the partial mediation.

Table 4

Family System Differences across Study Variables

Variables	Nuclear Family		Joint Family		<i>t</i> (132)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
AS	74.16	7.78	75.19	11.54	.56	.54	.12
BS	37.34	5.00	38.11	6.01	.76	.45	.14
HS	34.42	4.02	34.51	6.36	.09	.92	.02
Authoritarianism	50.48	6.09	50.88	4.69	.43	.67	.07
Aggression	15.08	3.55	16.39	2.72	2.41*	.01	.41
Submission	19.32	3.42	19.33	2.72	.025	.98	.00
Conventionalism	19.96	3.24	18.98	3.38	-1.66	.10	.30
SHA	51.84	7.59	58.97	10.70	4.14***	.00	.77

Note. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$. AS= Ambivalent Sexism, BS= Benevolent Sexism, HS= Hostile Sexism, SHA= Sexual Harassment Attitude

Table 4 revealed no significant mean difference in ambivalent sexism, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, authoritarianism, submission, and conventionalism between joint and nuclear families. Results revealed a significant mean difference in aggression and sexual harassment attitudes in men from the joint family and nuclear family systems.

Table 5
Social Status Differences among Study Variables

Variables	Upper Class (n=13)		Middle Class (n=123)		Lower Class (n=4)		F (2,137)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
AS	84.38	7.16	73.49	10.19	69.50	2.89	7.70**
BS	43.46	3.60	36.89	5.63	39.00	4.62	8.67***
HS	38.23	4.53	34.10	5.47	29.00	1.15	5.57**
Authoritarianism	50.61	2.57	50.98	5.41	46.50	4.04	1.45
Aggression	16.15	1.62	15.98	3.27	14.00	1.15	.81
Submission	19.85	2.61	19.16	2.99	21.00	1.15	1.03
Conventionalism	18.46	1.05	19.65	3.54	16.00	1.15	2.88
SHA	56.61	15.71	56.21	9.51	56.00	6.93	.01

Note. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. AS= Ambivalent sexism, BS= Benevolent sexism, HS= Hostile sexism, SHA= Sexual harassment attitude.

Table 6
Post Hoc Analysis for Comparison of Different Socio-economic Classes on ASI, BS and HS

Variables	Groups		Mean Difference
Ambivalent sexism	Middle class	Lower class	3.99
		Upper class	-10.90***
	Upper class	Lower class	14.88***
Benevolent sexism	Middle class	Lower class	-2.12
		Upper class	-6.58***
	Upper class	Lower class	4.46
Hostile sexism	Middle class	Lower class	5.10***
		Upper class	-4.12*
	Upper class	Lower class	9.23***

Note. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Results showed significant mean differences in ambivalent sexism, benevolent sexism, and hostile sexism among upper-class, lower class and middle-class men. Post Hoc analysis showed upper-class men were higher

on ambivalent sexism, benevolent sexism, and hostile sexism than lower-class men.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship among ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, and sexual harassment attitudes in men. In this study, the hypothesis suggested that ambivalent sexism and authoritarianism are likely to predict sexual harassment attitudes in young adult men. The results revealed that authoritarianism predicted sexual harassment. It was in line with previous studies which showed that authoritarianism significantly predicted rape myth acceptance and sexual harassment attitudes (Llanco et al., [2021](#); Manoussaki & Veitch, [2015](#)). However, ambivalent sexism, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism had non-significant effects on sexual harassment. This discrepancy could be due to the cultural, demographic, or contextual factors affecting the manifestation of sexism, and its relationship with sexual harassment. It was supported by a study which found that benevolent sexism does not correlate with hostility toward women and rape myth acceptance (Obierifu & Ezeugwu, [2017](#)). Moreover, ambivalent sexism does not tend to support sexual harassment attitudes, which indicates that the type of violence may mediate the relationship between ambivalent sexism (both types) and violence toward women (Agadullina et al., [2022](#)).

Secondly, it was hypothesized that there would be a strong relationship among study variables including ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism and sexual harassment attitudes. The results showed that sexual harassment attitudes had a significant positive correlation with authoritarianism while a significant negative correlation with ambivalent sexism. The authors argued that this finding is consistent with previous research that shows that people with authoritative personalities tend to endorse violence against women (Hannover et al., [2018](#)). Authoritarianism is associated with aggressive feelings towards perceived out-groups and predicts prejudice specifically towards women, as well as benevolent sexism and sexual harassment (Manoussaki & Hayne, [2019](#)). Moreover, studies have also found that ambivalent sexism is strongly related to sexual harassment attitudes (Bareket & Shnabel, [2019](#); Riley & Yamawaki, [2018](#)). This is because, in South Asia, women are considered inferior to men and experience higher rates of violence. Because of this, violence against women (VAW) is associated with sexism and patriarchy in society. While benevolent sexism

reflects more subtle forms of male dominance and patriarchy, hostile sexism is founded on misogynistic ideas that are inherent in VAW-supportive attitudes (Gutiérrez & Leaper, [2023](#)). The results of this study also showed that authoritarianism is linked to benevolent sexism. Several other studies have also shown that authoritarianism is associated with sexism, particularly benevolent sexism (Tang et al., [2019](#)). Those high in authoritarianism may endorse sexist beliefs because they perceive the world as a threatening place where women require men's protection; they may also oppose gender equality as it is a threat to the traditional order (Austin & Jackson, [2019](#)).

Moreover, it was hypothesized that authoritarianism is likely to mediate the relationship between ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes. The results of the study revealed partial mediation, consistent with previous studies that showed authoritarianism as a mediator between both types of sexism (Feather & McKee, [2012](#)). Additionally, authoritarianism has been found to mediate the relationship between the strength of values in benevolent sexism (Christopher et al., [2013](#)) as well as sexual disgust and abortion-stigmatizing attitudes (Patev et al., [2019](#)). Understanding the role of authoritarianism in mediating the relationship between ambivalent sexism and sexual harassment attitudes could inform interventions aimed at reducing harassment by targeting authoritarian beliefs and promoting egalitarian values and attitudes towards gender equality.

Lastly, socio-demographic findings indicated sexual harassment attitudes in men. It was consistent with previous studies related to sexual violence which found similar results (Malik et al., [2014](#)). Moreover, studies have found an association between the family system and sexual harassment perpetration (Espelage et al., [2022](#)). It is because, within the family system, role modelling by parents or caregivers can significantly impact a person's attitude and behaviour. Men who grow up witnessing respectful and egalitarian interactions between their parents are more likely to internalize these values and exhibit attitudes that reject sexual harassment. Also, significant differences across social classes were found in ambivalent sexism which are supported by Mastari et al. ([2019](#)) who found that sexist attitudes were related to socio-economic factors. Similar results were found in a few other studies (Crompton & Lyonette, [2005](#); Marks et al., [2009](#)).

Conclusion

The findings of the study shed light on the relationship among ambivalent sexism, sexual harassment attitudes and authoritarianism. It concludes that individuals having a negative attitude towards sexual harassment are likely to hold ambivalent sexist beliefs towards women while those supporting sexual harassment may show authoritarian tendencies. It also suggests that men' authoritarian beliefs influence their perception of and their response towards sexist attitudes and harassment. The findings emphasize the importance of ambivalent sexism and authoritarianism in determining men' attitude towards the sexual harassment of women.

Limitations and Suggestions

In the current study, we restricted the sample to men only. In future studies, women can also be included to explore gender differences in ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism and sexual harassment. Also, future studies can engage in longitudinal studies to understand the current study variables more and will be able to generate data in a new direction. Moreover, the study used assessment measures that were generated in the Western context. Future studies need to use indigenous scales to get better results in the Pakistani context. The current study did not take religious orientation into account which can potentially impact sexual harassment attitudes, ambivalent sexism and authoritarianism. By including this significant socio-demographic variable, future studies can generate additional pertinent results. Lastly, this was a self-reported study and there is the possibility of a social desirability factor in the responses of men regarding their attitudes towards sexual harassment. This can be addressed in future investigations by involving more rigorous research designs, such as mixed-methods approaches.

Implications

This article contributed to the literature by elucidating the relationship among ambivalent sexism, sexual harassment attitudes and authoritarianism for the first time, particularly within the context of Pakistan and among men. Sexual harassment remains a pressing issue in Pakistani society, yet it has often been overlooked. Findings of this study can be presented in conferences and seminars to highlight the empirical evidences it has generated. Moreover, this research provides direction for future research to

social psychologists and feminists. The study variables also fall under the domains like patriarchy, prejudice and discrimination, gender and sexuality, etc. This research can also be employed in different contexts e.g., family studies, gender discrimination, sexual assault, gender biases and prevalence of rapes in indigenous society. Additionally, implementing and enforcing robust anti-harassment policies in workplaces, educational institutions, and public spaces is critical. Hence, combining awareness-raising efforts with education, policy changes, community interventions, cultural shifts, and support services, can create a more comprehensive approach to preventing sexual harassment and fostering a culture of respect, equality, and safety for all.

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