

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**



**Bachelor Thesis**

**Workplace Sexual Harassment in Russia**

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## BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Violetta Anufrieva

Business Administration

Thesis title

**Workplace Sexual Harassment in Russia**

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### Objectives of thesis

This thesis will investigate experiences and understandings of workplace sexual harassment in Russia. Sexual harassment is considered a key issue in business ethics and in society more broadly, but its precise meaning and application is a subject of intense debate. There is disagreement among academics, lawmakers and the general public about what precisely counts as harassment and how it should be addressed and prevented. The thesis will discuss the main features of this debate, and investigate attitudes towards and understandings of harassment among women in Russia, based on qualitative interviews among selected participants.

### Methodology

The thesis will:

- Develop a literature review outlining contemporary debates and understandings of sexual harassment within business ethics and law, with a special focus on Russia.
- Undertake exploratory research into attitudes towards and experiences of harassment among women in Russia through the use of qualitative (interviews) methods.

## **The proposed extent of the thesis**

40-50 pages

## **Keywords**

Sexual Harassment, Russia, Women, Business Ethics

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## **Recommended information sources**

CROUCH, Margaret. (2001). Thinking about Sexual Harassment: A Guide for the Perplexed. New York: Oxford University Press.

HERSCH, Joni. (2015). Sexual harassment in the workplace. IZA World of Labor 188

CHERNYAEVA, Daria. (2013). Mobbing and harassment regulation in Russia: problems and prospects. SSRN Online Repository: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2399654> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2399654> p. 1-13

MACKINNON, Catherine. (1979). Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Sexual harassment in Russia." by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2022

\_\_\_\_\_ Anufrieva Violetta \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgement**

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# Workplace Sexual Harassment in Russia

## Abstract

This case study considers workplace sexual harassment with a focus on a definite country. This problem has become famous since the 20-th century and still remains relevant in our modern world. People may face their daily lives every day, such as work, university, and home. It is a widespread issue that exists worldwide, but not all people say about it; because sexual harassment seems “invisible.” Sometimes, mass media translated only the most popular harassment cases, but it is not enough. People should understand that it is a serious issue that requires detailed analysis and understanding. In my case study, I want to pay special attention to this problem and disclose the key aspects of sexual harassment. This research will examine definitions, prevention measures, company ethics, and their reaction. Based on the interview, I will also analyze the people’s experience and show the real situation with workplace sexual harassment in Russia. Moreover, I want to help people be more informed about this issue, especially the rising generation.

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment, Russia, Women, Business Ethics, Workplace

# Sexuální obtěžování na pracovišti v Rusku

## Abstraktní

Tato případová studie se zabývá sexuálním obtěžováním na pracovišti se zaměřením na určitou zemi. Tento problém se stal známým od 20. století a stále zůstává aktuální v našem moderním světě. Lidé mohou čelit svému každodennímu životu každý den, jako je práce, univerzita a domov. Je to rozšířený problém, který existuje po celém světě, ale ne všichni lidé o něm říkají; protože sexuální obtěžování se zdá být „neviditelné“. Někdy masmédiá překládala pouze nejoblíbenější případy obtěžování, ale to nestačí. Lidé by měli pochopit, že jde o vážný problém, který vyžaduje podrobnou analýzu a pochopení. Ve své případové studii chci tomuto problému věnovat zvláštní pozornost a odhalit klíčové aspekty sexuálního obtěžování. Tento výzkum bude zkoumat definice, preventivní opatření, firemní etiku a jejich reakce. Na základě rozhovoru také analyzuji zkušenosti lidí a ukážu skutečnou situaci se sexuálním obtěžováním na pracovišti v Rusku. Navíc chci pomoci lidem, aby byli o této problematice více informováni, zejména nastupující generaci.

**Klíčová slova:** obtěžování, Rusko, byznys etika, práce, žena

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# 1. Introduction

In this research, I would like to represent one of the most vital and main issues of our modernity which became rather popular in our society and especially often spreads to workplace area. Thus, I want to investigate sexual harassment in the workplace by focusing on my native country. After all, I am convinced that it is a relevant worldwide problem that should be researched because people are increasingly faced with sexual harassment every year. It causes a negative impact on business ethics, so it is important to explain what sexual harassment is and how sexual harassment can violate the work atmosphere. Moreover, it is also essential for an organization's work life. They should be informed about prevention measures. It also helps to improve people's existing knowledge, and probably someone avoids sexual harassment using the definite understandings and meanings from my work.

On the one hand, there is plenty of general opinions, views, and information about sexual harassment in the workplace among academics, researchers, and others.

On the other hand, there are misunderstandings and disputes about the accurate meaning and the impact of sexual harassment in the workplace. We do not have a clear idea of how we can stop and overcome harassment in our world.

## 2. Objectives and Methodology

### 2.1 Objectives

Many authors have various and other exciting research findings of sexual harassment, but I want to concentrate on the definite objectives.

Firstly, I will form the meaning of sexual harassment through the authors' views. It is rather vital to understand what sexual harassment is because our society often does not consider this issue seriously. Still, many people suffer from it every year and cannot distinguish correctly what sexual harassment is.

Secondly, it will describe the effective measures that may help reduce the cases of sexual harassment. The perfect protective system does not exist in our world, so it is necessary for victims and people trying to avoid it to be advised which measures can protect them.

Thirdly, I will focus on the definite area, so I will aim to examine the experience and understanding of sexual harassment at the workplace among Russian women using the qualitative research method. It allows me to discover what knowledge people have about sexual harassment, how they can interpret it, and what they know about its consequences. I will conduct some interviews with several respondents.

### 2.2 Methodology

My bachelor thesis will consist of four main parts. At first, to understand the main aspects of sexual harassment more precisely, I will start with the theoretical part, specifically a literature review where I will analyze and compare the different theoretical author's views regarding my research issue.

The second one is the practical part. As I mentioned in the objective chapter, I plan to use the qualitative research method, which will be based on not-so-long interviews. On the one hand, it is a rather good choice because it helps to understand the case of study deeper. On the other

hand, it might be subjective because it depends on a concrete person's opinion. Nonetheless, it allows me to better analyze the experience and attitudes towards sexual harassment.

The third part is about results and their discussion, which will contain outcomes from the interviews. The connection between getting outcomes from interviews compared to the analysis from the literature review will be discussed.

I am finishing my research to sum up, all examined results.

### 3. Literature review

#### 3.1 Definitions of the harassment

How does the term of sexual harassment can be defined?

“Sexual harassment is one of a range of abusive or counterproductive workplace behaviours which have hierarchical power relations at their core. These behaviours include general bullying, mobbing, racial harassment and sex-based harassment, such as verbal put-downs, abusive remarks and marginalizing or exclusionary behaviours on the basis of gender” (Thornton 2002; Zippel 2006). In my opinion, this author’s quote discloses the important aspects of the definition of sexual harassment. From the above definition, I can conclude that manifestations of sexual harassment may occur during the inequality of power because hierarchical system of relations gives me an understanding that people are not equal in their positions at workplace. According to the authors view, it is defined that sexual harassment may happen due to the sex or race difference (Thornton 2002; Zippel 2006).

Does it mean that sexual harassment has a connection with discrimination? Undoubtedly, sexual harassment is related to the discrimination but it is not the same idea. Nonetheless, sexual harassment demonstrates more the sexual aspect compared to the other forms of insulting behavior at workplace (Samuels, 2003). Furthermore, there is a difference between racial and sexual harassment. The sexual harassment is possibly justified as welcome attention (Samuels, 2003). I reckon that expression of excessive attention may be considered as a sexual harassment or as just a sign of sympathy. In that case, I suppose that it is not quite correctly to justify sexual harassment by means of welcome attention because it depends on the concrete cases and these cases does not always bring positive intentions. Fitzgerald distinguish two definitions of sexual harassment such as psychological and legal. According to the Fitzgerald view, sexual harassment is determined as undesirable sexual behavior at workplace. The victims estimate it as abusive behavior which might menace their health. He also mentioned that legal definition depends on the legislation of various countries. There are nearly 50 countries which legislation forbids the sexual harassment (McCan, 2005). To sum up all opinions which I have examined, I found out that sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior which may appear in case of inequality of powers.

However, we should distinguish sexual harassment and discrimination. Sexual harassment is related to the sexual context while discrimination may occur without it. In next section, I will continue to analyze the forms of sexual harassment.

### 3.1.1 Forms of sexual harassment

In this section of my thesis work, I want to examine the forms of sexual harassment that other authors already analyzed; it will also give a clearer understanding of sexual harassment, and then it will be easier to distinguish it, and as a result, people will anticipate and perceive better where the sexual harassment is. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations, and Social Affairs, writes that “More than half of the studies distinguish between verbal, physical and nonverbal types of sexual harassment.”

Verbal sexual harassment includes different kinds of jokes with sexual subtexts, comments about appearance, shape, sexual conduct, and requests about sexual intercourse.

The nonverbal forms are sending pornographic videos or photos, impolite gestures, or staring (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations, and Social Affairs, 1998).

Physical contact is considered as direct sexual connection with touching and concrete sexual acts such as sexual violence, coercion of kisses, and embrace. (International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 2021). Besides, the nonverbal form of sexual harassment splits into three sub-forms: gestural, written, and psychological harassment (Guidelines on the prevention of workplace harassment, 2017). Gestural harassment connects with gestures that contain sexual contexts, such as winks or finger gestures. As for written harassment, it represents different pornographic videos or pictures, placards. It might also be harassment through social networks. Psychological harassment is considered as some sexual insistent suggestions or requests, abuse, jeers, or sexual hints (Guidelines on the prevention of workplace harassment, 2017).

Moreover, I want to consider the sexual harassment telephone survey results. (Australian Human Rights Commission) The survey asked people who did not face sexual harassment in the workplace in their opinion. The survey below helps me understand how people distinguish sexual harassment acts from harmless jokes. During my analysis of the telephone survey outcomes, I saw that 10% of people had experience with sexual jokes or comments and they felt

insulted, and 9% of people got intrusive questions about their private life, body, and look. It also caused unpleasant feelings and sounded like an offense to some people. 7% also suffered from physical contact or unwanted kissing or touching and even faced actual assault (Australian Human Rights Commission).

*Table 1 :Sexual harassment behaviours experienced in the workplace in the last five years.*

Sexual harassment: Serious business Results of the 2008 Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey

<b>Table 1: Sexual harassment behaviours experienced in the workplace in the last five years</b>	
<b>Experienced any of these behaviours in the workplace in the last five years in a way that was unwelcome?</b>	<b>Incidence of sexual harassment behaviours amongst those who said they did not experience sexual harassment in the workplace in the last five years based on the definition (multiple responses allowed) (n=947)<sup>25</sup></b>
Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing	3%
Inappropriate physical contact	3%
Actual or attempted rape or assault	1%
Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated	5%
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended	10%
Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts that made you feel offended	5%
Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	2%
Intrusive questions about your private life or physical appearance that made you feel offended	9%
Sexually explicit emails or SMS messages	6%
Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social networking websites or internet chat rooms by a work colleague	1%
Requests or pressure for sex or other sexual acts	1%
None	78%

*Source: Australian Human Rights Commission*

As I mentioned above, this telephone survey was conducted among people who thought they did not face sexual harassment acts. Based on these data, I can say that people do not understand what sexual harassment is and what it means. They confuse it. Thus, this part about explaining forms of sexual harassment emphasizes the relevance and importance of my research.

During this part, I explored the forms of sexual harassment. Now, it made the understanding of sexual harassment more precise. After defining sexual harassment, I researched that there are three main forms of sexual harassment: verbal, nonverbal, and physical forms. In conclusion, it may help people distinguish and understand the type of harassment in the future.

### **3.2 Measures for prevention and help women against the sexual harassment in the workplace**

I have already mentioned in my introduction part that this issue about protection measures from violence is one of the research issues that I should examine. In this chapter, I will consider various opinions representing the measures that can help protect people from sexual harassment. Teaching programs concerning sexual harassment influence favorably, and support workers, especially men, understand this problem better and define what acts they can refer to as sexual harassment. It also helps employees pay more attention to this issue and get knowledge and reduces men's desire to commit harassment in the future. However, it does not help increase the cases when people inform about this problem their organization or police (Antecol and Cobb-Clark, 2003).

The Australian telephone surveys held in 2003 and 2008 showed some reasons why people did not apply official complaints after sexual harassment acts. The most popular responses included mistrust of people regarding complaints misunderstanding of issue seriousness. It also means that people do not know the meaning of sexual harassment, so they think sexual jokes or insults are not an important reason for complaints. However, as I analyzed in the previous part of the research, it is related to sexual harassment. Concerning complaints, people had several reasons why they did not want to apply them, such as complicated complaints

procedures. It is better to be silent about it. Nobody believes or negatively influences the future career. All these reasons revealed that managers should fully explain the application of complaints. In addition, they have to note that sexual harassment is a significant issue, and it would be better to say about it.

*Table 1: Reasons for not making a formal report. Source: Australian Human Rights Commission*

<b>Table 3: Reasons for not making a formal report</b>			
<b>Reasons for not reporting</b>		<b>2003 n=132</b>	<b>2008 n=190</b>
Didn't think it was serious enough		31%	43%
Lack of faith in the complaint process		Unable to compare	21%
This includes:	Easier just to keep quiet	19%	8%
	Complaint process would be embarrassing	4%	5%
	Complaint process would be difficult	4%	3%
	Thought I would not be believed	2%	3%
	<i>Would not change things</i> <i>Did not think anything would be done</i> (these responses combined in 2003)	13%	2% 1%
	Didn't trust the people I could complain too	1%	1%
	Difficulties with the complaint process	26%	NA
Took care of problem myself		26%	29%
Fear of negative impact on me		Unable to compare	15%
This includes:	Too scared/frightened	3%	5%
	Person too senior	6%	4%
	People would treat me like I was the wrong doer	2%	2%

Fear of negative impact on me		Unable to compare	15%
This includes:	Too scared/frightened	3%	5%
	Person too senior	6%	4%
	People would treat me like I was the wrong doer	2%	2%
	Damage to my reputation	2%	2%
	Thought people would think I was over reacting	1%	3%
	Afraid of getting fired	5%	3%
	Would have negative impact at work	2%	-
Did not know how to handle the situation		1%	3%

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**Sexual harassment: Serious business** Results of the 2008 Sexual Harassment National Telephone Survey

Moved to another place of work	1%	2%
Sexual harassment is accepted in my workplace	1%	1%
Harasser was already being dealt with	1%	1%
I did not know who to report it too	2%	1%
Didn't want to hurt the person who bothered me	3%	1%
Others	8%	3%

Besides, If some companies raise the premium to workers who suffer from the risk of harassment, it will be an effective way for decreasing the harassment and engaging new employees. According to Hersch's opinion, the most effective ways for the prevention of sexual harassment are the strict company policy which will forbid sexual violence in the workplace, training lessons, and devise the correct plan of applying complaints concerning sexual harassment (Hersch, 2015). Managers and other responsible staff must respond to women's safety in case of sexual harassment at the workplace. It means that they have to facilitate the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. If this act has already occurred, managers have to provide all necessary procedures for helping with this problem (International Labour Organization, India, 2013). One of the main actions that would help prevent sexual harassment is providing and creating a favorable and safe atmosphere in the workplace among women and men. Besides, a training course is another best option. It should be a detailed course for workers and managers separately (International Labour Organization, India, 2013).

Below, I would like to analyze the outcomes of the Australian telephone survey, which was conducted between people who faced sexual harassment and from where people got informal advice. Based on the given data, 39% of people referred to informal advice to their managers. In the second place, it was family or friends; then it was colleagues. As survey data showed, victims preferred getting advice from managers and their co-workers more often. Accordingly, it confirms the importance of separate training courses for managers and employers against sexual harassment. It also underlines that teaching courses are one of the necessary options for preventing violence.

*Table 2: Where respondents sought informal advice and assistance from. Source: Australian Human Rights Commission*

<b>Table 1: Where respondents sought informal advice and assistance from</b>	
<b>Did you seek informal advice? If yes, where from?</b>	<b>2008 Sample size = 67</b>
Margin of error	± 12%
Manager/Supervisor at work	39%
Friends or family	24%
Co-worker	21%
Employer/boss	13%
Co-worker more senior	6%
Human Resources Manager or equivalent	4%
Australian Human Rights Commission or State agency	3%
Union or Employee Representative	3%
Others	7%

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52 Sample size = 226, Margin of error ± 6.5%.

53 Sample size = 67, Margin of error ± 12%.

Despite the definite policy or law against sexual harassment, it does not mean that it will be realized because there are moral principles or stereotypes connected with cultural issues that interfere with problem realization (University of Minnesota, 2003). It shows that companies

should achieve cultural changes through discussion, teaching, breaking some stereotypes, and so on.

These authors' opinions understand what measures we may use for prevention against harassment in the workplace. When I compared one with another opinion, I can say that some measures are the same or almost the same such as training courses, strict policy, employee responsibility, premiums, the friendly atmosphere between workers. Nevertheless, as for Muslim countries, there is another problem. They have cultural features. According to this, women have some moral stereotypes which interfere with harassment fighting. Firstly, these countries should overcome cultural issues and not be afraid to say about them. Secondly, they can set certain rules and contracts which will be effective. All in all, effective measures have existed, but not all countries make them perfect (Merkin, et al., 2014).

### **3.3 Does the sexual harassment officially exist in Russia?**

The first mention of workplace harassment only occurred in 2000 in Russia (Daria V. Chernyaeva, 2013). It is rather late compared, for instance, to the USA, where it has been researched since the 70s (Hersch, 2015).

Now, “Under Russian legislation, there is no legal definition of harassment, and there are no comprehensive guidelines about how it should be dealt with” (Global HR lawyers, lusLaboris, 2019). This quotation distinctively explains that there are no legal norms against harassment in Russia on the official level. However, some legal regulations have existed which can potentially protect workers. It is mentioned in the Criminal and Labor Codes of the Russian Federation. The Criminal Code is described as if someone forces other people to sexual activity without their agreement; it will be considered a crime. As a result, it may lead to different punishments such as fines or even incarceration (Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Article 133). This formulation in Criminal Code is closer to the definition of sexual harassment. However, not all sexual harassment acts are referred to the criminal crimes. As I found in the previous chapter, sexual harassment also has a nonverbal and verbal form such as gestures or jokes, photos, and videos with pornographic context, insults. These all are also various manifestations of sexual harassment. Thus, it is necessary to devise special anti-sexual harassment laws with legal power.

Otherwise, it is not understood where is a clear distinction between criminal crime and sexual harassment acts. According to the Labor Code, any discrimination such as differences in sex, nationality, religion, language, origin, and other things are forbidden. All people have to be equal at work, and nobody should have additional or more privileges (Labor Code of Russian Federation).

Unfortunately, there are no separate legal laws against sexual harassment in Russia now; it is often considered only in the context of the Criminal Code or as an act of sex discrimination which the Labor Code prohibits.

### 1.1.1 Ethics in Russian companies

Do ethics reflect strong power in Russian organizations? Large companies started to embed some paragraphs which forbid harassment acts. However, it is only considered an additional option and called the Code of Professional Ethics. It does not relate to the official legal norms. Moreover, the legal norms of anti-harassment in this code are not executed, and employers have no obligations to discuss these ethics norms with workers because it has no value and importance (Daria V. Chernyaeva, 2013).

Nevertheless, the President with the Russian government tried to undertake some attempts to adopt the complex of measures concerning the Ethics Code in 2012. In 2012, the government took complex measures related to the definite spheres such as health care service educational services (The Decree of the President of Russian Federation No. 597, 07.05.2012). This complex of measures was concentrated on developing professional codes and self-government institutions. Besides, even some professional codes were already published on the Internet. Still, these codes only contained general concepts and provisions about anti-discrimination, some basic rules about respect and courtesy with colleagues and customers but no words about harassment. It was pretty clear that the issue of sexual harassment was not considered at all. According to Chernyaeva's view, if the ethics code was accepted officially as a legal act, it would facilitate prevention against sexual harassment in Russia. Currently, it does not have juridical power, and as a result, Ethical Code does not fulfill a protective function.

Analyzing the author's opinion about ethics in the workplace in Russia, I define that there is no special separate section about sexual harassment in Russian legislation. It also emphasizes that people and organizations do not know what law they can rely on in case of sexual harassment at

the workplace and how they can behave themselves in such difficult situations. Next chapter, I will examine the attitude of people as companies towards harassment.

### **3.4 Attitude towards sexual harassment in Russia**

As I researched in the previous chapters, there is no official law regulation against sexual harassment, but how do victims, organizations, police, and Courts react to the cases of sexual harassment in the workplace? The cases of sexual harassment are increased, it can be seen in the number of submitted complaints. However, the Court usually dismisses the victim's claims because people do not have evidence that would prove the harasser's guilt, such as videotape recording or witness statements; one more reason is that Russian's Courts do not know how this issue can be decided because there are no definite law regulations; also they often do not know the clear meaning of sexual harassment. (Global HR lawyers, lusLaboris, 2019). Moreover, most sexual harassment acts are rarely considered by the Court due to the unwillingness of investigators and lawyers to enter into victims' problems and help them. Victims often agree with harassment facts and give up because they know that nobody can protect them. Besides, if Court considers some cases, it always connects only with discrimination or inequitable dismissal facts. Sexual harassment is always reckoned as a secondary issue, but in most cases, this problem is not mentioned by Russian Courts (Daria V. Chernyaeva, 2013). Now, I understand the attitude towards sexual harassment by Courts, lawyers, police in Russia. However, what is the organization's attitude towards this issue? Which rules do they follow if there is no legal definition of sexual harassment in Russia? As for medium and small firms, they usually only have brief and not difficult rules based on legal databases.

Moreover, the authors of these regulations do not provide any information or provisions about sexual harassment (Daria V. Chernyaeva, 2013). Daria Chernyaeva also mentioned in her research about large companies. If, for instance, small enterprises refer to the big corporations, enterprises can use their rules. Generally, large corporations explain their employees' acceptable behavior and company policy in detail. In conclusion, workers know what they should do in case of inappropriate behavior and complain and get support. However, these rules must have a legal norm. Otherwise, it will be useless regulations that do not influence relationships between

workers. In this section, I examined the behavior of police, courts, lawyers, victims, and companies towards sexual violence in Russia, and I was persuaded that the Russian legislation has a lack of knowledge regarding researched issue.

## **4. Practical part**

### **4.1 Why I choose the qualitative method of research**

As I mentioned in my objectives and methodology parts, I have chosen the qualitative research method, specifically conducting the interviews. From my point of view, it will help to analyze the problem, research deeper, and understand what people know about sexual harassment even though it is not the official and prevalent term in Russia. Moreover, as Russia is a large country, it allows looking at issues inside the concrete city and seeing what happens with harassment cases there. Of course, there are some advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative research method.

On the one hand, it is a strictly limited method because I physically cannot interview all Russian people. Furthermore, it only reveals some people's opinions, and it may not be a wrong or right position because every person has a right to express their view, so I can expect that it might be a subjective or prejudiced view.

On the other hand, the interview process helps me recognize a person's experience and conclude what people have about this issue. Also, it is significant for me that I can see and hear people during the interview because private conversations are more effective than surveys. The reason is that during personal interaction with people, respondents think more about their answers and try to reply consciously. Otherwise, for example, people often just randomly click prepared answers during the surveys and do not ponder their replies; therefore, a researcher can get random answers that do not make any sense and may cause misunderstandings. Nonetheless, both qualitative and quantitative methods help people in their research or analysis, so researchers have a right to choose the most appropriate way.

As for my case, I am sure that I have selected the correct approach because I need to investigate people's experience that recognizes their knowledge. Based on that, I will connect interview results and literature review and conclude. Further, will be conducted more studies. I hope that my interview findings help pay more attention to this issue in Russia.

#### 4.2 The process of selection respondents

I decided to choose three women for my interview. Why did I choose women?

Firstly, women face sexual harassment more often than men (Hercsh, 2015). Secondly, I suppose that not all women are afraid of speaking about it compared to men. However, regarding my interview experience, most women still do not want to say about it publicly because they feel fear, mistrust, and embarrassment, so it is not easy to find respondents.

However, approximately two months ago, I created a questionnaire survey in one of the social networks where I asked the question, "Who would like to share with workplace sexual harassment experience?" After this survey, I found and selected two women who faced with sexual harassment acts and one who has never suffered from it. I will explain my chose a little bit later. In my questionnaire survey, I pointed out that all respondent replies will be confidential and used only for my university case study. My investigative area was focused on Russia, so selected women were from different Russian cities because I want to analyze how large and small cities deal with sexual harassment cases.

According to my research issue, I should examine the experience of sexual harassment in Russia, so I needed to find women who have already suffered from sexual harassment and one independent woman who did not face it. Why did I also include women without experience? I made this decision because I wanted to analyze the answers of victims and independent women and find out who have more understanding.

In the next chapter, I will examine some questions that I used during my interviews.

### 4.3 What questions did I ask?

My interview consists of 9 open questions. From my point of view, it is important to mention interview questions because the whole interview will not be available in my research. It will be attached as additional material in a separate file.

At first, I asked introductory questions such as name, city, age, and occupation; then, I gradually continued specifying my questions according to my case study. One of my aims was to examine how women understand the term “sexual harassment” then find the connection with a definition from the literature review, so I requested you to define sexual harassment or try to describe it.

After that, I focused on my studied area and started asking special questions such as sexual harassment in Russian law against it.

Afterward, I prepared concrete questions about workplace sexual harassment in Russia. I wanted to find out what companies undertake in workplace harassment and what measures can help reduce violence.

At the end of the interview, I asked one of the key questions about personal experience with workplace sexual harassment and what consequences they faced after that happened.

I reckon that my interviews cover all significant points concerning my research.

### 4.4 What kind of difficulties did I face during the conducting interview?

Firstly, I conducted the interviews through the Skype application because I lived in the Czech Republic for four years. I could not meet with each respondent in person, so I did it online. In my opinion, it was a little bit more complicated because the internet connection was not always stable. Sometimes, I could not hear the participants well, and I needed to repeat the question.

Secondly, we had a difference in time zone, so we needed to plan our meetings according to our schedule in advance.

Thirdly, searching for necessary respondents may take some more time than you would expect, so it will be better to start the search as soon as you can.

As for the interview process, sometimes it was rather difficult to talk with women faced with workplace sexual violence because this topic causes negative feelings and pain. Furthermore, not all people want to remember it. One more complication I faced was a misunderstanding of the sexual harassment term. Some people think that it is discrimination. I agree that there is a similar feature, such as inequality. However, As I pointed out in my literature review, there is the distinction between these two concepts. Even this fact emphasizes that this issue requires more explanations and studies in Russia.

I expect that my investigations regarding workplace sexual harassment will help Russian people to see the difference between sexual harassment and discrimination.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1 How do Russian women describe the term of sexual harassment?

Based on answers I got from Russian women about the definition of sexual harassment, I would say that two of them had some difficulties with the precise meaning of harassment, but the third one had a rather strong opinion about it.

One of the women said regarding the definition: "For me, it is a difficult question. It seems to me, I cannot formulate it correctly because I have a lack of knowledge concerning this issue, but I will try to do it" (Katherine, 19, Moscow). This opinion shows that the person cannot define and describe clearly sexual harassment terms. Besides, I understand that it is not her fault. She is only 19 years old. If the state considers this issue and says more about sexual harassment through, for example, mass media, it will give progress in people's knowledge. However, she found out about sexual harassment due to the case with Harvey Weinstein. This story was "famous," and all world knew about it. Unfortunately, only «loud» episodes of sexual violence are translated by Russian mass media. From my point of view, it is not enough. I think that the information about sexual harassment, such as definitions, types, causes, prevention measures, should be revealed regularly because it helps to formulate understanding.

The next participant is Julia. She is from Nizhny Novgorod. Julia also did not know about sexual harassment until she faced it. According to Julia's opinion now, sexual harassment happens "under pressure." It is an act that is occurred by force. Based on the literature review, I would say that it is a brief and incomplete description reflecting this term's main point.

The third woman is Margarita, 38, and she is from Yaroslavl. As I see, she has a clearer understanding than the other respondents. She described the violence as: "For me, it is referred to the inappropriate behavior. It is expressed as direct sexual harassment (I mean, enter into the sexual intercourse by coercion) or it might be only persistent requests about it, also touching or sexual jokes about appearance or body, insults". I suppose that this opinion reflects a person's

interest in sexual violence. This view has a link to the Thornton and Zippel definition of sexual harassment which I considered in the literature review and showed rather deep knowledge.

To conclude all the above results, I can define why sexual harassment in Russia has slow development. The first reason is the gap in government control. Secondly, usually, people are afraid of saying about it. It very slows down the process of spreading information about this issue. Thirdly, this one is referred to the first one; the harassers do not feel fear and consequences for their acts, so they are sure that they stay unpunished. I reckon that it is necessary to take some official laws against it.

### 5.1.2 Women as a weak link

In this subchapter, based on interview outcomes, I want to discuss why women face sexual harassment more often than men.

According to Julia's views, women are weaker than men in physical form. Her opinion is about physical inequality in power between men and women. I think that in most cases, women do not have enough power for resistance against men. She also mentioned that men might demonstrate their superiority over women in case of patriarchal model behavior, which has been saved in some Russian families so far. I suppose it makes sense because it also shows men's dominance over women. I also connected the patriarchal behavior with inequality of powers in my literature review.

Kate also has similar opinion as Julia that, on the one hand, men have more strength than women. On the other hand, women can even achieve the same successful results as men in careers. Despite this fact, we may observe the inequality in salaries between men and women in Russia (Napeeva D. (2019)). According to the wage report of ISO ( Napeeva D. (2019)), which was represented in 2019, I can see below the difference between men's and women's wages in percentages. The table shows that there is a 30.6 % difference in wages among men and women in Russia. It is a rather large gender inequality compared to the other countries so it proves that men and women are not equal in Russia. Besides, it is related to the dominant malefactor.

Table 3: Difference in wages between men and women in %.



Source: report International labor Organization (ISO), "Wages in the world"

Margarita thinks that inequality among men and women is reduced, but she said: “Unfortunately, we cannot get rid of this forever.” Margarita informs great about sexual harassment issue. She also mentioned that “a long time ago women have less rights than men”. Besides, she also mentioned that this tendency continues existing now especially in Muslim countries. It shows that she involved in this issue but the interest may provoke some, for instance, personal reasons. In her case, the extra interest towards harassment problem was caused by forcing to workplace sexual harassment. Now, she felt fear for yourself and your children life so she started to learn more. This suggests that sexual harassment causes anxiety, psychological trauma and fear for the rest of the person’s life.

## **5.2 Sexual harassment experience in different Russian cities.**

I will examine the workplace sexual harassment experience in Russia based on the information I have got during the interviews in this paragraph. As I researched in the literature review, there is no legal definition of sexual harassment in Russia. Moreover, there is a low probability that direct cases of sexual harassment will be considered by police or by Russian Courts because it is almost impossible to prove and collect evidence. I think that sexual harassment has a connection with gender discrimination in the workplace. In most cases, it can be referred to as the manifestation of discrimination.

From my point of view, sexual violence should be considered a separate issue because when people face it, they are just lost. They probably start to google information and search for what they have to do, but there is no legal information they should rely on. I suppose that this reason makes the problem «invisible.” So, two women agreed to tell me briefly about their horrible experiences with workplace sexual harassment in our interview. One of them faced direct sexual violence, including physical contact. She worked as a journalist in a local online magazine in Nizhny Novgorod.

Unfortunately, when sexual harassment case was occurred, neither managers of the company nor the director did not deal with the issue. They even did not provide protection. She said: “They(managers) just said that I hadn’t got evidence, and the best option for me has immediately left the job and kept silence.” I think that it is not surprising because it is the easiest

way to avoid problems for the company. On the one hand, they could assume measures that were supported victims, such as moral compensation or help to apply application to the police or give paid weekends.

On the other hand, the company felt fear for their reputation, and they understood that she did not have harassment facts that someone confirmed. I suppose that the company tried to do its best that avoid scandals. However, it was not the best option because the organization only cared about themselves, while aggrieved workers felt fear, desperation, and feebleness. After that, she left the job without any discussions and struggled for the truth. For me, it is an obvious reaction because not every person wants to fight without support.

Unfortunately, the second situation has similar consequences. The second woman I talked to suffered from sexual harassment eight years ago. She worked as an accountant in Yaroslavl. She was faced with a physical form of sexual harassment without sexual relations, only jokes, touching, and obscene compliments. The results of the situation are almost the same. The organization promised help but did not provide anything while the police said she should negotiate and settle this issue with a company. In my opinion, it looked like an “enclosed circle” without an exit. I reckon that these two opinions have a link to the literature review chapter «Attitude towards sexual harassment in Russia.» Considering experiences confirm that police and organizations often refuse to help victims.

To conclude these two cases, I would say that it is only two experiences, it does not mean that people face with such kind of attitude in every company. This is a quite complicated issue, so organizations often only rely on official legal norms. Still, despite this, they should demonstrate their humanity and do all possible things that support victims.

### 5.2.1 What do the victims feel?

I suppose that sexual harassment may change people’s minds because it is referred to as psychological trauma and causes a commotion of the spirits and other mental or physical diseases.

Julia commented on her feelings: “I felt depressed and moral breakdown. I was just shocked and crying every day and lay in bed and did nothing”. This proposed that sexual harassment negatively impacts on human mind and causes direct harm to health, future career,

private life. It is a usual reaction because the person needs to outlive this difficult moment and then adjust to living daily life. Moreover, if people cannot cope with this issue alone, they refer to a psychologist. Otherwise, it may lead to terrible consequences such as committing suicide. Also, Julia mentioned that harassment impacts their career. After that, she changed her mind and chose freelance work. I think that it is about mental traumas. People stop trusting others. They are afraid of working in collective again.

According to Margarita's experience, she overcame this stress without professional help. From my point of view, it all depends on the concrete person, on emotional feelings after harassment. Besides, every person selects an appropriate method of healing for themselves.

As for Katherine, who has never faced harassment, she can only suppose proposal consequences. She emphasizes that family support is a significant aspect that helps to recover consciousness faster.

I analyzed the primary outcomes after sexual harassment according to the interview answers. It is essential to cope with these consequences because it will allow one to live a normal and calm life in the future.

### **5.3 Is it possible to reduce sexual harassment in Russia?**

It is a rather broad and challenging question, but according to the interview opinions, all participants have to give or take the same idea and measure how it might be fixed in Russia. Firstly, they said that it is a government omission. On the one hand, yes, this issue depends on government decisions because they have power and can enact legal laws. On the other hand, most Russian companies could develop their professional codes and embed them in their work process. Furthermore, a list of accepted legal norms does not decide this problem. It is required a complex approach. The government and organizations should work together over this issue. As Russia is one of the biggest countries in the world, therefore, most prevention measures will not spread fast as we suppose.

All participants of my interview said that first of all; the government should "fill the gap in Russian legislation" and enact official legal laws against sexual harassment. They also mentioned that it is necessary to explain to people of all ages the meaning of sexual harassment,

how it might be distinguished, precise definition, and all other detailed aspects that people understand that they need to do in this situation.

One more measure is about creating particular guidelines for companies that will be contained official legal norms, behavior in the workplace, and some other aspects regarding prevention measures. Besides, training courses for workers is possible, but I think it is not an urgent measure as legal protection laws or creating special anti-harassment codes.

All in all, this issue was considered by the Russian government in 2012, as I analyzed in the literature review, but it did not bring significant outcomes. It was an only attempt.

#### **5.4 Actual situation with sexual harassment in Russia and supposed solutions**

In the last section of my "Results and Discussion" part, I want to represent the current situation with sexual harassment in Russia based on interviews and literature review analysis. As I found out, the situation with sexual harassment now is not considered. It is clear because now more global foreign policy issues are happening, but the harassment problem also stopped their development. The last attempts to change anything were conducted in 2012. Of course, it has been almost ten years since these attempts were held.

Now, plenty of mass media helps people be more knowledgeable. However, as it showed in my interviews, a young woman does not know a lot about the meaning and definition of sexual harassment. Two older women have more understanding only because they are faced with it in the workplace and start learning about it. Generally, they had some difficulties with the definition of harassment during an interview. Besides, they just did not know what to do when they suffered from it. It tells that people have relatively weak knowledge and understanding regarding this issue.

As I analyzed in previous sections, companies often try to decide the issue «quietly» and save reputation. According to the literature review, police and Russian Courts usually avoid and ignore this problem blaming it on lack of evidence. The women's experience proved that it happens regardless of its city.

What are the supposed solutions that I would offer? Firstly, I would suggest saying more about cases of workplace sexual harassment in mass media. It helps spread information faster,

and each Russian region will be informed about it. It makes people think and analyze it more. Secondly, it is government involvement in it. Their work should be concentrated on legal law development.

Thirdly, the companies can also help the government and try to develop guidelines or codes for workers, including a detailed explanation of sexual harassment. Managers can also discuss workplace behavior and create a friendly atmosphere among colleagues. Fourthly, suppose even there are no legal norms against sexual harassment. In that case, organizations should do the best for their employees and provide any help because the negative consequences may get not only employees but also companies. In conclusion, I want to say that common effort should overcome this issue.

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up all my findings and analysis concerning the sexual harassment issue in Russia, I would say that this country is rather far from overcoming it because some people do not know about basic things such as definition, forms, what they need to do in case of that and so on. I observed that during my interview, the youngest participant had more complications with answering than the older one; it reflects the fact that the young generation already has little knowledge because it is not discussed in schools or universities. They can only find it in social networks, but it is not professional articles, so the information about understanding or types might be wrong. Moreover, it is not considered a serious and relevant problem in Russia. Undoubtedly, it shows that the country falls behind the development of this issue compared to Europe or USA.

However, the situation does not look so hopeless. The attempts to improve the situation were conducted. As I found out from the literature review, it was revealed even some samples of professional codes on the internet, but later it was stopped. Now, the companies (not all) only have basic and primitive rules, but it is not related to sexual harassment.

In conclusion, I want to say that I considered deeper only some basic aspects of sexual harassment because I wanted it to be available and clear for all segments of the population. I hope that my research helped to understand the basic concept of this issue, and it will stay relevant for the future generation. After my work, I want to see more Russian research regarding this issue because I only represented fundamental aspects. Still, I am sure that sexual harassment is a broad topic, so other authors might focus on other ways.

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